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# Quiet Diplomacy in a Television Era: The Media and U.S. Policy toward The Republic of Korea

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Abstract: This study examines the role of television coverage in U. S. policy toward South Korea, focusing on the May 1980 Kwangju incident and the subsequent visit of South Korean president Chun Doo Hwan to the White House in February of 1981. It explores these slept episodes in the context of major dimensions of U.S. policy toward Korea and the themes developed through sporadic, low-level coverage of Korea by mainstream American media over the years. The analysis underscores the political impact of television's dramatic visual focus, its use of consistent visual images, its expansion of the geopolitical scope of the policy process, and its personalization of policy The dramatically different public interpretations of the Kwangju incident and Chun visit in Korea versus the United States suggests that President Reagan's first major state visit, during which he declared that his administration would pursue "quiet diplomacy" on human rights in Korea, while successful within the United States and in the short term, was damaging over the long term.

Keywords: News, media, television, foreign policy, public opinion, diplomacy, Korea, United States.

**Introduction**

Global television[1] is now the principal catalyst in the media-foreign policy relationship, stimulating renewed attention to a subject of perennial concern to scholars, the media, and government officials. However, despite the profusion of studies of media coverage of international affairs during the 1970s and 1980s, the vast majority of such studies only implicitly or tangentially address the relationship of coverage to foreign policy. Moreover, among those studies that do address the nature of the association between media and foreign policy,[2] almost all treat the news media generally, with insufficient attention to the ever more prominent role of television.

This paper explores the role of television and the other media in U.S. policy toward the Republic of Korea with particular attention to the 1980 Kwangju incident and the visit of Korean president Chun Doo Hwan to the White House in early 1981. It is responsive to Cohen's[3] call for studies of media behavior on a variety of foreign policy issue areas. Although less widely known, the South Korean case is equally as instructive as the Iran hostage crisis, the "people power" revolution in the Philippines, or the more recent massacre in Beijing's Tiananmen Square. A1l were watershed political occurrences, with direct implications for those nations' relations with the United States. In each case, television is widely thought to have played a new and important role in the policy process. Furthermore, each centrally involved questions about the proper U.S. policy toward

autocratic or dictatorial governments in other nations.

The title of the present study is drawn from the Reagan administration's decision to curtail public discussion of human rights issues in Korea and elsewhere, in a major departure from the policy of the Carter administration. The rationale for such a shift toward quiet diplomacy was articulated in the fall of 1979 in a widely publicized article on “Dictatorships and Double Standards” by Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, who later served as the U.S. permanent representative to the United Nations in the Reagan administration. In it, she argued that the Carter administration had participated actively in the toppling of non-communist autocracies in such nations as Iran and Nicaragua while remaining passive in the face of Communist expansion. She further suggested that such a policy was based on flawed assumptions and that right-wing autocracies, given favorable economic, social, and political circumstances, could be democratized. Despite its appeal to the incoming Reagan administration, the notion of quiet diplomacy runs counter to the idea that television and the other media have transformed modern diplomacy by bringing about a collapse of reticence and privacy in international negotiations.

At least four considerations underscore the cogency of the Korean case and help to structure the following analysis. The final three of them correspond with Adams’ typology of news dynamics based on the components of media intensity, thematic affinity, and image continuity.

The first consideration is the acknowledged importance of Korea to the United States as a bulwark in its policy of containment of communism and Soviet influence since the late 1940s. In this context, the tragedy of Kwangju and its centrality to an understanding of contemporary Korean politics, including that nation's relationship with the United States, are difficult to overstate. As Cumings observed, Kwangju “made the suppression of Solidarity in Poland seem like child's play.”[4]

A second consideration is media intensity, the question of whether the media give a story sufficient visibility to gain public awareness. While many published studies examine major media events which received high, “saturation” levels of coverage on U.S. television, the Korea case addresses the implications of a long-term pattern of low and sporadic levels of attention by mainstream U.S. media. For few other nations in the world is there such a glaring disparity between low levels of media attention on the one hand and the close military, political, economic, and cultural exchange with the United States on the other. Accordingly, this case study offers a strong complement to research on nations or regions that receive more sustained media attention.

A third aspect of the case study is the manner in which both U.S. media coverage and U.S. policies toward South Korea relate to prevailing images of that nation. In his classic 1950s study of American perceptions of China and India, Harold lsaacs noted that “vagueness about Asia has been until now the natural condition even of the educated American. His study was motivated by the apparent tendency of Americans, including policymakers, to view the world with emphasis on Europe, despite the obvious importance of Asia in America's emergence as a major world power. Korea illustrates the persistence of such tendencies on the eve of what many have called the Pacific Century.

A fourth concern of this case study is the question of how news about Korea on U.S. television and in other major media relates to a set of common and relatively stable values that may be used by the American public as an interpretive filter in comprehending international news. The present study builds on Adams' suggestion that

analyses of media messages be integrated into research that anticipates factors relevant to audience decoding of those messages. He identified seven long-term patterns from public opinion polling: belief in universal human decency, faith in communication and negotiation, sympathy for human rights everywhere, opposition to foreign combat, support for a strong defensive shield, favor U.S. economic self-interest, and inclination to favor president's leadership.[5]

**Conceptual Approach**

Although published in 1963, well before the full impact of global television could be discerned, Cohen's *The Press and Foreign Policy* [6]remains the landmark study of the media-foreign policy relationship. He analyzed the press as observer, participant, and catalyst in relation to the foreign policy process, three roles which are not mutually exclusive, but which do circumscribe the structural relationship of the media and foreign policy. His conceptual approach provides a useful framework for assessing the changes brought by television and also offers an informative contrast with more recent, reality-construction approaches in political communication.

While Cohen's conception of the press included all major mass media, for five practical as well as more substantive reasons, his study was based largely on newspapers. He noted (1) that foreign policy elites were more heavily dependent than the general population on newspapers rather than radio and television for foreign affairs news and comment, (2) that the products of the newspaper press were not so ephemeral as those of radio and television, (3) that newspaper coverage of foreign affairs was more extensive and thorough than radio or television coverage, (4) that most television and radio news was assembled from wire service reports, making it virtually indistinguishable from newspaper news, and (5) that newsgathering and editing processes in radio and television were broadly similar to those in newspapers.

Several of Cohen's assumptions passed into the conventional wisdom about the media and foreign policy and still persist. However, the hindsight of more than a quarter century of experience with television suggests some obvious modifications or qualifications in each of the foregoing propositions as well as Cohen's tripartite analytical framework.[7]

Television amplifies the observer role of the media in foreign policy as its broad, immediate, and visual reach extends all around the world, expanding the geopolitical scope of the foreign policy process. Symptoms of this development include the growing number of television channels and receivers, along with increased gathering and sharing of visual news by television organizations. In contrast to Cohen's assumption, the newsgathering and editing processes in television are acknowledged to be so influenced by the visual component of the broadcast as to suggest a decisive difference from print media. Furthermore, television news archives and videocassette recorders make the products of television more lasting than ephemeral.

Television has also made the media a more direct and active participant in the foreign policy process. In 1963 Cohen identified "the massive central issue" in debates among scholars, politicians, and journalists about the role of the media in foreign policy as the competing demands for privacy in diplomacy and negotiation on the one hand, and openness and publicity in news reporting, on the other. Today the public nature of the policy process is nearly universally acknowledged and the central issue is the relative influence of the media versus policymakers in shaping the public policy dialogue.

