

Crisis of Collapse in South Korea's Liberal Democracy
– ROK–U.S. Cooperation Framework for Election Fairness –



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Publication Statement

The Final Stance Toward Liberal Democracy

Baekma Ridge, located in Cheorwon, Gangwon Province during the Korean War, stands as a historic battleground marked by immense sacrifice in defense of the Republic of Korea's freedom. At this site, soldiers of the Republic of Korea Armed Forces fought with their lives to protect the nation's existence and its liberal democratic system.

Among them was the late Staff Sergeant Jo Eung-seong, who fell while maintaining his combat posture, aiming his rifle until his final moment. Years later, when his remains were discovered, he was still found in that very stance. His posture was not merely that of a fallen soldier, but a symbol of unwavering commitment to defending freedom and loyalty to the Republic of Korea.

What he risked his life to protect was not merely a single hill. It was a society where people can speak freely, choose freely, and where the people themselves are the sovereign authority of the state—namely, the values of liberal democracy enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Korea.

Article 1 of the Constitution of the Republic of Korea states: “The Republic of Korea shall be a democratic republic, and sovereignty shall reside in the people, and all state authority shall emanate from the people.” This principle forms the foundation of the nation's political order and declares that the people are the true owners of the state. The system through which the will of the people is most directly expressed is elections.

Electoral integrity is not merely a matter of administrative procedure. It is the essential mechanism through which popular sovereignty is realized and the most fundamental institutional pillar sustaining liberal democracy. If elections are not fair, the will of the people can be distorted, and the legitimacy of democracy itself is inevitably undermined.

Democracy is not completed by the mere act of voting. It becomes a living system only when the will of the people is accurately reflected and the process is transparently verified. For this reason, many democratic nations continuously assess the fairness and transparency of their electoral systems, operating various auditing and verification mechanisms to strengthen institutional trust.



The late Sergeant Cho Eung-seong of the Republic of Korea Armed Forces—a veteran of the Korean War who fell asleep at Baengma-gogi (White Horse Hill) with his rifle still aimed.

The Republic of Korea is no exception to this principle. Verifying electoral fairness and examining institutional vulnerabilities is not an act of undermining democracy, but rather a process that strengthens it. It is not an expression of distrust toward the state, but a responsible examination of its institutions and an essential effort to safeguard popular sovereignty.

The Republic of Korea is no exception to this principle. Verifying electoral fairness and examining institutional vulnerabilities is not an act of undermining democracy, but rather a process that strengthens it. It is not an expression of distrust toward the state, but a responsible examination of its institutions and an essential effort to safeguard popular sovereignty.

This report originates from such a critical awareness. It aims to examine whether the principle of popular sovereignty, as declared in the Constitution, is fully realized within the electoral system, and to identify what institutional improvements and verification measures are necessary to further strengthen public trust. This is a public mission to reinforce the foundation of liberal democracy.

The freedom of the Republic of Korea was built upon countless sacrifices. The posture of a soldier who did not lay down his weapon until the very end on Baekma Ridge asks us a question: How responsibly are we protecting this freedom today?

Safeguarding the sovereignty of the people under all circumstances and preserving the fairness and transparency of elections—the core institution of democracy—is the responsibility of those living today. It is our duty to the generation that fought for freedom and our historical mission to pass on a free Republic of Korea to future generations.

The liberal democracy of the Republic of Korea was never given freely. It is a value that must be protected and a principle that must be upheld to the very end. We must continue to verify, examine, and act responsibly to preserve it.

Just as the final posture of a soldier who fell defending freedom at Baekma Ridge, the liberal democracy of the Republic of Korea is a promise that must be upheld until the very end.

As citizens of the Republic of Korea, and in order to pass on a nation we can be proud of to future generations, we write this report in the spirit of the late Staff Sergeant Jo Eung-seong, who never turned his rifle away.

Freedom and Innovation Party of Korea

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Foreword

1. Collapse of the Separation of Powers in the Republic of Korea: An Omnipotent National Election Commission (NEC)

1) Inability of Judicial Oversight: A Sitting Supreme Court Justice Serving as Chair of the NEC

- In the Republic of Korea, when appointing members within the National Election Commission (NEC), a Supreme Court Justice has been appointed. This has been carried out as a long-standing convention; however, despite the need for mutual checks and balances over several decades, the NEC has effectively become a “sanctified” institution. As a result, investigations or trials related to the NEC are conducted by individuals affiliated with the NEC itself. This situation is analogous to self-judging, where a perpetrator investigates and adjudicates their own alleged crime.
- Although an unprecedented 126 election invalidation lawsuits were filed regarding the 2020 National Assembly elections, the Supreme Court justices sided exclusively with the NEC and dismissed all cases. Even in the case titled “2020Su30 Election Invalidation Case for National Assembly Members,” filed by former lawmaker Min Kyung-wook as a candidate, numerous pieces of physical evidence—such as ballots bearing the Japanese flag motif and so-called “cabbage leaf ballots”—which had never appeared at polling or counting stations, were revealed during recount proceedings. These findings strongly suggested the possibility of ballot substitution (ballot swapping) prior to the recount. Nevertheless, the case was dismissed.
- Election invalidation lawsuits are subject to a single-instance trial system and must be adjudicated within 180 days as a mandatory provision. However, the Supreme Court delayed proceedings. Furthermore, regarding the invalidation lawsuits for the April 10, 2024 National Assembly elections and the June 3, 2025 presidential election, no rulings have been issued to date, despite exceeding the 180-day statutory deadline.

- Despite numerous complaints and accusations concerning election crimes, law enforcement authorities—namely the police and prosecution—have failed to conduct proper investigations.

2) Limitations of Legislative Oversight

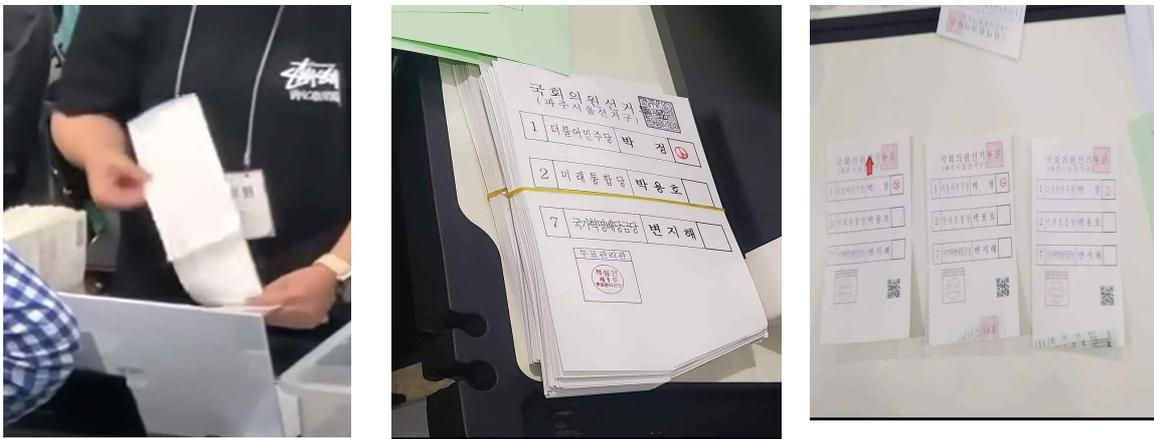
- Due to alleged evidence of election irregularities discovered at counting centers and recount sites, as well as statistically implausible and inexplicable discrepancies between early voting results and election-day voting outcomes, a majority of the public has raised suspicions regarding election integrity. In response, citizens are demanding electoral reforms to restore transparency and trust, including the abolition of early voting, the direct stamping of ballots using the personal seal of the polling station manager, and manual vote counting at polling stations.
- The Constitutional Court ruled that the Board of Audit and Inspection (BAI) cannot audit the NEC, as the NEC is a constitutional institution. While the National Assembly remains the only body capable of overseeing the NEC through mechanisms such as parliamentary audits, the NEC possesses investigative and inquiry powers that can significantly influence the electoral success or failure of elected lawmakers. Consequently, members of the National Assembly are effectively in a subordinate position vis-à-vis the NEC.
- Regarding electoral system reform, lawmakers have been either passive or have acted in alignment with the NEC's position. This is because acknowledging "election fraud" would call into question the legitimacy of their own election under the current system. In particular, the Democratic Party of Korea, which holds a supermajority of 198 seats, categorically denies allegations of election fraud. Instead, it supports the NEC's stance and is pursuing legislation to formalize the printed stamping method (facsimile seal imprinting)—considered by critics to be a fundamental cause of mass production of fraudulent ballots—by replacing the personal seal of the polling station manager with a printed seal. Legislative proposals calling for reforms such as the abolition of early voting have virtually no chance of passage. As a result, the legislature has become effectively incapacitated in advancing electoral reform.

2. Examination of Alleged Election Fraud

1) Issuance of Irregular (Non-Official) Ballots Led by the NEC

- While election fraud, if it occurs, involves numerous systemic factors, the most fundamental issue lies in the use of ballots that are not officially authorized ballots. According to Article 157 (“Receipt and Marking Procedures for Ballots”), Paragraph 1 of the Public Official Election Act, ballots must be issued to voters on election day by the polling station manager, who must affix their personal seal to the ballot. Furthermore, under Article 158, Paragraph 3, concerning early voting, it is stipulated that: “Ballots for the relevant election shall be printed, the ‘Early Voting Manager’ section shall be stamped with the manager’s seal, and the ballot shall be issued to the voter together with a return envelope without detaching the serial number.” Thus, by law, the polling station manager must personally affix their seal and issue the ballot. However, in practice, instead of using personal seals, stamps produced by the NEC are used, and these stamps are returned to the NEC after voting hours. This constitutes an unlawful electoral practice.
- When using stamps produced and later retrieved by the NEC rather than the personal seal of the manager, a critical vulnerability arises: the NEC could, in theory, mass-produce fraudulent ballots before or after the election period.
- Moreover, in early voting (conducted several days prior to election day), the stamping method does not involve manual affixation by the manager. Instead, an image of the seal is pre-registered in an electronic server, and the seal is printed directly onto the ballot during ballot issuance—a process referred to as “printed stamping” (facsimile imprinting). The NEC has established subordinate regulations to implement this method, despite it being inconsistent with higher-level statutory law. This creates a highly dangerous situation in which large volumes of fraudulent ballots could be produced rapidly at any time and place.
 - ① “Glue ballots” – where the upper portions of ballots are stuck together due to differing printing processes; under normal voting procedures, such adhesion should not occur.
 - ② Bundled ballots without fold marks – unlike normal ballots, which bear folding traces, these appear in stacked, unfolded form. Although the National Election Commission has explained these as “shape-restoring paper,” such materials are reportedly not found elsewhere globally.

- ③ Misprinted ballots (“cabbage leaf ballots”) – ballots showing printing errors, often with green overlay distortions. Under standard procedures, polling officers are required to verify and stamp ballots, and defective ballots should be discarded. The presence of such ballots suggests that proper procedures may have been bypassed or that the ballots entered the system through irregular channels.
- It is alleged that organized electoral fraud networks may exploit early voting ballots by mass-producing pre-marked votes and inserting them into early voting ballot boxes or introducing them during the counting process.



①“Glue ballots” (ballots stuck together abnormally)(Left) ②Unfolded bundles of ballots(Middle)
 ③Misprinted ballots (“cabbage leaf ballots”)(Right)

2) Issues with the Early Voting System

- Early voting is a system that allows voters to cast their ballots at any designated early voting station nationwide during a two-day period held 4-5 days prior to election day. The early voting system is designed and operated differently from election-day voting. Instead of using a paper-based voter registry, voter identity is verified solely through a computerized integrated voter registry system. Additionally, the serial number stub of the ballot is neither detached nor retained. Guidelines have also been issued to obscure CCTV cameras at early voting stations. In other words, the system is structured in such a way that no physical evidence remains to verify voter identity or to confirm the number of early voters.

- Early voting ballot boxes are stored at local election commission offices for 4–5 days; however, numerous instances have been reported nationwide where tampering or damage to the seals affixed to storage room doors has been observed. Ballots cast outside the voter’s registered district are delivered to the corresponding constituency via postal service, yet the postal delivery process is not subject to observer oversight. Monitoring of ballot boxes stored at election commission facilities is conducted by only two election officials recommended by the two major political parties, effectively excluding smaller parties from institutional participation in observation.
- Early voting ballot boxes are made in the form of fabric sacks, with only the lid sealed using adhesive seals. Moreover, non-residual seals—which leave no trace when removed—are used, meaning that even if seals are detached and reapplied, no evidence of tampering remains on the ballot box. Such practices, perceived as intentional negligence in election management by the election authority responsible for ensuring election integrity, have drawn public criticism.

3) Issues with Electronic Vote Counting Machines

- Electronic vote counting machines were introduced in 2004 and have since been subject to continuous concerns regarding system errors and vulnerability to external hacking. Despite these concerns, the National Election Commission has not transitioned to a manual vote counting system, instead continuing to rely on these machines.

	1일	2일	3일	4일	5일	6일	7일	8일	9일	10일	11일	12일	13일	14일	15일	16일
문자변환	a	n	j	j	l	v	i	q	a	d	a	g	a	o	o	o
	b	o	k	k	m	w	m	r	b	e	b	h	b	p	p	p
	c	p	l	l	n	x	n	s	c	f	c	i	c	q	q	q
	d	q	m	m	o	y	o	t	d	g	d	j	d	r	r	r
	e		n	n		z	p	u	e	h	e	k	e		s	s
	f		o				q	v	f		f	l	f		t	t
	g		p				r	w	g		g	m	g		u	u
			q				s	z	h			n	h		v	v
							t		i			o	i		w	w
							u		j			p	j			x
							v		k			q	k			y
							w					r				g

Converted Text: Follow_the_party(Source: Rep. Ha Tae-keung's YouTube Video)

- According to an investigation by the National Intelligence Service (NIS), it has already been revealed that electronic vote counting machines can be hacked, and that it is technically possible to manipulate vote shares and vote counts for candidates.



Follow_the_party(Source: YouTube – Hyoying TV)

- Electronic vote counting machines in the Republic of Korea were promoted as part of the election system by entities such as Hana Program Center and the Dasan Group, and there are allegations that A-WEB (Association of World Election Bodies) has been involved. Furthermore, there are records indicating that these systems were implemented as part of Official Development Assistance (ODA) projects in countries where allegations or confirmed cases of election fraud have emerged worldwide. In addition, A-WEB is suspected to be a central entity within an alleged election fraud cartel, and it is highly plausible that the current system creates an environment in which China could intervene in election manipulation controversies.

A-WEB ODA Project Details (Source: A-WEB Press Release, Feb. 11, 2025)

Category	Recipient Country	Details of Support
2015	Kyrgyzstan	710 Optical Scan Vote Counters, 1 Set of Election Information Systems, 1 Data Center
2016	Ecuador	1,850 Vote Result Transmission Systems
2017	El Salvador	1,800 Vote Result Transmission Systems
	Fiji	50 Touchscreen Voting Systems, 1 Data Center
	Uzbekistan	1 Integrated Voter Registry System
	Congo	1 Data Center
2018 ~ 2019	Samoa	1 Set of Election Information Systems, 1 Data Center
	Papua New Guinea	1 Set of Election Information Systems, 1 Data Center

3. Request Based on the ROK-U.S. Alliance

- Based on the Mutual Defense Treaty between the Republic of Korea and the United States and the provisions of the Washington Declaration, this document requests intervention by the United States and the international community to address issues of election integrity in the Republic of Korea and to prevent communist influence allegedly driven by election fraud cartel forces. At present, the Republic of Korea has reached a stage where it is unable to maintain political independence, with election fraud and unlawful cartel structures at its core.
 - Accordingly, pursuant to the declaration and treaty, this document calls for strong intervention and cooperation under the ROK-U.S. alliance, including:
 - Cooperation in cybersecurity measures to prevent election-related hacking and manipulation
 - Post-election verification (Risk-Limiting Audit, RLA) conducted by international election observation missions
 - Examination and prevention of institutional flaws in the electoral system
 - Establishment of an independent monitoring and auditing body, including members of international election observation missions, to address the structurally “sanctified” nature of the National Election Commission



Original Text of the U.S.-Republic of Korea Mutual Defense Treaty

4. Elimination of Electoral Fraud Cartels and Christian Significance

- Liberal democracy is founded upon inalienable rights granted to humanity by God, and the establishment of nations based on liberal democratic principles represents one of the greatest achievements in human history. However, today, liberal democracy is under threat from an alleged global election fraud cartel associated with China, and religious persecution is increasing as a result of communist expansion.
- In the Republic of Korea, religious suppression has already begun. For example, Pastor Son Hyun-bo of Segyero Church in Busan has been imprisoned, and multiple churches, including the Yoido Full Gospel Church, have been subjected to search and seizure. Furthermore, at public demonstrations advocating freedom, individuals who make statements regarding China have reportedly faced punishment, or law enforcement has been deployed to restrict marches, thereby infringing upon civil liberties. In practice, tearing the Chinese Communist flag during protests is punished, whereas pro-China or pro-North Korea leftist groups face no penalties when tearing the United States flag. Such repression of freedom and religious persecution represents a grave situation, and the Lee Jae-myung administration is described as not only neglecting this issue but also openly making statements perceived as supportive of North Korea and China.



The Republic of Korea Government Complex (left) and the National Police Agency (right), flying the Chinese flag.

- Additionally, there are indications that China has been deeply involved in the exercise of public authority within the Republic of Korea. Cases have emerged in which Chinese nationals have worked part-time within the Korean police system or served as election administrative personnel in nationwide elections. There have even been instances where Chinese individuals, who are not eligible to obtain a driver's license in Korea, were found possessing forged driver's licenses.
- Amid ongoing concerns regarding deficiencies in the preliminary voter registry system, these circumstances raise the possibility that Chinese nationals could participate in elections—such as National Assembly or presidential elections, in which they are legally prohibited from voting—or even cast multiple votes. This suggests the potential for foreign intervention or manipulation in Korean elections.



Testimony regarding part-time work related to policing by a Chinese national (left), and possession of a driver's license by a Chinese national (right)

- If these structural problems within the electoral system are not corrected and the alleged election fraud cartel is not eradicated, there is a risk that pro-China and anti-U.S. administrations may continue to take power. This could lead to the ongoing erosion of liberal democracy and, ultimately, to the collapse of the Republic of Korea—founded upon Christian values—into communism.
- Therefore, this document strongly calls upon the United States and the international community to intervene in restoring election integrity in the Republic of Korea, including through electoral system reform and organizational restructuring of the National Election Commission.

Executive Summary

1. Strategic Overview Based on Democratic Security

Founding Ideology and National Foundations of the Republic of Korea

- The Birth of a Liberal Democratic State: Following liberation in 1945, the Republic of Korea adopted liberal democracy, a market economy, and anti-communism as the core principles of nation-building. The first President, Syngman Rhee, based on his lifelong convictions, defined the people's freedom and equality as inalienable rights endowed by nature (natural rights), and through the promulgation of the 1948 Constitution (Constitution of the First Republic), declared the nation to be a democratic republic.
- Reflection of Christian Values: In 1948, the Constituent National Assembly opened with a representative prayer led by Assemblyman Lee Yun-young, who was also a pastor, symbolically reinterpreting the founding of the nation from a faith-based perspective. The Rhee administration institutionalized Christian values across public policy, such as designating Christmas as a national holiday and introducing the military chaplaincy system, thereby securing both the support and spiritual foundation of the Christian community during the early stages of state formation.
- Establishment of the Rule of Law and Security Framework: In December 1948, the government enacted the National Security Act, which imposed strict measures against communist activities. This served as a critical institutional mechanism to establish the identity of the newly founded state and to defend its system from external ideological infiltration.

Expansion Strategy of Communism and the Reality of Systemic Threats

- Antonio Gramsci's "War of Position": Modern communism prefers long-term ideological and cultural struggle over radical revolution. It employs a strategy of seizing "hegemony" within civil society—such as schools, media, and religion—to weaken the legitimacy of the existing system. This is analyzed as an attempt to gradually transform societal value systems and ultimately seize political power.

- Empirical Evidence of Historical Human Rights Violations: The Black Book of Communism exposes that approximately 90 million to 100 million lives were lost under 20th-century communist regimes due to political purges, forced labor, and famine. This serves as a symbolic demonstration of the dangers of concentrated power without democratic checks and balances.
- Cases of Communist Infiltration in South Korea: From early post-liberation incidents such as the forged currency case of the South Korean Labor Party (the Jeongpansa incident) and the Daegu October 1 Incident, to later cases including the Unified Revolutionary Party case in the 1960s, the Wangjaesan spy ring in the 2010s, and more recent Changwon and Jeju espionage networks, underground organizations linked to North Korea have continued to operate. These groups have attempted to form anti-government public opinion and disrupt the system by using labor organizations and civil society as their bases.
- **Crisis of Electoral Integrity and Vulnerabilities of Digital Systems**
 - Warning Against the Instrumentalization of Elections: As reflected in Joseph Stalin's remark, "It is not the people who vote that count, but the people who count the votes," totalitarian forces utilize elections not as a means of reflecting public will but as a procedural tool for consolidating power. The manipulated 1946 Polish referendum serves as historical evidence of how electoral systems can be abused as instruments of regime incorporation.
 - Exposure of Cybersecurity Vulnerabilities: According to a 2023 joint security inspection conducted by the National Intelligence Service (NIS) and the Korea Internet & Security Agency (KISA), vulnerabilities were discovered in South Korea's election management system, including internal network accessibility and susceptibility to data manipulation. In the context of modern information warfare (hybrid warfare), these vulnerabilities pose risks of external interference in vote counting and the potential to trigger social instability.
 - Case of Institutional Mismanagement: During the 2022 presidential election, the so-called "basket voting" incident involving COVID-19 confirmed voters represented more than a mere procedural flaw in election administration. The more serious issue was that multiple ballots marked for presidential candidate Lee Jae-myung were found inside out-of-district early voting envelopes. This

incident significantly undermined public trust in electoral integrity, leading to a sharp decline in confidence in the electoral system.

Statistical Anomalies and Electoral Forensics Debate

- **Statistical Irregularities:** In the 2020 National Assembly election, unusually large discrepancies were observed between early voting and same-day voting results in closely contested metropolitan districts, disproportionately favoring a particular political party. Some scholars argue that such patterns are statistically unlikely under natural conditions when analyzed through principles such as Benford's Law.
- **Assessment by International Experts:** Professor Walter Mebane, a leading authority in the field of election fraud detection, published a study analyzing data from South Korea's parliamentary elections, in which he identified numerous statistical anomalies indicative of potential fraud. This finding strongly underscores the necessity of ensuring transparency in election administration and establishing an independent verification system.

Summary

- ◆ **Strengthening the Will to Defend the System:** To safeguard the founding ideology of South Korea—liberal democracy and the rule of law—there is a need for vigilance against anti-system ideologies infiltrating cultural and educational sectors.
- ◆ **Enhancing Transparency in the Electoral System:** To prevent the “black-boxing” of digital equipment, urgent technical and institutional measures are required, including independent audits of source code, strict preservation of paper ballots, and the introduction of random recount systems.
- ◆ **Restoring Public Trust:** Elections form the foundation of democratic legitimacy. Even minor procedural flaws can serve as justification for external interference. Therefore, public trust must be restored through comprehensive transparency and open management throughout the entire electoral process.

2. Institutional and Legislative Development of Election Fraud Issues in South Korea

Introduction and Evolution of Early Voting and Electronic Counting Systems

- **Establishment of the Early Voting System**
 - **Institutional Change:** The “absentee ballot system based on prior reporting,” which had been maintained since the 1960s, was transformed in 2013 into a “no-report early voting system” with the introduction of a unified voter registry. It was expanded nationwide starting from the 6th local elections in 2014,

completing the current system of “2 days of early voting + 1 day of main voting.”

- Legal Basis: Under Article 158 of the Public Official Election Act, voters may receive a ballot without prior reporting by verifying their identity and providing an electronic signature.

○ Introduction of Electronic Counting (Ballot Sorting Machines)

- Background of Adoption: First introduced in the 3rd local elections in 2002, electronic counting systems were expanded nationwide to enhance the speed and efficiency of vote counting. Legal grounds for the use of mechanical devices and computer systems were explicitly established through amendments in 2014.

□ Major Issues and Controversies Surrounding Early Voting and Electronic Vote Counting

○ Inability to Visually Verify the Number of Issued Ballots and Controversy over the Principle of Secret Ballot

- Serial Numbers and Barcodes: Unlike regular election-day voting, early voting ballots are issued without detaching the serial number stub (Article 158, Paragraph 3 of the Public Official Election Act). This has raised concerns that matching the serial number with voter identification information could enable “voter traceability,” thereby potentially undermining the principle of the secret ballot. Furthermore, despite the law specifying the use of a barcode, the use of a QR code has generated controversy regarding excessive data encoding and potential illegality. Although there has been a shift back to barcodes, early voting ballots generally do not include a human-readable numeric serial number alongside the barcode, making it impossible for observers to visually verify the number of issued ballots.
- Issue of Printed Seal Imprinting: Early voting officials do not manually affix their personal seals when issuing ballots; instead, this is replaced by “printed seal imprinting” (facsimile seal printing) through ballot issuance devices. This practice has continuously raised concerns regarding the ease of producing counterfeit ballots and potential violations of superior statutory law.

○ Vulnerabilities in the Electronic System Security (2023 NIS Inspection Results)

- Hacking Threats: According to the results of a joint security inspection conducted by the National Intelligence Service (NIS) in 2023, it was revealed that it is technically possible to manipulate early voting turnout figures, register

ghost voters, and alter the classification results of electronic vote counting machines through infiltration of election networks. In particular, the inspection identified vulnerabilities such as the potential for program manipulation via unauthorized USB connections and wireless communication channels.

□ **Structure of Election Administration and Suspicions of External Intervention**

○ Hana Program Center and the Dasan Group

- Inter-Korean IT joint venture: Established in 2001, “Hana Program Center” was an organization in which personnel from North Korea’s Pyongyang Information Center (PIC) and South Korean engineers cooperated in Dandong, China. Because the election software and technology developed in this process are alleged to have become the foundation of South Korea’s domestic election system, suspicions have been raised regarding the training of North Korean hackers and the leakage of source code.
- Corporate connections: The Dasan Group controlled the center through HanaBiz.com, and later acquired HandySoft and related companies, thereby coming to manage the National Election Commission’s online voting and postal computer network. The core of the controversy lies in the possibility that points of contact were formed in this process with China (including Huawei) and North Korea.

□ **The Role of the Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB) and Its International Repercussions**

- Nature and activities of the organization: Founded in 2013 under South Korea’s initiative, A-WEB is an international consultative body that has provided Korean-style election equipment to less-developed countries through ODA. However, administrative deficiencies—such as autocratic management centered on the secretary-general, misuse of the budget, and activities carried out without the establishment of legal corporate status—have been pointed out by the Board of Audit and Inspection and others.
- International distrust: Former U.S. ambassador Morse Tan and others have criticized A-WEB as becoming an export channel for an “election fraud mechanism.” Recently, diplomatic pressure has intensified within the United States, with A-WEB being identified as a subject of investigation in connection with an alleged international election-fraud cartel.

□ Comparison of Domestic and Foreign Election Environments and the Issue of Reciprocity

- Trend among advanced countries toward returning to hand counting
 - Germany and the Netherlands: These countries either rendered electronic voting machines unconstitutional on the grounds that they were unverifiable or reverted to manual vote-counting methods.
 - Taiwan and Japan: These countries have adhered to the principle of hand counting or restricted machines to merely auxiliary functions, thereby prioritizing electoral transparency and public trust.
- Asymmetry in foreign voting rights between South Korea and China
 - Violation of reciprocity: South Korea grants local-election voting rights to certain qualified foreigners, including Chinese nationals, whereas China grants no voting rights whatsoever to resident Koreans. This has been criticized as creating an issue of institutional inequity from the standpoint of national sovereignty and security, while also serving as a channel through which external forces may influence domestic politics.

Summary

- ◆ The current election system of the Republic of Korea is facing a significant challenge: digital technologies introduced under the pretext of “efficiency” are, in fact, undermining transparency and integrity. In particular, the security vulnerabilities identified through inspections by the National Intelligence Service (NIS) and allegations of links with external actors (North Korea and China) constitute serious threats to the legitimacy of democracy.
- ◆ Future Tasks:
 - Institutional Reforms: Ensure physical integrity by legislating the mandatory detachment of serial number stubs for early voting ballots, prohibiting the use of printed seals, and requiring the direct affixation of the personal seal by the early voting manager.
 - Compliance with Personal Seal Usage: Prohibit the use of centrally produced and retrieved seals by the National Election Commission (NEC), and establish penal provisions for cases where ballots are issued without the manager’s personal seal.
 - Counting at Polling Stations: (section heading preserved as in original text)
 - Strengthening Manual Counting: Relegate electronic vote counting machines to an auxiliary role and transition toward a manual vote counting-centered system, as seen in advanced democracies, allowing verification by ordinary citizens.
 - Reestablishment of External Relations: Conduct a thorough audit of A-WEB (Association of World Election Bodies) and resolve international suspicions; review the application of the principle of reciprocity regarding foreign voting rights.
 - Self-Corrective Measures: Urgently implement self-corrective mechanisms whereby the state, in cooperation with allied nations such as the United States, proactively verifies electoral integrity and clearly addresses and resolves allegations of election fraud.

