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SECTION 7: POLITICAL-ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

Regional income distribution is likely to become an important issue in the 1970's. The major inequality is between the urban and rural sectors, but there are also marked income disparities between Seoul and other cities. In recent years, incomes in Seoul and its surrounding province have been almost twice the level of incomes in the major southwestern city (Kwanju) and its surrounding province. Unless the government succeeds in removing some of these regional differences, it may be plagued by political instability. A sharp shift of previous regional voting patterns was observed in the 1967 Presidential election; the final tally showed that all of the less-industrial provinces voted against President Park, where all of the industrializing provinces voted for him.

In recognition of the problems created by regional inequality, the Korean government plans to lay more stress on equity in its Third Five Year Plan (1971-75). Nonetheless, investment policies are still being adopted which will continue to encourage migration to Seoul. AID could profitably use some of the remaining, though rapidly dwindling leverage, to ameliorate some of the regional differences.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

POLITICAL FACTORS

Contents: Introduction and summary, p.364; The Current Political Environment, p.368; The Political System, p.368; Political Attitudes and Issues, p.372; Influence of the United States, p.373; North Korea and Unification, p.375; Other External Influences, p.375; Sources of Instability, p.376; Alternative Future ROK Political Environment, p.381.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

This chapter undertakes three tasks: (1) An examination of the present South Korean political scene; (2) an assessment of the major influences that impinge upon that scene; and (3) a description of several possible future Korean political environments which would pose significantly different problems for US policy towards the ROK over the next several years.

Present Situation -- The political and social turmoil which characterized Korean national life in the first fifteen years of its independence has been subdued by recent rapid economic progress and firm, effective, political leadership. In consequence, the Koreans are guardedly optimistic about their prospects, despite their fears of the three great powers which surround them and of their hostile cousins to the North. Living is better for almost everyone. Political control is effective and generally subtle. Security seems assured, despite northern incursions. Mobilization of resources is effective; distribution of resources is not so unbalanced as to be seriously divisive.

The permanence of this favorable situation is by no means assured. Korea's political, economic, and social system is fragile. The majority of the population accept the present regime or acquiesce in it, but are still skeptical of prospects for growth in individual freedom and welfare. They are not firmly committed, in an emotional or cultural sense, to President Park, his administration, or the present political system; their popular acceptance derives chiefly from their performance, not yet from firm cultural sanctions for their authority. The Koreans are, for the most part, opposed to Communism, and favor democracy to the extent they understand it; yet, at the same time, they want strong rule which will produce results. Their participation in the political process is still rudimentary. They have growing confidence in their armed forces, but still regard the US as guarantor of their security in event of an all-out attack. They still look on the US, also, as supporters of their national development. The elite and intellectuals, however, are beginning to question the extent of US involvement.

Sources of Instability -- Internally, however, the process of modernization is creating social and psychological tensions, which have already affected the elite and the growing urban masses (as exemplified by the corruption issue), but which have yet to strike the rural population in full force. In this

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context, the principal foreseeable sources of instability are: (1) decline of political adaptability; (2) deterioration of national security; (3) economic stagnation or recession; (4) unsatisfied expectations; (5) inequities in resource distribution; (6) unsatisfied needs for broader political participation; (7) cultural and psychological conflicts. All these contingencies are interrelated. Their effect cannot be precisely determined in nature, time, or extent. However, the first three would have maximum impact during the first five years or so; the last four, if they reach major proportions, would probably have their serious effect later on.

The stability and adaptability of the political system will be critically tested by the 1971 Presidential election. A national security crisis would jeopardize economic progress through diminished investment and saving; it would also encourage authoritarian trends, would add to economic strains through increased military expenses, and might lead to political crisis. Serious economic difficulties would detract from the legitimacy and popular support of the political system, in turn weakening its power; the consequence, like the consequence of decline in leadership, would be political confusion or increased authoritarianism, diminished efficiency, and a possible downward spiral of economic and political troubles. (Because of this sensitivity, it is quite likely that the North Korean policies may be designed to hamper South Korean economic progress.) The last four of the seven contingencies concern popular attitudes toward, and support for, the political system, which are of concern for the long run rather than the short run, but which eventually could seriously undermine the regime through loss of popular support and confidence unless effectively anticipated.

Sources of Strength -- There are significant sources of strength in Korean politics and society which provide some margin of safety against these sources of instability: (1) well-organized governmental institutions, steadily improving in quality; (2) strong and combat-proved armed forces; (3) a growing private economic sector, which is taking some of the overload from political institutions by functioning with a degree of autonomy; (4) an energetic, independent-minded, literate, and ethnically homogeneous people with considerable social mobility; (5) a well-developed educational system; (6) a continuing general commitment to some form of democracy and political freedom, combined with recognition of the need for strong government and for institutions which are consistent with native institutions; (7) a general desire to make Korea a strong nation, however this desire may be diluted by personal interest; and (8) a relatively pragmatic, secular culture. Korea shares with other developing nations the problems of transition to modernity, including corruption, factionalism, weak political consensus, a sense of national inferiority, and imperfectly developed political institutions. Yet Korea is further along in the transition than most other nations of the developing world, and has already weathered several severe national crises.

If the potential sources of instability do not materialize in major dimensions, then evolutionary development in Korea without major upheaval is a good possibility.* Assuming continued effective political leadership,

* See Appendix H, Annex VI, for a discussion of acceptable levels of instability.

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national security, and economic progress, it seems probable that, in time, Korean political and psychological self-reliance can be developed to a sufficient level to sustain the country without a special relationship with the US other than a multilateral defense commitment.

The American Role -- In the interim, US policy and action (or inaction) have a large role to play. The American role in Korean security -- especially in Korean and international opinion of Korean security -- is still a determining one. Any American move in the next few years that would be interpreted by the ROKG as the beginning of abandonment might precipitate a crisis of confidence within Korea, with both economic and political consequences. On the other hand, a reduction in the American role, properly timed and managed, could further the Korean trend toward increased self-reliance.

The American role in economic development is diminishing, but contributions in both material and technical assistance will provide an important increment for the next few years. In respect of Korean political stability, US influence has perhaps diminished most; it is stronger in the passive sense of friend and observer than in the active sense of exerting behind-the-scenes influence or coercion. Yet for another few years, American action or inaction will be a factor in Korean political calculation.

