



Did the 'China card' kill Korea's Park?

The assassination of Korean President Park has ended 19 years of relative stability and unprecedented economic growth in the southern half of the strategic Korean peninsula. Instability in Korea has an immediate impact on the strategic balance in the region, most directly on Japan which has always viewed Korea as the front line of Japanese security.

It is now clear that the Park murder was part of a coup plot, involving at least the KCIA chief Kim Jae Kyu, but it seems also, top officers in the Korean military. While the latest report of the army investigation absolves any military leaders of involvement, it is more likely that Kim acted precipitously on the basis of their perceived backing for his act.

The real question though, one asked directly at the press conference two days ago where the preliminary report was released, is U.S. involvement in the plot. Rumors abound, in Seoul and elsewhere, of U.S. contacts with Korean military men before the death of Park and of U.S. CIA "foreknowledge" of the event—at the least, it is believed in some circles that the U.S. gave its clear nod of approval to a circle of Korean leaders who were being told that Park's continued rule under conditions of rising opposition to the government was creating an "Iran-type situation" in the country.

The one key to the U.S. role is the fact that Park and his associates were an obstacle to the China Card strategy in Northeast Asia. With Peking sponsoring

Kim Il Sung in North Korea, and Japan and the U.S. backing Park in the south under conditions of continued deep hostility between north and south, Korea has been an obstacle to a Tokyo-Peking-Washington axis against the Soviet Union.

That this was the key consideration in removing Park was confirmed in an article in the *Baltimore Sun* on Nov. 4 which featured an interview with a top Korean oppositionist, unnamed. The dissident, the *Sun's* Bradley Martin reports, said that a new regime led by the opposition would bring benefits for the U.S. Martin reports that: "The benefit, he said, would come from reductions in tensions between North and South Korea, which he thinks would be the more or less automatic result of replacing the current extreme right-wing and stridently anti-communist regime with more flexible and liberal leaders ... the United States thus would have the prospect of removing the one situation that most gravely threatens to unglue its grand design of counterbalancing Soviet Far Eastern power with an American-Chinese-Japanese alignment, he said."

Backed by editorials and commentary in the major U.S. press, the State Department and Secretary Vance have moved rapidly to pressure the present military authorities to "liberalize" the political system. The aim is revision of the Yushin constitution which leaves selection of a successor President in the hands of a Park-selected electoral college, which would likely nominate someone who would continue the policies of his government. The Christian opposition, which is run through intelligence networks associated with the Jesuit order and its Protestant wing, the World Council of Churches, has added to the chorus with their calls for democratization. Opposition leader Kim Dae Jung, a favorite of Harvard intellectuals associated with Jesuit networks, and of the Kennedy family circles, issued a statement dutifully placed on the front page of the *New York Times* which called for direct U.S. pressure to this effect. Particularly, the statement asked the U.S. to ensure that the army remains "neutral" and stays out of politics.

The Jesuit political intelligence role is long known—not only its control of the opposition movement but also through "rightwing" circles associated with Georgetown University and other thinktanks which were the sponsors of "Koreagate" swindler Tong Sun Park, who, in retrospect, may have been involved in setting up the once powerful Korean Central Intelligence Agency for political attack. The KCIA chief who killed Park came in as a result of the shakeup forced through by the "Koreagate" scandal.

All of these facts are only the clues to the real plot—what some are calling "a Diem operation" in Korea. But one thing is certain right now: Korea is not what it was two weeks ago.