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PAGE 01            SEOUL 06459    210951Z  
ACTION EA-12

INFO    OCT-01    ADS-00    CIAE-00    DODE-00    NSAE-00    NSCE-00  
         SSO-00    ICAE-00    INRE-00    DCT-02    HA-05    SR-04    AID-07  
         CCO-00    FBOE-00    PM-05    H-01    INR-10    L-03    ACDA-12  
         SP-02    OC-06    OPR-02    PA-01    USSS-00    CA-01    A-02  
         OCS-06    OMB-01    SS-15    SY-05    SYE-00    IO-14    PC-01  
         FEMA-02    ANAE-00    /120 W

-----122471    210959Z /17

O 210932Z MAY 80  
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6480  
INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
SA CINCUNC KS  
CHJUSMAG SEOUL KS  
COMUSKOREA SEOUL KS//BJ-IS

C O N F I D E N T I A L    SEOUL 06459

E.O. 12065:    GDS 05/21/86 (CLARK, WILLIAM) OR-P  
TAGS:    PINS PGOV KS  
SUBJECT:    KWANGJU RIOT AND FUTURE POLITICAL STABILITY  
1.    (C) ENTIRE TEXT.

2.    KWANGJU DISORDERS CONTINUE EXTREMELY SERIOUS AS OF  
LATE AFTERNOON MAY 21 (SEE SITREP).    WHILE MILITARY WILL  
PROBABLY RESTORE ORDER USING CONSIDERABLE FORCE, SUFFI-  
CIENT DAMAGE HAS BEEN DONE TO CREATE SCARS WHICH WILL  
LAST FOR YEARS.

3.    SLOGANS IN KWANGJU ARE IN MANY WAYS SIMILAR TO THOSE  
SEEN IN SEOUL AND ELSEWHERE.    WHY THEN HAS THIS SOUTHERN  
CITY FALLEN INTO SERIOUS RIOTING AND A VERY GREAT LOSS OF  
THE GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC ORDER?    IT IS  
PROBABLE THAT REGIONALISM IS PLAYING SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN  
THE INTENSITY OF THE RIOT IN KWANGJU.    CHOLLA PEOPLE HAVE  
FELT THEMSELVES SECOND CLASS CITIZENS FOR A LONG, LONG  
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PAGE 02            SEOUL 06459    210951Z

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Page: 1

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
REVIEW AUTHORITY: DONALD A JOHNSTON  
DATE/CASE ID: 23 JUL 2003 199502728

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TIME, AND THEY ESCALATED THEIR PROTEST TO SPIRITED CONFRONTATION WITH THE AUTHORITIES QUICKLY IN RESPONSE TO NEWS OF THE DETENTION OF KIM DAE JUNG (M-R: KIM TAE-CHUNG), CHOLLA'S LEADING POLITICIAN, AND THE DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY MARTIAL LAW. POLICE AND TROOPS RESPONDED WITH SPECIAL DEGREE OF SEVERITY, PARTLY BECAUSE OF THE SPIRIT OF THE CHALLENGE, BUT POSSIBLY BECAUSE THAT WAS HOW THEY FELT THEY SHOULD TREAT CHOLLA PEOPLE. AT LEAST THAT IS HOW THE CITIZENS OF KWANGJU ARE LIKELY TO LOOK BACK ON THESE DAYS FOR SOME TIME TO COME. CHARGES THAT THE TROOPS BEING USED WERE FROM THE ARCHRIVAL KYONGSAN PROVINCE HAVE ALSO FANNED THE FLAMES.

4. WE EXPECT THAT THE CHOLLA PEOPLE WILL BECOME MORE EMBITTERED TOWARD THE MILITARY AND CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, AND FEEL THEMSELVES MORE EXCLUDED FROM FULL REPRESENTATION IN THE NATION AS A WHOLE. THE MILITARY MAY BE ABLE TO FORCE THE CITIZENS OF KWANGJU TO A SURLY ACCEPTANCE OF THE SITUATION, BUT REGIONALISM HAS GAINED A BOOST AT THE COST OF NATIONAL UNITY.

5. IN ADDITION, THE RIOTS IN KWANGJU HAVE INJECTED A DOSE OF ANTI-AMERICAN SENTIMENT INTO THE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT. MANY KOREANS FEEL THE U.S. CAN CONTROL THE SITUATION, AND THE FALLOUT OF THE RIOT, DEATHS, BEATINGS, BURNINGS, WILL MAKE THEM FEEL THEIR PERCEIVED FAILURE OF THE U.S. MORE VIVIDLY. REPORTEDLY THE RIOTERS ARE LINKING THE U.S. TO SUPPORT OF THE ROK MILITARY AND THUS, IN SOME WAY, TO RESPONSIBILITY FOR EVENTS NOW TAKING PLACE. THIS PROPENSITY TO SEEK AN OUTSIDE VILLIAN MAY WELL CAUSE US FURTHER TROUBLE IN THE FUTURE. GLEYSTEN

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Page: 2

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