Elements of Future Environment -- Three elements are likely to be critical in determining Korea's political environment over the next five years: (1) The performance of the political system, which will be significantly tested in the 1971 presidential election. That test could result in (a) an orderly re-election of Park Chung Hee through an electoral process accepted as legitimate by Korean standards; (b) a visibly "irregular" continuation of Park's tenure, with substantial loss of legitimacy and effectiveness; (c) emergence of a weak new government through election or coup; or (d) succession of a new strong nationalist leader, appealing to xenophobia and latent anti-Americanism. (2) The character and level of North Korean confrontation. Disregarding all-out invasion, this could take several forms: (a) a continuation of the present level and direction of infiltration and hostile probes; (b) a sharp increase in penetrations, terrorism, and assaults, aimed at destroying public confidence in the ROK government and in the US; or (c) moderated or subsided aggression, accompanied by appeals to reunification, designed to split the ROK leaders from their US supporters and from the Korean people. (3) The US security performance in the region, as viewed by the South Koreans. In ROK eyes, that performance will be tested by the degree of firmness with which the US responds to future North Korean affronts, by the evolving US military (particularly base) posture in the region, and by the manner in which the US disengages from the Vietnam conflict. Two sharply opposed South Korean reactions may be contrasted: (a) satisfaction and reassurance if the US retaliated appropriately for North Korean provocations and if the US base posture in Japan and Okinawa remained essentially unimpaired, as well as vindication of the ROK's close association with the US, if the Vietnam conflict were concluded on satisfactory terms; (b) dismay, if the US appeared to perform badly in these security tests.

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In addition to these major determinants of the Korean environment (performance of the political system, North Korean confrontation, and the US security performance), there are three other significant elements -- the state of the ROK economy, ROK military effectiveness, and Korean attitudes toward their foreign relations -- that are important ingredients of any Korean political future. Their course, however, will be largely determined by the major elements described above.

Possible Future Environments -- The foregoing elements can be assembled into coherent "states of the world" in numerous combinations. Five combinations have been selected so as to reflect the more interesting and plausible variations in the future Korean environment, each of which would pose quite different problems for US policy. In brief, these are:

(1) Legitimate re-election of President Park, with promise of stability on the domestic scene; an effective government capable of coping with North Korean subversion that continues at roughly present levels; and a firm U.S. security performance reassuring to the Koreans. In this situation, the ROKG would be more self-assured and assertive in its relations with the U.S.

(2) Continuation of the Park regime with severe loss of legitimacy and effectiveness; North Korean exploitation of the vulnerability by stepped-up aggression, precipitating suppressive countermeasures by the Park regime; U.S. security performance in Asia, making acceptance of badly-needed US support politically awkward for Park; and captious, apprehensive US reaction to the deteriorating Korean situation undermining US public support for the ROK.

(3) Succession of a weak new regime by election or coup, ushering in a period of domestic political uncertainty; North Korean exploitation of the weakness by stepped-up aggression; confidence of new regime is, however, bolstered by firm US security performance in the region. US domestic mood could permit continuing strong bilateral ties, lending much-needed prestige and reassurance to the new regime.

(4) Again, succession of a weak new regime, but North Korea's subversion aimed primarily at US targets and pro-US ROK leaders, appealing to Korean xenophobia with a siren song of "reunification"; disappointing US security performance adds to air of uncertainty, creating ambivalent ROKG attitude toward US.

(5) Emergence of a popularly elected strong nationalist leader, not tied to past policies, steering Korean toward a more independent course; a refocusing of North Korea's confrontation policy on xenophobia and reunification, to lure the ROK from its pro-West orientation; and an unsatisfactory US security performance assisting that process. The US would find the ROKG more independent-acting, though not inherently more secure, with enhanced bargaining power derived from a vacillating US policy.

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SECTION 2: THE CURRENT POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

2.1 The Political System

Of thirty million Koreans in the southern part of the Korean peninsula, about half still live on the land in largely traditional ways. Except for participation in periodic national elections, their contact with Korean democracy is very limited. They expect government to look after basic needs, but are still more or less resigned to government pressure so long as it does not become too onerous. Their principal channels for expressing their needs to the administrators are through village leadership and through relatives or other interpersonal connections. Their expectations are rising and their outlook changing, but so far quite slowly.

At the other political extreme are the leadership elite. A very small proportion of the population, they are drawn largely from university graduates, members of the affluent or prestigious social levels (who also tend to be university graduates), and most recently from among military officers. They rise through politics, bureaucracy, the professions, the military hierarchy, banking and business. Virtually all of them are Western oriented, although not all are necessarily pro-Western. Their outlooks and styles vary considerably, however, from the secularized, pragmatic, organizational approach of the younger American-trained bureaucrats and military officers to the philosophical, status-oriented, and personalized view of the older and the Japanese-trained. Even the most modern among them, however, are linked by informal ties based on shared school or college experience, shared participation in some special crisis situation, family or clan, and regional origin. Political communication among and within leadership groups is still largely through these connections, although there may be a trend toward more modern and impersonal institutional arrangements.

Urban residents are transitional between traditional and modern outlooks, with high consequent uncertainty and instability. They are embraced within several organization - block associations, labor unions, youth groups, women's associations, and the like - but virtually all such organizations are dominated by the government or the ruling party or both, and are dedicated to control of the population rather than representation of their interests. Here again, personal, associational, or family ties are the main channel for communication of needs. The industrial labor force is a large and growing component (10 percent or more) of the urban population. White-collar workers comprise an even larger component; the unemployed probably number between 6 and 10 percent. Less than 10 percent of the labor force is organized in trade unions. The urban population has been growing at a rate of 4.5 percent a year, compared with the recent over-all population growth of around 2.7 percent. However, unemployment has been held down by rapid industrial growth (18.5 percent average in the last six years).

President Park's personal control of the entire political system is undisputed. The subordinate loci of power include the bureaucracy (led by

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Prime Minister Chong Il-Kwon and the State Council), the Army, the Korean Central Intelligence Agency, the police, military intelligence, the Democratic Republican Party (of which Park is also President), and to some extent the business community and intellectuals. To this list should be added the President's own office, which closely supervises government operations and conducts significant independent information-gathering activities throughout the country, and his immediate political advisors. He makes skillful use of all these agencies and informal connections of his own to maintain political balance and control. The unicameral National Assembly, dominated both by the President's Office and the DRP, has little power, but does play a useful role as a sounding-board. Central in the President's control is a triumvirate comprised of his chief secretary, the head of the CIA, and a businessman prominent in the DRP.

The bureaucracy, highly centralized, is currently at an unprecedentedly high level of effectiveness despite its continuing illegal exactions from the public. A large infusion of fresh blood following the military coup of 1961 has installed young men, well-qualified by academic training and experience or by military service, in leading positions. Capability is less at local levels of government, but nevertheless has improved. Change comes slowly, however, in the traditional philosophy of government from the top down, but some progress has been made (with US encouragement) in decentralization. There appears no reason to doubt the loyalty of the entire bureaucracy to the government in power.

The Army (plus the small Navy, Air Force, and Marines) represent the fifth largest national armed force in the world; one Korean in 50 is currently in the service (mostly by draft for three-year term), and about a third of the men over 15 have been in it. Formerly divided by factional loyalties to senior leaders, the Army is now led by men at division and higher level who are considered to be personally loyal to the President; older general officers have been retired and given appropriate business positions or other posts. There are several hundred officers just below the senior level with military-school or other ties to KIM Chong-p'il, the principal potential contender for the Presidency; and 2,500 more junior officers who have graduated from the revised four-year curriculum of the Korea Military Academy. Some of these men regard themselves as better educated and qualified for leadership than either their military superiors or civilian political leaders. They are restive because their prospects for advancement are blocked by the relatively young men above them - many of whom were promoted at rapid rates during the Korean War era. The Army is inescapably involved in politics through its large share of the national budget and manpower, its role in counter-infiltration, its presence as ten reserve division cadres in provincial centers, its civic action programs, its intelligence activities, and its experience in two national political crises.