Hence, the art of public relations and the application of “spin-control” techniques to the discussion of public issues assume greater importance. According to former president Richard Nixon, “of all the institutions arrayed with and against a President, none controls his fate more than television.”[8] However, television's influence is not limited to the American political system. One symptom of its global scope is the growing number of government officials around the world who monitor the Atlanta-based Cable News Network (CNN) and make themselves available for interviews or statements through that network. As of early 1990, 90 television networks around the world had the right to “downlink” CNN reports via satellite and broadcast them live or taped.[9] The new priority granted television by policymakers calls for reexamination of the conventional view that the *New York Times* and other prestige national newspapers set the daily news agenda for television. Especially in foreign policy coverage, it may as often be the other way around, given the close daily contact between television news organizations and the governmental institutions that generate most foreign policy news--the White House, Department of State, Department of Defense, and the U.S. Congress.

Although some aspects of Cohen's study require modification in light of recent experience, in at least one important respect it was prescient. Alluding to Lippmann's earlier concern with the “pictures in our head”[10] he underscored the “map-making” function of the press and offered the following early statement of the agenda-setting hypothesis: The press “may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about.”[11] Were Lippmann writing today, he might well refer to the world outside, the television pictures, and the pictures in our heads. Television's expanding role as observer and participant in foreign policy dramatically increases the importance of the map-making function of the press.

The attractiveness of contemporary approaches which treat the news as political narrative[12] and constructed reality is partly a function of the increased ubiquity of media messages about international affairs, especially the intrusive visual images of television, and the corresponding lack of “extra-media”[13] data about such matters. Propaganda models also become useful in large part because they look at predominant rather than incidental or marginal media messages and treat media coverage of particular events like massive publicity campaigns.[14] The present research adopts the same epistemological principle, treating politics and political news as the creations of publics concerned with them, rather than as an account of events to which people react.[15]

The media role as a catalyst in foreign policy involves a set of questions about public use of the media and its relationship to both media coverage and policy. The democratic model assumes that the media transmit politically significant information which is then used by the public and policymakers as part of the overall policy process. The present research addresses these concerns by incorporating the general hypothesis variously referred to in the literature as *marginalization*,[16] *indexing*,[17] or *cueing*.[18] The hypothesis states that the mass media “index” the range of voices and viewpoints in the news according to the range of views expressed in mainstream government debate about a given topic, thereby “marginalizing” opposition or alternative views by leaving them in the fringes of media coverage. It implies that the range of voices in the news will vary widely from one issue area to another, narrowing in areas like foreign affairs which may appear more distant and inscrutable, even to interested or attentive publics.

The concept of focus and the apt metaphor of the television camera help to explain how television contributes to marginalization or indexing, in contrast to the older print media. The pervasiveness of television's global reach, frequency, and visual impact leads policymakers to speak and act with an awareness of its power. In this manner television creates the climate in which foreign policy decisions are debated and implemented, and television more than the print media establishes the outer limits for policy.
It does so through a process of focusing the public attention on various visual symbols of foreign policy.
The concept of focus draws attention to three characteristics of television's international affairs coverage: (1) its use of consistent visual symbols, (2) its personification of policy, and (3) the dramatic focus of the medium. Television's repeated use of visual symbols that are familiar to its audiences can be explained in part by its tendency to cover current, breaking stories, or “hard” news. Such symbols help to reduce the complexity of events that are unfolding in distant locations, making them more intelligible to viewers. Particularly in coverage of war, conflict, or natural disasters, such symbols may appear over time as familiar background elements in television coverage, giving politics and collective memory a more profoundly visual cast. The present study explores whether repeated exposure to visual material over time, even if in short bursts, can have an important cumulative influence on the policy process.
Television's personification of policy is exemplified by its tendency to cover U.S. foreign policy through statements and actions of the U.S. president or secretary of state. In so doing, television narrows the focus of political discourse, placing government leaders such as the U.S. president in the foreground with frequent and prominent coverage. Hertsgaard[19] documents the paramount importance that the Reagan White House placed on favorable visual coverage by television news and the extensive polling operation used to fine tune the administration's approach to news management. Both key White House staff members and network correspondents covering the administration operated on the assumption that television is primarily a visual medium and that the viewer's eye will always predominate over the ear when there is a clash between the two parts of a televised message.
The dramatic focus of television news was summarized in the now widely-cited 1963 memorandum from Reuven Frank to the staff of the NBC Evening News. It stated that “Every news story should, without any sacrifice of probity or responsibility, display the attributes of fiction, of drama. It should have structure and conflict, problem and denouement, rising action and falling action, a beginning, middle and an end. These are not only the essentials of drama', they are the essentials of narrative.”[20] Television's attraction to dramatic action which can be visually recorded and broadcast is now rather widely acknowledged. The present case study addresses the implications of this dramatic focus for patterns of news coverage and their relationship to policy.
Television is the most powerful agent through which the indexing process takes place because of its visual character, instantaneous or timely nature, and unprecedented ability to focus mass public attention on a particular nation or problem, sometimes through saturation coverage. One result of this focusing power is that television often exercises more influence over high-level policymakers than the *New York Times* and other elite print media.

However, it is a reciprocal rather than a one-way or automatic influence, with policymakers paying such close attention to television because they seek to manage its coverage. Problems and issues that appear with sufficient duration and frequency in the televised public discussion often require some response or action, while those that appear in the elite print media may be treated with benign neglect.

**Major Dimensions of U.S. Policy Toward South Korea**

The U.S. relationship with South Korea encompasses foreign policy considerations in four principal areas, each rooted historically in the global U.S. policy of containment of communism.[21] Notably, each of these areas of policy concern has generally been perceived quite differently in South Korea than in the United States.

The first dimension of the U.S.-Korea policy relationships was created by the division of Korea and the Korean War, which were part and parcel of the cold war containment policy pursued by the United States. In South Korea today, the national yearning for reunification forms the fundamental problem in Korean politics. Although the United States and the Soviet Union bear major responsibility for the decisions and the sequence of events that resulted in division of the Korean nation at the 38th parallel[22] such responsibility is neither widely understood nor publicly discussed in the United States. After all, the policy of containment implied that half a nation remaining noncommunist was better than none at all, especially if it protected Japan and even if it required support of military dictators and U.S. aid for economic growth.

A second policy domain is the military relationship between the two nations. South Korea has been home for 40,000 or more U.S. military personnel ever since the Korean War, large numbers of Korean troops fought on the U.S. side in the Vietnam War, and South Korea is the only nation in the world outside of Western Europe where it is acknowledged, although seldom publicly discussed, that the United States stations tactical nuclear weapons. [23]In addition, the United States has provided various forms of military aid and training to repressive military governments over the years, beginning with that of President Park Chung Hee, who took power in a 1961 military coup.

Matters of trade and economic policy form a third major policy domain. During the 1980s, the economic relationship between South Korea and the United States emerged as a full-fledged foreign policy issue. South Korea is the seventh largest trading partner of the United States, as its economy continues a remarkable expansion, displayed to the whole world as Seoul hosted the successful 1988 Summer Olympics. U.S. policy concerns about the imbalance in trade between the two nations were reciprocated in South Korea and friction over trade issues in specific industries became a recurrent feature of relations between the two nations in the 1980s.

The final policy domain in U.S. relations with South Korea, human rights, is inseparable from the preceding three. Under the military governments of Presidents Park Chung Hee and later Chun Doo Hwan, South Korea pursued economic growth while the United States as least tacitly approved of the authoritarian approach. In the process those governments compiled a record of human rights abuses that included arrest, jailing, and occasionally torture of dissidents, and heavy-handed control of the press. For many Koreans, such abuses could be seen as a direct result of U.S. influence and policies which supported stability at the expense of everything else.

