

# The State Dept., church, and private networks now destabilizing Korea

by David Hammer

The current crisis in South Korea potentially poses grave security problems for the United States and its allies, particularly Japan and South Korea itself. On June 22, through the mission of Assistant Secretary of State Gaston Sigur to Seoul, a meeting took place between President Chun Doo Hwan and Kim Young-sam, leader of the opposition Reunification Democratic Party. Although the Chun government released many of the thousands it had detained since riots began on June 10 and ended the house arrest of opposition leader Kim Dae-jung, there were no concessions coming from the RDP. Instead, the party proceeded to back a nationwide "peace march" scheduled for June 26.

As of June 25, it would appear that the opposition is determined to push the crisis to the breaking point, leading to total chaos in this strategically located country, or forcing the imposition of martial law and/or a military coup.

The following is a report on the organizational structures—in the United States and South Korea—that have created the crisis. From the United States, this network begins with the U.S. State Department, both officially and unofficially through its affiliated Project Democracy networks. This Stateside apparatus in turn works in tandem with the Reunification Democrat Party, which in turn coordinates with the umbrella organizations that call the rioters out into the streets.

From the standpoint of its architects, the policy objective of this crisis is not democracy, but the consummation of a deal with the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from South Korea—as proposed by the Carter administration—and the unification of the two Koreas under a Soviet-P.R.C. condominium. For that deal to go through, the Chun government and the military-political forces behind it, must be swept aside.

In this investigative report, where possible, we permit the destabilizers to speak for themselves:

## U.S. State Department

Secretary of State George Shultz: The State Depart-

ment current policy is support for the Korean opposition Reunification Democratic Party, led by Kim Young-sam and Kim Dae-jung. It was the State Department that in January 1985 forced the return of exile Kim Dae-jung from the United States to South Korea, warning the Chun Doo Hwan government against any attempt to harm the opposition leader. On June 22, Shultz commented on the crisis: "What we believe should happen is a resumption of talks not simply about the violence, but about the process through which a *transfer of power will take place* in a way that reflects the will of the Korean people [emphasis added]."

On the same day, State Department spokesman Phyllis Oakley, commenting on the South Korean government's possible options, handed down a warning to the Korean military: "In our view, military intervention would be a serious disservice to Korea's interests. . . . We urge Korean commanders to concentrate on the defense of Korea and allow the political process to develop in a manner agreeable to the Korean people."

On March 2, 1986, less than a week after the U.S.-directed coup against Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos, Shultz announced that the policy toward South Korea would be "the same as it had been in the Philippines." This policy was first enunciated in 1981, by the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, D.C., of which Shultz is a board member. The plan is now operational:

- 1) "the resurrection of the Carter administration's program for the withdrawal of American ground forces from Korea";
- 2) "the negotiation of arms control measures for the Korean peninsula, including restrictions on the introduction of advanced new weapons systems and possibly the creation of a Korean nuclear-free zone";
- 3) "increased American pressure on South Korea to promote human rights and political liberalization"; and
- 4) "direct official dialogue, as well as unofficial cultural, academic, and economic contacts between the United States and North Korea."

Though the Carter proposal for the withdrawal of U.S. troops was quashed, Shultz appointed its author, Morton Abramowitz, director of the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research.

**Gaston Sigur, Assistant Secretary of State for Far East and Pacific Affairs:** In February, Sigur spoke at a public forum in New York, calling upon Korea to "develop a more open and legitimate political system." He further suggested the United States link its military and economic links to South Korea to the government's progress toward "democratization."

Sigur is currently under investigation for his role in attempting to line up funding for the Nicaraguan Contras in the summer of 1985 when he served as assistant to Robert McFarlane at the National Security Council. Sigur is also a board member of the New York-based Council on Religion in International Affairs, which has played a Stateside role in coordinating the destabilizations in the Philippines and South Korea.

**U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Korea James Lilley:** Lilley was appointed ambassador in September 1986 to replace Ambassador Richard Walker, a political appointee, who had acted to thwart Project Democracy efforts. Lilley was officially with the CIA from 1951 to 1978, serving in Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, Cambodia, and Thailand. He was deputy station chief in Laos in 1965, at the point that Irangate's Ted Shackley and Thomas Clines were in the region. He was chief of station in Beijing from 1973-75. "He's been involved with the Agency since the beginning of his career that was essentially concerned with managing political change," comments South Korean oppositionist Pharis Harvey (see below).