The Korean Central Intelligence Agency has been somewhat reduced in size and power from its predominant position in the immediate post-coup period. Some of its political functions and personnel went to the Democratic Republican Party. It remains, however, a large, potent, and efficient organization, with agents throughout the country to detect and control opposition.

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to the government as well as enemies of the state. Currently, it is far from a totalitarian or terror agency; its methods are fairly subtle, physical coercion is, for the most part, restrained, and considerable reliance is placed on sophisticated "operations" and the liberal use of money. Its information-gathering capabilities are not entirely as good as those for exercising control. Next to the armed forces, it is the most logical power base for an attempt to seize political power, but no such tendency is now visible.

The strongly centralized police force, numbering 41,000 men or about 1 per 750 people (a comparatively low ratio), has gained some prestige and efficiency since the nadir of its involvement in the misguided and bloody attack on student demonstrators in 1960. It still is generally disliked, and indulges in petty corruption. A large number of former military officers has been added to its officer ranks. Because of the current threat from North Korea, police equipment and training are now being gradually upgraded. Police morale suffers from the subordinate relationship with the CIA and from frequent Army dominance of counter-infiltration activities. However, the police are doing an adequate job of routine law enforcement, despite their burden of additional counter-insurgency responsibilities. The police force has never shown any disposition to do other than follow central government direction (except for scattered covert opposition sympathy in the past), and is currently loyal to the regime.

The Democratic Republican Party, originally conceived as a strong force for unifying the people along the lines of the Chinese Kuomintang, now plays a supporting rather than a dominant role in politics. The party's operations focus chiefly on coordinating the work of its representatives in the National Assembly and on supporting its candidates in general elections. It does not enjoy widespread popular support, although it has considerable influence by reason of its connections with the seat of power and its supply of political funds under executive auspices. Composed of various disparate elements - ex-military supporters of Kim Chong-p'il, politicians from various former parties, and new recruits - the Party may or may not be permanently unified behind the President. Currently, however, it executes his will.

The major opposition political group, the New Democratic Party (NDP), has some influence through its representation in the National Assembly, some continued popular support and a diminished amount of financial backing from businessmen. However, its factionalism, its intransigence, and the stubbornness and obsolete attitudes of its leadership, coupled with government surveillance and manipulation, have reduced it to the point where it is little more than a complaint-box, and is not seriously regarded as an alternative to the group in power. It is likely to continue at this level for the foreseeable future. Other opposition groupings are of little consequence.

Intellectuals and students are potentially a strong political influence in Korea, but they are quiescent as a result of economic progress and skillful government policies. The press, once a main-spring of opposition sentiment despite government controls, is currently little disposed to fight the

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government line for independent cause. Both intellectuals and press, however, are able to publicize abuses and injustices within flexible government guidelines, and thus serve as a useful communication channel.

The business community - especially the larger businessmen - is largely dependent upon government for its prosperity: government control of lending, of export and import, licensing and of taxation and law enforcement ensures general complicity with official policy. Yet the government is also dependent upon businessmen as a major engine of economic development through entrepreneurship and investment, with emphasis on export. Government also looks to business for the large extra-legal political and operational funds which its current control techniques require (principally for the President's office, the CIA, and the DRP). The Federation of Korean Industry, the leading businessman's association, functions to a limited extent as a pressure group to win concessions for large industrial interests. Smaller and medium-level businesses operate with some degree of independence, and are very largely responsible for the dramatic recent increases in Korean exports. The expansion of the business sector has broadened the Korean socio-economic base, has made an alternative route of achievement for the college graduates both possible and desirable, and will in time dilute the traditional government monopoly of social control.

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2.2 Political Attitudes and Issues

Political and social order, security, economic growth, national identity, and life goals are the principal issues for the Korean people. These issues relate both to individuals and to the nation as a whole. Different population elements attach differing priorities to them: for example, the problem of national identity has minor importance for the farmer, who is concerned with his own income and his own security, whereas for the intellectual, national as well as personal identity and goals are of much concern.

Political and social order is a chronic problem in Korea. It is currently masked by the satisfactions engendered by rapid economic growth. As a society in transition from its traditional Confucian ideals to a modern orientation, Korea is not yet firmly committed in its cultural fabric to a specific political system, and its standards of conduct are confused. The great majority of urban Koreans (some intellectuals and young men excepted) value democracy as they imperfectly understand it, and oppose Communism, also imperfectly understood. They have tended to accept a political system modelled after the US, though many now doubt its complete applicability. However, the unhappy and chaotic experience with freedom in 1960 has led to general acceptance of strong government for the sake of progress. Moreover, the culture accommodates authoritarian leadership at the same time it encourages factionalism and opposition. President Park and his administration are respected for their accomplishments, which give his regime a certain pragmatic legitimation. He does not have the charisma to evoke a positive emotional response to his policies, particularly from the conservative older generation which still regards him as a usurper despite two popular elections. There is little prospect for peaceful change of leadership through accession of an opposition party to power, and no more than an even chance for peaceful rotation within the present leadership group. In this situation, continuation of the present degree of political equilibrium is heavily dependent upon continued economic progress and national security. These, in turn, depend upon political equilibrium, since loss of the present precarious attitude of confidence would reduce savings, cause business retrenchment, frighten foreign investors, and probably set in motion a downward spiral of increased government control, increased disaffection, more control, and so on to possible coup d'etat or subversion from the North. In the absence of an effective political opposition, and aside from the good sense of the present leadership and its willingness (which in a repressive spiral might well disappear) to keep communication channels open and accept advice from competent Korean critics, an important moderating element is American presence and influence, assisted in very minor degree by the United Nations presence.

Security has three aspects: security against external attack; security against Communist (i. e., North Korean) infiltration and subversion; and security of persons and property against criminals, predatory social elements, and abuses of authority. Security against external attack is not now a major concern since the Koreans trust the power of the US and are gaining more faith in their own armed forces. Security against subversion is of growing

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importance as the North Korean effort increases; it assumed major significance with the assault on the President's mansion in early 1968 and a large-scale covert landing on the east coast in October. As yet it is not a major threat in the public mind, but will become so if penetrations and violence continue. The third aspect of security has generally been far better managed by the present government than by its predecessors, and the fact is recognized by the public. However, complaints continue, the crime rate is still high, and intensified counter-infiltration measures carry the danger of increased abuse of police authority.

The achievement of a sustained high rate of economic growth, dating from about 1965, is the major new element on the Korean political scene. This growth buoys the entire nation and gives the present government a legitimacy it would not otherwise have. The benefits of economic progress are not equally shared; the growing gap between the few rich and the many poor is creating concern; the material benefits to the farmers have thus far been chiefly negative -- the elimination of periodic famine and starvation -- rather than positive, and laborers' incomes are rising far more slowly than their expectations. These problems have not yet been translated into political issues.

