

HOW THE 1988 SEOUL OLYMPICS CATALYZED DEMOCRACY:
THE SOUTH KOREAN EXAMPLE

by

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Under the Direction of Dr. Henry C. Carey

ABSTRACT

Authoritarian leaderships often oppress human rights within their governed states and create security concerns for the international community as their authoritarian-driven isolation creates socio-political value gaps not commensurate with international community norms. Many people desire the power and methods to force regime changes on authoritarian and non-cooperative states, all who are voluntarily or involuntarily connected to our international community. This paper analyzes the use of the Olympics to effectively pressure authoritarian states to make political reform and/or democratic transition by explaining how the 1988 Seoul Olympics catalyzed democracy in the Republic of Korea, ending South Korea's long history of authoritarian leadership. The research method includes analyzing the benefits and threats present in ROK-1987 and the speeches of both President Doo-Hwan Chun and General/President Tae-Woo Roh.

INDEX WORDS: Democratization, Democracy, Republic of Korea, Authoritarian, South Korea, Olympics, Catalyze, Regime change, President Chun Doo-Hwan, President Roh Tae-Woo

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An Honors Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
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INTRODUCTION

Former ROK President Doo-Hwan Chun (henceforth all Korea names begin with last name first), stated in a national address on July 1, 1987 that, “the 1988 Olympics will be a catalyst for national prosperity” (Qtd. in South Korean Leaders on Democratic Reforms 592-593). The Olympics served not only as a catalyst for prosperity, but for democratic transition by providing South Korean reformists a global audience to draw support from during their demonstrations. This increased the Republic of Korea (henceforth known as South Korea or ROK) government’s cost of postponing reform because international pressure on the ROK government acted as a deterrent to oppressing demonstrations. The Olympics brought power to South Korea’s dissenters and ended President Chun’s authoritarian rule by serving as one of General Roh’s primary motives for supporting direct elections in 1987.

For one to predict when an authoritarian leadership transitions to democracy or when it will negotiate political demands with its oppressed dissenters, the international community should consider creating an environment conducive to reform in that state in order to catalyze change. The Olympics can act as an applicable tool to force this environment on an authoritarian government. When an authoritarian state selects to host the Olympics, the entire world focuses on the actions inside that state because of the advent of televised media. When the international community’s attention is on an Olympics-preparing state, the market benefits expected from that event are at risk when dissenters attempt to cultivate the use of

foreign media intended for the Olympics. They challenge the state by threatening their ability to host the Olympics and hijack the Olympics-related media to rally world support for their own cause. In this situation, the threatened state's leadership must choose between hosting the Olympics by negotiating with dissent or oppressing them and chance sacrificing their ability to successfully host the event.

In the 1987 ROK case, President Chun had the choices of appeasing dissent or oppressing the cause. However if he were to oppress the cause on internationally televised media, any violent acts would result in international condemnation. If dissent successfully organizes demonstrations that threaten the governments ability to host the Olympics and they win the support of international media, the government will be deterred from high cost acts of oppression and be encouraged to appease the demonstrators. In the example of South Korea, the success of dissent threatening the ROK government's ability to successfully host the Olympics resulted in President Chun and General Roh being forced to support democratic elections. Specifically, in order to control the priorities of an authoritarian leadership, governments or like organizations may be able to create the conditions required for dissent to be able to demand some type of reform by introducing the enhancing Olympics variable. If dissent does not naturally occur because of successful and relatively undetected oppression, external governments or organizations have the option to use clandestine measures to ensure

dissent is organized in such a way to threaten the hosting of the Olympics while rallying the support and protection of international media.

To achieve democracy in an oppressive state where the population supports political reform, first introduce the reform-enhancing Olympics variable in a state with previously non-televised dissent. Second, predict reform when demonstrations calling for it create a threat to the hosting of the Olympics. In order to predict the choices an authoritarian government makes in regards to democracy or maintaining the status quo as supreme authority, one should work to create the conditions prevalent in the ROK in 1987.

The 1987 ROK democratic presidential elections serve as an ideal case study because the event proved that the Olympics are capable of acting as a reform and democratic process catalyst. The Olympics were in position to act as catalyst due to the great value hosting them had instilled in the political culture and economy in the ROK. In preparation for the Olympics, President Chun opened the ROK to foreign leaders, foreign business, foreign trade, and the outside world. In 1987, President Chun postponed his plan to allow for direct elections, which made his previously chosen successor, General Roh, to be his likely successor. This decision led to widespread protests demanding direct elections and for President Chun to resign. Students, labor forces, and other sectors of society protested against hosting of the Olympics, cancellation of direct elections, President Chun's oppressive rule, and for higher wages. These

dissenters threatened the government because they were able to make the leadership believe they could prevent them from successfully hosting the Olympics. The government could not afford to fail at hosting the sporting event because they expected it to catalyze their international legitimacy, economic development, national security, and national pride during a time when South Koreans felt insecure about their image before the international community.

Despite the ROK government's record of using military power to oppress the free speech of their citizens, President Chun moderated his actions in 1987 and supported compromising with dissenters. President Chun chose to cooperate because international attention, and the response that would have followed if he used military to silence the widespread protests, acted as a force for deterrence. The Olympics brought that deterrence by serving as a vacuum of internationally televised viewers who would condemn the use of oppressive military maneuvers on dissent. This global audience threatened President Chun's legitimacy as an authoritarian ruler. President Chun overcame the question of whether or not to allow for democratic elections or sacrifice losing the right to host the 1988 Seoul Olympics by succumbing to the political demands of the demonstrators. President Chun's cost-benefit analysis left democratic elections as the prevailing choice.

When explaining the precursors for democratic change, the political science community often looks to variables like income level, education, and political culture, but these variables

do not provide a constant for determining when states will evolve into democratic rule.

Therefore, we must also look to their leadership's motives to explain the conditions within an authoritarian state that lead to democracy. The decisive decisions made by the ROK

government to allow for elections during a time of turmoil and protest proves to be the result

of the high cost the 1988 Olympics games placed on the actions of President Chun. The

1988 Olympics acted as a catalyst for democratic reform by placing their authoritarian

leadership's need for the games to be successful before their need to retain power. Without

the 1988 Seoul Olympics, the ROK may not have experienced democratic elections in 1987.

In order to prove that the Olympics were the catalyst behind democracy in the ROK, this

paper will examine the threats to the ROK if the Olympics were unsuccessful because of

demonstrations and analyze how the expected benefits of the event led to General Roh and

President Chun succumbing to democratic reform.

CHAPTER ONE

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

According to Robert E. Bedeski, author of The Transformation of South Korea, following the end of WWII Japanese Occupation, South Korea attempted to develop democracy by electing President Rhyee Syngman and a parliamentary General Assembly (22). Not long after the end of the Korean War in 1953, their democratically elected government was overthrown in a Coup d'état led by General Park Chung-Hee on May 16, 1961 (Bedeski 23). In 1972, President Park proclaimed martial law, suspended the constitution, and imposed press censorship. President Park then introduced the Yushin constitution, which allowed the president to serve an indefinite number of terms in office (Bedeski 25). In 1979, Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA) Director, Kim Jae-Kyu, assassinated President Park (Bedeski 25). Vice President Choi Kyu-Ha succeeded President Park to become acting President (Bedeski 25).

Vice President Choi formally became President after being elected by the National Conference for Unification (NCU) (Bedeski 25).¹ As acting President of the ROK, Choi imposed “extraordinary” marital law in April of 1980 in response to widespread protests, support for opposition, and the dissent organized by pro-democracy leader and 1987

¹ The NCU acts as a closed electoral college by barring political parties, electing the president, and nominating 73 of the 219 General Assembly seats. Bedeski, pg 25

presidential candidate, Kim Dae-Jung (Bedeski 26).² As opposition continued, the ROK government became more desperate in its attempts to oppress dissent. When the democratic reform demands of Kim Dae-Jung and his supporters could not be silenced, the ROK government ordered military and police units to oppress the demonstrations and restore order in the city (Bedeski 26). The retaking of Kwangju through military force resulted in high casualties with estimated deaths in the hundreds and by some estimates, in the thousands (Bedeski 26). Following the massacre, the government answered some of the demand for social changes by legalizing political parties; on the other hand, they also resisted social reform by dismissing hundreds of journalists for “purification” reasons (Bedeski 26). President Choi resigned on August 16, 1980 and accepted responsibility for the widespread protests that destabilized the nation (Bedeski 26).

