The Transnational Protection Regime and Democratic Breakthrough: A Comparative Study of Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Political Science
University of Toronto

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Abstract

This dissertation explains why Taiwan and South Korea experienced democratic breakthrough in the late 1980s, when Singapore failed to do so. It explains this variation in democratic outcomes by specifying the causal mechanisms underpinning the international-domestic political interface of democratic development in these cases. New empirical evidence discovered in the course of this research has confirmed that transnational networks of nonstate and substate actors were an indisputable source of external pressures on the authoritarian governments of Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore during the late 1970s and early 80s. Foreign human rights activists, Christian missionaries and ecumenical workers, members of overseas diaspora communities, journalists, academics and students, along with legislators in key democratic countries allied to the target governments, were found to have raised the international profile of political repression by flagging them as reprehensible human rights abuses. Within the context of an international normative environment where human rights was increasingly considered a legitimate international concern, these transnational actors generated a negative international opinion of the target governments. Such grassroots pressures had the potential to raise the cost of political repression for these target governments with the effect of curbing
repressive state behavior, thereby protecting key domestic actors with the potential to effect
democratic breakthrough. The extent to which these external pressures could effectively
constrain repressive state behavior depended, however, on the immediate geopolitical
circumstances of each case. Geopolitical circumstances were also important because they could
affect the strength of the protection regime. Thus, the exposition of the transnational protection
regime as the causal mechanism underpinning the international-domestic political interface of
democratic development requires that we specify the exact role of agency within the
international normative and geopolitical contexts in which they operate. This dissertation
develops such an abstracted causal model for the purposes of application in other cases and for
policy analysis.
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Chapter 1
Introduction

The Puzzle

This dissertation seeks to answer the following question: why did Taiwan and South Korea experience democratic breakthrough in the late 1980s when Singapore did not? This is a puzzle insofar as they had all reached a level of socioeconomic development by the mid to late 1970s called the “political transitions zone” without undergoing democratization, as one would expect.¹ Yet, in September 1986 the political opposition in Taiwan formed the Democratic Progressive Party in defiance of martial law, which had long banned the formation of new political parties. This led on to further democratic reforms. In June 1987, what was essentially a military leadership in South Korea also accepted long time demands for democratic reforms from opposition leaders and activists including, importantly, direct presidential elections. These were significant events that came to mark the introduction of genuine political competition in Taiwan and South Korea – events that were unmatched by any equivalent in Singapore at the time or since. The nature of government there remains firmly authoritarian to this day.

The puzzle posed by the variation in democratic outcomes in Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore is therefore significant not only for those who are interested in understanding patterns of democratic development in the Pacific Asian region. These cases taken together challenge explanations of democratization currently offered, suggesting that further investigation will potentially yield research findings with important theoretical implications. The failure of Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore to democratize during the 1970s poses serious challenges to the

central claims of modernization theory and the myriad auxiliary observations that have supported the idea that middle-income countries are most likely to democratize. Since 1959 when Seymour Martin Lipset observed that a positive correlation between the level of economic development and the level of democracy seemed to exist, this correlation has been subject to many an empirical assessment to emerge as the closest that the field of comparative politics has to a universal “iron law.” Huntington further observed that of the countries that experienced transition in the “third wave” of democratizations, most were in the middle and upper-middle income range – what he coined the “political transitions zone.” The association of low levels of economic development to low levels of democracy, and high levels of economic development with high levels of democracy, further implied that “the largest gains in democracy should occur in countries at intermediate levels of development.” It was thus that Huntington happily concluded that, “a social scientist in the mid-1970s who wished to predict future democratizations, in short, would have done reasonably well if he had simply fingered the nondemocratic countries in the $1,000-3,000 transition zone.”

2 Lipset, S.M., “Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy,” American Political Science Review 53(1959): 69-105. Higher levels of education, which are concomitant with higher levels of economic development, nurture political attitudes and values such as interpersonal trust, which are conducive to democracy. Along with economic development comes a change in social structure – a formerly pyramidal social stratification system with a majority of poorer classes is replaced by a diamond shaped system where the majority consists of the middle class. This alters the balance of power between the upper classes and the rest of the population, that is, the middle classes that tend to be those who hold the aforementioned political attitudes and values because of their education. In this way, economic development is conducive to the establishment (transition) and maintenance (consolidation or stabilization) of democracy. See also Diamond, L., “Economic Development and Democracy Reconsidered,” American Behavioral Scientist 35(1992): 450-99. Two related intervening variables account for this: political culture and social structure. See also Robert Dahl, Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971) Chapter 5.

3 Huntington, S., The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), p. 60. 27 out of 31 countries that democratized between 1974 and 1989 were in the middle-income range.


5 Ibid. p.63. Huntington did, however, limit his assertion to the “third wave” of democratization starting in the late 1970s, for he stated earlier that the relationship between economic development and democracy or democratization “probably varies in time and space.” Ibid. p.59.
All three of our cases bucked these observed trends during the 1970s and early 1980s, of course, confirming instead the reservations that more recent scholars have had of the modernization thesis. Przeworski and Limongi asserted that there is no evidence to show that higher levels of per capita income promote democracy, although it does help in the sustainability or persistence of democracy.\(^6\) As Coppedge rightly pointed out, “it has been maddeningly difficult to demonstrate which aspects of modernization are causes of democracy, and which are effects, and which are only spurious associations. The frustration results from the fact that both democracy and socio-economic development are complex and multifaceted phenomena.”\(^7\)

Further, Muller demonstrated that many middle-income countries in Latin America in the 1960s and 70s challenged Lipset’s “iron law” because they were authoritarian at the time or became less democratic with the process of modernization.\(^8\) O’Donnell strengthened this argument by showing that the most advanced of the Latin American economies were, in fact, “bureaucratic authoritarian” regimes.\(^9\)

Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore’s economic and political development trajectories during the late 1970s and early 80s seemed to confirm these assertions, highlighting the structural parochialism inherent in modernization theory. In challenging this particular weakness in the modernizationist approach by conceptualizing democratization as a contingent process, the Transitions literature of the 1980s seemed to offer the possibility of better explanations.\(^10\)

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\(^8\) Muller, p. 967. Other regions also saw large declines in the level of democracy as states modernized – Greece in Europe, Lebanon, Tunisia and Turkey in the Middle East; Malaysia and the Philippines in Asia.
\(^9\) O’Donnell, G., Modernization and Bureaucratic Authoritarianism (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, 1979). Singapore has been one such case in the Southeast Asian region, while for a decade Taiwan and South Korea seemed also to be going down the same path.
particular themes characterize the *Transitions* literature. The first is that it is a volume of essays that emphasized the “extraordinary uncertainty of …[democratic] transition, with its numerous surprises and difficult dilemmas.” Further, “elements of accident and unpredictability, of crucial decisions taken in a hurry with very inadequate information, of actors facing irresolvable ethical dilemmas and ideological confusions, of dramatic turning points reached and passed without understanding of their future significance,” offered a picture of democratic transition far different from the somewhat sanitized and deterministic one offered by modernization theorists. Secondly, the authors emphasize that “normal science” approaches to analyzing transitions are inappropriate because of the shifts in configurations of power and benefits, the high indeterminacy of interactions, strategies and outcomes, and the increasingly free expression of interest and ideals characteristic of such moments. Because of this, the “relative stability and predictability of social, economic and institutional parameters – and therefore, of their descriptive and explanatory power – seem patently inadequate.” This led them to emphasize the role of agency, which emphasis also led to the development of a loosely formulated four-player game interrupted by factors such as social uprisings and military coups.

While the incorporation of contingency allowed for the possibility of deviation in democratic outcomes, and as such represented a significant advancement from the structural approach, the *Transitions* literature failed to challenge the accepted wisdom in comparative

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11 Ibid., p. 3.
12 Ibid., pp. 3-4. The authors are careful to state that they do not deny the long-term causal impact of “structures” but in line with some of last week’s readings, these seem to have more impact on consolidation than on transition.
13 Ibid.
14 The actors engaged in strategic interaction (the so-called pact-making process) would be the “softliners” or moderates and “hardliners” within the incumbent regime, and the similarly “hard” and “soft” versions of the opposition. Methodological individualism (as opposed to the aggregative approach of the modernizationists and structuralists) and their unfortunate comparison of democratic transition to a game of chess led to formalized game theoretic versions of their propositions, however, by those who wished to be able to “standardize” the possible paths to democracy and therefore make predictions. See for example, Colomer, J. M., “Transitions by Agreement: Modelling the Spanish Way” *American Political Science Review* 85, 4 (Dec 1991): 1284-99. See also Acemoglu D., Robinson, J., “A Theory of Political Transitions”, *The American Economic Review* 91, 4 (Sept 2001): 938-63.
politics that international factors are at best background or intervening variables – and always of secondary causal importance to democratic development.\textsuperscript{15} In fact, this body of literature resoundingly reinforced the idea that the politics of democratic transition, and particularly of consolidation, necessarily involved only “national democratic actors” except under exceptional circumstances (discussed in Chapter 2).\textsuperscript{16} This was problematic because the “reverse waves” experienced by many post-authoritarian countries in the 1960s and 70s, and the “no preconditions debate” – triggered by observations that lower-income countries have also experienced democratization under the right international conditions – had already put in doubt Lipset’s hypothesis that \textit{domestic} preconditions were of primary importance to democratization.\textsuperscript{17}

This was also problematic in the context of our cases because a whole new level of explanations beyond the domestic seemed to be warranted when Taiwan and South Korea democratized in the late 1980s. The \textit{timing} of democratic breakthrough experienced there suggested that external factors had some causal significance. Both Taiwan and South Korea democratized when the zeitgeist of democracy seemed to be sweeping across the region and beyond. During the late 1980s, agitations for democracy were emerging in many parts of the Pacific Asia such as the Philippines, China and Thailand. Such a perceptible historical trend was

\textsuperscript{17} Huntington observed that there were three historically contingent waves of democratization. The first wave of democratization of 1828 - 1926, and had its roots in the French and US revolutions. The first reverse wave then began between 1922-42 as the failure to democratize manifested itself in the establishment of totalitarian and authoritarian regimes across Europe. The second wave is dated between 1943-62, affecting countries in Europe, Latin America and Asia, only to reverse again between 1958-75 with the establishment of bureaucratic authoritarian regimes, especially in Asia. The third wave began in 1974, transforming the political landscape of Southern Europe, Latin America and Asia profoundly. Huntington was not the first to notice these historical patterns in democratization, however. See Robert Dahl, \textit{Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), Chapter 1.
even more pronounced in Eastern Europe, where the eventual fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 brought about the outright collapse of the former Soviet Union and a dramatic sweep of transitions away from communism to what was then believed to be democracy. Huntington thus included Taiwan and South Korea as part of the “third wave” of democratization, constituting another set of cases that suggest that international factors of democratization must be taken into more serious consideration.

As promising as an international perspective on democratization could be in explaining why, after having failed to democratize during the 1970s, Taiwan and South Korea experienced a breakthrough in 1986 and 1987 respectively, Singapore’s relative immunity to such international trends still needs to be grappled with. As an outlier in our pool of cases, Singapore inevitably suggests that a nuanced approach, which does not privilege either the international or domestic class of factors, is in fact needed in order to clarify exactly why, when and how international factors interact with domestic ones to make democratic breakthrough possible in some cases and not in others. The empirical puzzle at hand leads to this very theoretical question. As such, the purpose of this dissertation is to uncover the exact domestic-international political interface (or causal mechanisms) that led to democratic breakthrough in Taiwan and South Korea but not in Singapore.

The International Dimensions of Democratization

I have shown why and how this select set of comparative case studies is positioned to engage ongoing conversations on the complex nature of democratization. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall exploded the notion that that it was possible to seal off the domestic from the international in the study of democratization, numerous new studies have emerged along this vein. A volume of edited essays dedicated solely to the Eastern European experience led the way
to a better understanding of how international actors, institutions and the structure of international relations could matter. Scholars interested in the processes of globalization also began suggesting that in the advent of the “age of globalization”, what is being contested on a world scale is not just the nature of a specific regime that will rule a specific territory, but the nature of its borders and the very definition of the polity. This further suggested that the convenient separation between domestic and international affairs had been erased. As a result, several different strands of research began to emerge outside of the Eastern European context. Bodies of work that attempted to link the democratization literature with international relations theory, those that focused on US foreign policy and democracy promotion, and a number of country and region specific work examining the international influences on political development were thus developed.

These literatures are broad in scope and will be reviewed in Chapter 2 to specify exactly what other scholars have identified as international factors of democratization. Suffice to say here, however, that the shortcoming of many of these works has continued to be the underspecification of the exact causal mechanisms that underpin the domestic-political interface. Attempts to disentangle the myriad causes, effects and spurious associations were in themselves heroic tasks, but because much of the scholarship consisted of structural-based arguments, they tended not to specify exactly when and how these factors mattered. Other literatures that

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20 Ibid.
focussed on external agency, on the other hand, tended to focus on state actors, which we will soon see also obscured much of the workings of other international actors. Thus, we have had only at best a partial understanding of the causal mechanisms at play; at worst, we have so far misunderstood those mechanisms. As such, it is important here to develop a theoretical framework that can not only help us to disentangle the causal variables at play, but suggest the exact causal relationships between these variables. Such a framework is presented below (see Figure 1).

*Theoretical Framework*

In this theoretical framework, the first and central dimension of analysis consists of the international-domestic political interface, as already discussed. The second dimension of analysis requires that a loose distinction be made between short-term, one-off events and long-term developments at the international level. This allows us to examine the larger context of the international environment and its changes on the one hand, whilst taking into account the possible impact of international events and their timing within that context, on the other. The third dimension of analysis consists of understanding that at the domestic level, the process-oriented approach developed by O’Donnell and Schmitter is needed to bring the “politics” of democratic transition into view, but that strategic interaction between key actors is not entirely “contingent” but contextualized by existing institutions and structures.

This framework is very much at the center of tensions between structural and agency-based explanations of democratization and influenced in large measure by Barrington Moore’s *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern*
Moore is particularly informative for this study because he considered modernization as a matter of alternative routes, not evolutionary necessity - a perspective that decries viewing socio-political change as a function of the short-run workings of politics, although diminishing the determinism of modernization theory. The particular influence that Moore has exerted on this research comes in the form of his understanding that structural changes that foreground the short-run politics of democratic transition must necessarily be a function of long-term historical processes or developments. These macro-level mechanisms of change require macro-level historical analysis, although the “moment” of democratic transition should be analyzed in terms of the “bloodiness” of short-run political struggles on the micro-level. A combination of these two levels of analyses should bring a higher degree of realism into the overall analysis, giving one a powerful means of understanding the divergence between the paths taken by Taiwan, South Korea, and Singapore.

This theoretical framework has thus helped to uncover the following: that certain short-term international events have triggered long-term structural changes in the international normative and geopolitical environments, which in turn have conditioned the ability of external actors to assist in the development of opposition movements able to effect democratic breakthrough in our cases through the introduction of genuine political competition. Exactly what these international events were and exactly what these structural changes consisted of will be discussed in Part II of this dissertation. Importantly, this framework has also helped to identify transnational networks of nonstate and substate actors as central to the international-domestic political interface in democratic development within the context of our cases. How exactly the causal mechanisms identified in this research – what I call the “protection regime” – operated in the specific contexts of our cases will be discussed with richness of empirical detail in Part III of this dissertation.

The East Asian Laboratory

Although research on the Pacific Asian region has accumulated over the years in the comparative democratization literature, seminal comparative works have largely failed to take the region seriously into consideration. For example, in Rueschmeyer, Stephens and Stephens’ monumental comparative work of 38 cases – *Capitalist Development and Democracy* – the Pacific Asian region was only given marginal treatment.\(^23\) And although the *international dimensions* of democratization in Eastern Europe, and to a lesser extent in Southern Europe and Latin America, has been given systematic treatment, the dearth of such comparative literature on

Pacific Asia remains.\textsuperscript{24} This is a surprising gap considering the history of the region, its centrality as a major theatre of the Cold War and its highly internationalized economic posture, all of which suggest that external influences on domestic political development must have had at least some minimal significance to political development there. The statehood of some has even been hotly contested – a prominent case being Taiwan. This gap in the literature is a primary motivation for choosing cases from the Pacific Asian region.

Why, out of a universe of possible cases in the region, only these \textit{three particular} cases were chosen needs to be further explained, however. As a matter of research design, the cases selected reflect two general methodological principles. The first of these is the avoidance of the fallacy of research design that King, Keohane and Verba call “selecting on the dependent variable.”\textsuperscript{25} As a conscious attempt at avoiding selection bias in an inquiry where “democratization” is the dependent variable, a “retrospective research design” using two cases with the same outcomes – Taiwan and South Korea – against a third with a dissimilar outcome – Singapore – has been employed at the first cut.\textsuperscript{26} This is, of course, the minimum of cases needed to avoid selection bias: for purposes of expediency no more than three were examined. The second methodological principle is to control for as many domestic causal variables as possible through the most similar systems design, thus reducing the “many variables, small-N” problem. The selection of these three cases, out of a myriad of possible cases in the Pacific Asian region, largely reflects the attempt to control independent variables associated with the level of socio-economic development, political culture and “world historical space and time.”


\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., p. 141.
In terms of factors of social modernization associated monotonically with economic development - high levels of urbanization and literacy rates, for example - Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore are highly comparable. Further, other explanatory variables such as the market economy and a relatively equal distribution of income and wealth, which are comparable across these cases, are also controlled. By controlling for the level of socio-economic development, I can avoid entering into an already well-documented discussion about the causal relationship between level of socio-economic development and democracy, without committing the fallacy of omitted variable bias. This is the principal reason for which countries such as the Philippines and Thailand, which experienced democratization at the same time as Taiwan and South Korea, but had not attained a comparable level of socio-economic development, was left out of this study. Similarly, in a particular large pool of possible “outlier” cases in the region, only Singapore was chosen for the purposes of comparison.

The same logic of research design applies to the causal variable of political culture. Although the relevance of belief systems to political action cannot be denied, cultural explanations of democratization or the lack thereof tend to be nebulous, not least because different strains of cultural beliefs can have simultaneously contradictory effects on the prospects for democracy. This particular research design is meant to allow us to sidestep these controversies and ambiguities. However, in this instance the question of whether the political

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27 For the argument that democratic cultures are the consequences and not the causes of democratization, see Edward Friedman, ed., The Politics of Democratization: Generalizing East Asian Experiences (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994). Confucian scholar Tu Weiming also believes that there is a distinction between “political Confucianism” and the “Confucian personal ethic”. “Political Confucianism, which legitimated a hierarchical political system culminating in the emperor and its supporting bureaucracy of gentlemen-scholars has since the end of feudalism in China been disrupted “in a fundamental sense.” Thus, Tu argues that, “the more important legacy of traditional Confucianism is not its political teaching, but rather the personal ethic that regulates attitudes toward family, work, education, and other elements of daily life that are valued in Chinese society. It is these attitudes, rather than inherited ideas about political authority, that account for the economic success of the overseas Chinese.” Francis Fukuyama, “Confucianism and Democracy,” Journal of Democracy No. 6 Vol. 2 (1995): 20-33, p. 26. See Tu Weiming, Confucian Ethics Today: The Singapore Challenge (Singapore: Curriculum Development Institute of Singapore, 1984), p. 90.
cultures of these societies are similar enough to control through the most similar systems design requires further elaboration. Sweeping cultural similarities alleged to exist between “Asian” societies often ring false, not least because they have been most often put forward by Asian leaders disinclined towards the messiness of “Western-style” liberal democracy.\(^28\) That these cultural traits have Confucian roots is even more problematic. I think a more limited claim that particular attitudes toward authority and conceptions of legitimate rule that the Taiwanese, South Koreans and Singaporeans shared were conditioned by living memories of political upheaval, deprivation, insecurity and intense external threat to emphasize the “group over the individual, authority over liberty, and responsibilities over rights,” could nevertheless stand up to scrutiny.\(^29\)

It has also been important to control for world historical space and time, which inevitably affected the process of state evolution. Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore have in essence occupied the same world historical space and time, and the political developments to be examined unfolded simultaneously during the same thirty-year period. In Chapters 3-5 we will see how very similar international environments shaped very similar “developmental logics” in Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore from the early post-war years up until the 1970s. During that time, “modernization” meant the adoption of democratic political institutions modeled to varying degrees after the liberal democracies of the United Kingdom and the United States. The superimposition of the Cold War framework onto localized conflict meant that these newly

\(^{28}\) See Francis Fukuyama, ibid.
\(^{29}\) Thus Huntington writes, “Almost no scholarly disagreement exists regarding the proposition that traditional Confucianism was either undemocratic or antidemocratic, . . . Classic Chinese Confucianism and its derivatives in Korea, Vietnam, Singapore, Taiwan, and (in diluted fashion) Japan emphasized the group over the individual, authority over liberty, and responsibilities over rights. Confucian societies lacked a tradition of rights against the state; to the extent that individual rights did exist, they were created by the state. Harmony and cooperation were preferred over disagreement and competition. The maintenance of order and respect for hierarchy were central values. The conflict of ideas, groups, and parties was viewed as [End Page 24] dangerous and illegitimate. Most important, Confucianism merged society and the state and provided no legitimacy for autonomous social institutions at the national level.” Samuel P. Huntington, "Democracy's Third Wave," *Journal of Democracy* Vol. 2 No. 2 (Spring 1991): 12-34, p.24.
independent states became central to the Pacific theater of the Cold War and had to stay within the Western camp to secure national survival. However, the “modernization” paths they took under such international conditions came also to be characterized by the development of strong states monopolized by an authoritarian elite. The overdevelopment of repressive state apparatuses – in large part the result of real and present external threats – further allowed for the systematic elimination of genuine political competition. The authoritarian character of the political regimes that existed in Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore at the time was therefore defined largely by the distortion of existing democratic institutions through the repression of the political opposition. It is important to control for world historical space and time in order to isolate the international variables that brought about the divergences in developmental paths during the 1980s.

There is one further advantage to the choice of these cases for the purpose of examining the international dimensions of democratization. Taiwan and South Korea are situated in the sub-region of East Asia, whereas Singapore is situated in the sub-region of Southeast Asia. There are perceptible differences in sub-regional geopolitics that could have significance and this particular configuration of case studies allow for such an examination.

**Specifying the Dependent Variable: Democratic Breakthrough**

It is imperative at this point to explain what the dependent variable in this study is - or in other words, exactly what is meant by “democratization.” Here I use a general theoretical approach to first differentiate the particular phase in the democratization process we are interested in, namely, the lead-up period to democratic breakthrough. However, the exact content of democratic breakthrough is better understood with reference to the particular political contexts
of the cases in question – a point that will become more obvious in Chapter 3 as we examine the processes of authoritarian consolidation and democratic struggle in Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore.

At first cut it is important to understand that democratization is a complex process that has come to be understood to comprise several stages. Thomas Carothers characterizes these stages in the following way:

First there occurs the *opening*, a period of democratic ferment and political liberalization in which cracks appear in the ruling dictatorial regime, with the most prominent fault line being that between hardliners and softliners. There follows the *breakthrough*--the collapse of the regime and the rapid emergence of a new, democratic system, with the coming to power of a new government through national elections and the establishment of a democratic institutional structure, often through the promulgation of a new constitution. After the transition comes *consolidation*, a slow but purposeful process in which democratic forms are transformed into democratic substance through the reform of state institutions, the regularization of elections, the strengthening of civil society, and the overall habituation of the society to the new democratic "rules of the game."30

These different stages of democratization, as characterized by Carothers, are spatially represented below in Figure 2. In such a depiction, democratic opening and breakthrough are considered to be in the transition phase, temporally distinct from consolidation. By implication, the process of democratization is unidirectional, with democratic deepening taking place during the latter consolidation phase. As Carothers subsequently points out, in reality these two phases are not necessarily temporally distinct and that the sequence of change from transition to

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consolidation is seldom unidirectional. Nevertheless, it is safe to say that what marks the beginning of change is first a period of “opening.”

For the purposes of this project, I am interested in the period of democratic opening, where “democratic ferment and political liberalization” takes place and “cracks appear in the ruling dictatorial regime.” The reason for this is the following. Although this period may be considered to be a transition phase, doing so assumes that opening will necessarily lead to breakthrough. As I will later show however, in all three of these cases, this was never a certainty, not least because of the overdevelopment of strong states under Cold War conditions with an overwhelming monopoly on the use of force and later, other more subtle forms of repression. As such, the state retained the capacity to resist societal pressures for democratization - no matter how contentious society was.\(^\text{31}\) In the case of Taiwan and South Korea, what therefore needs to be explained is exactly what caused the state to refrain from utilizing this force on opposition elements close to the time when these actors effected democratic breakthrough, as we shall see in Part III.

**FIGURE 2**

**PHASES OF DEMOCRATIZATION**

**Consolidation Phase**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Democratic Opening</th>
<th>Democratic Breakthrough</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Ferment</td>
<td>Regime collapse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberalization</td>
<td>Elected government emerges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cracks in dictatorial regime</td>
<td>New institutional structures e.g. new constitution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Transition Phase**

31 See Michael Mann *The Sources of Social Power*
In particular, the *stability* that characterized what was a protracted and inconsistent process of “political liberalization” in Taiwan and Singapore suggests that a sustainable and indefinite stasis had developed in these cases for reasons that will be further explained in Chapter 3. Why Taiwan eventually did experience breakthrough while Singapore failed to do so thus makes the examination of this period of democratic opening particularly necessary and interesting, and explains why I have chosen to look at this particular time period, and thus, why the point of “democratic breakthrough” is the more exact understanding of the dependent variable in this study. And although South Korea experienced much higher levels of instability throughout the authoritarian period and the perpetuation of authoritarian rule seemed less certain, the overwhelming ability of an over-militarized state to continue with repression continued up until democratic breakthrough in June 1987 and even persisted thereafter. In South Korea, the situation was more of a stalemate than a stasis, but nevertheless it meant that democratic breakthrough was not a foregone conclusion until it happened, and must therefore be explicated.

Further clarification of what “democratic breakthrough” means is needed, however. Carothers’ depiction of breakthrough does not really distinguish between breakthrough and transition. Breakthrough is not so much a particular point in time when transition begins to take place as a period in itself where transition takes place. For purposes of clarity, the understanding of “breakthrough” adopted here is that of a *critical juncture* or turning point when it becomes clear that what could have been an indefinite period of “political liberalization” without change decidedly turns into a process of political change toward democracy.

The lack of conceptual clarity aside, three aspects appear integral to Carothers’ depiction of democratic breakthrough/transition: (1) the collapse of the (authoritarian) regime (2) the
institutionalization of genuine political competition through which a new government could come to power and (3) the establishment of democratic institutional structures, often through the promulgation of a new constitution. Whether all and in what sequence these complex, interrelated processes take place is dependent, of course, on the particular cases examined. The moment of breakthrough in the sense used in this project was marked very much by the emergence of genuine political competition and the possibilities of having an alternative government led by groups other than the authoritarian elites in question, however. This is not least because nominally democratic constitutions necessitated a limited degree of pluralism and elections for executive and legislative offices. However, extra-constitutional legislation, the manipulation of the electoral system, fraud and vote-buying eliminated genuine political competition, helping to ensure that an important arena of contestation was neutralized and the longevity of the authoritarian regimes ensured. Until the introduction of political competition made the possibility of an alternative government a real possibility, the collapse of the authoritarian regime and the establishment of other democratic institutional structures were even less certain.

It is for this reason that 26 September 1986 is considered that moment of democratic breakthrough in Taiwan. On that date the nascent political opposition formed the Democratic Progressive Party in defiance of 3 decades of martial law banning political organization – the single most important obstacle to genuine political competition at the time. The Nationalist government did not crack down on them although it had the capacity to. This was the clearest sign that it had come to accept the inevitability of political competition from these opposition elements. It is also for this reason that 27 June 1987 is considered the moment of democratic breakthrough in South Korea. It was on this day that the military leadership acknowledged the
demands of the rising opposition by promising political reform, including the reinstatement of direct presidential elections. As the office of the presidency was the most powerful institution in South Korea, the introduction of genuine political competition for this position was vital. That the ruling People’s Action Party instituted new restrictions on political competition at this time and into the 1990s makes for the argument that no such breakthrough occurred there.

These arguments for the specific choice and definition of the dependent variable of democratic breakthrough thus also relate to the shared feature of weak oppositions countenancing strong states that were dominated, if not outright monopolized, by the ruling authoritarian elites across all three cases. It should be clarified here that it is not weak societies of which I speak but weak oppositions. It is true, of course, that large cross-sections of these societies had been largely demobilized through decades of authoritarian rule, especially the middle-classes. Nevertheless, in the South Korean case, society can hardly be depicted as weak. What was weak, however, was the opposition movement as a whole, despite the relative frequency of large-scale protests throughout the 1950s and 80s. This weakness resulted in the inability to effectively challenge the incumbent authoritarian elites until much closer to the time of democratic breakthrough in the case of Taiwan and South Korea. The continued weakness of the political opposition in Singapore was, conversely, the key reason for which no democratic breakthrough occurred there. The importance of the political opposition to democratic development in these will be elaborated on in Chapter 3.

**Research Methodology**
The existing literature suggests that democratic transition is likely to be determined by “a unique set of socio-structural and international circumstances.” The nature of the subject matter itself therefore poses a methodological challenge. On the one hand, there is a need to remain committed to the development of a contextually sensitive theory, while at the same time keeping to an important purpose of social science – that of making generalizable explanatory claims that can be applied beyond the cases during the time period examined. In order to make specific claims as to the causal mechanisms at play, it is also necessary to adopt a research method that allows for the specification of exactly why and how identified factors “cause” the outcomes that ensue.

**The Historical Comparative Approach**

The comparative historical method is proposed as the one best suited to meet this challenge, because it has been explicitly developed to accommodate the interpretive approach with the demands of positivist social science. In using the historical comparative method a small number of cases is examined (in this project, these “cases” will be national-level units) in order to “trace” the salient political processes in each of these cases. This involves understanding the relationship between different processes and the significance of the timing and sequences of events. By emphasizing time contexts and sequences of events, it becomes possible therefore to specify exactly why and how the factors that are identified cause the outcomes that ensue.

“Process tracing” is also particularly important for this project because the dynamism inherent in the subject matter of democratization makes it “intrinsically complex.” Multiple causality of varying impact at different points in time makes it difficult pin down the causal

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33 Pridham, p. 11.
impact of international factors unless carefully followed. This method enables one to “trace sets of chain reactions, whether originating in the domestic or the external arena, which clearly form part of the dynamics of the transition process.” As Bennett and George point out, “process tracing can identify different causal paths to an outcome, point out variables that otherwise might be left out, check for spuriousness, and allow causal inferences on the basis of a few cases or even a single case.” Moreover, as specified earlier, many international factors are not merely short-term events but long-term structural processes, which progress needs to be charted carefully to understand their causal impact.

This approach does admit of only limited generalizations, however, because it is particularly sensitive to historical and cultural contexts, and the researcher undertaking this method is required to understand the world-view and knowledge of the actors in particular situations. The approach that this method offers to causality is contingent rather than deterministic, therefore. At the same time, these limited generalizations tend to be derived inductively – concepts and theory are developed in conjunction with empirical data. As such, concepts and hypotheses are constantly revised according to data and these modified concepts are then used to reorganize evidence – the interaction between theory and empirical data, in other words, is rather high.

34 Ibid., p. 14. In other words, this allows for the possibility of multiple causal logics, the paths of which this method is particularly apt to reveal. Skocpol’s approach in States and Social Revolutions admits of multiple causal logics. That is to say, it allows for the possibility that one or more causal factors have greater importance than others depending on the historical context, and thus, a variance in the relationship between different causes is possible. See Hobden, S., International Relations and Historical Sociology: Breaking Down Boundaries (NY/London: Routledge, 1998).


36 See pp. 6-7 below.

In the following sub-section I outline the different stages of research, specific investigative methods employed and the problems and difficulties anticipated and encountered, linking conceptual problems with practical ones.

**Specific Investigative Methods**

The first step in this research consisted of conducting extensive research on *secondary* historical resources to form a basic idea as to what the key conjunctures and contingencies might have been to formulate tentative concepts with which to later organize further evidence. At this first cut, the secondary sources are expected to provide only a tentative guide as to what further evidence one may have to look for, how to later frame that body of evidence, and what new concepts might be needed. Because a historian’s selection of “facts” may not be based on consistent or explicit criteria, a form of selection bias or “premature foreclosure” of alternative explanations may result. At this first stage, therefore, the net was cast as widely as possible, and as many alternative explanations were sought.

These possible explanations were *not* however, “tested” against the secondary historical accounts from which these tentative conclusions have been drawn. Instead, the next stage consisted of looking at/ seeking primary data, which were at the same time used for the purpose of narrowing down the hypotheses and refining the concepts developed at the first cut. Primary data comprised two types: written/archival and oral. Thus, evidence from official reports, newspapers and magazines of the period of interest, letters, memos and diaries, along with personal memoirs and unpublished written documents that were most likely to be found only in the countries under study, was collected as extensively as possible during field trips or

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38 See King, Keohane and Verba, pp. 135-6.
39 This relates to the issue of “wastage” discussed earlier.
subsequently through social networks established during fieldwork. “Oral history” was also collected by obtaining pre-existing interviews and by personally interviewing key individuals involved during face-to-face meetings, over the telephone and by e-mail. These individuals included (1) actors such as human rights activists, journalists (foreign correspondents and local newspapers), academics, foreign students, foreign church leaders and members of the overseas diaspora communities interested and involved in political developments in their home countries (2) those from the ruling elite and (3) the political opposition, including opposition politicians and social movement leaders (that is, labor leaders, student leaders, church leaders and intellectuals). Again, the net was cast very wide in correspondence to the wide set of hypotheses at the initial stages. As the hypotheses narrowed, further interviews were conducted.

The difficulty of conducting research on primary written documents, of course, is that with the advent of faxes, the telephone and so on, much of the everyday communication between key actors would not have been systematically recorded. The phenomenon under study did not develop under conditions of “normal politics” and mostly required a high degree of secrecy. Or there may be issues of privacy or accessibility, which did not allow one to access unpublished records. In order to mitigate the problem of gaps in the evidence, a particular investigative concept suggested by Neuman was employed. Neuman suggested that one needs only to look for evidence that would “test” the key parts of an explanatory model, calling such unambiguous

40 Efforts exerted on my behalf have been much appreciated and have been acknowledged at the very beginning of this document.
41 The diversity of such interview methods, the particular effectiveness of which will not be discussed in this document, turned out to be necessary in the course of the research owing to the geographical spread involved. The limitation of resources did not allow for face-to-face meetings on every occasion.
42 There may be obstacles to the foreign scholar who wishes to obtain such material. I am open to suggestions as to how this may be overcome. Another issue of concern is whether the failure to obtain such material will amount to “selection bias” as King, Keohane and Verba discuss, even though a wide array of information is collected in this process. See King, Keohane and Verba, pp. 132-3.
evidence that is enough to infer a particular theoretical relationship “critical indicators.”

Fortunately, this gap in evidence did in fact narrow considerably as the hypotheses narrowed, and no insurmountable leaps in causal logic were countenanced as the explanatory model developed.

Further, at all stages of my research I was particularly attentive to the quality of evidence, that is to say, its reliability. Neuman has suggested two ways of evaluating evidence: by applying external and internal criticism to them. External criticism consists of “evaluating the authenticity of a document itself to be certain that it is not a fake or a forgery.” Internal criticism consists of “an examination of the document’s contents to establish credibility.” Once the authenticity of the source is established (which did not prove to be a difficult matter in all cases), internal criticism becomes particularly important because of the need to establish causality. The temporal order of events is one of three keys in establishing causality, therefore it is important to know if the source is likely to be accurate in the dating of events, and whether in fact the causal arrows run in the right direction as it may suggest.

Two challenges concerning the comparative aspects of this project were anticipated at the outset and should be discussed briefly here. First is the issue of equivalence. Because historical comparative research requires comparison on both latitudinal and longitudinal dimensions,

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43 Neuman, p. 395. In the event that evidence is sketchy, it ought all the more to be handled carefully. Thus, the failure to put the information that is obtained in its proper context, and using it out of context should be avoided. One should also be more wary of discrepancies in dating events found within the evidence available. See also Neuman, p.394.

44 As we considered which hypotheses were unlikely to explain the phenomenon in question satisfactorily, it was in my judgment sufficient to establish plausibility arguments that did not require as high a level of primary data as when we continued to establish our particular causal model.

45 Neuman, p. 401. This means verifying if the document was indeed produced when it was claimed to have been by the alleged author, why it was produced and how it survived.

46 Ibid. The researcher thus asks if the document is based on the author’s first hand experience or second-hand information, taking note of the context within which it was written, and finally seeking verification of the “facts” mentioned in the document.

47 The other two necessary but not sufficient conditions of establishing causality are “association” (or concomitant variation between variables) and “no spuriousness” (or the elimination of alternative causes).
conceptual and interpretational consistency is crucial. Thus, I anticipated having to be particularly sure that (1) certain phrases and words are understood in the time and cultural context in which they were used and (2) the concepts adopted are “case-sensitive.” I anticipated that this would be a particular challenge in South Korea, owing to my reliance on interpreters/translator that might not have this awareness. Fortunately, this was not as great a problem as anticipated owing to a large array of secondary historical resources that allowed me to definitively “ground” my research.

The second of the two challenges is known as Galton’s problem. Briefly stated, Galton’s problem stems from the failure to take into account the possibility that the same phenomenon that is observed across cases does not have independent origins. The result of this is to mistakenly attribute spurious relationships between variables within each unit of comparison. What is being left out is the possibility that diffusion across units has occurred and influenced the phenomenon observed within each of those units. Although somewhat more abstract, it is no less important, because of the international-domestic dimension of the analytical framework adopted that requires an understanding of the interaction of domestic factors, on the one hand, and international factors that reach across cases, on the other. This is a particularly salient issue when considering the objective geographical proximity of the cases under study on the one hand, and the possibility of a perceived affinity between the cases in the minds of salient actors under study. In the survey of the secondary literature, therefore, particular attention was paid to the mention of how events and developments in one case might have influenced the other. Further, in the course of the interviews conducted, questions intended to determine the extent to

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48 For the importance of this, see Kopstein, Jeffrey & Reilly, David, “Geographic Diffusion and the Transformation of the Postcommunist World” World Politics Vol.53, No.1 (Oct 2000).
which political developments in one case affected the perceptions of salient actors, and therefore political developments in another, was included.

**The Plan of the Dissertation**

There are four parts and ten chapters to this dissertation. The first foundational part of the dissertation consists of two chapters meant to provide the reader with the framework with which to understand subsequent chapters. In this chapter, I have already set out the key parameters of this research project. These include the empirical puzzle and research question, the theoretical significance of this research, the research design and case selection, a precise definition of the dependent variable, the theoretical framework of the study and the historical comparative methodology adopted.

In Chapter 2, I survey the key literatures that discuss the international factors that have impacted domestic (political) processes. The purpose of this chapter is to identify the potential independent variables of this study. These are primarily drawn from, but not exclusive to, the literatures in the subfields of comparative politics and international relations. These potential independent variables are then organized through the theoretical framework provided in Chapter 1 for clarity. At this stage, however, it is not possible to narrow down the broad range of potential independent variables to the ones most likely to have had an impact because what is first required is an understanding of the processes of political development in each of these cases. In understanding the structural and institutional contexts within which democratic struggle has taken place in Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore, it becomes possible to have a better idea of which international factors are most likely to have impacted the processes of democratic development there.
This is accomplished in Chapter 3. In this chapter I trace the development of authoritarianism in Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore within the early Cold War context. This provides an insight into the structural and institutional context that conditioned the nature of the democratic struggle during the authoritarian period. In this historical narrative, the importance of the geopolitical and related international normative context to political development in these cases will already become obvious. This chapter also brings to the fore the importance of key actors in this struggle – the political opposition – and the reasons why they were weak and unable to effect democratic breakthrough. It is clear, then, why Chapter 3 belongs to Part II of the dissertation, where I set the stage for the empirical chapters to follow.

Chapters 4 and 5 also form Part II of the dissertation. These chapters provide the necessary understanding of the external environment surrounding Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore. It particular these chapters explain how and why the geopolitical and international normative environments interacted and evolved over time. Together, Chapters 3, 4 and 5 provide the background with which to understand the focus placed on transnational nonstate and substate actors I call the “protection regime,” and the role they were able to play in the democratic development of Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore. In Chapter 6 I introduce the concept of the transnational “protection regime,” and present the contours of such a regime found to have surrounded the political opposition in each of our cases, providing for the comparison of its inherent strength and effectiveness in Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore.

Having set the scene, I move on to Part III of the dissertation, where I present the empirical evidence supporting Chapter 6. In Chapters 7, 8 and 9 – the heart of the dissertation – I also trace the impact of the protection regime on democratic development in Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore and explain why and how they have or have not been able to support the
political oppositions there. It is in Part III that we arrive at a complete understanding of the causal mechanisms that underpin the international-domestic political interface that was key to democratic development in our cases.

Finally, in the conclusion to this dissertation – Chapter 10 – I not only provide a summary of the arguments made in earlier chapters, but also make suggestions as to the implications of this research. This final part of the dissertation also provides an overview of the causal model I develop, how it may be applicable in other cases and thus constitute a fruitful research agenda for the future.
Chapter 2
Explaining Democratization from an International Perspective

Introduction

Since the early 1990s the scholarship on democratization has taken an increasingly “international” turn for the reasons already mentioned. Before this time, however, a few scholars had already begun to consider some of the external dimensions of socio-political development and regime change, including the reasons for democratic breakdown. This extensive body of literature mostly provided a structural understanding of socio-political development and regime change, including the impact of the security environment, the impact of colonial legacies, the structure of the international economy and a country’s position of “economic dependency.”

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Besides these structural factors, however, external *state agency* was also recognized to be an important factor in democratic development and breakdown.\(^{50}\)

In this chapter, I review the literature that has suggested some potential international factors that might matter to democratization in our cases. I begin more narrowly by examining the comparative politics and international relations literatures that deal with democratization before broadening the survey to other related literatures that look at the domestic-international political interface across other issue areas. These potential causal factors are then organized as per the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 1, as either short-term events or long-term developments. Without looking at the particularities of our cases, this may seem merely an exercise in broad speculation. It is important, however, because it helps to situate the approach I have taken and the research findings of this project in terms of other choices that could have been made.

**The Transitions Literature**

In chapter one, I explained that the operative assumption of the *Transitions* literature was the pre-existence of a well-defined polity, where statehood was not contested. In such a context, it was argued that external factors were of minor significance. As the Eastern European cases attest, this is no longer the case when that assumption does not hold. By implication, therefore, two related possibilities emerge: first, that contested state sovereignty is a precondition that magnifies the importance of other as yet unspecified external factors to democratic development, and second, that it is itself a direct causal factor in some way. Although O’Donnell and Schmitter’s pioneering “process-oriented” approach considered that international factors were of

secondary importance, some of these exogenous factors were on occasion considered to have had a *direct* influence on democratization. Thus, for example, they admitted that, “the most frequent context within which a transition from authoritarian rule has begun in recent decades has been military defeat in an international conflict.”\(^{51}\) Related to this is “occupation by a foreign power which was itself a political democracy.”\(^{52}\)

Further, O’Donnell and Schmitter also considered that certain background variables such as “ideological constraints at the international level” appear to have some effect on “actor perceptions of the long-term viability of a given regime,” and that international events such as “the negative impact of a downturn in the international economy can accelerate matters.”\(^{53}\) This seemingly straightforward list of factors with clearly external origins – military failure, external imposition, international normative considerations and economic crises induced by an increasingly integrated world economy – was a useful starting point. However, in reality the “ideological constraints at the international level” and “the negative impact of a downturn in the international economy” are complex factors that need much further elaboration. The exact conditions under which they operate, the scope of their applicability and the exact mechanisms through which they effect democratization remained somewhat unclear and the international-domestic interface remained underspecified.

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\(^{51}\) O’Donnell & Schmitter, p.18. In keeping with O’Donnell and Schmitter’s observations on the one hand, and Whitehead’s on the other, Huntington also notes that military failure contributes to authoritarian degeneration in eroding the legitimacy of those regimes. The way in which this works is by causing disaffection within the military, and delegitimation in the eyes of the general public.

\(^{52}\) Ibid., p.4. I consider, under this rubric, colonialism, although colonization by a democratic power might leave behind institutional legacies that are not conducive to democratization.

\(^{53}\) Ibid. These causal factors were considered of secondary importance, however, because the initial inductive studies of regime transition were conducted in post-1945 Southern Europe and Latin America that represented a narrow set of “postwar peacetime attempts at transition, and thus embodied assumptions about democratization that reflected the pre-existence of a well-defined national polity.” Indeed, as statehood was not an issue, it did not seem unreasonable to consider democratization an “essentially domestic drama.” Ibid., p.5. Further, it was considered that “external influences would become effective only if channeled through fully constituted domestic political agencies,” which again existed in those cases. Whitehead, L (ed.) *The International Dimensions of Democratization: Europe and the Americas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) p. 444.
The Geopolitical Environment

In the meantime, however, the wave of Eastern European democratizations inspired research in both the comparative politics and international relations subfields along three main directions. The first was a renewed interest in international “background variables” such as the geopolitical environment. This is different, although related to, the factors of war/war-making and military failure discussed by the earlier literature. In the studies conducted on the democratic transitions in Eastern Europe during the late 1980s, for example, there was a consensus that important changes in the geostrategic setting - specifically the crumbling of the communism in the USSR and the attendant changes in Soviet policy towards its Eastern European satellite states - resulted in the ostensible “snowballing” of democratization in the region.\(^{54}\) O’Donnell, Schmitter and Whitehead had in fact intimated at an earlier stage that the geopolitical environment could be important when comparing the Southern European case studies to that of Latin America by asking, “why have the liberalizations/democratizations of Southern Europe got off to what seems to be a better and more reassuring start [than Latin America]?” Their “partial explanation” was that “the international context in that part of the world and at this point of time is more supportive of such an outcome…”\(^{55}\) Until the Eastern European cases, however, Pridham

\(^{54}\)“It is now commonly felt among students of democratic transition that the international dimension has been far more decisive and probably more profound in the regime change in Eastern Europe than in the other regional cases.” Pridham, *Building Democracy*, p. 7. By “international dimension he refers explicitly to “a favorable or supportive geostrategic environment.” Ibid. There are many such works on the Eastern European transition, which will not be reviewed in detail here. Examples include, Nancy Bermeo ed., *Liberalization and Democratization: Change in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1992), Grzegorz Ekiert, “Democratization Processes in East Central Europe: A Theoretical Reconsideration,” *British Journal of Political Science* 21 (July 1991): 285-313; Valerie Bunce, “The Struggle for Liberal Democracy in Eastern Europe,” *World Policy Journal*, 7 (Summer 1990), 395-430.

noted that the importance of this international dimension was “more often assumed than proven.”

The Eastern European cases do suggest, however, that while the geopolitical setting may be a necessary “background or situational variable,” it is not a sufficient condition. In particular cases where there are no domestic or international consensus as to the territorial boundaries of the polity in question, the geopolitical setting may be more important, however. In this regard, the international processes that determine the extent to which such boundaries are established and stabilized “carry direct and often powerfully disruptive implications for the composition (and viability) of democratic regimes within those boundaries.” Further, these international processes in question pertain not only to inter-state boundaries, but security alignments that may affect the international or regional power balance.

Although the “geostrategic setting” might be at a global level, the presence or absence of particular regional strategic factors must be considered because they might prove to be an important intervening variable with the potential of negating or reinforcing the effects of the geopolitical changes already considered. Whitehead has gone as far as to suggest that, “such international dimensions of democratization seems much clearer at [the] regional level than at the world wide level of analysis.” In the context of the Eastern European democratizations, it was not merely the fall of Communism but the existence of a Western democratic bloc that mattered. As John Pinder put it, “since the watershed of 1989, the European Community has

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57 Margot Light explained that, “In the pre-transition phase of democratization the events which occurred in individual Eastern European countries were primarily, although perhaps not solely, dependent upon the transformation which had occurred in the Soviet Union. In other words, Soviet perestroika was a necessary but not a sufficient condition for East European democratization. Domestic political influences within individual countries clearly played an indispensable role in making the transition possible.” See Margot Light, “The USSR/CIS and Democratization in Eastern Europe,” in Pridham G., ed., *Building Democracy? The International Dimensions of Democratization in Eastern Europe* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1994) pp. 144-67, p. 144.
58 Ibid., p.17.
59 Whitehead, p. 396.
acted to support pluralist democracy in Central and Eastern Europe.”  

Although policy changes in the Soviet Union and the consequent geopolitical changes was a necessary condition for democratization in its satellite states, the then-European Community subsequently reinforced the transition to democracy there. However, although Pinder refers to the then-European Community in terms of an external agent, Eastern Europe’s geographical proximity to a Western democratic European bloc was a *geostrategic* factor that influenced the direction of regime transition after the initial “opening” presented by the crumbling of the USSR.  

The possibility of strategic alignment with the Western democratic bloc was an important consideration to salient domestic political actors mindful of “the external ramifications of their choices.” However, regional strategic factors are not restricted to those that are geographically determined: other considerations such as trade patterns, networks of international organization membership and UN voting blocs might be significant.

**External State Agency**

The second revival of interest was in the role of external state agency, which in the foreign policy literature took the particular form of “democracy promotion.” In the comparative literature, Whitehead moved our understanding of the international-domestic interface of external state agency forward by conceptualizing external agency in terms of “control.” Unlike “contagion,” which we will discuss below, “control” attributes intentionality to the process of

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63 Bruce Russett, *International Regions and the International System* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1967). This goes to the heart of what a “region” is.
transmission, which brings into sharp relief the role of external agency in the spread of democracy. Four aspects of Whitehead’s concept of “control” will be discussed here. First of all, external state agency is the source of “control,” congruent with the democracy promotion literature.  

Secondly, despite its alignment with the democracy promotion literature - which suggests the importance of the values and ideals to the democracy promoter - “control” is largely an interest-based approach to understanding external influences. “Transmission” is thus a function of simple power politics, and not “norm diffusion,” which we will also discuss later. As such, observable “clusters” are reflective of the spheres of influence of powerful Western democracies. The third point is that by focussing on external state agency, “control” is necessarily a ‘top-down’ understanding of the international aspects of democratization. Nevertheless, the incorporation of both system-level and state-level analysis is a way forward in capturing the international-domestic interface of factors encapsulated by the concept of “control.”

Lastly, Whitehead makes a further contribution by pointing out that direct and indirect forms of control should be delineated. An example of direct control would be what O’Donnell and Schmitter identified earlier as “occupation by a foreign power, which was itself a political democracy.” Such direct control was more typical of the immediate wave of post-war transitions.

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64 See, for example, Thomas Carothers, Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999). The democracy promotion literature, which falls within the rubric of the foreign policy literature, is too exhaustive and diverse to be mentioned in full here. State agency can be exercised, however, through the international organizations or institutions controlled by these states, whether they be essentially political or economic in nature.  

65 Thus, Whitehead writes, that short of power rivalries an important aim of a dominant state wishing to promote democracy in a less powerful state was “to create an international environment that would be relatively less threatening to a former great power in decline in the longer run.” Ibid., p.11. Further, interest calculations at the domestic level also matter, as when “domestic opinion within the dominant state …affect[s] its foreign policy.” Ibid.  

66 These two are not mutually exclusive, of course.  

67 See also O’Donnell, Schmitter and Whitehead, Comparative Perspectives, p. 12.  

68 By this I mean that the ontology of the “control” perspective limits the levels of analysis to the system and state-level only because the external pressures are exerted at a government-to-government level. The “contagion” perspective highlights the conditions of receptivity of a citizenry, and is thus not exclusively “top-down”.

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because it followed on the heels of war, which context provided those who conquered the ability to exercise considerable influence over the political development of the vanquished. The context of the early Cold War also induced the much greater propensity to intervene directly in the domestic politics of strategic countries. Since then, indirect control – or more specifically “indirect systems of influence and support” – has become more prevalent.\(^{69}\) These indirect forms of control include, as the democracy promotion literature suggests, instruments such as “the allocation of aid and other economic concessions,” and “gestures of political support of disapproval.”\(^{70}\) Such forms of indirect control are now commonly termed “external pressures.”

Huntington also points out that “external actors significantly helped third wave democratizations,” although he also observes that “foreign influences…may retard or prevent democratization…”\(^{71}\) The ability of external actors to do both is an important recognition because O’Donnell and Schmitter had explicitly noted that while “external manipulations and calculations” can bring down a democracy, they are less likely to bring down an authoritarian regime.\(^{72}\) This is because, “political democracies are usually brought down by conspiracies involving few actors (even though, usually at later stages, those actors may obtain mass support for their efforts), and this may give special leverage to external manipulations and calculations. The liberalization and eventual democratization of authoritarian regimes may have its conspiratorial side, “but it also involves … a crucial component of mobilization and organization of large numbers of individuals,” which to O’Donnell and Schmitter attenuate the role of external factors.\(^{73}\) Huntington also argues that the \textit{timing} of the third wave of democratization in

\(^{69}\) Ibid., p.14.  
\(^{70}\) Ibid. Indirect control is also exerted through “the dense network of military and security ties.”  
\(^{71}\) Ibid., p.86.  
\(^{72}\) They write, “What brings down a democracy is not the inverse of those factors that bring down an authoritarian regime – and the same cane be said for the successful consolidation of these respective regime types.” O’Donnell, Schmitter and Whitehead, \textit{Tentative Conclusions}, p. 18.  
\(^{73}\) Ibid.

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the 1970s and 80s can be explained in terms of “changes in the policy of external actors” at around this time.\textsuperscript{74} Further, Huntington’s discussion of the role of state actors includes democratic countries that imposed democratic institutions on its colonies.\textsuperscript{75}

“Control” may also be extended through international organizations, be they political, military/security or economic in nature.\textsuperscript{76} International organizations can be used to “apply pressure in a variety of ways ranging from overt de-legitimization of the regime by IO members through diplomatic pressure to direct economic sanctions against the regime or even expulsion from the organization.”\textsuperscript{77} International organizations or institutions should not be considered merely as an extension of the “external agency” approach, however. Thus Pevehouse points out that two other causal mechanisms explain the influence of international organizations on regime change – membership may also lead to the acceptance of liberalization by certain elite groups who might otherwise oppose liberalization (business and military) through “a hand-tying process” that guarantees their continued rights and preferences or through the “socialization of

\textsuperscript{74} Specifically, these were “changes in the policies of external actors, including in the late 1960s the new attitude of the European Community toward expanding its membership, the major shift in U.S. policies beginning in 1974 toward the promotion of human rights and democracy in other countries, and Gorbachev’s dramatic change in the late 1980s in Soviet policy toward maintaining the Soviet empire.” Ibid., pp. 45-6.

\textsuperscript{75} Huntington, p. 43. These countries, according to Huntington, fit the “decolonization pattern” of democratization. They mostly occurred during the second wave, and were mostly former British colonies. However, British colonies in the Caribbean fit this pattern of democratization during the third wave. Later, he uses the term “decolonization” very loosely to refer to the changes in Soviet policy towards the satellite states of Eastern Europe that led to the snowballing of democratization in the late 1980s there.


domestic elites.” Whitehead’s discussion of the domestic “consent” needed for successful
democratic transition also includes that which is generated by the ‘democratic conditionality’
imposed by international and/or regional organizations to which the country in question aspires
accretion. Thus, for example, “full membership of the European Union generates powerful,
broad-based and long-term support for the establishment of democratic institutions because it is
irreversible, and sets in train a cumulative process of economic and political integration that
offers incentives and reassurances to a very wide array of social forces.” Elsewhere, Harvey
elaborates on the generation of domestic consent by democratic conditionality in explaining that
the adoption of democracy under conditions of economic deprivation could be driven by the need
to “make a recipient more attractive to prospective democratic suppliers.” Whitehead considers
that “democracy by convergence” “may well prove the most decisive international dimension of
democratization” in the cases under study because strategic actors to the democratization process
are mindful of the external implications of their choices.

Consideration of the democracy-promoting West alone is insufficient to understand the
factor of “external agency,” however. Regional powers may also resist and negate, or prevent
“extra-regional” powers from exerting external pressures on neighbouring target states. The
reason for this may be that these neighbouring states are also authoritarian and may also be
potential targets for the future. Higher levels of resistance are probably generated by more
coercive instruments of external pressure - such as economic sanctions or the withdrawal of

78 Pevehouse’s specific point concerns the military. He thus argues that “regional alliances and military
organizations, especially those that conduct joint training operations of maintain permanent institutions (such as
NATO), can help to socialize military leaders in member states as to the role of the military in domestic society.”
Ibid., p. 528.
79 Whitehead, p.19.
80 Harvey Starr, “Diffusion Approaches to the Spread of Democracy in the International System,” The Journal of
81 The phrase was used by Whitehead as early as 1991 in “Democracy by Convergence in Southern Europe: A
Comparative Politics Perspective,” in Geoffrey Pridham (ed.), Encouraging Democracy: The International Context
of Regime Transition in Southern Europe (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991)
military aid - rather than mere rhetorical censure because of the weightier implications of such measures. In her discussion of the factors that influence international cooperation in economic sanctions, Lisa Martin alerts us to the possibility that “asymmetries of interest” may make it difficult for a state leading such sanctions to gain the cooperation of other states.\(^82\) Indeed, Martin only considers the generic “free-rider” problem, whereas the context-specific content of “asymmetries of interest” can in fact manifest itself in active resistance toward such sanctions as explained above. Regardless of content, however, Martin alerts us to the fact that the existence of such asymmetries of interest means that for states leading such sanctions to secure cooperation from other state actors requires credible threats for non-cooperation or effective side payments, all of which are costly to the leading state. But where there are strong motives to resist or negate the leading state’s sanctions, these costs rise. This suggests that the leading state might potentially be discouraged from leading sanctions or be forced to eventually abandon initiatives.

**Transnational Diffusion, Contagion, Snowballing and the Demonstration Effect**

The third direction in which research in the 1990s took was explaining the spatial “diffusion” of democracy.\(^83\) In the comparative democratization literature, particular interest was taken in the spatial and temporal dimensions of observable “waves” of democratization, particularly that of the “third wave.” Whitehead’s concept of “contagion” was precisely that

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\(^82\) Martin’s article is really aimed at explaining the institutions (and self-imposed costs) that facilitate cooperation amongst states in a “mixed-motive” game by increasing the “audience costs” of leading states that have been publicly committed to sanctions, counter sanctions and side payments, thus increasing their credibility. See Lisa Martin, “Credibility, Costs and Institutions: Cooperation on Economic Sanctions,” *World Politics* Vol. 45 (April 1993): 406-32.

attempted to encapsulate the reasons for which spatial and temporal patterns of democratization—"clusters" and "sequences"—have been observed on an international scale. Whitehead argues that these patterns at the international level suggest the existence of some "neutral transmission mechanisms." These mechanisms are neutral to the extent that they "affect the attitudes, expectations, and interpretations of the public at large, regardless of whether or not outside agencies intend to produce this effect, and independent of the strategies and calculations of those holding political power within." To begin with, the mere "observation" of democratizing countries close by has the potential to induce a democratic contagion, but the extent to which this materializes is a function of whether similar local conditions and historical experiences are believed to be shared. It is this historic consciousness that determines the different "political readings" of instances of democratization elsewhere, and thus, the pattern and limits of the contagion process. While the exact content of the contagion factor—which appeals to the extent that it sits well with the euphoric notion of "the end of history"—has always been somewhat vague, Whitehead’s contribution is exactly that of pointing out the scope of its operation. Further, Whitehead’s contagion thesis further specifies one important domestic aspect of transmission: the domestic media. The media’s role in "magnifying (or dampening) the

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84 Whitehead., Chapter 1.
85 Whitehead, p. 6.
86 Thus Whitehead writes, “Spain’s commitment in the 1970s to a ‘pacted’ democratization was significantly reinforced by the impact on Spanish public opinion of observing the process of Portugal’s democratization through “rupture.” Similarly the highly controlled Chilean process must have been affected to some extent by observation of what happened a few years earlier when Argentina, Bolivia, and Peru had undertaken much more disorderly transitions.” Whitehead, p. 7. Here Whitehead is specifically referring to the choice of transition mode, but the basic idea really applies at all stages of democratization.
87 Ibid., p. 7. It cannot go as far as to explain the first case of democratization in a cluster, however. Nevertheless, it does enable us to explain why “waves” of democratization can “jump” across regions by unpacking the content of the “geographical proximity” factor, namely the perceived similarity of local conditions and historical experiences. If in fact such perceptions exist, geographical proximity itself may not be important to the “transferability” of the democracy idea.
domestic impact of external developments” makes it an important agent of transmission. In the case where the media is tightly controlled by an authoritarian government, and there is no alternative source of information and interpretation of events in the outside world, the potential that the media has to be a transmission mechanism is thus considerably dampened.

In Whitehead’s discussion of “consent,” he also considers the “international demonstration effects” that affect popular preferences and expectations. International demonstration effects are different from the “neutral transmission mechanisms” of contagion in that its emphasis is on how “an almost universal wish to imitate a way of life associated with the liberal capitalist democracies” generated by “images of the good life” there that generates democratic consent. It is elsewhere termed the “emulation effect” in both the comparative democratization and international relations literatures. What the “demonstration effect” or the “emulation effect” does is to create a domestic consensus on the need for democratization, often leading to popular mobilization in that direction.

Whitehead’s observation of “democratic clusters” was of course, not new. In an earlier volume, Huntington had pointed out the existence of different “waves” of democratization on the international scale. In explaining this Huntington adopted a concept very similar to

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88 This appears to muddy to notion of neutral intentionality, however. Harvey Starr frames this more “objectively” by looking at “informational flows” about chances in the openness of governments anywhere in the international system, such that “decision makers and peoples might use that information as cues and sources of emulation.” “Diffusion Approaches to the Spread of Democracy in the International System,” The Journal of Conflict Resolution 35, 2 (June 1991): 356-381, p. 360.
89 Ibid., p.21. Whitehead’s third concept of consent was developed because the two earlier concepts were thought to be based on “extremely basic and inadequate conceptions of democratization.” Because “genuine and securely implanted democratic regime requires the positive support and involvement of a wide range of social and political groupings,” it is important to understand what international factors can generate the consent of such groupings to the establishment of a democracy. Ibid., p. 15.
90 Ibid., pp. 21-2. The extent to which such images of the good life will generate domestic consent is dependent upon whether migration to those democratic capitalist states is possible.
Whitehead’s notion of contagion, namely that of “snowballing.” “Snowballing” – a much broader (and arguably vaguer) concept that includes several factors such as the “demonstration effect,” “diffusion,” “emulation” and the “domino effect” - similarly points out how democratization in one country can encourage democracy in another by “show[ing] that it could be done” and “how it could be done.”⁹³ Indeed, Huntington elaborates on the way in which cumulative effects of transitions abroad can impact the “regime self-confidence” of non-democracies and that of opposition forces, to encourage democratization. This psychological impact presumably significantly alters the strategic interaction between the two. As such, “snowballing” often does not depend on the existence of economic and social conditions favourable to democracy and could become a substitute for those conditions.⁹⁴ One necessary condition, however, is the existence of rapid communications technology and modern means of transportation, which explains why “snowballing” was more important in the ‘third wave’ democratizations than the ones preceding them.⁹⁵ Nevertheless, for snowballs to “stick”, the right domestic conditions do matter - “snowballs rolling downhill, however, not only accelerate and grow; they also melt in unsympathetic environments.”⁹⁶

The concepts of “contagion,” “demonstration effect,” and “snowballing” go some way to explain the “diffusion” of democracy across national units, and are particularly helpful to understanding the temporal and spatial aspects of that spatial diffusion. The “emulation effect” further helps to explain what drives this diffusion, on the one hand, while also opening up a “bottom-up” societal perspective that research on “external state agency” alone cannot entirely

⁹³ Huntington, The Third Wave, p. 101. Confusingly, the international relations literature calls these various effects collectively “diffusion effects,” not to be confused with the “norms diffusion” literature within the constructivist school of IR, however.
⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 105.
⁹⁵ Ibid., p.101.
⁹⁶ Ibid., p.105. Unfavorable domestic conditions include low levels of socio-economic development, lack of previous experience in democracy, traditional political cultures that have many “authoritarian elements.” In Asia, we saw this in China, Hong Kong, and Myanmar.
give. However, it is arguable that “contagion,” “demonstration effect,” and “snowballing” are concepts that are rather too proximate to the political outcome of democratic transition to sufficiently explain the underlying mechanisms of democracy “diffusion.” Further, as Strang and Soule note, one stream of the diffusion argument tends to verge “toward a broader class of contextual and environmental processes, where conditions outside the actor shape behavior.”97 The early literature that looked specifically at the contextual processes of democracy diffusion was not as helpful in that they focussed mostly on mapping the spatio-temporal distributions in order to delineate arguably vague concepts of “spatial context” such as “neighbour,” “regional” or “international” effects.98 Later efforts such as Kopstein and Reilly’s was a significant improvement in that it took care to delineate a country’s “spatial stocks” such as who its neighbours are, from “flows” of specific determinants such as information and resources, thus giving meaning to previously vague “spatial contexts.”99 To the extent that there is a recognition that neighbour and regional effects are generally stronger than international effects – Whitehead argues that “such international dimensions of democratization seems much clearer at this regional level than at the world-wide level of analysis” – it begs the question of why some countries that have predominantly non-democratic neighbours nevertheless successfully democratize, without giving any satisfactory answers.100 This is an important question, however,  

98 See for example, Harvey Starr, “Diffusion Approaches to the Spread of Democracy in the International System,” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 35, 2 (June 1991): 356-381. See also Harvey Starr, “Democratic Dominoes Revisited: The Hazards of Governmental Transitions 1974-96,” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* Vol. 47 No. 4 (August 2003): 490-519. The differences between these are explained as, “nations…interact much more with their neighbors than they do with those who are far away. Hence their success depends in large part on how well they do in their interactions with their neighbors. But neighbors can serve another function as well. A neighbor can provide a role model. If the neighbor is doing well, the behavior of the neighbor can be imitated. In this way, successful strategies can spread throughout a population, from neighbor to neighbor.” Ibid., p. 494.  
100 Whitehead, p.395. This issue was raised in Doorenspleet, Renske and Kopecky, Petr, “Against the Odds: Deviant Cases of Democratization,” *Democratization* Vol. 15 No. 4 (August 2008): 697-713.
because in the cases that we look at, the “neighbourhood” was a very heterogeneous one and was not particularly democratic.

The international relations (IR) literature, by borrowing extensively from other disciplines across different issue areas, has provided a much broader range of explanatory models that could help us better understand the mechanisms of “diffusion.” As a word of caution, some of the IR literature does overlap with the concepts already developed in the comparative literature, but in a way that may confuse the reader. Thus, for example, external pressure from “main poles” has been conceptualized as a form of diffusion process when it comes to financial regulatory norms, although “external state agency” is studied in the comparative literature as a distinct factor on its own.101 Such “coercive pressures” were also seen to be in operation when it comes to the adoption of technology standards across countries by organizations.102 In the context of democratic diffusion, “coercive pressures” do highlight the possibility that diffusion may not be a function of geographical proximity, however, but of economic and political linkages with extra-regional powers, thus mitigating the neighbourhood effect and helping to explain why countries that have predominantly non-democratic neighbours nevertheless successfully democratize.

Other overlaps merely confirm the observations of the comparative democratization literature. Thus, for example, “the domino effect” has been suggested as one reason for which

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101 Helen Milner, “The Global Spread of the Internet: The Role of International Diffusion Pressures in Technology Adoption” Paper presented at the conference Interdependence, Diffusion and Sovereignty, held at UCLA, March 2003. Milner writes, “First, the most powerful countries in the world—the so called superpowers or main poles—can affect the policy choices and practices of less powerful states.” See also Beth Simmons, “The International Politics of Harmonization: The Case of Capital Market Regulation,” International Organization Vol. 55 No. 3 (2001): 589-620. Simmons argues in the context of policy harmonization across countries in the issue area of financial regulation that the dominant financial center uses political pressure to achieve convergence where there is resistance.

preferential trading agreements have “diffused.” One interesting strain of the IR literature that departs from the comparative democratization literature is that which explains diffusion as a learning process, however. While the “demonstration effect” can be understood as an instance of rational learning, Cederman conceives of a long-term stochastic process where the “interdemocratic learning effect” brings about the diffusion of “the democratic peace.” Yet Cederman’s analysis is approached from an aggregate level that does not unpack the exact learning processes involved. Another strain of international relations literature looks instead at the micro-processes through which states are “socialized” into the adoption of international norms both of the principled and ‘non-principled’ kind, thus better explaining such normative “diffusion.”

Transnational Nonstate Actors

This body of literature is important because it brings into much sharper relief the role played by (transnational) nonstate actors, adding another level of analysis – complementary to the process-oriented approach of the Transitions literature - that enriches our understanding of the international-domestic interface when considering the external factors of democratization.

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103 Edward D. Mansfield, “The Proliferation of Preferential Trading Arrangements,” The Journal of Conflict Resolution, Vol. 42, No. 5 (Oct., 1998): 523-543. Mansfield writes, “There is also evidence of clustering in the frequencies with which PTAs are formed and states enter these arrangements. Both for the world as a whole and the GATT, the rate of PTA creation is directly related from one year to the next, suggesting that preferential arrangements are often initiated as strategic reactions to each other.” Ibid., p. 538.

104 Lars-Erik Cederman, “Back to Kant: Reinterpreting the Democratic Peace as a Macrohistorical Learning Process,” American Political Science Review Vol. 95 No. 1 (March 2001): 15-31. This process where states learn from each other also takes place between democracies and non-democracies, however.


106 Other works on the impact of transnational nonstate actors on multilateral institutions, and on global issues such as the environment and governance, see Khagram, Sanjeev, Riker, James & Sikkink, Kathryn, eds., Restructuring World Politics: Transnational Social Movements, Networks, and Norms (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota
The comparative democratization literature as we have reviewed it so far appears to emphasize
the state and substate levels of analysis. Whitehead’s earlier work in 1986 had in fact pointed to
the possible roles played by non-governmental organizations such as “churches, political parties,
human rights lobbies, aid agencies” in the promotion of democratic transitions, however.107 His
was nevertheless not a systematic survey of these actors, as the emphasis was placed narrowly on
the role played by political parties abroad - in particular, the Socialist International.108 Later,
Pinto-Duschinsky would add to this discussion by considering the funding activities of political
foundations associated with political parties in Germany, in particular the Konrad Adenauer
Foundation (German Christian Democrats), and its role in democratization in Latin America as
“intermediaries for the German government’s international political payments.”109 However,
Pinto-Duschinsky’s chapter does demonstrate an important point - that the delineation between
external state and nonstate actors cannot always be clearly made.110 Put in another way, the
symbiotic relationship between external state and nonstate actors cannot be overlooked.

Extending the list of possible nonstate actors further is Angell’s work on “political
exiles” in the case of Chile, who during their time abroad forged links with “a variety of
governments, parties, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)” and were thus able to obtain
financial resources to sustain the opposition movement there.111 They organized in the form of

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107 O’Donnell, Schmitter and Whitehead, *Comparative Perspectives*, p. 3.
109 Michael Pinto-Duschinsky, “International Political Finance: The Konrad Adenauer Foundation and Latin America,” in Whitehead, *The International Dimensions of Democratization*, Chapter 9, p. 233. This was under the influence of the US government.
trade unions, academic research and promotional institutes, and helped to generate criticism of the authoritarian regime, function as an organizational basis for the opposition abroad, serve as conduits for financial assistance from abroad, and finally as “experts” during policy briefs. They also found expression through the Catholic Church and worldwide ecumenical organizations (World Council of Churches), which lent local churches assisting the political opposition in Chile both “moral and political” support through “international episcopal statements.”

In the comparative democratization literature, the most underexplored of those transnational nonstate actors appears to be that of “human rights lobbies.” This is possibly because at face value, human rights lobbies do not appear to have a direct external influence on democratization as many human rights organizations do not have an explicit agenda of affecting political change. An inroad has been provided for us by the international relations literature on principled advocacy networks, however. The human rights regime literature provides a very useful framework for understanding the modes of operation of such principled advocacy networks through which states are ‘socialized’ into norms compliance in the human rights issue area. They are also useful in specifying the domestic conditions necessary for such principled networks to be effective. Indeed, “target actors must be vulnerable either to material incentives or to sanctions from outside actors, or they must be sensitive to pressure because of gaps

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112 Ibid., p.187. The Christian Churches in Chile itself formed the National Refugee Commission (CONAR), “which was set up a few months after the coup by a group of leading church figures, often conducted people to asylum in foreign embassies at grave personal risk.” Ibid., p. 177.

between state commitments and practice...Countries that are most susceptible to network pressures are those that aspire to belong to a normative community of nations.”

Although the case studies in this literature show that human rights and democracy are often linked, why and how the adoption of human rights norms is related to democratization is more often than not assumed rather than made explicit. The relationship between human rights advocacy and democratization has yet to be systematically explored outside of the Eastern European region. This is of course largely because this particular literature is not concerned with the transformation of domestic political structures per se, and as such touches upon democratization only indirectly. However, it is also obvious that the activities of human rights advocacy networks both delegitimize those authoritarian regimes that commit human rights abuses, and strengthen (“protect and empower”) the position of the political opposition precisely by making it difficult for political repression to take place. The rhetorical commitments to human rights norms may also entail an obligation towards political liberalization, where “certain rights that protect both individuals and social groups from arbitrary or illegal acts committed by the state or third parties” are “made effective,” “redefined” and “extended.” Liberalization may (or may not) then lead to democratization, as the case may be.

More can be said as to why human rights advocacy may be a cause of external pressures for democratization, however. For this, we turn to the work of Daniel Thomas, who traces the rise of human rights norms as a legitimate international concern and an important element of

116 Perhaps this is also owing to the assumption that only an open and accountable democratic political system that respects fundamental civil liberties is ultimately compatible with the respect for human rights.
118 O’Donnell and Schmitter., p.7.
state-to-state relations during the Helsinki Process. Thomas’ work is precisely an explanation of the relationship between the Helsinki Process and the demise of communism in Eastern Europe. Thomas points out that during the interaction between Western democratic states wanting to incorporate human rights into the Helsinki Act and those Communist states that resisted, the identity of democratic states became increasingly bound to human rights issues. Further, because the Western democratic countries chose to interpret and represent human rights explicitly as civil and political rights, while the Communist bloc chose to emphasize social, cultural and economic rights, this discourse bound the Western concept of human rights to the ideals of democracy. This is important to note not only because it explains why even states who pay lip service to human rights norms under the pressure of nonstate advocacy networks might later be obliged to liberalize and possibly democratize, it opens up to us an understanding of the inter-state dynamic created by human rights advocacy, which may not have been obvious before. It is possible to see how states allied with the West and who identified themselves as democracies would become obligated to demonstrate more explicitly an actual adherence to international human rights standards, while Western democracies themselves became increasingly constrained in their support of regimes that violated these norms for sole strategic reasons.

Works on “transnational relations” in other issue areas stress the importance of domestic structures as an intervening variable mediating the influence of nonstate actors on policy-making, however. In the human rights regime literature, those “failed” cases where states have

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120 For example, Thomas Risse-Kappen, examines how transnational coalitions and actors, mediated by domestic structures and international institutions, impact state policies in a variety of issue areas. See Thomas Risse-Kappen,
been slow to internalize international human rights norms can be explained precisely by the domestic structures that inhibit the development of transnational networks. In comparing the variation of outcomes in two cases of Tunisia and Morocco, for example, Gränzer has argued that the extent to which transnational networks of human rights non-governmental organizations could develop depended very much on the extent to which the state was “pluralistic” and thus, whether national networks could develop. While the pluralistic state of Morocco did allow a diversity of human rights organizations to exist, this was not the case in Tunisia. As such, it made it easier for the Tunisian state to “insulate” itself from the pressures that a fully constituted transnational network.  

Indeed, “a differentiated national network of human rights non-governmental organizations (NGOs) constituted the precondition for the development of a manifold and intensive transnational human rights network.”  

The human rights regime literature in IR also identifies other possible nonstate actors that could be a source of nonstate external pressure in the context of democratization. By this I refer specifically to members of the academic community. Although not quite like the “epistemic communities” or “knowledge elites” analysed elsewhere in the IR literature, members of the academic community have also been important in bridging the gaps of information on the socio-political situation of far flung countries that has subsequently helped to influence foreign policy direction.  


121 More specifically, “the lack of structural diversity of NGOS on the national level influenced in a negative way the development of a transnational network. The temporal strength of the only human rights NGO could be split by tactical moves of the new Tunisian government after 1987.” Sieglinde Gränzer, “Changing Discourse: Transnational Advocacy Networks in Tunisia and Morocco,” in Risse, Thomas, Ropp, Stephen & Sikkink, Kathryn. The Power of Human Rights, Chapter 4, p. 115.

122 Ibid.

123 An epistemic community is a “network of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or issue area. Although an epistemic community may consist of professionals from a variety of disciplines and backgrounds, they have (1) a
only within the confines of policy-relevant technical knowledge, but in terms of knowledge as to the extent of political repression and human rights abuses, and indeed, the technical aspects of those means by which repression takes place. Such asymmetries of information may exist because of the powerful propaganda machinery in the hands of authoritarian regimes, the suppression of information and a general geopolitical environment not conducive towards the close scrutiny of authoritarian allies of the West. In discussing how transnational advocacy networks work, Keck and Sikkink point out that, “information politics” is an integral component of what nonstate actors do – they “gain influence by serving as alternate sources of information,” including, testimonial, technical and statistical information.  

In the studies done on Latin American cases, academics are often an integral part of these advocacy networks, whose expertise is often called upon to correct such asymmetries of information.

**The International Normative Environment**

This body of work also highlights one important “background variable” that has so far not been considered in our literature review – the international normative context which O’Donnell and Schmitter refer briefly to in 1986. The comparative democratization literature did in fact touch upon the normative context, but with varying degrees of success. In his discussion of the role of the US as a promoter of democracy abroad, for example, Huntington shared set of normative and principled beliefs, which provide a value-based rationale for the social action of community members; (2) shared causal beliefs, which are derived from their analysis of practices leading or contributing to a central set of problems in their domain and which then serve as the basis for elucidating the multiple linkages between possible policy actions and desired outcomes; (3) shared notions of validity – that is, intersubjective, internally defined criteria for weighing and validating knowledge in the domain of their expertise; and (4) a common policy enterprise – that is, a set of common practices associated with a set of problems to which their professional competence is directed, presumably out of the conviction that human welfare will be enhanced as a consequence.” Peter M. Haas, “Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination,” *International Organization*, Vol. 46 No. (Winter 1992): 1-35, p.3.


125 Ibid., p. 92.

126 O’Donnell & Schmitter., p.18.
also takes into consideration the normative changes within US policy circles, beginning with Congress in 1973, and later, with the Carter and Reagan administrations. Because Huntington’s analysis is confined to developments within the US that led to the instatement of human rights (and by inference democracy promotion) as a foreign policy goal, it failed to tie the possible effects of the Helsinki Process - in which the US was heavily involved - to these changes, however. This perhaps reflects the assumption that the US was the promoter of human rights as a legitimate set of issues in the Helsinki Process itself.

Thomas has subsequently shown that this was, in fact, not the case at all. During the Helsinki process, the US was explicitly opposed to putting human rights on the negotiating table, being more concerned about carving out and settling the respective “spheres of influence” of East and West. Curiously, Huntington’s normative approach to the role of the US as a democracy promoter abroad was rather one-dimensional and certainly less nuanced than that of Whitehead’s, which takes into consideration the power politics behind such a “moral” foreign policy. As a result, Huntington claims simply that, “Washington pushed democratization in Latin America and Asia.”

Several works on the human rights policy of the Carter and Reagan administrations have shown that the US was not consistent in “pushing” for democratization in those countries and that strategic calculations of national interest often overrode moral

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127 A series of fifteen hearings were held that year by Representative Donald Fraser’s Subcommittee on International Organizations and Movements on issues of human rights in US foreign policy, resulting in 1974 of a report that urged the promotion of human rights and a foreign policy goal. In 1974 Congress also added human rights amendments to the Foreign Assistance Act, the Mutual Assistance Act and the Trade Reform Act and in 1977, the International Financial Institutions Act. Note however, that in the first term of the Reagan administration, human rights was downgraded as a foreign policy goal, in the way it was pursued during the Carter administration.


129 Ibid., p.87.
Nevertheless, this was a good first stab at understanding the normative context within which external actors do operate.

In his discussion of the then-European Community (EC) Huntington does take into consideration the changing international normative context that influenced the EC’s policy of democratic conditionality, however. Thus, Huntington notes that “the beginning of the third wave more or less coincided with the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), the Helsinki Final Act, and the beginning of what came to be known as the Helsinki Process.” To Huntington, the Helsinki Process was important in that it resulted in formal international documents that legitimized human rights and freedoms and to the international monitoring of these rights in individual countries. Helsinki thus “became an incentive and a weapon for reformers to use in attempting to open up their societies.” Although Huntington’s discussion of Helsinki notes that it also led to the creation of formal and informal compliance mechanisms – commissions or watch groups – that also became domestic lobbies for

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131 Note that Huntington conceives of the EC as an external actor, and not as a set of “international structures of consent,” as conceptualized by Whitehead. Whitehead differs from Huntington in that he emphasizes the power politics behind democratic conditionality. Indeed, to Whitehead, what distinguishes the “backyard” of the US and Western Europe lies precisely in the latter’s lack of “military means to project power,” leading it to rely instead on “political and economic inducements to stabilize its southern flank and to draw its neighbors into its system of commitments.” Whitehead, in O’Donnell, Schmitter and Whitehead, Comparative Perspectives, p. 12.
132 Huntington, The Third Wave, p. 89.
133 Further, it expanded those rights to include a full range of democratic liberties and institutions. The Final Act, for example, set forth as one of ten principles, “respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief.” Basket III of the agreement elaborated on the responsibilities of governments to “promote the free flow of information, minority rights, freedom of travel, and the reunion of families.” The concluding document of the CSCE meeting in January 1989 also included more detailed provisions concerning human rights and basic freedoms, while the Conference on Human Dimension, which met in Paris in 1989 and Copenhagen in 1990, approved a comprehensive document “endorsing the rule of law, democracy, political pluralism, the right to form political parties, and free and fair elections.” Ibid., pp. 89-90.
134 Ibid., p. 90.
liberalization in their individual countries, his concerns are still limited to the impact of these normative changes on state actors.\footnote{Ibid. The example he gives is that of Hungary, and how “the reform-minded government…used its commitment to the right of an individual to emigrate…to justify violating its agreement with the East German government and letting East Germans exit through Hungary to West Germany” setting in motion a series of events that led to the collapse of East German Communism. Ibid., pp. 90-1.}

Further, Huntington discusses theological changes, particularly within the Catholic Church during the 1960s and 70s. It is unclear if by this, Huntington is referring to the Vatican as an external actor, or as a contributor to the international normative changes already described, however. Nevertheless, Huntington argues that changes experienced within the Catholic Church during the 1960s and 70s were important in that they created domestic opposition groups in the form of religious and ecumenical leaders that did not exist before. Noting the differences between traditionally activist and pro-democracy Protestant Christian Churches and the historically pro-establishment Catholic Church, Huntington points out the historic significance of the Second Vatican Council (1962-5) to the rise of religious opposition to authoritarianism in many Latin American countries.\footnote{At Vatican II, Church leaders had the responsibility to “pass moral judgments, even on matters of the political order whenever basic personal rights…make such judgment necessary.” Brian H. Smith, The Church and Politics in Spain: Challenges to Modern Catholicism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 284. These views were later “reaffirmed and elaborated in the Latin American bishop’s conferences in Medellin in 1968 and in Puebla in 1979 and in gatherings of bishops elsewhere.” Huntington, p.78.} This included the rise of the “Christian Left,” a generation of “militant” Christians opposed to authoritarianism.\footnote{The “Christian left” that developed in the Philippines included “Marxists and others…whom supported a social democracy that was both anti-imperialist and anticommunist.” Ibid., p. 79. Liberation theologians were subsequently censured by the Vatican in the 1980s, however.} Although this policy change within the Vatican developed at a time when “liberation theology” was emerging out of a movement within the Latin American Catholic Churches, its influence on other Christian denominations outside of the Latin American region cannot be denied.\footnote{For how “Christian socialism” was shared amongst Catholics and non-Catholics, see Parig Digan, Churches in Contestation: Asian Christian Social Protest (New York: Orbis Books, 1984). The Vatican subsequently censured liberation theologians in the 1980s, however.} The policy change within the Catholic Church that Huntington describes was really only a part of a wider a theological and ecumenical
movement taking place within the Christian community at a global scale.\textsuperscript{139} Thus, it should also be regarded as a subset of important international normative changes with the potential of impacting the process of democratic development, particularly in generating greater opposition to authoritarian regimes.

**International Economic Factors**

The general revival of interest in the international dimensions of democratization also rekindled an interest in understanding how international factors of an economic nature might influence democratic development. An earlier research tradition had emphasized those international economic factors that were structural in nature. Thus for example, Gerschenkron contended in 1962 that epochal differences in the international economic system lead to the evolution of different kinds of socio-political configurations.\textsuperscript{140} This is because the timing of industrialization shapes the need different kinds of states that can organize society to overcome varying “entry costs” to the world economy. Moore built on this idea to show that fascism, communism and democracy were merely different “modes” of modernization, while O’Donnell explained the breakdown of democratic and semi-democratic regimes in Latin America in terms of the “exhaustion” of the import substitution strategy.\textsuperscript{141} Drawing from the “dependency” school were others that explained democratic development in terms of a country’s position in the international economy.\textsuperscript{142} An important intellectual goal of these literatures was to refute, through the international perspective, the universalistic claims of modernization theorists.

\textsuperscript{139} This is not to suggest, however, that Christian socialism was ever the mainstream.