The problems of identity and life goals stem also from the transitional nature of Korean society, and from the confusions of recent history. The full impact of transition has not yet hit the rural population, but it deeply affects elites and the urban sector. Aberrent religious movements, Socialism, occasional admiration of Hitler, neutralism, a little anti-Americanism, are all manifestations of malaise. Governmental and social leaders are mindful of this problem and are endeavoring to find answers for it, exemplified by the recent National Charter of Education and the President's "second economy". Growing Korean prestige on the international scene is one partial answer to the problem at the national level; social differentiation and organization, coupled with educational reforms and welfare, may eventually provide answers at the personal level.

2.3 Influence of the United States

The relationship between the ROK and the United States is historically unique in its closeness, warmth, and continuity despite basic cultural differences. Although Koreans are somewhat ambivalent - resenting foreign presence, behavior, and influence at the same time they welcome US guidance and protection - it remains true that the US is their principal source and symbol of protection, constancy, and assistance in a hostile and confusing world.

America's commitment to Korea and consequent military assistance and participation of combat forces in the UN Command has set the environment for US-ROK relations. The fact that Korea's capital city is booming with new construction within twenty-five air miles of the DMZ is one by-product of this environment. But there is considerable real apprehension, however, irrational, that the US will "abandon" Korea to Japan, as in 1905; the Koreans mingle with

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their trust and respect of America a European-like view of American international naivete. Surrounded by three giants whom they have good reason to dislike and distrust, the Koreans have transferred their age-old dependence upon a protecting power, justified by a Confucian world view, to the United States. Their comparison of America to a Confucian elder brother is a common cliché, but a true reflection of their outlook.

The United States has been the strong advocate of democracy in Korea. The magic of American democracy has faded somewhat with familiarity and Korean political crisis, but a considerable residue remains as a significant re-tardant on Korean political excesses. The American presence sometimes functions almost as a loyal opposition would in the absence of any such domestic institution.

American influence has been backed by the power of its economic assistance, the leverage of which has supported both economic and political reforms. This past leverage is rapidly declining as the aid program is reduced. In part, however, it has been supplemented by Korean respect for the demonstrated effectiveness of American economic advice.

The recent and unprecedented growth in Korean national pride and confidence is a result of several years of rapid sustained economic development. Some part of this pride, however, is traceable to the Korean desire to justify their "elder brother's" care for them and win favor in his eyes.

There are counter-trends affecting American influence which will gather force in future years, regardless of American policy. The Koreans are increasingly disposed to assert themselves and rely on their own independent strength, demonstrated economic growth, successful military operations in Vietnam, and increased international participation. As their strength grows, latent anti-foreign feelings will grow also. The younger-generation Koreans are not so warmly conditioned toward Americans as their parents; this fact will inhibit the close inter-personal relations between Americans and Koreans at all levels which have been characteristic since 1945, and will call for more and more skill on the American side to maintain them. On the other hand, US actions which reduce Korean foreign exchange earnings - such as controls on Korean imports into the US, or reduced US spending in Korea for and by the military forces - will add further strains to the relationship, the magnitude depending in large part on the impact such steps have on the economy in general or on politically sensitive sectors of it.

Some positive American influence will probably persist in Korea for many years, even if direct US Government economic and military involvement were totally to cease. However, there is the possibility of a swing to the negative. If in the future the Korean political elite were to encounter severe political and economic difficulties, they might find in the alleged errors of a no-longer-provident United States a convenient scapegoat for their ills, with adverse consequences for private American interests.

Korean military involvement in Vietnam is in part a demonstration of the influence the United States has in Korea, although it is explainable also in

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terms of Korean national interests. It is likely that combat experience in Vietnam will make Korea somewhat less responsive to United States influence in the future for two reasons - (1) the Koreans will consider that they have discharged a debt to the United States, and (2) with the confidence of proven accomplishment in combat outside the country, they will be less disposed to accord priority to United States advice over their own methods and concepts. If the Vietnam war goes badly, there may be additional loss of influence because the United States will have lost face. In the absence of this last factor, however, the decline of US influence attributable to the Vietnam experience alone should not be very great.

2.4 North Korea and Unification

The strong Communist regime in North Korea is an object of fear, hostility, and some fascination in the South. There is a constant threat of renewed North Korean aggression, recently augmented by intensified (but sporadic) North Korean efforts at infiltration along the long South Korean coastline. The anti-Communist sentiments of South Koreans have been cultivated by a generation of indoctrination and reinforced by the trauma of the Korean War. North and South Korean leaders are presently committed to each other's overthrow. There is, also, some traditional distrust between northerners and southerners. Yet the connections of the Communists with the independence movement before 1945, residual admiration for North Korean economic accomplishments and social order, and some anti-Western feeling offset the general anti-Northern sentiment in the minds of a minority.

Unification is a major issue for the Korean people. The division of the country -- often blamed on the United States -- is seen as separating and weakening a basically homogeneous nation, keeping families apart, isolating two complementary halves of the national economy, and denying to Korea the prestige and security it could have as a unified state. Recent economic progress in the South and continued United Nations support have muted popular desires for unification, but not eliminated them. It is conceivable that Kim Il-song or a future North Korean regime would attempt, in a different political environment in the South, to exploit these desires by calculated political appeals to the latent unification sentiment.

2.5 Other External Influences

Japan. The influence of Japan in Korea derives from its geographic position, its size and economic power, and business and social connections remaining from the occupation period (1905 to 1945). Since relations were normalized in 1965, Japan has become Korea's principal trading partner, despite the growing trade gap favoring Japan (\$5 in imports from Japan to \$1 in exports), and a major source of investment capital (approximately \$36 million in 1967 and \$112 million in 1968 in private investments in addition to governmental grants and loans). The Japanese government, for its part, regards a strong South Korea as important to Japanese national interests. It undertook the normalization of relations with Korea, with its associated grants and loans, in order to help strengthen ROK economic and political stability. The Japanese are confident that the US will continue to guarantee ROK security but have directed their own

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policies to strengthen the ROK against the day when the US presence may not be so great. If the US should leave the ROK and North Korea should successfully overrun South Korea, Japan would not fight to prevent a Communist takeover but would hope to manipulate to Japan's advantage the new regime's presumed need for foreign trade and economic assistance.

The Koreans resent the Japanese attitude of superiority, and dislike and distrust the Japanese as a people. Korea was ravaged by Japanese armies in the late sixteenth century, and occupied for forty years in the present century with the intention of integrating it both culturally and economically into Japan. Anti-Japanism was drilled into school children and public until 1960. Not without reason, the Koreans fear that the Japanese, with superior resources, will eventually re-establish their hegemony through economic penetration. The Koreans recall what they regard as Roosevelt's "abandonment" of Korea to Japan in 1905, and are concerned that the same thing will happen again as a result of American economic and military withdrawal.

