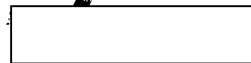




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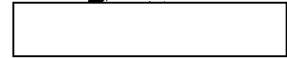
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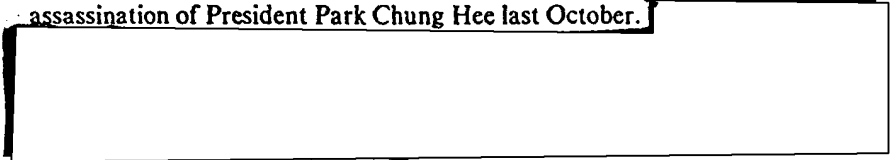


**South Korean Students:  
The Potential for Unrest**

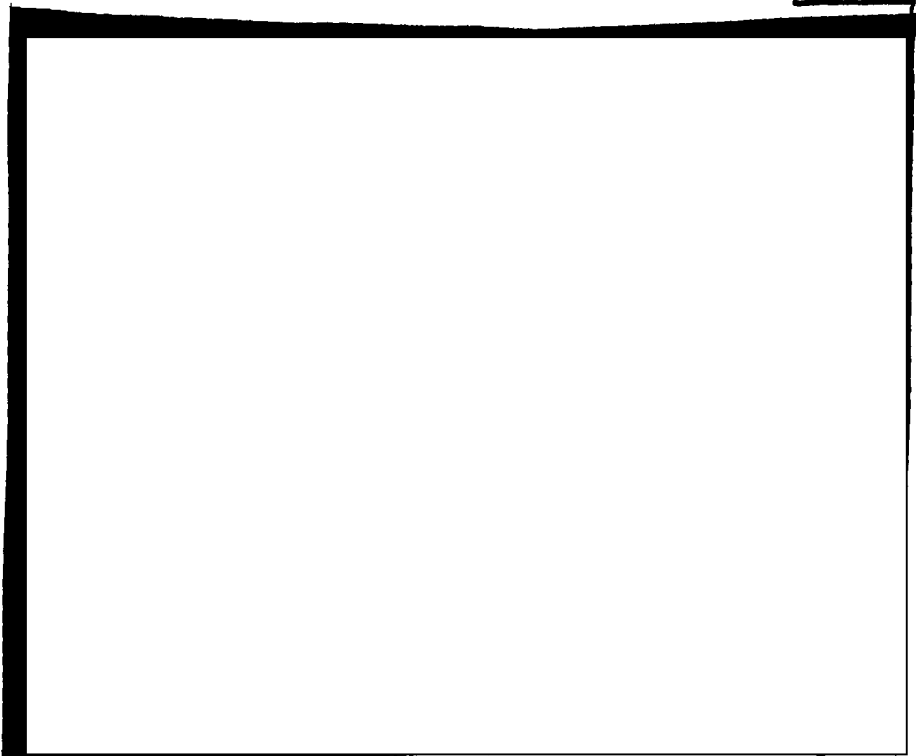


**Summary**

South Korean Government and military authorities believe there will be significant campus demonstrations this spring, largely because of student tradition and the heady new atmosphere on the campuses following the assassination of President Park Chung Hee last October.



The campus situation might heat up substantially by mid-April, when students will mark the 20th anniversary of the riots in 1960. Whatever the magnitude of any possible demonstrations, the students cannot by themselves bring about a radical reorientation of the South Korean political establishment.



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Aware that their "revolution" in 1960 led to a military takeover, student leaders may try to avoid creating any such opening for the army this year.

