

# Korea's Removal Of KCIA Boss May Reflect U.S. Scandal

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The surprise removal early Saturday of South Korea's secret police chief is the most dramatic evidence to date that President Park Chung Hee is feeling the impact of the U.S. bribery scandal.

As is customary in Park's periodic shuffles, no reason was given for the unexpected replacement of KCIA Director Shin Jik Soo. However, Washington officials and Korea-watchers believe it is an attempt to place the maximum amount of distance between Park and payoffs to U.S. congressmen and other abuses reported in the still-unfolding scandal.

There has been no report that Shin had a major role in seeking influence with U.S. legislators, and observers here and in Seoul credited him with a more respectable direction of his powerful agency than his immediate predecessor.

Nonetheless, there was little surprise at his ouster, due to the oriental practice of "taking responsibility" for misdeeds and misfortunes in one's domain, whether or not there is a personal fault or connection involved.

Former Lt. Gen. Kim Chai-kyu, who was named as the new KCIA Director, is a lifelong friend to Park's who comes from the president's home village and was among his classmates at the Korean military academy. Those who know him say he has made a career of personal loyalty in such posts as chief of the sensitive Army Security Command (1968-1971), deputy director of the KCIA (1971-73) and Minister of Construction (1973 to the present).

Because of the virtually unchecked internal authority of Seoul's intelligence—secret police—thought control agency and its worldwide quasidiplomatic network, the KCIA director is often considered the most powerful man in the country next to Park himself.

Thus ouster of such a high official is a very important piece of state business, undertaken only for the most serious reasons and bringing major repercussions inside as well as outside South Korea.

The bribery investigations centered

There was no advance warning to the U.S. government about the replacement of Director Shin, according to informed sources. However, some officials have taken it as an indirect admission that all has not been well and thus a signal from Park of his concern about relations with his major ally.

There is little doubt that the decision last week of Washington KCIA operative Kim Sang Keun to seek refuge in the United States and cooperate with U.S. investigators has sharply heightened concern in the Park government and among U.S. diplomats about the long-term consequences of the scandal.

The reported "bookkeeper" of KCIA's Washington financial records since the early 1970's, the diplomat-turned-informant was in position to have detailed knowledge of the most intimate—and potentially most damaging—transactions involving American political figures.

Since the "bookkeeper" went over to the FBI, a KCIA bureau director from Seoul reportedly turned up in Washington. The KCIA station chief in Washington, Air Force Maj. Gen. Kim Yung Hwan, is reported to have been ordered to return to Seoul. There are some indications that all KCIA officials in the Washington embassy may be replaced in view of the developments.

Gen. Kim declined to see a Washington Post reporter who visited the embassy Friday. Other embassy officials refused to comment on his plans.

Neighbors said a moving van took family belongings away from the \$120,000 home in Alexandria that the Kims moved into only four months ago and the KCIA station chief's daughter told a high school classmate that she was going to live with an uncle because her parents are returning to Korea.

Three years ago almost to the day, a sudden Seoul reshuffle replaced the previous top official of the KCIA, Lee Hu Rak, in the face of growing criticism in Japan and the United States of the agency's strong arm methods.

The expectation in Washington is that little will be heard of the latest senior aide to be sacrificed by Park, at least until the current scandal has run its course and the final results known. This is not likely to be for many months, given the signs of new and detailed evidence in the hands of FBI investigators.

In the meantime, the relations of the U.S. and its strategically located Asian ally, South Korea, are more uncertain than at anytime in recent years. Officials in both capitals are showing new signs of concern.

in Washington have gone unmentioned in Seoul's controlled press, and thus Saturday's publicly announced shift may be a puzzling event to those Koreans whose only news is from the formal media.

However, word-of-mouth transmission of political news and gossip is extremely well developed in Seoul. The KCIA shift can be expected to set the rumor mill into accelerated operation, bringing more speculation with-in South Korea about the country's standing in Washington.