The United Nations. The Koreans are probably more aware of the UN and its activities than any other developing nation, because of the UN role in the creation and preservation of the Republic. The annual votes on the Korea question in the UN have both reassured the Koreans and aroused anxiety that international support may lessen. The UN Command serves to offset the nationalist resentment which presence of a purely American force might arouse. However, the UN as a source of Korean prestige and security is diminishing in importance as the Koreans grow more sophisticated and as their power, capacity, and flexibility on the international scene increase.

Other. China and the Soviet Union are both objects of fear and dislike in Korea -- especially the former, whose "volunteer" troops forced the UN Command back to the North in 1951. The Republic of Korea considers itself the equal or superior of other East Asian nations, with whom it plays an active role in promoting regional cooperation. Korea's growing ability to act on the international scene is a significant source of national pride and security. European influence in Korea is not great; such as there is derives from investment, trade, and technical assistance and welfare activities. Until recently, the principal Korean interest in its international relations was to maximize support in the annual UN votes, and to obtain economic assistance from developed countries. The emphasis is now shifting toward a role of leadership in regional solidarity efforts, reinforced specifically by trade and cultural relations and security arrangements.

2.6 Sources of Instability

From the foregoing analysis of the Korean political system, it appears that there are three major conditions which could cause political crisis in Korea or overtax the system: (1) loss of political adaptability; (2) deterioration in security, or of the Koreans' sense of security; (3) downturn in economic progress.* In addition, there are four other conditions which could have significant destabilizing effects in the longer run; (4) unsatisfied popular expectations; (5) inequities in resource distribution; (6) crisis of political participation; (7) cultural and psychological conflicts.

* e. g., a decline in the annual growth rate to less than two percent in excess of population growth, or worse.

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Each of these conditions is briefly discussed below. The first two form the basis of the three principal determinants of alternative future ROK political environments in Section 3 of this chapter (see p.381); the third is treated there as a dependent variable. The remaining four, for simplicity in analysis, are regarded as constants for the short run, although they should not be disregarded in policy formulation.

US policies have a significant, though diminishing effect on all seven conditions. The direct effect is currently greatest on the first three. The United States has participated in Korean domestic affairs since 1945 - particularly in the earlier years - to an extent more akin to colonial administration than normal international relations. It has done so with remarkably little friction or resentment, despite wide cultural differences. However, future relations must inevitably move closer to the orthodox norms of international relations. In fact, it has long been US policy to encourage this trend. If our policies are structured so that Koreans accept a diminished US involvement as a positive acknowledgement of their maturity, they will reinforce the trend toward stability. If they appear to the Koreans as a threat of abandonment, they will promote conditions of instability.

The three major conditions of Korean instability are as follows:

(1) Loss of Political Adaptability. Present Korean Government efficiency could be adversely affected by (a) in-fighting among major leaders and groups in the political power structure; (b) crystallization of the political power structure, leading to blockage of communication channels and diminished responsiveness to critical popular needs; (c) disaffection of key elite groups -- notably junior army officers -- most likely in combination with disaffection among significant population groups (e. g., farmers in southwest Korea, urban unemployed, or veterans), leading to rebellion or coup d'etat. Disaffection could result from (d) over-use of repressive and coercive measures of control by the administration or its security agencies; (e) sustained and conspicuous inequities in the distribution of resources among population groups; (f) excessive extra-legal collection and use of resources, either through widespread petty graft or levies for political funds.

(2) Deteriorating security. The Korean sense of security against external threat - which is politically more significant than objective calculation of security - is primarily a function of Korean estimates of (a) North Korean, Soviet, and Chinese capabilities and intentions; (b) US willingness and ability to assist in their defense, (c) defense effectiveness of ROK military forces. Of the three, (b) is the most influential factor. The Koreans' sense of security could be adversely affected by indications that the US was not fully committed to the defense of Korea. Successful ROK management of North Korean incursions along the DMZ and of guerrilla incursions in the South might partially offset this; pride in the performance of ROK forces in Vietnam have already increased Korean confidence in their own capabilities. Expansion in the scope and intensity of North Korean actions against the South would increase insecurity,

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although under some circumstances it might have a useful effect in stimulating Korean political unity. Gains in North Korean international power and prestige would increase feelings of insecurity as would significant adverse changes in the world military and political power balance, or threatening Soviet or Communist China moves. There is also a purely domestic problem: feelings of insecurity would be increased by (a) inadequately restrained use of coercion and repression by ROK security agencies or political forces, (b) resurgence of widespread hoodlum depredations in the cities, (c) rise in the crime rate.

(3) Downturn in Economic Progress.* Along with political-administration effectiveness, the principal legitimation of the regime rests upon continued visible economic progress, with at least some benefit for substantial portions of the population. Loss of economic headway could immediately lead to questioning of the regime's personalities, policies, and authority. Such a downturn could result from a combination of (a) errors of policy by the administration, leading to inflation or misallocation of resources, (b) massive diversion of resources to defense, (c) loss of international markets because of general economic recession or restrictionist trade policies by the United States or Japan, (d) drying up of foreign capital inflow, (e) deterioration in tax collection, domestic savings and agricultural production.

The four other factors which may cause political instability, especially in the longer run, are as follows:

(4) Unsatisfied expectations. Except for the privileged elite, no substantial element of the Korean population has witnessed a rise of individual income proportionate to the rise in its expectations, except in the negative sense that the most desperately poor have declined in numbers and traditional cycles of starvation have been eliminated. Preliminary statistics indicate that real income among half or more of urban workers and farmers has not increased during the first five-year plan, despite an average per-capita GNP growth of over 5 percent. In urban areas, where expectations are most stimulated, restive unions in some industrial sectors signal the growing problem. In rural areas, the revolution of rising expectations has not really manifested itself, but with the spread of universal education, mass media, and good transport the problem will be in the ascendant within ten years.

(5) Inequities in resource distribution. The emphasis on industrial development in the first two five-year plans has disproportionately favored urban areas, particularly Seoul, over rural areas. Various factors -- transportation, resources, existing facilities, regional prejudices -- have favored certain areas, notably the Kyong-sang and other eastern provinces, over the Cholla provinces in the southwest. Voting patterns in the 1967 elections reflected these differences. Additionally some statistics indicate that the real incomes of substantial parts of the population, both rural and urban, may not have greatly increased in several years. The perennial problem of graft and corruption, which is now said to be on a greater scale than ever, is a part of the resource distribution problem as is the extreme affluence of a select few

* e. g., a decline in the annual growth rate to less than two percent in excess of population growth, or worse.

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government officials and businessmen. The feature of North Korean life most commonly cited in the past by its admirers in the south is the elimination of corruption and economic inequalities. The problem is already attracting public and intellectual attention. It is recognized by the Korean government, which reportedly hopes to deal with it in the Third Five Year Plan. If it does not do so, serious and growing discontent could jeopardize continued progress and stability.

