

(E1927)

DEPARTMENT OF STATE 9003668 IS/FPC/CDR TCB Date: 9/13/93

TEXT OF TELEGRAM BOSEOUL 009827

ADP974

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ACTION EA-12

RELEASE DECLASSIFY
 EXCISE DECLASSIFY
 DENY IN PART
 DELETE Non-Responsive Info
FOIA Exemptions _____
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MR Cases Only:
EO Citations _____
TS authority to:
 CLASSIFY as S or C OADR
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INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-10 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
HA-05 AID-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /084 W

P 310825Z JUL 80
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8104
INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO
SA CINCUNC KS
CHJUSMAQ SEU'L KS
COMUSKOREA SEUL KS//BJ-IS

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E.O. 12065: GDS 07/31/86 (MONJO, JOHN C.) OR-M
TAGS: SUPN PINS KS
SUBJECT: JOURNAL PRESS PURGE IN KOREA

REF: SEUL 7704

1. - ENTIRE TEXT)

2. SUMMARY: THE RULING GROUP'S ONGOING PURIFICATION DRIVE HAS NOW HIT THE PRESS. PRESS ASSOCIATIONS HAVE "VOLUNTEERED" TO BE PURIFIED AND SEOUL DAILIES HAVE FRONTPAGED RESOLUTIONS TO THAT EFFECT. EACH PRESS ORGANIZATION WILL SELECT ITS OWN CANDIDATES FOR DISMISSAL ACCORDING TO A SET OF LARGELY POLITICAL CRITERIA; ADDITIONAL NAMES MAY BE FURNISHED BY THE AUTHORITIES. THE GOVERNMENT-RUN MEDIA, AT WHICH HEADS ROLLED EARLIER OVER KWANGJU REPORTING, WILL STILL HAVE TO UNDERGO THE CURRENT PURIFICATION EXERCISE. ALL JOURNALISTS WHO SURVIVE PURIFICATION WILL BE REQUIRED TO UNDERGO "REEDUCATION." MANY WILL LOSE JOBS LATER IN AN ENFORCED RETRENCHMENT OF PRESSDOM: 172 PERIODICALS HAVE BEEN

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ORDERED CLOSED, INCLUDING SEVERAL LEADING ONES, AND SIMILAR ACTIONS ARE EXPECTED FOR NEWSPAPERS AND WIRE SERVICES. SOME CUTS IN THE PRESS PROBABLY WOULD HAVE OCCURRED ANYWAY, GIVEN A RECENT DECLINE IN CIRCULATION FIGURES, AND A FEW "CORRUPT" JOURNALISTS MIGHT HAVE LOST THEIR JOBS WERE CORRUPTION THE ONLY STANDARD APPLIED. THE MAGNITUDE AND NATURE OF THIS PRESS PURGE, HOWEVER, SHOULD LEAVE LITTLE DOUBT IN KOREAN MINDS AS TO THE BASICALLY POLITICAL MOTIVATION UNDERLYING IT. END SUMMARY.

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3. THE PURIFICATION MOVEMENT HAS NOW EXTENDED ITS BLESSINGS TO THE PRESS. THE NEWSPAPER AND BROADCAST

ASSOCIATIONS MET SEPARATELY JULY 30 AND RESOLVED IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST TO CARRY OUT PURIFICATION IN PRESSDOM. THEIR RESOLUTION TO THAT EFFECT WAS CARRIED ON THE FRONT PAGES JULY 31. EACH PUBLISHING/BROADCASTING ORGANIZATION WILL SET UP A COMMITTEE WHICH WILL SCREEN EMPLOYEES ACCORDING TO FOUR CRITERIA: A) AGITATORS OR PARTICIPANTS IN THE PRESS MOVEMENT OF THIS SPRING; B) AGITATORS OR PARTICIPANTS IN THE SPRING'S PRESS BOYCOTTS; C) PARTICIPANTS IN PRESS SABOTAGE INCIDENTS OF THIS SPRING; D) CORRUPT JOURNALISTS. THE "PRESS MOVEMENT" ((A) ABOVE) IS NOT DEFINED BUT PROBABLY REFERS TO SERIES OF MEETINGS WHICH WERE HELD AND PETITIONS CIRCULATED URGING CONSTITUTIONAL GUARANTEES OF PRESS FREEDOM, AND REINSTATEMENT OF JOURNALISTS FIRED SEVERAL YEARS EARLIER FOR RESISTING TIGHTENED GOVERNMENT PRESS CONTROLS. THE SCREENING COMMITTEES ARE TO SUBMIT LISTS OF NAMES BY AUGUST 10 TO THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND INFORMATION (MCUI), WHICH WILL ADD OR DELETE NAMES AS IT SEES FIT. ALL PRESS EMPLOYEES APPARENTLY WILL SUBMIT RESIGNATIONS--PAK KWON-SANG (M-R),

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EDITOR IN CHIEF OF TONG-A, DID SO JULY 29, AND ALL STAFFERS AT CHOSUN ILBO DID SO JULY 30--AND THOSE WHOSE NAMES APPEAR ON LISTS RETURNED BY MCUI WILL HAVE THEIR RESIGNATIONS ACCEPTED. THE TOTAL NUMBER TO BE PURGED IS EXPECTED TO BE ABOUT 135.

