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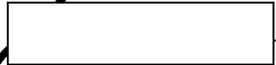


National
Foreign
Assessment
Center

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East Asia Review

15 July 1980



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South Korea: Information Control [redacted]

Army strongman Chun Doo Hwan has embarked on a multifaceted program of information control [redacted]

Background of Media Control

Control of information networks has been a more or less constant feature of Korean political life for decades. Strict government control of the press was practiced by the Japanese during the annexation period. Under the Syngman Rhee and Park Chung Hee regimes the press had to walk a narrow line to avoid either outright closure or indirect means of control such as threats of violence or economic pressure. Nevertheless, journalists often were able to express their dissent by nuance and in the ubiquitous gossip columns carried by all major papers. [redacted]

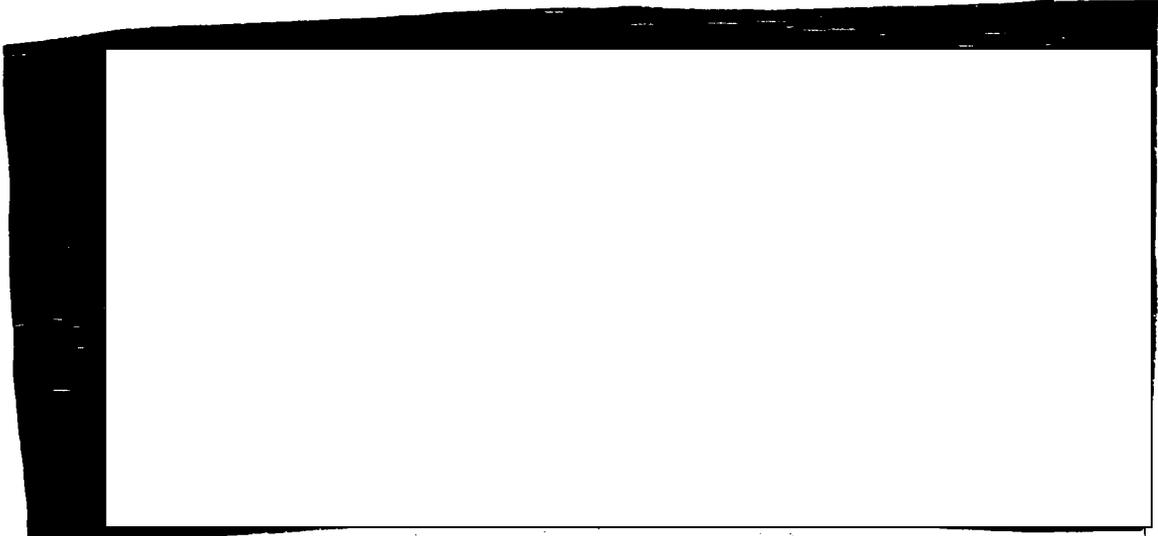
Objective: To Win Public Support

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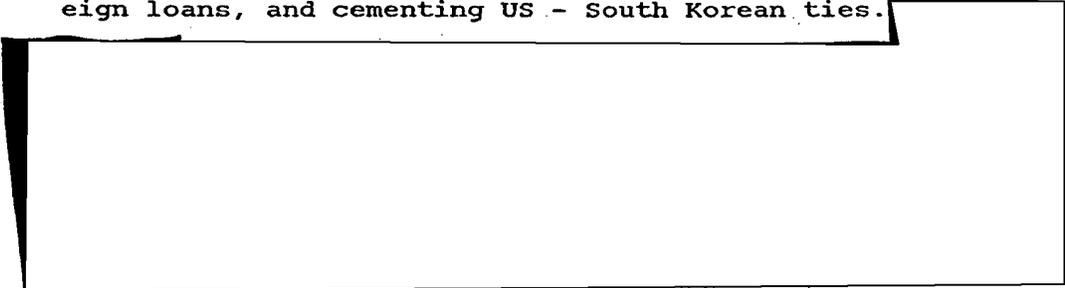
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There are few obvious signs that the media are under heavy censorship. The newspapers retain the same familiar makeup and format, and political cartoons still appear, although they are more bland than before. Articles about political factions, dissent, and National Assembly bickering, however, are missing in the dailies. On balance the tone appears to be more positive, with emphasis on "purifying" corrupt elements, obtaining foreign loans, and cementing US - South Korean ties.



The press is also being used to favorably portray the military and its policies. In early June, for example, all of Seoul's newspapers carried lengthy statements of support for the newly created Special Committee for National Security Measures (SCNSM). The statements  argued that student disorders, labor strife, and the Kwangju incident had hurt the economy and endangered national security and that it was necessary for the government to extend martial law and to form the SCNSM. The statements also hailed

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the "wise decisions" of the government in coping with the crisis and welcomed government efforts to establish strong leadership and achieve total security. [redacted]

External Information Sources Blocked

South Koreans frequently have turned to foreign newspapers and periodicals, North Korean radiobroadcasts, and Japanese television programs to supplement internal information sources. To close this gap, all foreign publications now are reviewed before they are released to the distributors, and offensive articles are removed or blacked out. The MLC also censors foreign press agency material before passing it on to the newspapers and broadcasting stations. [redacted]

North Korean radiobroadcasts and broadcasts of the clandestine "Voice of the Revolutionary Party for Re-unification" are heard in many parts of South Korea; during the Kwangju incident many South Koreans turned to these broadcasts as an alternate source of information. To counter this the military has threatened severe punishment for persons caught listening to Radio Pyongyang and other North Korean stations. Fear of being caught listening to such broadcasts--and being accused of being a Communist--has discouraged any widespread audience for the Pyongyang broadcasts, and the generally strident tone and blatant propaganda of most North Korean fare probably also help to keep listenership low. [redacted]

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Residents of Pusan and other areas along the southern coast--with the help of special antennas--have long enjoyed Japanese television programming. Many Koreans, particularly the older generations, understand Japanese, so Japanese TV plays a significant role as an alternate source of information. For several days during the Kwangju incident, Japanese television was one of the few reliable sources of information.

