

# South Korean government faces yet another crisis with opposition

by Lydia Cherry

A clandestine journey to North Korea by the father of South Korea's dissident movement, 71-year-old Reverend Moon Ik Hwan, has plunged the government in Seoul into yet another crisis. To the consternation of authorities in the South, in his meeting March 28 with North Korean leader Kim Il Sung, Moon Ik Hwan addressed the generally conceded semi-mad leader as "respectable chairman" and made references to the "dictatorial forces" in the South.

The meeting, where the two discussed reunification of the peninsula, marks the first time the North Korean leader has met with a South Korean since 1972.

Authorities in the South have vowed to punish Moon upon his return for violating national security laws for visiting the country with whom Seoul is technically still at war. The law, which bans all pro-communist activities, carries a possible death sentence. Moon, who journeyed to the North via Tokyo and Beijing, plans to return to the South via Panmunjom, the truce village straddling the Demilitarized Zone, apparently for maximum destabilization effect.

Just prior to Moon's trip to the North, South Korean President Noh Tae Woo had succeeded in maneuvering around another crisis, which, on the surface, looked to have been created by the same Moon Ik Hwan networks. This grouping is now organizationally clustered around the largest ever centrally run dissident coalition, the Coalition for a Democratic Movement or Chonminyon.

Chonminyon had vowed to use the President's promised referendum on his now one-year term in elected office to bring down the government, saying, "Without getting rid of the military dictatorship here, there will be no reunification with North Korea" or driving out of "foreign forces."

## Referendum postponed

President Noh, in a televised broadcast March 20, announced he was forced to postpone the referendum, because it was clear to him that radicals would exploit it to overthrow his government by violent means. "I will try to achieve social stability by first dealing with the problems of illegal group actions and violent activities which threaten democratic order."

Earlier this month, he had been even more explicit. "We have reached the stage where we can no longer tolerate at-

tempts to topple this government through class revolution," Noh said March 1, as he ordered riot police to arrest 28 leading Chonminyon dissidents who tried to reach the North Korean border for talks with the North Korean government. As in the case of Chonminyon "adviser" Moon Ik Hwan, the 28 had been invited by the North, at the same time that Pyongyang stonewalled all overtures made to them by the Seoul government.

As the crackdown continued against Moon Ik Hwan's networks, the night of March 28, South Korean police seized more than 3,000 copies of pro-North Korean books and arrested 11 publishers in raids.

## Noh's balancing act—eliminating extremes

The national debate sparked by Moon Ik Hwan's unauthorized trip to Pyongyang threatens to upset the careful balance that President Noh Tae Woo, a former general, has struggled to maintain since coming to power in December 1987, between the opposition, which claims to want "détente" with the North at whatever cost, and the hardline military.

Shortly after he called off the referendum on his presidency, he authorized the use of rifles to fire on violent leftist protesters. Before two days were over, however, he was forced to reverse himself. On March 24, Prosecutor General Kim Ki Chun, with Noh's backing, ordered an intensive crackdown on institutes in which dissidents teach factory workers "Communist or leftist ideologies." On March 30, President Noh authorized a pre-dawn raid by 9,000 riot police against strikers at the shipyard owned by Hyundai Heavy Industries, which had been immobilized by strikers and leftist students for three months. Over 700 workers were arrested, and the action set off protests across university campuses.

In the same week, however, President Noh sacked Lt. Gen. Min Byong Don, the chief of the country's military academy and a major military intelligence services figure. Four-star Gen. Chung Jin Tae, who served as deputy head of the U.S.-South Korean Combined Forces Command (CFC), was also abruptly dismissed and 49 other top generals were reshuffled.

Though no reason was immediately given for the reshuffle, press note that Gen. Min Byong Don had severely criti-

cized Noh in a speech at the academy's graduation ceremony in the third week of March, charging that national policies under Noh, over leftist protests at home and North Korean and East bloc détente, were in a state of confusion.

Many international press outlets accused Noh of indecisiveness and "waffling." The *New York Times* in March editorialized about the South Korean President's recent performance differently, noting that Noh's authorization for police to fire on violent leftists was "worrying." "The fortunes of Korea's nascent democracy depend on his balancing skill. And so, in a sense, does Seoul's future relationship with Washington. U.S.-Korean ties can have no stronger guarantee than a shared democratic faith."

