

General Elections. - New Prime Minister and Cabinet. - President Rhee's Visit to U.S.A. - Speech to Congress. - Call for Attack on Communist China with U.S. Air and Naval Support. - Warning against Rearmament of Japan.

General elections were held in South Korea on May 20 to elect a new National Assembly of 203 members, and were contested by over 1,200 candidates, of whom 179 were nominated by President Syngman Rhee's Liberal Party, 67 were Democratic Nationalists (the only considerable Opposition party), and over 800 were Independents or nominees of minor political groups. It was officially announced on May 21 that 109 seats had been won by the Liberal Party, 74 by Independents, 15 by the Democratic Nationalists, and five by minor parties, and that about 90 per cent of the electorate of 8,000,000 had gone to the polls. On June 18, however, a Liberal Party spokesman said that the party now held 136 seats in the Assembly as a result of several recounts, thereby giving the Liberals a two-thirds majority in the new Parliament. (Prior to the elections President Rhee had called for a two-thirds majority to enable him to carry out a number of constitutional reforms.)

Although the election campaign was characterized by numerous Opposition allegations of intimidation, pressure, and irregularities on the part of the Government, the elections themselves — which were observed by the U.N. Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (UNCURK) passed off quietly and without incident. Whilst the Liberal Party received overwhelming support in rural areas, several prominent Opposition members were returned with large majorities in urban constituencies — among them Mr. P. N. Shinicky, leader of the Democratic Nationalists and President of the former Assembly; Mr. Chough Pyong Ok, a prominent Democratic Nationalist and former Minister; and Mr. Chang Palk Song, a former Prime Minister who stood as an Independent. In Seoul, the capital, the Liberals won six of the 16 seats, the other ten going to Opposition candidates, five of whom were Independents. As in the former National Assembly, 190 seats remained vacant for North Korean representatives.

On June 19 President Rhee accepted the resignation of the Prime Minister, Mr. Paik Too Chin, and at the same time recommended the abolition of the post on the ground that it was unnecessary, since the President was the chief executive of the Government as in the United States. This recommendation (the implementation of which required a

constitutional amendment) was strongly opposed by the National Assembly, and led to a political crisis during which the Assembly refused on several occasions to accept Dr. Rhee's nominations for a new Cabinet. Mr. Pyun Yung Tai (the Foreign Minister), who had been designated by President Rhee on June 27 as "temporary" Prime Minister, eventually succeeded in obtaining a vote of confidence from the National Assembly on July 8, and on the same day formed a new Cabinet in which he retained the portfolio of Foreign Affairs concurrently with the Premiership. (Mr. Pyun, who represented South Korea at the recent Geneva conference, was the eighth Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea.)

President Rhee paid an official visit to the United States from July 26 to Aug. 8, during which he had discussions with President Eisenhower, Mr. Dulles, and other members of the U.S. Administration. In a speech on July 28 to a joint session of the U.S. Congress, he called for the ending of the armistice in Korea and for an all-out attack on Communist China by the South Korean and Chinese Nationalist armies, which, he urged, should be supported by American naval and air power. Extracts from President Rhee's speech to Congress are given below.

After describing the South Korean Army as "the strongest anti-Communist force in all Asia," President Rhee continued; "If the U.S.A. could help build up this force, together with air and sea strength in adequate proportion. I can assure you that no American soldier would be required to fight in the Korean theatre of action. Many Americans gave all they had to give to the good cause, but the battle they died to win is not yet won. The forces of Communist tyranny still hold the initiative throughout the world. On the Korean front the guns are silent for the moment, stilled temporarily by the unwise armistice which the enemy is using to build up his strength. Now that the Geneva Conference has come to an end with no result, as predicted, it is quite in place to declare the end of the armistice.

"The northern half of our country is held by a million Chinese slaves of the Soviets. Communist trenches lie within 40 miles of our national capital. Communist airfields newly constructed in defiance of the armistice terms and furnished with jet bombers, lie within ten minutes of our National Assembly. Yet death is scarcely closer to Seoul than to Washington, for the destruction of the U.S.A. is the prime objective of the conspirators in the Kremlin. The Soviet Union's hydrogen bombs may well be dropped on the great cities of America before they are dropped on our shattered towns. The essence of the Soviet strategy for world conquest is to lull Americans into a sleep of death by talking peace until the Soviet Union possesses enough hydrogen bombs and inter-continental bombers to pulverize the airfields and productive centres of the U.S.A. by a sneak attack. This is a compliment to the American standard of international morality but a sinister compliment; for the Soviet Government will use

the weapons of annihilation when it has enough to feel confident that it can eliminate America's power to retaliate...

"We know that we cannot count on Soviet promises. Thirty-six years of experience have taught us that Communists never respect a treaty if they consider it in their interest to break it. They are not restrained by any moral scruple, humanitarian principle, or religious sanction. They have dedicated themselves to the employment of any means, even the foulest, to achieve their conquest of the world. The Soviet Union will not stop of its own volition. It must be stopped... The way to survival for the free peoples of the world is not the way of wishfully hoping for peace when there is no peace; not by trusting that somehow the Soviet Government may be persuaded to abandon its monstrous effort to conquer the world; not by appeasing the forces of evil; but by swinging the world balance of power so strongly against the Communists that, even when they possess the weapons of annihilation, they will not dare to use them. There is little time. Within a few years the Soviet Union will possess the means to vanquish the United States. We must act now. Where can we act.

