

South Korean Dissident Travels to Pyongyang

Illegal Trip Draws Threat of Punishment From Seoul Government

By Peter Maass
Special to The Washington Post

SEOUL, March 26—South Korea's most famous dissident has begun an illegal visit to communist North Korea and may be arrested when he returns to the South, government officials said today.

Moon Ik Kwan, 71, reportedly arrived in the North Korean capital of Pyongyang yesterday via Tokyo, marking the first time that a leading South Korean dissident has visited the northern city since the Korean War ended in 1953. Visits there are prohibited except in rare cases approved by the government.

Moon's visit, which apparently surprised officials here, dominated news broadcasts and drew a quick and harsh response from the government. [A senior South Korean prosecutor was quoted by state radio Sunday as saying that Moon would face legal action under a tough anticommunist law that carries a maximum penalty of death, Reuter reported.]

Though the South and the North are still technically at war, South Korean President Roh Tae Woo said last year that Pyongyang should be viewed as a partner, not as an enemy, and he proposed wide-ranging exchanges. Negotiations have yet to be successful.

As a result of Roh's new policy,



MOON IK KWAN
... may be arrested in South Korea

relations with North Korea have become the focus of intense discussions among many South Koreans, who for decades were legally prohibited from talking about the subject and who have expressed a strong desire for reunification.

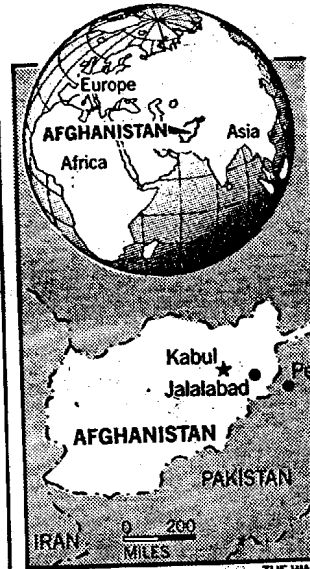
Seoul, with the consent of the main opposition parties, has prohibited dissidents and militant students—who have criticized Roh's efforts as being insincere and weak—from setting up their own channels of contact with the North. Officials have said they fear that independent talks or exchanges could undermine their authority and be manipulated by North Korea to

The government has also deployed police to block illegal reunification marches to the border. [Authorities deployed thousands of riot troops throughout Seoul on Sunday to end antigovernment protests by radical groups, The Associated Press reported. No incidents were reported in Seoul but students were reported to have clashed with riot police in two southern provincial cities.]

Seoul's political reforms include allowing the circulation of some books, photographs and movies about North Korea—all strictly banned until a year ago. The government has also allowed firms here to trade openly with the North, and earlier this year permitted Chung Ju Young, founder of the Hyundai Group, to visit Pyongyang, where he agreed to help develop a tourist area.

The visit by the Princeton-educated Moon, however, goes beyond the bounds of what the government is willing to tolerate. Moon grew up in northern Korea but fled south in the 1940s after his father, a Presbyterian minister, had been jailed twice by the communists.

Moon, frequently jailed in the South during the 1970s and '80s, was invited to Pyongyang earlier this year to participate in talks that North Korea proposed between political leaders from each side. The



Afghan Rebel Prize Captured Soviet Tank

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squadron, manned by other Afghan Army tank crew guerrilla trainees.

"We have 10 tanks in winter, and we are training them to use them," he said. The tank driver claimed that he was taught by a captured Soviet crewman four years ago. "It took 10 months to learn," he added.

At the moment, they are

Koreans' Love for the U.S. Has Faded

MOON, From A16

Their criticism of the United States is rooted in a sense of betrayal. South Koreans are steeped in the hierarchical conceptions of Confucianism, and in their view the role of respected authority figure the United States took on four decades ago meant that in return for the loyalty of people here their interests would be protected. The rage now felt by some South Koreans derives from their perception that the United States actually worked against the interests of the Korean people by dividing the country and supporting dictators and that it continues to do so today.

"Koreans are bitter as well as sad," Moon Kwan says. "They feel they are betrayed by a trusted friend."

For a generation, South Koreans read grade-school textbooks extolling the virtues of the United States. Moon Tong Hwan's American wife, Faye Moon, recalled that South Korean women used to ask her for the recipe for apple pie. The Moon brothers even adopted western names while in the United States, becoming Timothy and Steven Moon.

"It was like a dream country," Moon Ik Kwan recalled of his perception of the United States, "a great Christian nation." He lived through the famous 1965 blackout and vividly remembers how extraordinarily generous New Yorkers were as they helped each other cope with the power failure. "Courteous," "kind," "gentle," and "conscientious" are some of the words he uses to describe his feelings about Americans in that era.