In summary, the four major dimensions of U.S. policy toward Korea-reunification, the military relationship, economy, and human rights-may be seen in historical context as different aspects of the U.S. creation and support of a particular kind of government and economy in South Korea as a bulwark against communism. It was in such a context that the tragic Kwangju incident occurred in 1980.

Increasing repression during the latter years of the Park Chung Hee government created a set of pressures which led to the assassination of President Park in 1979. There followed a brief period of public progress toward democratic reform, coinciding with the consolidation of power by general Chun Doo Hwan in a two-stage military coup. In the spring of 1980, this process of military control exacerbated student demonstrations in Kwangju, the capital of South Cholla province and a stronghold of support for opposition politician Kim Dae Jung.

On May 17, 1980, a declaration of martial law dashed all hopes for a transition to democracy and citizens rebelled with student demonstrators, leading to what is now known as the tragic, bloody Kwangju incident. It erupted when both demonstrators and spectators were beaten and bayonetted, and a number killed, by Black Beret paratroopers, untrained in crowd control, who had reinforced martial law troops. Over the next three days, word of the brutality spread among citizens of Kwangju, and the troops were forced to retreat from the city, allowing students and other citizens to obtain arms from police stations and army stockpiles. By May 22, the citizens controlled the city, which was surrounded by the military. Negotiations aimed at a peaceful settlement continued until May 27, when the government ordered troops to retake the city in an early morning assault in which more people were killed.[24]

Early government estimates showed that more than 200 died in the clashes between citizens and soldiers, while members of the political opposition have claimed that more than 2,000 perished. Furthermore, although the United States officially claims that it played no significant role in Kwangju, there were two specific forms of involvement. First, the United States played the role of an important bystander, almost inevitable given its close relations with South Korea and its large military presence on the peninsula. On May 26, the citizens of Kwangju appealed to the U.S. government to mediate a truce. The appeal came in the midst of the rebellion, with the city of Kwangju sealed off by government troops. The U.S. Department of State declined to mediate, saying "We recognize that a situation of total disorder and disruption in a major city cannot be allowed to go on indefinitely." Second, the troops sent to reinvade the city and quell the uprising were released from the joint U.S.-ROK command structure, which at the time was headed by an American, General John A. Wickham, Jr.[25]

In short, the Kwangju incident was itself a massive human rights episode. It cast its shadow not only over the regime of former President Chun Doo Hwan and his successor President Roh Tae Woo in Korea, but also over the U.S. relationship with South Korea. Before examining television coverage of the Kwangju incident and President Chun Doo Hwan's subsequent visit to Washington, D.C. , a brief review of salient, long-term patterns in U.S. media coverage of South Korea provides necessary context. Such background helps to establish the degree to which television relies on familiar plots and story lines in its effort to explain breaking news.

**The Existing Narrative: Themes in Media Coverage of Korea**

The long established and stable pattern in U.S. television and mainstream media coverage of South Korea is that of low and intermittent levels of attention. For example, during the decade from 1972 to 1981 more than 20 other nations ranked above South Korea in overall extent of coverage by early evening network television news.[26] Such European allies as Great Britain, France, West Germany, and Italy all received greater and more consistent attention, as did both the People's Republic of China and Japan in Asia. A more detailed analysis of coverage for the years 1979, 1983, and 1987 showed that the news narrative about Korea had the following prominent features.[27]

First, student demonstrations were the dominant symbol of protest for both television and the print media. The larger student protests are routinely visual and violent, lending themselves equally well to a front-page newsphoto of a masked student hurling a fire-bomb or to an evening news clip of helmeted riot police firing a round of tear gas.

Second, other forms of political violence composed a related leitmotif of Korean coverage. In October of 1979, coverage of the assassination of President Park Chung Hee was closely tied to reports on political opposition, protests against his authoritarian government, and human rights abuses. In October of 1983, a bomb blast in Rangoon, Burma, killed 18 people, including six officials of the South Korean government who had accompanied President Chun Doo Hwan on a trip there.

Third, coverage of South Korea clearly showed the tendency of television to “presidentialize” its international affairs coverage. State visits to Korea, such as those by President Carter in June 1979 and by President Reagan in November 1983, received extensive coverage from the accompanying pool of White House reporters. The destruction of KAL flight 007 was by far the major Korea study of the 1980s as measured by quantity of media coverage. Television coverage of the incident began at saturation levels, but was sustained primarily because of a Reagan administration decision to retaliate by seeking to trigger worldwide condemnation of the Soviet Union. Hersh[28] describes how the decision to pursue such a propaganda campaign was made during the early hours following the shootdown, despite intelligence evidence suggesting that the Soviets may have confused the Korean Air Lines 747 with the flight path of an RC-135 U.S. intelligence plane. National Security Decision Directive 102, outlining the government's response to the destruction of Flight 007, says that the basic goal of American policy was to advance understanding of the contrast between Soviet words and deeds. Soviet brutality in this incident presents an opportunity to reverse the false moral and political ‘peacemaker’ perception their regime has been cultivating.” President Reagan himself spoke out repeatedly on the KAL 007 downing in the weeks and months following the incident.

Fourth, for all practical purposes, coverage of the South Korean economy and its growing trade relationship with the United States was missing from television coverage. By contrast, economic news was a staple of New York limes coverage, accounting for 14% of total Korean coverage during the three years examined.

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**Organizational and Cultural Constraints**
**On Media Coverage**

The difficulties facing U.S. and other Western news media in covering South Korea stem partly from considerations of language, culture, and the organizational and structural constraints of U.S. and international news media. During the period of time covered by this study, none of the U.S. television networks staffed a full-fledged bureau in Seoul, preferring instead to retain cameramen on a permanent basis and periodically bring in a correspondent from Tokyo or elsewhere.

Linguistically, Korea poses a most difficult challenge. Its language is considered among the most difficult in the world for English-speaking Westerners to learn. Over the years a large number of South Koreans have developed proficiency in English and a much smaller number of expatriates have done so with the Korean language. In the context of a large U.S. military and governmental presence in Seoul, the foregoing factors lead many television reporters and other foreign correspondents to frequent association with and dependence on official U.S. government sources or other Western expatriates for cues as to developments in Korea.

Although student demonstrations might occur at any one of several large universities in Seoul, the front gate of Yonsei University has proven to be extremely convenient for both student demonstrators and representatives of U.S. and other international television organizations. Yonsei is located near two other major universities and is within walking distance of two stops on the citywide subway system, allowing easy access to the area by students from other universities. The university is also close to the center of downtown Seoul, approximately ten minutes drive away by taxi and offering easy access from major international hotels, the Seoul Foreign Correspondent's Club, and the U.S. embassy. Furthermore, the Yonsei University main gate fronts on a major thoroughfare, across the street from a raised railroad embankment, offering an excellent vantage point for news photographers or television camera operators.

Like most universities in Seoul, Yonsei has a walled campus within which students may gather and later pour out of the pates, arms locked in highly organized demonstrations. In general, the most violent parts of student demonstrations in South Korea, involving firebombs and tear gas, take place in mid or late afternoon, after students have assembled and built up sufficient strength in numbers to warrant an attempt to march into the street. In short, foreign correspondents for Western news organizations face a minimum of difficulty in offering timely coverage of demonstrations or unrest in this location.