(6) Crisis of Political participation. The problem of rising expectations is not purely economic. Larger proportions of the population will expect and demand to be consulted in matters which affect their interests, and the scope of their interests increases with modernization. Unless they participate sufficiently in such affairs to understand their complexity, serious dissidence could result; this in turn would encourage disaffected or merely ambitious elite groups to lead dissident movements, subversion, or rebellion. At present, the channels of participation in the power structure are restricted, especially at local levels; the election process, the only formal means of popular political participation, is becoming discredited by repeated abuses and manipulations; the legal opposition is largely discredited. Moreover, little in Korean history or culture encourages belief in peaceful change of political power. Under these circumstances, the chances appear to qualified political observers to be no better than even that political violence and upheaval can be averted during the next ten years. The adverse chances are augmented, and the seriousness of the upheaval increased, in proportion to the dimensions of the other contingencies listed.

(7) Cultural and psychological conflicts. For Korean elites, Korea's international prestige is important to their own prestige, especially because the country is divided into rival halves. International indifference or abandonment, particularly in a time of domestic difficulty, would have grave personal impact. For the leadership, the consequences might be irrational compensatory behavior. Unification overtures might well result which could support or conflict with US interests.

Although considerations of national prestige have some meaning for the general population, they are less important than the search for identity and meaning in a rapidly shifting domestic society and culture. The uncertainties of transition to modern ways have been unsettling to the growing urban population for some time. They are just beginning to have effect in the rural areas.

Korean political and social behavior is inclined to excessive factionalism, rivalry, and hostility -- in part because of indigenous tradition but also in part because no coherent set of beliefs and values has yet achieved the validity of the discredited traditional ones. In this transitional period, an extraordinary faith and reliance on an alien protector, the United States, and its philosophy have partially filled the void. The Koreans seem to be groping their way toward a value system compounded of various alien and indigenous elements validated in part by the Korean experience since 1945 and in part by resuscitation of old heroes and ideas. This process may ultimately be successful, if reasonable stability is maintained, but it cannot be completed in much

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less than another full generation. Meantime, lack of a coherent, generally accepted system of political and social beliefs and values complicates all other uncertainties in the Korea situation.

As was noted in the introductory section (p.364) and as should be clear from the analysis of the Korean political system, these seven sources of instability are offset by major sources of strength. Without such strength, Korea's progress since 1945 -- the evidence of which has been so dramatically evident in the achievements of the last few years -- would probably have been impossible even with the massive US assistance provided. With this strength, there is good reason to expect that the sources of instability can be controlled, and that Korea's progress to national maturity -- social, economic, and political -- can be sustained with progressively (but cautiously and judiciously) lowered levels of US support.

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SECTION 3: ALTERNATIVE FUTURE ROK POLITICAL ENVIRONMENTS

The preceding section examined significant aspects of the current Korean political scene and discussed the major factors that impinge upon that scene. The present section attempts to describe possible future political environments which would create significantly different circumstances for US policy toward the ROK over the next several years.

3.1 Determinants of Korea's Political Environment

The political environment of a country is the product of a very large number of interrelated factors. To attempt to pull together all of these factors and to take account of all the possible interactions would be a completely unmanageable task -- in Korea or in any other country. Instead, this section attempts, at the risk of great over-simplification, to single out those elements of the environment which would most critically impinge upon US interests in the ROK over the next five years. There are three such elements: (a) Stability and adaptability of the ROK political system, as tested in the 1971 presidential election; (b) Character and level of North Korean confrontation; and, (c) US security performance in East Asia.

Each of these elements will determine, in a major way, the course of political developments in the ROK. These elements are clearly interrelated, but the nature of the interrelationship is difficult to specify. For the purposes of this analysis, they are treated as the principal determinants.

There are at least three additional elements that are also highly significant, but they appear to be largely dependent upon the former three, and are so treated in this discussion. They are: (a) The state of the economy; (b) The effectiveness of the ROK military in its defense role; (c) ROK attitudes toward its foreign relations.

On the first of these, while the economy may suffer temporary difficulties as a result of such developments as reduction in earnings stemming from a phase-down of the Vietnam war, adverse developments in its trading position in world markets, or poor harvests, these alone are not likely to be sufficiently serious or persistent to arrest the favorable growth trend over the next several years. Moreover, with moderate extensions of economic assistance, the US could offset such temporary difficulties. The type of disruption of the ROK economy that would have serious political implications would most likely result either from short-sighted economic policies of the ROKG designed to serve narrow political interests, or from loss of investor confidence (foreign and domestic) occasioned by political instability or deterioration of security.

With respect to military effectiveness, the incentives for Korean self-improvement will remain strong so long as the threat from the North remains. However, in the face of political instability, the military might

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be diverted from its primary defense role and become preoccupied with suppression of dissident elements or deep involvement in Seoul politics.

As regards Korean attitudes toward its foreign relations, the two major determinants of the ROK's continued self-assured foreign policy role in the region will be: (a) The degree to which Korea views its security investment in Vietnam as a success, and (b) The extent to which the ROK's domestic political strength gives it a free hand in foreign relations.

Thus the degree of political stability, the character of the North Korean confrontation, and the quality of the US security performance appear to be the key determinants of the ROK political environment over the next five years. What are the interesting, significant variations in these three determinants?

(1) Stability and Adaptability of the ROK Political System, as Tested in the 1971 Presidential Elections

It is obviously impossible to forecast with any great precision the evolution of a political system or the outcome of a complex political process. However, the forthcoming Korean election is a major test of the adaptive capacity of the South Korean political system because it must be resolved either by a constitutional amendment permitting a third-term bid by President Park, by an orderly transfer of power to a successor, or by abandonment of the constitutional process. The following four possibilities seem the most interesting from the standpoint of US policy:

a. The re-election of Park Chung Hee, resulting from an orderly revision of the constitution to permit a third term, and through an electoral process that is accepted as legitimate by Korean standards. Under these circumstances, the existing one-party dominant system and President Park's confident control over the bureaucratic process may remain essentially unimpaired. In the longer run, however, Park's continuation in power might reduce the adaptive capacity of the system.

b. The continuation of President Park's tenure with substantial loss of legitimacy, resulting either from suspension of constitutional processes or from employment of visibly irregular methods in the constitutional revision and election. Under these circumstances, Park's party support in the DRP would be greatly weakened, his opposition increased, reliance on suppressive security measures augmented, and the prospects for instability, crisis and coup thereby also increased.

c. The emergence of a weak new government either as a result of legitimate elections in which Park is defeated or poorly chooses a successor, or a coup produces a new regime. The weakness would derive from the lack of personal and organizational strength under the circumstances of a legitimate accession, or from the necessity of power balancing under conditions of

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a coup. The strength of party fiber alone would not be enough to compensate for such weaknesses.

d. The succession, through the 1971 elections, of a new strong, nationalist leader, either through assumption of Democratic Republican Party (DRP) leadership with Park's initial blessing or by defeating a much-weakened DRP candidate (Park or a hand-picked successor) with the support of an opposition and splinter DRP. This new leader would not be tied to past policy, could consolidate his power relatively quickly, and might gain further strength by appealing to nationalist sentiment and sharpening of latent anti-Americanism or anti-Japanese feelings.

