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HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES ARMY FORCES IN KOREA
Office of the Commanding General
APO 235

24 March 1948

Maj. Gen. William F. Dean
Military Governor, USAMGIK
Seoul, Korea

Dear General Dean:

I am inclosing herewith a copy of letter 17 March received from the United Nations Commission bearing upon the subject of freedom of elections in South Korea. I have discussed all of these matters with you daily and I feel sure that there is no divergence of opinion on methods of carrying out to the extent possible the recommendations made.

To insure that my ideas on this are generally on record and can be passed to other responsible agencies, I will comment on pertinent paragraphs of the recommendations made by the Commission. Also included for your information and guidance is a copy of my answer to the Commission.

With reference to paragraphs 1 and 3, we are now assembling the information requested. The ordinance you have just signed concerning "Changes in Criminal Procedure" together with the proclamation now in preparation, appears to meet the other recommendations of paragraphs 2 and 3. With respect to paragraph 4, I will attempt to get further understanding with the Commission on the extent to which opposition to elections under the definition of "peaceful and legal means" may go.

With respect to paragraphs 5, 6 and 7, there is a strong inference of a threat that if we do not make drastic changes in the police force the Commission will automatically say that there is no free atmosphere for elections. However, in view of the continuing strong communist activity with subversive attacks and acts of violence, I stand by my decision that there will be no drastic changes in the organization and structure of the police force. This does not change my orders that any member of the police force found guilty of malfeasance in office shall be promptly removed. It is incumbent on all agencies who deal with the police to continue every effort to orient and guide them fully as to what is expected of them before and during the elections in the way of maintaining a free atmosphere. However, I do not want this carried to the extent of giving police the idea that the effectiveness of the police in maintaining law and order is in any way weakened during the period of the elections. In order that there can be no misunderstanding on the part of the police, it is directed that a special directive to the police be prepared covering their specific duties pertaining to the conduct of elections.

With respect to paragraphs 8 - 12, we must make every effort to guide and utilize youth organizations toward development of free atmosphere for elections and in addition to enlist their help to educate and persuade all of the people to support the elections. Present regulations require registration of all such groups of a political nature. It is directed that Military Government follow up and see that all youth groups are registered under Ordinance #55 under the assumption that they are political. Police will be definitely informed that members of youth organizations will not be allowed to congregate in the vicinity of the polling places other than for the purpose of voting.

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Maj. Gen. Dean

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With reference to paragraph 13, it is desired that all facilities of government be used for the dissemination of information about elections and that a comprehensive educational campaign on an impartial basis be carried through.

With reference to paragraph 14, I desire that any newsprint under government control as may be determined surplus to official needs of the administration be made available as suggested.

With reference to paragraph 15, regulations will be established to insure equitable use and parcelling of any radio facilities to various political candidates and parties engaged in campaigning.

With reference to paragraphs 16 - 19, I shall try to get from the Commission a mutually agreeable and more clearly cut definition of political prisoners. In the meantime, I desire that the Department of Justice continue case-by-case examination of prisoners whose confinement and sentence might be the result of his political beliefs or legitimate actions connected therewith, or who may be released without detriment to law and order.

It is directed that you keep the UN Commission fully informed of steps taken to carry out the recommendations contained in their letter. Copies of all regulations, statements, ordinances, etc., pertaining to these recommendations should be furnished to Brigadier General Weckerling, together with progress reports or reports of completion of any phase for transmission to the Commission.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ John R. Hodge
JOHN R. HODGE
Lieutenant General, U. S. Army
Commanding

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