

## **Assassination of President Park Chung Hee - Mr Choi Kyu Hah elected President -Cabinet formed by Mr Shin Hyon Hwack - Other Internal Developments, August 1979 to March 1980**

The President of South Korea, Mr Park Chung Hee, was assassinated on Oct. 26, 1979, by the director of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA), Mr Kim Jae Kyu, who was subsequently sentenced to death. The Prime Minister, Mr Choi Kyu Hah, temporarily assumed the presidency, to which he was elected unopposed by the National Conference for Unification on Dec. 6. Mr Shin Hyon Hwack, previously Deputy Premier, formed a Cabinet on Dec. 14. Details of these and related developments are given below.

A major political crisis developed in August 1979, after the Government had launched an offensive against the opposition New Democratic Party (NDP) and Christian dissidents.

The NDP had received more votes in the elections of December 1978 than the ruling Democratic Republican Party (DRP), although the latter retained an overwhelming majority in the National Assembly, as under the 1972 Constitution one-third of the members were nominated by President Park. Mr Kim Young Sam, who had been elected president of the NDP at the party convention in May 1979, called for President Park's resignation, the restoration of democracy and the extension of human rights in a speech in the Assembly in July. Copies of the NDP newspaper Democratic Front containing the text of the speech were seized by the police on July 31, and its editor, Mr Mun Pu Shik, was arrested.

Another cause of concern to the Government was the influence of Christian movements among industrial and agricultural workers, and especially among the poorly-paid female textile workers. The Korean Catholic bishops' conference protested on April 10, 1979, against persecution of workers involved in Christian labour movements. Seven teachers at the Christian Academy in Seoul, an adult educational institution, were arrested on March 9, 1979, on a charge of "pro-communist" activities, and at court hearings on Aug. 6-10 alleged that they had been tortured to extort confessions from them. The Rev. Cho Hwa Soon, a woman Methodist minister and a member of the staff of the Urban Industrial Mission (an international Protestant organization working among lower-paid workers in South-East Asia, South Korea and Japan), was sentenced to five years' imprisonment in May.

Following the closure of a textile factory on Aug. 6 the police expelled 170 of its female employees from the company dormitory where they had been living, whereupon the women took refuge in the NDP headquarters in Seoul where they conducted a protest "sit-in". On Aug. 11, however, about 1,000 police stormed the building, one woman being killed and many people seriously injured, including members of the Assembly, NDP officials and journalists. Mr Kim Young Sam's secretary was arrested on Sept. 7 for distributing copies of a report on the raid which questioned the finding of the police that the woman had committed suicide by jumping from a window.

An official report on the incident which was submitted to President Park on Sept. 14 alleged that members of the Urban Industrial Mission had infiltrated into enterprises where wages were low and instigated workers to engage in illegal struggles against their employers. It also criticized members of the Catholic Farmers' Movement, who, it said, had sought to create class consciousness among farmers.

Three NDP members on Aug. 13 filed a suit disputing Mr Kim Young Sam's narrow election as party president, on the ground that 22 unqualified delegates had voted at the convention in May. The Seoul district civil court on Sept. 8 issued a temporary injunction suspending Mr Kim and the four vice-presidents of the party from office and appointing Mr Chung Woon Kap, who had been chairman of the convention, to act as interim president. Mr Kim, however, described the court's decision as “a conspiracy to abolish the opposition party”, and declared that he would not accept it. When the Assembly session opened on Sept. 20 it appeared probable that the NDP would split, as Mr Kim and Mr Chung both claimed the leadership.

Meanwhile, in an interview with *The New York Times*, Mr Kim said on Sept. 15: “The time has come for the United States to make a clear choice between a basically dictatorial regime, increasingly alienated from the people, and the majority who aspire to democracy... Carter gave a big present to Park by coming here [on June 29-July 1—see page 29799]. He gave Park the courage to wipe out the opposition by boosting his prestige here. We asked him not to come, precisely because it would encourage Park to strengthen oppression, and all this came true.... Iran was America's supreme diplomatic disaster. I want the US embassy to avoid following the same track here....”

The DRP members of the Assembly on Sept. 22 submitted a motion calling for disciplinary action against Mr Kim, on the ground that in his *New York Times* interview he had advocated US interference in South Korea affairs. When the motion came up for discussion on Oct. 4 the NDP members occupied the Assembly chamber; the DRP members, however, met in a committee room and quickly passed a resolution expelling Mr Kim from the Assembly, the opposition members being forcibly excluded from the room by the police.