### Overtures to the North

In September 1988, Noh launched his "Northern Policy." The South Koreans made a rapid-fire series of overtures to establish a clear diplomatic foothold in the north and east of Asia—aimed at Russia, China, Eastern European countries, and, to a lesser extent, North Korea. This policy, which effectively coopted the opposition's program, was carried out with the full backing of the United States.

Seoul's overtures to the U.S.S.R. and Red China have moved forward, and Seoul expects that soon it will have obtained cross-recognition from both China and the Soviet Union—as per Henry Kissinger's prescriptions for a "settlement" of the Korean divisions.

Moscow, on the other hand, has used to its advantage the "business opportunity" it promises to South Korea. As stated in the March 18-24 issue of the Soviet publication *Argumenty I Fakty*: South Korea "has its sights on the ambitious task of joining the club of highly developed countries before the end of this century. . . . The leeway for South Korea within the framework of the international capitalist economy is limited." The article continues, "As is known in our country, the complex of consumer industries is poorly developed, and this is exactly the mainstay of South Korea's international specialization. On the other hand, in our country the capacities for manufacturing producer goods are developed, which is something that is needed by the 'higher levels' of production in South Korea."

As early as November of 1988, Seoul made clear it would pursue Gorbachov's open door policy with Siberia. This is the type of investment the U.S.S.R. has been seeking from Japan without success, because of Japan's insistence that Moscow must first return the Soviet-held Japanese islands off northeastern Hokkaido, the Kuriles.

However, in contrast to the U.S.S.R., North Korea's response has been discouraging. The first economic deal which the South succeeded in making with the North, the North sent 20,000 tons of unacceptable coal. Attempts at talks between the two sides inevitably broke down, over such demands by the North that the U.S.-South Korean "Team Spirit" exercises be canceled or that U.S. troops be with-

drawn from the peninsula. Increasingly, the Kim Il Sung regime made clear it would hold negotiations only with opposition party leaders or Chonminyon.

As the attempts at talks proceeded, many Korean analysts inside and outside of Korea came to the conclusion that Pyongyang was using the talks simply as a convenient forum to encourage the growing anti-Americanism in the South.

The Noh Tae Woo government has consistently repulsed these demands, vehement that U.S. troops must not be pulled out prematurely, and at times voicing concern at statements made on the U.S. side, not demonstrating this commitment.

### Kim Dae Jung's diplomacy

Speaking to diplomats and reporters at the Foreign Correspondent's Club in Seoul March 27, Kim Dae Jung, leader of South Korea's largest opposition party, the Party for Peace and Democracy (PPD), suggested that Moon Ik Hwan's visit to the North should not be the subject of a furor at all. Instead, he said, it should be seen in the context of President Noh's own policy of north-south reconciliation and the President's "Northern Policy" toward the Soviet Union and China. "In this spirit, the exchange of people of all walks of life would be helpful to ease tension," Kim said, though noting, "It might have been much better if Reverend Moon consulted with the government before he went."

Kim Dae Jung and Moon Ik Hwan are no strangers. Moon Ik Hwan's brother, the Rev. Moon Dong Hwan, is an assemblyman and a member of Kim Dae Jung's party. It is this, somewhat less activist and more theologian Moon, who chaired the parliamentary committee this year that attempted to force former President Chun Doo Hwan to testify before parliament over "human rights violations" committed by his administration—a demand which eventually succeeded in dividing the ruling party.

But whose message did Rev. Moon Ik Hwan carry to Pyongyang last weekend? *EIR* irrefutably determined in 1987 that both Moons, known in National Council of Churches circles by their American names, "Steven Moon" and "Timothy Moon," are spawns of the intelligence operation based out of Union Theological Seminary in New York City, located just around the corner from its sister institution, the U.S. National Council of Churches. Kim Dae Jung has the same pedigree, with this U.S. faction sponsoring and strong-arming the government in Seoul into permitting his return to South Korea after he was kicked out of the country under the Chun Doo Hwan regime. Kim Dae Jung's friends and advisers are from Union Theological Seminary, where Kim himself has given lectures. Union's president, Donald Shriver, was one of Kim Dae Jung's key backers during Kim's 1982 to 1985 exile.

These facts, and the added feature that Moon Ik Hwan went to Pyongyang by way of Beijing and Tokyo, makes clear that his trip has backing from high places, which most likely include Washington.