

# The Korean CIA in the USA

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**K**orean intelligence agents operating in the United States have violated our laws with impunity. Such reprehensible actions merit serious scrutiny at any time. But in view of recent developments in Korea, it is even more urgent that our government be concerned about the intelligence activities of the South Korean Government in the United States.

The hearings held earlier this year before the appropriate subcommittee of the House are important for at least two reasons. First, they sought, at long last, to inquire publicly into serious allegations of illegal activity carried on in our country by agents or persons representing a foreign power. The fact that Korea has been a close ally of the United States is not in dispute; what is of concern is whether representatives of that government have violated American law and have attempted to deny the human rights of Koreans resident in this country.

There is another reason, and one that I believe has even greater implication for U.S. foreign policy and the image of our country abroad. To the extent the United States allows, or even ignores, such activities within our shores, it sends signals abroad that despite lofty expressions, the U.S. is not as attached to human values as it professes to be. The fact that Korean intelligence agents have been able to carry out their schemes in the U.S. and to violate our laws with impunity cannot but embolden the KCIA in its evil work at home. And it all but destroys the hopes of those forces in Korea that are courageously struggling for a return to democratic institutions. If such activities in the U.S. go unchallenged, then the sentiments on behalf of human rights expressed by our Congress in economic and military aid legislation become mere rhetoric. Thus the U.S. is not uninvolved with the actions of the KCIA, either at home or abroad—an involvement that takes on even greater

significance when we recognize that this Korean Central Intelligence Agency, as its name alone connotes, was established with the technical advice and financial assistance of our government.

It is important that our government review *all* activities of the Republic of Korea that contravene our laws or the spirit of our Constitutional guarantees, not only actions of the KCIA. There are others, for example, who have operated directly out of Korea's Blue House and have carried on separate missions. But the Korean Central Intelligence Agency is, admittedly, the most influential and the most awesome intelligence arm of Korea. Established in the period immediately following the military coup of 1961 to provide for the collection of intelligence relating to the security and defense of South Korea, it moved quickly in the tradition of its predecessors to the surveillance of the activities of people and organizations unsympathetic to the perpetuation of power by General Park Chung Hee. In time, the Director of the KCIA came to be more powerful and feared at home than the Prime Minister; and abroad its Chief of Station (another term borrowed from American experience) was accepted by Korean Embassy personnel as more influential than the Korean Ambassador. On more than one occasion Korean ambassadors have indicated they were unable to control the activities of supposedly subordinate station chiefs who had direct lines to the KCIA kingpin at home, and the ambassadors were hesitant to communicate through ordinary channels with their Foreign Office about certain activities of these Embassy intelligence heads.

I have for years followed closely the intelligence activities of the South Korean Government, both in Korea and in the U.S. As a Foreign Service Officer, now retired, I served as Director of the Office of Korean Affairs in the Department of State from early 1970 to the end of 1974. As Country Director for Korea, I was responsible for the formulation of U.S. policy toward Korea—political, military, and economic—and for the conduct of our foreign relations with that country. My knowledge of Korean intelligence activities derives largely from my observations during that period, al-

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though my earlier experience in Korea at the time of the fall of Syngman Rhee and the military coup of 1961 provided me with additional information and a wider perspective.

The concerns of the Korean Government in the U.S., diplomatic as well as intelligence, during the period 1970-74 were largely conditioned by a single event: the 1971 Korean national election. In 1970 General Park Chung Hee, who had seized power in 1961, was still President of Korea, having earlier amended the Korean Constitution to enable him to serve as President for a third term. Opposing Park in the spring of 1971 was a vigorous and popular candidate, Kim Dae-Jung, an advocate of close ties to the U.S., a realistic approach to unification, and of democratic rule and human rights. In an election characterized by the massive use of government power and finance Park was reelected. But not before he had promised publicly not to stand for office again, and only after the opposition had polled some 46 per cent of the popular vote. Indeed there were many, and I count myself among them, who believe that in a free and fair election Kim Dae-Jung would today be President of the Republic of Korea. From the very beginning of the presidential campaign the KCIA moved ruthlessly against Kim, both in Korea and the U.S. No other public figure in Korean affairs over the past decade had so enraged the Blue House and, consequently, the Korean intelligence apparatus. The persecution of this loyal and democratic Korean political leader continues to this day.