A US State Department spokesman described Mr Kim's expulsion on Oct. 4 as “inconsistent with the principles of democratic government”, and the US ambassador (Mr William Gleysteen) was recalled to Washington for consultations on the following day. All the opposition members of the Assembly—the 66 NDP members, the three Democratic Unification Party members and Mr Son Joo Hang, an independent member who had been imprisoned in 1978 on charges of having called President Park a dictator and had been elected from prison—tendered their resignation on Oct. 13 as a protest. The effect of Mr Kim's expulsion was thus to reunite the NDP, as pressure from their constituents had compelled even his opponents inside the party to support him.

Student demonstrations on Oct. 16 in Pusan (South Korea's second largest city and Mr Kim's constituency) demanding President Park's resignation were joined by many workers, and developed into riots in which the demonstrators fought the police and attacked official buildings. As the rioting continued on the following day martial law was proclaimed and the city's two universities were closed. The number of casualties was officially given as 73 policemen, two students and three others injured, but according to Japanese press reports at least five people were killed, many others seriously injured and about 4,000 arrested.

Rioting also broke out on Oct. 18 in the industrial city of Masan after students had demonstrated in protest against the closing of colleges in the city; it continued on the following day, police posts and the local DRP offices being attacked. The Army took over responsibility for public order in Masan and the adjoining city of Changwon from the police on Oct. 20. An anti-government demonstration by students in Taegu on Oct. 25 ended peacefully, after the police had prevented the students from leaving the university grounds.

The US Defence Secretary, Dr Harold Brown, who was visiting Seoul for talks on military questions, handed President Park a letter from President Carter on Oct. 18, in which the latter expressed concern at recent developments in South Korea.

A report published by the International Commission of Jurists on Nov. 6 accused President Park's regime of persecuting lawyers who defended dissidents. Some who had persisted in doing so, it stated, had themselves been accused of anti-state activities, imprisoned and forbidden to practise law, with the result that out of about 850 practising lawyers in South Korea only 20 were prepared to defend political prisoners. The report also stated that defence counsel were excluded from interrogations, during which prisoners were frequently tortured, were not allowed to see the charges until the last minute, and in some cases were even forbidden to call defence witnesses.

President Park and his chief bodyguard, Mr Cha Ji Chul, were shot dead by Mr Kim Jae Kyu at a dinner party in Seoul on Oct. 26.

**President Park Chung Hee** (61), the son of a farmer, entered a Japanese officers' school in 1940 and served in the Japanese Army during the war. When Korea became independent in 1945 he was commissioned in the Korean Army, and fought in the war with North Korea in 1950–53. He headed a military coup in May 1961, assumed the post of acting President in March 1962 and was elected President in October 1963 [see page 18212, 19642 A, 19822 A], being re-elected in 1967, 1971, 1972 and 1978 [for most recent re-election see 29795 A].

President Park's foreign policy was based on close co-operation with the United States and Japan, and in 1965 he sent troops to support the US forces in Vietnam [see page 21223] and concluded a treaty normalizing relations with Japan [see 20662 A]. His economic policy was aimed at increasing exports by developing light industries and attracting foreign (mainly American and Japanese) investment by keeping down wage rates. This policy resulted in a high growth rate and a massive increase in exports, but heavy industry and agriculture did not expand in proportion to light industry, and the growth of the towns at the expense of the countryside created grave social problems [see page 28972].

The rapprochement between the United States and China which began in 1971 obliged President Park to modify his policies, and in the following year talks were held between North and South Korea on possible unification [see 25488 A] taking advantage of this situation he introduced a new Constitution in 1972 which gave him virtually absolute power [see 25607 A]. The kidnapping in Tokyo in 1973 of the then NDP leader and 1971 presidential candidate Mr Kim Dae Jung, which was attributed to the KCIA, however, led to the breakdown of the negotiations with the North and the growth of a strong protest movement at home, and subjected relations with Japan to a severe strain [see 26285 A]. An attempt on President Park's life in 1974 by a Korean resident in Japan, in which his wife was killed, was followed by a period of tension between the two countries [see 26696 A, 26938 D]. Relations with the United States were also strained during his later years, in part because of the discovery that the KCIA was engaged in the systematic bribery of US congressmen and intimidation of Koreans in the United States, and in part because of US reactions to the repression of Christian and other opposition elements in South Korea [see page 28036; 29555 C].