In the period since 1979, two events in particular help to illuminate the vital role of media in relations between the United States and South Korea. Therefore, the May 1980 Kwangju incident and the February 1981 meeting of South Korea president Chun Doo Hwan with newly-inaugurated president Ronald Reagan in the White House will be discussed in some detail.

**Coverage of the 1980 Kwangju Incident**

The height of the Kwangju incident occurred between May 18 and May 27, 1980, beginning with the initial bloodshed in clashes between demonstrators and paratroopers, continuing through the week during which citizens controlled the city, and ending with a predawn assault by army troops to retake the city. For both the *New York Times* and the three major television networks, coverage of Kwangju built upon the already existing

story line of protest and political maneuvering in South Korea, with at least three broad emphases. One was the protest, violence, and bloodshed itself, preceding and during the Kwangju incident, with attention to casualty reports and other details of the brutality. The visual drama and conflict provided by such events drew correspondents from all three of the major U.S. television networks to South Korea, allowing television to convey vivid, moving images while the *New York Times* was limited to a smaller number of news photos however graphic.

A second broad thematic emphasis was the role of the authoritarian military versus the pro-Democratic opposition and students in South Korean politics. While network television was unable because of time limitations to provide much more than an identification of the key actors, the *New York Times* devoted considerable space to such matter as the career and background of both General Chun Doo Hwan and the opposition political leader, Kim Dae Jung.

A third broad theme of the Kwangju coverage was formed by attention to official statements by the military government in Seoul and by U.S. government representatives, usually in Washington, D.C. This emphasis reflected both standard newsgathering practices and an effort to place the rapidly unfolding events into some broader context to make them understandable. The focus of this study dictates special attention to both the visual impact of television coverage and the pattern of media attention to official pronouncements on Kwangju.

**Visual Impact of Television**

The first CBS Evening News coverage from South Korea during May of 1980 came in a report by correspondent Bruce Dunning in Seoul, aired on the 13th of the month. The audio and visual themes of the report are shown in Table 1.

Bruce Dunning's report lasted one minute, seven seconds, and the contrast between his narration and the visual scenes is striking. Visually, the report focused on dramatic action, consisting entirely of pictures of riot police and students at various stages of confrontation involving rocks, bottles, truncheons, and tear gas. The front gate of a Seoul university formed the familiar backdrop for such action. In short, the central message and symbolic value of this story has much more to do with violent student demonstrations *per se* than with the subject matter of the audio narrative or the origins, broader context, or results of such demonstrations.

Bruce Dunning's next report from Seoul was aired on May 18 and the two-minute story sustained the same dominant visual theme of combat police confronting students. Reporting from the city of Kwangju itself began on May 19, as Dunning described a chaotic and bloody confrontation between paratroopers and citizens of the city.

**Table 1**

Audio and Visual Themes of CBS Evening News Report, May 13, 1980

| Audio Narrative | Visual |
|---|---|
| For more than a week, student demonstrations have been building because of anger at military rule which has continued since the assassination of President Park Chung Hee. | Close-up and medium-range shots of students singing and riot police in formation. |
| Unrest triggered now by the additional appointment of the martial law commander as chief of the Korean CIA, the political police. | Riot police rush students; students march with locked arms toward the police. |
| Thousands of students at Yonsei university hurl rocks and bottles at police, who retaliate with rounds of tear gas. Students fear progress toward democracy may be cut off by the martial law commander and other generals still loyal to the memory of President Park and his authoritarian regime. | Students throw bottles and rocks at police; police and armored vehicles respond with billowing rounds of tear gas; police club students . |

Troops were shown in full battle gear with automatic weapons and fixed bayonets. There were scenes of confrontation between the troops and civilians, bloody pictures of wounded participants on both sides, soldiers shown arresting young men, including some in business suits, and armored vehicles rolling through the streets.

On May 20 and 21 , CBS aired short anchor reports on the developing situation in Kwangju, accompanied by still photos similar to those which appeared on the front page of the *New York Times*. Bruce Dunning's next report from Kwangju, filed on May 22, is summarized in Table 2.

On May 23, correspondent Dunning filed a report that began by showing people in traditional Korean mourning clothes participating in a funeral, followed by scenes of dead and wounded people in hospitals and hospital morgues. Views of burned out buildings and vehicles around the city showed the extent of destruction, and shots of the Korean army ringing the city underscored the continuing confrontation and impasse.

On May 26, CBS broadcast a report by correspondent Peter Collins, focusing on a group of Kwangju clergy meeting with army generals to negotiate; students and citizens marching to show continued determination, and more scenes from a morgue with estimates from a citizens group that counted “173 killed and nearly 900 wounded.”

On May 27, CBS broadcast a report by Collins describing the predawn assault by government troops to retake the city of Kwangju. It was one of the most chilling reports of the entire incident broadcast on the early evening network news (Table 3).

In summary, the reports from Kwangju made spectacular visual television of the sort that

American viewers have come to expect from coverage of war or conflict. Little wonder that on May 21 and 22, both correspondent Mark Litke and anchor Peter Jennings of ABC television explicitly referred to the Kwangju situation as a "small war" in that city. However, the visual images were also consistent with the scenes of violent student demonstrations and political unrest that had been televised to American audiences from Korea over the years. Therefore, they were more likely to reinforce or strengthen rather than challenge current public images of Korea in the United States, even though the unrest in Kwangju was orders of magnitude more important than prior unrest.
Despite the drama and the underlying significance of the events, none of the individual stories were considered important enough at the time to lead a newscast, except for the ABC broadcast on May 27. Nearly all of the reports on CBS came during the second half of the early evening news broadcast. Some of the major stories which preceded Kwangju coverage on the three networks were the eruption of the Mount St. Helens volcano in Washington State, diplomatic maneuvering in an effort to resolve the continuing Iran hostage crisis, race riots in Miami, President Carter's declaration of Love Canal , N.Y. as a disaster area because of health problems caused by toxic chemicals, and George Bush's announcement of his withdrawal from the race for the Republican presidential nomination.

**Reliance on Official Sources**

Upon closer examination, this lack of prominence reflects an important aspect of the indexing phenomenon. In the absence of public policy debate over events in South Korea, the media characteristically turn to routine government sources to interpret events in that nation. High-level officials such as the president or secretary of state made no public comment during the Kwangju incident which would have generated higher- profile television news coverage.