In early 1971, prior to the election, Kim visited the U.S. to meet with Congressional and Executive Branch leaders to demonstrate to the Korean electorate that he was acceptable to the American Government. During his short visit here, Kim was under the constant surveillance of the Korean CIA, who attempted to block his appointments, to obstruct his schedule, and to limit his appeal to Korean residents in the U.S. Indeed, there was reason to believe that the KCIA had actually infiltrated Kim's official party and was thus able to report on his conversations in Washington and offset his impact abroad.

Following the election, Park Chung Hee accelerated his march toward authoritarian rule, just as Kim had forecast. By the end of 1971 the country was under emergency decree; and a year later Park Chung Hee abandoned the Constitution, placed the country under martial law, and had himself elected President again, this time with no limitation on tenure. Kim Dae-Jung, who was out of Korea at that time, decided not to return home. Instead, he determined to seek appointments in the U.S. and Japan with opinion leaders, and to speak to overseas Korean groups about the dangers to Korea he apparently saw looming ahead. Again, the KCIA moved forcefully to block his appearances and his appeal. In some instances the movement against Kim was crude and heavy-handed, as in the disruption by karate strongmen of a meeting he was to address on the West Coast. In other instances it was more subtle, taking the form of intimidation and threats by the KCIA to Koreans to stay away from Kim or to avoid criticism of Park's government. But always the KCIA was on his heels.

Finally, when all such efforts to limit Kim's cause failed, he was kidnapped by the KCIA from his hotel during a visit to Japan in August, 1973. It was an item of more than passing notice to the Korean communities in the U.S. and Japan that at the time this event occurred the KCIA Station Chief in Washington, along with two of his subordinates, had just returned to Korea on "official business." In the United States this agent was falsely accredited as Lee Sang-ho, but a few years earlier at the Korean Embassy in Germany he had been known by his birth name, Yang Du-wan. To many Koreans in the U.S. he was the so-called "bag man" who had arranged the kidnapping from Germany of Korean students and others the government wanted returned to the homeland for questioning.

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The many complaints I received from private Koreans regarding the activities of the Korean CIA led me to warn Korean officials here that the U.S. Government would not tolerate their attempts to interfere with the rights of Koreans resident in the U.S. I had such discussions with various Korean Embassy officials, including the Korean Ambassador, on at least a half-dozen occasions during mid-1973. At first denying the allegations, Embassy officials subsequently admitted their inability to deal directly with the problem. I also warned the KCIA Station Chief himself, who denied involvement in any of the incidents reported, and on one occasion attempted somewhat subtly to intimidate me. Finally, in the fall of 1973, when reports of KCIA intimidation and infringement continued, the Korean Ambassador was called in at my recommendation for a meeting with the Deputy Under Secretary of State and told in blunt terms that the U.S. Government would not countenance attempts by the KCIA to control Korean residents in the U.S.; such activities were to cease immediately. A few months later, after a sufficient time had elapsed so that Mr. Lee could depart without "loss of face," he was recalled to Seoul, where today he is a top-level supervisor at KCIA headquarters.

In mid-1973, amidst charges of KCIA harassment of Lee Jai-hyun, a Korean Embassy officer who refused to be reassigned to Korea, I took the

initiative to meet with the FBI and called for an investigation of the KCIA in the U.S. After exploratory meetings, such an investigation began, but for reasons I have never quite understood, it did not get off the ground. When it finally petered out several months later, it had produced little more than mere confirmation of the basic information I had submitted initially. I concluded that the FBI, or those higher in authority, had no inclination to follow through on an investigation that could wind up embarrassing an ally.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, Korean intelligence has been interested in learning what it can about the maintenance of American support as manifested in the treaty commitment, the stationing of U.S. forces, and the provision of American military assistance. And to every Korean government, from the formation of the Republic to the present, the seat of these determinations is not the Executive Branch but the Congress, which explains why it is that our Congress is of such importance to Korean intelligence.