According to the Japanese magazine *Shindoan*, Lilley recommended his close friend Donald Gregg, former CIA station chief in Seoul, to George Bush as Bush's national security adviser. Gregg, when stationed in Seoul in the 1970s, privately circulated his belief that the government of Park Chung-hee should be overthrown. Park was assassinated in 1979. Later the Korea desk head at NSC, Gregg is now under investigation for his role in the Iran-Contra affair.

Reports in the Korean exile community in the United States say that the South Korean government attempted to reject Lilley's appointment as ambassador, fearing that "he would try to overthrow the government." "It's not so good that a CIA agent for 27 years was sent to Korea," said a former student leader now operating out of the Center for Democratic Policy. "The mere fact that he was a CIA agent gave a bad impression to both government and opposition. Students burned his effigy even before he arrived, because they said, 'Oh, that guy's coming to mess up the situation.' And the government thought he might be coming to overthrow the government. I heard the rumor that his appointment was refused by the Korean government, but I am not sure. . . . Because, you know generals, they know what CIA is doing."

Lilley has been a featured speaker before Sigur's Council on Religion in International Affairs.

### **Quasi-governmental: 'Project Democracy'**

The "Project Democracy" apparatus of Lt. Col. Oliver North is still flourishing, centering around the U.S. government-funded, but privately administrated, **National Endowment for Democracy (NED)** and the NED's **National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI)**.

According to **Linda Pochek** of the NED, the endowment provided money for the NDI to run an April 1986 workshop, "South Korean Democratic Development" in conjunction with the opposition party then led by Kim Dae-jung and Kim Young-sam, the New Korea Democratic Party. "It was a review of basic party-building techniques, coalition building," explained Pochek. "Then they recently held a seminar which focused on the role of political parties in a democratic transition. But you'll have to call NDI for details, speak to Vivian Derrick. She knows all about it."

"The NKDP was extraordinarily factionalized. We kept stressing coalition," reported the NDI's Vivian Derrick. "We told them you just can't have a single issue, the elections, you have to look at building coalitions around broader issues. . . . So, by the end of the week, they got the idea about diversifying on issues, reaching out to others, coalition building, and the importance of having some kind of coherent consensus in the party was taking hold." The NDI kept up the contacts after the seminar: "Larry Atwood, our president, went over to Korea with a survey team, to meet with people." Atwood, who led the "international observer team" to the Philippine elections in 1986, is a former State Department official. The NDI will be conducting another workshop for the opposition in the fall.

The credentials of the chief adviser to the Kims' Reunification Democratic Party, Kim Chong-Won, gives a good indication of the high-level backing for the party in the United States. A long-time associate of Kim Yong-sam, Chong-Won attended high school in Seoul, then moving to the Phillips Exeter Academy in New England. He then studied at Harvard and Columbia universities, at Johns Hopkins' School of Advanced International Studies, and Harvard Law School. He taught at Harvard, Johns Hopkins, and Rutgers, and also served as a senior research fellow at the Research Institute on International Change at Columbia University and at the Institute for East Asian Legal Studies at Harvard Law School. He has been involved in research projects at the Brookings Institution in Washington and has worked as a research analyst for the U.S. Defense Department.

### **The World Council of Churches**

The coordinating centers for the destabilization on the ground in South Korea are the World Council of Churches and its Korean and U.S. National Council of Churches affiliates. Said one Western European-based official of the World

Council of Churches: "Global ecumenical solidarity with the churches and students of South Korea, against the regime, is increasing. The regime is squeezed. I would say this regime will be finished by the end of the year. There are similarities to the Philippines." Over the past 20 to 30 years, the entire opposition apparatus, from the well-trained youths throwing Molotov cocktails in the streets to the Reunification Democratic Party of the two Kims, has been systematically created by these institutions.

From the United States, this network is directed by **Pharis Harvey**, chairman of the **North American Coalition for Human Rights in Korea**, a subsidiary of the **National Council of Churches**. Harvey reports himself to be on the phone with either one of the two Kims every day. He is also in regular contact with the State Department. A recent interview with Harvey was interrupted when a desk officer called from State to give Harvey a rundown on the latest news from Seoul. "This is a guy I talk to all the time. We talk fairly frankly with each other," Harvey explained.