4. SOME PURIFICATION HAS ALREADY TAKEN PLACE: 67 STAFF MEMBERS AT KBS NETWORK HAVE BEEN OUSTED. IN ADDITION, 100 EMPLOYEES AT MBC/KYONGHYANG SINMUN (GOVERNMENT OWNED, LIKE KBS), HAVE BEEN PURGED. SOME STAFF AT NAEWOE BUSINESS JOURNAL, THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE KOREA HERALD, AND SEOUL SINMUN NEWSPAPER, ALL REGARDED AS GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED, HAVE BEEN FIRED AS WELL. MOST OF THESE OUSTERS WERE AT OR ABOVE THE ASSISTANT DESK EDITOR LEVEL, AND AS MANY AS HALF WERE EXPLICITLY RELATED TO COVERAGE OF THE KWANGJU UPRISING. THESE ORGANIZATIONS WILL BE EXPECTED NOW TO GO THROUGH THE REGULAR PURIFICATION PROCEDURE.

5. JOURNALISTS WHO SURVIVE PURIFICATION WILL REPORTEDLY HAVE TO ATTEND A REEDUCATION PROGRAM WHICH THE KOREAN PRESS INSTITUTE HAS BEEN INSTRUCTED TO DEVELOP. A SPECIAL TRAINING CENTER WILL BE ESTABLISHED FOR THE PURPOSE.

6. AN ORGANIZATIONAL TRIMMING OF SEOUL'S COMPLEX PRESSDOM HAS BEGUN AS WELL. IT WAS ANNOUNCED JULY 31 THAT 172 OUT OF ABOUT 1,500 WEEKLY OR LESS-FREQUENT PUBLICATIONS WOULD BE SHUT DOWN. AMONG THESE WERE TWO WIDELY-RESPECTED

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DISSIDENT MONTHLIES, SNU PROF. PAEK NAK-CHONG'S (M-R)
"CREATION AND CRITICISM" AND QUAKER HAM SOK-HON'S (M-R)
"VOICE OF THE SEEDS," AS WELL AS TWO ENORMOUSLY-POPULAR
NATIONAL MAGAZINES, "CHUNGANG WEEKLY" AND "THE DEEPLY


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ROOTED TREE." OTHERS CLOSED DOWN RANGED FROM THE
YUJONG-HOE'S PUBLICATION "YUSHIN FRATERNITY" TO A MIXED
BAG OF LITERARY AND TRADE JOURNALS, COFFEE-TABLE
PICTORIALS, AND GIRLIE MAGAZINES. FURTHER CHANGES IN THE
PRESS WORLD HAVE NOT BEEN ANNOUNCED, BUT RUMORS CENTER
ON THE FOLLOWING: THREE OF THE CAPITOL'S EIGHT VERNACULAR
GENERAL-CIRCULATION DAILIES--INDEPENDENT SHIN-A ILBO, AND
GOVERNMENT-LEANING SEOUL SINMUN AND KYONGYANG SINMUN--
REPORTEDLY WOULD BE MERGED INTO A SINGLE SEMI-OFFICIAL
ORGAN. PROVINCIAL DAILIES WOULD BE BANNED FROM PRINTING
NATIONAL NEWS. WIRE SERVICES WOULD FACE REORGANIZATION:
TONG YANG BROADCASTING MAY BE SEPARATED FROM ITS PARENT
CHUNGANG PUBLISHING COMPANY; HAPTONG AND ORIENT PRESS,
THE MAJOR WIRE SERVICES, WOULD REPORTEDLY BE MERGED; AND
MANY SMALLER NEWS SERVICES WOULD BE FORCED TO CLOSE.

7. COMMENT: SORTING OUT THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS WHIRL-
WIND OF ACTIVITY WILL TAKE TIME. WHILE WE DO NOT HAVE
EXACT FIGURES, WE KNOW THAT THE CIRCULATION OF MANY OF
SEOUL'S DAILIES, NOTABLY SHIN-A ILBO AND SEOUL SHINMUN,
HAS DECLINED SHARPLY SINCE MID-MAY, WITH OUR CONTACTS

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REPORTING THE BORING, UNRELIABLE CONTENTS OF THE OVER-
CENSORED PRESS AS THE PRIME REASON. GIVEN THAT AND THE
PRESENT NATIONAL ECONOMIC AUSTERITY, SOME CONSOLIDATION
AND PRUNING MAY HAVE BEEN INEVITABLE. WHATEVER THE FACTS
ARE, CORRUPTION AMONG JOURNALISTS IS POPULARLY BELIEVED
TO BE WIDESPREAD. NEVERTHELESS, IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT
THE HUMILIATING PRETEXT OF VOLUNTARY PURIFICATION WILL BE
UNDERSTOOD AS BEING POLITICALLY AS WELL AS ECONOMICALLY
MOTIVATED. MONJO

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