3. Analytical Review of Issues Concerning Election Fairness in South Korea

Legislative Trends and Analysis Relating to Elections for the 22nd National Assembly

- Since the opening of the 22nd National Assembly, interest in amendments to the Public Official Election Act has been so high that a total of 235 bills have been proposed. However, criticism has been raised that, among the proposed revisions, administrative convenience was prioritized over electoral integrity.
 - Major passed provision: Limiting the number of early-voting observers to a maximum of eight may weaken the election-monitoring function.
 - Controversial bills pending:
 - Relaxation of the offense of publishing false facts: raises concerns about fostering a false and distorted election culture.
 - Lowering the voting age: attempts to reduce the eligible age for voting and campaign activities to 16.
 - Seal of the early-voting manager: a conflict persists between efforts to explicitly legalize the use of a “printed seal” and amendment bills seeking to mandate a “direct seal” in order to prevent forgery.
- Amendment to the National Referendum Act: The amended Act promulgated in March 2026 directly transplanted the early-voting system of the Public Official Election Act and introduced multiple-choice voting, raising strong concerns that the vulnerabilities of existing elections would also be transferred to national referendums.

Empirical and Technical Evidence Relating to Suspicions of Election Fraud

- Irregular Physical Evidence Identified During On-Site Recounts and Security Inspections: The anomalous physical evidence discovered during recounts and security inspections suggests not merely administrative mismanagement but a high likelihood of potential manipulation.
 - **(Abnormal Ballots)**: Various irregular ballots were identified, including so-called “cabbage leaf ballots” (two ballots printed in overlapping layers), bundles of crisp, uncreased ballots that appear not to have been folded or

processed through normal voting procedures, and ballots adhered with adhesive (glue). These findings make it difficult to conclude that such ballots underwent a legitimate ballot-casting process through standard ballot box submission.

- **(Illegality of QR codes)** Although the law requires the use of “barcodes,” the unauthorized use of “QR codes,” which enable information tracking, raises suspicions of violating the principle of secret elections and of data manipulation.
 - **(Security vulnerability of equipment)** A wireless LAN card was found in the vote-count control laptop (LG Gram), which could serve as a channel for computerized manipulation or hacking through external communication.
 - **(Theory of digital originals)** Analysis of scanned images detected signs of “pure digital files” lacking paper texture or noise. This has led to suspicions that the data were computer-generated rather than scans of physical originals.
- Through analysis using mathematical models, it was confirmed that data convergence phenomena with probabilities too low to occur naturally had emerged. The details are as follows.
- **(The 39% constant law)** A phenomenon was simultaneously observed across multiple candidates in which the number of out-of-district early votes matched the number of in-district votes multiplied by a certain constant (approximately 0.39).
 - **(Analysis by Professor Heo Byeong-gi)** When applying a formula that estimates population vote shares based on same-day voting results, the actual results of the 22nd general election substantially departed from the statistical confidence interval. According to this result, it would be statistically reasonable for the People Power Party (conservative) to win 141 seats and the Democratic Party of Korea (progressive) to win 113 seats; however, the actual outcome differed significantly, and this has been presented as statistical evidence of election fraud.
- **(Suspicion of geopolitical intervention: Follow_the_party)** The string “Follow_the_party,” discovered during analysis of the data from the April 15, 2020 general election, has been interpreted as a computational fingerprint of intervention by the Chinese Communist Party.
- **(Analytical mechanism)** According to the analysis of statistical data presented by the National Election Commission of South Korea, the phrase emerges

when certain numerical values are converted through the Fibonacci sequence and ASCII code.

- **(Suspicion regarding forces behind it)** It has been argued that, combined with the export of electronic vote-counting systems by the Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB) and the expansion of Chinese influence, South Korea's electoral sovereignty was infringed upon.

Summary

- ◆ The current electoral system of the Republic of Korea simultaneously exhibits legal loopholes and technical security vulnerabilities. In order to restore electoral fairness, urgent institutional measures are required, including:
 - ◆ Mandatory direct affixation of the personal seal by early voting managers
 - ◆ Introduction of manual vote counting
 - ◆ Complete prohibition of wireless communication in election-related electronic equipment

4. Strategic Responses for the Protection of Liberal Democratic Elections

Transition to an Election Model Centered on Hand Counting

- To overcome the vulnerabilities of the current electronic and automated vote counting system—including risks of hacking and manipulation—it is proposed to adopt a manual vote counting system that prioritizes fairness and transparency over efficiency.
- **(Basic Structure):** All voting shall be conducted using paper ballots, with the implementation of anti-counterfeiting printing measures and the personal seal affixation by counting officials. Although these procedures are already prescribed under the current legal framework, they are not being properly enforced in practice.

Introduction of the Risk-Limiting Audit (RLA)

- In order to guarantee the accuracy of election results through statistical probability, the introduction of the Risk-Limiting Audit (RLA), which is being implemented in advanced countries such as the United States, is proposed.
- **(Concept)** A post-election verification technique that limits “the probability that the election outcome is wrong” to within a pre-set risk limit (e.g., 5% or less).
- **(Method)** Actual paper ballots are compared with machine tabulation results through random sampling.

- **(Scalability)** If the sample audit fails to secure sufficient statistical confidence, the scope of inspection is designed to be gradually expanded, ultimately allowing for a full recount.
- **(Expected effects)** By presenting a scientific and statistical level of confidence in election outcomes, the system can reduce unnecessary social costs and distrust.

□ Restructuring the Authority of the National Election Commission and Independent Security Audits

- The current structure, in which the National Election Commission monopolizes execution, administration, supervision, and auditing—a form of “self-audit”—must be dismantled and its authority dispersed.
 - **(Limitations of concentrated authority)** Since one institution monopolizes the entire election process, the structure should be reformed because it makes external verification of internal errors or system-design problems impossible.
 - **(Establishment of an Independent Security Audit Committee)** Legislation should establish an institution that is completely independent of the Election Commission in terms of personnel and organization, and empower it to audit the election information system (including source code), ballot management, and the overall counting procedures. At this stage, members of international election observer missions should also be included to examine various matters.
 - **(Direction of legislation)** A new Office of Election Security Audit should be created within the Public Official Election Act, clearly specifying the legal basis for the audit body’s establishment and its authority to demand submission of materials, while also mandating transparent disclosure of audit results to the National Assembly and the public.

Summary

- ◆ The policies presented are aimed at institutionalizing the verifiability of elections.
- ◆ Short term: Introduce the Risk-Limiting Audit (RLA) first in pilot electoral districts in order to build technical trust.
- ◆ Medium term: Expand hand-counting procedures nationwide and formally launch an independent security audit body.
- ◆ Long term: Complete a constitutional and legal framework in which the authority to administer and the authority to verify elections are balanced through checks and balances.

5. Policy Proposals for Strengthening Election Fairness Through U.S.-ROK Cooperation

Crisis of Electoral Integrity in South Korea and the Need for International Verification

○ Elections are central to determining the legitimacy of democracy. Recently, however, social distrust concerning electronic vote-counting equipment and early-voting administration has persisted in South Korea. This creates the risk not only of undermining confidence in the accuracy of results, but also of lowering “losers’ acceptance” of the outcome and thereby collapsing institutional trust.

- **(Academic implications)** Experts such as Pippa Norris analyze election failure as stemming less from fraud itself than from a “lack of transparency.” The more technology is introduced, the more indispensable independent auditing and verifiability become.

- **(Compliance with international standards)** The OSCE and ODIHR recommend disclosure of source code, independent security audits, and Risk-Limiting Audits (RLA), among other measures. South Korea likewise should accept such international standards for the sake of institutional stability, beyond the interests of any particular political faction.

○ Requests for IFES technical assistance

- **(Independent technical diagnosis)** A comprehensive evaluation of auxiliary electronic vote-counting equipment and the early-voting system.

- **(Study on RLA introduction)** Establishment of a statistically based post-election random sample audit framework.

- **(Governance improvement)** Preparation of a roadmap concerning the independence of personnel and budgeting of the Election Commission, as well as the scope of information disclosure.

The Nature and Multidimensional Importance of the U.S.-ROK Alliance

○ Beginning with the 1953 Mutual Defense Treaty, the U.S.-ROK alliance has served not merely as a military defense arrangement but as an “external constitution” stabilizing the economic, political, and social order.

- **(Economic dimension)** The U.S.-ROK alliance functioned as an institutional device that enabled South Korea to choose a free-market model rather than a communist planned economy. By reducing war risk, it made capital accumulation and technological development possible; more recently, it has served as a safeguard protecting supply chains and technological sovereignty from China's state capitalism.
- **(Political and social dimension)** The alliance has provided a "democratic alliance effect" that restrains Korean politics from regressing into authoritarianism or becoming communist. It has also internalized the values of freedom, human rights, and the rule of law, thereby guaranteeing space in which civil society could grow autonomously.
- **(Military dimension)** The essence of the U.S.-ROK alliance lies not in waging war but in deterring war. The tripwire function of U.S. forces stationed in Korea, the combined defense system, and, more recently, the strengthening of extended deterrence through the Washington Declaration together constitute a core structure blocking strategic miscalculation by North Korea and China.

□ Request for Alliance-Based Guarantees of Election Fairness

- Article II of the U.S.-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty provides for mutual consultation when the "political independence or security" of either country is threatened. Recent allegations of Chinese administrative interference (such as remotely controlled beam projectors and part-time Chinese police personnel) constitute a serious security threat infringing upon South Korea's political right of self-determination.
- **(Historical legitimacy)** The Republic of Korea was founded through institutional design under the U.S. military government and through the 1948 general election held under UN supervision. International involvement in protecting electoral fairness is therefore in line with the founding legitimacy of the Republic of Korea.
- **(Cybersecurity alliance)** In 2024, the two countries confirmed that cyberattacks under certain circumstances could constitute an armed attack under Article III of the treaty; threats to election infrastructure likewise require an alliance-level response.
- **(Key requests to the United States)**

- **(Deployment of an OSCE–model observer mission)** Introduction of an international election–monitoring system.
- **(Election security cooperation)** Joint protection of cybersecurity and election infrastructure.
- **(Formation of a U.S.–ROK democracy consultative body)** Establishment of an alliance–based mechanism for the defense of democracy.

Summary

- ♦ Resolving controversies over election fairness in South Korea is not merely a matter of domestic politics, but an alliance task necessary to preserve the stability of South Korea, a key strategic hub in the Indo–Pacific. It is therefore an urgent matter to reaffirm the integrity of the electoral system through IFES’s objective diagnosis and the security cooperation of the U.S.–ROK alliance.

6. Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

Policy Objectives and Summary

(Objectives)

- ① Securing electoral integrity
- ② Restoring public trust in the electoral system through reform
- ③ Securing international transparency

- (Summary)** After implementing hand counting, social trust in election outcomes shall be secured by legislating verifiability, independent audits, and post–election statistical verification (such as RLA).

Specific Measures

Legal and Institutional Reforms

- Abolition of early voting, mandatory direct affixation of the personal seal by the polling manager, and on–site vote counting at polling stations
- **(Implementation of Manual Counting)** Abolish existing electronic and digital vote counting systems and ensure electoral fairness through a transparent and verifiable manual counting model
- **(Legislating Risk–Limiting Audits (RLA))** Introduce RLA provisions into the Public Official Election Act, establishing a default risk limit (e.g., 5%) for all elections and defining procedures for sample selection and escalation

- Administrative and Organizational Reforms
 - **(Reorganization of the National Election Commission)** Address the institutional “sanctification” of the NEC by separating its core functions and establishing an independent security audit body to ensure transparency in election management and operations
 - Prohibit judges from concurrently serving as Chair of the National Election Commission
- Technical and Statistical Measures
 - **(Development of RLA Implementation Manuals and Statistical Toolkits)** Develop sample selection algorithms, ballot comparison methodologies, and manuals tailored to the Korean context, and mandate training for NEC personnel, local election officials, and audit bodies
 - **(Introduction of Election Data Forensics and Monitoring Systems)** Implement algorithms to detect temporal and regional anomalies in voting data, operate an automated alert system, and incorporate the need for statistical anomaly detection
 - **(Principle of Parallel Paper–Based Verification)** Require ballots to include unique identification numbers and barcodes, and mandate processes that allow cross–verification with CVR (Cast Vote Record / Construct Validity Ratio, as referenced)
 - **(Establishing cooperative frameworks with international organizations such as IFES, International IDEA, and the OSCE)** Regularize consultation on election technology and procedures, the dispatch of international observer missions, and international verification of equipment and processes, while implementing U.S.–ROK cooperation and international monitoring.
 - **(U.S.–ROK technical cooperation in cybersecurity and information security)** Recommend the conclusion of MOUs covering process monitoring of election systems, joint exercises against election–related hacking, and mutual technical support.
- International Cooperation and Transparency
 - **(Establishment of Cooperation Frameworks with International Organizations such as IFES, International IDEA, and OSCE)** Institutionalize technical and procedural advisory support, deployment of international observation missions,

and international verification of equipment and processes, alongside strengthened ROK-U.S. cooperation and international oversight

- **(ROK-U.S. Technical Cooperation in Cybersecurity and Information Security)**
Recommend the conclusion of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) for process monitoring, joint training on election-related cyber threats, and mutual technical assistance

○ Key Conclusions

- Compliance with the Law: Use the personal seal of the polling manager, not NEC-issued seals; require direct affixation, not printed seals
- Establishment of Checks and Balances: Prohibit judges from concurrently serving as NEC Chair
- (1) Verifiability as the Highest Priority: Verifiability must take precedence over electronic efficiency, and statistical verification tools such as RLA must be institutionalized
- (2) No Trust Without Procedural Transparency: Given the volume of evidence and allegations, reforms such as the abolition of early voting are urgent, and all procedures must be managed with full transparency
- (3) Institutionalization of Independent External Audits (Domestic and International): Establish a domestic independent audit body while strengthening objectivity through cooperation with international organizations such as IFES and OSCE
- (4) Strengthening Legal and Administrative Accountability: Urgently establish clear liability and penalty provisions for procedural violations and security breaches
- (5) Phased and Pilot-Based Implementation to Build Social Consensus: Conduct step-by-step pilot programs to verify effectiveness and side effects while building public consensus
- (6) ROK-U.S. and Multinational Cooperation as a Strategic Choice: Electoral integrity extends beyond a domestic issue and is linked to Northeast Asian security and alliance credibility; therefore, ROK-U.S. cooperation and international monitoring mechanisms are essential

A Strategic Overview of the Security of Liberal Democracy in the Republic of Korea

1. Founding Ideology of the Republic of Korea

□ The Republic of Korea as a Liberal Democratic State in the East

○ Overview

- Following liberation from Japanese colonial rule in 1945, the founding ideology of the Republic of Korea centered on liberal democracy, a market economy, anti-communism, anti-North Korea, and Christian values. The first president, Syngman Rhee, approached state-building on the basis of his lifelong faith and, at the opening of the first National Assembly, offered thanks and prayer to God, interpreting the birth of the nation from a faith-based perspective¹⁾. The Constitution declared the state to be a democratic republic while defining the people's freedom and equality as "natural rights."

○ Core Elements of the Founding Ideology

- The Preamble and provisions of the Constitution declared that "the Republic of Korea shall be a democratic republic" and guaranteed freedom and equality as natural rights of the people²⁾. It was thus understood that the national identity was grounded in liberal democracy, the rule of law, and a Christian spirit. The basis for this may be found in the 1919 Founding Principles of the Nation (Geonguk Jongji), and the founding ideology also included rejection of communism (anti-communism). In December 1948, the Rhee administration enacted the National Security Act to strictly suppress communist-related activities³⁾.

○ The Convictions and Policies of First President Syngman Rhee

- First President Syngman Rhee (1875-1965), as a devout Protestant Christian, closely integrated his faith and politics. During his years in exile, he interacted with the American missionary Homer Hulbert and came to hold the conviction that "when Korea is liberated, it will become a Christian nation."⁴⁾ He

1) Proceedings of the 1st Plenary Session of the 1st Constituent National Assembly, National Assembly Stenographic Record.

2) Christian Daily Korea press material. <https://kr.christianitydaily.com/articles/115376/20221121/>

3) National Archives of Korea, Ministry of the Interior and Safety. Materials on the National Security Act and the Anti-Communist Act.

4) In Jong-cheol. 2009. From Civilizational Enlightenment to Anti-Communism: The Transformation of the

continued to act in accordance with this conviction after returning to Korea. At his inauguration, Rhee declared, “This body, which has died many times, has lived by the grace of God,” and “I swear before the grace of God and my compatriots to fulfill my duties.”⁵⁾ After taking office, President Rhee also sought to reflect Christian values in the constitutional and legislative process. For example, after the establishment of the government following liberation, Rhee bestowed state honors, including state and social funerals, upon missionaries and Christians; designated Christmas as a public holiday; and introduced the military chaplaincy system (according to government documents). Such policies and events demonstrate the early government’s intent to secure the support of the Christian community.

- The Constituent National Assembly of the Republic of Korea opened with a prayer at its first plenary session on May 31, 1948. At that time, temporary chair Syngman Rhee took the podium and proposed that the meeting begin with a prayer of thanksgiving to God, saying, “We should give thanks to God for being able to convene this first session.” Reverend and Assemblyman Lee Yoon-young then delivered the representative prayer. Proceedings of the 1st Plenary Session of the 1st Constituent National Assembly, National Assembly Stenographic Record. This prayer included wishes for inter-Korean reunification and public stability, and through it the founding of the nation was symbolically proclaimed not merely as a political act but as the result of divine grace. It also shows that the Christian spirit exerted a significant influence on the early state-formation process.

○ **Examples of the Christian Spirit and Anti-Communism in the Constitution, Policies, and Public Discourse**

- Many Protestant leaders participated in the Constituent Assembly and government, and Syngman Rhee himself had advocated Christian nationalism since the 1910s, thereby giving early public discourse a Christian coloring. Immediately after Rhee’s inauguration, the government declared that “the new government will actively support missionary activities,” and it conducted state funerals and extended funeral honors for missionaries who had fallen in service

Relationship Between Syngman Rhee and Protestantism, 1912-1950. Institute for Korean Studies, Yonsei University.

5) Ministry of Public Information. 1953. “Inaugural Address of President Syngman Rhee,” Collected Presidential Statements of Dr. Syngman Rhee.

or been martyred. In addition, President Rhee emphasized “Christian national unification” and, in a 1946 speech before the National Council for the Rapid Realization of Korean Independence, urged that “the Soviets be driven out and the Communist Party be prevented from gaining a foothold.” As several incidents caused by North Korean spies occurred in the early period of state formation, the Anti-Communist Act and the National Security Act were additionally established in order to block them and lay the foundation for early liberal democracy.

2. Expansion of Communist Political Influence Surrounding the Republic of Korea

□ Expansion Strategy of Communism

○ Strategy of Ideological Infiltration

- The Italian Marxist thinker Antonio Gramsci analyzed why communist revolution did not easily occur in the democratic states of Western Europe and proposed an approach different from the classical revolutionary strategy. He viewed a sudden overthrow of power, such as the Russian Revolution, as unrealistic in Western societies and instead emphasized a strategy of changing society’s value system through a long-term ideological and cultural struggle⁶⁾. Gramsci believed that political power was maintained not simply by physical coercion, such as the military or police, but by the influence of civil society—composed of schools, universities, the media, religion, and cultural institutions⁷⁾. He argued that the “hegemony” formed within these spheres of civil society determines society’s values and structures of perception, and that in order to seize political power one must first secure cultural and ideological leadership within civil society. He called this strategy the “War of Position.” Rather than directly attacking the values and legitimacy of the existing system, this strategy signifies changing the structure of social consciousness over a prolonged period by expanding influence within institutions that produce knowledge and within the cultural sphere⁸⁾. Gramsci saw that, if this process

6) Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. New York: International Publishers.

7) *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

8) Adamson, W. (1980). *Hegemony and Revolution: A Study of Antonio Gramsci's Political and Cultural Theory*. University of California Press.

accumulates, the legitimacy of the existing political order may weaken and a new political order may emerge. His ideas were systematically organized in his major work *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* and later became an important theoretical foundation in political sociology and cultural studies⁹⁾.

- Especially since the Cold War, as competition for influence in culture, information, and education has become more important than direct military conflict, Gramsci's theory has gained renewed attention in modern political analysis. Some political scientists analyze that this concept appears in modern politics in the form of "culture war" or discursive competition, and that value competition within civil society may have a long-term impact on the stability and political legitimacy of the state system¹⁰⁾.

○ Historical Empirical Evidence of Threats to the System

- Among the most widely known works systematically analyzing the historical consequences of communist systems is *The Black Book of Communism*, edited by the French historian Stéphane Courtois and others. This study comprehensively organizes cases of political violence and human rights abuses that occurred in various countries that adopted communist systems during the twentieth century, based on historical materials and statistics¹¹⁾. According to the researchers, many communist regimes implemented policies of systematically suppressing political opposition in order to maintain the system and strengthen power, and large-scale human rights violations occurred in this process. A representative example is the political purges under Joseph Stalin's rule in the Soviet Union and the Gulag system of forced labor camps¹²⁾. It is recorded that millions of political prisoners and ordinary citizens were victimized through forced labor, execution, and camp life. In addition, Mao Zedong's Great Leap Forward policy caused severe economic disorder and mass famine in the course of pursuing rapid industrialization and collectivized agriculture, and many researchers estimate that tens of millions died during this period¹³⁾.

9) Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*.

10) Heywood, A. (2019). *Political Ideologies: An Introduction*. Palgrave Macmillan.

11) Courtois, S., Werth, N., Panné, J.-L., Paczkowski, A., Bartosek, K., & Margolin, J.-L. (1999). *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression*. Harvard University Press.

12) Applebaum, A. (2003). *Gulag: A History*. Doubleday.

13) Dikötter, F. (2010). *Mao's Great Famine: The History of China's Most Devastating Catastrophe, 1958-1962*. Walker & Company.

- The researchers of *The Black Book of Communism* estimated, by synthesizing such cases across multiple countries, that the number of deaths under twentieth-century communist regimes ranged from approximately 90 million to 100 million¹⁴). Although there is methodological debate in some academic circles regarding this figure, many historians commonly acknowledge that political violence and human rights abuses occurred on a broad scale under communist regimes. These historical cases are evaluated as important research examples showing that concentration of power and the absence of political competition may lead to human rights abuses and authoritarian rule. Accordingly, studies in political science and history emphasize separation of powers, the rule of law, freedom of the press, and civil-society participation—core elements of democratic systems—as important institutional mechanisms for preventing the abuse of political power¹⁵).

□ Communism’s Infiltration into the Republic of Korea

○ The South Korean Labor Party and Early Instability

- Immediately after liberation, the political order on the Korean Peninsula was formed amid a sharp power vacuum and ideological confrontation, and communist forces also began to act in an organized manner during this period. In particular, the Communist Party of Korea led by Park Heon-young and the subsequently reorganized Workers’ Party of South Korea (Namnodang) sought strategies for advancing communist revolution within South Korean society¹⁶). They adopted what was then called “New Tactics,” combining legal political activities with underground revolutionary activities.
- A representative example is the Jeongpansa Counterfeit Money Incident of 1946. This incident is known as a case in which organizations affiliated with the Communist Party of Korea mass-produced counterfeit currency in an attempt to secure funds for political activity and foment social disorder¹⁷). Also in the same year, the Daegu October Incident expanded from worker and peasant demonstrations into violent clashes, leading to attacks on U.S. military government and police facilities and large-scale social disorder¹⁸). These

14) Courtois, S., et al. (1999). *The Black Book of Communism*, p. 4.

15) Fukuyama, F. (2011). *The Origins of Political Order*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

16) Kim Nam-sik. (1988). *Study on the South Korean Labor Party II: Materials*. Dolbegae.

17) Ibid.

18) Cumings, B. (2005). *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History*. W.W. Norton.

incidents caused considerable political instability as South Korean society sought to establish a stable state system after liberation, and they also acted as major historical sources of conflict during the subsequent formation of the Republic of Korea government. Historians evaluate this period as the initial stage in which communist organizations attempted to expand their political influence within the Republic of Korea¹⁹).

○ **Revolutionary Cells and the Reconstruction of an Underground Party (Unified Revolutionary Party)**

- Since the 1960s, North Korea is analyzed as having strengthened a strategy of expanding political influence through clandestine organizations within South Korea rather than through direct military confrontation. A representative example of such a group is the Unified Revolutionary Party (Tonghyeokdang). It is known as an organization that sought to build an underground party structure within South Korea and establish a revolutionary base in accordance with North Korea's revolutionary strategy toward the South²⁰). The organization especially sought to expand within university circles and among intellectuals, and it was investigated as having envisioned a strategy of accumulating revolutionary capacity within society and then attempting an armed uprising or political regime change at a decisive moment²¹). According to organizational documents and activity records revealed during the investigation, some members were found to have adopted North Korea's Juche ideology as their ideological foundation and to have engaged in anti-government propaganda and organizational expansion²²).
- In particular, Shin Young-bok and others mentioned as major figures in the case were tried on charges of violating the National Security Act in connection with organizational activities, and subsequent court rulings found the organization to be an underground revolutionary organization linked to North Korea's strategy toward the South²³). The Unified Revolutionary Party case is evaluated as a representative example of North Korea's use of clandestine organizations to influence the internal political environment of South Korea during the Cold War.

19) Park Myung-lim. (1996). *The Outbreak and Origins of the Korean War*. Nanam.

20) National Institute of Korean History. *Materials on Modern Korean History*.

21) Armstrong, C. (2013). *Tyranny of the Weak: North Korea and the World 1950-1992*. Cornell University Press.

22) Ibid.

23) Supreme Court of Korea. (1969. 9. 23.). Decision 69Do2283.

○ **The Wangjaesan Spy Ring Case and Connections with the Political Sphere**

- Even in the 2010s, underground organizations linked to North Korea continued to be uncovered intermittently, and a representative example is the “Wangjaesan case,” revealed through a 2011 investigation. This case is known as one in which an underground organization active in South Korea under the direction of an entity affiliated with North Korea’s Reconnaissance General Bureau was uncovered²⁴).
- According to materials confirmed during the investigation and trial, the organization built a network centered in the Incheon area, maintained contact with North Korea through the internet and secret communication lines, and sought to intervene in political and social activities²⁵). In particular, some members were accused of analyzing domestic political conditions and reporting them to North Korea, or of attempting to shape public opinion favorable to specific political forces during election periods. In its judgment, the court found that the organization had acted under the direction of North Korea in violation of the National Security Act, and convicted its members²⁶). This case is frequently cited as demonstrating that information warfare and ideological competition between North and South Korea have continued even after the end of the Cold War, and it is also regarded as an important case in discussions of national security and transparency in the political process.

○ **Infiltration into South Korea’s Cultural and Labor Sectors**

- More recently as well, cases of organizations suspected of links to North Korea have been raised during investigations, continuing social controversy. Representative examples include the “Changwon spy ring case” and the “Jeju spy ring case,” both publicized through investigations in 2023. Investigative authorities announced that some individuals in these cases were accused of contacting North Korean operatives and acting under their instructions²⁷).
- In particular, these cases drew social attention because allegations were raised that certain individuals active within labor circles and civil–society groups had engaged in organizational activities linked to North Korea. According to reports,

24) National Intelligence Service. Investigation materials on organizations conducting operations against the South.

25) Summary of the prosecution’s indictment.

26) Supreme Court of Korea. (2013. 7. 25.). Decision 2013Do2623.

27) Cho Jae–yeon. (2023.03.13). “Changwon autonomous unification and Jeju cases under spy–ring allegations.” Munhwa Ilbo.

investigative authorities judged that these individuals expanded their organizations and engaged in political propaganda through secret contact with North Korean operational networks, and attempted to shape public opinion on specific political issues²⁸). Media reports also raised the possibility that such activities may be linked to strategies aimed at expanding social conflict through anti-American or anti-government slogans. However, these cases remain matters of ongoing legal judgment and social controversy, and some facts are still being clarified through trials and further investigation²⁹).

○ Transformation of North Korea's Strategy for Communist Revolution in the South (from Violent Revolution to War of Position)

- Political-science research has suggested that North Korea's strategy toward South Korea changed after the Korean War from one centered on military confrontation to one emphasizing political and social influence. The activities of the early Namnodang period focused on direct revolutionary methods such as uprisings and armed struggle, but such a strategy became practically difficult after the establishment of the Republic of Korea government and the Korean War³⁰). Accordingly, North Korea is evaluated as having adjusted its strategy toward securing long-term influence within South Korea's social structure. Some researchers analyze that this change appeared in the form of expanding influence across fields such as culture, education, labor, and the media, and compare it with Antonio Gramsci's concept of the "War of Position."³¹). From this perspective, the Unified Revolutionary Party case and various underground organization cases uncovered thereafter are sometimes interpreted as examples of attempts to build a long-term political and social base within South Korea. Academia evaluates these cases as showing that political competition between North and South Korea has continued in various forms even after the Cold War³²).