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**Table 2**
Bruce Dunning's CBS News Report from Kwangju, May 22, 1980

| Audio Narrative | Visual |
|---|---|
| So severe was the fighting in Kwangju, that the outnumbered army and police forces had to withdraw, leaving the city to its citizens. Western newsmen who managed to get into the city found themselves applauded and cheered by the crowds, but the atmosphere is heavily tinged with danger. The rioters have commandeered police vans, army trucks, even armored vehicles. They broke into armories, and most of the young men now controlling the city are armed with loaded carbines and rifles. Supplies of ammunition seem plentiful. The battered vehicles carry the South Korean flag, for these people consider themselves patriots, opposing the generals who seized power last weekend. | Empty streets of the city; smoke rising amid some of the buildings. Scenes of cheering crowds, videotaped from a slowly moving vehicle. Students, some with headbands or masks, carrying automatic weapons and driving trucks, and armored vehicles. |
| Earlier rumors of several dozen killed in the rioting are proving true. Many of the dead are civilians, apparently shot in the face at close range or bayonetted. The insurrection has spread to other parts (Table 2 continued) | Bodies on stretchers being placed on a raised platform. |
| of southwestern Korea. Demonstrators from Kwangju were cheered as they sought support in farming villages. Recruits jumped aboard commandeered buses and trucks to join the crowds back in Kwangju. | Scenes of demonstrators, some with weapons in various commandeered vehicles. |
| The people of Kwangju seem flush with victory. They are standing firm on their demands that martial law be ended, and that their local political hero, Kim Dae Jung, be released from jail. The generals consider this unacceptable. The two sides are negotiating, however, and the newly named prime minister made a promise, in a nationwide broadcast, to find a solution quickly. Both sides seem to realize that any attempt to regain control of the city by force would be a bitter, bloody fight. Bruce Dunning, CBS News, Kwangju. | More scenes of commandeered vehicles, young men with weapons, and on occasion cheering citizens in the streets of Kwangju. |

**Table 3**

May 27, 1980, CBS Broadcast: The Retaking of Kwangju

| **Audio Narrative** | **Visual** |
|---|---|
| The attack began in the cold, gray light of dawn. Volleys of gunfire echoed over the rooftops as army troops moved in on the provincial headquarters where the students were holding out. | View of buildings in dim light; sounds of gunfire in the background. |
| The worst of the fighting was over in two hours, but fears of rebel snipers kept nervous soldiers moving from door to door and checking the few civilians who ventured into the streets. A young man caught in an alleyway was taken prisoner by soldiers who clearly believed anyone in the streets was suspect. | Soldiers moving through streets; soldiers stopping people at gunpoint. |
| Scores of tanks and thousands of soldiers were used in a massive display of force, not only in the final attack on the students, but also throughout the city. In contrast to last week, when the rebels were able to overwhelm a smaller number of troops, the army was taking no chances this time. A helicopter brought in a major general in charge of the operation after the area was secure. | Scenes of tanks, truckloads of soldiers, troops moving through streets, and officer walking from a helicopter. |
| The army captured some two hundred young men, most of them university students. The prisoners were taken away to a nearby military base for investigation. | Prisoners in a bus, with hands behind heads or heads down. |
| In the courtyard of the heavily damaged headquarters, some of the casualties in the fighting lay dead and wounded. As soldiers continued to mop up, more prisoners were brought out and brutally tied up. The force and violence used today were a climax to an upheaval that began more than a week ago with peaceful demands for dent an end to martial law. The students had held the city for six days after breaking into armories, seizing thousands of weapons, and turning back the army's first attempt to crush the rebellion. At the end, negotiations broke down, and the students ignored a last ultimatum to surrender. After it was all over, an Army Colonel talked about the assault. | Students lying on pavement in pools of blood; soldier tying student around neck with narrow cord; soldier forcing student to lie down at gunpoint; soldiers dragging body of student along pavement. |
| “We had a very bitter fight.” Q: “They did fire back?” A. “They fired first.” Q: “They fired first at you?” A. “Yes” | Colonel being interviewed. |
| As the streets in this city of 800,000 lay still and deserted under a total curfew, the military faced the task of winning back the confidence of a population that largely supported at least the initial stages of the student rebellion. The uprising here was itself a reaction against military force.<br>The bitter and bloody way that it has ended is sure to inflame passions further, and the peace here may only by temporary. Peter Collins, CBS News, Kwangju, South Korea. | Scenes of streets and moving armored vehicles; Peter Collins, concluding the report. |

Except for statements attributed to "leaders" of the Kwangju rebellion, both the *New York Times* and CBS regularly relied on public announcements by the military leaders in Seoul and statements by U.S. officials, usually at the State Department in Washington, D.C. Typical of television was Walter Cronkite's comment following a correspondent's report from Korea on May 22: "In Washington, the State Department warned North Korea that the United States will react strongly if there's any attempt to exploit the unrest in the South." One rare exception to the network reliance on official sources occurred on May 26, when CBS correspondent Peter Collins interviewed an American missionary, Arnold Peterson, who had witnessed use of excessive force by the paratroopers in Kwangju.
Despite the pattern of reliance on official U.S. government sources, there was a conspicuous lack of attention, especially by television, to the nature and roots of U.S. involvement with Kwangju. ABC was the only network to report that citizens of Kwangju had appealed to the United States in the midst of the uprising. On May 26 a report by correspondent Mark Litke contained the following statements: "Leaders of the rebellion, holed up in the provincial government building, now want the United States to mediate the dispute and exert its influence. No comment tonight from U.S. ambassador to Korea, William Gleysteen." However, there was no attempt to go into the historical, cultural, and political context which might explain why citizens of Kwangju made such a request or believed so deeply in the power of the United States to influence the course of events.
The New York Times offered relatively more context, noting in a May 23 report that General John A. Wickham, Jr. , had granted a South Korean request that some of its ground forces be released from the combined U.S.-South Korean command for use in crowd control and security work. Defense Department officials said that the Korean forces were rear echelon units not those assigned to areas near the demilitarized zone.[29] Notably, even the newspaper report failed to go further into the crucial political significance in South Korea of the joint command structure and of this particular release of Korean forces by the American head of the joint command. Under the joint command, a U.S. general was supreme commander of both American and Korean troops and his permission was necessary for the Korean troops to be released.
On other occasions, television showed itself capable of inserting fragments of very significant information into its reports in an almost offhand manner. For example, near the end of a May 27 report from the State Department, focused on Carter administration concerns over apparent moves toward a military dictatorship in Korea, ABC correspondent Barrie Dunsmore noted that "With 39,000 American troops and perhaps as many as 700 tactical nuclear weapons in South Korea, the U.S. is not just a causal observer. . . ."

**President Chun's State Visit to the White House**

Following the Kwangju incident, opposition political leader Kim Dae Jung was convicted of sedition and sentenced to death. His death sentence was reportedly lifted only after intervention by the United States. It was widely reported that in 1980 President Reagan invited President Chun Doo Hwan to the White House in exchange for a promise not to execute Kim Dae Jung.
For sheer political impact in South Korea, as a visible symbol of U.S. support for an

authoritarian, right-wing military government, President Reagan's meeting in the White House with President Chun on February 2, 1981, was unequalled during the U.S. president's administration. It was the first major state visit of the Reagan presidency and all subsequent signs of support for the Chun government could be somehow related to that televised White House meeting. Its impact was all the greater because it came less than nine months after the Kwangju incident itself and only weeks before the Korean presidential election. Table 4 details the CBS Evening News report of the Chun visit. The visual part of television's coverage was highly personalized, focusing on the two presidents and their wives, and deeply symbolic. There were smiles all around and no hint of any areas of discord in the talks. Moreover, the complete texts of their luncheon toasts, President Reagan's remarks on the departure of the Korean leader, and the joint communique they issued shows that none existed. There were no public references at all to human rights questions. The major theme was the military and security relationship between the two nations.