The NCU nominated General Chun on August 27, 1980 as South Korea’s next President (Bedeski 26). On 22 October 1980, President Chun introduced and passed by a 91.6% vote, an amendment to the Yushin constitution that centralized presidential power (Bedeski 27). Outrage continued over the Kwangju Massacre and the need for political form. President Chun responded by using police and military force to oppress dissent repeatedly up until mid-1987. According to the Korean Constitutional Court, during the 12th National General Assembly general election held on February 12, 1985, the New Democratic Party of

² The marital law included press censorship, a national curfew, and the closing of 170 journals.

Korea, the Democratic Party of Korea, and the National Party, all ran on the promise to amend the constitution to allow for direct presidential elections (15). The three parties earned a majority vote, defeating the incumbent Democratic Justice Party. (Ccourt.go.kr 15) The new majority coalition opened debate with President Chun on holding direct presidential elections (Ccourt.go.kr 14). On April 13, 1987, President Chun declared that the debate would be suspended until after completion of the 1988 Seoul Olympics (Ccourt.go.kr 15).

Following suspension of the debate, university students, professors, labor, middle class, all participated in mass demonstrations met with police enforcement and tear gas. Unlike the 1980 Kwangju Massacre where the ROK government had the option of ending dissent by sending in the military, President Chun would have to choose between losing the right to host the Olympics or sacrificing the future and security of the ROK. If President Chun chose to retain power and chance losing the right to host the Olympics, the loss of the citizen's expectation that the event would improve their quality of life would have further justified their dissent. The population, well aware of the risks oppression presented to their safety, organized demonstrations and used President' Chun's desire to retain power as a form of weakness.

CHAPTER TWO

THE BENEFITS OF HOSTING THE OLYMPICS

The leadership of the ROK between 1986 and 1988, President Chun and Director of Defense Security Command, General Roh, viewed the Olympics as both a threat and necessary benefit to the future of the ROK. The Korean government anticipated the following four benefits from the Seoul Olympics:

- (1) Economic development
- (2) International business and political connections
- (3) International security and recognition
- (4) National pride through international recognition

Economic development

According to conclusions drawn from interviews Jarol B. Manheim summarized in Rites of Passage: The Seoul 1988 Seoul Olympics as Public Diplomacy, the ROK government felt tantalized by the economic growth that followed the 1964 Tokyo games in Japan and sought to replicate the Japanese experience through the Seoul Olympics (283). According to the National Science Foundation report, Asia's New High Tech Competitors, Japan maintained an annual percentage change in growth of domestic product by 10% from 1960 until 1970 (NSF.gov). The ROK government's fascination with the success of Japan's successful hosting

of the Tokyo Olympics encouraged them to through intent or through neglect, overlook the risks involved with hosting the Olympics in Seoul (Manheim 283).

According to the economic analysis extracted from the Seoul Olympic Organizing Committee (SLOOC) and compiled by Pyun Do Young in The Economic Benefit of The Seoul Olympic Games, the SLOOC earned total profits of approximately 50 billion won (Qtd. in Pyun 5). The production resulting from Olympics-related projects completed between 1982 and 1988 totaled 1,846.2 billion won, which accounts for 0.4% of the ROK Gross National Product (GNP) over that same period (Pyun 6). In 1987, Olympics-related projects accounted for 0.5% of the nation's total employment (Pyun 6). From 1982 to 1988, 336,000 new jobs were created (Pyun 6). In addition to domestic economic developments, from 1982 to 1988, the ROK earned 690 million in U.S. currency through foreign currency investment and spending related revenue (Pyun 6). Brian Bridges states in East Asia in Transition: South Korea, that in 1987, South Korea's GNP grew by 12 percent, reaching a total GNP of \$U.S. 118 billion while their trade volume reached U.S \$88 billion, placing them 12th among the world's trading nations (385). The ROK government anticipated the Olympics would support the expansion of their economy through international connections and trade. In fact, President Chun Do-Hwan set 1988 as the ROK target date to join the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (Bridges 382).

International business and political connections

The leadership of the ROK expected the international exposure of their industrialized and modernized state to encourage more foreign investments and trading partners. With 160 country representatives in the ROK during the Olympics, the government expected the event to catalyze business connections and trading. The ROK government intended to use the Olympics as a springboard for developing a more globally interconnected state. According to the Official Report of the 1988 Seoul Olympics published by the SLOOC, the South Korean government successfully organized 30 international conferences around Olympics (269). In addition to joining a league of world trading countries, Bridges concludes that the ROK government placed making international contacts with socialist countries as their priority among Olympics-related trade developments (382). The ROK in the 1980s, which was not a socialist country, would benefit trade with socialist countries by drawing their support away from North Korea and toward South Korea. South Korea's change in trade behavior with North-Korean-supporting countries ahead of and following the Olympics supports the position that the ROK government anticipated for the event to serve as an opportunity to shift the balance of power away from North Korea and toward the ROK.

Han Sung-Joo writes in South Korea in 1987: The Politics of Democratization, in anticipation of the 1988 Olympics, 1987 was marked as the year of expanding contacts with

East European countries as well as with China and the Soviet Union (59). Moreover, the ROK government paved the way for improved relations with socialist countries by granting consular rights to the Soviet Union (SLOOC 269). Notably, the ROK did not previously have diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union (SLOOC 269). Han Sung-Joo's research in South Korea in 1988: A Revolution in the Making, found that major South Korean trading companies, including Samsung Group, opened formal liaison offices in cities in China, the Soviet Union, Hungary, Yugoslavia, and other Eastern Bloc European countries ahead of and following Seoul's hosting of the Olympics (35).³ According to unconfirmed reports, South Korea's indirect trade with the Soviet Union and China reached U.S. \$500 million and U.S. \$2 billion in 1987 (Han 59). President Roh confirmed the ROK leaderships' awareness of the Olympics-related trade benefits. In addressed the 43rd General Assembly on October 18, 1988, he stated, "I find it significant that China, a nation which traditionally was a good neighbor of Korea, is moving to overcome the wall of separation that has lasted for nearly half a century and is expanding its mutual exchanges and cooperation with the Republic of Korea. I have also taken careful notice of the positive signals being made by General Secretary Gorbachev of the Soviet Union" (Qtd. in Korea: A Nation Transformed 10). Not only did the ROK leadership anticipate economic gains through new trading partners because of the Olympics brought foreign business and governments to South Korea, but they also sought trade with the

³ In this paper, the term Eastern Bloc refers to Eastern European socialist countries

socialist countries because it would weaken North Korean attempts to use socialist-supporting countries as leverage over South Korea in international diplomacy. Han points out that the Olympic Games led to the ROK developing un-official and lucrative trade ties with China, Soviet Union, and Eastern Europe (34). While the ROK government could not be sure the successful hosting of the Olympics would result in developing trade ties, it is important to point out that following the Olympics, the ROK opened new trade offices, air routes, shipping routes, and communication lines inside communist countries and the Soviet Union. (Han 34)

International security and recognition

The successful hosting of the Olympics assisted in maintaining ROK regional security by catalyzing trade relationships with North-Korean-supporting socialist countries. It is even possible that the ROK government's new relations with North-Korean-supporting countries shifted the balance of power away from North Korea enough so that South Korea's new economic developmental ties led to the beginning of decreasing global and Eastern Bloc support for North Korea. Because the ROK developed trade ties with North Korean allies following the Olympics, the event served as a method to secure support from those socialist countries that ideologically aligned with North Korea, which undermined North Korea's boycott of the Seoul Olympics and their hostile policy towards South Korea. Specifically, the ROK government used the Olympics as a global spectacle that earned the support necessary

to shift the balance of power away from North Korea and also proved to the world that South Korea officially joined the world of the developed countries.

