

Juggling act confronts S. Korea's President

by Lydia Cherry

As a result of South Korean President Noh Tae Woo's adeptness in "keeping the ship afloat" since his election at the beginning of the year, the Republic of Korea is not only still standing, but has moved in the direction of cooling out the time bomb on its northern border—the closed society of Kim Il-Sung. Noh has accomplished this while at the same time dodging the bullets of a Soviet-directed irregular warfare capability on his own soil—groups that are the creation of the day-to-day funding, training, and ideologies of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and allied institutions abroad.

Although he is the hand-picked successor of former President Chun Doo Hwan, Noh, a former army general, had intervened to cool out the summer riots of 1987, prior to coming into office, by calling for "the first democratic elections in 40 years." As 1988 began, Noh won that election, and took office Feb. 25.

In parliamentary elections held April 26, however, the ruling party suffered a surprising setback, failing to win a majority in the National Assembly. The party of radical firebrand Kim Dae-Jung—the front man for the shifting underground groups aligned with the WCC—rose from an underdog position to become the clear leader of the opposition forces. As a result, the clamor in the streets got louder.

As the banner of the 1987 student and dissident riots had been "Democracy," so their banners in 1988 read, "Reunification" and "Get U.S. Troops Off the Peninsula." The pundits of the major press in the United States and elsewhere claimed that the demand for reunification and increasing anti-American sentiment represented a natural deepening of the Korean nationalist movement. Budget-cutting mania in Washington added fuel to the dissidents' calls for U.S. disengagement. Noh Tae Woo was emphatic that the U.S. troops were still needed in Korea, and as Michael Dukakis became the U.S. Democratic presidential nominee, calling for U.S. troop withdrawals, Noh politely attacked him, saying that even Jimmy Carter, once elected and forced to be "responsible," gave up that careless notion.

The United States and Japan shared South Korean concern that North Korea's Kim Il-Sung regime might well follow through in its threats to turn the September Olympics into a bloodbath. What later became known as Noh Tae Woo's "Northern Policy" was only in embryonic form prior to the Olympics. But during the summer, Noh made overtures to the North for economic cooperation, and also made over-

tures to the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union for the successful holding of the games.

Noh then used the international prestige brought to South Korea as a result of the games as a diplomatic springboard to embark on a foreign policy revolution aimed at bringing about the eventual reunification of the divided peninsula—implicitly under the hegemony of the South. Speaking at the United Nations Oct. 4, Noh issued his offer to the impoverished North: "I have taken concrete steps to pave the way for free trade between the northern and southern sides of Korea. We must transform the North-South Korean relationship, so that we can reconnect every roadway, whether a major highway or a little path, linking the two sides which remains disconnected now." It was clear that "reconnecting every roadway" implied a massive effort from the economically successful South to develop the Northern economy, since the paved roads of South Korea abruptly turn into rubble dirt roads, as soon as the border is crossed.

Bhutto hopes to unify Pakistan

by Lydia Cherry

On Dec. 1, Benazir Bhutto Zardari was named Pakistan's new prime minister after national elections Nov. 16 that brought democracy to Pakistan for the first time in 11 years. Bhutto's Pakistani People's Party had polled the largest number of seats in the parliamentary elections, winning nearly double the number taken by her chief opponents organized in the Islamic Democratic Alliance, a party formed mostly of military chiefs organized around the legacy of the late President Mohammed Zia ul-Haq. Zia was killed in a suspicious airplane crash on Aug. 17.

The peaceful conditions in which the elections were held showed the degree to which Pakistan's elites—from Mrs. Bhutto to the military leadership that overthrew and judicially murdered her father—jointly acted to ensure a smooth transition of power. The outcome might have been much different; the near-daily Soviet air attacks on Pakistani villages from Afghanistan and the rise of social chaos and ethnic violence within Pakistani borders, had created the conditions for Pakistan's disintegration.

In her acceptance speech Dec. 8, Mrs. Bhutto saluted "President Ghulam Ishaq Khan and the armed forces chief for doing whatever they could for restoring democracy after the incident Aug. 17." Bhutto said Pakistan has been torn apart by linguistic, ethnic, and sectarian strife, which she said she would do everything in her power to end.

Several weeks later, the acting President Ghulam Ishaq

Khan was elected—with the support of Bhutto's party—as President. While keeping the post of finance minister for herself, Bhutto retained Pakistan's most eminent foreign policy leader, Yaqub Khan, as foreign minister.

