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TEXT OF TELEGRAM BOSEOUL 007089

ADP638

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 IO-14 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 SY-05 /090 W

-----099192 041126Z /16-12
R 030630Z JUN 80
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6793
INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO
SA CIMCUNC KS
CHJUSMAC SEOUL KS
COMUSKOPFA SEOUL KS//BJ-15

SEOUL 07089

E.O. 12065: GDS 06/03/86 (CLARK, WILLIAM) OR-P
TAGS: FINS KS
SUBJECT: POKG ISSUES ITS OFFICIAL REPORT
ON KWANGJU INCIDENT

REF: FB15 SK 310649

1. [REDACTED]
2. MARTIAL LAW COMMAND (MLC) ISSUED ON MAY 31 A "COMPREHENSIVE REPORT" ON THE KWANGJU INSURRECTION (REF). SEOUL DAILIES MAY 31 CARRIED SUMMARIES PLUS THE FULL 5,000-WORD TEXT. HEADLINES FEATURED OFFICIAL DEATH-TOLL FIGURES: 144 CIVILIANS, 22 SOLDIERS, AND 4 POLICEMEN KILLED. THRUST OF THE REPORT WAS THAT RIOT WAS PROFESSIONALLY-INSTIGATED AND ATTAINED PROPORTIONS OF "MASS HYSTERIA." IT ALLEGED THAT RIOT WAS SUBDUED WITH MINIMAL BLOODSHED, BECAUSE OF RESOURCEFULNESS AND SELF-RESTRAINT OF ROK ARMY TROOPS.
3. THE RIOT WAS THE WORK OF COMMUNIST AGENTS AND THE FOLLOWERS OF KIM DAE-JUNG (M-R: KIM TAE CHUNG), ACCORDING [REDACTED]

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TO THE MLC ACCOUNT. TWO REINSTATED STUDENTS (I.E. FORMER POLITICAL OFFENDERS PERMITTED TO RETURN TO COLLEGE THE BEGINNING OF THE PRESENT SEMESTER), ONE EACH FROM CHOSUN AND CHONNAM UNIVERSITIES AND BOTH PAID KDJ LOYALISTS, ARE NAMED AS THE PRINCIPAL AGITATORS BEHIND THE ORIGINAL STUDENT PROTESTS.

4. THE FIRST ACT OF THESE AND OTHER "INSTIGATORS" WAS TO FAN THESE STUDENT PROTESTS INTO A GENERAL INSURRECTION.

PAGE NO.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE 90034008 IS/FPC/CDR TRB Date: 9/13/93

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELEASE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DECLASSIFY	MR Cases Only:
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THIS THEY DID BY FABRICATING AND SPREADING RUMORS. THE OFFICIAL ACCOUNT ADMITS THAT "YOUNG SOLDIERS...DEALT ROUGHLY WITH SOME STUDENTS," BUT SAYS THAT THE ATROCITY RUMORS WHICH THEN QUICKLY SPREAD WERE "INCOMPREHENSIBLE TO MEN OF REASON." NEVERTHELESS THE RUMORS APPARENTLY CARRIED ENOUGH FORCE TO DRAW IN THE MASS OF CITIZENS, AND, WITHIN 24 HOURS, "MASS HYSTERIA PREVAILED" IN KWANGJU.

5. THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE CITY'S MASSES IS NOT DENIED, AND VIGNETTES OF THE RIOT LEADERS--"A MOTHER-OF-PEARL CARVER, CHIEF OF THE STRIKE FORCE; A TRUCK DRIVER, CHIEF OF THE SITUATION ROOM;" ETC.--CONVEY RATHER DRAMATICALLY THE SENSE OF A PLEBEIAN UPRISING. THERE IS EVEN MENTION OF A 33-YEAR-OLD ARMY RESERVE CAPTAIN CONDUCTING AD HOC SQUAD-TACTICS TRAINING IN THE YMCA. THERE IS A DISTINCTION DRAWN HOWEVER BETWEEN THE HIGHLY SUGGESTIBLE CITIZENRY AND THE "HARD CORE" OF "IMPURE ELEMENTS" WHO INSISTED ON A BLOODY FIGHT TO THE END.

6. CREDIT FOR CASUALTIES BEING NO HIGHER THAN THEY WERE IN KWANGJU IS GIVEN ENTIRELY TO THE TROOPS, WHO "RESTRAINED THEMSELVES FROM USING THEIR RIGHT OF SELF-DEFENSE." THEIR RESOURCEFULNESS IS PRAISED AS WELL: AWARE THAT RIOTERS HAD MINED THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT BUILDING, "MARTIAL LAW

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TROOPS INFILTRATED...THE BUILDING AND DEFUSED THE CHARGES," THUS PREVENTING A MASSIVE BLAST WITH MANY CASUALTIES WHEN KWANGJU WAS RETAKEN. FINALLY, SECURITY FORCES ARE CREDITED WITH GREAT GENEROSITY OF SPIRIT IN RELEASING WITH ADMONITIONS 1,010 OF THE 1,740 PERSONS TAKEN INTO CUSTODY DURING AND AFTER THE INSURRECTION.

7. THE REACTION OF KOREANS WE HAVE SPOKEN TO, INCLUDING THOSE NORMALLY CONSERVATIVE AND PRO GOVERNMENT, HAS BEEN SKEPTICAL. THE OFFICIAL REPORT DENIES THE TALES OF TROOP ATROCITIES ON MAY 18 WHICH BY NOW MOST KOREANS HAVE HEARD AND SEEM TO BELIEVE. THE REPORT DOES NOT REALLY ACCOUNT FOR THE PHENOMENON OF THE CITIZENS' JOINING THE STUDENTS; LURID RUMORS ARE A FACT OF LIFE IN KOREA AND THEY DO NOT NORMALLY RESULT IN MASS HYSTERICS. THE REPORT GIVES A CASUALTY COUNT WHICH MOST TO WHOM WE TALK CONSIDER VERY LOW. IT CONTAINS SOME INTERESTING AND COLORFUL DETAILS, SUCH AS THE INFILTRATORS' DISARMING THE EXPLOSIVES, BUT IT IS NOT LIKELY TO GAIN WIDESPREAD ACCEPTANCE AS THE LAST WORD ON KWANGJU. GLEYSTEN

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