

National Assembly to come to agreement with parties opposed to May 10 elections; (2) Assembly attitude toward unification of country; (3) stability of present govt; (4) electoral complaints; (5) Cheju Island situation. No definite decision was reached except tentatively to divide chapter two of part two of report into separate chapters to reduce bulk of material.

• 북한선거와 해주대회(1948. 9. 14)

THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES

1948  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

American Mission in Korea  
Seoul, September 11, 1948

No. 26

CONFIDENTIAL

SUBJECT: Political Summary for August 1948

THE SECRETARY OF STATE,  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

SIR:

inserted  
SKIG Report May

In continuation of despatch No. 204, August 16, 1948, reporting on political developments for July, I have the honor to report herewith on political developments in Korea for the month of August 1948.

The climax of three years of "freedom" and "liberation" came with the establishment of two rival governments, each claiming jurisdiction over the whole country. While President Syngman Rhee completed the launching of his United Nations and United States sponsored government in Seoul, Pyongyang announced the inauguration of a "Democratic People's Republic" with an "election" in both North and South Korea on August 25th. Both regimes would present themselves to the United Nations General Assembly as the true government of Korea, but the United Nations' own commission in Korea had finally elected to recognize the ~~True Republic~~ prior to its departure for UN Headquarters in New York.

Communist Activities - North and South Korea:

The extent to which Communist groups in South Korea have become a force apart from the normal life of the community and the appendage of a foreign power will be apparent from a perusal of this report. Thus, it will be noted that a detailing of Communist activities can only be made with reference to Soviet-controlled events in North Korea, to Soviet plans, and to Soviet-directed operations.

The focal point of all activity during August was the preparation in both North and South Korea for the Communist-called elections on

the 25th. The plan for this had probably been laid in Moscow about February in answer to UNTCOK activity in the American zone of Korea. The first step had been the preparation of an approved Soviet-type constitution. This was routed through the puppet North Korean Peoples Committee and approved in April, but not then placed into effect. At the same time, parallel efforts were made to induce middle-of-the-road groups in South Korea, led by Kim Kiu Sik, and disaffected rightist elements, led by Kim Koo, to appear in Pyongyang to work out a plan for a unified Korean government. The fruition of this plan came in the North-South Unity Conference of April in Pyongyang where demands for joint troop evacuation and for Korean-managed creation of their own government were made. None of the South Korean conferees seemed at the time to observe how strangely similar these steps were to previous USSR propaganda appeals nor how obvious was Communist control of the entire proceedings. A few months reflection, however, made this apparent, and when a Soviet call came for a second "unity" conference in Pyongyang, the chief South Korean leaders refused. A rump meeting with renegade Southerners was held anyway, as required by Russian plans, at the beginning of July, and this was the body that issued the call for nation-wide elections on the 25th of August. The Russian-prepared response was to order the new "Peoples Constitution" into immediate operation as the "Democratic Peoples Republic" of (all) Korea was proclaimed.

Under the direction of an Election Guidance Committee composed of Southern Communists and fellow-travelers who attended the second unity meeting, instructions were sent to all South Korea Labor Party offices and cells still functioning to have South Koreans join in the balloting for their own delegates to the new Pyongyang "Supreme Peoples Council". Ballots in South Korea were actually for choosing 1,050 members of a "South Korean Peoples Assembly" to meet in Haeju, North Korea to choose, in turn, the final 300 delegates to the Pyongyang council. Ballot slips in South Korea, as used in this underground election, were sometimes a list of names pre-selected by "participating parties" (i.e., the Communists) for the Haeju Assembly. More usually, however, they were either blank slips or blank rosters which South Koreans were induced or intimidated to sign. Although it was asserted that these blank forms constituted all right, they were actually, at most, an indication that the person signed was in accord with the election and North Korean plans. Often, however, they were not even that. In case after case, the persons who carried around the ballot slips or rosters would tell uninformed observers that the paper was only a petition for unity of Korea or a petition for some other governmental project which they were being asked to sign. Despite wide activity, despite many handbills and much publicity, and despite threats in some localities from armed bands, it is believed that somewhat less than a million persons in South Korea signed any paper, roster, or ballot connected with the election.

South Korean police cracked down on these illegal foreign-inspired activities wherever and whenever they came to light. By the month's end, national police chief CHOUGH Pyung Ok announced that 1,379 persons had been arrested in connection with the election. 226 were sent to court for trial, 414 received hearings in police court, 616 were still detained by the police, and 123 had been released. About 100 of those arrested were officials of SKIG, which evidently still had some Communist cells. Others were Labor Party or Democratic Peoples Front.

workers caught making the rounds. The largest haul came with the arrest of the chief of the Democratic Patriotic Youth Association (Communist South Korean youth group) who allegedly had papers containing 111,798 signatures. Another large seizure was made by ChollaPukto police who reported finding 80,000 papers with 82,458 names throughout the province. Smaller numbers were taken elsewhere throughout the country.

As had been pre-arranged, and as would have occurred regardless of the results of South Korean voting, the Peoples' Assembly convened at Haeju on August 21st with apparently 1,002 members in attendance and 78 prevented, for various reasons, from arriving. The convention praised itself, confirmed that it had been legally elected, denounced its South Korean opponents, praised its North Korean mentors, and on the 25th, chose 360 of its number as delegates to the "Supreme Peoples Council". The list was, of course, presented to them for the usual "yes" or "no" concurrence. The final figure announced by the meeting on South Korean participation in its voting was 77.48 per cent of all eligible voters.