\textsuperscript{140} Gerschenkron, Alexander, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective* (New York: Praeger, 1962)


The democratic transitions that took place in the developing world from the mid to late 1980s stimulated interest in the impact of international economic events on democratization, however. At this time, democratic transitions that ostensibly followed internationally induced economic crises posed an interesting theoretical puzzle in that a pre-existing literature had explained democratic breakdown in terms of a new political dynamism induced in part by economic crises. Thus, works by authors such as Roett tried to show how the foreign debt crisis was linked to the process of re-democratization in Latin America at this time. The “performance legitimacy” of authoritarian regimes can be undermined by international economic shocks. The structure of the economy is important in this regard in that the degree of insulation or exposure to the international economy determines the extent to which such shocks affect the economy and thus, the “performance legitimacy” of authoritarian regimes. This elaborates significantly on O’Donnell and Schmitter’s point that, “the negative impact of a downturn in the international economy can accelerate [actor perceptions of the long-term viability of a given regime].” Several works including those by Stephan and Kaufman have since elaborated on how economic downturns can lead to democratic transitions, while Starr has

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145 The key assumption made of nondemocratic regimes of the 1970s, especially those created during the second reverse wave, is that they have fundamental legitimacy problems owing to the fact that, “the body politic of their society had been infected with the democratic virus, and even if the previous democratic regime had not been terribly successful, the belief remained that a truly legitimate government had to be based on democratic practices.” Huntington, p. 47. As such, legitimacy had to be founded on non-ideological criteria, collectively called “performance legitimacy.” Such legitimacy depended upon deliverance of certain social goods, such as economic prosperity, social stability and national security.
146 Huntington, p. 51. For example, a high degree of dependence on imported oil meant that the oil shocks of the 1970s had a huge impact on the domestic economy. Also, a high level of international debt also meant that changes in global economic conditions can lead to a debt crisis in such countries, with consequences on the overall economic well being of these countries.
further explained how such economic downturns are related to the emulation effects already discussed above.148

Conclusion

The pre-existing scholarship on the international dimensions of democratic development and regime change, along with related literatures in the international relations field have provided us with several road maps with which we can potentially understand the experiences of Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore. The literature reviewed has been extensive, and so the possible “external” explanatory factors for democratization are summarized in the table below according to the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 1 (see Table 1). By disentangling the potential causal variables of democratic breakthrough in this way, it is arguably easier to understand them and how they relate to one another.

Strictly speaking, it is neither possible to narrow down the range of explanatory factors nor attach causal weight to any of them at this point. To do so requires that we first understand the domestic political context of each of our cases, befitting the “grounded” approach taken in this research. Chapter 3 thus presents the political history of Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore to ground what has since been discovered to be relevant external factors to democratization, which are highlighted in Table 1 above. How and when these factors operated together to effect democratic breakthrough in Taiwan and South Korea, but failed to do so in the case of Singapore will be made explicit in later chapters.

### TABLE 1.
LIST OF POTENTIAL CAUSAL VARIABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International Events</th>
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| War                  | Occupation by a democratic power  
|                      | Military Defeat  
|                      | Military/Political Intervention (“Direct Control”)  
| Geopolitical “System-changing” Events | End of the Cold war  
|                      | Specific changes in foreign policy of allies or “patrons” towards a particular state  
| External State pressure | Decolonization  
|                      | Democracy promotion as calculation of strategic interest  
|                      | Democracy Promotion as driven by normative motives  
|                      | Withdrawal of support for authoritarian allies as driven by normative constraints  
|                      | “Indirect Control”: diplomacy, economic and military aid etc.  
|                      | Through international organizations  
| International Economy | Internationally induced economic crisis – affects “performance legitimacy,” changes pre-existing coalitions, related to emulation effects  
| External nonstate Pressure | Non-religious transnational actors: political parties, foundations/agencies, human rights lobbies, “exile clusters”, epistemic communities  
|                      | Religious transnational actors  
| Contagion            | Observation of neighboring countries that “fit”  
|                      | Demonstration/Emulation Effect (also generates consent)  
|                      | Lowers regime self-confidence  
|                      | Heightens opposition confidence that “it can be done”  
|                      | Pressures created on authoritarian regime by increasing incidences of democratization (domino effect)  
| International Developments |          |
| International Normative Environment | Increasing importance of human rights norms  
|                      | Human rights norms increasingly tied to democratic identity  
|                      | Proliferation of principled advocacy networks  
|                      | Policy changes within religious community (Christian/Catholic)  
| Geopolitical Environment | Security Alignments (generation of consent)  
|                      | Territorial Boundaries (generation of consent)  
|                      | “Spheres of influence”  
|                      | Global balance of power (and changes)  
|                      | Regional balance of power (“regional blocs”)  
|                      | Regional institutions/ organizations  
| International | Patterns of trade  

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economy</th>
<th>• Patterns of “dependency”</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diffusion</strong></td>
<td>• Process of learning between states</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Socialization/internationalization of international norms through transnational nonstate actors</td>
</tr>
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Chapter 3
The Democratic Struggle

Introduction

Now that we have considered a broad range of possible external factors that might impact the process of democratization generally, I turn to the specific cases at hand. This chapter provides a historical analysis of political development in Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore. The purpose of telling the stories of democratic struggle in these places is not merely to give a casual account of the opposition movements of Taiwan and South Korea and what did or did not happen in the lead-up to the failure to form an effective one in Singapore, however. The primary purpose of this chapter is to help us to focus on the explanatory factors – just identified in Chapter 2 – that are most relevant to the cases at hand, through a comparative understanding of the domestic political contexts of each case. In this chapter I will show why it is that in this research project, I have chosen to examine the influence of external agency across all three cases, within the international normative and geopolitical structural contexts in which they operate.

In the cases of Taiwan and South Korea, the historical period of interest spans the early post-War years to the late 1980s – covering both authoritarian consolidation and democratic opening up to the point of democratic breakthrough.\(^\text{149}\) In the case of Singapore the historical period analyzed also begins with the early post-War years of authoritarian consolidation up until the early 1990s – when the initial promise of democratic opening with a second generation of leaders failed to materialize. Our analysis is confined to these time periods consistent with our

\(^{149}\) See Chapter 1, pp. 10-15.
definition of the dependent variable of democratic breakthrough (see Chapter 1) and to achieve a consistency of world historical time and space across all three cases.

At first cut, it is possible to eliminate certain potential causal factors through the comparative method. These include those factors classed as war, the international economy and contagion. As we shall see, neither Taiwan, South Korea nor Singapore were occupied by a democratic power, were forced to democratize upon military defeat or through “direct control” and therefore war was not in itself an immediate cause of democratic breakthrough in Taiwan and South Korea. When we consider Taiwan and South Korea together, internationally induced economic crisis could not have been a common factor as both democratized even though only South Korea could be said to have approximated a genuine crisis of “performance legitimacy” at the time of breakthrough.\textsuperscript{150} Patterns of trade (with the democratic West) and patterns of economic “dependency” were very similar across all three cases – which therefore cannot explain the variation in the outcome of democratization across these cases either.

Contagion, on the other hand, could have played some role in encouraging the political opposition to challenge the authoritarian leaderships across all three cases, while lowering, to varying degrees “regime self-confidence.” This possibility was confirmed by interviews conducted for this research, along with both secondary and primary documentary evidence. The democratic rumblings in Eastern Europe and China, and the People Power movement in the Philippines, did not pass unnoticed by either the political opposition or the authoritarian leadership in all three cases. The PAP leadership in Singapore also noticed democratic opening in Taiwan and South Korea. Although relevant, contagion is considered too proximate to the outcome of democratic breakthrough to bear further in-depth investigation for the purposes of

\textsuperscript{150} The case of Singapore does not indicate anything conclusive because it did not experience an internationally induced economic crisis at the time but also failed to democratize.
Instead, this research is focused on seeking explanations based on underlying factors that span a longer period of time.

This process of elimination does not suggest conclusively that what factors remain were causally significant. However, some striking similarities found in the processes of political development across Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore do suggest that external state and non-state pressures were causally significant. Further investigation (presented in Chapters 4 and 5) also confirms that “system changing” events that affected the international normative and geopolitical environments conditioned external agency in a significant way. How exactly these factors played out in each case will become clearer in the course of subsequent chapters that establish exactly how they mattered. In laying the foundation these subsequent chapters, this chapter will therefore provide separate historical narratives of political development in Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore in three sections. This is concluded, importantly, by a comparative analysis of these cases, which shows that the structural and institutional obstacles that evolved under early Cold War conditions could only have been overcome by the political opposition through the assistance of external agents. This explains why, in trying to uncover the causal mechanisms at the heart of the international-domestic political interface, this dissertation is focused on external agency.

**Authoritarian Consolidation and the Democratic Struggle in Taiwan**

Defeat in the civil war between the then-ruling Nationalists (or Kuomintang, KMT) and the Chinese communists (Chinese Communist Party, CCP) on mainland China saw the former retreat to the subtropical island of Taiwan in 1949. On 19 May that year, Chen Cheng, the newly

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151 The emulation effect was more pronounced in the Eastern European cases owing to their proximity to Western Europe.
appointed governor of Taiwan, ordered that martial law (or more accurately, “vigilance measures law”) take effect at zero hour the next day as communist forces were advancing into Fujian province, and Taiwan appeared to be in imminent danger of invasion. Fortunately, the involvement of the Chinese communists in the Korean War prevented immediate advancement, and the opportunity to do so was lost for many decades to come as the US resumed its support for the KMT and stepped in as a guarantor of stability along the Taiwan Straits. Thus, for the next four decades until 15 July 1987, when martial law was finally lifted, Taiwan was governed under provisions which stipulated that public assembly, political criticism, and any action endangering public order were to be considered seditious and all political crimes were to be tried at the military courts.

Earlier, the Temporary Provisions adopted by the National Assembly in 1948 had already disabled the democratic Constitution of the Republic of China promulgated on the mainland the year before, concentrating power in the office of the president, abolishing the two-term limit of the Presidency and banning the formation of new political parties. The Temporary Provisions also gave the President the power to set up ad hoc organizations to mobilize and control the population and to appoint delegates to the elected organs of government. Further, in the subsequent ruling of the Council of Grand Justices in 1954, national-level elections were indefinitely suspended. Although supplementary elections were held from 1969 onwards to replace parliamentary representatives who had died or stepped down due to old age, delegates

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152 The “Temporary Provisions Effective During the Period of National Mobilization for Suppression of the Communist Rebellion” had a two-year limit, but was later extended indefinitely until which time the Communists were defeated. Note also that two other (ineffective) political parties already existed: the China Youth Party and the Democratic Socialist Party. All other candidates for local elections were thus forced to be independent candidates if they did not belong to either the KMT or these two parties.


154 The Council of Grand Justices, with 15 members, was charged with interpreting the Constitution of the Republic of China.
representing mainland Chinese provinces were replaced either by a defeated candidate who had run for the seat in the 1947 election or by someone else from that province, making the representative nature of these supplementary elections extremely limited. In other words, only elections for provincial-level representative institutions and local executive office were conducted.\textsuperscript{155} Further, opposition candidates did not run on an equal footing with Nationalist candidates, ensuring that the Nationalists mostly won these offices in the early postwar years.

The transplantation of a constitution that was meant to apply to a much larger territorial entity to the island of Taiwan thus limited genuine political competition and compromised the representative nature of national political institutions. The accompanying extra-Constitutional legal measures further limited constitutionally protected civil and political rights. However, these arrangements were meant only to \textit{suspend} the practice of democracy on the island on a temporary basis until which time full civil liberties could be restored and a fully representative national government elected when the mainland was recovered.\textsuperscript{156} The Nationalists had no intention of staying on Taiwan, and had meant to make the island a temporary garrison from which to reclaim the mainland. As events would have it, the US Seventh Fleet sailed into the Straits and the KMT, along with its 2 million supporters from the mainland, became stranded on the island on an indefinite basis. The Sunist constitution of 1947 was a democratic one, as was the party ideology of the KMT itself. Thus, it is important to note that although the legal foundations of authoritarianism were laid early on through extra-constitutional legislation, the ruling party was at least obligated to derive a part of its legitimacy from allowing some limited

\textsuperscript{155} Note, however, that when the political opposition captured the mayorships of two of Taiwan’s largest cities - Taipei and Kaohsiung - elections for these offices were suspended.

form of electoral competition and winning in those competitions. Thus, Rigger notes that the KMT-led regime was best characterized as “mobilizational authoritarianism.”  

Importantly, the single most important factor that allowed the KMT to lay the legal foundations of an authoritarian regime in Taiwan was the Cold War – more specifically, the security threat posed by the mainland CCP government, who remained militarily aggressive until the early 1970s. Martial law and the Temporary Provisions were creatures of the particular security conditions of the time. The local opposition to Nationalist rule generated by the incompetent management of Taiwan by its first governor Chen Yi ironically enabled the KMT to further justify the suspension of democracy and indeed, carry out extensive political purges that eliminated virtually all dissent in the name of anti-Communism during the 1950s and 60s. Following the massacre that took place in 1947 in the aftermath of the island-wide rebellion known as the February 28 Incident, the KMT pursued additional campaigns to “exterminate traitors,” targeting in particular politicians, journalists and any prominent citizens who might have expressed unhappiness with the new regime. A particularly important subgroup of these dissidents were not “communists” but in fact, Taiwanese independence fighters who questioned the viability of the Nationalists’ very conception of the state or opposed it on the grounds of local identity. These campaigns, which decimated the local elite, further emaciated a civil society that

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158 The February 28 Incident arose as the result of building resentment against the KMT on the part of the local Taiwanese population. They KMT troops arrived on Taiwan on October 1945 following Japanese surrender, and a new Governor, Chen Yi, was installed. During his tenure, there was rampant corruption, economic mismanagement and the loss of public law and order. What sparked the island wide rebellion, which resulted in the KMT’s loss of control in the major cities, was the arrest of a woman selling cigarettes on the street by two Taipei City Monopoly officials on February 27, 1947. Witnesses say she was physically assaulted. Martial law was declared on February 28 as the Taiwanese formed Resolution Committees to take over the administration of major cities across Taiwan. As discussions to find a political resolution to the situation was underway, more troops were brought in from the mainland and proceeded to quell the rebellion by force, resulting in countless deaths that have since haunted the psyche of the Taiwanese people.
had been weakened by 50 years of colonial rule under the Japanese, with the effect that all active resistance to the KMT was decidedly eliminated.

The particular external and internal security threats that made it possible for the KMT to create a system of extra-Constitutional legal arrangements as a foundation for an authoritarian regime on the one hand, and to eliminate local opposition on the other, only tell part of the story, however. Once potential opposition forces were spent, these measures also allowed the KMT to further dominate the governance structures. However, it is not merely the dominance of the KMT in these governance structures that is of interest but the fusion of party and state. Earlier, the KMT’s Leninist party structure had already created a “structural symbiosis of party and state.”

The KMT party, which had originated on the mainland as an amalgamation of Sun Yat-sen’s Revive China Society and two other nationalist groups in Japan as the Chinese United League, was reorganized between 1919-24 to take on the Bolshevik party’s Leninist organizational structure, based on the principle of “democratic centralism.”

The result has been said to be “a certain lack of organizational cohesion” in the overall government of the island. The fusion of party and state created an overlapping of functions between the two. Under threat of war, security-related functions of the state were reproduced by the party, leading to the over-development of surveillance and coercive apparatuses overall. This is reflected, for example, in espionage carried out by the sixth division of the KMT headquarters, which ought to have been undertaken within the domain of the state. Further, the military, created by the Nationalist party in the 1920s, came under close influence of the party.

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again after 1950 as the KMT’s political commissars fanned out throughout its ranks and party
cells were reintroduced, making its status as an independent state institution questionable.¹⁶³

Over and above the consolidation of KMT hegemony over key institutions of the state,
some of its functions had been appropriated and other state institutions absorbed - developments
crucial in building a near-totalitarian regime in the initial stages of its removal to the island. As
Moody argues, “precise specification of functions and powers sets limits to power, however
extensive and arbitrary that power may otherwise be.”¹⁶⁴ In such a system where state and party
were indistinguishable, the “diffusion of power … strengthens the role of the leader.”¹⁶⁵ The
KMT government was characterized by a high degree of personalism, and power was
particularly concentrated on the two consecutive Presidents, although not exclusively so. Thus,
as Chiang Kai-shek was concurrently party chairman, commander of the armed forces and the
President of the Republic of China all at once, and his son Chiang Ching-kuo oversaw the
island’s extensive security apparatus before “ascending” to the office of the President, the regime
was anything but democratic.

Certainly, the military, economic and technical aid that poured in from the US was
monopolized by the party-state, which proceeded not only to use it in local elections but also in
building a strong state more generally.¹⁶⁶ New and well-funded state agencies of social and
political control emerged: the National Security Bureau of the National Security Council
(nicknamed the Taiwan KGB) was established in 1955, the Military Intelligence Bureau emerged
to succeed the notorious Bureau of Investigation and Statistics of the National Military Council
and the Bureau of Investigation under the Ministry of Legal Affairs emerged to take over the

¹⁶⁴ Moody, Peter R. Jr., Political Change on Taiwan: A Study of Ruling Party Adaptability  (New York: Praeger,
1992)
¹⁶⁵ Ibid.
¹⁶⁶ Although a strong state is not necessarily an authoritarian one, in all our three cases, this was true.
Central Investigation and Statistical Bureau of the party. Along with the Taiwan Garrison Command, these agencies formed a network of secret police that terrorized all those deemed to be the political opposition over the next few decades of authoritarian rule. A culture of clandestine operations to monitor Communist activity across the Straits and possible subversion on the island itself developed as the Korean War drew CIA activities to the island, helping to entrench the control of these agencies.\textsuperscript{167} The overdevelopment of a coercive state that was well insulated from society was helped, of course, by Japanese colonial rule, during which time a highly centralized administrative system that disenfranchised the Taiwanese by excluding them from administrative positions of any significance had already developed.\textsuperscript{168} The KMT simply continued to staff all bureaucratic positions vacated by the Japanese at the end of the Pacific war with “mainlanders” (benshengren) who had retreated with the KMT and remained loyal to it.\textsuperscript{169} The unrepresentative nature of the party-state had some implications for whether the strong state would also be an authoritarian one in the context of emerging sub-ethnic cleavages between the “mainlanders” and the “native Taiwanese” in post 1945 Taiwanese society.\textsuperscript{170}

One particular institutional legacy was to have a mixed effect over the short and long term, however. During the 50 years of colonial rule, most of the basic civil rights that would have accrued to citizens of a democratic polity were, naturally, denied the Taiwanese. However, the local population did enjoy limited suffrage at the local level under what was, for most of the five decades, a military dictatorship. The KMT inherited the single-vote, multiple-member district electoral system of the Japanese colonial administration that allowed the local elite to

\textsuperscript{167} Taylor, p. 206.
\textsuperscript{168} Prior to the arrival of the KMT in 1945, Taiwan and the Penghu islands were a part of the Japanese empire under the terms of the Treaty of Shimonoseki of 1895.
\textsuperscript{170} This will be discussed in the following section.
compete in elections at the provincial, country and town levels. Although elections were suspended at the national level, local elections at the provincial/municipal, county and township levels continued to take place at four-yearly intervals. The governing system of Taiwan under the KMT was complex enough to warrant fairly regular electoral participation, and a semblance of democracy. More significantly, the nature of the single-vote, multiple member district system was such that it had the effect of “[atomizing] the movement for Taiwanese autonomy by creating incentives for politicians to focus on local issues and cultivate local power bases rather than working to support national organizations and national goals” as it had prior to 1945. Up until 1977, the KMT was able to successfully manipulate local interests for its purposes by patronage dispensed through the local electoral system. This particular institutional legacy of Japanese colonial rule therefore further assisted in the establishment of authoritarian rule by the KMT, although as some other scholars point out, it helped to develop a culture of electoral competition from the bottom up that would later lead to more demands for national level competition.

“Mobilizational authoritarianism” thus rested upon a quadripartite foundation. The first of these is a set of extra-constitutional legal arrangements to “suspend” democracy and institute rule by martial law, under which jurisdiction agencies of political repression could develop. The second of these is the development of a highly centralized, tightly organized political party apparatus with a deep reach into all levels and sectors of Taiwanese society. The third is the fusion of party with state, not least because its nebulous nature would allow for the development

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171 The national-level government was merely superimposed on the provincial level government when the KMT removed from Mainland China, and many administrative functions are thus duplicated.
172 The ROC government is divided into three main levels: central, provincial/municipal, and county/city, each of which has well-defined powers.
173 Roy, p. 37.
174 For this argument, see Shelley Rigger, Politics in Taiwan: Voting for Democracy, Chapter 2.
of personalistic rule by a paramount leader. Lastly, limited electoral competition at the local level would also tie local interests into the KMT leadership and provide a safety valve for potential demand for better political representation at the national level. In this way, the KMT could construct a police state with an elaborate complex of agencies that could monitor, censor and neutralize political dissent in the name of anti-Communism and the restoration of a glorious China. As such, the structural and institutional foundations of authoritarianism were in place even before the “economic miracle” took place. When it did by the early 1970s, however, it only enriched the party-state, strengthening the coercive structures of the state.

The structures and institutions made it difficult for a genuine opposition leadership to emerge, and when they did emerge, to organize effectively. Once the ability to mete out harsh reprisals had been demonstrated in the early 1950s and 60s, it no longer became necessary to exercise the coercive powers of the state as often or on a large scale – even though the capacity to do so remained intact. Further, what could have been the most significant social cleavage that could have led to political conflict at the time - that between the “mainlanders” and the “native Taiwanese” – was further ameliorated in the early 1970s by the co-optation of some of the best and brightest native Taiwanese into the governing apparatus with the 1972 “Taiwanization” policy. It is worth noting that the Taiwanization of both party and state apparatus did seem to mark the shift from “hard” to “soft” authoritarianism. However, it would be a mistake to consider the Taiwanization policy of the early 1970s as an explicit move toward political liberalization, as none of the institutional obstacles to genuine political competition were

175 By “native Taiwanese” is largely meant the earlier waves of Chinese immigrants who came to the island of Taiwan prior to 1945. This was not strictly speaking an ethnic category as the various aboriginal tribes were also included. It is instead a political category to distinguish the immigrants that came with the Nationalist forces after 1945 from the earlier settlers. This underlines the fact that the “social cleavages” within Taiwanese politics were “socially constructed.”

dismantled, and the coercive apparatuses of the state were maintained. The differences between “softliners” and “hardliners” within the ruling camp during the 1970s and 80s should not be exaggerated as the range of possible attitudes toward political competition was significantly limited by the uncertainty of regime survival as the ROC slipped into international isolation. How the political opposition was able to overcome these structural and institutional obstacles to take the opposition movement out of the electoral arena (which was sanctioned by the authorities) and onto the streets (which was not well tolerated) is therefore a puzzle.

Opposition to authoritarian KMT rule on Taiwan can be conceptualized in terms of three “waves.” Although the February 28 Incident has since become symbolic of the opposition’s struggle for democracy in Taiwan, I do not include this initial opposition to KMT rule as it is better characterized as a rebellion to agitate for self-rule. The first wave of opposition is better understood to have taken place in the late 1950s. Initially a part of the “mainlander” political and intellectual elite, these liberal democrats played a particularly important role in the context of a largely neutralized Taiwanese opposition. Insulated by their “insider” status were able to sustain credible criticism of the Nationalist government and even managed to revive whatever local leadership there was under the White Terror campaign. At the time of their arrests, this liberal group of over 100 mainlanders and native Taiwanese were interested in advancing the liberal democratic cause by particularly challenging the KMT government’s ban on organized opposition in the form of political parties. Some high profile examples of this opposition leadership included former high-ranking KMT official Lei Chen and influential thinker Hu

177 In the course of this spontaneous island-wide uprising on February 28, 1947, nine major cities were taken over by the angry local populace that could not be controlled by emaciated KMT forces recalled to fight the civil war on the mainland in 1946. For the demands made by the native leaders of the rebellion, see Denny Roy, Taiwan: A Political History, p. 68.
Shih\textsuperscript{178} - both mainlanders who formed and edited the \textit{Free China Fortnightly} in 1949, a magazine that became highly critical of President Chiang Kai-shek’s government and later, became the locus of an attempt to form the China Democratic Party in defiance of martial law. On 4 September 1960, Lei along with the manager, editor and chief accountant of \textit{Free China Fortnightly}, were swiftly arrested on suspicion of “involvement in rebellion,” however. Lei was then sentenced to 10 years imprisonment on trumped up charges suggesting involvement with the Chinese communists, possibly under the direction of President Chiang Kai-shek himself.

These events debilitated the initial democratic movement, despite attempts to revive it shortly after.\textsuperscript{179} Without the ability to organize, and with tight social control exerted via the security apparatuses of the Nationalist government and the co-optation of societal groups by a corporatist state, the opposition was restricted to a very limited political space. It consisted of a handful of disparate independent politicians who continued to contest the KMT in elections for local representative and executive office. This group would later seed a better-coordinated set of opposition politicians known as the \textit{Tangwai}, or “those without party affiliation.” For over a decade, these disparate opposition elements managed to succeed in getting elected despite the KMT’s sophisticated patronage machinery, but progress towards the formation of an organized political party itself had largely died due to heavy repression.

By 1966, the KMT was compelled to amend the Temporary Provisions to permit supplementary elections for national level institutions - the National Assembly, Legislative Yuan (the “Long Parliament”) and Control Yuan - because its octogenarian representatives who were held many important party and government positions, including secretary-general of the Political Consultation Conference, deputy and secretary-general of the National Assembly, minister without portfolio and national policy advisor to President Chiang Kai-shek. See “One Man's Struggle for a Nation's Freedom,” \textit{Taipei Times} September 5, 2002, p.3. Hu Shih turned out to be more of this movement’s “spiritual leader” and rather sat on the fence when it began to unravel under KMT pressure.

\textsuperscript{178} As Rigger points out, mainlanders and native Taiwanese would never work as closely together in opposition to the KMT again. See Shelley Rigger, \textit{Politics in Taiwan: Voting for Democracy} (London/NY: Routledge, 1999), p. 105.
frozen into office were fast fading. This provided hope for the political opposition that an opening must necessarily occur at some point and provided a key stimulus for the gradual revival of efforts to press towards more organized opposition. In the first of these elections that took place in 1969, three Tangwai candidates were brought into the Legislative Yuan.\textsuperscript{180} The 1975 supplementary Legislative Yuan elections brought into office six Tangwai candidates. In the midst of these gradual advancements made by opposition politicians, a second wave of “extra-parliamentary” opposition eventually arose.

This wave of opposition resulted from the marginalization of the ROC in negotiations over the Diaoyutai islands between 1971 and 1973. This movement actually began life as a transnational student movement, initiated by the KMT to bolster the “Chinese” claim to the islands. The “Protect the Diaoyutai” movement had strong “Chinese” nationalist overtones, but when the PRC came to represent the “Chinese” interest at the negotiation table, Taiwanese students and intellectuals began to initiate a movement of self-reflection.\textsuperscript{181} In this so-called “intellectual ferment,” the Nationalist government came under fire for allowing the ROC to be marginalized yet again by the international community because of its inflexible foreign policy.\textsuperscript{182} Such dissatisfaction led to calls for more thorough political reform, because the failure of the Nationalist government was seen as only a symptom of a much more fundamental political degeneration that resulted from its unchallenged hegemony over important policy areas. Specifically, calls to open up the political system to “the mainstream of society” in order to create a more efficient government and better the chances of unifying the mainland in the future

\textsuperscript{180} These representatives were elected on an indefinite basis. From 1972 onwards, however, the offices were held for only three years.
\textsuperscript{182} Ibid. In 1971, the ROC lost its seat in the UN to the PRC as a result of the ROC’s rejection of the US “one China, one Taiwan” principle. For a more detailed discussion of the KMT’s dilemma and its inflexible foreign policy, see Chapter 4.
were heard in (underground) opposition magazines such as The Intellectual. By this time, the KMT government was beginning to develop more sophisticated means of suppressing political opposition, however – through a mixed strategy of repression and co-optation, this wave of opposition died out without having brought into effect most of its reform agenda.

By about the mid-1970s, yet another stream of political opposition, cantered on the Tangwai, was beginning to galvanize. Driven partly by increasing electoral success on the one hand, and the Nationalist government’s diplomatic failures on the other, previously disparate local opposition politicians began an active search of more effective means of organization to win more office from the KMT candidates. By this time, public discontent in the way that foreign policy was conducted by the KMT had been growing, giving the political opposition greater opportunities for attack. Because organized opposition provoked particularly harsh reprisals from the KMT, initial efforts to organize opposition elements revolved around leading opposition magazines circulated widely and in secret amongst the local populace. In this way, opposition to the KMT government took on features of an underground social movement. Local opposition politicians also began cultivating a next generation of opposition leaders by making secret contacts with students at universities and high schools, who began their careers at this time as political activists distributing flyers and standing guard at polling stations.

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183 Prominent Tangwai politician Shih Ming-teh recalled the effect these diplomatic setbacks had amongst his contemporaries, “In the past, the U.S. - which led the fight against communism - supported Taiwan wholeheartedly. But this was no longer the case after its decision to consider detente with Beijing … We realized it was time to reconsider Taiwan's future from our own viewpoint, instead of allowing the KMT to be the only decision maker for the island's destiny.” Taipei Times, December 9. 1999.


185 Personal interview with Chen Chu, 18 August 2005. Chen was working as secretary to opposition legislator Kuo Yu-hsin at the time, and was involved in contacting many of these students who would become instrumental in the third wave of political opposition.
In the meantime, a perceptible “understanding” had emerged between the KMT and the opposition politicians that would later become known as the predominant “moderate” faction. As such, the KMT appeared to take a more tolerant stance vis-à-vis the political opposition, which elements remained atomized, remained largely unorganized and mindful to avoid the subject of Taiwanese independence. The only clearly discernable extra-parliamentary opposition that existed, and was openly pushing the boundaries of officially defined ideological acceptability at this time, was comprised of a handful of missionaries within the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan (PCT). A critical juncture in the history of Taiwan’s political opposition took place in 1977 for two reasons, however. In that year, the Tangwai opposition candidates Kang Ning-hsiang and Huang Hsin-chieh initiated a unified campaign strategy for the provincial assembly, municipal executive and municipal council elections. The electoral results were stunning in the context of an electoral system highly skewed to favour the ruling party – “the [KMT]’s performance was the worst in history; its candidates won only 64% of the popular vote in the Provincial Assembly races… [and the] Tangwai captured the executive posts in Taichung City, Tainan City and Kaohsiung County. Overall, Tangwai candidates won 30% of the vote in the executive races.”

Furthermore, disturbances in the township of Chungli in Taoyuan County were indicative of the mobilizational potential of the growing opposition, which had by then acquired features of a widespread social movement. Thomas B. Gold argues that a political threshold was crossed when over a thousand supporters of Hsu Hsin-liang – an independent candidate whose victory at the Taoyuan County magistrate’s election was annulled by the KMT government - stormed a police station and reinstated him. As the first public riot since the February 28 Incident, the

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186 Rigger, Politics in Taiwan, p. 115.
187 That was the year that the KMT also lost the race for office in Taoyuan, Kaohsiung, and the cities of Taichung and Tainan to the Tangwai, which was not an insignificant victory for the opposition.
188 Thomas B. Gold, State and Society in the Taiwan Miracle (Armonk: ME Sharpe, 1986).
Chungli Incident was indeed significant in that it broke a “psychological barrier” of fear amongst the native Taiwanese by demonstrating that the KMT was not invulnerable and that “people power” could possibly bring about desired political outcomes.\(^{189}\)

Sensing the increasing vulnerability of the KMT government after a particularly grave international setback in 1978 – US derecognition – the political opposition began to coalesce on two fronts. *Tangwai* elements concentrated efforts, on the one hand, to acquire quasi-party apparatuses that would allow it to increase its challenge to the KMT in the electoral arena. On the other, a social movement front – termed “radicals” by the KMT controlled media - was developing in parallel and in conjunction with the efforts of the *Tangwai* opposition. By this time, a third wave of political opposition had unambiguously begun to take shape, led by mostly native Taiwanese activists and politicians not only calling for democratization, but also the elimination of “ethnic injustice” in the existing authoritarian system. Along these activist lines, the “radicals” organized a public protest against the postponement of the 25 December 1978 elections, where the *Tangwai* candidates were slated to make significant strides after a successful campaign under better organization in the form of the *Tangwai* Campaign Assistance Corp. However, its organizer Yu Teng-fa was rather predictably arrested and subsequently sentenced to 8 years’ imprisonment. Nevertheless, the mobilizational strength and popularity of the *Tangwai* as a collective whole was growing. As an example, in May that same year the *Tangwai* once again organized a public rally disguised as an opposition leader’s “birthday party,” where “thousands gathered to hear speeches by [Tangwai] politicians and buy banned political books.”\(^{190}\) The tide of “radicalism” had seemed by this time to be unstoppable.

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\(^{189}\) Personal interview with Chen Chu in Taipei, 15 August 2005.

\(^{190}\) Roy, p. 167.
By August 1979, the movement-oriented faction that centred on the *Meilidao* opposition magazine had also succeeding in testing the boundaries of officially defined acceptability by carrying out quasi-party activities in 12 nation-wide offices.\(^{191}\) Shortly after, the activists involved with the *Meilidao* magazine further pushed the boundaries by organizing an illegal Human Rights Day Rally on December 10, which resulted in the arrest of 8 of its leading politician-intellectuals (known as the Kaohsiung Eight) who were then court-martialled in March and April the following year – regardless of whether they were at the scene of the rally.\(^{192}\) Fifteen opposition magazines were closed down.\(^{193}\) Later, thirty-three more participants, including members of the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan, were sentenced to jail in civil courts, while in February that year, opposition activist Lin Yi-hsiung’s mother and two daughters were mysteriously murdered while their home was under police surveillance. Instead of debilitating the opposition movement, however, these occurrences won wide public sympathy for the opposition politicians and activists. The events surrounding the *Meilidao* Incident cast the KMT in particularly bad light both at home and abroad, and as a result the government was compelled to restrain from breaking up the *Tangwai*’s continued efforts toward formal organization. When the cancelled elections were reinstated in 1980, the released detainees and the spouses of incarcerated *Meilidao* activists who stood for election in their stead won resounding victories, reviving this third wave of opposition and clearly indicating what the Taiwanese electorate thought of the KMT’s repressive tactics.\(^{194}\)

\(^{191}\) Well-attended political discussions open to the public were held at these offices.

\(^{192}\) For details see Chapter 6. The application made for a license to hold this rally had been rejected by the KMT earlier. The eight opposition activists and politicians who were tried in military courts included: Huang Hsin-chieh, Shih Ming-the, Lin Yi-hsiung, Yao Chia wen, Chen Chu, Lu Hsiu-lien, Chang Chun-hung, and Lin Hung-hsuan.

\(^{193}\) Roy, p. 169.

\(^{194}\) Overall, however, the Tangwai did not do as well as they had hoped. Particularly, those portrayed by the media as “radicals” were censured by the electorate - winning only 13% of the vote in the legislative elections.
The Meilidao Incident led to the further “radicalization” of the opposition movement by convincing a newer generation of opposition leaders that challenging the KMT only within the electoral arena would never go far enough to force the government into democratic reform. Named after its publication, the New Tide magazine, a new opposition faction “emphasized the power of social movements for bringing about political change” and “oppo[sing] the practice of placing parliamentary participation ahead of other goals.” During this initial post-Meilidao period of factional proliferation and growing disagreements, the KMT carried out a series of attacks on the opposition to weaken the movement. Opposition magazines – an important channel for the expression of the political opposition’s ideals and policy proposals as well as a means for political organization – experienced large-scale closures during this time. However, it was really the internal weakness caused by these factional differences that temporarily blunted the movement, especially on the electoral front. Thus, greater effort began to be expanded to further organize the opposition candidates under the Tangwai Public Policy Research Association (DPPRA) umbrella, which acted as a pseudo political party. This project unified all the different factions of the opposition. Recognizing this, the Minister of the Interior threatened the Tangwai to disband it. Encouraged by the growing popular mobilization by its movement-oriented wing, however, the Tangwai began to press towards formal organization by opening up DPPRA offices around the island towards the end of 1985. By this time, the KMT was suffering from the embarrassment of a series of serious political and financial scandals with international repercussions, and thus made no effort to suppress the group. By the mid-1980s, 

195 Rigger, From Opposition to Power, p. 24. This group was explicitly pro-independence.
196 Although the vote share for the political opposition was generally rising, this did not translate into the number of seats captured. The particularly complex Single Non-Transferable Vote electoral system required particularly strong unity and coordination in order to translate votes into seats.
197 The DPPRA succeeded the DCAG.
198 Four of seven candidates put forward were elected.
199 Rigger, From Opposition to Power p. 24. See also Chapter 7.
therefore, the *Tangwai* was getting stronger in terms organization and mobilization on both the electoral front and on the streets.

1986 was the year in which an unprecedented level of street demonstrations began to take place. In May 19, the “Green Action” protests – a series of street demonstrations against martial law – was launched by opposition activist Cheng Nan-jung.\(^{200}\) Under pressure from increasing public rallies, during which taboo issues such as “self-determination” - which the KMT understood as “Taiwan independence” - became openly discussed, President Chiang initiated negotiations with the (moderate faction of the) political opposition in May 1986.\(^{201}\) At least one secret meeting between the two sides had presumably taken place in 1978, but because these were *public* meetings, its symbolic value was far more significant. It represented the political opposition’s ability to *force* the Nationalist government to recognize the legitimacy of the *Tangwai*, previously cast as unpatriotic “traitors,” through its increasingly successful mobilization of popular support.\(^{202}\) During two of these meetings, the KMT demonstrated limited sincerity in allowing the *Tangwai* to legally organize as a political party, being more concerned at obtaining cooperation from the moderates to rein in popular mobilization on the streets, and thus presumably, the movement-oriented wing of the *Tangwai*.\(^{203}\) Subsequent to the second meeting, five opposition politicians were even arrested and prevented from participating in upcoming elections. Nevertheless, a DPPRA office was opened in Taipei at this time, with a committee to oversee efforts to organize a political party. During public rallies held at these

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\(^{200}\) Protests from the budding environmental movement against the proposed Dupont factory also took place that year.

\(^{201}\) These talks were mediated through scholars Hu Fu and Yang Kuo-shu and included Tangwai politicians Yu Ching, Hsieh Chang-ting, Kang Ning-hsiang, Huang Tian-fu, Fei Shi-ping, Chang Chun-hsiung, Chang Peng-jian and You Hsi-kun.

\(^{202}\) These negotiations opened up divisions between the “radicals” and the moderates once again, and it is possible that these negotiations were a further tactic to divide the opposition movement. This certainly gives a different cast to the meaning of these KMT-initiated meetings.

\(^{203}\) Roy, pp. 170-1.
offices, explicit references to the “people power” movement in the Philippines were made – veiled threats directed at the KMT. The KMT left nothing to chance – sending out some 1500 police personnel to watch over one rally on May 19, 1986.204 The following month, a 12-man committee was formed to look into “lifting martial law, legalizing new political parties, and implementing other important political reforms.”205

No longer willing to allow the KMT to set the political agenda and possibly delay democratic breakthrough, the Tangwai held a historic meeting at Taipei’s Grand Hotel under the guise of the Rotary Club on September 26, during which time 132 signatories brought to fruition over three decades of democratic struggle in the form of the then-illegal Democratic Progressive Party. Mindful of the Tangwai’s ability to mobilize its supporters in popular protest in increasingly larger numbers, President Chiang responded to the appeal of hardliners to crackdown on the political opposition with these words, “At this time it is not good to resort to anger and recklessly take aggressive action that might cause great disturbances in society. We should try to adopt a calm attitude and consider the nation’s stability and the people’s security.”206 Betraying the fact that the political opposition were initiators of this democratic breakthrough, he further added, “In response to these changes, the ruling party must adopt new ways to meet this democratic revolution and link up with this historical trend.”207 This helps to underline the extent to which democratic breakthrough was initiated by the political opposition, following a protracted period of “liberalization” that held out limited prospects of genuine democratization.

204 Ibid., p. 171-2.
205 Ibid., p. 172.
206 Ibid.
207 Ibid., italics mine.
Authoritarian Consolidation and the Democratic Struggle in South Korea

Following the surrender of the Japanese on 15 August 1945, there was a brief period of possibility for an independent and democratic Korea in the immediate future.\(^\text{208}\) However, following the Moscow Agreement of December 1945 a trusteeship government was each established by the US and the Soviet Union in South and North Korea respectively. Despite unpopularity amongst the Korean public along with left wing and moderate sectors of the political elite, the nominally democratic Republic of Korea was formed in the South on 15 August 1948 with Syngman Rhee as the first elected President. On September 9 of the same year the communist Democratic People’s Republic of Korea was established under Kim Il Sung. The Korean people never considered the division of Korea an ideal situation, and tensions between North and South would escalate until the North decided to forcefully unify the Peninsula in June 1950, ushering in the Korean War of 1950-53. With these developments, the dream of immediate unification was not only crushed, the chances of establishing democracy on the Peninsula – whether in the North or South – were significantly reduced.

The developing Cold War gave rise to the establishment of extra-constitutional laws such as the National Security Law of 1948 (NSL), which defined “sedition” so vaguely as to allow for anti-communist witch hunts with devastating consequences for democracy. The NSL – which still exists today – was used not only against any potential extra-parliamentary opposition; it was directed at opposition politicians who attempted to undermine Rhee’s attempts to create a dictatorship. While some scholars argue that the Korean War created conditions that were conducive to the formation of genuine political opposition and hence political competition in the

\(^{208}\) Korea had been a Japanese colony between 1910 and 1945.
South, the reality was that in the immediate term, the Rhee government became increasingly intolerant of any form of political competition and used the NSL and martial law extensively to cripple the opposition.\(^{209}\) As part of the early institutional roadblocks to democracy, the democratic constitution was amended in 1952, 1954, and twice in 1960 to further weaken the parliamentary opposition and concentrate presidential power.\(^{210}\) While the semblance of democracy was preserved, the National Assembly was turned into a rubber stamp for the executive branch of government. In so doing, Rhee’s government was further established “as a coalition of conservative elements grafted onto the bureaucratic and police apparatus of the Japanese regime.”\(^{211}\)

It is important to note that the Rhee government had inherited and used the coercive state apparatuses left behind by the Japanese against the political opposition just as the American Military Government (AMG) had used it against both socialist and moderate nationalist groups. For example, in 1952 and 1958 Rhee even went so far as to deploy the police in the National Assembly to secure amendments to the Constitution and the National Security Law that would allow for the consolidation of executive power and the control of opposition groups.\(^{212}\) The fear of communist subversion at the time provided the Rhee government “with an endless excuse” to declare martial law and deploy its forces against the political opposition.\(^{213}\) Further, the police, military and surveillance agencies were often used to intimidate voters. The last straw came with

\(^{209}\) See Chi-young Pak, *Political Opposition in South Korea 1945-60* (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 1980), pp. 20-23. This is because the War resulted in the collapse of traditional society in such a way that a “new political culture” could be formed.

\(^{210}\) It was important to weaken the National Assembly at this time because Rhee had established his power base in the Liberal Party, which he needed to occupy the majority of seats in the National Assembly.


\(^{212}\) Chi-young Pak, *Political Opposition in South Korea 1945-60* (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 1980), p. 93-131. Further, in 1958 the pro-opposition Kyungsang Shinmun was forcefully shut down, the President gained power of veto over the appointment of judges, and Cho Pong-am, a Progressive Party Leader that had proposed peaceful unification, was executed.

\(^{213}\) Sohn, p. 27.
the open use of the state machinery in rigging the 1960 presidential election, however – extensive grassroots protests finally brought down the authoritarian Rhee government and installed a democratic government under Chang Myon for a brief nine-month period.  

Amongst the various reasons for which the Chang government lasted for only so short a period, the most important was probably its inability to win the trust of the military. During this time, the constitution was revised to reflect the opposition’s longstanding position – a parliamentary system was instituted and civil liberties generally restored, including that of a free press, while a new National Assembly was elected. The opening up of political space also meant the resurgence of left-wing forces, however, which alarmed the conservative elements of the military. The Second Republic was “the freest period in the short history of the ROK, but also the most chaotic,” during which time the economy and law and order deteriorated. This convinced a class of younger military officers under the leadership of General Park Chung Hee to undertake a “veto coup” in May 1961 to check rising leftist elements, which they viewed as a threat to national security.

The Supreme Council for National Reconstruction was established as an interim government on 18 May, receiving within two days a message from US President Kennedy confirming US friendship and cooperation. Within the month, a “clean-up” operation of the bureaucracy and police began – planting those supporting the new military government within its ranks. The Control of Illicit Profiteering measure was also issued to force business to cooperate

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214 For three months after the fall of Rhee, a caretaker government headed by Ho Chong (of the Liberal Party) presided over political affairs in the ROK.

215 Clough, p. 32.

216 See Sohn, p.19. Kim Hyung-A suggests, however, that the military officers who had been frustrated by their superiors, had already planned a coup to take place on May 8, when the student uprising of April 1960 took place. This delayed their plans but also gave them stronger grounds on which to launch their coup in 1961 when public disapproval of Korean politicians became widespread. See Kim Hyung-A, Korea’s Development Under Park Chung Hee (New York: RoutlegeCurzon, 2001), p.59.

with the government.\textsuperscript{218} Emergency Decree No. 6 banned all political parties and activities. By June, the Korean Central Intelligence Agency was formed – holding more power than any other state apparatus.\textsuperscript{219} In March the following year, the Political Purification Law banning over 4000 politicians from political activity was put in place.\textsuperscript{220} Thus, despite the promise to allow a national election and the formation of a civilian government by 1963, more permanent institutional and structural obstacles to democratic development were re-established during the military junta years.\textsuperscript{221}

By March 1963, only a few months before the promised presidential and national assembly elections, General Park announced a decree proposing a national referendum to extend military rule by another four years. It was at this time that the US began an “anti-Park strategy” to force a return to civilian government.\textsuperscript{222} While successful in that military rule was not extended, the government that was formed after the 1963 elections consisted of military leaders in civilian dress. Elected only by a small margin – to the alarm of the US – the government of the Third Republic at this time still tolerated some degree of parliamentary opposition.\textsuperscript{223} Although a system where constitutionally democratic institutions were grafted “onto a coercive state apparatus comprised of the military, police, the KCIA, and the personal authority of President Park” was maintained, a form of two-party parliamentary politics was in existence during the 1960s. Elections for legislative and executive offices were duly held, although the extent to

\textsuperscript{218} 13 business leaders who were found to be “illicit profiteers” were released from jail to set up the Promotional Committee for Economic Reconstruction in July 1961, a forerunner of the Federation of Korean Industries.
\textsuperscript{219} Sohn, p.20.
\textsuperscript{220} About 76% of these were allowed to appeal and by 1963, only 269 remained banned from political activity.
\textsuperscript{221} Presidential and National Assembly elections did take place in October and November of 1963 respectively.
\textsuperscript{222} This strategy included withholding economic aid (particularly food aid) from the ROK and redirecting military aid to economic development. See Kim Hyung-A, pp. 86-7.
\textsuperscript{223} This alarm caused a return to full support for the Park government. Further, it was on the US agenda to have ROK normalize relations with Japan and as such it was important to give Park unequivocal support.
which they were free and fair was clearly doubtful.\textsuperscript{224} Whatever semblance of democracy that the Third Republic had should not be exaggerated, however, as civil society remained emaciated and extra-parliamentary opposition was brutally suppressed. Further, the steady depoliticization of democratic institutions was already taking place before the promulgation of the \textit{Yushin} (Restoration) Constitution, reflecting Park's own distaste for the “disorder and inefficiency” of politics.\textsuperscript{225}

Certainly, the dictatorial aspects of the Park government came through very clearly when the constitution was amended through a dubious referendum in 1969 to allow Park a third term, in anticipation of the 1971 presidential elections – one of Park’s many Napoleon-like uses of “direct democracy.” The early 1970s was a pivotal point in South Korea’s political history because it saw the systematic consolidation of authoritarianism and the depoliticization of the Korean polity in the face of rising social discontent.\textsuperscript{226} Having almost lost what was already a rigged election to opposition leader Kim Dae Jung in 1971, President Park went on to declare martial law, dissolve the National Assembly and promulgate the \textit{Yushin} Constitution that would provide a comprehensive basis for authoritarian rule.\textsuperscript{227} Rammed through in 1972, the new Constitution provided for a potential president for life whose office was “above the three branches of executive, legislature and judiciary” and thus unaccountable except to the Constitution Committee appointed by the President.\textsuperscript{228} Further, a new body of delegates forbidden from affiliation with any political party – the National Conference for Unification

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{224} Sohn, p. 20.
\item \textsuperscript{225} Ibid., p. 28.
\item \textsuperscript{226} Socio-economic disparities under the economic system designed by the Park government began to widen and create discontent amongst workers.
\item \textsuperscript{227} Under the state of national emergency, the Emergency State Council of Cabinet replaced the National Assembly.
\item \textsuperscript{228} Sohn, p. 47. This meant that the National Assembly could be dissolved by the President and that the judiciary would now be appointed and dismissed by the President.
\end{itemize}
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(NCU) – was created to elect the President without any debate.\textsuperscript{229} The President under this constitution also had the power to “recommend” a third of the National Assemblymen to the NCU for election – ensuring that Park’s Democratic Republican Party (DRP) would have the majority of seats despite having to subject the rest of the seats to popular election. Park’s personal dictatorship was shored up through the development of the strongly centralist DRP, which served as a vehicle for controlling the legislative process. This made the National Assembly a mere rubber stamp for Yushin policies and the invocation of martial law at executive will.\textsuperscript{230} The Yushin Constitution emasculated the party system and the parliamentary opposition was severely weakened. Further, the political opposition was rendered particularly vulnerable to repression as the new constitution removed the right of habeas corpus and the judiciary was also brought to heel through a significant number of reappointments.\textsuperscript{231} Under a series of Presidential Emergency Measures (PEMs, also emergency decrees) and wartime laws, re-imprisonment without trial was also allowed.\textsuperscript{232} This process of depoliticization thus hollowed out all democratic institutions and rendered the political opposition particularly vulnerable to repression.

However, the Korean polity was characterized not only by a strong state but also a strong society and as widespread protests (especially on university campuses) intensified, PEMs were

\textsuperscript{229} The NCU itself was to be popularly elected without debate. As the only candidate, Park was re-elected with 99.9\% of the NCU vote. Rhee had earlier amended the constitution to allow for the direct election of the president in order to circumvent opposition politicians.

\textsuperscript{230} 96\% of the NCU accepted the President’s recommendation in the 1973 National Assembly election.

\textsuperscript{231} In March 1973, 43 judges were reappointed, whilst 9 of the 15 Supreme Court judges were barred from reappointment.

\textsuperscript{232} Public Security Law was passed in July 1975 to regulate the activities of former political prisoners and to authorize restriction to right of residence or take unto custody those who had been imprisoned for political or ideological reasons and charged with infringement of the National Security Law or sedition. Under this law, people were liable to be imprisoned without trial. PEM 1 prohibited all acts which continued to (1) deny, oppose, misrepresent, or defame the constitution (2) assert, introduce, propose, or petition for the revision or repeal of the constitution (3) fabricate or disseminate false rumors (4) to advocate, instigate, or propagate any act of acts prohibited under articles (1) to (3), or to communicate such acts through broadcasting or by any other means. Violations were liable to lead to arrest, detention and the search and seizure of property without warrant. Liable to imprisonment for up to 15 years imposed by an Emergency Court Marital as specified in PEM 2.
increasingly issued. PEM 1 was issued on 8 January 1974 prohibiting all activities directed toward opposing the Yushin Constitution, and supported by PEM 2, which allowed for offenders to be imprisoned for up to 15 years as determined by the Emergency Court Martial. PEM 4 outlawed a key student organization that had called for “all-out uprising against the Yushin system,” and prohibited further anti-government activities on pain of death or imprisonment from five years to life. Although PEMs 1 and 4 were later repealed under international pressure some 8 months later, PEM 9 was issued to allow for the closure of all educational institutions, newspapers, broadcasting organizations and businesses for all forms of anti-government criticisms widely defined. Rule by emergency decree was not meant to be “imposed on a temporary basis but on an indefinite and extended scale,” perpetuating “the systematic use of terror and intimidation by [the] state apparatus.” The Yushin Constitution allowed for the “restructuring [of] the apparatus of government into that of a quasi-wartime state.” Similar to authoritarian consolidation in Taiwan, authoritarian consolidation under Park was achieved under martial law through a revision of the Constitution concentrating power in the office of the President and the Blue House Secretariat, and rule by emergency decree. As part of this “quasi-wartime state,” the KCIA – created in 1961 after the American model – remained one of the most important agencies that maintained tight social control and was, as such, a “new institutional bulwark” of the Yushin system.

233 Key dissidents Chang Chun-ha and Paek Ki-wan were arrested promptly, along with Church leaders calling for open discussion of the Yushin Constitution.
234 This was less brutal than PEM 4 but more effective, as it led to self-censorship of the press and other organizations.
235 Sohn, p. 89.
236 Kim Hyung-A, p. 140. Four wartime laws were revived during this time.
237 Under the Yushin system, Park governed “like a commander-in-chief and his secretariat acted as a quasi-wartime cabinet.” Kim Hyung-A, p. 152. Authoritarian consolidation took place under martial law through extra-constitutional legislation and the fusion of a highly centralized party and state apparatus.
The Yushin system was gradually dismantled after Park’s assassination in 1979 with the introduction of a new constitution in 1980 and the revocation of PEM 9. Park’s death could have been a window of opportunity for the restoration of democracy. The new 1980 constitution restored many of the basic civil rights and liberties and showed promise that integrity would be returned to the party system and the introduction of genuine political competition.\textsuperscript{239} This time around, emergency measures could only be issued with the approval of the National Assembly, and the ability of the President to dissolve the legislature was also curtailed. Although the President could not seek re-election after a rather long seven-year term, only indirect election by an electoral college, presumably immune from electoral manipulation, was possible. By January 1981, martial law was lifted and elections for the Electoral College, President and National Assembly took place shortly after.

These improvements aside, several disturbing signs that the transition away from the Park dictatorship did not in practice signify a transition to democracy remained. Of course, Chun and the top echelons of the political leadership were in reality military men in civilian dress who came to power essentially through a series of bloody coups that eventually wrenched power away from the civilian Choi administration.\textsuperscript{240} Under continuing threat from North Korea, the National Security and Anti-Communism Laws were retained, allowing for harsh reprisals for the political opposition. The 1980 constitution specified permissively that, “freedoms and rights of citizens may be restricted by law only when necessary for national security, the maintenance of law and order or for public welfare.”\textsuperscript{241} Further, the back of the KCIA – so crucial to the ability to

\textsuperscript{239} Habeas corpus, labor rights, was restored in this Constitution.
\textsuperscript{240} The first of these bloody coups took place within the military between 12-13 December 1979 in order to place Chun and his supporters in key military positions. Chun then illegally assumed control of the KCIA while still a military officer. The next coup took place three months following the 19 May Kwangju Incident, which saw President Choi resign and Chun elected President by the NCU. These coups were considerably bloodier than Park’s which earned him disdain throughout his tenure.
\textsuperscript{241} Article 35 (2).
repess any form of political opposition – was broken, but not with a reformist intention. A new state agency – the Military Security Agency – was created as Chun’s new power base. Last but not least, the integrity of the party system was seemingly restored but the new Constitution also stated that “if the purposes or activities of a political party are contrary to the basic democratic order, the Government may bring action against it in the Constitution Committee for its dissolution…” Although Chun gradually lifted the ban on opposition politicians over five years, he also continued to harass and intimidate them. Chun also developed a new centralist political party that was ensured a majority through the proportional representation system and other structural advantages afforded the ruling party, thus allowing Chun to effectively control the legislative process. Between 1983-5, political repression seemed to have been scaled back, but in essence what looked like a liberalization process was largely cosmetic.

In the public mind, this was evidenced by Chun’s refusal to continue any discussion of an amendment to the Constitution to introduce direct elections for the office of the president in April 1987. In June, increasingly widespread protests finally exploded at Chun’s announcement of the new President-designate Roh Tae Woo – a close associate through whom he could still control political power without being President – spread from university campuses and into the streets of major cities everywhere. Indeed, by this time, the parliamentary opposition had joined forces with the extra-parliamentary opposition elements in a formidable show of dissent that forced Roh to concede to reforms long demanded by the opposition on 29 June. As a result, a new constitution providing for direct presidential elections was put in place in October and elections for the President took place in December that same year. Opposition politicians such as

242 Article 7.
243 See Eckert, p.376.
244 The reform program included: direct presidential elections, restoration of the civil rights to opposition politicians, protection of human rights, the lifting of press restrictions, local and campus autonomy, the promotion of political parties and other social reforms.
Kim Dae Jung and Kim Young Sam took part, heralding the beginning of genuine political competition for the most powerful office of the land.

How the political opposition was able to overcome these structural and institutional obstacles to mobilize a large cross-section of society on the streets is thus an interesting question. It has been estimated that in 1950, South Korea’s prisons held as many as 60,000 people. Although by 1960 we saw that students could be a formidable extra-parliamentary force despite frequent use of coercive apparatuses of the state to imprison, torture and even murder those opposed to the Rhee government, the ability of opposition forces to place pressure on the government was not consistently strong. The principal reasons for this were the intense factional strife amongst the parliamentary opposition and the disconnect between the parliamentary and extra-parliamentary opposition. Political parties were formed around personalities without much programmatic differentiation, and much infighting took place amongst opposition politicians. What also has to be understood is that opposition groups that had broad-based societal support tended to have leftist leanings, while the political elite, including the parliamentary opposition, were largely rightists. Political parties in South Korea were not mass-based parties and the public generally viewed the struggles taking place within the National Assembly over constitutional design as an internecine struggle between political elites interested narrowly in their own power. During the First Republic in particular, elitist opposition parties “tended to be parties of parliamentarians who were the core of the oppositional structure, their decision-

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245 Eckert, p. 349. Most were charged with crimes under the National Security Law.
246 The political elite was drawn from the yangban (or official) class that emerged in thirteenth century Koryo.
247 The main political opposition party of the day - the right-wing Korean Democratic Party (later, Democratic Nationalist Party after 1949 and Democratic Party after 1955) - started off as a significant power base for Rhee in the 1948 General Elections. It was only following their failure to obtain a significant number of seats in Rhee’s Cabinet that this right-wing party with close ties with the US Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK, 1945-8) formally turned into a political opposition party. The political elite was largely drawn from the yangban class. Moreover, many opposition National Assemblymen at this time were independents lacking significant broad-based societal support.
making was not sufficiently democratic in terms of rank and file member participation,” and “there was a considerable oligarchic tendency in the operation of the parties.” At this time, there were also no discernable programmatic differences that could distinguish the incumbents from the opposition. Rhee was able to overcome the Liberal Party’s lack of popular support and undercut opposition parties, on the other hand, through the local offices of the police and bureaucracy, however.

Under severe threat from Communist invasion, the Rhee government was thus able to systematically decimate the leftwing extra-parliamentary opposition groups, while at the same time interfere in both elections and the legislative process through the use of the police. The National Assembly may have been an arena for fierce and often violent political debates, but the concentration of power in the executive rendered these exercises largely farcical. The general frustration at the ineffectualism of elite political struggles and the poor governance it produced was, in fact, the underlying reason for the events that led to the fateful Sa-il-Gu Incident and the revolution that swept the liberal democratic Chang Myon government to power.

As explained earlier, the resurgence of populist left-wing groups, the deterioration of economic conditions and social instability during the 1960-61 period induced the military to step in. The induction of the military into politics in 1961 further hampered the development of a coordinated opposition movement. Until that time, opposition politicians often put up a good fight in the National Assembly, but Emergency Decree No. 6 banned all political parties and activities. Among other things, the junta government under Park pledged itself under heightened Nationalist rhetoric to the elimination of left-wing elements, and with the establishment of the KCIA set out rooting out these allegedly subversive elements. At this point, opposition

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248 Chi-young Pak, p. 60.
249 Over 100,000 students and youth assembled at the presidential palace and palace guards fired upon them, killing at least 115 demonstrators and injuring over 1000.
politicians were still caught up in factional strife. Nevertheless, opposition leader Yun Po-sun presented under almost impossible conditions a very real challenge to the Park government’s legitimacy by winning almost as many votes in the 1963 presidential elections. For a while, mass protests died down but the normalization of relations with Japan in 1964 stirred up another wave of student protests and, importantly, aroused Christian opposition. Such protests were again revived by the rigged National Assembly elections in 1967 and the constitutional amendment to run for a third term of office in 1969.

The student movement was at the forefront of opposition to the Park government throughout the 1960s, 70s and 80s – organizing numerous campus protests that came to spill over into the streets and spread throughout South Korea, issuing public declarations and distributing leaflets calling for society-wide uprising against the Park government. The beginning of Christian opposition was significant in the development of a democratic movement, however. Although students had traditionally been the self-styled conscience of society that could be depended upon to part ways with the authorities when need be, most Protestant and Catholic churches had been either actively supportive of or accommodative toward the anti-Communist governments. In fact, the Christian churches did not actively support the student movement that toppled the Rhee government, even though the Catholic Church lent President Chang Myon its support later on because he was Catholic. The Christian churches, which tended to be anti-Communist, was also supportive of the 1961 military coup and endorsed the right-wing junta government.

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250 Park only won by a 1.4% margin.
252 Ibid., p. 138.
253 Ibid.
individual Christian leaders such as Park Hyung-kyu and Un Myong-gi, and it was not until the mid 1970s that systematic efforts to oppose the authoritarian government on grounds of human rights and democracy began to be made nationwide through the National Council of Churches (NCCK).\textsuperscript{254}

Such Christian opposition was significant also because of another particular direction in which it took – the cultivation of labour and farmer activism. As social justice entered Christian theological discourse elsewhere, \textit{minjung} theology (or the people’s theology) began to take root in South Korea.\textsuperscript{255} The Park government’s export-oriented industrialization policy had led to exploitative work conditions and the neglect of the agricultural sector.\textsuperscript{256} With an explicit emancipatory agenda, the Protestant Urban Industrial Mission (UIM) and the Jeunes Ouvriers Catholiques (or Young Catholic Works, JOC) began to organize workers to fight for the restoration of labour rights and better working conditions in major industrial areas. In this regard, Chon Tae-II’s self-immolation on 13 November 1970 was a significant trigger bringing together the Christian, labour, farmer and student protestors. A vast array of spontaneous dissension thus began from the early 1970s, including labour disputes, student protests, the resignation of 37 Seoul District Criminal Court judges, demands by academics for more freedom and a nationwide movement for press freedom by journalists.

\textsuperscript{254} Park Hyung-kyu and Kim Chae-jun organized the \textit{People’s Council Fighting Against the Revision of the Constitution to Allow Park Chung Hee the Third Term} in 1969 and Park was later imprisoned in 1973 for circulating anti-Park leaflets. Un Myong-gi was imprisoned in December 1972 for having opposed the Yushin system and refusing to sit on the advisory committee on constitutional revision.

\textsuperscript{255} “Who qualifies for the term “minjung” and why are extremely vexed questions that are almost irredeemably confounded by the intense nationalist feelings and political stakes that are entangled in them.” Kenneth M. Wells, “The Cultural Construction of Korean History,” in Kenneth M. Wells (ed.) \textit{South Korea’s Minjung Movement: The Culture and Politics of Dissidence} (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995), p. 12. However, Hyug Bae Im also writes that, “the Minjung are defined as grassroots members of society, such as workers, farmers and lower and middle classes, owners of small and medium sized businesses, students, and progressive intellectuals.” Hyug, p. 140.

\textsuperscript{256} Park’s 1968 “Second Economy Movement” had largely failed to mobilize peasants towards his four-year rural development program called the “Special Project for Increasing the Income of Agrarian and Fishing Villages” in which peasants were to become ‘well-to-do’ (\textit{chascalgi}).
However, it is the galvanization of the political opposition (now the New Democratic Party) with the extra-parliamentary dissident forces that constituted the beginnings of the most significant challenge to Park’s power. This was encapsulated in the person of Kim Dae Jung, a relatively young opposition leader with leftist leanings who commanded a significant following and nearly defeated Park in the 1971 presidential election. Importantly, during the election campaign, Kim promised a welfare oriented “mass” economy and national security guaranteed by the Four Powers. The achievement of national security and national reconstruction were the twin pillars of the Park government’s legitimacy, and it was this that Kim Dae Jung was directly challenging. As we have seen earlier, political opposition was mostly ineffective insofar as they were divided and personality-oriented. Kim’s challenge was a serious one in that it offered a programmatic alternative, one that was a clear criticism of Park’s current policies. What was significant at this time was also the way in which increased grassroots mobilization was directed by the students to support the candidacy of Kim Dae Jung. Park’s near defeat by Kim further legitimized the growing opposition movement and saw the emergence of the chaeya (extra-parliamentary opposition) as a permanent feature of the opposition movement, requiring no small amount of effort on the part of the Park regime to keep suppressed through garrison decree.257

Another opposition leader Kim Young-sam, a centrist, also commanded a significant following.258 Although the disconnect between the parliamentary and extra-Parliamentary opposition was increasingly bridged, the parliamentary opposition remained highly factionalized at this point, and rivalry between the two Kims would hamper the opposition.

It is against such a backdrop that the “revitalizing reforms” under the new Yushin Constitution was instituted and the draconian Emergency Measures promulgated. The

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257 43.6% of the electorate supported Kim instead of Park (who garnered 51.2% of the vote). Park in fact considered this a personal defeat, as revealed in conversation with Kim Jong Pil, head of the KCIA. See Sohn, p. 31-32.

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abolishment of habeas corpus and the admissibility of forced confessions as evidence under the new Constitution meant that torture was used intensely between 1972-76. During the Third Republic, torture was mostly used to intimidate detainees who were usually released shortly after, but torture during the Fourth Republic now became a means to obtain the “evidence” to justify long prison sentences and even the death penalty under the legitimacy of the law.\textsuperscript{259} As tensions with North Korea increased following the failure of the 1971-3 North-South dialogue, the Park government became more repressive – even going as far as to kidnap Kim Dae Jung in 1973 while he was in Tokyo, presumably with the intention of murdering him.\textsuperscript{260} Criticisms in the National Assembly from opposition politicians such as Kim Ok-son (National Democratic Party) that Park was using national security issues to justify his grip on power only made the Park government more defiant.\textsuperscript{261} In May 1975 PEM 9 was issued and eight opposition activists were executed shortly after on trumped up charges of communist conspiracy under the National Security Law – indicative of the lack of judicial autonomy and the vulnerability of the opposition.\textsuperscript{262}

The repeal of PEMs 1 and 4 in 1974 further encouraged opposition activists. However, thousands of students, Christian activists, labour activists, opposition politicians and journalists continued to be imprisoned and tortured – severely weakening the galvanizing opposition movement. As repression became harsher, Christian leaders began to be more vocal about

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\textsuperscript{259} The Yushin Constitution prohibited torture, as the previous Constitution did, but it also dropped the previous Constitution’s ban on the admissibility of forced confessions.  
\textsuperscript{260} Park initiated the North-South Dialogue on 12 August 1971 as a pragmatic diplomatic effort to pursue peaceful unification. The dialogue was suspended by 1973.  
\textsuperscript{261} She was expelled from Assembly for criticizing Park on Oct 8, however. See Korea Times Oct 9, 1975. Interview with Kim Ok-son, Seoul, 23 May 2006.  
\textsuperscript{262} PEM 9 prohibited “the dissemination of groundless rumors or the distortion of facts,” a widely interpreted provision that repressed all forms of criticism. All institutions that violated PEM 9 would be shut down immediately, and a civilian court could mete out a sentence of 1-10 years’ imprisonment. In October 1977, more than 300 students were arrested and seven were charted with the violation of PEM 9. The following month, another 120 more were arrested and 11 were handed prison sentences ranging from 14 months to three years.
democracy and human rights, however. By 1976, Christian leaders had joined forces with opposition politicians and become bold enough to contravene PEM 9 in calling for President Park’s resignation and appealing to the public and the international community to protest Park’s repressive rule. The March 1st “Declaration for the Democratic Salvation of the Nation” was the first such open and organized challenge to the Yushin system since the promulgation of PEM 9. Further, the arrest of Kim, Yun and 18 others further activated a series of campaigns for their release, made martyrs of them, and helped to propel them into central positions into an alliance movement later on.

By 1977, the Park government had begun to ease the repression of the political opposition and the opposition movement began to intensify. Current literature cites Jimmy Carter’s election as US President, rumblings of US troop withdrawal, the Koreagate scandal and a secret nuclear program that plunged US-ROK relations to a new low as factors that contributed to the Park government’s relatively soft approach to the opposition. The intensification of protest mobilization added increasing pressure on the Park government. In October 1977, unprecedented discussions were held between the chaeya dissidents and the Park government on the release of political prisoners held under PEM 9. A Coalition for Human Rights Movement in Korea (CHRMK) was also formed in December 1977. By 1978, the CHRMK had expanded into a central committee comprising some 118 members, raising human rights issues, organizing

263 A series of arrests were made of Christian leaders who openly criticized the Yushin constitution in their prayers, sermons and leaflets.
264 This took the form of a prayer service at the Myongdong Cathedral in downtown Seoul, and was attended by Yun Posun and Kim Dae Jung.
265 Sohn, p. 95.
266 This came to be known as the Myongdong Incident.
267 See Kim Hyung-A, Korea’s Development Under Park Chung Hee, Chapter 9 and Hak-kyu Sohn Authoritarianism and Opposition in South Korea, Chapter 6.
268 Sohn, p. 151. Some of the key organizations included the Democratic Youth Council (of the student movement), the Urban Industrial Mission (labor movement), dismissed journalists from Dong-a Ilbo and Choson Ilbo, the Association of Writers for the Practice of Freedom.
forums, demanding the release of Kim Dae Jung and other political prisoners and protesting the 99.9% of votes Park garnered in the presidential election of July 1978. The eventual release of Kim in 1978 allowed these dissidents to further rally around his leadership. The National Alliance for Democracy (NAD) was formed on the basis of the CHRMK and reorganized by March 1979 as the National Alliance for Democracy and Unification (National Alliance) – a non-party opposition organization that would serve to be the political base of Kim and other opposition politicians, and a platform for further oppositional activities. This formal alliance brought together the student movement, the labour movement, the farmer’s movement, journalists, academics and other independent dissidents with the parliamentary opposition. Importantly, the National Alliance embodied a progressive ideology reflective of the “radicalization” of the chaeya – by this time the conservative parliamentary opposition had lost all initiative.

It was against a backdrop of an increasingly coordinated opposition movement that the parliamentary opposition won the majority of votes in the 1978 National Assembly elections and the leadership position of the New Democratic Party was wrested from the “moderate” Lee Chul-Sung and restored to Kim Young Sam in May 1979. In a show of unprecedented unity, Kim Dae Jung endorsed Kim Young Sam as the new opposition leader, overcoming Park’s efforts to interfere in the opposition and cause divisions amongst the parliamentary opposition. The NDP was before this time badly split between a pro-Park faction led by Lee Chul-Sung, and the “radicals” led by Kim Young Sam (Kim Dae Jung, having been captured by the KCIA in 1973

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269 Lee, the incumbent president of the NDP since 1974, believed that the NDP should work within the system and extolled the virtue of “middle-of-the-road” politics to establish a balance between liberal democracy and national security, order and freedom. He is considered to be pro-Park by other more “radical” factions.

270 Sohn, p. 151.
while in exile, was now in jail). As a result of the new leadership, members of the Minjonghoe, a negotiation group of independent opposition parliamentarians, joined the NDP.

Strengthened and emboldened, Kim challenged the Yushin system in the National Assembly, going so far as to express his willingness to meet with the North Koreans. Solidarity between the parliamentary and extra-parliamentary opposition was further sealed by the Y.H. Company Incident, when 15 National Assemblymen were seriously injured by the police for supporting 200 women workers protesting the closure of the garment factory in August 1979. Needless to say, Kim Young-sam was soon displaced from the NDP leadership and later expelled from the National Assembly for speaking out against the Park government to the New York Times, whilst Kim Dae Jung, previously released from prison, was put under house arrest. These developments triggered an explosive response from the chaeya dissidents, however, and spread to the cities of Pusan and Masan, triggering the re-imposition of martial law. These protests were started by the students but came to involve ordinary citizens by the thousands. The NAD supported the rioting. Defying orders to put down riots by force, KCIA chief Kim Jae-kyu fatally shot Park in the Blue House on 26 October 1979 and was later executed.

The parliamentary opposition remained largely weak and divided during the interim Choi administration, which continued to operate under the Yushin constitution. However, the extra-parliamentary opposition was growing increasingly organized and militant. Students continued to protest vigorously and issue public statements challenging the government for the slow pace of reform. As student demonstrations became increasingly widespread and violent, General Chun

271 The party split openly on 35 May 1976. Incumbent president of the Party, Kim Young Sam, and his supporters were barred from entering the convention center at which leadership elections for the NDP were held by their rival faction. Eventually, two leaders were elected. Kim accused the government of instigating the incident in order to eliminate him.

272 Pusan was Kim Young-sam’s hometown, while Masan was where the 1960 student rioting that brought down the Rhee government first started.
Doo Hwan quickly took power through violent machinations that led the political opposition to protest to intensify. A new wave of student demonstrations demanding the removal of martial law, the Yushin Constitution and the military leadership involved some 30 universities and approximately 70,000-100,000 students on 15 May 1980. In response, the National Assembly was dissolved, the universities were shut down, labour strikes were banned and all political activity prohibited. On 19 May, key opposition (and ruling) party politicians were arrested on grounds of social disruption. An uprising in Kwangju, capital of Kim Dae Jung’s home province of South Cholla, then erupted. In a display of the terrifying force at [Chun’s] disposal and his even more frightening willingness to use it,” the uprising was brutally put down – resulting in anything between 200 to 2,300 casualties.273

The Kwangju Massacre was a significant event not only because of the long shadow it cast on the Chun government’s legitimacy, the dent it put on “regime self-confidence” and consequently, its heavy reliance on US support. It was also significant to the development of South Korea’s opposition movement in that it radicalized the chaeya even further. Immediately following the Kwangju Incident, key opposition leaders such as Kim Dae Jung were slapped with charges that held the death penalty and the chaeya were largely driven underground. Kim narrowly escaped execution owing to international pressure, and a relatively softer approach was again taken toward the opposition between the 1983-5 period. The Chun government lifted the 1981 ban imposed on some 567 politicians. By 1986, a series of student rioting and suicide protests, along with large-scale labour unrest began to convulse South Korea again. The fractious nature of the parliamentary opposition worsened however, as government sponsored political parties and “moderate” factions sought accommodation with Chun’s Democratic Justice Party on

273 Korean politics is highly regionalized. The official estimate of 200 is far below Asia Watch’s estimate of 2,300 deaths.
the issue of constitutional design and rivalry between the two Kims simmered close to the surface.\textsuperscript{274} However, the parliamentary opposition was still able to exercise leadership of a growing popular movement with the goal of amending the constitution to permit direct election of the president.\textsuperscript{275} Student and labour organizations, radicalized since the Kwangju Massacre, began to undertake organizational and tactical changes that strengthened the movement greatly.\textsuperscript{276}

When in April 1987 Chun suspended further public debate on constitutional revision and appointed Roh as his successor two months later, popular unrest exploded. The discovery of university student leader Park Chung-chul’s body – whom police later admitted to have tortured to death during interrogation – led to widespread street fighting across South Korea. Unwilling to relieve the Chun government of the mounting bottom-up pressures, the leading opposition Reunification Democratic Party refused the offer of renewed debate in the National Assembly on the issue of direct presidential elections, leading President-designate Roh Tae Woo to capitulate to the demands of the opposition on 29 June 1987. This was unexpected, and yet, when one considers the extent of mass mobilization against the authoritarian government at a time when all eyes were trained on South Korea in anticipation of the 1988 Olympics, the capitulation does appear to have been inevitable.

**Authoritarian Consolidation and the Failure to Develop a Democratic Movement in Singapore**

\textsuperscript{274} The Korea Nationalist Party was sponsored and controlled by the Chun government, as was the Democratic Korea Party. Kim Dae Jung had already left the leading opposition NDP in 1980. The NDP was later renamed the New Korea Democratic Party (NKDP) in 1985. However in 1985 Lee Min-woo, a “moderate” who wanted compromise with the Chun, was elected party leader. The NKDP later split in 1986 to form the People’s Democratic Party, only to rejoin the NKDP after the two Kims formed the Reunification Democratic Party (RDP) in 1987.

\textsuperscript{275} Eckert, p. 381.

\textsuperscript{276} Ibid., p. 380.
Once the People’s Action Party (PAP) went from being the political opposition under the Labour Front government elected in 1955, to becoming the ruling party from 1959 onwards, its intolerance towards a political opposition able to challenge government policies became almost immediately manifest.\textsuperscript{277} As a nominal parliamentary democracy has obligated the PAP government to tolerate a degree of political competition – not unlike in the cases of Taiwan and South Korea. Unlike in Taiwan in the pre-breakthrough phase, over 20 other political parties were allowed to register and to contest the legislative elections (see Table 2).\textsuperscript{278} As a percentage of popular votes, the political opposition has by no means been insignificant – yet as translated into the number of Parliamentary seats won, it is clear that the political opposition has not been able to become a significant opposition force (see Table 3). Such an electoral pattern points to the success that the first-past-the-post system and various institutional machinations have been able to prevent the institutionalization of genuine political competition.

**TABLE 2**

**POLITICAL PARTIES REGISTERED IN SINGAPORE: 1950-1991**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Date of Registration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Singapore Chinese Party</td>
<td>26 September 1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persatuan Melayu Singapura</td>
<td>2 February 1952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Singapore Malay Association)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partai Rakyat (People’s Party)</td>
<td>3 December 1956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angkatan Islam (Islamic Movement)</td>
<td>6 August 1958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Worker’s Party</td>
<td>30 January 1961</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{277} Chan Heng Chee, *The Dynamics of One-Party Dominance: The PAP at the Grassroots* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1978), p. 8. In 1955, a new constitution that allowed Singapore self-rule – it was then still a crown colony - provided for a legislative assembly with 32 seats. Under this new constitution, the highest elected representative was the chief minister, who would govern Singapore along with a British Governor appointed by the British colonial office. The Labor Front won the majority of legislative seats in this election, and formed a coalition government under David Saul Marshall, its first Chief Minister. Shortly after failed attempts to persuade the British to grant independence to Singapore, Marshall resigned and Lim Yew Hock became Chief Minister.

\textsuperscript{278} They are very small in size compared to the PAP, however.
People’s Action Party 18 February 1961
Pertubuhan Kebangsaan Melayu Singapura 20 February 1961
(Singapore Malays National Organization)
United People’s Party 14 July 1961
Barisan Socialis (Socialist Front) 15 August 1961
Parti Kesatuan Ra’ayat (United Democratic Party) 16 June 1962
Singapore Indian Congress 7 August 1962
Alliance Party Singapura (Singapore Alliance Party) 17 February 1966
United National Front 6 March 1970
National Party of Singapore 26 February 1971
The People’s Front 21 May 1971
Justice Party, Singapore 10 August 1972
Democratic Progressive Party 16 March 1973
People’s Republican Party 30 August 1973
United People’s Front 20 March 1975
Singapore Democratic Party 8 September 1980
National Solidarity Party 6 March 1987
Singapore National Front 15 August 1991


While the weakness of the parliamentary opposition is apparent through these figures, it is also important to note that extra-parliamentary opposition has been effectively repressed through tight controls over the development of civil society and interest group formation in particular. The related effect of such controls and the particular way they have been exerted has also been to deprive existing opposition parties of larger membership and new leadership – in other words, crucial material and personnel resources. The purpose of this section is to trace in historical detail the struggle of the political opposition, both those which seek to challenge the PAP government within the electoral arena and outside of it.

**TABLE 3**

**OPPOSITION POLITICAL PARTIES: ELECTORAL PERFORMANCE 1959-1991**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Seats Contested</th>
<th>% of Popular Vote</th>
<th>No. of Seats Won</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>46.6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>53.04</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Departing from the schema employed in our last case study, our narrative begins a little earlier than 1965, when the Republic of Singapore was founded. Some six years earlier, when Singapore was still a crown colony proceeding towards a negotiated independence from colonial rule, the People’s Action Party (PAP) had come into power with the 1959 general election for a new legislature under a revised constitution. The PAP, formed only some five years before, won 53% of the popular vote. This translated into a decisive win of 43 parliamentary seats out of a total of 51, and Lee Kuan Yew became prime minister for the first time. Because of the reluctance of the Malay political elite, Singapore was not at this time part of the Federation of Malaya.\(^{279}\) The political backdrop to this 1959 electoral victory was not turbulent because of the struggle for independence therefore, but because of the inability to find the formula for a polity  

\(^{279}\) An earlier political arrangement known as the Malayan Union had been resolved in 1948 to form a Federation of Malay states that guaranteed special rights for Malays over the other racial groups, in which the power of the Sultans was restored. Under the Marshall and Lim Yew Hock governments, Singapore had approached the Malayan Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman with the possibility of a merger without success.
that would accommodate a predominantly-Chinese Singapore on terms acceptable to the indigenous Malays. The British and the core Malay leadership were particularly concerned that Singapore would be incorporated into the Federation in order to forestall any possibility that the tiny island would fall to the Communists, and post a threat to the Peninsula.\textsuperscript{280} The terms for merger were fraught with multiple complications from the structure of financing to the terms of citizenship, however.

This introductory background is needed in order to understand what was shortly to happen within the ranks of the PAP itself, and its implications for the political opposition later on. In order to extend its reach to the grassroots, the core PAP leadership of “moderate,” English-educated professionals headed by Lee had decided to strike an alliance with left-wing elements led by Lim Chin Siong. The latter was part of a popular anti-colonial movement with the support of trade unions and Chinese-speaking students. In May 1961 proposals for a political merger between Singapore and Malaya were revived after previous failed intimations, a proposal that was attractive to the “moderate” faction of the PAP. As details were negotiated, however, schisms within the ranks of the PAP began to appear. The left-wing faction, fearing the extension of the Internal Security Act (ISA) to Singapore and decrying the hypocrisy of formal independence, demanded “full self government.”\textsuperscript{281} The ISA was a piece of British legislation aimed at the heart of the communist movement but posed a potential threat to all left-wing elements suspected of being an open front of the communists.\textsuperscript{282} In 1961 the PAP suffered a terrible blow when this left-wing faction was purged from the PAP but came to form the

\textsuperscript{280} The commercial interests of the British in the region were still vast and it was paramount that they should be secured from communist threat. By then the draconian Internal Security Act had been put in place (1960) in Malaya and it was hoped that by the incorporation of Singapore into the Federation it would also apply there. As it turned out, this was the case when Singapore merged with Malaysia.

\textsuperscript{281} The ISA was extended to Singapore when it joined the Federation in 1963, and has remained in force ever since.

\textsuperscript{282} “The ISA legalized detention without warrant of any “suspected persons” for an initial 30 day period for investigations and interrogation. After that detention period, a person may be detained only under an order issued by the Minister for Home affairs, but on an indefinite basis.
opposition Barisan Socialis party (BS) – depleting as much as 70% of its rank and file members, and 30 out of 34 headquarters staff members. Almost all control of the PAP branches were lost to the BS. The BS was therefore a potentially formidable opposition able to derail already tenuous negotiations underway for merger, on which the PAP had staked its credibility. This also created vulnerabilities for the PAP in Parliament because of the 51 seats in the House, it now only held 26 – a majority of only one – and further defections to the opposition would have crippled the PAP government on the question of merger.\(^{283}\)

To shore up the legitimacy of the merger proposal, the remnant PAP rammed through a somewhat questionable referendum whilst simultaneously clamping down on the activities of pro-BS trade unions through the Trade Disputes Ordinance the following year.\(^{284}\) This was only the first step toward crushing the opposition, however. Anxious that the merger would not be undermined by the BS, the PAP, Whitehall and Kuala Lumpur were brought together in a clandestine operation in 1963 to put opposition elements into “cold store.” In the early hours of a February morning, 133 BS and Worker’s Party (WP) leaders, journalists, editors, trade unionists and student leaders were arrested and detained without trial under the Internal Security Act.\(^{285}\) Cleared of opposition, Singapore became independent of the British and joined the Federation of Malay on 16 September 1963. These events debilitated the BS leadership to a significant extent,

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\(^{283}\) To the 7 Alliance seats, one held by independent A.P. Rajah, 1 held by the Worker’s Party after the 1961 Anson by-election and 3 held by previous PAP defectors was now added 13 more who crossed the floor to form the BS. As Drysdale points out, however, the vulnerability of the PAP lay not in its slim majority in Parliament, but in the possibility of further defections. John Drysdale, *Singapore: Struggle for Success* (Singapore: Times Books International, 1984), p. 284

\(^{284}\) The Trade Disputes Ordinance – which banned all strikes unrelated to trade disputes - would become part of a series of legal measures to clamp down on union activism and finally bring it under the PAP-controlled National Trades Union Congress in the 1980s. Of the three choices presented in the referendum, the choice of not merging with Malaya was not included. Merger was endorsed by 71% of the electorate.

\(^{285}\) At the 1 February meeting in Kuala Lumpur to plan Operation Coldstore were the PAP’s Lee Kuan Yew, Goh Keng Swee and Ong Pang Boon, Malaya’s Internal Security Minister Dato Dr Ismail, British Commissioner to Singapore Lord Selkirk, his deputy P.B.C. More and the British General Officer Commanding, Singapore Base District, Major General E.A.W. Williams. The order for the arrests was subsequently issued by the Internal Security Council, which comprised of representatives from Singapore, the UK and Malaya.
yet in the general elections that followed in October, it still managed to field a total of 46 candidates and with a total of 33% of the votes, win 13 out of 51 seats in parliament – a clear reflection of its ability to command popular support. At this time, the Barisan Socialis was still considered “the strongest and the most effective opposition party.”