National pride through international recognition

In addition to the ROK government's anticipation of economic growth, international connections, and national security, the development of international recognition and national pride also became an important goal of the ROK before and during the Seoul Olympics. In President Chun's 1983, January 18, New Year policy-speech, compiled in 1980's: Meeting a New Challenge III, he expressed the importance of the Olympics and the pride of South Korea when he said, "As you know well, preparations for the 1988 Olympics... I cordially request all citizens to actively involve themselves by enhancing their sense of civic responsibility and keeping the environment clear and neat with a spirit of voluntary participation in this worthy cause. In such a way, we will be able to demonstrate to the world that Koreans are cultured and enlightened (Qtd. in The 1980's: Meeting a New Challenge III 28)." Additional evidence of the effort to change the image of Korea before ROK citizens and the rest of the world also exists in their enormous global marketing efforts. The ROK government coordinated the participation of 160 countries for the Seoul Olympics, with international televised transmission completed by 85 broadcasting companies (SLOOC 714). Further evidence supporting the position that the government intended to use the Olympics as a political

springboard for improved international confidence in the ROK exists in the SLOOC report, which stated that “the SLOOC exerted its efforts to demonstrate the Korean people’s organizational capability and convince the world of Olympic security by bringing important international meetings to Seoul” (269).

The Olympics served as a catalyst used by the ROK government to increase macro and micro economic development, international trade, business connections, long-term security with North Korea, and to establish national pride through international recognition. Because the Olympics committed the ROK to a nearly irreversible course towards democracy and because of President Chun’s willingness to pay any price to maintain the expected benefits of the Olympics, government-destabilizing demonstrators used the expected gains from the Olympics to challenge the government’s ability to safely and successfully host the event. Once the government realized the threat demonstrations posed to the event, the demonstrators demanded direct presidential elections in exchange for their cooperation during the event. By threatening the successful hosting of the Olympics and using the cost of those benefits to hold the Olympics hostage through protests, President Chun’s only choice was to submit to their request for direct presidential elections in December 1987.

CHAPTER THREE

THREATS TO THE BENEFITS OF THE OLYMPICS

Olympics related benefits provided South Koreans who opposed the government something to hold hostage through internationally televised protests. With international media heavily present in the ROK for the first time due to the Olympics, government opposition vented their oppression and demands for elections by organizing mass demonstrations in 1987. The protestors used the international media coverage and the government's expectations from the Olympics as leverage to push forward their own demands for labor rights, wage increases, open-government, and direct presidential elections. Protests were a viable danger to the ROK Government because they posed the following four threats to the successful hosting of the Olympics:

- (1) Instability offered North Korea an opportune time for forced unification
- (2) Mass protests threatened the government and its international support
- (3) Mass protests risked losing the right to host the Olympics
- (4) Worldwide visible protests could irreversibly damage the ROK economy

Instability offered North Korea an opportune time for forced unification

To prove that North Korea served as a viable threat to South Korea, one must consider their covert and overt actions ahead of the Olympics. After receiving the Seoul Peace Prize,

former U.S. Secretary of State George Pratt Shultz pointed out in his Seoul Peace Prize Acceptance Speech “on November 29, 1987, Korean Airlines Flight 858 exploded in midair between Abu Dhabi and Bangkok while on its way to Seoul (SeoulPeacePrize.org). Almost all of the 115 people who died were South Koreans (SeoulPeacePrize.org). On January 15, 1988, a female North Korean agent confessed to planting a bomb on the plane in an attempt to disrupt the 1988 Olympics (SeoulPeacePrize.org). Throughout the 1980s, North Korea remained on constant aggression towards South Korea through terrorism, promoting pro-unification student groups, and through boycotting the Olympics. The North Korea terrorist bombing of the Korean Airlines flight served as a reminder that North Korea could carry out another act of terror or an invasion under the justification of stabilizing South Korea. North Korea not only carried out acts of terror, but their unification-at-all-costs propaganda had infiltrated the protestors in the ROK.

Michael Breen, a university student present in the ROK leading up the Olympics, writes in The Koreans: Who They Are, What They Want, Where Their Future Lies, that one of his friends, Lee Yong-ho, joined an illegal circle that studied Marxist and neo-Marxist theories (214). Students purposely joined the work force as undercover pro-North Korean and Marxist ideologues in preparation for a labor movement (Breen 214). Breen also stated that he participated in underground organizations that studied Kim Il-Sung’s Juche theory, talked in

circles about a labor movement, listened to North Korea radio broadcasts, and endured a student-driven sense of a unified Korean nationalism (214-215). His peers would state comments like “Just believe and follow” when asked about underground Marxist movements in the ROK (Breen 214-15).

Eugene Kim points out in South Korea in 1986: Preparing for a Power Transition, because widespread student protest engulfed South Korea in early 1987, demonstrators posed a two-fold threat to the leadership, democracy, and North Korean unification (68). Kim concludes that according to an analysis published by The Korea Herald on May 8, 1986, 75% of the leaflets passed out by protest groups in May of 1986 were negative, meaning they included messages of anti-American, anti-capitalist, and anti-new-democratic-party messages (Qtd. in Kim 68). With demonstrations growing in power, their acts became more overt. In 1986, South Korean protestors seized the U.S. Cultural Center in Busan on May 21 (Kim 68). On May 27, 1986, protestors organized a bomb attack on the Chonhodong branch of the Kor-Am-Bank (Kim 68). At the minimum, North Korea maintained a clear and active role in promoting the pro-unification and anti-Olympics student wave that engulfed Korea. According to Han’s research, students protested Olympics because many of them feared it would further slow prospects for unification and contribute to the legitimatization of a divided North and South Korea (33). In fact, after President Chun agreed to elections and to end

authoritarian rule, 20,000 students attempted to march to the border of North Korea in June and August to meet with North Korean students so that they could protest South Korea's attempt to host the Olympics (Han 33). While this event happened after South Korea's transition to democracy on December 1987, the event is important because it highlights the fact that some of the dissenters not only organized in support of elections, but to also prevent the successful hosting of the Olympics. Many students who attempted to prevent the successful hosting of the Olympics possibly viewed this as greater accomplishment than democracy.

Mass protests threatened the government and its international support.

Not only did student and organized labor protests make the ROK vulnerable to invasion or terrorism from North Korea, but they also threatened the government's power and international support. Protests were able to threaten the ROK government by highlighting their acts of oppression on international television, which also threatened South Korea's much-needed international support during a time of insecurity in its balance of power arrangement with North Korea and other socialist countries. Increasing demonstrations lead to more opportunities for media coverage. According to Dong-One Kim's research in An Analysis of Labour Dispute in Korea and Japan: The Search for an Alternative Model, sourced from the Korea Labor Institute and the International Labour Office Year Book of

Labour Statistics, approximately 100,000 South Korean workers participated in over 3,500 labor disputes in 1987 (Qtd. in Kim 144). Jose Aleman's research extracted from the ROK National Statistic Office, Social Movements and Democratic Consolidation in South Korea 1987-1999, concludes that approximately mid-summer 1986, Union membership only totaled approximately 1,000,000 workers, but sky rocketed to approximately 1,500,000 before General Roh Tae-Woo's declaration speech on June 29, 1987 to hold elections (Qtd. in Aleman 15). The Olympics contributed to the workers' rising expectation of wage increase. In 1987, 70.1 percent of all disputes were over wages (Aleman 14). Based on the figures Aleman extracted from a study provided by Chunbuk University, the combined total of student, labor, general public, and other forms of dissidence expressed through protests totaled 2,528,956 citizens in 1987 (Qtd. in Aleman 32).

These protests had a profound impact on South Korea's international image.