The younger Moon had similar impressions when he studied in the U.S. from 1951 to 1961 at several seminaries. Still, he began to experience some uneasiness, even some hints of racism, although none of this was yet strong enough to change his pro-American disposition. He recalled that when he became engaged to an American woman, a close American friend told him that she would have been opposed to his marrying her daughter.

"Americans were kind to me, but I was always kept at arm's length," Moon Hwan said in an interview at his home. His wife, Faye, nodded in agreement. The sound of American music wafted into the room from a stereo turned on by one of their children, who have Korean names and speak both Korean and English. An anti-American poster hangs on a wall.

A Presbyterian deacon, Faye Moon speaks fluent Korean and is a social activist who counsels, among others, Korean prostitutes who serve U.S. soldiers. For nearly nine years in the 1970s, she was an alcohol and drug-rehabilitation counselor for the U.S. military in Seoul. She now laughs about the irony of having worked "for the [U.S.] government that was supporting the dictator that was keeping my husband in jail."

After spending about eight years translating the Bible into Korean, Moon Ik Kwan joined his brother in opposition politics in the mid-1970s, but his dispute was chiefly with the generals ruling South Korea, not with the United States. The turning point for the Moons—as for most Koreans now critical of the United

States—was the 1980 Kwangju uprising, in which more than 200 people were killed when the military government of Chun Doo Hwan sent troops into the provincial capital to put down a student-led rebellion against the regime.

At the outset of the crisis, Moon Kwan was accused of helping plot a revolution and jailed. He was prisoner number 202, and the renowned opposition leader Kim Dae Jung was number 201. While in jail, Moon Kwan learned of the Kwangju deaths and of the allegations—taken as fact by students and dissidents—that the U.S. military masterminded the suppression of the uprising.

"For the first time I was able to see the Korean problem in an international context," Moon Kwan said. "Syngman Rhee, Park Chung Hee, Chun Doo Hwan—to me, they had been the enemies. But all of a sudden I realized that America and Japan are pulling all the strings behind them. . . . America knew what was happening [in Kwangju] and . . . condoned it. That was shattering." In the wake of Kwangju, Moon Kwan says, "I awakened from the dream."

Moon Hwan was traveling in Europe when the Kwangju incident occurred in May 1980, and was unable to return to South Korea because a warrant had been issued here for his arrest. Instead, he went to the United States as a political exile and tried to arouse interest in the human-rights abuses committed by Chun's martial-law regime.

But Moon Hwan said he was ignored by the Washington establishment and shouted down by ordinary Americans during a speaking tour in



MOON IK KWAN
... "I was so naive" about America



MOON TONG HWAN
... "I admired America for a while"

which he criticized U.S. policy. "They got angry," he recounted. "They said, 'We sent our boys to Korea to die, and now you speak like that.' They were furious. They wouldn't listen. People stood up and walked out."

It was a dismaying experience, and Moon Hwan left the United States for home in 1985 with vastly different ideas than when he ended his previous sojourn in 1961. "For us Koreans, it's foolish to expect our 'democracy,' he said. "The [U.S.] government handles the situation according to the interests of people who are concerned only about themselves. . . . It is hopeless."

For Moon Hwan, there is the added dismay of competing family loyalties. "Maybe it is because I married an American; this has made America my second nation," he said. For his son in the U.S. Air Force, America is a first nation, and this appears to pain Moon Hwan. He tried to persuade his son not to join,

but he insisted because being an Air Force pilot was the only way he could fulfill his dream of becoming an astronaut.

"That's his desire," Moon said un- easily. "I cannot force him. We tried to help him see differently, but he stuck to the idea."

Whatever their present sympathies, the Moons and their country remain tied to America. Moon Kwan still has some yellowed pictures of himself dressed in a U.S. Army uniform, and he plans to hold on to them because "that was part of my life; I cannot throw them out." Moon Hwan expects his pilot son to settle in America, and his youngest daughter also feels more comfortable in an American rather than South Korean environment, he says.

Moon Hwan prefers South Korea, but he has promised his wife Faye that once he retires from politics they will return to the United States "and spend the rest of our lives there."

Bush Hears Complaints In S. Korea

S. KOREA, From A16

South Korean reaction to Bush's visit showed how even well-intentioned gestures can go awry in the current climate of trade tensions and rising nationalism here. U.S. officials, fearing South Koreans would feel slighted if Bush visited only Japan and China on his trip, added the brief stop in Seoul. But today, the media repeatedly pointed out that he was making the "shortest visit ever by a U.S. president."

Bush met opposition leader Kim Dae Jung, a former political prisoner and dissident who for years was shunned by even the U.S. ambassador. Kim spent most of the meeting lecturing Bush on the causes of anti-Americanism, citing U.S. trade pressure as a key problem.