The PAP’s electoral victory translated into an attack on the extra-parliamentary opposition. Nanyang University founder and Honorary President of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce Tan Lark Sye had his citizenship revoked for “actively and persistently collaborating with an active anti-national group of Communists in Nanyang University.” The arrest and detention of key student and trade union leaders followed shortly after. Grievous tactical mistakes on the part of the remnant BS leadership would lead to its further decline and that of the parliamentary opposition more generally. Although it would seem that the position of the BS should have been strengthened by the PAP’s failure in the mainland elections of April 1964 and Singapore’s subsequent separation from the Federation in August 1965, its flaccid performance in the Hong Lim by-election that same year indicated that after Operation Coldstore the BS had indeed been become a spent force. In reality, the end of the Sukarno regime and the decimation of the Communist Party of Indonesia - an important ally of the BS - also had a significantly negative impact on the BS.

In August 1965, Singapore left the Federation after a rocky political marriage with the Malaysian leadership and a racial riot between Malays and Chinese that killed 22 and injured hundreds in 1964. However, in what was a grave miscalculation by the 13 BS Members of Parliament (MP), the BS continued to insist that Singapore’s independence was a false one because the new Republic would still be beholden to imperial powers. The BS began to lose...
significant credibility when they decided to boycott Parliament when the Constitution Amendment Bill and the Singapore Independence Bill were passed (by two-thirds majority) on 22 December 1965.\footnote{This was, presumably, the better of two options, the other being to vote against Singapore’s independence, which would have cost much political capital. However, they lacked sufficient electoral support to return to the House. \textit{Ibid.}, p. 397.} The rapid erosion of the parliamentary opposition came when 5 BS MPs resigned in 1966. The PAP went on to defeat an independent candidate at a by-election in January 1966 and three additional seats passed to the PAP who went unopposed on Nomination Day on March 1, bringing membership of the government bench to a total of 42.\footnote{\textit{Drysdale}, p. 398.} Then, on 7 October, six more BS MPs resigned their seats “on the grounds that neither national independence nor parliamentary democracy existed in Singapore.”\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}} The decision to boycott the parliamentary elections of 1966, and later, to refuse to participate in general elections in 1968 effectively allowed the PAP to lock the opposition out of power – a holding pattern achieved since that time through gerrymandering and various other tactics to disadvantage the political opposition. As early as 1967 we witnessed the redrawing of electoral constituencies to ensure the defeat of the opposition.\footnote{\textit{See Hussin}, p.212.}

In any case, by the mid-1960s the BS had only one recourse to challenge the PAP government – mobilization on the streets. Whilst the BS had strong allies amongst the trade unions and Chinese students, who agitated against the PAP government’s attempts to control their organizations between 1966-7, it was losing its influence over these groups.\footnote{This was largely due to factional strife. The Trade Union Act disqualified non-citizens and persons with criminal records from holding office in trade unions and provided for the compulsory registration of all office bearers.} Machinations to win over certain trade union leaders and curb others had also become effective, whilst the PAP-influenced media also portrayed student agitation against “suitability certificates”
as a communist plot. By concentrating on the “extra-parliamentary struggle,” the BS further undermined its electoral chances as they were increasingly seen to be undermining economic development efforts. Crippled by internal schisms, the BS decided not to contest general elections in 1968. All the opposition parties put together managed to field only 8 candidates – everyone of whom lost, allowing the PAP to win all parliamentary seats. Other significant opposition parties such as the Worker’s Party led by David Marshall, had also gone into decline and would stay dormant between 1966-72. This marked the decline of both the parliamentary and extra-parliamentary opposition.

It is important to understand the political machinations of the PAP and the tactical mistakes on the part of the opposition in the early post-war years to comprehend the basis of authoritarian consolidation in Singapore. In the Singapore case, the institutional and structural obstacles to democratic development that were later built was predicated largely on the overwhelming dominance of the PAP in the legislature from 1968 to date. Under the parliamentary system, this translated into long-term control of the executive branch of government and thus, the monopoly of state apparatuses. One party dominance in parliament thus facilitated the establishment of a strong state and in fact, not unlike in Taiwan, we witnessed a practical fusion of party and state. In the Singapore case, such structural and institutional obstacles to democratic development were never successfully overcome by the political opposition. What we see over the 1970s and 80s is thus a steady emaciation of the parliamentary and extra-parliamentary opposition and thus, a severe attrition in genuine political competition,

294 The left-wing Singapore Association of Trade Unions that supported the BS had effectively collapsed after Operation Coldstore, leaving the National Trades Union Congress, which supported the PAP, the dominant trade union to date. The suitability certificates would have prevented student activists from graduating. See The Straits Times, 16 November 1965. The suitability certificates would have prevented student activists from graduating.

295 In 1972, J. B. Jeyaretnam took over as Secretary-General.

which had in fact existed up until the late 1960s. Certainly, the PAP used its dominance in Parliament to modify the Constitution and create extra-Constitutional legislation that increased social and political control – a process of depoliticization – without having to resort to overt forms of brutality. Further, observers have argued that the ostensible cultivation of executive influence over the judiciary over time ensured an interpretation of the law that would cripple the parliamentary opposition and suppress any potential extra-parliamentary opposition.²⁹⁷

Not all aspects of authoritarian consolidation were overtly coercive in nature, of course. Although in command of the coercive apparatuses of the state, the PAP government was nevertheless the least brutal of the three authoritarian governments. With a monopoly of Parliament, the PAP government could pass laws that further entrenched the party in government quite easily without having to intimidate the opposition. For example, a notable, if different form of gerrymandering took place in 1988 with the creation of the Group Representative Constituency (GRC) and the absorption of the Anson constituency – which Workers’ Party leader Jeyaretnam enjoyed support from – into a new GRC.²⁹⁸ With the institution of the GRC, walkovers became increasingly common. Also, when the ISA was not used, the PAP government used the seemingly less draconian Banishment Act instead to expel dissidents, consistent with Article 61(4) of the Constitution. Individuals could be, and sometimes were, of course detained indefinitely without trial “awaiting deportation” and their assets seized. As the

²⁹⁷ Judges are appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Prime Minister in consultation with the Chief Justice. Subordinate Court judges and public prosecutors are civil servants and are appointed by the Legal Service Commission. According to the 1982 US State Department Country Reports on Human Rights “the Ministry of Law can freely transfer them from magistrate to prosecutor positions or to the legal offices of other ministries and statutory boards. Superior Court (High Court) judges, including the Chief Justice, are normally appointed ...some of the seven high county judges, however, hold what amount to probationary appointments for fixed terms, frequently one year.” See p. 801.

²⁹⁸ Under this scheme, up to 6 constituencies can be grouped into a GRC and all political parties must field a slate of candidates from different ethnic groups. This had the effect of disadvantaging opposition parties, which had great difficulties recruiting the requisite number of candidates from different ethnic groups. As such, walkovers became increasingly common.
incumbent, the PAP also had structural advantages over the opposition parties, which allowed it to establish inroads into grassroots support. Party branches, the Citizens’ Consultative Committees (CCC), the Resident Committees, the Town Councils, Community Development Councils, community centers and later, the Feedback Units, all allowed for the “penetration of social life… particularly in the public housing estates, where more than 85% of the population live.”

According to Chee, CCC leaders were useful to the MPS because they could assist the party by helping to explain unpleasant policies to the people they also served during national campaigns and national celebrations. Further, the Pyramid Club – an invitation-only club of elites where real policymaking takes place – also “dispenses the party line to the elite.”

As most of the middle classes were employed by the state in one form or another, they also tended to tow the line.

Further, the independent media was also brought to heel during the 1970s through a series of arrests and various restrictive legislation, a process that culminated in the 1980s with the creation of the government-controlled Singapore Press Holdings. The Newspaper and Printing Presses Act required that newspaper companies, printers and chief editors obtain annual government licenses and that management shares could only be held by government-approved individuals. Earlier in 1963, the Broadcasting and Television Act had already established the government’s ‘exclusive privilege’ to establish a broadcasting station, while the Undesirable Publications Act of 1967 empowered the government to ban publications considered “contrary to the public interest” and both the ISA and the Sedition Act also barred the printing, publishing,

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302 Some of the earliest attacks on the print media included the detention of four members of the Nanyang Siang Pau in May 1971, along with the deportation of the editor of the Singapore Herald and the closure of the Eastern Sun for alleged “black operations.” This was a police term for activities directed against Singapore from outside the country.
circulation and possession of any material deemed prejudicial to the national interest, public order or society. The control of information through the exercise of such legislation, along with programs to build “social cohesion,” made it much easier to portray the political opposition as subversive enemies of the state and foreign proxies, further weakening popular support for them.\textsuperscript{303}

Indeed, such was important because the students and labor agitation did not go away immediately with the decline of the parliamentary opposition and the closing down of Nanyang University and trade unions, where most of the pro-BS agitation had taken place.\textsuperscript{304} Despite the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971, which stipulated that no University student group, whether official or unofficial, shall “do anything which can be construed as expressing support, sympathy or opposition to any political parties or trade unions,” a notable labor strike took place in 1972 at the Gulf Plastics facility as a joint effort between workers and student leaders with Christian backing, targeting the core of the PAP’s “performance legitimacy” by attacking foreign investors.\textsuperscript{305} In two “anti-Communist” hunts in 1972 and 1975 journalists, university graduates, workers and executives of commercial firms were detained under the ISA. As the student movement continued to build steam, another wave of arrests and deportations of student leaders also took place in 1974, and in 1975, president of the University of Singapore Students’ Union Tan Wah Piow was sentenced to 12 months imprisonment for rioting, because

\textsuperscript{303} The latter was a tactic used against its political opponents often. In the 1959 PAP election campaign, the Labor Front government was accused of receiving a secret USD 500000 “gift” from the Eisenhower administration, thus being “an American proxy.” On 25 August 1972, a PAP candidate accused the WP from receiving SGD 600000 from a source in Kuala Lumpur. See also Chris Lydgate, \textit{Lee’s Law: How Singapore Crushes Dissent} (Melbourne: Scribe Publications, 2003), p. 67.

\textsuperscript{304} The Students National Front was formed in 1966, resulting in expulsion of 112 students from Nanyang University and 81 from Ngee Ann College, and the banishment of those who were not citizens.

\textsuperscript{305} \textit{Le Monde} “Singapore – Profits at all Costs,” 14, 15 and 16 November 1973. On that occasion the police arrested Daniel Breen, an Irish priest who was a lecturer at the Nanyang University. Breen was interrogated by the security police for six hours without being given the opportunity to consult a lawyer. \textit{Le Monde} “Singapore – Profits at all Costs,” 14, 15 and 16 November 1973.
he organized a peaceful demonstration on campus. After one professor and 8 Chinese society students were arrested for pro-Communist Party of Malaya activities in 1979, the National University of Singapore Act 1980 was put in place, prohibiting student unions from engaging in any political activities whatsoever. While this may have largely depoliticized student organizations, “socially conscious” student leaders of that era continued to exist in a low profile manner.

After the decline of the BS, the parliamentary struggle also continued valiantly in the early 1970s through the Worker’s Party and its newly elected Secretary General of J.B. Jeyaretnam. The party manifesto called for the abolition of restrictions on newspapers, the removal of the Internal Security Act and greater freedom of speech, amongst other things. In a televised party broadcast that same year, Jeyaretnam appealed to the public, saying that “…in a democratic society an opposition in Parliament is absolutely necessary….Democracy without an opposition in Parliament providing, as it were, for representation of the people’s view is unthinkable. A one-Party Parliament wholly subservient to the executive, rubber-stamping all decisions of the executive is not a democracy…. We in the Worker’s Party are striving through perfectly constitutional means to ensure that the democratic way of life finds acceptance in Singapore.” Not surprisingly considering the institutional obstacles described earlier, the WP won only 24% of votes in the 27 constituencies it contested for the December 1972 general elections, and none of its candidates polled more than 37%. The dismal election results precipitated a split in the WP, further weakening the parliamentary opposition. Opposition politicians from other parties were also rounded up on charges of libel and sedition. Dr. Poh Soo Kai was rearrested in 1973 after holding press conferences to denounce arbitrary detention, addressing university students, making tape recordings of his speeches for students abroad,
traveling to Japan to address the public on political repression in Singapore and last but not least, attempting to organize a human rights committee in Singapore. The latter organization was accused of assisting the activities of the communists in Singapore in demanding the release of political detainees who had been accused of being communist. By the 1976 general elections, however, a new opposition politician, Chiam See Tong, had appeared on the political scene. As an independent candidate pitted against PAP heavyweight Lim Kim San – who had been credited with the success of the Public Housing program – Chiam lost. The WP had by this time increased its vote share, but the PAP still continued to win every constituency with a total of 72% of the vote.

Because of the revival of organized opposition activity at this time, opposition politicians were slapped with libel suits for claims made against the PAP leadership during their campaigns in the 1972 and 76 general elections – effectively bankrupting some of them. Bankruptcy disqualifies a politician from holding a parliamentary seat, and failure to pay damages could lead to a contempt of court charge and jail time. As such, this tactic has been vigorously used against opposition politicians to date, whether elected to office or otherwise. Other more subtle legal tactics were also used. It is no coincidence that attempts to collect on damages over a libel case that Jeyaretnam had previously lost to PAP MP Tay Boo Too in 1972 were rigorously pursued once Jeyaretnam won a parliamentary seat in the 1981 by-election. By 1982, Jeyaretnam was also convicted and censured by the Parliamentary Privileges Committee for alleged failure to declare an economic interest in a matter under debate, namely, his failure to disclose the full state

307 This was noted in the US State Department’s Country Reports on Human Rights, 1982, p. 803.
308 WP sued PAP MP Tay Boo Too for libel. Tay was accused of making a statement at an election rally that the WP had received a SGD 600000 political contribution from Malaysia and thus was a puppet of a foreign government. WP’s 1972 suit was dismissed and WP ordered to pay costs amounting to SGD 17101 plus interest of 8% per annum, reportedly because the Party could not establish the exact words spoken by Tay in the Fujian dialect.
of party finances when WP assets were being seized to pay for damages in this case. By August 1983, both Jeyaretnam and Wong Hong Tay, chair of the WP, were charged with making a false statement about the Party’s accounts and fraudulently transferring Party funds to thwart creditors. In January 1984, Senior District Judge Michael Khoo acquitted them on the false statement charge and two of the defrauding charges, but convicted them on another defrauding charge involving SGD 400 and fined them each only SGD 1000 – sentences that would have allowed Jeyaretnam to remain in Parliament, since any conviction of over SGD 2000 under Singapore law disqualifies an MP from serving in Parliament. The state appealed and the chief justice reversed the acquittals for defrauding creditors and imposed SGD 1000 fines, however. Further, a retrial on the false statement charge found both Jeyaretnam and Wong guilty and sentenced to 3 months imprisonment before new Senior District Judge EC Foenander in September 1985.\textsuperscript{309} The conviction on the false statement charge was also upheld in November 1986 and the original sentence was changed to one month’s imprisonment and fines of SGD 5000 each. As a result Jeyaretnam was expelled from Parliament in 1986, and barred from contesting the 1988 and 1991 general elections.

But this was not all – later, Minister of Foreign Affairs S. Dhanabalan filed a complaint to the Parliamentary Committee of Privileges to initiate disciplinary action against Jeyaretnam. By 1986, amendments to the Parliament (Privileges, Immunities and Powers) Act had provided for the imprisonment of an MP and the imposition of fines of up to SGD 50000 if he or she was found guilty of “dishonorable conduct, abuse of privilege or contempt.” Dhanabalan claimed that Jeyaretnam had abused parliamentary privileges through allegations during Parliamentary session that there was executive interference in the judiciary. Jeyaretnam was convicted and fined in 1987. Jeyaretnam was also arrested that year for “attempting to hold an unlawful

\textsuperscript{309} As an example of executive influence over the judiciary, Justice Michael Khoo was quickly demoted.
meeting” whilst demonstrating against detentions outside the Prime Minister’s offices. He was also charged for contempt of Parliament for publishing 5 newsletters and the maximum fine of SGD 25000 was imposed. In May, as editor of the WP newspaper, Jeyaretnam was personally fined another SGD 10000 and the WP paper fined SGD 5000 by the Committee of Privileges for an article regarding the hearings before the Sinnathuray Investigative Commission that was opened after Jeyaretnam’s accusation of executive influence over the judiciary. In one of the most devastating lawsuits lost by Jeyaretnam to then Prime Minister Lee, damages of SGD 260000 were awarded in 1992.

The treatment of Jeyaretnam alone was enough to deter potential opposition leaders from stepping forward and for an effective opposition movement to develop. However, a MPs’ protection from civil action was also removed subject to a limitation period in 1986. Further, the constitution was amended in 1986 to deny an MP’s the right to counsel if he or she was cited for contempt in Parliament, although a history of intimidation of counsel for the opposition had already tended to deter lawyers from taking up the task. In January and April 1989, the Constitution, ISA and the Judicial Committee Act was further amended to eliminate any judicial review of the objective grounds for detentions made under the ISA and to restrict appeals to the Privy Council in London – technically the highest court of appeal in Singapore and an important avenue through which opposition leaders could try to overturn politically influenced court decisions. The ISA had been amended in 1987 to vest the power of detention exclusively in the Minister of Home Affairs without any legal recourse, but in December 1988 an Appeals Court judge ordered the release of four ISA detainees, because in his opinion preventive

310 This investigation was conducted by Justice Sinnathuray, which Tremewan notes to have been “notorious for his pro-government political decisions on the bench.” See Christopher Tremewan, The Political Economy of Social Control in Singapore (New York; Palgrave Macmillan, 1996), p. 207.

311 This had some technical difficulties as such appeals can only be made if the case had been decided in the Singapore High Court.
detention was not a subjective matter resting solely upon the judgment of the executive and thus open to judicial review. The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council had also stated in November 1988 that Jeyaretnam was “fined imprisoned and publicly disgraced for offences of which [he was] not guilty,” angering the PAP government. By the late 1980s, entering politics on the other side of the floor had thus developed into an extremely risky enterprise for the average Singaporean, and the opposition had increasing difficulty fielding candidates. By 1991 only 4 Parliamentary seats were held by the political opposition. It appears that the PAP government may have deemed it necessary to step up the use of such tactics in the early 1980s because the political opposition – hitherto unable to present a united front against the PAP because of severe infighting – had begun to show “an unusual degree” of cooperation in 1981. By 1984, the growing electoral strength of the opposition was becoming more apparent, as two opposition candidates were elected to Parliament and the PAP garnered only 62% of the vote in the general election of that year. While the WP had been the leading opposition, the SDP also made great strides by increasing its share of votes from 30.1% to 45.2% of the votes in wards it contested in 1984. However, the rather disproportionate intensity of efforts to cripple the opposition in the late 1980s is better explained by the wish to deter the development of a broad based opposition movement similar to those in the Philippines, Taiwan and South Korea, which the PAP leadership was no doubt aware had successfully effected democratic breakthrough in those places. Certainly, during the late 1980s, we saw increasing coordination amongst opposition

312 In the 1981 by-election, other opposition parties stood aside to avoid splitting the anti-PAP vote, allowing the Anson constituency to cast protest votes that saw Jeyaretnam brought into Parliament. The newly formed Singapore Democratic Party, then headed by Chiam See Tong, did not field a candidate, while the Barisan Socialis and the Singapore United Front helped to campaign for Jeyaretnam. See Chris Lydgate, Lee’s Law: How Singapore Crushes Dissent (Melbourne: Scribe Publications, 2003), p. 91.
313 Business Times, 23 December 1984
politicians in electoral contestations, growing extra-parliamentary opposition, and increased cooperation between parliamentary and extra-parliamentary activists in Singapore.

Political space and genuine political competition had thus become heavily circumscribed by constitutional amendments and extra-Constitutional legislation by the mid to late 1980s. With specific regard to potential “extra-parliamentary” opposition, restrictions were not confined to the workers and students who had traditionally been the source of political activism, however. The Societies Act 1968, which restricts all registered organizations to activities covering issues relevant only to their declared constituencies, also extends “registration requirements of non-political societies with the condition of non-participation in political activities.” Despite such a broad provision intended to delimit political activities to political parties, two important breeding grounds for extra-parliamentary political opposition emerged in the 1980s – the Law Society and the Christian churches. Unlike other professional bodies, the legal professional body had no governmental representation. The Singapore churches were traditionally largely quiescent for reasons that will be explored in Chapter 9, but normative changes following Vatican II, as observed in Chapter 4, did come to inspire more social critique from a handful of clergy and ecumenical workers. Of the two, the Law Society presented a much more serious challenge to the PAP government’s tight political control, however.

Indeed, in 1986 the Law Society publicly criticized amendments that were made to the Newspaper and Printing Presses Act to restrict the foreign press by requiring foreign publications that reported on the politics of Singapore to post a bond and obtain a permit to circulate their publications in Singapore. A host of legal tussles with the foreign press over articles the PAP government deemed unacceptable had already been initiated at this point. While the Law Society was within its original mandate for doing so, the Legal Professions Act was amended in October
1986 to expressly prohibit the Society from commenting on proposed legislation except when
asked to do so.\textsuperscript{314} Internal disciplinary action was also taken away from the Law Society Council
and vested in the Chief Justice. In January 1986 an independent-minded former Attorney
General, Francis Seow, had become president of the Law Society. Despite attempts to restrict the
mandate of the Law Society, in the January 1987 address to the Supreme Court judges at the
Opening of the Legal Year, Seow demanded that “the Law Society should be consulted on the
selection and appointment of Supreme Court judges, and be heard on the appointments,
promotions and transfers of subordinate judicial and legal officers by the Legal Service
Commission.”\textsuperscript{315} As the amended Legal Professions Act had also provided that Law Society
Council members must vacate their offices if they had previously been struck off the roll or
suspended from practice or convicted of an offense involving fraud or dishonesty, Seow – who
had been suspended from practice for a year in 1973 for improper conduct, fined SGD 1000 in
1982 and subsequently suspended from practice for 6 months for making a false declaration with
respect to his financial position – was forced to resign as president.

Forced from this arena, Seow then joined the WP in August 1988, in preparation for the
September general elections. Before he could do so, however, Seow came under arrest under the
ISA between May and July for being a “a willing partner to acts of interference in Singapore’s
internal affairs by representatives of a foreign power” in some unspecified but sinister plot to
undermine the PAP government. More specifically, a few US diplomats including Mason
Hendrickson was accused of “meddling in Singapore Politics” by encouraging Seow to enter
politics, while Seow was accused of receiving moneys from the Americans and seeking political
asylum in the US. It was not a coincidence that Seow was arrested while waiting to meet some

\textsuperscript{314} Until that time, the Law Society’s mandate included the provision of assistance to the government and the courts in all matters affecting legislation and the administration and practice of law.

\textsuperscript{315} Francis Seow, \textit{To Catch a Tartar}, pp. 55-6.
activists he had agreed to represent in court, who were detained under the ISA at this time (see below). In the LawAsia Biennial Conference on 29 June 1987, Seow had appealed to “concerned and caring international organizations... to exert pressure on the Singapore government put them on trial in a court of law or release them.”

The PAP won by a very narrow margin in Eunos Constituency where Seow and another opposition leader Dr. Lee Siew Choh contested under the new GRC scheme. Crowds had gathered in significant numbers in their campaign rallies. Later, two Non-Constituency MP seats were offered to Lee and Seow. However, Seow came under investigation for tax evasion and his bank accounts in both Thailand and Malaysia were frozen. Seow fled to the US, and as such, did not fill his parliamentary seat.

Seow was not the only independent-minded lawyer who was dissatisfied with the state of the legal and judicial profession in Singapore, however. In hearings over the amendment of the Legal Professions Act, other Law Society Members such as Teo Soh Lung and Tang Fong Har had stood up to then Prime Minister Lee himself. As such the Singapore Academy of Law Bill was passed on 16 August 1988 establishing the Academy of Law as an organization to “provide lawyers and others in the legal profession a forum to meet and exchange ideas and also promote higher standards of conduct.” However, “many lawyers saw the establishment of the Academy as yet another Government-inspired move to cut the Law Society down to size.”

Individual lawyers were also targeted as part of Operation Spectrum to dismantle a wider underground

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316 Seow, To Catch A Tartar, p.137.
317 A constitutional amendment and an amendment to the Parliamentary Elections Act in 1984 established up to 3 “non-constituency” parliamentary seats for the highest polling opposition candidates where the opposition fails to win up to 3 seats. They are barred from casting votes on constitutional amendments, budgetary matters, or motions of no confidence and forbidden from representing constituents in their dealings with government agencies.
318 Seow was charged and convicted for tax evasion ad absenta.
network of social workers, actors and professionals who were also either Christians, former student leaders or WP sympathizers. Alleged Marxists who had been conspiring with political exile Tan Wah Piow to violently overthrow the PAP government, these persons were rounded up unceremoniously under the ISA in May 1987, during which time some alleged they were tortured. Although most were released shortly after signing confessions that were widely publicized, others who recanted were later rearrested. It is probably fair to say, however, that physical torture, if used, was neither comparable in severity to that inflicted upon the opposition by authorities in South Korea nor Taiwan.

The involvement of the Catholic priesthood in support of some of their members at this time also led to their being targeted by the government. In 1990, the Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act was therefore passed, the effect of which has been argued were not limited to the avoidance of proselytization of fundamentalist or sectarian religious doctrine but the preclusion of social activism by religious groups, as shown in the case of Catholic youth groups which were involved in the alleged Marxist conspiracy. The Singapore Polytechnic Students Council, which had sent a letter to the Home Affairs Minister to protest the arrests, was also dissolved after 3 student leaders were arrested following the letter. In reality, it was unlikely that the individuals of these alleged Marxist networks were planning to establish a broad based opposition movement that could genuinely challenge the PAP government. However, the heavy-handed approach effectively crushed any potential extra-parliamentary opposition at a time when democratic breakthrough had been experienced in Taiwan and South Korea.

Indeed, the casual observer may notice that the only other opposition parliamentarian Chiam See Tong – who was elected to represent the Potong Pasir constituency in 1984 – was in fact able to stay in Parliament relatively unscathed, however. This was because he “projected
himself as someone who [had] no desire to see any epochal change in Singapore’s political landscape.”

The political opposition had evolved from a first generation of left-wing elements in the BS with fundamentally different conceptions of the state and society, to one espousing a “Western-style” liberal democracy in the manner of J. B. Jeyaretnam, to one which accepted the PAP’s hegemony and purposed narrowly toward demanding some accountability from the PAP government on specific questions of policy. As the non-competitive mode of opposition was acceptable to the PAP government, this was a “winning formula” that the public approved of. Chiam was seldom harassed in the same way that other opposition leaders who challenged the PAP’s hegemony were. That only the non-competitive mode of opposition was acceptable to the PAP leadership was not only confirmed by the earlier creation of a quasi-opposition with the Non-Constituency Member of Parliament in 1984, but also the Nominated Member of Parliament scheme in 1990, the latter which Rodan considers part of the extensive mechanisms of political co-optation to direct contention through state-controlled institutions during the early 1990s.

Although Prime Minister Goh, representing a second generation PAP leadership, promised upon taking office that the government would embrace a “more open, consultative, and consensual leadership style,” this did not entail political liberalization. Instead, as Chua observed, what evolved was “substantively a politically absolutist single-party dominated

321 Hussin, p. 169.
322 By the 1988 general election, the SDP had surpassed the WP as the leading opposition party and would be acknowledged by the PAP as the leader of the opposition. See Hussin, p. 179.
government that [was] able to hold on to power by both relaxing the boundaries for civic participation as circumstances require, and by clearly delineating and policing areas of social life in which it entertain[ed] no compromises, including the realm of competitive politics,” a view confirmed by Chan who wrote that the PAP leadership “[did] not have democratization in mind in the meaning of accepting competing bases of power.” 325 We have just seen in the case of Singapore that, in the words of Chan, “the ruling party has applied the entire range of political weaponry to stymie the development of the opposition, including detention, deregistration of key opposition organizations, invoking legislation to restrict political action and publication, and preemptive organization,” and that “these measures were initially enforced to suppress the communists, but … have resulted in the control and limitation of all effective political activity other than that of the ruling party.”326 The opposition failed to pressure the authoritarian government into democratic reform, as was the case in Taiwan and South Korea, and no democratic breakthrough was experienced in the early 1990s.

**Conclusion**

In all three narratives of authoritarian consolidation and democratic struggle in Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore is the story of the early decimation of political opposition and the overdevelopment of a strong state under the monopolistic control of an authoritarian elite.327 Such similar processes of authoritarian consolidation took place specifically under the superimposition of the Cold War framework of political conflict on all these countries in the early post-war period. External threats justified the development of formidable domestic

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326 Chan, p. 425
institutions and structures that not only eliminated political competition, but enabled the repression of the political opposition and thus, the retardation of democratic development.

Such external structural conditions will be explored in the following chapter, but suffice to say here that they limited to a significant extent, the basic modernization thesis that with development comes democracy. In both Taiwan and South Korea, democratic breakthrough was significantly delayed, while in Singapore, genuine democracy with meaningful political competition has yet to emerge to date. That the external political and security environment facilitated authoritarian consolidation naturally leads us to consider how and why any changes therein may have influenced democratic development in Taiwan and South Korea and Singapore. I shall soon explain that the external environment was important not so much because it may have conditioned changes in those authoritarian institutions and structures in the 1980s, but because external actors appear to be important to democratic breakthrough in Taiwan and South Korea. These actors also operate within particular international environments, whatever these may be.

We have seen how the political opposition in Singapore could not surmount the institutional and structural obstacles that developed with authoritarian consolidation, and as such, no effective opposition movement developed and democratic breakthrough has yet to materialize. However, the military governments of South Korea and the KMT government of Taiwan also had a monopoly on the coercive apparatuses of the state, and to varying degrees were much more disposed to use them in a way that, at first glance, would seem to have made it much more difficult to effect democratic breakthrough. Nevertheless, the democratic struggle in Taiwan and South Korea enjoyed much greater success. Why the political opposition in Taiwan and South Korea managed to overcome the political repression meted out to them and force their
authoritarian governments through effective mobilization to embark upon political reform that would reintroduce political competition, and hence, lead to a genuine multiparty democracy needs, therefore, to be better explained. From the narratives of the democratic struggle presented, we should have noticed that the institutional and structural roadblocks to democratic change had the propensity to self-perpetuate under the direction of an authoritarian elite whose monopolistic control of an overdeveloped state enabled them to retain the capacity for political repression throughout the period of our observation. The threatening external security conditions tended to justify and even legitimize the use of such apparatuses whenever opposition resurgence became a perceptible threat. Even with the waxing and waning of the fortunes of the authoritarian elites, such state apparatuses remained intact and firmly under their control.

If so, Taiwan and South Korea’s experiences should be the exception rather than the norm, suggesting that some other intervening variable may better account for why the political opposition was able, despite the institutional and structural obstacles, to overcome political repression and effect democratic breakthrough. Huntington has observed that, “external actors significantly helped third wave democratizations.” Huntington has also suggested that the timing of the third wave of democratization in the 1970s and 80s can be explained in terms of “changes in the policy of external actors.” As such, Huntington had in mind external state actors. Other literatures we reviewed in Chapter 2 also suggest that “external pressures” exerted by state actors have in other contexts been influential. In examining the specific political contexts of these cases, it would appear that important strategic allies such as the US or former

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328 Ibid., p. 86.
329 Specifically, these were “changes in the policies of external actors, including in the late 1960s the new attitude of the European Community toward expanding its membership, the major shift in U.S. policies beginning in 1974 toward the promotion of human rights and democracy in other countries, and Gorbachev’s dramatic change in the late 1980s in Soviet policy toward maintaining the Soviet empire.” Ibid., pp. 45-6.
colonial powers such as Japan or the UK would have potentially substantial leverage over the authoritarian governments in question.

The problem with such a line of reasoning is, of course, that it is a largely “top-down” approach that examines only state-to-state relations and how it may have influenced the approach taken by authoritarian elites toward the political opposition and the perceived problems of political competition. We have already seen, however, that democratic breakthrough in Taiwan and South Korea was largely pushed from below. Despite rhetoric and superficial “liberalization” measures to defuse building political tensions – the incumbent elites were at best reluctant participants in what turned out to be democratic breakthrough in Taiwan and South Korea. Another class of external actors besides at the state level should be considered instead. Potential external nonstate and substate pressures have the potential to relate better, causally speaking, to both the development of an effective political opposition in these cases and also elite decision-making. It is for this reason that this research project also examines – in large measure – the role played by transnational nonstate and substate actors in Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore’s democratic development. In this way, this chapter has both provided some background information on political development in Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore and more importantly, explained why I have chosen to focus this research on the role of external actors and the broader structural contexts within which they operate. As we shall see in the next two chapters, both the geopolitical and international normative environments condition external agency significantly.

**TABLE 1.**
**LIST OF POTENTIAL CAUSAL VARIABLES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International Events</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Occupation by a democratic power</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Geopolitical “System-changing” Events | Military Defeat  
Military/Political Intervention (“Direct Control”)  
End of the Cold war  
Specific changes in foreign policy of allies or “patrons” towards a particular state  
Decolonization  
Democracy promotion as calculation of strategic interest  
Democracy Promotion as driven by normative motives  
Withdrawal of support for authoritarian allies as driven by normative constraints  
“Indirect Control”: diplomacy, economic and military aid etc.  
Through international organizations |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| External State pressure             | Internationally induced economic crisis – affects “performance legitimacy,” changes pre-existing coalitions, related to emulation effects  
Non-religious transnational actors: political parties, foundations/agencies, human rights lobbies, “exile clusters”, epistemic communities  
Religious transnational actors |
| International Economy              | International Developments  
Increasing importance of human rights norms  
Human rights norms increasingly tied to democratic identity  
Proliferation of principled advocacy networks  
Policy changes within religious community (Christian/Catholic) |
| External nonstate Pressure          | Security Alignments (generation of consent)  
Territorial Boundaries (generation of consent)  
“Spheres of influence”  
Global balance of power (and changes)  
Regional balance of power (“regional blocs”)  
Regional institutions/ organizations |
| Contagion                           | Patterns of trade  
Patterns of “dependency” |
| International Economy              | Process of learning between states  
Socialization/internationalization of international norms through transnational nonstate actors |
Chapter 4
The Geopolitical Environment

Introduction

Now that I have explained why external agency was potentially important to democratic development in Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore, I turn to consider the international structural environment in which they operated. This is important because any kind of external actor would not have operated within a political vacuum. Instead, the international structural environment would have both empowered and limited external agency in different ways, and we must consider these carefully in order to fully understand the causal mechanisms that underpin the international-domestic political interface. We have also seen in Chapter 3 that the geopolitical environment in particular conditioned domestic structural and institutional
development in each of our cases to significant extent, and this shaped the nature of the democratic struggle. This chapter thus provides us, on the one hand, with an important in-depth survey of the geopolitical environment that conditioned authoritarian consolidation in the early postwar years. On the other hand, it also provides us with an understanding of the key changes in geopolitical environment that later created new conditions that affected the nature and extent of the external agency that would prove crucial to democratic development in our cases.

As a preface to the narrative that follows, it should be understood that owing to one abiding feature of the Cold War – that is, the absence of open and direct military hostilities between its two main protagonists on their own soil - Pacific Asia became an important theatre of the Cold War. The rivalry for military supremacy was often manifest as proxy wars in other parts of the world, shifting in the 1960s from Europe to the Middle East, Africa, Latin America and last but not least, Asia. As such, the national interests of the two superpowers of the US and USSR were often superimposed onto existing local conflicts, which were then perpetuated under the Cold War framework. This not only meant that internal conflicts on the Korean Peninsula, across the Taiwan Straits and on the Indochinese mainland would be internationalized with consequences for superpower relations, the countries of this region would in turn became sensitive to the changing global balance of power.

This chapter therefore outlines, first of all, the vicissitudes of superpower relations between the 1940s and 80s, before moving on to the implications that this had on both the regional balance of power and the external threats that South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore faced. In so doing, this chapter allows us to further understand the differences in the geostrategic position occupied by Taiwan and South Korea on the one hand, and Singapore on the other. Indeed, the subtle differences between their immediate geopolitical environments will create
different conditions for the operation of external agency. Further, the immediate geopolitical environments will also affect the level of sensitivity that the governments of Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore have to external agency and the range of possible responses to them. At the same time, this chapter also provides us the necessary background to understand developments in the international normative environment and the shape of US human rights policy discussed in Chapter 5. We will realize by Chapter 5 that the subtle changes in the international geopolitical environment in the 1960s and 70s described here had a profound impact on the international normative environment, which in turn changed the structure of international relations in no small way. The consequences of these long-term developments at the international level will come to have potentially profound consequences for democratic development in our cases.

Superpower Relations, the Global Balance of Power and Regional Implications

There were four discernable phases in superpower relations and the global balance of power during the period of interest, which had an impact on regional geopolitics and the national security of Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore. The first of these is the development of tensions, which spread beyond Europe into other parts of the world and led to a “two-camp” Cold War from the late 1940s to 1962 with the advent of the Cuban Missile Crisis. The second phase is the period of East-West détente between 1962 and 1979, when superpower rivalry was shifted to remoter parts of the world. This period ended with the renewal of open tensions at the advent of the Soviet War in Afghanistan in 1979. Following this period was the “second” Cold War, which lasted between 1979-84 before a period of renewed détente emerged, followed by eventual Communist collapse in the fourth and final phase between 1985-90.
It was not a foregone conclusion before 1947 that tensions between the US and the USSR would develop into a global “cold” war, however, as reasonable concessions had been made to the Soviets at the Yalta Conference of 1945. Between 1947 and 49, communism was quickly spreading into Eastern Europe and China, and East-West coalitions were taking shape. Tensions between the US and the USSR were also developing in the Middle East, Asia and Europe. In Europe - the main theatre of the Cold War in the 1940s and 50s - the question of Germany’s future became particularly contentious as the Soviets desired Germany divided and disarmed while the US independent and democratic. By the time the Soviets occupied parts of Iran in 1946, scepticism of Soviet intentions had grown in the US and the Cold War was well on its way.  

As such, on March 12, 1947 US President Truman delivered a speech outlining a comprehensive policy of containment (the Truman Doctrine), simultaneously appealing to Congress for aid to suppress the communist insurgency in Turkey and Greece. This not only signalled the beginning of the Cold War, but the terms on which the non-Communist states of Pacific Asia, which had yet to be accorded the same level of importance as their European counterparts, would later be brought into the War – that is to say, as part of an overall containment strategy.

In the meantime, while the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Marshall Plan were being put into place to contain Communist expansion in Europe, the Soviets successfully tested their own atom bomb in 1949 and the Kuomintang government in China lost its civil war with the Communists and retreated to the island of Taiwan. The People’s Republic of China (PRC) was established in October that year, and one of the most populous nations of the

world was now under Communist control. A few months later on June 25, 1950, the North Koreans launched a surprise attack on the pro-West Republic of Korea with the (arguably limited) backing of the Soviets. As part of the containment strategy under the direction of Dean Acheson, the US became directly involved in the Korean War of 1950-3. Although the Cold War had evidently begun its spread into Asia, both superpowers continued to exercise some restraint in the Asian Pacific theatre at this time, not least because disagreements closer to home over Germany preoccupied them. Although the rising number of new nation-states was piquing the interest of the Soviets during this time, efforts were largely concentrated on carving out a sphere of influence in Eastern Europe.

East-West tensions remained high throughout the 1950s as both sides raced each other for military supremacy, increasingly in nuclear terms. The development of nuclear capability was part of the US policy of massive retaliation, which found resonance with the Soviets under Khrushchev. The nuclear arms race would come to characterize the decade, and indeed, the entire Cold War era, with spillover effects into Pacific Asia. In the meantime, the launching of Sputnik I led to the widespread belief that the USSR was leading in the area of intercontinental ballistic missiles, which the Soviets did built on to up the ante on the West and expand its influence in the Middle East, Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. This perceived expansionism culminated in unprecedented levels of tension between 1958-62, when it was thought the world would come close to a nuclear war.

Indeed, Khrushchev demanded at this juncture that the US and her allies evacuate West Berlin, simultaneously deploying nuclear missiles in Cuba. However, the deadline for withdrawal set by the USSR was subsequently withdrawn and the Cuban Missile Crisis defused.

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within 12 days. These two incidents had important consequences for the Pacific Asian region, however. Khrushchev’s perceived readiness to cede to the West and his failure to support Chinese nuclear ambitions drew the ire of Mao Zedong and helped to precipitate the Sino-Soviet split. This would lead the US to pursue a policy of rapprochement with China and consequently, derecognition of Taiwan in 1979. It would also lead US-Korea relations to sour in the late 1970s. Before that time, however, the near all-out nuclear confrontation in Europe and the Caribbean was to prove too close for comfort for both the US and USSR, and as a result, greater efforts were made to ease conflict and whatever residual tensions were shifted to geographically remoter parts of the world. As a result, the Pacific Asian region began to be drawn more deeply into the vortex of the Cold War even though it was still reeling from the devastation of major wars fought there.

In the meantime, the period of East-West détente developed between 1962 and 1975, occasions for increased tensions notwithstanding. Willy Brandt’s pursuit of Ostpolitik reflected efforts during this time on the part of Western European states to normalize relations with the Eastern bloc. The Moscow and Warsaw Treaties of 1970 further contributed to the easing of tensions in Europe, followed by the separation of Germany into two states in 1973. Before this time, efforts to curb the arms race culminated in the test-ban treaty and the non-proliferation treaty signed in 1963 and 1968 respectively. The Strategic Arms Limitation Treaties (SALT I and II) of 1972 and 1974 were also significant moves toward the limitation of anti-ballistic missiles and strategic weapon launchers possessed by the US and the USSR.333 Annual summits bringing together US and Soviet leaders – few and far between during the 1950s and 60s - also began to take place in the 1970s.

333 In May 1976, the US signed a five-year treaty with the USSR to restrict the size of underground testing and to permit US inspection of Soviet test-sites.
In 1975, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) provided confirmation of the territorial status quo in Europe as well as the broad principles of cooperation between East and West, further stabilizing relations. The CSCE had other important implications, however. The negotiations leading up to the Helsinki Final Act would lead to important changes in the international normative environment – changes that essentially raised the profile of human rights as a legitimate international concern and led to the proliferation of transnational advocacy networks. This process is described in more detail in Chapter 5, as it will have important implications for democratization in Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore.

In reality, East-West détente swept tensions under the carpet, and covert rivalry continued to be conducted in the Middle East, Africa, Latin America and Asia. 334 Thus, while a temporary state of relative restraint was being maintained in Europe, the US was progressively being engaged in Vietnam. The US had been previously drawn into the complicated affairs of Indochina during the Second World War because of its support of the Viet Minh’s anti-colonial efforts. Ironically, because Asia still remained a sideshow to the US in the 1950s, it chose to secure the friendship of a NATO power by supporting the French in their efforts to reclaim their former colony, thus abandoning the Viet Minh. The Viet Minh became more explicitly Communist from this point on, engaging the help of the Chinese and Soviets, who entered into a fragile coalition in 1965 despite rising tensions between them. As such the fight for independence in Vietnam fell into the Cold War framework, inevitably drawing the US into the political maelstrom that was brewing in that part of the world. What was to follow involved not

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334 Soviet policy towards the US was less open than to Western Europe during the 1960s because the Soviets at the time hoped to drive a wedge between the allies, seeing that Western Europe was increasingly independent. See Lundestad, p. 93.
only Vietnam, but also Laos and Cambodia, as he Indochinese Communist Party’s strategic aim was to reconquer the entire territory of Indochina.\(^{335}\)

By 1968, however, for reasons that will be explored later, the US was preparing to withdraw from Vietnam and eager to seek a resolution. The Paris Peace Accords were finally signed in January 1973, temporarily separating Vietnam into North and South. Unfortunately, the corrupt and inept South Vietnamese regime collapsed soon after and Vietnam was unified under the Communists in July 1976. In the meantime, increasing numbers of pro-Soviet regimes were established in different parts of the world, and Communist insurgencies continued to spread - not least in Latin America, the backyard of the US.

It was the Soviet War in Afghanistan in 1979, and not the proxy wars taking place in Indochina, that dissolved the East-West détente, however. The war in Afghanistan was the first deployment of Soviet troops to a country outside of the Warsaw Pact and it was read as a clear manifestation of Soviet ambitions towards superpower hegemony in a global policy of power projection. The US and the Free World were quick to condemn the Soviet incursion into Afghanistan, which in President Carter’s words were, “the most serious threat to peace since the Second World War.” In the midst of renewed tensions between the two superpowers in the early 1980s, the Soviets also appeared to make significant diplomatic and military strides at a time when the prevalent view was that US global leadership had declined. In 1981, an impressive show of unity and force within the Soviet bloc came in the form of a military exercise conducted under the Warsaw Pact (Zapad). However, hidden problems within the Soviet bloc soon began to rear their ugly heads. The Soviet economy and those of its satellites were fast faltering, leading to increasing levels of social and political instability. Civil protests in Poland were on the rise,

and on August 1981, a one million-strong protest was held to demonstrate against food shortages experienced with the onset of the economic crisis. A succession of weak, hardliner Soviet leaders at this time exacerbated the problem. That these internal problems of the Soviet bloc would lead to the “end” of the Cold War was not clear at this time, however, because by 1983 the prospects of a nuclear war were becoming more real than ever.

Despite the hostile posture taken by President Reagan, and the international outrage over the KAL 007 debacle, the promise of renewed détente between East and West nevertheless emerged. Gorbachev came into power in 1985 with the intention of making a sea change to Soviet foreign policy and undertaking requisite domestic reform. This new openness to peaceful co-existence led to a summit between Gorbachev and Reagan in November that year, the first such summit since 1979 when Brezhnev and Carter had met. The ideological shift in the Soviet Union under Gorbachev had begun to ease collective efforts on arms control and disarmament and in a fourth meeting in 1987, the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) was signed. The West in turn avidly supported Gorbachev’s policies of perestroika and glasnost, which, as we know, would later lead to the dissolution of the Soviet Empire. On 10 November 1989, the Berlin Wall fell.

These different phases in the Cold War demarcate not only fluctuations in the level of tensions between the superpowers and their allies, but also outline the structural changes in superpower relations that had important implications for the balance of power in Pacific Asia. The terms under which the Pacific Asian region first became embroiled in super power rivalry

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336 Months of civil unrest would lead to the imposition of martial law in Poland.
337 Brezhnev died in November 1982, and was succeeded by the infirm Yuri Andropov, who lasted another three years before Konstantin Chernenko succeeded him in March 1985.
338 Korean Airlines Flight 007 was shot down by Soviet fighter jets killing hundreds. The Soviets claimed that the airliner had strayed into its airspace. Tensions rose to a new high over this incident.
339 This was an important agreement because it went beyond the limitation of arms growth to eliminate a whole class of weapons altogether. The USSR had also dropped demands that the Strategic Defense Initiative proposed during this time be stopped.
was defined very much by the national interests of these superpowers. Thus, local conditions were turned into a means of Soviet containment for the US, which was also careful not to allow these local conflicts to be turned into full blown, open confrontation with the USSR. In this way, the resolution to many proxy conflicts came in the form of territorial demarcations or spheres of influence that reflected the global balance of power.

In this way, the Korean peninsula came to be split into the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) in the North and the Republic of Korea (ROK) in the South, each new state supported by the USSR and the US respectively, and of course technically in the state of war. Chinese Communist and Nationalist forces were also prevented by the US from reclaiming the territories on either side of the Taiwan Strait, leading to the simultaneous existence of two separate governments (the Republic of China or ROK, and the People’s Republic of China, or PRC) claiming to be the only legitimate government of “all China.” For both South Korea and Taiwan, the most immediate and significant sources of threat to national security became the Communist regimes of North Korea and China respectively, although, as we shall see, there were and continue to be significant perceived qualitative differences between them.

Singapore was not at the heart of superpower rivalry in the region, however, even though it was a very useful Western ally in the Indochinese struggle. Because it was not on the frontlines of the Cold War, the external threats it faced were different. US or Western interests in the remaining parts of Southeast Asia were served by supporting anti-Communist regimes and encouraging intra-regional stability without military intervention in their affairs. Singapore and its relations with its immediate maritime states were thus spared from being sucked into the vortex of Cold War politics in such a way that major wars were fought in their respective
territories. What follows describes how changes in the overarching geopolitical environment affected the national security of Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore.

**Taiwan’s National Security**

We have seen that during the 1950s US engagement in the region was restrained, as American policy makers believed that Europe remained the most important theatre of the Cold War. So although the China Act of 1948 committed the US to “maintain the genuine independence and the administrative integrity of China, and to sustain and strengthen principles of individual liberty and free institutions in China through a program based on self-help and cooperation,” US troops in China were withdrawn at the time of Communist advancement because the Truman administration was skeptical of the Kuomintang (or Nationalist) regime, which it viewed to be corrupt and incompetent. Instead, the US adopted a wait-and-see posture, hoping that Mao Zedong would become a second Tito. The Nationalist forces, which had been severely weakened by eight years of conflict with the invading Japanese thus lost the civil war to the Communists and retreated to the island of Taiwan. On the other hand, the initially indifferent view of the Soviets towards China changed because of Titoism, and in 1950 a 30-year alliance pact was signed between China and the USSR. This and the outbreak of the Korean War later prompted the US to re-evaluate the strategic value of the Nationalist regime on Taiwan, and the decision to prevent *Taiwan* from being overrun by the Communists was taken.\(^{340}\) Although the Nationalist forces had hopes of “reclaiming the mainland,” the US preferred to maintain the status quo, and as such what was meant to be a temporary situation developed into a holding pattern.

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\(^{340}\) The Formosa Act was passed in 1955 giving the President emergency powers to defend Taiwan against Communist invasion.
As such, the state sovereignty of Taiwan became a contested one. The contested nature of the ROC’s sovereignty also meant two things - that its national security was greatly dependent upon the commitment of the US to defend it militarily and diplomatically; and that the Nationalist government would be highly susceptible to the vagaries of international opinion. However, the level and nature of US commitment towards Taiwan has changed over the years, mostly as the result of fluctuations in the level of Cold War tensions and the global balance of power already described. US Taiwan policy was largely determined by Sino-US relations in the wider context of superpower rivalry with the USSR. US-PRC rapprochement of the 1960s mirrored the pursuit of East-West détente in Europe. The drive towards normalization in the 1970s was also an act of balancing the Soviet Union at a time when tensions with the Soviets were rising in different regions of the world. In particular, what drove the US courtship of the PRC was the Sino-Soviet split in the 1960s, which made it possible to use China as a counterweight to the USSR.

The opinion of the wider international community on the question of Taiwan’s national sovereignty has also been important to its national security because increasing international recognition of the Chinese Communist regime on the mainland would most likely mean that the world would stand by in silence if the PRC chose to invade Taiwan in the future. This was particularly true after US derecognition in 1979 and the growing international isolation that Taiwan experienced thereafter. These two variables – US commitment to Taiwan’s national sovereignty and international opinion – also depend very much on the direct interaction between the ROC and PRC. Indeed, changes in the foreign policy posture taken by the PRC and the ability of the ROC to respond, has profoundly affected the national security of Taiwan.
Chinese nationalism and the PRC leadership’s adoption of “a unique blend of Marxism-Leninism that put heavy emphasis on Lenin’s theory of imperialism and the inevitability of war to provide a framework for its worldview” meant that US commitments toward Taiwan would be a serious thorn in the side of Sino-American relations, however. The interest that China had in Taiwan was also reflected in the following assessment made by Mao in 1966: “America will attack us from four points, namely, the Vietnam frontier, the Korean frontier and through Japan by way of Taiwan and Okinawa.” In reality, US interests were never served by direct engagement with the PRC, which in the period before the Sino-Soviet split, portended direct engagement with the USSR. And while the Republicans and Democrats differed in the extent to which they were willing to go to assist the rump KMT government on Taiwan, but both ultimately drew the line at the risk of full military confrontation.

Because of this, US national interest and that of the ROC were ultimately incompatible insofar as the KMT government continued to claim that the ROC was the only legitimate government of a single China and either pursued a national policy of retaking the mainland or refusal to negotiate a peaceful reunification with China. Under certain circumstances, however, this conflict of interest need not necessarily have weakened the relationship between the US and the ROC with the consequence of undermining Taiwan’s national security. Three particular circumstances in the 1950s and 60s in fact strengthened the US-ROC alliance despite the inconsistencies just outlined: (1) tense relations between the US and the PRC (2) strong ties between the USSR and the PRC and (3) the PRC’s refusal to renounce the use of force in settling the Taiwan issue. As long as the “cold war” between the Free World and the Communist bloc

342 Ball, The Cold War, p.132.
344 The national policy of retaking the mainland was significantly toned down after 1972, however, when President Chiang Ching-kuo became Premier and effectively took over the reins of government from his ailing father.
threatened to turn into a “hot war” in the Asian theatre, Taiwan became and continued to be of strategic value to US interests in the Western Pacific.

This argument is borne out by the change of US policy from one of indifference to one of active, even if cautious, engagement in the preservation of the rump KMT government on Taiwan before and after the outbreak of the Korean War respectively. In January 1950, the Truman administration had made clear that “the United States Government [would] not pursue a course which [would] lead to involvement in the civil conflict with China. Similarly, the United States Government [would] not provide military aid or advice to Formosa.”345 Yet, by July that same year, less than a month after the Korean War broke out, the Truman administration had sent the Seventh Fleet to pre-empt an attack on Taiwan, because “the occupation of Formosa by Communist forces would be a direct threat to the security of the Pacific area and to United States forces.”346 Military and economic aid to the ROC subsequently ballooned.347 With the Korean War, Taiwan became part of the US strategy of containment in the western Pacific. As a result, the ROC was recognized by the US at this time, as the only legitimate government of all China.

The ROC profited from the PRC’s early military aggression towards its outlying territories of the Kinmen, Matsu and Tachen islands as well. The first Taiwan Straits crisis of 1954 prompted the US to pour in yet more economic and military aid to support a regime it had previously abandoned, during which time the ROC’s military was considerably modernized with US technological expertise.348 On 12 September 1954, against the backdrop of strengthening Sino-Soviet ties, the US Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) was prepared to go as far as to use nuclear

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345 Department of State Bulletin, 16 January 1950, p.79.
346 The words of President Harry Truman. Department of State Bulletin, 3 July 1950, p.5. This move was also taken to prevent the ROC from attacking the PRC.
347 For details, see Clough, Island China, pp. 9-10.
348 The first Taiwan Straits Crisis took place between 11 August 1954 and 1 May 1955. Heavy artillery bombardment of Kinmen Islands on 3 September, followed by air bombings of Tachen Islands, were launched after Chiang Kai-shek sent in 58,000 troops to Quemoy & 15,000 to Matsu when President Eisenhower lifted the navy blockade across the Straits.
weapons to repel an attack by the PRC. In December 1954, the Mutual Defense Treaty was signed between the US and the ROC, further committing the US to the defense of Taiwan. When the PRC launched an amphibious assault on Yichiang Shan Island, overpowering KMT forces in January 1955, US Congress quickly enacted the Formosa Resolution, authorizing the US President to defend Taiwan and the Pescadores (or Penghu) islands just off the coast of Taiwan. Although no military bases were established on Taiwan, the Eisenhower administration subsequently provided the KMT government with air-to-air missiles, and positioned 8-inch howitzers capable of firing nuclear shells on Kinmen and Matsu islands along with surface-to-surface Metador missiles that could carry conventional or nuclear warheads for up to 600 miles.

By the time Chairman Mao launched the Great Leap Forward in 1958, domestic militancy had further translated into foreign policy, and the PRC began to turn from the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence, declared only a few years before. These developments culminated in the second Taiwan Straits crisis, which began in August 1958 when the PRC launched an attack on the Matsu and Kinmen islands in order to “liberate” Taiwan. The US responded firmly in rhetoric and in practice, pushing back PRC attempts to control the islands and the region’s airspace, while the Joint Chiefs of Staff put forward plans for nuclear attacks on Shanghai, Guangzhou and Nanjing. The ROC further acquired 8-inch howitzers, Sidewinder missiles and landing craft from the US. The official stance of the US was, however, that these

349 Secretary of State John Foster Dulles publicly threatened “massive retaliation” against Communist aggression and expressed willingness to go “to the brink” of war to stop such aggression on 12 January 1954.
350 Due to increasing tensions with India after the invasion of Tibet, Premier Zhou Enlai put forward these five principles of international relations when he met with an Indian delegation in December 1953. In joint declarations subsequently issued by the Premier with the Prime Ministers of India and Myanmar during the Chinese Premier’s visit to the two countries in June 1954, the principles of mutual respect for each other’s territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other’s internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit and peaceful co-existence were advocated. These principles were incorporated into the declarations of the Bandung Conference held in April 1955.
The US did not openly support such an enterprise for fear of provoking conflict with the PRC and the USSR, however, certain accounts suggest that the US had tacitly supported some of the failed military expeditions of the ROC troops into the mainland.


For details of these talks see Kenneth T. Young, *Negotiating with the Chinese Communists: The United States Experience 1953-1967* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968). It has been argued that the US did not quite take the opportunity of détente with the PRC at this time too seriously, rejecting Chinese overtures at expanded bilateral contacts in 1956-7, not least because of the influential China Lobby. See Kalicki, *The Pattern of Sino-American Crisis*, p.163.


Ibid., p.22.
strategic value to the ROC’s national policy of retaking the mainland, however, because of their proximity to the mainland.

As Clough writes, “…the ROC gains were made at a high cost. Differences between Washington and Taipei over how to cope with the [second Taiwan Straits] crisis imposed unprecedented strains on the alliance.”\textsuperscript{356} During the course of the ceasefire negotiations, the US also made clear that the US did not support the ROC’s policy of retaking the mainland, further provoking the ROC’s refusal to reduce troops on the islands.\textsuperscript{357} The conciliatory position taken in the Warsaw peace negotiations by the US towards the PRC fuelled even greater mistrust. Suspicions also became mutual - American officials came to believe that the ROC had deliberately provoked a military clash between the US and PRC to further its own interests.\textsuperscript{358}

The second Taiwan Straits crisis also portended the Sino-Soviet split in the 1960s. Disagreements between Khrushchev and Mao on several fronts were already showing by 1957. During the period of East-West détente in Europe, the PRC became increasingly critical of the Soviet’s policy of appeasement, a criticism reflected in the PRC’s subsequent aggression towards the ROC in the second Taiwan Straits crisis, regardless of Soviet reservations.\textsuperscript{359} Khrushchev’s meeting with President Eisenhower in 1959 deepened suspicions, as did the failure of the Soviet Union to subsequently support the nuclear ambitions of the PRC. By 1960, public clashes between their leaders had taken place.\textsuperscript{360} When the Soviets supported India in the Sino-Indian War of 1962, suspicions of Soviet intentions to isolate the PRC were confirmed and relations

\textsuperscript{356} Clough, Island China, p.18.
\textsuperscript{357} Ibid., p.20.
\textsuperscript{358} Ibid., p.18.
\textsuperscript{359} At the Moscow Conference of Communist Parties in November 1957, Mao famously contradicted Khrushchev’s statement that no one could win a nuclear war by saying that nuclear war would not be the end of the world since half its population would survive. It has been argued that the launch of the second attack on Kinmen and Matsu was to demonstrate the PRC’s independence from Soviet policy.
\textsuperscript{360} At the Congress of the Romanian Communist Party in June 1960, the Soviets and the Chinese openly denounced each other.
disintegrated. In the subsequent period of “Red Guard diplomacy,” relations between the two virtually ceased to exist. Military conflict between the two would moreover take place in 1969 along the Sino-Soviet border, pushing the PRC leadership towards the increasingly eager arms of the US. Indeed, because of increasing engagement in Vietnam, the US was increasingly seeking rapprochement with the PRC.

Before this time, however, the second Taiwan Straits crisis and its implications for global stability had prompted the international community to re-evaluate the options available in resolving cross-Straits tensions.\textsuperscript{361} US intervention in the second Taiwan Straits crisis prompted harsh criticisms both on the domestic and international fronts - the US had defended the islands contrary to the preference of the majority of UN members, who supported the withdrawal of ROC forces from the islands in order to avoid further conflict.\textsuperscript{362} In a discussion with other US officials, US Secretary of State Foster Dulles later revealed that over 90 percent of UN members had preferred placing Taiwan under a trusteeship and giving the PRC a seat in the UN during this time, which conclusion was prevented only by US intervention.\textsuperscript{363} Despite the diplomatic support of the US, the tide of international opinion had already begun in the late 1950s to change in favour of the PRC.

Indeed, during the first Taiwan Straits crisis, the US had begun to toy with a “two-China” policy that would allow it to both support the rump KMT government on the island and at the same time recognize the reality of the PRC’s existence, thus bridging its obligations to the ROC and international opinion. On 19 January 1955, President Eisenhower stated in a press conference that a “two-China” policy was being considered by the US government despite the fact that the US had been taking the official position of recognizing the ROC as the sole

\textsuperscript{361} A third crisis took place in 1962, but was quickly defused.
\textsuperscript{362} Clough, \textit{Island China}, p.19.
\textsuperscript{363} Ibid., p.19.
legitimate government of all China at the time. Following news that the Soviets had launched
the first man-made satellite in October 1957 the US Senate Foreign Affairs commissioned the
Conlon Report, which in 1959 proposed that the US lift on the one hand, the embargo against the
Chinese mainland, admit the PRC as a permanent member of UN Security Council, and replace
the ROC with a “Republic of Taiwan” on the other. During the Kennedy-Johnson administration, therefore, the US began to make moves towards a policy of “one China, one
Taiwan.” During US Secretary of State Dean Rusk’s visit to the ROC in 1964, it became clear
that although the US was not prepared to allow the ROC’s expulsion from the UN, it was
contemplating the admission of the PRC. Unfortunately, this policy was unsuccessful at the time
because the KMT leadership under President Chiang Kai-shek continued to consider the “one-
China” principle inviolable, a view shared by the Chinese Communist regime. Because of
Taiwan’s refusal to consider the US proposal, however, relations with the US soured. The US
eventually came to agree with both regimes across the Strait to the “one-China” principle - as
reflected in all three Communiqués with the PRC - and the “one Taiwan-one China” formula
died.

Towards the mid-1960s, however, the Sino-Soviet split put into gear the “open-door”
policy of the US towards the PRC. By 1960, it was already impossible to obtain a clear
international consensus on keeping the PRC out of the UN and by 1964, the first tie vote on the
question of PRC admission was witnessed, adding fuel to an appeasement policy in the US. In

365 The report was entitled Studies of United States Foreign Policy in Asia and was commissioned for the purpose of reassessing US policy in Asia. See John C. Kuan, p.27.
366 The push towards a more conciliatory approach towards the PRC is also partly explained by the recognition by US officials by 1964 that the PRC would soon succeed in obtaining nuclear weapons capability. It conducted a successful test in October 1964.
advocated improved relations with the PRC. 368 A month after these Hearings, however, Secretary of State Dean Rusk outlined a ten-point policy towards the PRC, which nevertheless demonstrated a continued commitment towards the military defense of the ROC and its representation in the UN. 369 At the same time, US Ambassador to the UN Arthur Goldberg clarified that the US remained committed to preserving the ROC’s seat in the world body. 370 Confident that it still had the support of the US, and believing that the Cultural Revolution was ravaging the mainland, the Chiang government suggested that 1967 was an opportune time to recover the mainland. 371 Public statements to this effect were however flatly contradicted by the US State Department, which asserted that under the Mutual Defense Treaty, the ROC could not launch an offensive on the mainland without prior consultation with the US, a reading of the treaty contrary to the ROC’s. This further strained relations between the two. 372

369 The ten-point policy is as follows: (1) The US should firmly resolve to offer American aid in resisting Chinese Communist aggression (2) The US should continue to assist Asian nations in establishing viable governments, striving for progressive economic and social policies (3) the US must solemnly fulfill its commitments to the Republic of China and the people of Taiwan, who do not desire to be ruled by Communism, to continue the defense of Taiwan, and to persuade the Chinese Communists to reach an agreement with the US against the use of military force in the Taiwan area (4) the US will continue its efforts to prevent the expulsion of the ROC from the UN and its affiliate organizations. If the Chinese Communists persist in their present policies, the US will oppose their admission to the UN (5) the US should continue to assure the Chinese communists that the US has no intention of attacking the Chinese mainland. The US does not need a war, has no intention of touching off one, and there is no reason to believe in the inevitability of a war between the US and the Chinese Communists (6) the US must realize that Chinese Communist policies and attitudes are not immutable (7) under the cardinal rule of not endangering its own self interests, the US should seek more opportunities for unofficial contacts with the Chinese communists, if such contacts are beneficial in changing the Chinese communist attitude toward the Us. The US believes that contacts and intercourse are not contrary to a firm policy of encirclement (8) the US should continue to maintain the direct diplomatic contacts in Warsaw with the Chinese Communists in the hope that such contacts will pave the way to fruitful discussions (9) the US is prepared to negotiate with the Chinese Communists and other countries on such problems as disarmament and limiting the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The nations of the world should urge the Chinese Communists to change their position of refusing all such proposals and invitations (10) the US must continue to collect and analyze intelligence material on the Chinese Communists in order to formulate a realistic policy.
370 John C. Kuan, p.33.
371 Ambassador Chow Shu-kai stated at a press conference that, “Due to the present chaos on the Chinese mainland, 1967 may be a decisive year for the Republic of China to recover the mainland.” As quoted in John C. Kuan, p.35.
372 Ibid., p.35-6.
With world opinion leaning towards the PRC, and the US Congress and public urging improved relations with the PRC, the ROC’s position in the international arena was beginning to look increasingly precarious. A policy of appeasement towards the PRC - which would inevitably mean derecognition of the ROC - seemed poised to take place. However, the KMT leadership was bound by the Nationalist ideological principle of “one China” and its claim to be the only legitimate government of that China such that peaceful negotiations on reunification or dual recognition was impossible. Further, domestic opposition to martial law, which was justified only by the state of war with China, along with rumblings of a growing Taiwanese independence movement meant that negotiations on reunification or dual recognition would have likely have encouraged what the Nationalist government considered to be destabilizing political forces that would further undermine Taiwan’s national security and, very importantly, threaten the political dominance of the Nationalists. Herein lay the dilemma for the Nationalist regime – a situation ironically created by the recognition of the one-China principle by all parties involved.

For reasons related to regime survival, therefore, the KMT could not respond flexibly to forestall the unfortunate developments in the 1970s. Up until the Nixon administration, however, the US was largely unwavering in its recognition of the ROC as the only legitimate government of all China. Moral obligations aside, the abandonment of the ROC was expected to create mistrust of the US amongst its other allies, not least Japan. Happily for the ROC, the Cultural Revolution on the mainland caused a hiatus in the US appeasement policy towards the PRC. Military aid and equipment also continued to pour into Taiwan as confrontation between the US and the PRC developed in Vietnam.\(^{373}\) As long as Taiwan remained useful to US military

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\(^{373}\) Economic aid on concessional terms was eliminated beginning in 1965, although, with the Vietnam War and tensions across the Straits, military aid by 1969 reached USD 4.5bn. The ROC had also reached a degree of self-sufficiency by 1969 since it could produce its own M14 rifles, machine guns, artillery shells, and mortars amongst other smaller equipment. See Clough, p.23. Grant aid for military purposes was also phased out in 1974 with the
operations in Vietnam, it could still count on its diplomatic and military support. Unfortunately for the ROC, widespread opposition in the US to the Vietnam War soon prompted the Nixon administration to move towards a foreign policy of “negotiations instead of confrontation.”

There was an urgent need for an extrication strategy that was acceptable to the American public and at the same time would not damage the international prestige of the US. An important part of this strategy was rapprochement with the PRC, which success would depend in large part on refraining from giving the ROC the kind of support that would antagonize the PRC. In the event of success in the longer run, the containment strategy - of which Taiwan was an integral part - would no longer be needed. US interest on the island was thus significantly downgraded.

Some of the immediate consequences of this courtship were that US destroyers ceased to patrol the Straits, and the Warsaw talks were resumed with the PRC after a two-year hiatus. Following this, the US withdrew its opposition to PRC admission as a member to the UN. Nixon’s Guam Doctrine was greeted with the PRC’s “ping-pong” diplomacy, and very soon Secretary of State Henry Kissinger was dispatched to Beijing in a secret visit to prepare the way for direct high-level talks. The Shanghai Communiqué, issued subsequent to Nixon’s visit to the PRC in February 1972, made clear that the US intended to normalize relations with the PRC and withdraw all its troops and installations from Taiwan. In what was a major diplomatic disaster for the ROC, it lost its seat in the UN to the PRC later that same year. At the same time, disputes

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375 On 21 April 1971, the PRC sent this message to the US, “If the relations between China and the USA are to be restored fundamentally, the US must withdraw all its armed forces from China’s Taiwan and the Taiwan Straits area.” As quoted in Nianlong Han (ed.), The Diplomacy of Contemporary China (Hong Kong: New Horizon Press, 1990), p. 271.
376 The US also indicated that it would only disengage from cross-Straits issues on the condition that the use of force would not be employed in its settlement, however. For details on the military withdrawal from Taiwan, see Clough, pp. 26-7.
over the Diaoyutai islands erupted, and as negotiations went on, it became increasingly clear that the US and the world community had effectively ceased to regard the ROC as the government representing all of China, dealing only with the PRC on this issue instead. Although the US had not established formal diplomatic ties with the PRC at this time, the tide had turned irrevocably against the ROC.

A flurry of high-level exchanges subsequently took place between the US and the PRC, but significant progress towards normalization failed to happen in this period. Although the PRC leadership realized the need to balance the Soviet threat with the support of the US and its allies, the issue of Taiwan continued to be a significant obstacle to improved relations. Nevertheless, the promise of breakthrough emerged with political developments in the PRC during the late 1970s. The rise of Deng Xiaoping marked a new era of politics in the PRC, with significant changes seen in its foreign policy. As the new leadership gave emphasis to the economic development and modernization of the mainland, the direction of its foreign policy naturally turned towards creating a favourable external environment for the pursuit of such goals. This translated in policy terms into the neutralization of the Soviet threat through rapprochement with the US, the pursuit of international stability and increased economic relations with the West. Tensions with the USSR in Afghanistan had also begun to create domestic pressures on the Carter regime to take a strong stance against the Soviets at this time, aligning US security interests with the PRC’s.

State Department officials had, in fact, made explicit by this time that US interests were served in the continued modernization of China, and that steps should be taken to safeguard reformist elements within the PRC leadership. One such step would be the formal recognition of

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377 The US continued to resist PRC pressures by increasing ROC diplomatic representation in the US while at the same time refusing to downgrade diplomatic representation to the ROC.
the PRC. That the PRC seemed to be on the road to significant political and economic liberalization at this time also made a positive impression on the American public. Widespread domestic support for the normalization of relations with a PRC newly emerged from the self-destruction of the 1960s, thus allowed the US State Department to finally declare for the first time that the “Government of the People’s Republic of China [was] the sole legal Government of China.”

The US policy of appeasement was finally allowed to reach its logical conclusion to the exasperation of the Taiwanese at home and abroad. The ROC was plunged into its deepest national crisis since the KMT government was forced to encamp on the island in 1949. Two weeks later on 1 January 1979, the ROC was indeed derecognized, and a year following this, the Mutual Defense Treaty was abrogated. The international media responded to these developments by calling the ROC a “pariah state,” sharing this new status with North Korea and Cuba. However, problems were not confined to the diplomatic arena alone - the outbreak of the Iran hostage crisis and the Afghanistan War in late 1979 increased security cooperation between the PRC and the US, and a transfer of arms from the US to the PRC took place.

That the ROC was playing a dangerous game in maintaining a hardline stance towards the PRC throughout the post-War years is now clear in hindsight. As the Sino-Soviet bloc crumbled, in turn easing tensions between the PRC and the US, playing diplomatic hardball with the PRC became an increasingly self-defeating policy. This was exacerbated by the change in the PRC’s policy towards the ROC from that of an aggressive, militaristic approach to a softer one in

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379 Through the Taiwan Relations Act passed by Congress on 10, April 1979, the US continued to maintain unofficial representation at the American Institute of Taiwan (AIT) in Taipei. All commercial relations continued, and in fact, according to subsequent hearings on the implementation of the Taiwan Relations Act, flourished. See Implementation of the Taiwan Relations Act: Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs (Washington, US G. P. O. 1981).
the late 1970s. \textsuperscript{380} There were minor indications even before then of the possibilities of a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan issue, although the PRC continued to see unification as the “liberation” of Taiwan. Premier Zhou Enlai stated in 1956 that, “there are two ways for the Chinese people to liberate Taiwan, that is, by war or by peaceful means,” but, “at present, the possibility of peacefully liberating Taiwan is increasing.”\textsuperscript{381} The PRC leadership also tried repeatedly at this time to persuade its counterparts in the ROC that its future might be more profitably tied to Beijing than to the US. \textsuperscript{382} Further, on 6 December 1958, when the second Taiwan Straits crisis was taking place, the PRC Foreign Minister Chen Yi briefed foreign diplomats in Beijing that the PRC desired either to liberate all the offshore islands, Penghu and Taiwan at the same time or to preserve the status quo. \textsuperscript{383} The failure to capture all these territories therefore led the leadership to appeal to the ROC to enter negotiations in order to foil the “US scheme to isolate Taiwan and place it under trusteeship.”\textsuperscript{384} Mistrust across the Strait was insurmountable at this time, however, and no further moves were made in this direction.

From 1972, the PRC courted the KMT by repeatedly urging more cross-Straits interaction, stating that it would not punish any KMT officials if they would encourage reunification, and even offering the return of captured KMT officials to Taiwan in 1975 – all of which the KMT flatly refused. Although the PRC’s military aggression toward the ROC had waned over the years save for the routine bombardment of the Kinmen islands, the turning point in the PRC’s policy came at around 1978. After the normalization of Sino-American relations

\textsuperscript{380} This statement has to be qualified to the extent that in all negotiations with the US, the PRC refused to renounce the use of force in settling Cross-Straits issues. However, this was considered to be a remote possibility by most US experts and policy-makers. Indeed, during the time of normalization, the US Congress held hearings to determine the economic and security impact of normalization on the ROC, and it was considered that Taiwan did not suffer from an immediate security danger, not least because it was widely perceived that Deng did not intend to get sidetracked from domestic reforms.

\textsuperscript{381} Kalicki, p. 162

\textsuperscript{382} Ibid., p.163

\textsuperscript{383} Halperin, pp. 475, 483

\textsuperscript{384} Clough, p.21.
was announced, the Standing Committee of the People’s National Congress issued on 1 January 1979, a “message to the compatriots of Taiwan” appealing for peaceful reunification. The bombardment of the Kinmen and other outlying islands also ceased immediately. The campaign for “three links and four exchanges” with Taiwan was also launched at this time, an indication of the PRC’s commitment to a peaceful route to reunification.\footnote{385} These gestures were followed by the Nine-Point Proposal in 1981 and the Six Point Supplement in 1983, during which the “one country, two systems” concept was extended to Taiwan.\footnote{386} However, citing the principle that “gentlemen will not sit with thieves,” the Chiang Kai-shek government issued the three-nos policy: no contact, no compromise, no negotiations.

This, of course, did not mean that the PRC had abandoned its territorial claims for the long-term future – only the approach taken and the time line had changed. During the 1970s and 80s, an increasing number of countries switched recognition from the ROC to the PRC, recognition oftentimes being a commodity going to the highest bidder, thus further committing the ROC to “money diplomacy.”\footnote{387} Owing to heavy pressure from the PRC, the ROC also became increasingly marginalized in international multilateral institutions. What the ROC most needed in this political war was therefore the continued support of the US if not diplomatically, then militarily. Although this was not forthcoming on the diplomatic front, the Taiwan Relations Act permitted continued arms sales to the ROC, which the Reagan administration initially

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{385} The three links included mail, trade and air and shipping services, while the four exchanges would involve relatives and tourists, academic groups, cultural groups and sports representatives.
\item \footnote{386} The nine-point proposal suggested, amongst other things, that Taiwan could function as a special administrative region after reunification, maintain its own armed forces, and that Taiwanese officials could step up to the national level. It also assured the Taiwanese that that existing socio-economic conditions, culture and way of life would be preserved. For the KMT response to the PRC’s overtures at this time, see “Peking Calls Itself Patient on Unity Offer to Taiwan,” \textit{The New York Times}, 4 December 1981 and Chiu, Hungdah, “Prospects for the Unification of China: An Analysis of the Views of the Republic of China on Taiwan,” \textit{Asian Survey} Vol. 23 No. 10 (Oct. 1983): 1081-1094.
\item \footnote{387} A total of 114 countries had chosen to recognize the PRC instead of the ROC prior to US derecognition in January 1979. For details see Nianlong Han, Appendix II, pp. 584-594.
\end{itemize}}
increased, to the chagrin of the PRC leadership. This was the period of renewed tensions between the Free World and the Communist bloc, and the firm posture taken by the Reagan administration during this time reflected a renewed containment strategy. Nevertheless, in light of the need to balance the USSR through friendly relations with the PRC, US interests were not served by antagonizing China over the issue of Taiwan. In the Joint Communiqué of August 1982, the US position thus softened considerably – and it eventually agreed to limit and eventually reduce arms sales to Taiwan.\textsuperscript{388} Taiwan was gradually being cut loose by the US – and the world began to follow suit.

**South Korea’s National Security**

Not unlike the US attitude toward Taiwan, the US was initially indifferent to the Korean Peninsula. The Korean War, however, demonstrated to the Americans the extent of interest that the Soviets and Chinese had in the Peninsula. The US soon became involved in order to protect Japan, their new Asian ally, and Korea became a front-line state in the global containment strategy. The belligerence of the North Korean regime subsequently sealed a military alliance between the US and the ROK in February 1954, followed by a similar one with the ROC in December.\textsuperscript{389} The Korean War proved to be a turning point in that it sealed US involvement in

\textsuperscript{388} In the 1982 Shanghai Communiqué, the US had stated that, “it does not seek to carry out a long-term policy of arms sales to Taiwan, that is, arms sales to Taiwan will not exceed, either in qualitative or in quantitative terms, the level of those supplied in recent years since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and China, and that it intends to reduce gradually its sales of arms to Taiwan, leading over a period of time to a final resolution.” However, the US position was conditional upon a Chinese promise to seek a peaceful resolution of differences across the Taiwan Strait. Mistrustful of this eventuality, President Reagan simultaneously placed a secret memorandum in the National Security Council files that, “... it is essential that the quantity and quality of the arms provided Taiwan be conditioned entirely on the threat posed by the PRC. Both in quantitative and qualitative terms, Taiwan’s defense capability relative to that of the PRC will be maintained.” See Shirley Kan, “China/Taiwan: Evolution of the One-China Policy – Key Statements from Washington, Beijing and Taipei,” Congressional Research Service Report for Congress, 7 September 2006, p. 43.

\textsuperscript{389} The US-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty was ratified in February 1954. Article IV states that the ROK “grants, and the United States of America accepts, the right to dispose United States land, air and sea forces in and about the territory of the Republic of Korea as determined by mutual agreement.” The Senate Foreign Relations Committee further added that, “It is the understanding of the United States that neither party is obligated, under Article III of the
the security of the Northeast Asian region. US commitments to defend the ROC and the ROK against their enemies thus had profound implications on their national security.

As in the case of Taiwan, the global balance of power provided an overarching framework within which the regional balance of power played out, with profound effects on the ROK’s national security. The initial conditions surrounding Taiwan and South Korea were very similar in that they both faced a Communist power that was determined to eliminate their respective rival states through both military and political means. So while it has usually been taken for granted that the Republic of Korea’s national sovereignty was uncontested – unlike that of the ROC – this was not the case up until the early 1960s. The DPRK had launched a diplomatic offensive during the late 1950s aimed at undermining the international legitimacy of a separate South Korean state, which was a serious challenge because popular elements within the Southern state were similarly unsupportive of a separate polity. Fortunately or otherwise, these domestic elements had been largely eliminated with US consent and assistance before the DPRK’s “peace offensive,” a political strategy to win over international opinion on national unification on its terms through its superior political and economic progress. The DPRK’s 1957 “peace offensive” campaign appeared to have won over considerable international opinion on national unification. However, North Korea’s ultimate failure to undermine the national sovereignty of the ROK through diplomatic means, largely because of US support, has meant that the ROK’s national security was largely affected by military-related factors and that the ROK was no longer vulnerable to international opinion.  

above Treaty, to come to the aid of the other except in case of an external armed attack against such party; nor shall anything in the present Treaty be construed as requiring the United States to give assistance to Korea except in the event of an armed attack against territory which has been recognized by the United States as lawfully brought under the administrative control of the Republic of Korea.” The PRC and USSR entered into a similar arrangement with the DPRK in 1961.  

390 For a more detailed discussion, see Chapter 3.
The military superiority of the North Korean regime throughout the 1950s and 60s and its continued nationalistic belligerence throughout the 1970s and 80s meant that without a firm US security commitment towards South Korea, North Korea might have used force against the South. North Korea remained a very real source of external threat to South Korea throughout the period of our study, which was not ameliorated by any geographical buffer, which the Taiwan Straits afforded the ROC. Military invasion from the North’s million-strong standing army was always considered a real possibility, a brief détente during the early 1970s notwithstanding. In this way, the national security of the ROK became very dependent on US security commitments south of the 38th parallel.

While the intensity of the threat surrounding South Korea, and the grave implications for the global balance of power if the USSR or China managed to establish a stranglehold on the entire Peninsula would suggest that US commitments to the ROK would not waver, this was not the case. Indeed, the very belligerence of the North Korean Communist regime had the paradoxical effect of raising the stakes of superpower involvement so high that all parties involved would shy away from increasing tensions on the region. So while South Korea came to be considered the frontlines of the Cold War, requiring a very direct security involvement from the US – it entered into a joint military command structure where the forces of the Korean army were under the direction of an American commander – as soon as signs of East-West détente appeared in the 1960s and 70s, the US would take measures to withdraw troops from the Peninsula.

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391 Taiwan was separated from the mainland by the Taiwan Straits, which the Communists were not well equipped to cross at this time - hence the constant scrapping over the islands around Taiwan, which could be used as a launching pad for an attack. South Korea did not have the luxury of such a geographic buffer, however. The Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) was thus heavily guarded. The discovery of numerous underground tunnels dug by the North Koreans as a covert channel for troops into South Korea underscores the differences in the intensity of external threat experienced by the Taiwanese and the South Koreans.
Although all who were initially involved on the Korean Peninsula in the 1940s and 50s would have preferred to preserve her territorial integrity, the eventual division of the Peninsula reflected the carefulness underlying the regional balance of power: neither the Soviets, the Chinese, nor the US were prepared to enter into a larger war over Korea.\textsuperscript{392} The division of Korea satisfied their minimum security requirements. As time passed, the stability of the status quo reinforced the acceptability of the situation to the external powers involved, and Korea remained divided against the wishes of the Korean peoples.\textsuperscript{393} The gradual reduction of US forces South of the 38\textsuperscript{th} parallel during the 1970s has also reflected the desire to reduce tensions within the framework of this arrangement. This is not least because the Soviet and Chinese-backed demands of North Korea had always been for the withdrawal of US troops, since the Soviets and the Chinese did not maintain their forces in North Korea. By 1963, US President Kennedy would therefore broach the subject of troop withdrawal with South Korea’s foreign minister.

No consensus could be reached as to total early withdrawal from the Korean Peninsula, however, both within the US and amongst its Asian allies, because of the relative weakness of South Korea’s military. Developments in Vietnam in the mid-1960s also pointed towards continued commitment - the Sino-Soviet split had been somewhat ameliorated by a coalition brokered by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in 1965. Efforts toward pulling out US troops stalled in the 1960s not only for the above reasons, however. By this time the Koreans had begun to send troops to Vietnam, as per the request of the Americans.\textsuperscript{394}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{392} The political elites of South Korea, the majority who were conservative and staunchly anti-Communist, preferred to form a separate state under the “protection” of the US.


\textsuperscript{394} 312,853 South Korean soldiers fought in Vietnam between 1965 and 1973.
\end{flushright}
By 1968, however, American public opinion had turned overwhelmingly against the conduct of America’s Cold War foreign policy in Asia and the precarious fiscal position of the US as a result of its entanglements there. In 1969, President Nixon announced the Guam Doctrine, which basically stated that unless Asian nations were under nuclear threat, internal Communist insurgency and external aggression would remain solely their responsibility. This heralded the rolling back of US security commitments in the region. The Guam Doctrine took effect almost immediately on the Peninsula. Despite the pleas of South Korean President Park Chung Hee for more time to build up the ROK’s military capabilities, by 27 March 1971, the Americans had withdrawn 20,000 troops, one of two divisions committed to the defense of the ROK. US Defense Secretary Melvin Laird further testified before the Senate Appropriations Committee that in the case of conflict in Asia the US would offer military aid but would not send combat troops. US ambassador to Seoul William Porter also declared that US defense commitment to Korea did not stipulate automatic involvement even when there was an invasion.\(^{395}\) US-ROK relations soured at this time because the South Korean leadership considered the unilateral withdrawal of US troops a contravention of the Ten-Point list agreed to in 1965, in which a sizeable number of Korean troops were committed to the Vietnam War in exchange for US military concessions.\(^{396}\) The withdrawal of the Seventh Division had begun six months before President Park was formally notified. The South Korean leadership considered these developments to be a grave danger to the national security of the ROK and a state of emergency was declared on 6 December 1971.

Sensing that the US would soon withdraw their troops from the South, President Park had already begun to reverse his earlier hardline policy of “unification by rooting out Communists”

\(^{395}\) *Donga Ilbo*, 23 June 1971.