According the Carnegie Endowment publication written by Robert Kagan, What Korea Teaches, Ambassador to South Korea James Lilly warned President Chun in 1987 that a military response to protests in 1987 would "stretch U.S. Korea alliance in a dangerous fashion" (10). Assistant Secretary of State Gaston Sigur also gave a speech demanding the ROK government adopt a new political framework (Kagan 10). Part of this outside pressure came from the effects of international media exposure. According to research graphed by

James F. Larson and Heung-Soo Park in Global Television and the Politics of the Seoul Olympics, the New York Times produced 1,300 stories on South Korea in 1987 and 1,450 stories in 1988 (199).

Why was there never public support against military oppression in South Korea from the United States before 1987? The new presence of international media served a roll in making the ROK government more responsive to foreign sentiments. In 1986, U.S. based National Broadcasting Company, NBC, won control in 1986 of 74.2 percent of media rights to the Seoul Olympics (Larson and Park 83). The increase in foreign media and coverage of constant widespread protests led to demonstrations effectively challenging the successful hosting of the Olympics. This international media coverage handicapped the ROK government's ability to oppress the dissent through military and police force. Demonstrations ahead of the transition to democracy are commonly explained by a societies' demand for democratic representation as a result of rising middle class, but this would not completely explain why demonstrations continued in the ROK through 1988 after democratic elections. According to Aleman's research extracted from Chunbuk University, protests involving students totaled 1,025,023 participants in 1988 (Qtd. in Aleman 32). Because the protests continued, they were also a threat not to just the leadership's grip on authoritarian rule, but to their ability to host the Olympics.

Mass protests risked losing the right to host the Olympics

Due to the widespread protests frequently organized with the intent to prevent the successful hosting of the Olympics, the ROK remained under constant threat of the possibility for the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to cancel or move the location of the Olympics out of South Korea. After General Roh Tae-Woo won the December 1987 elections to become the President of South Korea, he pointed out in a speech cited from Korea: A Nation Transformed, that in 1984 he spoke before the Executive Committee of the OIC in Lausanne on the threat of losing their plans to host the Olympics (Roh 163). During a discussion with the IOC on whether or not they should change the site of the Olympics, General Roh told the Committee, “If you who have decided to award the next Olympics to Seoul now change the venue, I will erect a tombstone for the Seoul Olympics in the center of the Main Stadium in Chamshil which is now about to be completed, and will inscribe on the tombstone that you have killed the Seoul Olympics before it birth (Roh 163).”

Worldwide visible protests could irreversibly damage the ROK economy

The actions of the IOC to consider moving the Olympics placed South Korea’s future at risk to international and domestic losses. For the purpose of considering what would of happen if the Olympics were canceled because of destabilizing demonstrations, consider the following counterfactual: without the Olympics, the ROK would possibly not have hosted

the 160 countries participating in the Olympics, demonstrators would possibly not have been televised and consequently not rallied international support for democratic change, and the ROK would possibly not have earned the socialist business and trading partners necessary to begin shifting the balance of power away from North Korea. Considering Pyun's calculations on Olympics-related economic returns, what would have been the loss to the ROK economy if they did not earn that income due to a cancellation of the Olympics because of mass demonstrations (5)? These losses would have been compounded by ROK foreign debt. In 1986, the ROK held the world's largest debt-service ratio of 15.4% and held a foreign debt of \$48 billion (Pyun 5).

Where would have South Korea been without its Olympics related projects that totaled production of 1,846.2 billion won, which account for 0.4% earnings towards its GNP (Pyun 6)? Where would have the ROK been without 0.5% of national employment coming from Olympics-related projects (Pyun 6)? The losses from the time and money the ROK government invested in the Olympics would have not only caused damage to the economy, but possibly legitimized North Korea's boycott of the event. This could have further shifted international legitimacy towards North Korea and away from South Korea. With the hosting of the Olympics being held hostage by domestic protests that wanted a unified Korea, democracy, higher wages, and a cancellation of the Olympics, much of the ROK economic,

political, and international future remained at risk to a long-term catastrophe.

CHAPTER 4

INFLUENCES ON LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVE

In mid-1987, when the people of South Korea were demanding elections in December before the 1988 Olympics, General Roh and President Chun recognized the risks to the ROK should the demonstrations continue through the event. Furthermore, those risks likely influenced their decision-making because they were directly affected by the possible disasters that continuing demonstrations and a cancellation of the Olympics could bring to the ROK. These threats that affected the leadership personally, which influenced their decision-making, include the following three areas:

- (1) Assassination attempts
- (2) Negative international media coverage
- (3) Pressure from the U.S. government

Assassination attempts

According to an official report published on the ROK National Intelligence Service webpage, Terrorist Bombing at the Tomb of Burmese Hero in Brief, three North Korean agents exploded a bomb operated by remote control on October 9, 1983, at a tomb in Burma where President Chun and various other cabinet members were visiting (NIS.go.kr). Four ROK cabinet members were murdered, including Deputy Prime Minister Suh Seokioon

(NIS.go.kr). In total, 14 South Koreans and 32 Burmese died from the blast (NIS.go.kr).

President Chun's late arrival narrowly saved his life (NIS.go.kr). President Chun personally experienced the threat of North Korean terrorism through attempts on his life and acts of terror carried out by North Korean spies. With North Korea boycotting the Olympics and carrying out acts of terror, President Chun likely understood the security dilemma that protestors created by participating in nation-destabilizing demonstrations, which offered North Korea an opportune time for forced unification.

President Chun's persistence to remain as authoritarian ruler energized the demonstrators, whose actions threatened the military security of South Korea. Despite the obvious threat created by President Chun's persistence to remain ruler, he continued as an authoritarian President. He attempted to ignore the mass demonstrations requesting elections. Former Secretary of State Shultz confirmed the ROK and U.S. government's anxiety over the threat North Korea posed to the Olympics in his Seoul Peace Prize speech by stating that he invited Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze to the U.S. White House (SeoulPeacePrize.org). They discussed the security of the Seoul Olympics over lunch and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze affirmed that there would not be any terrorism acts during the event (SeoulPeacePrize.org). Because of the communist ties and post-Korean War support from Russia to North Korea during the Olympics, the U.S. diplomatic effort to secure

Russia's guarantee that there would be no terrorist attacks meant North Korea would not disrupt the Olympics.

Negative international media coverage

In view of the North Korean threat and the danger demonstrators posed to the expected benefits of the Olympics, President Chun experienced the problem of having to choose between appeasing the demonstrators, risking the hosting of the Olympics, and/or military security. For the purpose of ruling out alternatives to democratic transition, consider the counterfactual that President Chun could have attempted to secure the successful hosting of the Olympics and prevent support or threat from North Korea by oppressing the demonstrators. President Chun would then attempt to host the Olympics. However, if he were to oppress the pro-democracy demonstrators, many states would have likely responded by boycotting the event and the IOC would have possibly responded by canceling or moving the Olympics. Essentially, oppressing the demonstrators would not have secured their goal to successfully host the Olympics and instead likely destroyed it. President Chun first attempted to oppress the dissent before realizing that act would undermine the successful hosting of the event.

According to Kyu Ho-Youm's research in Press Freedom under Constraints: The Case of South Korea, to prepare for any attempt by dissenting citizens to reveal negative

perspectives of the South Korean to international media, the ROK Supreme Court ruled in 1983 that Press couldn't release information to foreigners that made the state look bad (874). President Chun intended to prevent protestors and international media from revealing any attempts by the ROK government to oppress dissenters before the Olympics. Breen states that during his time in the ROK, foreign press were required to wear armbands to distinguish them from domestic press (218). South Korean police wore phony armbands to video record protestors so that the ROK government could keep track of those who were involved with the demonstrations (Breen 218). Despite President's intent to postpone elections until after the Olympics, the exposure of demonstrations on world television made that plan impossible. Why could the government not silence dissenters through military force? The presence of foreign media acted as a deterrence. The media remained present because of their coverage of the Olympics and its preparations.