○ Attempts to Control Institutional Politics and Civil Society

- One of the strategies attributed to North Korea toward the South is the attempt to expand influence by utilizing spaces for lawful political activity.

28) Kim Jung-hwan. (2023.03.15). "Changwon spy ring members indicted." Chosun Ilbo.

29) Prosecution investigative release materials.

30) Armstrong, C. (2013). *Tyranny of the Weak*. Cornell University Press.

31) Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*.

32) Snyder, S. (2018). *South Korea at the Crossroads*. Columbia University Press.

This strategy is sometimes described as using clandestine organizational activity and lawful political activity simultaneously³³). For example, in the Wangjaesan case judgment, it was mentioned that some members maintained contact with North Korea, analyzed the domestic political situation and reported on it, and attempted activities favorable to particular candidates or political forces during election processes³⁴). Such activity is sometimes interpreted as an attempt to indirectly influence the political process through shaping public opinion or spreading political messages during elections.

- Political–science research analyzes that this strategy may appear not as direct military action, but as the exercise of influence through political and social networks. Therefore, it is argued that in democratic states it is important to guarantee freedom of political activity while also establishing institutional mechanisms and transparency to block the possibility of intervention by external forces³⁵).

□ The Relationship Between Communism and Election Fraud

○ Instrumentalization of Elections

- According to the memoirs of Boris Bazhanov, former secretary to Stalin, Stalin stated: “The people who cast the votes decide nothing. The people who count the votes decide everything.” (“I consider it completely unimportant who in the party will vote, or how; but what is extraordinarily important is this — who will count the votes, and how.”) This shows that the communist leadership regarded elections not as a means of reflecting the popular will, but as a mere formality for acquiring and maintaining power³⁶).

○ Historical Case of Manipulation (Poland, 1946)

- After World War II, as Soviet influence expanded in Eastern Europe, communist regimes were gradually established, and it is widely assessed that the electoral system was used in this process as a means of securing political legitimacy. A representative case is the 1946 Polish people’s referendum. This referendum proceeded in a way that encouraged voters to select “3×TAK,” meaning “YES,” in response to three questions concerning the direction of Poland’s political and economic system³⁷).

33) Norris, P. (2015). *Why Elections Fail*. Cambridge University Press.

34) Supreme Court of Korea. (2013. 7. 25.). Decision 2013Do2623.

35) Levitsky, S., & Ziblatt, D. (2018). *How Democracies Die*. Crown.

36) Paczkowski, A. (2003). *The Spring Will Be Ours: Poland and the Poles from Occupation to Freedom*. Penn State University Press.

37) Paczkowski, A. (2003). *The Spring Will Be Ours: Poland and the Poles from Occupation to Freedom*. Penn

- At the time, the referendum was conducted under the leadership of the communist Polish Workers' Party and under Soviet political influence, and later historical research raised claims that various forms of manipulation occurred in the voting process. Records remain that in some regions there were acts of replacing ballot boxes, controlling the counting process, and falsifying tabulation documents³⁸). In this way, the officially announced result appeared in favor of the policies promoted by communist forces, and similar political control is assessed to have continued in the 1947 general election³⁹).
- Historians analyze this incident as a representative example of elections being used as a tool to secure political legitimacy in the process by which Eastern European states were incorporated into the communist system. In particular, the incident is frequently cited as a historical case showing that, while democratic procedures were formally maintained during the formation of the early Cold War order in Eastern Europe, actual political power remained tightly controlled⁴⁰).

○ **United Front Strategy and Directives for Electoral Intervention**

- The “United Front Strategy,” known as one of the political strategies of Marxism–Leninism, is explained as a strategy for expanding political influence through alliances with different political forces. It has been analyzed as a method used by communist forces to expand influence by utilizing lawful political institutions and social organizations in political environments in which direct seizure of power is difficult⁴¹). Some researchers analyze that when such a strategy is combined with electoral systems, it may influence political propaganda and the process of public–opinion formation. In particular, there are studies showing that communist states have continued to attempt intelligence–gathering and influence–expansion activities in foreign political environments during and after the Cold War⁴²).
- In South Korea, during investigations into spy–ring cases in the 2020s, allegations were raised that North Korean operational organizations demanded

State University Press.

38) Ibid.

39) Davies, N. (2005). *God's Playground: A History of Poland*. Oxford University Press.

40) Snyder, T. (2010). *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin*. Basic Books.

41) Van Slyke, L. (1967). *Enemies and Friends: The United Front in Chinese Communist History*. Stanford University Press.

42) Brady, A. (2017). *Magic Weapons: China's Political Influence Activities Under Xi Jinping*. Wilson Center.

analytical reports on the domestic political situation or instructed anti-government demonstrations and public-opinion campaigns during election periods. Some media reports and prosecution materials also disclosed that North Korea had conveyed propaganda directives utilizing South Korea's internal political situation⁴³).

- Political-science research analyzes that such activities may be understood as part of information warfare, propaganda warfare, and competition for political influence, and that in modern international politics the electoral process is increasingly drawing attention as an area in which external actors may attempt information operations or public-opinion intervention⁴⁴).

○ Systemic Disruption Through Exploitation of Digital Vulnerabilities

- In the recent international security environment, political competition using cyberspace has emerged as an important strategic tool alongside military force. This is often referred to as “Hybrid Warfare,” a strategy combining military action, information warfare, cyberattacks, and propaganda activities in order to disrupt the political and social system of a target state⁴⁵). Because election systems are directly linked to a state's political legitimacy, they have been identified as one of the primary targets of cyberattacks. In fact, hacking attempts targeting election-management systems, voter registration databases, and the networks of election-administration agencies have been reported in multiple countries⁴⁶). It is analyzed that the purpose of such attacks may not simply be data theft, but also the creation of distrust in the electoral process and the expansion of social conflict.
- In Korea as well, discussion has continued regarding the security vulnerabilities of election-management systems, and reports that security weaknesses were discovered during some simulated hacking inspections have raised the need to strengthen cybersecurity⁴⁷). Experts point out that in order to address these problems, a variety of technical and institutional safeguards

43) Lee Hye-won. (2023.03.15). “Changwon spy ring’—four related individuals indicted in detention... carried out North Korean directives.” Dong-A Ilbo.

44) Norris, P. (2015). *Why Elections Fail*. Cambridge University Press.

45) Hoffman, F. (2007). *Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars*. Potomac Institute.

46) Rid, T. (2020). *Active Measures: The Secret History of Disinformation and Political Warfare*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

47) Jung Young-gyo & Moon Hee-cheol. (2023.10.11). “National Election Commission breached in simulated hacking.” JoongAng Ilbo.

are necessary, including independent security audits of election systems, network separation, and strengthened access controls⁴⁸). Therefore, given that modern democracies recognize not only traditional election administration but also the establishment of cybersecurity systems and the strengthening of information–warfare response capacity as important policy tasks for ensuring election fairness, it appears that the time has come for a new paradigm in improving South Korea’s election system and electoral fairness.

48) National Academies of Sciences. (2018). *Securing the Vote: Protecting American Democracy*. National Academies Press.

3. Recognition of Threats to Electoral Integrity

□ Doubts Concerning Electoral Transparency and the Possibility of Manipulation

○ The Meaning of Elections and the Issue of Fairness in a Democratic State

- In democratic states, elections are the core institutional procedure by which the people choose their political representatives and confer legitimacy on state power. According to modern democratic theory, elections are regarded as the most fundamental mechanism for implementing the principle of popular sovereignty in the actual political process⁴⁹). When free and fair elections are guaranteed, citizens can participate in the political process and exercise control over governmental power. However, when the electoral process loses fairness or suspicions of fraud are raised, trust in the political system may be greatly weakened. If social consensus regarding election results collapses, elections themselves become a cause of conflict, and political legitimacy may also be shaken⁵⁰). Indeed, in various countries around the world, cases have been reported in which allegations of election fraud led to political division or prolonged social conflict. Accordingly, democratic states establish a range of institutional mechanisms—such as independent election—management bodies, fair election laws, and open counting procedures—to guarantee electoral fairness and transparency. These institutions are regarded as key elements not only for conducting elections, but also for securing public trust in election outcomes⁵¹).

○ Damage to Electoral Integrity

- Electoral integrity refers to the concept of whether the entire electoral process is fairly managed in accordance with legal standards and democratic principles. Political scientist Pippa Norris emphasizes that electoral integrity is a core element determining the stability of democracy and political legitimacy⁵²). According to her, if elections are not fairly managed or suspicions of fraud are continually raised, citizens lose trust in the political process and their willingness to participate politically declines. In particular, if

49) Park Jin-woo. (2009). "Problems of the Current Public Official Election Act from the Perspective of Electoral Freedom and Fairness." *Gachon Law Review*, 2(1), 91-121.

50) Norris, P. (2015). *Why Elections Fail*. Cambridge University Press.

51) Kim Gwang-tak. (2025.06.08). "[In Focus] Election Fraud: How the World Responds." Naeoe News Agency.

52) Norris, P. (2014). *Why Electoral Integrity Matters*. Cambridge University Press.

trust in elections collapses, citizens may come to believe that the political system does not reflect their will, and such circumstances may lead to social conflict such as political disobedience or mass demonstrations⁵³). In some countries, it has indeed been reported that prolonged controversy over election fraud produced political disorder or crises of regime legitimacy.

- Therefore, in order to maintain electoral integrity, a variety of institutional mechanisms are essential, including transparency in voting procedures, openness in the counting process, and independence of election-management bodies. When such elements are combined, social trust in election results is formed, and this becomes an important foundation for the stable operation of the democratic system⁵⁴).

○ Opacity of Digital Systems

- In recent years, as many countries have introduced electronic voting equipment and electronic vote-counting systems into the election-administration process, technical efficiency has increased, but debates over security and transparency have also emerged. Computer-security expert Professor J. Alex Halderman has pointed out, through research analyzing the security vulnerabilities of electronic voting equipment, that some devices may be exposed to cyberattacks⁵⁵). His research analyzed the software architecture of certain electronic voting devices and presented the theoretical possibility that election results could be distorted if external access or insertion of malicious code were possible⁵⁶). Later, he testified before the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence that stronger security and independent verification procedures were necessary for electronic election systems⁵⁷). These research findings are evaluated not as meaning that electronic voting systems necessarily lead to fraud, but rather as showing that the more election systems rely on digital technology, the more important security and verification procedures become. Accordingly, many countries have introduced a variety of supplementary measures for electronic election equipment, including independent security audits, preservation of paper ballot records, and random recounts.

53) Ibid.

54) Norris, P., Frank, R., & Martínez i Coma, F. (2014). *Advancing Electoral Integrity*. Oxford University Press.

55) Halderman, J. A., et al. (2009). *Security Analysis of the Diebold AccuVote-TS Voting Machine*. USENIX Security Symposium.

56) Ibid.

57) Halderman, J. A. (2017). *Testimony before the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence*.

○ Procedural Defects in Election Administration and Collapse of Trust

- Procedural problems arising in election administration may also have a major impact on public trust in elections. During South Korea's 2022 presidential election, the so-called "basket voting" controversy that occurred during early voting by COVID-19 confirmed and quarantined voters sparked social debate about vulnerabilities in the election-management system⁵⁸). At some polling places, images were made public showing ballots stored in temporary containers or transported by methods other than directly into ballot boxes, prompting criticism regarding the appropriateness of the voting procedure.
- One of the basic principles of elections is direct and secret voting, which guarantees that voters may freely express their will without outside influence. Therefore, if voting procedures are perceived as failing to adequately guarantee these principles, trust in the election-management body may weaken⁵⁹). Although audits and investigations pointed out some shortcomings in administrative management, it has also been assessed that, apart from any criminal liability, the need to improve the election-management system was raised. This case is cited as an example showing that even small procedural problems in election administration can have a significant impact on public trust⁶⁰).

○ Digital Black Boxes and the Limits of Verification

- Modern election administration uses a variety of digital devices, including ballot-sorting machines and election-management servers. These devices have the advantages of speeding up the counting process and improving administrative efficiency, but they also raise issues of technical transparency. In particular, it has been pointed out that if the source code or internal algorithms of certain equipment are not disclosed to ordinary citizens or outside experts, the election system may appear to be a "black box."⁶¹). In information-technology systems, verifiability is regarded as a core element in building trust. Therefore, the view has been raised that election systems also need to secure reliability through outside auditing or independent security

58) Kim Jung-rae. (2022.12.08). "Poor management of early voting for COVID-confirmed voters in the presidential election." Seoul Shinmun.

59) IDEA. (2016). Electoral Justice Handbook. International IDEA.

60) Moon Gwang-ho. (2023.07.10). "Board of Audit and Inspection's audit related to 'basket voting.'" Kyunghyang Shinmun.

61) Kim Jin-gang. (2019.10.08). "Only the National Election Commission knows the core information of early voting." Sky Daily.

verification⁶²). In fact, in some countries efforts have been made to secure technical reliability through disclosure of the source code of election equipment, public testing, and random recount systems. Such institutions are evaluated as mechanisms not only for ensuring the accuracy of election results, but also for securing public trust in the electoral process. In other words, it is suggested that not only the technical safety of election systems, but the very fact that they are verifiable, is an important factor in maintaining the stability of democratic institutions⁶³).

4. Analysis of Domestic and International Electoral Risk Environments

□ Analysis of Domestic and International Election–Fraud Environments

○ Hybrid Warfare and Cyber Intervention

- In the recent international security environment, “Hybrid Warfare,” in which traditional military conflict is combined with information warfare, psychological warfare, and cyberattacks, has emerged as a major strategic form. Such strategies aim to weaken a target country’s political system and social stability without direct military attack, and democratic procedures such as elections may become primary targets⁶⁴). A representative example is the allegation of Russian interference raised during the 2016 U.S. presidential election. According to the Mueller Report released by the U.S. Department of Justice, organizations linked to the Russian government were found to have engaged in activities such as opinion manipulation through social media and the leakage of political–organization information through hacking⁶⁵). It has been analyzed that such activity aimed less at the election result itself than at deepening political divisions within society.
- International relations research evaluates such cyber and information–warfare activities as new threat factors that weaken trust in elections and intensify political conflict in modern democracies⁶⁶). Accordingly, many countries

62) National Academies of Sciences. (2018). *Securing the Vote: Protecting American Democracy*.

63) Norris, P. (2015). *Why Elections Fail*. Cambridge University Press.

64) Hoffman, F. (2007). *Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars*.

65) U.S. Department of Justice. (2019). *Report On The Investigation Into Russian Interference In The 2016 Presidential Election*.

66) Rid, T. (2020). *Active Measures: The Secret History of Disinformation and Political Warfare*.

recognize the strengthening of election–infrastructure security and the establishment of systems to respond to information warfare as important national–security tasks.

○ **Institutional Vulnerabilities (Mail–in Voting, etc.)**

- The point that the level of risk of fraud or external intervention may vary depending on the design of the electoral system has long been discussed in election studies. In particular, mail–in voting has been criticized as containing potential vulnerabilities because, compared with in–person voting at polling places, its management and verification procedures are more complex⁶⁷).
- The Carter–Baker Commission, established in the United States to improve the electoral system, analyzed the risk factors of mail–in voting in its 2005 report and identified the limits of identity–verification procedures and management problems in the ballot–delivery process as key vulnerabilities⁶⁸). The report especially mentioned as institutional risk factors the possibility of third parties delivering ballots on behalf of voters or of voting being carried out in a manner different from the voter’s actual intention.
- These issues are not limited to a particular country but constitute common institutional controversies raised in many democracies. Accordingly, some countries allow mail–in voting but make policy efforts to supplement institutional reliability through strict identity–verification procedures and ballot–tracking systems⁶⁹).

○ **Results of the NIS Security Inspection (2023, Security Vulnerabilities in the Election Management System)**

- Cybersecurity issues in election systems have emerged as an important policy task in modern election administration. In 2023, South Korea’s National Intelligence Service and the Korea Internet & Security Agency (KISA) conducted a joint security inspection of the National Election Commission system, and results were announced stating that some security vulnerabilities had been discovered⁷⁰). According to reports, the simulated hacking inspection found possible access to the internal network of the election–management

67) Norris, P. (2015). *Why Elections Fail*. Cambridge University Press.

68) Commission on Federal Election Reform. (2005). *Building Confidence in U.S. Elections*.

69) IDEA. (2016). *Electoral Justice Handbook*.

70) Kim Ji–heon, Ha Chae–rim, & Hong Guk–gi. (2023.10.10). “Results of simulated hacking inspection of the National Election Commission system.” *Yonhap News*.

system and vulnerabilities in the data–management structure. In particular, it was pointed out that, at least in theory, access to voter registry data or vote–counting–related data might be possible, increasing public concern over election security⁷¹). *Securing the Vote: Protecting American Democracy*. Experts explain that these results do not mean that actual fraud occurred, but rather show the possibility that the election system could become a target of cyberattack. Accordingly, discussion has arisen over the need for various supplementary measures, such as strengthening network security at election–administration bodies, implementing independent security–audit systems, and strengthening system access controls⁷²).

○ Poor Management of the Early Voting System

- The early voting system was introduced to expand voter participation, but at the same time it has also given rise to debate over the transparency of management procedures and security issues. In the election–management process, strict procedures are required at multiple stages, including ballot storage, transport, and pre–count management, and these procedures are evaluated as key elements in securing trust⁷³).
- In South Korea as well, controversies over CCTV blind spots at ballot–storage facilities and other management–procedure issues related to early voting have been raised in the media⁷⁴). In addition, the so–called “basket voting” incident during voting by COVID–19 confirmed voters in the 2022 presidential election triggered social controversy over shortcomings in the election–management system. Such procedural problems in election administration may affect public trust in election results regardless of whether actual fraud occurred. Accordingly, international standards of election administration emphasize complete chain of custody for ballot storage and movement, as well as open management procedures⁷⁵).

□ Statistical and Survey Results, and Case Analysis

○ Manipulation of Electronic Voting in Venezuela (2017)

71) National Academies of Sciences. (2018). *Securing the Vote: Protecting American Democracy*.

72) Norris, P. (2015). *Why Elections Fail*.

73) IDEA. (2016). *Electoral Management Design Handbook*.

74) Han Young–hye. (2022.03.07). “Controversy over early–voting ballot storage.” *JoongAng Ilbo*.

75) Norris, P., Frank, R., & Martínez i Coma, F. (2014). *Advancing Electoral Integrity*.

- In the 2017 Venezuelan Constituent Assembly election, international controversy arose over the reliability of the electronic voting system. Antonio Mugica, CEO of Smartmatic, the company operating the election system at the time, stated in an official release that the turnout announced by the election authorities may have been inflated by at least one million votes compared with the actual system records⁷⁶). This statement caused major controversy in the international community, and some international monitoring bodies and media outlets raised the possibility that the Venezuelan government had distorted election results in order to secure political legitimacy⁷⁷). The incident has since been frequently cited as a case showing how electronic voting systems can be used within a structure of political power. Election studies analyze this incident not as a problem with electronic-voting technology per se, but as a case showing that, if election-management bodies lack independence and verification mechanisms, even technical systems may be abused as political tools⁷⁸).

○ Statistical Anomalies (Benford's Law)

- The research field that analyzes irregularities in election-result data is called "Election Forensics," in which attempts are made to detect the possibility of fraud through statistical methods. One representative method is Benford's Law. This law explains the statistical principle that, in naturally occurring numerical data, the frequency with which certain digits appear follows a particular pattern⁷⁹).
- Professor Walter Mebane, a political scientist at the University of Michigan, has analyzed election data from multiple countries using such statistical models and published findings that abnormal data distributions appeared in cases such as the 2009 Iranian presidential election⁸⁰). This method is used not as direct proof of election fraud, but as a tool for detecting anomalies in the data. Therefore, the results of election-forensic analysis are often used as reference material suggesting the need for further investigation or auditing.⁸¹).

○ Extreme Gap Between Early Voting and Election-Day Voting

- During South Korea's 21st National Assembly election (2020), a phenomenon

76) Reuters. (2017.08.02). "Venezuelan election turnout figures manipulated by 1 million votes - Smartmatic".

77) Human Rights Watch. (2017). Venezuela Political Crisis Report.

78) Norris, P. (2015). Why Elections Fail.

79) Mebane, W. (2010). "Fraud in the 2009 Presidential Election in Iran?". Chance.

80) Ibid.

81) Beber, B., & Scacco, A. (2012). "What the Numbers Say". Political Analysis.

was observed in closely contested metropolitan districts such as Seoul, Gyeonggi, and Incheon in which early-voting vote shares were unilaterally 10-15 percentage points higher for a particular party (the Democratic Party) than election-day vote shares. Professor Park Young-ah of Myongji University and others raised suspicions of artificial intervention (“Digital Fraud”), arguing that the probability of such statistics occurring naturally was lower than the probability of winning the lottery⁸²⁾⁸³⁾. On the other hand, the National Election Commission and some scholars explained that such differences may arise from various factors, including differences in voter composition, regional voter characteristics, and voting-participation methods⁸⁴⁾. This controversy is evaluated as a case showing that statistical interpretation in the analysis of election-result data is an extremely complex issue. Therefore, it has been pointed out that multiple statistical models and additional materials need to be comprehensively reviewed in election-data analysis⁸⁵⁾.

○ Analysis by Overseas Academia (Walter Mebane)

- Professor Walter Mebane of the University of Michigan, an expert in election-fraud detection, argued in a paper analyzing the 2020 South Korean general-election data that a large number of statistical anomalies suggestive of “fraud” were discovered. In his study analyzing the 2020 South Korean general election data, he argued that some data patterns displayed anomalous features that are difficult to explain statistically and raised the need for further verification. In particular, he raised the possibility that the early-voting result data may have been manipulated⁸⁶⁾⁸⁷⁾.
- This study is evaluated not as having definitively concluded that election fraud occurred, but as an analytical study presenting the possibility that certain data patterns were statistically abnormal. Some media outlets introduced the study’s findings while reporting on the controversy over election-data analysis⁸⁸⁾.

82) Kim Jun-il & Yoon Da-bin. (2020.04.21). “Controversy over early-voting vote share.” Dong-A Ilbo.

83) Yoo Gi-jeong, Park Eun-hee, and Lee Ok-ju, 2024.12.20 13:41, [Urgent Special Report] Korea’s Elections Deviating from Statistical Laws... “A Mysterious Gap Between Early Voting and Election-Day Voting” (Part 3), Freejin News.

84) National Election Commission press materials.

85) Norris, P. (2015). Why Elections Fail.

86) Mebane, W. R. (2020). "Anomalies and Frauds in the Korea 2020 Parliamentary Election". *Department of Political Science and Department of Statistics, University of Michigan*.

87) Reporter In Se-young, May 1, 2020, 12:07 PM: Interest Surges in Professor Walter Mebane, Who Alleged "Fraud in South Korea's 2020 Parliamentary Election" — FN Today.

88) In Se-young. (2020.05.01). “Controversy over Professor Walter Mebane’s analysis.” FN Today.

Academic circles emphasize that election–forensics research is a statistical tool for detecting anomalies rather than directly proving election fraud. Accordingly, such analyses are often used as reference materials in discussions concerning the transparency of election–management systems, expanded disclosure of data, and the establishment of independent verification mechanisms⁸⁹).

89) Beber, B., & Scacco, A. (2012). Political Analysis.

The Institutional and Legislative Formation Process of Alleged Electoral Fraud in the Republic of Korea

1. Introduction of Early Voting and the Development of Electronic Vote Counting Systems

□ Process of Introducing the Early Voting System

○ From the 1960s to the 2000s: Absentee Voting Based on Prior Absentee Registration

- The absentee voting system was first introduced in the election for the 5th National Assembly in 1960, and it operated in a manner whereby voters were required to submit an absentee-voter declaration in advance, after which absentee ballots were sent and returned by mail.

○ 2012-2013: Special Provisions for Absentee Voting Following the Use of an Integrated Voter List

- In 2011, the National Election Commission submitted to the National Assembly its proposed amendments suggesting that an integrated voter list allowing voting anywhere in the country be prepared and utilized, and that, for stable implementation, it first be introduced on a pilot basis in by-elections and special elections⁹⁰⁾. Thereafter, through the amendment of the Public Official Election Act on February 29, 2012, a special provision for absentee voting through the use of an integrated voter list (Article 158-3) was newly established, thereby providing the legal basis for “no-report early voting” utilizing the integrated voter list.
- Pursuant to Addendum Article 2 of the Public Official Election Management Regulations (National Election Commission Regulation No. 376, partially amended on June 25, 2012), the early voting system utilizing the integrated voter list was first implemented in the by-elections and special elections held in the first half of 2013.

90) National Election Commission, Proposed Amendments to Political Relations Laws (Public Official Election Act, Political Parties Act, Political Funds Act), 2011, p. 42.

Public Official Election Act [Effective January 1, 2013] [Act No. 11374, February 29, 2012, partially amended]

Article 158–3 (Special Provisions for Absentee Voting through Use of the Integrated Voter List)

① The National Election Commission may receive from the heads of Gu/Si/Gun a copy of the computerized data of the voter list finalized pursuant to Article 44(1), prepare a single voter list (hereinafter referred to as the “integrated voter list”) by using a computer system, and permit its use at absentee polling stations.

Public Official Election Management Regulations [Effective January 1, 2013] [National Election Commission Regulation No. 376, June 25, 2012, partially amended]

Addenda <National Election Commission Regulation No. 376, June 25, 2012>

Article 1 (Effective Date) These Regulations shall enter into force on the date of promulgation. Provided, however, that the amended provisions of Article 87 shall enter into force on January 1, 2013.

Article 2 (Timing of Use of the Integrated Voter List) The integrated voter list under Article 158–3(1) of the Act shall be used beginning with the first election held after the amended provisions of Article 87 take effect (including by–elections, etc.).

○ **Since 2014: Full Revision of the Public Official Election Act and Full Introduction of the Early Voting System**

- As the Public Official Election Act was amended on January 17, 2014, provisions on the “installation of early voting stations” were newly inserted into Article 148 and provisions on “early voting” were newly inserted and reorganized in Article 158, thereby allowing anyone to vote at an early voting station without any separate prior declaration.
- With the first nationwide early voting conducted in the 6th Nationwide Simultaneous Local Elections on June 4, 2014, the election schedule was in effect changed into a structure of “2 days of early voting + 1 day of election–day voting,” and the previous absentee voting system was completely replaced by the new early voting system.

- Since the 2014 amendment, the system has been maintained in that form, with only partial amendments made to detailed procedures, methods of electronic verification, and the like.

Public Official Election Act [Effective January 17, 2014] [Act No. 12267, January 17, 2014, partially amended]

Article 148 (Installation of Early Voting Stations)

① The competent Gu/Si/Gun Election Commission shall install and operate early voting stations within its jurisdiction for two days from five days prior to election day (hereinafter referred to as the “early voting period”) so that voters listed on the voter register may vote.

② When installing early voting stations pursuant to paragraph (1), the Gu/Si/Gun Election Commission shall publicly announce their names, locations, and installation/operation period no later than nine days before election day, and shall notify the election campaign manager or the head of the election liaison office thereof, and shall post the notice in five places in each polling district within its jurisdiction. The same shall apply when the place of installation of an early voting station is changed.

③ In order to assist the voting affairs of early voting stations established pursuant to paragraph (1), the Gu/Si/Gun Election Commission shall appoint early voting clerks from among persons falling under any of the subparagraphs of Article 147(9).

④ With respect to restrictions on and cooperation for use of the installation site of an early voting station and facilities, etc., paragraphs (3) through (7) of Article 147 shall apply mutatis mutandis.

⑤ Matters necessary for the installation, public announcement, notification, appointment of early voting clerks, and other related matters concerning early voting stations shall be prescribed by National Election Commission Regulations.

Article 158 (Early Voting)

① Any voter (excluding absentee-at-residence voters and shipboard voters) may vote during the early voting period by going to an early voting station.

② A voter wishing to cast an early vote shall present identification at the early voting station, have his or her identity verified, affix a thumbprint or sign by electronic means, and then receive a ballot.

③ The early voting manager shall print, by means of a ballot issuance device, the ballot for the relevant election in which the voter has the right to vote, affix his or her seal in the “Early Voting Manager” box, and then issue it to the voter together with a return envelope without detaching the serial–number stub. (Omitted below)

□ Introduction of the Early Voting System and the Controversies Surrounding It

○ Constitutional Complaint and Decision Concerning the Serial Number Stub (Non–Detachment) and Use of QR Codes on Early Voting Ballots (2022Hun–Ma231, 231, 240, 267, 1595)

- (Subject matter and issues of adjudication) Whether Article 158(3) of the Public Official Election Act, which requires that early voting ballots be issued without detaching the serial–number stub, is unconstitutional, and whether the act of issuing ballots bearing a two–dimensional “QR code” instead of 표시ing the serial number in the form of a “barcode” pursuant to Article 151(6) of the same Act is unconstitutional.
- (Constitutional Court decision: dismissal) The Constitutional Court dismissed the claim on the ground that printing a QR code on a ballot constitutes merely a simple administrative factual act and is not an exercise of public power subject to constitutional complaint.
- (Constitutional Court decision: rejection) The Court rejected the claim on the grounds that a serial number in barcode form is difficult to identify with the naked eye and therefore presents only a small possibility of infringing the secrecy of the ballot, and that omitting detachment of the stub is a reasonable measure for voter convenience, such as shortening waiting time.