\(^{396}\) By the close of 1969 there were over 47,000 Korean troops in Vietnam.
(myolgong t’ongil), instead proposing a policy of “peaceful coexistence” with the North, however.\footnote{Kim Hyung-A, *Korea’s Development Under Park Chung Hee: Rapid Industrialization 1961-79* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004) pp. 127-8.} This drew a positive response from Kim Il Sung, who in a public address in August 1971 stated that, “In order to accomplish Korea’s peaceful unification, [I] am willing to meet anytime with every political party, including the DRP, mass organizations, as well as individuals in the South.”\footnote{Ibid, p. 128.} These were developments that were not only triggered by bilateral efforts, but by Nixon’s visit to China on 15 July 1971, which the South Korean leadership (correctly) read as a switch to diplomatic channels to reduce tensions in the region in preparation for a draw down on security commitments on the Peninsula. On 20 August, both sides met at Panmunjeom and on 4 July 1972, a joint communiqué was issued stipulating the three principles of reunification – “unification without foreign interference,” “unification through peaceful means” and “great national unity transcending ideological and systemic differences.” The first meeting of the North-South Coordinating Committee was held between 30 November and 2 December 1972, but détente soon quickly deteriorated. Then on 23 June 1973, in a concessionary statement President Park pronounced that the ROK would accept admittance to the United Nations along with the DPRK as a temporary solution to the diplomatic impasse – in effect acknowledging North Korea as an unavoidable fact of international life, even if not a legitimate state.\footnote{“Seoul Alters Stand on North Korea in UN,” *The Washington Post*, 23 June 1973.}

Earlier on 24 August 1970, a significant but painfully long drawn out meeting between President Park and Vice President Spiro Agnew had taken place. President Park, sensing since a meeting with President Johnson in 1968 that the US would soon withdraw their troops, tried to negotiate US 3bn worth of aid over five years for the purpose of modernizing the South Korean military. After 4 months, the negotiations ended with a promise of only US 1.5bn, handed out in
a “painfully slow” fashion that eventually forced Park to slap a National Defense Tax on the South Korean population in 1975. Funds were desperately needed because by March 15 1974, a secret defense project know as the “Yulgok Operation”, which purpose was to purchase advanced military weapons and modernize the military, had been launched. The ROK, seeking greater self-sufficiency, had acquired the ability to produce their own light weapons, although other military equipment continued to be purchased from countries such as France, Canada and the US. In efforts to diversify the sources of funds, in July 1975, President Park concluded an agreement with France for a loan in order to develop nuclear reprocessing facilities and two nuclear power plants.

Indeed, the US was vehemently opposed to the prospect of nuclear facilities south of the 38th parallel, which it believed would escalate tensions and a nuclear arms race on the Peninsula. Moves taken by the Park regime at this time therefore brought US-ROK relations to a new low. The US accordingly applied immense pressure on the French to cancel the agreement, successfully doing so. Park, on the other hand, was determined to point out that should “the US nuclear umbrella [be] removed, Korea will have to develop nuclear weapons.” Unfazed by US opposition, Park went on to develop the Korean Nuclear Fuels Development Corporation in December 1976, which aim was to build Korea’s nuclear facilities without US interference. The rift between the ROK and the US grew wider.

At this time, a series of events served to heighten the national security fears of the ROK. Following the failure of a short-lived period of North-South détente in 1970-3, a series of discoveries were made of underground tunnels dug by the North Koreans in order to penetrate South Korean defences along the DMZ. On 15 November 1974, allied reconnaissance troops

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400 The “Lightning Operation” launched on 16 December 1971 led to the production of M1 carbines, M19, A4 machine guns, and 60 million trench mortars amongst others.

found steam rising from the earth’s surface indicating that a tunnel was present underneath the DMZ. A subsequent investigation indicated that it spanned over 3.5 km, and would have brought North Korean troops within some 65 km of Seoul. A second tunnel was found some 6 months later. Then, on 18 August 1976, skirmishes between the North Koreans and Americans broke out over the cutting of a tree along the DMZ, which prompted the US to deploy helicopter gun ships, F-4 Phantom jet fighter-bombers, three B-52’s, 20 F-111s and naval task force led by Carrier Midway of the Seventh fleet. Tensions soon fizzled out, but in less than a year, the DPRK shot down a US helicopter and tensions were renewed. Pyongyang subsequently adopted a conciliatory posture towards the US, however, which heightened fears in the ROK that this could be taken by the US as a positive signal towards further troop withdrawal when the DPRK was intent on invading the South.

Indeed, the election of Jimmy Carter exacerbated South Korea’s security dilemma because it heralded an administration that was committed to the withdrawal of US ground troops. By 1977, the decision to phase out US ground troops over five years while increasing air, intelligence and communications units in Korea was taken. Unlike previous resistance towards compensatory measures, however, arms transfers and technical training were expanded to make up for further withdrawal at this time. Unfortunately, some difficulties towards this purpose emerged because of the difficult relationship developed between the Park regime and US Congress. The Koreagate scandal, which implicated some 90 US Congressmen and officials bribed by the Korean Central Intelligence Agency in its efforts to influence US policy on the Peninsula, broke out during this time. The initial reluctance of the South Korean government to cooperate in investigations into this scandal caused Congress to put a stop to the transfer of

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402 There were to be three phases in the withdrawal plan – (1) one brigade of the Second Division and related support units of 6000 were to be withdrawn in 1978-9 (2) logistic and other support units of 9000 men would then follow suit before (3) two more brigades and the division headquarters were pulled out over 1981-2.
military equipment and further aid. The House Committee on International Relations refused to authorize President Carter’s request to transfer USD 800mn worth of military equipment. Congress also cut USD 56mn in food aid in 1978, although its proposal to terminate all US military assistance was defeated. At the same time, the US CIA announced that it had planted secret electronic bugging and tape-recording devices at the Blue House, insisting that Park had been personally implicated in the Koreagate bribery operation – drawing protests in the ROK. The nuclear dispute and the Koreagate scandal underscored the sense of desperation on the part of the South Koreans in the aftermath of the 1971 troop withdrawal, but the actions of the South Korean leadership further undermined US-ROK relations.

Of course, good US-ROK relations were not only important to the national security of the ROK alone. State Department officials at this time held the view that it was in the national interest of the US to maintain good relations with the ROK very strongly and was already busy trying to mend relations with the ROK even as it reached a new low in the late 1970s. In a November 1978 visit by Defence Secretary Brown to Seoul, a personal letter from Carter was conveyed, expressing hopes of a Carter-Park meeting in the spring of 1979. President Park replied by welcoming the summit. 15 House Representatives subsequently visited Korea in the same month to attend an international seminar on security issues sponsored by a research institute, indicative of efforts in other quarters of Congress to ease tensions in the US-ROK relationship.

Fortunately for the ROK, internal opposition to Carter’s withdrawal plans also caused the administration to eventually abandon it in July 1979.403 By the late 1970s, voices criticizing the

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403 In a February 1977 report to Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Hubert Humphrey and John Glenn criticized Carter’s plans for withdrawal and called for legislation requiring President Carter to give Congress detailed military justification before each increment of planned withdrawal. In April 1977 the House Armed Services Committee voted 24-12 to prevent a premature withdrawal of US ground forces from South Korea,
foreign policy of the Carter administration, which was seen to have diminished the global leadership role of the US, had grown louder. Japan, an important US ally in Asia, was also beginning to voice its earlier misgivings over the implications of US disengagement on the regional balance of power. The CIA also reported new findings during this time that suggested that the North Korean military was far larger and superior in armour and firepower than previously assessed.\footnote{404} The US had earlier sought rapprochement with the PRC in hopes that improved relations would in turn cause the Chinese to exert a restraining influence on the North Koreans, but a few days after the Deng-Fukuda statement that war tensions no longer existed on the Korean Peninsula, a third underground tunnel was discovered, indicating the contrary.\footnote{405} This time, the tunnel was only 44 km north of Seoul and estimated to be large enough for 30,000 heavily armed North Korean troops to pass without effort.

Friendly overtures by the South Koreans were also flatly ignored by the North Koreans during this time, while the Chinese affirmed its “total support” for North Korea during Deng’s visit to the US in February 1979 contrary to the hopes of the Carter administration. Further, increasing signs of Soviet expansionism in the region were also perceptible – the Soviet-Vietnamese Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation had been signed in 1978 and the Vietnamese had invaded Cambodia. The turning point for US policy towards the ROK really came, however on October 26, 1979, when President Park was assassinated. By then the US had agreed to sell

\footnote{404} See The New York Times Jan 4, 1979 and Jan 21 1979. It was already known by this time that the North Koreans were attempting to develop atomic weapons. See Cha, \textit{Alignment Despite Antagonism}, p. 210.\footnote{405} This also vindicated Park, who was quoted in the French daily, \textit{Le Figaro}, to have said that “it would be excessively optimistic to predict that the conclusion of the peace and friendship treaty between Japan and China would drastically and immediately improve the chances for peace on the Korean Peninsula” and that there was an “optimistic tendency in the Western society to believe that Communist China would exercise influence over the North Korean Communists to deter them from invading the south by armed means.” \textit{The Korea Herald} Oct 27, 1978 and Nov. 21, 1978.
the ROK F-16 fighter-bombers, co-assemble the F-5 and deploy A-10s in the South. At the time of the assassination, the US dispatched an aircraft carrier and two Airborne Warning and Control System planes to South Korea, with a stiff warning to the North Koreans that any moves to exploit the vulnerability of South Korea at this time would be met with strong US retaliation. The show of force was successful in deterring any ROK moves to invade the South.

In keeping with the changing global geopolitical environment and a new phase in US foreign policy, the Reagan administration came to give open support to the new military regime established by General Chun Doo Hwan following a coup in May 1980. Significantly, Park’s assassination in October 1979 had been followed shortly after by Soviet aggression in Afghanistan in December, and the consequent disintegration of a carefully pursued policy of East-West detente. With the looming economic crisis brought on by Park’s Heavy and Chemical Industries policy and the instability brought on by the power vacuum left behind by President Park’s assassination, South Korea seemed poised on the brink of self-destruction, with profound implications for the regional and indeed, global balance of power at a time of heightened tensions.

Within this global geopolitical context, the interim civilian government continued to appear incapable of bringing destabilizing social and political forces in the ROK to heel, and it became imperative that a stronger regime able to prevent further social and political instability be installed so that the North Koreans would not advance. Another possible reason for which the Reagan administration was firmly supportive of a possible military government under Chun was the military leader’s promises to dismantle former President Park’s nuclear weapons program. These considerations led the Reagan administration to approve of Chun’s “second coup” on 17 May 1980, which once again ended feeble attempts at civilian rule in South Korea. For better or
worse, the national security of the ROK, as underwritten by the US, thus appeared to be restored at this time. Upon his return from the high-profile Reagan-Chun summit of 1981, the South Korean President stated, “My trip to the US has been both satisfactory and successful…I can call the result of the visit a restoration of trust.”

In fact, during renewed tensions in the “second Cold War” phase, cordiality in US-ROK relations increased tremendously. As mentioned before, the renewal of tensions between the superpowers had effected a change in US global policy, and the view from the White House of security commitments to traditional allies in Asia had also changed with the Reagan administration. With regard to South Korea, the particular circumstances on the Peninsula meant that US security commitments to South Korea were both reaffirmed and increased. While the Carter administration had turned down requests for the purchase of F16 Falcon fighters, Reagan immediately approved the sale. Reagan revived the US-ROK Security Consultative Conference, cancelled by Carter, in 1981.

One of the earliest marks of a renewed security commitment to the ROK, USD 100mn was dedicated to military construction for US forces in the South, which tripled the budget for the previous fiscal year of 1980. Lance missile systems were deployed in 1986, while further efforts were made to support South Korea’s Force Improvement Plan for 1982-7. This was a new era in US-ROK relations, therefore, where the ROK no longer needed to fear that the US would cut them loose in the case of Communist aggression. President Chun also became first Korean head of state visit the UK, West Germany, France and Belgium from April 7-18 of 1986. The opposite, as we have seen, was true for Taiwan, however, since the need to balance the Soviets with closer relations with the PRC meant that Taiwan was increasingly being cut loose.

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Improvements in strategic relationships within the Northeast Asian region were also encouraged during this time, further altering the regional balance of power in favour of the ROK’s national security. Previously difficult relations between Japan and the ROK were somewhat eased in the new geopolitical context of a “second Cold War.” Envisaging an increasing security role for Japan in the region, the US had attempted to broker the normalization of relations between the two in the 1960s. Although the normalization of ROK-Japan relations had taken place in August 1965, strong public disapproval had stalled further improvements in their relations. The Kim Dae Jung kidnapping in 1973, the furor over his subsequent death sentence in 1974 and the attempted assassination of Park by a member of the Chosen Soren that year further strained relations in the 1970s.\footnote{The significance of these events will be further discussed in Chapter 6.} In 1983, however, summit talks between the ROK and Japan were held for the first time, and the year following this, Emperor Hirohito offered a public apology for Japanese imperialist aggression on the Korean Peninsula. A hefty USD 4bn loan to the ROK soon followed.\footnote{This did not mean, of course, that relations between the two were smooth sailing from then on. In 1986, Japan Education Minister Masayuki Fujio stated that Japan’s annexation of Korea in 1910 was a case of mutual consent rather than invasion, causing a public outrage in Korea. Further, disputes over Tokto Island with the Japanese continued.}

Possibly in response to the unfavourable changes in the regional balance of power, the North Koreans began to step up terrorist aggression towards the South. On 9 October 1983, three special North Korean reconnaissance officers detonated a bomb at the Aung San Martyr’s Mausoleum in Rangoon, in an attempt to assassinate South Korean President Chun during a state visit to Burma.\footnote{This followed shortly after the downing of the KAL airliner by the Soviet Union in 1983, which increased Cold War tensions on a global scale during this time.} The explosion killed 17 South Korean officials, including four cabinet ministers and two senior presidential secretaries, narrowly missing President Chun a month
before President Reagan was to visit South Korea. Attempts to create a peaceful dialogue process with North Korea were also fraught with difficulty – on 30 January 1986, dialogues were broken off in protest against joint US-ROC military exercises. A few months later, another bomb allegedly set off by the North Koreans at Gimpo Airport, killed 5 and injured 29.

President Chun was able to turn this situation to South Korea’s advantage, by showing restraint in its response by pursuing only international sanctions and keeping in step with the US desire to maintain stability in the region, which only strengthened US-ROK ties. These acts of terrorism were important not only for this reason, however. Although they gave the ROK the opportunity to score diplomatic points, they also underscored the reality of continued threats from North Korea, under circumstances where the preponderance of power was on the side of the South Koreans. It became clear by then that the security dilemma faced by South Korea would continue despite renewed US commitments to the ROK, and in some quarters, voices arguing that the underlying problem lay with the way the Korean Peninsula remained divided under the Cold War framework was growing louder.

Indeed, the renewal of US involvement began to have destabilizing effects within South Korea – a general sense of anti-Americanism had been developing since the Kwangju Massacre, manifest in a series of attacks on American buildings throughout Korea. By the time the “Spring of Discontent” developed in 1987, with increased incidences of large-scale and violent protests all across the country, domestic analysis of the continuing insecurity facing South Korea had begun to change in a fundamental way, pinning responsibility on military dictators supported by the US. What external threats that justified authoritarian rule in the past were thus fast becoming obsolete by the mid 1980s amongst increasing numbers of South Koreans.
Singapore’s National Security

The principle threats to the national security of Singapore had and continue to have different sources from those of Taiwan and South Korea, although the shadow of the Cold War hung over each of our cases. The external threats that Singapore faced were somewhat different from the previous cases because it did not face a neighbouring Communist power intent on extinguishing it. This does not mean that Singapore did not have hostile neighbours, of course. In the early post-independence days, the nationalist and anti-Imperialist dynamics of decolonization stirred up regional strife in the form of military confrontations between Indonesia and the Federation of Malaysia, of which Singapore was then a part. As these newly independent states settled into the business of state and nation building, however, the historical tensions that could potentially have sparked military confrontation turned into “low grade” tensions purposefully institutionalized and managed by regional organizations collectively known as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Indeed, ever since the Republic of Singapore was formed as a result of being forced out of the Federation of Malaysia, it has maintained strained relations with its immediate neighbour to the North. However, the level of conflict has never suggested that armed engagement would be likely. Vietnam’s expansionist ambitions were largely confined to the Indochinese Peninsula, for local historical reasons that we will not delve into here, and Singapore was not in immediate danger of being swallowed up by some formidable Communist power, as Taiwan and South Korea were, communist insurgencies notwithstanding. The fact that the attentions of the superpowers were focused mostly on the Southeast Asian mainland, also meant that any tensions in relations it might have had with Malaysia or Indonesia was not augmented by the superimposition of the Cold War framework on local dynamics. The collective stance taken by
the region in the Non-Aligned Movement also further insulated regional tensions from the Cold War framework.

That there were subregional differences in the geopolitical environment of Southeast Asia is not incidental to the fact that they belonged formerly to different colonial empires. American entanglement in French Indochina was the result of first supporting the left-wing anti-colonial movement in Vietnam, and then encouraging it to turn into an explicitly Communist force by later assisting the return of the same colonial forces. The integration of local political dynamics of the Indochinese mainland into the Cold War framework became inevitable as a result.\textsuperscript{412} The US had no such direct involvement in the former British colonies until much later. The British also returned to the region in the post-War years with the intention of re-establishing its colonial empire, and although it ultimately failed to do so, its interventions in the first two decades after the end of the Pacific war made sure that pro-Western, anti-Communist forces remained in power in these British territories. Besides, the British sphere of influence was of minimal attraction to the Soviets, not least because Great Britain was by this time no longer a global superpower. Malaysia and Singapore were thus not divided along sharp ideological lines, which would have no doubt increased the intensity of conflicts and turned them into something of significance to the global balance of power.

The principle source of threat to the island Republic was not Malaysia alone. The direct sources of threat to Singapore’s national security were instead more diffuse, arising from the fact that it was and remains a Chinese enclave in a Malayo-Indonesian, Muslim part of the world. This fused the security dilemmas generated by the domestic social structure with the regional. The ethnic tensions of the region had early roots in the socio-economic differences between the

\textsuperscript{412} The same is true for Taïwan and South Korea – the US became largely involved as a result of fighting and winning the Pacific war against the Japanese.
Chinese settlers and their host populations, differences which were encouraged by colonial policies that kept these local populations from advancing as the immigrant populations engaged in the commercial activities of the metropolis were forced to do. This, along with the dense business networks they established, caused the Chinese came to be perceived by the native populations as the “Jews of the East.” The Pacific war exacerbated these latent tensions, as well. The local Chinese who were politically oriented towards China were staunchly anti-Japanese, bearing the brunt of the Imperial Japan’s brutality, while the majority of Malays and Indonesians were seen as “collaborators.” When China fell to the Communists, a section of the Southeast Asian Chinese came to be perceived as a potential fifth column for Communist advancement, a perception reinforced by the fact that many Communist insurgents were indeed Chinese. Many Chinese were murdered in subsequent Communist purges in the region. Because over 80 percent of its population and the majority of its leaders were Chinese, Singapore experienced difficult relations with its much more populous Malayo-Indonesian neighbours. This explains to a large extent the care that has been taken to refrain from projecting an image of Singapore as a “Chinese state.” Nevertheless, that Malaysia or Indonesia would attack Singapore on these grounds alone were slim, even if relations have not always been easy because of it. They were powers far less menacing than North Korea and China would have been to South Korea and Taiwan respectively.

The background to these tensions was a rather unstable geopolitical environment during the 1950s and 60s, although the conflicts off the Indochinese mainland have been considered relatively low in level. In the first two decades of the post-War period, the post-colonial

\[413\] The foreign policy literature has often pointed out the fact that Singapore only normalized relations with China after Indonesia had done so to underscore the importance of this. Others have pointed out, however, that in terms of economic diplomacy, Singapore has successfully decoupled the ethnic dimension of foreign relations from economic ones. Thus, the Bank of China, which had been barred from operations in Singapore when it joined Malaysia, was immediately allowed into Singapore upon its independence. See Ganesan, p. 17.
processes of state and nation building in the region were fraught with dangers – it was an era when nationalism, anti-colonialism, and communism intersected with the colonial legacy of arbitrary territorial boundaries to form many a complicated political situation in the rest of Southeast Asia not directly embroiled in the maelstrom that was the Indochinese mainland. Fortunately, developments on the Indochinese peninsula, along with destabilizing Communist insurgencies at home brought about a gradual convergence in the external orientations of these Southeast Asian states, giving them increasing common ground and allowing local conflicts to be suppressed under the rubric of cooperative “containment.” However, this was only to take place in the 1970s – in the meantime, intra-regional instability persisted.

An example of early regional conflict is that of Indonesia’s Konfrontasi with Malaysia. After the forces of nationalism had foiled Britain’s attempts at reconstituting a Malayan polity subject to colonial control, the British had been anxious that a merger between the pre-existing Malayan Federation and Singapore would be undertaken, so that both would not become overrun by communist forces. However, this political objective was pursued under very difficult relations with a left-leaning Indonesia, an emerging regional power that saw the new federation of Malaysia as a British attempt to maintain a colonial stranglehold in the Southeast Asian region.\footnote{414} Borneo, parts of which were to become federated, was the initial focus of conflict, since both British and Indonesian interests existed on the island.\footnote{415} This soon spread, however, when on 20 January 1963, the Indonesians announced that Konfrontasi (or a policy of confrontation) would be pursued with Malaysia, which was officially formed on 16 September that year without the inclusion of Brunei.\footnote{416} Following the quelling of the Brunei Rebellion,\footnote{417} it

\footnote{414} The federation of Malaysia would have included British territories in the former island of Borneo.
\footnote{415} Borneo was then divided into four parts – in the south was Kalimantan, an Indonesian province; in the North were the Kingdom of Brunei and two British colonies of Sarawak and British North Borneo (later Sabah).
\footnote{416} Negara Brunei Darussalam remained a British protectorate until 1984.
was announced that the disputed territories on Borneo would be incorporated into the Malaysian Federation ahead of an agreed United Nations referendum that was to have let the local peoples decide on the political future of these territories.\footnote{The Brunei Rebellion broke out on 6 December 1962 when left-wing, anti-colonial insurgents (North Kalimantan National Army) allied with Sukarno’s nationalist movement in Indonesia began to raid the oil-town of Seria in an attempt to unify the British territories on Borneo in an independent North Kalimantan state.} This move was in contravention of an earlier agreement with Indonesia (and the Philippines) to incorporate those territories only if the local peoples supported this. As a result, Indonesia’s “confrontation” began and increased in magnitude as it spread from Borneo to the Malaysian Peninsula, eventually engaging the British navy, air force and Commonwealth troops in the latter’s defence.\footnote{Both Sabah and Sarawak had a large proportion of non-Malays who were not enamored of the “Alliance pattern of politics” seen on Peninsula Malaysia, where the different communal groups entered into a “social pact” in order to maintain racial harmony. See Chandler, David et. al. In Search of Southeast Asia: A Modern History (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987) p. 411.} In the meantime, open military engagements were coupled with acts of terrorism on Malaysian territory, including the 1966 MacDonald House bombing that killed three people and injured 33 in Singapore, which was then still five months away from separating from the federation. Konfrontasi only ended shortly after President Sukarno of Indonesia was toppled in a coup d'etat by General Suharto in 1965, widely speculated to have been supported by the British and Americans.\footnote{The Indonesian army was not openly deployed until the mid-1960s.} An anti-Communist, pro-Western regime was subsequently established in the largest state in Southeast Asia, greatly stabilizing the subregion. However, bilateral relations between Singapore and Indonesia under President Suharto (1965-98) while largely cordial, continued to be strained in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when two Indonesian marines were executed for planting a bomb and taking three lives during Konfrontasi.\footnote{A peace treaty between Malaysia and Indonesia ended the conflict on 11 August 1966.}

In the meantime, although Indonesia’s destabilizing “confrontation” with Malaysia had died down, further developments in neighbouring Malaysia, connected only by a short causeway,
began to take place. On the 13 May 1969 communal riots broke out, killing over two hundred in Malaysia - including a busload of Chinese children slaughtered by an uncontrollable Malay mob. Such displays of outright communal animosity indicated that the delicate “communal pact” put together by the political elite in Malaysia was unravelling, and this struck fear into the hearts of the Chinese majority not far away in Singapore, whose memories of similar communal riots in Singapore five years earlier were still fresh.\textsuperscript{422} This led to the declaration of a state of emergency in Malaysia, and for two years parliament was suspended and the National Operations Council took the reins of government, while their neighbours south of the Johor Straits waited with baited breath to see how the Malay leadership would respond. Singapore’s national security was at stake - prior to this time, nationalist Malay elements in Malaysia had begun criticizing the Malaysian leadership not only for being too accommodative to other communal groups, but for allowing Singapore to secede so easily.

At this juncture, the British military prepared to pull out of the tiny Republic island, which had served so well as a military and intelligence outpost during the war and immediate post war years. This was thought at the time to have a potentially profound impact on the economy of the city-state that derived much of its economic activity as a host to the British military. Besides being gifted with a naturally deep harbour and a good geo-economic location, Singapore had no natural resources to fall back on when the pullout was to take place in 1970. A faltering economy would naturally undermine its national security – the possibility that an unviable polity would be absorbed into Malaysia on terms unacceptable to the Chinese majority on the island was conceivable. These internal constraints were not shared by either Taiwan or South Korea. Fortunately, British commercial interests still remained, and the economy was subsequently dedicated to the pursuit of foreign capital from the US and Europe, which helped to

\textsuperscript{422} 33 people died and 600 were injured in these riots.
underpin Singapore’s national security. It was also believed at the time that the British military pull-out would also have a negative impact on the national security of the island-state at a time when relations with its neighbours were uncertain and difficult, because Singapore would no longer have an external power that could underpin stability in the region. Indeed, Singapore had yet to establish a “credible and deterrent military defense.” 423 The Five Power Defence Arrangement (FPDA) was thus developed in 1972 and to draw Singapore together with Malaysia, New Zealand, Australia and the UK, providing a cooperative security framework that could lock potential conflict between Singapore and Malaysia down, as well as deter any future aggression from Indonesia.

Relations with the US also began to change significantly during this time. The Americans had historically been suspicious of the People’s Action Party because of its left-wing elements, and were sceptical of the British confidence in Lee Kuan Yew’s ability to extinguish these radical elements. 424 The PAP did not take kindly to the CIA’s efforts to undermine the PAP by giving financial support to the Labour Front during the 1959 General Elections either. 425 It was a grudge held well into the 1960s, explaining Singapore’s choice to remain non-aligned once the PAP came into power. While Singapore belonged to the Non-alignment Movement (NAM), by 1967 the PAP leadership had begun to see the US as “the only benign superpower that could ensure regional stability” and became a ready ally in advocating continued US presence in the region, although no bases were maintained in Singapore. 426 This was a pragmatic switch,

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423 Words articulated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on its website, stating the principles of Singapore’s foreign policy, as quoted in Ganesan, Realism and Interdependence in Singapore’s Foreign Policy, Appendix 2.
425 Ibid., p. 200.
426 Ganesan, p. 16. The US maintained security arrangements with the Philippines and Thailand and they served as bases for the American military. Singapore was officially part of the Non-Aligned Movement, and thus did not have any US bases. Most of Singapore’s arms purchases have been from the US, however, and it has since remained “one
however, under changing conditions brought about by British withdrawal. Economic reasons also underlay the change in perception. By 1970, the US had become the largest source of much-needed foreign direct investment – larger than Britain and Japan combined.427

As US-Singapore relations improved and commercial ties deepened, Singapore became an increasingly important asset to the Americans. Singapore’s key industry was that of petroleum refining and Singapore developed from a base for storing, shipping and distributing petroleum into the world’s largest fuel oil bunkering center and the third largest refining center during the 1970s with heavy involvement from the Americans and the Europeans.428 It also became the base for oil exploration expeditions in the region during the “oil-boom” of the mid-1970s.429 An efficiently run, stable Singapore began to serve the security and economic interests of thousands of Westerners in a very direct way as a result of the development of the petroleum industry there.

With Suharto at the helm in Indonesia and the strategic role that Singapore was playing in oil explorations in Indonesia, new possibilities for better bilateral relations and indeed, greater regional cooperation emerged.430 The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was formed shortly after a peace agreement was signed by Malaysia and Indonesia in 1967, bringing together Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines and Indonesia in what was to become a perceptibly anti-Communist, pro-Western organization.431 The prototype to ASEAN – the most densely defended state in the world.” Tim Huxley, Defending the Lion City: The Armed Forces of Singapore (St. Leonards, N. S. W.: Allen & Unwin, 2000), p. xx.

428 Ibid., p. 245.
429 Ibid., p. 245-6.
430 Previous attempts at regional security cooperation had been less successful – the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) was dissolved in 1977 at a time when Communist aggression on the mainland was peaking. SEATO was formed in 1954 by the US, UK, Australia, New Zealand, France, Pakistan, the Philippines and Thailand to maintain an anti-Communist stance in the region and thus sanction US presence in Vietnam. It proved unable to intervene in the Indochinese mainland, however, and by 1977 was disbanded. The Association of Southeast Asia (ASA) formed in 1961 by Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand was similarly dissolved 6 years later.
431 The Bangkok Declaration states that members of ASEAN “are determined to ensure their stability and security from external interference in any form or manifestation in order to preserve their national identities in accordance with the ideals and aspirations of their peoples.” The wording of the Declaration, which outlines the purpose of the
Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) – was encouraged by the US. Although declared as an organization purposed towards the promotion of collective economic, social and cultural goals, its underlying purpose was political – to maintain regional autonomy, and later, to underpin anti-Communist security cooperation. The toppling of Sukarno in Indonesia and Communist victory in Vietnam in the mid-1970s brought about changes in the subregional balance of power that was to prove a turning point in regional cooperation.

These were developments favourable to Singapore’s national security. Indeed, the “Communist threat” had the effect of motivating the non-Communist regimes of the region to suppress conflicts between themselves in a united front – one of the key agreements in the Bangkok Declaration was to refrain from the use of force in the resolution of interstate disputes, in accordance with the principles espoused in the UN Charter.\textsuperscript{432} ASEAN came to be touted as one of the most successful examples of regional cooperation in the Third World in years to come, not least because it contributed to the stabilization of interstate relations amongst the non-Communist regimes of Southeast Asia throughout the 1970s and 80s. This provided Singapore with an immediate geopolitical environment that was far less threatening than that which it found itself in at the time of its inception.

Importantly, a key principle of ASEAN cooperation was non-interference in the internal affairs of another state. This principle underpinned the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation adopted at the Bali Summit of 1976, and a number of other such foundational documents. Although this principle was upheld in hopes of deterring extra-regional interference in its domestic affairs, its organization, clearly indicates the intention of member states to maintain regional autonomy. Indeed, in 1971 the symbolic Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) was formed by the ASEAN foreign ministers to state their position of neutrality in the Cold War, although US bases continued to be maintained in Thailand and the Philippines, and ASEAN turned increasingly pro-West and anti-Communist from the mid-1970s.

\textsuperscript{432} Scholars have noted a “decompression effect” (the resurfacing of interstate tensions) in the immediate post Cold War period, lending weight to the thesis that the Communist threat contributed to intra-regional during the Cold War.
importance lay in this: “[n]on-interference in the affairs of another country was...the key factor as to why no military conflict had broken out between any two member states since 1967.”

With time, ASEAN also developed socio-cultural norms of collective decision-making that came to be known as the ASEAN Way, where a “high degree of consultation and consensus” was perceptible - presumably contributing to further regional stability.

Singapore’s participation in this regional organization as a sovereign state in an organization purposed to uphold the principle of non-interference and had a preference for consultation and consensus over regional issues served to enhance Singapore’s national security to a great extent. However, Singapore’s participation in ASEAN was until the mid-1970s rather lukewarm because the sense of regional autonomy promoted by ASEAN and most clearly articulated in the 1971 Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) ran counter to its instinctual preference for the presence of an external power which had the potential to change the regional balance of power in favour of the tiny Republic. As ASEAN became more pro-West, however, Singapore’s enthusiasm for the regional organization grew, and it served as a useful platform on which the tiny state could effectively articulate and pursue its national interests at the regional and global level. It is interesting to note how Singapore has effectively used the regional organization to gain access to wider international forum where it can articulate its national interests with positive feedback effects at the regional level.

One of the main differences in the immediate geopolitical environment surrounding Singapore on the one hand,

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434 Acharya, p. 64. See also Peter Boyce, “The Machinery of Southeast Asian Regional Diplomacy,” in Lau Teik Soon, ed., New Directions in the International Relations of Southeast Asia: Global Powers and Southeast Asia (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1973), p. 175.
435 Ganesan, p. 21.
436 An interesting example is Singapore’s role in bringing the international community to condemn Vietnam’s occupation of Cambodia in 1979.
and Taiwan and South Korea on the other, is arguably the existence of such a regional organization that significantly diminished the need for the US or Britain to underpin its security.

In the meantime, Singapore’s uneasy relationship with Malaysia evolved within the framework of the Five Power Defence Arrangement and ASEAN. Malaysia did not come to pose any serious national security threat to Singapore, although it had a curious relationship of competition and cooperation with Singapore. It is important for the purposes of this research to note that when it came down to water, gas and ethnic issues with Malaysia, relations were tense, but in matters of “regime security” the incumbent Malaysian and Singaporean political elite were highly supportive of each other, seeing a common fate in the ability to control “insurgencies” in the two territories. We have thus seen that although regional stability and Singapore’s national security was to a large extent dependent upon the US, it has been far more insulated from the vagaries of US foreign policy changes toward the region because of the existence of regional military, political and economic institutions.

We have also seen that for historical reasons, perceived threats to Singapore’s national security have been as much a function of internal structural conditions as they are of external ones. In this sense some scholars have tended to use the term “national viability,” which denotes instead the closely interrelated internal and external facets of national security in the particular case of Singapore. By internal conditions are meant the small size of the state (the more important being relative rather than absolute size), its lack of natural resources, and its ethnic composition – the first two conditions being its inherent “vulnerabilities” while the latter what makes it a socio-cultural anomaly in the region. Indeed, mixed into these objective conditions are the particular historical circumstances in which it became a sovereign state – which subsequently allowed an exaggerated narrative of insecurity to develop.

437 See for example, Ganesan, Realism and Interdependence in Singapore’s Foreign Policy.
Conclusion

We have seen that changes in superpower relations and the global balance of power in the time period of interest had profound implications on the regional geostrategic environment. However, the nature of national security threats facing Taiwan and South Korea on the one hand and Singapore on the other have been rather different, owing largely to different sub-regional dynamics and the particular geostrategic position occupied by each in the context of the Cold War. In the case of Taiwan, the contested nature of its national sovereignty meant that the Nationalist government was vulnerable to international opinion and highly dependent upon the US for its national security. The US, on the other hand, had diminishing use for Taiwan as rapprochement brought about normalization of US-PRC relations in the 1970s. This made the Nationalist leadership highly sensitized toward any form of external agency.

South Korea, on the other hand, did not suffer international isolation and its military leaders were not as vulnerable to international opinion as were the Nationalists in Taiwan. And while South Korea was highly dependent upon the US for its national security, South Korea continued to be important to the regional and global balance of power and thus, to the US. With the exception of the Carter administration, US Korea policy was consistently supportive of staunchly anti-Communist (military) strongmen who could maintain stability in South Korea. Altogether, this meant that the military leaders of South Korea were on the whole less sensitized toward external agency than was the case in Taiwan. Importantly, the Chun government was different to its predecessors to the extent that the Kwangju Massacre cast a long shadow over its legitimacy and as such heightened its sensitivity to the Reagan administration’s attempts to publicly distance itself in the mid 1980s. The Reagan administration only began to take a stronger rhetorical stance against the Chun government’s human rights abuses as the tide of anti-
Americanism grew stronger toward the mid 1980s and the extent of human rights abuse in South Korea took on a higher profile.

The PAP government in Singapore was even less sensitized to external agency than the military leaders of South Korea. Without having to experience international isolation in the face of a highly possible invasion from a neighbouring Communist state, it was vulnerable to international opinion only to the extent that it would affect its reputation as a stable, efficient international economic hub where British, American and other commercial interests could safely base their operations in the region. Still dependent upon the US for national security, it was nevertheless not caught up in the maelstrom of the Indochinese struggle. Instead, it served as a handy ally in the Vietnam War from a safe distance. Regional institutions and security arrangements absent in the Northeast Asian region further ameliorated local conflicts and tensions with its immediate neighbours. The PAP leadership therefore concentrated efforts to build and maintain a world-class infrastructure and a seemingly benign domestic environment that would be supportive of international business interests in the tiny island-state.

How the geopolitical environment affected the prospects of democracy in Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore will become clearer in Part III of the dissertation. The next chapter provides the background to some very important changes in the international normative environment that also impacted such prospects across our cases.
Chapter 5
The International Normative Environment

Introduction

In this chapter, I examine another crucial facet of the international structural environment. Chapter 2 had already highlighted some of the literatures that touched upon the international normative environment as an external factor of democratization. O’Donnell and Schmitter discussed the “ideological constraints at the international level” that appeared to have some effect on “actor perceptions of the long-term viability of a given regime.” Huntington, on the other hand, noted the importance of the broader international normative context to the European Community’s policy of democratic conditionality. These literatures suggest that the international normative environment was important, but it was the specifics of Huntington’s observation that “the beginning of the third wave more or less coincided with the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), the Helsinki Final Act, and the beginning of what came to be known as the Helsinki Process” that was a particularly important one, assuming that

438 O’Donnell & Schmitter, p.18.
such a “third wave” could be discerned.\footnote{Huntington, \textit{The Third Wave}, p.89.} To Huntington, the Helsinki Process was important in that it resulted in formal international documents that legitimized human rights and freedoms and led to the international monitoring of these rights in individual countries. Formal and informal compliance mechanisms thus emerged in the form of commissions or watch groups.\footnote{Ibid. The example he gives is that of Hungary, and how “the reform-minded government…used its commitment to the right of an individual to emigrate…to justify violating its agreement with the East German government and letting East Germans exit through Hungary to West Germany” setting in motion a series of events that led to the collapse of East German Communism. Ibid., pp. 90-1.} Helsinki also “became an incentive and a weapon for reformers” – or domestic lobbies for liberalization in individual countries – “to use in attempting to open up their societies.”\footnote{Ibid., p. 90.} In other words, the international normative environment was important because it created new opportunity structures and actors that could take advantage of these structures.

In this chapter, I provide a background to the changes in the international normative environment outlined above, which made the form of external agency that I will describe in the following chapters possible to begin with. I want to emphasize here that certain antecedent changes in the geopolitical environment described in Chapter 4 were crucial to the normative changes that took place in the mid 1970s, although as we shall see, the proliferation of nonstate actors and their activities subsequently sealed the status of human rights as a legitimate international concern. This is, of course, not hard to believe considering what has already been observed about post-war political developments in Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore in Chapter 3. The international normative environment prior to the 1970s was inconducive to the international diffusion of human rights norms due largely to a hostile Cold War geopolitical environment, when \textit{realpolitik} trumped morality. It was precisely within such a context that nominally democratic authoritarian regimes were able to eliminate, with impunity, political
competition through methods that violated human rights, thus retarding the development of
democracy. The genesis of structural and institutional impediments to democratic development at
this time can thus be traced to the global and regional geostrategic environment, and subsequent
changes in these environments did in fact have an impact on democratic development in Taiwan
and South Korea, and a lesser extent, Singapore.

Together with the other three chapters in Part II of this dissertation, this chapter thus sets
the stage for an explanation as to exactly how these structural changes at the international
translated into democratic development there.

**Tracing the Changes in the International Normative Environment**

The establishment of human rights as an international guiding principle for the treatment
of citizens and non-citizens of a particular state was long in process before the 1970s. The
horrors of the holocaust following the Second World War had directed the attention of the
United Nations (UN) towards “promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for
fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion” in a way
that would commit its world members to the obligations of Articles 55 and 56 of the UN
Charter. Following the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the General
Assembly in 1948, numerous covenants, resolutions, conventions, declarations, statements of
principle and codes of conduct were produced under the aegis of the UN, setting the standards
for human rights. As well as general standards reflected in the International Covenant on Civil
and Political Rights (1966) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural
Rights (1966), specific ones were codified in other international documents such as the Standard

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442 This process is described by Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink in *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1999), pp. 85-9.

Apart from the notion of human rights as the right of the individual, the input of Communist and Third World countries shaped yet another category of human rights – that of the collective. In particular, the process of codifying human rights converged with the movement for decolonization at one point, resulting in the idea of the right to self-determination, a so-called “third generation” right. Both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights read, “All Peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.”

The trickier aspect of establishing human rights as an international norm came in the form of implementation, however. There tended to be a disjuncture between international law and international norms. During this time, supervision procedures were also gradually put in place, including both treaty-specific and Charter-based ones - that is, those pertaining to the UN Human Rights Commission. These supervision procedures clearly implied that the principle of

443 The first generation rights refer to civil and political ones, while the second generation rights refer to economic and social ones. Collective human rights have remained more controversial than the first and second generation rights, however, perhaps explaining to some extent why they have been underexplored. Although collective human rights have remained more controversial than the first and second generation rights, this third generation right of self-determination has resonated well in both Taiwan and South Korea such that when the democratic movements of those countries came to be framed as a human rights issue in precisely those terms, a mobilizational potential previously lacking was created.
non-intervention on internal matters, based on the post-Westphalian conception of sovereignty, could be limited in particular domains such as human rights. While states came in this way to be committed to the protection of human rights at the expense of national sovereignty, the linkage between human rights and relations between states had nevertheless been slower to develop. The conduct of state-to-state relations continued to be guided largely by the principle of non-intervention in internal affairs, impeding the explicit and substantive incorporation of human rights into the foreign policy of most states, save for a handful of Scandinavian and Western European ones.

The advent of the Cold War had interesting effects on the development of human rights as an international norm at this time. Under early Cold War conditions, concern for international stability often meant that human rights and democracy was generally of secondary importance to the leaders of the Free World. The containment strategy applied by Western democracies to their Communist enemies was one that did not allow them to scrutinize the human rights practices of friendly regimes too closely. Much of the “Free World” thus became defined rather loosely as “non-communist.” The reality was of course, that many of these ideologically democratic regimes were authoritarian in practice, with little respect for basic human rights. These regimes consistently received the tacit, and in many cases, outright support of their Western democratic allies in the repression of dissent, because a premium was placed on political stability in these frontline countries. In Pacific Asia, a major theatre of the Cold War, strong states with both coercive capacity and repressive propensity, thus developed through copious quantities of military and economic aid. As their economic and military strength grew into shining examples
of what the Free World could accomplish, support for these regimes continued.\textsuperscript{444} This was the case with Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore to varying degrees.

Ironically, while the Cold War hampered the protection of human rights in many parts of the world, it did not suppress the discourse on human rights from developing at an international level.\textsuperscript{445} The very ideological aspects of the war between the Free World and the Communist bloc in fact fanned the discourse of human rights in the domain of East-West relations. Human rights abuses were repeatedly brought up by both sides as a means of criticism, and hence justification for the status quo in each camp. However, in the course of such exchanges, human rights came to be perceived increasingly as a democratic norm, where norms are defined as a “collective [expectation] for the proper behaviour of actors with a given identity.”\textsuperscript{446} The constitutive effect of this East-West discourse ultimately came to mean that nominally democratic governments would eventually be held to standards of human rights set out by the international regimes that had already been developing.

One significant arena in which the discourse on human rights took place was the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), which the Eastern Europeans proposed as a forum for the discussion of security issues. During this conference, the Western European democracies managed to place human rights on the agenda for discussion despite considerable resistance from the Eastern bloc and the reluctance of the US. The US, principally concerned with reaching a détente with the Soviets, was concerned that human rights would

\textsuperscript{444} This is not to say that elements genuinely concerned about the practice of human rights and democracy around the world were absent at this time. When rivalry between East and West was intense and military flashpoints continued to threaten all-out armed engagement the 1950s and 60s, their voices were drowned out.

\textsuperscript{445} Others have argued, however, that gross violations of human rights under Cold War conditions gave space for international non-governmental organizations such as Amnesty International to develop, with the consequence of legitimizing international concern for human rights. See Peter Baehr & Monique Castermans-Holleman, \textit{The Role of Human Rights in Foreign Policy} (Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) p. 14.

become a contentious issue impeding such a goal. They were successfully included in Basket III of the Helsinki Final Act signed on 1 August 1975, however. The Helsinki Final Act had tremendous impact on the development of human rights not just on a regional scale but internationally.447 As a result of East-West interactions in the process of negotiating the Helsinki Final Act, the profile of human rights norms came to be raised.448 East-West interactions during this time also came to have a constitutive effect, where human rights would come to be reinforced as a norm shared by democratic states – with the effect of creating a standard of “democratic-ness” on human rights grounds. In particular, it had the effect of stamping civil and political rights as the definitive content of human rights.449 As a result of the Helsinki Final Act, human rights also came to be acknowledged as an international concern affecting relations between states, and hence increasingly incorporated into the foreign policy of Western states in varying degrees. With time, human rights norms began to reshape to an extent the foreign policy direction of countries such as the United States, not least towards its authoritarian allies in Asia. It also allowed transnational advocacy networks to develop within the European region, with a spillover effect on a global scale. For example, the Helsinki Watch, formed in 1978 to monitor the former Soviet Union's compliance with the Helsinki Accords, later expanded into other

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447 In 1978 the American Convention on Human Rights created a commission and a court, while in Africa, the Banjul Charter on Human and People's Rights was formed in 1981. The Helsinki Accords signed in 1975 at the Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe led to a series of meetings in Belgrade (1977), Madrid (1980-83) and Ottawa (1985) to review progress on human rights.


449 As indicated earlier, the content of human rights was controversial. The Western democracies emphasized civil and political rights while the Eastern bloc emphasized social, cultural and economic rights.
regions of the world and was amalgamated as Human Rights Watch in 1988. In light of its importance, the Helsinki process itself will be discussed in greater detail.

**The Impact of the Helsinki Final Act on the International Normative Environment**

The Helsinki Final Act was the culmination of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE, 1972-5), a security initiative driven primarily by the Soviet objective of forestalling the integration of Western Germany into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the proposed European Defense Community and to seek legitimation for its hegemony in Eastern Europe. The strategic goals of the Eastern bloc underpinned the rationale for the CSCE, and the communist leaders were not only disinterested in the issue of human rights, but also resistant towards the idea that alleged human rights abuses could trigger Western intervention in its domestic affairs. The US was at the beginning only narrowly interested in détente, and the majority of the Western European states the lowering of barriers of travel and communication between East and West. In fact, during the 1950s and 60s, when the idea of such a Conference was being considered, “respect for human rights was not part of the normative structure of trans-European relations” and was not considered an important priority.

However, human rights managed to be placed on the CSCE agenda by the European Community “first as a set of issues amenable to East-West cooperation (family reunification, free movement of information, and so on), and later as a proposed principle of relations among European states” in return for the recognition of Soviet dominance in Eastern Europe. The US

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450 Human Rights Watch has since produced annual “World Reports” on human rights in different countries, lobbied governments to punish specific human rights offenders, and handed out grants and awards to victims of persecution.
451 The Soviets also wanted to remove the US from involvement in European affairs, and solicit aid from the West.
453 Ibid., p. 28.
remained disinterested in the issue of human rights, and was in fact concerned that this would become an irreconcilable issue hampering détente. Through a painful process of negotiation that lasted two and a half years, the ten principles of the Final Act were finally agreed upon, Principle 7 (Basket III) of which pertained to the respect of human rights. Although not a legally binding document, the Helsinki Final Act committed the thirty-five participating states to the pursuit of the principles articulated through follow-up meetings. In March and January of 1976, however, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights went into force respectively, legally obliging signatories to the Helsinki Final Act to adhere to the principles thereof.

Research has shown that these developments were important in that they allowed activists and dissidents of the Communist regimes to pursue an “up-and-out” strategy that challenged the initial status quo framing of the Helsinki Act, which essentially rejected domestic

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454 Principle VII of the Helsinki Act, Respect for Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, Including the Freedom of Thought, Conscience, Religion or Belief, reads:

“The participating States will respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion. They will promote and encourage the effective exercise of civil, political, economic, social, cultural and other rights and freedoms all of which derive from the inherent dignity of the human person and are essential for his free and full development. Within this framework the participating States will recognize and respect the freedom of the individual to profess and practice, alone or in community with others, religion or belief acting in accordance with the dictates of his own conscience. The participating States on whose territory national minorities exist will respect the right of persons belonging to such minorities to equality before the law, will afford them the full opportunity for the actual enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms and will, in this manner, protect their legitimate interests in this sphere. The participating States recognize the universal significance of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for which is an essential factor for the peace, justice and well-being necessary to ensure the development of friendly relations and co-operation among themselves as among all States. They will constantly respect these rights and freedoms in their mutual relations and will endeavour jointly and separately, including in co-operation with the United Nations, to promote universal and effective respect for them. They confirm the right of the individual to know and act upon his rights and duties in this field. In the field of human rights and fundamental freedoms, the participating States will act in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They will also fulfill their obligations as set forth in the international declarations and agreements in this field, including inter alia the International Covenants on Human Rights, by which they may be bound.”

455 The Helsinki Accords signed in 1975 at the Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe led to a series of meetings in Belgrade (1977), Madrid (1980-83) and Ottawa (1985) to review progress on human rights.

456 Under Principle 7 of the Helsinki Act, signatories were obliged to comply with obligations under the ICCPR and the ICESCR.
liberalization.\footnote{For an elaboration of this dynamic framing process, see Thomas, *The Helsinki Effect*, Chapter 3.} This two-pronged strategy of appealing on the one hand to the Communist authorities (the “up” strategy) and Western governments, media and non-governmental organizations on the other (the “out” strategy) was only possible through the invocation of the principles that participant Communist regimes were formally committed to in the Helsinki Final Act. Although the leaders of these Communist regimes had no intention of upholding the norms of human rights in their conduct towards political dissidents, pressures toward liberalization were brought to bear on their regimes in this way.

Domestic implications for democratic development in the former Communist states aside, the protracted and controversial process of negotiating Principle 7, the symbolism of the final Helsinki document itself and the outward appeals made by dissidents and activists to the international community had the effect of diffusing human rights norms on both a regional and international scale. The Helsinki Final Act had the effect of activating civil society across borders. Religious groups, in particular Christian ones, quickly assimilated human rights into its agenda of social causes, lending further legitimacy and impetus in the mobilization of lay populations worldwide. By late 1976, social and political movements had emerged around human rights advocacy groups that were transnational in nature. These Helsinki-inspired transnational networks would not only work to “engage the attention of nonstate and substate actors in the West” but also “engage the interest and influence of Western governments, lobbying and shaming them to adopt a more assertive position on human rights violations in the East bloc.”\footnote{Thomas, p. 122.} In other words, these networks placed pressure on Western democracies to incorporate human rights into their foreign policy, to treat of human rights as an issue in state-to-state relations.
The very process of negotiating the human rights agenda had another interesting effect on the substantive content of human rights as an international norm. In the negotiation process, the emphasis given by the Western democracies was on civil and political rights, because this allowed them to more effectively criticize the political repression that was taking place within the Soviet Union and its satellite states. The Soviet bloc, however, took up social, cultural and economic rights as a means of disparaging the hypocrisy of disjunctions between ideology and practice as manifest in the imperfect social conditions seen in capitalist democracies, not least the US. The shape of such interaction, however, had the effect of deepening international perception that the respect for civil and political rights was indeed a “democratic” norm. In other words, by ideological implication all states that were identified or aspired to be identified as part of the “Free World” should be committed to the protection of civil and political rights. This would have future implications on the growing extent to which nominally democratic states could be called upon to answer for the violation of political and civil rights. Indeed, this allowed transnational advocacy networks that had formed before and during this time to apply pressure on democratic states to change their practice of international relations to incorporate human rights promotion. And as the many Eastern European communist regimes were called upon to comply with international covenants on human rights through the Helsinki Final Act, and Western governments were pressured into being seen as sincere advocates of these rights elsewhere, the international normative atmosphere began to change.

This change was largely possible because by the 1970s, East-West détente had been largely achieved, although it was not apparent at this time that the West wind had prevailed in military terms. Changes in superpower relations nevertheless opened up a space for the establishment of human rights as an international concern worthy of incorporation into the
practice of national sovereignty, and consequently, a structural change in the international normative environment. Although Cold War tensions resumed with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, human rights had by that time become entrenched as a widely accepted international concern. By the mid-1980s, when Mikhail Gorbachev took office, even Moscow had become more receptive to the norms of human rights as previously defined by the West. Within such a permissive context, therefore, the American Convention on Human Rights was created in 1978 followed by yet another regional initiative in Africa called the Banjul Charter on Human Rights in 1981.

These developments in the normative environment also helped to shape US foreign policy, which began to change from one of realpolitik to one concerned also with questions of morality, albeit not without considerable ambivalence. Because the US played a central role in the politics of the region with an impact on the political development of each of our case studies, the changes seen in the direction of US foreign policy will be examined in more detail, particularly during the Carter and Reagan administrations (1977-89).

The Ambivalent Pursuit of Human Rights in US Foreign Policy

In the official discourse on human rights in US foreign policy, the political traditions of its founding fathers is often evoked, such that it is often said, “our national origins and our political culture assure[s] that our approach to foreign affairs would not be routine realpolitik, but would have an explicit moral purpose.” In the time period of our interest, this moral

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459 The development of the “Helsinki Effect” should be seen in this wider context of structural changes in superpower relations.
460 The Arab Commission on Human Rights had been established earlier in 1969.
461 Ironically, these are the words of Jeane Kirkpatrick, in the Foreword to Joshua Muravchik, The Uncertain Crusade: Jimmy Carter and the Dilemmas of Human Rights Policy (Lanham, MD: Hamilton Press, 1986). Kirkpatrick, a former Democrat and Ambassador to the UN under the Reagan administration, had been very critical
purpose has often wavered - to a considerable extent during the Nixon and Ford administrations, and to a lesser extent, the Carter and Reagan administrations. During the protracted process of negotiating the Helsinki Final Act, for example, the US was, under the leadership of President Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, little interested in pursuing human rights issues. The Ford administration in fact continued the “implicit policy” towards the Final Act after its conclusion in 1975, which essentially downplayed the CSCE in East-West relations.462 The position of the US Congress on this issue was no different at this time in that “most members of Congress viewed the CSCE negotiations in Geneva as, at best, a necessary evil for the maintenance of détente, and at worst, a concession to continued Soviet hegemony.”463

However, US foreign policy did take a different direction in the late 1970s with regards to human rights, due largely to a combination of timely international and domestic developments. On the international level, an important explanation for this change is the pressure placed on Western governments by dissidents and other members of the transnational network of NGOs concerned with abuses of human rights, as part of the “Helsinki Effect” explained in the last section. That the US was a reluctant advocate for human rights concerns during the Helsinki negotiation process is clear, rhetoric notwithstanding. Although it is beyond the scope of this research to delve into these issues, research has suggested that it is likely that a combination of the constitutive effects of that negotiation process which increasing bound the concepts of human rights to the identity of democratic states, and the activities of the “Helsinki network,” had the overall effect of changing the direction of US foreign policy.

462 Thomas, p. 123.
463 Ibid., p. 124.
The seeds of policy change were first sown in Congress, and not the State Department, however. A clear example is seen in the issue of Helsinki compliance monitoring and issue-linkage in US foreign policy. Congressional members, who had contact with dissidents abroad during routine delegation visits, often returned convinced of a need to create oversight committees for Helsinki human rights provisions and for issue linkage, much to the resistance of the State Department, which preferred the personalized method of “shuttle diplomacy” that did not jeopardize détente. The lobbying activities of organizations linked to Soviet and Eastern European activists not only convinced increasing numbers of Congressional members of the need for compliance monitoring, but raised the profile of human rights problems in Communist countries and heightened pressures on the State Department to realize proposed monitoring initiatives. The diligence and persistence of these activists and their transnational network of supporters would eventually convince many that a more significant place should be created for human rights in America’s foreign policy.

At the time that the “Helsinki network” was hard at work, however, a change in the political atmosphere of the US was also being experienced. This was partly demographic - a generation of “baby boomers” had come of age ready to challenge the status quo, thus spawning social movements such as the counterculture and civil rights movements. Two significant events leading to the change in political atmosphere was the Watergate scandal and the Vietnam War, the latter of which was the focal point of the anti-war movement. The Watergate scandal had exposed the inadequacies of leadership but the loss and subsequent inglorious extrication from Vietnam had all but killed the sense of idealism and moral purpose in American political

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464 Because such an initiative would have extended well beyond the Jackson-Vanik Amendment of the 1974 Trade Act, which linked most favoured nation status to human rights issues (specifically the emigration policies of Communist states), this represented to the State Department an attempt by Congress to further interfere in matters of foreign policy. Ibid., p. 126.
discourse and the search for a new direction began. It was against such a background that Jimmy Carter emerged as a Presidential candidate, promising to “reaffirm and strengthen [the] ethical and spiritual and political beliefs [of the American people].”

Convinced of a need to bring morality back into US foreign policy in order to invigorate the American polity and restore its self-confidence, Carter was in search of issues that would underpin such an agenda. Zbigniew Brzezinski, who later became Carter’s national security advisor, had written in 1975 that human rights could return legitimacy to US foreign policy both domestically and internationally. As the “Helsinki network” stepped up pressure on Western governments to incorporate human rights in their foreign policy towards non-democratic regimes and human rights was gaining legitimacy as an international concern, Carter adopted human rights as one of his principal campaign platforms.

That the Carter administration would pursue a policy of human rights, particularly during the first two years of its single term, is ironic in that President Carter was not only opposed to the Jackson-Vanik Amendment of the 1974 Trade Act, which was one of the first attempts to link human rights to US foreign policy, but had also expressed skepticism regarding the Helsinki Final Act itself. Although the prevalent view is that the Carter administration’s pursuit of human rights was “pure Jimmy,” there is evidence to suggest that Carter had ridden on the human rights wave that came crashing down on the Ford administration in the aftermath of the

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466 Hendrik Hertzberg, a former Carter speechwriter is reported to have said, “Jimmy Carter had a moral ideology but no political ideology and the human rights policy is very much a reflection of the strong moral impulses tethered somewhat loosely to a set of political goals.” See Muravcik, p. 1.
468 It has also been argued that the feedback from the Helsinki Process also helped Carter to be elected by weakening President Ford’s political base and shaping the terms of debate between Ford and Carter. See Thomas, pp. 132-33.
469 Carter said the following to the Foreign Policy Association in June 1976, “Our people have learned the folly of trying to inject our power into the internal affairs of other nations.” See Thomas, p.133.
470 The words used by a former speechwriter, Hendrik Hertzberg. See Muravcik, p. 1.
Helsinki Final Act in order to arrive at electoral victory.\textsuperscript{471} Research has shown, however that although the Carter administration displayed initial reluctance towards an explicit human rights approach towards relations with the Soviets, it was pressured into doing so by this same transnational “Helsinki network.”\textsuperscript{472}

Whatever the reasons for eventually giving human rights a larger role in US policy towards the Soviets during this time, the Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs was established in the State Department by law in 1977, which key task was to compile an annual human rights report on every member state of the UN. The Bureau’s responsibilities were to monitor the human rights conditions of various countries, to propose policy actions concerning all countries, to initiate instructions to embassies, to pose questions to embassies for investigation, and to maintain liaison with geographic bureaus and the embassies of their countries in Washington.\textsuperscript{473} In this way, the change in US foreign policy direction was not confined to Eastern Europe, with implications for US foreign policy elsewhere. The existence of this Bureau, and the practice of compiling an annual human rights report also ensured to some extent that such foreign policy content would be sustained beyond the Carter administration.\textsuperscript{474}

During President Carter’s term, the US thus began to pursue a policy that linked bilateral relations to human rights conditions through a myriad of policy instruments. First, a combination of quiet and open diplomacy was used to persuade and shame recalcitrant regimes into respecting human rights respectively, particularly in the context of political dissidents. Open pressure would be placed on certain regimes at a bilateral level during press conferences, communiqués, or

\textsuperscript{471} For this argument, see Thomas, Chapter Four. President Carter’s personal convictions aside, it is clear that senior State Department officials preferred the use of quiet diplomacy in human rights issues.
\textsuperscript{472} See Thomas, p.136.
\textsuperscript{473} See Mower, p. 77.
\textsuperscript{474} This was “coolly received in the department, especially by the career Foreign Service officers trained to put a high premium on stable and friendly relations with the states to which they were assigned.” David Forsythe, Human Rights and US Foreign Policy: Congress Reconsidered (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1988), p.15.
speeches delivered at state dinners, and at a multilateral level during public discussions in forums such as the United Nations. Displeasure at human rights abuses would also be expressed at a private level during official visits or through confidential correspondences. More often than not, however, these pressures were exerted through quiet diplomacy. Economic and military aid, along with arms sales, were likewise linked to human rights conditions of particular countries, albeit such a tactic was usually reserved as a last resort and largely limited in nature.  

These were sometimes pursued bilaterally on the one hand, and multilaterally through international financial institutions on the other. These policies were not without controversy, however. Patricia Derian, Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs under the Carter administration said of attaching human rights to aid programs, “I don’t favor the carrot and stick approach to human rights. I think it doesn’t work.” The limited nature of such issue linkages has also been explained as the result of bureaucratic reluctance to let the Interagency Group on Human Rights and Foreign Assistance under Warren Christopher review many key parts of the foreign assistance program. Overall, the ambivalence of Carter’s human rights policy is most likely to have been the result of bureaucratic conflict – it had limited traction within the Department of Treasury and the other regional bureaus more interested in uncomplicated and stable economic and security relations.

475 Thus, for example, there was no small degree of reluctance in applying Section 502B of the amended Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 forbidding assistance to governments that commit human rights violations. According to Stephen B. Cohen, relatively few governments were found guilty of such and fewer still were cut off from security assistance. See Stephen B. Cohen, “Conditioning US Security Assistance on Human Rights Practices,” *American Journal of International Law* (Jan-April 1982): 264. The Carter administration also resisted the International and Financial Assistance Act, passed nevertheless in 1977, which authorized US Executive Directors of international financial institutions to oppose any loans, financial or technical assistance to governments that violated human rights norms.

It is also clear that during the Reagan administration, senior officials at the State Department were similarly resistant to deviations from the national interests in matters of foreign affairs. Although the rhetoric on human rights was similarly maintained, the Reagan administration pursued policies that were more reflective of realpolitik than a commitment to human rights. The legacy of the Carter administration was that human rights could no longer be removed from the foreign policy agenda of the US, yet human rights at this time was taken up as more of a tactical weapon in the struggle against the Communist bloc at opportune times.\footnote{Indeed, US Ambassador to the UN Jeane Kirkpatrick would use the UN as a platform for singling out the Soviet Union and Cuba for public criticism.} Thus, the 1981 \textit{Country Reports on Human Rights Practices}, produced annually by the State Department since 1977 states, “It is a significant service to the cause of human rights to limit the influence the USSR can exert. A consistent and serious policy for human rights in the world must counter the USSR politically and bring Soviet bloc human rights violations to the attention of the world over and over again.” During the Reagan administration, the instrument of open diplomacy was withdrawn, as one State department official noted, “we don’t believe in public lecturing of other governments.”\footnote{Failure: The Reagan Administration’s Human Rights Policy in 1983, report prepared by Americas Watch, Helsinki Watch and Lawyers Committee for International Human Rights (Washington D.C., January 1984) p. 69.} Linkage between human rights and aid programs was similarly withdrawn in many cases, despite restrictive legislation already in place for this very purpose. Quiet diplomacy was the only method that US officials were prepared to use at this time. The Human Rights Bureau within the State Department was thus reduced to a “public relations bureau for anti-Communism.”\footnote{Caleb Rossiter, Human Rights: The Carter Record, the Reagan Reaction, International Policy Report (Washington D.C.: Center for International Policy, 1984) pp. 22,25 as quoted in Mower, p. 76.} In light of these later developments in US foreign policy, the impact of Congress in the continued pursuit of human rights in diplomacy is therefore important.
Indeed, it is probably true to say that Congressional oversight of the foreign policy output of the State Department might have pushed the latter towards a firmer stance in human rights issues in the first place. Its continued oversight in these matters certainly preserved human rights as a legitimate foreign policy concern in the Reagan years.\textsuperscript{480} It has been argued that Congress was concerned that American foreign policy should reflect the ideals of the US political tradition of freedom – and even prior to the “Helsinki effect,” Congressional members were very critical of the lack of human rights concerns in Republican foreign policy at a series of hearings by the Subcommittee on International Organizations and Movements (later Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Organizations) of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs in 1973.\textsuperscript{481} However, it is also true that Congressional members were also more likely to respond to sections of their constituencies lobbying for attention to human rights abuses, or the political situation in their countries of origin.\textsuperscript{482}

Congressional oversight in matters of foreign policy was the result of an evolution in institutional relationships. At the height of cold war tensions in the 1950s and 60s, Congress was shut out of the foreign policy making process, which became the sole prerogative of the executive branch of government. However, Congress became more assertive in matters of foreign policy primarily as a result of the Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal. Thus between 1970-75, Congress began to intervene in many key aspects of US foreign policy. Numerous statements and declarations concerning human rights were also made during this time, along with important legislation linking human rights to foreign assistance. The Foreign Assistance Act of

\textsuperscript{480} David Forsythe writes, “Yet it was Congress, not the Carter administration, that put international human rights back on the foreign policy agenda of the United States. And it was primarily Congress that prevented the Reagan administration from taking the subject off the foreign policy agenda in 1981, as it evidently wished to do.” David Forsythe, p. ix.
\textsuperscript{481} Ibid., p. 1.
\textsuperscript{482} Indeed, this was true particularly in the case of Taiwan as we shall see in Chapter 7.
1973, Section 32 constitutes one of the first declarations on human rights made by Congress, for example. The Bretton Woods Agreement Act, Section 5 (b) further attempted to restrict US engagement with countries guilty of “the international crime of genocide.” The 1982 Foreign Assistance and Related Programs Appropriations Act, Section 511 explicitly reads, “Funds appropriated by the Act may not be obligated or expended to provide assistance to any country for the purpose of aiding the efforts of the government of such county to repress the legitimate rights of the population of such country contrary to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”

Important legislation concerning human rights include: (1) 1978 Amendment to Section 502B of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, which restricts security assistance to governments which engage in “a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights;” (2) 1984 Amendment to Section 116 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, which restricts economic assistances to the same and (3) 1977 International Financial Assistance Act Subsection (a) (1) and (2), which authorizes US Executive Directors of international financial institutions to oppose any loans, financial or technical assistance to the same and finally, the (4) 1974 Jackson-Vanik amendment to the Trade Act linking most favored nation status to emigration policies in “non-market economies.”

One of the key aspects of Congressional oversight is the annual Human Rights Reports required from the State Department beginning in 1977. Social, economic and cultural rights are unfortunately not included in the definition of “human rights” within these reports.

483 Various legislative requirements that the executive report to Congress regarding human rights considerations are also found in numerous laws affecting the Department of State, the Agency for International Development, the Department of Treasury, the Department of Commerce, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, and the Export-Import Bank. Hearings can be opened if Congress finds these
reports unsatisfactory.\textsuperscript{484} For all these attempts to pressure the State Department into observance of human rights norms, however, Congress failed to ratify the ICCPR, the ICSECR, the Convention on Racial Discrimination and the Genocide Convention which were signed by the Carter administration, undermining US moral leadership in the human rights question. The reasons for this are complex, but some have argued that the failure to ratify these treaties was the result of President Carter’s unwillingness to spend political capital to reach human rights objectives.\textsuperscript{485}

Despite the lack of positive action on issues of human rights during the Reagan administration, there was a positive aspect to its treatment of human rights as a tactical instrument against Communism. In the anti-Communist discourse of the Reagan era, the most likely human rights abusers came to be understood as non-democratic regimes. One of the key criticisms the Reagan administration had leveled against Carter’s human rights approach was its lack for a strategy for structural change in countries where human rights violations were prevalent. In promoting the cause of structural change in such countries, there was a propensity to collapse the notion of human rights into that of democratic freedoms, and “to talk about, if not push for, structural change toward democracy.”\textsuperscript{486} As such, calls were heard during the Reagan administration for “a crusade for democracy.”\textsuperscript{487} Under administrative pressure, therefore, Congress eventually approved funding for the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), which purpose was to promote democratic institutions and values in non-democratic countries. While again, ambivalent support dogged the NED because of initial funding scandals, there was a clear sense in which human rights and democracy had become directly linked in a way which

\textsuperscript{484} See Forsythe, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{485} See Mower, p. 59.
\textsuperscript{486} Forsythe, p. 19.
\textsuperscript{487} A speech delivered to the British Parliament, as reported in \textit{The New York Times}, 9 June 1982.
was not explicitly done so in the Carter administration. Such a development in US foreign policy discourse certainly resonated with the constitutive effects of East-West interactions during the Helsinki process, where human rights came to be reinforced as a norm of democratic states.

From pre-existing research, it is thus clear that the instatement of human rights norms as a legitimate international concern during the 1970s did have an impact on the shape of US foreign policy. When we break down the “black box” of the US as a state actor, however, we do see cross-cutting institutional interests which make the pursuit of human rights as a foreign policy goal a complicated affair, suggesting that literatures attributing credit to the US for successful democracy promotion abroad should be re-examined. As we will see in Part III of this dissertation, this is necessary. However, what also emerges from the existing literature on US human rights policy are two important observations: (1) that nonstate actors were crucial in forcing state actors to stick to their normative commitments and (2) that substate actors had a more positive and consistent role in the promotion of human rights and democracy abroad. Whether this was true in the context of our cases will also be further explored in Chapter 6 and Part III of this dissertation.

**Transnational Activism**

Earlier, we saw how and why the Helsinki Final Act led to the formation of a transnational “Helsinki network” that worked under the banner of human rights towards the preservation of the lives and well being of political dissidents in non-democratic regimes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The changes experienced in the international normative environment during the 1970s were closely interrelated with the rise of such a transnational network because they worked towards ensuring norms implementation in a geostrategically important region of the world. Further, this network began to extend beyond Europe into other
parts of the world, with the formation of global organizations such as Human Rights Watch. This phenomenon has to be understood in the light of the fact that such transnational advocacy networks came to constitute a non-traditional “structure” in international politics, however. Although later chapters will concentrate on the activities of those agents that both belong to and have constituted such a transnational structure and their effects on the democratic movements of the countries studied, the structural aspects of those transnational networks are examined here.

Although more recent research has examined the “Helsinki network” in detail, in reality transnational networks concerned with a myriad of issues, extending beyond the temporal and spatial confines of the Helsinki network, have long existed and are difficult to enumerate. However, social movements began extending beyond borders in recent decades, adding to the density of such transnational networks, particular those dedicated to principled causes. According to Keck and Sikkink, “a transnational advocacy network includes those relevant actors working internationally on an issue who are bound together by shared values, a common discourse, and dense exchanges of information and services’ with the purpose of “chang[ing] the behavior of states and international organizations” on principled grounds. As a transnational “structure” they are bridges between the international and domestic systems where informational, ideational and material resources can be conveyed. As a result, they allow, and are an essential part of, the strategies adopted by local dissidents and activists to target (often non-democratic) rights-violating regimes in ways otherwise impossible - achieving in the long term what has been termed the “boomerang effect” through external pressure.

Several suggestions have been made to account for the transnational activism of recent decades. The possibilities of international contact and thus better informational flow had been

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488 Keck and Sikkink, Activists Beyond Borders, p.2.
489 Ibid., pp. 12-4.
opened up in the last four decades with cheaper air travel and swifter communication technologies.\textsuperscript{490} A broader “cultural shift” – the legacy of a “baby boomer” generation in Western Europe, the United States and elsewhere during the 1960s – has also been suggested as a cause of increasing international activism and a progressively denser transnational advocacy network.\textsuperscript{491} The outreach of missionaries, the solidarity traditions of labor and the left and liberal internationalism have all been seen to contribute to the emergence of such activists.\textsuperscript{492} “Political entrepreneurs” willing to take on great personal costs are said to have emerged from such traditions, although they may no longer identify themselves as such. While “political exiles” had also been identified as one such important political entrepreneur, somewhat neglected are the ordinary immigrants who may have been disaffected with the repressiveness of their home countries but unqualified to be termed “political exiles.” These have regularly become politicized while living overseas, and have formed an integral component of what Thomas has termed “ethnic lobbies” active in Congressional politics, for example.

The rise in the number of international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) has also been identified as a reason for the rise of international activism and the increasing density of advocacy networks. These INGOs are important nodes in the web of transnational relationships. The nature of this project places an emphasis on human rights as civil and political rights, making Amnesty International (AI), for example, a very significant NGO in our analysis. Established in London as the “Appeal for Amnesty 1961” to save two students from seven years’ imprisonment for making a toast to freedom in Salazar’s Portugal, it soon expanded from a marginal movement into an international network of advocates for political prisoners and dissidents everywhere. By 1979, AI had more than 6000 groups in over 70 countries, groups and

\textsuperscript{490} Keck and Sikkink, p.14.
\textsuperscript{491} Ibid., pp. 14-5.
\textsuperscript{492} Ibid., p. 15.
sections being at the bottom-most level in the organizational hierarchy of the INGO, and thus, the most local. By maintaining such groups or sections staffed by one or a few country coordinators, accurate and authoritative reports were generated on the plight of political prisoners, often reflective of the political climate in those countries. Thus, AI became an important center for both the generation and the dissemination of informational resources so central to the lobbying activities of these transnational advocacy networks. Further, their letter writing exercises were independently important as an effective means of lobbying state actors. As a result of the work of AI, many key political dissidents in South Korea and Taiwan have been saved from death or debilitating torture, thus preserving the democratic movements in these countries.\footnote{AI was less successful in securing the release of political prisoners in Singapore for reasons discussed in Chapter 9.}

Although a fierce advocate of those unjustly imprisoned or treated while in captivity, the AI was not focused on “structural changes” in countries where human rights violations take place, and were hence more akin to the philosophy of the Carter administration than the Reagan administration. There have been, however, other non-governmental organizations focused on such “structural changes,” apart from US government-sponsored organizations such as the NED and Freedom House. By this I refer specifically to highly politicized immigrant organizations focused on changing the political conditions of their home countries, a more enduring example being the Taiwanese American community’s Formosan Association for Public Affairs (FAPA).\footnote{The NED was an American initiative mostly funded by the US government, and thus strictly speaking difficult to categorize as a non-governmental organization, despite its claims to be a “private” organization.} Such organizations often worked hand in hand with other international non-governmental organizations to bring pressure to bear on their target states, and were hence an integral part of these transnational advocacy networks.
In his analysis of the Helsinki networks, Thomas also notes that an “up-and-out” strategy was pursued in pressuring Communist states into respecting the civil and political rights of their citizens more generally, and political dissidents in particular. “Upward” appeals to the Communist authorities were only an effective form of pressure on these authoritarian regimes because of the existence of formal commitments to human rights at an international level, however. Unfortunately for the political dissidents of South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore, there existed no equivalent to a Helsinki Final Act that explicitly committed their governments to the respect of human rights during that time. The contested nature of Taiwan’s sovereignty would have only made the direct appeal to formal human rights commitments at the international level even less feasible. Therein lay the difference in the international environment, which would have adversely affected the efficacy of the strategies adopted by similar transnational advocacy networks in the Pacific Asian region.

As such, pressure could be effectively placed upon rights-abusing, authoritarian regimes in question only through more complex strategies that were at least as dependent upon the immediate geopolitical environments surrounding the cases in question. Insofar as the respect for human rights norms became rhetorically identified with democratic governments, and it was geostrategically important to remain identified with the “Free World” led by the US, it was more possible for similar transnational networks to exert the kinds of pressures observed in other regions of the world on authoritarian regimes. This fundamental logic, as we shall see, will play out differently in interesting ways across the cases of Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore.

**Developments in the Religious World**

Changes in the broader international normative environment aside, developments in the religious world also had an impact on transnational activism. While Protestant social activism
has historically earned the Protestant churches in general a reputation for greater democratic leanings than the Roman Catholic Church, Huntington has pointed out that reforms within the Catholic Church during the 1960s and 70s were significant in changing this. Noting the differences between traditionally activist and pro-democracy Protestant Christian Churches and the historically pro-establishment Catholic Church, Huntington has pointed out the historic significance of the Second Vatican Council (1962-5) to the rise of religious opposition to authoritarianism in many Latin American countries.\footnote{Huntington, p. 78.} While it is not within the ambit of this research to discuss specific doctrinal developments at this time, what was important was the necessitation of responsibility on the part of Church leaders to “pass moral judgments, even on matters of the political order whenever basic personal rights...make such judgment necessary.”\footnote{Ibid.} Such an interpretation of the gospel was later “reaffirmed and elaborated in the Latin American bishop’s conferences in Medellin in 1968 and in Puebla in 1979 and in gatherings of bishops elsewhere.”\footnote{Brian H. Smith, The Church and Politics in Spain: Challenges to Modern Catholicism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 284.} As such, these doctrinal developments helped to reinforce the notion of an individual moral conscience more akin to a non-hierarchical Protestant one, which allowed for domestic opposition groups in the form of religious and ecumenical leaders to surface.

The impact of Vatican II extended well beyond creating domestic opposition elements within Latin American countries, however. Doctrinal debates surrounding Vatican II stimulated the growth of “liberation theology” which had already developed in South America during the 1950s and which was subsequently thought to be instrumental to democratic transition in Latin American countries because “the liberation theology movement attacked injustice, inequality,
oppression, and corruption by formulating a Christian message that emphasized the need to organize politically at the lower reaches of society.”\textsuperscript{498} The influence of liberation theology on other Christian denominations outside of the Latin American region cannot be denied. “Christian socialism” was in fact shared amongst both Catholics and non-Catholics.\textsuperscript{499} It is at this time that rise of the “Christian Left” and a generation of “militant” Christians opposed to authoritarianism was observed in other places. The “Christian left” that developed in the Philippines, for example, included “Marxists and others…whom supported a social democracy that was both anti-imperialist and anticommunist.”\textsuperscript{500}

The policy change within the Catholic Church that Huntington describes was thus part of a wider a theological and ecumenical movement taking place within the Christian community on a global scale. Because the Christian movement based on “liberation theology” set its sights not only on the rectification of social but political injustices, it should also be taken into account in our examination of the normative changes that conditioned the processes that will be described in Part III of this dissertation. While the Helsinki Final Act had the effect of activating civil society across borders, religious groups, in particular Christian ones, quickly assimilated human rights into its agenda of social and political causes, lending further legitimacy and impetus to the mobilization of lay populations worldwide. Christian actors not only comprised of domestic opposition activists as described by Huntington, but their Christian allies abroad, which together made up dense transnational networks of religious actors that could be mobilized for political purposes. Thus it was, that Angell was able to describe Chilean political exiles at work abroad in

\textsuperscript{499} For how “Christian socialism” was shared amongst Catholics and non-Catholics, see Parig Digan, Churches in Contestation: Asian Christian Social Protest (New York: Orbis Books, 1984). The Vatican subsequently censured liberation theologians in the 1980s, however.
\textsuperscript{500} Ibid.
alliance with not only the Catholic Church and worldwide ecumenical organizations such as the World Council of Churches, which in turn lent local churches assisting the political opposition in Chile both “moral and political” support through “international episcopal statements.”

None of this should suggest, however, that Christian socialism was ever the mainstream. Liberation theology’s perceived radicalism in fact subsequently led to its censure by the Vatican in the 1980s. As noted by Cheng and Brown, Pope John Paul II’s own personal experience with communism as an East European “made him wary of the Marxist bent of the movement.” The lack of a uniform approach to democracy and human rights issues amongst the Protestant churches has also been well noted. In fact, the large variation in positions taken by the Christian churches on issues of human rights and democracy was not only the result of the personal convictions of few individuals at the leadership level. The immediate context in which practical relations with the state take place is an important causal variable. Cheng and Brown have noted for example, that “Hong Kong’s Christian churches almost instinctively have sought to avoid any conflict with officials that could pit them in a power struggle with the coercive authority of the government” since they are heavily dependent upon state finances for educational and social service programs. Perceptions of such practical considerations can, of course, also vary from church to church as well, depending on historical relations between church and state.

Conclusion

501 Ibid., p. 187.
502 Ibid., p. 79.
504 Ibid., p. 13.
The re-instatement of human rights as a legitimate international concern followed geopolitical developments in the 1960s and early 1970s. This change in the international normative environment was important on different levels. At the interstate level, human rights became a plausible foreign policy goal. Even when advanced industrialized democracies came short of their own rhetoric or normative commitments, such normative standards still served as constraints on the ability to completely ignore human rights violations taking place amongst friendly allies – as was the case in the early period of the Cold War. Those who wished to take such policies to task also came to have a much firmer normative footing with which to do so. In the same token, it also became imperative that those states that wished to remain in the democratic camp with the advanced industrialized democracies also maintain at least a semblance of respect for human rights. Political repression became more difficult to justify internationally with the high international profile that human rights was taking at this time. These normative considerations thus had the potential to generate more external, top down pressures on authoritarian regimes toward democratization, or at the very least, added a layer of complexity to interstate relations between Western democracies and their authoritarian allies. Which of these was the case in Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore, and to what effect, will be dealt with in Part III of the dissertation.

It is impossible to understand the complexities in interstate relations resulting from such changes in the international normative environment without opening the “blackbox” of the state, however. Existing research on human rights as a US foreign policy goal has already shown that a simplistic take on this issue is impossible, not least because of institutional conflicts that render foreign policy goals and approaches inconsistent at a particular point and over a period of time. The role of the US as a human rights defender or a democracy promoter has therefore been
historically ambivalent for the most part. On the other hand, such international normative changes took place when the societies of Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore were becoming more complex, raising expectations for liberalization and reinforcing demands for democratization.

To understand the complexities at the interstate and substate levels brought about by the changes in the international normative environment, we also need to understand how these changes brought about the emergence of transnational nonstate actors that formed an important norm compliance mechanism. Existing research on the proliferation of transnational advocacy networks centred on human rights issues in Europe, and later, other regions of the world, has shown how important these agents were in compelling both Western democracies and authoritarian governments to uphold some minimum level of human rights standards. In so doing, they inadvertently contributed to the transition from authoritarianism toward (in many cases) democracy, because their actions in effect helped to protect pro-democracy activists from authoritarian repression. To some, these transnational networks of nonstate actors cannot be thought of in terms of agency alone because they changed the very structure of international politics.

This chapter has tried to capture all of the above following the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 1, where the changes in the international normative environment described above are considered to be international *developments* over a period of time. These structural changes were antecedent to the emergence of transnational agents who were an important source of external pressure on authoritarian governments to democratize. By examining such nonstate actors, the existing literature has already suggested that a more nuanced approach be taken toward interstate relations as a norm compliance mechanism, and to question if state actors are
really that significant as sources of external pressure on authoritarian governments, especially when it comes to their allies in the Cold War.

Although it is a widely accepted notion that the US is a leading champion of human rights and a democracy promoter, there is evidence to suggest that US human rights policy had in fact been largely ambivalent. This chapter has explicated in the briefest terms the logic behind this ambivalence, and how this plays out with different effects in each of our cases will become clearer in later chapters. Part III of this dissertation will in fact show that what has been understood as “external pressure” from the US – widely credited with making a direct contribution to democratization in those countries – is a far more complex picture than it would first seem. This complexity is compounded by the fact that the extent to which the US could effectively exert pressure was limited by the extent to which the survival of these authoritarian governments was considered to have a direct impact on the national interests of the US. Instead, substate actors – namely, legislators within Western democratic countries such as the US – had a more consistent role in the development of human rights and democracy in our cases.

Indeed, if we consider external sources of pressure on authoritarian governments to democratize causally significant, the relative importance of state, nonstate and substate actors, and their relationship to each other, is an issue that will have to be grappled with. This dynamic will become more obvious in the examination of our cases later on. What is perhaps less explicit in the current literature on such transnational nonstate and substate actors are the conditions under which they are rendered effective, however – as we shall see in Part III they are effective only within particular geopolitical contexts and sometimes only insofar as they become part of strategies adopted by states in state-to-state interactions. This will be picked up in the following chapter when I discuss the transnational protection regime.
Chapter 6
The Transnational Protection Regime

Introduction

The processes of democratic development in Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore as described in Chapter 3 strongly suggest that the focus of research into the international factors of democratization should be on external agency. The international structural contexts within which external agency was actualized and operated, was also crucial to understanding the precise nature and effect of such agency. Chapters 4 and 5 not only provided the background to these international structural contexts, but also suggested which forms of external agency were potentially important to the prospects of democratic development across these cases. The geopolitical environments within which Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore became and continued to be viable political entities meant that external state agency would have at least some potential influence on political development there. This is because a dependence on external powers for national security either gave these powers leverage over the authoritarian governments in question or created a predisposition toward actions that inadvertently created pressures toward democratic reform. Previous chapters have made clear that as a key ally and patron, the US had by far the most actualized or potential influence on political development in Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore. And by virtue of the fact that Singapore was a British
colony, the UK is also given some treatment when we examine the role of external state agency in Part III of the dissertation.

However, Chapter 4 also suggested that the role of the US as a human rights champion and democracy promoter may in fact have been more ambivalent than is sometimes perceived. Chapter 5 suggested that other forms of external agency that could have a potentially greater impact on democratic development in our cases were essentially nonstate in nature. As described in that chapter, changes in the international normative environment from the mid 1970s created transnational advocacy networks that have been found to have an important positive impact on democratization in Eastern Europe. In raising international awareness of human rights abuses committed against democracy activists and the political opposition in those countries, pressuring rights-abusing governments to stick to their formal normative commitments and shaming wavering Western democracies such as the US to take a stronger stance on human rights, these nonstate actors were vital to the progress of democratization there.

These networks proliferated on a global scale and as such there could be similar findings in our cases. In setting the stage for Part III, it is therefore necessary to specify exactly who these nonstate actors were in the particular cases of Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore. Research into this form of external agency has shown, in fact, that those actors who had an impact on democratic development in these cases were not confined to principled actors with concerns for human rights alone. Further, the efforts of these nonstate actors to lobby substate actors in Western democracies and bring them on board the human rights cause there was also what led to the incorporation of these substate actors. Certain substate actors also collaborated with these nonstate actors with the effect of furthering democratization in Taiwan and South Korea. In this
chapter, I therefore introduce the concept of the protection regime to capture what is different about these networks.