President Chun and the ROK government managed the threat of dissenters before 1987 through oppression and military violence. Bedeski points out that after the ROK government ordered martial law in the ROK on May 17, 1980, 2,000 ROK military forces drove back pro-democratic protestors and slaughtered them in unconfirmed numbers ranging from the hundreds to the thousands in the Kwangju Massacre (26). What made President Chun respond differently in 1987 when protestors again were challenging the government's authority?

President Chun did not fear oppressing the people of South Korea out of consideration for human rights, but because international pressure acted as a deterrent to irrational acts.

International pressure remained constantly present primarily because many of the government's acts of oppression were visible on 85 international broadcasting companies present in the ROK in anticipation of the Olympics (SLOOC 714). The government's lack of willingness to use the military to oppress the demonstrations had less to do with their conscience and more to do with the deterrence of international pressure. The 1980 Kwangju Massacre serves as proof that the ROK government did not fear oppressing its people.

The only way President Chun could have thwarted democratic transition in 1987 would have been by military and police intervention to end demonstrations. However, the use of force to oppress demonstrators would likely have led to a cancellation of the Olympics or worldwide boycotts, which would have also likely led to an unsuccessful Olympic hosting. The cost required to prevent democratic transition is a price General Roh and President Chun were not willing to pay. President Chun's possible consideration to oppress the dissenters ended when the U.S. government intervened in South Korean affairs. Partly because the media catalyzed international responsiveness, the U.S. government involved itself in ROK affairs and informed President Chun that they would not tolerate any oppressive maneuvers. Notably, the U.S. never overtly responded before to the violent acts of President Chun or the

previous oppressive Presidents of the ROK, but they did in 1987. President Jimmy Carter served as the U.S. President during the May 1980 Kwangju Massacre. However, his daily journals, archived at the online Jimmy Carter Library, provide no reference to the Massacre during the month of May in 1980 or any like event occurring during that time (jimmycarterlibrary.gov). What prevented international responsiveness to oppression in the ROK before the Olympics? The New York Times only published approximately 500 stories on South Korea in 1980 (Larson and Park 199). To no fault of President Jimmy Carter, the Kwangju Massacre did not have the large media coverage associated with the Olympics, which would have invited foreign opinion to act as deterrent to government-led oppressive acts.

Pressure from the U.S. government

With the American public and other citizens from around the world watching the mass demonstrations on world viewed television, the deterrence of American and international opinion inhibited President Chun's ability to violently respond to the demonstrations calling for elections. In late 1987, the U.S. government made it clear they would not tolerate him using military force to guarantee his security as authoritarian ruler. President Chun experienced a direct threat to legitimacy as authoritarian leader because of U.S. politicians expressing their support for democracy in the ROK. According to Kagan, the U.S.

government expected President Chun to attempt to retain power despite any commitments to democracy, which prompted Secretary of State George P. Shultz to make the remark, “Chun Do-Hwan had made a commitment, and we wanted him to realize that the United States expected him to keep it” (9). Assistant Secretary of State Gaston Sigur made a speech in February of 1987 calling for a “new political framework” in the ROK and for a “civilizing” of Korean politics (Kagan 9). U.S. Ambassador James Lilly met with President Chun and warned that intervention on the demonstrations with the Korean military would stretch the U.S.-Korean alliance in a dangerous fashion (Kagan 10). Lastly, U.S. President Ronald Reagan sent President Chun a letter encouraging him to uphold his promises for a peaceful transition to democracy (Kagan 10). The pressure of trying to thwart any assassination attempts, maneuver around negative international media coverage, and manage the necessary alliance with the U.S. government while trying to remain in power and host the Olympics, led to President Chun being forced into direct presidential elections.

CHAPTER 5

PRESIDENT CHUN DOO-HWAN'S OLYMPICS PERSPECTIVE

Even though extracting every thought, value, or doubt from President Chun's mind is not possible, it is not necessary to prove the Olympics were of greater value to him than retaining power. It is only necessary to analyze President Chun's speeches in order to define the value he placed on the Olympics to the future of Korea. President Chun's speeches provide insight into his rhetoric and possible perceptions on benefits and threats to South Korea. President Chun and General Roh maintained the option of oppressing demonstrations. However, the Olympics audience and the IOC threats to move or cancel the Olympics deterred them.

The deterrence of international opinion brought to the ROK through Olympics-related media caused President Chun to succumb to their citizens' demand for direct presidential elections. President Chun's reversal in decision to postpone the elections ahead of the Olympics created the environment necessary for a peaceful and successful hosting of the event. If President Chun did not succumb to the demand for direct elections, the demonstrators could have continued rioting and disrupted the Olympics. The rioting would have likely led to the cancellation of the Olympics and a possible excuse for North Korea to force unification through invasion, which would have caused enormous long-term losses in

economy, jobs, trade, security, international legitimacy, and life. Before and after the Olympics, President Chun persistently mentioned how the Olympics were an integral part to the future of the ROK. By establishing the value President Chun placed on the Olympics to the future of South Korea, this paper shows that part of the reason why President Chun did not violently resist South Korea's December 1987 transition to democracy is because of his fear the demonstrators demanding elections would have jeopardize the successful hosting of the Olympics. Furthermore, this paper will show that the event was more important to him than his authoritarian presidency.

According to the CQ Press Historic Document, South Korean Leaders on Democratic Reforms, President Chun outlined the 1988 Olympics as one of South Korea's top three greatest achievements in his April 13, 1987 speech where he declared the suspension of constitutional dialogue on free elections (Qtd. in South Korean Leaders on Democratic Reforms 583). President Chun's speeches reveal that he viewed the Olympics as an opportunity for the ROK to earn international recognition, serve as a catalyst for reform, and instill national pride. In President Chun's 1983, January 18, New Year policy-speech, he emphasized the importance Olympics were to the future of the ROK by speaking on the roll of the event in creating a world image of South Korea as a legitimate and responsible member of the international community. He said, "As you know well, preparations for the 1988

Olympics... I cordially request all citizens to actively involve themselves by enhancing their sense of civic responsibility and keeping the environment clear and neat with a spirit of voluntary participation in this worthy cause. In such a way, we will be able to demonstrate to the world that Koreans are cultured and enlightened (Qtd. in *The 1980's: Meeting a New Challenge* III 28)." In an address at the Inaugural Session of the 70th Inter-Parliamentary Conference held on October 4, 1983, President Chun pointed out in a stern fashion that the people of South Korea should be on their best behavior before the world during the 1986 Asia Games. He affirmed, "Let me make it clear once more, here and now, that the people and government of the Republic of Korea will welcome and provide every convenience to all visitors from every country in the world who come to participate in any international gathering or conference now and in the future including of course, the Asian Games in 1986 and the Olympic Games in 1988 (Qtd. in *The 1980's: Meeting a New Challenge* III 120)."

Speaking in a speech on the roll of the Olympics as a catalyst for reform, President Chun stated, "the '88 Olympics will be a catalyst for national prosperity" (Qtd. in *South Korean Leaders on Democratic Reforms* 593). In an address at the Opening of the 64th National Sport Festival on October 6, 1983, President Chun expressed his expectations for international recognition to be a catalyst for change that could improve the image of South Korea and providing economic development, when he said "I expect that it will present at

home and abroad a Korea which, in barely a century, has been transformed from a hermit kingdom into a rapidly industrializing, vibrant nation” (Qtd. in *The 1980’s: Meeting a New Challenge* III 226) The phrase “hermit kingdom” refers to a negative image of the Korean Peninsula. “Hermit kingdom” is a phrase used to represent Korean people as reclusive and backwards. While this comment reveals President Chun’s expectation for the National Sport Festival to reveal a new and great South Korea to the world, one must expect that he would have held an even larger expectation for the much more massive Olympics event. In the same speech, President Chun reiterated the value of the Olympics to South Korea’s national pride and international image. Elaborating on their economic future, pride, and heritage, President Chun said, “the 1988 Olympics... should serve as an opportunity to present to the world Korea’s brilliant cultural heritage, ever-expanding national strength, and energetic people united in a vigorous march toward the forefront” (Qtd. in *The 1980’s: Meeting a New Challenge* III 227). President Chun made it clear to South Korean people that he had high expectations for the roll of the Olympics in paving the way for a stronger economic, political, and cultural South Korean future. However, South Korea’s next President and chosen successor, General Roh, had even higher expectations for the Olympics.