[redacted] Moreover, even if the demonstrations ultimately produce no great turmoil, they will involve at least transitory costs by helping to maintain a high level of public anxiety during a difficult process of political transition. They will complicate the position of those opposition politicians who sympathize with many of the students' causes and yet believe that action in the streets should be avoided during this period, and contribute to the image of a South Korea on the verge of instability [redacted]

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**South Korean Students:  
The Potential for Unrest**

**Background**

Students traditionally have been the most vocal among Korean dissident groups. This tradition goes back to the Japanese colonial period, when students were involved in the 1919 Independence Movement and the 1929 Kwangju Student Uprising. Student demonstrations in April 1960 triggered the downfall of the Syngman Rhee government, endowing students with a mystique of being the conscience of the nation and the voice of the antiestablishment population. Throughout the 1960s, students staged demonstrations against government policies, corruption, and social injustice. In the 1970s the target of their resentment became the highly authoritarian Yusin system of President Park Chung Hee.

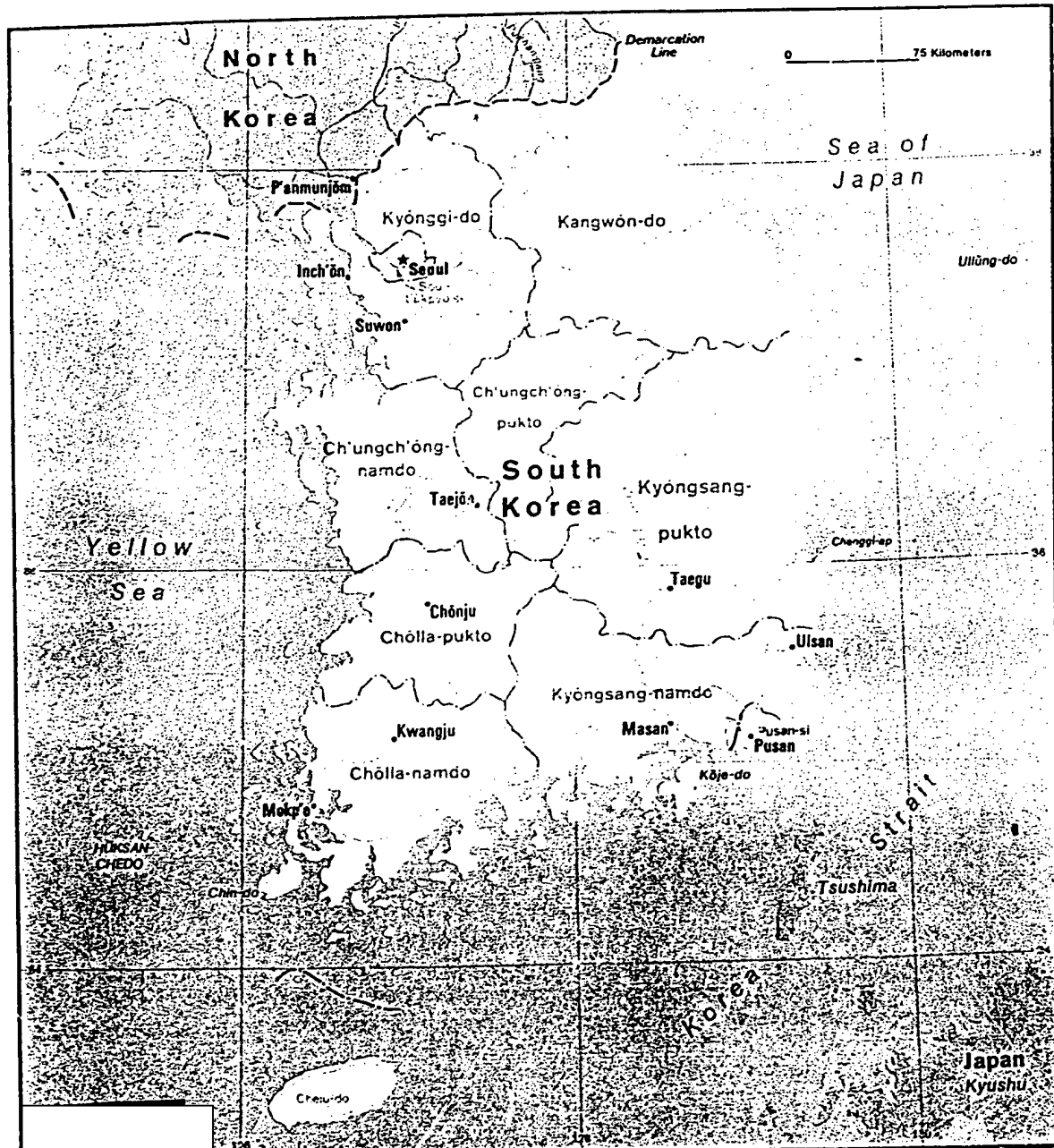
More than 133,000 students—nearly half the nation's total—attend the 37 colleges and universities in Seoul. The concentration of this large student population in the capital contributes further to their political importance. The most prestigious universities—Korea, Yonsei, and Seoul National—tend to produce the leaders of student protest movements, who feel they are an elite that must take the lead on national issues. Students of these "Big Three" universities compete with one another in organizing antigovernment protests and consider it a matter of school honor to be the first to stage a demonstration or to advance an issue.