By contrast, past U.S. presidents had made a habit of at least publicly acknowledging repression and human rights problems of the military governments in Korea. The Carter administration's stance is well known, but even when President Ford visited Seoul on November 22, 1974, CBS correspondent Bob Schieffer's report ended as follows: ". . . officials confirmed that the subject of Korea's repressive domestic policies did come up during the afternoon talks. No details were revealed, but one administration official will remain in Seoul to hear complaints from spokesmen for dissident groups."[30]

## The Impact of U.S. Television in South Korea: AFKN and the VCR

Television coverage of the Kwangju incident and President Chun Doo Hwan's subsequent visit to the White House each had a dramatically different and greater public impact in South Korea itself than in the United States. That public response was affected in the short term by the broadcasting of the Armed Forces Korea Network[31] and in the longer term by the underground circulation of videocassettes containing Kwangju cover- age. Although nearly 80% of all South Korean households owned television sets by 1980,[32] nationwide martial law was in effect during the Kwangju incident and virtually nothing was written or broadcast about it in the South Korean

**Table 4**

CBS Evening News Report of Chun Visit to White House

| Audio Narrative | Visual |
|---|---|
| Walter Cronkite: "President Reagan greeted South Korean President Chun Doo Hwan at the White House today and gave Chun the news he wanted to hear, that the United States will not withdraw any of its 39,000 troops from South Korea. A phased withdrawal, begun in '77, was stopped two years later and was scheduled to resume, pending review, this year. More on the story from Leslie Stahl.<br>Table 4 (continued) **Audio Narrative** | Cronkite and graphic of U.S. and Korean flags, then map of Korean peninsula. |

| | **Visual** |
|---|---|
| By inviting South Korean President Chun Doo Hwan to be one of its first foreign visitors, aides say President Reagan was hoping to signal the world that the United States has a new foreign policy, one that deemphasizes the human rights issue and stresses the reliability of the U.S. as an ally.<br>I hope you'll understand that the United States will remain a reliable Pacific partner, that we shall maintain the strength of our forces in the Pacific area.<br>President Chun was even more explicit. “I am happy to say that President Reagan gave me firm assurances that the United States has no intention of withdrawing the American forces in Korea. I am pleased that the present level of United States military presence in Korea will be maintained. | Presidents Reagan and Chun, with wives on White House balcony, shots of the couples outside of the White House. |
| In a joint communique, Mr. Reagan agreed to resume the full range of defense and economic consultations between the two countries that former - President Carter had cut off because of alleged human rights violations. | President Reagan; Nancy Reagan and Mrs. Chun looking on. |
| The timing of the Chun visit, just a few weeks be- fore elections in South Korea, was being questioned, amid charges that Chun will use television pictures of the meeting to enhance the legitimacy of his regime. | President Chun speaking, Reagan looking on. |
| Also questioned were the full page ads placed in today's *Washington Post* by seven Korean corporations. But State Department sources say privately that President Chun won his visit through, quote, “an implicit agreement under which he lifted martial | Picture of written communiqué. |
| law and press censorship, and commuted to life in prison the death penalty imposed on Kim Dae Jung, leader of the political opposition in South Korea.”<br>In his toast at the state luncheon, Mr. Reagan celebrated, as he put it, the neverending friendship of the two countries. | Chun and Reagan seated in oval office, pictures of newspaper advertisements, Chun addressing luncheon group. |
| Our young men have fought side by side, not only in Korea, but in Vietnam, and again there, the cause was freedom, and today we are committed to each other's defense against aggression. | Reagan addressing luncheon. |
| There were two signals from the White House today. First, that human rights will no longer be discussed publicly by U.S. officials, and second, that the Reagan administration intends to bolster U.S. allies in parts of the world that face possible Soviet aggression. Leslie Stahl, CBS News, the White House. | Leslie Stahl outside White House in the evening. |
| Walter Cronkite: Incidentally, the State Department confirmed that it suggested Congress delay release of the annual U.S. report on human rights abuses until Chun leaves the country. | Walter Cronkite in studio. |

news media without approval by the military censors. This led to near total silence on the details of what was happening in Kwangju at the very time when the public in that nation was eager for such news. In a May 20 dispatch from Seoul, the New York Times reported that demonstrators in Kwangju itself attacked a broadcasting station, set it aflame, and the building burned to the ground. "They were said to be enraged by broadcast statements yesterday that there were no deaths or injuries in Kwangju when in fact the city's five hospitals were reportedly filled with injured people."[33]

Given such strict control on Korean-language media, the U.S. broadcast coverage aired by AFKN was unquestionably followed by the majority of highly educated Koreans who speak and comprehend English, which has long been a required second language in the South Korean school system, beginning in middle school. Under the circumstances, even those who might not normally view AFKN television broadcasts for lack of English fluency might have been expected to tune in for any visual coverage of what was occurring in Kwangju.

The impact of television was reinforced in an important way through use of the videocassette recorder, which is manufactured and is widely available in South Korea. in the months and years following the Kwangju incident, efforts by the Chun government to restrict public discussion of it were met with public efforts to make it an issue. Along with books and other materials which circulated underground, copies of videotapes made by U.S . , Japanese, and German television news organizations during their coverage of the incident circulated widely among student activists, dissidents, and concerned citizens.[34]

By receiving President Chun as the first foreign head of state to visit the White House in February 1981, the Reagan administration sent out a resounding message of support for the military government only eight months after the blood- shed in Kwangju. It also provided President Chun with a major Korean media event, less than a month before a presidential election in that nation under the old election laws, which allowed campaigning only through the news media and prohibited direct appeals to the electorate through public speeches and rallies.[35]

That Chun would seek to use his visit with Reagan as a domestic media event was never in doubt. Less than six months earlier, the Carter administration had complained loudly and publicly about efforts by the government of then-General Chun Doo Hwan to distort American policy positions in the south Korean media. According to Richard C. Holbrooke, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, South Korean authorities were manipulating the press so that "public statements by officials, including the President of the United States, are misrepresented to the Korean people."[36] In reflecting on his actions during the Kwangju incident as U.S. ambassador to Korea, William Gleysteen noted that "Not much was said praising or criticizing the U.S. at the time. Within a few months, however, a myth sprang up in Kwangju that the U.S. was partly responsible for the incident. The timing postdated the Reagan-Chun summit meeting, suggesting that act may have provoked someone to maliciously disseminate false charges against the U.S."[37] Rather than invoking conspiracy theories, Gleysteen might more plausibly have attributed the criticism of the United States to such general conditions as the lack of Korean media coverage during Kwangju, widespread perceptions in Korea of U.S. influence, and the public impact in Korea of a widely

televised state visit to the White House for a man who nine months earlier was still an army general during an era of public yearning for civilian, democratic government.
Both AFKN broadcasting and the phenomenon of duplication and widespread viewing of videocassettes illustrate the difficulties television technology poses for those who would control access to information.

**Media Coverage and the Climate for U.S. Policymaking**
Although the American public has not been polled about Korea on a regular basis, a review of some findings helps delineate the climate within which public policy dialogue took place, presumably setting the outer limits for foreign policy. That climate may be described in terms of both thematic affinity and image continuity, as discussed earlier.
Data from several nationwide polls suggest that the American public views Korea in terms of its longstanding orientations to foreign affairs, which include opposition to foreign combat, support for a strong defensive shield, and sympathy for human rights everywhere. Polls have generally shown that only a minority of the American public would favor commitment of U.S. troops to defend South Korea if it were attacked by North Koreans.[38] However, the proportion of respondents favoring U.S. military involvement increases rather dramatically when they are prompted with the information that the United States has troops stationed in South Korea and a firm commitment to defend that nation. In another poll, Yankelovich, Skelly, and White tried to measure the "firmness" of public opinion on various domestic and foreign policy issues. They found that “giving military support to anticommunist allies, such as South Korea, even if they violate human rights” was one of several issues on which opinion was least firm, scoring highest on their “mushiness” index.[39]
Such poll results are consistent with the low-level and intermittent pattern of media coverage given Korea over the years and suggest a rather high degree of latitude for government policymakers, particularly the executive branch, to shape public discourse and opinion on Korea issues. In fact, the White House was itself conducting an extensive survey research program managed by Richard B. Wirthlin and funded by the Republican National Committee. One purpose of these surveys was to measure public ignorance or indifference to, or misconceptions of, world places and events in order to gauge the education effort required by the White House to gain public support for specific actions. For example, one set of surveys showed that:

> About 19% of Americans didn't know about Israel, or not enough to have an opinion. Among those who did, Israel's popularity rating was 47 on a scale of 0 to 100, with 100 being the “best possible” country. Canada's popularity rating, in contrast, was 72, which is extremely high, and Korea's was.[40]

The preceding findings begin to suggest the nature of Korea's public image in the United States. More detailed information was gathered in two nationwide surveys on American perceptions of Asia, completed in July 1980 and March 1985 respectively, which included several specific questions on Korea. The surveys were conducted by the Gallup Organization and involved personal interviews with a random sample of adult Americans.[41]
Respondents were asked to choose from a long list of adjectives those which came closest

to describing their impressions of specific nations in Asia. The two words most frequently chosen to describe Korea are political unrest (chosen by 47 % in 1980, 48 % in 1985) and underdeveloped (39% in 1980, 42% in 1985). More respondents associated the term political unrest with Korea than with any of the other countries mentioned, except for the Philippines, which tied Korea in 1985, being mentioned by 48 % of respondents. The finding undoubtedly reflects the timing of the first survey, about one month after the Kwangju incident, as well as television attention to the longer-term student and political opposition to the Chun Doo Hwan government engendered by Kwangju. Moreover, it is of particular relevance to the question of media intensity as a factor in news dynamics.[42] It appears that low levels of televised attention, particularly if the message is consistent and sustained over months or years, can influence public perceptions in a manner relevant to the policy process.

A relatively high proportion of respondents considered Korea to be underdeveloped. In 1985 only 36% of respondents applied that adjective to China, 47% to Indonesia, 32 % to the Philippines, 22 % to Taiwan, 38% to Thailand and 45% to Vietnam. On a related question, 83% of respondents in 1985 (up from 81 % in 1980) said they thought the following statement was true: "The United States provides major economic assistance and aid to South Korea." During the same time span covered by the surveys, the general lack of attention to news about the South Korean economy, especially on television, coincided with this widespread public misconception.

In short, the survey results provide an important glimpse into the public opinion climate for U.S. policymaking on Korea. Because of longstanding public views on foreign affairs (thematic affinity) and the nature of preexisting public images of Korea (image continuity), the Reagan administration could feel safe in deemphasizing human rights and hosting President Chun at the White House. The above survey findings are also consistent with the notion that television focuses the public dialogue and sets the broad parameters for policy. Given the reach, frequency, and visual impact of television along with its preeminence as a source of international affairs information, the high public awareness of political unrest in Korea could hardly be attributed primarily to other sources. Instead, it suggests that television was the principal influence, supported by the other media. Likewise, the unrealistically high public perception of Korea as underdeveloped would not have been possible without low levels of television attention to the burgeoning Korean economy.

**Conclusion**

Analysis of the media role in U.S. policy toward the Republic of Korea contributes to a better understanding of the expanded role of television in foreign policy in several ways. These may be summarized in relationship to the conceptual approach presented at the outset.

First, the Korean case helps to refine our understanding of the relationship between media intensity and the foreign policy process. The Kwangju incident, although a central problem in South Korean politics and in the U.S. relationship with that nation, never received saturation coverage or became a lead television news story. One important reason was that its dramatic and violent visual scenes fit the familiar story line established by coverage of Korea during the 1970s and 1980s. The television organizations and those correspondents dispatched to Kwangju had ample prior

experience gathering pictures of a nation wracked by student demonstrations, assassinations, acts of terror or violence, and on occasion threatened by a hostile neighbor to the north. A second, equally important reason for the lack of prominence was the silence of President Carter and Secretary of State Edmund Muskie during the incident, even when citizens of Kwangju appealed to the United States to mediate. Finally, unlike the 1989 massacre in Beijing's Tiananmen Square, which closely coincided with a visit to China by the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, U.S. television had no such second story line or alternative reason for spotlighting events surrounding Kwangju.

An important lesson of the Korea case is found in this low-intensity coverage. It shows television's power to create a visual context through less frequent but long-term and consistent attention to predictable themes. The impact of such consistency in visual images may well be heightened when, as in the case of Korea, they have such a highly dramatic focus. The explanation for such an impact is somewhat like the low-involvement hierarchy developed by Krugman to explain why television advertising has an effect through repetition even though most viewers are not strongly involved with either the advertising or its topics.[43] Opinion poll data suggest that television inculcated images of political unrest and violence as a pervasive component in American public perceptions of Korea. Such images were presumably evoked as a background factor when U.S. administrations decided to elevate Korea to public discussion, either through official state visits or by way of public shifts in policy.

Second, the multiplication of channels for such news expands the geopolitical scope of the policy process. Public perceptions of the Kwangju incident and the Chun White House visit were very different in Korea than in the United States, and the evidence suggests that the transnational character of television technology helped to shape these differences. Because of strict military censorship of South Korean media during the May 1980 Kwangju incident, an influential and attentive segment of the Korean public received first reports of the tragedy through television news relayed from the United States via satellite and broadcast in South Korea by the Armed Forces Korea Network. Such coverage helped make it inordinately difficult for the military, led by Chun Doo Hwan, to suppress news of the incident. Only eight months later, a much larger South Korean public saw President Chun Doo Hwan visit the White House, with coverage maximized on the government-controlled television systems in South Korea, and with the usual rebroadcast of U.S. television news through AFKN. Subsequent efforts by the Chun government to put a favorable “spin” on the White House visit through rebroadcast of pictures from the meeting coincided with the wide circulation in Korea of graphic videotapes from Japanese, West German, and U.S. television coverage of Kwangju.

Third, the case study also shows that, as a participant in the U.S. policy process toward South Korea, television was primarily dependent on official information rather than a source of new information for policymakers. To some degree, this finding is attributable to long-established patterns of visual newsgathering in an East Asian setting that posed a difficult challenge, linguistically and culturally. However, it stems in part from the president's ability to focus the public attention on himself and other officials through state visits to Korea or such highly visible gestures such as the Reagan summit meeting with President Chun.

A fourth conclusion has to do with television's uniquely powerful ability to narrow the visual focus and to personalize politics. The White House meeting with President Chun

Doo Hwan in 1981 was highly visible and brimming with symbolic meaning, especially about the human rights issues. To South Korean audiences it conveyed unqualified support for the man whom many in Korea held responsible for the Kwangju tragedy, and did so at a time when questions were being raised about the U.S. role in the incident. On the other hand, for viewers in the United States the familiar scenes of a president and foreign leader inside and outside the White House were probably more reassuring than alarming, despite the best efforts of the reporters to provide context through their audio narrative.

Finally, the visual focus of the Reagan-Chun White House meeting showed how television provides considerable leeway for government efforts to shape the public policy dialogue. The existing television narrative about Korea virtually ensured that the visit would evoke no public outcry in the United States. The public could be expected to remember Kwangju within the context of earlier protests and political violence in Korea. Furthermore, there was no strong "opposition" constituency in the television narrative to explain the profound political significance of Kwangju for South Korea and for its relationship with the United States, though one did surface in the New York Times coverage in the form of periodic letters to the editor and guest columns.

