The Kwangju Uprising
The Kwangju Uprising

1980’s Korea – deepening economic recession

- deepening economic recession
- Still under partial martial law
- Opposition politicians’ anti-government acts increased (3 Kims – Kim Dae Jung, Kim Young Sam, Kim Jong Pil)
- Students demonstrations surged.
The Kwangju Uprising

WHO’S CHUN?

The most powerful man in Korea

- Defense Security Commander, Acting KCIA director
- Strong antipathy toward demonstrators – Kim Dae Jung
- North Korean Card
The Kwangju Uprising

**PROCESS**

**MAY 17 – 18**
- widespread arrests of political opponents and leading demonstrators

**MAY 18 – 21**
- passionate protests in Kwangju and harsh attacks by black berets

**MAY 22**
- Kwangju people armed themselves

**MAY 23**
- The Final Military attack by ROK 20th Division and special forces.
The Kwangju Uprising

Casualties

Difference between Gov.’s estimate and civilian’s.
- Official toll was 170 people
- Kwangju people insisted it is more than 2000.
- In 1995, it was raised to 240.
The Kwangju Uprising

After Kwangju massacre

President Chun Doo Hwan

- Special Committee for National Security Measures
- Promoted to four-star general
- President Choi Kyu Ha ‘s resignation
- Did US approved President Chun?
- Elected president by National Conference for Unification
The Kwangju Uprising
US and Kwangju Uprising
Controversies:
Did US approved Kwangju events?

US allowed ROK 20th division to crackdown Kwangju.

US tried to minimize casualties, thus they allowed 20th division instead of special forces.
The Kwangju Uprising

US’s act toward Chun’s ministry

Absence of free and fair presidential balloting

- Elected by National Conference for Unification.
- Chun’s power is based on military force similar to Park Chung Hee

US Reaction

Carter

- No congratulations
- Demand early elections and “greater personal freedom”
- Banned cabinet-level visits to Seoul
The fight to save Kim Dae Jung
The fight to save Kim Dae Jung

WHO’S KIM?

Fierce antipathy among conservatives

- Strong candidate of presidential election
- Assassination attempt in 1973
- Arrested on charges of inciting student demonstrations
- *Communist* or not??
- After arrest, he became Chun’s trump card to obtain opportunity for meet Reagan
The fight to save Kim Dae Jung
Kim, the trump card / meanings of Kim in other countries

JAPAN
- Kim’s abduction from TOKYO in 1973
- Japanese anger over Kim’s abduction

USA
- Major issue in American – South Korean relationship
- Carter: criticize Chun, kept fighting to save Kim
The fight to save Kim Dae Jung

Carter ➔ Reagan

Democratic party ➔ Republican party

Changes of US reaction over South Korea

- Withdrawal of US troops in Korea
- Views on Kim Dae Jung case
The fight to save Kim Dae Jung

Reagan’s act and Koreans’ reaction

Lifting of martial law

Commutation of Kim’s death sentence to life imprisonment (1981.1.21)
- Three days after announcement of White house that Chun’s visit is impended

Reagan – Chun in Washington (1981.2.2)

Reagan
- No withdrawal of US troops
- Increased the forces to 430,000 Americans
- Resume previously postponed military and economic consultation
- Prepared to sell Korea F-16 warplanes
The fight to save Kim Dae Jung

Reagan’s act and Koreans’ reaction

- Convincing most south Koreans that Chun’s takeover was a fait accompli
- Responsible for publicly approval of Chun’s regime

Reagan’s “warm” White House reception

Antagonism betrayal among Koreans
What is the meaning of KwangJu uprising in Korea history??
KEY QUESTION

What are the **differences** between Carter and Reagan regime’s **diplomatic politics** against Korea?