"Many of the opposition groups have come up out of the churches," Harvey reports. "During the last decade, at times when no other group could operate legally, they operated out of the churches. The church was the nurturing ground for the labor movement, the farmer movement . . . [even] the Buddhist movement began to adapt the tactics and style of the Christian movement."

Harvey, along with fellow Methodist missionary George Ogle, laid the basis for the destabilization now under way, in the early 1950s. Their vehicle was the Urban Industrial Mission in South Korea, funded by the World Council of Churches. The UIM, using the slum-organizing "community control" methods of Saul Alinsky, creator of Chicago's black youth gangs, organized "Christian" radical farmer, labor, student, and other organizations against the government. As one of Ogle's

Development Policy in Washington put it, "George Ogle was the man behind the scenes. . . . He was the key figure who organized that mission. His wife, Dorothy, was also active. He developed network building."

Harvey describes his work: "I used to work with UIM. In Asia overall the UIM is known as URM (Urban-Rural Mission) because it works with laborers, urban poor, and farmers and peasants, and with cultural and ethnic minority groups. They are all together in one program, and that is the title of it. It is a loose federation of local programs all over Asia in that coalition, and there are similar loose coalitions in other parts of the world which are coordinated with the World Council of Churches, which serves as a kind of information center for the church to groups to contact each other and as a source and coordinator of funding from various church bodies around the world. . . .

"In Tokyo I was with the Urban-Rural Mission as a research consultant on economic justice issues. I was working

under the Christian Conference of Asia. As the situation evolved in Korea, more and more of my time was absorbed by efforts to support particularly people in the UIM and others being arrested and so forth. They never knew I was with the UIM. We worked very carefully. I was not listed on any letterhead. I never signed my name to anything and when I gave my address I always gave it in New York. They [the KCIA] had known about me earlier. . . . They were getting more and more curious toward the end, but even on the day Park was killed, I was scheduled to go to a meeting there on my way back to take this job. . . . It was just a coincidence that I was there when Park was killed, just to keep the record straight."

Though Harvey and Ogle had to leave, the apparatus they created took on a life of its own. As Lee Shin Bum put it, after noting that Ogle trained many of those now leading the current protests, including the spokesman for the National Campaign for a Democratic Constitution, "They had a center in many cities. The government suppressed them at the end of the 1970s. And now, the people they trained, the labor leaders and all, they are now acting on their own. . . . The church contributed to the movement at the initial stage, *very much*. Now, the car is in the fourth gear. (laughs) You know what I mean?"

When the South Korean government cracked down on the insurgency in the 1970s, many organizations went "clandestine," that is, back into the protective cover of the church. "And in the 1970s, and the 1980s also it was virtually impossible to have these groups, so many joined the church and the churches said they were renewed by the influx of new blood," reported Lee Shin Bum. "Many of my friends joined the Catholics. Some of them joined the Presbyterians, and so on. . . . I think the government cannot eradicate this. They used to say they would 'eradicate all the impure elements.' Uproot, or eradicate."

These groupings now comprise the bulk of the two main opposition coalitions, the United Minjung Movement for Reunification and Democracy, led by Presbyterian Rev. Moon Ik-Hwan, and the National Campaign for a Democratic Constitution, to which belongs the Reunification Democratic Party. Rev. Moon Ikh-wan, currently in jail, was trained by George Ogle.

As for how "the troops" are called out on the streets at a moment's notice, Shin Bum remarked, "At the Christian Building [the 10-story Korean Council of Churches building in Seoul] you will see a group of 'youngsters' whose ages are 30 to 40 who are actually taking care of the movement. . . . The government brands them as the radicals committed to a revolution, full-time revolutionaries."

The ideology of the movement, however, is largely a creation of the *Christian Academy*, which in the 1970s trained almost 800 organizers, for farmers and laborers. "That institute was destroyed in 1978," reported Lee, "because the

government found it very dangerous. That institute was founded by the *German Church* [*Evangelische Kirche Deutschlands* (EKD)]. Almost \$200,000 they gave, to Bishop Daniel Dji. It was quite a good educational institute. People who were trained there are still very active. . . . Many Catholic and Protestant churches are funded by German churches.”