[Provisions Subject to Adjudication and Related Provisions]

Public Official Election Act [January 17, 2014] [Act No. 12267, January 17, 2014, partially amended]

Article 151 (Preparation of Ballots and Ballot Boxes)

⑥ Notwithstanding paragraphs (1) and (5), the Gu/Si/Gun Election Commission shall have early voting ballots to be issued at early voting stations prepared by the early voting manager at the early voting station using a ballot issuance device. In such cases, the serial number printed on the ballot shall be 표시ed in the form of a barcode (meaning a bar-shaped symbol displayed so that a computer can recognize it), and the barcode shall not contain any information other than the name of the election, the name of the electoral district, the name of the competent election commission, and the serial number.

Article 157 (Receipt of Ballots and Marking Procedure)

② When issuing a ballot to a voter on election day, the voting manager shall affix a signature or seal in the signature/seal box and, in the presence of the voter, detach the serial-number stub before issuing the ballot; provided that, where deemed necessary, he or she may affix such signature or seal in advance on not more than 100 ballots and then issue them.

Article 158 (Early Voting)

① Any voter (excluding absentee-at-residence voters and shipboard voters) may vote during the early voting period by going to an early voting station.

② A voter wishing to cast an early vote shall present identification at the early voting station, have his or her identity verified, affix a thumbprint or sign by electronic means, and then receive a ballot.

③ The early voting manager shall print, by means of a ballot issuance device, the ballot for the relevant election in which the voter has the right to vote, affix his or her seal in the “Early Voting Manager” box, and then issue it to the voter together with a return envelope without detaching the serial-number stub.
(Omitted below)

- **Suspicion and Controversy Regarding the Constitutional Court Decision on the Serial Number Stub (Non-Detachment) and Use of QR Codes on Early Voting Ballots (2022Hun-Ma231, 231, 240, 267, 1595)**
 - (Possible infringement of the principle of secret balloting due to non-detachment of the serial-number stub on early voting ballots) In ordinary

election-day voting, the serial-number stub is detached before issuance pursuant to Article 157(2) of the Act, whereas in the case of early voting ballots, pursuant to Article 158(3) of the Public Official Election Act, the ballots are issued without detaching the serial-number stub. If the serial number is not detached, it becomes possible, at least in theory, to match the voter's identification image and the ballot at the time the early voting ballot is printed, thereby making it theoretically possible to trace for whom the holder of that ballot voted; thus, there is a possibility of undermining the principle of secret balloting. Furthermore, the political inclinations of specific citizens secured through prior elections could be used after the election for opinion manipulation. This is because public opinion can be manipulated through sample distortion, such as conducting opinion polls only among voters of certain politicians or political parties. Continued manipulation of public opinion can then be used as a means of explaining the next fraudulent election to the public. However, the Constitutional Court has taken the position that the non-detachment of the serial-number stub carries only a small possibility of infringing the principle of secret balloting.

- **(Possibility of manipulation of early-voting ballot boxes due to non-detachment of the serial-number stub on early voting ballots)** Because the serial-number stubs on early voting ballots are not detached, a problem arises in that there is no offline physical evidence of the number of ballots cast into the relevant early-voting ballot box. In election-day voting, because the serial-number stub is detached before issuance, evidence remains, through the detached serial numbers, of how many people voted at that polling station. In contrast, in early voting, there is no offline physical evidence of how many people voted at that early voting station. Accordingly, if, to the extent that the integrated voter list has been manipulated, fraudulently pre-printed ballots are inserted into the early-voting ballot box, a problem arises in that there is no physical evidence with which to prove it. Nevertheless, the Constitutional Court has regarded non-detachment of the serial-number stub as a reasonable measure for voting convenience.
- **(QR code ≠ barcode)** Article 151(6) of the Public Official Election Act, in explaining "barcode," adds in parentheses that it "means a bar-shaped symbol displayed so that a computer can recognize it." Ordinarily, a barcode is recognized as consisting of black-and-white stripes, and the "bar" in the

foreign term “barcode” also means a rod or something shaped like a rod. By contrast, a QR code is a black-and-white grid-pattern code, and it is questionable whether, in its overall appearance, it can be regarded as a black-and-white striped or bar-shaped symbol.

- **(Possible infringement of the principle of secret balloting because QR codes can contain excessive information)** Unlike barcodes, which are a format that contains one-dimensional information, QR codes are a format containing two-dimensional information and are capable of holding far more information. Article 151(6) of the Public Official Election Act provides that a barcode shall not contain anything other than the name of the election, the name of the electoral district, the name of the competent election commission, and the serial number. It may therefore be inferred that, at the time of enactment of this provision, it was judged that even a barcode format would be sufficient to contain the foregoing information. Nevertheless, the adoption of a two-dimensional QR code on early voting ballots instead of a one-dimensional barcode, apart from the fact that it is not expressly a “barcode,” makes it difficult to dispel the suspicion that there may have been an intention to include more information.

○ **Constitutional Complaint and Decision Regarding the Printed Seal on Early Voting Ballots (2022Hun–Ma232, 239, 266)**

- **(Subject matter and issues of adjudication)** Whether the Public Official Election Management Regulations are unconstitutional insofar as they allow the early voting manager’s official seal to be replaced by a “printed seal” rather than requiring the manager to affix the seal directly.
- **(Constitutional Court decision: rejection)** The Court rejected the claim on the grounds that the Public Official Election Act delegates matters concerning the preparation and management of ballots to National Election Commission Regulations and therefore provides a legal basis, that the efficient conduct of early voting is essential because unpredictable numbers of voters may crowd in, and that even if printed seals are permitted, the inflow of forged ballots can be prevented through measures such as observer attendance and sealing procedures.

[Provisions Subject to Adjudication and Related Provisions]

Public Official Election Management Regulations (amended by National Election Commission Regulation No. 400 on January 17, 2014)

Article 84 (Affixing of Seals on Ballots)

③ Where the chairperson of a Gu/Si/Gun Committee affixes his or her seal on absentee-at-residence ballots, or where the early voting manager affixes his or her seal on ballots, the affixing of the seal may be substituted by a printed seal.

Public Official Election Act [January 17, 2014] [Act No. 12267, January 17, 2014, partially amended]

Article 151 (Preparation of Ballots and Ballot Boxes)

④ Ballots shall bear the official seal of the competent Gu/Si/Gun Election Commission in accordance with National Election Commission Regulations. In such case, the affixing of such official seal may be substituted by a printed seal. (Omitted in part)

⑨ The specifications of ballots and ballot boxes, the sealing, storage, handover, and other necessary matters concerning ballots shall be prescribed by National Election Commission Regulations.

Article 158 (Early Voting)

③ The early voting manager shall print, by means of a ballot issuance device, the ballot for the relevant election in which the voter has the right to vote, affix his or her seal in the “Early Voting Manager” box, and then issue it to the voter together with a return envelope without detaching the serial-number stub.

○ **Suspicion and Controversy Regarding the Constitutional Court Decision on the Printed Seal on Early Voting Ballots (2022Hun–Ma232, 239, 266)**

- **(Ease of producing forged ballots)** The Constitutional Court viewed efficient election administration and the prevention of forged-ballot inflow through other means as sufficient; however, permitting a printed seal on early voting ballots removes the unpredictability of what seal the early voting manager will use, thereby making ballot forgery easier. Elections, as an exercise of the people’s sovereignty, require consistency and integrity to an extremely high

degree, yet the issue was dismissed under a logic of efficiency, which is problematic.

- **(Conflict with the express language of the Public Official Election Act)** Article 158(3) of the Public Official Election Act expressly provides that the early voting manager shall affix his or her own seal in the early-voting-manager box on the early voting ballot before issuing it to the voter; however, Article 84(3) of the Public Official Election Management Regulations, which are subordinate regulations to the Public Official Election Act, provides that this may be substituted by a printed seal. Even though the Public Official Election Act does not delegate to subordinate legislation the specific method by which the early voting manager must affix the seal to early voting ballots, the administrative regulation prescribes a rule that conflicts with the express content of the Act, which is problematic. Furthermore, instead of amending the Public Official Election Act—which is relatively difficult to amend—it is difficult to dispel the suspicion that the Election Commission may have amended the relatively easy-to-change subordinate regulation according to its own intent despite its inconsistency with the Act.
- Therefore, Article 158(3) of the Public Official Election Act, which provides that the early voting manager shall affix his or her own seal in the early-voting-manager box on the early voting ballot and then issue it to the voter, serves as a means of preventing the production and insertion of forged ballots and is necessary for fairness. Accordingly, rather than amending the Public Official Election Act to conform to an administrative rule for the sake of convenience and efficiency in election administration, the conflicting administrative rule should be corrected.

○ Recent Trends and Discussion on Institutional Reform

- **(Constitutional Court maintains its position)** In its 2025 decision, the Constitutional Court maintained its position that the system itself is constitutional (Constitutional Court 2023Hun-Ma1383 et al., October 23, 2025), and recent discussions concerning the early voting system have largely proceeded along two lines: “arguments for abolition or reduction” and “improvement centered on strengthening transparency and management.”
- **(Discussion on abolition or reduction of early voting)** Some members of the People Power Party introduced an amendment to the Public Official Election

Act proposing abolition of early voting and extension of the hours for election-day voting⁹¹) Likewise, another amendment to the Public Official Election Act was introduced proposing abolition of early voting and, instead, extension of election day itself to two or three days⁹²). These developments show a continuing institutional movement toward the “abolition of early voting.”

- **(Attempts to maintain the early voting practice while strengthening management)** In the wake of transparency controversies raised after the 20th presidential election (such as the route of movement of early-voting ballot boxes, CCTV, and envelope management), the National Election Commission, in preparation for the 21st presidential election, expressed its intention to strengthen management through measures such as video recording of the entire movement process of early-voting ballot boxes, mandatory installation of CCTV, and codification of rules on management of early voting ballots and envelopes⁹³). However, suspicions regarding inadequate transparency and management continue to be raised⁹⁴).
- **(Attempt to fundamentally block the use of printed seals in early voting)** The current Public Official Election Act expressly provides that, in early voting, the early voting manager shall print the ballot by means of a ballot issuance device and affix his or her own seal before issuing it to the voter. However, as a supplementary measure for the practical circumstances existing at the time of the system’s introduction—namely, the need to print and issue ballots immediately to large numbers of voters within the limited space of early voting stations—the Public Official Election Management Regulations provided that affixing the seal may be substituted by a printed seal. Because this provision is inconsistent with the superior statute, it is seen as undermining the legitimacy of the election. Accordingly, there has been an attempt to amend the Public Official Election Act so as to secure public trust in elections by clearly stipulating in law, through the addition of the latter part of Article 158(3) and the new paragraph (4) of the same Article, that the early voting

91) Partial Amendment Bill to the Public Official Election Act (proposed by Representative Kim Min-jeon and 24 others, Bill No. 2201955 (July 18, 2024), 416th National Assembly (Extraordinary Session)).

92) Partial Amendment Bill to the Public Official Election Act (proposed by Representative Jang Dong-hyeok and 10 others, Bill No. 2208646 (March 4, 2025), 422nd National Assembly (Extraordinary Session)).

93) Cho Da-woon, “[Presidential Election D-7] NEC goes all out on early-voting management... securing transparency as top priority,” Yonhap News, May 27, 2025.

94) Lee Hae-in et al., “Second-day early voting rate declines... ‘The NEC spoiled the atmosphere through poor management,’” Chosun Ilbo, June 2, 2025.

manager's affixing of the seal may not be substituted by a printed seal, while allowing a designated deputy of the early voting manager to affix the seal on the manager's behalf⁹⁵).

□ Process of Introducing Electronic Vote-Counting Machines

○ 2002-2004: Initial Introduction and Expansion

- Electronic vote-counting machines were first used in the 3rd Nationwide Simultaneous Local Elections (covering five elections) on June 13, 2002⁹⁶. Thereafter, the same type of electronic vote-counting machine was used in the 16th presidential election in 2002 and the 17th National Assembly general election in 2004, and during the 2004 general election the government announced that it had deployed 1,377 machines at 248 counting centers nationwide⁹⁷).
- At the time, the use of ballot-sorting machines was based on Article 99(3) of the Public Official Election Management Regulations, which had been delegated under Article 178(4) of the Public Official Election and Election Malpractice Prevention Act (Progress of Vote Counting), but, as discussed below, there was controversy over its constitutionality.

Public Official Election and Election Malpractice Prevention Act [Effective March 7, 2002] [Act No. 6663, March 7, 2002, partially amended]

Article 178 (Progress of Vote Counting)

④ Procedures for vote counting, the form of the vote-count status table, and other necessary matters shall be prescribed by National Election Commission Regulations.

Public Official Election Management Regulations [Effective March 21, 2002] [National Election Commission Regulation No. 187, March 21, 2002, partially amended]

Article 99 (Progress of Vote Counting, etc.)

95) Partial Amendment Bill to the Public Official Election Act (proposed by Representative Cho Jung-hoon and 34 others, Bill No. 2216632 (February 6, 2026), 432nd National Assembly (Extraordinary Session)).

96) Shin Seung-geun, "[Eureka] The Humiliation of Electronic Vote-Counting Machines / Shin Seung-geun," Hankyoreh, Mar. 31, 2020.

97) Hong Young-mo, "1,377 Electronic Vote-Counting Machines Deployed at 248 Counting Centers Nationwide," Korea Policy Briefing, Apr. 15, 2004.

- ① ② (omitted)
- ③ In counting votes, a Gu/Si/Gun Committee may use mechanical devices or computer systems necessary to classify ballots as valid or invalid, or by candidate, or for calculation. <Amended Mar. 21, 2002>

○ **Since 2014: Clarification of the Legal Basis Through Amendment of the Public Official Election Act**

- Previously, electronic vote-counting machines had been used on the basis of Article 99 of the Public Official Election Management Regulations under the delegation of former Article 178(4) of the Public Official Election Act. However, through the amendment of the Public Official Election Act on January 17, 2014, the legal basis for the use of mechanical devices or computer systems to assist voting and counting affairs was expressly clarified in Article 178(2), although, as discussed below, controversy over constitutionality still remains.

Public Official Election Act [Effective October 1, 2025] [Act No. 21066, October 1, 2025, amended by other Act]

Article 178 (Progress of Vote Counting)

- ① (omitted)
- ② In order to assist vote-counting affairs, a Gu/Si/Gun Election Commission may use mechanical devices or computer systems necessary to classify ballots as valid or invalid, or by candidate (or by political party in proportional representation National Assembly elections and proportional representation local council elections), or for calculation. <Newly inserted Jan. 17, 2014>

□ **Introduction of Electronic Vote-Counting Machines and the Controversies Surrounding Them**

○ **Introduction and Operating Method of Electronic Vote-Counting Machines (Ballot-Sorting Machines)**

- **(Background of introduction)** Since the revival of local elections in 1991, there had often been situations in which several elections were conducted simultaneously. In order to improve the speed and accuracy of vote-counting

affairs, a machine for sorting ballots was developed in 2001 by applying financial-sector technology that used scanners to sort checks, and in January 2002 the Election Commission decided to introduce ballot-sorting machines⁹⁸).

- **(Operating method)** The National Election Commission states that the ballot-sorting machine uses an OCR (optical character reader) method to recognize the form and location of the voting mark stamped on the ballot, classify correctly marked ballots by candidate, and separately sort invalid or inaccurately marked ballots so that vote-counting personnel may ultimately verify whether they are valid or invalid⁹⁹). However, controversy exists over whether the device should be regarded not merely as assisting vote-counting affairs through simple ballot sorting, but as actually performing electronic vote counting and therefore constituting an electronic vote-counting machine. As discussed below, there are also constitutional and security controversies.



Electronic Vote Counting Machine (Ballot Sorter)

○ Constitutional Controversy Concerning Electronic Vote-Counting Machines (Ballot-Sorting Machines)

- **(Constitutional controversy)** Constitutional complaints were filed on the grounds that vote counting using computers and computer systems is difficult for ordinary voters to verify and thus harms electoral fairness; that the introduction of electronic vote counting not provided for by law violates due process; and that, because the conditions of monitoring differ from those in manual counting, it infringes equality rights and political participation rights¹⁰⁰).

98) Shim Ji-young, "Introduction of Ballot-Sorting Machines (2002): The Three Elements of Speed, Accuracy, and Efficiency," Cyber Election History Museum of the National Election Commission, Nov. 5, 2018.

99) Shim Ji-young, "Introduction of Ballot-Sorting Machines (2002): The Three Elements of Speed, Accuracy, and Efficiency," Cyber Election History Museum of the National Election Commission, Nov. 5, 2018.

100) Constitutional Court, Mar. 31, 2016, 2015Hun-Ma1056 et al.

- **(Constitutional Court decision)** In response, the Constitutional Court unanimously held Article 178(2) of the Public Official Election Act (allowing the use of mechanical devices and computer systems) to be constitutional, ruling that ballot-sorting machines and the like are merely “devices assisting vote-counting affairs,” and that, because there are procedures for visual inspection and re-verification by humans (the examination/tally section and election commission members), it is difficult to conclude that the fairness of vote counting is infringed. Furthermore, the Court held that, given the simple and repetitive nature of the work, increasing accuracy and efficiency by utilizing machines falls within the discretion of the legislature, and that this cannot be seen as essentially restricting the right to vote¹⁰¹). However, as discussed below, security controversy regarding electronic vote counting has not been dispelled.

< Relevant Case Holdings >

○ Holding of the Constitutional Court (Constitutional Court, Nov. 1, 2005, 2005Hun-Ma982)

A vote-counting machine is based on Article 99(3) of the Public Official Election Management Regulations pursuant to the delegation under Article 178(4) (Progress of Vote Counting) of the Public Official Election Act, and constitutes a mechanical device that tabulates ballots by candidate, excluding unclassified ballots, in order to assist the visual confirmation and examination by the examination and tally section.

○ Holding of the Supreme Court (Supreme Court, May 31, 2004, 2003Su26)

A vote-counting machine is based on Article 99(3) of the Public Official Election Management Regulations pursuant to the delegation under Article 178(4) (Progress of Vote Counting) of the Public Official Election Act.

○ Holding of the Constitutional Court (Constitutional Court, Mar. 31, 2016, 2015Hun-Ma1056 et al.)

With respect to Article 178(2) of the Public Official Election Act as amended by Act No. 12267 on January 17, 2014, the provision allowing the use of mechanical devices or computer systems, for the purpose of assisting vote-counting affairs, to classify ballots as valid or invalid or by candidate, or for calculation, does not infringe the right to vote.

101) Constitutional Court, Mar. 31, 2016, 2015Hun-Ma1056 et al.

○ **Security Controversy Concerning Electronic Vote-Counting Machines (Ballot-Sorting Machines)**

- **(Results of the joint NIS security inspection)** On October 10, 2023, following a two-month joint security inspection conducted from July by the National Intelligence Service, the National Election Commission, and the Korea Internet & Security Agency (KISA), vulnerabilities in the NEC's voting and counting management systems were tested by having hypothetical hackers attempt to penetrate the NEC's computer network, and it was revealed that the system was in such a poor security state that foreign forces, including North Korea, could infiltrate it at any time¹⁰²).
- Multiple vulnerabilities were found in the integrated voter list, the election network, and communication equipment at early voting stations, leading to the assessment that it was technically possible to manipulate the displayed number of early voters, register phantom voters, alter sorting results by hacking electronic vote-counting machines (ballot-sorting machines), and steal the files for the official seals affixed to early voting ballots, including the official seal of the Election Commission and the signature/seal of the voting manager¹⁰³).
- It was also pointed out as a problem that unauthorized USB devices and wireless communication equipment could be connected to electronic vote-counting machines (ballot-sorting machines), enabling the installation of hacking programs, and that the business network and election network could be penetrated through the internet, thereby exposing the program of the electronic vote-counting machine (ballot-sorting machine) to the internet. Analysis was even presented that "manipulation in the form of classifying votes for Candidate A as votes for Candidate B is possible in theory."¹⁰⁴).
- **(Measures taken after the NIS inspection)** The National Election Commission has stated that it implemented technical supplementary measures such as strengthening network separation for the voter register and election network, blocking unauthorized USB devices, controlling wireless communication

102) Han Dong-hoon, "National Election Commission Vulnerable to Hacking... Both Voting and Counting Can Be Manipulated,' NIS Announces," The Epoch Times, Oct. 10, 2023.

103) Han Dong-hoon, "National Election Commission Vulnerable to Hacking... Both Voting and Counting Can Be Manipulated,' NIS Announces," The Epoch Times, Oct. 10, 2023.

104) Han Dong-hoon, "National Election Commission Vulnerable to Hacking... Both Voting and Counting Can Be Manipulated,' NIS Announces," The Epoch Times, Oct. 10, 2023.

equipment, and managing programs as non-public. While acknowledging the existence of technical vulnerabilities, it has repeatedly emphasized that actual manipulation would, in reality, be difficult without internal collusion.

- **(Response of the National Election Commission)** The NEC explains that ballot-sorting machines are, in principle, not equipped with LAN cards, do not directly communicate with the central server, and are separated from the system that stores vote-counting results, so it is structurally impossible to change results through external network hacking. It also emphasizes that the machines merely perform sorting, while all ballots are re-checked and tallied by human beings in the examination and tally section, and that final vote totals are subject to inspection and announcement by election commission members; therefore, the structure is not one in which machine-only error could overturn the result¹⁰⁵). However, as discussed below, suspicions and controversy concerning electronic vote-counting machines have not ended, and demands for manual counting continue.

○ Recent Trends and Discussion on Institutional Reform

- **(Trend toward strengthening electoral transparency in advanced countries)** Unlike the Korean National Election Commission, which is seen as circumventing the law in the name of efficiency, advanced countries are reforming and operating their electoral systems with transparency and verifiability as the highest priorities.
- The German Federal Constitutional Court, under the fundamental principle of the public nature of elections (Grundsatz der Öffentlichkeit der Wahl), ruled in 2009 that the use of electronic voting machines was unconstitutional. The Court held that “all steps of the election process must be understandable and verifiable by ordinary citizens without specialized knowledge with regard to voting and counting.”¹⁰⁶). It therefore held that the use of unverifiable electronic voting machines was unconstitutional.
- The Netherlands introduced Nedap/Groenendaal voting computers in 1998 and used touchscreen voting machines nationwide, but in 2006 it was demonstrated that the voting-machine program could be manipulated through electromagnetic

105) Kim Cheol-young, “National Election Commission: Hacking or Manipulation of Ballot-Sorting Machines Is Impossible,” NewsPower, Jan. 21, 2025.

106) BVerfG, Urteil vom 3. März 2009 – 2 BvC 3/07 (BVerfGE 123, 39)

emissions, revealing the hacking vulnerability of Nedap machines and proving that vote-count totals could be altered¹⁰⁷). On October 1, 2007, the Alkmaar District Court in the Netherlands decided to revoke the certification of Nedap/Groenendaal voting machines¹⁰⁸). The Netherlands then returned, from 2008 onward, to paper ballots and manual counting.

- In Taiwan, public elections adhere to the principle of manual counting and do not use electronic vote-counting machines; nor do they implement early voting, absentee voting, or mail-in voting. Even in the 2024 presidential election, ballots were openly counted one by one at each polling place in the presence of observers. This is understood as reflecting the judgment that gaining the public's trust is more important, even if it takes more time, and it is evaluated as an effective mechanism for preventing election interference by outside forces such as the Chinese Communist Party¹⁰⁹).
- Japan uses electronic vote-counting machines, but only as an auxiliary means after election officers first complete manual counting and verify the results. By contrast, South Korea claims to conduct electronic counting first and then have election officers verify it, but in reality, under the pretext of speed and efficiency, proper verification is not being carried out.
- The United States has not transitioned to full manual vote counting; however, following the controversies over alleged election fraud after the 2020 presidential election, various states have been advancing legislation to strengthen electoral transparency. The state of Georgia revised its election law in 2021 to enhance voter identification requirements and tighten absentee ballot application procedures, while the state of Texas passed legislation in the same year to strengthen election monitoring. These measures share a common emphasis on prioritizing reliability over administrative efficiency.
- **(Republic of Korea: Calls for Transition to Manual Counting)** During the 21st National Assembly general election in 2020, videos circulated showing invalid ballots that had passed through electronic vote-counting machines (ballot-sorting machines) being classified as valid ballots. In response, the

107) Institute of Korean Political Studies, Seoul National University, "Policy Research for Promoting the Advancement of Voting and Counting," 2013, pp. 73-75.

108) EDRi, "Electronic voting machines eliminated in the Netherlands," Oct. 24, 2007.

109) Choi Chang-geun, "How Taiwan Fundamentally Blocks Election Fraud: Manual Counting, 100% In-Person Voting...", The Epoch Times, Jan. 17, 2024.

National Election Commission announced that it would consider implementing full manual counting starting from the 2024 general election in order to dispel allegations that electronic vote-counting machines (ballot-sorting machines) were failing to properly classify ballots and were being exploited for election fraud.¹¹⁰).

- **(Republic of Korea NEC: Compromise by Maintaining Electronic Counting)** Despite trends in advanced countries toward abolishing electronic counting and introducing manual counting to enhance transparency and verifiability, the Korean National Election Commission maintained the use of electronic vote-counting machines in the June 3, 2025 presidential election. However, in an effort to dispel allegations of election fraud, the NEC adopted a compromise approach by strengthening security and verification measures, including △ inspection and monitoring involving security experts △ direct participation of party observers in manual verification (hand counting) △ recording and preserving the vote-counting process¹¹¹). Nevertheless, even after the 21st presidential election, suspicions of election fraud related to the use of the early voting system and electronic vote-counting machines (ballot-sorting machines) appear to have intensified further.

110) Choi Hye-ryeong et al., "Amid Electronic Counting Controversy... NEC to Push for 'Full Manual Counting' in Next Year's General Election," *Dong-A Ilbo*, Nov. 15, 2023.

111) Yoon Myung-jin, "Persistent Allegations of 'Ballot-Sorting Machine Manipulation'... 'Establish a Public-Private-Government Verification Group for Monitoring,'" *Dong-A Ilbo*, Apr. 11, 2025.

2. Suspicions of External Influence and Intervention in the Election Administration Structure

□ Hana Program Center

○ Overview and Background of Establishment

- **(Overview)** Hana Program Center was the first inter-Korean IT joint venture, established in August 2001 in Dandong, Liaoning Province, China, by South Korea's HanaBiz.com and North Korea's Pyongyang Information Center (PIC), which invested a total capital of USD 2 million at a ratio of 6:4, for the purposes of inter-Korean economic and technological cooperation and laying the groundwork for reunification. It ceased operations in December 2011 due to management difficulties.
- **(Background of establishment)** Hana Program Center was triggered by the establishment of HanaBiz.com in April 2000 by President Moon Gwang-seung, who had been active in civic organizations, together with the Korean Sharing Movement and the Kungangsan International Group, under the concept of conducting business (BIZ) in which the South and the North become one (HANA).¹¹²⁾ Later that same year, following the June 15 South-North Joint Declaration between the leaders of the two Koreas, private-sector exchange and cooperation through IT accelerated, and the establishment of Hana Program Center has been evaluated as one of the major outcomes of the June 15 Joint Declaration¹¹³⁾.



하나프로그램 센터 시무식 사진 (출처: 이데일리)

112) Kwon Sang-hee, "[Top 100 Events_058] Establishment of the First Inter-Korean IT Joint Venture <August 2001>," Electronic Times, Sept. 17, 2012.

113) On Gi-hong, "Untying the Knots of Inter-Korean Politics Through IT," Post Office and People, Apr. 2002.

- **(Inaugural ceremony)** Major related figures from South Korea, North Korea, and China attended the inaugural ceremony held on August 2, 2001. On the South Korean side, attendees included Park Kyung-yoon, Chairman of Kumgangsan International Group; Moon Gwang-seung, President of HanaBiz.com; Nam Min-woo, President of Dasan Networks; and Lee Sang-san, Director of the Supercomputing Center. On the North Korean side, attendees included Jang Woo-young, President of Minryeon; Choi Ju-sik, President of PIC; Kim Yu-jong, Chief Engineer of PIC; and development and training personnel. From China, Woo Hoe-rak, Vice Mayor of Dandong City, attended.