By tradition and inclination, Korean college students tend to align themselves on the side of the politically and socially disadvantaged. Oriented toward issues rather than personalities, they also tend to ally themselves with elements that are at odds with the government.

**Student Organization  
and Tactics**

Although there is no well-developed or cohesive national student organization powerful enough to launch nationwide strikes or demonstrations, the students may have improved their interuniversity networks for exchanging views and cooperation.

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[REDACTED]

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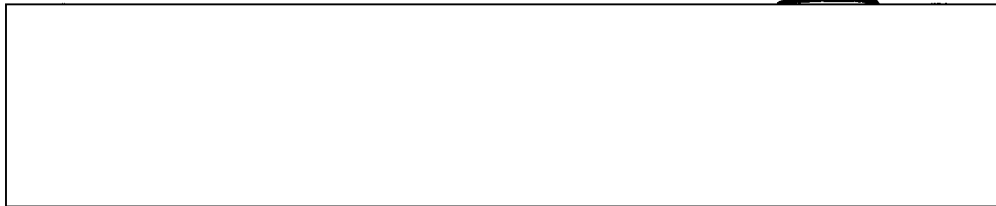
In the past, the government has closed colleges and universities and bivouacked the military on campuses; made educational authorities responsible for the acts of the students, punishing the faculty for student demonstrations; expelled students and forced them to promise that they would not engage in antigovernment activity; and declared martial law, as a last resort. [REDACTED]

**Recent Student Attitudes**


Many student leaders see similarities between the events leading to the overthrow of the Syngman Rhee government and those leading to the assassination of Park. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Some student leaders view Park's death as the first step in a student-led "revolution" which they feel obligated to sustain by their active participation in the political process. [REDACTED]

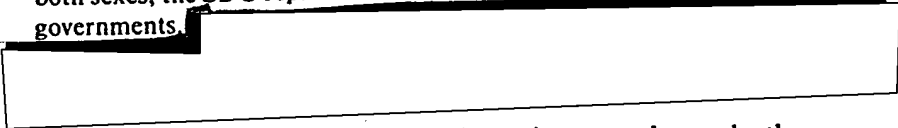
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Campus Issues

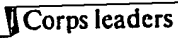

Many, albeit not all, of the issues that prompted student unrest during the 1970s have been removed. Park can no longer be used as the focal point of student anger, and interim President Choi Kyu Hah has cautiously taken a number of measures to mollify students and other dissident elements. He has abolished the repressive EM-9 that Park had used to suppress all criticism of himself and the Yusin system and has released from prison all EM-9 violators; has permitted the universities to reinstate students who were expelled and faculty members who were dismissed for antigovernment activities; and has restored the civil liberties of prominent dissidents such as Kim Dae Jung. 