CHAPTER 6

GENERAL ROH TAE-WOO'S OLYMPICS PERSPECTIVE

After President Chun postponed democratic elections on April 13, 1987, mass demonstrations threatened the Republic of Korea until General Roh Tae-Woo surprised the world on June 29, 1987. He recognizing the national crisis created by mass demonstrations and declared eight points for democratic reform with the second point including direct presidential elections (Qtd. in *South Korean Leaders on Democratic Reforms* 587). General Roh naturally had a greater interest in successfully hosting the Seoul Olympics. If he were successfully able to lead democratic change in the ROK, he would likely be their presidential frontrunner due to his leadership roll in supporting democratic reform.

General Roh won the December 1987 elections and went on to be President of the ROK. Why did General Roh Tae-Woo, who was expected to be the successor of President Chun, risk his chance to be president by supporting the democratic process? General Roh's speeches suggest that he had a profound understanding of the positive benefits and negative risks the Olympics posed to the ROK. General Chun recognized that demonstrations risked the successful hosting of the Olympics. He also realized that the event acted as an integral and necessary tool used to develop a successful future for the ROK. After being elected to President on December 1987, many of President Roh's speeches in 1988 referenced the

Olympics and its relationship to South Korea's international connections, national pride, and international legitimacy. This paper will reference the following nine speeches and analyze how President Roh's perspectives on the future of South Korea ties into the Olympics:

- (1) April 21, 1988 Press Conference with the Chong Wa Dae Press Corps
- (2) May 30, 1988 address during opening of the 13th National Assembly
- (3) August 15, 1988 43rd National Liberation Day Speech
- (4) September 14, 1988 remarks on the eve of the Seoul Olympic Games
- (5) October 18, 1988 U.N. General Assembly address
- (6) September 11, 1989 Special Address to the National Assembly
- (7) October 18, 1989 address to the National Press Club, Washington, D.C.,
- (8) October 18, 1989 U.S. Congress Joint Meeting address
- (9) January 17, 1989 remarks at a New Years press conference

President Roh expected the Seoul Olympics to be the most important Olympiad ever because it would reveal the newly developed ROK to the world as a legitimate power. He also anticipated the games to provide South Korea an opportunity to serve a pivotal roll in the cold war. He expected the Olympics to lead South Korea into developing relations with the socialist countries of the Eastern Bloc, China, and the Soviet Union. Emphasizing South Korea's entry into the industrialized world in a speech made on the eve of the Olympics,

September 14, 1988, President Roh said, “Now our people are about to pull off a cultural miracle on the Han River by staging a more magnificent Olympic Games than any previous which were mostly hosted by industrialized advanced nations. With the Seoul Olympics, we will arrive at the threshold of the developed world, the entry to which has been our long-standing national goal” (Qtd. in *Korea: A Nation Transformed* 48).

In the same September 14 speech, President Roh highlights his expectations for the event to strengthen socialist country ties when he stated,

“This evening, I wish to share, not only with my fellow citizens but with all the people on earth, the joy of holding here in Seoul an Olympiad that will genuinely be a grand festival of global harmony as it was originally conceived to be; the Seoul Olympic are bringing the East and the West together for the first time in 12 years. I appeal for even more enthusiastic involvement until the Seoul Olympics flame is extinguished so that the Seoul Games will be the most magnificent Olympiad ever... The Seoul Olympics are striving to attain the lofty dreams of the Olympic movement to forge common ideas for all mankind by brining the East and West – and Korea and the world – together not only in sports but in culture, the arts and learning” (Qtd. in *Korea: A Nation Transformed* 46).

The Olympics not only assisted in democratizing the ROK, but also served an important role in the cold war by undermining North Korea's boycott of the Olympics. The participation of North-Korean-supporting Soviet Union, Eastern Bloc countries, and China in the event demonstrates ROK political success and a shift in balance of power away from North Korea. In an address on the opening of the 13th National Assembly on May 30, 1988, President Roh highlights his view on the role of the Olympics and the cold war when he stated, "Spurred by the success of the Seoul Olympics, we should be able to overcome the barriers that the Cold War erected and advance practical relations even with countries that subscribe to ideologies and political systems different from ours. Our northern diplomacy is important not only to raising international status but also to creating conditions conducive to unification" (Qtd. in Korea: A Nation Transformed 174).

In an address before the 43rd Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations on October 18, 1988, President Chun emphasized the role Olympics served in international politics, security, and peace making as it relates to the ROK when he declared, "The Seoul Games instilled in all of us the hope that at last peace and reconciliation are beginning to spread throughout the world. Still, it is ironic that this wonderful festival of peace should be held in a land where the danger of conflict still looms large. But this also gives us great hope for the future" (Qtd. in Korea: A Nation Transformed 5). In his New Years January 1989 Press

Conference, President Roh expressed his view that the Olympics would have a profound impact on South Korea's international relations and legitimacy when he contended, "The Success of the Seoul Olympics, which astounded the world, demonstrated the great inherent capabilities of our people to attain any goal we set. It was a triumph that crowned our people's tenacious and untiring efforts to develop a war-devastated, economically backward country into the tenth largest trading nation in the world in a matter of only 30 years. Clearly, the world now regards Korea as a model of development designed to achieve prosperity through international openness and free competition and with a commitment to peace and freedom" (Qtd. in *Korea: A Nation Transformed* 121).

President Roh also understood the threat demonstrations were to the successful hosting of the Olympics and the future of South Korea. In fact, he shared his understanding of that threat before the U.S. Congress on Oct 18, 1989 when he stated, "Korea has transformed itself. Our nation has emerged from the authoritarianism of the past and is now propelled by the momentum of liberty, openness, and democracy. This new atmosphere led not only to the success of the Seoul Olympics..." (Qtd. in *Korea: A Nation Transformed* 15). In this speech before the U.S. Congress, President Roh acknowledges that the ROK government's decision to have elections contributed to the success of the Olympics. In another speech before the U.S. Council on Foreign Relations and the Society in New York on October 19, 1989,

President Roh acknowledged the threat of the demonstrations to the Olympics when he said, “you will recall more vividly than most the uncertainties and trepidations that we in Korea felt only 16 months ago. Our domestic policies were in serious difficulty as evidenced by last years’ violent street demonstrations. Many people wondered if, under those circumstances, our polity and economy would survive. They wondered whether we would be able to successfully serve as the host nation of the 1988 Olympics” (Qtd. in *Korea: A Nation Transformed* 156).

President Roh made it clear that demonstrations were a threat to the Olympics before his declaration on June 29, 1989 to support democratic reform. In his speech made on August 15 and September 14 1988, he brings attention to his anxiety over their ability to successfully host the Olympics when stated first on August 15, 1988,

“Today we face two major challenges in pushing ahead with democracy.

One is attempts by some groups to overthrow our free democratic system through a violent revolution and to establish a class dictatorship in its stead.

Another is the thoughtless eruption in some segments of our society of demands and strife, which also threaten the foundations of democracy that we have build so hard. We cannot any longer tolerate activities which destroy free democracy, the way of life for all of us. At present, not only we

ourselves but people around the world are praying for the success of the Seoul Olympics. Therefore, the people and the government will not forgive anyone who spoils the festival through mob action or the throwing of firebombs, no matter for what plausible cause. Breaking the law and disturbing the peace to impose one's view on others must be brought under control" (Qtd. in *Korea: A Nation Transformed* 71).

