

ANNEX TO THE LETTER TO  
LIEUTENANT GENERAL  
JOHN R. HODGE

30 March 1948

UNITED NATIONS TEMPORARY COMMISSION ON KOREA

STATEMENT OF FACTS

CONCERNING THE CONTENTS OF THE COMMUNICATION  
FROM THE COMMANDING GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES  
ARMY FORCES IN KOREA TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMISSION

1. In the first paragraph of General Hodge's letter of 29 March 1948, it is stated that "from the very beginning it was believed by this Command that at least 80 days would be required between announcement of the date set for an election and the election itself". It is correct that this term of 80 days has been mentioned, but it is also correct to say that references were made repeatedly to the possibility of reducing these 80 days to 70 or 60 days. In the meeting of Sub-Committee 1 of 24 February 1948, Mr. Wang (China) put the following question: "...What is your opinion regarding the length of time required for the dissemination of such information? How long will it take to sufficiently satisfy us that the average voter will know his rights and know how to vote?" To this question, General Dean replied, according to the verbatim record, as follows: "Any answer on that would be relative because, naturally, the more time you have, the better education you can give. I feel that 60 days would be the time, and when I say 60 days, I take into account the fact that that education started before the United Nations Commission came over here."

2. At the end of paragraph 1 of General Hodge's letter, it is stated that a letter was addressed to the Principal Secretary of the Commission on 27 February 1948 by the Liaison Officer, Brigadier General Weckerling, anticipating announcement of election on 1 March, and saying that, "I would suggest that in order to accelerate completion of preparation for elections in South Korea, that 20 May be established as the election date". However, in that same memorandum of General Weckerling,

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the following sentence is included, which is omitted from the letter of General Hodge: "If you should see fit to shorten this period by about ten days, I could see no great objection to that procedure."

3. General Hodge stated on page 3, paragraph 5, that he "only reluctantly agreed" to the formula "not later than 10 May 1948" because of Mr. Menon's statement in the United States, "suggesting that elections be held during the first week in May". It should, in this connection, be pointed out that on 2 February, the Commission received a document from the United States Liaison Officer concerning the "Korean Spring Agricultural Calendar and its Bearing on the Election Date", of which the last paragraph runs as follows:

"It is suggested from the viewpoint of agriculture that the first week in May is the very latest period during which the election should be held. A specified time earlier than that would be even better; the earlier the better."

It was, among other things, on that statement on which Mr. Menon's suggestion of the first week in May was made. Since the Agricultural Calendar was issued, on 2 February, there has never been any indication whatever that a change in this agricultural situation was possible. It is only in the letter from General Hodge, dated 29 March 1948, that for the first time facts are given with regard to more favourable conditions concerning farm labour.

4. Page 2 of the letter from General Hodge might create the impression that the Commission and the Secretariat are, to a certain extent, responsible for the request to postpone the election day by recommending changes in the election law, and it is stated "that the discussions of these changes between the United States Liaison Officer and the Legal Counsellor of the United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea took place as late as 18 March 1948 on the evening before Mr. Schreiber's departure from Korea".

5. It should be noted, firstly, that neither Mr. Schreiber, nor the Principal Secretary, nor any other officer of the Secretariat had any indication from the United States authorities, either before or after Mr. Schreiber's departure, that the discussion on the recommendations

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would cause a postponement of the election day; and secondly, that the reference solely to 18 March tends to give an entirely wrong impression of the way in which the Commission and Sub-Committee 3 dealt with the matter. The facts are as follows:

6. On 1 March 1948, the United States Liaison Officer to the Commission drew the attention of the Principal Secretary of the Commission to certain provisions of the election law, the application of which involved technical preparations which were to be started immediately, in view of the fixing of the election date on 9 May 1948.

7. Since he requested an expression of views as early as possible, the Sub-Committee considered these questions on 2 March and the Chairman of Sub-Committee 3 authorized the Secretariat to transmit the substance of the decisions of the Sub-Committee as to the recommendations it would make to the Commission on the points mentioned in the United States Liaison Officer's memorandum.

8. Accordingly, on 3 March, the Principal Secretary transmitted the recommendations of Sub-Committee 3 to the United States Liaison Officer.

9. This Officer replied to the memorandum of the Principal Secretary on 4 March, in which he pointed out that the United States authorities, while accepting most of the recommendations of the Sub-Committee, requested the reconsideration of three of its recommendations, namely, (1) the elimination of provincial election committees; (2) the appointment by the National Election Committee of the members of lower echelon election committees on the basis of lists of personalities recommended by the administrative head of the district concerned and the president of the highest tribunal located in or having jurisdiction over the district; and (3) the establishment of voting districts of not more than 2,000 inhabitants.

10. The Sub-Committee, on 7 March, agreed with the first two points presented by the United States authorities, but felt unable to change its recommendation on the last point. This information was immediately communicated to the United States Liaison Officer on 8 March, and on that date, the negotiations between the United States authorities and the Commission on the electoral provisions were virtually completed.

11. The Commission gave formal consideration to this matter on 10 and 11 March, and approved with only one important amendment, namely, a change in voting age from twenty to twenty-one years, the recommendations of the Sub-Committee. The recommendations of the Commission with respect to the election law were transmitted by the Chairman to the United States Liaison Officer on 12 March. Furthermore, the Commission believed this matter to be of such vital importance that it was taken up prior to consideration of the question of the implementation of the Interim Committee's Resolution of 26 February.

12. From the above facts, it is quite clear that the Commission, by accepting the formula "not later than 10 May 1948", based its action entirely on information given by the United States authorities themselves, and the Commission and the Secretariat, in arranging their time-table accordingly, can in no way be made responsible for bringing about the request for a postponement of the election day.

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