The KCIA has made it its business to follow Congressional actions on a day-to-day basis, to know the status of military and economic assistance legislation, the views of individual Congressmen and influential committee chairmen regarding stationing of forces, human rights, and other issues affecting Korea, and to learn about their overseas travel and their election campaigns. Indeed, Korean ambassadors as well as station chiefs are popular in the Blue House only so far as they are able to demonstrate an influence with our Congress.

Evidence regarding the activities of the KCIA in the U.S. is indeed hard to obtain. For obvious reasons Koreans are reluctant to speak publicly or for the record. Many have relatives abroad, or in various ways are in need of favors or services of the Korean Embassy in Washington.

Notwithstanding this, on the basis of my observations during the period 1970-74 I believe the following to be true:

- The KCIA has interfered with the rights of Koreans in the U.S. to assemble and to express their views freely regarding affairs in Korea.

- The KCIA has organized demonstrations in support of the Park government, and at other times attempted to break up demonstrations against that government. It even planned in late 1974, at a time of government-manipulated anti-Japanese sentiment, to organize demonstrations in the U.S. against Japan.

- The KCIA has attempted to influence the selection of officers for the various Korean Resident Associations in the U.S. and has tried to influence their policies, particularly with respect to support of the present government.

- The Korean Government, either directly through the KCIA or indirectly with its help, has made offers of financial support to candidates for office in the U.S. One such offer was reported earlier this year by the *Washington Post*. I can confirm that this particular offer was reported to me by the person to whom it was made.

- The KCIA has attempted to utilize Koreans in

positions of access to influence. Again, I take for granted the revelations in the *Washington Post* regarding the use of one such person currently serving as a staff secretary in Congress.

- There are curious links among organizations friendly to the present government of Korea. One Korean individual, a Korean military attaché in the early 1960's, has since worked in an executive position for several such organizations.

- The KCIA has supported various Korean newspapers and pressmen in the U.S.; it is alleged to sponsor a Korean research institute in Washington; it or companion intelligence organizations have supported seminars in Washington or in Korea to which American scholars have been invited with all expenses paid.

I believe the following recommendations concerning the activities of the KCIA in the U.S. are in order:

1. The nature of existing allegations warrants a thoroughgoing investigation by the FBI into the intelligence activities of the South Korean Government in the U.S.

2. On the basis of the present evidence the Department of State should make emphatically clear to the Government of the Republic of Korea that it will not countenance the present role and conduct of the KCIA in the U.S. So that there be no misunderstanding about this message, it should be expressed in a diplomatic note, accompanied by an oral protest made in person by the Secretary of State to the Korean Ambassador. Expressed by anyone else in the State Department, the message will be read as mere form rather than substance, and it will be taken in that light. Moreover, after the note is handed over, its substance should be made public.

3. The State Department should at the same time make clear to the South Korean Government that the only acceptable function of the KCIA in the U.S. is intelligence liaison.

4. The State Department should set a limit on the number of KCIA representatives it is prepared to accredit; and it should carefully screen the background of those assigned in order to ascertain whether they are indeed bona fide intelligence analysts. In my opinion, two, and at most three, such intelligence liaison representatives from Korea would be sufficient for the actual work involved.

5. It should also be made clear that intelligence liaison representatives may be assigned only to the Korean Embassy in Washington. The assignment of intelligence personnel to any of the Korean consulates in the United States should be prohibited. This much has been told the Korean Government before, but the practice has continued, and if reports are to be believed, the number has increased.

6. Finally, inasmuch as the State Department has issued certain of these stipulations before, only to have them ignored, it should be prepared to back up representations with disciplinary action. Specifically, I can think of no more beneficial action than for the Department of State to declare persona non grata any KCIA Station Chief under whose tenure further transgressions against our laws take place.