The EKD also supplied the ideology of the insurgency—Minjung theology, the Korean version of the theology of liberation. “The main figure was the director of the [EKD-funded] Research Institute for Theology,” said Shin Bum, “Dr. Ahn Byung Moo, who is retired now. He is extremely well-known in Germany. He was trained, I think, at Heidelberg. He taught from the nationalist point of view. And he himself is a well-known nationalist.”

Centered around heretic Hans Küng, these circles created the theology of liberation for Ibero-America and the Philippines. In Korea, they faced a particular problem. As Pharis Harvey explained it: “The church was drawn to find a political theology with a language that was not considered treasonous, because of the anti-communist reality of the state. This led in a little different direction. . . . They interpreted the movement of God in history and the identification of justice and suffering of the poor as the locus of God’s activity and that led them to examine Korean history in terms of people’s history. That’s how a model of Min-jung came to have a theological connotation. If God is active in history, then he is active on behalf of and with the poor, bringing about a struggle for righteousness.”

The physical training of the rioters, who deploy in the same paramilitary fashion as the Green Party rioters in Germany, is conducted in mountain camps, according to Lee: “they have training courses. They call it MT, membership training courses. We didn’t have it so much at the time, but now they use the MT. . . . After two weeks of MT, you will see hundreds of revolutionaries. They go to the mountains, go in tents and so on. ‘Intensified anti-government education.’ Actually, it is brainwashing.” The courses are constantly offered, not only in preparation for a major protest. “One of the courses is to work as factory workers, to get the sense of ordinary people and how they feel. In my days we went to the rural areas in the summer and we used to go to the factory for survey. At that time the government was not cooperative, but did not prevent. Now, it is impossible. So the students cover up their identity, just go to the factories, say I went to elementary school, can I work here? They work for a short period to get the sense of it, and to get the connections to labor.

“It is well-organized. In many industrialized areas, you will see workers and students living together, sharing the emotions. Some people say it is the *v narod* movement. There is a Russian word, *v narod*. It means in English, ‘Let’s go to the people.’ In seminars it was introduced.”

The policy for the destabilization is reunification, at any cost, as reflected in the title of the new Reunification Democratic Party. While the rioters were battling police in South Korea’s cities June 10-26, a delegation of the National Council of Churches of Korea was in Pyongyang, the North Korean capital, for negotiations on reunification. “An NCC delegation is in the capital of North Korea right now,” reports Harvey, “and if the political situation allows, will enter Seoul on Saturday June 27. The issue of reunification started in the churches. The church initiative to take up the issue at a non-governmental level has gone a long way in helping the public debate form. . . .

“Last fall in Davignon, Switzerland, high leaders from the Christian Confederation in North Korea, and seven from the National Council of Churches of South Korea met in Switzerland. This was the first time that has happened.

“This meeting was an outgrowth of a project in South Korea of the churches to take up the issue of reunification. When they did, a couple of pastors and some researchers got imprisoned. So they turned to the World Council of Churches and asked them to establish an international dialogue on the issue that would help legitimate their own internal dialogue. So, in the fall of 1984, we had a big international conference in Japan on the reunification of Korea. It brought people from the Soviet Union, Cuba, South Korea was there, U.S., Japan, and several European countries. Growing out of that, the National Council of Churches adopted a policy statement about reunification.”

A second conference on reunification sponsored by the Korean Council of Churches—International Gathering on Peace, Justice, and the Unification of the Koreas—is scheduled for the second week of November 1987. This conference will bring together representatives of West Germany’s EKD, and numerous National Council of Churches from various nations, including the United States.

In the United States, the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. (NCCCUSA, usually called National Council of Churches) issued a policy statement, “Peace and the Reunification of Korea” on Nov. 6, 1986. It reads in part (emphasis added):

“The NCCCUSA shall continue and strengthen its efforts to promote peace, justice, and participatory democracy for all Koreans *as a fundamental aspect of reunification*. . . . The NCCCUSA shall . . . press for the creation of a nuclear-free zone in North East Asia. The NCCCUSA calls upon the United States Government to affirm formally that it is a policy goal of the United States to support the peaceful reunification of Korea. The NCCCUSA urges the United States Government . . . to withdraw from commanding the U.N. peace-keeping operation at the Demilitarized Zone in Korea in favor of mutually acceptable neutral nations.”

We leave it to the reader to answer the question: Who benefits?