The focus of this chapter is therefore on the nonstate and substate actors, which networks have been found to exist in each of these cases. Specifically, what is also provided in this chapter is a description of the key characteristics of each of the protection regimes in Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore. This provides a basis for comparing their inherent similarities and differences, and ultimately for understanding what is most important – their comparative strength and effectiveness.

**The Transnational Protection Regime**

The concept of the protection regime is a partial derivative of the international human rights regime. Regime, in this sense, is defined generally as the “principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actor expectations converge in a given issue-area.”

The international human rights regime is usually understood as consisting of international conventions, specific international organizations that monitor compliance and other assorted regional human rights arrangements. Scholars of international relations have also traced the emergence of transnational networks of advocacy coalitions and international non-governmental organizations from such a global human rights regime as important norm compliance mechanisms. These findings have further led to the conceptualization of the human rights

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“international regime” as an “international political community.” Similarly, I have chosen to characterize what is a transnational community of actors related and motivated by “shared values or principled ideas,” or “beliefs about what is right or wrong,” as a transnational protection regime.

The reason for which the transnational networks described below are collectively called a protection regime - as opposed to a human rights regime - is twofold. First of all, this research is not principally directed at the question of how international human rights norms are diffused or how they are internalized, which is the main concern of the scholarship on human rights regimes. Instead, whether and how transnational networks of nonstate and substate actors have worked specifically to allow the political opposition to survive repression and eventually effect political change in Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore is the principal concern here. Secondly, while actors motivated by the principled issue of human rights form a significant portion of these networks, many operating outside of this rubric have also been important. Although implicit in their motivations are those “values and principled ideas” of human rights, many of these actors are driven by other more context-specific principled causes.

Take for example, the Taiwanese diaspora located in the US, a very crucial element in the protection regime. These nonstate actors who contributed significantly to the provision of an increasingly effective protection to the political opposition in the 1980s, operated under more than just the principle of the fundamental rights of the individual. More specifically, they were motivated to protect the political opposition in Taiwan because they believed that democratization would ultimately lead to the universal recognition of Taiwan’s international

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510 Sikkink, ibid., p.440-41.

511 See, for example, The Power of Human Rights, ibid.
sovereignty and the restoration of “ethnic justice.” The pro-democracy movement in the US and elsewhere had a far more explicitly pro-independence agenda than did the movement that developed in the late 1970s and 80s in Taiwan. Some of the South Korean diaspora working to protect the opposition movement in the ROK were similarly concerned not only with the principles of democracy, but by the prospects that democratic government might create for a unified Korean peninsula. The overlap between the universal human rights cause, the cause of democracy and context-specific political causes such as national sovereignty and national unification was particularly observable in Taiwan and South Korea, but not in Singapore.

Moreover, there are other actors that fall outside of existing categories in the international human rights regime literature. There is both a formal and informal aspect to the protection regime because of the highly personalistic relations between actors that form the transnational networks. This informality often meant the ad hoc recruitment of random strangers, acquaintances, friends and family who were not human rights activists belonging to some advocacy network. These individuals – now nameless and faceless in the annals of history – were nevertheless frequently involved and important to the survival of the opposition movement in Taiwan and South Korea. These actors, together with others described in more detail below, shared the same belief that the political opposition ought to be protected in order to further democratization, and thus, as a whole it is more accurate to describe these transnational networks as a protection regime.

Who, then, were these nonstate actors exactly? Broadly speaking there were five types of nonstate actors comprising the transnational networks, although many actors often belong to two or more of these categories either simultaneously or at different points in time. These five types
were: (1) Christian churches and related ecumenical workers\textsuperscript{512} (2) human rights activists (3) overseas Taiwanese (4) students and academics and (5) foreign journalists. With the limitations that the principle of non-interference in state-to-state relations imposed on the role state actors could play in the protection of the opposition movement, the versatility of these nonstate actors was critically important. The transnational nature of their activities was also particularly important to their ability to carry out the kinds of functions that will be described in Part III. What about the substate actors? It is no mystery that by these I refer mostly to members of the legislative branch of government in the US and the UK. Of course, by these I mean only the handfuls that were sympathetic to the political opposition and successfully mobilized by the nonstate actors. With specific reference to the Singapore case, members of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council based in the UK also played a role because the Privy Council was Singapore’s last appeal court until 1989 (See Chapter 9).

As we will see in Part III of this dissertation, there were two aspects to the kinds of activities that the protection regimes were engaged in to help protect the political opposition. The first of these was to channel much needed resources to the political opposition, especially during periods of harsh repression. The second and more important of these is to help raise the international profile of political repression taking place domestically. Raising the international profile of political repression in turn generates external pressures on the authoritarian governments, with the potential of raising the political cost of repression for these governments and thus changing their repressive behaviour towards the political opposition. Success in this

\textsuperscript{512} Ecumenical workers are neither missionaries nor aid workers. Their function is to “provide links of solidarity between all Christians in an area – to work with them in their own programmes and to identify with their struggles and aspirations…. they bring together like-minded people to share experiences and set new goals for the people and for the church.” Ron O’Grady, \textit{Banished: The Expulsion of the Christian Conference of Asia from Singapore and its Implications} (Hong Kong: Christian Conference of Asia International Affairs Committee, 1990), p. 69.
regard thus has the potential to allow the political opposition to gradually grow and develop a
democratic movement that can help effect democratic breakthrough.

**The Concepts of Strength and Effectiveness**

Earlier, I suggested that the development of a strong and effective protection regime around the political opposition in Taiwan and South Korea might explain the extent to which democratic movements were able to develop and subsequently effect democratic breakthrough there. Here I explain what is meant by strength and effectiveness, concepts that are related but nevertheless need to be distinguished for analytical purposes because South Korea is an instance where the strength of the protection regime did not necessarily translate into effectiveness for reasons that will be explored in Part III.

Very simply, by “effectiveness” is meant the ability to alter the behaviour of authoritarian elites in regards to *its treatment of the political opposition* by the exertion of political pressure. More specifically, an effective protection regime is one that is able to constrain the authoritarian leadership from forms of repression that significantly diminish the ability of the political opposition to exercise mobilizational leadership. This includes murder, intimidation, incarceration or other more subtle means such as imprisonment for lesser “crimes” and the inducement of bankruptcy.513 Further, an effective protection regime is one that is able to channel much-needed material and other resources to the opposition at times of repression, thus helping to sustain them at their most vulnerable moments.

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513 These include the failure to apply for official permission to make public speeches, for example. The inducement of bankruptcy as a form of repression is particular to Singapore since under the Constitution, an undischarged bankrupt or one “who has been convicted of an offence by a court of law in Singapore or Malaysia and sentenced to imprisonment for a term of not less than one year or to a fine of not less than SGD 2000 and has not received a free pardon” under Part VI Disqualifications for Membership of Parliament Sections 42 (1) (b) and (e) respectively, becomes barred from electoral participation.
As we shall see, the effectiveness of the protection regime is partly a function of the strength of the transnational networks of nonstate and substate actors. The strength of the transnational networks is in turn a key determinant of the level of external pressure that the protection regime can generate and the level of resources it can mobilize and channel to the political opposition for support. Without the capacity to generate high levels of external pressure in particular, a weak protection regime is unlikely to be effective in altering the repressive behaviour of the target government. Broadly speaking, the strength of the transnational networks is largely conditioned by the international normative environment – a more conducive international normative environment for human rights has been an important determinant of the growth of these transnational networks. I have found that the strength of these transnational networks consists of five key dimensions: (1) the cohesiveness of actors (2) the availability and mobilization of material and intellectual resources (3) autonomy from the respective authoritarian government agencies abroad (4) the density of the networks and (5) the completeness of the networks. These five dimensions of strength are in turn determined by a confluence of endogenous and exogenous factors, presented in Table 4 below. The endogenous factors are those that pertain to the inherent characteristics of the actors and networks; the exogenous factors, on the other hand pertain immediately to the authoritarian government’s attitude and actions toward the protection regime. Importantly, the menu of responses available to target governments is influenced largely by other international structural factors of a geopolitical nature, as will be explained below.

More needs to be said about these five measures of strength, starting with the cohesiveness of the protection regime’s members. Although there is usually a high degree of ideological consensus on human rights and democracy, the cohesion of these nonstate and
Substate actors cannot be taken for granted as other issues or characteristics of the actors can introduce incohesion. The extent of cohesion is important because it determines the extent to which collective political action can be taken. Material resources also affect the strength of the networks as these resources determine the scale and type of political action possible. Thus, for example, lobbying activities require substantial finances and intellectual resources to navigate the ins and outs of the political system. More importantly, however, is the mobilization and not just the availability of material resources for the purpose of such activities. There are times when resources are potentially available, but the failure to mobilize them has kept them from being used productively.

Because the security and intelligence agencies of the authoritarian governments have been known to spy on, intimidate and/or co-opt members of the transnational networks in order to control them. The degree of autonomy that these actors are able to develop from these authorities is thus an important dimension of strength. The ability to exert autonomy from the control of the authorities is partly a function of the severity of harassment and intimidation suffered and the tactics of co-optation used. To a large extent, the determination of these actors to protect the political opposition can help to overcome the efforts of the authorities to exercise such control, however.

**TABLE 4**

**FACTORS THAT DETERMINE THE STRENGTH OF THE PROTECTION REGIME**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of Strength</th>
<th>Endogenous Factors</th>
<th>Exogenous Factors</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Cohesiveness of actors | • The extent to which actors share a strong collective identity on a variety of bases  
• The extent to which they are divided upon political issues of the country in question.  
• The extent to which they are divided upon issues in their own  | • The extent to which security/intelligent services of the home government have introduced/heightened incohesion amongst actors |
| Availability & mobilization of material & intellectual resources | • The extent to which actors are fluent in the requisite language for navigating political systems abroad  
• The professional background of actors  
• The extent to which actors are motivated to contribute | • The extent to which resources have been diverted toward the interests of the authoritarian government abroad |
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy of networks</td>
<td>• The degree of determination the actors have to achieve their objectives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Density of networks | • The extent of actor motivation for collective political action  
• The extent to which actors are geographically spread | • The extent to which the authoritarian government has the leeway to intimidate the actors/potential actors |
| Completeness of networks | • The extent of network density | • The extent to which the authoritarian government has the leeway to truncate and/or thin the networks |

What affects the strength of the protection regime is also the density of the networks. If networks are inherently thin on the ground, the capacity to undertake political action is likely to be limited. When many actors are involved, on the other hand, activities to raise the international profile of repression and mobilize resources to the political opposition tend to happen faster and on a larger scale. Last but not least, the extent to which the networks are transnational and members are well connected is important, since this affects communication and thus the ability to transmit information to the outside world. A network is considered incomplete when transnational ties are truncated, or if the network of members are only loosely held together at the domestic level. The ability of authoritarian governments to limit associational links between nonstate actors within national boundaries or to further limit the numbers operating within those boundaries could lead to truncation. To the extent that the networks are already inherently thin, therefore, it becomes much easier to truncate these networks.

The effectiveness of the protection regime in altering the repressive behaviour of an authoritarian government is not determined by the inherent strength of the transnational networks
alone, however. Strong networks able to raise the international profile of political repression in our cases or channel resources to the opposition can nevertheless fail to be effective either because international attention has not been engaged successfully and/or because the government is unresponsive to those pressures. It is important to consider other structural variables that may condition the extent to which the attention of the international community can be successfully engaged in the first place, and the extent to which the target government is sensitive or susceptible to international opinion in the second.

The international normative environment is clearly important in setting the stage for the engagement of the international community in questions of human rights violations by repressive governments, yet because this is a constant variable throughout our cases, any variation in effectiveness cannot be explained by the international normative environment alone. Rather, it is the specific and immediate geopolitical contexts that matter to the engagement of international attention. Similarly, it is the geopolitical environment that ultimately influences the extent to which authoritarian governments are susceptible to international criticism or negative international opinion. In some cases, particular geopolitical circumstances render target governments relatively immune to negative international opinion, in which case, they have more leeway to counter-target the protection regime itself and continue with repressing the political opposition. Without an examination of our cases, the nuances of these arguments cannot be fully understood, and so the following sections of this chapter will present our cases in detail.

The Protection Regime in Taiwan

The protection regime in Taiwan’s case can be said to have been both strong and effective in altering the repressive behaviour of the Nationalist government over time. While growth and development of the protection regime and the impact it had on democratic
development in Taiwan is traced in Chapter 7, what I present here is an analysis of the endogenous and exogenous determinants of its strength, and the reasons for which it was very effective in Taiwan.

The protection regime in Taiwan’s case can be said to have “scored” rather highly on all five dimensions of strength. The question of cohesion is an interesting and important one in the case of Taiwan because from an external perspective, the protection regime did not always appear cohesive, particularly as it pertained to the overseas Taiwanese community as a whole. More about why this was the case will be said later, but the reality was that the different actors involved in the pro-democracy movement were highly cohesive, because the actors not only shared “principled beliefs” in human rights and democracy, they also shared a common sympathy for the “ethnic injustices” suffered by the native Taiwanese. The overseas “native” Taiwanese were particularly apt in framing the democratization movement as a “civil rights” movement demanding political equality from the ruling “mainlander” elite, in keeping with their broader agenda of independence for Taiwan.\textsuperscript{514} Such a transnational theme for political struggle at the time provided an added basis for cohesiveness. Further, the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan had a historically strong sense of “native” identity. Its role as a bastion of cultural resistance in Taiwan will not be within the scope of this dissertation, but it is important here to point out that their “native” Taiwanese perspective had significant influence on the other nonstate and substate actors concerned. In this way, the “ethnic” dimensions of democratization provided a strong basis for collective identity between these actors, and brought about a high degree of cohesion.

Further, the ROC’s deteriorating international situation provided a sense of urgency to the need for democratization in the minds of many, since democratization promised the

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{514} For a useful discussion of how ethnicity has been used by pro-independence elements to distance Taiwan from China and thus justify their demand for de jure sovereignty, see Melissa Brown, \textit{Is Taiwan Chinese? The Impact of Culture, Power and Migration on Changing Identities} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).
loosening of the KMT ‘s monopolistic hold on foreign policy. Opposition politicians had articulated weighty criticisms of the KMT ‘s foreign policy in underground opposition magazines and during election campaigns, but had no opportunity to influence its direction. There were, of course, some differences between those who believed that the demand for Taiwan’s independence should be more explicitly articulated (as represented by World United Formosans for Independence and other pro-independence groups), and those who believed that the greater urgency lay with democratization (as represented by Formosan Association for Public Affairs and groups that advocated “self-determination”) amongst the overseas Taiwanese. 515 These differences were not fundamental differences, however, but differences of priority, method and timing. When a failed assassination attempt on President Chiang Ching-kuo during a state visit to New York was traced to persons connected to World United Formosans for Independence (WUFI) in 1970, and the organization became listed by the State Department as a terrorist organization, the organization began to lose credibility and those who sought to prioritize Taiwanese independence become generally marginalized.

That is not to say that the KMT authorities did not try to introduce incohesion amongst the members of the protection regime. The majority of the KMT ‘s efforts were directed at intimidating the nonstate actors, particularly the overseas Taiwanese who had become so crucial to the protection regime. Lin has noted, however, that the KMT had also sponsored various grassroots organizations to try to draw away members from the “native” Taiwanese organizations. 516 This was mostly unsuccessful, however, because the strong sense of collective identity made it particularly difficult to penetrate the overseas Taiwanese community. Further, it

515 Personal interview with Ben Wei, Taipei, 11 August 2005.
was impossible for the KMT to play the pro-independence groups against their moderate counterparts by encouraging its resurgence because this would undermine the interests of the Nationalist government as well. However, it has sometimes been impossible for outsiders to the protection regime to understand this high level of cohesion. This is because the KMT also had their own lobby groups and state-sponsored grassroots organizations such as the Taiwan Benevolent Association of America. Their contradictory campaigns and demands often had the effect of confusing the American public and members of Congress. In reality, however, these KMT-sponsored overseas Taiwanese groups were not part of the protection regime, but were groups opposed to the protection regime.

The Taiwanese protection regime also possessed high levels of material and intellectual resources, which they could mobilize quite readily. Because the availability of resources is fairly constant across my cases with regard to human rights activists, academics and students, journalists and Christian groups, the focus of discussion here is the overseas Taiwanese community. Most of the material resources used either as occasional “side payments” to substate actors and the maintenance of publicity activities, or that channelled to the political opposition in Taiwan, came from the overseas Taiwanese community - although there was no lack of resources available to the other actors because of the ability to tap into and mobilize the formal networks and organizations abroad, whether ecumenical or secular. The overseas Taiwanese community had increasingly comprised professionals and executives, or students who were pursuing higher education in the US. This demographic feature meant that financial and intellectual resources were available. Further, a high level of resource mobilization was perceptible, possibly because of the cohesiveness of these actors and the urgency of Taiwan’s international situation.

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517 Ibid.
The autonomy that members of the protection regime maintained from the KMT agencies abroad was also fairly high by the late 1970s. Earlier in the chapter we saw how the KMT had begun to target elements of the protection regime in the early 1980s - in particular, local Presbyterian ministers, members of the overseas Taiwanese community and even foreign academics – in an effort to intimidate them and sever links between those who comprise the protection regime and the political opposition. That there was fear amongst members was clear – the long arm of the security services included student spies who gathered information on participants in conferences, public lectures and other such gatherings, and secret society gangsters.

Further, the security services maintained an ancient Chinese system of political intimidation – that of punishing family members and friends for the “crimes” of the individual. This meant that the most vulnerable segment of the protection regime was in fact, the overseas Taiwanese community. Ultimately, those members who were foreign nationals were protected by their nationality, and indeed, many overseas Taiwanese acquired this status in order to do so. Yet, possibly because of a strong sense of ethnic identity and the urgency felt by the Taiwanese elements because of Taiwan’s precarious international situation, the motivation to overcome the threats posed by the security services was high. Further, the fact that the overseas Taiwanese were able to forge strong friendships and alliances with prominent members of the American and international community, also provided it a degree of autonomy.

The protection regime surrounding the opposition in Taiwan had developed dense networks of nonstate and substate actors by around the mid to late 1970s. The density of these complex networks is explained in part by the numbers of Taiwanese emigrating overseas to the

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518 Lin, p. 146. Ironically, many who were blacklisted and barred from returning to Taiwan were forced to acquire US citizenship or permanent residence, increasing the number of foreign nationals protected by their foreign citizenship.
US from 1976 onwards. Further, because they were well organized and very motivated, they had the ability to attract other actors to their cause – including “one-off” participants who agreed to act as messengers or couriers without incurring the suspicions of the authorities - adding to the density of the networks. The growing density of the networks was helped by the fact that the KMT government was rendered quite unable to thin out these networks by intimidation or elimination because of the counterproductive effects on its international image. In this regard, the particular geopolitical circumstances faced by the ROC were particularly important. Its effect on the geostrategic calculations of the KMT government was such that the importance of its “democratic” image outweighed the need of eliminating the growing transnational support for the opposition.

Density was, in turn, an obstacle to the authoritarian government’s attempts to truncate the protection regime by severing links between international and domestic actors. Where numbers are few, it takes very little to truncate the networks through border controls. The Garrison Command maintained its “blacklist” up until 1994– barring those considered a political threat from leaving or returning to Taiwan – but because of the density of these networks, it was impossible to completely police transborder movements of information and resources. This was not a simple problem of state capacity, however, but a matter of constraint owing to the international position of the ROC. Once the protection regime was allowed to develop, the frequency with which a dense network needed to be restrained would have had the effect of damaging the international image of the KMT government. Further, as the pressure to maintain the image of “Free China” increased with the international visibility of political repression in Taiwan and its growing international isolation, transborder movement controls also became

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519 See Appendix A, Fig. 3.
increasingly constrained in a downward spiral for the KMT. Thus, the complex networks in the case of Taiwan were mostly intact.

Because the protection regime in Taiwan’s case was a strong one according to all five specified dimensions, the likelihood of its effectiveness in altering the repressive behaviour of the KMT was high. This is because these networks were better able to channel more resources to the political opposition at times of need, on the one hand, and more importantly, better raise the international visibility of political repression in Taiwan, on the other. However, the strength of the networks, as discussed earlier, is necessary but insufficient to ensure the ability of the protection regime to constrain repressive behaviour.

To be able to effectively translate external pressure into high political costs for the government, international attention must first be effectively engaged by the efforts of the protection to raise the international profile of repression, on the one hand, and the authoritarian government must be susceptible to subsequent negative international opinion, on the other. If in the event the international community largely ignores the efforts of the protection regime, or it cannot sustain interest in the issues of political repression taking place, it will not matter how hard these nonstate actors tried to raise the international profile of political repression. On the other hand, if these networks were successful in engaging the attention of the international community and helps to form a negative international opinion of the government but the target government is not particularly concerned, these efforts cannot translate into effective constraints on repression either, and the protection regime remains ineffective. What conditioned the ability of these transnational networks of nonstate and substate actors to engage international attention and translate pressure into high political costs of repression for the Nationalist government?
Of course, an international normative environment where human rights was considered a legitimate issue of international concern enabled these actors to engage international attention towards the political repression taking place in Taiwan when framed in terms of human rights abuses. The international normative changes that occurred in the late 1970s as a result of the Helsinki process were therefore important. However, these conditions alone cannot explain the variation in outcomes across our cases, so there must remain some other explanation as to what made the protection regime so effective in the Taiwan case and less effective, as we shall see, in others. Indeed, specific to the Taiwan case were conditions of a geopolitical nature that allowed the protection regime to pressure the Nationalist government into changing their repressive behaviour toward the political opposition. Both international attention was successfully engaged and the KMT government was susceptible to negative international opinion for the following reasons.

While it may have seemed that the downgrading of Taiwan’s geostrategic importance in the Cold War as the US pursued a policy of rapprochement with the PRC would have relegated Taiwan to the margins of international consciousness, Taiwan remained the cornerstone of key strategic relationships in the region with potential global impact. The “Taiwan issue” remained a thorn in the side of US-Sino relations. Further, the “abandonment” of Taiwan took place within a broader context of the Guam doctrine, and thus had the potential to affect the confidence of US allies in the region. Some concerns were indeed raised in Japan and strategic relations with South Korea were severely undermined during the 1970s as a result of these developments and the example of Taiwan. The diplomatic impasse that developed during the early part of the Reagan administration as a result of Chinese pressure to limit arms sales to Taiwan following the

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promises of the 1982 Shanghai Communiqué further heightened public awareness of the continued significance of the “Taiwan issue” in world politics. Further, Taiwan’s struggle to restore its place in the international community meant that mulit-fora campaigns were launched precisely to prevent the international community from forgetting Taiwan. In this regard the powerful KMT lobbies in the US and Japan had the ironic effect of keeping international attention on Taiwan.521 In short, Taiwan failed to fade into the recesses of international consciousness merely because the US and much of the international community had formally derecognized its claims of de jure sovereignty over the mainland territories. The efforts of the protection regime to raise the international visibility of political repression in Taiwan effectively engaged the international community’s attention because Taiwan’s continued geostrategic importance had kept it “above the radar.”

The KMT government was particularly susceptible to negative international opinion precisely because of the international isolation it was suffering, however. This became particularly acute after US derecognition in 1979. Significant policy shifts in the People’s Republic under Deng in 1978 to “open up” China had begun to turn the tide of favourable international opinion toward China. Conscious of political competition with China, President Chiang Ching-kuo expressed in an interview with Katherine Graham of the Washington Post in 1981 that, “Especially today when the communist bandit regime is near the end of its road…it is more important than ever for us to strengthen the construction of constitutional government to demonstrate clearly that the strong contrast between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait is basically due to the fact that one side has implemented a constitution based on the Three

521 Such efforts in the US were well reported by the mid-1990s, but had in fact long since existed in the earlier form of the “China Lobby,” then later in the form of TECRO and the lobby firms hired. See for example, Elaine Sciolino, “Taiwan’s Lobbying in US: Mixing Friendship and Hardball,” New York Times 9 April 1996. A supposedly stronger lobby in Japan has also existed since the early 1970s. See Todd Crowell and Murakami Mutsuko, “Taiwan’s Lobby in Japan: It’s Stronger than the One in Washington,” Asiaweek 11 December 1998.
The fact that Taiwan’s military conflict with China had begun to be fought increasingly in the diplomatic arena by the 1970s determined to a large extent the sensitivity of the KMT to its international image as “Free China.” For these reasons the challenge that the protection regime posed to the KMT in exposing political repression in Taiwan to the international community was that it seriously undermined efforts to build such an image by a leadership who understood that more than ever before that it was important to maintain a place for Taiwan in the Western democratic camp. In this way, the efforts of the protection regime to raise the international profile of political repression translated easily into high political costs for the government, constraining its repressive behaviour toward the opposition.

Ironically, US derecognition helped to push Taiwan into further international isolation and created an even greater reliance on US military and political support. This in turn meant that the opinion of the US Congress carried even more weight. Indeed, the ROC was no longer dependent upon the US for economic or military aid by the 1970s. However, it was still dependent on US arms sales to maintain the military balance across the Taiwan Straits, along with other implicit security guarantees, which Congress had influence over. If not for the KMT’s Congressional friends, the security provisions binding successive US governments to sell arms to Taiwan might have never found their way into the Taiwan Relations Act. Thus, a positive international image of the KMT government was important, not least because it was imperative

523 There is evidence to suggest that by the 1980s, President Chiang had begun to lose his grip on the security apparatus, explaining why despite increasing concerns with Taiwan’s international image at the political center, potentially explosive political assassinations were still taking place in Taiwan and abroad. See Jay Taylor, The Generalissimo’s Son. This did not compromise state capacity for coercion, however.
524 The Carter administration’s Taiwan Enabling Act, submitted to Congress, did not contain any security provisions. This was worrying because the US had simultaneously terminated the Mutual Defense Treaty of 1954. The Taiwan Relations Act does not mandate US intervention in the event of aggression from China, however.
to their Congressional friends that they were not perceived by a disaffected American public to be supporters of an authoritarian government in Taiwan. For these reasons, the increasing susceptibility of the government to the efforts of the transnational networks to raise the international visibility of political repression in Taiwan increased with time and translated the “bottom-up” external pressures into constraints on the repressive behavior of the KMT.

The Protection Regime in South Korea

For comparative consistency I begin with an analysis of the strength of the protection regime along the same five dimensions delineated above, beginning with the cohesiveness of the nonstate actors. One of the main differences between the South Korean and Taiwanese protection regimes is that the nonstate actors in these transnational networks were not as cohesive as those found in the Taiwan case. The main locus of incohesion amongst these 5 groups of actors came from within the overseas Korean community, with specific reference to those settled in the US. The overseas Korean community was divided by suspicion, fear and rivalry, often impeding the collective political action required to raise the international profile of repression. This state of affairs was due in part to the particular features of the Korean American community, but the intelligence services of the South Korean governments also actively intimidated, co-opted and sowed division amongst them. As such, the most politically effective Korean Americans were those who operated through the Christian churches and ecumenical organizations.

Numerous sociological studies have suggested plausible reasons for the low level of political activism amongst the Korean American community, which had not always been the case. In the first and second waves of emigration to the US (1883-1902, 1903-24), students and
anti-Japanese political exiles were in fact politically active, and many played significant leadership roles in a small community that was made up mostly of plantation laborers. At this time, the overseas Korean community, which was concentrated in Hawaii, was active in the independence movement – which produced important nationalist leaders such as Syngman Rhee. As these students and political exiles left to return to Korea after independence from the Japanese, a leadership vacuum emerged, however, and political activism amongst the Korean American community atrophied significantly after 1945.

New political leadership failed to appear for the following reasons. Broadly speaking, the Korean American community was ethnically homogenous, which promoted political homogeneity. Indeed, the brutalities of the Northern Communist regime united anti-Communist Koreans and created a politically conservative culture that was prevalent in the Korean American community.525 Government-controlled media - which were either overseas offices of pro-regime news media in South Korea or newspapers set up by the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA) - further reinforced such a political culture. The overwhelming majority of anti-Communist conservatives amongst the overseas Korean community therefore dampened anti-government activism. In this importance sense their worldview was aligned with the anti-Communist authoritarian regimes of South Korea. In any case, those who were still opposed to the authoritarian aspects of the Park regime, in particular, could not openly espouse anti-government views because they could be labeled as communists or sympathizers and ostracized by other members of the overwhelmingly conservative, anti-Communist Korean American community. If they were considered important enough, they could also be neutralized by the

525 Phone interview with Martha Vickery, 8 November 2007.
KCI A through various methods.\textsuperscript{526} Such tactics were ultimately very effective in creating a self-policing mechanism amongst the overseas Korean community in the US, dampening political activism.

However, fear aside, sociological studies have indicated that an “unusually high proportion” of overseas Koreans in the US have been involved and continue to be involved in small businesses.\textsuperscript{527} The majority of those who emigrated to the US in the post-1965 period were university or college educated middle class individuals and their families not fluent in the English language. Because of difficulties in acquiring the language after being in the US, they mostly chose to become self-employed in the retail sector.\textsuperscript{528} Although many of those who emigrated during this time seem to have had some dislike of the political situation in Korea, their occupations prevented them from initiating or being involved in political activities.\textsuperscript{529} This was partly because small businesses in the retail sector demanded a 7-day workweek, leaving little or no time to devote to political activism.\textsuperscript{530} The overwhelming engagement of the overseas Korean community in small retail businesses also created intra-group conflict that dented the ability to undertake collective political action.\textsuperscript{531} This was ironically exacerbated by the lack of political-ethnic cleavages similar to that in Taiwan, which accentuated the conflicts created by bitter

\textsuperscript{527} Won Moo Hurh, \textit{The Korean Americans} (Westport, Connecticut; Greenwood Press, 1998).
\textsuperscript{528} Pyong Gap Min, \textit{Caught in the Middle: Korean Communities in New York and Los Angeles} (University of California Press, 1996), pp. 54, 70.
\textsuperscript{529} Personal interview with Korean American businessman, Los Angeles, 15 November 2007.
\textsuperscript{530} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{531} Hurh explains the sources of this intra-group conflict, p. 65.
This may have contributed to well-recorded personal conflicts within the Korean churches and amongst grassroots community organizations such as the Haninhoe, which further suggest the inability to undertake collective political action. Because of US-ROK trade disputes that affected the Korean Americans, the most successful of these businessmen whose resources might have been beneficially employed on behalf of the opposition in South Korea were recruited to work on behalf of the authoritarian regime instead. Indeed, these Korean American business lobbies were closely allied with the Park and Chun regimes in large part because US-ROK trade disputes intensified from the late 1970s onward.

The importance of the overseas diaspora cannot be overstated, however, because they lent legitimacy to the claims of human rights abuse used by the other foreign nonstate actors to raise the international profile of political repression. The lack of a united front amongst the overseas Koreans during the 1970s and into the 1980s could have had the effect of weakening the message of the human rights activists, Christian leaders, academics and foreign journalists. In the context of South Korea, however, this was mitigated precisely by the scale, frequency and brutality of political repression, which overt nature made it easier flag such violations to the international community despite the relatively higher levels of incohesion within the Korean American community.

An incohesive overseas Korean community also meant that it was weak in another respect – it lacked autonomy from South Korean government agents, a second dimension of strength. A high level of cohesiveness makes it more difficult for the Korean authorities to

532 For an alternative view, see Pyong Gap Min, pp. 216-7.
penetrate the community. The intensity of the Northern communist threat led to a much more aggressive monitoring of the overseas Korean communities and at the same time created a permissive environment for the labeling of all anti-authoritarian dissidents as “communist.”

However, had the overseas Korean community had the strong sense of identity that bound the overseas Taiwanese community, penetration might not have been as easy and a greater degree of autonomy might have existed.

The overwhelming engagement in business activities also created an unfortunate vulnerability to the coercive tactics of the military dictatorship overseas. The KCIA would often intimidate the Korean Americans by threatening to employ hooligans and gangsters to disrupt the businesses of individuals who were suspected to be engaging in anti-government activities. Owing to the fact that many of these businesses depended on imports from South Korea, it was also possible to threaten them with disruption of supplies. Threatening the livelihood of such individuals, whose businesses were often set up with borrowed capital from relatives and friends, proved to be rather effective. As Jerome A. Cohen, academic and long-time associate of Kim Dae Jung, put it in the *Washington Post* in 1974 upon the death of one dissident professor Che Chong Kil under KCIA custody, “Koreans shy away from discussing the case even in America, for the tentacles of the KCIA extend throughout not only their country but also our own.”

The lack of autonomy was thus not a function of the endogenous weaknesses of the component units of the protection regime alone, but that of the aggressiveness of the South Korean authorities. Fortunately, the outbreak of Koreagate scandal constrained the ability of the

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535 One of responsibilities of the KCIA agents at the Embassy was to detect and prevent contact between North Korea and local Korean residents.
536 Personal interview with Korean American journalist and activist, Los Angeles, 15 November 2007.
South Korean authorities from harassing and intimidating members of the protection regime on levels comparable to the early 1970s. The Koreagate scandal brought out into the open the extent to which the Korean American community suffered intimidation and harassment from the Park government during the 1970s, and not just the extent to which the Park government had succeeded in influence-buying in Congress.\textsuperscript{539} One Ret. Admiral Lee Yong Woon, active in anti-government circles in the US, testified that he had his motel broken into once by two armed men; his son was later detained and tortured in Seoul.\textsuperscript{540} Participants of anti-Park demonstrations abroad were closely monitored and photographed. Korean students – who were at times treated somewhat more delicately – were persuaded not to demonstrate on the grounds that their chances of future employment in Korea would be damaged, and interestingly, that they would get into trouble with the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the US.\textsuperscript{541} The Korean American Churches were also interfered with, as was a successful attempt to supplant them with the pro-government Unification Church.\textsuperscript{542} Congressional Hearings over the Koreagate scandal also revealed the extent to which the KCIA, which operated out of the Korean Embassy in Washington D.C., had penetrated the overseas Korean community – going so far as to plant “their own” into community leadership positions in grassroots organizations such as the \textit{Haninhoe}.\textsuperscript{543}

The autonomy of other segments of the protection regime was in fact compromised by the sheer fact that some of its members were of Korean nationality. Thus, for example, Korean counterparts to the foreign human rights and Christian activists have been known to suffer from

\textsuperscript{540} Ibid., p.95.
\textsuperscript{541} Ibid., p.96.
\textsuperscript{542} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{543} Ibid., p. 95.
close surveillance of the authorities, occasional raids and restrictions on their activities.\textsuperscript{544} If they were located in Korea, they would sometimes even experience brutality.\textsuperscript{545} In 1984, for example, a human rights worker was actually beaten up by men linked to the security services while at church.\textsuperscript{546} During the Chun government Koreans were routinely questioned after meeting with foreigners such as journalists.\textsuperscript{547} Further, a Congressional Research Service survey of US correspondents working in Korea revealed that the Korean Government had tried to interfere in their ability to gather news in Korea.\textsuperscript{548} When on Korean soil, even foreign transnational activists would experience harassment – AI temporarily closed its Seoul office in 1985 “on the grounds that the group’s independent activities were not possible under present conditions.”\textsuperscript{549}

While human rights activists and Christian leaders were less amenable to tactics to co-opt them, generous educational grants to the most prestigious universities in the US were known to be given during the 1970s in attempts to compromise the autonomy of academic opinion, as were attempts to buy over foreign journalists.\textsuperscript{550} While pro-Park foreign academics did testify positively on behalf of the government during Congressional hearings on the human rights situation in 1975, there is no clear evidence to suggest that such a position taken was the result of the government’s co-optation, however.\textsuperscript{551} The evidence presented at the Koreagate Hearings suggests, in fact, that such efforts only yielded mixed results. While there is a lack of positive

\textsuperscript{545} Ibid., 1982, p. 748; Ibid., 1983, p.818.
\textsuperscript{546} Ibid., 1984, p. 801.
\textsuperscript{547} Human Rights Report, 1985, p. 803. The law prohibiting Korean nationals from speaking negatively to foreigners about the government existed at the time.
\textsuperscript{549} Human Rights Report 1985, p. 809.
evidence that efforts to compromise the autonomy of the nonstate actors had eased by the time of
the Chun government, the lack of news coverage, hearings and investigations on this specific
subject does suggest that they had eased by the 1980s.

The third dimension of strength consists of the availability and mobilization of material
and intellectual resources. There is no evidence to suggest that the availability and mobilization
of material and intellectual resources on the part of human rights activists, Christian churches,
academics and journalists was any different in the South Korean case. A significant overlap in
the organizations and networks to which these actors belonged suggests that comparable levels
of available resources were available, and in fact, the scale of activities suggest that the
mobilization of these resources was at a high level. This was, however, not the case with the
overseas Korean community. For one, the lack of autonomy also compromised the mobilization
of what limited resources there were. The fear of being found out to be supporting anti-
government elements in South Korea tended to stifle material contributions to the cause of
protecting the political opposition, although contributions to the church were a way of getting
around this.\textsuperscript{552} Further, although material resources, and to a lesser extent intellectual resources
were available, we have seen that these were largely channeled into government lobbying
activities.\textsuperscript{553}

The availability of intellectual resources was more limited in the sense that the post-1965
wave of Korean immigrants had more difficulty with the English language, which limited their
ability to access and navigate US political institutions. Of course, the highly Americanized first
and second generation Korean Americans with a good grasp of the English language and familiar

\textsuperscript{552} Ibid. Most of the documental evidence of financial contributions point to donations by the Churches to the
victims of repression.
\textsuperscript{553} See Chung-in Moon, “Complex Interdependence and Transnational Lobbying: South Korea in the United States,”
with the American political system existed, but the nature of their organizations suggest that they were largely dedicated to cultural preservation amongst the Korean American community. Those with better grasp of English tended to be Christian leaders with many years of close contact with foreign missionaries, in which case, they tended to work within the Christian networks.

The fourth dimension of strength is that of density. The networks in this case were dense, but not for the same reasons as that found in the Taiwan case. It might be thought that the issue of unification might have given potential actors in the South Korean case a sense of urgency and motivation in support of the political opposition in a fashion similar to Taiwan. However, the issue of unification itself was complex, unwieldy and contentious, whilst the relationship between democratization and unification highly debated. South Korea’s national sovereignty was not at stake – unlike in the case of Taiwan. The issue of unification was therefore not as strong a source of actor motivation, particularly amongst the overseas Korean community. Instead, the scale and frequency of overt human rights abuses in the South Korean case was the principal source of actor motivation. The scale and frequency of brutality in South Korea was what attracted many of the nonstate actors involved.

This, of course, did not mean that the authoritarian governments did not attempt to thin the networks through intimidation. We have already seen how the security and intelligence apparatus was used against the overseas Korean community. During the early Yushin period human rights activists suffered severe harassment, whether they were Korean nationals or not. In November 1973, for example, four South Korean Section officials of the AI office based in Seoul were arrested. The Reverend Un Myung-ki, an executive committee member of AI’s South Korean Section, was sentenced to eight months’ imprisonment with a two-year stay of execution on charges related to “spreading a groundless rumor.” Four other directors of the section were
also detained for questioning by the KCIA. On 25 January 25, 1974, three AI international officials were also arrested in South Korea. These harsh responses were meant to discourage others from stepping forward to support the political opposition. Apart from this early period, there is less evidence to suggest that attempts to intimidate the foreign nationals that made up other segments of the protection regime took place. Most of these efforts became directed at the overseas Koreans or the Korean counterparts of these actors, particularly Christian leaders and human rights activists stationed in South Korea. As time went on, therefore, these networks grew denser and were mostly concentrated in the US (and Japan). Thus, on the whole, it may be said that the transnational networks that formed the protection regime surrounding the political opposition were dense, even though the overseas Korean component was mostly inactive.

It was again true in the South Korean case that the denser the networks, the more difficult it was for the authorities to truncate them. Attempts were, of course made to truncate these networks in order to disrupt informational flows within them, principally by prohibiting foreign members of these networks from entering and remaining in South Korea, or making contact with their Korean counterparts on the ground or the political opposition itself. While the foreign nationalities of many of these transnational actors inhibited the authoritarian governments of South Korea from thinning out the networks through harsh reprisals, it was still possible to attempt to truncate the networks by keeping them out. In the spring of 1974, for example, a blacklist of “undesirable foreigners,” most of which were considered to be foreign correspondents, effectively denied them visas, while those who were allowed into Korea were

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555 Ibid.
monitored closely.\textsuperscript{556} A few standing visas for critical foreign journalists were cancelled.\textsuperscript{557} In January 1974, the Ministry of Culture and Information announced that the Emergency Measures curtailing criticism of the Yushin Constitution would apply to foreign correspondents, not just Korean citizens. The New York Times correspondent Richard Halloran later stated that US correspondents were deliberately hampered or denied assistance by the Park government, and those whom they attempted to speak to were intimidated and harassed.\textsuperscript{558} Troublesome and high profile foreign Christian missionaries such as Reverend George Ogle of the UIM and human rights activists were also expelled from South Korea in 1974. The most severe attempts to truncate these networks were experienced during the early part of the Yushin period however.

Nevertheless, attempts by the Chun government to truncate the transnational networks seem to have revived in the early 1980s. AI sent a mission to South Korea in July 1981 to investigate reports of mass arrests and torture and to register their concern with the Chun government – only to be turned away because human rights was “too sensitive in South Korea at this time.”\textsuperscript{559} In the 1982 State Department Human Rights Report, it was found that the Chun government was generally been reluctant to grant visas and residence permits to foreign journalists. Controls over foreign travel were reintroduced in 1983.\textsuperscript{560} Further, it was pointed out that attempts to truncate the protection regime by preventing or punishing Koreans for making contact with foreign elements of the protection regime were undertaken then. Thus, “a Christian youth activist was sentenced to 18 months’ imprisonment in October 1982 on charges of

\textsuperscript{556} Report of the Subcommittee on International Organizations of the Committee on International Relations US House of Representatives, Oct 1978, p.305. Those not considered to be anti-Park broadcasters and journalists were invited on all-expenses paid trips to Korea.
\textsuperscript{557} Elizabeth Pond of the \textit{Christian Science Monitor} had her visa cancelled in 1974, as did John Saar of \textit{The Washington Post} four years later
\textsuperscript{558} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{560} This was presumably, on balance of payments grounds. \textit{Far Eastern Economic Review} Vol. 135, No. 6, 5 Feb 1987, p.56.
slander the Government in an interview with foreign reporters” under legal prohibitions in existence since 1975. It is worth noting that this law had never actually been exercised under the Park government, suggesting that the Chun government was much more serious in its attempts to truncate the protection regime. Korean members of the human rights or Christian components of the protection regime would be questioned at length after having been in touch with their foreign counterparts well into the 1980s. The fact that a very large percentage of South Koreans were Christians (40% of the general population) meant, however, that it was impossible for the Park and Chun governments to effectively truncate the Christian networks – explaining in part why the Christian networks remained the key component of the protection regime at this time. Further, by the 1980s, these networks had reached a level of density that made it difficult to effectively pursue the early Park policies of harassment and intimidation.

The overall picture we get is therefore of a protection regime under heavy siege from both the Park and Chun governments. Despite attempts to weaken the protection regime in various ways, the core of the networks centered on the Christian missionaries and human rights activists were nevertheless able to raise the international profile of political repression in South Korea. The transnational nonstate actors were successful in lobbying Congress, whose members went on to further raise the international profile of repression and pressure the executive branch of the US government to take a more forceful stance on human rights issues (see Chapter 8). As such, it would be fair to consider that the protection regime was as strong as that found in Taiwan. Further, the large scale and high frequency of brutality, made it much easier for the protection regime. The question remains, therefore, why it was that the authoritarian leaders of South Korea adopted a more aggressive stance toward the protection regime, and more
importantly, why the protection regime failed to be consistently effective in constraining the repressive behavior of the authoritarian governments of Park and Chun.

The answer to this question lies in the permissibility of the geopolitical environment, which answer also explains why the effectiveness of the protection regime was inconsistent despite its progressively growing strength. Indeed, in Chapter 3, we saw that the level of repression fluctuated throughout the 1970s and 80s, which pattern begs the question of whether it was the strength of the protection regime or its effectiveness that correspondingly varied during this time. During the 1972-6, 1979-82 and the 1986-7 periods when levels of repression remained high, a tough stance was also taken towards the protection regime (see Table 5 below). However, as we shall see in Chapter 8, this did not mean that the protection regime was particularly weak during those times. In fact, as the international normative environment encouraged the proliferation of transnational advocacy networks and instated human rights as a legitimate international concern, and the ability of the Park and Chun governments to intimidate and harass members of the protection regime eroded after the Koreagate scandal, individuals came together in increasing numbers to provide protection for the political opposition. This suggests that levels of repression remained high during those periods because the efforts of the protection regime could not translate effectively into high political costs of repression for the Park and Chun governments or because of having failed to effectively engage the attention of the international community.

The geostrategic position of South Korea in the Cold War, Western involvement, and the fact that political protests often took on a large scale and rambunctious nature precluded the possibility that the attention of the international community failed to be engaged, however. These conditions rendered the task of raising the international profile of political repression somewhat
easier, despite the aggressiveness of the Korean authorities towards the protection regime. The extent of media coverage and the dogged controversies over US Korea policy attest to that fact. This leaves us with the only other possibility – that the external grassroots pressures that were generated by the protection regime failed to translate effectively into high political costs for the authoritarian governments of South Korea.

Owing to the fact that the geopolitical circumstances of South Korea were qualitatively different in some significant respects that will be explained below, negative international opinion did not translate into high political costs for the government. As such, to become most effective transnational grassroots pressures had to be channeled through external state actors, namely the US. US failure during those periods to exert top-down pressure on the Park and Chun governments except in a few high profile cases, along with the general tone of disregard for human rights issues in US foreign policy at those periods supports such a contention. These findings further underscore the importance of structural factors and the contingent nature of agency in the explanations offered here, not to mention the complex relationship between state, substate and nonstate actors as sources of external pressure on authoritarian governments.

### TABLE 5
**VARIATION IN THE IMPACT OF THE PROTECTION REGIME**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Level of Repression</th>
<th>US-ROK Relations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1972-1976</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Security relationship firm; tensions later deepen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977-1979</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>US-Korea relations sour tremendously</td>
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<tr>
<td>1979-1982</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Unconditional US support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983-1985</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>US exerts private pressures to ease repression in exchange for continued support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986-1987</td>
<td>High; later capitulates on 29 June 1987</td>
<td>US ambivalent in support; later condemns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Here, explicit comparisons with Taiwan must be made. In the Taiwan case, the ability to translate external grassroots pressures into high political costs was contingent upon the susceptibility of the Nationalist government to negative international opinion. Short of consistent and forceful external state pressures, the Nationalist government was nevertheless constrained in its repressive behavior because of this susceptibility. This was in turn the result of Taiwan’s precarious international position – by the early 1970s, international isolation had set in. The confrontation with China thus turned into a diplomatic battle over the *de jure* sovereignty of the ROC, where the image of “Free China” was important. The national security of South Korea was not as immediately dependent upon the goodwill of the international community as it was on the goodwill of the US, however. Indeed, the UN resolution 195(III) of 12 December 1948 meant that the ROK’s national sovereignty was not moot from that point onward. The conflict with the North was thus more of a military one than a political one, underpinned by the commitments of the superpowers to the region. The fact that South Korea did not need to maintain a democratic image to win international favor in its confrontation with North Korea meant that it could afford to adopt an aggressive posture not only toward the political opposition, but also to members of the protection regime. This, of course, did not mean that favorable international opinion did not matter, of course, but that it mattered most as and when it affected US-ROK relations. *If by raising the international profile of political repression in South Korea effective constraints were brought to bear upon US support and bilateral relations were strained, the cost of political repression would be raised.*

It is thus no coincidence that during the periods when levels of repression remained high, US Korea policy has generally been supportive of the status quo in South Korea, that is to say,
during periods when the US was most accommodative toward the authoritarian leadership. The costs of repression during those times were low for the government. During the 1977-79 period when the level of political repression was perceptibly lowered, however, the Carter administration undertook a policy of open condemnation of the Park government’s human rights abuses. US-ROK relations also came under strain for a variety of other reasons besides that of human rights, not least Park’s secret nuclear arms program and the Koreagate scandal. It was during this period in time that we began to see the scaling back of repression and the resurgence of opposition activity to help bring about the “normalization” of bilateral relations.

After a period of silence on the issue of political repression in South Korea during the early years of the Reagan administration, signs that US foreign policy was changing on the question of human rights also began to appear by 1982. Genuine concerns that political repression was driving anti-Americanism were also surfacing in US policy circles. The potential that this had to affect US Korea policy prompted the Chun government to undertake a shift in gears by 1983, allowing the political opposition a relatively liberal environment within which to develop until 1985. During these two periods, the transnational networks of nonstate and substate actors generated grassroots pressures that constrained the ability of the US government to undertake a permissive Korea policy that would have condoned the repressive behavior of the Park and Chun governments – the principal subject of analysis in Chapter 8. Grassroots pressures in the case of South Korea can raise the cost of political repression in a much more indirect way than in the Taiwan case, underscoring the complex relationships between the different forms of external agency, as conditioned by the geopolitical environment.

Of course, political repression in South Korea took a consistently more brutal nature, indicating that the political cost of internationally visible repression was mitigated by South
Korea’s strategic value to the West in the continuing Cold War on the Korean Peninsula – a “privileged” position that Taiwan did not have. Such external pressures could go only so far as to provide the minimal protection to the political opposition as to make sure that the movement was not entirely extinguished. The very vulnerability of South Korea to the external threat posed by North Korea always secured US support for “what needed to be done” in the immediate term to return South Korea to some level of internal stability, public opinion on the morality of US foreign policy notwithstanding. At such periods of time, therefore, the international visibility of political repression tended to be less effectively translated into political cost for the government. This again underscores the external structural variables that condition the efforts of the transnational networks of nonstate and substate actors to raise the international profile of political repression.

The Protection Regime in Singapore

The protection regime in Singapore’s case was weak and its attempts to protect the political opposition failed accordingly. This failure is evidenced by the increasing state capacity and continued willingness to contain potential extra-parliamentary opposition elements, along with the use of libel actions to debilitate the parliamentary opposition into the 1990s. Why the protection regime was unable to develop in the Singapore context to an extent that would have enabled them to constrain the PAP government is the subject of discussion here.

Indeed, the protection regime was not deficient on all five dimensions of strength. There is no evidence to suggest that the five types of nonstate actors were incohesive to any significant degree, or that this contributed to a collective political action problem. The Christian leaders, journalists, human rights activists, academics and students and overseas Singaporeans who worked to raise the international profile of political repression in Singapore were mostly in
agreement as to why they supported the political opposition and how they would do so. Of course, unlike in Taiwan’s case, there did not exist a particularly strong collective identity based on grounds other than a concern for human rights and democracy. The problem with collective action did not stem from the lack of cohesion, but the lack of a critical mass of Singaporean emigrants in one place, owing to their tendency to fan out over many countries. As such, there were few formal social organizations for overseas Singaporeans in the time period we are interested in, except on University campuses.

There is also suggestion that the lack of mobilization across the board was at least in part the result of de-politicization back home – just as only marginal numbers were politically active in Singapore at this time, so this trend was reflected overseas. Although survey data conducted in 1991 amongst recent émigrés to Australia and Canada suggest that 30% of the Singaporeans interviewed left because of the “socio-economic and political environment,” they were nevertheless less likely to organize for political reasons except on an ad hoc basis. In the previous two cases I have underscored the importance of the overseas diaspora to the protection regime, whose claims of repression and strength of motivation can both legitimate and invigorate the efforts of the other actors in the regime significantly. The weakness of the protection regime as a whole is partially a reflection of the small number of politically active overseas Singaporeans in important places such as the US and UK.

On the question of whether material and intellectual resources were available, there is nothing to suggest that there were any differences between the transnational networks of human rights organizations, Christian churches, foreign journalists and academics and students working in the previous two cases and those in Singapore, since many of those same organizations were

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involved. Of course, the overseas Singaporean component of the protection regime was a different matter, and in this regard the small numbers of overseas Singaporeans necessarily limited the amount of material resources this particular group brought to the table. It should also be noted that during the 1970s, most of the politically active overseas Singaporeans were students whose material resources were more limited. As pre-tertiary education in Singapore was, and still is, conducted in English, the problem of language barrier did not exist for those who were domiciled in English-speaking Commonwealth countries and the US. Language did not pose a difficulty in the navigation of the ins-and-outs of the political systems there, and in this sense, the overseas Singaporeans had an advantage over many of the South Koreans. The Singapore government’s concern over a “brain drain” indicates that besides the few exiled political dissidents, the majority of overseas Singaporeans were students overseas or well-educated, middle class professional emigrants.

As the British university fee structure changed in the late 1970s, however, the availability of material and intellectual resources amongst this significant subset of politically active overseas Singaporeans became even more limited. There is evidence of increasing financial difficulties faced by a UK-based student organization SiMBA, for example, by the 1990s. One of its last newsletters read, “the 8 members present at the AGM in March took the decision to move away from Long Lane and to scale down activities… the organization, and especially its Newsletter, have had an influence and impact quite disproportionate to its membership (about 50, paid-up, at any one time, some of whom are unwaged). The Newsletter, in my opinion, was excellent, but the cost and effort of producing it and sending it to the many places where it
should be seen, were considerable. That cost, together with that of a London office, necessitated more fund-raising than the declining number of active members could manage.”

Insofar as the autonomy of the networks is concerned, there is widespread perception – reinforced by the apparent tabs kept on the “conspirators” and political exiles overseas revealed during the unravelling of the “Marxist conspiracy” in 1987 – that politically active Singaporeans were closely monitored both at home and abroad. However, overseas Singaporeans have not faced the kind of control Singaporeans face in Singapore, nor have they encountered the kind of harassment and intimidation that their Taiwanese and South Korean counterparts have.

Foreign nationals who were a part of the protection regime also did not face the same kinds of monitoring and harassment faced in the previous two cases. While this may suggest that the overseas Singaporeans enjoyed more autonomy as a whole, this was not true for the most politically active subset – the overseas students. As the increasing numbers that went abroad to study became state-sponsored, their autonomy to engage in activities to raise the international profile of political repression in Singapore dropped significantly without any need for overt intimidation or harassment. This was particularly obvious in the case of UK-based students, explaining to a large extent why the locus of activity shifted to students in other Commonwealth countries in the late 1980s – these tended not to be state-sponsored students. In one of the final newsletters produced by SiMBA, declining membership was attributed in part to Singaporean students, who were said to “appear reluctant to join SiMBA in case such membership reflects on their future careers (many students are of course on Government scholarships). Even some members of such specifically and overtly apolitical student groups as Oxford Singapore-

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562 SiMBA Newsletter, Issue No 5 July 1994, p. 3
Malaysia Forum...have been ordered by their parents to leave, or not to join.564 Fee structures and sources of student sponsorship also explain why Singaporean students in the US – who were largely state-sponsored because of the expensive fees in Ivy-League universities – were less politically active.

There is no evidence to suggest that overseas Singaporeans in general were closely monitored on a consistent basis, however. Owing to the fact that the level of mobilization was relatively low, it was unnecessary to do so. However, attempts to curb the autonomy of academics and foreign journalists to write critically not only about specific government policies and political leaders in Singapore, but to report on sensitive political events, has been made by the government’s numerous legal actions against such individuals. This was a practice that already began in the 1970s but intensified considerably in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In November 1974, for example, a local correspondent of the American magazine Newsweek was fined SGD 1500 on being found guilty of contempt of court following the appearance of a “scandalizing” article in the magazine earlier that month. The Singapore circulation manager of Newsweek and the retail sales agent were also fined. In 1985, a contempt charge was filed against the Asian Wall Street Journal (AWSJ) for an article deemed defamatory to the Singapore government. That same year, Deputy Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong also brought a lawsuit against the International Herald Tribune. In 1987, a lawsuit was brought on the Far Eastern Economic Review for an article on the unreported details of the Marxist Conspiracy affair and on 30 November 1989 a high court judge held that the magazine had libelled the Prime Minister in another December 1987 article, awarding him USD 115,000 in damages. That same month, the Singapore government further applied for a contempt of court citation against the AWSJ because of its report on this verdict. These legal actions have since 1990 become an even more effective

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564 SiMBA Newsletter, Issue No 5 July 1994, p. 5.
deterrent in that the Newspaper and Printing Presses Act was amended to compel foreign publications to post a SGD 118,000 security bond in case of lawsuits.

Nevertheless, these actions had only the limited effect of preventing the circulation of these newspapers and magazines within Singapore. They have not constrained publication and circulation abroad. Likewise, the Singapore government, having little direct leverage over the global and regional Churches and related ecumenical organizations, have only prevailed to persuade them to refrain from encouraging the growth of domestic opposition. Of course, local priests and ecumenical leaders were closely monitored, and enjoyed less autonomy from official authority in Singapore. The ability of Catholic Church ministers to call large crowds into action in neighbouring Philippines caused the Internal Security Department to keep one Catholic priest who showed signs of activism under intense surveillance for at least three years. The Home Affairs Minister also affirmed in his response to a parliamentary question on 30 November 1987 that church mail was routinely opened by the secret police and phones tapped. Similarly, transnational human rights activists originating from abroad enjoyed autonomy outside of Singapore, but were monitored closely while in Singapore. There were no overt acts of intimidation or harassment against these foreigners, however. Local human rights organizations simply were not allowed to exist.

Indeed, the PAP government did not weaken the protection regime through strong measures to compromise the autonomy of these transnational nonstate actors that we saw in the previous two cases. It did so by keeping the networks thin within Singapore, which then also made it easier to truncate these networks at the domestic level. Of course, the networks themselves were not as dense as in the case of Taiwan or South Korea because Singapore itself is

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566 Banished, p. 29.
a comparatively small country to begin with. The fact that most Singaporeans had been depoliticized by the 1970s also meant that very few were politically active, whether in Singapore or abroad. Further, the size of Singapore and the tight social control exercised by the PAP government meant that there were very few of these transnational actors involved with Singapore to begin with, whether they are human rights activists, journalists, academics and students, Christian leaders or overseas Singaporeans. As such, some of these actors found it more difficult to mobilize the formal organizations to which they belonged. This problem was particularly perceptible with the Christian churches and related ecumenical organizations. For example, when the Singapore authorities targeted the only four Catholic priests who openly supported the “Marxist conspirators” in 1987, pressure from the Vatican and the World Council of Churches could not be effectively mobilized and brought to bear on the Singapore government. It was rather accepted that their only option was exile abroad, further truncating the Christian networks. There was a similar lack of immediate response toward the expulsion of the Christian Conference of Asia.\footnote{Banished, p. 19.}

The density of the networks and the ability to truncate them are therefore closely related. The smallness of Singapore’s size made monitoring these networks and expelling these actors far easier than was the case in either Taiwan or South Korea, however. The political opposition, their family and friends were also discouraged from making contact with and informing human rights activists and journalists abroad about their condition. News tended to reach personal acquaintances (overseas Singaporeans) abroad more easily, however, once family members and friends in Singapore knew about them, therefore very little information on the whereabouts of detainees was usually given to them at the initial stages and visiting hours were later carefully
monitored. Political detainees were often warned not to say anything about their prison conditions to their family during visiting hours. When released, detainees were also subjected to restriction orders regulating their activities. These included restrictions to their freedom of movement both within Singapore and outside of Singapore and their ability to join non-governmental organizations and meet other political detainees. As such, not only were the transnational networks of the protection regime truncated at the domestic level, their connections with the political opposition were also heavily restricted.

The thinness of the networks also meant that it was far easier to pick individuals off one by one as the authorities saw fit. Many of the journalists and human rights activists who were found to be “interfering with the domestic affairs of Singapore” were systematically removed from Singapore or denied entry into Singapore. In June 1971, for example, the PAP government accused freelance journalist Anthony Polsky - who wrote for the *Far Eastern Economic Review* (FEER) and the *New York Times* - of interfering in Singapore’s domestic affairs by helping AI to compile a report on mistreated political prisoners. He was soon expelled. In 1977, two correspondents of foreign publications based in Singapore were arrested for “anti-government activities” – one of them deprived of Singapore citizenship in the meantime and deported. When it was increasingly difficult to maintain correspondents within Singapore in the 1980s, refusal to issue visas to visiting journalists kept them out of Singapore. The *FEER* was no longer allowed to place a resident correspondent in Singapore after 1987. During the Marxist Conspiracy affair in 1987-88, the chief correspondent of the *FEER* was refused entry at about the same time that another journalist of the AWSJ was told to leave Singapore. David Porter, the *FEER*’s assistant editor, was also refused entry at this time. In 1989, two *FEER* correspondents applied for temporary employment passes since it was no longer possible to enter Singapore on social visit
passes but was rejected. Narayanan Balakrishnan, another FEER correspondent based in Hong Kong was also refused entry to Singapore that year even though he was not on assignment. Similarly, human rights activists, particularly from the AI, were refused entry into Singapore. Academics such as DJ Enright and Northcote Parkinson were some well-known academics “eased out” of their positions at the University of Singapore. Other lesser-known ones merely failed to have their contracts renewed. The expulsion of the CCA in 1987 is another example of how Christian organizations were expelled from Singapore when seen to be involving themselves in political matters.

The protection regime in Singapore’s case suffered from several weaknesses, the most serious of which originate from the thinness of the networks and the ease with which the networks could be truncated. This meant that the efforts of the protection regime in Singapore as a whole were *neither as intense nor as sustained* as that taking place in Taiwan, and to a lesser extent, in South Korea. However, we have seen that despite this weakness, numerous campaigns to raise the international profile of political repression in the 1970s and 80s were launched. In one exceptional case, the Emergency Committee for Human Rights in Singapore (ECHRS) even lasted for over a year, consistently producing newsletters to raise the international profile of political repression in Singapore.\(^{568}\) Although these efforts had the effect of forcing the PAP government to justify its tight social control and reduce the number of political prisoners in custody, they ultimately failed to pressure the government into repealing the ISA, to prevent further legislation to strengthen state capacity for political repression, to stop the continued use of libel suits to cripple the parliamentary opposition and the continued use of restriction orders on former political prisoners – all of which have prevented the development of a strong opposition leadership and a movement for democratization.

\(^{568}\) The ECHRS produced a fortnightly newsletter between May 1987 and October 1988.
Indeed, the ability of the PAP government to thin out and truncate these transnational networks with impunity, and also repudiate the pressures exerted by the nonstate actors and substate actors in the US and UK, is explained at least in part by the immediate geopolitical environment in which Singapore was found. In light of these external structural factors it may be questionable if a protection regime without the inherent weaknesses as those seen in the Singapore case would necessarily become stronger or more effective. We have seen that the extent to which international attention may be engaged by the efforts of the protection regime, and even more importantly, the extent to which the authoritarian government is susceptible to international opinion, affects the ability of external grassroots pressures to translate into political costs of repression. Although Singapore punches above its weight in economic and political terms, in reality it is a tiny island-state with little direct relevance to the global balance of power. Although Singapore was a useful ally to the West at the height of the Cold War in Southeast Asia during the 1960s and 1970s, it was by that time no longer on the frontlines as the power struggle concentrated on mainland Southeast Asia. By the 1980s, Singapore served as no more than a convenient example of economically successful allies of the West. Interviews with both human rights activists and members of the overseas diaspora have suggested that it has been difficult to sustain international attention or interest in political events taking place within Singapore for any significant period of time, even when framed in terms of human rights abuses. As one interviewee put it, albeit with specific reference to the US, “We are nobody, Singapore is nothing to them.” The relative geostrategic insignificance of Singapore allowed the PAP government to fly under the radar of the international community in general.

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569 Phone Interview with a former overseas Singaporean activist, 3 March 2009.
An interviewee has also suggested that international commercial interests vested in the PAP government compounded the problem. However, the argument that vested economic interests caused the international community to ignore the repressive behaviour of the PAP government is difficult to establish when a comparative perspective is taken, since significant levels of such interests were also vested in the governments in Taiwan and South Korea. More plausible is the regime self-confidence that this helped to build, making the PAP government less susceptible to international opinion. In Singapore’s case, what little negative international publicity that was raised with the effort of the protection regime throughout the 1970s was duly taken into account but not accommodated, but by the 80s it generated surprisingly vehement counter-attacks, without consideration of the bad international publicity that this would further generate (see Chapter 9). Ironically, the reaction of the government by the 1980s further contributed to raising the international profile of political repression in Singapore. This suggests that by the 1980s, regime self-confidence was such that the PAP government considered that it could afford to disregard good international opinion altogether. It is suggested here that a combination of Singapore’s geostrategic insignificance to the global balance of power and its growing geo-economic significance to the West helped to build the government’s self-confidence in its ability to get away with political repression and as such it was less susceptible to international opinion.

Unfavorable external structural factors working against the protection regime notwithstanding, it is still important to note how the PAP government has circumvented international criticisms and managed to preserve its capacity to keep the political opposition in check through a combination of acquiescence, reinforcement and retaliation. A combination of these tactics has allowed the PAP government to prevent these pressures from building and to

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570 Ibid.
avoid capitulation to existing levels of external pressures. Under pressure from human rights organizations in the 1970s, the Singapore government acquiesced by significantly reducing the number of political prisoners. Over time, the methods of physical and psychological torture also became subtle. While this deprived detainees of the ability to demonstrate physical evidence of torture, it also reflected a response to the pressures of these human rights organizations. However, state capacity for indefinite detention without trial was at the same time retained and the capacity to crush both parliamentary and extra-parliamentary opposition forces reinforced through various legislation. In this way, it has in effect augmented the threat of repression, increased fear amongst the Singaporean populace and thus, ironically reduced the need to exercise this repressive capacity.

At the same time, the PAP government has taken great pains to retaliate against the protection regime at critical moments in order to weaken it, principally by thinning and truncating the transnational networks of nonstate actors, particularly at the local level. Ultimately, the PAP government has enjoyed the ability to undertake these tactical options because of its felicitous geopolitical circumstances, which have increased the range of possible responses to these external pressures. As much as the efforts of the protection regime generated publicity for political repression in Singapore the level of attention and concern of the international community was not sustainable over any significant period of time. By targeting the protection regime and limiting its strength, while at the same time acquiescing to limited curtailments to physical torture but reinforcing its ability to detain the political opposition, the PAP government has successfully resisted the external pressures generated by the transnational protection regime, explaining the continued weakness of the political opposition and the lack of democratic breakthrough in Singapore.
Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the kinds of nonstate and substate actors that influenced, to varying degrees, the extent of democratic development in Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore and introduced the concept of the protection regime with which to capture their theoretical worth. We have seen that the protection regime, while underpinned by the transnational advocacy networks that proliferated with important changes in the international normative environment in the mid 1970s, was more expansive in terms of both the kinds of actors involved and the principled causes they believed in. To differentiate these networks for the human rights advocacy networks described in the human rights regime literature, the term protection regime has thus been used in the context of this research.

This chapter has also provided a description of how the protection regimes in Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore differed along five key dimensions of strength. Although the protection regimes of Taiwan and South Korea were not exact duplicates of each other along these five dimensions of strength, both did indeed have strong protection regimes; Singapore, on the other hand had a weak protection regime. Such a comparative analysis goes some way in suggesting an explanation for the variation in outcomes between Taiwan and South Korea on the one hand, and Singapore on the other. However, the case of South Korea also demonstrates that a strong protection regime is not always able to effect the intended changes in the repressive behavior of target governments (see Table 6 below). As such, it is important to distinguish between the strength and effectiveness of protection regimes and to consider other sets of factors that might compromise a strong protection regime.

TABLE 6
COMPARISON OF PROTECTION REGIMES
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strength</th>
<th>Taiwan</th>
<th>South Korea</th>
<th>Singapore</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>Effective but Inconsistent</td>
<td>Ineffective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What the case of South Korea demonstrates is that the extent to which the external pressures generated by the protection regime can translate effectively into high political costs for the authoritarian governments in question depend also on particular geopolitical circumstances. Indeed, in South Korea’s case, the military nature of the confrontation with the North meant that its dependence on US support was much more important to the military governments than was favorable international opinion. As such, the bottom-up pressures generated by the protection regime were effective only insofar as it threatened to affect or affected US-ROK relations – it was precisely during those moments when US-ROK relations were low that we saw a dip in the level of political repression in South Korea. While in the South Korean case the protection regime may be considered to have exerted only indirect external pressures, the importance of their role in negatively affecting US-ROK relations cannot be denied. What the South Korean case really demonstrates is that a complex relationship can exist between state, nonstate and substate actors depending on the particular geopolitical context in question.

Part III of the dissertation will further analyze the kinds of activities that these state, nonstate and substate actors were involved in to generate external pressures on the authoritarian governments in question, trace the impact of their activities on the repressive behavior of these governments and thus provide an assessment of their relative roles. In so doing, it will further elaborate on the complex relationships between these actors within the international normative and geopolitical contexts already described.
Chapter 7
Taiwan

Introduction

Individuals dedicated to the protection of Taiwan’s political opposition came together in increasing numbers in the 1970s and 80s, a trend reflective of the proliferation of transnational advocacy networks worldwide. At around this time, the opposition movement in Taiwan was increasingly taking a social movement turn as well. The emergence of such transnational

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571 “By the end of the 1970s, there were several thousand people worldwide who were dedicating themselves to the cause of Taiwan’s human rights. Their focus was on rights of speech and publication, as well as on the release of political prisoners.” The Road to Freedom: Taiwan’s Postwar Human Rights Movement (Taipei: Chen Wen-chen Memorial Foundation, 2004), p.145.
nonstate and substate actors with the express purpose of protecting the political opposition at such a juncture in Taiwan’s opposition movement was important for several reasons. As I have explained in Chapter 2, without these social movement oriented elements within the political opposition pushing for mobilization beyond the electoral arena, the quasi-stasis of a long-drawn out process of “liberalization” might yet have continued and democratic breakthrough might yet have been delayed. The diplomatic setbacks suffered by the KMT government did not automatically push it towards democratic reform as has been suggested by previous research. As we have seen in Chapter 2, the KMT leadership tended to extend only limited concessions to the opposition while simultaneously seeking ways to contain them.

Indeed, the coercive capacities of the state at the disposal of the KMT leadership remained unchanged throughout the 1970s and early 80s. Further, the propensity to use these coercive apparatuses of the state to crush the democratic movement also continued, as the 1979 Kaohsiung Incident demonstrated. The insecurities created by international isolation, had in fact the propensity to trigger a hardline approach to the ‘radical’ elements that were increasingly unwilling to work with the authoritarian regime solely within the limited electoral parameters tacitly agreed upon after the Lei Zhen Incident. It was all the more important, therefore, to protect these activist elements of the democratic movement at this critical juncture in the development of the opposition movement. Further, such elements were treated with suspicion within US policy circles, and had less support to begin with from the international community because of fears that increasing popular mobilization would lead to political instability in Taiwan, with adverse security implications for the region.\textsuperscript{572} The KMT’s propaganda machinery was well able to project an image of an “irresponsible” political opposition to audiences.

\textsuperscript{572} Suspicions toward these ‘radical’ elements were owed in part to their more explicitly pro-independence stance, which could ultimately strain Cross-Strait relations if there was an expansion of political space to accommodate them.
witnessing the democratic struggle both within Taiwan and beyond. It is in such a context that we should regard the importance of those activities engaged in by the complex networks of transnational nonstate and substate actors in order to protect a democratic movement that continued to be under siege even when the KMT government was slipping into an externally-induced legitimacy crisis.

This chapter describes and analyses precisely such a “protection regime,” long overlooked by research that focused on “top-down” sources of external pressures toward democratization. My research findings suggest instead that a growing political opposition with demonstrable mobilizational capacity in the electoral arena and on the streets began to exert with increasing success, “bottom-up” pressures on the KMT from 1977 onward. This was possible in part because of the support extended to the political opposition by transnational nonstate and substate actors. Although the state capacity for coercion remained unchanged, there was also a demonstrable hesitance on the part of the authoritarian regime to crush the opposition from 1980 onward. This is explained by the rising cost of political repression generated by the activities of the “protection regime” to raise the international profile of political repression. This aspect of the protection regime’s activities was especially crucial to the eventual success of the democratic movement.

Of course, what is important to realize is that the strength and effectiveness of the protection regime in Taiwan – already compared to those in South Korea and Singapore in Chapter 6 – highlight the importance of the geopolitical context, which conditions the ability to translate the international visibility of political repression into high political costs for the authoritarian regime. What we will see in this chapter is that because of these geopolitical circumstances, Taiwan represents a straightforward case where external grassroots pressures
exerted by the protection regime was a direct causal factor in altering the repressive behaviour of the KMT government. In what follows, I therefore focus on the protection regime itself, first describing these transnational networks of nonstate actors and the content of the protection they offered to the political opposition in Taiwan. I then examine the role of substate actors that also form a part of the protection regime. In this section of the chapter, I simultaneously assess the comparative role of substate and state actors in order to highlight the relatively weak role played by state actors widely perceived to have contributed to democratization through external pressure. This is followed by an important section where I systematically trace the impact of the protection regime on the repressive behaviour of the KMT government and the trajectory of growth in the opposition movement.

The Transnational Networks of Nonstate Actors – Who Were They?

In Chapter 6, I outlined five principal types of nonstate actors involved in the protection regime: Christian church leaders and ecumenical workers, human rights activists, overseas Taiwanese, students and academics and foreign journalists.\(^{573}\) In Taiwan’s case (as in the case of South Korea and Singapore), the majority of these transnational nonstate actors were foreigners originating from the US, Canada, Japan and Europe. Their status as foreign nationals explains how they came to provide protection for the opposition – their citizenship status gave them greater leeway to undertake the transnational activities that they did.\(^{574}\) Many of the overseas Taiwanese also had foreign citizenship or permanent resident status – although their Taiwanese

\(^{573}\) Many actors often belonged to two or more of these categories either simultaneously or at different points in time.

\(^{574}\) For example, Miyake Kiyoko, a Japanese national married to a Taiwanese was “able to travel freely to Taiwan” and as such “was often charged with the responsibility of conveying important information abroad.” However, Rick Ricketts, a US national was expelled and court martialed in 1971 for transmitting human rights related information abroad. Several foreign Church ministers were also expelled and blacklisted for helping to protect the political opposition. See *The Road to Freedom*, pp. 144-5.
origins tended to compromise their security, their foreign passports also gave them more transnational mobility. Indeed, the KMT controlled the transnational mobility of the Taiwanese by way of both entry and exit permits granted through the Garrison Command, restricting their transborder movements, and a blacklist of persons considered a political threat was maintained during the martial law period. However, given the ROC’s precarious international diplomatic situation, the KMT was leery of causing any diplomatic fallout should any foreigners claim to be harmed or harassed while in Taiwan or traveling to and from Taiwan. This meant that foreign nationals were naturally protected by their nationality. At worst they could expect to be deported from Taiwan and placed on the KMT’s blacklist, barring them from return. Realizing the advantages they had over the KMT authorities, many were willing to utilize their status as foreign nationals to assist and protect the political opposition – one foreign activist going so far as to marry a leading opposition figure in doing so.575

The Nature of the Transnational Networks

In order to understand how these actors came to form a protection regime, it is also necessary to understand the nature of the networks they formed within and outside of Taiwan. By mapping the transnational networks spatially, it is possible to better perceive the general relational patterns formed by these complex networks and thus understand the nature of their operations. These five types of actors were often closely associated with one another, and cooperated to the extent that their objectives overlapped.576 Excepting foreign journalists, these actors would most consistently have spent time living in Taiwan. As a result, they would have

576 Not all actors had the explicit objective of effecting political change in Taiwan but all were concerned about human rights abuses. Personal interview with Lynn Miles, Taipei, 17 August 2005.
established a network of close associates while in Taiwan, including opposition politicians, their families and sympathizers.

These networks were informal and personalistic, however, permitting occasional KMT penetration. Incidences of espionage often had the effect of increasing trust between those already proven true to the cause, tightening the affective ties between a handful of these central actors, which would in turn consolidate as the central nervous system of the transnational networks. These core actors, by virtue of the fact that they are closest to the pulse of things, would mostly be located in Taiwan itself, although transborder movements and deportation meant that this was not always the case. This tightly knit core of the transnational networks would be the center of information and directives.⁵⁷⁷

Such information and directions would often, but not always, be disseminated and carried out by a peripheral layer of actors with limited knowledge of the overall purpose or content of their activities. This peripheral layer of actors were often selected spontaneously, and occasionally involved students and other random members of society available at the time. For example, taxi drivers would be recruited on the spot to deliver some documents, students who were friends of friends would be instructed to have documents stowed away in creative places and brought overseas.⁵⁷⁸ Many never questioned the contents of the documents they were carrying, either because they were sympathetic to the cause of the political opposition, felt a strong “native Taiwanese” identity which characterized the third wave opposition, or because of their personal relationships with those who requested assistance. For whatever reason this was

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⁵⁷⁷ “Miyake Kiyoko from Japan and Lynn Miles from the US played crucial roles in the informational “underground railroad.” They circulated abroad the latest information on Taiwan’s human rights situation, while staying in close contact with such human rights workers as Dr. Tien Chao-ming, Chen Chu and Hsieh Hsiu-mei, and they maintained constant correspondence with foreign human rights volunteers in Taiwan, many of them working clandestinely.” The Road to Freedom, p. 145.
⁵⁷⁸ The Road to Freedom, p. 146.
the case, it provided a degree of insulation from penetration at the core by the KMT authorities. Depending on the job at hand, these peripheral actors could either be foreigners or everyday locals who had a degree of domestic and transnational mobility. The degree of informality can therefore be very high indeed.

Amongst those who make up the networks, there appears to have been a strong collective identity, however, particularly those at the core of the networks who were bound together by a profound sense of danger as members of an underground movement, if not common ideological or principled beliefs. This explains in large part the informal aspects of such an organizational form. In the case of Taiwan, the common cause of democracy and human rights was overlaid with the sense that an émigré KMT government had created a socio-political system of injustice, a discursive theme that was colored with much stronger sub-ethnic overtones for those Taiwanese living outside of the island and their foreign friends.\(^{579}\) This was the case because the majority of activists exiled during the White Terror campaign were pro-independence activists who believed that Taiwan was not part of China either culturally or politically. Amongst many of the nonstate actors of the transnational networks, identification with those who shared the principles of democracy and human rights in addition to this sense of injustice was strong, not least because of the successful framing of the human rights abuse by an authoritarian government in Taiwan in terms of “ethnic injustice” by the overseas Taiwanese, many of whom were part of

\(^{579}\) During the 1970s and early 80s the opposition in Taiwan had in fact begun to look past this sense of ethnic injustice, advocating instead a common identity amongst “the residents of Taiwan” against that of the KMT government. As Fuchang Wang points out, sub-ethnic cleavages between “mainlander” and “native” Taiwanese were not as deep as is sometimes depicted. After decades of social interaction, common living experiences, the KMT’s mobilization of local interests, and a successful cultural policy, the boundaries that might have existed between the two sub-ethnic groups had been largely blurred. Fu-chang Wang, *From Democratization to Ethnic Politics: The Development of Democratic Movements in Taiwan, 1970s-1990s* (in Chinese) (Taipei: Academia Historica, 2004), p. 549. Denny Roy also argues that, “ethnic tensions between mainlanders and Taiwanese were lower after the 1960s because of intermarriage and the economic success of Taiwanese in the private sector, which ameliorated their resentment over the mainlander domination of public sector employment.” See Denny Roy, *Taiwan: A Political History*, p.162.
the Taiwanese Independence Movement (TIM). The ability to cultivate such a collective identity was not without obstacles, however. As we shall soon see, Christian missionaries – especially those with a strong native Taiwanese identity - provided an important venue of contact and discussion amongst dissidents and activists operating within Taiwan, which facilitated the deepening of this collective identity amongst the members of these complex networks.  

Finally, one important feature of the core of the complex networks was its capacity to activate formal organizations and their networks abroad, mobilizing their resources for the support of the opposition and creating channels of information otherwise unavailable for news of political repression to surface in the international community. Important in this regard are the Christian churches, global and regional Christian organizations, human rights organizations, overseas Taiwanese associations, educational institutions of higher learning, student and news organizations. These networks were thus formed not only on the basis of personal, affective ties amongst the actors, but consisted of formal organizational links as well.

The Content of Protection

Such transnational networks of nonstate actors were able to provide the political opposition with protection in two primary ways. The first is by mobilizing material and psychological support during incidences of repression, and the second by raising the international visibility of political repression in Taiwan. The latter form of protection, as we shall see, was particularly important.

The networks carried out three specific functions, the first of which was to mobilize the resources of formal organizations and networks abroad for the democratic cause in Taiwan. The second was to create channels of information, particularly for the outflow of political news, to

\[580\] For the effects of this strong collective identity on the strength of the protection regime, see Chapter 6.
the international community. The third function was to generate accurate information on Taiwan’s political situation. In this way, the networks were able to help sustain the political opposition during times of repression, on the one hand, and pressure the KMT government to reduce the severity of repression, on the other. Ultimately, the ability to place sustained ‘bottom-up’ external pressure on the KMT government by raising the international profile of political repression was most important because it raised the political cost of repression for the regime, thus constraining such behaviour for the future. This then allowed the political opposition to gain further strength by mobilizing popular support.

Three of the most important organizations that carried out these functions were the Christian churches and their ecumenical agencies, human rights organizations and the overseas Taiwanese organizations – all of which had global interlocking networks, not least because many of the actors had overlapping memberships in each. For example, many of the numerous human rights groups were para-church organizations. At the same time, many of the Taiwanese diaspora community were also members of these para-church organizations because they were members of the church. A more detailed discussion of these organizations is warranted, and we begin with the Christian churches and their ecumenical agencies.

Research into the Christian community on the island itself has revealed that the majority of the Christian Churches were not consistently engaged in public affairs or actively resistant to the authoritarian regime during the period concerned, with the exception of the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan (PCT). The principal reason for which the PCT was politically active was because it was historically a bastion of local Taiwanese language and culture even before the
arrival of the Nationalist forces in 1949. As such, the PCT was opposed first of all to the KMT’s cultural policies, which aimed to “sinicize” the Taiwanese by banning the use of the local tongue in all social spheres, including that of the Church. This was repressive and “undemocratic” in the view of the PCT. Individual Christian missionaries and leaders from other denominations such as the Methodist, Catholic and Mennonite Churches have been known to be involved in supporting the political opposition, however. The Maryknoll Order of the Catholic Church, for example, worked closely with the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan to preserve the native Taiwanese tongue by praying, reading and delivering sermons in *Taiwanhua*, as a symbolic form of political resistance and tacit support for the democratic movement.

At the same time, the PCT and these other Christian churches maintained formal links to churches of the same denomination overseas - particularly in the US - and to other Christian denominations owing in part to their membership in regional and global ecumenical organizations such as the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) and the World Council of Churches (WCC) respectively. Close contact between different denominations that worked on similar social issues or were sympathetic to the “native” Taiwanese existed in Taiwan itself, aiding the linkages abroad. Indeed, it has been observed of Asian churches in general that, “living in a minority situation, [they] do not have the capacity to effectively challenge governments when restrictive measures are introduced,” and as such “those churches which face the most severe repression from authoritarian governments have developed strong support networks in Western countries which enables them to quickly attract world attention when they

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582 Personal interview with Rev Lyim Hong Tiong, Taipei, 29 July 2005.
are under attack.”583 Further, the role of the WCC as “a center for clearing information among ecumenical groups and initiating world action is of strategic importance to Asian church groups.”584 These statements were both applicable in the case of Taiwan.

These formal links allowed for financial resources to be raised on occasion in order to support the publication of opposition magazines at different points in time.585 Further, these Christian organizations mobilized both material resources to support the families of incarcerated dissidents and provided less tangible and yet crucial psychological support they needed at the most vulnerable moments in the history of the democratic movement.586 During the Kaohsiung Incident, for example, these Christian organizations were crucial in both senses, not least in providing support for opposition activist Lin Yi-hsiung. Importantly, these Christian organizations also allowed for the generation of accurate information about Taiwan’s political situation. The homes of some of these foreign missionaries stationed in Taiwan would often serve as a “communications hub” at which foreign academics, journalists and human rights activists could gather to establish contact with one another and learn of the local political situation. This was in fact a crucial contribution because the media was tightly controlled by the KMT within Taiwan, whilst a significant amount of KMT propaganda existed outside of Taiwan.

Christian networks also allowed information generated at the core of the networks in Taiwan to be channelled both within global Christian networks and beyond. News of political repression in Taiwan would circulate in Church newsletters and radio programs, through telephone reports and even sometimes in sermons.587 Their outreach extended in one very

583 Ron O’Grady, Banished, p. 76.
584 Ibid. This was not entirely the true in the Singapore case, however.
585 Personal interview with Winston Dang, Taipei, 17 August 2005.
586 Personal interview with Yao Chia Wen, Taipei, 22 July 2005.
587 Telephone reports are political news updates accessed by the congregation or non-Christian interested persons by dialing a certain number. Personal interview with Linda Arrigo, Taipei, 24 August 2005.
important respect to members of the US Congress. These Christian groups sometimes acted as agents introducing the Taiwanese political opposition to members of the US Congress, in conjunction with grassroots Taiwanese organizations in the US. For example, Representative James Leach was first introduced to a pro-opposition Presbyterian minister by his aide Cynthia Sprunger, daughter of a Mennonite missionary who grew up in Taiwan. By mobilizing their resources to invite abroad certain members of the political opposition to give public lectures and to meet members of Congress, these Christian Churches and their ecumenical agencies not only allowed for first hand accounts to generate overseas, they helped to put a face on the opposition movement in Taiwan. This was crucial in reducing the indifference of the American public towards the plight of Taiwan’s political dissidents and mitigating any misunderstanding of the democratic movement generated by the KMT-controlled Government Information Office (GIO). In times of danger, these networks could therefore be more easily activated to protest the repression of the political opposition in Taiwan and further raise the international profile of repression.

