



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

April 28, 1987

TO: HA - Dick Schifter
FROM: HA - George Lister 7
SUBJECT: Korean Evening

On April 23 the Korean Institute for Human Rights held an off the record dinner/discussion at the Woo Lae Oak, in North Arlington (ref. attached invitation). Attendance came to around 60, about half of them Koreans. A good number of Congressional aides were present. I was the only representative of the Department.

The evening began with a brief update of the political situation in South Korea, with much emphasis on Chun's failure to deal responsively with the democratic Opposition. It was noted that Kim Dae Jung is now under house arrest for the 54th time.

Following supper there was a 30 minute cable TV show of the Canadian Broadcasting Company's documentary on South Korea: The Dark Side of the Miracle. I understand that 18 minutes of it was shown recently on the MacNeil-Lehrer Show. Among other things the documentary portrayed and discussed the difficult working conditions of many Korean women (13 hour day for \$3.00), instances of torture, alleged USG support for Chun, the push for direct elections, the riots and demonstrations, the upcoming Olympics, etc.

The meeting organizers then put in a long distance call to Kim Dae Jung, in Seoul, who was waiting at the telephone. A number of Koreans spoke to Kim, and simultaneous translation was provided when the conversations were in Korean. Among other things Kim warned that anti-US feeling is increasing because of the perception that the USG supports Chun. He said he was not asking that we interfere in Korea's internal affairs, but only that we make clear our support for democracy. Kim emphasized that the Korean people should be allowed to decide what kind of elections and government they prefer.

Several Korean guests told me they hoped Ambassador Lilley would be seeing Kim Dae Jung soon.

Elated with this success the evening organizers then called Kim Young Sam, but communication was broken off immediately. Subsequent calls produced only busy signals. It was assumed that the ROKG had been surprised by the call to Kim Dae Jung, and had refrained from interrupting that conversation, but that the authorities were blocking the call to Kim Young Sam.

Some material distributed at the meeting is attached. Please read at least the December 1986 Branfman interview of Kim Dae Jung.

I came away impressed once again with the political sophistication and activism of the local Korean community. The Korean Institute for Human Rights is in daily telephonic communication with Kim Dae Jung and Kim Young Sam.

Attachments:

As Stated

cc: HA - J. Montgomery
HA/HR - R. Rackmakes
T. Murphy
Korean Desk