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16 May 1961

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CENTRAL
INTELLIGENCE
BULLETIN



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DAILY BRIEF

*South Korea: (Information available as of 0500 EDT)

The only military units thus far identified with the military coup staged in Seoul in the early morning hours of 16 May are elements of the South Korean Second Army and some marine units. The rest of the army, the air force, and most navy elements reportedly have not thus far participated in the revolutionary activity; which way they will throw their support is not clear. Although the "military revolutionary committee" set up shortly after the coup claims that it controls the entire country, and evidently does control the city of Seoul, and possibly Taegu, it is still questionable whether the coup leaders have sufficient support to retain power.

The "military revolutionary committee," which claims to be anti-Communist, pro-US, and pro-UN, has been issuing proclamations over the name of Army Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Chang To-yong. Early on 16 May Chang asked the commander of UN forces in Korea, US General Magruder, for the assistance of American forces in putting down the revolt, and the revolt leaders may be merely using his name. Chang has, however, since been in contact with the coup leaders, and his present position is not known; it is possible he is working for a compromise which would avoid further armed conflict. In any event, the real leader and chief planner of the coup appears to be Maj. Gen. Pak Chong-hui, deputy commander of the Second Army, [redacted]

[redacted] The whereabouts of Prime Minister Chang Myon is not known; but he apparently escaped when the coup leaders tried to capture him and is now in hiding. According to press reports, a number of other government officials are under house arrest in Seoul. [redacted]

South Korea

Major General Pak Chong-hui was court-martialed in 1948 on charges of being a Communist and was sentenced to 10 years in prison. At the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, he was recalled to service, and subsequently was pardoned because of his war record. He is not known to have re-established contacts with the Communists or to have been connected with South Korean leftist groups since 1948. However, because of alleged efforts to stir up discontent among officer elements following the revolt which toppled Rhee in April 1960, there was some question of his loyalty and whether he would soon be dropped from the Army.

The South Korean Second Army is largely composed of training and logistical units. It is not known whether units of the First Army--South Korea's combat ready force deployed along the Demilitarized Zone facing North Korea--support the uprising. First Army support for the coup could ensure its success. Although a proclamation of the "revolutionary committee" has named the First Army commanding general Yi Han-lim as "martial law commander" in the front line areas,

In a six point proclamation the insurgents, who have proclaimed martial law, have announced that they intend to strengthen anti-Communist measures, observe the UN charter, wipe out government corruption, rehabilitate the economy, work for Korean unification, and eventually return the government to civilian authority when their mission is accomplished. However, [redacted] Pak and his supporters had no definite plans for administering the government after they seized power. There also were indications that the Pak group was discontented over the loss of the privileged position enjoyed by the military under the Rhee regime. In the year since Rhee's ouster, many senior officers have been cashiered from the service, a civilian committee has been set up to investigate military affairs, and the press has been permitted to criticize the armed forces.

Army Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Chang To-yong was one of those widely criticized in the press for his support of the Rhee regime and accused of acquiring an illegal fortune through

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graft and corruption. Chang knew that Pak was planning a coup, but claimed last month that he lacked sufficient evidence to arrest the plotters. It is possible that Chang now may be playing both sides of the fence in an effort to assure his position whatever the outcome.

The North Korean regime has not yet commented on today's events in South Korea. The only Communist bloc reaction noted thus far has been a Moscow TASS item, and this essentially was a repeat of American press reports.

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