President Roh elaborates on his perceptions of the threat of demonstrations by stating in his September 14, 1988 speech on the eve of the Olympics, "Having personally experienced domestic and international trials from the time of bidding for the 24th Olympic Games until the present and having been constantly worried about the Games' success, I am now deeply moved to observe the proud present state of affairs. Together with my fellow countrymen, I feel confident of the nation's bright future... They (people of South Korea) have overcome a national crisis by creating a democratic miracle that astonished the world" (Qtd. in *Korea: A Nation Transformed* 48).

President Roh's reference to Korea's emergence from authoritarianism and national crisis in these speeches relate to the success of the 1987 December elections. The fate of the Olympics remained in jeopardy before President Roh stepped forward on June 29, 1987 and declared his intent to support direct presidential elections. General Roh's position contrasted

against the publicly stated position of President Chun who declared his intent to postpone elections. The fate of South Korea's future was held hostage by mass demonstrations that were appeased with democratic reform mostly because the Korean government feared continued protests would provoke the IOC to cancel or change the site of the Olympics. What do these speeches mean to the position of this paper that the Olympics catalyzed democracy?

President Roh repeatedly emphasized his expectations for the Olympics to act as an opportunity for the ROK to strengthen its international support, develop international trade, and unveil itself to the world as a developed country. He also recognized the threat of mass demonstrations. General Roh was the first of South Korea's leaders in a position of authority to step forward and support democratic reform, ending the motivation of the demonstrations in time for the Olympics. After General Roh won the 1988 Presidential elections, he said it best when he stated that, "Korea has transformed itself. Our nation has emerged from the authoritarianism of the past and is now propelled by the momentum of liberty, openness, and democracy. This new atmosphere led not only to the success of the Seoul Olympics..." (Qtd. in *Korea: A Nation Transformed* 15). President Roh recognized the Olympics ability to serve as a catalyst for change and perceived it as an essential step for the future of South Korea.

President Roh stated that the Olympics were a cause for reform in the ROK. In press conference before the Chong Wa Dae Press Corps on April 21, he contended, "With the Seoul

Olympics serving as the catalyst, the situation enveloping the Korean Peninsula is now changing rapidly. Accordingly, I am confident that the external change is bound to cause internal change in North Korea also..." (Qtd. in *Korea: A Nation Transformed* 108-109). This speech highlights his view on the roll of the Olympics in Korea's economic development, democratization, international relations, and security.

In a Special Address to the South Korean National Assembly on September 11, 1989, concerning National Unification, President Roh acknowledged that he believed democracy contributed to the success of the Olympics when he said, "last year, with new vitality stemming from democracy, we staged the most magnificent Olympics ever right here in Seoul (Qtd. in *Korea: A Nation Transformed* 86)." President Roh made it clear in his speeches that in his view the Olympics were an essential part of South Korea's success by saying in his 43rd National Liberation day speech on August 15, 1988,

"We are determined to live up to the world's expectations by staging the Seoul Olympics safely, splendidly and flawlessly. The success of the Seoul Olympics will inspire every one of us with a boundless sense of pride, as well as an unshakable 'can-do' spirit. This will certainly serve as a springboard for our leap into the developed world. The eyes and ears of people all over the world are now being turned toward the Korean

Peninsula where the 1988 Olympics are going to take place” (Qtd. in Korea: A Nation Transformed 70).

President Roh also made it clear that he attributed the success of the Olympics to their transition to democracy when he stated in his October 18, 1989 address to the National Press Club, Washington, D.C., that “The Success of the Games was surely due to many factors, but not least to the confident spirit of the people united with pride over the fact that they are practicing democracy no less effectively than others (Qtd. in Korea: A Nation Transformed 151).” Why does it matter what President Roh thought about the Olympics? President Roh is the first person close to President Chun to publicly proclaim their support for democracy. On June 29, 1988, General Roh’s cost-benefit analysis of the Olympics brought South Korea functional democracy.

CHAPTER 7

HOW THE OLYMPICS CATALYZED DEMOCRACY

From President Park's rule starting in 1962 to General Chun's rule ending December 1987, South Korean citizens remained under relentless authoritarian oppression as they developed economically and labor and wages increased accordingly. With the development of South Korea came a demand by the people to be involved in political life. However, with the Kwangju Massacre as an example of failed attempts to demand democratic reforms, the people of the ROK were not able to timely persuade the government to transition to a completely democratic government until December 1987. What noticeably changed in South Korea's socio-political environment? President Chun and President/General Roh clearly expressed in their speeches great expectations for the Olympics. They intended for the event to move South Korea into a new global image and increased self-esteem. However, President Chun failed to consider he would be placed into a situation where he would be forced into succumbing to the people's demand for democracy because of circumstance related to the Olympics.

If the transformation from authoritarianism to democracy, according to President Roh, caused the Olympics to be a success, then the contra-positive brings us to the conclusion that going from democracy to authoritarianism in the ROK could have caused the failure of the

Olympics. If the ROK failed at successfully hosting the Olympics, then they would quit possibly have also failed to secure their political stability, entry into the international and socialist community, and shift in balance of power over North Korea. Moreover, President Roh and President Chun's perspectives on the Olympics contributed to the fate of South Korea. Their actions placed them in the situation where they had to choose democracy or to possibly fail at successfully hosting the Olympics. The U.S. government and international media made it clear that oppressing demonstrations could jeopardize not only South Korea's right to host the Olympics, but also relations with their allies. This threat prompted President Roh to choose to avoid any dissent-related risks to the Olympics by declaring in his June 29, 1987 speech that he supports democratic reform. President Chun intended to postpone elections until after completion of the Olympics, but that plan proved to be an impossible feat due to the continuing threat demonstrations posed to the security of the Olympics. General Roh solidified the people's desire to hold elections before the Olympics when he stepped forward and announced his intent as a South Korean military General to support democracy, thus weakening the cause of the demonstrations through supporting direct president elections.

It is reasonable for someone to conclude that President Roh's first focus was on democracy and that coincidentally led to a successful Olympics instead of this paper's position that the support for Olympics prompted support for democracy. Nonetheless, because of

President Chun and President Roh's ability to recognize the value of the Olympics to South Korea's future, their decisions to have elections in fear of demonstrations disrupting the Olympics, led the event catalyzing the South Korean democratic process.

CONCLUSION

The Olympics alone obviously cannot facilitate democracy; however, a rising middle class or educated society also cannot guarantee democratic transition in a timely manner.

Unfortunately, some states whose populations have a demand for political reform may experience long-term oppression like the case of South Korea from 1980 to 1987. However, all authoritarian leaders and governments share the common goal of attempting to maintain power with the endurance of Presidents Fidel Castor and Kim Jong-II, and the communist governments of China and Vietnam serving as reliable examples. In order to estimate when a state governed by an authoritarian government or ruler will evolve into democracy, one should control the cost and benefits that leadership makes its decisions based on by introducing a Trojan horse for political reform, the Olympics.

Presidents Roh and Chun both acknowledged the roll the Olympics placed in Korea's democratization process. With the Olympics behaving like a Trojan horse for democracy, President Chun appeared to overlook the risks Olympics brought to his legitimacy as authoritarian president. He instead focused on the Olympics' roll in bringing South Korea international power, pride, cold war allies, stronger economy, and prospects for a stronger future. Because President Chun and General/President Roh expected these benefits, the costs demonstrations created by threatening the hosting of the Olympics became too great, causing

President Chun and General Roh to be forced into democratic transition. Protestors held the Olympics hostage with mass demonstrations. In exchange for ending the demonstrations, President Roh supported direct elections.

In the future, where the Olympics could be held in a state under authoritarian rule and demonstrations threatened the successful hosting of the Olympics, democracy or other forms of political reform can be used as a bargaining tool in exchange for cooperation during the Olympics. If demonstrators were to hold the successful hosting of the Olympics hostage through internationally viewed and threatening demonstrations demanding political reform, the ramifications of the demonstrations could lead to international pressure demanding the government meet with the demonstration leaders and appease their demands. If the ruling government were to ignore the international community and oppress the demonstrators, unlike a normal act of oppression in an authoritarian state with controlled media, the entire world would be watching due to Olympics-related media, causing lasting international impacts. This would likely result in a myriad of political and economic problems that include, but are not limited to, a drop in currency value and a decline in foreign investments, which would further anger the people living in that authoritarian state. It would be a lose-lose situation for an authoritarian state that hosts the Olympics to face demonstrators demanding popularly supported reform before Olympics-related international media.

CLANDESTINE APPLICATIONS

The use of the Olympics to strategically bring change through planned action, moral or immoral, positive or negative, offers a realistic application of the previously outlined Olympics catalyst for reform. This paper does not advocate a right or wrong use of the Olympics and does not encourage or discourage the use of the Olympics to bring change. This portion of the paper identifies possibilities for use of the event with no regard for perspectives appropriate or inappropriate use of the Olympics-catalyzing model. A state is in a compromising situation when it wins a bid for the Olympics and begins years of preparations for the event, but may have to cancel the event because demonstrations compromise their ability to safely host the event. In this situation, those in that state demanding reform may be able to acquire the leverage necessary to bring the government into negotiations. The outcome of the use of the Olympics to bring reform will depend on how valuable the successful hosting of the Olympics are to the host government and how successful the demonstrators are at threatening the hosting of the event. Those goals may include, but are not limited to, separatist movements, political rights, prisoner exchanges, or democracy.

To force reform on an authoritarian regime that draws some of its power from the promise to bring economic improvement, offering that regime an opportunity to host the Olympics might appear to be an appealing option since the event can serve as the Trojan horse for political reform. If awarded the event, the expectation of economic return from

hosting the event may result in a greater demand by the people for an increased standard of living. If a government that maintains oppressed populations within its society is naïve enough to host the Olympics because they are focused on the perceived benefits of the event, their leadership may not expect what exchange they will have to make with its dissenters. If protestors hold the success of the Olympics hostage with demonstrations, the government may be forced into negotiations with the demonstrators. This paper will consider the following two applications of the Olympics to act as a catalyst for reform movements:

- (1) China
- (2) Vietnam

China

In the case of the Beijing Olympics in 2008, the Chinese government appears to be risking a lot for an opportunity to successfully host the Olympics. China recently dispatched international forces to assist in peace building in Lebanon. China is building railroads, schools, and universities in Africa. They are trading heavily with states around the world and pursuing multiple free trade agreements. They are leading the world with a fast growing export-led economy. China is attempting to show the world that they have an attractive model for economic and social development. Therefore, any threats that would damage China's public image could have a shattering effect on their diplomacy and economy.

If Chinese citizens, political organizations, or the governments of U.S., Taiwan, Tibet, or another nation, wanted to jeopardize China's ability to host the Olympics by supporting and organizing demonstrations aimed at demanding some type of reform before the Olympics, they might be able to coerce the Communist Party into cooperation. If the parties involved with organizing the demonstrations are careful to plan their movement undetected and not until foreign media is in place for the Olympics, they may be able to muster enough international support to threaten the successful hosting of the Olympics. According to the Chinese Ministry of Public Security reported on the Chinese government Official Web Portal, China experienced 87,000 cases of public order disturbances, up 6.6% from 2004 (Gov.cn). Local Chinese authorities are frequently in the news for oppressing dissenters. Preparations do not have to be organized by Chinese citizens alone, but also by foreign interests or clandestine operations organized from abroad. If during the 2008-Beijing Olympics, Taiwan declares independence or coordinates demonstrations in Beijing, what course of action will the Chinese Communist party have. What would happen if the people of Taiwan demand independence for or against the will of their leadership and organize mass demonstrations numbering the hundreds of thousands?

Like the Korean 1988 case, the world media present for Olympics will change the manner at which the Chinese government is capable of responding to demonstrations, placing

the Communist Party in the same tight position President Chun and Roh were in before June 29, 1987. If the demonstrations can threaten the government's ability to host the Olympics and the IOC reconsiders China's ability to host the event, the Chinese government would have to choose to settle the demands of their opposition or fail to successfully host the Olympics. If they fail to successfully host Olympics, the Chinese government may face more severe public disturbances like those South Korea's labor forces organized due to their rising expectations of income ahead of the Olympics-related job creation and revenue. If the Chinese government were to oppress the demonstrators and ignore the international media, they would still possibly lose the Olympics due to international condemnation reminiscent of the Tiananmen Square incident. This would likely lead to a devastating drop in currency, foreign investments, trade deals, diplomatic ties, and mass dissatisfaction with the government across China. The cost would be devastating to China. Therefore, the Olympics are an opportune time to force reform on the Chinese leadership either through locally organized movements or through clandestine support from abroad.

The covert activities of foreign agents assisting in organizing demonstrations in Taiwan or Beijing in mid-2007 and 2008 could be planned by Taiwanese agents educated in Mandarin Chinese or by Chinese citizens working with U.S. intelligence agencies. Regardless of the origin, motivation, or goal of any clandestine operation designed to threaten the Olympics

though demonstrations, how effective they are will determine how much of a danger they are to their target. The possible outcomes demonstrated by the perceived covert roll North Korean agents played in the 1987 demonstrations proves to be an appealing reason for foreign states and their intelligence agencies to have a more proactive roll in regime change ahead of the Olympics inside a state.

Vietnam

Vietnam is another case where the application of the Olympics-catalyzing model could result in political reform. According to the World Bank's Vietnam online data profile, their Annual GDP percentage growth in 2000 was 6.8% while 2005 growth totaled 8.4% (WorldBank.org). Vietnam's government currently manages state-controlled media, but if they were to host the Olympics, the event would bring foreign media whose coverage of dissent or oppression could risk their expected economic benefits from the Olympics. Because Vietnam is maintaining high economic growth and attained World Trade Organization (WTO) membership November 2006, economic development is a priority for the government. Therefore, the government of Vietnam might expect a similar economic prosperity that Japan and Korea experienced following their hosting of the Tokyo and Seoul Olympics. What roll does clandestine activity provide?

On Nov 10, 2006, the U.S. embassy in Hanoi confirmed that Vietnam's government

jailed three American citizens for terrorism because they allegedly tried to organize an overthrow of the government (BBC.co.uk). On October 22, 2006, BBC News reported in the article, Vietnam Net Users Fear Crackdown, Vietnamese Security Forces began making arrests of dissidents who are expressing negative views of the government on the internet (BBC.co.uk). This action by the Vietnamese government provides relative evidence that they fear the power of dissenters inside Vietnam. If there is a widespread demand for political reform in Vietnam, but government oppression prevents any organization demanding reform from developing, the Olympics may act as the necessary catalyst to provide the conditions necessary for dissenters to protest without fear of government oppressive intervention. If the government of Vietnam remained distracted from the risks associated with hosting the Olympics and if they were to successfully win a bid for the event, clandestine operations could be organized to provide the dissenting citizens in Vietnam with the tools necessary to force the government into reform. To be effective in forcing reform, dissenters should coordinate waves of blitzkrieg-like demonstrations a few months ahead of the Olympics and prevent the government from silencing the oppression before it masses into a large enough force to captivate the world. These demonstrations would instantly jeopardize years of preparations for the event.

The parties involved with preparations for the demonstrations should not have the

appearance of foreign interest or assistance, but instead appear to be organized by local Vietnamese or former Vietnamese citizens educated abroad who may or may not be backed by foreign intelligence agencies. When the conditions of authoritarian rule, expected increase in income, Olympics preparations, international media, organized dissenters, international pressure, all exist during the hosting of an event like the Olympics in a state, the possible applications of the event to be used as leverage to force political reform are limitless. If the conditions necessary for reform are properly organized and the demonstrations are coordinated and executed in an effective and time-appropriate manner, an Olympiad can catalyze reform, as did the 1988 Seoul Olympics

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