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ACTION SS-30

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 06109

EXDIS DECAPTIONED

E.O. 12065:RDS-1 5/14/90 (GLEYSTEN, W.H.) OR-M
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, KS
SUBJECT: ROKG PLANS ON CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

1. (C) ENTIRE TEXT.
2. AT THE END OF A CONVERSATION ON OTHER MATTERS MAY 14, I ASKED BLUE HOUSE SYG KWANG SOO CHOI (M-R: CH'OE KWANG-SU) WHY THE GOVERNMENT HAD ABANDONED ITS PLANS TO HOLD PUBLIC HEARINGS ON CONSITUTIONAL AMENDMENT, WHETHER THERE WAS ANY SUBSTANCE TO PRESS STORIES THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS READY TO ABANDON ITS OWN DRAFTING EFFORTS, AND WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT MIGHT ACCELERATE ITS POLITICAL TIMETABLE IN LIGHT OF THESE EVENTS. CHOI REPLIED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD ABANDONED PUBLIC HEARINGS BECAUSE IT FEARED THAT IN THE CURRENTLY CHARGED ATMOSPHERE, HEARINGS MIGHT LEAD TO PUBLIC CONFRONTATIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE GOVERNMENT HAD A REPORT THAT KIM DAE JUNG'S (M-R: KIM TAE-CHUNG) SUPPORTERS PLANNED TO SATURATE THE FIRST HEARING WITH 50,000 MILITANTS DEMANDING THAT THE GOVERNMENT ABANDON ITS CONSTITUTIONAL DRAFTING EFFORT. THE REPORT MIGHT HAVE BEEN ERRONEOUS, BUT THE GOVERNMENT WAS PROMPTED TO DROP THE HEARINGS AS A PRECAUTION. AS A RESULT, A PROCESS THAT WOULD HAVE TAKEN ABOUT THREE WEEKS HAD BEEN ELIMINATED AND THE POLITICAL SCHEDULE COULD CONCEIVABLY BE ACCELERATED SOMEWHAT. NO
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DECISION HAD BEEN TAKEN, HOWEVER.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: ROBERT H. MILLER
DATE/CASE ID: 21 FEB
2001 199604577

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3. CHOI DENIED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS ABANDONED ITS PLAN TO PRODUCE A CONSTITUTIONAL DRAFT. SUCH REPORTS WERE A MISCONSTRUCTION OF WHAT HE HAD PRIVATELY TOLD ME PREVIOUSLY -- NAMELY THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD NO SET IDEAS ON HOW THE CONSTITUTION SHOULD BE AMENDED AND, DESPITE ALL THE PUBLIC RUCKUS TO THE CONTRARY, DID NOT EXPECT GREAT DIFFICULTY IN ACCOMMODATING THE VIEWS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. GLEYSTEN

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