(2) Character and Level of North Korean Confrontation

This description of alternative forms and levels of aggression disregards the contingency of all-out invasion, not because this contingency is not real, but rather because it would change the fundamental nature of the political environment to all-out nation-versus-nation conflict, the military aspects of which have been treated in previous war games and simulations. Instead, this description concentrates on three possible North Korean confrontation strategies:

a. A continuation of the present level and direction of infiltration and hostile probes. These appear to be aimed at creating an air of insecurity and testing the possibility of developing an insurgent movement in the South. The character of Kim Il-sung's actions leaves no doubt that they are intended as an overt though limited challenge to the political system of the ROK.

b. A sharp increase in the scope, intensity, and visibility of North Korean penetrations, terrorist actions, and assaults. The aim of these would be to cause widespread disruption of the political and economic system, but below the level of full-scale, large unit aggression. They might be designed to raise doubts within the ROKG about its own capacity to deal with the North, to undermine public confidence in the ROKG, to regard ROK economic growth, and to create severe tension between the ROKG and the US.

c. Moderated and perhaps subsided aggression as an accompaniment to a siren song of reunification. The thrust of the actions and their explanation would be xenophobic, designed, if possible, to separate the ROK leaders from their US supporters and, if not, from the Korean people. The attacks would be selective, as covert as possible, and aimed at the "US imperialists and their running dogs". US neo-colonialism would be made the threat, and "Korea for the Koreans" held out as the prize.

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(3) US Security Performance in the Region

An important determinant of the political atmosphere in South Korea over the next several years will be the South Koreans' assessment of the US security performance within the region. In their eyes, the principal tests of that performance will be the manner in which the US responds to calculated affronts to it by North Korea or other hostile powers (Pueblo, EC-121), the evolving US military posture in Korea and on Korea's periphery (particularly US bases in Japan and Okinawa), and the manner in which the US disengages from the Vietnam conflict. The importance to Korea of the US performance is not so much a function of the direct impact of that performance on Korean security, but rather (i) whether it arouses ROKG and public fears for their security, and (ii) whether or not it causes the ROKG to suffer embarrassment from its close link to and support of US policy in the region -- from normalization with Japan to troops to Vietnam. Precisely how the South Koreans will view the US performance is hardly possible to predict, but it is useful to differentiate between two sharply opposed reactions.

a. Satisfaction. In the near term, the South Koreans would be reassured by evidence that the US is prepared to retaliate with appropriate firmness for any future North Korean affront, or at least not to permit such an act to go by without imposing some costs on the perpetrator. In the longer term, the ROKG would feel vindicated for its assistance to and close association with the US effort in Vietnam, if that effort resulted in a settlement that arrested the spread of Communism in Southeast Asia. At a minimum, they might feel exonerated if the settlement would give a non-Communist government of South Vietnam a reasonable probability of survival if it performed well.

b. Embarrassment. The ROKG would feel embarrassed and disconcerted by an apparent lack of US capacity or inclination to deal effectively with further North Korean affronts. The prestige and popular support of the present regime would suffer more seriously if the US accepted a settlement in Vietnam that could be interpreted as simple abandonment of the cause to which it had mustered Korean and other allied support. A South Korean opposition might well challenge the regime to show cause why it had failed to loosen its foreign policy from its close ties to an irresolute ally.

3.2 Alternative Environments

Obviously, any attempt to describe discreet future states of the world introduces an element of artificiality, as there are virtually infinite possibilities from which to choose. The purpose of the preceding description of the elements of the environment is to provide a framework for looking at interactions among these elements so that the more interesting possibilities can be developed. Five significantly different -- and perhaps stark -- environments are selected and elaborated below. These should provide useful

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benchmarks for examining some of the advantages and limitations of alternative US policy packages that may be developed.

Environment I: Park legitimate re-election -- NK aggression at present levels -- Satisfactory US performance

The re-election of President Park to a third term, after an orderly revision of the constitution, would provide for substantial continuity and a promise of at least short-run stability on the Korean domestic scene. The effective ROK government would be more than capable of coping with the North Korean subversion efforts at roughly the present level. While this level of aggressiveness would be an annoyance, it would also serve as a reminder of the external menace and thus exert a cohesive force within the ROK. It would tend to give Park greater latitude at home and abroad than he would otherwise have. The ROKG would be further strengthened by a firm US security performance in the region, but even a less staunch US performance, e. g., in Vietnam, might be tolerated under these conditions of political strength.

In general, present favorable trends could be expected to continue, at least for some time. Although democratic processes and institutions would not necessarily be strengthened under these circumstances, governmental self-confidence and administrative effectiveness would continue to grow. Some social groups would probably press for a greater share of Korea's growing social produce (e. g., higher wages for blue collar workers). The DRP would probably continue to ossify, offering few, if any, meaningful avenues for political participation. Korea's economy would continue to flourish in an atmosphere of stability. Private foreign and domestic investment would continue at present high rates, sustaining the favorable growth of the export sector, easing the impact of loss of Vietnam-associated foreign earnings, and permitting Korea to proceed toward economic self-support. Continued effective civilian government would tend to make further professionalization more attractive to the military than political dabbling. Strength at home would also permit the ROKG to pursue its regional relations more energetically and would alleviate its traditional sense of inferiority vis-a-vis Japan.

The ROKG, under these circumstances, would be more self-assured and assertive in its relations with the US. Indeed, it might chafe under what it may regard as unnecessarily prolonged American tutelage and threaten to pursue a more independent role. Since there would be few opportunities to express the new independence other than by a harder anti-Communist line, it could take the form of more aggressive retaliatory acts against North Korean harassment or an independent role on the SVN conflict. The US performance in the region would reassure the ROK of the desirability of the US security commitment. The financial burden of ROK dependency could be lightened, but US political influence would decline correspondingly, and Korean compliance with US wishes would increasingly have to be bought instead of flowing as a by-product of Korean dependency.

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Environment II: Park low-legitimacy continuation -- NK aggression step-up
Embarrassing US performance

Suspension of constitutional processes or blatant manipulation of the election to permit continuation of the Park regime would reduce the democratic component of Korean politics. The loss of legitimacy would reduce the effectiveness with which the regime could govern. With reduced governmental effectiveness, the regime would be in any event more vulnerable to North Korean confrontation, even at a low level of intensity.

Exploitation by Kim Il-sung of this vulnerability by stepped-up aggression would place further strains on the ROKG and call forth suppressive actions by the Park regime. At the point when its stature was diminishing because of its actions at home and its reaction to pressures from abroad, it would be further embarrassed by a failure of the US to live up to the expectations of a staunch ally.

