

EXCLUSIVE**ASIA**

Scandal Shakes U.S.-Korea Relations; Carter Support for Park in Doubt

The ongoing scandal over South Korean bribery and influence buying on Washington's Capitol Hill has severely shaken relations between the United States and its ally, South Korea. This crisis is sure to deepen; Jimmy Carter is committed to revamping the relations between the two countries, including the defense pact that has been the cornerstone of relations between the two countries since the post-war period.

The crisis has directly brought into question the future of South Korean President Park Chung Hee, who is privately viewed with contempt by Carter's closest advisors, and whose ability to rule following the expected loss of mandate from official Washington is unlikely.

The scandal revolves around alleged bribes to members of the Congress by operatives of the Korean government in return for legislative and diplomatic support for the Park regime. The scandal's central figure is Tong Sun Park, a Korean businessman based in Washington through whom many of the bribes were allegedly conducted.

Many South Koreans, including official circles close to President Park, have suggested that the extensive publicity surrounding the scandal is aimed at forcing changes in the South Korean government. Evidence cited is the apparent close coordination of several wings of the United States government, including the State Department and intelligence agencies, with the press in publicizing the allegations.

"Insiders" on the Carter team, especially Anthony Lake, who will be the chief of Policy Planning in the Carter State Department, are known to be encouraging the investigations with the hope of provoking a replacement of President Park.

The publicity surrounding the scandal also provides an immediate pretext for Carter to more easily carry out his planned withdrawal of the 40,000 U.S. troops still stationed in Korea.

Since the initial allegations became public, the South Koreans have issued public attacks on the United States for the "defection" of an official of the South Korean Central Intelligence Agency stationed in Washington to the State Department, where he will now reportedly cooperate with the investigations into the bribery charges. The KCIA is a major target of the allegations because of its reported coordinating role in the influence peddling activities.

The second focus of the South Korean attack was the published accounts of U.S. intelligence agencies' bugging

the offices of President Park, which provided evidence linking Tong Sun Park's activities directly to the Korean President. The transcripts of these tapes have reportedly been turned over to the Justice Department by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.

Last month the South Koreans demanded a public denial of the reports on U.S. bugging and the release of the KCIA official from "forced detention." A series of negotiations in Seoul between South Korean and U.S. officials followed these demands and led to the issuance of a South Korean government statement last month. The statement termed the U.S. charges "groundless allegations and distorted facts," and while accepting private U.S. assurances that Park's Blue House was not bugged, warned that such acts would "grossly infringe upon the national sovereignty of the Republic of Korea."

Trilateral Considerations

Park's fears are not without basis. Highly informed sources report that at a recent, private seminar at the New York Council on Foreign Relations, Carter's chief of National Security, Zbigniew Brzezinski suggested that U.S. support for Park be removed, and the U.S. instead should encourage formation of a government headed by U.S.-university trained "technocrats" with a new "liberal capitalist" image.

Brzezinski, well known for his general support of such "technocratic" governments, believes such a regime in South Korea would be more acceptable in Japan and the U.S.

In addition, Carter advisor Paul Warnke told Japanese news agency Kyodo recently that "if the Korean people should rise against the Park regime, the new U.S. government would not support it (the regime)."

The former CIA station chief in Seoul, Donald Gregg, predicted that Park "would not live to serve out another six year-term if he were re-elected in 1978." The former official was station chief in Seoul from 1973 through early 1976; he has reportedly been telling private audiences that Park should be forcibly removed from office.

The withdrawal of U.S. troops from Korea also provides the needed pretext for a rearming of Japan as the primary military strength in the region. David Rockefeller, in a speech two days ago at the Trilateral Commission meeting in Japan called on Japan to "assume its share" of defense spending. With that charge, the recently elected government in Japan headed by Takeo Fukuda will attempt to comply.