○ **Organizational Structure and Business Activities**

- **(Organizational structure)** It is said that the total number of developers at the center expanded from 10 at the initial stage of the business to a total of 90¹¹⁴). Approximately 40 North Korean developers and training personnel with 5 to 10 years of experience, including graduates of the Pyongyang Information Center (PIC), Kim Chaek University of Technology, and Kim Il Sung University, were dispatched to Dandong and worked together with South Korean engineers. It is presumed that 10 development personnel were immediately assigned to programming work, while 30 trainees were deployed to actual work after a six-month training period¹¹⁵). On average, North Korean developers reportedly worked there for five to six years, and their wages, at the time of retirement, ranged from about USD 1,000 to USD 1,800, which was said to be approximately one-third to two-thirds of the wages of South Korean software developers at the time. However, the hiring of North Korean personnel was highly rigid, and even the general manager, Lee Sang-san, could not meet North Korean developers one-on-one. Communication was restricted to a limited form in which opinions were conveyed through the representative dispatched from the North (the head of the development office). From this, it appears that the dispatched personnel of the two states did not form an organically integrated organization¹¹⁶).

114) Kim Hyun-a, "Do You Know Hana Program Center, Which Worked with North Korean Software Developers for 10 Years?" Edaily, July 6, 2018.

115) Yoo Hyung-jun, "Hana Program Center Begins Full-Scale Operations," Electronic Times, Aug. 3, 2001.

116) Kwon Sang-hee, "[Top 100 Events_058] Establishment of the First Inter-Korean IT Joint Venture <August 2001>," Electronic Times, Sept. 17, 2012.

- **(Business activities)** Its main business fields were e-commerce, natural language recognition, and network-related software, and it was agreed that profits earned through Hana Program Center would be divided between the South Korean and North Korean sides at a ratio of 6 to 4¹¹⁷⁾. It is known to have jointly developed mobile 3D programming (with SK C&C), Ethernet solutions (with Dasan Networks), and integrated Korean-Chinese-Japanese IME development (with KISTI)¹¹⁸⁾. Lee Sang-san, former General Manager of Hana Program Center (and former Vice President of HandySoft), later recalled: “We engaged in contracted software development, packaging North Korean products for commercialization, and developing our own products for business purposes.”¹¹⁹⁾.

○ **Relations with Other Institutions**

- **(Dasan Group)** Dasan Group appears to have been the de facto owner of Hana Program by securing approximately 70% of the shares of HanaBiz.com, which established Hana Program. Because Dasan Networks substantially possessed the technology related to the early electronic vote-counting machines and election software (NetTool, HanTool) created through Hana Program, built relationships with outside powers such as China and North Korea through Hana Program, and established ties with major figures related to alleged election fraud in Korea, Hana Program Center was effectively no different from the parent entity that enabled Dasan Group to play a core role in building and operating an alleged election-fraud system.
- **(Indirect control through acquisition of HanaBiz.com shares)** Nam Min-woo, President of Dasan Networks, accompanied the third private-sector inter-Korean IT cooperation delegation to North Korea in April 2001, and in July 2001 he assumed management of Hana Program Center on condition of acquiring 50% of HanaBiz.com’s shares. Lee Sang-san, then head of the Supercomputing Center at the Korea Institute of Science and Technology Information (KISTI), was appointed CEO of Hana Program Center, was dispatched to China and worked there for six months, then returned to KISTI,

117) Yoo Hyung-jun, “Hana Program Center Begins Full-Scale Operations,” *Electronic Times*, Aug. 3, 2001.

118) Lee Hyang-seon, “[Reporter Lee Hyang-seon’s IT Retrospective] Establishment of ‘HanaBiz.com,’ the First Inter-Korean IT Joint Venture,” Mar. 27, 2016.

119) Kim Hyun-a, “Do You Know Hana Program Center, Which Worked with North Korean Software Developers for 10 Years?” *Edaily*, July 6, 2018.

and two years later, in 2003, moved to Dasan, where he later served as Vice President of Dasan Networks.¹²⁰⁾

- **(Closure of HanaBiz.com)** Dasan Group invested in a 70% stake of HanaBiz.com through Dasan Investment, but after Hana Program closed in December 2011 due to worsening business conditions, HanaBiz.com also soon suspended operations¹²¹⁾. It remained as an affiliate of Dasan Networks, but was excluded from Dasan Networks' specially related parties when it closed in the first half of 2024¹²²⁾.
- **(Relationship with Huawei through Siemens)** In March 2004, Dasan Networks sold 5.5 million newly issued shares to the German electrical and electronics company Siemens at KRW 9,000 per share, transferring management control. However, four years later, in August 2008, when Siemens fully joined hands with Nokia, Nokia Siemens Networks (NSN) sold all 7.9 million shares of Dasan Networks it held (at KRW 3,615 per share at the time), effectively returning control of Dasan to Dasan itself. However, in February 2004, one month before Siemens' acquisition of Dasan Networks took place, Siemens and Huawei established a joint venture in Beijing in the field of third-generation telecommunications equipment¹²³⁾. In light of this, it is difficult to view the matter simply as a successful investment based on Dasan Group's strategic judgment alone. As prosecutorial investigations were underway following the exposure of bribery lobbying in the process of supplying electronic vote-counting machines to South Korea in 2002, one cannot help but raise the question of whether there may have been some transaction with Huawei and/or the Chinese Communist Party for Dasan Group to temporarily transfer management control to a foreign company such as Siemens in order to avoid judicial risk.
- **(HandySoft)** Although HandySoft does not have a direct relationship with Hana Program Center, it is related in that, when Dasan Group acquired HandySoft in 2011, Mr. Lee Sang-san, who had served as General Manager of Hana

120) Kwon Sang-hee, "[Top 100 Events_058] Establishment of the First Inter-Korean IT Joint Venture <August 2001>," Electronic Times, Sept. 17, 2012.

121) Kwon Sang-hee, "[Top 100 Events_058] Establishment of the First Inter-Korean IT Joint Venture <August 2001>," Electronic Times, Sept. 17, 2012.

122) Dasan Networks Semiannual Report (2024.06).

123) The New Paradigm, "Nam Min-woo's Dasan Networks, a Venture Success Myth, at the Core of the Election Fraud Cartel," NPK, Dec. 30, 2024.

Program Center, became CEO of HandySoft, and HandySoft—specialized in the postal system’s information systems responsible for the delivery and management of election mail—was incorporated, together with Hana Program, which had developed the early electronic vote-counting machines and election software (NetTool, HanTool), into Dasan Group’s control structure.

- **(Before Dasan Group’s acquisition)** HandySoft, founded in 1991, was listed on KOSDAQ in 1999 and was responsible for managing the postal groupware system. It won the National Election Commission records-management system contract in 2005 and the postal logistics portal system contract in 2008, and by 2009 it had grown into an important company by winning information-system contracts from the Defense Agency for Technology and Quality, the Blue House, Presidential Records Management, and the Supreme Court.
- **(Dasan Group’s acquisition)** However, around 2009, due to Oriental Resource’s (Dongyang Holdings’) aggressive mergers and acquisitions, the company’s identity shifted from software development to resource development, causing a sharp deterioration in management, and it was delisted from KOSDAQ in 2010. Dasan then acquired HandySoft in 2011. In 2013, Lee Sang-san, former General Manager of Hana Program Center, became CEO of HandySoft; in 2016 HandySoft was relisted on KOSDAQ; and in 2018 HandySoft was incorporated into Kevoting, an affiliate of Dasan¹²⁴).
- **(Connection between the National Election Commission and the Chinese and North Korean Communist Parties)** HandySoft, which developed the information systems of major state institutions, exclusively supplies the online voting system (K-Voting) to the National Election Commission under Kevoting of Dasan Group. It is said that the first project HandySoft carried out after being incorporated under Kevoting of Dasan Group was the development of the NEC online voting system (K-Voting)¹²⁵). HandySoft, in which former General Manager Lee Sang-san—who had been deeply involved in Hana Program Center, a collaborative project with the Chinese and North Korean Communist Parties—took office as a director, may be viewed as a key company in building close ties between the National Election Commission and the Chinese and North Korean Communist Parties.

124) The New Paradigm, “Nam Min-woo’s Dasan Networks, a Venture Success Myth, at the Core of the Election Fraud Cartel,” NPK, Dec. 30, 2024.

125) The New Paradigm, “Nam Min-woo’s Dasan Networks, a Venture Success Myth, at the Core of the Election Fraud Cartel,” NPK, Dec. 30, 2024.

○ Related Suspicions

- **(Suspicion of establishing an early election–fraud system)** It has been alleged that the electronic vote–counting machines and election software (NetTool, HanTool) developed at Hana Program Center were supplied to the National Election Commission and were fully used from the 2002 presidential election (Lee Hoi–chang vs. Roh Moo–hyun), thereby marking the beginning of election fraud¹²⁶).
- **(Suspicion of providing source code for electronic vote–counting machines and election software)** Although outwardly Hana Program was part of private–sector exchange and cooperation through IT under the June 15 Joint Declaration between the two Koreas, one cannot help but raise the reasonable suspicion that in reality it exposed the vulnerabilities of electronic vote–counting machine and election software technology to hostile states (China and North Korea) at the source–code level, thereby providing a channel for technical intervention.
- **(Suspicion of providing the foundation for training North Korean hackers)** Hana Program Center had an attached training center, where South Korean instructors provided IT retraining to North Korean IT personnel in Windows, Linux, networks, Java, and similar fields¹²⁷). This inevitably raises the following suspicions: “What background made it possible for world–class hackers to be trained in North Korea, which is close to being one of the poorest countries in the world?” and “Could there truly be no connection at all with Hana Program Center, the North Korean programmer training site in Dandong, China, where former HandySoft Vice President Lee Sang–san was involved from 2001 for 10 years?”
- **(Suspicion of providing a channel for influence projection by North Korea and the Chinese Communist Party over South Korea’s election system)** During the establishment and operation of Hana Program, major South Korean political and business figures may have built close personal networks with outside powers such as China and North Korea and thereby served as channels of communication between anti–state forces inside Korea and foreign powers, raising the suspicion that they provided channels for external election intervention. It is also questionable whether companies owned by the Chinese

126) Lee Yeo–jin, “‘Suspicious of Manipulation in the 2002 Presidential Election’ Through an Inter–Korean Joint Election System,” Sky Daily, Mar. 6, 2025, p. 1.

127) On Gi–hong, “Untying the Knots of Inter–Korean Politics Through IT,” Post Office and People, Apr. 2002.

Communist Party, such as Huawei or Tencent, are projecting influence into South Korea's election system through companies such as Siemens or Capstone Partners. This inevitably raises the following suspicion: "Why does the South Korean government entrust its election system to Dasan Group, which operated Hana Program Center, an inter-Korean joint company training North Korean programmers, and which received investment from the Chinese Communist Party?"

□ Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB)

○ Overview and Major Historical Development

- **(Overview)** The Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB) is an international consultative body established in 2013 under the leadership of the Republic of Korea, in which election-management bodies around the world participate (121 election-management bodies from 111 countries as of early 2026).
- **(Member bodies)** A total of 121 election-management bodies are active as member organizations of A-WEB, including 26 in Asia, 31 in the Americas, 39 in Africa (including two election bodies from Mali), 19 in Europe, and 6 in Oceania.
- **(Associate members)** Two regional election associations—the Arab EMBs and the Association of Asian Election Authorities (AAEA)—have agreed to the "A-WEB Charter" and thereby acquired associate-member status, granting them the right to speak at the General Assembly but not the right to vote.
- **Major contents of the A-WEB Charter**

■ **[Nature of A-WEB]** A non-political consultative body among election institutions, voluntary and independent in character, which does not intervene in the sovereignty issues of individual states.

■ **[Composition]** Any national-level election-management body responsible for election affairs in its country is eligible for membership.

■ **[Organization]** Composed of the General Assembly, the Executive Board, and the Secretariat.

■ **[General Assembly]** Held every two years, with the head of the election body hosting the General Assembly serving as Chair and convening and presiding over the meeting.

■ **[Executive Board]** Composed of the heads of up to 10 election bodies elected by the General Assembly in a manner reflecting representation by continent, or representatives designated according to appropriate procedures, together with the Chair, Vice–Chair, and Secretary–General.

▶ **(Term of Executive Board members)** Two years, renewable once only (except for the Secretary–General).

▶ **(Meetings of the Executive Board)** Held once annually, though extraordinary meetings may be convened upon the request of more than one–third of Executive Board members, and the Secretary–General may convene an extraordinary meeting with the consent of more than one–third of the Executive Board members.

■ **[Officers]**

▶ **(Chair)** The head of the election body hosting the General Assembly serves as Chair.

▶ **(Vice–Chair)** The head of the election body hosting the next General Assembly serves as Vice–Chair.

▶ **(Secretary–General)** Nominated by the head of the election body of the state where the Secretariat is located, recommended by consensus of the Executive Board, and approved by the General Assembly. The Secretary–General serves a term of four years and may be reappointed once only.

■ **[Secretariat]** The Secretariat shall be located in the Republic of Korea.

▶ **(Operating expenses of the Secretariat)** The election body of the state hosting the Secretariat shall bear the costs of the Secretariat building, its maintenance, and administrative processing.

– History of establishment and major meetings



Establishment and History of Major Meetings (Source: A-WEB Official Brochure)

○ Organizational Structure and Activities

- **(Main organization)** A-WEB is composed of the General Assembly, the Executive Board, and the Secretariat.
 - **(General Assembly)** The highest decision-making body of A-WEB, in which all member election-management bodies participate, and which is held every two years to determine the organization's principal strategies and directions.
 - **(Executive Board)** The operating body of A-WEB, composed of election-management bodies from approximately 20 countries, with meetings held annually.
 - **(Secretariat)** The permanent body of A-WEB led by the Secretary-General, located in Songdo International City, Incheon Metropolitan City, Republic of Korea. It supports the holding of the General Assembly and Executive Board meetings and plans and implements programs for member bodies.
- **(Main activities)** The A-WEB Secretariat reportedly organizes and operates the following four major programs in order to facilitate the exchange of experience and knowledge among election-management bodies:
 - **(Training for strengthening election-management capacity)** It operates educational programs to help election officials around the world strengthen their capacity and seek solutions to the issues faced by election-management bodies.
 - **(International election observation)** It operates multinational election-observation programs so that election officials from various countries may observe elections in different states.
 - **(Global exchange and cooperation)** It hosts international seminars and conferences with election-management bodies and related international organizations to exchange expertise and experience in the field of election administration.
 - **(Publications and platform operation)** It publishes newsletters, annual reports, and reports related to A-WEB programs containing the status of election administration in various countries, thereby sharing global examples of election administration and electoral systems.
 - **(Support for introduction and institutionalization of election ICT)** It provides training designed to strengthen election integrity in a manner tailored to the circumstances of each country and to build the technical capacity of local personnel so that they can operate systems independently without outside assistance.

○ **Act on Support for the Association of World Election Bodies**

- Legislative history of the Bill on Support for the Association of World Election Bodies¹²⁸).

- a. Date proposed and proposers: October 2, 2013, Representative Kim Tae-hwan and 12 others
- b. Date referred: October 17, 2013
- c. Dates of submission and voting
 - 320th National Assembly (Regular Session), 11th Public Administration and Security Committee (Dec. 6, 2013): submitted, proposal explained, review report, substitute discussion, referred to subcommittee
 - 321st National Assembly (Extraordinary Session), 1st Bill Review Subcommittee (Dec. 11, 2013): submitted
 - 321st National Assembly (Extraordinary Session), 5th Bill Review Subcommittee (Dec. 19, 2013): submitted and passed (amended)
 - 321st National Assembly (Extraordinary Session), 3rd Public Administration and Security Committee (Dec. 20, 2013): submitted, subcommittee review report, article-by-article review, passed (amended)
 - 321st National Assembly (Extraordinary Session), 4th plenary session (Dec. 24, 2013): submitted and passed (amended)
 - 321st National Assembly (Extraordinary Session), 2nd plenary session (Dec. 26, 2013): submitted and passed (amended)
- d. Transferred to the government: January 10, 2014
- e. Promulgation and enforcement: January 21, 2014

- **Purpose and key contents of the Bill on Support for the Association of World Election Bodies¹²⁹.**

- **(Purpose of proposal)** The Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB, hereinafter “the Association”) is the largest international organization in the

128) Bill on Support for the Association of World Election Bodies (proposed by Representative Kim Tae-hwan and 12 others, Bill No. 1907109 (Oct. 2, 2013), 320th National Assembly (Regular Session))

129) Bill on Support for the Association of World Election Bodies (proposed by Representative Kim Tae-hwan and 12 others, Bill No. 1907109 (Oct. 2, 2013), 320th National Assembly (Regular Session))

field of electoral democracy in which election bodies of countries around the world and election-related international organizations participate. It was proposed and led by the Republic of Korea, which held the inaugural General Assembly in Songdo, Incheon in October of that year, and the Secretariat was to be located domestically. In this situation, where the establishment of the Association and the hosting of its Secretariat in Korea had been confirmed, the purpose was to support the activities of the Association and the stable operation of the Secretariat by clarifying the various legal bases and procedures regarding the Association's legal capacity as an international organization and support by the state and local governments.

- **(Main contents)** The proposed Act consisted of a total of four Articles, with the key contents as follows:

Main contents of the proposed Act on Support for the Association of World Election Bodies

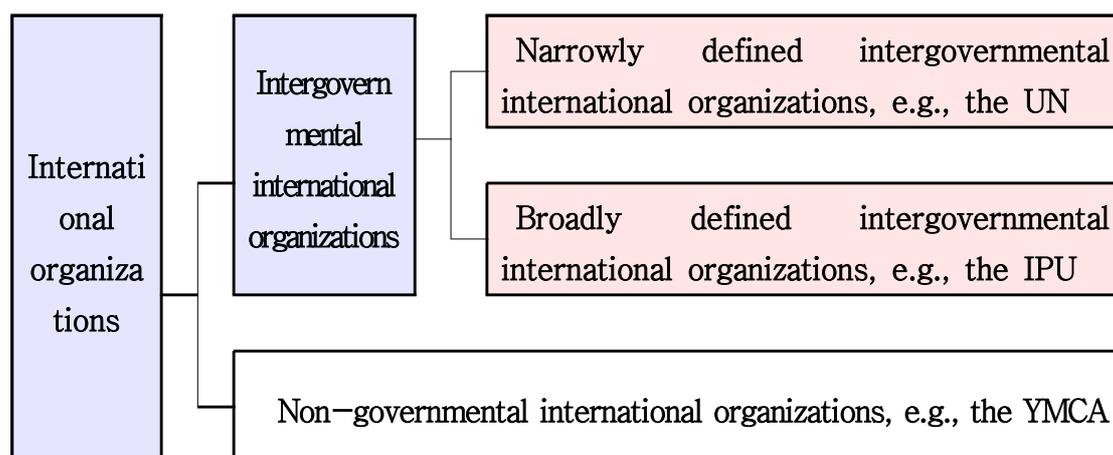
Categories	Main contents
Article 1 (Purpose)	To support the activities and operation of A-WEB and its Secretariat
Article 2 (Legal personality and capacity to act)	To possess legal personality and capacity to act as an international organization
Article 3 (Cooperation with the Association)	Cooperation with A-WEB shall be overseen by the Chairperson of the National Election Commission
Article 4 (Support by the State and Local Governments)	The state and local governments may provide necessary administrative and financial support

- Major review and examination issues concerning the Bill on Support for the Association of World Election Bodies¹³⁰⁾¹³¹⁾.
- (Whether A-WEB is an international organization: not an international organization) Article 2(1) of the proposed Act explicitly defined A-WEB as an “international organization,” but although A-WEB was joined by election-management bodies of various countries and election-related international organizations, it is difficult to regard it as a narrowly defined intergovernmental international organization because it was not established by an intergovernmental treaty. A-WEB was established by a charter, which does not constitute formal hard law such as a treaty.

130) Expert Review Report of the Public Administration and Security Committee (Dec. 2013)

131) Review Report of the Public Administration and Security Committee (Dec. 2013)

- However, since the parties at the inaugural General Assembly adopted, through the A–WEB Charter, a resolution to establish the organization, there is room to regard it as an international organization in a broad sense. Nevertheless, in order to be recognized as an international organization, it is ordinarily necessary to be granted the three elements of the establishment of an international organization—international legal personality, capacity to act, and privileges and immunities¹³²). Yet the A–WEB Charter does not specify these three elements, nor were they mentioned in the resolutions adopted at the inaugural General Assembly¹³³). Since the A–WEB Charter cannot be said to have binding legal force beyond the obligation to pay membership dues, and is closer to a non–binding agreement document than a resolution among states, A–WEB may be viewed not as an international organization but as a kind of consultative body pursuing the promotion of cooperation among election–management bodies. Finally, considering that whether an entity is an “international organization” is determined under international law and is not something that can be separately prescribed explicitly by domestic law, it was considered desirable to delete the expression “as an international organization” from Article 2(1).



Classification of types of international organizations (Source: Expert Review Report of the Public Administration and Security Committee on the Bill on Support for the Association of World Election Bodies)

132) Jung Min-jung, “Issues Concerning the Legal Personality of the Green Climate Fund (GCF)—Its Relation to the Capacity to Conclude a Headquarters Agreement and the Need for Domestic Legislation,” *Seoul Journal of International Law*, Vol. 19, No. 2, 2012, p. 136.

133) For reference, in the case of the GGGI, the Agreement on the Establishment of the Global Green Growth Institute expressly provides for legal personality and capacity (Article 14) and privileges and immunities (Article 15).

- **(Whether A–WEB has legal personality: absence of international legal personality and possibility of domestic legal personality)** Article 2(1) of the proposed Act stated that A–WEB possesses legal personality sufficient to perform functions according to its purposes of establishment and operation, but because domestic law cannot confer the legal personality of an international organization, the proposed Act may be understood as intending to confer “legal personality as a domestic corporation.” However, in order for A–WEB to be granted legal personality under domestic law, legislative precedents such as the Civil Act or special acts on the establishment of various corporations require matters such as registration of incorporation, articles of incorporation, a board of directors, and a supervisory authority. According to Article 32 et seq. of the Civil Act, requirements such as articles of incorporation, a board of directors, and a supervisory authority are necessary. Because the proposed Act did not specify these requirements, it was deemed necessary to add and supplement related provisions.
- **(Scope of A–WEB’s legal capacity to act: explicit enumerated limitation required)** Article 2(1) of the proposed Act provided: “The Association of World Election Bodies, as an international organization, possesses legal personality and capacity to act for carrying out its public functions according to the purposes of its establishment and operation, including the following acts:
 1. entering into contracts or otherwise becoming a party to contracts;
 2. acquiring or disposing of movable property, immovable property, or other assets;
 3. instituting lawsuits or otherwise becoming a party to litigation.”
 This may be seen as intended to enable A–WEB to operate the Secretariat smoothly and thereby engage in substantive domestic and international activities. Although the legal capacity sufficient for a given organization to carry out activities according to its purposes of establishment and operation may vary by organization, in most cases the three core legal capacities allowed are: ① the capacity to enter into contracts, ② the capacity to acquire and dispose of real property, and ③ the capacity to bring suit¹³⁴). Therefore,

¹³⁴) Since Article 2(1) could be interpreted as permitting activities beyond those enumerated in the subparagraphs, and since it is unclear what such “other public functions” are, it was judged to risk violating the principle of legal clarity. The standard for clarity is whether the legal norm gives fair notice to its addressees so they can

it was considered appropriate to amend the main clause of Article 2(1) to read: “The Association of World Election Bodies may perform the following acts according to the purposes of its establishment and operation,” and to enumerate the subparagraphs.¹³⁵⁾.

- **(Privileges and immunities of A–WEB: acquisition of international–organization status through treaty form must first be pursued)** Even if A–WEB were granted legal personality and legal capacity under the proposed Act, since it did not acquire international legal personality through a treaty, it would in reality be difficult for it to conclude a headquarters agreement; accordingly, it appears that it would not be able to enjoy privileges and immunities, which are typically provided by inclusion in an establishment agreement or through the conclusion of a headquarters agreement. The purpose of privileges and immunities is to ensure that an international organization may operate and perform its functions without interference from governments, and the privileges and immunities ordinarily granted to international organizations include immunity from jurisdiction, inviolability of official premises, documents, and archives, immunity of property, funds, and assets from legal process, search, and seizure, exemptions from taxes and duties, and privileges and immunities for representatives of member states and the organization’s staff. Therefore, if circumstances arise in which recognition of privileges or immunities for the organization and its personnel is necessary with regard to A–WEB’s capacity to act, it is considered necessary first to pursue procedures to obtain international–organization status, such as concluding an establishment agreement in treaty form.

know its meaning and content and have predictability, and whether it sufficiently governs the institutions interpreting and enforcing the law so as to exclude arbitrary interpretation or enforcement—in other words, whether predictability and the exclusion of arbitrary enforcement are secured (Constitutional Court, June 30, 2005, 2002Hun–Ba83).

135) In a similar case, the Act on Support for the Operation of the Green Climate Fund also confers legal capacity by enumerating such acts.

Article 2 (Legal Capacity)

- ① The Green Climate Fund (hereinafter “the Fund”) may perform the following acts according to the purposes of its establishment and operation:
 1. entering into contracts or otherwise becoming a party to contracts;
 2. acquiring or disposing of movable property, immovable property, or other assets;
 3. instituting lawsuits or otherwise becoming a party to litigation;
 4. issuing financial instruments or trading financial instruments in financial markets.
- ② In performing the acts under paragraph (1), the Fund shall comply with the relevant laws and regulations of the Republic of Korea.

- **Full text of the Act on Support for the Association of World Election Bodies**
 - **(Major revisions from the original bill)** Since the original bill contained ambiguities regarding the legal personality and capacity to act of A-WEB, it was expressly provided that A-WEB would be a “corporation” (Article 2), provisions on the requirements for incorporation were added (Articles 3 and 4), the duties of the Association were clearly specified (Article 5), and provisions were newly established allowing the National Assembly, in connection with administrative and financial support by the state and local governments, to require the Central Election Commission to submit the Association’s business plan or settlement report (Article 10(1) and (2)).

Act on Support for the Association of World Election Bodies [Effective Jan. 21, 2014] [Act No. 12331, Jan. 21, 2014, enacted]

Article 1 (Purpose) The purpose of this Act is to facilitate the smooth operation of the Association of World Election Bodies by supporting its activities and operation, thereby contributing to the development of democracy in the international community, in order to promote a culture of free and fair elections around the world through the participation of election-management bodies of various countries and election-related international organizations.

Article 2 (Legal Personality) The Association of World Election Bodies (hereinafter “the Association”) shall be a corporation.

Article 3 (Office) The principal office of the Association shall be located in the Republic of Korea.

Article 4 (Registration) ① The matters to be registered upon incorporation of the Association shall be as follows:

1. purpose
2. name
3. address of the Association’s office
4. names and addresses of officers

② Except as otherwise provided in this Act, the provisions of the Civil Act relating to incorporated associations shall apply mutatis mutandis to the Association. In such case, “articles of incorporation” shall be deemed to mean the “Charter of the Association.”

Article 5 (Duties) The Association shall perform the following duties:

5. international election observation for the conduct of open and transparent elections
6. support for establishing electoral laws and institutions consistent with internationally recognized principles of election administration
7. promotion of the exchange of research results and technical information on electoral systems
8. other matters determined by resolution of the General Assembly and the Executive Board pursuant to the Charter of the Association

Article 6 (Cooperation with the Association) ① Cooperation between the Republic of Korea and the Association shall be overseen by the Chairperson of the National Election Commission (hereinafter in this Article, “the Chairperson”).

② The Chairperson may formulate and implement comprehensive measures to strengthen cooperation with the Association or to support its activities.

③ Where measures formulated under paragraph (2) are related to other central administrative agencies or local governments, the Chairperson may request cooperation from the heads of the relevant central administrative agencies or local governments.

Article 7 (Support by the State and Local Governments) The state and local governments may provide administrative and financial support necessary for the activities and operation of the Association.

Article 8 (Request for the Secondment of Public Officials) The Association may, when necessary for the performance of its duties, request the secondment of public officials under Article 2 of the State Public Officials Act and Article 2 of the Local Public Officials Act from the relevant administrative agencies or local governments.

Article 9 (Request for the Provision of Materials) The Association may request relevant administrative agencies, local governments, public institutions, educational institutions, and research organizations to provide materials such as investigative reports and research papers related to electoral systems.

Article 10 (Submission of Budget–Execution Details, etc.) ① If the Association receives financial support such as contributions, it shall execute such funds transparently.

② Where the state has provided administrative or financial support to the Association, the National Assembly may, when necessary, require through the National Election Commission the submission of the Association’s business plan or settlement report for the relevant year.

Addenda <Act No. 12331, Jan. 21, 2014>

This Act shall enter into force on the date of its promulgation.