"We can act in the Far East... The Republic of Korea has offered you its 20 equipped divisions and the men to compose 20 more. A million and a half young Koreans ask for nothing better than to fight for the cause of human freedom, their honour and their nation. The valour of our men has been proved in battle, and no American has doubted it since General Van Fleet's statement that a Korean soldier is the equal of any fighting man in the world. The Government of the Republic of China in Formosa also has offered you 630,000 men of its armed forces and additional reserves.

"The Communist regime on the mainland of China is a monster with feet of clay. It is hated by the masses. Although the Reds have murdered 15,000,000 of their opponents, thousands of free Chinese guerrillas are still fighting in the interior of China. Red China's army numbers 2,500,000, but its loyalty is not reliable, as was proved when 14,369 of the Communist Chinese army captured in Korea chose to go to Formosa, and only 220 chose to return to Red China. Furthermore, the economy of Red China is extremely vulnerable. Sixty per cent of its imports reach it by sea, and seaborne coastal traffic is its chief means of communication from north to south. A blockade of the China coast by the American Navy would produce chaos in its communications. The American Air Force as well as the Navy would be needed to ensure the success of the counter-attack on the Red Chinese regime, but, let me repeat, no American foot soldier.

"The return of the Chinese mainland to the side of the free world would automatically produce a victorious end to the wars in Korea and Indo-China, and would swing the balance of power so strongly against the Soviet Union that it would not dare to risk war with the United States. Unless we win China back, an ultimate victory for the free

world is unthinkable. Would not the Soviet Government, therefore, launch its own ground forces into the battle for China, and its air force as well? Perhaps. But that would be excellent for the free world, since it would justify the destruction of the Soviet centres of production by the American Air Force before the Soviet hydrogen bombs had been produced in quantity.

"I am aware that this is a hard doctrine. But the Communists have made this a hard and horrible world, in which to be soft is to become a slave... Let us take courage and stand up in defence of the ideals and principles upheld by the fathers of American independence, George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, and by the great emancipator, Abraham Lincoln, who did not hesitate to fight in defence of the union which could not survive half free and half slave. Let us remember that peace cannot be restored in a world half Communist and half democratic. Your momentous decision is needed now to make Asia safe for freedom, for that will automatically settle the world Communist problem in Europe, Africa and America."

Whilst no official comment was made on President Rhee's speech, his proposal that the U.S.A. should lend naval and air support for an attack on the Chinese mainland caused considerable embarrassment in Washington and was strongly criticized by a number of papers; e.g., the *New York Times* described the speech as "unfortunate" and as providing "fresh grist for Communist propaganda mills."

In an address on July 30 to the Overseas Writers' Club in Washington, President Rhee said that his speech to Congress had been "misunderstood"; that he had "tried to make it clear that it should be the policy of the United States to save China in order to save us all"; and that he had presented for the consideration of the U.S.A. "a long-term policy which would lead to the preservation of the free world." On Aug. 1 in an interview published in the *New York Times*, he was quoted as saying that only "short-sighted" American policy had prevented the South Korean forces from unifying the whole of Korea, and that the Americans had "not got guts enough" to face the problem of Korea's unification. On the following day, in a speech in New York (where the Mayor, Mr. Robert Wagner, presented him with the City's Medal of Honour), President Rhee declared that "war must come sooner than later because we know that the later it comes the more terrible it will be," whilst on Aug. 3, speaking at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in the same city, he called upon the American people to organize "a mighty crusade to rid the world of the menace of Communist totalitarianism,"

Following a meeting between President Eisenhower and President Rhee on July 30, a communiqué was issued saying that there had been "a fruitful and cordial exchange of views on a number of matters of common concern."

The communiqué added that Presidents Eisenhower and Rhee had reaffirmed their intention "to move forward, in accordance with the U.N. Charter and the resolutions of the General Assembly, to achieve a unified, democratic and independent Korea," and that, in view of the failure of the Geneva Conference to reach a settlement of the Korean question, they had "discussed means for continuing to seek this objective."

After his return to Seoul; President Rhee issued a statement on Aug. 29, shortly before the Manila conference on South-East Asia, saying that there was "grave danger" in the steps which the U.S.A. appeared to be taking to build up Japanese military strength. He declared that the rearmament of Japan was "the surest way to doom all hope of free Asian unity"; said that "the free peoples of Asia can see little choice between Japanese and Communist hegemony, and will take their chances against the Reds rather than submit to new dictation from Japan"; and added: "What happened at Pearl Harbour can happen again. It is almost certain to happen if the U.S.A.re-creates a Frankenstein monster of Japanese militarism."

Towards the end of 1953 President Rhee had flown to Formosa for conversations with Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek on Nov. 27-28. A joint statement said that they had exchanged views on "world problems and specific tasks," that they were united in opposing Communism, and that they appealed to the free Governments and peoples of Asia to form a united anti-Communist front. On returning to Seoul, President Rhee said that he had visited Formosa for the purpose of an exchange of views, but that no alliance had been signed with Nationalist China. — (New York Times - New York Herald Tribune - Times - Manchester Guardian) **(Prev. rep. President Rhee, 13397 A; Presidential Elections, 12397 A; National Assembly, 10804 B; Cabinet, 13198 A.)**