One notable difference between Christian organizations and other types of nonstate actors lies in the fact that they also comprised the activist wing of the opposition movement itself. Generally speaking, the increasing drive towards social action within Christian churches and related ecumenical organizations since the 1970s meant that political activism was also rising at this time within some Churches. In the specific case of Taiwan, the strong “native Taiwanese” identity of the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan meant that its leaders were at the forefront of an

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588 Personal Interview with Ben Wei, Taipei, 11 August 2005.
589 The political opposition was often painted as subversives that had the potential to destabilize Taiwan and, in turn, the region.
anti-KMT movement espousing a liberal democratic polity that would redress the “ethnic injustices” of the authoritarian regime. Owing to the political activism of certain Christian leaders, the protection regime also shaded into the opposition movement itself. This also explains why the Christian churches were a vital component of the protection regime: they were able to activate their transnational organizational linkages when attacked by the authorities as part of the opposition. Nevertheless, the Christian community in Taiwan was small and the PCT and other Christian churches and ecumenical organizations were not the central breeding ground for political opposition. As such, the churches did not attract as much attention from the authorities as in the cases of South Korea and Singapore.

Numerous international and regional, faith-based and non faith-based human rights organizations played a role in creating channels for the outflow of accurate inside information on political repression in Taiwan.\(^{591}\) Amnesty International (AI) features heavily, however, because of the explicit link made between human and political rights, and because of the fact that by 1977, its reputation as a Nobel Peace Prize winning organization had secured the legitimacy of its cause. In any case, human rights activists associated with the AI also formed their own organizations by using their own resources – important examples being the International Committee for Human Rights in Taiwan based in Seattle and the International Committee for the Defense of Human Rights in Taiwan based in Japan.\(^{592}\) A handful of members forming the core

\(^{591}\) Some of these were the Human Rights Watch, Human Rights Internet, a Canadian-based organization that promoted information exchange within the human rights community, Democracy International and the Society for the Protection of East Asian Human Rights in New York. Note also that faith-based (Christian) human rights organizations such as the Asian Center also existed and worked alongside non-faith based organizations. These organizations may have had a more global reach, while others were regional, such as the International Committee for the Defense of Human Rights in Taiwan (based in Osaka), the Taiwan Political Prisoner Rescue Association (Tokyo). Taiwanese Americans also organized their own human rights groups, such as Formosan Association for Human Rights (New York) and the Overseas Support for the Democratic Movement in Taiwan (Chicago).

\(^{592}\) The ICHRT published the Taiwan Communiqué, which was explicitly pro-independence. However, because financial resources were limited, these publications were fewer in number and circulation was much smaller. It was run by Gerrit van der Wees and his Taiwanese wife Mei-chin van der Wees, who became important figures in the
of the transnational networks described above were human rights activists from or associated with the AI. As a result of close relationships with the political opposition, their families and their sympathizers, these activists had in their possession a wealth of accurate inside information on significant political events, which would be relayed either in their Annual Reports or in their country-specific, issue-related Briefings. The AI also sent legal experts as foreign observers to the trials of dissidents to ensure a fair trial. Failing this, the unfairness of those trials would be reported and made known internationally. In this way, they contributed to the generation of accurate inside information on the political situation in Taiwan. By appealing to the authoritarian governments for the release of what Amnesty International calls “prisoners of conscience” and sending representatives to inquire about them, they also provided much needed psychological support to the political opposition and their families.

It is important to note that the importance of the AI itself preceded the growing tide of human rights activism from the mid-1970 onwards because it had already become well established by then.\textsuperscript{593} Thus, we see that the AI had already begun to play a significant role in raising the international profile of political repression in Taiwan by the early 1970s. In 1970 the AI published a secret list of 237 political prisoners, which information had been painstakingly smuggled out of Taiwan through an American pastor Michael Thornberry, who was then based at the Taiwan Theological College and Seminary. This was a significant breakthrough in that the international image of “Free China” and of the Nationalist government was still largely favourable, and very little was the known of its repressiveness.\textsuperscript{594} As another example, AI sent

\textsuperscript{593} The AI was established in London in 1961.
\textsuperscript{594} This document was passed on from one political prisoner to another until it reached Thornberry, who then handed it over to other opposition activists before it finally reached the then secretary general of AI, Martin Ennals.
observers to appeal for the release of Taiwanese political prisoners on 30 September 1973, and later appealed to President Chiang Kai-shek for the release of Taiwanese journalist-writers Li Ao, Bo Yang and Li Ching-sun who were detained with a petition with over 250 signatures of journalists. At the same time, a representative of AI was sent from Japan to inquire after the health conditions of Taiwanese independence leader Hsieh Chong Min, who had been charged with treason in 1972.

Importantly, the professional and social status of some of these observers – respected academics, for example – lent such information credibility and thus gave it *value*. The value of the information is important because the political opposition needed a form of “currency” to engage sections of the international media, which were not necessarily committed to the causes of human rights and democracy as these other types of actors were, whose anti-Communist political leanings ultimately favoured the Nationalist government, or who simply had to be convinced that the official version of events presented by the KMT were untrustworthy. The KMT possessed a formidable propaganda machine outside of Taiwan. A human rights activist interviewed pointed out that in the 1960s and early 1970s, it was in fact difficult to convince visiting foreign journalists of political repression because they would either disbelieve these accounts, or refuse to publish them because of the potential damage it would do to the geostrategic interests of the US and its allies in the Cold War. Some junior reporters further expressed doubt as to whether their editors would allow the accounts given by these human rights activists on the ground to see the light of day even if they reported them. Nevertheless, the fact that these eyewitness accounts presented a version of events very different from that provided by the KMT sometimes gave them the value of sensationalism that promised greater readership, and were thus picked up. However, the accuracy of this information still remained

595 Personal interview with Lynn Miles, Taipei, 17 August 2005.
profoundly important because it increased the probabilities that the mainstream media would pick up on them and run those stories without risk to their own credibility.\textsuperscript{596} The more widely this information was disseminated through the mainstream media, the greater the international visibility of the KMT’s human rights abuses. Indeed, a handful of journalists were key to introducing the opposition movement in Taiwan to the international community still ignorant of what really was going on in “Free China” during the early 1970s.\textsuperscript{597}

Overseas Taiwanese grassroots organizations, particularly those found in the US and Japan, were also important to understanding how these transnational networks came to provide protection to the opposition. Guided principally by the fact that Taiwan’s single most important strategic relationship at this time was with the US, I focus on the various Taiwanese American communities that had the most potential in influencing the direction of its policies towards Taiwan, not least through the mobilization of American public opinion. That is not to deny, of course, that many Taiwanese had also emigrated to Japan, especially during the 1950s and 60s.\textsuperscript{598} The most politically active of these were pro-independence advocates, however, making Japan the principal overseas arena for the TIM from the 1950s onward. As a result, the overseas Taiwanese community in Japan was treated with great suspicion by the KMT authorities and links were extremely difficult to establish with the political opposition in Taiwan, marginalizing their significance to the democratic movement in Taiwan. Of course, Taiwanese nationalists were also found amongst the overseas Taiwanese organizations in the US. Nevertheless, the Taiwanese American community tended not to advocate independence too openly, especially when they sought help from their Congressional friends and US officials, who discouraged them

\textsuperscript{596} Détente with China had created a much more conducive environment for the circulation of these eyewitness accounts amongst the foreign media by the mid-1970s.
\textsuperscript{597} See The Road to Freedom, p.149.
\textsuperscript{598} This earlier wave of emigration was mostly to Japan because as a former Japanese colony, many Taiwanese spoke the language.
from doing so not least because they did not wish to support a movement that could potentially complicate cross-Strait relations. Because the focus of their campaigns against the KMT was still within the bounds of ideological acceptability to the KMT, the Taiwanese American community did not suffer the kind of close surveillance and truncation as the Taiwanese in Japan. It is also for this reason that my research has focused on the Taiwanese in the US.

The principal contribution of the Taiwanese American community to the political opposition in Taiwan did not consist of material support. The Taiwanese American community had in their possession the requisite financial resources to help sustain the opposition movement in the 1950s and 60s, but rapid industrialization in Taiwan meant that their contributions became increasingly insignificant with time. Financial resources were known to have been repatriated back to Taiwan to support the opposition movement and its publications, but this was considered to have become a negligible source from the 1970s onwards. 599 The Taiwanese American community was vital in helping to raise the international profile of political repression in Taiwan, however, a role that grew to considerable significance by the 1980s. During the 1950s and 60s, the overseas Taiwanese based in the US played a limited protective role, in part because border controls restricted contact between the local Taiwanese and their contemporaries abroad. Apart from those who belonged to the TIM, most Taiwanese emigrants during this time were also less engaged in anti-KMT activities, possibly because the majority was of “mainlander” origin.

By the 1970s, however, this had changed as an increasing number of “native” Taiwanese went abroad for further studies or began to emigrate. Between 1977 and 81, there was a surge in

599 Personal interview with Winston Dang, Taipei, 17 August 2005.
Taiwanese emigration to the US, in particular. The number of “native” Taiwanese organizations that were independent of the KMT-sponsored “mainlander” Taiwanese organizations increased dramatically all over the US, concentrating in large urban centers. There were a wide variety of organizations, including the Taiwanese Association of America and the Taiwanese American Citizens League which were explicitly native Taiwanese in identity and political in nature; the Taiwanese Alliance for Democratic Rule in Taiwan with an explicit agenda to promote democracy; the Formosan Association for Human Rights that was established in 1976, worked closely with Amnesty International to flag human rights abuses in Taiwan; and other “Formosan” associations with an explicit pro-independence agenda such as Free Formosans for Formosa, United Formosans for Independence and the United Formosans in America for Independence. Numerous Taiwanese Community Centers or cultural associations also existed where Taiwanese Americans clustered. Above and beyond the fact that the overseas Taiwanese tended toward organization, over a third of these emigrants were also highly educated professionals and executives conversant in English, with the capacity of grasping and navigating the ins-and-outs of the US political system and in possession of financial resources to become politically effective.

This would prove important because by the early 1980s the nature of overseas political activism began to change significantly, turning away from the ineffectual radicalism of the World United Formosans for Independence (WUFI). This change in the nature of the overseas opposition movement was important because it further muted the pro-independence overtones.

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600 See Appendix A, Fig. 3. The sharp rise in Taiwanese emigration to the US after 1965 is explained by the Immigration Act of that year, which abolished previous discriminatory legislation favoring Western European immigrants. The National Origins Quota Act of 1921 restricted Asian immigration into the US while the 1924 Johnson Reed Act allowed China, Japan and Korea no annual quota whatsoever until the Immigration Act of 1965.

601 See Appendix A, Fig. 4.

602 See Appendix A, Fig. 5.

603 Personal interview with Wu Li-pei, Taipei, 25 July 2005.
that were in fact prejudicial to the democratic movement in Taiwan because it aroused no small
degree of suspicion. In fact, efforts to go in a different direction had already appeared in the late
1970s when opposition member of the Taiwan Provincial Assembly (1949-75) Kuo Yu-hsin fled
to the US in 1977 after receiving death threats in Taiwan. The Overseas Alliance for Democratic
Rule in Taiwan was formed under his leadership in order to lobby Congress on issues of
democracy and human rights in Taiwan.\textsuperscript{604} In the wake of the \textit{Kaohsiung} Incident, a handful of
overseas Taiwanese and human rights activists also went on to form an ad hoc “Taiwan lobby” in
Washington D.C. to “stop further arrest[s] of opposition leaders and release all detainees arrested
abruptly after the Kaohsiung Human Rights Rally,” and ultimately to achieve the “normalization
of internal political process[es].”\textsuperscript{605} It was not until 1982 that we saw a clear and sustained
directional change in the form of the Formosan Association for Political Affairs (FAPA),
however.

FAPA was a permanent organization set up specifically to undertake more effective
lobbying activities in Washington D.C. on a number of issues, not unlike the Nationalist “China
Lobby” that had previously existed.\textsuperscript{606} FAPA organized grassroots petition letter campaigns,
generated its own news releases, wrote letters published in a wide variety of newspapers and
provided useful information for individuals and groups on how to lobby the US legislature. The

\textsuperscript{604} This grassroots organization was represented at several Congressional Hearings, including the Hearings before
the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, 96\textsuperscript{th} Congress, First Session, February 7 & 8, 1979.

\textsuperscript{605} Document entitled, “Human Rights for Taiwan: re Kaohsiung Incident of 12/10/1979,” private collection of
Linda Arrigo. Its members were Mark Chen, Chen Wan Jen, Hsu Hsing-liang, Peng Ming Min, Linda Arrigo and
Nellie G. Armonson.

\textsuperscript{606} FAPA, now headquartered in Washington D.C., was established in Los Angeles as a non-profit educational
organization in 1982 (under US tax code 501(c)(3)) by prominent overseas Taiwanese activist Trong Chai, who had
disagreements with the WUFI leadership. Local chapters were established in every US state subsequently.
In 1984, a Canadian chapter was established in Ottawa and was later turned into an independent organization dealing
specifically with Canada-Taiwan relations. The “China Lobby” had started to lose influence and support by the late
1960s, but the KMT still maintained a formidable lobbying machinery which it used to “peddle influence” amongst
key decision-makers in the US. Richard Allen, former national security adviser to President Ronald Reagan who has
served both as a paid and unpaid advisor to Taiwan (and South Korea) has said that, “They're either tied with or
KMT would soon scramble to keep up with what was an aggressive public relations war waged by the American Taiwanese, particularly those in the Washington area, even though FAPA had limited success in influencing policy at the State Department and White House directly. In this way, such overseas Taiwanese organizations were important not only in cultivating important relationships in Congress, they were crucial in raising greater awareness of the KMT’s repressive activities in US political circles and amongst the wider American public. Many Congressional Hearings were the culmination of the efforts of the Taiwanese American lobby, including those on the murders of opposition activists Chen Wen-chen and Henry Liu. The Taiwanese diaspora community was a critical component of the protection regime because it lent the necessary credibility to the opposition movement in Taiwan by bearing witness to the international community of the repressiveness of the KMT government. This was especially the case when members of this community consisted of former political detainees or political exiles.

Last but not least, foreign academics, students and journalists also had a role to play in increasing the visibility of human rights abuses and the extent of political repression in Taiwan in a variety of ways. Letters exposing the repressive aspects of Nationalist rule written by

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608 The Lobbying Act and the Foreign Agent Registration Act allowed voluntary interest groups and grassroots organizations and individuals, including those organized by foreign institutions, to engage in lobbying activities, translating foreign-policy issues into domestic ones. By the 1970s, direct lobbying of executive officials became increasingly accepted - the Carter administration set up a public liaison office at the White House in 1978 - but FAPA was set back in this regard precisely because derecognition meant that access to US officials was denied to the Taiwanese.
609 The overseas Taiwanese were trying to drive home the scandals that plagued the KMT government at this time. These included the questionable death of US permanent resident and KMT critic, Professor Chen Wen-chen, in Taipei shortly after “an interview” with the Taiwan Garrison Command in 1984. Shortly after, Henry Liu, another KMT critic residing in San Francisco, was murdered in his home by two thugs. This incident was particularly scandalous because it involved Wang Hsi-ling, head of the Intelligence Bureau of the Ministry of National Defense (IBMND), Chiang’s eldest son Alex Chiang, other members of the KMT party, and the Bamboo Gang, a secret society long associated with the IBMND. This incident not only exploded the illicit ties between shady underworld characters and one of Taiwan’s most notorious institutions (that had incidentally been nurtured by President Chiang himself in the past), but also put Chiang’s family in a bad light. At the same time, the Tenth Credit Cooperative, owned by Tsai Chen-chou, a KMT legislator and boss of the Cathay Group, and was put on the verge of bankruptcy due to over-lending and misappropriation of company funds ($192mn) for private use. This led to the worst financial crisis and (non-political) demonstrations in Taiwan. The scandal brought down two successive finance ministers.
prominent academics such as John K Fairbank and Ezra F. Vogel in leading newspapers such as *The New York Times* is a notable example of how the American public and the international community would be educated about the political situation in “Free China.” Others, such as Robert Kagan, would even criticize US foreign policy for supporting “dictatorships” in the attempt to influence US Taiwan policy, with the effect of raising the international profile of political repression in Taiwan. Expert testimonials during Congressional Hearings also served to educate the US political elite and the American public. Of course, not all academics held a negative opinion of the KMT government, and some even testified on behalf of the KMT during Congressional Hearings.

Foreign students and academics also sometimes acted as agents conveying reports, name lists, photographic evidence, personal letters and other important documents abroad without detection – an important role short of the communications technology we have today. Sympathetic foreign journalists, often at the junior level, along with academics, would also convey such documents and communications, thus acting as channels of information to the outside world. There were a few occasions when these networks have enabled certain dissidents to escape from the KMT authorities and from Taiwan itself, bringing them to safety and further publicizing the repressiveness of the regime. Sympathetic academics have further been known to provide fellowships at their institutions to political dissidents - making safe exile abroad, from which their political cause could be further pursued, a financially feasible alternative, a prominent example being Professor Peng Ming-min. Failing this, the emotional

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612 See *The Road to Freedom*, p. 146.
614 See Peng Ming-min, *A Taste of Freedom*.
support that they provided to the activists and their families at moments of repression have been invaluable in sustaining the morale of the dissidents.

Altogether, these transnational networks of nonstate actors protected the political opposition in the following ways. First, they helped to generate accurate, credible and thus valuable information about political repression in Taiwan that could be circulated abroad. Secondly, they provided channels through which such information could get out of Taiwan and circulate internationally and they helped to make contact with other actors that could further publicize this information and place pressure on the KMT. This gave increasing international visibility to the political opposition movement, raising the cost of repression for the KMT. Further, these networks also mobilized and channelled the resources of the formal organizations to which they were affiliated, allowing valuable material resources to reach the political opposition when the families of downtrodden dissidents often denied a living by the KMT needed it most. The emotional support that they provided to the activists and their families at times of heavy repression cannot be discounted either - numerous former activists interviewed have confirmed the importance of this psychological support. In cultivating such external linkages, the political opposition thus obtained the necessary protection to sustain the democratic movement.

The Comparative Role of State and Substate Actors

To the extent that international actors have been considered important to Taiwan’s democratic movement, the main focus of the literature has been on state actors that appeared to have exerted external pressure on the KMT to democratize. In this regard, the role played by the US has been considered most important, because the particular relationship of military and diplomatic dependence that the ROC had with the US gave the latter the most leverage over the
Nationalist government. As a regional democracy and the world’s second largest economy with strong trade relations with Taiwan, one might have thought that Japan would have used its potential leverage to actively “promote” democracy and the respect of human rights there.\textsuperscript{615} However, Japan’s foreign policy was very much constrained by the legacies of its aggression in the region and its defeat in World War Two. Relations with its regional neighbours were conditioned by the burning memory of Japanese war crimes, constraining its capacity to undertake any policies that might be construed as interference in the domestic affairs of its neighbours, some of whom it had once colonized. Moreover, Nationalist forces had fought a bitter eight-year war with imperial Japan between 1937 and 1945, during which time about 20 million died. Although anti-Japanese sentiment has since receded for the “native” Taiwanese with the gradual reshaping of Taiwanese historical memory, the voluminous expressions of anti-Japanese feeling amongst Chinese nationalists throughout the world over the Diaoyutai affair is also reflective of the extent of anti-Japanese feeling in Taiwan during the time period concerned. This explains Japan’s failure to play any significant role in promoting democracy in Taiwan.

Upon closer examination, the role of the US as a democracy promoter in Taiwan has at best been ambivalent, however. The Chiang Kai-shek government had the tacit approval of the US during the White Terror campaigns to eliminate all opposition to the KMT while post-withdrawal “secret wars” with China were still being fought.\textsuperscript{616} At this time, only very mild and occasional private remarks indicating US disapproval of the brutal treatment of the political opposition were ever made. For example, when Chiang Ching-kuo visited the United States in September 1953, Secretary of State Dulles casually mentioned in private that he had heard Chiang’s father “was a little rough in his handling of security matters,” and suggested a gentler

\textsuperscript{615} Japan was Taiwan’s biggest export destination after the United States up until 1999.  
\textsuperscript{616} See Jay Taylor, p. 211-12.
method only obliquely by adding that the US had problems of subversion too which were not dealt with in such a way as to infringe on human rights.\(^{617}\) At this time, the US concern over political repression seems to be limited to the potential political instability it might have caused by provoking the “native” Taiwanese.\(^{618}\) Further, the concern of the State Department over the arrest of Lei Chen and his supporters in 1960 was muted by Ambassador Drumright’s position that “it would be useless for the Untied States to try to change things, because Chiang [Kai-shek] ‘[was] prepared to reject any US intervention if it comes,’” and that, “it was not in America’s interest…to promote any more democratic change on Taiwan than the Generalissimo and Ching-kuo believed wise, noting the stark fact that free elections would doom the KMT.”\(^{619}\) This, he suggested, would be “disastrous to US interests.”\(^{620}\) US officials continued to avoid criticizing the KMT’s methods of political repression into the 1970s because by this time, the US needed close co-operation of the KMT to pursue its policy of détente with China since Zhou Enlai had indicated clearly that “there [was] only one outstanding issue” in US-PRC relations – “the US occupation of Taiwan.”\(^{621}\)

The Carter administration’s foreign policy focus on human rights has been credited with linking the KMT’s treatment of the political opposition to US-ROC relations, which had become extremely crucial to Taiwan’s diplomatic survival and continued military supremacy over the PRC at the time, however.\(^{622}\) In actuality arms sales to Taiwan increased during the Carter administration, indicating that the treatment of Taiwan’s political opposition or human rights

\(^{619}\) Taylor, pp. 260-1.
\(^{620}\) Ibid.
\(^{622}\) Bush, Chapter 4.
violations were never explicitly tied to national security issues, rhetoric notwithstanding. Further, US government arms agreements actually increased during the first half of the Reagan administration, even under pressure from the PRC to reduce arms sales after the 1982 Communiqué. When official arms agreements did decline between 1985-6 under pressure from the PRC, commercial arms sales rose in compensation. These trends indicate clearly that, despite the human rights rhetoric of its leaders, the principal US concern was that of Cross-Straits security. In a revealing admission, a former American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) official who was asked about the role played by the US in Taiwan’s democratization indicated that the Taiwanese achieved it themselves with almost no help from the US.

These views are by no means irreconcilable, but they force us to unpack the role of the United States as an influential state actor in Taiwan’s democratization, and to understand the dilemmas inherent in its policies toward Taiwan. Despite the human rights concerns in the White House at this time, the priority of the State Department and the AIT officials on the ground was to ensure that the democratic movement would not destabilize Taiwan and give the PRC an opportunity to mount an offensive, undermining US national interests. This position was articulated as early as 1960 in debates over what actions to take following the Lei Zhen crackdown. Thus Ambassador Drumright wrote, “We have known all along that a free political atmosphere is an unattainable goal if we want [a] stable, militarily secure Taiwan to deter [the

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624 See Appendix A, Table 7 and Figure 6. For more on the position of the Reagan administration with regard to arms sales to Taiwan and US-China relations, see Feldman, Harvey, “Taiwan, Arms Sales and the Reagan Assurances,” American Asian Review Vol. 29 No. 3 (Fall 2001): 75-101 and Shirley Kan, “China/Taiwan: Evolution of the One-China Policy – Key Statements from Washington, Beijing and Taipei,” Congressional Research Service Report for Congress, 7 September 2006, p. 43.

625 Personal interview with a former US diplomat, Taipei, 5 March 2005.

626 Most interviewees gave little credit to Japan, although Japanese human rights activists played a small role.
Communists and preserve our peripheral defenses … We really have no alternative in terms of our own security but to continue [the] policy … to work with Chiang and [the] KMT. Neither [the] world situation nor objective conditions here permit [the] luxury of [a] free organized opposition.” 627 This cautious approach was naturally taken towards the social movement-oriented “radicals” of the third wave of opposition in the 1970s. The limited role that external state actors played was precisely due to their hesitance to support what was seen to be “radical” opposition elements, which as I have tried to explain in Chapter 3, were the very forces that had broken through the stasis of an indefinite process of “liberalization” and contributed significantly to democratic breakthrough. As a former Taiwanese journalist sympathetic to the opposition put it, “It wasn’t always possible to know if you could trust the Americans. They had a “double handed” policy … they tended to adopt a wait-and-see attitude.”628 The sympathies of many officials lay with President Chiang Ching-kuo because he was believed to be a pro-reform leader who favoured gradual, stable change - completely in line with US interests in the context of larger geopolitical considerations.629 Thus, the favoured approach was to encourage stable negotiations between the moderate factions of the opposition and what was considered the liberal reformers within the ruling elite – thus contributing to the perpetuation of the long process of “liberalization” without significant immediate prospects of democratic breakthrough.630

As such, US officials exerted direct pressure on the KMT in a limited and inconsistent fashion throughout the period concerned. Between the 1950s and 70s, opposition elements were given little if any support owing largely to security considerations. The KMT government, under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek in particular, was also highly suspicious of the activities of the

627 Bush, p.65.
628 Personal interview with a former journalist and opposition activist, Taipei, 1 April 2005.
629 Bush, p. 198.
630 Personal interview with Edward Friedman, Toronto, 10 February 2006.
CIA and would often accuse the US of instigating an overthrow of the Nationalist government, making it difficult to show any support for opposition elements.631 By the mid to late 1970s, however, the political atmosphere in the US itself had changed dramatically due to the Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal, leading to a greater need to maintain, at the very least, a public appearance of a moral foreign policy. However, ensuring that prospects for democracy still remained, while simultaneously preserving socio-political stability in Taiwan was a difficult tightrope to tread. Thus, while US officials on the whole tended to look the other way when “low-visibility” political repression took place, they were compelled to intervene in certain instances of “high-visibility” political repression that could either threaten to spark social instability in Taiwan, or become a cause for public criticism of the US government. This tended to reinforce the impression that the US was a key external actor in Taiwan’s democratization, whereas the US leadership was a reluctant critic of the regime at best. The extent to which external state actors moved to publicly condemn political repression was largely dependent upon the success with which the transnational networks were successful in raising the international profile of political repression and engaging the attention of the international community.

The complexities involved thus resulted mostly in the gentle but somewhat less effective approach of quiet diplomacy. Before the Kaohsiung trials took place, for example, AIT officials privately advised President Chiang Ching-kuo to refrain from harsh reprisals, for fear of damaging both the international image and interests of Taiwan and the US.632 However, “private advice” alone could not raise the costs of political repression sufficiently and the regime proceeded to prosecute opposition leaders that were not even present at the 1979 rally. Further, when quiet diplomacy could not prevent the apprehension and trial of the opposition leaders for

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treason – which held a potential death sentence – the US State Department subsequently fought to contain the public relations fallout for both the Taiwanese and US governments. Although the State Department duly included the Kaohsiung Incident in its 1980 human rights report - the role played by gangsters employed by the security agencies to stir up a riotous crowd was downplayed, despite the fact that this was a point of consensus amongst US officials present in Taiwan at the time. 633 This was an express effort to keep the public image of the Nationalist government clean. That US officials did not desire to be publicly seen as supporters of such repressive governments was further underscored by the testimonials of State Department officials at Congressional Hearings over the Henry Liu murder in 1985, where the best effort to downplay the harassment and intimidation meted out to critics of the KMT by its intelligence and security agencies was exerted. Deputy Assistant secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs testified on 7 February 1985 that there was no proof of a consistent pattern of harassment or intimidation against overseas Taiwanese in the US. 634

Although the Carter administration’s human rights policy failed to translate in any concrete fashion into the protection of the opposition, Reagan’s reversion to pragmatism on normative issues heralded worse. His belief that the US should not criticize its allies would have decidedly strengthened the hand of the hardliners within KMT against the political opposition. During his presidential campaign, Reagan – who had long been a strong supporter of the ROC and the Nationalist government even before his election as president - promised to restore official relations with the Republic of China. Although this never materialized, it had become obvious that the US was at this time at least determined to circumvent Chinese pressure to stop

arms sales to Taiwan in support of the KMT government.\textsuperscript{635} In the meantime, the KMT leadership launched a diplomatic offensive with a four-point program expressing congruence with US interests and normative concerns, even before the new AIT Director James Lilley had even left Washington for Taipei. The KMT promised to democratize, “Taiwanize,” further modernize and establish working relations with China.\textsuperscript{636} Good first impressions made, Chiang Ching-kuo came to be seen by Lilley as “a visionary and strong leader.”\textsuperscript{637} Such was the perception that the State Department officials “in their heart of hearts…did not want to come down hard on [Chiang] Ching-kuo” over the Henry Liu affair, which Congress was pursuing rigorously.\textsuperscript{638} Indeed, the US remained largely silent on political developments in Taiwan during this time.

The protective role played by members of the US Congress toward the political opposition in Taiwan was more consistent and significant, not least because the interests of Congressional members were served in being receptive to the concerns of their anti-KMT Taiwanese constituencies. Although I have included these substate actors in the community of principled actors, their individual interests were also served by taking up the repression of the political opposition in Taiwan as a human rights cause, since the Taiwanese American organizations who lobbied them were also engaged in fundraising activities for these

\textsuperscript{635} Both Reagan and National Security Advisor Richard Allen – who had drafted Reagan’s campaign pledge to restore US-ROC relations – had wanted to enhance relations with Taiwan even at the risk of alienating China. Secretary of State Haig was of the position that US-PRC relations should be of first priority, however, even at the expense of Taiwan. Reagan’s unofficial mentors, such as ex-President Nixon, had stressed the strategic importance of China as a counterweight to the Soviets. Eventually, the view that US-PRC relations were too important to sacrifice for the sake of “no more Vietnams, no more Taiwans” prevailed even though pressures from most of the White House staff and Republican Congressmen such as Barry Goldwater, Jesse Helms and James S. Thurmond to fire Haig continued in the first term of the Reagan administration. See Taylor, p. 371 and also Lou Cannon, \textit{President Reagan: The Role of a Lifetime} (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991).

\textsuperscript{636} Taylor, p. 370.

\textsuperscript{637} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{638} Ibid., p.391.
Congressional representatives. Institutional interests were also served by exposing the repressive aspects of the KMT government. Important changes taking place in the relationship between Congress and the State Department at the time was giving the former more leeway in the oversight of foreign policy matters. This could be said to have given members of Congress Pell, Solarz, Kennedy and Leach – most consistently supportive of the political opposition and thus considered by the Nationalist government to be its nemesis – much more leverage in scrutinizing the KMT. At the same time, however, exposing the KMT’s authoritarian tactics gave Congress a raison d’être to intervene increasingly in US foreign relations issues. The holding of Congressional Hearings and the issue of symbolic resolutions, press conferences held in the US and abroad, regular tours and reports by the Committees of both Houses in turn made the human rights abuses of the KMT highly visible to the American public and the international community. This further compelled the State Department and White House to take some issue with the KMT’s authoritarian practices under the changed international normative environment.

Following US derecognition in 1979, the KMT leadership would have also grown cautious in taking action that would either alienate or embarrass their Congressional friends and their constituencies who had proved so vital in bringing about the Taiwan Relations Act, which had saved the KMT government from an outright legitimacy crisis. These Congressmen later fought to prevent the abandonment of Taiwan before and after the 1982 Shanghai Communiqué through the issuance of the Six Assurances. The efforts of US Congressmen (and the

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639 Personal interview with Ben Wei, 11 August 2005.
640 See Taylor, pp. 371-2. At this point, the KMT’s Congressional supporters managed to get Secretary of State Haig fired, allowing the pro-ROC camp in the White House and Congress more influence in foreign policy by 1982. The six assurances included the following: the US would not set a date for termination of arms sales to Taiwan; would not alter the terms of the Taiwan Relations Act; would not consult with China in advance before making decisions about U.S. arms sales to Taiwan; would not mediate between Taiwan and China; would not alter its position about the sovereignty of Taiwan (that is, an issue to be decided peacefully by the Chinese themselves) without pressuring Taiwan to enter into negotiations with China and lastly, would not formally recognize Chinese sovereignty over Taiwan.
Taiwanese Americans who lobbied them) to highlight the Chen Wen-chen and Henry Liu murder cases were therefore important in that they exposed the repressive activities of the KMT, some of which violated US sovereignty, embarrassing the KMT’s supporters in Congress and eventually uniting them with KMT critics in their displeasure with the Taiwanese leadership. It proved to be the feather that broke the back of Taiwan’s security apparatus, rolling back one of the most ardent enemies of the political opposition.641

Nevertheless, the difficulties faced by pro-opposition Congressmen should not be obscured. The following example should suffice to illustrate the limitations experienced by substate actors supportive of the political opposition. In August 1986, shortly before the DPP was formed, the House Foreign Affairs Committee had approved with an overwhelming majority, a resolution that stated amongst other things that, “it is the sense of the Congress that the authorities on Taiwan should…[allow] the formation of genuine opposition political parties.”642 However, as House Concurrent Resolution No. 233 was sent to the full House for vote, it failed to pass because supporters of the Nationalist government managed to block it. The ROC’s international predicament had the potential to work both ways – while it made the KMT more vulnerable to international opinion, it also rallied together anti-Communist supporters of the regime who wanted to prevent the geopolitical implications of the regime’s dissolution. Although Congressional members supportive of pro-democracy elements in Taiwan were often not very successful in the passing of high-profile Resolutions or legislation that would have tied the KMT’s human rights issues to arms sales, the publicity that the act of passing Resolutions and the holding of Hearings generated nevertheless brought external pressure to bear upon the

641 These were the Intelligence Bureau of the Ministry of National Defense and Special Intelligence Bureau.
KMT government and constrained the executive branch of the US government from giving the Taiwanese leadership open and unqualified support.

Owing to these complexities, it is impossible to consider the US a unitary state actor exerting unqualified and consistent pressure on the KMT government on grounds of human rights or democracy. As and when public disapproval by US officials was shown, it was often the result of the pressures exerted by transnational activists on them to stick to their normative commitments to democracy and human rights. The nature of external pressure as experienced by the KMT was instead more diffuse, stemming from the negative international opinion that was growing with the increasingly consistent efforts of the transnational networks of nonstate and substate actors to undermine the legitimacy of the regime at a time of increasing international isolation. For this reason, the external pressure experienced by the KMT government was the result of “bottom-up” forces, making it qualitatively different from the usual depiction of external pressure as direct and “top-down” in nature.

**Tracing the Role of the Protection Regime**

Chapter 3 detailed three waves of opposition to the KMT government where only the third managed to effect democratic breakthrough. Significantly, the failure to develop a strong or effective political opposition up until the late 1970s corresponded with the relative weakness of the protection regime before that time. Indeed, the number of political prisoners held at the Taiwan Garrison Command or on Green Island during the 1950s and 60s far outstripped the numbers held in the 1970s and 80s.643 On the other hand, the growing strength of the political opposition corresponded with the proliferation of those complex networks from the mid-1970s

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onwards. Here, I show through “process-tracing” that the increasing protection received by the political opposition from these complex networks of nonstate and substate actors is one reason for which the political opposition was able to effectively challenge the authoritarian government from the late 1970s onward.

Although it is seldom noted, limited efforts to raise the international visibility of political repression had begun as early as the 1960s. The White Terror campaign to root out all local pro-independence or leftist elements possibly opposed to the newly arrived regime had largely taken place without much notice or opposition by the “free world” because of rising Cold War tensions. In 1960, however, the KMT moved to annihilate the first attempts at organized opposition with a potentially broad social base by arresting its liberal leaders and about a hundred of their supporters. Although at this time the State Department cabled US ambassador Drumright about concerns over long-term democratic development on the island, the issue was pressed no further when Drumright advised that free elections would be “disastrous to US interests.” It thus remained for the residual supporters of the opposition movement to attempt to change this policy of quiescence.

It was under such circumstances that Lei Zhen’s daughter and a small handful of supporters in the US began a campaign to mobilize officials at the State Department, along with members of Congress and the Senate, to pressure President Chiang Kai-shek to release the opposition activists. Their efforts were more successful at mobilizing members of Congress than State Department officials, although conversations between the Assistant Secretary for Far East Affairs Graham Parsons, Deputy Assistant Secretary John Steeves and Under-secretary for Political Affairs Livingston Merchant took place on three separate occasions with Taiwanese

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644 AmEmb Taipei, cable Oct 1 1960, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1958-60, Vol. 19, pp. 724-9. Ambassador Drumright had believed that should a political party with native appeal have been established, the KMT would no longer be able to retain political control, and as such sought to prevent further inquiries into the affair.
Ambassador Ye over the issue.\textsuperscript{645} Their efforts recruited the support of only one member of Congress and Senate each – Representative Charles Porter (Oregon) and Senator Harrison Williams (New Jersey) – who proceeded to pressure the State Department to either persuade the Chiang Kai-shek government to drop charges against Lei or issue a public statement against Lei’s subsequent sentence – the latter which never occurred.\textsuperscript{646} Ultimately, efforts to secure Lei’s release and to revive the opposition movement culminated only in limited news coverage, private letters of protest from members of Congress to the State Department and inconclusive diplomatic conversations that yielded no tangible results.

The Lei affair was not the only story of failure at this time, however. The overseas Taiwanese based in Japan (Alliance in Japan) also launched a campaign to save Su Tung-chi and his pro-independence supporters from detention. Petition letters were sent to the US Congress without receiving any significant response – most likely because the political prisoners in question were pro-independence, and not pro-democracy activists. Lobbying efforts largely failed at this time because they corresponded to the peak in Cold War tensions, which created an environment that was particularly unsuited to the close scrutinization of the Western world’s anti-Communist allies. Ambassador Drumright held particularly strongly that the US could not place too much pressure on the KMT at this time on issues of democracy and human rights. On the other hand, the complex transnational networks that were firmly in place by the late 1970s and early 80s had not, at that point, developed. A \textit{sustained effort} to raise the international visibility of political repression in Taiwan thus failed to materialize and the political opposition

\textsuperscript{645} See Bush, \textit{At Cross Purposes}, pp. 60-7.
\textsuperscript{646} Consistent with our assessment of the role of the US earlier, it should also be noted that State officials sought to persuade the Chiang government to release Lei and his supporters by warning against the \textit{public relations} fallout that the Lei Affair would cause at the international level. The State Department was mainly concerned about the affair in this respect. See Bush, \textit{At Cross Purposes}, pp. 60-7.
languished for close to a decade until, once again, changed international circumstances roused another wave of potentially broad-based political opposition.

Owing to the fact the second wave of opposition in the early 1970s originated as a Chinese nationalist movement encouraged by the KMT government to bolster the ROC’s position over the Diaoyutai Affair, it was forced to use methods of co-optation as well as coercion to contain elements that went on to demand democratic reform. These methods of co-optation were quite successful, explaining in large measure the failure of this second wave of opposition. However, when the political opposition demonstrated that it could effectively mobilize popular support both within the officially sanctioned local electoral arena and on the streets in 1977, hardliners within the KMT began to close in on the movement leaders. At this stage in the third wave of opposition, the protection regime could not prevent the hardliners’ choice of response to the opposition, although as we shall see, the ability to crush the opposition was later constrained by ensuing transnational activities to raise the profile of this particular episode of repression.

Indeed, when oppositional activities peaked with a human rights day rally held in the city of Kaohsiung in 1979 - reportedly attended by as many as 20,000 persons – many opposition leaders were arrested. At this time, many of the leading opposition leaders, including those holding office, were arrested irrespective of whether they were at the scene of the rally. They were subsequently held incommunicado and allegedly tortured in order to obtain “confessions.” Many of the charges appeared fabricated in order to augment the severity of the sentences, including the death penalty for sedition under martial law. In two further rounds of arrests supporters of the political opposition were also brought to trial, including a Taiwanese Presbyterian minister who tried to prevent the arrest of Shih Ming-teh, a key organizer of the
rally. This signalled the KMT’s intention of eradicating not only the opposition movement, but also local elements of the transnational “protection regime,” which for reasons I will discuss later, had grown considerably stronger.

Indeed, under pressure from the international press and human rights activists the closed trials taking place in military court were forced to become public. For the first time, close news coverage of the sedition charges, the evidence presented and the sentences meted out to the opposition leaders allowed the Taiwanese and international community to scrutinize the KMT’s actions in the court of law. As a result of following the trials intimately, human rights activists were able to present to the international community alternative evidence to that presented in court against the political opposition. The International Committee for Human Rights in Taiwan and the Society for the Protection of East Asians’ Human Rights published a complete transcript of the speeches made by opposition leaders at the Kaohsiung rally in 1981, for example, testifying that they had not incited violence as alleged. 647 This served to highlight the KMT’s abuse of the legal system in order to repress the opposition movement.

In the meantime, human rights activists and the overseas Taiwanese tirelessly lobbied members of the US Congress and Senate to pressure the KMT into reducing their charges against the dissidents. As one human rights activist described, the outrage felt by many overseas Taiwanese over the KMT’s attempts to crush the opposition at this time was a watershed moment in the mobilization of the overseas Taiwanese networks in support of the political opposition in Taiwan. 648 As the result of the international pressure placed on the KMT to hold public trials, and as a result of what was revealed about the KMT government during those trials,

648 Gerrit van der Wees, Interview in DVD format, Taipei, Oral History Project, Taiwan Foundation for Democracy, 2003
these networks were further stimulated to keep up a sustained effort to raise the international visibility of political repression in Taiwan and FAPA was formed for this purpose.

That the KMT was well aware of the constraints the activities of these transnational networks was imposing on its actions is suggested by the fact that during the trials of the Kaohsiung dissidents, it sought repeatedly to discredit the opposition in the local media “by tying them to foreign interference in Taiwan’s politics.” While local elements of the transnational networks like Reverend Kao were punished for shielding the opposition, a foreign academic supportive of the opposition was also falsely implicated in the murders of opposition politician Lin Yi-hissing’s mother and twin daughters – possibly an effort to intimidate members of the networks themselves. Lin’s mother had attempted to contact Amnesty International in Osaka a day before members of the Iron Blood Patriot Society – allegedly connected to members of the KMT – broke into their home and brutally stabbed Lin’s family while it was under 24 hours of security surveillance. This incident, widely reported by the press, “further sullied the image of the [KMT], particularly in the eyes of the American press and human rights activists in the United States.”

Despite attempts to cut off contact between the political opposition and members of the transnational networks and to intimidate them, collective efforts to raise the international visibility of the KMT’s repressive nature continued. Human rights activists and overseas Taiwanese continued with public statements calling into question the legitimacy of the evidence and subsequent military and civil court trials, which found their way into the US State Department’s annual Human Rights Report in 1981. Many of the dissidents today believe that

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650 This person was American academic, Bruce Jacobs. It was alleged that Jacobs had been seen loitering near the Lin residence shortly before the murders and was thus a suspect.
651 Taylor, p.357.
the bad publicity generated internationally resulted in the reduction of sentences - many of those charged with sedition received long prison sentences instead of the death penalty. Further, some cases were transferred from military to civilian courts, and two other convictions were overturned in civil court upon appeal.

In the immediate aftermath of the Kaohsiung trials, the family members of incarcerated opposition leaders who ran in their stead were swept into office on a tide of sympathy and popularity while the KMT hardliners were unable to take any further action against their persons. For reasons easily conjectured, the security apparatus began to turn their attention to the supporters of the opposition movement abroad – after all, by this time it had become obvious just what role they had played in bringing international scrutiny to the Kaohsiung trials. In 1981, a Taiwanese-born professor at Carnegie-Mellon University was murdered while on a home visit in Taipei. Chen Wen-chen, a US permanent resident, was an active member of the Taiwanese Association and a vocal critic of the KMT government connected to prominent opposition leader Shih Ming-teh. Chen had been in the custody of the Garrison Command for some 13 hours shortly before his mysterious death, but the murder was presented by the KMT at home and abroad as suicide. Forensic evidence and circumstantial evidence suggested instead that the security services were involved – a view held strongly by the overseas Taiwanese community who also believed that it was an effort to intimidate the political opposition at home and their Taiwanese supporters abroad. As questions continued to hang over Chen’s untimely death, the international media picked up this sensational news story and members of the protection regime again lobbied US Congress to hold investigative Hearings over the matter. Detailed Hearings by the Subcommittees for East Asian and Pacific Affairs and Human Rights and International Organizations in July and October 1981 later uncovered the frightening nature of the KMT’s
security operations in Taiwan and the US.\textsuperscript{652} It was revealed during those Hearings that Chen had already been under surveillance from the Taiwan Garrison Command on US soil before his death.

Two weeks after Chen’s death, some 150 members of the American Taiwanese community from across the Midwest and East Coast mobilized to attend a memorial service at Carnegie Mellon University. Public protests by overseas Taiwanese in Oakland and Los Angeles also took place, publicizing the political motivations behind the murder of Chen. Wearing paper bags over their heads to conceal their identity, they sang the US civil rights anthem “We Shall Overcome” that was probably calibrated to resonate with the American and worldwide activist audience.\textsuperscript{653} With possible public relations fallout at hand, then Government Information Office director James Soong “personally telephoned the Hong Kong bureau chief of a foreign wire service to advise him to have his reporters back off the story.”\textsuperscript{654} By this time US officials began to express considerable concern over the possibility that the international image of the KMT would be irreparably damaged. In a private meeting between AIT chief Charles Cross and KMT officials, Cross expressed the concerns of the State Department that, “in upcoming congressional hearings it would not be to Taiwan’s advantage to be in the company of Libya…”\textsuperscript{655}


\textsuperscript{653} The symbolism of both the paper bags and the civil rights anthem could not be missed. By placing paper bags over their heads, the overseas Taiwanese emphasized their fear of being hounded by the KMT, even on US soil. The civil rights anthem emphasized the “ethnic injustice” behind authoritarian repression, and framed the opposition movement in a way that could relate to the American public. Note also that “We Shall Overcome” was sung by the relatives of political prisoners and Christian missionaries in Korea during the 1970s, and was written on placards by the overseas Korean supporters of Kim Dae Jung when he arrived from Seoul to the US on 24 December 1984. It was akin to an “anthem” of the opposition movement there. See James Sinnott, Once Around the Sun: A Personal Journey, South Korea 1974-5 (unpublished manuscript), pp. 138, 144.


\textsuperscript{655} Kaplan, p.310.
However, because the murder had taken place in Taiwan, Chen’s murder did not have as large an impact as later acts of intimidation that took place in the US. The explosive nature of dissident writer Henry Liu’s murder by two Taiwanese gangsters hired by the security apparatus was precisely owed to the fact that it took place in San Francisco, where he was living. Shortly following Liu’s controversial murder was the arrest of Li Ya-ping, a US permanent resident and editor of the Los Angeles-based Chinese language *International Daily News*, on the basis of allegedly pro-Communist articles *published in the US*. These acts clearly violated the constitutional rights of US residents and citizens and US sovereignty. These cases further stirred up a hornet’s nest over the question of whether agents of friendly states had been given unwarranted leeway to operate against residents and citizens of the US – already the subject of Congressional hearings since Professor Chen Wen-chen’s murder. The Reagan administration – not pleased with these developments – was also very much constrained in its ability to contain the situation because it had already begun to adopt a stronger human rights position in foreign policy. Further, the scandals alienated what friends the regime had in Congress and shocked the American public at a time when Taiwan most needed friends in a climate of international isolation.

It was impossible to hush up these scandals because of the efforts of the protection regime, which worked hard to capitalize on these incidents to raise the international visibility of KMT government’s authoritarian nature. In fact, members of the transnational networks were integral to the publicization of these events as symptoms of systemic political problems in Taiwan. The overseas Taiwanese community persuaded Liu’s hesitant widow to make public

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656 Liu had written unflattering biographies of President Chiang Ching-kuo.  
statements about the political motivations behind the murder and testify at Congressional Hearings. Expert witnesses from the academic and religious community, along with the testimony of the overseas Taiwanese, provided damning evidence of the KMT’s illegitimate use of violence against the political opposition during these Congressional Hearings. This evidence was accordingly conveyed to the international media through channels already described, generating a hard-hitting editorial from the *Washington Post* that described Liu’s murder as “a savage act of terrorism on American soil…a hostile act.”

As a result of what was exposed about the KMT, President Chiang Ching-kuo was compelled to issue a directive to dismantle the Intelligence Bureau of the Ministry of National Defense and Special Intelligence Bureau. These two organs of the security apparatus were subsequently merged and restricted to only gathering military intelligence. Further housecleaning included the removal of Wang Sheng, an ambitious and somewhat shady character in charge of the informal “liu-shao-kang” office that had become the power centre within the KMT as the President slipped into bad health. As a result of raising the international visibility of political repression by the “protection regime,” significant hardliner elements within the KMT government were reined in by the mid-1980s, paving the way for the political opposition to spearhead a democratic breakthrough shortly following these scandals. The confidence that the political opposition had on the evening of September 28 that the KMT could no longer clamp down on the movement should an illegal opposition party be declared proved true. To be sure, there could no longer be another Lei Zhen Incident because of the international

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658 See Kaplan, p. 456.
659 Taylor, p. 393.
660 Wang, a “hardliner,” had been slated to succeed President Chiang. Ibid.
visibility of political repression in Taiwan. In the words of President Chiang Ching-kuo, “the times have changed, events have changed, trends have changed.”

Conclusion

The case of Taiwan has revealed the operation of hitherto under-acknowledged forms of agency and the external structural conditions that have enabled their contributions to democratic breakthrough. We have seen that a combination of nonstate and substate actors worked together to channel resources to the opposition movement, and more importantly, to raise the international profile of political repression in Taiwan. Human rights activists, Christian churches and related ecumenical organizations, the overseas Taiwanese based particularly in the US, academics and journalists along with the Congressional members they successfully lobbied helped to generate accurate information tightly controlled by the KMT authorities and created channels with which to disseminate them worldwide. This in turn generated external “bottom-up” pressures on both the KMT government to refrain from such repressive behaviour and created constraints on the ability of its most important patron and ally, the United States, to support the KMT government unconditionally.

These research findings speak to the existing literature on two fronts. First of all, it allows for a perspective that acknowledges the role of the political opposition in Taiwan’s democratization, and the importance of their transnational supporters, who made it possible to survive political repression and with time, to defy the Temporary Provisions and create a political party. Such a “bottom-up” perspective on Taiwan’s democratization process has until now been largely neglected, as the majority of the literature on Taiwan has characterized it as one initiated and managed by the incumbent Nationalist elites, or reforma. Such a “top-down”

approach has further influenced current understandings of what the external dimensions of that process were. Consequently, the literature has focused exclusively on those geopolitical circumstances that most likely influenced the decision of the incumbent authoritarian elites to liberalize and eventually democratize. International isolation did not automatically translate into a policy of democratic reform, however and in fact, attempts were still made to suppress and contain a growing political opposition at the same time as limited political concessions were made. Understanding Taiwan’s democratization process as an elite-initiated and managed process thus leads to a partial understanding or even misunderstanding of the international dimensions of democratization in Taiwan found in the country-specific literature.

Secondly, these research findings present a clearer picture of which “external” actors played what role as a source of pressure on the regime, and exactly how they played that role. Contrary to the general foreign policy literature that has credited the Carter administration’s human rights policy with curtailing abuses of its authoritarian US allies, my research findings show that US policy toward Taiwan remained ambiguous on that front throughout the time period concerned. US policy toward Taiwan was, in fact, shaped largely by US national interests and not normative concerns. “Quiet diplomacy” was largely used to “advise” the Nationalist leadership against any repressive actions that might tarnish its international image and bring public criticism to bear on US foreign policy, a course of action often too weak to prevent some of the most high profile instances of repression in Taiwan. When they took place anyway, efforts were in fact made to help downplay the bad publicity generated by the transnational networks of nonstate and substate actors. When the “blackbox” of the US is opened up, it becomes possible to see that certain US Congressmen whom these transnational nonstate actors successfully lobbied played a more consistent and positive role in Taiwan’s democratization process than
other US officials by helping to further publicize the repression of the political opposition and placing pressure on State Department and White House officials. The presence of strong networks of nonstate actors was important in the mobilization of these substate actors. Nevertheless, in Taiwan’s case what we see is the general failure to motivate State Department and White House officials to openly condemn political repression in Taiwan. US State officials did not move decisively and publicly to condemn the Nationalist government for acts of political repression because they were conscious of the international isolation that Taiwan was already suffering, largely as a result of US derecognition.

Indeed, the geopolitical circumstances immediately surrounding Taiwan was important to the ability of the protection regime to strengthen and become increasingly effective. Of course, the elevation of human rights as a legitimate international concern was an important change in the international normative environment that enabled the issue of political repression to engage the attention of the international community in the first place. On the other hand, it had also led to the proliferation of transnational advocacy networks that underpinned the protection regime. However, international isolation prevented the KMT government from cracking down the protection regime quickly and decisively enough and with time they grew progressively stronger and better able to sustain efforts at raising the international profile of political repression in Taiwan. Nevertheless, the development of a strong protection regime alone would have been insufficient to exert effective pressure on the Nationalist government unless it was able to engage international attention toward the particular case of Taiwan and at the same time influence the Nationalist government’s calculations of the political cost of repression. Fortunately, Taiwan remained a key cornerstone of US-Sino relations and international isolation did not diminish that status, keeping it “above the radar” of international attention. International isolation, however,
had rendered the Nationalist government more susceptible to international good opinion. The fact that the conflict with China had been increasingly played on the diplomatic front meant that it was important remain “Free China” to the “Free World.” As such the efforts of the protection regime to raise the international profile of political repression translated easily into political costs for the regime, effectively constraining its repressive behavior.

It would thus appear that exogenous structural factors that together make up the international normative and geopolitical context determined to a large extent the strength and effectiveness of the protection regime. Taken together, these explanations bring into sharp relief the contingent nature of agency, an observation that will, in fact, be repeated in the following two cases. Indeed, the case of Taiwan gives us a basic understanding of the nature of the protection regime and the conditions that affect its strength and effectiveness, upon which we can build a comparative study that will further help to refine the observations presented here.
Chapter 8
South Korea

Introduction

As in the case of Taiwan, individuals and groups dedicated to the protection of South Korea’s opposition movement came together in significant numbers during the 1970s and 80s, reflecting the overarching changes in the international normative environment. This was important in the case of South Korea for two reasons. The first was the ever-expanding state capacity to suppress the political opposition and the propensity of its military leaders to do so throughout the 1970s and 80s. The scale and brutality of repression was on average considerably higher than that witnessed in Taiwan. At the same time, no small degree of ambivalence toward the opposition elements also existed within US policy circles and the international community because of their more militant posture. The extra-parliamentary chaeya movement that grew increasingly “radical” from the late 1970s was often believed to have a potentially destabilizing effect on South Korea, which in turn could trigger an offensive from the North. This
ambivalence toward the opposition ultimately meant that the role played by the protection regime to canvass international support for them was vitally important.

My research findings suggest two differences between the protection regime in South Korea and Taiwan. First of all, a greater number of active protection regime elements had in fact already appeared prior to the “Helsinki spillover,” even predating the transnational networks surrounding the political opposition in Taiwan. The five types of non-state actors previously observed had already started to undertake the same kinds of activities to raise the international profile of political repression in South Korea and to lobby Congress to influence US Korea policy towards the mid-1970s. Substate actors in the US also appear to be more aggressive than those in the case of Taiwan, not least because of the dynamics of a particularly controversial debate on US South Korea policy. South Korea’s continued strategic value to the US in the Cold War had aroused concerns from many quarters during the early 1970s that the security imperatives of US Korea policy were supportive of dictatorships there.

Secondly, it has been found that the protection regime in South Korea was on the whole just as strong as that in Taiwan. However, there were certain qualitative differences between the two that make for interesting comparison. In general, diaspora communities have particular credibility as first-hand witnesses to authoritarian practices. The Taiwanese community in the US was a particularly important component of the protection regime, however, because of its cohesiveness and high levels of activism. The Korean community in the US was largely incohesive, intimidated and mobilized largely within the Christian framework. Indeed, members of the Christian networks were highly mobilized and well resourced. The comparatively high levels of socio-political turmoil, along with the scale and brutality of human rights abuses there also assisted the task of raising the international profile of political repression for the protection
regime in South Korea, and as such the relative lack of collective action on the part of the overseas Korean diaspora community did not compromise the ability to raise the international profile of political repression in South Korea.

Interestingly, the protection regime was altogether less effective in constraining repressive behaviour of the Park and Chun governments by raising the international profile of repression and shaping a negative international opinion of them, achieving only inconsistent results at best. The activities of the protection regime could largely secure the physical safety of the most internationally recognizable or prominent opposition leaders, but countless other activists languished. What little constraints there were on the regimes’ repressive behaviour did enable key opposition leaders to gradually bring together disparate streams of opposition into a broad-based movement that eventually forced President-designate Roh to capitulate to the demands of the opposition in June 1987, however. Exogenous structural factors of a geopolitical nature explain why the authoritarian regimes in question were generally immune to the direct “bottom-up” pressures generated by the protection regime. Unlike Taiwan, South Korea’s national sovereignty never became disputed, while its continuing geostrategic significance to the West in the Cold War throughout the time period in question made international opinion largely superfluous. The only exception to this rule was during 1983-5 when the long shadow of the Kwangju Massacre rendered the Chun government vulnerable to a legitimacy crisis and thus prompted a “softer” approach toward social control.

These findings do not suggest that the protection regime was redundant in the South Korean case, however. The international visibility of political repression generated by the protection regime and the pressures exerted by Congress on the executive branch of the US government helped to motivate a US Korea policy that on the whole took a more explicit
position on the brutal treatment of the political opposition. This was important in the South Korean case because the authoritarian regimes were more susceptible to “top-down” external pressures generated by state actors than they were to “bottom-up” external pressures. Indeed, while the geopolitical conditions surrounding South Korea rendered the good opinion of the international community irrelevant to its security, the constant threat posed by the North meant that continued military support from the US mattered tremendously. External state pressures to refrain from repressive actions against the political opposition could translate more effectively into political costs for the authoritarian leadership, even if significant forms of leverage were not always exercised. What we do observe in the South Korean case is that external state pressures were more effective in constraining repressive behaviour.

Sadly, the continued strategic value of the ROK to the US in the Cold War also meant that security imperatives tended to complicate and constrain the ability of the US to exert pressure on the Park and Chun governments in a consistent fashion. Although external state pressures may have been stronger, they were not necessarily more consistent. Stronger positions tended to be taken when the international profile of a particular incidence of repression was high. This explains in large part the choice to intervene most forcefully when internationally-recognized opposition figure Kim Dae Jung’s life was threatened on several occasions. In this sense, state actors were mostly responsive to the attempts of transnational networks of non-state and substate actors to generate negative international opinion of the authoritarian regimes in question and criticize US Korea policy, and the protection regime remained relevant in this way.

Such nuances will be discussed in detail in throughout the chapter, which is structured by essentially the same framework used in the Taiwan case to facilitate comparisons.
Transnational Networks of Non-State Actors – Were They Different?

The critical mass of transnational non-state actors began to appear in the mid to late 1970s when the international normative environment led to a proliferation of advocacy networks worldwide. However, before this time an observable number of Christian leaders, human rights activists, academics and journalists had already helped to trumpet the excessive human rights abuses of the Park government during the first years of the Yushin period. To different extents, the same five types of non-state actors were also involved in the South Korean case, including Christian churches and related ecumenical organizations, human rights activists, overseas Korean communities, foreign journalists, along with academics and students. Certain actors, such as Christian leaders, also played a direct role in the opposition movement, and as such the protection regime also shaded into the political opposition itself.

Personalistic, affective ties and informal relationships also underpinned the transnational networks of non-state actors in this case, while principled causes of human rights and democracy brought them together. The formal aspects of these networks consisted of their links to organizations to which these actors belonged and which they could also activate. The core-periphery structure of relationships that were discernable in Taiwan was also perceptible in the case of South Korea. Indeed, the reason for which such a structure consolidated in Taiwan’s case was because of the heavy infiltration of government agents into these networks, and more importantly, the potentially severe consequences for individuals exposed by these agents. In many respects, the authoritarian regimes of South Korea were more consistently menacing than that of Taiwan, and as such it was necessary to develop a core-periphery structure where only a small handful of persons had full grasp of information and directives.
In terms of the content of protection, we also see evidence for psychological, and to a lesser extent, material support. A handful of Korean Americans did appear to have given small amounts of contributions on a periodic basis to the opposition movement, but it was difficult to do so. More importantly, effort was also exerted to raise the international visibility of political repression by generating accurate information on South Korea’s political situation and disseminating them through multiple alternative channels, both within the networks and beyond. Further, these non-state actors lobbied substate actors in the US hard, who then went on to further raise the international profile of political repression and pressure state officials not to condone political repression in South Korea. There is more evidence in the South Korean case of criticisms of US Korea policy from these nonstate and substate actors.

In short, the basic structure and functions of the protection regime in South Korea’s case closely paralleled that of the Taiwan case. A few of the nonstate actors working on the Taiwan case were also participants in the South Korea case, explaining to a large extent the similar strategies employed. Differences between the protection regime in Taiwan and South Korea will become more obvious in the analysis of the content of protection provided to the political opposition, however.

The Content of Protection

Close examination of the content of protection reveals striking similarities to that in the Taiwan case. The characteristics of Korean society and its diaspora in the US, along with the much more intrusive nature of the authoritarian regimes have contributed to qualitative differences between the two cases, however. Further, several key elements of the protection

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662 Many worked out of Japan, especially if they could not enter Taiwan or South Korea but wanted to be relatively close to the action.
regime had already appeared before the “Helsinki spillover” of the late 1970s. Driven by the advent of the *Yushin* Constitution in 1972 and a series of brutalities against the parliamentary opposition and activists, such activities as the lobbying of Congress, providing news coverage, writing to the press to educate the public, sending observers and fact-finding missions to South Korea and providing expert testimonials at Hearings had already started to take place in the early 1970s. Importantly, the actors most involved at this time had personal experience of or had close ties to South Korea. Examples include Christian leaders and human rights activists who had been deported from South Korea or knew of their counterparts being arrested, academics with specialist knowledge of the Korean legal system and politics, and Koreans residing in the US who had relatives still living in South Korea.

The overseas Korean community did not appear to be on the frontlines of these activities, however, unless working within the Christian framework. According to a Korean American activist interviewed, most of the overseas Koreans were afraid to openly defy the South Korean authorities and relied on the churches to speak for them instead. The fear of what the Korean security agencies could do to themselves and their families in South Korea appears to have been a crucial reason for which many Korean Americans avoided openly engaging in activities to support the political opposition in South Korea, with the exception of a larger number who later rallied around leading opposition politician Kim Dae Jung when he was exiled to the US. Particular characteristics of the overseas Korean community already discussed in Chapter 6 also account for the relatively low levels of political activism.

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663 Personal interview with a Korean American journalist and activist in Los Angeles, 15 November 2007
Nevertheless, there is evidence to suggest that important pockets of activism existed. A handful of highly educated professionals and prominent persons who were supportive of human rights and democracy in South Korea organized successfully to raise the international profile of political repression in joint effort with other Christian activists, academics and numerous Congressional members. In response to the death and life imprisonment sentences meted out to anti-Park demonstrators in 1974, for example, the Committee for Human Rights in Korea mobilized 35 prominent Americans and Korean residents of the US to issue a public statement – published in the *New York Times* - calling on the Nixon administration to distance itself from the Park government and limit its aid. Further, the Korean Congress for Democracy and Unification (KCDU) had 8 offices across the US by the late 1970s. Centered on the personality of then leading opposition leader Kim Dae Jung, who was the honorary chairman, the KCDU campaigned aggressively for his safe release when the Chun government attempted to take his life in 1980. Another such known organization is the United Movement for Democracy in Korea, which was also dedicated to publicizing political repression and human rights abuses in South Korea and lobbying members of the US Congress, State Department and White House for the purpose of preserving the life of opposition leaders such as Kim Dae Jung. A handful of second and third generation Korean Americans also staged open protests against the Park government during the *Yushin* period. The Hawaii Committee for a Free South Korea, for example, held a demonstration before the Korean consulate in Honolulu in July

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668 *Collection of Democracy and Unification in Korea*, Collection No. 358, Box 46, Folder 23, Young Library, University of California in Los Angeles.
Further, a handful of Korean newspapers managed to remain independent of the Park and Chun governments despite the harassment they experienced to publish articles that further publicized repression in South Korea. As waves of protests swept through South Korea during the 1980s, increasing numbers of public demonstrations against the Chun government or “memorial marches” for those Koreans who sacrificed their lives were organized abroad on an ad hoc basis and duly covered by the mainstream international media. At times of crisis for the political opposition, ad hoc organizations would appear to campaign for the safe release of political prisoners.

Owing to the fact that most of the overseas Koreans preferred political expression through their Churches, the role played by Christian missionaries in the “protection regime” surrounding the political opposition in South Korea was doubly important. As we have already seen in Chapter 3, the Christian Churches in South Korea were at the forefront of the opposition movement. The ease with which overseas Churches were mobilized on behalf of the opposition in Korea is explained in part by this involvement. They were also a crucial link between the political opposition and the members of the US Congress, and an essential source and channel of information about political repression to the international community. Foreign missionaries were particularly important because their nationality gave them immunity from incarceration and

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669 Letter from Jai Hyon Lee to Rev. Pharis Harvey, 27 January 1981. This event was reported in the Honolulu Advertiser 23 July 1974.
670 Personal interview with a Korean American journalist and activist, Los Angeles, 15 November 2007. These include The New Korea, the Korea Journal, The Hanmin Shinbo, Free Republic and The Korean Guardian. Such papers were small and independently owned by Korean Americans, unlike the mainstream papers like the Korean Times which was owned by chaebols or affiliated with mainstream South Korean papers. The New Korea Times in Toronto was another such paper.
672 The Christian activists and their organizations who campaigned aggressively to raise the international visibility of political repression in South Korea derived no small amount of legitimacy on the other hand, from the fact that over 75% of the Korean Americans and 40% of South Koreans were Christians, even if the Korean congregations were not necessarily openly involved in their campaigns.
torture. One foreign Catholic priest explicitly noted in his memoirs that, “we are of the exemption from rough treatment afforded to westerners,” and as such were chosen to accompany protestors “less for physical prowess than for our Caucasian features.”\textsuperscript{673} It also gave them relative ease of transborder mobility, and they often smuggled documents out of South Korea.\textsuperscript{674}

The Christian missionaries were important nodes in the transnational networks because their homes were often used as meeting places for members of the political opposition and the protection regime, including journalists, thus facilitating the transmission of information to the international community.\textsuperscript{675}

The Christian churches and their ecumenical agencies were also important generators of accurate, and thus valuable information on political repression in South Korea. The Human Rights Committee of the National Council of Churches in South Korea kept track of the number of political prisoners held. Organizations such as the North American Coalition on Human Rights in Korea (NACHRK), was in turn a key organization that exerted a consistent effort to publicize such information generated by its South Korean counterpart.\textsuperscript{676} The NACHRK’s “Human Rights Data Packet,” kept abreast of the human rights situation in Korea, including sensitive information on the political prisoners detained, tortured or released. Further, a “Korea Phone Weekly Report” that provided political news on South Korea also provided “alternative” news on the authoritarian realities in South Korea.\textsuperscript{677} Numerous other Christian-based publications that generated and disseminated information on repression include the Korea

\textsuperscript{673} James Sinnott, \textit{Once Around the Sun: A Personal Journey, South Korea 1974-5} (unpublished manuscript), p. 112.


\textsuperscript{675} “Monday night groups” were held for this purpose. “Korean Democracy,” interview conducted by Dick Gordon with Rev. Gene Matthews in America Public Media program "The Story," 31 August 2009.

\textsuperscript{676} It was a non-denominational initiative of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States.

\textsuperscript{677} See documents entitled, “Korea phone announcements” in \textit{Collection of Democracy and Unification in Korea}, Collection No. 358, Box 2, Folder 5, Young Library, University of California in Los Angeles.
Communiqué, the Korea Scope, Voices from South Korea and the Asian Rights Advocate. These sources were considered reliable enough that from the 1980s onward, the US Department of State began to cite the HRC’s figures regularly in its annual human rights reports, and indeed, Christian leaders were important sources of information for US officials. Christian ministers in Korea would even be interviewed by US officials and Congressmen when possible for more information of the political situation on the ground and even advice.678

These alternative sources and channels of information became increasingly important in the 1980s. While the news media was highly controlled in the Yushin period, massive structural changes in the early period of the Chun government systematized direct government control over all news media. Christian human rights groups were a key ally of the political opposition in Korea during this time because of the privileged position they sometimes occupied and the multiplicity of channels that they gradually developed. For example, they could sometimes circumvent reporting bans placed on journalists – making them important sources of information. Foreign Christian ministers on the ground would also ensure that international attention to political repression in South Korea was engaged by occasionally creating a degree of “sensationalism.”679 They would also arrange for press conferences to publicize their accounts of events. As part of their sustained efforts to raise the international profile of political repression, the Christian Churches and their ecumenical agencies also supported the making or distribution of existing documentaries on repression in South Korea.680 They were also involved in other

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679 For details of more such efforts to raise the international profile of human rights abuses, see James Sinnott, Once Around the Sun: A Personal Journey, South Korea 1974-5 (unpublished manuscript).

680 See Collection of Democracy and Unification in Korea, Collection No. 358, Box 6, Folder 12, Young Library, University of California in Los Angeles.
forms of media to transmit their information on the violation of the rights of the political opposition in Korea, supporting what was the Christian Broadcasting System.\textsuperscript{681}

Christian groups were useful in several other respects. They would often serve as interpreters for foreign journalists or sources of other contacts, which was very helpful because many foreign journalists found it extremely difficult to interview locals who feared official reprisals. Through the NACHRK’s Legislative Action Network and Korea Action initiatives, the NACHRK would also mobilize support for letter writing and boycott campaigns.\textsuperscript{682} The NACHRK was able to rally numerous faith-based and non faith-based organizations sharing the same “principled beliefs” such as the Clergy and Laity Concerned, the Church Committee for Human Rights in Asia, the Alliance for Democracy in Korea, and the Korean Institute for Human Rights as well as the support of other Christian leaders in the writing of such letters. Further, it was the “specific action target” of the Church Committee on Human Rights in Asia, for example, to “develop relationships with local press and other media” and to “carry the needs expressed by the Asian Christians to US legislators.”\textsuperscript{683} Mainstream newspapers such as the \textit{New York Times}, as well as numerous Christian newsletters such as \textit{Key Contact} and \textit{Korea Update}, have often carried such open letters. Other ad hoc organizations put together whenever there was a political crisis also existed. And although our focus is on organizations based in the US, there are others based outside, in Japan for example. Indeed, the Japan Emergency Christian Conference on Korean Problems worked alongside the NACHRK.

\textsuperscript{681} The Christian Broadcasting Association, established as early as 1948 by an American missionary Rev. E. Otto DeCamp, was a radio network headquartered in Seoul, with stations that later opened in Daegu, Pusan, Kwangju and Iri with the help of Canadian and American Churches. The West German churches assisted the CBS financially. See “Christian Broadcasting System,” \textit{Collection of Democracy and Unification in Korea}, Collection No. 358, Box 64, Folder 4, Young Library, University of California in Los Angeles.

\textsuperscript{682} \textit{Korea Guardian} 28 January 1978.

\textsuperscript{683} See \textit{Collection of Democracy and Unification in Korea}, Collection No. 358, Box 9, Folder 8, Young Library, University of California in Los Angeles.
The Christian churches were also crucial in providing protection for the extra-parliamentary opposition. Christians leaders have been known to “harbor” opposition elements to save them from arrest on numerous occasions, whilst the resources of the Churches have been used to help political exiles abroad, such as Kim Dae Jung. The protection that South Korean activists received from the Christian churches is evidenced by the fact that many dissident activists converted to Christianity precisely to obtain protection and resources from the Christian churches. The Christian churches also provided the means for key opposition leaders such as Kim Dae Jung to hold public lectures and talking to the media overseas. The NACHRK’s “Korean Human Rights Communications Project” brought “young leaders of the movement for human rights and democracy from Korea to the United States for periods up to six months, for exposure to the American political scene, the media and the nongovernmental and religious movements for international justice.” Such contacts reduced possible indifference to the South Korean democratic movement, making it much easier to mobilize international support for the political opposition in times of crisis. Finally, these faith-based organizations also made sure to leverage the 1988 Seoul Olympics Games for the purpose of raising the international profile of political repression in South Korea by launching the Campaign for a Repression-free Olympics, which declared purpose was to “exert pressure on the South Korean government to end practices that so violently contradict the spirit of the Olympics.”

687 Project Summary: Korean Human Rights Communications Project April 1986, Collection of Democracy and Unification in Korea Box 8, Collection 358, Young Library, University of California in Los Angeles.
688 See Collection of Democracy and Unification in Korea, Collection No. 358, Box 92, Folder 9, Young Library, University of California in Los Angeles.
The spectrum of Christian denominations involved in the South Korean case appears wider and included the Catholic Church. However, the churches in South Korea were heterogeneous in their political outlook – ranging from pro-regime to neutral to openly anti-regime - which tended to be reflected in the positions taken by their foreign counterparts regarding the authoritarian regimes there. One interesting finding is that in the earlier part of the 1970s at least one Catholic Church has openly opposed, in the name of anti-Communism, proposals to exert pressure on the Park government by reducing US military aid despite human rights abuses. However, many of the Churches became anti-authoritarian following the arrest and imprisonment of Presbyterian minister Un Myong-gi for “making up and spreading groundless rumors” under the martial law decree in December 1972, and the later arrest of Rev. Park Hyung-kyu and 11 other ministers for distributing anti-Park leaflets in July 1973. Indeed, “the sympathetic concern of international churches towards [the Park Hyung-kyu] case led to their extended support for the human rights cause of the Korean churches in the succeeding periods.”

The Christian organizations were not exclusive in their recruitment of support from believers for their human rights causes, however, and were in fact very successful in rallying other secular components of the protection regime together. The Lawyers Committee for International Human Rights in New York (now known as Human Rights First), and labor unions would work together with such para-church organizations to produce critical reviews of the US administration’s policies towards human rights in South Korea. Several Christian-based human rights organizations that had backing from wider ecumenical organizations such as the World Council

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of Churches, the Christian Conference of Asia and the National Council of the Churches of Christ (US) were essential components of the South Korean protection regime because they acted like a “task force” for a united Christian effort to expose human rights abuses to the American public and international community. As part of the “Helsinki spillover,” however, participation from an increasing number of non faith-based human rights organizations strengthened the networks.

Secular human rights organizations such as AI and the International League for Human Rights were also a very important source of information on political repression in South Korea. From 1974 onwards, AI’s fact-finding missions and subsequent reports were a constant source of detailed information on a wide array of opposition elements arrested and tortured by the Park and Chun governments. International campaigns were also mounted on behalf of political prisoners whose profile might have helped to further engage the attention of the international community. Legally oriented human rights organizations such as the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) were also important in exposing the extent of executive interference in political cases and protecting the political opposition from unfair trials and sentences. These human rights organizations have been less successful in obtaining access to numerous key political cases, however. The ICJ sent investigative missions but although trials under the Emergency Measures and the regular law were public, it was not always successful in obtaining access to them – and example being the 1980 trial of Kim Dae Jung and his 23 co-defendants.

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691 For example, in 1976 AI mounted a publicity campaign on behalf of poet Kim Chi-ha, a prisoner of conscience since 1972. Urgent action appeals for those sentenced to death further highlighted the brutality of the Park government.

692 The ICJ sent a two-man mission in 1979, for example, to investigate reports received from 1974 onwards of harassment and persecution of defense lawyers in politically sensitive cases and reported not only that lawyers were harassed for representing clients in political cases between 1974-9, but judges who decided cases contrary to the wishes of the government were removed to less favorable judicial positions. Harassment of human rights lawyers was also reported.
Nevertheless, denying their presence in those trials tended to highlight the repressiveness of the government.

Particularly important was the fact that human rights organizations exposed the repressive nature of what was commonly thought to be a more liberal regime under Chun Doo Hwan. For example, in the 1981 report on South Korea, AI pointed out that, “detention and arrests continued under the provision of the Anti-Communist Law 1961, rescinded in January 1981, concerning activities allegedly benefiting the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea,” and that although “a new constitution was promulgated on 27 October 1980 guaranteeing freedom from torture, freedom of speech, press, assembly and association and the exclusion of forced confessions from evidence in court…these rights may be restricted constitutionally ‘when necessary for national security, the maintenance of law and order or for public welfare’ in violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.”

At a time when the Reagan administration gave unqualified support to the Chun government, it was particularly important that the international profile of political repression in South Korea remained high.

The international media was much more interested in news events in South Korea. The major internationally circulated newspapers and journals such as the New York Times, Washington Post, Asian Wall Street Journal and the Far Eastern Economic Review carried far more articles on political repression in South Korea than Taiwan. However, information was tightly controlled through official channels in South Korea, foreign journalists were sometimes kept out of South Korea and a prevalent atmosphere of fear inhibited many from speaking directly to foreign journalists. During the Yushin period, the law prohibited criticizing the Korean

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693 AI Annual Human Rights Report, 1981, p. 230. In a separate report dedicated solely to human rights abuses in South Korea and circulated internationally as part of a worldwide campaign, political repression under Chun was further exposed. See also AI, Republic of Korea: Violations of Human Rights (March 1981).
government to a foreigner.\textsuperscript{694} Persons with whom they wanted to speak were harassed and intimidated. Some correspondents were denied ROK Government assistance while reporting in Korea. Accurate information on political events was therefore scarce and \textit{valuable} to the international media. In this way, the Christian networks were able to create links with the international media through their ability to obtain accurate first hand accounts of events in South Korea because many Christian ministers were at the heart of the opposition movement itself.

Nevertheless, foreign journalists were not necessarily pro-opposition, although most of the articles surveyed in the news media held a negative view of the authoritarian governments because of the scale and brutality of political repression in South Korea. It was revealed in the Fraser Committee Report on the Koreagate scandal in 1978, however, that “the South Korean Government had spent large sums to develop control over journalists in the United States,” including an attempt to bribe an official of the Voice of America “for the purpose of limiting unfavorable news about the Government.”\textsuperscript{695} It is uncertain how many foreign journalists were thus influenced. Of course, such efforts to buy off the international press were not always successful, and were more prevalent during the Park government, not least because the Koreagate scandal itself prevented subsequent efforts to do so on a significant scale. As political trials became public in the late 1970s and into the 1980s under external pressure to do so, members of the foreign press became even more important as only foreigners who were journalists and diplomatic observers were usually allowed.\textsuperscript{696} Indeed, representatives of human rights organizations such as AI and the ICJ were usually barred.

\textsuperscript{694} Presidential Emergency Measure No. 1 also applied to foreign news agencies.

\textsuperscript{695} Ibid., pp. 6, 8.

\textsuperscript{696} This was not unqualified. The 1980 constitution allowed the closing of trials to the public for “justifiable reasons,” however and the majority of the Kwangju trials took place in closed military courts under martial law.
Academics played a very broad educative role not unlike that which we saw in Taiwan. In this case conferences were occasionally organized to raise awareness in the international community of the democratic struggle in South Korea.\textsuperscript{697} Academics were often involved with human rights organizations that sent them as witnesses to the trials of political dissidents. They also raised awareness of the plight of the political opposition and of the democratic movement by interviews and letters to the press, and expert testimonials at Congressional Hearings. At a time when there was great controversy over whether security assistance programs should be cut down on the Korean Peninsula, for example, Harvard professor (and diplomat) Edwin O. Reischauer wrote to the \textit{New York Times} in 1974 that, “the kidnapping … of Kim Dae-jung and now the charges brought against him of violations of the election law in 1967 and 71 are merely symptomatic of a harsh oppression that is beginning to resemble that of openly totalitarian regimes” and that the US should cut back sharply on its military aid and withdraw its troops.\textsuperscript{698} His position was also presented at Congressional Hearings held over this period on the issue of human rights in South Korea. In raising the profile of Kim Dae Jung’s treatment by the authoritarian regime and offering a fellowship at Harvard, academics such as Edwin O. Reischauer and Jerome Cohen were important in ensuring the safe return and exile of key opposition leader Kim Dae Jung following his kidnapping in 1973. Nevertheless, not all academics played a positive role in protecting the political opposition in South Korea. During the height of the Park government’s lobbying efforts in the US, certain academics could have been influenced through the generous sponsorship of conferences and donations.\textsuperscript{699}

\textsuperscript{697} The Association of Korean Christian Scholars organized a conference on May 22-24, 1980 in order to raise awareness that in the post-Park era the international community “may be able to exert a significant influence in supporting those who are involved in the [democratizing] process.”

\textsuperscript{698} See “South Korea on a ‘Disastrous Course,’” \textit{The New York Times}, 7 June 1974. For level of US troops in the ROK, see Appendix B Figure 8.

\textsuperscript{699} Harvard University was embroiled in such a controversy between 1974-5 when J. T. Coolidge, an alumnus of Harvard, procured a million-dollar donation from the South Korean government for the East Asian studies program.
We have seen that although there were some significant differences between the protection regimes of Taiwan and South Korea, the transnational networks of nonstate actors also helped to generate accurate, credible and thus valuable information about political repression in South Korea, provided alternative channels through which such information could circulate internationally and helped to make contact with other actors that could further publicize this information and place pressure on the Park and Chun governments. This helped to raise the international visibility of political repression in South Korea. In the next section, I compare the role of state and substate actors.

The Comparative Role of State and Sub-state Actors

Frank Baldwin, a US academic, wrote in 1976 of a conference sponsored by the Korean government for US academics that, “Seoul was a fun city for co-opted academics in the summer of 1975. The Park regime had just summarily executed nine dissidents in April on trumped up charges, but the scholars blithely tripped over each other at the freebies.” Frank Baldwin, “The Weaker the Product, the Harder the Sell: The Korea Lobby,” Christianity and Crisis, Vol. 36 No. 12 19 July 1976.
On the whole, the external pressures applied by both state and substate actors on the Park and Chun governments appear to have been stronger than that witnessed in the case of Taiwan. However, the ability of both substate and state actors to apply external pressure on the Park and Chun governments have been significantly complicated by security considerations, and as such substantive leverage was mostly avoided in favor of “quiet diplomacy” and public rhetorical pressure. Nevertheless, a handful of substate actors were more consistent and aggressive in their efforts to create issue linkages between human rights and security. Failing that, they exerted efforts to help raise the international profile of political repression in South Korea and thus pressure the executive branch of the US government to press for the release of political prisoners and political liberalization.

The analysis here has been limited mostly to the US because of the significant leverage it maintained over South Korea throughout the time period of interest. Of course, Japan also developed potential leverage as aid and trade relations developed after the normalization of relations in 1964. For example, Japan threatened to withhold USD 4bn worth of loans and credit at a time when Korea was on the brink of a debt crisis over the Kim Dae Jung affair. Japan has played a more significant role in this case, but the same kinds of constraints that shaped its relations elsewhere were in play here. This meant that many Korean dissidents who escaped to Japan were in fact repatriated to South Korea, although ongoing diplomatic tensions revolved around the execution of Japanese citizens of Korean descent who were accused of espionage for North Korea. Further, historical distrust of Japan meant that it was often accused of harboring dissidents that posed a threat to the South Korean government. As such, Japan’s criticisms of the repressiveness of the Park and Chun governments were mostly limited to the occasions when its

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sovereignty became embroiled. This explains why, apart from interventions on behalf of Korean Japanese citizens, pressure was exerted only over the treatment of Kim Dae Jung, who happened to have been kidnapped on *Japanese soil* in 1973. Indeed, that kidnapping gave Japan occasion to play a more prominent role in constraining the Park government from killing one of South Korea’s most prominent opposition leaders, and later, to demand again for his release in 1980. In the latter occasion, the Japanese held the Chun government to a deal that had been struck between the Park and Tanaka governments in the course of the 1973-4 diplomatic impasse that Kim would not be harmed.

While the external pressure exerted by Japan in saving Kim cannot be discounted, it is mostly the US that has been given credit for promoting human rights and democracy in South Korea, especially during the Carter administration and the second half of the Reagan administration. In reality, the role played by the US in constraining the repressive behavior of the Park and Chun governments was not straightforward either. The strategic importance of the ROK in the regional Cold War also meant that the Korean leadership *had some leverage over the US*. Thus, pressures have been confined mostly to private persuasion and to a lesser extent, public rhetoric. In one specific case this was particularly demonstrable. The US exerted an extraordinary diplomatic effort in 1980 to prevent Kim Dae Jung from receiving the death sentence for treason - of the 10 or more meetings that Ambassador Gleysteen had with Chun in 1980, Kim was allegedly the dominant topic of discussion.\footnote{Gleysteen, William, *Massive Entanglements, Marginal Influence* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1999), p. 172.} There was very little policy disagreement between the outgoing Carter and incoming Reagan administrations regarding how to react to the Kim case despite the considerable differences in their approaches to human rights.
Gleysteen wrote later that, “in my foreign service career, I can recall few other examples of such a concentrated effort by the US government on behalf of a single individual,” although this was mostly confined to “quiet diplomacy” and Congress was in fact discouraged from threatening sanctions.

Gleysteen’s own account of policy meetings seems to suggest that this was primarily a public relations effort, however. Of course, this would not have been necessary had the international profile of political repression in South Korea been low and had grassroots criticisms of US Korea policy not have intensified since the early 1970s. As a poster-child for authoritarian repression in South Korea since the drama of his abduction in 1973, Kim was indeed guaranteed this protection that countless others did not get. As Ronald L Ranard, former director of the State Department’s Office of Korean Affairs wrote concerning Kim’s escape from the death sentence in 1980, “Certainly prodding by Washington helped. But, without the active and vocal support of by American church leaders, human rights activists on both sides of the Pacific, congressional hearings and the press … Kim’s fate would long ago have been sealed.”

On the whole and throughout the period of interest, the US did maintain a more critical posture towards authoritarianism in South Korea, albeit inconsistently. In 1950, Secretary of State Dean Acheson warned President Rhee that, “US aid, both military and economic, to the Republic of Korea has been predicated upon the existence and growth of democratic institutions within the Republic.” Such private warnings were seldom accompanied by the exercise of substantive leverage, however, since security imperatives overrode normative concerns with the

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702 Ibid., p. 171. Ambassador Gleysteen expressed some initial reservations because he felt that the US needed to deal with other people in Korea who were also under detention, instead of focusing only on Kim.