*Student Defense Corps*

A major theme of past university demonstrations—on a par with the call for the abolishing of the Yusin system—has been the demand for greater campus freedom, including the elimination of the Student Defense Corps (SDC) and the restoration of student government. Although the SDC has been recently reorganized, it still represents a potentially explosive issue. Organized in 1975 in the wake of the fall of South Vietnam amid fears of a North Korean invasion, the SDC had been one of the country's three main paramilitary organizations. (The others are the Homeland Reserve and the Civil Defense Corps.) Comprising all high school and university students of both sexes, the SDC replaced all official student organizations and student governments. 

The SDC issue was one of the first student grievances taken up by the interim government. 



 Corps leaders are now to be elected by the students, rather than appointed by the authorities. 

Not all students are satisfied with these changes. Manifestos circulated on major campuses in the Seoul area in late February scorned the limited reforms and repeated earlier demands for complete abolition of the SDC and the restoration of democratic student government.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Other student demands include the right to conduct student council meetings at the time and place of their choosing—currently they are regulated by school officials. They also want to print their own publications without interference from the school administration, and they want an end to formal supervision of their activities.

[REDACTED]

**National Issues  
on Campus**

***Kim Chae-kyu***

Sympathy for Kim Chae-kyu, the convicted assassin of President Park, has been building up among students and opposition figures and could emerge as a significant factor in mobilizing student opinion against the government. Indeed, this is the most immediate of a number of volatile national issues that the students are expected to champion during the coming months. Many students see Kim as a hero who has served his country by ridding it of



a dictator and they want him spared. They liken him to the famous patriot An Chung-kun, who assassinated Japanese Governor General of Korea Ito Hirobumi in 1909. [redacted]

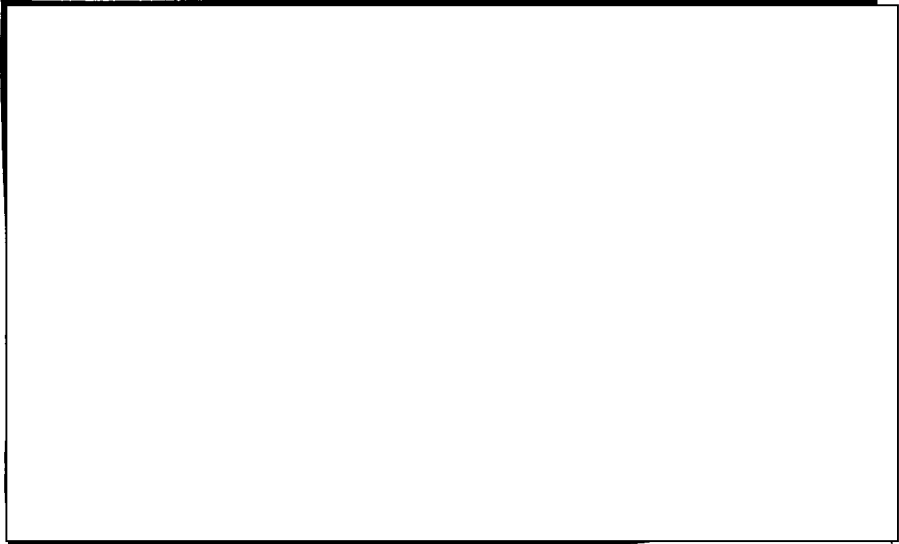
By early January, student activists had begun printing leaflets calling for a reversal of Kim's death sentence; some leaflets have been disseminated in downtown Seoul. Signs bearing quotes from Kim's statement in court, including references to the "26 October Revolution"—Kim's term for the assassination—have begun to spring up on campuses. [redacted]

Although it is doubtful that the majority of the population shares the students' and intellectuals' romanticized view of the presidential assassin [redacted]

[redacted] The military, [redacted] well aware of the impact that this issue could have on campus, have announced that they will not lift martial law until Kim and his accomplices have been executed. [redacted]