An announcement broadcast early on Oct. 27 stated that an emergency cabinet meeting held at 11 p.m. on the previous evening (local time) had decided that in accordance with the Constitution the Prime Minister, Mr Choi Kyu Hah, should take over as acting President; that martial law had been imposed throughout the country, except in the southern island of Cheju, because of "trouble with the President"; and that Gen. Chung Seung Hwa, the Army Chief of Staff, had been appointed martial law administrator.

The first announcement of President Park's death, issued 2½ hours later by the then Minister of Culture and Information, Mr Kim Seong Jin, said that he had been accidentally killed in an "abrupt conflict" between Mr Kim

Jae Kyu and Mr Cha Ji Chul, who had also been killed, together with three of the President's bodyguards. On Oct. 28, however, it was announced that President Park and Mr Cha had been deliberately shot by Mr Kim, and that the President's five bodyguards had been shot by KCIA agents. Fuller details were given in a report presented to a press conference on Nov. 6 by Maj.-Gen. Chun Doo Hwan, head of the Army security Command, who was in charge of the investigation into the assassination.

Gen. Chun stated that Mr Kim had formed the plan of killing President Park in June 1979, after he had been reprimanded by him because of his failure to deal with the domestic situation and also because of his "involvement in matters of rights and interests". He had resented the fact that the President trusted only Mr Cha, not himself, and that Mr Cha, although his junior in age and rank, had insulted him and meddled in his business, and he had feared that he might be relieved of his post because of the Pusan and Masan riots. Believing that "important people currently in office and military leaders" were under his influence, he had hoped after killing President Park to control the situation through "the immense power granted to him as KCIA director and the vast organizational power of the KCIA" and to make himself President.

At 4 p.m. on Oct. 26, Gen. Chun continued, Mr Cha had informed Mr Kim that President Park would have dinner at the KCIA dining hall, whereupon Mr Kim had decided to carry out his plan that night. "Aiming to embroil others in a revolt after killing President Park", he had invited Gen. Chung Seung Hwa and Mr Kim Jong Sop, second assistant director of the KCIA, to dine at an annex about 50 metres from the dining hall. Mr Kim Kae Won, the President's chief secretary, had arrived at about 5.40, and had complained to Mr Kim about Mr Cha's "arrogance". Mr Kim had replied "I shall finish him off tonight", whereupon Mr Kim Kae Won had "nodded in agreement".

At the dinner, which started soon after President Park and Mr Cha arrived about 6.05, only the President, Mr Cha, Mr Kim Jae Kyn, Mr Kim Kae Won and two women who acted as waitresses had been present. During the meal both President Park and Mr Cha had criticized Mr Kim for his handling of the situation in Pusan. Mr Kim had left the room at about 7.10 and gone to the annex, where he had asked Gen. Chung and Mr Kim Jong Sop to wait for him until he returned. After collecting a pistol from his office, he had told Mr Park Son Ho, head of the KCIA protocol section, and his secretary, Col. Park Hung Ju, to "dispose of the bodyguards when you hear gunshots in the dining room", whereupon Mr Park had asked for 30 minutes in which to make his preparations.

At about 7.35 Mr Kim had again left the dining room, and had been assured by Mr Park that his preparations were completed. On returning to the dining room he had shot first Mr Cha and then President Park, whereupon Mr Kim Kae Won had fled. Hearing the shots, Mr Park had shot dead two of the President's guards, while Col. Park and three other KCIA men, Mr Lee Ki Ju, Mr Yu Song Ok and Mr Kim Tae Won, had shot dead two others and wounded a third.

After the shooting, Gen. Chun went on, Mr Kim had hurried to Gen. Chung, who had heard the shots, told him that "a serious thing" had happened and asked him to accompany him to the KCIA headquarters. When Mr Kim informed him in the car that the President was dead, however, Gen. Chung had insisted that they go to the army headquarters instead, and had summoned the Defence Minister (Gen. Ro Jae Hyun) and the Chiefs of Staff there. Mr Kim Kae Won meanwhile had taken the President's body to a hospital, and had then asked the Prime Minister, the Home Affairs Minister (Mr Koo Ja Choon) and the Minister of Justice (Mr Kim Chi Yol) to come to the presidential palace, where he told them that the President had had "an accident". On receiving a telephone call from Mr Kim Jae Kyu all four—together with the Foreign Minister, Mr Park Tong Jin—had gone to the army

headquarters. When they arrived there at about 9.30 Mr Kim had said that the President was “in trouble”, and had suggested that absolute secrecy should be ensured for two or three days and that martial law should be declared.

