

system of illegal loans was linked to relatives of high officials.

President Chun promised to step down after his seven-year term is up. This will help avoid criticisms of his aiming at lifetime power, as Rhee and Park had sought in the past. He is also reportedly grooming ex-General No as a possible successor, in order to prevent the power vacuums of the past, when strong presidents resigned or were removed by assassination.

The military has been a central element in Korean politics in part because the North Korean threat required a large standing army. Various unification proposals have been devised, but Pyongyang demands removal of the present Seoul government as a precondition. Under Kim Il-Song, a highly-regimented society has been created in the North. Kim's personality cult has far surpassed even that of Stalin, and has outlasted that of Mao Tse-tung. Kim has maintained delicate equidistance between his Chinese and Soviet allies, although there are indications of a slight move towards Moscow in recent years. North Korea (officially the Democratic People's Republic of Korea) has a foreign debt which is large in proportion to its eighteen million population, and maintains a 782,000 man military force (ROK armed forces total 601,600).

To date, attempts at peaceful reunification have failed. Another approach to reducing tensions in the peninsula would be cross recognition of North Korea by the US, and of the ROK by Peking and Moscow. Seoul would welcome access to Chinese markets and resources, but the ROK's close links with Taiwan, and China's refusal to antagonize Pyongyang by recognizing Seoul, remain formidable obstacles to such a solution.

Today, South Korea's major ally is the United States. In January 1981, Chun visited Washington at the invitation of President Reagan, who cancelled Carter's plan of withdrawing US ground forces. With Seoul's strength estimated at seventy percent of the north, US armed forces are vital for defence. Secretary of Defence Weinberger promised delivery of new F16 fighters, and other weapons were sent to reinforce US and ROK forces. Last spring, at the fourteenth US-ROK Security Consultative Meeting, Weinberger signed an agreement for the US to transfer two billion dollars worth of defence materials immediately in event of emergency. The Korean arms industry has increased its capabilities, and now manufactures a number of weapons and military equipment under US licence. Seoul has been seeking to export some weapons, but the US is wary because this could undercut US sales at a time of high unemployment.

Japanese connection

Relations between Japan and Korea remain complex. Japanese colonial rule from 1910 to 1945, and a dissatisfied and sizable Korean minority living in Japan, have contributed to uneven relations. Recently a new power elite has emerged in Korea which tends to be more American and European than Japanese in educational background, and less likely to speak Japanese as a second language than was the earlier generation in government.

Tokyo hoped to establish good relations with Seoul by sending Foreign Minister Ito to attend Chun's inauguration. However, Ito angered many Koreans with his remarks that there was no threat from North Korea. More recently,

the revision of Japanese school textbooks has soured relations. Japan's aggression is no longer portrayed as "invasion," but as "advancing," for example. The 1919 movement for Korean independence is described as "demonstrations and riots" in the new texts, much to the dismay of Korean nationalists.

Elsewhere, Korea's diplomatic presence is expanded by trips such as Chun's visit to the ASEAN countries in June 1981. Unlike Japan, Korea has no history of conquest and occupation. The ASEAN nations also have relations with North Korea, so Seoul hopes to enlarge its influence. When Australian Prime Minister Fraser visited Seoul last May, President Chun proposed annual summit talks among the nations of the Pacific basin, in order to pursue peace and prosperity in the region. He stated that the centre of world history has moved to the Pacific, where half of world trade is now carried on.

Canada, meet Korea

Korea's relations with Canada have also expanded. Prime Minister Trudeau became the first Canadian head of government to visit Korea in September 1981. President Chun returned the visit this August, on his return from four nations in Africa.

Today, Korea is Canada's seventh largest trading partner and this country is Korea's eighth largest. Last year's trade totalled nearly \$1.05 billion, with Korean exports at \$608 million and Canadian sales to Korea of over \$446 million.

The visits of Trudeau and Chun included meetings between top business people, who have formed the Canada-Korea, and Korea-Canada, Business Councils. According to the Canadian Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce, the most promising prospects for sales to Korea are in the sectors of nuclear power, energy products,

Courtesy Korean Embassy



Seoul's 1988 Olympic site abuilding

telecommunications, grains, aircraft and pulp. The Wolsung CANDU reactor was shipped in 1980, and Ottawa hopes to supply more in the future. Imports from Korea have been concentrated in textiles, footwear, electronics and steel products, and grew 46.1% from 1980 to 1981.

Canada and Korea are middle-range powers with complementary economies and mutual interests. Although very different in culture and history, and separated by language and great distance, both face the problem of dealing with a nearby industrial giant. Both countries will also host the Olympic games in 1988. Following the recent visit of Chun and thirty-two major business leaders, an expanding trade and diplomatic relationship is anticipated.