

used against political activities. The government of the ROK has stated that those who remain in detention are hard-core, pro-communist radicals or persons who have been convicted of non-political criminal offenses.

Because South Korea allows foreign journalists to enter the country, media coverage of human rights issues has increased and with it, interest by numerous foreign governments and many of their citizens. It should be emphasized that media access to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is practically negligible. The human rights situation in that country is therefore not covered by the media. As a result, a closed monolithic totalitarian communist state which prohibits political parties and dissent appears to be free of such problems and is little criticized; this naturally increases the South Korean sensitivity.

#### KOREAN POSITION

President Chun and his government have reacted very negatively to persistent international representations on human rights issues. Although the ROK has implemented increased liberalization and democratization, the government continues to maintain controls on basic liberties, arguing that forms of democracy must be adopted which take full account of Korean traditions and drawing attention to the Korean tendency to factional, centrifugal and violent forms of dissent which could be exploited by North Korea.

#### CANADIAN POSITION

While recognizing that the threat posed by North Korea represents a destabilizing influence for South Korea, the Canadian government has repeatedly and forcefully conveyed to Korean authorities the continuing concerns of Canadians regarding the situation of human rights in many countries of the world including South Korea.

The Canadian Embassy in Seoul continues to monitor the situation, to make representations on general and specific concerns, and to provide ongoing reports to the Canadian government. Korean interlocutors have, on occasion, been rather curt as they perceive inquiries and comments on individuals or the general situation to be interference in domestic political matters. The tenor of Canadian representations has recognized, in a pragmatic way, the limits on what can be achieved by Canada and the desire not to antagonize unduly those whom Canada would wish to persuade. During his visit in May 1986, Prime Minister Mulroney had extensive conversations on the general human rights situation with President Chun and Prime Minister Lho and made references to the matter in both his speech at the State Banquet and his press conference. Last November, during political consultations with Korea held at the Assistant Deputy Minister level, Canada again discussed human rights issues and expressed Canadian concerns.