In the short term, television helped the Reagan administration to redirect domestic public discussion of its Korea policy away from human rights and toward the military and security relationship between the nations. However, to the extent that policies must be successful over the long term and must cope with public opinion in more than one nation, this case study suggests that global television renders "quiet diplomacy" an anachronism. The public message of the Reagan-Chun summit, so heavily laden with symbolism and transmitted instantly and broadly to the South Korean public through multiple channels, then replayed countless times during the years of the Chun government, would presumably outweigh private diplomatic discussions on human rights as a factor in the policy process. The central question concerns the impact, especially over the long term, of private conversations which conflict with broadly visible public gestures.

Given the critical importance of Korea to U.S. foreign policy the relative lack of television attention to the Kwangju incident and subsequent developments stands in contrast to its more active role in the Philippines revolution, the Iran hostage crisis, or the more recent massacre in Tienanmen Square. The Korean case suggests that when television is less actively engaged in covering foreign affairs, the role of policymakers in constructing the public policy dialogue correspondingly increases. The normative question is whether the news media and citizens ought to cede to the president and government officials such power to focus the public attention on important matters of foreign policy.

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[1] Here, global television is defined broadly, to include the cluster of technologies used by television news (communication and remote-sensing satellites, electronic newsgathering

technology, air travel, computers), organizational routines, the selection and training of television personnel, ownership and control of the media, and ideological factors.

[2] See, for example, W. Phillips Davison, "News Media and International Negotiations" Public Opinion Quarterly 38 (Summer 1974): 174-91 ; Dina Goren, "The News and Foreign Policy: An Examination of the Impact of the News Media on the Making of Foreign Policy" Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change 3(1980): 1 19-41 ; Montague Kern, Patricia
W. Levering, and Ralph B . Levering, *The Kennedy Crises: The Press, the Presidency and Foreign Policy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983).

[3] Bernard C. Cohen, "Mass Communication and Foreign policy" in *Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy*, ed. James N. Rosenau (New York: Free Press, 1967), pp. 195-212.

[4] Bruce Cumings, "Devil to Pay in Seoul" *New York Times*, July 6, 1982, p. A17.
[5] William C. Adams, "Mass Media and Public Opinion About Foreign Affairs: A Typology of News Dynamics," *Political Communication and Persuasion* 4(1987): 263-78.

[6] Bernard C. Cohen, *The Press and Foreign Policy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963.
[7] James F. Larson, *Global Television and Foreign Policy*, Headline Series No. 283 (New York: Foreign Policy Association, February 1988).

[8] Richard Nixon, "Memo to President Bush: How to Use TV-and Keep from Being Abused by It," TV Guide 37 (January 14, 1989): 26.
[9] Ted Turner's CNN Gains Global Influence and 'Diplomatic' Ro1e," *Wall Street Journal*, Feb. 1 , 1990, p. l .

[10] Walter Lippmann, Public Opinion (New York: Macmillan, 1922).
[11] Cohen, *The Press and Foreign Policy*, p. 13 .
[12] W. Lance Bennett and Murray Edelman, "Toward a New Political Narrative" Journal of Communication 35:4 (Autumn 1985): 156-71.

[13] Karl E. Rosengren, "International News: Intra and Extra Media Data," *Acta Sociologica* 13:2 (1970): 96-109.

[14] Edward S. Herman, "Diversity of News: 'Marginalizing' the Opposition" *Journal of Communication* 3543) (Summer 1985): 135-46.

[15] Murray Edelman, *Constructing the Political Spectacle* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988).

[16] Herman, "Diversity of News."

[17] W. Lance Bennett, "Toward a Theory of Press-state Relations in the U.S.," unpublished manuscript, Jan. 1989.

[18] Murray Edelman, *Constructing the Political Spectacle*.

[19] Mark Hertsgaard, *On Bended Knee: The Press and the Reagan Presidency* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1988), p. 25.

[20] Edward Jay Epstein, *News From Nowhere* (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), pp. 4, 5.

[21] This framework for the historical context benefits from a suggestion by Clark WL Sorensen, assistant professor, Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington, Seattle.

[22] Bruce Cumings, "The Division of Korea" in *Two Koreas-One Future* ?, eds. John Sullivan and Roberta Foss (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987), pp. 5-18.

[23] Stephen D. Goose, "The Military Situation on the Korean Peninsula" in *Two Koreas One Future*?, pp. 80-81.

[24] Donald N. Clark, ed., *The Kwangju Uprising: Shadows over the Regime in South Korea* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988), pp. 10- 14.

[25] Ibid.

[26] James F. Larson, *Television's Window on the World: International Affairs Coverage on the U.S. Networks* (Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1984), pp. 56.

[27] An online search of the National Newspaper Index provided data on all *New York Times* stories on Korea for the years 1979, 1983, and 1987. These years were chosen because of the occurrence of important events and to facilitate both quantitative and more qualitative analysis.
Using the *Television News Index and Abstracts* (monthly publication, Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press), similar data were gathered on all CBS Evening News stories mentioning Korea during the same three years.

[28] Seymour M. Hersh, *"The Target is Destroyed": What Really Happened to Flight 007 and What America Knew About It* (New York: Vintage Books, 1987) , p. 229.

[29] Bernard Gwertzman, "U.S. Urges 'Maximum Restraint' on South Korean Military Leaders" *New York Times*, May 23, 1980, p. 1.

[30] Videotape of CBS Evening News broadcast, Nov. 22, 1974, Vanderbilt Television News Archive, Nashville, TN.

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[31] The Armed Forces Korea Network (AFKN) television and radio broadcasts virtually nationwide throughout the Republic of Korea. It carries a variety of programming, including CNN, network news broadcasts, and public affairs programs relayed within several hours via satellite from Los Angeles through the Armed Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS).

[32] Economic Planning Board, Social Indicators in Korea, 1985.
[33] Henry Scott Stokes, “Cabinet Resigns in South Korea as Riots Grow” *The New York Times*, May 21, 1980, p. A8.

[34] Hak Soo Kim, and James F. Larson, “Communication and Martial Law in The Republic of Korea, 1979-1988,” commentary in *Canadian Journal of Communication*, Special Issue, Winter 1988, pp. 87-91.

[35] Sung-il Choi, “Reagan and Chun” *New York Times*, Feb. 1, 1981 , p. Ed 1.

[36] Bernard Gwertzman, “U.S. Says Seoul Press Distorts Criticism,” *New York Times*, Aug. 29, 1980, p. A1.

[37] William H. Gleysteen, Jr. , "Korea: A Special Target of American Concerns" in *The Diplomacy of Human Rights*, ed. David D. Newsom (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1986), pp. 85-99.

[38] A survey by Louis Harris and Associates for the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations in Dec. 1974 showed that 14% of respondents would favor U.S. military involvement if North Korea attacked. Public Opinion (Feb./March 1980 1: 26). A similar survey by Louis Harris in Oct.-Nov. 1982 found that 22 % would favor U.S. involvement (Public Opinion, August/September 1983, p. 29).

[39] "An Editors' Report on the Yankelovich, Skelly and White ‘mushiness index’," *Public Opinion* (Feb./March 1 980): 50-51.

[40] Jack J. Honomichl, “How Reagan Took America's Pulse” *Advertising Age* 60: 4 (January 23, 1989): 1.

[41] William Watts, "The United States and Asia: Changing American Perceptions," paper prepared for Potomac Associates, Washington, D.C. : The School of Advanced International Studies, May 17, 1985.

[42] Adams, “Mass Media” p. 263.

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