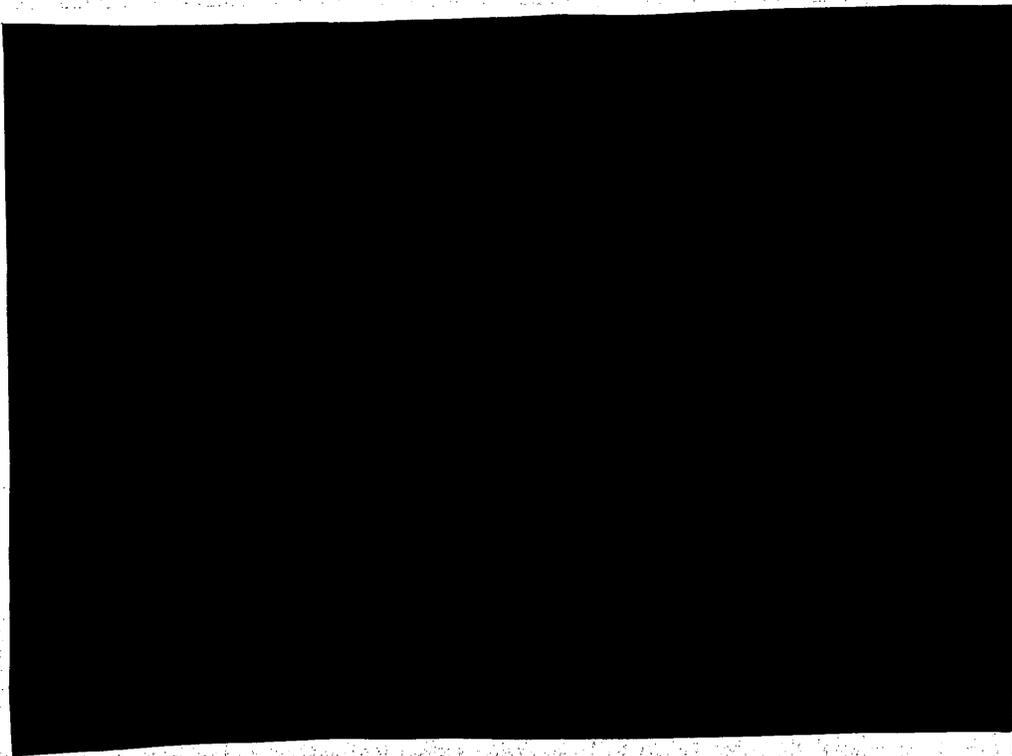


~~TOP SECRET~~ [REDACTED]

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SOUTH KOREA

The South Korean National Assembly is moving toward amendment of the constitution to reduce the powers of the president and establish a cabinet with a prime minister responsible to the legislature. Sporadic demonstrations have continued on a reduced scale calling for the resignation of the incumbent assembly, but the majority of students and the general public seem willing to have the changes made by the present legislature. Any prolonged delay, however, by the assembly or the Huh administration in reforming the government or holding new assembly elections could provoke new widespread disturbances.

The assembly on 5 May opened public hearings on the

proposed constitutional changes. Those testifying generally approved the establishment of a responsible cabinet system headed by a prime minister, supported election by the legislature of a president with drastically restricted powers, and agreed that the incumbent assembly need not be dissolved prior to amendment of the constitution. They objected, however, to the assembly's draft provisions restricting freedom of speech, press, and assembly, as well as to proposed emergency powers. According to unconfirmed press reports, the legislature will vote on the measure about mid-June, and elections for a new assembly will be called within the next 30 days.

Approved for Release

~~TOP SECRET~~ [REDACTED]

JAN 2000

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In early May, Acting Chief of State Huh Chung said the time required to draw up new voting

for Rhee in the 1956 presidential elections.

Both Rhee's Liberal party and the conservative opposition Democratic party have been apprehensive over the development of a strong leftist opposition party. A senior government official recently attributed the continuing demonstrations in Pusan to an alliance of former Progressive party members and college professors. The official allegedly feared that a "socialist uprising" in the area was imminent.



YI CHONG-CHAN



SONG YO-CHAN

New Minister of Defense Yi Chong-chan, following a visit to Pusan, reported to the Huh cabinet on 9 May that law and order had been restored throughout the country. He found no evidence of Communist instigation of the Pusan demonstrations. The United States Eighth Army has commented that martial law com-

mander Song confirmed that there was no evidence of Communist instigation, although some Communist pamphlets had recently been uncovered in the area.

lists and make other preparations would make it difficult to hold the elections within the prescribed legal time limits. The minority Democratic party then charged in the assembly that local officials were deliberately delaying preparations for the election, and Home Minister Yi Ho on 10 May promised that the government would do its best to hold the elections on time.

mander Song confirmed that there was no evidence of Communist instigation, although some Communist pamphlets had recently been uncovered in the area.

Huh, while assuring Ambassador McConaughy that the elections would be completely free, has pointed out that members of the former Progressive party, which Huh equated with the Communists, will be elected to a new assembly. The late Progressive party leader Cho Pong-am, who was executed last year by the Rhee regime, polled over 2,000,000 votes against 5,000,000

Song, who has expressed concern over the threat of Communist agent exploitation of the present unrest, reportedly has been in favor of using whatever means are necessary to suppress any further disturbances, but has employed only moderate force to break up demonstrations. Yi insists that the demonstrations be permitted and that martial law be ended as soon as possible so the army can return to its regular duties.

Commenting on foreign affairs, Huh Chung has explained that his recent demand that Tokyo stop the repatriation of

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Koreans in Japan to North Korea was not a prerequisite to a resumption of negotiations but a precondition for a final settlement. It now appears that in the recently reported shooting incident involving a Japanese fishing boat, a Korean police patrol boat fired four

rounds of blank ammunition. The embassy notes that the incident, which apparently did not involve the South Korean Coast Guard, does not invalidate Huh's assertion that further seizures of Japanese fishing boats will be avoided. [REDACTED]