While this adverse turn of events would not wipe out recent gains in South Korea, the favorable trend of the past would clearly be reversed. The regime's need to resort to irregular means to perpetuate its control would testify to a general loss of political support. The unfavorable circumstances of this continuation would serve as a rallying point for dissenting factions within the society. Opposition groups would tend to challenge the government's policies at many points, thus limiting its freedom of action and precipitating suppressive control measures. North Korean agents would find it easier to exploit domestic dissatisfactions and to merge with local dissident groups. Voluntary cooperation with the government's counter-infiltration effort would decline sharply. Deterioration of both the political and the security situation would take its toll on the economy. Investors would become wary, political strikes and demonstrations would cut into productivity, and the regime would increasingly resort to the use of its economic power to reward its political friends and punish its opponents. The balance of payments would turn sharply adverse. While military effectiveness might not decline by any professional yardstick, the military's capacity for defense would be called into question by the deteriorating security situation, and public sympathy would be shaken by ROK armed forces' participation in suppressive activities. Preoccupation with domestic insecurity would preclude any serious ROKG role in regional security arrangements.

Under these circumstances, the regime would need the staunch support of the US both because of the domestic political strength US endorsement would provide, and because of the assurance it would give in the face of the sharply increased threat from the North. On the other hand, the ROKG would be embarrassed by past US performance and by growing public criticism of the ROKG's ill-advised association with the unsuccessful US-Southeast Asian venture. While the Park regime's difficulties would provide the US greater leverage in the bilateral relationship, the loss of the Park regime's legitimacy and the deterioration of the over-all situation in South Korea would

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undermine US public support for the ROK. Indeed, it might evoke odious comparison of the Park regime to that of Ngo Dinh Diem.

Environment III: Weak new ROKG -- NK aggression step-up -- Satisfactory US performance

The succession of a weak new regime either by election or by coup would arrest the favorable political development trend in South Korea and would usher in a period of domestic uncertainty.* The power elite would be preoccupied with political maneuvering to fill the power vacuum and the authority of the new government would be tenuous for some time. Kim Il-sung would exploit the resulting ROK vulnerability by sharply stepping up aggression, in the hope that widespread disruption of the economy and polity of the South would lead to a chain reaction of deterioration. While the North Korean action would inflict material damage and contribute to disorganization, it would also serve to unify the ROK people by reminding them of the seriousness of the external threat to their survival. The besieged ROKG would derive substantial confidence from a firm US security performance in the region.

Governmental weakness would mean initially a halt in ROK progress on a broad front. Administrative performance would lag while new political alignments are formed and lines of authority clarified. On the economic front, new investment would decline, not as a result of outright loss of confidence, but rather because of a wait-and-see attitude toward new government policy and the security situation. The economic elite would be tight-fisted in its support of the new government both to avoid over-identification with any one faction and to challenge the new government's capacity to continue to exact the heavy tribute imposed by the Park regime. Central command and control of the ROK military would be at least temporarily weakened by the lack of strong central political leadership. The need of the weak new leadership to mobilize support would place military commanders in a strong political bargaining position. While the new government would have its hands full at home, the record of US performance in the region would be such as to permit the ROKG passively to go along with US regional initiatives.

Under these circumstances, the new regime would seek strong US support to provide it much-needed prestige and as reassurance in the face of the North Korean threat. While weak policies of the new government might arouse concern in the US, the ruthless exploitation of the situation by North Korea would lend public support to a continuation of strong bilateral ties.** Favorable developments in Southeast Asia would mitigate arguments against US commitments to weak governments in trouble. Under these circumstances, aid to the ROK would not be totally unpalatable, even if the new government had come to power through a coup.

* The manner of succession of a weak new regime would probably not affect US strategy, but it would affect US action choices in the short run -- e. g., domestic political opposition to an illegitimate change of Korean government might limit the scope of US support for it for a time.

** Public support would probably be less for a government which had come to power illegitimately.

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Environment IV: Weak new ROKG -- NK Selective aggression with siren song --
Embarrassing US performance

Domestic uncertainty and arrested development would be the consequence of emergence of a weak new regime, whether by election or by coup. Political forces within the ROK would vie for power in the political vacuum created by such a regime. Kim Il-sung would redirect his confrontation with the South toward covert acts of terrorism against US facilities and personnel and against pro-West ROK leaders and institutions. His propaganda would seek to appeal to Korean nationalism and xenophobia and would label the terrorist acts as spontaneous anti-Americanism by South Korean patriots rather than as North Korean "retaliation". He would openly invite discussion of "peaceful reunification". With the ROK's past association with US regional security policy in Southeast Asia discredited by poor US performance, the new government would feel the need at least to articulate a new, more independent policy, though not necessarily to lessen its real dependence.

The coincidence of weak administration, a new thrust to the North Korean confrontation, and the disappointing performance of Korea's patron and ally, would create a general air of uncertainty. This uncertainty would translate itself into economic slow-down, if not stagnation, foreign investment would shy away in the face of apparent xenophobia, and good economic policy would give way to efforts by the new regime to manipulate the economy for political purposes. Since North Korean aggression would be focussed on Americans and "running dogs", the ROK military would face less direct challenge, and would therefore feel free to involve itself in politics. With shaken confidence in US fortitude, the ROKG would send nervous feelers to regional neighbors in hopes of developing some regional counterpoise to replace the US.

Under these circumstances the ROKG's attitude toward the US would be ambivalent. It would like to have US endorsement and material support to strengthen its position at home, but it would feel uneasy at foreclosing options by drawing too close to the US -- both because of disaffection with the US in the ROK and disillusionment with the US commitment to Asian security. Apparent diminution of the overt threat to South Korea and vocal anti-Americanism would bolster US domestic arguments for reducing the US presence -- if not the commitment -- in Korea.

Environment V: New nationalist strong man - NK selective aggression with siren
song -- Embarrassing US performance

Benefitting from legitimate accession to office, a new nationalist leader emerging from the 1971 election would be free to consolidate his power rapidly. He would quickly make it apparent that he was not beholden to the previous regime or to any particular faction. Unidentified with past policy, he would gain strength by calculated appeals to Korean nationalism and incipient anti-American or anti-Japanese sentiment. Kim Il-sung's refocus of his terrorism on xenophobia and his propaganda on reunification would be designed to lure the new ROK leadership away from its past single-minded pro-West orientation. The unsatisfactory US performance in the region would provide substantive reason

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to question the strength of the US commitment and political cause to place the US at arm's length. The popular mandate of the new government would permit the luxury of doing so.

Building on Korea's favorable past progress and personal political power acquired by an impressive electoral victory, the new leader would revitalize the government party and steer Korea toward a "New Identity". He would feel strong enough to gamble by playing the evidently cynical North Korean policy off against the US. The South Korean economy would continue to flourish, as uncertainty diminished with the passage of another political milestone. Lacking a serious immediate security challenge to his armed forces, the new leader could demand a pledge of personal loyalty by military leaders, under the threat of a purge. The temporary decline in military efficiency that would accompany the shake-up would be more than offset by the benefits of consolidation of central control. The new leader could also afford to experiment with regional initiatives, unfettered by conflicts with wider US interests.

Under these circumstances, the US would be confronted with a more independent-acting but not necessarily more inherently-secure ROK. The US would face the problem of protecting its security posture in the region -- however defined -- while not undermining desirable, though premature self-reliance by its previously all-too dependent ally. The new ROK leadership would derive considerable bargaining power from what might appear to be a vacillating US policy.

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