***Economic Factors***

The economy is likely to figure prominently as a source of student dissatisfaction. Students—many of whom are from middle- and low-income families—feel the effects of inflation and the job crunch more than most. [redacted]



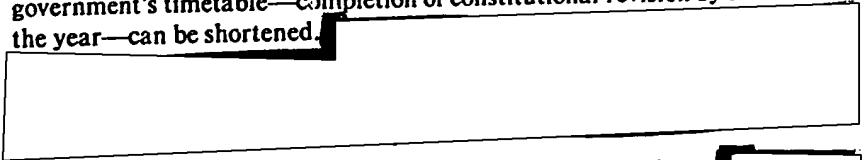
**Political Issues**

Students are expected to seize on a number of other national issues to muster support; any one of them could emerge during the year as a major cause. The foremost of these issues is *political liberalization*.

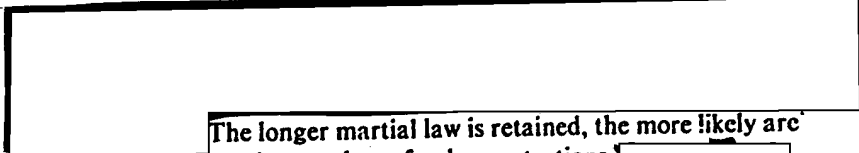


If the government draft constitution—scheduled to be announced in September—contains restrictive provisions,

and might take to the streets. The slow pace of liberalization also is a potential trouble spot. Opposition political elements feel that the drafting of a constitution should not take too long, and that the government's timetable—completion of constitutional revision by the end of the year—can be shortened.



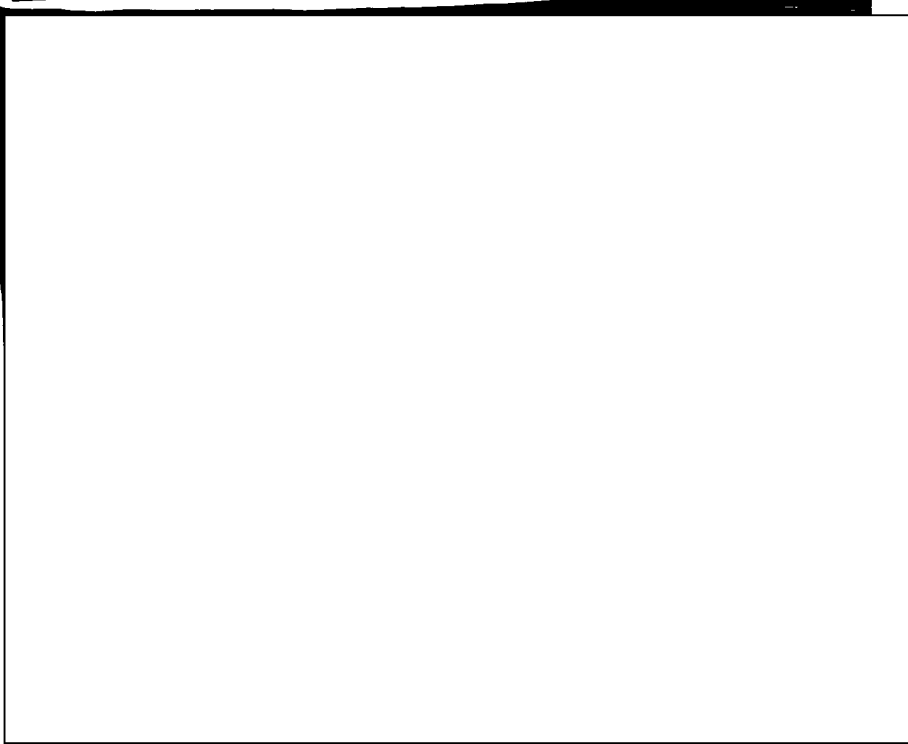
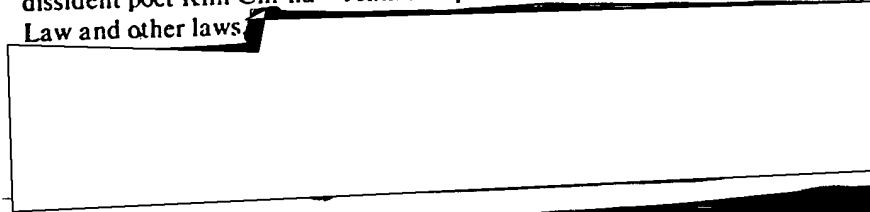
Another budding student concern is the question of *martial law*.