○ Problems and Suspicions

- **(Concerns over opaque project implementation and organizational operation centered on the Secretary-General)** According to the A-WEB Charter, A-WEB’s principal officers consist of three persons—the Chair, the Vice-Chair, and the Secretary-General—together with ten Executive Board members elected at the General Assembly. However, while the term of officers other than the Secretary-General is two years, the Secretary-General’s term is four years, renewable once, allowing service for up to eight years. This is expected to create a marked imbalance of knowledge between the Secretary-General and the other officers. Although an organization centered on the Secretary-General undoubtedly has advantages in terms of consistency and efficiency in carrying out its own projects and operating the organization, it may also give rise to problems of arbitrary or opaque project implementation and organizational management. As one example, the first Secretary-General of A-WEB (former Secretary-General of the National Election Commission) was investigated by the prosecution on charges including breach of trust in office and violation of the Subsidy Management Act for providing internal information so that a particular company could win a contract¹³⁶).
- **(Use of budget outside intended purposes)** According to the Board of Audit and Inspection’s September 2019 audit results titled “Status of the National Election Commission’s Promotion, Management, and Supervision of ODA Projects,” KRW 5.9 billion in operating expenses from 2016 to 2018, such as rent for the offices of the Association of World Election Bodies, were spent from the NEC’s ODA project budget in a manner contrary to the purpose of relevant laws and regulations¹³⁷).

136) Jeong Byeong-jin, “National Election Commission’s ODA Support Through A-WEB Sparks Controversy Over ‘Legal Basis,’” OhmyNews, May 3, 2018.

- **(Operation of the organization without corporate incorporation)** It was also discovered that, from its establishment in October 2013 until April 2019, A-WEB had operated without obtaining corporate authorization and incorporation registration procedures under the Act on Support for the Association of World Election Bodies and related laws. The Board of Audit and Inspection therefore notified the Chairperson of the National Election Commission to devise measures to have the Association fulfill the relevant procedures¹³⁸).
- **(Insufficient legal basis for ODA support)** Under Article 7 of the Act on Support for the Association of World Election Bodies, the state and local governments may provide administrative and financial support necessary for the Association's activities and operation. However, the legal basis for ODA project support such as providing election equipment to underdeveloped countries in Africa or Latin America is unclear. Even if the National Election Commission may pursue ODA projects under the Framework Act on International Development Cooperation, there appears to be little basis for A-WEB to accept delegation or entrustment of such ODA projects from the NEC.
- **(Attempt to establish grounds for ODA implementation)** Accordingly, at the 346th National Assembly, Representative Park Nam-chun and 12 others proposed a partial amendment bill to the Act on Support for the Association of World Election Bodies that would expressly include election-related international development cooperation (ODA) projects within A-WEB's scope of duties and provide for administrative and financial support by the state and local governments¹³⁹). However, the bill was discarded upon expiration of the Assembly's term. This is evidence to the contrary that, under the existing Act on Support for the Association of World Election Bodies, there was little basis for A-WEB to carry out ODA projects. Furthermore, in a press release dated February 11, 2025, A-WEB claimed that, aside from the ODA projects it had carried out in eight countries from 2015 to 2019, it was not conducting any ODA projects. Yet from 2020 onward, it appears to have continued

137) Lee Yoo-mi, "KRW 5.9 Billion of NEC ODA Budget Used for A-WEB Operating Expenses," Yonhap News, Sept. 4, 2019.

138) Ibid.

139) Partial Amendment Bill to the Act on Support for the Association of World Election Bodies (proposed by Representative Park Nam-chun and 12 others, Bill No. 2003260 (Nov. 3, 2016), 346th National Assembly).

carrying out projects substantially similar to ODA using external funding, such as support from USAID, rather than domestic funds, raising suspicion that it may be continuing ODA projects indirectly¹⁴⁰).

- **(Details of voting and counting equipment support related to ODA projects)** According to a press release provided by A–WEB on February 11, 2025, A–WEB stated that, as a subsidiary implementing agency of the NEC’s ODA projects, it had supported equipment and infrastructure in eight countries: Kyrgyzstan, Ecuador, El Salvador, Fiji, Uzbekistan, Congo, Samoa, and Papua New Guinea. It further stated that electronic voting was not included in the support to those eight countries, and argued that those projects had no relation to election–fraud controversies in those countries. It also claimed that no ODA projects had been implemented in South Africa, Romania, Belarus, Bolivia, Argentina, or other countries beyond those eight.

A–WEB ODA Project Details (Source: A–WEB Press Release, Feb. 11, 2025)

Category	Recipient Country	Details of Support
2015	Kyrgyzstan	710 Optical Scan Vote Counters, 1 Set of Election Information Systems, 1 Data Center
2016	Ecuador	1,850 Vote Result Transmission Systems
2017	El Salvador	1,800 Vote Result Transmission Systems
	Fiji	50 Touchscreen Voting Systems, 1 Data Center
	Uzbekistan	1 Integrated Voter Registry System
	Congo	1 Data Center
2018 ~ 2019	Samoa	1 Set of Election Information Systems, 1 Data Center
	Papua New Guinea	1 Set of Election Information Systems, 1 Data Center

- **(Controversy over the scope and impact of ODA projects)** However, former U.S. Ambassador–at–Large for Global Criminal Justice Morse Tan stated at the Seattle Forum in December 2025 that “Korea’s National Election Commission and A–WEB are serving as channels for exporting electronic election fraud methods worldwide, and a fraudulent election mechanism combining Korean hardware, Huawei components, and Venezuelan software is helping leftist forces come to power around the world.”¹⁴¹) This presents a position contrary to A–WEB’s official stance. Furthermore, the TheSCIF

140) Shin Ji–hoon, “Morse Tan at Seoul National University Lecture: ‘The U.S. Government Has a Responsibility to Investigate Korea’s Election Commission,’” July 16, 2025.

141) KCPAC, “Why Are They Afraid? The Truth of Election Fraud,” Dec. 19, 2025.

- account, repeatedly cited by President Trump on social media, has posted that South Korea is the hub of global election fraud and that A-WEB is involved, and public reaction to these posts has been very intense¹⁴²⁾¹⁴³⁾¹⁴⁴⁾¹⁴⁵⁾.
- **(Suspicion regarding the cause of silence in political and media circles)** In its early years, A-WEB operated a consultative advisory group composed mainly of political figures and major media figures. Even if such an advisory body is not expressly specified in the Charter, it could certainly be formed for purposes of organizational operation. However, given the silence or inappropriate responses of political and media circles to election-fraud controversies to date, it is difficult to put to rest questions about the role A-WEB expected of its advisory group at that time.
 - **(Initial advisory group)** It consisted of ten persons, including Choi Kyung-hwan (Deputy Prime Minister for the Economy), Kim Moo-sung (National Assembly member), Park Jie-won (National Assembly member), Yoo In-tae (National Assembly member), Kwon Tae-sun (CEO of Huffington Post Korea), Kim Min-bae (Head of News Division, TV Chosun), Kim Young-hee (Senior International Editorial Writer, JoongAng Ilbo), Lee Gye-seong (Editor-in-Chief, Hankook Ilbo), Lee Dae-geun (Editorial Writer, Kyunghyang Shinmun), and Choi Young-hoon (Editorial Writer, Dong-A Ilbo).



Main scenes from the A-WEB Advisory Group Breakfast Meeting (May 20, 2014, National Assembly Members' Dining Hall)

(Source: A-WEB Report on the Results of the Advisory Group Breakfast Meeting)

142) <https://x.com/TheSCIF?s=20>

143) <https://x.com/TheSCIF/status/2015299881481474054?s=20>

144) <https://x.com/TheSCIF/status/2015916386862923814?s=20>

145) <https://x.com/TheSCIF/status/2014981542330667277?s=20>

- (Suspicion that A-WEB is a global hub of election fraud) One cannot avoid raising the suspicion that A-WEB may be serving as a hub for the Chinese Communist Party's improper exercise of influence over elections in countries around the world.
- **(Chinese Communist Party-Dasan Group-National Election Commission-A-WEB)** A-WEB was established under the leadership of the South Korean National Election Commission, and the law related to A-WEB, namely the Act on Support for the Association of World Election Bodies, also falls under the jurisdiction of the National Election Commission (Legislation Division). From this, A-WEB may be regarded as an organization to promote major projects of the Korean National Election Commission. However, as examined above, the Chinese Communist Party appears to exercise influence over the Korean National Election Commission through Dasan Group (Kevoting). It is therefore only reasonable to suspect that the Chinese Communist Party's influence over elections around the world is being exercised through A-WEB.
- **(Connection with the Belt and Road Initiative)** Furthermore, if the name A-WEB is analyzed, the "A" may be interpreted as meaning "one," while "WEB" may be interpreted as "connection" or "road." When combined, these resemble the Chinese Communist Party's major foreign policy initiative, "One Belt One Road." For that reason as well, it is difficult to dispel the suspicion that A-WEB may be an organization reflecting the Chinese Communist Party's ambition to influence elections worldwide via Korea.
- **(Need to urgently pursue self-verification of electoral integrity and self-corrective action before external intervention)** Before the Republic of Korea is branded, as a hub of election fraud, a perpetrator state of hybrid warfare that has infringed upon the sovereignty of countries around the world, including the United States, it must itself verify electoral integrity and urgently pursue self-corrective action.
- **(The blade of U.S. election-fraud investigations pointing at South Korea)** In a speech at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, on January 21, 2026, U.S. President Donald Trump declared that "those involved in rigged elections will soon be indicted," and FBI Director Kash Patel reportedly stated that "overwhelming evidence has been secured regarding an international election fraud cartel," naming Korea's A-WEB as a subject of

investigation¹⁴⁶). Furthermore, Ambassador Morse Tan has argued that because the National Election Commission received USAID support, the United States is able to investigate it¹⁴⁷). In light of this, it is difficult to deny that the blade of U.S. election–fraud investigations is directed toward the Republic of Korea.

- **(Need to race toward verification of electoral integrity and self–corrective action)** If, through election–fraud investigations led by foreign countries such as the United States, it is revealed that South Korea was the hub of election fraud that intervened in major elections worldwide, including the 2020 U.S. presidential election, the Republic of Korea is highly likely to be branded as a perpetrator state of hybrid warfare and to face international isolation and even coercive sanctions, like China, Iran, and Venezuela in recent years. Accordingly, South Korea must itself dispel suspicions of election fraud through verification of electoral integrity, and if election fraud exists, disclose it and undertake self–corrective action.

□ Comparison of Foreign Voting Rights in China and Korea

○ Voting Rights of Overseas Koreans and Immigrants

- **(Legal legitimacy of voting rights of overseas Koreans)** The voting rights of overseas Koreans holding the nationality of the Republic of Korea are rights grounded in the constitutional right to political participation and should be guaranteed regardless of place of residence. Overseas Koreans, as citizens of the Republic of Korea, maintain a legal relationship with the state through obligations such as military service, taxation, and nationality obligations, and their voting rights constitute legitimate rights consistent with democratic principles.
- **(Issues raised regarding overseas Korean voting)** In relation to voting by overseas Koreans, issues have been raised such as △ gaps in management due to the physical distance involved in voting and return processes △ difficulty of external verification due to management centered on local diplomatic missions △ limitations in real–time monitoring of ballot boxes and counting processes △ and the possibility of indirect influence depending on the local political and

146) Heo Gyeom, “U.S. FBI Director: ‘Overwhelming Evidence Secured of International Election Fraud’... Korea’s A–WEB Also Named,” Hanmi Ilbo, Jan. 21, 2026.

147) Shin Ji–hoon, “Morse Tan at Seoul National University Lecture: ‘The U.S. Government Has a Responsibility to Investigate Korea’s Election Commission,’” July 16, 2025.

diplomatic environment. These need to be approached as problems of management and verification systems rather than problems with voting rights themselves.

- **(Principled distinction regarding voting rights of immigrants [foreign nationals])**
In South Korean elections, the right to vote is, in principle, granted only to South Korean nationals. This is a principle commonly applied in the international community, and nationality is the core criterion for the exercise of political rights. Nevertheless, the participation of foreign nationals in voting may lead to a mismatch between responsibility and authority in national policy decisions, the possibility of indirect influence by foreign governments or outside powers, and a decline in public acceptance of election results. Therefore, the granting of voting rights in central or national-level elections to immigrants and foreign nationals should be restricted, and this is not discrimination but a distinction based on the principle of sovereignty. However, because voting conducted abroad involves greater physical and technical constraints than domestic voting, institutional supplementation, such as strengthening transparency and verification, is essential.
- **(Scope of voting available to Chinese nationals within South Korea)** In the Republic of Korea, foreigners, including Chinese nationals, may not in principle participate in national-level elections (presidential and National Assembly elections). However, if they meet certain conditions, they are granted limited voting rights only in elections for local government heads and local councils. This system was introduced for the purpose of encouraging the participation of long-term resident foreigners in local communities, but it raises issues such as the possibility of exercising local political power in ways that may affect national governance, the possibility of regionally concentrated voting by particular nationality groups, and concerns about the indirect exercise of influence by foreign governments.
- **(Reality of voting rights of Koreans in China)** China does not grant resident foreigners any form of voting right in elections, and this applies equally to all political decision-making processes, including local elections. Koreans residing in China face the reality of a complete absence of voting rights in both national and local elections, together with strict restrictions on political activity and

election-related expression. China clearly excludes foreigners' political rights in order to preserve its communist system.

- **(Comparison from the perspective of reciprocity)** Although the principle generally applied in international relations is "reciprocity," an asymmetry exists in the voting-rights systems between South Korea and China. South Korea allows China limited voting rights in local elections, whereas China grants no voting rights whatsoever to Koreans. This asymmetrical structure may, in the long term, generate controversy in terms of institutional fairness and public acceptance.
- **(Issues from the perspective of security and sovereignty)** China is a country that has numerous issues in which its diplomatic, security, and economic interests conflict with those of the Republic of Korea. If foreigners participate in the process of forming South Korea's public authority, there is a possibility that the policy orientation of foreign governments may be reflected directly or indirectly. This brings with it problems in that external pressure and influence over decision-making on certain regional policies may expand, while public trust in the electoral system as a whole inevitably declines.



Analytical Examination of Electoral Integrity Issues in the Republic of Korea

1. Review of Election Administration and Policy Frameworks in the Republic of Korea

□ Analysis of the Current Electoral System and Proposed Policy Measures

○ Analysis of Proposed Amendments to the Public Official Election Act in the 22nd National Assembly

- **(Overall analysis of proposed amendments to the Public Official Election Act in the 22nd National Assembly)** From the commencement date of the 22nd National Assembly (May 30, 2024) through March 1, 2026, a total of 235 amendment bills to the Public Official Election Act were proposed. Of these, 2 were passed and promulgated, 3 were discarded after being incorporated into alternative bills, and 230 remain pending. Considering that, during the same period, the numbers of proposed amendments (including alternatives) to the six major statutory codes other than the Constitution were 46 for the Civil Act, 141 for the Criminal Act, 95 for the Commercial Act, 23 for the Civil Procedure Act, and 129 for the Criminal Procedure Act, interest in amending the Public Official Election Act appears to have been extraordinarily high.
- **(Major passed amendments to the Public Official Election Act in the 22nd National Assembly and analysis thereof)** Of the 235 amendment bills to the Public Official Election Act proposed in the 22nd National Assembly, two¹⁴⁸⁾¹⁴⁹⁾ were passed and promulgated on January 7, 2025 and April 1, 2025, respectively. Some of these amendments appear to have been made more for the convenience of election administration by the National Election Commission than for electoral fairness and integrity. The specific amendments are as follows.
 - **(Contents and analysis of the amendment to the Public Official Election Act promulgated on January 7, 2025)** Reflecting the intent of the Constitutional

148) Partial Amendment Bill to the Public Official Election Act (Alternative) (Chairperson of the Public Administration and Security Committee, Bill No. 2206328 (Dec. 9, 2024), 418th National Assembly)

149) Partial Amendment Bill to the Public Official Election Act (proposed by Representative Han Byeong-do and 10 others, Bill No. 2200311 (June 11, 2024), 415th National Assembly)

Court’s ruling of unconstitutionality (2021Hun–Ga14, Jan. 25, 2024), which held that a complete prohibition on election campaigning by full–time employees of local public corporations and public enterprises violates the principle against excessive restriction and infringes the freedom of election campaigning, the amendment excluded full–time employees of local public corporations and public enterprises from the category of persons prohibited from engaging in election campaigning or acts affecting elections, while also partially amending the law for the smooth administration of elections, such as by providing that each early voting station may have up to eight early–voting observers. Quite apart from the adjustment of the scope of persons eligible to engage in election campaigning, it is problematic that the amendment limited the maximum number of observers who may attend an early voting station to eight. Before the amendment promulgated on January 7, 2025, in electoral jurisdictions with high public interest, more than eight early–voting observers could attend for the sake of fairness and integrity in early voting; however, the amendment imposed a cap on the maximum number of participants as early–voting observers. This appears to have prioritized the convenience of election administration by the National Election Commission over the fairness and integrity of elections.

- **(Contents and analysis of the amendment to the Public Official Election Act promulgated on April 1, 2025)** The current law designates the National Election Commission, prosecutors, or judicial police officers as entities authorized to request restrictions on passport issuance for overseas election offenders. However, in the provisions concerning the method and procedure for such requests, “judicial police officers” had been omitted from the list of authorized entities, and this amendment corrected that omission. This was an amendment made to maintain consistency following amendments to other laws. Although there are issues related to the expansion of the duties and powers of judicial police, that topic falls outside the scope of this report and is therefore omitted.
- **(Major contents and analysis of the pending amendment bills to the Public Official Election Act in the 22nd National Assembly)** Of the 235 amendment bills to the Public Official Election Act proposed in the 22nd National Assembly, 230 remain pending. Among these, the major amendment proposals

relevant to election fraud addressed in this report include △ the relaxation of the offense of publication of false facts △ the prohibition of internet opinion manipulation and the establishment of investigatory grounds △ the establishment of a legal basis for quality evaluation of election opinion polls △ the lowering of the minimum age for exercising voting rights and engaging in election campaigning △ and conflicting amendment attempts concerning the affixing of the early voting manager's seal. The details are as follows.

- **(Relaxation of the offense of publication of false facts)** Article 250(1) of the current Public Official Election Act provides that any person who, for the purpose of being elected or having another elected, publishes or causes to be published false facts favorable to a candidate (including a preliminary candidate), concerning the candidate, the candidate's spouse, lineal ascendants or descendants, siblings, birthplace, family relations, status, occupation, career, property, conduct, affiliated organization, or whether such person is supported by a particular person or organization, or who possesses campaign documents containing such false facts for the purpose of distributing them, shall be punished by imprisonment for not more than five years or a fine not exceeding 30 million won. However, the Partial Amendment Bill to the Public Official Election Act (Bill No. 2210374) seeks to relax the elements of the offense by amending Article 250(1) of the Public Official Election Act so that only the "publication of material false facts that harm the fairness of elections" would be punishable. This amendment may be interpreted as intending to turn a blind eye to candidates' publication of minor falsehoods for the purpose of winning election, and it raises concern that it may create a false electoral culture in which candidates think it sufficient to win office through falsehoods and correct them only afterward.
- **(Prohibition of internet opinion manipulation and establishment of investigatory grounds)** The Partial Amendment Bill to the Public Official Election Act (Bill No. 2217082) would, through the new paragraphs (7) and (8) of Article 82-4 of the Public Official Election Act, prohibit acts such as mass posting or inputting of posts or reaction indicators through automated programs during the election period for the purpose of favoring or disadvantaging a particular political party or candidate, and establish penal provisions for violators. At the same time, it would provide a legal basis for

election commissions at each level to request internet service providers to inspect and submit materials such as access records, thereby seeking to prevent opinion manipulation through automated programs and secure electoral fairness. Along with manipulation of opinion polling, the shaping of internet opinion is a prior measure used to make the public accept the results of fraudulent elections. It is therefore desirable that the law prohibit the improper shaping of internet opinion and establish a legal basis for its investigation.

- **(Establishing a legal basis for conducting quality evaluations of election opinion polls)** Election opinion polls are becoming increasingly important not only because they survey trends in public opinion before and after elections and identify the direction of popular sentiment, but also because they may influence the process of formation of mass opinion and the direction of its change. Meanwhile, although the importance of election polling has steadily increased in elections since democratization, paradoxically, controversy over the risks of opinion manipulation and distortion through election polling has also continued to intensify. The current law provides for the establishment and operation of the Election Opinion Poll Deliberation Commission to secure the objectivity and reliability of election opinion polls, the registration of polling agencies and organizations, and regulation of the publication and reporting of polling results. However, it remains insufficient to improve the quality of election opinion polls and regulate those lacking in reliability. Accordingly, the Partial Amendment Bill to the Public Official Election Act (Bill No. 2216710) appears to be a desirable amendment, as it would newly establish Article 8–10 of the Public Official Election Act to mandate that the National Election Commission and metropolitan/provincial election commissions conduct annual quality evaluations of election opinion polls in order to improve their quality and enhance reliability.
- **(Lowering the age for exercising voting rights and engaging in election campaigning)** The Partial Amendment Bill to the Public Official Election Act (Bill No. 2216710)—more specifically, the bill proposed by Representative Kim Min-jeon and 10 others, Bill No. 2216564 (Feb. 4, 2026), 432nd National Assembly—seeks to lower the age for exercising voting rights and engaging in election campaigning to 16 years or older through amendments to

Article 15(1) and (2), Article 60(1)2, and related provisions of the Public Official Election Act. As grounds for the amendment, it cites the facts that the age for joining a political party under the Political Parties Act has been lowered from 18 to 16, that the absence of voting rights for adolescents may create political imbalance even as policies directly affecting future generations are increasing, and that some countries, such as Austria and Scotland, already grant voting rights to persons aged 16 and older. A thorough national-level discussion is needed as to whether lowering the age for exercising voting rights and engaging in election campaigning would have a positive effect on the development of liberal democracy in the Republic of Korea.

- **(Conflicting amendment attempts concerning the affixing of the early voting manager's seal)** The current law expressly provides that, in early voting, the early voting manager shall print the ballot through a ballot issuance device, affix his or her seal, and then issue it to the voter. However, as a supplementary measure for the practical problem existing at the time of introduction—namely, the need to immediately print and issue ballots to large numbers of voters in the limited space of early voting stations—the Public Official Election Management Regulations provide that the affixing of the seal may be substituted by a printed seal. This inconsistency with the superior law undermines the legitimacy of elections. Accordingly, since the Supreme Court and the Constitutional Court have consistently recognized the legality of the provision allowing the early voting manager's seal to be affixed in printed form, a bill has been proposed to codify the legal basis for printed affixing of the early voting manager's seal. Partial Amendment Bill to the Public Official Election Act (proposed by Representative Yoon Jun-byeong and 11 others, Bill No. 2216546 (Feb. 4, 2026), 432nd National Assembly). In contrast, another bill has been proposed to secure public trust in elections by clearly providing in the statute that the early voting manager's seal may not be substituted by a printed seal and by allowing a designated deputy of the early voting manager to affix the seal on the manager's behalf. Partial Amendment Bill to the Public Official Election Act (proposed by Representative Cho Jung-hoon and 34 others, Bill No. 2216632 (Feb. 6, 2026), 432nd National Assembly). The former bill, Bill No. 2216546, appears outwardly to align

case law, statute, and administrative regulations, and from the standpoint of administrative convenience may seem proper; however, it is undesirable because it cannot prevent the infiltration of fraudulent ballots and thereby harms electoral fairness and integrity. By contrast, the latter bill, Bill No. 2216632, clearly provides in statute that the early voting manager's seal may not be substituted by a printed seal for the sake of electoral fairness and integrity, even if this conflicts with the current administrative regulations; this is not problematic, because the current administrative regulations allowing substitution by a printed seal can simply be amended. Furthermore, by providing for the designation of a deputy for the early voting manager to affix the seal in light of the efficiency and convenience of election administration, it appears to be an excellent amendment in that it seeks simultaneously to promote electoral fairness and integrity as well as the efficiency and convenience of election administration.

- **(Summary)** Although the 230 pending amendment bills proposed in the 22nd National Assembly were not exhaustively reviewed and analyzed in full, this report examined the major amendment proposals relevant to the issue of election fraud, namely △ relaxation of the offense of publication of false facts △ prohibition of internet opinion manipulation and establishment of investigatory grounds △ establishment of a legal basis for quality evaluation of election opinion polls △ lowering the minimum age for exercising voting rights and engaging in election campaigning △ and conflicting amendment attempts concerning the early voting manager's seal. There were bills that raise concern as to whether they are intended to create an electoral culture in which false facts become even more prevalent by relaxing the offense of publication of false facts, and there were also bills that sought to reinforce election fraud by codifying the substitution of the early voting manager's seal with a printed seal, which constitutes a core link in the alleged fraudulent election system. On the other hand, there were desirable bills seeking to prohibit substitution of the early voting manager's seal with a printed seal for the sake of electoral fairness and integrity, as well as bills intended to prohibit internet opinion manipulation and conduct quality evaluations of election opinion polls. If members of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea are to read the broader atmosphere calling for the eradication of election fraud and to ensure

that fair elections are conducted for the nation and the people, they must begin by voicing support for amendment bills that strengthen electoral fairness and integrity, while continuing to criticize and oppose bills that seek to solidify an election–fraud system.

- Full Amendment Bill to the National Referendum Act (Alternative)¹⁵⁰⁾
 - **(Background of proposal)** At the 4th meeting of the Public Administration and Security Committee during the 432nd National Assembly (Extraordinary Session) on February 23, 2026, the Committee reviewed the following nine bills and decided not to refer them to the plenary session, and instead, pursuant to Article 51 of the National Assembly Act, decided to propose an alternative bill at the committee level.

Outline of Introduction and Review History of 2 Full Amendment Bills and 7 Partial Amendment Bills to the National Referendum Act

(Source: Full Amendment Bill to the National Referendum Act (Alternative) (Chairperson of the Public Administration and Security Committee, Bill No. 2216968 (2026.02.23.)))

Bill Title	Lead Sponsor	Date Introduced	Review History
Full Amendment Bill to the National Referendum Act	Representative Kim Young-bae (2200415)	2024. 06. 12.	Submitted to the 1st Public Administration and Security Committee of the 418th National Assembly (Regular Session) (24.9.2.); Submitted to the 2nd Subcommittee on Bill Review of the 429th National Assembly (Regular Session) (25.11.18.); Submitted to the 3rd Subcommittee on Bill Review of the 429th National Assembly (Regular Session) (25.11.26.)
	Representative Kwon Chil-seung (2213273)	2025. 09. 25.	Directly referred to the subcommittee pursuant to Article 58(4) of the National Assembly Act (2025.11.12.); Submitted to the 2nd Subcommittee on Bill Review of the 429th National Assembly (Regular Session) (25.11.18.); Submitted to the 3rd Subcommittee on Bill Review of the 429th National Assembly (Regular Session) (25.11.26.)
Partial Amendment Bill to the National Referendum Act	Representative Yoon Hu-deok (2203589)	2024. 09. 03.	Directly referred to the subcommittee pursuant to Article 58(4) of the National Assembly Act (2024.11.11.); Submitted to the 2nd Subcommittee on Bill Review of the 429th National Assembly (Regular Session) (25.11.18.); Submitted to the 3rd Subcommittee on Bill Review of the 429th National Assembly (Regular Session) (25.11.26.)

150) Full Amendment Bill to the National Referendum Act (Alternative) (Chairperson of the Public Administration and Security Committee, Bill No. 2216968 (Feb. 23, 2026), 432nd National Assembly (Extraordinary Session))

Representative Kim Yong-min (2205394)	2024. 11. 08.	Directly referred to the subcommittee pursuant to Article 58(4) of the National Assembly Act (2025.02.18.); Submitted to the 2nd Subcommittee on Bill Review of the 429th National Assembly (Regular Session) (25.11.18.); Submitted to the 3rd Subcommittee on Bill Review of the 429th National Assembly (Regular Session) (25.11.26.)
Representative Park Jeong-hoon (2209719)	2025. 04. 10.	Directly referred to the subcommittee pursuant to Article 58(4) of the National Assembly Act (2025.07.01.); Submitted to the 2nd Subcommittee on Bill Review of the 429th National Assembly (Regular Session) (25.11.18.); Submitted to the 3rd Subcommittee on Bill Review of the 429th National Assembly (Regular Session) (25.11.26.)
Representative Kwon Hyang-yeop (2210099)	2025. 04. 24.	Directly referred to the subcommittee pursuant to Article 58(4) of the National Assembly Act (2025.07.01.); Submitted to the 2nd Subcommittee on Bill Review of the 429th National Assembly (Regular Session) (25.11.18.); Submitted to the 3rd Subcommittee on Bill Review of the 429th National Assembly (Regular Session) (25.11.26.)
Representative Park Chung-kwon (2211274)	2025. 07. 04.	Directly referred to the subcommittee pursuant to Article 58(4) of the National Assembly Act (2025.09.17.); Submitted to the 2nd Subcommittee on Bill Review of the 429th National Assembly (Regular Session) (25.11.18.); Submitted to the 3rd Subcommittee on Bill Review of the 429th National Assembly (Regular Session) (25.11.26.)
Representative Hwang Un-ha (2216568)	2026. 02. 04.	Directly referred to the subcommittee pursuant to Article 58(4) of the National Assembly Act (2026.02.11.)
Representative Lee Yong-woo (2216856)	2026. 02. 13.	Directly referred to the subcommittee pursuant to Article 58(4) of the National Assembly Act (2026.02.20.)

