

defining functions of such deputies, after issuing explanatory statement day before. In this statement General Dean said that service as deputies was voluntary, that the purpose was to help police maintain order during elections, that they were under jurisdiction of local administrative official who alone had authority to summon deputies, and that no political youth groups would be allowed to perform protective functions as such. National police force also was further strengthened by establishment of mobile police groups, equipped with bicycles and armed with U.S. Army carbines.

Indicative perhaps of sharpening intimidation, terrorism and of nerves on part of Communists was revival of ancient system signal bonfires on mountain tops. Numerous such fires attributed Communist signaling were reported over wide areas in period.

Special precautions against May Day riots were taken by police. 27th editors of three Leftist press were arrested for printing praise of violence and alleged refusal to the Communist Trade Union (Chun Hyung) of permission to hold separate celebration of May and inciting citizens to join violence.

On 22nd dispute developed at Taegu between procurators and police over question of warrants, leading to alleged police violation of district court. On 24th Chief Procurator left Seoul to look into dispute, which seems to be related to standing rivalry between two branches of law enforcement.

남한 선거 시찰(1948. 5. 12)

No. 124

THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

RESTRICTED

Office of U. S. Political Adviser
Seoul, Korea, Hqs., XXIV Corps, APO 23
c/o Postmaster, San Francisco, Calif.
May 12, 1948

SUBJECT: Observation of Elections in South Korea

THE HONORABLE

THE SECRETARY OF STATE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

WASHINGTON

SIR:

There is enclosed herewith a memorandum of Vice Consul David E. Mark of my staff describing his tour of the countryside and small towns within a day's distance of Seoul at election time.

Mr. Mark's first-hand account of the election in the provinces will be found very interesting and informative, indicating the excellent machinery set up for the voting, the responsiveness of the people, and the free and peaceful atmosphere prevailing on the occasion. In this connection mention may be made of the contrast in Seoul to the holiday atmosphere existing in the country. In the capital, after the heavy voting had ended in the forenoon, the usually crowded streets were still and deserted, with shops, restaurants, and houses tightly shut. This method of utilizing a holiday is so different from the usual flocking to parks and walking about the streets that it was evident some apprehension of disorders was present.

As in the countryside, voting booths had at their entrance the pictures and biographical sketches of the candidates of the district, usually five or six, and seated on benches or chairs about the entrance were election officials. At some distance on either side of the booths stood or sat young men with armbands and clubs, members of the local residents self-protective bodies organized for the occasion under Military Government ordinance of April 21st. At street corners and other strategic points leading to the booths, other members of the corps patrolled and searched suspicious looking individuals or blocked streets. Police generally remained at their boxes, with bayonets fixed, although mobile police were seen patrolling the streets in trucks or on bicycles. As a result of these precautions, voters and voting booths received adequate protection and the day passed off with a minimum of disorders.

In general, therefore, the election has passed off in a very satisfactory manner--better than most expected. While 35 deaths are reported to have occurred (5 policemen, 16 Communists, and 14 Rightists), this evidence of violence is rather insignificant in view of the 20,000,000 people involved, and the threats and warnings from the Communist north combined with the disaffection of such prominent leaders as KIM Koo and KIM Kiusic. The results reveal that the Communist elements are not as strong as their vocal organs would seem to indicate.

A report of the candidates elected, including their classification by party affiliations will be submitted later when the final election results are known.

Respectfully yours,



Joseph E. Jacobs
United States Political Adviser

Enclosure: VVV

1. Memorandum on Elections

<첨부문서> 데이비드 마크 부영사의 5·10선거 비망록(1948. 5. 12)

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Memorandum on Elections

Inasmuch as some pre-election day and election day reports of news correspondents have painted a picture of tension and disturbance in Korea on May 10, 1948, it will, I think, help in maintaining a more balanced perspective to note briefly some observations made by this officer in the company of Vice Consul John W. Rozier on a short jeep tour of three provinces on election day and the Sunday immediately preceding. The itinerary covered the sizeable towns of Suwon, Ichon, and Pyongtaek in Kyunggi Province, Chonan, Kongju, Chochiwon, and Taejon (capital) in South Chungchong Province, and Chungju and Chongju (capital) in North Chungchong Province, as well as the more rural areas in between.

On May 9th, the Korean scene looked much the same as it does on any other Spring or Summer day. Farmers were in the fields plowing, women were working around the house, children stopped their playing to shout "hello - O.K." as we passed. Townsfolk were much more interested in the eclipse than in the election, but business and work absorbed more attention than either. Candidates' posters were ubiquitous along with numerous official exhortations to get out and vote. Various persons with whom I spoke talked of the usual things and exchanged pleasantries. When I injected the subject of the election into the conversation, it was treated as just another routine topic which gave strength to the unanimous assertion that everything was and had been quiet.