The longer martial law is retained, the more likely are students to seize upon it as an issue for demonstrations.

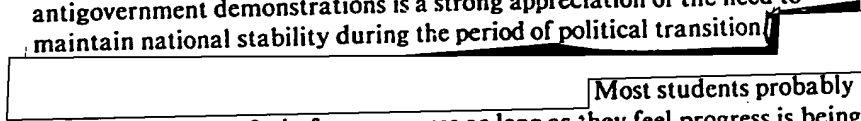
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Another possible campus issue is that of *political prisoners*. Although the government has released all persons jailed under the emergency measures and restored their political rights effective 1 March, many people—such as dissident poet Kim Chi-ha—remain imprisoned under the Anti-Communist Law and other laws.



**Countervailing Factors**

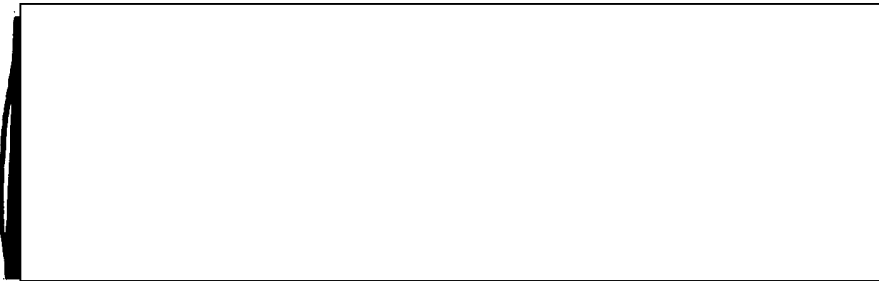
The foremost factor that will tend to deter students from serious antigovernment demonstrations is a strong appreciation of the need to maintain national stability during the period of political transition.




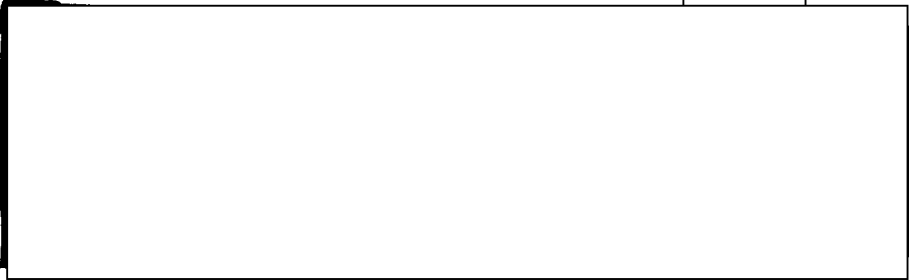
Most students probably will be willing to refrain from excesses as long as they feel progress is being made and that the government has not betrayed their trust.