703 Ibid., p. 172.


advent of the Korean War. Such a pattern was replicated over the next decade, such that Cohen and Baker later wrote that “such ad hoc admonitions and behind-the-scenes pressures could not alter the nature of Rhee’s government.” Instead, the US may well have contributed to the significant weakening of opposition forces during the early Cold War years by condoning the elimination of the extra-parliamentary opposition, which consisted mostly of left-wing elements. Under the cover of what was mostly American (and Western) silence on the human rights abuses taking place in the name of anti-Communism, the Rhee government undertook such repression quite freely – whether the opposition was pro-Communist or otherwise.

There is also evidence to support the contention that the US was more willing than it should have been to accommodate the military junta government that took power from the democratic Chang government. It appears that there were initial misgivings about the military coup of 1961, of course. The right wing, anti-Communist military leadership reassured the US that resurgent left-wing forces with the potential to destabilize the ROK would be suppressed, however. Although there was no small amount of US pressure placed on a reluctant Park to end the junta government and hold democratic elections in 1963, the return to the “high principle” of non-intervention in the affairs of US allies from the mid-1960s meant not only the continued repression of left-wing opposition political elements, but also the stifling of any and all political opposition by the Park government. While there are those who claim that the US maintained a policy of “equidistance” between the Park government and that of the political opposition during the 1960s, it is also undoubtedly the case that it was this policy of non-

708 See Kim, Hyung-A
709 Economic aid was denied to the military junta government until then-General Park Chung Hee promised to return South Korea to civilian rule.
intervention in the mid-1960s that, “gave Park the clearest signal that he could move ahead in the early 1970s with measures far more repressive than those he adopted during the first decade of his rule.”

By 1974 the scale and severity of political repression under the new *Yushin* constitution and the numerous emergency decrees had already begun to bring together elements of the protection regime whose efforts helped to generate no small amount of international interest. The 1973 kidnapping of Kim and the mass arrest of over a thousand dissidents under Emergency Decree No. 4 the following year – 14 of who were sentenced to death – ignited international furor. At the same time, elements of the protection regime had also begun efforts to generate pressure on the US government to distance itself from the Park government. Besides intervening to protect Kim Dae Jung, however, the Nixon and Ford administrations were adamant that exerting substantive leverage on the Park government would compromise regional security and undermine American national interest at a time when US troops had already begun to draw down. Thus, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger stated unequivocally before the Senate Subcommittee on Foreign Assistance in 1974 that the US should not reduce its support to the Park government even though reprehensible human rights abuses were taking place there – “where we believe the national interest is at stake, we proceed even when we don’t approve.” Quiet diplomacy thus continued to be the primary form of external pressure exerted on the Park government, which yielded some success in securing the release of some political prisoners.

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713 Before President Ford’s visit to Korea in November 1974, for example, a “discussion of the human rights question” reportedly took place between Korea’s Foreign Minister and high-level State Department officials,” which later led to an agreement to release a number of political prisoners and promises to “liberalize.” The Korean officials
Shortly before Carter became President, the first signs that the sole use of private diplomacy might be changing began to appear, as Congressional pressures to modify US Korea policy on the human rights front continued to mount. The transnational non-state actors had by this time found increasing numbers of Congressional allies. Carter’s disapproval of political repression in South Korea featured prominently in his presidential campaign, and by the time he took office public rhetorical disapproval intensified, straining US-ROK relations. At the same time as State officials tried to mend fences through the Carter-Park summit of 1979, President Carter signaled support for the parliamentary opposition by giving opposition leader Kim Young Sam and his counterparts a “disproportionate amount of time” to speak to him during the National Assembly visit.714 At a later function, religious leaders and opposition activists were also invited and given much time and attention.715 Park was allegedly also handed a list of political prisoners the US wished to see released and a promise was later elicited to release 180 of them within six months.716 The Carter-Park Summit was strongly opposed by the members of the transnational protection regime who believed it was an endorsement of authoritarianism, and Carter’s actions was a response to such grassroots pressures. As opposition forces took courage from these gestures and began agitating for democratic reform, however, the Park government once again resorted to repressive tactics. The US nevertheless continued with the same tact by “publicly criticizing Park’s high-handed behavior and publicly recalling [Ambassador Gleysteen] to Washington for ‘consultations.’”717

714 Gleysteen, p. 50.
715 Ibid.
716 Sohn, p. 154.
717 Gleysteen, p. 52.
Riding on the low public approval ratings of the Carter administration, the Reagan administration took the opposite tact with the Chun government during its first term, consistent with Reagan’s view that US allies should not be openly condemned on human rights grounds. Before Chun Doo Hwan was formally installed as the President of the Fifth Republic, Reagan had already extended an invitation for a state visit. The fact that Chun was the first head of state to visit the US after Reagan became president signaled in no uncertain terms that US support for the new government was firm, regardless its considerable unpopularity with South Koreans. Nothing direct was publicly said of the continued repression of the opposition. Interestingly, it was during this time that we find the annual State Department human rights reports least demur in detailing the brutalities of the Chun government towards the opposition, however. The policy of unreserved support for the Chun government was eventually reversed during Reagan’s second term as opposition to the Chun government and anti-Americanism continued to grow and South Korea appeared to be on the brink of self-destruction. Under renewed fire from the transnational non-state actors, Congress and even opposition leaders in South Korea – including Kim Dae Jung - the Reagan administration began to make public admonishments of the Chun government’s repressiveness and poor human rights record shortly before the breakthrough of June 1987.\footnote{Kim Dae Jung was very open about his opposition to the use of mere “quiet diplomacy” by the Reagan administration, a position widely reported in the international press. See also, Gregg Brazinsky, \textit{Nation-Building in South Korea} (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), pp. 243-44.}

This outline of the directional changes US Korea policy throughout the 1950s and 80s demonstrates more continuity than meets the eye, however. In reality, rhetorical pressure was almost never matched by the use of substantive military or economic leverage. Indeed, the push by certain Congressmen to create issue linkages between human rights and security during the mid-1970s was highly controversial because most in the US political and policy circles agreed
that South Korea was a “frontline ally” in the regional Cold War. Japan was also of the position that its own security was dependent upon South Korea’s fate, and therefore urged the US not to reduce security assistance and troops throughout the 1970s and 80s. It was still considered well into the 1980s that “a war in Korea [was] not something the United States [could] stand away from or stand apart from.” As late as 1985 Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Paul Wolfowitz continued to underline the vulnerability of South Korea by testifying that, “the bulk of North Korean forces are deployed well forward, along the DMZ, some 25 miles from Seoul.” America’s deep involvement on the Peninsula meant that it was therefore “all the more important” that North Koreans and the Soviets understood “what [the US] commitment [was]” – making it not just impossible to draw down on ground troops and security assistance to any significant degree, but to tie human rights issues directly to security assistance. An intelligence report in January 1979 suggesting that the US had previously underestimated the strength of North Korean forces killed off all initiatives on troop withdrawal. As a result of these particular circumstances, the continued US commitment in terms of troops, equipment and training was considered too crucial to be withdrawn, especially on mere normative grounds. To the extent that aid and troops were gradually reduced over the years, these initiatives were based largely on the rationale that the spectacular growth of the Korean economy warranted less reliance on US aid.

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719 The parliamentary and extra-parliamentary political opposition in South Korea also opposed troop withdrawal and made this known through public statements and demonstrations before the US Embassy in Seoul in 1977. The National Council of Churches in Korea and the Association of the Families of Prisoners of Conscience reasoned that US troops were crucial to the maintenance of democratic values and human rights. See Sohn, p. 120-1. Anti-American sentiments had not yet surfaced to any significant degree.


Carter’s initiatives to withdraw ground troops from South Korea was in fact never explicitly tied to human rights issues precisely due to the fact that strong opposition from within the US military, bureaucracy and other quarters of Congress on security grounds was strong from the very beginning. Coupling human rights issues to troop withdrawal would have weakened the case for troop withdrawal even with the change in American political atmosphere that brought Carter to power in the first place – a CBS-New York Times poll conducted in July 1977 showed that 52% of surveyed individuals preferred the retention of American ground troops while only 34% preferred withdrawal. Further, it was impossible to cease security assistance on human rights grounds because of prior commitments to increase military concessions and aid as a condition of troop withdrawal.\textsuperscript{722} The upshot of considerations was that the State Department’s position on human rights in South Korea was mostly a pragmatic one, even during the Carter administration.

Towards the late 1970s, the State Department and embassy officials earnestly urged the White House to refrain from unrealistic expectations on the human rights front.\textsuperscript{723} Close examination of the State Department’s annual human rights report on South Korea at this time further reveal that comparatively few details of political repression were in fact included in South Korea’s dossier. On several occasions the State Department flatly contradicted the estimates of political prisoners made by human rights groups, and on other occasions cast doubt on them by suggesting they could not be verified. Thus in the inaugural 1977 Annual Human Rights Report,

\textsuperscript{722} The US pledged to provide South Korea with approximately USD 2bn in military equipment over the withdrawal period as a condition of withdrawal. Assurances were also given that it would strengthen US air power in Korea. Larry A. Niksch, “US Troop Withdrawal from South Korea: Past Shortcomings and Future Prospects,” \textit{Asian Survey}, Vol. 21 No. 3 (March 1981): 325-341, p. 332.

\textsuperscript{723} Ambassador Gleysteen’s advice to Carter in preparation of the Carter-Park Summit was the following: “I know that there is a strong desire at the highest level that there be some helpful human rights development prior to a presidential visit to Korea. I recommend against explicit linkages in our formal proposal to the Koreans – both because I do not think it is necessary and because President Park might be offended to the point of setting back our cause.” See William Gleysteen, \textit{Massive Entanglements, Marginal Influence}, p. 202.
it was stated that, “as of late December 1977 we estimate that fewer than 150 persons remained in prison under Korean emergency measures” although the AI had reported several hundred.\textsuperscript{724} The following year’s Human Rights report further watered down the widespread problem of torture. By 1978, the State Department had already begun a “comprehensive new policy” towards “normalization” of strained relations with the ROK, and a Carter-Park Summit was proposed.\textsuperscript{725} Thus, the report of that year merely stated in a non-committal fashion that, “the government of the Republic of Korea states that it does not employ torture or abuse prisoners. There is a difference of opinion among dissidents on the question of whether the government has recently resorted to torture.”\textsuperscript{726}

Indeed, the State Department demonstrated a surprisingly “understanding” view of the Park government shortly before Park’s assassination – Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Richard Holbrooke’s stated before the Far East American Council in New York in 1978 that “no society is perfect, our own certainly included. Correspondingly, there is a more balanced perspective in the US of the realities – both problems and accomplishments – in South Korea.”\textsuperscript{727} Although the 1979 report included previously omitted details of torture and restrictions placed on the movement of prominent opposition leaders, human rights abuses were once again watered down in the aftermath of the Kwangju Massacre to avoid substantiating the claims of critics of the incoming Chun government and further implicate the US in that unfortunate event. The large number of arrests and allegations of abuse reported by AI were duly

\textsuperscript{724} AI Annual Report, 1977, p.3.
\textsuperscript{725} Gleysteen, p. 35.
\textsuperscript{726} AI Annual Report 1978, p. 375. The mild nature of the State Department report was strongly criticized by the Koreans. The defendants of the March First Declaration for the Democratic Salvation of the Nation Incident and the Association of the Families of Prisoners of Conscience both wrote an open letter each to President Carter on 18 February 1978 and April 1979 protesting the findings.
noted alongside the statement that, “there is no way of substantiating reports of torture in the interrogation of prisoners.”

Ironically, the strongest rhetorical position ever taken by the State Department on human rights in South Korea was in 1974 where in a special report it was unequivocally stated that the US “did not approve of [its] policies on human rights.”

Interestingly, the State Department’s human rights reports began to take a stronger position on human right violations by the Chun government, however, with much more detail of such abuses cited from 1982 onwards. Further, US embassy officials sent an implicit message of caution by maintaining a presence during the trials of political prisoners at this time. Beyond such gestures, however, no substantial leverage was exercised over the repressive Chun government. In fact, shortly before this time the State Department had authorized the sale of USD 1.4mn worth of revolvers, gas masks, and crowd dispersal chemicals to the Korean National Police in 1981.

The best example by far of the realpolitik in US Korea policy is to be found in the role played by the US in the 1980 Kwangju Massacre. There is some evidence to suggest that some confusion during the period leading up to the Massacre prevented the US from taking decisive action to prevent it. In the immediate aftermath of the military coup led by Chun, however, Carter told an American television audience that human rights issues had to be subordinated to security at around the same time that a public statement condemning the violence was issued.

A press conference was held by Secretary of State Muskie two days later, and on the May 21, a “not-for-attribution” press briefing for foreign correspondents was held to explain that “while accepting the government’s need to maintain public order in Korea, we had protested its

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728 Department of State Human Rights Report 1980, p. 640-1. The overall tone of the report was, however, critical of the incoming Chun government.
729 Special Report: Human Rights in the Republic of Korea (Bureau of Public Affairs, Department of State Office of Media Services, 1 October 1974).
731 Gleysteen, Massive Entanglements, Marginal Influence, p. 65.
repressive actions and we were using all channels available to us to urge moderation and press both sides to negotiate a peaceful resolution.” Ambassador Gleysteen later claimed that the US wanted to “lean hard on the Korean army to conduct a serious dialogue with the citizens committee in Kwangju,” and to pressure them into refraining from a “military solution for a reasonable period,” in order to facilitate a negotiated settlement.732 However, the US State Department also failed to respond to the broadcast appeals of Kwangju citizens for US mediation, and the military forces returned on May 26 to retake the city.733 On the day before the Twentieth Division (under US control) entered Kwangju, a group of dissidents requested that the American embassy broker negotiations but Ambassador Gleysteen turned them down in part because he suspected that the protestors were “dangerous radicals.”734 While it is a matter of controversy until this day as to what the US could have done to prevent such large scale repression, there is no doubt that the US role in protecting the political opposition at this time was minimal. Thus, Andrew Nagorski wrote in 1980 that, although “the Carter Administration viewed these developments with visible unease … its actual handling of relations with South Korea throughout the post-Park transition achieved the dubious distinction of appearing both ineffective and inconsistent…there is no evidence to suggest that at any point US policy …eased his handling of the dissidents.”735 In former Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights Patricia Derian’s words, the US at this time “rolled over and played dead.”736

733  Cohen and Baker, in Shaw ed., Human Rights in South Korea, p. 193. Note that the paratroopers sent into Kwangju on 17 May were not under US command, but the Americans had control of 20th Division forces sent in on May 27.
734  Brazinsky writes that, “By the time [General] Wickham released the Twentieth Division, the Americans saw the restoration of stability as their most urgent objective in South Korea and were willing to alienate democratic forces to obtain it.” Gregg Brazinsky, Nation-Building in South Korea (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), p. 237.
736  See “Freeman Reports,” Transcript of interview aired on the Cable News Network, 5 January 1983, 10: 00 p.m.
Further, Nagorski rightly predicted that, “the Reagan administration may … abandon even the rhetoric of human rights in the case of South Korea for the same security reasons that prompted the Carter administration to back away from its earlier more outspoken position.” In part because the Reagan administration reversed the policy of détente with the Soviets, great pains had to be taken to re-establish warm relations with the incoming Chun government. Security concerns were still paramount going into the second term of the Reagan administration, especially since multiple incidents of North Korean and Soviet aggression suggested that tensions were not easing on the Peninsula. Thus Paul Wolfowitz testified before Congress at this time that, “security developments on the Korean Peninsula are of global import since the security interests of the Soviet Union, China, and the United States, as well as Japan, are all affected. An outbreak of conflict there has the potential to ignite a confrontation between the major regional powers.” Until the seeming about-face during the second term of the Reagan administration, the predominant approach to security on the Korean Peninsula was predicated on the assumption that the security of South Korea was a matter distinct from the state of human rights there. Support for the status quo – that is, authoritarian governments – in South Korea was thus considered good policy.

Developments in South Korea during the 1980s began to undermine this assumption long criticized by members of the protection regime, however, “vindicat[ing] the contention of American and Korean critics of US policy that protection of human rights [was] a necessary condition for stability and security.” The increasingly widespread and violent protests against the Chun government and the rising tide of anti-American sentiment for its support of Ch

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737 Nagorski, ibid.
739 Cohen and Baker, p. 215.
resulted in no small amount of socio-political instability, which prompted US policy makers to reconsider the repressiveness of the Chun government as a threat to regional security. Despite the fact that the Reagan had indicated by 1982 that US human rights policy would no longer focus solely on the former Soviet Union, this “even-handed” approach had no direct impact on South Korea until after the mid-1980s. As an unfortunate coincidence for the Chun government, the unraveling of its involvement in the Iran-contra affair at this time further necessitated that the US maintain a greater political distance.\textsuperscript{740} Thus, the \textit{Washington Post} reported in 1987 that, “in recent days, an intriguing new theme has been heard coming quietly from top American officials. It is time, they say, for the United States to … become more vigorous in support of embattled democrats abroad.”\textsuperscript{741}

It was at this point that quiet diplomacy and public rhetoric to pressure the Chun government to democratize and refrain from further political repression began to intensify – although, again none of that pressure was consolidated through the use of the military and economic leverage. President Reagan sent a letter to President Chun shortly before the June 1987 breakthrough, urging him “not to overreact to the street demonstrations,” and to “resume talks with his political opposition.”\textsuperscript{742} The State Department, long a proponent of “realistic expectations” on human rights, began to make high profile statements indicating a shift in US policy. Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Gaston Sigur delivered a speech in February 1987 – just prior to the Seoul Spring protests – calling for forward strides toward “permanently civilianizing [Korean] politics,” and a transition to “a more open and

legitimate political system” which could only “emerge from compromise and consensus among the major political players, not from violence, abuse of physical force, or obstinate confrontation.”

Although on the whole security concerns took priority, there is no question that the changing international normative environment had complicated US policy towards South Korea. Grassroots pressures generated by the protection regime coupled with the new human rights tact taken during the second term also meant that the US could not be seen to support the Chun government unconditionally. What made external state pressures stronger in the case of South Korea was the fact that political repression took a higher international profile because of the efforts of the protection regime to raise the international profile of its scale, frequency and brutality. Through the efforts of the transnational protection regime, such repression became framed in terms of human rights abuses that should be unacceptable to the international community. Thus, when considering the role of the US as a state actor, it is important to take into account the effect that grassroots pressures had on influencing the shape of US Korea policy.

Indeed, substate actors were significant in that they channelled grassroots pressures onto state actors to redirect US Korea policy and were themselves an important source of external pressure on the Park and Chun governments. Further, they helped to raise the international profile of political repression in South Korea through the numerous Congressional Hearings, reports, press conferences, introduction of bills and resolutions, and speeches to highlight the human rights abuses in South Korea, which further constrained state officials and policy makers. Strongly anti-Communist Congressional members tended to support the status quo, however, and they effectively blocked many of the bills and resolutions to link security or economic assistance to human rights issues. Controversies were much sharper within Congress owing to the

geostrategic significance of South Korea, and the actions of Congress were mostly limited to those short of authorizing actual sanctions against the Park and Chun governments.

The earliest signs of Congressional pressure began prior to the mid-1970s. The role of certain Congressmen - such as Democrats Donald Fraser and Robert N.C. Nix - were especially important in the early to mid 1970s. Others such as Edward M. (Ted) Kennedy, Dante Fascell, Edward Feighan, James Leach and Steven Solarz, amongst others, played a more prominent role during the 1980s. Congress began to take a particular interest in South Korea’s political developments in 1974 largely in response to the Park government’s abandonment of all semblance of democracy in 1972. By then, a growing number of voices in Congress had begun to suggest that US security assistance programs for its allies had “the effect of strengthening particular regimes against internal dissent” and that “the primary effect of so-called security assistance is to maintain … certain regimes in power.”744 By 1974, the many dissidents arrested, tortured, incarcerated and even murdered led to the activation of transnational nonstate actors, who went on to lobby Congress. The Koreagate scandal, which will be discussed below, had not yet come to light but the first rumblings were already heard as State Department officials received complaints of harassment by KCIA agents from the overseas Korean community and investigations by the FBI began.745 As a result of the lobbying efforts of the human rights groups, Christian churches and a handful of Korean Americans, an investigation was conducted by Congress, followed by a series of Congressional Hearings held between 1974–5 to look into the issue of human rights abuses in Korea and its “implications for US policy.”746

746 See Leo Ryan, Vietnam and Korea: Human Rights and U.S. Assistance, a study mission report of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, February 9, 1975. See also, “Human rights in South Korea: Implications for U.S. Policy,” Hearings before the Subcommittees on Asian and Pacific Affairs and on International Organizations and Movements of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Ninety-third Congress, second session,
Congressional interest in human rights in South Korea during the 1970s resulted not only from political developments there, however. A confluence of factors had already led to broader policy deliberations regarding US security policy towards its allies in Asia and Latin America, giving these Congressmen the needed opportunity to raise the profile of political repression in Korea. Persistent US deficits, the effects of the 1973 oil shock and the Vietnam debacle had already prompted the Nixon doctrine, setting in motion attempts to reduce US military commitments abroad, including that of security assistance programs for its allies. In the particular case of South Korea, which received far more in security assistance and troop commitments than any other US ally at this time, it became important to consider if reductions in US support would be feasible. With South Korea partly in mind, the 1961 Foreign Assistance Act was amended in 1974, Section 502 (B) stating that: “no security assistance may be provided to any country the government of which engages in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights … unless the President certifies in writing to the Congress that extraordinary circumstances exist warranting provision of such assistance.”

Section 32 of the Foreign Assistance Act 1961 had also been amended the year before to provide that, “that the President should deny any economic or military assistance to the government of any foreign country which practices the internment or imprisonment of that country’s citizens for political purposes.” Further, Rep. Donald Fraser called unequivocally for a suspension or elimination of security aid to South Korea over the harsh punishments meted out to student

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July 30, August 5, and December 20, 1974; “Human Rights in South Korea and the Philippines: Implications for US Policy,” Hearings before the Subcommittee on International Organizations and of the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, 94th Congress, First Session, May 20, 22, June 3, 5, 10, 12, 17 and 24, 1975.

747 This was offered as a Sense of the Congress resolution in 1974, but made binding in 1978.
protestors (the National Federation of Democratic Youth and Students) that same year.\footnote{See “Human Rights in South Korea: Implications for US Policy,” Hearings Before the Subcommittee on International Organizations and Movements,” US House Committee on International Relations, 30 July, 5 August, 20 December 1974.} These were gestures purposed to send a clear and direct warning to the Park government and to pressure the executive branch of the US government to take a stronger human rights stance. Sadly, the “extraordinary circumstances” provision of Section 502 (B) let the Park and Chun governments off the hook and security assistance was never reduced on the grounds that the external threat posed by the North warranted the continuance of security aid.\footnote{Secretary of State Henry Kissinger apparently instructed James T. Lynn, Director of the Office of Management and Budget in December 1975 to reduce the 1977 Military Assistance Program from USD 47.3mn to USD 8mn – although the FMS (Foreign Military Sales) credit level was raised from USD 150mn to USD 275mn. See Kim Hyung-A, 
\textit{Korea's Development Under Park Chung Hee} (New York: RoutlegeCurzon, 2001), p. 217. I could not find any documentary evidence to verify this, however.} When Section 502(B) became binding in 1978, the Carter administration even managed to ignore the provision in large part – never naming any foreign government a “gross violator” nor having to justify an “extraordinary circumstance.”

To be sure, tying human rights issues to security aid in the specific case of South Korea was a complicated affair. Having to maintain a favourable balance of military strength in South Korea meant that troop withdrawal and “various plans to reduce aid to the Republic of Korea” were typically considered “untimely, ill-conceived, and inconsistent with the welfare of the United States” amongst many other Congressional members.\footnote{Hon. Wendell Wyatt (R-OR), Extension of Remarks “Aid to Republic of Korea,” Proceedings and Debates of the 93rd Congress, First Session, Vol. 119 Part 6, 12 March 1973, p. 7382. In 1973, for example sec. 2103 of the bill S. 1443 sought to limit security spending of the executive to USD 652, 000,000 for fiscal year 1974. See Congressional Record, 93rd Congress, First Session, Vol. 119 Pt. 17, 26 June 1973, pp. 21546-52.} Attempts to link human rights issues to military aid became increasingly difficult towards the late 1970s as bipartisan opposition to troop withdrawal mounted in Congress, in the military and the executive branch of government. In 1975, the House of Representatives rejected by a 311-95 vote an amendment that would have withdrawn 15,500 troops from South Korea. The House of Representatives again
voted 241 to 159 against an attempt by Representative Fraser and others to reduce military aid to South Korea on human rights grounds on 3 June 1976, prompting a Congressional aide to remark that the Park government “now [had] a green light to continue its repressive measures without fear of a reduction in military assistance.”

The death knell to such initiatives was sounded in 1979 when an intelligence report based on satellite imagery concluded that North Korean military capabilities had been growing rapidly and thus grossly underestimated.

In the meantime, the Koreagate scandal had already erupted by 1976, resulting in a Congressional investigation and a series of high profile Hearings held between 1977-78. Although these Hearings did not serve to revive support for troop withdrawal or the reduction of security assistance, it did help to further raise the international profile of political repression in South Korea, further delegitimate the Park government and constrain the harassment of the Korean American community. Numerous Hearings and reports related to South Korea’s political development, human rights, US Korea policy and North-South relations - which further helped to highlight the state of affairs in South Korea and raise the international profile of political repression during the Chun government – continued well into the 1980s.

751 Frank Baldwin, Christianity and Crisis, 1976
backdrop of a growing consciousness of political repression and instability in South Korea two
House resolutions were successfully passed in support of the political opposition in the 1980s.
These appear to have been particularly important in constraining the repressive behaviour of the
Chun government.

In 1986, House Concurrent Resolution 345 expressed “the sense of Congress that
political stability and human rights in South Korea would best be served by rapid progress
toward full democracy,” whilst in June 1987, shortly before democratic breakthrough in South
Korea, House Concurrent Resolution 141 encouraged “the promotion of democracy and security
in the Republic of Korea.”

A senate concurrent resolution was also introduced in March 1987
calling “on the government and the opposition to continue their dialogue in a spirit of consensus
and compromise, which is fundamental to all democracies.”
An economic sanctions bill was
also introduced by Senator Ted Kennedy and others, who was reported to have said to the press
that, “we have learned to our regret in Congress that quiet diplomacy in this administration
means no diplomacy…there appears to be gross indifference to increasing repression.”
Although unsuccessful, it showed “South Koreans that important segments of the US Congress
and public favour their struggle against the Chun regime.” These symbolic gestures helped to
encourage opposition elements in their protests, warn the Chun government and raise put increasing pressure on the executive branch of the US government. To be sure, the latter effect is particularly important in the South Korean case as grassroots pressures, as we shall see, was most effective when it threatened to derail US-ROK relations and undermine South Korea’s national security.

**Tracing the Role of the Protection Regime**

We have seen so far that “bad publicity” created by the protection regime was necessary to motivate state actors into using public rhetoric and private pressures to constrain the repressive actions of the Park and Chun governments. US officials were motivated to overcome these normative constraints activated by these transnational networks of nonstate and substate actors because they would have limited the US ability to maintain its security interests in the ROK, which was a cornerstone of the regional Cold War. Ambassador Gleysteen later wrote of the grassroots campaign to save Kim Dae Jung that, “most knowledgeable Americans were impressively united behind this campaign, including many anti-communist conservatives who, despite their reservations about Kim Dae Jung as a leader, believed that his execution would dangerously impair American support for Korea.”\(^{759}\) The focus of diplomatic efforts on Kim underscores the fact that his rescue was in part an exercise in public relations undertaken to enable further US support for the Chun government. In fact, the prospect that Congress might derail the traditional course of US Korea policy may have helped to convince the particularly recalcitrant Park government during the late 1970s that continued US support depended on the easing of political repression.

\(^{759}\) Ibid.
The role of the protection regime in South Korea’s case was thus a somewhat more indirect one, although no less important. The following analysis shows that, with the exception of two periods between 1977-79 and 1983-5, levels of repression were high even though the efforts of the transnational networks of nonstate and substate actors to raise the international profile of political repression was getting progressively stronger. This implies that negative international opinion generated by the protection regime was unable to constrain repressive state behavior on its own in the case of South Korea (see Table 8). Incidentally, during these times of relative ineffectiveness, US Korea policy was a conservative one that largely condoned human rights abuses. During 1977-79 period, however, US-ROK relations soured tremendously for a variety of reasons, and the protection regime capitalized on this to drive home human rights concerns, further complicating US-ROK relations. And although US-ROK relations appeared to be cordial during the 1983-5 period, the rising tide of anti-Americanism in South Korea was beginning to affect the strategic thinking in US policy circles. Members of the protection regime were also making more inroads into US Korea policy, with the result that security concerns were no longer divorced from human rights. The threat of losing US support for the Chun government as a result of these developments was a serious matter, not least because the Kwangju Massacre continued to cast a long shadow on the legitimacy of the Chun government. The relatively soft approach taken toward the political opposition at this time reflects such considerations. In this section, I trace this complex dynamic to demonstrate the exact impact of the protection regime on the development of the opposition movement.

Although the levels of repression remained comparatively high throughout the period of interest, the efforts of the protection regime were not entirely futile, however. Close examination of the protection regime’s impact shows that it was crucial in securing the release of the most
important opposition leaders who were then able to gradually bring together disparate elements of the opposition in a broad based movement that would force the authoritarian leadership to capitulate to the demands of the political opposition in June 1987. Indeed, the earliest signs that the transnational networks of non-state actors had an early role to play in protecting the political opposition came in 1973, on the heels of the arrest of Reverend Park Hyung-Kyu and other pastors in July 1973 for the distribution of anti-Park leaflets. The mobilization of overseas Churches in the form of an investigative committee, which arrived in August that year to inquire into the arrests, and the numerous protest letters and telegrams sent to the President is widely believed to have forced the Park government to release the church leaders in September 1973, only two days after prison sentences were already handed down.\(^{760}\) The international mobilization of human rights groups, Christian Churches, academic community, the media and the overseas Korean community to condemn the kidnapping of Kim from Tokyo that same year were also crucial in prompting forceful external state pressures to prevent him from being murdered by the KCIA.

Short of internationally prominent opposition personalities such as Kim Dae Jung and Christian leaders with strong international contacts, other less internationally recognizable but nevertheless important persons such as intellectual Chang Chun-ha were given some protection by the transnational protection regime at this time. Thus, when he was known to have been tortured and subsequently sentenced to the maximum term by court martial in 1974, the transnational networks mobilized in a transnational campaign to secure his release. “Foreign pressures” subsequently forced the Park government to release Chang and “hundreds of

\(^{760}\) Hak-Kyu Sohn, *Authoritarianism and Opposition in South Korea* (London: Routlege, 1989), p. 59. Further, “the sympathetic concern of international churches towards this case led to their extended support for the human rights cause of the Korean churches in the succeeding periods.” Ibid.
intellectuals, students and religious and military figures condemned by the military tribunals.\textsuperscript{761} This list also includes opposition journalists, whose sentences were reduced because AI, which adopted them as “prisoners of conscience”, brought their plight to international attention.\textsuperscript{762} Human rights organizations were crucial in helping to bring pressure to bear on the Park government to release or commute the sentences of numerous “prisoners of conscience” by “urgent appeals” that often mobilized individuals from all over the world to condemn their treatment.\textsuperscript{763} The lobbying efforts of the transnational non-state actors also mobilized important substate actors such as Donald Fraser, whose actions in Congress at this time put in place the most explicitly anti-authoritarian legislation that had the potential to affect US-ROK security relations, which no doubt gave such grassroots and external state pressures for the release of key opposition figures more teeth.

The efforts of the transnational protection regime at this time also helped to bring the draconian nature of the Emergency Decrees to international attention and thus mobilized some external state pressures in the form of quiet diplomacy and a damning State Department Report on human rights in South Korea. This secured a momentary reprieve from repression for the political opposition in the very difficult 1972-6 period. Emergency Decrees Nos. 1 and 4 were eventually repealed on 23 August 1974, less than a month before President Ford’s visit. As Sohn explains, a state visit by the US President was particularly welcome at this time because it signaled US commitment to the Korean government. “Relaxation of political repression was therefore a gesture that would allow President Ford to avoid the possible embarrassment he might otherwise incur as a consequence of the human rights issue in Korea. The abrogation of

\textsuperscript{761} Cohen and Baker, p. 178.
\textsuperscript{762} AI Annual Report, Republic of Korea, 1975.
\textsuperscript{763} See AI’s report of 1975 for details of those whose sentences were either successfully commuted or were released altogether that year.
the PEMs … can be interpreted as evidence of this disposition …, as can the regime’s restraint in its actions against the opposition movement.” The announcement of the planned visit had been made in the midst of controversy in Congress and the press over human rights abuses by the Park government. Although the level of repression was generally still very high at this time, the constraints posed by the “bad publicity” generated by the protection regime gave the political opposition a temporary reprieve. It was precisely at this time that a resurgence of protest activities was observed and both the parliamentary and extra-parliamentary opposition formed a new national-level coalition, the National Congress for the Restoration of Democracy, with numerous branch organizations throughout South Korea.

TABLE 8
VARIATION IN LEVEL OF REPRESSION AND US-ROK RELATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Level of Repression</th>
<th>US-ROK Relations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1972-1976 (Park)</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Security relationship firm; tensions later deepen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977-1979 (Park)</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>US-Korea relations sour tremendously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979-1982 (Chun)</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Unconditional US support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983-1985 (Chun)</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>US exerts private pressures to ease repression in exchange for continued support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986-1987 (Chun)</td>
<td>High; later capitulates on 29 June 1987</td>
<td>US ambivalent in support; later condemns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apart from this brief period around President Ford’s visit, the leadership remained mostly recalcitrant, however. Shortly after his release, opposition leader Chang died under mysterious circumstances.

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764 Sohn, p. 77.
765 Ibid., p. 76.
766 Ibid., pp. 75-6. Renewed efforts by the parliamentary opposition to attack the Yushin Constitution were also seen at this time after a period of relative confusion and impotence. See Sohn, p. 75.
circumstances widely believed to have been orchestrated by the security agencies. The efforts of the protection regime to secure the release of the extra-parliamentary opposition also did not prevent their re-arrests later on.\textsuperscript{767} Kim Dae Jung was not immediately freed, but placed under house arrest until the groundswell of domestic protest forced his release. Neither could their efforts constrain Park from extending the state capacity of repression by issuing further Emergency decrees, particularly the infamous Emergency Measure 9, which provided the legal basis to further cripple the political opposition and was, indeed often used against student activists. The numbers arrested on a frequent basis far exceeded the numbers released under international pressure. These pressures also could not prevent the execution of 8 opposition activists alleged to be communist insurgents in 1975.\textsuperscript{768} We even saw at this time attempts to weaken the protection regime itself – the international media being the prime target.\textsuperscript{769} Korean members of these transnational human rights organizations also fell victim of the harassment and intimidation of the Park government – Hahn Seung-hun, a board member of the South Korean section of AI was sentenced under the Anti-communist Law to 18 months’ imprisonment followed by a subsequent suspension of another 19 months of civil rights in September 1975, for example. His fate was not atypical of the Korean counterparts to these transnational non-state networks.

Although domestic dissent was comparatively loud in South Korea throughout the period we are interested in, the widespread continuation of such inhumane practices of torture “turned hundreds of articulate and conscientious Koreans who were involved in the democratic

\textsuperscript{767} Chang presumably fell off a hill while climbing it, a claim that is widely disbelieved in Korea.
\textsuperscript{768} AI reported that these persons were in fact victims of trumped up charges. They were executed under the National Security Law.
\textsuperscript{769} Import licenses could be revoked for international newspapers and magazines if they were found to be too critical of the Yushin Constitution. This only restricted information from reaching the South Koreans of course, but was a punitive measure that would have affected the revenue of these newspapers and magazines.
movement into the living dead, suffering from both physical damage and psychological trauma.”

Opposition politicians remained largely ineffectual in challenging Park’s autocracy due to the institutional obstructions presented by the Yushin constitution, and efforts to both co-opt and further intimidate them. While the extra-parliamentary dissident movement had coalesced momentarily during President Ford’s visit in 1974, the issuance of further emergency measures and the continuance of blatant repression – as demonstrated by the reaction of the authorities to the March First Declaration in 1976 – continued to cripple the opposition movement.

Baker and Cohen’s observation that “those whose detention tended to attract publicity were often better treated” underscores the importance of the protection regime even at such a time, however. Before these transnational networks publicized such tortures, even the arrest and torture of some 15 opposition National Assemblymen in 1972 - some of whom were prominent politicians – were unknown until 1975. Uncertain that their stories would be heard outside of South Korea, and certain that reprisals would be suffered were they to break their silence, many preferred to keep mum. By the mid-1970s, however, even the numerous nameless and faceless student activists had stepped forward to speak out against the tortures they suffered - encouraged by human rights organizations, which strove to identify these otherwise anonymous persons and publicize their plight. Continued efforts to raise the international profile of trumped up charges against the political opposition yielded some results in December 1976, when the Seoul Appellate Court confirmed the conviction of all the Myongdong Incident

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771 Ibid., p. 179.
772 Ibid.
activists but later reduced the sentences of Kim Dae Jung, Yun Posun and Hahm Suh Hon whilst suspending another four “without explanation,” a decision confirmed by the Supreme Court.\textsuperscript{773}

While the legal and institutional capacity of social control was extended through the issuance of Emergency decrees and other wartime laws, the repression of the political opposition began to ease for a brief period between 1977 to early 1979. Political prisoners were no longer singled out for harsh treatment, as was the practice earlier, whilst prison conditions improved.\textsuperscript{774} Kim Dae Jung had gone on a hunger strike in May 1977 to demand for better prison conditions, a fact well reported by AI and the foreign news media. The practice of torture also eased. Political prisoners except Kim Dae Jung were released after “statements of regret” negotiated between the Korean government and human rights and church leaders.\textsuperscript{775} Further, trials under both Emergency Measures and regular laws were made public whereas they had been previously undertaken by special military court. With the exception of Emergency Decree No. 9, other Emergency Measures were gradually rescinded between 1977 and 1978. By 1978, the preferred mode of repression for demonstrators was that of misdemeanor charges, which allowed for only a light sentence of up to a month, instead of draconian death sentences or life imprisonment. Further, over 106 political prisoners were released in late 1978 under US diplomatic pressure in the run-up to the Carter-Park Summit.\textsuperscript{776} Kim Dae Jung – most hated of the hardliners in the Park government – was released soon after along with 30 other prisoners. Famous dissident poet Kim Chi-ha – for whom AI had mounted an international campaign – also received a commutation of his life sentence for the violation of the Anti-Communist law to 20 years.\textsuperscript{777}

\textsuperscript{773} AI Report 1977.
\textsuperscript{774} Ibid., p. 247.
\textsuperscript{775} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{776} Sohn, p. 150.
\textsuperscript{777} HR Report 1978, p. 376. Kim was later released from prison in December 1980 after a sustained campaign by human rights organizations such as AI.
Of special note during this interval was the direct discussions entered into between the government and leaders of the chaeya movement in October 1977. Unprecedented, these discussions were held to work out a plan for the release of most of the political prisoners detained under Emergency Measure No. 9. In the South Korean context, this was a remarkable gesture of conciliation and undoubtedly influenced by the developments of the Koreagate scandal. Although the scandal had already erupted in late 1976, it was no coincidence that the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct issued an unequivocal statement charging the Park government of being directly involved in the bribery scandal in October 1977. The human rights organizations, Christian Churches, academics and the overseas Korean community had already capitalized on the scandal to further advertise the repressiveness of the Park government. Encouraged by the human rights organizations and Christian Churches, Korean Americans stepped forward to testify of the harassment and intimidation that they had suffered over the years while on American soil, as well as the conditions faced by South Koreans. Their testimonies during Congressional Hearings over the scandal were further strengthened by the defection of high-ranking KCIA agent Kim Sang-gun, who also testified to the same effect.

Indeed, members of the protection regime continued to provide expert testimonials and eyewitness accounts in the Congressional Hearings that helped to raise pressure on US officials to stick to their normative commitments at this time. Such activities helped to further raise the international profile of political repression in South Korea, generating a negative international opinion that further constrained the ability of the US to give unqualified support to the Park government. In highlighting the Koreagate scandal and South Korea’s involvement in the Iran contra affair, the protection regime helped to bring a chill into US-ROK relations. By December

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778 In July that year, the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct appointed Leon Jaworski special counsel. Jaworski was counsel in the Watergate Affair.
779 Sohn, p.115.
1977, bilateral relations had so soured over the Koreagate affair that Secretary of State Cyrus Vance actually warned that aid to Korea would be affected if the Park government did not cooperate in the investigations. In the clamor of transnational grassroots support for Kim Dae Jung upon his re-arrest in 1976, US-ROK relations were further soured and “quiet pressures” for his release intensified.

Kim was finally released on 27 December 1978, shortly before the planned Carter-Park Summit to be held the following summer. The release of important opposition figures was in turn a decisive factor in the revival of attempts at this time to further consolidate the extra-parliamentary opposition movement and for the parliamentary opposition to regain the ground that was lost in the mid-1970s. This temporary reprieve was particularly important at this time because the Yushin Constitution had emasculated the party system and the parliamentary opposition had been rendered impotent as an opposition force. The easing of political repression at this time allowed “the formation of a growing alliance among the leadership of the now proliferating dissident groups.” Further, the release of Kim Dae Jung in late 1978 allowed the chaeya dissidents to rally around his leadership. On 1 March 1979, Kim and two other prominent opposition leaders formed the National Alliance for Democracy and Unification as a non-party opposition organization that would serve to be Kim’s political base and a platform for further oppositional activities. This formal alliance brought together the student movement, the labor movement, the farmer’s movement, journalists, academics and other independent dissidents with the parliamentary opposition. This was again significant as Korean political parties were not

780 Ibid.
781 Sohn, p. 124.
782 Sohn, p.151. Some of the key organizations included the Democratic Youth Council (of the student movement), the Urban Industrial Mission (labor movement), dismissed journalists from Dong-a Ilbo and Choson Ilbo, the Association of Writers for the Practice of Freedom.
traditionally mass based parties and a disconnect between the parliamentary opposition and the extra-parliamentary opposition movement had existed.

It was against such a backdrop of a strengthening opposition movement that the parliamentary opposition won the majority of votes in the 1978 National Assembly elections and the leadership position of the New Democratic Party was wrested from the pro-Park Lee Chul-Sung and restored to Kim Young Sam in May 1979. Kim Dae Jung’s endorsement helped to secure Kim Young Sam’s position.\(^{783}\) This show of unity amongst the opposition leadership was rare and important, especially as the parliamentary opposition movement was mostly fragmented and rivalry between the two Kims was intense. By the spring of 1979, repression had begun to return to previous levels as the Park government sought to make contact between the political opposition and the US delegation to the Carter-Park Summit impossible. External grassroots pressure alone could not prevent the Park government from re-arresting the political opposition at this time. Kim Dae Jung was kept under house arrest, opposition parliamentarians harassed and the extra-parliamentary opposition rounded up. Kim Young-Sam was displaced from the NDP leadership and later expelled from the National Assembly for speaking out against the Park government to the *New York Times*. These events triggered an explosive response from the chaeya dissidents, however, and spread to Pusan and Masan, triggering the re-imposition of martial law and the fatal events that led to Park’s assassination in October 1979.

It is important to note that US-ROK relations were poor during the 1977-9 period not only because of gross human rights violations by the Park government. Carter’s troop withdrawal initiative, the Koreagate scandal and last but not least, President Park’s secret nuclear program were significant sources of strain. The protection regime merely capitalized on these

\(^{783}\) Sohn, p. 151.
circumstances to add further strains on the human rights front. In any case, the death of President Park promised a window of opportunity for democratic breakthrough. Under continued pressure from AI and other human rights organizations, hundreds of political prisoners arrested and charged under the Emergency Measures were released, albeit with the possibility of re-arrest without trial. Despite an initial atmosphere that promised political liberalization, a large number of opposition activists still remained behind prison walls and a number of dissidents were newly arrested and sentenced to prison for staging peaceful demonstrations, however.\textsuperscript{784} In May 1980, over 100,000 student activists who had become impatient with the slow advance in democratic reform demonstrated in Seoul, only to be met with tear gas and brutal beatings by the riot police. Reports of torture and even death while in custody continued to be confirmed over the next two years.\textsuperscript{785} As Cohen and Baker observed, “the human rights situation in the Republic of Korea remained as bad or worse during the early years of the Chun Government as in the last years of the Park Government.”\textsuperscript{786} Of course, it was during this time that the US gave the Chun government unconditional support.

Under such circumstances, the protection regime was nevertheless still successful in securing the safety of opposition leaders crucial to the democratic movement. When the Kwangju uprising gave the incoming Chun government the excuse to slap Kim Dae Jung and other opposition leaders with charges that held the death penalty, the transnational protection regime sprang into action to draw attention to these individuals. Human rights organizations, Christian churches and related ecumenical organizations, academics, along with some overseas Koreans mobilized very quickly to campaign internationally for the opposition leaders implicated in the Kwangju uprising and international newspapers covered their trials extensively.

\textsuperscript{784} State Department Human Rights Report, 1980.
\textsuperscript{786} Cohen and Baker, p. 196.
Such campaigns included an appeal, organized by AI, to 43 heads of government who were part of the UN Commission on Human Rights to intervene in the affair. The resultant international scrutiny brought to bear no small amount of pressure from state actors such as the US and Japan to intervene through quiet diplomacy and public condemnation of the irregularities of the trials and the harsh sentences meted out to Kim and his supporters. The efforts of these transnational networks also helped to ensure the better chances of a fair trial by forcing the Chun government to relax restrictions placed on defense lawyers. Following “worldwide expressions of concern,” and President Reagan’s public and private requests, Kim’s death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment in 1981, whilst the sentences of his co-defendants were reduced. They were eventually released altogether in 1982, and Kim was allowed to go into exile in the US.

Although the Chun government showed no less propensity to arrest and torture political dissidents at this time, it granted numerous large scale amnesties to political prisoners, actions which US officials capitalized on to both promote the idea that the Chun government was a comparatively liberal one, and that the “quiet diplomacy” of the Reagan administration was far more effective than that of Carter’s. Thus, for example, a presidential pardon saw 83 prisoners charged for crimes related to the Kwangju incident released during Chun’s presidential inauguration. In yet another grand gesture in late 1982, another 1200 political prisoners were released. Many more remained in prison at this time, of course, especially the more significant opposition leaders. Notably, the Chun government also reduced the sentences meted out to some

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788 Ibid.
790 Ibid, p.231.
73 dissidents sentenced under the Anti-Communist and National Security Laws. Although unable to save all the dissidents, this was an important advancement because these two pieces of legislation remained the legal strongholds of repression behind which the Park government had previously remained unmoved by transnational efforts to save falsely accused dissidents from the death sentence in 1975.792

Although it would seem that the protection regime was mostly unsuccessful in constraining the Chun government from re-arresting and ill-treating these very same dissidents, these periodic amnesties were in fact very important in keeping the opposition movement alive. Indeed, once released, most of these chaeya dissidents and opposition leaders would resume their protest activities and further galvanize the opposition movement before being arrested again. The cumulative effect of this cycle of release and re-arrests was to allow the opposition to grow and strengthen with the passing of time. As the brutalities intensiffied, the dissidents further hardened and the opposition movement radicalized. This ritualistic granting of amnesties to large numbers of dissidents during one of the most repressive periods of South Korea’s political history was a curious one that also lends us much insight into the dynamics of external top-down and bottom-up pressures and their impact on the development of the opposition movement there. To be sure, the Reagan administration’s open and certain support of the Chun government created a permissive environment for repression. However, the Chun government did not have completely free rein in the matter either - what was demanded in return were precisely those grand, facing-saving gestures of amnesty which the Reagan administration could then use to defuse grassroots pressures, particularly those channeled through Congress, whilst containing a public relations

792 Korea Times, 27 May 1974, as quoted in Sohn, p.70.
fallout. Without the efforts of the protection regime to raise the international visibility of political repression these demands of the Chun government might not have been made.

Certainly, scholars of Korean politics speak of a relative easing of political repression by 1983-5. The periodic granting of political amnesties continued at this time and was further accompanied by the lifting of the ban on some 567 politicians (excluding Kim Dae Jung and fifteen others) who were barred from politics in 1981. In two presidential amnesties granted in August and December 1983, some 1944 political prisoners were released.\textsuperscript{793} The death sentence was also commuted in three political cases. Over 200 student protestors were also released from prison in 1984, whilst over 1000 were academically reinstated. This ritualistic release of political prisoners was accompanied by other improvements. House arrest and short-term detention was increasingly used against the political opposition, instead of draconian legislation that potentially imposed life sentences or the death penalty. By 1985, most demonstrators were charged under the Minor Offences Punishment Act, unless they openly discussed or advocated a position on national unification. Despite such signs of easing political repression, less progress was made in other respects. Police brutality continued, whilst student demonstrators and labor leaders were arrested \textit{en mass} and opposition leaders put under house arrest on a highly frequent basis. Further, torture continued to be practiced to elicit false evidence against dissidents in irregular trials despite the new Constitution’s provision against the admissibility of such evidence.

What accounts for the continuity of arrests and brutality under custody at this time was no doubt the continuity of openly cordial US-ROK relations. During Reagan’s state visit to Korea in November 1983, only an oblique and fleeting remark about the benefits of democracy and human rights to South Korea’s national security was made during his address to the National

\textsuperscript{793} Long-term detainees did not receive amnesty, however.
Assembly, prompting opposition leader Kim Young Sam to publicly express “disappointment” at his speech.\textsuperscript{794} A joint statement issued at this time reaffirmed the strong commitment of the United States to the Republic of Korea and acknowledged its pivotal role to the stability of Northeast Asia and the US national security instead. Further, the American delegation denied knowledge of the detention of the parliamentary opposition and activists during President Reagan’s visit, and later even denied that such detention had taken place.\textsuperscript{795} However, there is no denying that the approach taken towards the political opposition nevertheless showed a softening, which needs to be explained.

While private diplomacy continued to be used to address the problem of human rights violations at this time, grassroots pressure was already mounting on the Reagan administration to take a more explicit stance on human rights abuse. The Reagan administration’s increasing tendency to claim credit for the effectiveness of private diplomacy in bringing about the release of political prisoners on numerous public occasions and to the press was a reflection of the growing effectiveness of grassroots pressure on the Reagan administration to demonstrate more concern for human rights issues.\textsuperscript{796} Such signs aside, in his address to the British House of Parliament on 8 June 1982, President Reagan had already indicated a more “even-handed” approach to human rights issues in US foreign policy, necessitating some caution on the part of the Chun government. The transnational protection regime had also begun to make inroads into US Korea policy in multiple dimensions. For one, the State Department was becoming more explicit in cataloguing the human rights violations of the Chun government by 1982, corroborating rather than contradicting or casting doubt upon the figures and claims of human

\textsuperscript{794} NBC Evening News, 12 November 1983, 6:30-6:33 p.m., Record No. 527408.
\textsuperscript{795} Cohen and Baker, p. 218.
rights groups. These groups were increasingly cited as sources of figures and claims of torture in the annual human rights reports.

To be sure, grassroots pressures as channeled through Congress continued to mount on the Reagan administration, with US officials being increasingly on the defensive to justify the effectiveness of quiet diplomacy during congressional hearings. In testifying before the Subcommittees on Asian and Pacific Affairs and on the Human Rights and International Organizations of the House of Foreign Affairs Committee on 9 December 1982, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Shoesmith stated that, “we do not believe a line should be – or can be – drawn between human rights interests and strategic interests. …we cannot be indifferent to the adverse effects on our strategic interests of a pattern of persistent and gross violations of human rights within a country with which we are allied or whose cooperation we seek in pursuit of such interests.”797 This statement signaled a significant change in strategic thinking by echoing arguments long put forward by academics and other members of the transnational protection regime in the 1970s that human rights and security priorities were not mutually exclusive. Further, unwilling to suggest that the Chun government was not guilty of gross violations of human rights, Shoesmith openly admitted that the progress made in the Republic of Korea at the time was at best “mixed.”798 Against the backdrop of such developments, the South Korean government not only softened its approach to the political opposition, but also its approach to the transnational nonstate actors – for example, by lifting restrictions on the investigative missions of human rights organizations.799

798 Ibid.
799 Whilst it had previously been barred from doing so, AI was able to send an investigative team in 1984 to look into claims of human rights abuses, whilst two delegates attended the trial hearings of some student dissidents in 1985 with surprisingly little harassment. AI Report, 1985, p.234.
Further, the rising tide of anti-Americanism in the aftermath of the Kwangju Massacre had also begun to place pressure on the Reagan administration to demonstrate more concern for the gross violation of human rights there as they were perpetrated against pro-democracy activists. In incessantly criticizing US Korea policy on the grounds that it perpetuated authoritarian governments there, these transnational non-state and sub-state actors further justified a growing anti-imperialist discourse that directly implicated the US, increasing those pressures on the US government. It is very possible, therefore, that at least one of the reasons for which political repression was eased at this time was due to the growing effectiveness of bottom-up pressures on the direction of the Reagan administration’s US Korea policy, which did eventually shift decisively when the Chun government heightened political repression once again in a failed effort to contain an uncontrollable tide of opposition, as we saw in the last section.

Of course, the 1983-5 period encouraged more oppositional activity, and by 1985 we do begin to see a swing towards repression once again.\textsuperscript{800} A widely accepted explanation for this reversion to repression is the growing militancy of the student movement, which allowed the Chun government to crack down on all oppositional activity in the name of stability. This, however, was only part of the story. By this time, the efforts of the well-established protection regime to raise the international profile of political opposition had intensified. In 1986-7, we thus see the successful passing of Congressional resolutions calling for political liberalization. Such unequivocal expressions in Congress were not reflected in statements by US officials, however. To be sure, Secretary of State Schulz instead condemned those extra-parliamentary opposition elements agitating against authoritarianism at this time as “inciting violence” during a visit to Korea in May 1986 - of no surprise since political instability has long been considered a threat to

South Korean national security, detrimental to US security interests. Further, when pressed by a journalist on whether he had discussed the need to move on human rights and political reforms with President Chun, Schulz answered that, “the idea that somehow there isn’t an effort to bring into play democratic institutions and have an orderly transition of power is wrong. It’s right there for everyone to see.” It was clear that the Reagan administration supported the crackdowns on the political opposition elements that were considered a threat to political stability at this time. Fortunately, it was no longer possible to contain the democratic movement, which had by this time garnered the support of the middle classes, and the continued agitations forced upon the military leaders the acknowledgement of the need for substantive democratic reform in June 1987.

By tracing the impact of the protection regime, we have seen that external bottom-up pressures were most effective in altering repressive state behavior when it threatened to affect US-ROK relations. In the 1977-9 period, it became most effective channeled as top-down external state pressures. However, even the latter was not unqualified in its effects owing to the nature and intensity of the North Korean threat and the finely calibrated balance of power in US-ROK relations. External pressures on the whole were more successful in securing the release of key opposition leaders and giving the opposition momentary breathing space than in shaping a gradual and consistent pattern of tolerance for political competition. In the 1983-5 period, the protection regime was again able to help effect changes in repressive state behavior in South Korea by threatening to alter US strategic thinking and consequently undermine US support for the ROK.

801 Ibid.
Conclusion

The protection regime in Taiwan and South Korea were comparable in terms of the kinds of actors involved and the content of the protection provided to the political opposition. Although the overseas Korean community was relatively weak and the aggression of the South Korean authorities toward members of the protection regime was much higher, the South Korean protection regime was not perceptibly weaker. The transnational Christian networks played a compensatory role, and were particularly strong in the South Korean case. Further, the scale and frequency of brutality unseen in the Taiwan case favoured the ability of the protection regime to raise the international profile of repression in South Korea. By the time human rights was instated as a legitimate international concern in the late 1970s, the Park government had become the poster child of anti-Communist authoritarianism spawned by superpower rivalry in the region. With the “Helsinki spillover,” the grassroots pressures generated by the protection regime in South Korea grew consistently stronger over the late 1970s and 80s.

In the absence of strong and consistent external state pressures on the Nationalist government in Taiwan to refrain from political repression, the pressures of negative international opinion generated by the protection regime was particularly important source of external pressure. The impact of the protection regime in this regard was consistent with the growing strength of the protection regime over the late 1970s and 80s. What is interesting here is that a clear-cut pattern in the protection regime’s impact consistent with its growing strength is not observed over the 1970s and 80s. Although the safety of key political leaders was often secured throughout the time period of interest, general levels of repression remained high except for two periods in 1977-79 and 1983-5. Why this was the case raises many interesting points of comparison that yield nuances to the observations gathered in the Taiwan case.
What we observe in the South Korean case is that a high international profile of political repression translates more effectively into high political costs for the authoritarian governments only insofar as it affected or had the potential to affect US-ROK relations. Put in another way, the key difference between the Taiwan and South Korea cases lies in the observation that bottom-up pressures generated by the protection regime were most effective when channelled through state actors as top-down external pressures in the latter case. External structural factors of a geopolitical nature account for this difference - in the South Korean case, the confrontation with the North was primarily a military one, which made strategic alliances significantly more important than positive international opinion. At the forefront of the regional Cold War, the general approval of the international community on normative grounds was usually unnecessary to secure support against military aggression from the North.

This finding is somewhat different from conventional explanations of the nature of external pressures on democratization. In the South Korean case, external state actors are often attributed a key causal role without close examination of another class of actors I capture in the concept of the “protection regime.” Indeed, significant constraints on the ability of the US to exercise leverage over the authoritarian regimes in South Korea on grounds of human rights and democracy often limited the extent of external state pressures, and levels of repression remained comparatively high. As security considerations tended to drive US Korea policy toward the support of authoritarian leaders considered most able to exercise “strong leadership,” however, external grassroots pressures generated by the protection regime was particularly important in holding back key state actors from completely reverting to the status quo policy. The role of the protection regime in compelling decisive state intervention on behalf of important opposition leaders and prominent political prisoners was shown to be compelling. Its role in widening the
wedge between the Carter administration and the Park government and later, in influencing US
Korea policy during the latter part of the Reagan administration also cannot be discounted.
Chapter 9
Singapore

Introduction

The third and final case of Singapore is important to this research for the simple reason that democratic breakthrough did not take place there, owing to the continued weakness of the political opposition and the lack of a widely and openly supported democratic movement. Seeing that this was the case, one might ask if it was the absence of a protection regime in Singapore’s case that accounted for the continued weakness of the political opposition. The same kinds of transnational networks that operated to protect the political opposition in Taiwan and South Korea did in fact exist in Singapore during the time period of interest, however. Indeed, a complete absence of those transnational networks of nonstate and substate actors would have been unlikely because the development of the protection regime was largely underpinned by the proliferation of transnational advocacy networks brought about by changes in the global normative environment, to which Singapore was not immune. By the late 1970s and early 80s, a protection regime in Singapore began to take on similar functions to those found in Taiwan and South Korea, but were additionally important in that they also encouraged the development of opposition politicians and activist elements that could have constituted an extra-parliamentary opposition.

As we have seen in Chapter 6, the protection regime in Singapore was significantly weaker, however. One inherent feature of the protection regime that contributed in particular to its weakness was that of its thinness. For example, the number of overseas Singaporeans was significantly fewer, less active and spread out over a much wider geographic area. Further, the
tactics used the by PAP government against the transnational nonstate actors was an important contribution to the continued weakness of the protection regime. Singapore’s immediate geopolitical environment enhanced the ability of an astute authoritarian regime to intimidate the transnational nonstate actors, truncate the protection regime with impunity and circumvent whatever little external grassroots pressures they attempted to exert. These geopolitical conditions rendered the efforts exerted to raise the international profile of political repression largely ineffective in increasing the cost of political repression for the PAP government. These findings set the Singapore case apart from the two earlier cases. This case has proven invaluable in further refining our understanding of the external structural conditions that are necessary for the proper functioning of the protection regime, as discussed in Chapter 6.

Sadly, in no other context has the protection regime been as badly needed as in the tightly controlled Singapore. The increasingly subtle tactics of the PAP government in the repression of the opposition has accounted for the unchecked erosion of genuine political competition so vital to a properly functioning democracy. International admirers and detractors alike have credited the lack of widespread political unrest and instability, spectacular economic growth and development, along with the existence of a relatively “clean” government to the PAP leadership. This tended to discount the reality of political repression and the tight societal control exercised by the PAP government. In this respect, the political opposition in Singapore shared a very similar handicap to its Taiwanese counterparts, who initially faced some difficulty in convincing the international community of the legitimacy and importance of its cause. However, in the Singapore case, the lack of overt forms of repression comparable to that of South Korea, and to a lesser extent, Taiwan, has seriously blunted its ability to flag them as human rights abuses.
Importantly, in understanding the potentially important role that the protection regime
could have played in strengthening an emasculated political opposition, we can also begin to
comprehend one particularly significant but little understood political period between 1987-88
underpinned by the unravelling of a so-called “Marxist conspiracy.” It is no coincidence that the
PAP government not only arrested and detained a group of seemingly harmless social activists,
they also engaged in high profile and protracted litigation battles with the foreign media.
Christian ecumenical organizations were also expelled along with a US diplomat for “foreign
interference” in the domestic politics of Singapore. Behind the xenophobic hysteria shared by
these actions was a systematic attempt at dismantling a growing transnational protection regime
that could weigh in on behalf of weak opposition elements at a time when the transition to a
“second generation” of PAP leaders had already begun and the zeitgeist of democracy seemed to
be sweeping through Pacific Asia. News reports and Parliamentary speeches at the time strongly
suggest that the first generation leadership believed that without the benefit of an international
clout forged through both exceptional historical circumstances and the forcefulness of
personality, the second generation of leaders could well lose their monopoly on political power
should external grassroots pressures successfully support growing domestic demands for greater
pluralism. 803 Such an interpretation of the 1987 Operation Spectrum and the subsequent efforts to
purge Singapore of any “foreign interference” has yet to be presented to date in the literature on
politics in Singapore and is important in understanding why this period was a watershed in
Singapore’s political development.

803 “Asian Exemplar Moves Toward Authoritarianism,” The New York Times, 12 May 1988. For these reports and
parliamentary speeches, see The Straits Times, 30 July 1987 and 22 June 1990.
In this chapter, we will examine the transnational networks of non-state actors and the content of protection that they attempted to provide, compare the role of state and substate actors and trace the effect of the protection regime on the behaviour of the PAP government.

**Transnational Networks of Nonstate Actors – Were They Different?**

Not unlike the first two cases, the critical mass of those who made up a discernable pattern of overlapping transnational networks supporting the political opposition appeared in the 1970s when important changes in the international normative environment led to a proliferation of advocacy networks worldwide. The usual suspects were involved, although to different extents in this case: Christian churches and related ecumenical organizations, human rights activists, overseas Singaporean communities, foreign journalists, academics and in quite a different way, foreign students. Of course, as with the other two cases, some of these component groups of activists - Christian organizations, certain human rights groups such as Amnesty International (AI) and the overseas Singaporean communities in particular – pre-date the proliferation of principled networks in the mid-1970s. With the exception of Amnesty International, the extent of their activities on behalf of the political opposition in Singapore was less significant before the mid-1970s, however.

The pattern of relationships between these nonstate actors share an important similarity with those found in the cases of Taiwan and South Korea in that they were based largely on personalistic, affective ties that were informal in nature.\(^{804}\) Thus, a high level of trust existed between these actors.\(^{805}\) The formal aspects of these networks consisted of, again, their links to organizations to which these actors belonged and which they could also activate. There is some

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\(^{804}\) Phone interview with a member of the overseas Singaporean diaspora, 9 February 2009.

\(^{805}\) Phone interview with a member of the overseas Singaporean diaspora, 2 March 2009.
limited evidence of the core-periphery structure of relationships that were discernable in the former two cases, although a degree of secrecy was also often necessary in the Singapore case. Thus Gomez writes that various forms of communication, “were supplemented with the use of couriers who came into the country as tourists and passed on or exchanged information with local contacts.” However, the core-periphery pattern was not clearly discernable here because the networks of which we speak were never as well developed as those found in Taiwan and South Korea.

In terms of the content of protection, we also see evidence for activities to mobilize psychological support at times of crises and, more importantly, to raise the international visibility of authoritarian practices by, again, (1) mobilizing the resources of formal organizations and networks abroad (2) creating channels of information, particularly for the outflow of political news to the international community and (3) generating accurate information on Singapore’s political situation. However, there is less evidence to suggest that these networks engaged significantly in the mobilization of material support for the political opposition. Owing to accusations by the ruling PAP that opposition parties have received monies from “questionable” sources abroad to discredit them have been periodically heard during election campaigns, such admissions were either impossible to elicit or such donations were effectively curtailed. An early precedent - the 1959 PAP election campaign that accused the Labor Front government of receiving a secret USD 500,000 “gift” from the Eisenhower administration, thus being “an American proxy” – was important in that it found resonance with the electorate and helped to usher the PAP into power. The early success of this “anti-Imperialist” discourse accounts for its endurance, surfacing from time to time during the 1970s outside of electoral politics. It has, for

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example been used against the local media - in 1971 two independent English dailies, *The Herald* and *The Eastern Sun*, were closed for alleged “covert subversion” and receiving monies from abroad. Further, domestic organizations with transnational links have also been thus accused. As evidence for his role as the local mastermind of the transnational Marxist plot to violently overthrow the Singapore government in 1987, Vincent Cheng was shown to have received financial help from the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) – although it was for his personal use as a theological student. It is for this reason that less evidence has been found for the material support that could have been given.

**The Content of Protection**

Close examination of the content of protection provided to the political opposition here reveals striking similarities to the previous cases. However, in the context of a tightly controlled society such as Singapore, the protection regime played a dual role in cultivating potential extra-parliamentary opposition elements as well as aspiring opposition politicians. This fact helps to explain why the PAP government chose to crack down particularly strongly on a web of informal transnational relationships between activists and would-be opposition politicians in Singapore and abroad in 1987, which developed despite previous attempts to disrupt and control civil society groups with potential transnational links. The various Christian churches and ecumenical organizations, which activism predated the “Helsinki spillover,” were particularly important in cultivating a potential extra-parliamentary opposition.

However, one distinct feature of Singapore’s Christian community as a whole was its general disengagement in public affairs. Although many Christian churches were pro-status quo in the last two cases, the lack of explicit engagement in socio-political issues was significantly pronounced in Singapore. Frustrated with the consistent failure of the local Christian churches to
engage in public affairs in general, the late leader of the opposition Worker’s Party J. B. Jeyeratnam even criticized and complained about it openly.\textsuperscript{807} The reason for this general passivity is of course to be found in the fear of overstepping the shifting set “Out-of-Bounds” markers set arbitrarily by the PAP government.\textsuperscript{808} However, the demography of the island and of the region is also an important factor. The level of Christian activism has been circumscribed by the predominance of Islam in the maritime Southeast Asian region, significant because of the historical communal tensions between the Muslim Malays and non-Malays on the Malaysian Peninsula and the island. State tolerance of religious activism has therefore been low – resulting in a general policy of disengagement in public affairs on the part of most Church leaders.\textsuperscript{809} In fact, this demographic context has been beneficial in the perpetuation of the notion of imminent religious and communal strife in a delicately balanced “multicultural nation” – which has served to both increase preventive measures of social control and justify the suppression of whatever activist Christian elements remained throughout the 1970s and 80s.\textsuperscript{810}

In terms of the protection regime, this of course meant that the local churches were careful to take an arms-length approach to the parliamentary opposition in Singapore. They were thus unlikely to activate their counterparts overseas in an effort to raise the international profile of political repression in Singapore and to mobilize material support for the parliamentary opposition in any direct form. In effect, this largely isolated the organized political opposition in Singapore from the transnational Christian community. There is also some evidence to suggest that members the Christian community had implicitly come to accept the PAP government’s

\textsuperscript{808} OB markers are “action and speech that engage directly in electioneering and party politics; that is, within the arena of the contest for political power.” Ng Boon Yian, “OB Markers: We Still Need Them?” \textit{Today}, 16 June 2003.  
demarcation of the “political sphere” as “out of bounds,” thus isolating the parliamentary opposition elements from the transnational networks of Christian activists.\textsuperscript{811} However, certain ecumenical groups and a select few Christian leaders, particularly from the Catholic Church, did show limited sympathy and practical support for the parliamentary opposition in the form of disapproval of the Internal Security Act (ISA) during the 1970s. In 1977, one of the more prominent Catholic activists, Father Patrick Goh, attempted to set up a Human Rights Committee opposed to detention without trial and other arbitrary restrictions of freedom. This committee of ten consisted of the political opposition previously detained under the ISA, including left-wing Barisan Socialis opposition parliamentarian Dr Poh Soo Kai. Because of the leftist leanings of those involved, this new human rights committee was alleged to be a front organization for a communist revival and quickly disbanded.

In the 1980s, elements of the Catholic Church and related ecumenical organizations began to show open sympathy towards the parliamentary opposition and became political targets in the 1987 Operation Spectrum. During the 1970s, certain Catholic Church members and ecumenical leaders had associated to different extents with student activists later exiled abroad.\textsuperscript{812} These Christian activists were rounded up as part of the crackdown on the grounds of an alleged “Marxist conspiracy” to violently overthrow the PAP government in 1987. Of those who were questioned by the police and detained were Catholics who had volunteered to support the opposition Worker’s Party.\textsuperscript{813} Their increasing support or sympathy towards the parliamentary opposition could in itself have been worrying to the authorities, but their links to transnational ecumenical organizations and indeed, to the Catholic Church itself was a concern because the moral weight that it could lend the opposition in Singapore, increasing the visibility

\textsuperscript{811} Phone interview with a member of the overseas Singaporean community, 9 February 2009.
\textsuperscript{812} These were Tan Wah Piow, Juliet Chin and Paul Lim.
\textsuperscript{813} These included Tang Fong Har, Kenneth Tsang, Tan Tee Seng and Low Yit Leng.
of political repression there. This was especially the case when the Catholic-led “people’s power” movement in the neighboring Philippines had only recently toppled the authoritarian Marcos government and captured the attention of the international community. That this was a concern on the part of the PAP government is reflected in attempts to discredit this group of Catholic activists as members of a transnational “Marxist” movement with the aim of toppling governments throughout Asia, when in fact the closest association to Marxism consisted of Vincent Cheng’s intellectual sympathies for the South Korean brand of liberation theology called the *minjung* theology.\(^{814}\)

The Catholic Church and other Christian ecumenical organizations were not a threat to the government simply because of the resources and channels that were potentially available to give support the existing parliamentary opposition. By the 1970s, an active opposition movement had all but been decimated – as reflected in the only 2 Parliamentary seats that had been won by the opposition in 1987. There really was no immediate prospect by the 1980s that opposition leaders could break the PAP’s political stranglehold, particularly as they showed limited mobilizational capacity in the electoral arena. The background of those who were arrested in the 1987 Marxist conspiracy suggests that the PAP government was instead worried that the Catholic Church and other related ecumenical organizations at the time were serving as a *breeding ground for an extra-parliamentary opposition*. It was apparent that certain ecumenical movements and theologies were already an inspiration to such elements. The emergence of a Christian-rooted grassroots movement with many ideological commonalities with the parliamentary opposition had the potential to form a wider democratic movement with better

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mobilizational potential.\textsuperscript{815} During the late 1960s and early 70s, the Urban and Industrial Mission (UIM) undertaken by the multi-denominational CCA had through its local affiliate the National Council of Churches in Singapore (NCCS) encouraged workers to take a “confrontational” approach to addressing issues of socio-economic grievance to the state. The Jurong Industrial Mission (JIM) also involved university student leaders.\textsuperscript{816} However, the UIM did not take off in Singapore because under pressure from the PAP government, many local churches “withdrew their endorsement and financial support from the UIMs.”\textsuperscript{817} The UIM was eventually shut down in 1973, but by that time had already passed the torch to the Catholic Church in 1968 through personal relationships between Protestant and Catholic religious leaders and assistance rendered to the Catholic Nazareth Center.\textsuperscript{818} This new community center adopted the same approach of “confrontation” in assisting the working classes – which came in the rather mild form of setting up meetings between labor leaders and Members of Parliament, and encouraging workers with grievance to go to the media with their stories. A crackdown was narrowly averted in 1969 when the Nazareth Center changed leadership and policy direction as the result of an inopportune illness on the part of its director.\textsuperscript{819}

In the meantime, the Catholic Church was becoming increasingly active in the separate form of the Young Christian Workers’ Movement (YCW), which was primarily concerned with the rights of local and immigrant workers. The activities of the YCW in the 1980s consisted largely of making workers aware of their rights and providing legal and other services to foreign

\textsuperscript{815} “Officials have been looking for links between local public-interest groups around which a political opposition could form...” \textit{The New York Times}, 12 May 1988.

\textsuperscript{816} These included Tan and Lim.


\textsuperscript{818} Ibid. , p.12.

\textsuperscript{819} Ibid.
workers. The Geylang Catholic Center, for example, provided refuge for foreign workers such as housemaids, and was staffed with solicitors such as Teo Soh Lung - also arrested in Operation Spectrum in 1987 - to give legal advice. Teo had become the poster child for the kind of grassroots opposition that could develop and needed to be stopped by the 1980s - she headed a Legislation (Civil) Special Assignments Committee to challenge the proposed Newspaper and Printing Presses Act amendment in 1986 and when a Parliamentary Select Committee hearing on the Legal Professions (Amendment) Act was held in 1986, had an infamous run-in with then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew as a Worker’s Party “sympathizer.”

Prior to the 1980s, the Catholic movement had spread to the campuses of the then-University of Singapore (later, the National University of Singapore) and the Singapore Polytechnic in the form of the Catholic Students Society. By 1974, it had also begun to influence the wider student body, which had also become increasingly politicized, with student leaders speaking openly about the need for democratization in Singapore. Many of these student activists were also involved with the Student Christian Movement (SCM), which in turn was a part of the multi-denominational World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), giving them transnational organizational links. The various SCMs united under the WSCF also had strong ties with the regional CCA. Further, the new student movement of the early 1970s had an explicit “mobilizational” agenda, and was unafraid of stepping beyond the circumscribed boundaries of political activism. This philosophy became practice in the SCM’s 1972 “Save the Herald” campaign to protest the shutting down of the Singapore Herald for “taking on the government.” Students also led an infamous labor strike in 1972 on the Gulf Plastics site along

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820 Tan, Let the People Judge, p. 5.
821 Ibid., p. 6.
with an Irish priest who was later expelled.\textsuperscript{823} This fledgling extra-parliamentary opposition had the potential to forge cross-class alliances (working and middle classes) in opposition to the PAP. Further, initial attempts to cow these student leaders did not immediately work - the deportment of 7 student leaders in 1974 and Tan’s arrest in 1975 further aroused the mobilization of the Singapore Polytechnic Students’ Union (SPSU), the Nanyang University Student’s Union (NUSU) and what was then called the Ngee Ann Technical College Students’ Union (NATCSU) to protest the crackdown. Although the arrest of Tan and the deportment of other student leaders in 1975 did eventually quell the Christian-related student movement of the 1970s, Christian social activism continued in muted tones well into the 1980s, eventually drawing the attention of the authorities in 1987. Vincent Cheng, who was the “most skeptical of party politics,” continued to “work at the grassroots level, to raise the consciousness of the workers whom society [had] deserted.”\textsuperscript{824}

By the mid 1980s, the Catholic Church itself was experiencing some important changes that would lead it to engage more openly in public affairs. In 1985, the YCW Movement issued a public statement on May Day concerning the right of workers to their jobs that was construed by the authorities as an attempt to incite them to strike.\textsuperscript{825} Shortly before the 1987 crackdown, debate on social justice in the Catholic Church had increased and calls for the Church to become more engaged in public affairs were particularly strident between 1986-7.\textsuperscript{826} These more recent debates originated from the Archdiocesan Justice and Peace Commission and were reflected in its publication \textit{The Catholic News} (more specifically its column \textit{Justus}) and \textit{Singapore}

\textsuperscript{824} Tan, \textit{Let the People Judge}, p. 43.
\textsuperscript{826} Report of the International Mission of Jurists to Singapore, 5-9\textsuperscript{th} July 1987, \textit{To Investigate the Arrest and Detention of 22 Persons in May and June 1987} (October 1987), p. 17.
Highlights, which were all later shut down.827 These ecumenical organizations and their publications were not confined to the Catholic community alone, having established a presence amongst tertiary students and workers. Such publications provided alternative informational and discursive channels in a tightly controlled Singapore, with the potential to contribute to the development of grassroots opposition to the PAP government. Further, Catholic activism was beginning to spread to other Christian denominations through ecumenical workers like Vincent Cheng, who was arrested only shortly before a meeting was to be held by an multi-denominational organization with plans to unite Protestants and Catholics toward greater “political participation.”828

Special Branch officers later raided the office of the CCA in December 1987 and expelled all foreign staff charging that, “the CCA had breached its undertaking not to indulge in any political activity or allow its funds to be used for political purposes.”829 The CCA programs “seemed to have more affinity with the activist churches of Korea, the Philippines and other places than with the introverted concerns of many of the churches of Singapore.”830 Besides its attempts to set up Urban Industrial Missions and of having student leaders involved in those Missions during the 1970s, the CCA was accused of more recently helping “to fund … exchanges for political activists and dissidents,” and trying to “persuade its readers to involve themselves in radical political activities” through the CCA News, its monthly journal.831 The CCA had mounted a campaign against the arrests of the “Marxist conspirators” from its subsidiary bodies in Hong

827 Silencing All Critics, p. 39.
828 This was the Coalition for Religious Development (CORD). The Straits Times, 29 May 1987.
830 Ron O’Grady, Banished: The Expulsion of the Christian Conference of Asia from Singapore and Its Implications (Hong Kong: CCA International Affairs Committee, 1990), p. 29.
831 This was because it highlighted church-state confrontations, appealed for ecumenical solidarity for Christian dissidents in trouble and reported the “people power” movement in the Philippines that brought down the authoritarian government in 1986.
Kong and some of its member Councils of Churches. Further, the Asian Human Rights Commission, linked to the CCA, sent a fact-finding mission in July 1987 along with the International Mission of Jurists, which concluded in its report that those detained should be “defended and applauded.” The CCA also financially supported the Emergency Committee for Human Rights in Singapore (ECHRS), based in Christchurch, New Zealand, which produced fortnightly newsletters between May 1987 and October 1988 to publicize and inform on Operation Spectrum. It would appear that there were official concerns over the CCA not only because of its potential to breed a new generation of extra-parliamentary opposition, but its ability to mobilize transnational networks to protect them from repression.

Numerous church and ecumenical leaders in Australia, Japan, the Philippines and Taiwan protested Operation Spectrum and the closure of the CCA immediately following those events, further raising the international profile of repression there. The Ecumenical News Service of the WCC carried news of the crackdowns abroad while in May 1988, recommendations were made at the Churches Commission on International Affairs – an advisory body of the WCC – that the WCC boycott Singapore Airlines, which it did. Although the Singaporean Christian community has shied away from too explicit an association with the parliamentary opposition, these transnational networks were thus mobilized on behalf of those Christian and student activists who were rounded up in 1987. Ex-student leader Tan Wah Piow also stated that he “enjoyed the support of the World Council of Churches, and the British Council of Churches” when he went to the UK to seek political asylum. The support that Tan received enabled him

833 ICJ Report, p.27.
834 Banished, Chapter 2, pp. 13-22.
835 Ibid., pp. 19-20.
836 Phone interview with a member of the overseas Singaporean community, 9 February 2009.
837 Tan, Let the People Judge, p. 11.
to further campaign for the release of political detainees under the ISA while in the UK, further raising the international profile of political repression in Singapore.

Apart from Christian Churches and related ecumenical organizations, human rights organizations were another crucial component in the transnational networks of nonstate actors. Again, they were important in raising the international profile of the government’s repressive tactics toward the parliamentary opposition and the nascent extra-parliamentary opposition through their reports, press releases and the adoption of various long-term detainees as “Prisoner of the Month.” In addition to annual reports on Singapore’s human rights situation, Amnesty International (AI) also produced particular reports based on study missions and published lists of long-term ISA detainees, the first of which appeared in 1970. However, their activities were somewhat different in the case of Singapore, in that they also highlighted the legal institutions of political repression and social control. The importance of the AI in the Singapore case lies in the fact that it consistently raised international awareness of the institutionalized means of repression as embodied in the International Security Act, the Banishment Act and the subtle subordination of the judiciary to the executive in “political cases.”

The latter was particularly important as the PAP’s Parliamentary dominance ensured the proliferation of a variety of extra-Constitutional legislation that extended state capacity for repression without the need to resort to overt brutality. With time the judiciary increasingly reflected the will of the PAP-controlled executive in the interpretation of both the Constitution and such legislation. Since 1975 the AI has played a crucial role in raising awareness of the subtle legalistic methods of political repression employed to date, especially the use of the Banishment Act to hold some detainees indefinitely without trial without having to resort to the
Importantly, the AI Annual Report of 1977 raised the issue of increasing use of “public confessions” to justify the arrest and imprisonment of activists and as a condition of release, in lieu of normal judicial procedure altogether. Raising issue with the legal institutions employed by the PAP government against the political opposition was particularly important because the carefully managed international image of Singapore and the PAP government as an efficient, stable leadership on the one hand, and the rarity of overt physical torture on the other. The AI was subsequently banned from Singapore, however, making other human rights organizations such as Asia Watch, Human Rights Watch and the International Service for Human Rights increasingly important. Representatives of Human Rights Watch (Asia Watch) were given more leeway by the PAP government to operate in Singapore, which findings were consistent with that of AI.

These human rights organizations were also important in that they invited the political opposition in Singapore abroad to conferences and workshops in order to give them a platform on which to publicize the plight of the political opposition on the island. They also interviewed the political opposition, their friends and family and gave them a channel through which they could voice what was censured or distorted in the local press. Noted opposition leader Francis Seow was invited to the US to participate in a series of human rights meetings hosted by Human Rights Watch shortly before charges against him were heard on 5 December 1988. The Asian Human Rights Commission also invited Seow to a workshop in Kuala Lumpur in October 1987. Of such conferences, opposition figure Francis Seow stated, “They avail me a forum to share my views…and to focus attention on some human rights problems in Singapore…so that concerned

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839 The AI was finally allowed to send a fact-finding mission to Singapore on 14 June 1987.
international organizations would bring pressure to bear upon the Singapore Government...”

Seow also mentioned that such conferences “could provide me a measure of immunity and preservation in the event of the Government’s action against me when I entered politics.”

While Seow’s statement expresses the role of human rights organizations as a potential source of protection for a possible new wave of political opposition, the PAP construed that “these invitations, arranged through the informal network of human rights organizations, appear[ed] to be party of the plan to build up Seow’s reputation and credibility as an opposition figure of stature.”

The view of the PAP government further confirms that the human rights organizations were essential in helping to put a “face” to the political opposition in Singapore, particularly important because the absence of a broad-based democratic movement tended to reinforce the impression to the outside world that there was little, if any, democratic struggle in Singapore.

Further, human rights organizations with a focus on legal institutions were particularly important in exposing the difficulties faced by the “parliamentary opposition.” Such human rights organizations with technical expertise in the law were particularly important to give the positions taken by other human rights organizations such as the AI the requisite technical credibility. In this regard, the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) played an important role in its close cooperation with the AI. Further, such human rights organizations also provided another conduit for the outflow of information on political repression in Singapore. In a seminal report produced after a fact-finding mission in Singapore in July 1987, for example, the ICJ interviewed opposition figures Francis Seow, J. B. Jeyeratnam, and the family and friends of those “Marxist conspirators” whose positions on a multiplicity of political issues had either been

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841. Ibid.
842. This was expressed in an addendum to a press statement issued by the Government on 21 May 1988. Ibid.
suppressed in the tightly controlled local and international media or rendered imprecise. As was noted by the ICJ mission, this was made possible “despite the close surveillance which has been imposed on such communications,” and therefore gave “details imparted under such conditions a special credibility.”  

The ICJ also invited aspiring opposition politician Francis Seow to a conference in Bangkok in December 1987 and June 1988 to further raise the international profile of political repression in Singapore. Other organizations such as the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights (now Human Rights First) and the International Human Rights Law Group also served as expert witnesses during Congressional Hearings over the human rights situation in Singapore.  

The ICJ was also crucial to the political opposition in Singapore because of the increasing reliance of the “parliamentary opposition” in the early 1980s on external sources of legal expertise as the PAP government began to turn to the use of libel action to cripple the parliamentary opposition. The inability to procure local counsel willing to risk their own necks to defend the political opposition in such cases meant that Commonwealth Queen’s Counsels were often the only source of help.  

The ICJ would help to obtain such eminent British lawyers - whose prestige helped to raise the international profile of political repression. On the other hand, the ICJ would also send observers to such trials in order to help ensure at the minimum that the proper procedures of law were observed, or when their fairness was questionable, to make sure that such machinations of the Singaporean courts were well publicized abroad.  

Two other organizations active abroad in support of the political opposition in Singapore should be mentioned. They were akin to Taiwan’s FAPA and involved ex-student activists living

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845 See Silencing All Critics, p. 52.
or exiled in the UK, Netherlands and France, but because they were mostly staffed and supported by non-Singaporeans, they are considered here as human rights organizations. SiMBA (Singapore and Malaysian British Association) and KEHMA-S (European Committee on Human Rights in Malaysia and Singapore), both based in the European region, were human rights organizations that focused exclusively on Singapore and Malaysia. In noting the lack of coverage given to the democratic struggle in the mainstream media, both SiMBA and KEHMA-S were purposed toward collecting and publicizing information on the current affairs of Singapore and Malaysia, carrying out campaigns on human rights violations and the repeal of repressive legislation, and supporting the efforts of individuals and groups working toward creating more democratic societies there. SiMBA in particular published a regular newsletter and frequent news updates, issued urgent action appeals, organized public meetings and talks to a variety of public forums, and distributed written and audio-visual material on politics in Singapore and Malaysia. Working closely with KEHMA-S, it was also dedicated to lobbying MPs and MEPs to use their influence to take up human rights issues in Singapore and Malaysia. Indeed, SiMBA was closely associated with Amnesty International, and KEHMA-S appears to have made some inroads with the European Parliament through the Green Alternative European Link (GRAEL) in the late 1980s.