- **Main contents of the proposal**

- **(Scope of eligible voters)** Reflecting the intent of the Constitutional Court’s decision of constitutional nonconformity, the proposal includes within the scope of referendum voters “persons entered in the overseas voter register,” and, by incorporating the current Public Official Election Act mutatis mutandis, lowers the voting age from the previous 19 years or older to 18 years or older (Articles 2 and 9).
- **(New introduction of multiple-choice format)** It adds to the concept of

referendum campaigning “acts intended to induce support for one among several matters,” and also adds to the ballot format, in addition to the existing expression of approval or opposition, “a format in which one among several matters is selected” (Articles 22 through 42).

- **(Application mutatis mutandis of the Public Official Election Act)** It introduces into national referendums the systems of early voting, absentee-at-residence voting, and shipboard voting under the Public Official Election Act, and provides that matters relating to voting procedures, including voting hours and ballots, shall be governed mutatis mutandis by the Public Official Election Act (Articles 38 through 42).
 - **(Special provisions for concurrent implementation with public official elections)** It provides special rules for concurrent implementation in preparation for cases where a national referendum and a public official election under Article 2 of the Public Official Election Act are held on the same day (Articles 63 through 74).
 - **(Penal provisions)** It provides for the deletion of illegal postings using information and communications networks, investigative authority over referendum-related crimes involving communications, and newly establishes various offenses and penalties relating to national referendums (Articles 84 through 119).
- Analysis of, and concerns regarding, the main contents of the proposal
- **(Concern over transplantation of the existing election-fraud system through harmonization with the Public Official Election Act)** The above Full Amendment Bill to the National Referendum Act (Alternative) seeks to align the current national referendum system with the current public official election system. Specifically, it lowers the voting age for referendum voters from 19 to 18 in line with the Public Official Election Act, introduces into national referendums the systems of early voting, absentee-at-residence voting, and shipboard voting under the Public Official Election Act, and also applies mutatis mutandis the Public Official Election Act to matters relating to voting procedures such as voting hours and ballots, thereby pursuing harmonization of the current referendum system with the current public official election system. This raises serious concern as to whether the intention is to transplant into national referendums the same fraudulent

election system that has allegedly been carried out in public official elections, and thereby commit election fraud in referendums as well.

- **(Concern over abuse of the multiple-choice referendum format)** Article 53 of the former National Referendum Act provided that ballots “shall contain two columns for approval and opposition,” meaning that, with respect to a single agenda item, national referendums were possible only with the two choices of approval and opposition. However, Article 40 of the above Full Amendment Bill to the National Referendum Act (Alternative) newly adds, beyond approval and opposition, “a format in which one among several matters is selected.” National referendums should be held only after determining whether a matter falls within the category of matters requiring a national referendum, such as important policies relating to diplomacy, national defense, unification, or other matters concerning national security under Article 72 of the Constitution of the Republic of Korea, or a proposed constitutional amendment under Article 130(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Korea, and, if so, only after sufficient public understanding and consensus have been formed regarding the matter to be voted on. However, there is concern that the multiple-choice referendum system newly proposed in Article 40 of the above bill may be abused to force the people to choose one among several options while bypassing sufficient deliberation, public understanding, and consensus concerning the referendum agenda.
- **(Concern over suppression of freedom of expression through excessive penal provisions)** The offense of obstructing a national referendum was previously provided in Article 102 of the former National Referendum Act, which stated that any person falling under one of the following subparagraphs in relation to a national referendum shall be punished by imprisonment with labor or without labor for not more than five years, or by a fine of not less than 500,000 won and not more than 2.5 million won:
 1. a person who assaults, threatens, induces, unlawfully arrests, or detains a voter;
 2. a person who obstructs the freedom of voting by fraud, trickery, or other improper means;
 3. and where a prosecutor, police officer, or military personnel committed such acts, the punishment was imprisonment with labor or without labor for

not less than one year and not more than ten years, together with suspension of qualifications for not less than five years. However, Article 96 of the Full Amendment Bill to the National Referendum Act (Alternative) proposes to amend the law so as to prescribe harsher punishment, to protect politicians rather than the people, and to suppress the people's freedom of expression. Specifically, while the former offense of obstructing voting freedom was punishable by "imprisonment with or without labor for not more than five years, or a fine of not less than 500,000 won and not more than 2.5 million won," the full amendment bill (alternative) greatly increases the punishment to "imprisonment for not more than ten years, or a fine of not less than 5 million won and not more than 30 million won," thus doubling the maximum term of imprisonment and increasing the minimum fine tenfold and the maximum fine twelvefold. Given that the level of punishment under the Criminal Act is rarely adjusted, this raises concern over excessive enhancement of punishment. Moreover, the proposal expands the protected subjects of the offense of obstructing referendum freedom from voters, namely the people, to speakers (such as politicians), and expands the categories of conduct constituting the offense from two to four. In the plenary-session amendment to the Full Amendment Bill to the National Referendum Act (Alternative) dated February 28, 2026 (proposed by Representative Cheon Jun-ho and 161 others), an amendment was proposed to delete Article 96(1)4. The deleted Subparagraph 4 was a toxic provision with great potential to suppress the people's freedom of expression, and its deletion is welcome; however, concern remains because further discussion is still needed regarding the toxic provisions contained in the full amendment bill (alternative). One cannot help but raise the suspicion that this expansion is intended not to protect the people, but rather to protect politicians or political parties.

- **(Summary)** On March 1, 2026, the above amendment to the National Referendum Act (alternative) was passed in the form of a plenary-session amendment deleting Subparagraph 4 from Article 96(1), which defined the offense of obstructing a national referendum, and it was promulgated on March 6, 2026 and entered into force immediately. Given that the National Referendum Act promulgated and enforced on March 6, 2026 contains special

provisions for concurrent implementation with public official elections, there is grave concern that, in this year's 9th Nationwide Simultaneous Local Elections (June 3, 2026), matters requiring a national referendum—such as important policies concerning diplomacy, national defense, unification, or other matters relating to national security under Article 72 of the Constitution of the Republic of Korea, and proposed constitutional amendments under Article 130(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Korea—might be submitted to the people in a multiple-choice referendum format without sufficient public consensus, thereby forcing voters to select one among the options on the ballot, and that election fraud might be carried out in the referendum in the same manner as in public official elections.

2. Analysis of Evidence Related to Allegations of Electoral Fraud in the Republic of Korea

1) Appearance of Physically Irregular Ballots

□ Identification of Evidence and Description

○ Discovery of “Cabbage–Leaf Ballots”

- At the recount site for Yeonsu–gu Eul, Incheon, in the April 15, 2020 general election in the Republic of Korea, ballots were discovered with the lower portion printed in green, resembling the shape of a cabbage leaf. These appeared to be ballots in which a district ballot and a proportional–representation ballot (green) had been printed on top of each other or improperly cut¹⁵¹⁾¹⁵²⁾.



Cabbage–leaf ballot (Source: YouTube Gong Byeong–ho TV)

○ “Japanese Flag” Ballots and “Magnet” Ballots

- Ballots were discovered in which the voting stamp had bled red so as to resemble the Japanese flag; bundles of ballots that would not separate as though several sheets had been glued together with adhesive; and stacks of ballots as stiff as newly issued banknotes, with no fold marks. These are difficult to regard as paper that passed through a normal voting and counting process^{153),154)}.

151) In Se–young, June 29, 2021, 09:53, “Large Number of Fraudulent Ballots Found at Recount Site—‘Smoking Gun’ Emerged,” FN Today.

152) YouTube, “[Direct Interview] Supreme Court Cabbage–Leaf Ballot Determined to Be Forged / Full Disclosure / Causing a Major Uproar / Who on Earth Did This? / Basilia TV–MediaA Deployed [Gong Byeong–ho TV].”

153) YouTube, “[Hwang Kyo–ahn TV] Evidence of Election Fraud: Japanese–Flag Ballot (May 14),” Hwang Kyo–ahn TV.

154) YouTube, “Properly Report the Controversy Over Stiff Ballots,” MBC Third Labor Union (MBC Labor Union).



Ballot with incorrectly affixed “Japanese flag” mark (so called because it resembles the Japanese flag) (left) and ballot without folding marks (right)



Out-of-district proportional early-voting ballot that should have been folded and placed in an envelope but bears no folding marks (left), and stacked fake ballots with no folding marks (right)

□ Rebuttal by the National Election Commission and Counter-Rebuttal (Analysis)

○ Position of the National Election Commission

- The Commission explained that these were merely natural phenomena caused either by simple mechanical errors in the printing process (such as a ballot-sorting machine jam) or by moisture during ballot-box storage. It argued that these were no more than operational mistakes and not evidence of organized manipulation.

○ Counter-Rebuttal and Analysis

- Given the structure of the ballot issuance device (printer), district ballots and proportional-representation ballots are on different rolls, so it is physically impossible for them to be printed on top of each other. There are absolutely no

records in the election-day voting records or counting records concerning such unusual ballots. The fact that they suddenly poured out at the recount site strongly suggests the possibility that the ballot boxes had been replaced in their entirety (so-called tong-gari, or wholesale substitution of ballot boxes).

2) Legal Violations in the Election Management System and Evidence of Server Manipulation

Identification of Evidence and Description

Illegality of the Use of QR Codes

- Article 151 of the Public Official Election Act provides that a “barcode (a bar-shaped symbol)” shall be 附屬ed on ballots, yet the National Election Commission used two-dimensional “QR codes” without authorization. Because QR codes may contain voters’ personal information, there is concern that this may infringe the principle of secret balloting.

Server Access Logs of the Integrated Voter Register

- During the National Intelligence Service’s security inspection and in the course of related litigation, circumstances were detected showing that unauthorized equipment had accessed internal servers in the election network without authorization and that log files had been deleted.

Rebuttal by the National Election Commission and Counter-Rebuttal (Analysis)

Position of the National Election Commission

- The Commission argues that QR codes also fall within the broad meaning of barcodes (two-dimensional barcodes) and therefore present no legal problem, and that they were a measure for efficient election administration. It also explains that server logs and related matters were managed in accordance with security regulations.

Counter-Rebuttal and Analysis

- As a legal term, “barcode” is generally understood to mean a one-dimensional linear symbol. The National Election Commission’s introduction of QR codes on its own initiative, without a statutory amendment by the National Assembly, constitutes a clear illegal act.

- Because QR codes can contain far more than a simple serial number, they have ample potential to be misused as a form of “digital marking” to track the identity of early voters. The deletion of server logs should be regarded as destruction of evidence.

3) Allegations Regarding the “Digital Original Files” of Ballot Images

Identification of Evidence and Description

Existence of Original Files Rather Than Scans

- Analysis of the “ballot image files” obtained during the recount revealed none of the “paper fiber,” “slight skew,” or “noise” that ordinarily appears when paper is scanned.

Sharpness Similar to Vector Graphics

- Features such as font outlines that do not break apart even when enlarged, and perfectly aligned voting–stamp positions, strongly suggest that these files were not scans of actual ballots but rather “digital original files” generated inside a computer system.

Rebuttal by the National Election Commission and Counter–Rebuttal (Analysis)

Position of the National Election Commission

- The Commission dismisses this by saying that the images came out very clean because the latest high–performance scanners were used, and that this is simply a technical characteristic resulting from image–compression methods (such as JPG).

Counter–Rebuttal and Analysis

- No matter how high–performance a scanner may be, it is impossible to completely remove the irregular physical texture of actual paper and produce a “pure white” background (RGB 255,255,255). This constitutes technical evidence supporting the existence not of actual counted paper ballots, but of separately generated ballot data within a computerized server.

4) Wireless Communication Traces from Control Laptops (LG Gram) Used for Ballot Sorting Machines

Identification of Evidence and Description

Installation and Activation of Wireless LAN Cards

- Under the Public Official Election Act and relevant security regulations, PCs controlling ballot-sorting machines must be completely isolated from external networks. However, the “LG Gram” laptops used at the site were equipped with wireless LAN cards (Wi-Fi), and in some cases traces were found suggesting that communication functions had been activated.

Possibility of External Access

- This opens the possibility that laptops at vote-counting sites may have wirelessly communicated with a central server or a third external device to send and receive data, or may have served as a pathway for hacking.

Rebuttal by the National Election Commission and Counter-Rebuttal (Analysis)

Position of the National Election Commission

- The Commission explains that these were merely manufacturer-installed specifications of the laptop, and that in actual vote-counting operations the wireless LAN function had either been physically removed or software-disabled, making communication impossible.

Counter-Rebuttal and Analysis

- At recount sites, some laptops were found with their wireless LAN cards still installed. A software block can be reversed and reactivated at any time with only a few clicks.
- Using commercial laptops as-is for election equipment, where security is of the utmost importance, and failing to completely remove wireless communication modules, constitutes a grave management failure that appears highly indicative of an intention to neutralize security and create a manipulable environment.

5) Suspicions of Manipulation in Electronic Vote Counting Machines

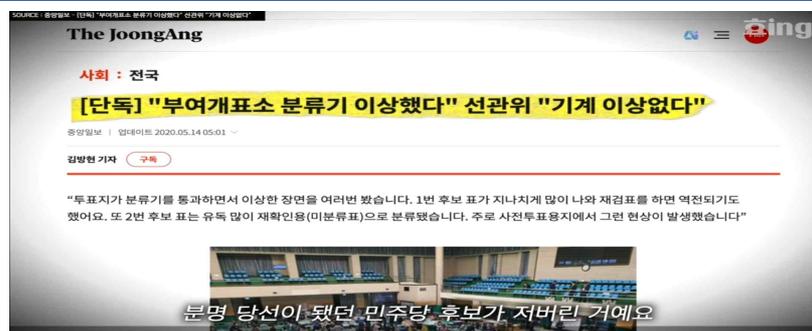
Identification of Evidence and Description

○ Ballot Placement Errors in Electronic Vote-Counting Machines

- During ballot sorting using electronic vote-counting machines, because of the machines' high-speed nature, it was difficult to confirm irregularities on-site. However, when reviewed by video recording, it was observed that ballots originally bearing no voting mark at all—which should have been separately classified as unclassified ballots and treated as invalid votes—were instead classified under Candidate No. 1.

○ 2020 General Election Ballot-Sorting Error Incident in Buyeo County

- On the day of the 2020 general election, at the vote-counting center in Oksan-myeon, Buyeo County, observers watching the count recognized that there was a problem with the electronic vote-counting machine and demanded a recount. An election official then turned the machine off and back on, after which a recount was conducted. In the original count, Democratic Party candidate Park Soo-hyun was shown as the winner. However, when 415 ballots were recounted, the results were 159 votes for Park Soo-hyun of the Democratic Party and 170 votes for Jung Jin-seok of the Future United Party. This confirmed an outcome in which the Democratic Party candidate lost. According to one observer, “As the ballots passed through the sorter, I witnessed strange scenes. Candidate No. 1 received an excessively large number of votes, and when a recount was conducted the result was reversed. Candidate No. 2, on the other hand, was unusually often classified into the re-check (unclassified ballot) category, and this phenomenon was found mainly in early-voting ballots.”¹⁵⁵⁾.



2020 general election ballot-sorting error incident in Buyeo County
(Source: JoongAng Ilbo; re-cited by Hyoing TV)

155) JoongAng Ilbo [Exclusive], “There Was Something Wrong with the Sorter at the Buyeo Counting Center,” NEC Says ‘No Problem with the Machine’ (2020.05.14.).

6) So-called “Glue Ballots” and “Tape Ballots” (Abnormal Adhesive Materials)

Identification of Evidence and Description

Bundles of Ballots Glued Together

- At recount sites, bundles were found in which multiple ballots were strongly attached together with glue or adhesive, making them difficult to separate by hand. The slot of a ballot box is narrow, so several sheets cannot enter overlapped, and there is no reason for a voter to use glue.

Ballots with Tape Attached

- Ballots were found that had Scotch tape attached to the bottom or side edges at the time they were counted. This is a foreign substance that could never arise in a normal voting and management process.

Rebuttal by the National Election Commission and Counter-Rebuttal (Analysis)

Position of the National Election Commission

- The Commission speculates that these may have resulted from static electricity inside the ballot box, adhesive residue left in the process by counting staff while organizing (banding) the ballots, or tape that had come off a ballot-box seal.

Counter-Rebuttal and Analysis

- Paper sticking together through static electricity and paper congealed into a mass by industrial adhesive are entirely different in physical character. The adhesive force is far too strong to regard it as a simple mistake by counting personnel.
- It is more reasonable to view this as evidence of ballots having been hastily fabricated in bundles outside the ballot box (so-called “brick stamping”), or as traces of the work that occurred in the process of substituting ballot boxes.



Abnormal ballot not folded before voting (shown being peeled apart by hand because glue had been applied)

7) Allegations of Handwriting Mismatches on Early Voting Box Seals¹⁵⁶⁾

Identification of Evidence and Description

Discovery of Handwriting Different from the Observer's Signature¹⁵⁷⁾

- At the vote-counting site for the April 15, 2020 general election, and later at recount sites in Yeonsu-gu Eul, Incheon, and Paju, Gyeonggi Province, claims were raised that the signatures on the seals affixed to early-voting boxes differed from the originals.
- Early-voting observers stated that, at the time the ballot boxes were sealed, they themselves had written their names clearly in block script and signed with their characteristic handwriting, but that the seals inspected during the count contained clumsy handwriting as though written by an elementary school student, or signatures in completely different forms. A decisive witness in election-fraud suspicions has emerged (Part 1)¹⁵⁸⁾.

Circumstances Suggesting "Replacement" of Seals

- The seals are made of a special material such that, once removed, the word "VOID" appears. However, some seals found at recount sites bore no traces of

156) In Se-young, Mar. 9, 2022, 22:03, "At Daegu Bongdeok Counting Center, Six Seal Signatures on Ballot Storage Box Have the Same Handwriting—Suspicious of Illegal Election," FN Today.

157) Checker, Apr. 18, 2020, 12:03, [FactY] "Was the Early Voting Box Seal Manipulated?" Is It True?, YTN. (An article arguing that the election-fraud claim is false, but it contains many useful sources such as videos.)

158) That seal signature is not mine!" (21st General Election, Bangi 1-dong, Songpa-gu observer Jeong Dae-yeon), Pioneer Broadcasting, YouTube.

removal and yet had different signatures on them¹⁵⁹⁾¹⁶⁰⁾. This supports the suspicion that the original seals were removed and replaced with new seals to which forged signatures had been affixed.



Photographic evidence showing that the signatures on the seals differ by date

□ Rebuttal by the National Election Commission and Counter-Rebuttal (Analysis)

○ Position of the National Election Commission

- The Commission explains that, in the process of applying transparent tape over the seal, the shape of the writing may appear different because of refraction of light or the texture of the tape. It also argues that observers may have written differently from their ordinary handwriting because they were nervous or hurried at the time of voting.

○ Counter-Rebuttal and Analysis

- According to analyses by handwriting experts, in many cases the differences are too great to be explained as mere trembling or optical distortion, because even the way consonants and vowels are combined (stroke order and formation) is different.
- In the case of Paju in particular, a seal bearing a “fake signature” that the

159) Min So-young, Apr. 11, 2024 (20:13), “Traces of Seal Removal on an Unopened Ballot Box’... Disturbances over Election Fraud Across Various Regions,” KBS News.

160) [Case File 24] Debate Over ‘Special Seals’ at Vote Counting Demonstration... Participants Raise Possibility of CCTV Manipulation, TV Chosun News, YouTube.

observer had never signed was discovered, and an application for preservation of evidence was filed. This strongly suggests the possibility that the ballot box was opened by a third party before being moved from the storage location to the counting site, or while in storage, and is therefore a trace of physical tampering indicating possible insertion or replacement of ballots.

8) Comparison of Mobile Voter Counts at 5-Second Intervals

Identification of Evidence and Description

- Scene of Increases by Multiples of Ten Captured in Vote-Counting Broadcast
 - On the real-time vote aggregation screen of the K-Voting mobile application as broadcast by MBC, the voter count was shown increasing by multiples of ten every five seconds. In a natural voting process, the final digit would normally fluctuate irregularly; the scene shown was said to be something that could occur with a probability of only 1 in 10 billion, statistically speaking.

5초 간격 모바일 투표인수 비교표 (국민의힘당)

(2023. 3. 4 - 3. 5)

1일차 (3월 4일 4시경)							2일차 (3월 5일 4시경)						
No	화면 시각 (시:분:초)	PC 누적투표 인수(B)	모바일 누적투표 인수(A)	투표인수 (A+B)	투표인 증가수	투표인수 일의 자리	No	화면 시각 (시:분:초)	PC 누적투표 인수(B)	모바일 누적투표 인수(A)	투표인수 (A+B)	투표인 증가수	투표인수 일의 자리
1	15:59:48	1,026	267,399	268,425		5	1	15:59:47	1,534	389,731	391,265		5
2	15:59:53	1,026	267,449	268,475	50	5	2	15:59:52	1,534	389,739	391,273	8	3
3	15:59:58	1,026	267,489	268,515	40	5	3	15:59:57	1,534	389,748	391,282	9	2
4	16:00:04	1,026	267,539	268,565	50	5	4	16:00:03	1,535	389,762	391,297	15	7
5	16:00:09	1,026	267,579	268,605	40	5	5	16:00:08	1,535	389,768	391,303	6	3
6	16:00:15	1,026	267,639	268,665	60	5	6	16:00:13	1,535	389,776	391,311	8	1
7	16:00:20	1,026	267,679	268,705	40	5	7	16:00:18	1,535	389,790	391,325	14	5
8	16:00:25	1,026	267,719	268,745	40	5	8	16:00:24	1,535	389,797	391,332	7	2
9	16:00:31	1,026	267,779	268,805	60	5	9	16:00:29	1,535	389,806	391,341	9	1
10	16:00:36	1,026	267,819	268,845	40	5	10	16:00:34	1,535	389,817	391,352	11	2
11	16:00:42	1,026	267,879	268,905	60	5	11	16:00:39	1,535	389,828	391,363	11	3

A scene showing an unidentified ballot being inserted after opening an early-voting ballot box even though early voting had already ended

Rebuttal by the National Election Commission

- Position of the National Election Commission
 - The National Election Commission announced that the convention in question was an internal party election entrusted to the Commission for management and concluded that there was no evidence of manipulation, but it did not conduct any separate investigation.

9) Statistical Evidence

□ Statistical Anomalies: Artificial Data Convergence and “Twin Graph” Analysis(Statistical Evidence of Systemic Intervention)

○ Artificial Replication of Early Voting Ratios (The Twin Graph Phenomenon)

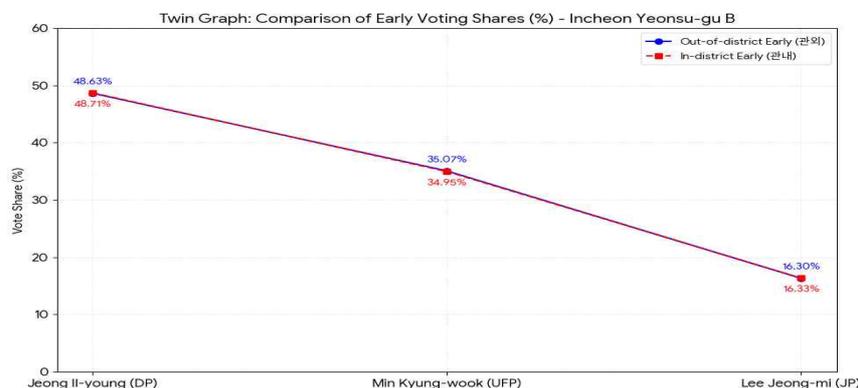
- In key battleground districts within the Seoul metropolitan area—including Seoul, Gyeonggi, and Incheon—a consistent convergence pattern was observed in early voting results, where the vote share ratio between the Democratic Party and the United Future Party (then the main opposition party) repeatedly approximated 63:36.

- Notably, in the case of Yeonsu-gu Eul district in Incheon, a detailed analysis revealed a highly unusual phenomenon:

two statistically independent voting groups—in-district early voting (in-person) and out-of-district early voting (mail/absentee)—produced nearly identical vote share distributions down to decimal precision, forming what is referred to as a “Twin Graph” pattern.

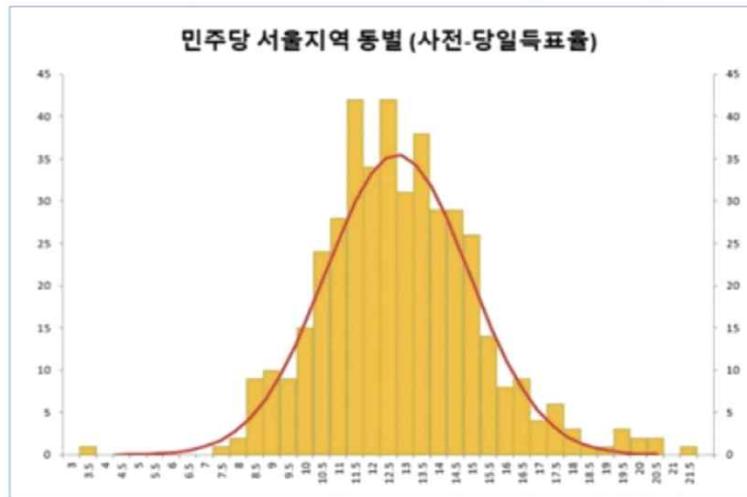
Vote Distribution (Incheon Yeonsu-gu Eul)

Category	Democratic Party (Jeong Il-young)	United Future Party (Min Kyung-wook)	Justice Party (Lee Jung-mi)
Early Voting (Out-of-district, 39% of total)	6,185	4,460	2,073
Early Voting (In-district)	15,797	11,335	5,296
Election Day Voting	30,575	33,933	15,799
Total	52,557	49,728	23,168



Statistical Anomaly Analysis of the 21st General Election: The Phenomenon of Artificial Convergence in Support Rates Between In-district Early Voting and Out-of-district/Mail-in Voting in "Incheon Yeonsu-gu Eul"

- Suspicion of Mathematical Consistency in the Data: The “39% Constant”
 - The core of this analysis lies in the observation that the number of out-of-district early votes appears to correspond geometrically to the number of in-district early votes multiplied by a specific constant (approximately 0.39).
 - Jeong Il-young (Democratic Party): $15,797 \times 0.391530 \approx 6,185$
 - Min Kyung-wook (United Future Party): $11,335 \times 0.393471 \approx 4,460$
 - Lee Jung-mi (Justice Party): $5,296 \times 0.391427 \approx 2,073$
 - In other words, the probability that supporters of three candidates with distinct political orientations would all participate in out-of-district voting at nearly the same ratio (~39%) is extremely implausible under natural conditions. This pattern strongly suggests the possibility of algorithmically generated data (data generation via computational processes) rather than organically formed electoral outcomes.
- Statistical Convergence at the Metropolitan Scale (Histogram Analysis)
 - **(Full Analysis of 424 Administrative Districts in Seoul)**
 - An analysis of the difference (Delta) between early voting share and election-day voting share for the Democratic Party across all administrative districts in Seoul revealed an unusual pattern:
 - The distribution of the gap values exhibited a highly concentrated normal distribution centered around approximately +12.5 percentage points, forming a sharply peaked bell-shaped curve.
 - Such a narrowly clustered distribution across a large number of independent districts constitutes a key indicator of statistical artificiality, as natural electoral data typically exhibit broader variance.



Analysis of the Statistical Distribution of the Vote Share Gap Between Early and Election-Day Voting in the Seoul Region (Histogram Analysis)

□ Rebuttal by the National Election Commission and Counter-Analysis

○ Position of the National Election Commission

- The Commission argued that the observed patterns can be explained by differences in voter behavior, particularly the tendency of progressive-leaning voters to prefer early voting, and that statistical figures alone cannot be used to definitively conclude electoral fraud.

○ Academic Counter-Analysis

- (Probabilistic Impossibility)

- According to analyses by scholars such as Professor Park Young-ah (Myongji University, Physics), the probability that identical vote share deviations occur across dozens of constituencies is lower than flipping a coin 1,000 times and obtaining heads every time.

- This indicates that the observed results are unlikely to be naturally occurring and instead resemble outcomes produced by predefined computational inputs or algorithmic intervention.

- (Indicators of Algorithmic Intervention)

- Such consistent convergence patterns are characteristic of datasets in which results are pre-configured using fixed constants (“pre-set constants”), a known feature in computational data generation processes.