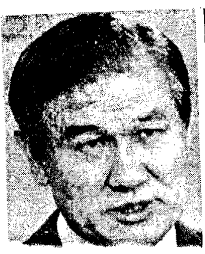
Even ruling party chairman Park Jyun Kyu warned Bush about rising anti-Americanism, according to South Korean officials who attended the private meeting between the president and major party leaders.

Bush acknowledged worries about anti-American sentiment, but said it does not overly concern him, according to the same sources. He told the party leaders that he believes many South Koreans still remember U.S. sacrifices in the 1950-53 Korean War and that existing conflicts can be resolved.

In his speech to the National Assembly, Bush warned South Korea not to give in to protectionism. The legislators listened silently to Bush's plea for open markets. A dozen opposition legislators boycotted Bush's speech.

One U.S. official said Bush succeeded in establishing a personal relationship with Roh and demonstrating U.S. commitment to keep its troops here. "Given the brevity of the visit, he did what he had to do," the official said.

But one South Korean politician who asked not to be named said he believed the visit had contributed more to illustrating the gulf between the two nations.



ROH TAE WOO
... planning political compromises

Washington Post special correspondent Peter Maass in Seoul contributed to this report.

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Kim Il Sung Sees S. Korean Dissident

Illegal Visit Represents Embarrassment to Government in Seoul

By Peter Maass
Special to The Washington Post

SEOUL, March 28—A South Korean dissident's illegal journey to North Korea turned more controversial today with the disclosure that he has met President Kim Il Sung, whose last reported meeting with a South Korean was in 1972.

The visit to North Korea by dissident leader Moon Ik Kwan, who faces arrest once he returns to Seoul, is breaking a number of taboos, but the meeting with Kim is seen here as particularly explosive. Visits to communist North Korea, technically still at war with South Korea, are banned except in rare cases.

According to North Korean press reports monitored today in Seoul and Tokyo, the Princeton-educated Moon and three traveling companions were at a luncheon given yesterday by Kim, who discussed unification issues with Moon. The press reports did not provide any comments from Moon, 71, a Presbyterian minister who has been jailed often and is one of the father figures of South Korea's dissident movement.

Moon left South Korea early last week for Tokyo and then traveled to Beijing, where the North Koreans reportedly provided a special plane to fly him to Pyongyang on Saturday.

He is expected to return to South Korea before April 14, when his passport expires. He reportedly wants to return via Panmunjom, the

truce village straddling the tense Demilitarized Zone that has divided the Korean peninsula since the war ended in 1953.

Moon worked at Panmunjom, the symbol of the peninsula's division, more than 30 years ago as an interpreter for the U.S. Army during truce talks with North Korea. He was born in northern Korea but fled south in the 1940s after his father was persecuted by the communists.

Moon's trip takes place at one of the most volatile moments so far in South Korea's fragile transition to democracy. Hard-liners in the military and in the government, worried about symptoms of social disorder, are pressing conservative President Roh Tae Woo to crack down on dissent, and they are certain to redouble their efforts in the wake of Moon's meeting with Kim.

A small-scale crackdown already has begun. Police reportedly have seized more than 3,000 copies of pro-North Korean books and arrested 11 publishers in raids last night.

In a possible sign of struggles within the ruling camp, the government announced a shuffle of 49 top generals today, including the sacking of a three-star general who failed to salute Roh at a public ceremony last week. The general's action was widely interpreted as a sign of the unease that hard-line generals are apparently feeling over the political situation in South Korea. Today's shuffle may be a bid to move troublesome officers out of the powerful military, although few details were made available.

Moon's meeting with Kim, shown in a blurred photograph published in South Korean newspapers this afternoon, puts the government in an embarrassing position because of its new policy of encouraging friendlier ties with the North and treating Pyongyang as a partner rather than an enemy. Earlier this year, the government permitted Hyundai founder Chung Ju Young to visit North Korea, and several South Korean journalists have also traveled to the North, although none has met with Kim Il Sung.

The last South Korean whom Kim is known to have met was Lee Hyu Rak, then chief of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency, who in 1972 made a secret trip to Pyongyang that opened up a brief period of detente. With the exception of another brief thaw in 1985, the two sides have had hostile relations.

Despite its new policy of openness to the North, the government here has banned independent contacts because it is afraid that North Korea will manipulate people such as Moon to stir up political unrest and undermine its authority. Students and dissidents oppose the government ban, arguing that if Roh can state publicly, as he has, that he will go anywhere at any time to meet Kim Il Sung to promote reunification, then they, too, should be allowed to seek contacts with the North.

South Korea's intelligence community has come under fire for not knowing in advance of Moon's plans to visit the North and failing to block him from doing so.