At about 11.30 Mr Kim Kae Won, knowing that Mr Kim's plot to seize power could not succeed, had told Gen. Chung and the Defence Minister that Mr Kim was “a criminal”. They had thereupon lured him on a pretext into a waiting car, where he was arrested. The Cabinet had meanwhile met at the Defence Ministry, and after confirming that President Park was dead had promulgated martial law.

“His [Mr Kim's] vicious scheme,” Gen. Chun declared, “was that immediately after the killing a cabinet meeting would be convened and martial law declared. To consolidate his position, the fact of His Excellency's accident would be kept secret for three days. The members of the KCIA would investigate and deal with the case on the pretext that the scene of the killing was inside the KCIA's own building. The fact that the killing was committed by himself would be either disclosed or concealed, according to the degree of the people's mourning. The military would perform only the mission of national defence, while the KCIA would perform the missions of keeping the political situation under control and of implementing political policies. . . . The conclusion of the investigation is that there is no connexion between the military or other organizations and the case, or participation of or manipulation by any foreign power in the case at all, and that the case was a homicide aimed at a rebellion committed by a megalomaniac whose dream it was to become President.” Gen. Chun added that besides Mr Kim, Mr Kim Kae Won, the five KCIA men involved in the shooting and another KCIA man who had destroyed evidence, 111 people had been interrogated, of whom 33 had been designated as witnesses and the other 78 had been released.

It had previously been announced on Oct. 30 that Mr Kim Kae Won had been taken to investigation headquarters on Oct. 27, and was being intensively questioned to check whether he was involved in the crime.

Mr Choi Kyu Hah on Oct. 30 appointed Lt.-Gen. Lee Hee Song, Deputy Chief of Army Staff, as acting director of the KCIA. The appointment of Gen. Lee, who retained his military rank, to this post was regarded as an indication that the Army would maintain control over the KCIA, which had developed into a “state within the state”, with 15,000 members and 300,000 “correspondents”.

The KCIA was founded in 1961 shortly after President Park's seizure of power, and was headed until 1963 by Mr Kim Chong Pil [see page 19643], who later became Prime Minister (from 1971 to 1975). Under a successor, Mr Kim Hyung Wook, the kidnapping of South Korea students from Western Germany by the KCIA severely strained relations between the two countries [see 23434 A]. Mr Kim was dismissed in 1969, and fled to the United States in 1973. The next director, Mr Lee Hu Rak, was dismissed in 1973 because of the scandal caused by the kidnapping of Mr Kim Dae Jung [see 26285 A]. His successor, Mr Shin Jik Soo, was forced to resign in 1976 as a result of revelations of KCIA activities in the United States, and was replaced by Mr Kim Jae Kyu, a former lieutenant-general and Construction Minister [see page 28971]. Since the murder of President Park's wife in 1974 the KCIA's power was believed to have been limited by the increasing influence of the presidential bodyguard headed by Mr Cha Ji Chul.

The KCIA was divided into eight bureaus, the first being responsible for administration and training, the second for internal propaganda and censorship, the third for combating communist infiltration, the fourth for internal security, the fifth for examining applications for passports, the sixth for assassinations, abductions and sabotage, the seventh for collecting political information from abroad, and the eighth for psychological warfare against North Korea. Mr Kim Hyung Wook said in testimony before a committee of the US Congress in 1977 [see also

29555 C; 29795 A]: “I had extensive powers at my disposal—more power than you can imagine—covering virtually every aspect of my country. My power extended into political, economic, cultural, religious and even foreign propaganda activities.

President Park was given a state funeral, the first since the establishment of the republic, on Nov. 3, and was buried beside his wife in the national cemetery in Seoul. An official funeral service for Mr Cha Ji Chul and the other four bodyguards killed with the President, which had been arranged for Oct. 30, was cancelled just before it was due to be held, no explanation being given, and they were buried privately.

When the news of President Park's death became known in Washington in the afternoon of Oct. 26 (local time), the Defence Department placed the US forces in South Korea on a state of alert, officially described as “defence readiness condition 3”, (i.e. one level higher than the usual state of readiness, but not equivalent to emergency status). The alert did not extend to other US forces in the Pacific.

A State Department statement said: “We have been advised of the developments in the Republic of South Korea. The United States regards the matter as an internal one for the Republic of Korea, and urges restraint on the part of all. The US Government also wishes to make clear that it will react strongly in accordance with its treaty obligations to the Republic of Korea to any external attempt to exploit the situation in the Republic of Korea.”

Dr Harold Brown stated on Oct. 28 that two airborne warning and control (AWACS) aircraft were on their way to South Korea, and an aircraft carrier had been ordered closer to Korean waters. No unusual activities by the North Korean forces were reported, however.