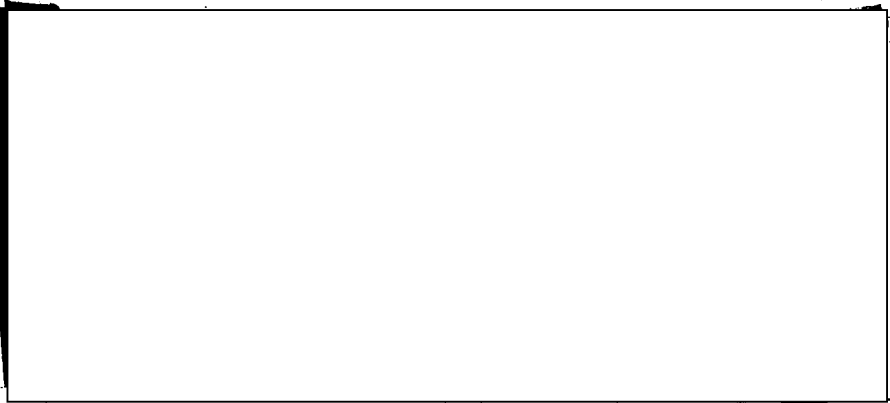
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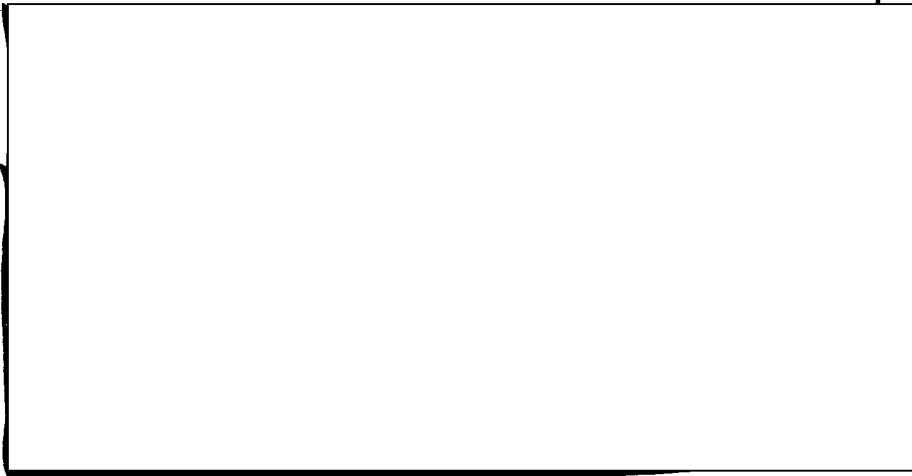
Students also are aware that North Korea might take advantage of severe political disruptions to launch an invasion against the South. The government has used the argument of such a "North Korean threat" so much in the past, however, that it may be losing some of its effect. Moreover, the North-South talks now being conducted at Panmunjom aimed at future prime ministerial-level discussions will tend to allay some fears of the North's intentions and make war appear less of a possibility. 



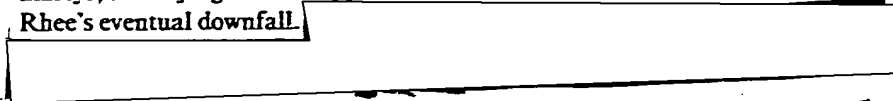
Finally, many students—if not most—would prefer to be able to study in a calm atmosphere, pursuing their degrees without interruption, especially in view of current economic uncertainties and the likelihood of a tighter job market. 



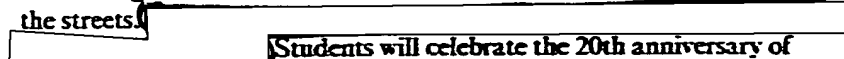
**Government  
Perceptions  
and Reactions**



Should a bloody confrontation develop, the most serious eventuality would be the death of a student at the hands of the police or military. Government officials are all too aware that it was the police killing of a high school student in Masan in 1960 that provided the student movement with a martyr, solidifying student opposition to the Rhee government, which led to Rhee's eventual downfall.



Student radicals have been organizing committees on individual campuses since last month, but it probably will be some time before they will be able to launch large-scale demonstrations that would threaten to spill over into the streets.



Students will celebrate the 20th anniversary of their 1960 Student Revolution on 19 April. Given the symbolic significance of the event, it could well serve as the focal point for antiestablishment activities.