The election in North Korea was not noticeably different from those usually occurring in the Soviet Union or its satellite countries. Basically, a single slate of 227 candidates was presented to the voters for 212 positions, who had the choice only of dropping their ballot publicly in either the "for" or "against" ballot box. The 15 extra candidates were apparently disposed of between registration and election time since no deviation from the pattern was announced to permit a third ballot box for a second candidate. The entire campaign was a country-wide effort to arouse the people's political attentiveness and orient them favorably towards the regime in power. All was well if the people came to appreciate the beneficent society in which they were privileged to live and "participate". No one was therefore surprised when the Pyongyang radio announced that 99 per cent of the voters had approved the candidates amidst loud self-adulation concerning the wonders of truly "democratic" elections. The first meeting of the "Supreme Peoples Council" with 360 South Korean and 212 North Korean members was called for September 2nd.

Other news of North Korea rated little attention during the month. The Soviet Army announced a reduction in troop strength which did not seem to occur. Peoples Army troops continued to move down to the 38th parallel border for joint duty with Soviet troops, but solely North Korean patrolling was not yet in order. Parallel incidents continued at about the same rate as previously. On 16 occasions, North Korean constabulary were alleged to have crossed the border and fired on South Korean police, and three times, on U.S. soldiers. It is probable that South Korean police also violated the parallel on occasion, but reports of such activity come only in protests to SAFIN by Soviet Army authorities in North Korea.

Persistent reports of uprisings and riots in South Korea on either August 15th or 25th proved completely false. However, North Korean agents were still infiltrating the South and Cheju Island. One report said that Communist students from KIM Il Sung University in Pyongyang were being sent South in large numbers to infiltrate South Korean schools, government, business, and Army as well as to revitalize Communist cells and promote riots and demonstrations. Another rumor

was that the North and South Korean Labor Parties would soon be combined into one new organization under a different name. Finally, to continue speculation of when Communist trouble might be expected in South Korea, now that none had materialized on either August 15th or 25th, several informants stated it would be after the Paris session of the UN General Assembly.

In this connection, it is somewhat pertinent to note that since the great Korean-American crackdown on South Korean Communists in August 1947, intelligence reports and political informants have constantly set target dates for North Korean invasion and/or local Communist uprisings. Dates on which American troops have been alerted have included March 1, May 1, May 10, May 30, August 15, and August 25. Invariably, these days have passed quietly without evidence that the alerting of U.S. troops had much to do with this fact. From this it may be assumed that South Korean Communist strength, while significant in scattered rural localities, is substantially below the level usually attributed to it and rather largely unequipped and disorganized. In the one place where this is not the case, Cheju Island, continuous "guerrilla" attacks indicate what all South Korean Communists might do if they could.

#### Miscellaneous:

On August 27th, Lt. Gen. John R. Hodge, commander of all American personnel in Korea since start of the occupation in September 1945, departed his "adopted" country for a new Army assignment in the United States. Commendations for a fine job well-done were sent by President Truman, Secretary of the Army Royall, and Army Chief of Staff, Gen. Bradley. In Seoul, Gen. Hodge attended farewell dinners and parties, a number of which were given in a gesture to receive a resounding tribute, and was given a letter expressing heartfelt gratitude on behalf of the Korean people by President Rhee. As the General took leave of Korea with genuine emotion, Maj. Gen. Coulter, took command of USAFK. Hodge's post as chief U.S. Representative, however, passed over to the Special Representative of the President of the United States.

Apart from numerous references to Japanese oppression on August 15th, the only other important event was a statement in one of President Rhee's press conferences that the island of Tsushima, situated midway between Pusan and the Japanese home island of Kyushu, should be "returned" to Korea. When a Japanese newspaper and Japanese Government official said this would be the same as giving North America back to the Indians, Public Information Chief KIM Dong Sung remarked in Seoul that this demonstrated that the Japanese had not suffered enough yet or become sufficiently contrite from their defeat. He repeated a demand that Korea participate in any Japanese peace treaty conference.

Another interesting Presidential press conference remark was that he appreciated fair criticism from the press if given in a "constructive" spirit. Rhee also reversed his stand about abstaining from "petty partisanship" in this critical period and decided that "well-defined" political parties have a definite function in governmental structure.

Home Minister PARK Chi Young, who will assume control of the Department of the Police, fought an acrid verbal battle which caught

headlines in every paper with retiring Police Director and forthcoming Ambassador CHOUGH Pyung Ok in the last days of August over who, at the given moment, had charge of the force. CHOUGH stated that a formal transfer had not yet been made (which was true) and he called CHOUGH a traitor for denying the authority of his own new Government. (A formal transfer on September 2nd settled the issue)

On the third anniversary of liberation, Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov cabled greetings to KIM Il Sung and the people of North Korea, congratulating them on their stupendous economic, political and cultural achievements, which will, he felt confident, become even greater once complete unification as a sovereign, democratic state is accomplished despite all obstacles of "international reactionaries".

Respectfully yours,

*[Handwritten signature]*  
JOHN J. MCCOY

· 제주도 하곡수집 목표 미달(1948. 9. 18)

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DIVISION OF OCCUPIED AREAS  
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Rec'd September 19, 1948  
5:20 p.m.

SEP 21 1948  
TO  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

FINANCIAL & DEVELOPMENT POLICY

FROM: Seoul

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 56, September 18.

PRIORITY

FROM CONGEN USAFIK TO STATE DEPT INFO CINCPAC JCS CITE  
ZPOL 1510. COULTER SENDS FOR MUCCIO.

Semi-monthly economic review.

Part I, South Korea.

2. Food and agriculture. Summer grain collection program nearing successful conclusion with every province except south Cholla and Cheju having already collected over 100 percent of their respective quotas. Civil strife in Cheju and damaging typhoons and floods in south Cholla.