Although the Soviet Union made no attempt to hide its enmity with Zia ul-Haq, it is evidently not pleased with Mrs. Bhutto's emergence either. The *Patriot*, newspaper of the Indian Communist Party, on Dec. 6 called Bhutto a "captive." "Compulsions have transformed Ms. Bhutto into a captive prime minister who is dependent on many factors for her survival in power," wrote the *Patriot*.

Despite the fact that her brothers were involved in Soviet-directed terrorism, Mrs. Bhutto has indicated that she has no intention of turning Pakistan into a Soviet puppet. She has been emphatic that the only solution for Afghanistan is for the Soviets "to get out!" Pakistan immediately rejected Soviet President Gorbachov's proposals for a ceasefire and subsequent negotiations for a government in Kabul, as a ploy to place conditions on Moscow's promise to execute a full withdrawal of its troops from Afghanistan by Feb. 15, 1989.

It is hoped that Mrs. Bhutto's coming to Islamabad will bring about an improvement in relations with India. Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi sent warm congratulations to her on Dec. 2.

Benazir Bhutto's major electoral commitment, to turn around "economic policies based on wrong thinking" because "we are on the brink of catastrophe," promises to put her in head-to-head conflict with the International Monetary Fund. She has thus far said she hopes to delay Pakistan's answer on the conditions put forward by the IMF for an \$800 million restructuring facility until June. "Alternatively, as our hands and feet have already been bound [by the IMF], let this be the last legacy of the last regime."

Her other pledge to deal harshly with Pakistan's drug economy and the destabilization factor emanating from this is already putting her government to the test. Six people died in drug-related riots in the port city of Karachi on Dec. 14.

Mexico: the elections of classical tragedy

by Hugo López Ochoa

Wall Street financial circles are still reeling from the panic that hit them with the results of the presidential elections of July 6, 1988 in Mexico. Ever since Dec. 1, when Carlos Salinas de Gortari, of the Revolutionary Institutional Party (PRI), took office as President, Mexican policy has been determined and will continue to be for the immediate future, by the fact that on July 6 the party which has ruled Mexico

since 1929 was on the verge of losing power.

On that historic day, the voters went to the polls and overwhelmingly chose the nationalist presidential candidate Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, who, supported by a coalition grouped under the National Democratic Front (FDN), offered a program to "save national sovereignty" from the hands of Mexico's creditors and to launch an economic recovery based on freeing up resources which are now earmarked to pay foreign debt.

The PRI did prevail, but it is clear that the country faces a mass strike process in which the old "dirty tricks" and classic "rules of the game" by which the ruling party used to control the opposition, buy it off, or blackmail it, while keeping its own ranks in line, no longer works. The Cárdenas vote was not a vote for an opposition party, but the expression of a Mexican cultural paradigm which reaches beyond the parties, crosses artificial divisions of "right" or "left," and expresses itself inside and outside the established institutions. This cultural paradigm is expressed in the 1917 Constitution, the outcome of a Revolution that cost 1 million lives early in this century, and which is summed up in the beautiful Article 3: "Democracy [is] not only a juridical structure and a political regime, but . . . a way of life founded upon the constant economic, social, and cultural betterment of the people."

The President of Mexico in this century who did the most to advance this precept was Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas's father, President Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-40). Lázaro Cárdenas, in the course of his policies of agrarian reform, nationalization of oil and other strategic areas, and accelerated industrial growth, clashed with the oligarchist clique of Plutarco Elías Calles, the PRI founder, and ran him out of Mexico. This same paradigmatic battle is what Mexico is still living through: "Callism" versus "Cardenism," i.e., oligarchism versus nationalism. Cuauhtémoc himself is not part of the traditional opposition—the Communists and the right-wingers of the National Action Party (PAN). He only left the PRI in October 1987. Ex-President Miguel de la Madrid stuck to Callism, in an act of moral stupidity comparable only to the gods of Olympos, by which he drove Mexico to the brink of civil war.

The PRI rout

Thus, when Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas started, on July 16—with a rally of more than 400,000 supporters in Mexico City—a triumphant post-election national tour, a historic campaign that brought together millions, many more citizens than were at his pre-election campaign rallies, panic broke out in the leading ranks of the PRI. The seeping wounds of a divided PRI could no longer be hidden, and a rout began: Darwin Ballinas, who had run on the PRI ticket for the federal Congress in the state of Tabasco, announced he was going over to the Cardenists; then Andrés López Obrador, who as a PRI state official had won great popularity for his reformist