Cowling the Foreign Press

The military authorities have been attempting to silence foreign journalists or to punish them for unfavorable stories. The primary objective is to prevent the dissemination abroad of potentially embarrassing information, but there also is concern that such information could find its way back to South Korea or to North Korea, which uses it in its anti - South Korean propaganda. Japanese press agencies and newspapers have been singled out for punishment. South Korean offices of the Kyodo News Agency, the Asahi Shimbun, and the Jiji News Agency have been closed on charges of improper reporting, and some foreign journalists reportedly have found it difficult to obtain visas for South Korea.

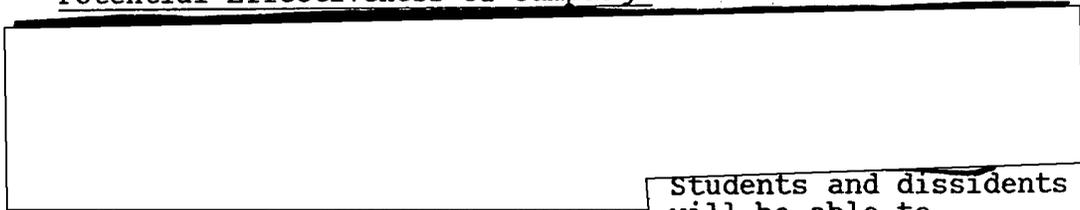
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Potential Effectiveness of Campaign



Students and dissidents with access to foreigners, however, will be able to circumvent the restrictions, and underground newspapers are likely to appear. Even so, such informal, small-scale operations will have a limited audience. Students will continue to attempt to disseminate information through leaflets, but these are not likely to be effective,



The appearance of a normal press will exert a soothing effect on much of the populace. Even if there are minor disturbances in the form of antigovernment demonstrations or rallies, the media probably will either ignore them or play them down, a tactic that Park successfully employed. Media treatment of the Kwangju incident appears to have convinced large segments of the population of the correctness of the government's measures and

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of the need for total martial law. Many members of the middle and lower classes already appear to be convinced that jailed dissident Kim Dae Jung is guilty of the charges against him.

An important test of the effectiveness of the information-control measures will come with the unveiling of the new draft constitution later this summer. One can expect a concentrated media campaign extolling the virtues of the new document, complete with ringing endorsements from prominent business, social, and government leaders. Opposing opinions are not likely to be aired.

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CHRONOLOGY: NORTH KOREA

- 10 June 1980 A North Korean Army delegation led by a vice minister of defense returns from a three-week trip to China. While in China, the delegation is received by Chinese leader Hua Guofeng.
- 11 June North Korea, implicitly siding with a Yugoslav effort to have the Third World condemn the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, calls on the nonaligned movement to convene an early meeting of foreign ministers. North Korean Foreign Minister Ho Tam also sends a letter to NAM foreign ministers criticizing the military crackdown in South Korea and US support for the Seoul regime.
- 12 June Vice President Pak Song-chol leads a government delegation to Madagascar to mark five years of rule by Head of Government Ratsiraka.
- 14 June Chinese Ambassador Lu Zhixian returns to Pyongyang after a seven-week absence.
- 21 June The South Korean Navy sinks a 10-man North Korean agent boat off the west coast and picks up one survivor. Authorities in Seoul announce that North Korean planes and ships were placed on alert in reaction to the incident but avoided contact with South Korean forces.

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- 24 June North Korea announces that NAM's working group on Korea met on 19 June in New York and passed a resolution critical of the situation in South Korea.
- 24 June Working-level representatives from North and South Korea meet for the ninth time at Panmunjom. South Korea makes a slight change in its proposed agenda and calls for an early meeting at the prime ministerial level, but North Korea agrees only to another preliminary session on 20 August. The chief North Korean delegate fails to attend, claiming a "health problem."
- 25 June North Korea routinely marks the 30th anniversary of the Korean war with anti-US rallies in Pyongyang and the provinces.
- 27 June The Military Armistice Commission holds its 402nd meeting at Panmunjom at the request of the UN Command, which protests the infiltration incident on 21 June; North Korea denies any involvement.
- 28-30 June A national conference of consumer industry workers convenes in Pyongyang. Kim Il-song calls on local authorities to continue to increase production of consumer goods and to improve their quality, using existing production capacity.
- 29 June A North Korean civilian defects by walking across the Demilitarized Zone in the western sector.
- 1 July Kim Il-song receives a visiting Chinese television and broadcasting group.

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2 July

Kim Il-song attends the opening ceremony of the Mirim sluice gate on the Taedong River in a northeast suburb of Pyongyang.

3 July

North Korea publishes slogans marking the Sixth Congress of the Korean Workers Party, scheduled for October 1980. The slogans, which serve as a preview of the policy lines to be adopted at the Congress, follow the thrust of those issued in 1975 for the party's 30th anniversary celebration.

4 July

Pyongyang city holds a rally to begin a "100-day" production campaign to prepare for the Sixth Congress.



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