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TEXT OF TELEGRAM BOSTATE 166890

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TAGS: OREP, PEPR, PINT, KS

SUBJECT: CONGRESSIONAL LETTER TO KOREAN PRESIDENT CHOI

1. FOLLOWING FOR YOUR INFORMATION IS THE TEXT OF A LETTER TO PRESIDENT CHOI FROM CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ AND 31 OTHER U.S. CONGRESSMEN EXPRESSING CONCERN ABOUT RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA AND URGING THE RELEASE OF POLITICAL LEADERS AND RESUMPTION OF A PROCESS OF POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION.

2. THE ORIGINAL WAS DELIVERED TO THE KOREAN AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON BY CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ JUNE 24.

3. BEGIN TEXT:

DEAR PRESIDENT CHOI:

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WE WRITE TO EXPRESS OUR SERIOUS CONCERNS ABOUT RECENT ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE SOUTH KOREAN MILITARY TO SEIZE CONTROL OF THE GOVERNMENT AND PREVENT AN EARLY RETURN TO DEMOCRATIC RULE.

LIKE MANY OTHERS IN BOTH THE UNITED STATES AND THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA, WE WERE HOPEFUL THAT THE PROCESS OF POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA WHICH BEGAN SEVERAL

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MONTHS AGO WOULD LEAD TO THE PROMPT DRAFTING OF A NEW CONSTITUTION AND THE HOLDING OF FREE ELECTIONS LEADING TO THE SELECTION OF A CIVILIAN PRESIDENT. WE APPLAUDED THE INITIAL SIGNS THAT SEEMED TO INDICATE THAT KOREA WAS MOVING IN THE DIRECTION OF A DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING THE RESTORATION OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS OF KIM DAE JUNG AND OTHER POLITICAL DETAINEES ON MARCH 1, 1980, AND THE INITIATION OF A PROCESS TO DRAFT A CONSTITUTION. WE BELIEVED THEN, AND WE REMAIN FIRMLY CONVINCED NOW, THAT EVEN WITH AN AMERICAN SECURITY COMMITMENT, THE FUTURE STABILITY AND SECURITY OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA CANNOT BE ASSURED UNLESS THERE IS ALSO A PROMPT RETURN TO A POPULARLY-SUPPORTED GOVERNMENT. WE ARE THEREFORE EXTREMELY DISTRESSED BY THE RECENT TREND OF EVENTS IN SOUTH KOREA INCLUDING THE REIMPOSITION OF MARTIAL LAW, THE ARREST OF PROMINENT POLITICAL FIGURES THE BRUTAL SUPPRESSION OF DEMONSTRATORS IN KWANGJU, THE SUSPENSION OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MEETINGS, AND THE CREATION OF THE 30-MEMBER STANDING COMMITTEE AS THE DE FACTO DECISION-MAKING BODY.

IT IS A MATTER OF PARTICULAR CONCERN TO US THAT PROMINENT POLITICAL LEADERS, INCLUDING MR. KIM DAE JUNG, HAVE BEEN DETAINED AND HELD INCOMMUNICADO. MR. KIM DAE JUNG'S LONG RECORD AS AN ANTI-COMMUNIST LEADER IS WELL-KNOWN TO US, AND

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WE HAVE SEEN NO CREDITABLE EVIDENCE TO JUSTIFY THE CHARGES OF SEDITION FOR WHICH HE WAS ARRESTED.

WE RESPECTFULLY URGE YOUR GOVERNMENT TO RELEASE MR. KIM AND THE OTHER POLITICAL LEADERS IMMEDIATELY, AND TO RENEW THE ESSENTIAL PROCESS OF POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION THAT THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA SO HOPEFULLY EMBARKED UPON EARLIER THIS YEAR. WE WANT TO ASSURE YOU THAT YOU WILL HAVE OUR WHOLEHEARTED COOPERATION IN ANY STEPS YOU TAKE IN THIS DIRECTION, AS MEMBERS OF CONGRESS WHO ARE DEEPLY COMMITTED TO THE POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF SOUTH KOREA, AND WHO LOOK WITH PRIDE ON THE HISTORIC AND MUTUALLY PRODUCTIVE RELATIONSHIP THAT HAS DEVELOPED BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES, WE FEEL COMPELLED TO TELL YOU THAT, IN THE ABSENCE OF SUCH MEASURES, WE FEAR IT WILL BECOME INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO JUSTIFY TO THE CONGRESS AND TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, THE CONTINUATION OF THE CLOSE SECURITY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA.

WE RECOGNIZE THE DIFFICULTIES AND DANGERS CONFRONTING YOUR COUNTRY AT THIS TIME. BUT WE URGE YOU, TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THE EFFORT TO ESTABLISH A BROADLY-BASED CIVILIAN AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT IN THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA. END TEXT.

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