It was our object on May 10th to drop into a number of polling places at distances of 15 or so miles for fairly close questioning and observation and to note appearances at all other polls as we drove past. This proved to be a satisfactory approach for obtaining a general picture of the area.

It was surprising how well each place visited had been organized. The instructions of the election law, the election regulations, and the latter's diagrams were diligently followed. Typically, the voter ran into the clerk with the registration book as he entered the poll. After his name was checked off, he went to another clerk who handed him a standard ballot and envelope. He was then directed to an enclosed booth where he marked his choice and put the ballot in the envelope. The envelope was finally dropped into the ballot box standing alone in the center of the room, whereupon the voter departed. The whole proceeding was observed by the election committee and the candidates' local representatives who all sat in a row at long tables. Conspicuously posted outside the entrance were the pictures, names, and symbol markings of each of the district's candidates. No noise or excitement prevailed within the polling place, but

a short explanation of the procedure was necessary for many of the voters.

Lines were heavy outside of all polling places throughout election day morning. People waited patiently for their turn to vote in a carefree, holiday spirit, dressed in their festival clothes in the villages and smaller towns. City folk were more businesslike and matter-of-fact in their attitude. Everyone was, however, genuine in his interest and participation in the election. As I was my own interpreter, I can vouch for the enthusiasm with which they invited us in, answered our questions, and cited the statistics. There was virtually no voting activity after noontime since stragglers were rare. Each group of election officials, however, sat around patiently and seriously until the closing hour. At one poll of 582 registered voters, 200 had voted by 9:20 a.m. Another boasted 620 out of 640 at 12:30 p.m. A third in the city of Chongju had processed about 450 out of 600 by noon. A country town noted 885 of a 940 total by 2:00 p.m. By midnight, the normal number of farmers was again to be seen working in the fields.

With one exception, the universal verdict was that everything was extremely orderly and quiet. The only exception was at Chochiwon, South Chungchong Province, where the mayor's house had been burned two nights before. The police were everywhere armed and on the alert. In North Chungchong Province, most of the police boxes were sandbagged or barricaded, but we were told that it was the result of the provincial police chief's instructions and not of fear of trouble. Volunteer firemen had been turned out in uniform with clubs to add strength to the law and order forces. Numbers of other citizenry had been deputized as "peace preservers" and given clubs under authority of the Military Governor's April 21st proclamation to that effect. In fact, most of these latter turned out to be members of Rightist youth groups turned en masse into police auxiliaries. Some had donned new armbands, but others hadn't bothered to make the change. In any event, however, there was no sign that any of this show of force effected the slightest intimidation of any voter. Everywhere persons of the law were accepted as friends of the voters and election officials, and treated as a part of the necessary polling place scene. We did not see any of them, furthermore, within a polling place.

It is admitted that this almost idyllic picture does not fit in with troublesome occurrences in Pusan, Taegu, Kwangju, Seoul, and Cheju Island. It should be remembered, however, that our trip covered an area that has never been strongly leftist and that has little industrial population. Although there was no real tension anywhere, the atmosphere was a little less carefree in the larger towns. It is certainly plausible to find that still larger towns tended to become more volatile. I suspect that the farming areas everywhere in South Korea (except Cheju Island) were not much different from those described herein. Furthermore, North Korean or

local Communist agitators might well be able to find better organized South Korean Labor Party remnants in larger towns. There they might mix with the bigger population without being spotted as one would be in a village where everyone knows everyone else. Cities, generally, have groups of dissatisfied unhappy people. Korean farmers this year have memories of last year's good rice crop, promise of an even better one, land distribution for some, and to-be-hoped-for distribution for the remainder. The 70% of Korea which is rural is not now fertile soil for violence.

It is, of course, not possible in assessing the election to consider only election day and forget all that has gone before. I, personally, feel that past American actions have done much to bring about the dominance of the ~~XXXX~~-rightist political group on the Korean scene and to discourage not only Communist but also non-Rhee, non-Communist groups from participation in the election, as a force that will act as any sort of an opposition to Dr. Rhee.

That, however, does not alter these salient features of the election as we observed it. There was a "free atmosphere"; voters could ballot without fear of intimidation. There was a peaceful atmosphere without hurry or tension. There was a truly secret ballot, with each voter's choice beyond possibility of identification. There was, overall, a truly democratic procedure and organization, which Koreans will do well to remember and emulate in future years.

David E. Mark
Vice Consul

• 1948년 5월 10일의 남한내 선거반대 활동표(1948. 5. 21)

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May 21, 1948 DIVISION OF
NORTHEAST ASIAN AFFAIRS

is assigned to

No Comment

SUBJECT: Tabulation of Anti-Election Disturbances
South Korea on May 10, 1948

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

THE HONORABLE
THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

SER: