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SPECIAL ANALYSES

SOUTH KOREA: Succession Prospects

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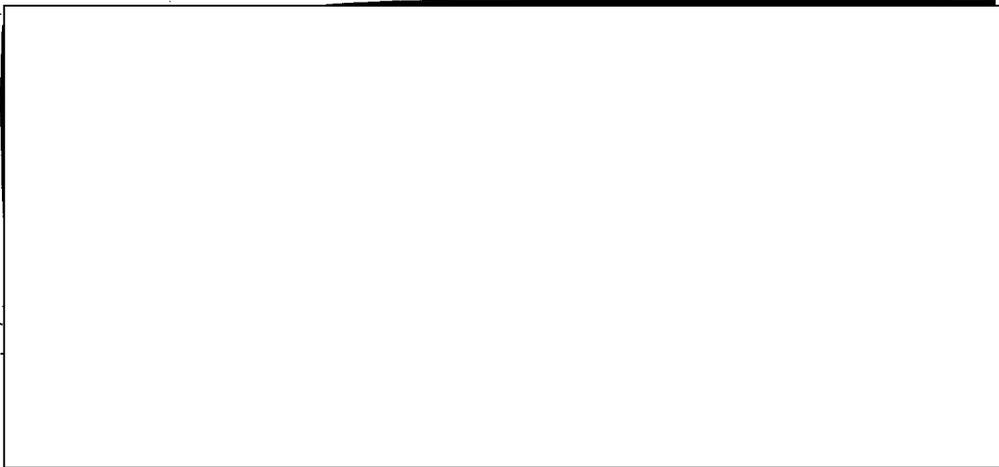
The military, which has assumed control of the interim government, will play a key--if not preeminent--role in selecting a successor to the late President Pak. There is no evidence so far that the Army is determined to have one of its own officers become president. If a strong civilian candidate does not emerge, however, the chances for a military successor to Pak will grow.

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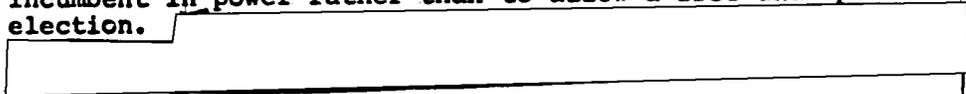
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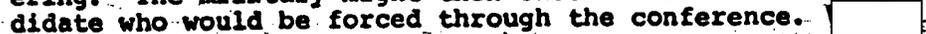


Succession Problems

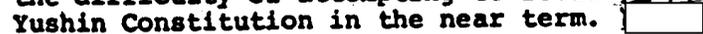
The succession process will be complicated by two problems. First, legal provisions for selecting the president are designed specifically to perpetuate the incumbent in power rather than to allow a free and open election.



Jockeying among would-be aspirants for conference votes will undoubtedly increase after Pak's funeral on Saturday. A fight for votes within the conference could easily lead to political confusion and acrimonious bickering. The military might then choose a consensus candidate who would be forced through the conference.



The second problem clouding the succession picture involves mounting pressure for political liberalization and reform. Nearly all segments of Korean society and elements of the government favor the fashioning of a more relaxed political environment, but they also recognize the difficulty of attempting to revise the authoritarian Yushin Constitution in the near term.



Even so, many Koreans view the question of legal reform as an urgent one, for any successor taking office

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under the Yushin system will have the legal means--as did Pak--of ruling indefinitely. The opposition New Democratic Party probably will seek to have any successor commit himself in advance to constitutional reforms that introduce another method of presidential selection.

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