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STATEMENT BY LIEUT. GEN. JOHN R. HODGE - 6 April 1948

We have been hearing much recently concerning the so-called North-South Korea Leaders Conference for uniting Korea. Some uninformed persons seem to believe that such a conference will solve the problem and therefore it eliminates the need for the election of the representatives of the people as a necessary step for reestablishing Korean sovereignty. The very fact that preliminary negotiations between certain Korean individuals for a North-South Conference are underway makes it all the more important at this time that the people elect their representatives as soon as possible. Then their elected representatives can participate in and put the stamp of approval on any negotiations to be carried on in the name of the South Koreans. Unification of North and South Korea into a sovereign state has all along been a primary aim of the United States. Unification through elections is what the United States had in mind when proposing elections under United Nations observation. It is also one of the important purposes which the Interim Committee had in mind and incorporated in its instructions when it approved the elections in those areas of Korea where they could be held.

Who can we say are truly representatives of the Korean people, unless they have been duly elected by the Korean people in a free election? Those alleged to be representatives of the Korean people without a popular mandate from the people cannot be true representatives.

As to the present status of the North-South Conference proposal, it is interesting to note that the Korean heads of the Communist Government of North Korea themselves are naming the South Korean representatives to be invited. They did not give to South Koreans any choice as to whom the South Koreans should name to represent them. This is in spite of the fact that South Korea contains two-thirds of Korea's population and that South Koreans first proposed a North-South conference. In their invitations, the North Koreans have failed to invite the well known leaders of several major parties of South Korea. They invited only those who oppose democratic elections, which will provide the only way of determining whom the Korean people wish to represent them. Although they invited a few well known South Koreans, the most of those invited were their own stooges who have headed and carried out subversive Communist activity in South Korea since VJ Day in their attempt to push all of Korea into the Communist Satellite fold. Since none of those invited by the North Korean Communist Government are elected representatives of the Korean people, they have no mandate to speak for the people of South Korea. They can only speak for themselves and a few close associates.

There can be no doubt but that these same North Korean individuals are laying down all the conditions for the conference. It is reasonable to assume that the agenda for the conference has already been prepared by them. In judging of the intention behind this move of the North Koreans it should be kept in mind that the United States proposed and the United Nations Organization voted overwhelmingly to hold general elections throughout all Korea under United Nations observation but the Soviet masters of the North Korean Communists seem to fear the results of any free elections in North Korea and apparently do not want the representatives of the United Nations to see and contact the masses of Koreans in North Korea. It is patent to the close observer of world affairs that this present proposal through the North Korean Communists is another effort to deceive the good people of South Korea. It is also clearly in furtherance of the Communist aim to seize control of all of Korea by fair means or foul, disregarding completely the wishes and the will of the people of Korea.

The Korean people must not be fooled by tricks. The one surest way in which there can be an effective and lasting uniting of North and South Korea by the Koreans themselves, is through the action of elected representatives of the people on both sides. Hence it is absolutely essential that every man and woman over twenty-one full years of age go to their place of registry immediately and register. They must go to the polling places on election day and vote for their own selection of representatives who can in a truly representative capacity take steps to bring about the unification of Korea and make it a truly sovereign state, according to the wishes of those who elected them.

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