The peak of activity for these two organizations appear to have been during the late 1980s, not least because of the stimulation provided by the “Marxist Conspiracy” arrests. SiMBA conducted extensive news coverage of the “Marxist Conspiracy” crackdowns from the opposition perspective, helping to put a “face” to the victims of political repression at this time. A rather large human rights conference with over 150 attendees organized by KEHMA-S and

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GRAEL in March 1989 also brought together opposition politicians and extra parliamentary activists that would have found difficulty in coming together in Singapore, along with the secular and non-secular human rights organizations that supported them. Its purpose was to “raise awareness among the European public of the subtle and serious, though unspectacular, human rights violations and the deteriorating state of democracy in Malaysia and Singapore.”

Furthermore, efforts were stepped up to lobby not only the British and EU parliamentarians, but also Commonwealth delegates at the Commonwealth Meeting in Kuala Lumpur in 1989.

Such efforts were, however, limited by the general passivity of the Singaporean diaspora. In the view of at least one former dissident exiled abroad, “Singaporeans are funny. If you ask a Singaporean why he or she left Singapore, they will say to get away from the control. They don’t like control. However, they are not willing to step forward to say anything or do anything when they are abroad either.” The fear of suffering some form of reprisal after raising concerns about human rights abuses and political repression in Singapore appear to have been widespread, although in reality the surveillance apparatus of the Singapore government may not have been extensive. Nevertheless, this fear may in fact have intensified after Operation Spectrum identified the transnational links between activists in Singapore and in the UK.

Further, the Singaporean diaspora was spread over various countries in the Commonwealth such the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, along with other countries in Western Europe, Hong Kong and the US. Different waves of dissidents and emigrants have tended to show different geographical preferences for both studying and settling.

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849 “Singaporeans and Malaysians living in Britain appear reluctant to join SiMBA in case such membership reflects on their future careers (many students are of course on Government scholarships).” SiMBA Newsletter, Issue No 5 July 1994, p. 5.
abroad – in the 1960s and 70s this was mainly the UK, while since the 1980s this preference shifted to Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the US. Nevertheless, this high degree of geographical dispersal meant that the Singaporean diaspora on the whole was less of a “community.” This may explain in part the relative lack of collective political action. It also explains why most of the organizations that rallied around the political opposition at moments of repression were ad hoc in nature, and could not be sustained over long periods of time. Such ad hoc organizations were mostly initiated because there happened to be one or two people with personal connections with the arrestees. At around 1987, for example, there were no significant campaigns in the US for the political opposition, partly because the number of Singaporeans living there were few and had no personal connections with the arrestees. In contrast, a few of the arrestees happened to have friends in the Netherlands and Belgium, who formed KEHMA-S. When asked if the geographic dispersal was a contributing factor to the lack of political organization, the interviewee’s reply was, “Yes, I think that is important too. But those who emigrate don’t really have an appetite for collective action. We are very different from the South Koreans, for example. We have no nationalist inclination…we tend to be very atomized.”

That is not to say that there has been no evidence of particular overseas Singaporean communities coming together to help raise the international profile of political repression in Singapore, of course. Various ad hoc campaigns have appeared very quickly in Australia and New Zealand to support the political opposition during the 1980s, examples being the Emergency Committee for Human Rights in Singapore, formed in Christchurch, New Zealand, and the Malaysia and Singapore Human Rights Group, based in Sydney. These, however, were not sustained efforts at collective action. Perhaps the most well organized and politically active

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850 There were also generational differences in the political attitudes of students.
851 Phone interview with member of overseas Singaporean diaspora, 2 March 2009.
852 Ibid.
segment of the overseas Singaporeans have historically been those students studying abroad, transient a population though they were. From the mid-1980s onwards, however, student activism had begun to atrophy, significantly so in the 1990s. By 1994, SiMBA had experienced low membership and trouble carrying on publications. The reason for this was the rising number of government-sponsored students, whose ability to continue and finish their studies depended upon good grades, and ostensibly, “good behavior.” The reason for which students going to the UK relied increasingly on government sponsorship, on the other hand, was that fees for international students were increased substantially in the early 1980s by the Conservative government. Student bodies there thus became increasingly apolitical, focusing mostly on the organization of social events. This trend coincided,ironically, with an increasing number of students studying abroad.

Because overseas students were ostensibly the most organized and politically active segment of the Singaporean diaspora, I will now focus on three of the largest and most active ones in the UK, Australia and Hong Kong. The first on this list is the Federation of United Kingdom and Eire Students’ Organization (FUEMSSO), comprised of 22 college-based clubs first founded in 1963. FUEMSSO did not become politicized until 1969 following the May 13 riots, after which its monthly publication *Fikiran Pelajar* (or *Fijar*, Students’ Thoughts) demonstrated strong concerns with authoritarian practices at home. FUEMSSO worked closely with the human rights organizations to raise the international profile of political repression in the UK and abroad. Thus, workshops and conferences about politics and society in

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853 SiMBA Newsletter, Issue No 5 July 1994, p. 3  
854 Ibid., p. 5.  
857 This magazine was issued 8 times a year at an annual subscription rate and distributed outside of the UK.
Singapore (and Malaysia) were organized on a consistent basis. *Fijar* promoted the writings of the political opposition in Singapore and Malaysia and other literature critical of the ruling regimes. Further, they extended the work of human rights organizations by writing protest telegrams in support of long-term and recent ISA detainees and by encouraging other students to write to them via “urgent appeals” circulars. Prominent political exiles like Tan were invited to give lectures, further exposing the fate of the political opposition in Singapore.\(^{858}\) FUEMSSO also organized a public rally in February 1975 and was active in the mid-1970s at lobbying British Members of Parliament. In 1972, another London-based Malaysians and Singaporeans for a Democratic Society (MSDS) even protested the British Broadcasting Corporation’s interview with Prime Minister Lee as an “ineffectual whitewash” and produced affidavits and statements for the UK press “smuggled from prison speaking of forcible feeding, ill treatment and attempts at forced labor…signed by the relatives of 14 political detainees.”\(^{859}\)

By the early 1980s, the growing mobilizational capacity of student organizations had become apparent. Although its ability to create alliances with labor organizations, British political parties and Christian groups predated the 1980s, it became obvious that such alliances could be mobilized toward a campaign blitz against the PAP government. One such campaign of significance in fact began in 8 May 1981 with a march that took place from the Speakers’ Corner in Hyde Park to the Singapore High Commission protesting the “psychological and physical tortures” of political detainees. An exhibition on such abuses was also held at the Friends’ House on Euston Road, where some 5000 signatures demanding the immediate and unconditional release of all ISA detainees were gathered and forwarded to then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew. Further, a “few thousand” protest postcards, bearing the faces of “some of the world’s longest

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\(^{858}\) Tan, *Let the People Judge*, p. 7.

\(^{859}\) *The Sunday Observer*, 9 January 1972.
serving political detainees” were sent to Lee. The Seamen’s Union, the Transport and General Workers Union (the largest union in Britain at the time), and the International Transport Workers Federation supported this grassroots action.\textsuperscript{860} Furthermore, a wide range of “eminent persons” were persuaded to send protest letters to the Prime Minister on behalf of these political prisoners, including religious leaders.\textsuperscript{861} Two months later the Standing Committee on Human Rights in Malaysia and Singapore of the FUEMSSO held a press conference at the House of Commons.\textsuperscript{862} Later in the day, a picket was held before the Singapore Airlines office on Regent Street with placards of the face of one of the longest held political prisoners in the world at the time, Dr Poh Soo Kai. This drew “a great deal of attention, sympathy and support from hundreds of tourists, shippers, office workers and even motorists and passengers in the permanent traffic jam in Regent Street.”\textsuperscript{863}

Students in Australia were active through the Australian Students’ International Network and the Network of Overseas Student Collectives in Australia. Following the “Marxist Conspiracy” arrests an exhibition on political repression in Singapore was held across Sydney campuses for four days in August 1987. A booklet based on the materials at these exhibitions went on to say that Operation Spectrum “exposes yet again the underside of a society which is better known as a miracle economy internationally,” and that the exhibition was aimed at “highlighting this lesser known side of a glittering society so that overdue international sanction can be brought to bear on Lee Kuan Yew’s dictatorial regime.” It went on to provide the biodata of each of the 18 activists detained at the time – putting a face to the victims of political

\textsuperscript{860} See \textit{Fijar} No. 14 October 1981.

\textsuperscript{861} Ibid., p.13.

\textsuperscript{862} The panel of speakers on the July 8 press conference included the Chair of the Parliamentary Human Rights Group Lord Avebury, the International Secretary of the Labor Party Jenny Little, and ex-student leader and ISA detainee Tan Wah Piow. Ibid.

\textsuperscript{863} Ibid.
repression in Singapore. The campaign did not stop there - throughout the summer an intensive series of campaigns, public demonstrations and talks were held in Sydney to publicize the arrests and highlight political repression in Singapore more generally.\footnote{An “International Campaign for the Release of the Singapore 18” Between 18 July to 9 August 1987. 18 July, 25 July, 1 Aug and 8 Aug 1987 were dedicated to a “Symbolic Boycott of Singapore Airlines.” Between 2 and 9 August 1987, a series of forums, talks, rallies and the airing of video films were held as part of the Singapore Solidarity Week. Finally, 9 August, Singapore’s National Day was declared the “Day of Sorrow and Protest” and a telegram campaign was held.} The Australian student organizations seem to have adopted an extremely militant posture towards the PAP government.\footnote{See Trusanini No. 2, 1985.}

Lastly, we come to a discussion of the Asian Students Association (ASA), based in Hong Kong. Student activists linked to the ASA were targeted in the “Marxist Conspiracy” arrests, implying their growing significance as a regional node in the transnational networks already described. There is evidence that ASA and FUEMSSO had begun to make contact since 1981, signaling a coalescing student movement abroad in the aftermath of attempts to suppress the student movement in Singapore in the mid 1970s.\footnote{See Fijar No. 14 October 1981, p. 14.} In fact, one of the most significant aspects of these student organizations was that they considered themselves a part of a transnational student network. Judging from its publications, a strong sense of solidarity existed amongst these various student organizations. In this regard, the overseas students represented the most significant \textit{transnational} network of what was a series of highly atomized pockets of overseas Singaporeans based in different countries. However, early efforts to form a transnational alliance did not appear to have been successful either.

Although a crucial channel for information on political repression to reach the international community, the foreign media was not always been critical of the PAP government. During the 1950s and 60s, the general impression of the Singapore government conveyed by the
mainstream media to the international community was largely favorable, and much was made of the intellect of its core leadership and their strict adherence to the ideals of a “clean” government. Singapore was orderly and efficient, and the way it was run compared very well to many developing countries. By the 1970s, however, the PAP’s complete dominance of Parliament and the organs of state, along with the increasing curtailment of civil liberties such as the freedom of information, were not lost on an increasingly doubtful foreign media. The 1970s marked the beginning of both legislative and other measures to muzzle the local and foreign press, which began to rankle members of the International Press Institute, the Press Foundation of Asia and the Commonwealth Press Union. These organizations registered their concern publicly, for example, over the 1971 closure of The Herald and the Eastern Sun and the arrest of 4 senior staff members of the Nanyang Siang Pau. The tide of opinion in the mainstream foreign media began to turn in the 1970s, and it became increasingly critical of the PAP government’s tight control of dissent. From 1981, critical reports of the mistreatment of vocal opposition parliamentarian J. B. Jeyaretnam became a staple of reports on political developments in Singapore. This invited, of course, spates of legal actions against the foreign media by the Singapore government.

By the 1980s the foreign press was very much in step with the opinion of human rights activists and legal experts involved in raising the international profile of repressive tactics used against the parliamentary opposition. The London Sunday Observer and the Times both gave publicity to the student protests in 1981 by carrying the profile of Dr Poh Soo Kai in their Prisoners of Conscience columns on the 12 and 13 July that year. During the Marxist conspiracy debacle, the foreign press weighed in against the actions of the government and the

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continued existence of the ISA.\textsuperscript{868} The \textit{Far Eastern Economic Review}, on the other hand, gave extensive coverage to the position of the so-called Marxist conspirators and the parliamentary opposition – an important angle of reporting lacking in the Singapore press. Although somewhat more neutral in its position, the British Broadcasting Corporation also proved a useful channel for the political opposition to clear their name of official charges of communist involvement.\textsuperscript{869} That the foreign press was a crucial component of the protection regime in Singapore’s case is underlined by the words of opposition leader Francis Seow, who confessed that he felt it would be, “useful…to cultivate the friendship of these foreign journalists because in the long term, they could help publicize my views and this would be advantageous as I already had the intention to enter politics.”\textsuperscript{870} This largely pro-opposition stance taken by the foreign press explains the extensive public relations battles fought in the editorial pages of internationally-circulated newspapers and magazines, the numerous libel charges hurled at their editors, and repeated accusations of “foreign interference” in the domestic politics of Singapore.

Lastly, the roles played by academics and students were largely replicated in the case of Singapore, with the exception that there was no evidence that documents and information were conveyed out of Singapore in secret on behalf of the political opposition. Because fewer Hearings were held in the Singapore case, their expert testimonials were not called upon with frequency. Academics, particularly those in the legal sector, were vitally important in Singapore’s case, however, not least because of the legal technicalities of repressive measures there. Academics representing human rights organizations would appear as observers in court proceedings against the opposition. For example, Jerome Cohen, a lawyer based in Hong Kong and the former director of Harvard University’s East Asian Legal Studies Program, traveled to

\textsuperscript{869} Seow, \textit{To Catch a Tartar}, p. 230.
\textsuperscript{870} “Seow Reveals Human Rights Connection,” \textit{The Sunday Times} (Singapore) 22 May 1988.
Singapore on behalf of Asia Watch to observe habeas corpus proceedings involving ISA detainees in May 1988. They would also write exposés in notable newspapers circulated worldwide, condemning the methods used against the opposition.871 Sympathetic academics based overseas also provided financial support to exiled dissidents in the form of fellowships at their universities, during which further works exposing political repression in Singapore could be undertaken. For example, Francis Seow obtained fellowships at Harvard and Yale, which also allowed him to produce works further exposing the political repression and means of social control in Singapore. Singapore-based academics critical of the Singapore government met with similar harassment as the political opposition there, and many did not stay long, however.872 Nevertheless, their expulsions usually led to more bad publicity abroad as these academics were then free to tell of their experiences in Singapore.

However, critical academics such as D.J. Enright and Malcolm Caldwell were by no means the majority in the 1960s and 70s. Then-prime minister Lee’s academic accomplishments were much admired in Britain. In 1971 – when members of the local press and student leaders had just been rounded up – both Sheffield and Liverpool Universities conferred upon Lee honorary doctoral degrees.873 In other words, academics - especially in the UK - tended to be impressed with the educational credentials of the Singapore leadership and had mixed reactions its approach to the political opposition. As the overseas Singaporean student organizations grew in size and clout, they were able to influence and mobilize increasing numbers of academics to the cause of protecting the political opposition in Singapore, however. There is even further

872 For example, an early critic D. J. Enright, who taught English at the University of Singapore, was “eased out” of his position there.
evidence to suggest that they influenced (non-Singaporean) student organizations in Europe, Australia and New Zealand to take the part of the political opposition in Singapore during the 1970s. An example is the National Union of Students in the United Kingdom, which undertook a broad campaign in cooperation with FUEMSSO to raise awareness of the repressive legislation used against the political opposition. Thus, in the Singapore case, the strength of the overseas Singapore student associations was reflected in the engagement of foreign students in raising the international profile of repression in Singapore.

The Comparative Role of State and Substate Actors

Discussion of the role played by external state actors and substate actors here is confined to the US and the UK, although lobbying efforts by the overseas Singaporeans consisted also of the European Parliament. Historically, the US has considered Singapore to belong to the British sphere of influence, although in reality the US has, since the early 1970s become Singapore’s principal trading partner and strategic ally. Although Singapore has had minimal bilateral linkages with the US through aid, the US has since the 1970s come to have the greatest potential to influence political developments in Singapore. While Singapore receives no U.S. foreign assistance, the United States was Singapore's largest trading partner and the second-largest source of Singapore's imports during the 1980s. The UK, on the other hand, has gradually lost its significance in the region, but because Singapore was a former British colony, residual cultural and political influences and important commercial ties remain. This focus does not discount other Commonwealth countries, particular regional powers with trading and security ties with

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874 Singapore received no significant aid from the US, however, during the 1970s and 80s. Under the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program, however, the US did provide a meager USD 50,000 for military upgrade and skills training. More significantly, the US sold high technology equipment such as F16 fighters, E-2C antisubmarine warfare aircraft and anti-ship missiles such as the Harpoon, F-Hawk anti-aircraft missiles and mortar locating radars under this program.
Singapore such as Australia and New Zealand. The presence of the transnational nonstate actors in these countries has meant that the lobbying of both state and substate actors there to place pressure on the PAP government has taken place during moments of repression. Further research into the influence of these regional powers could be warranted, but beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Despite the Communications and Information Minister Dr. Yeo Ning Hong’s assertion that “foreign elements, through their local proxies and pawns” were attempting to “undermine the integrity of the [Singapore] government,” the role played by external state actors in supporting the development of an opposition movement was at most half hearted.\(^{875}\) Although former Prime minister Lee was initially ambivalent towards US presence in the Southeast Asian region, the imminent withdrawal of British military presence from Singapore prompted an about-face in 1967, and with time Singapore came to be regarded in the US as one of its staunchest allies in the Southeast Asian region. Later, Lee even became an unofficial advisor to the US on Southeast Asian matters, whose opinions on wider strategic affairs was also well regarded.\(^{876}\)

From a convenient base for intelligence gathering in East and Southeast Asia during the 1950s and 60s, Singapore would become an important refueling base for the US navy during the Vietnam War in the 1970s, as well as the regional base for oil exploration in Indonesia and Malaysia. Lee, on the other hand, was held in high regard in the UK as an intellectual, astute statesman and close ally who had turned Singapore into a stable and prosperous base for British economic interests, especially in the petroleum industry. Thus, as one Western diplomat put it at the height of the crackdowns on the political opposition in the 1980s, “For all the problems and

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\(^{876}\) See Kuan Yew Lee, *From Third World to First*, p. 474.
the grumbling that you hear about (Mr. Lee’s party), it’s done a hell of a job for bringing up this country from a slum to the second or third largest (economy) in Asia.**877

Owing to these circumstances, concerns for human rights in Singapore - particularly in regard to treatment of the political opposition - was pursued at best through “quiet diplomacy.” In the 1970s, however, there was little indication that the issue of political repression in the case of Singapore was of concern to either the US or UK officials, despite the work of human rights organizations and a smattering of overseas Singaporeans in the UK to expose the use of the draconian ISA. In 1978, the US State Secretary for Human Rights under the Carter administration, Patricia Derian, did speak to Prime Minister Lee about restrictions on civil liberties in general under the pressure of human rights groups. Years later Lee’s annoyance with Carter – referred to as the peanut farmer “too good to be President” - may well have indicated that the White House and State Department showed more concern about political repression in Singapore than did other administrations.878 Little evidence was found of mention being made of the treatment of the opposition politicians, however, and certainly the lack of opposition representation in the Singapore Parliament was ever debated in the legislatures of either the UK or the US.879 One exception was the US State Department Human Rights Reports, which did duly note the difficulties that the political opposition faced, but also stated somewhat ironically by 1982 that there was “a lessening of the reliance on preventive detention to control potentially subversive elements. The release of prominent detainees without the once-mandatory public

879 As we will see later, an Early Day Motion was moved in 1975 in the UK Parliament. This EDM was not debated, however.
confession and abjuration of communism is one sign the Government’s perception of the reduced threat Singapore faces from communist subversion.”

The fact is that the harassment of the parliamentary opposition seemed to draw little official interest in either the US or UK, and the political situation in Singapore did not receive close scrutiny until the US and British newspapers and magazines began to experience legal entanglements with the Singapore government, and later, the Marxist Conspiracy crackdown took place. During an Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) meeting that happened to be held in Singapore during the time of the arrests between 11 and 19 June 1987, the foreign ministers of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and US Secretary of State Shultz made inquiries about the crackdown. It was only in the 1988 human rights report on Singapore that the State Department began to note that “when the September elections for Singapore’s 81 seat Parliament were called, opposition parties complained that the event was a snap election with insufficient notice for them to prepare…Opposition parties also criticized the domestic media for bias in favor of the PAP and accused the PAP of pursuing authoritarian measures designed to stifle viewpoints differing from those of the PAP … [the] Group Representation Constituency system instated by the PAP controlled Parliament effectively and immunized the PAP from serious electoral challenge in the GRC districts.” However, it is clear that the Reagan administration used only quiet diplomatic channels at best to pursue such concerns with the Singapore government. It was only during Congressional inquiries into Operation Spectrum in July and September 1988 that the State Department was forced to take a defined public stand.

However, Congressional pressures on two State Department officials to state their position on the state of human rights and democracy in Singapore with specific reference to the

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881 ICJ Report, p. 11.
Marxist Conspiracy affair during these hearings only drew a measured response from them. On the September 22 Hearing, they avoided verifying the credibility of human rights reports of mistreatment and also declined to comment on the reasons for which the re-arrested detainees signed a statutory declaration during detention refuting their earlier public statements of physical and psychological abuse.\(^{883}\) When asked to clarify the position of the State Department, they answered without further specification that, “we share Congressional concern about detentions without trial because as a matter of principle the United States Government opposes prolonged detention without trial throughout the world. We have urged the Government of Singapore to either release or try fairly all persons detained under the Internal Security Act and will continue to do so in the future.”\(^{884}\)

Under pressure from human rights organizations to make public statements on specific developments during Operation Spectrum, the State Department was also somewhat evasive. According to Human Rights Watch, “when four of the detainees were rearrested immediately after the Singapore Court of Appeal had ordered their release on technical grounds on December 8, 1988, the State Department reacted with a similarly indirect formulation.”\(^{885}\) Further, when the ISA was amended to limit judicial scrutiny to purely technical grounds and the right of appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London was abolished in ISA cases, the State Department again reacted in public with only broad statements of principle: “we also regard as serious the subordination of fundamental liberties for whatever reason just as we are opposed to detention without trial.”\(^{886}\) The Bush administration was similarly reticent about the later


\(^{885}\) Ibid.

\(^{886}\) Ibid.
treatment of opposition elements in Singapore. In response to the continued detention of Vincent Cheng and Teo Soh Lung without trial, and the refusal to allow a Queen’s Counsel to enter Singapore to defend Teo, State Department officials remained largely silent.\textsuperscript{887} In response to Asia Watch’s inquiries, State Department officials assured the human rights organization that they were “working privately” to obtain the release of Cheng and Teo, and that embassy officials had been observing “most of Cheng’s and Teo’s hearings.”\textsuperscript{888} State officials continued to be silent on the issue of continued restrictions on the civil and political rights of ex-ISA detainees later released from both the 1963 and 1987 crackdowns, however.\textsuperscript{889} The Bush administration had nothing to say about the extension of restrictions on Teo and Cheng for an additional two years in June and July 1989. It also had no comments on the house arrest of Chia Thye Poh, originally detained under the ISA in 1963 and conditionally released on the island of Sentosa in 1986.

Opportunities to take external pressure up a notch were missed on several significant diplomatic occasions. In the May visit to Singapore by US Vice President Dan Quayle in 1989, for example, the subject of Operation Spectrum was completely sidestepped. The so-called human rights concerns of the US – expressed only privately - centered upon restrictions placed on the circulation of US-owned publications the \textit{Asian Wall Street Journal} and the \textit{Far Eastern Economic Review}.\textsuperscript{890} Consistent with Human Rights Watch’s assessment of the weak tactic taken on behalf of the political opposition in Singapore, vice president Quayle’s public speech suggested that common ground had increased between the US and these Asian countries, and that good bilateral relations between Singapore and the United States were growing stronger and

\textsuperscript{887} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{888} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{889} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{890} Ibid.
more important to the US.\textsuperscript{891} Only a very broad statement on the US commitment to principles of human rights and that “old traditions of authoritarian government [were] fading fast from the scene” across Asia without particular reference to the circumstances of the political opposition in Singapore were made.\textsuperscript{892} Instead, Vice-President Quayle praised the role of Singapore in global and regional stability and concluded that, “I leave with strong favorable impressions of Prime Minister Lee, his younger generation of leadership, and the Singaporean people who have created this economic miracle.”\textsuperscript{893} This reflected the tone adopted in President Bush’s earlier visit to Asia in February that year, which also glossed over the issue of human rights with no particular mention of incidences of repression that had taken place only shortly before.\textsuperscript{894}

This particular posture on Singapore was adopted not least because of the diplomatic row between the US and Singapore in May 1988, which erupted over an alleged US plot to interfere in Singapore’s domestic politics. Allegations that a US diplomat (and two other State Department officials) had met with nascent opposition leader Francis Seow and encouraged him to enter politics while offering him the possibility of asylum in the US sparked fierce Parliamentary debates over US interference in Singapore politics, followed by the eventual expulsion of the said diplomat.\textsuperscript{895} In a retaliatory gesture on the part of the US, a high level Singaporean diplomat was also expelled. The hysteria accompanying this diplomatic fallout with the US was reflected in PAP Parliamentarian Goh Choon Kang’s description of the incident as resembling “a girl in a bar, being molested by a sex maniac” during a Parliamentary debate on a motion supporting “firm action of the government to prevent our country from being subverted,

\textsuperscript{892} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{893} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{895} In a signed confession that Seow later refuted, Seow and lawyer Patrick Seong alleged that the US State officials had promised Seow asylum as an exit strategy, in order to encourage him to enter opposition politics.
whether by Marxists, communists, Western powers or other foreign interest groups.” 896 Surprised by the vehemence and very public nature of the accusations, Secretary of State George Schultz stated categorically in a letter to Prime Minister Lee that “that it was not US policy to interfere in Singapore,” and that it was only in the normal course of duty that the said diplomat had maintained contact with opposition elements in Singapore. 897 Lee challenged US officials to a TV broadcast of a “confrontation” that would pit Seow - whose statutory declaration during detention suggested this liaison - against the said State officials, so that “all the countries in Southeast Asia can see the Americans clear their name.” 898 These statements were in keeping with a tide of anti-American sentiment washing over Southeast Asia during the late 1980s. Trade relations with ASEAN members at the time were strained as the US had begun to take a more protectionist posture owing to its persistent trade deficit, and an increasingly aggressive stance on the issue of intellectual property rights in Asia generally. Singapore relations with the US were strained in particular because the US wanted to remove Singapore from the Generalized System of Preferences. Ironically, democratization in the Philippines and South Korea at around this time also allowed anti-American sentiments to be more openly expressed and the unwieldy issue of US air force and naval bases in the Philippines became hotly debated public issue rousing even more anti-American sentiments there. In any case, proposals for a televised confrontation did not materialize, but served to plunge US-Singapore relations to an all-time low.

Later, Francis Seow did in fact seek refuge in the US, although it remains unclear if in a private meeting with Seow US State officials had in fact promised to offer to “protect” Seow from what had become predictably subtle but nevertheless harsh reprisals on those who dared to

enter the political arena across the floor. Yet, the swiftness with which this diplomatic row washed over – it lasted only two months - indicated that the US was unwilling to make further issue out of the treatment of the political opposition. In a Parliamentary speech on 1 June, PM Lee offered the olive branch and when Foreign Minister Dhanabalan met with Secretary of State Schultz in Bangkok in July, both publicly agreed to put the incident behind them. Further, it was also obvious that the US was more concerned with how the restriction of press freedoms in Singapore affected American-owned news publications rather than the development of democracy in Singapore per se. By 1989, US Ambassador to Singapore Robert Orr was already working on a program to boost bilateral economic ties by bringing state governors to Singapore to “enable them to see how Singapore can be used as a base to expand American business with Southeast Asia.” Human rights issues were never tied to these new and important economic initiatives. Indeed, Ambassador Orr characterized Singapore as “a friend whose importance to the U.S. far outweighs its size.”

The UK has played an even more limited role in placing pressure on the PAP government towards better treatment of the political opposition. In examining the role of the UK as a state actor we have to return to the period in time when the British had more influence over political developments in Singapore – the 1950s and 60s. The lack of British interest in the establishment of a genuinely multi-party democracy in Singapore in this early period owed much to the developing Cold War in the region, during which time suspicion of left-wing opposition forces

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899 To Catch a Tartar: A Dissident in Lee Kuan Yew’s Prison (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Center for International and Area Studies, 1994), pp. 161-2.
903 Ibid.
prompted them to support PAP moves to outmaneuver its opponents and establish its political monopoly. The support of the British in Operation Coldstore in 1963 was in fact a very important contributing factor to the demise of an effective political opposition in Singapore in the first place, which later made the emergence of a single-party state possible. The British were also careful not to give opposition elements an exit strategy: those with British citizenship, such as T. T. Rajah – a lawyer who represented trade unions, left-wing politicians and workers – were revoked.

The British officials were also largely impassive to the appeals made by Singaporean students during the 1970s to place pressure on the Singapore government to release ISA detainees. On behalf of the overseas Singaporean students, the National Union of Students wrote in January 1975 to the Foreign Secretary asking for his intervention over the arrest of student leader Tan Wah Piow, only to be declined because “the Foreign Secretary is not in a position to make a direct intervention as the trial is an internal matter in Singapore.”\textsuperscript{905} The political advisor to the Foreign Secretary instead advised that, “continued pressure from national students organizations would be of effect.”\textsuperscript{906} While Tan was later allowed into the UK, other political activists and politicians were not. One of the activists arrested in 1987 - Wong Souk Yee – applied to live and work in Hong Kong, only to have her application rejected.\textsuperscript{907} Francis Seow also broached the subject of asylum with Sir Ham, the British High Commissioner to Singapore, but was refused.\textsuperscript{908} In general, an arms-length relationship with opposition elements in Singapore was quite consistently maintained during the period of interest.

\textsuperscript{905} Quoted from National Union of Students President’s Letter to Asian Students Association dated 17th January 1975.

\textsuperscript{906} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{907} SiMBA Newsletter, No. 6 May 1988 p.7.

\textsuperscript{908} Seow, \textit{To Catch a Tartar}, p. 63.
One exception, however, was the Foreign and Commonwealth Office’s complaint over the refusal to let British QC Anthony Lester into Singapore to represent Teo Soh Lung in habeas corpus proceedings in 1988 because he was allegedly to have been part of legal circles that were encouraging the British Government to express concern about Operation Spectrum.\textsuperscript{909} Displeasure at the ban was registered privately.\textsuperscript{910} It was an incident of note because, as the \textit{Financial Times} put it, “rarely, if ever, has the British Government publicly taken up the cudgels of individual barristers, as they have done in the case of Mr. Lester. This is in spite of the fact that most of them likewise have, to use the phrase attributed to the Singapore Government to Mr. Lester’s conduct, ‘mixed up a human rights crusade with legal duties to the court.’”\textsuperscript{911} Nevertheless, this too blew over very quickly when the Queen visited Singapore the very next year, ignoring protests from the Worker’s Party in Singapore that the visit symbolized the condoning of “numerous recent government measures which deny the values believed in by the Commonwealth.”\textsuperscript{912}

Substate actors were more certain and vocal in their disapproval of the treatment of the political opposition in the case of Singapore. Nevertheless, there is no evidence to suggest that the lack of a parliamentary opposition, the periodic round-ups of potential extra-parliamentary opposition elements and the continued detention of political prisoners under the ISA during the 1970s was considered an issue of any seriousness in the US. This reflects to a large extent, the lack of a Singaporean “ethnic lobby” in the US at this time, a condition that was in fact to continue. Most of the interest generated in the US came from human rights organizations and later, when US-owned newspapers and magazines came under attack by the Singapore

\textsuperscript{910} Financial Times, 20 March 1989.
\textsuperscript{911} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{912} “Rights Protest to Queen at Start of Singapore Visit,” \textit{The Times}, 9 October 1989.
government, journalists. The Marxist conspiracy debacle did draw Congressional attention, however, not least because one of the detainees was a Harvard graduate and most were Christian social activists. Before the end of 1988, at least 9 letters had been dispatched from Congress to Prime Minister Lee, Home Affairs Minister Jayakumar and Ambassador Tommy Koh expressing concern over the three rounds of arrests between 1987 and 1988. In a meeting with Prime Minister Lee in early April 1988, expressions of “concern over human rights abuses and press restrictions” were made by several Congressmen during Lee’s visit to Washington. When, in less than a month of the visit, re-arrests were made, the Chair of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, John E. Porter, remarked in session that, “these actions, which are so disdainful of true democracy, continue to frustrate those in the United States and the West who support Singapore.”

Hearings were subsequently held in July and September 1988 and House Concurrent Resolution 328 was passed in the House of Representatives calling for the release of the detainees, the right of free and open political expression and an investigation into alleged abuses of the ISA detainees. Three months later, another letter signed by 8 Congressmen calling for the release of the alleged Marxist conspirators was sent to the Singapore government. When US Vice-President Dan Quayle visited Singapore in May 1989, he brought with him another letter signed by 26 members of Congress urging him to raise human rights issues, with particular reference to the continued detention of Teo Soh Lung and Vincent Cheng. When Teo and Cheng were reissued detention orders, 30 members of the House sent a letter to Prime

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Minister Lee Kuan Yew in early August expressing opposition. As many as forty-eight members of Congress also joined an international appeal by 150 legislators from seven countries for either the release or fair trial of Teo and Cheng.\textsuperscript{916} These gestures were publicly known and some were reported widely in the international press, further contributing to accusations of “foreign interference” by the PAP government and the brief souring of US-Singapore relations.

British Members of Parliament were also more vocal of their disapproval of the treatment received by the political opposition in Singapore, and of the PAP government more generally, especially Labor MPs mobilized by the Singaporean students in the UK. Ironically, when the University of Sheffield decided to award PM Lee with a honorary degree in 1971, 9 MPs protested, albeit unsuccessfully.\textsuperscript{917} In 1973, a letter on the “ordeal and irony of protest in Singapore,” was written by several MPs and student leaders to The Guardian, publicizing the difficulties faced by the political opposition in Singapore.\textsuperscript{918} MPs such as Christopher Price also participated in a public rally organized by FUEMSSO held in February 1975. Christopher Price – a Labor MP - was a particular champion of the political opposition in Singapore, writing letters and articles about the political condition in Singapore in the The Times and New Statesman during the 1970s. In a scathing open letter to PM Lee in 1975, for example, he wrote that the continued incarceration and “ill-treatment” of the Operation Coldstore detainees “is a blot upon the reputation of the Singapore Government.”\textsuperscript{919} As part of FUEMSSO’s 1981 “Day of Action” campaign, 6 MPs wrote to The Times calling for the release of opposition parliamentarian and

\textsuperscript{917} Morning Telegraph, Sheffield, 5 November 1971. These MPs were all members of the British Committee for Democracy in Malaysia and Singapore and worked closely with students.
\textsuperscript{919} The Times, 4 February 1975. Price was only one of four members of the House of Commons to have signed this letter on 30 January 1975.
long time political prisoner Dr. Poh Soo Kai. An interparty parliamentary human rights group of about 100 MPs also convened on 12 May 1981 during which meeting Michael C. Williams, who participated in Amnesty International’s fact finding mission to Singapore in 1978, gave an explicit presentation about the ISA and the treatment of the political opposition in Singapore.

Two Early Day Motions were also tabled. The first, in 1975, was submitted by Christopher Price, Les Huckfield, David Young, Stanley Newens, Roy Hughes and Frank Hooley, “deplor[ing] the continued detention and ill treatment for 12 years by the Government of Singapore of all those people [detained]…on 2nd February 1963 on the orders of the Internal Security Council which contained three British representatives … at a time when Her Majesty’s Government was responsible for the island’s internal affairs,” thereby calling “upon Her Majesty’s government to make representations to the Government of Singapore for their immediate release.” The second, in 1981, was submitted by 29 MPs calling upon “Her Majesty’s Government to seek the release of the following political prisoners in Singapore: Ho Piao, Lee Tse Tong, Dr Lim Hock Siew and Dr Poh Soo Kai, who have been detained for 18 years without trial, three of whom have been held since 2nd February 1963 during the course of “Operation Cold Store” to which the British Government was party, being at the time represented on the Singapore Internal Security Council.” While these Early Day Motions had no effect on the British government’s position on Singapore’s human rights situation, it did serve to publicize the existence and continued use of the ISA against opposition elements and the plight of the earlier generation of political opposition leaders. Curiously, no EDMs appear to have been tabled during

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920 The Times, 20 July 1981.
921 Early day motions (EDMs) are formal motions submitted for debate in the House of Commons. Very few EDMs are debated, however, and EDMs are more often used for publicizing the views of individual MPs, drawing attention to specific events or campaigns, and demonstrating the extent of parliamentary support for a particular cause or point of view.
the 1987-88 period. Nevertheless, this publicity was limited since EDMs were never debated in Parliament.

British Parliamentarians exerted pressure on the PAP government in more direct ways than through the generation of bad international publicity, however. Through the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the British Parliamentary Human Rights Group took up the case of Lee Tse Tong and sent a delegation to Singapore in May 1979 to investigate Lee’s case. In the IPU’s annual conference in Caracas in September that year, calls were made on the Singapore government to release Lee immediately. Under the urging of the Singaporean students in the UK, Lord Avebury, Chairman of the Parliamentary Human Rights Group, also led a delegation of MPs to see the Singapore High Commissioner in London to raise concern about ISA, particularly of the four opposition leaders mentioned in the 1981 Commons Early Day Motion.922 The Singaporean students in the UK were also quite successful in mobilizing eminent MPs to write protest letters to PM Lee and the Singapore government directly. For example, Lord Fenner Brockway, former chairman of the Movement of Colonial Freedom, wrote such a letter in 1981 as part of FUEMSSO’s July 1981 “Day of Action” campaign.

Another kind of substate actor of note in the British context is the Privy Council, particularly the Judicial Committee. Until 1989, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council was Singapore’s last appeal court. Before the Legal Profession (Amendment) Act of 1989 came into effect, barring appeals to the Privy Council, the political opposition still had recourse to a judicial body uninfluenced by the executive in Singapore.923 As such, the Judicial Committee had some influence over the actions taken in a court of law against opposition politicians, could

923 Amendments to Section 95 of the Legal Professions Act barred appeals to the Privy Council whilst amendments to Section 80 required that disciplinary bodies convened under the Act accept criminal convictions as “final and conclusive”, thus precluding such bodies from looking into the circumstances surrounding a criminal conviction when taking actions against members of the profession.
through their position undermine the legitimacy of those actions and also provide moral support to those judges who were not amenable to the preferences of the executive. In a high profile incident in 1988, for example, the Judicial Committee overturned the disbarment of opposition politician Jeyeratnam and restored his license to practice law. Although it had no power to overturn decisions in criminal cases, the Privy Council roundly criticized the Singapore High Court’s for miscarriage of justice in the conviction of Jeyeratnam for a crime that led to his disbarment. This was very bad publicity for a government that prided itself on its faithfulness to the rule of law, and projected such an international image for the purpose of shoring up both domestic and international legitimacy. In the course of its opinion, the Privy Council stated categorically that Jeyeratnam had been “been fined, imprisoned and publicly disgraced for offences of which [he was] not guilty,” declaring Jeyeratnam a victim of “grievous injustice.”

In reference to two convictions meted out to Jeyeratnam by the Chief Justice, the Privy Council also stated that the Chief Justice had “patently exceeded the proper function of an appellate court and wholly ignored the advantage enjoyed by the trial judge who had seen and heard the witnesses. This amounted to a serious error of law which vitiated the Chief Justice’s decision.”

However, appeal to the Judicial Committee was not always easy, as a retrial needed to be heard at the High Court before such an appeal could be possible. Such a request to have an appeal heard in the High Courts could be turned down in order to bar further appeals from reaching the Privy Council. Such judicial machinations prejudicial to the political opposition – now no longer necessary owing to amendments to the law by a PAP-controlled legislature – had

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been undertaken with some success before 1989. Nevertheless, it was precisely the moral weight of the 1988 opinion of the Privy Council that prompted three judges to later release 4 of the ISA detainees on a technicality – an interpretation of events taken by then Trade and Ministry Minister Lee Hsien Loong during a BBC interview in November 1988.

In sum, the considerations of national interest similarly held state actors with potential leverage over the PAP government in check, making external state pressure in the Singapore case equivocal. Substate actors in both the US and UK have played a more important role in raising the international profile of political repression in Singapore than state actors, however. Substate actors in the UK played a stronger role in raising the international profile of political repression during the 1970s while substate actors in the US took on a stronger role during the late 1980s. While there is evidence that the involvement of British members of Parliament during the 1970s and early 1980s was the result of the lobbying efforts of student groups based in the UK at the time, there is no such evidence that this was true in the US during the 1980s. In the latter case, the involvement of the American press in legal suits over their reportage of Operation Spectrum was the more likely cause of the stronger position taken by the US Congress over political repression taking place then.

**Tracing the Role of the Protection Regime**

The absence of the protection regime in the 1960s - when the left-wing Barisan Socialis was virtually extinguished by Operation Coldstore - was a very important factor allowing the PAP government to demolish opposition forces in Singapore with impunity. Of course, significant at this time was the Cold War environment, which prompted the British to acquiesce

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926 See, for example, Seow, *To Catch a Tartar*, p. 253.
to such. International scrutiny of political repression in tiny Singapore was lacking. It was not until the earliest international efforts to raise the profile of political repression through human rights organizations such as Amnesty International began that the first negative portrayals of the political situation in Singapore emerged. Not unlike in the other two cases, this was a message that could emerge with more clarity and resonance in the 1970s because of the changes in the international normative environment that instated human rights as a legitimate international concern.

Although democratic breakthrough did not take place in Singapore owing to the continued weakness of the political opposition, it is not true to say that the external grassroots pressures exerted by the protection regime did not have any effect on the PAP government. There is evidence to show that the leadership found it imperative to respond to international criticisms, even if in the negative, and to justify repressive actions taken. This is reflected in the numerous interviews granted to international journalists at times when criticisms have been most strident, and the battles waged in the editorial pages of foreign newspapers and magazines. Further, despite the fact that the ISA has been retained, and continues to be used periodically to keep opposition elements in check, the time period of incarceration diminished significantly over time. The official “Asian Values” discourse that emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s could be understood as the PAP government’s attempt to justify authoritarian practices in response to these external grassroots pressures.

In this regard, the work of human rights organizations, especially that of Amnesty International, was important in laying the groundwork of “bottom-up” pressure on the PAP government during the 1960s and early 1970s, when the protection regime had yet to
galvanize.\textsuperscript{928} In this early period, the PAP government was less responsive to the pressures exerted, not least because the international normative context in which political repression could be flagged as human rights abuses had yet to fully emerge. However, when overseas Singaporean students, the foreign media, human rights organizations and the substate actors they lobbied in the UK started to come together from the mid-1970s onwards when human rights had been instated as a legitimate international concern, we saw a perceptible shift in attitude on the part of the Singapore leadership. External bottom up pressures reached a significant level during the late 1970s and 80s, when the overseas Singaporean students in the UK, human rights organizations, academics and students and the foreign media latched onto the spate of detentions without trial that had taken place under the ISA or Banishment Act in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s. As these pressures mounted we saw both public relations efforts to neutralize the negative international image that was being generated as well as a series of high profile releases.

In 1977, for example, the PAP government made an express effort to counteract the negative publicity generated by the protection regime by signing an international petition calling for the release of all political prisoners, which had been circulated by AI at the UN during the “Prisoners of Conscience Year.” It is probably no coincidence that the AI won the Nobel Peace Prize that year, explaining in part the somewhat conciliatory position taken by the PAP government, a position it would come to abandon in the 1980s and 90s. Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew also stated categorically in an interview with \textit{The Times} of London that same year that only 61 political prisoners remained in detention.\textsuperscript{929} Between 1978-80, several prominent political detainees were also released, including some long-term detainees that the human rights and

\textsuperscript{929} \textit{The Times}, 17 May 1977.
student organizations had long campaigned for. Two prominent political detainees were further released in 1982 – both of which AI had campaigned rigorously for. Further, “there were nine people under detention under the Internal Security Act in September 1982, versus 17 in February 1982 and an estimated 20 in 1981.” It was during this period that significant reductions were made in the numbers of political prisoners still held without trial. Of course, this did not mean that the structures of political repression were dismantled – the PAP government was unresponsive in this regard. The ISA and the Banishment Act remained in place, and other repressive legislation strengthened the tight social and political control it wielded. Further, the use of criminal and civil actions to demobilize the parliamentary opposition from the early 1980s onwards also prevailed. Refusal to bend to this pressure continued as the fiercely nationalistic refusal to allow “foreign interference in the domestic politics of Singapore.”

It was not until the late 1980s that the PAP government would again experience the kind of external bottom-up pressure that it experienced in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The Marxist Conspiracy arrests galvanized the overseas Singaporean human rights organizations, and stimulated a few ad hoc support groups as well – most of who were individuals involved with the student and Christian movements that had been crushed in the 1970s, and who had personal connections with the 1987 detainees. At this time, transnational Church-related organizations, human rights activists, the foreign media, student and academics, and substate actors in the US – over 200 organizations in all – wrote letters of protest to the Singapore government over the arrests, leading then Foreign Minister Rajaratnam to complain about the international attention given to these “conspirators.” With pressure from the US Congress mounting on both human

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rights issues and the restriction of the foreign press, Singapore Ambassador to the US Tommy Koh also felt compelled to put up a defense based on the argument of national sovereignty.\(^933\)

However, the posture of the PAP government had again changed by the late 1980s, shifting perceptibly from the defensive to the offensive. Reflecting no small degree of assertiveness, then Trade and Industry Minister Lee Hsien Loong made a well-publicized speech during his visit to the US in May 1989 stating that, “It therefore puzzles us that the US human rights groups and government officials should so confidently prescribe for us, as a panacea for progress and stability, US-style press freedoms and "human rights".... [I]t is best for the U.S. to leave well alone and not interfere in the internal development of countries, particularly when they are working well and making progress. This is especially so with those countries where the US has had no historical involvement. And when, like Singapore, they have democratically elected governments, the US, of all countries, should respect the freely expressed choice of the people.”\(^934\) These public statements were not conciliatory, but rather a refutation of the criticisms that were directed at the government through the argument of cultural relativity – and theme that would later develop into the “Asian values” discourse. Attacks on the foreign media were perceptibly intense and aggressive at this time, as were counter-attacks on human rights activists, Christian activist groups, overseas Singaporean dissidents and foreign academics.

Although by this time, the mass mobilization of a broad cross section of society against the repressive governments in both Taiwan and South Korea had already taken place, this was not the case in Singapore. There was no outward sign of disaffection and political instability, which in contrast to the political situation in many neighboring countries at this time, suggested

that the PAP government was the “freely expressed choice of the people.” Ironically, the lack of mobilization by this time in tandem with surrounding agitations worked against the political opposition and their transnational allies even further. To be sure, it gave the PAP government confidence to assert its own version of “democracy.” Thus, the moment was lost and the opportunity for democratic breakthrough at a time when the zeitgeist of democracy was sweeping through Asia and other parts of the world was squandered.

**Conclusion**

The protection regimes in all three cases were comparable in terms of the kinds of actors involved and the content of the protection provided to the political opposition. In the Singapore case, however, the transnational Christian networks were important because they also served as the breeding ground of social activists that in some cases showed the potential to form the basis of an extra-parliamentary opposition. Aspiring opposition politician Francis Seow also came to see human rights organizations as transnational allies that could support a new generation of opposition politicians in the late 1980s. Sadly, the protection regime in Singapore was significantly weaker, on the one hand because of its inherent features, and on the other, precisely because the political leadership realized its potential significance and cracked down on these transnational networks consistently and decisively throughout the 1970s and 80s. The 1987 Operation Spectrum should be understood as one such systematic attempt. Of significance in the Singapore case is the thinness of the networks, which made it possible for the PAP government to truncate them without resort to the sort of intimidation and harassment witnessed in the cases of Taiwan and South Korea.

The ability of the PAP government to crack down on elements of the protection regime was conditioned by external geopolitical circumstances that, in the calculation of the leadership,
mitigated against the bad international publicity further generated by such crackdowns. In contrast to the KMT government in Taiwan and the Chun government in South Korea at the point of democratic breakthrough, regime self confidence was so high by 1987 that the PAP leadership not only cracked down on the transnational networks of nonstate actors openly, it took a high handed response to what little external state pressures were exerted on the government by the US and the UK. The fact that Singapore’s national security was not immediately threatened in so acute a fashion as that in Taiwan and South Korea meant that it had little reliance on either good international opinion or the goodwill of a superpower.

These geopolitical circumstances also explain the general indifference toward the political situation in Singapore on the part of the international community and of potentially important state actors such as the US and UK. The lack of consistent external state pressure in Singapore’s case was not explained by the security considerations that constrained the ability to take into serious consideration human rights concerns in foreign policy, which we saw was particularly true in the South Korean case. It did not help, of course, that there was a lack of overt physical abuse that would have made it considerably easier to engage the attention of the international community and motivate state actors – despite the initial furor over the Singapore government’s legal cases against the international media, interest in the political situation in Singapore would begin to fade by the 1990s. When compared to the South Korean case, where state actors were far more active in raising the international profile of political repression, it is clear that the principal motivator was the scale and severity of repression. In both Taiwan and Singapore, human rights violations were not deemed “high profile” and therefore a blind eye was mostly turned towards the treatment of the political opposition there. In the South Korean case, however, it would have been impossible for state actors to do so without also incurring some
political cost in appearing to the international community and domestic constituents to condone the brutality of allied dictatorships.

Without the kind of international scandals seen in the Taiwan case, and an Olympic game that would focus attention on the political situation in the South Korean case, political repression continued to fly below the radar of the international community still in awe of the economic achievements attributed to the virtues of the PAP leadership.
Chapter 10
Conclusion

We have seen that in nominally democratic Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore, the authoritarian elite came to either dominate or monopolize the coercive apparatuses of the state, which allowed them to eliminate almost all genuine political competition in the immediate post-independence period. The gradual establishment of extra-constitutional institutional obstacles to the development of genuine political opposition also helps to explain why despite having reached a level of socio-political development that should have led to the development of democracy in the late 1970s, it was impossible for pro-democracy elements in the opposition to mobilize toward effecting democratic breakthrough at this time. Authoritarian consolidation in Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore cannot be understood without an appreciation of the extent to which external security threats enabled these authoritarian elites to suspend democracy and justify the repression of the political opposition, to the detriment of human rights. To a significant extent, the immediate geopolitical environment surrounding Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore enabled authoritarian consolidation.

However, authoritarian rule could not be maintained in Taiwan and South Korea as it continues to be maintained in Singapore today. By the late 1970s, what was a weak political opposition had begun to coalesce, increasing “bottom-up” pressures on the KMT government by mobilizing not only in the highly circumscribed electoral arena, but also very importantly, on the streets. As much as Taiwan’s democratization has been characterized as a top-down process initiated and managed by the KMT leadership, the inherent stasis of the piecemeal and reactionary “liberalization” period during the 1970s suggests that democratic breakthrough should be more accurately described as pushed from below. In South Korea, the coalescence of
what was a fragmentary parliamentary opposition and a wide spectrum of heavily repressed extra-parliamentary movements towards the late 1970s and early 1980s also generated considerable “bottom-up” pressures on the military government of the day through simultaneous mobilization, breaking the stalemate that had developed up until the point of democratic breakthrough on 29 June 1987. In both cases, such mobilization was a possible threat to internal stability, but its scale and frequency did not allow the authoritarian governments to assert that only marginalized extremists were responsible and punishable.

How the mobilizational capacity of the opposition managed to increase in Taiwan and South Korea despite the continued existence of such institutional and structural obstacles is the key question that has to be answered if we were to solve the puzzle posed by the variation in democratic outcomes in our pool of cases (See Chapter 1). To be sure, Singapore is the outlier in both this narrow context and within the wider context of the third wave of democratization. However, it is clear from our understanding of the similar domestic political conditions facing the political opposition across all three cases, that the puzzle is not so much why Singapore failed to democratize, but why Taiwan and South Korea did (see Chapter 3). In other words, if Taiwan and South Korea experienced democratic breakthrough at a time when the zeitgeist of democracy was sweeping through Pacific Asia, why were they more vulnerable to it than Singapore?

As it turns out, the timing of democratic breakthrough in Taiwan and South was influenced by political developments elsewhere to the extent that “snowballing” gave opposition elements the confidence that the time for democracy had come – giving impetus to opposition resurgence. The “demonstration effect” was perceptible even in the Singapore case, as the PAP leadership was aware that developments in Taiwan, South Korea and the Philippines could
encourage nascent opposition elements to agitate for democratic reform and felt obliged to implement superficial and non-political measures of liberalization. Important was also the fact that political succession was imminent in all three cases at around this time. In Taiwan’s case the health of President Chiang Ching-kuo had been failing, in South Korea President Chun Doo Hwan’s seven year term was about to end and in Singapore, a second generation of PAP leaders had been poised to take over from the “old guard” for some time. This raised the specter of some form of political change – expectations that intensified the “demonstration effect” in all three cases.

Nevertheless, only Taiwan and South Korea had by that time developed opposition movements with any sort of potential to effect democratic breakthrough by the 1980s. Certainly, the so-called “Marxist conspirators” in Singapore were few in number and only very loosely associated with the weak parliamentary opposition. As a whole, opposition to the PAP government hardly qualified as a movement at all. Without the requisite domestic actors in place, “the demonstration effect” had very limited impact on democratic development in Singapore. “Snowballing” is not completely independent of pre-existing domestic conditions as Huntington has suggested, and in our cases, can only at most be considered a proximate cause of democratic breakthrough in Taiwan and South Korea.

The susceptibility of Taiwan and South Korea to democratic contagion was thus explained by the pre-existence of an opposition movement. When we consider how much more prepared the authoritarian governments of South Korea and (to a lesser extent) Taiwan were to repress the political opposition in an overt fashion right into the 1980s, it would seem counter-intuitive that broad-based mobilization would develop there – unless, of course, we consider that some form of external intervention or assistance was afforded the political opposition. It is for
this reason that this research inquiry into the international dimensions of democratization came to focus on external agency, despite the fact that myriad other causal variables have been suggested by the comparative politics and international relations literatures (see Chapter 2). More specifically, the focus of this inquiry came to be on the kinds of external agency that may have been causally significant to the development of effective political oppositions in Taiwan and South Korea, and very importantly, exactly how they were important. The posited causal variables in the case of Taiwan and South Korea also needed to be “tested” against the case of Singapore – where they should be shown to be either absent or causally insignificant due to some other intervening variables. The results of this research inquiry, which were presented in detail in Chapters 7, 8 and 9, are summarized below.

**External Agency: State, Nonstate, Substate**

In so far as external agency is considered to have been important to democratic breakthrough in Taiwan and South Korea, external state actors, particularly the US, have been largely credited with exerting top-down “external pressures” on the authoritarian governments in question to liberalize, democratize or curb human rights abuses. On the other hand, the literatures on transnational advocacy networks suggest that such an understanding of “external pressures” is simplistic – and that a class of nonstate actors previously ignored comprised a very important causal mechanism translating human rights and democracy promotion rhetoric into concrete policy action against authoritarian governments. These nonstate actors were themselves sources of pressure on both Western democratic and target authoritarian states to stick to their normative commitments. Other research also suggests that certain substate actors, principally legislators in Western democratic countries, may also be allied to these principled nonstate actors. It has thus been central to this research that the significance of these actors in the specific context of these
cases be determined, and the manner of their significance specified. The findings for the three cases are summarized in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>State Actors</th>
<th>Nonstate Actors</th>
<th>Substate Actors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>Causally insignificant</td>
<td>Causally significant</td>
<td>Causally significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>Causally significant</td>
<td>Causally significant</td>
<td>Causally significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>Causally insignificant</td>
<td>Causally insignificant</td>
<td>Causally insignificant</td>
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</table>

The extent to which state actors are able to exert pressure on the authoritarian governments in question depends very much on the leverage they have over those governments. It is for this reason that the focus on state actors has primarily been on the US – whose patronage on both the economic and security fronts have been vitally important to Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore. I also looked at the UK in the case of Singapore because of continuing security and economic ties, which were strong in the early post colonial period before US hegemony over the region eclipsed its significance; and Japan in the South Korean case because of growing economic ties from 1964 onward when relations were normalized between the two.

As the table above indicates, it was found that state actors were not causally significant in the cases of Taiwan and Singapore, whilst state actors were causally significant in the case of South Korea. This is primarily because external state pressures were minimal in the former two cases. In the Taiwan case, the US exerted little public rhetorical pressure on the KMT government, and the issues of human rights and democracy were pursued largely through a mild form of quiet diplomacy. None of these gentle private pressures were concretized through linkage with trade relations or arms sales, important to Taiwan because of the external security threat posed by the PRC. Without using the leverage that the US had over the KMT government as its principal security guarantor, such pressures had very limited effect on the repressive
behavior of the KMT government. In the Singapore case, no significant pressures of any form were found to have been exerted by the US or the UK on the PAP government on grounds of human rights or democracy on any consistent basis.

In South Korea, higher levels of external state pressures took both the form of high profile public admonitions by the US and a stronger form of private diplomacy combined. These diplomatic actions had the effect of securing the release of key political prisoners and the gradual easing of physical torture. Threats to link human rights and democracy to security and economic assistance seldom translated into policy, however, because it was mostly considered detrimental to the US national interest to let normative issues alter the balance of power on the Korean Peninsula. Gradual US troop withdrawal from South Korea was ultimately unassociated with human rights abuses by the successive authoritarian governments there. Moreover, US diplomatic pressures were not exerted in a consistent fashion – it was much more intense during the Carter administration, was eased during the first term of the Reagan administration, and then intensified again during the second term of the Reagan administration. Similarly, Japan did not exert consistent external pressure on the authoritarian governments of South Korea, although its diplomatic actions on behalf of Kim Dae Jung went a significant way in preserving the key opposition leader’s life. To the extent that these state actors felt obliged to take on human rights abuses by the authoritarian governments of South Korea against opposition elements, it was largely in response to the pressures exerted on them by transnational nonstate and substate actors to do so.

The transnational nonstate actors were found to be causally significant in the cases of Taiwan and South Korea, but causally insignificant in the case of Singapore. This was because these human rights activists, Christian church leaders and ecumenical workers, members of the
overseas diaspora communities, academics and students, and foreign journalists were found to have collectively exerted significant external pressure on the authoritarian governments of Taiwan and South Korea, but failed to generate much bottom-up pressure in the case of Singapore. The nature of bottom-up (or grassroots) external pressures exerted by transnational nonstate actors was different from that of “top-down” external state pressures. While state actors have at their disposal a variety of well-defined policy instruments that could be used through security, economic and diplomatic channels to exert direct pressure, the same is not true for nonstate actors. In order to exert direct pressure on target authoritarian governments, transnational nonstate actors have at their disposal a much more diffuse method – raising the international profile of political repression taking place in those countries. It was found that these transnational nonstate actors raised the international profile of repression by generating, channeling and disseminating accurate information on political repression through a myriad of activities – allowing the international community an insight into actual political developments in those countries. To the extent that raising the international profile of political repression is bad publicity for these authoritarian governments, it creates a form of external pressure that could potentially raise the political cost of repression for authoritarian governments, and in so doing, curb repressive state behavior. As such, these transnational nonstate actors offered the political opposition in Taiwan and South Korea a crucial form of protection that they did not offer in the case of Singapore. This was the principal form of protection offered to the political opposition, although I also discuss the channeling of material and psychological resources to the opposition movements as another form of protection more important in the Taiwan case.

In the absence of significant external state pressure in the case of Taiwan, this source of external pressure was crucial. In the South Korean case, what we do observe, however is that
although the level of direct pressure on the authoritarian government was high, grassroots pressures were most effective when channeled through state actors. In other words, when transnational nonstate actors were able to introduce strains into strategic relations between the US and South Korea by raising the international profile of political repression in South Korea or by pressuring Western democratic states like the US to exert pressure on the authoritarian governments in question, they were more likely to alter repressive state behavior as intended. This, in effect, was a more indirect form of external pressure. Why this was the case in South Korea is important to understanding how the geopolitical environment surrounding each of our cases conditions the efficacy of external agency.

This research has also found that certain substate actors proved to be very useful allies to these nonstate actors in Taiwan and South Korea and as such were causally significant. These substate actors were also allied to transnational nonstate actors in the case of Singapore, but differed in that they were not mobilized to any causally significant extent. Certain transnational nonstate actors such as Christian leaders and members of the overseas diaspora communities would often lobby such substate actors to take up the human rights cause. In Taiwan and South Korea, they helped to generate the same kind of direct, bottom-up pressures on the authoritarian governments in question by raising the international profile of repression. They did this by conducting visits to the countries in question, holding hearings, press conferences, passing or attempting to pass resolutions, stirring policy debates and other related activities that generated public interest in political repression in those countries. This was particularly true of legislators in the US. In the case where US Congressmen took part in such activities, international attention tended to be drawn. With some influence on foreign policy, it has also been found that such substate actors in the US also generated pressure on the executive branch of government to stick
to its normative commitments by raising the international profile of political repression. In this way, grassroots pressures generated by these substate actors (and the nonstate actors who lobbied them) could be channeled through state actors, a process particularly perceptible in the case of South Korea.

This research has thus shown that external actors provided protection to the political opposition in Taiwan and South Korea against the repressiveness of the authoritarian governments in question, but not in the case of Singapore. These findings correlate well with the observation that Taiwan and South Korea developed opposition movements by the late 1980s, while Singapore did not. In order to positively determine a causal relationship between external agency and democratic breakthrough in Taiwan and South Korea, “process tracing” was employed. The historical narrative detailed in Chapter 7 showed that external nonstate and substate actors did indeed cause the KMT government to mete out lighter sentences for the political opposition, who were tried in civilian rather than military courts over the Kaohsiung Incident in 1979 and that they raised the international profile of political killings on both Taiwanese and US soil during the early to mid 1980s, compelling the rolling back of coercive apparatuses of the state. The historical narrative detailed in Chapter 8, on the other hand, established that in raising the international profile of repression, transnational nonstate and substate actors were also able to compel the US to exert external state pressure on the Park and Chun governments, and in so doing, secured the release of key opposition leaders in various points in time along with the gradual easing of coercive methods used against them.

In both of these cases, state actors were reluctant participants and it was fortunate that in the South Korean case, political repression was of the scale and frequency to make it impossible to turn a blind eye, as was in the Taiwan case. However, in the Singapore case, these
transnational nonstate and substate actors failed to generate similar levels of external pressure seen in the previous two cases. There was evidence, nevertheless, that the PAP leadership was at least compelled to respond to the high international profile of repression generated by these actors by publicly defending its position in the international media in the 1970s and to develop more subtle, legalistic methods against the opposition later on.

**The International Normative Environment and the Protection Regime**

This research has also found that the transnational nonstate and substate actors described above had come together in the 1960s and early 70s but became progressively more active from the mid-1970s onward. Why was this the case? Chapter 5 described changes in the international normative environment in the 1970s that led to two important consequences: the instatement of human rights as a legitimate international concern with the potential to influence state-to-state relations and the worldwide proliferation of transnational advocacy networks that changed the structure of international relations. Specifically, it was the negotiation process of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and the Helsinki Final Act it produced in 1975 that introduced such important changes. Prior to the 1970s, the international normative environment was conducive to the international diffusion of human rights norms due largely to a hostile Cold War geopolitical environment, when *realpolitik* trumped morality in the conduct of international relations. It was precisely within such a context that authoritarian governments were able to eliminate the political opposition through methods that violated human rights with minimal international scrutiny or condemnation.

After this time, however, strategic relations could not be conducted without some consideration of normative concerns. The emergence of transnational nonstate actors that formed
“advocacy networks” for victims of repression, meant that pressures began to mount on target authoritarian governments and Western democratic ones alike to stick to international human rights norms long articulated in numerous international documents. These transnational nonstate actors were thus a key enforcement mechanism that formed a crucial part of the “human rights regime.” Further, in forming a transnational structure, these networks became bridges between the international and domestic systems where informational, ideational and material resources were conveyed. As a result, they allowed for strategies adopted by local opposition elements to target rights-violating governments in ways otherwise impossible.

In the context of our cases, such transnational advocacy networks were foundational to very similar principled networks whose specific aim was to protect the political opposition from repression and thus help to preserve those elements that could lead a democratic movement. The changed international normative environment allowed them, together with the substate actors they lobbied, to use international human rights norms to raise the political cost of repression for their target authoritarian governments, thus curbing their repressive behavior toward opposition politicians and activists. They did this by either generating negative international publicity that would turn the tide of international opinion against the target governments and/or affect key strategic relations with other democratic states. The documented changes in the international normative environment from the mid 1970s explains why these actors came together in increasing numbers and were much more active as a whole at around that time.

These transnational nonstate actors were in large part motivated by human rights causes, but also comprised those not explicitly associated with the “human rights regime” whose principled motivations include context-specific political causes (see Chapter 6) that ultimately converged upon the wish to see democratic change in these countries by preserving the requisite
domestic political elements. Other nonstate actors recruited on an ad hoc basis to form an outer periphery of agents who would carry out tasks without explicit knowledge of the content of their activities were also present in the context of our cases. For these reasons, these transnational networks of nonstate and substate actors, working within the rubric of the larger “human rights regime” that emerged in the mid-1970s, is conceptually differentiated as the “protection regime” to better capture its exact nature.

Of course, when we compare the protection regimes surrounding the political oppositions in Taiwan and South Korea, what was found was that they were similarly strong. Nevertheless, the external pressures directed at the authoritarian government of Taiwan was more effective in altering repressive state behavior than was the case in South Korea, except when state actors also got on board. In other words, bottom-up pressure from the transnational protection regime was able to alter repressive state behavior in the South Korean case mostly by changing or threatening to change South Korea’s strategic relations with the US. Why this was the case needed to be further explained. Considering the consistency of the international normative environment across all three cases, why Singapore failed to develop a protection regime able to provide the political opposition there with the requisite protection was also a similar puzzle. As it turned out, the answer to these questions was to be found in the exact nature of the immediate geopolitical circumstances surrounding each of these cases.

The Immediate Geopolitical Environment and its Impact on the Protection Regime

As much as the international normative environment enabled the protection regime, the immediate geopolitical environment should also be considered a set of intervening conditions that could decisively impact upon the strength and/or effectiveness of the protection regime. The
variation in the strength and effectiveness of the protection regime across all three cases is summarized below.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Strength</strong></th>
<th><strong>Effectiveness</strong></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Most effective when pressure channeled through state actors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>Ineffective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the strength and effectiveness of the protection regime are closely related, as demonstrated by the Taiwan and Singapore cases, the two were conceptually differentiated in Chapter 6. Very simply, the strength of the protection regime refers to the capacity of the transnational nonstate and substate actors to collectively carry out the activities that generate external bottom-up pressures. The effectiveness of the protection regime refers, however, to the ability of such pressures to actually alter repressive state behavior. A weak protection regime is naturally unlikely to be an effective one, since low levels of activity means that the international profile of repression will remain low and the political costs of repression consequently affordable for the target authoritarian government.

The difference between strength and effectiveness is, of course, demonstrated most clearly in the case of South Korea, where strong bottom-up pressures generated by the protection regime did not lower the level of repression appreciably except when state actors were also mobilized to exert pressure (see Chapter 8). At first cut, the case of South Korea made it imperative that the concepts of strength and effectiveness be clearly delineated because it suggests that some other factor or factors can intervene to make strong protection regimes less
effective. It was found that the translation of a high international profile of repression into high political costs of repression for target authoritarian governments could be obstructed by particular immediate geopolitical circumstances. Successive South Korean governments were generally less susceptible to negative international opinion because it was not as immediately dependent upon the goodwill of the international community as it was on the goodwill of the US, whose security commitments underpinned its national survival. This was because the conflict with the belligerent North was explicitly military in nature. As a result, the authoritarian governments there could afford to adopt an aggressive posture not only toward the political opposition, but also to members of the protection regime – except, of course, when it affected or threatened to affect US-ROK relations. However, it has been found that the Chun government was more susceptible to external state pressures than the Park government. Interestingly, this was largely because of the Kwangju Massacre in 1980, which cast a long shadow over the legitimacy of the Chun government – thus making it additionally reliant on US support and consequently, more sensitive to any pressures it exerted.

Taiwan represented the opposite case in that the KMT government was extremely susceptible to international opinion. Unlike the conflict on the Korean Peninsula, the conflict across the Taiwan Straits conflicts had developed from a military confrontation into a political one following the PRC’s strategy to internationally isolate Taiwan. From 1971 onward, formal diplomatic derecognition meant that the good reputation of “Free China” needed to be maintained, especially after the PRC began in 1978 to undertake extensive economic that had widespread international approval. Precisely because raising the international profile of repression had the effect of shaping a negative international opinion of the KMT government, such external bottom up pressures generated by these transnational nonstate and substate actors
translated effectively into high political costs of repression for the KMT government. The qualitative difference between the cross-Straits conflict and the confrontation on the Korean Peninsula is important in highlighting how certain immediate geopolitical circumstances can alter the effectiveness of the protection regime.

In both cases of Taiwan and South Korea, the ability to sustain the interest of the international community in political repression taking place there was not an appreciable problem. However, in the case of Singapore, this was indeed the case – which can also be explained in part by its immediate geopolitical circumstances. Unlike Taiwan and South Korea, which were (and continue to be) potential flashpoints that threaten international stability, Singapore had always been one step removed from the Cold War maelstrom that consumed the Indochinese mainland. Of course, its reputation as a well-run city-state tended to discount tales of tight political and social control, whilst the development of more subtle, legalistic methods of repression also made it more difficult to flag such repression as human rights violations. The general inability to sustain the interest of the international community in political repression taking place in Singapore was an obstacle in translating what little external bottom up pressures generated by an already weak protection regime effectively into political costs for the PAP government.

This research has also found that the immediate geopolitical circumstances surrounding Singapore did not only contribute to the ineffectiveness of the protection regime there – it also diminished its strength. This is because the particular geopolitical circumstances described above allowed the PAP government a much wider range of possible responses to the protection regime – including those more aggressive. The PAP government doggedly pursued a systematic policy of dismantling the transnational networks of nonstate actors that culminated in Operation
Spectrum in 1987. A more aggressive reaction by the target governments against the protection regime was also perceptible in the South Korean case because the particular geopolitical circumstances there made it less necessary for them to cultivate a positive international image. Such aggression had the effect of weakening the protection regime surrounding the political opposition in Singapore to a particularly significant extent. In the case of Taiwan, we do see attempts to enact reprisals upon the protection regime, but these were far less consistent and systematic than that witnessed in South Korea and Singapore, precisely because such efforts would further tarnish the reputation of the KMT government. It can thus be concluded, therefore, that the strength of the protection regime – comprising the five dimensions of cohesion, availability and mobilization of material and intellectual resources, autonomy, density and completeness – is determined by not only endogenous factors pertaining to the inherent characteristics of the networks but exogenous ones related to the reaction of the authorities (see Chapter 6). These exogenous factors are collectively dependent upon the extent to which target authoritarian governments, under permissive geopolitical circumstances, can exact reprisals upon the protection regime – particularly against the nonstate actors.

These case studies therefore point to the importance of the immediate geopolitical circumstances surrounding Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore as detailed in Chapter 4, which can serve as an intervening factor altering the strength and effectiveness of the protection regime, with consequences for democratic breakthrough.

**Toward a Causal Model**

In Chapter 1, I developed a theoretical framework with the specific purpose of disentangling the wide range of possible external factors of democratization offered by the pre-existing literatures and delineate three specific dimensions of analysis that comprise this
research. This theoretical framework informs the causal model I now develop using the empirical content of the three case studies, as presented below. Importantly, in this model the transnational protection regime is specified as the central causal mechanism linking international events and developments to domestic political processes, structures and institutions, thereby offering the possibility of addressing the key question of exactly how certain international factors were important.

The causal model here – derived both deductively and inductively – is an attempt to bring our analysis to a level of abstraction better suited to application in other possible cases. Indeed,
in the process of explaining what the protection regime was, why it was important and how it operated, it was necessary to first explicitly compare the role of state actors against that of nonstate and substate actors with specific reference to each of our cases and within the international structural contexts in which they operate. As our findings suggest that state actors were largely causally insignificant, they do not feature prominently in this model, and the inclusion of external state pressures as part of the causal mechanism reflects the possibility of an alternative causal path as suggested by the case of South Korea. As the causal arrow linking the protection regime to the external state actors suggests, however, external state pressures are likely to become part of this causal mechanism largely because state actors are compelled to respond to bottom up pressures generated by the transnational nonstate and substate actors.

Further, of note is the fact that because this model was derived inductively with reference to Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore, the dependent variable is very specific – the introduction of genuine political competition is understood as “democratization” and defines the point of democratic breakthrough. As such the model would appear to be most immediately applicable to cases where the lack of genuine political competition is a key defining characteristic of the authoritarian regime. However, this model is flexible enough to accommodate a different dependent variable more suitable to the specifics of other political contexts without changing the inherent “logic” of it.

Further, the cases examined suggest that political processes encapsulated by the development of a substantive opposition movement underpin the institutional changes that reflect the introduction of genuine political competition. There is some rigidity in this causal logic of linking short-run political processes to long-run institutional and structural changes at the domestic level. However, emphasis on political process is consistent with the belief in contingent
causality inherent in the historical comparative approach used in this research, and the exact content of that political process and the kinds of actors involved can be adjusted from case to case. The kinds of institutional and structural changes involved are also open to the specifics of each case, and need not be confined to the introduction of political competition. We shall that this model is more flexible than first meets the eye later on when we consider the policy implications of this research.

Research Implications

Theoretical Contributions

This research has important theoretical implications for how we understand the international dimensions of democratization. First of all, the identification of the transnational protection regime as the core causal mechanism translating events and developments in the international normative and geopolitical environments into external pressures that impact democratization, has revealed some of the underlying causal processes that have yet to be systematically explored in the comparative literature. This is significant because it corrects the myopia of literatures that concentrate only on state-to-state interactions or external state pressures. The causal model developed allows us not only to negate the apologist agenda of some of these foreign policy literatures, it holds the potential to revise “top-down” conceptions of democratization to form more accurate depictions that may be incompatible with a focus on state-to-state interactions. This particular point is further discussed in the specific context of Taiwan when we consider the empirical contributions of this research (see below).

Secondly, another theoretical implication of this research is to extend extant notions of the international human rights regime developed in the subfield of international relations. The protection regime is a conceptual innovation that encapsulates the theoretical worth of those
transnational networks of nonstate and substate actors who piggyback on human rights activism to protect political oppositions struggling to exist under authoritarian governments. The legitimacy of the protection regime in our cases was based upon international human rights norms and a key component of these transnational networks consisted of human rights activists who disavow any political agenda. However, unlike these human rights activists, many of the actors that made up the protection regime do have explicit political goals that ultimately converge upon effecting democratic change. As such, the resulting political changes were not tangential to the pursuit of human rights, as is mostly the depiction of the human rights regime literature. The importance of having a concept like the protection regime lies in its ability to capture the political goals of such actors and thus allow for a better understanding of these transnational networks.

Finally, in marrying human rights to democracy in an explicit fashion, the concept of the protection regime facilitates a more complete understanding of how the normative and the strategic interact at the international-domestic political interface, with particular outcomes for democratic development. The causal model developed can be used to schematize the factors that impact the prospects of democratic development in other cases, while allowing for a way useful way forward in analyzing exactly how these factors might interact. The applicability of this research to other such cases will be considered under “Policy Implications and a Future Research Agenda” below.

**Empirical Contributions**

The existence of the protection regime in each our cases is a novel discovery that contributes to a better understanding of the international dimensions of democratization in Taiwan and South Korea. This research has the potential to correct previous misunderstandings
of the role of external agency in the democratization of Taiwan and South Korea in the extant literatures, while introducing more nuance into current understandings of the “legacy of divided nationhood” there.\textsuperscript{935}

Certainly, the security threat posed by (powerful) communist rivals is correctly identified as the principal legacy of divided nationhood in the cases of Taiwan and South Korea. However, what has been inferred from such external conditions is a susceptibility to external state pressures, particularly as they emanate from the US as the principal guarantor of Taiwan and South Korea’s security. This is a natural inference that stems from an emphasis on the geopolitical circumstances immediately surrounding Taiwan and South Korea. Taking into account the international normative environment as it evolved from the mid-1970s onward has allowed us to consider other kinds of actors, and in so doing, provide a revisionist view of the nature of those external pressures, however.

The problematization of the role of external state agency in the case of Taiwan has led to the conclusion that external state pressures were in fact very weak, and thus, causally insignificant. On the role of external agency, however, the case of South Korea is particularly important, because the US is usually credited with “democracy promotion” there. Of course, what this research has discovered is that external state pressures were important in South Korea, but until now only a partial understanding of the political processes driving US Korea policy has been available because the role of those transnational nonstate actors described in this research has not been taken into full account. The research findings presented here thus corrects what has only been a partial understanding of the role of external state agency in the case of South Korea.

The discovery of a “bottom-up” dimension to external pressures is particularly important in the Taiwan case for another reason. The mainstream take on Taiwan’s democratization process is largely that it was primarily a “top-down” process initiated and managed by the KMT leadership, obscuring the importance of the political opposition and the extent to which democracy was pushed from below. At the same time, the existing literature on the international dimensions of democratization in Taiwan has tended to emphasize the negative impact of international isolation on the KMT’s legitimacy, which arguably drove it to initiate a process of political liberalization and democratization. Such a misunderstanding of the nature of democratization in Taiwan and the largely “top-down” approach to the external dimensions of democratization there tended to be mutually reinforcing. In providing a perspective that takes into account more than the geopolitical alone allows for a very different conception of the very nature of democratization there, correcting this historical bias.

There is a further empirical contribution to our understanding of the nature of the external threat facing Taiwan and South Korea. To date, they are usually considered to be qualitatively similar security threats. Without discounting the extent to which Taiwan faces a possible military conflict with the PRC, this ceased to be completely true from the 1970s onward. The immediate threat that Taiwan faced from the PRC was political in nature, whilst that of South Korea remained military. Over time, the controversy over South Korea’s sovereignty diminished over time within the international community, quite the opposite to the case of Taiwan. This, as I have argued, had important implications – the difference in the nature of these external threats explains the different “causal paths” taken by Taiwan and South Korea with respect to the impact of the protection regime.
Last but not least, this research has also made an empirical contribution to our understanding of political development in Singapore during the late 1980s, particularly the episode coined the “Marxist conspiracy.” To date, no known literature systematically explains – especially from a wider comparative perspective - the PAP government’s repression of a group of social activists with transnational ties to the international media, human rights and student groups, and Christian organizations. This research uncovers the extent to which these “conspirators” were part of an embryonic protection regime that also shaded into what the PAP government perceived as opposition leadership with potentially broad-based mobilizational capacity.

**Policy Implications**

The causal model developed in this dissertation has the potential to inform current policy approaches taken to “democracy promotion” by emphasizing the importance of supporting key domestic elements that have the potential to raise grassroots pressures for democratic change. However, whether and how this model can be meaningfully applied requires first and foremost that a detailed case study of the nature of the institutional and structural obstacles to democratic development, the nature of the democratic struggle, and the political opposition itself be first conducted. This model has some inherent flexibility to accommodate the particularities of the cases it is applied to, but the findings of such a preliminary study should suggest that external agency might be crucial to democratic breakthrough before we proceed to consider the exact form of external agency and the structural conditions in which they operate.

The application of this causal model for policy analysis will take us through a series of analytical steps that make it possible to understand whether external agency will matter to democratic development, and if so, exactly what kind of external agency, and exactly how they
will matter. As suggested earlier, the first step of the analysis should entail a close study of the domestic political institutions and structures and political processes to determine whether external agency is required at all. If the analysis suggests that this is the case, consideration should be given specifically to the following question: whom must we protect? Correctly identifying the domestic actors that will matter to democratic breakthrough is foundational to the policy analysis.

Next, it is important to determine the following: who should do the protecting? In our causal model, the nonstate and substate actors that comprise the protection regime were primarily responsible for protecting the political opposition. We have found in the South Korean case, however, that a combinational approach that involved state actors was required for external pressures to be most effective because of the particularities of its immediate geopolitical environment. To determine which configuration of actors would be most suitable requires that we first understand the immediate geopolitical circumstances of a particular case and how they affect the strength and effectiveness of the protection regime. In other words, what needs to be considered are how the immediate geopolitical circumstances (1) affect the susceptibility of the authoritarian government (2) influence the menu of possible responses the authoritarian government has to these external actors and (3) affect the ability to engage international attention. What also needs to be considered are which state actors have potential leverage over the authoritarian governments in question and whether the geopolitical environment will allow these state actors to exercise that leverage. The systematic consideration of how these geopolitical factors condition external agency should help to determine which actors are the best sources of external pressures on the target government.
The next step in the analysis should involve determining the following: how should we protect? If state actors are to be involved, the different avenues for the exercise of leverage should be considered carefully taking into account possible domestic responses and consequences. The causal model developed here also specifies exactly how transnational networks of nonstate and substate actors protect key domestic actors – by channeling needed resources to them and flagging political repression as human rights abuses to the international community. The latter more important method needs to be reviewed in future cases with specific reference to the international normative environment at the time. It is presumptuous to assume that the respect for human rights is now an established international norm, and therefore the normative footing of these transnational actors are surer than ever.

The international normative environment is in fact at least as complex today as it was during the time period of the study, if not more so, despite the fact that human rights is now an established international norm. This cannot be given full treatment here, but suffice to say that it is probably true that the euphoria of “the end of history” has come to mark the zenith of the appeal held by the liberal democratic model, especially since it has come to be associated with the instability of “Anglo-Saxon capitalism.” The advent of the September 11 attacks and the particular tact taken by the Bush administration toward “regime change” since that time has further tarnished the credibility of “democracy promotion,” whether undertaken by state, nonstate or substate actors. Such developments have created crosswinds in the international normative environment with the effect of undercutting the legitimacy of those who wish to encourage democratic development in other places. As such, exactly how these actors exert external pressure on their target governments has to be pursued with sensitivity to these developments.
What I have attempted to convey through this outline is that the causal model developed here is useful in providing a systematic approach to the consideration of the various factors that need to be taken into account in democracy promotion. Democratization is a complex, contingent process, but this model arguably offers a first step toward understanding the causal factors and processes that have yet to be systematically considered. Analysis along these lines might not only suggest that current approaches toward democracy promotion in particular cases are unsuitable; it might suggest that attempts to influence democratic development from the outside are inadvisable. Either way, these are useful findings for the purposes of determining policy.

**Agenda for Future Research**

Two interesting and fruitful avenues for future research involve research into how the protection regime might impact democratic development in China and Myanmar. These cases are of interest primarily because regime change in these places holds potentially important implications for international security. China is important for obvious reasons — as a rising economic and political power, political development there will have profound implications for its immediate neighbors and beyond. Myanmar, although small and impoverished, remains important because of the geostrategic position it occupies and the implications that democratic change there will have for the regional and global balance of power.

The sense that the protection regime is an important source of external influence on democratic development in these countries arises from the fact that external state agency is extremely constrained. At the general level, we have seen that state actors are often compelled for geostrategic reasons to subordinate human rights concerns to *realpolitik*. We continue to see this today, in the dismissive approach that the US has most recently taken towards China’s treatment of its democracy activists and other outspoken critics. It appears that Washington’s
strategic calculations have concluded that it is almost impossible for the US to provide any direct support for opposition elements there. The US may not have the same considerations in the case of Myanmar as it does in China. However, the leverage that the US has over Myanmar is limited - the Western democracy that has more leverage over the military government there is the UK. Stating it generously, the UK has played at best an ambivalent role in encouraging democratic development in Myanmar, however – not unlike what we witnessed in the case of Singapore.

Importantly, the support that Myanmar receives explicitly and implicitly from key regional leaders China and India mitigates the potential leverage that Western democracies in general may have over the military government there. Although India is a democracy, rivalry with China has prevented it from taking a stronger stance on issues of human rights and democracy in Myanmar.

There is, in fact, some evidence to suggest that phenomena resembling the protection regime are in operation in China and Myanmar. During the 2008 Beijing Olympics, for example, we witnessed a rash of activities to raise the international profile of political repression in China as in order to raise its political cost for the Chinese communist government. The advent of the Saffron Revolution in Myanmar has been attributed to the encouragement of transnational non-governmental organizations, and its repression has been flagged by similar actors as reprehensible human rights abuses in order to exert external pressure on the military government there. Such evidence suggests that systematic research into these cases might in fact uncover further empirical evidence that confirms the operation of a protection regime. Such an inquiry will help us to understand the international-domestic political interface in the cases of China and Myanmar better. The specifics of these two cases might also be useful in extending the generalizability of the causal model developed or they may contribute to its refinement. Last but
not least, the findings of such a research can also feed back into policy analysis for democracy promotion in these two countries.
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APPENDIX A

FIGURE 3

Source: Overseas Compatriot Affairs Commission, R.O.C (Taiwan).
Note: Total number of R.O.C. emigrants to the U.S.A between 1972 and 1990 stood at 145,144.
FIGURE 4
DISTRIBUTION OF SETTLED TAIWANESE EMIGRANTS BY U.S. CITIES, 1975-1990

Source: Overseas Compatriot Affairs Commission, R.O.C (Taiwan).
FIGURE 5
TAIWANESE EMIGRANTS TO THE U.S. BY OCCUPATION, 1983-1990

Source: Overseas Compatriot Affairs Commission, R.O.C (Taiwan).
<table>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$15.940 billion</strong></td>
<td><strong>$17.557 billion</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2.682 billion</strong></td>
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FIGURE 6
US ARMS SALES TO TAIWAN DURING THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION (1981-9)

FIGURE 7
NO. OF KOREAN IMMIGRANTS TO THE US FROM 1970-86

FIGURE 8
NO. OF US TROOPS DEPLOYED IN THE R.O.K.

Source: Department of Defense Deployment of Military Personnel by Country; CIA Factbook.