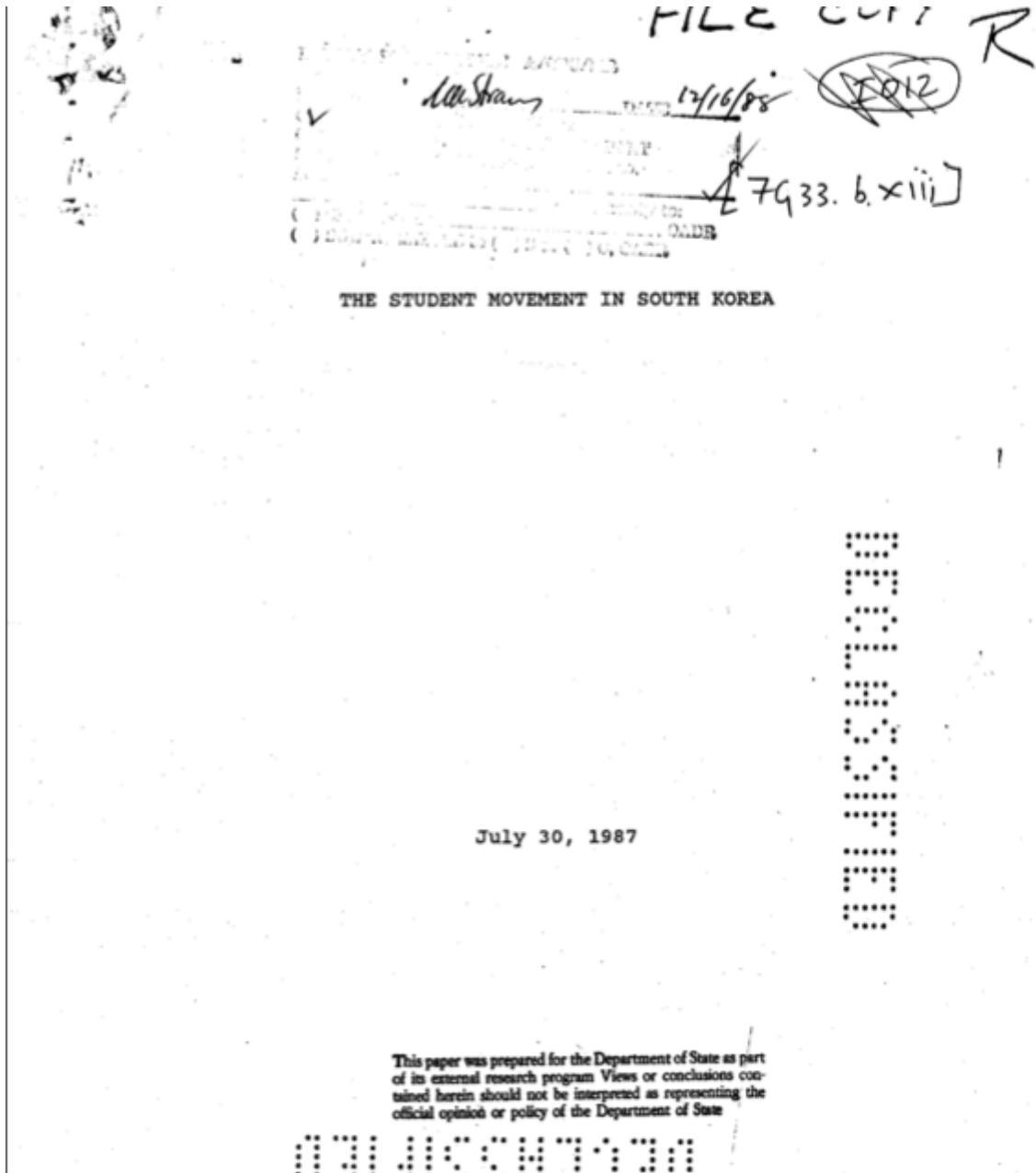


The Student Movement in South Korea



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University student protest movements in the Republic of Korea have played an important role in its political history. Brutal government response to such protests contributed to the fall of Syngman Rhee in 1960. Kim Dae Jung earned a great deal of credibility among student agitators during the period of the Park Junta as an advocate for democracy that undoubtedly supported him in his later bid for the ROK presidency. More recently protests on the dispatch of South Korean troops to Iraq and over relations with US forces in Korea have caused similar protests. Former student radicals from the “386” generation have also achieved positions of prominence in the Roh Administration.

This 1987 report by Vincent Brandt examines the student movement in the ROK in regards to tactics, ideology, structure, and place within Korean society, including relations with fellow students, the middle class, the Christian Church, and organized labor.

Writes Brandt,

“In contemporary South Korea the role of dissenting students as the purest expression of the nation’s ideals and moral transitions has become institutionalized. Although there may be criticism of the extremist ideologies and violent tactics, the student movement generally has the respect, sympathy, and admiration of most of the population. The older generation and conservatives in general may be opposed to specific goals, but they are nevertheless constantly exposed, not only to the currents of student thought, but also to the considerable weight of student righteousness. In the long run this tends to be more influential than government propaganda.” [page 4]

This report was released to the Nautilus Institute under the US Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

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