- (International Expert Analysis - Professor Walter Mebane)

- “The estimates and tests all exhibit anomalies that suggest the election data were fraudulently manipulated.”(University of Michigan, eforensics model analysis)
 - This assessment suggests that the Korean election data exhibit statistical irregularities consistent with potential manipulation.
- **Analytical Materials by Professor Heo Byung-gi, Emeritus Professor, College of Engineering, Inha University**
- **(Overview)** Professor Heo Byung-gi, Emeritus Professor at the College of Engineering, Inha University, has engaged in writing and lecture activities related to the statistical analysis of election data and has a research background based on engineering and mathematical analysis. In his major book, *Anatomy of Election Fraud – Do Not Steal Votes*, Professor Heo analyzed the data from the 21st and 22nd National Assembly elections and presidential elections from a statistical perspective, carrying out \triangle a comparison of vote shares in early voting and election-day voting \triangle probability calculations and statistical significance \triangle and interpretation of election outcomes.
 - **(Academic considerations)** In order to resolve academic issues related to election fraud, first, the formulas or theories used in solving the problem must be recognized and authoritative. Second, there must be many cases of use of the applied theories or formulas. Third, the materials used in the analysis must be definite and secure. Fourth, the reliability of the results derived must be ensured.
 - **(Analytical materials)** Statisticians have discovered that the distribution of characteristic values (such as height, weight, approval ratings, etc.) in social issues such as the age-specific height and weight of elementary school students nationwide and College Scholastic Ability Test scores, in natural phenomena such as rainfall and temperature, and in political issues such as presidential approval ratings and election vote shares, exhibits a bell-shaped characteristic, and that the probability density function for this is expressed by the vote-share estimation Formula (1) below. This formula appears in high school mathematics textbooks all over the world, including in liberal democratic countries, socialist countries, and even communist countries, and is studied by students. Using this formula, if one derives a formula for estimating the vote

share of the constituency population from the election-day voting results of any constituency in the 22nd general election, it is as shown in Formula (2) below.

$$f(x) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi} \sigma} e^{-\frac{(x-m)^2}{2\sigma^2}}$$

Vote Share Estimation Formula (1)

신뢰도 95%인 신뢰 구간

민주당 후보 : $x_A - 1.96 \sqrt{\frac{x_A(1-x_A)}{n_A}} \leq x_{AE} \leq x_A + 1.96 \sqrt{\frac{x_A(1-x_A)}{n_A}}$

국힘당 후보 : $y_A - 1.96 \sqrt{\frac{y_A(1-y_A)}{n_A}} \leq y_{AE} \leq y_A + 1.96 \sqrt{\frac{y_A(1-y_A)}{n_A}}$

신뢰도 99%인 신뢰 구간

민주당 후보 : $x_A - 2.58 \sqrt{\frac{x_A(1-x_A)}{n_A}} \leq x_{AE} \leq x_A + 2.58 \sqrt{\frac{x_A(1-x_A)}{n_A}}$

국힘당 후보 : $y_A - 2.58 \sqrt{\frac{y_A(1-y_A)}{n_A}} \leq y_{AE} \leq y_A + 2.58 \sqrt{\frac{y_A(1-y_A)}{n_A}}$

Vote Share Estimation Formula (2)

- (Application of Vote Share Estimation Formula (2)) In Formula (2) above, x_A represents the election-day vote share of the Democratic Party candidate, y_A represents the election-day vote share of the People Power Party candidate, x_{AE} represents the constituency vote share of the Democratic Party candidate, y_{AE} represents the constituency vote share of the People Power Party candidate, and n_A represents the number of election-day votes. If a formula for estimating the difference between the constituency vote share of the People Power Party candidate(y_{AE})—and that of the Democratic Party candidate(x_{AE}) is separately derived from Formula (2), it is the same as Vote Share Estimation Formula (3).

$$\begin{aligned}
& \text{신뢰도 95\%인 신뢰 구간} \\
& (y_A - x_A) - 1.96 \left(\sqrt{\frac{x_A(1-x_A)}{n_A}} + \sqrt{\frac{y_A(1-y_A)}{n_A}} \right) \leq y_{AE} - x_{AE} \leq (y_A - x_A) + 1.96 \left(\sqrt{\frac{x_A(1-x_A)}{n_A}} + \sqrt{\frac{y_A(1-y_A)}{n_A}} \right) \\
& \hspace{20em} (3) \\
& \text{신뢰도 99\%인 신뢰 구간} \\
& (y_A - x_A) - 2.58 \left(\sqrt{\frac{x_A(1-x_A)}{n_A}} + \sqrt{\frac{y_A(1-y_A)}{n_A}} \right) \leq y_{AE} - x_{AE} \leq (y_A - x_A) + 2.58 \left(\sqrt{\frac{x_A(1-x_A)}{n_A}} + \sqrt{\frac{y_A(1-y_A)}{n_A}} \right)
\end{aligned}$$

Vote Share Estimation Formula (3)

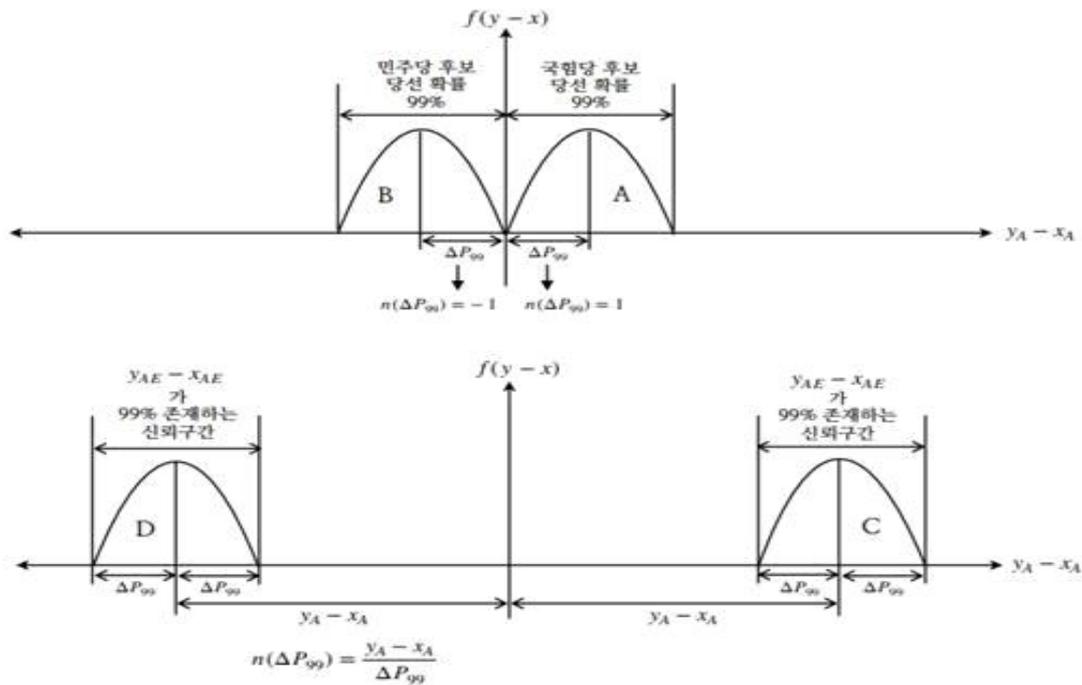
$$\Delta P_{99} = 2.58 \left(\sqrt{\frac{x_A(1-x_A)}{n_A}} + \sqrt{\frac{y_A(1-y_A)}{n_A}} \right) \quad (4)$$

Vote Share Estimation Formula (4)

- (Application of Vote Share Estimation Formulas (3), (4), and (5)) From estimation Formula (3), the length of the 99% confidence interval for $y_{AE} - x_{AE}$ can be expressed as ΔP_{99} and can be expressed by estimation Formula (4) by estimation Formula (4), and when the difference value $y_A - x_A$ between the election-day vote share of the People Power Party candidate and the election-day vote share of the Democratic Party candidate is expressed as a multiple of the length of the 99% confidence interval ΔP_{99} , it becomes Equation (5) as follows. When the meaning of Equation (5) is plotted on the coordinate plane, it is expressed as the probability density function graph for the $y_A - x_A$ distribution below.
-

$$n(\Delta P_{99}) = \frac{y_A - x_A}{\Delta P_{99}} \quad (5)$$

Vote Share Estimation Formula (5)



$y_A - x_A$ Graph of the Probability Density Function for the Distribution

- (Figure $y_A - x_A$ Probability Density Function Graph for the Distribution) As in A of Figure $y_A - x_A$, the probability density function graph for the distribution (hereinafter, the “graph”), when $n(\Delta P_{99}) = 1$, the probability of election of the People Power Party candidate is 99%. As in B of the graph, when $n(\Delta P_{99}) = 1$, the probability of election of the Democratic Party candidate is 99%. As in C of the graph, when $n(\Delta P_{99}) > 1$, the probability of election of the People Power Party candidate is $99 \times n(\Delta P_{99})\%$. As in D of the graph, when $n(\Delta P_{99}) < -1$, the probability of election of the Democratic Party candidate is $99 \times |n(\Delta P_{99})|\%$. In other words, it may be said that, when the confidence interval, which is a commonsense benchmark for voting results, is applied, the results appear as shown in the graph.

- (The Safest Voting Sample) The 22nd general election consists of election-day voting, in-district early voting, out-of-district early voting, at-home/shipboard early voting, and overseas early voting, and the constituency voting result corresponding to the population is determined by the sum of the five kinds of voting explained above. Therefore, election-day voting and the four kinds of early voting become samples of the constituency voting, which is the population,

and the question of which sample's vote share should be used to estimate the population vote share in the safest way is extremely important. It is necessary to identify the safest voting sample among the five kinds of samples.

- **(Analysis)** When the competitiveness between candidates is similar, an easy method of verifying the safety of a sample is to use the probability value of occurrence of the voting sample calculated by using the number of constituencies in which the difference value between the vote share of the Democratic Party candidate and the vote share of the People Power Party candidate is (+), and the number of constituencies in which it is (-). The cases in which the vote share difference value between the two candidates becomes (+) and (-) are mutually exclusive events, and because the voting in each constituency is conducted independently, the probability that a voting result is derived by using the number of constituencies in which the difference value is (+) and the number of constituencies in which it is (-) can be calculated by using the recognized formula, "Equation (6)."

$$P = {}_n C_r \left(\frac{1}{2}\right)^r \left(\frac{1}{2}\right)^{n-r}$$

Vote Share Estimation Formula (6)

- **(Application of Vote Share Estimation Formula (6))** In Equation (6) above, P means the probability value, n means the total number of constituencies, and r means the number of constituencies in which the vote share difference value is (+). When the occurrence probability for each voting sample for the 48 constituencies in the Seoul area is calculated by using Equation (6), the result is as shown in the table below. From this result, it can be confirmed that, among the five kinds of voting samples, the election-day voting sample is the safest sample. Therefore, it can be concluded that it is reasonable to use the election-day vote share in estimating each candidate's vote share for a constituency.

For each voting sample: the number of electoral districts where the vote share difference between the two candidates is positive (+), the number where it is negative (-), and the probability of occurrence for that specific voting sample.

	Democratic Party Candidate Vote Share – People Power Party Candidate Vote Share			Probability Values and Comparison of Probability Values	
	Number of constituencies with (+)	Number of constituencies with (-)	Total	Probability value	Election-day sample probability ÷ probability of each sample
Election-day voting (A)	20	28	48	$P_A = 0.057$	$P_A/P_A = 1$
In-district voting (B)	43	5	48	$P_B = \frac{1}{160,000,000}$	$P_A/P_B = 9,700,000$
Out-of-district voting (C)	45	3	48	$P_C = \frac{1}{16,200,000,000}$	$P_A/P_C = 960,000,000$
At-home/shipboard (D)	30	16	46*	$P_D = 0.0141$	$P_A/P_D = 4.2$
Overseas voting (E)	47	1	48	$P_E = \frac{1}{2,800,000,000,000}$	$P_A/P_E = 350,000,000,000$

* 2 constituencies in which the Democratic Party candidate vote share = the People Power Party candidate vote share

- (Statistical Calculation Results on the Electoral Outcome of People Power Party Candidates) Using Equation (5), when the statistical electoral outcomes of 50 People Power Party candidates who won in election-day voting but lost in constituency voting were analyzed, the table below shows the difference value between the People Power Party candidate’s election-day vote share (Ya) and the Democratic Party candidate’s election-day vote share (Xa) for the 50 People Power Party candidates who won in election-day voting but ultimately lost.

Regarding the 50 People Power Party candidates who won the election day vote but lost the district vote Difference in Election-Day Vote Share (%) Between the People Power Party Candidate and the Democratic Party Candidate

People Power Party candidate election-day vote share(y_A) - Democratic Party candidate election-day vote share(x_A)			
$10\% \leq y_A - x_A$	$5\% \leq y_A - x_A < 10\%$	$1\% \leq y_A - x_A < 5\%$	$0\% < y_A - x_A < 1\%$
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Seoul area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yeongdeungpo-gap (12.4) - Yangcheon-gap (12) - Seongdong-eul (11.1) - Gangdong-gap (10.7) - Gwangjin-eul (10.7) - Songpa-byeong (10.2) ♦ Gyeonggi area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yongin-byeong (13.2) - Hanam-gap (10.9) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Seoul area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jongno (9.2) - Gwangjin-gap (9) - Dongjak-gap (8.2) - Seongdong-gap (8) - Dobong-eul (6.2) ♦ Gyeonggi area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yongin-jeong (9.1) - Suwon-jeong (9) - Anseong (5.6) ♦ Incheon area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yeonsu-eul (8.4) ♦ Daejeon/Chungcheong area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Daejeon Jung-gu (7.2) - Cheongju Seowon (5) - Cheonan-gap (5.8) - Gongju-Buyeo (9.4) - Nonsan-Gyeryong (7) - Dangjin (7.6) ♦ Gyeongnam/Ulsan area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changwon Seongsan (9.4) - Ulsan Dong-gu (6.6) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Seoul area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seodaemun-gap (4.9) - Gangseo-eul (4.2) - Dongdaemun-gap (3.4) - Gangdong-eul (3.4) - Dongdaemun-eul (1.6) - Guro-gap (1) ♦ Gyeonggi area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Goyang-byeong (4.6) - Anyang Dongan-eul (4.2) - Hanam-eul (3.3) - Yongin-gap (2.9) - Uiwang-Gwacheon (2.2) - Goyang-jeong (2) ♦ Incheon/Gangwon area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yeonsu-gap (3.4) - Chuncheon-gap (2.1) - Wonju-eul (4) ♦ Daejeon/Chungcheong area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Daejeon Dong-gu (3.2) - Daejeon Daedeok (2.2) - Cheongju Sangdang (1.7) - Cheongju Hongdeok (1.2) ♦ Jeju area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seogwipo (3.2) ♦ Busan/Gyeongnam area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Busan Buk-gu-gap (2.3) - Gimhae-gap (4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Gyeonggi area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gwangju-eul (1.4) ♦ Incheon area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Michuhol-gap (0.6) - Namdong-eul (0.8)

The figures in parentheses () indicate the difference value (%) between the People Power Party candidate's election-day vote share and the Democratic Party candidate's election-day vote share

- **(Defeat Due to Vote Contamination)** Looking at the table below, it shows the probability that the People Power Party candidate would have been elected if the votes had not been contaminated, and when the number of constituencies that lost due to contamination is organized by region, it appears as a total of 46 constituencies: 16 constituencies in Seoul, 11 in Gyeonggi, 2 in Incheon, 2 in Gangwon, 3 in Daejeon, 3 in Chungbuk, 4 in Chungnam, 1 in Jeju, 1 in Busan, 1 in Ulsan, and 2 in Gyeongnam.

Values for the 50 constituencies in which People Power Party candidates won in election-day voting but lost in constituency voting $n(\Delta P_{99})$

$10 \leq n(\Delta P_{99})$	$5 \leq n(\Delta P_{99}) < 10$	$1.3 \leq n(\Delta P_{99}) < 5$	$0 < n(\Delta P_{99}) < 1$
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Seoul area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yeongdeungpo-eul (11.1) - Yangcheon-gap (13.0) - Seongdong-eul (10.9) - Gangdong-gap (11.5) - Songpa-byeong (11.6) ◆ Gyeonggi area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yongin-byeong (13.2) - Yongin-jeong (10.5) ◆ Incheon area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yeonsu-eul (11.0) ◆ Gyeongnam area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changwon Seongsan (10.8) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Seoul area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gwangjin-eul (9.0) - Jongno (7.3) - Gwangjin-gap (8.1) - Dongjak-gap (8.0) - Dobong-eul (5.3) ◆ Gyeonggi area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hanam-gap (9.1) - Suwon-jeong (9.8) - Anseong (5.2) - Goyang-byeong (5.2) ◆ Daejeon/Chungcheong area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Daejeon Jung-gu (7.4) - Cheonan-gap (6.1) - Gongju-Buyeo (8.9) - Nonsan-Gyeryong (6.7) - Dangjin (6.2) ◆ Ulsan area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dong-gu (5.4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Seoul area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seodaemun-gap (4.1) - Gangseo-eul (4.6) - Dongdaemun-gap (3.0) - Gangdong-eul (3.4) - Dongdaemun-eul (1.5) ◆ Gyeonggi area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Anyang Dongan-eul (3.7) - Hanam-eul (2.8) - Yongin-gap (3.1) - Uiwang-Gwacheon (2.4) - Goyang-jeong (2.3) ◆ Incheon/Gangwon area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yeonsu-gap (3.2) - Chuncheon-gap (2.1) - Wonju-eul (3.4) ◆ Daejeon/Chungcheong area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Daejeon Dong-gu (3.1) - Daejeon Daedeok (2.0) - Cheongju Sangdang (1.6) - Cheongju Seowon (4.6) - Cheongju Hongdeok (1.3) ◆ Jeju/Busan/Gyeongnam area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seogwipo (2.8) - Busan Buk-gu-gap (1.9) - Gimhae-gap (4.4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Seoul area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guro-gap (1.08) ◆ Gyeonggi area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gwangju-eul (0.37) ◆ Incheon area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Michuhol-gap (0.63) - Namdong-eul (0.68)
9 constituencies (probability of election 1,000% or higher) impossible to lose	16 constituencies (probability of election 500% or higher and less than 1,000%) impossible to lose	21 constituencies (probability of election 130% or higher and less than 500%) certain to win	4 constituencies (probability of election greater than 0% and less than 100%) verification required

The figures in parentheses () indicate the difference value (%) between the People Power Party candidate's election-day vote share and the Democratic Party candidate's election-day vote share.

Number of constituencies by region for People Power Party candidates estimated to have been elected if there had been no contamination of the vote

Region	People Power Party candidates			Region	People Power Party candidates		
	Clearly elected	Verification required	Total		Clearly elected	Verification required	Total
1. Seoul	16	1	17	7. Chungnam	4		4
2. Gyeonggi	11	1	12	8. Jeju	1		1
3. Incheon	2	2	4	9. Busan	1		1
4. Gangwon	2		2	10. Ulsan	1		1
5. Daejeon	3		3	11. Gyeongnam	2		2
6. Chungbuk	3		4				
Total					46	4	50

- **(Constituencies of Democratic Party candidates whose election outcomes should be verified)** Among Democratic Party candidates, there were 10 constituencies in which, according to the National Election Commission's announced results, they were elected, but the value of Formula (5) was between -1 and $+1$, thus falling within the 99% margin of error for election. If the difference value between the People Power Party candidate's election-day vote share (y_A) and the Democratic Party candidate's election-day vote share (x_A) value are calculated, the results are as shown in the table below. According to these results, the $n(\Delta P_{99})$ value for the Yeongdeungpo-gap constituency is -1.033 , which is less than -1 ; however, the $n(\Delta P_{99})$ value is -1.033 , which is less than -1 , the $n(\Delta P_{99})$ values for the remaining 9 constituencies fall within the range of $-1 < n(\Delta P_{99}) < 0$ indicating that these constituencies require verification of the election outcome.

Difference in Election-Day Vote Share and $n(\Delta P_{99})$ Values for Constituencies Requiring Verification of Democratic Party Candidates' Election Outcomes

Constituency	Difference in election-day vote share (People Power Party – Democratic Party)	$n(\Delta P_{99})$	Constituency	Difference in election-day vote share (People Power Party – Democratic Party)	$n(\Delta P_{99})$
1. Gangbuk-eul (Seoul)	-0.2%	-0.16	6. Suwon-byeong (Gyeonggi)	-0.6%	-0.59
2. Yeongdeungpo-gap (Seoul)	-1%	-1.033	7. Pyeongtaek-eul (Gyeonggi)	-0.8%	-0.71
3. Goyang-gap (Gyeonggi)	-0.2%	-0.23	8. Pyeongtaek-byeong (Gyeonggi)	-0.9%	-0.87
4. Paju-eul (Gyeonggi)	-0.2%	-0.2	9. Bupyeong-gap (Incheon)	-0.4%	-0.43
5. Gimpo-gap (Gyeonggi)	-0.2%	-0.22	10. Seo-gu-eul (Daejeon)	-0.1%	-0.1

○ **(Results of the statistical analysis of the results of the 22nd general election)**

The result announced by the National Election Commission for the 254 constituency seats in the 22nd general election was 91 seats for the People Power Party and 163 seats for the opposition party, and the discourse over whether this result was a reasonable and fair election result has caused serious division in our society. If the election results are interpreted academically using formulas that are recognized throughout the world and included in high school mathematics textbooks in almost all countries of the world, the result is as shown in the table below. According to this result, out of the 254 constituency seats, the opposition party is estimated to have won 113 seats and the People Power Party 141 seats. If the National Election Commission's result is the true result, it appears that we would face the extremely serious problem not only of having to re-establish statistical theory, but also of having to revise the statistics sections of high school mathematics textbooks all over the world.

Results announced by the National Election Commission and statistical analysis results for the general election of April 10, 2024

Region	Number of constituencies	NEC announced result		Statistical analysis result					
		Democratic Party elected	People Power Party elected	Democratic Party elected			People Power Party elected		
				Clearly elected	Verification required *	Total	Clearly elected	Verification required *	Total
Seoul	48	37	11	18	2	20	27	1	28
Gyeonggi	60	53**	7	35	6	41	18	1	19
Incheon	14	12	2	7	1	8	4	2	6
Gangwon	8	2**	6				8		8
Daejeon	7	7		3	1	4	3		3
Sejong	2	2		2		2			
Chungbuk	8	5	3	1	1	2	6		6
Chungnam	11	8	3	4		4	7		7
Gwangju	8	8		8		8			
Jeonbuk	10	10		10		10			
Jeonnam	10	10		10		10			
Jeju	3	3		2		2	1		1
Daegu	12		12				12		12
Gyeongbuk	13		13				13		13
Busan	318	1	17				18		18
Ulsan	6	2**	4	1		1	5		5
Gyeongnam	16	3	13			1	15		15
Total	254	163	91	102	11	113	137	4	141

10) Alleged Manipulation in the 21st National Assembly Election of the Republic of Korea: Follow_the_party

- (Overview) The April 15, 2020 general election was the gravest crisis in the history of liberal democracy in the Republic of Korea, and there were many aspects of the Democratic Party’s overwhelming victory and the results that were difficult to accept statistically and in terms of conditions on the ground. Centered on former United Future Party lawmaker Min Kyung-wook, a truth-finding movement was launched, and the symbolic piece of evidence of this movement is precisely the character string “Follow_the_party” (hereinafter “FTP”). This is interpreted as a “fingerprint” proudly left behind by Chinese Communist Party hackers after infiltrating and manipulating the election computer system. FTP is not a mere coincidence; rather, it is the English version of the communist slogan “Forever follow the Party” (永远跟党走), and is decisive evidence cleverly hidden within the official data of the National Election Commission.



Follow_the_party (Source: YouTube Hyoing TV)

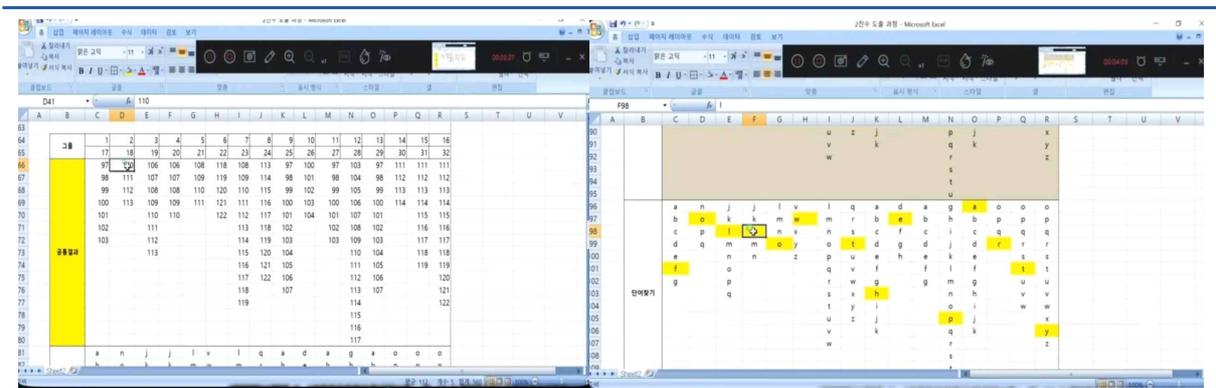
- (Development of the election-manipulation claim) Former lawmaker Min Kyung-wook first disclosed FTP through Facebook and a press conference in May 2020, and according to analysis by experts such as Roy Kim (Kim Sang-hoon) of publicly disclosed statistical data from the National Election Commission, if a particular algorithm (binary conversion + leading zero padding + ASCII code interpretation) is applied, “FOLLOW_THE_PARTY” is derived. Former lawmaker Min Kyung-wook described it as “a message left behind by a genius hacker so that only he could recognize it, like the Da Vinci Code,” and defined it as “irrefutable evidence” proving intervention by the Chinese Communist Party. It was later systematized in The Hacker’s

Fingerprint follow_the_party: Report on the Full Story of the April 15 Fraudulent Election (co-authored by Kim Mi-young, Roy Kim, and Jang Young-hoo, 2021), and spread by conservative intellectuals such as Gong Byeong-ho and attorney Park Joo-hyun.

- In 2024-2025, it was reignited through matters such as the background of former President Yoon Suk-yeol's declaration of martial law and testimony at American conservative events, and developed into an expanded logic claiming that "all elections (including the 2022 presidential election and the 2024 general election) were manipulated by Chinese and left-wing forces."

○ (Core evidentiary content of FTP) The core evidentiary content of FTP proceeds through \triangle hidden strings in election data \triangle statistical anomalies \triangle linkage with on-site and physical-evidence suspicions, and the details are as follows.

- (Hidden strings in election data) If the array of numbers disclosed by the National Election Commission (vote counts, turnout rates, etc.) is subjected to a series of mathematical transformations (application of Fibonacci-sequence-like weights \rightarrow reordering centered on negative values \rightarrow division to approach 100 \rightarrow binary conversion \rightarrow zero padding \rightarrow ASCII interpretation), the phrase "FOLLOW THE PARTY" appears. This is a sophisticated design difficult to regard as a statistical coincidence, and is defined as an "Easter egg" left by Chinese hackers.



Process of transforming statistical figures from the 21st National Assembly election into character values through a series of steps (Source: VON News)

	1열	2열	3열	4열	5열	6열	7열	8열	9열	10열	11열	12열	13열	14열	15열	16열
문자변환	a	n	j	j	l	v	i	q	a	d	a	g	a	o	o	o
	b	o	k	k	m	w	m	r	b	e	b	h	b	p	p	p
	c	p	l	l	n	x	n	s	c	f	c	i	c	q	q	q
	d	q	m	m	o	y	o	t	d	g	d	j	d	r	r	r
	e		n	n		z	p	u	e	h	e	k	e		s	s
	f		o				q	v	f		f	l	f		t	t
	g		p				r	w	g		g	m	g		u	u
			q				s	z	h			n	h		v	v
							t		i			o	i		w	w
							u		j			p	j			x
							v		k			q	k			y
							w					r				g

Transformed characters Follow_the_party (Source: YouTube video from Rep. Ha Tae-kyung’s office)

- **(Statistical anomalies)** Extreme gaps appear in the early-voting and election-day vote shares within the vote-share rates and vote figures disclosed by the National Election Commission. In particular, the 63-to-36 ratio repeatedly appears in the Seoul metropolitan area, and there are also observations, such as Professor Walter Mebane’s (University of Michigan) analysis, that the z-values (statistical deviations) are at a level almost impossible on earth. This suggests that early-voting ballots were pre-manipulated and allocated in the computerized system.
- **(Linkage with on-site and physical-evidence suspicions)** Numerous on-site testimonies and photographs—such as early-voting ballots with QR codes, discovery of wireless LAN and FPGA chips in ballot-sorting machines, mass appearance of ballots without the manager’s seal, piles of Samlip bread boxes and crisp new ballots, mixed ballots and leakage of ballots from the wrong districts—are presented together with FTP as pieces of the puzzle of Chinese intervention and computerized manipulation.
- **(Subsequent claims)** The essence of FTP is that it is evidence that the Chinese Communist Party usurped Korean electoral sovereignty, and former lawmaker Min Kyung-wook warned that “if this evidence is ignored, the identity of the Republic of Korea will disappear,” while Roy Kim testified that he “accidentally discovered it while back-tracing data as an accounting major.” As of 2025, conservative communities (V for Korea, far-right YouTube channels, etc.) are still claiming that “abolition of early voting and introduction of manual counting are the only solutions,” while calling for rallies of one million people and appeals to the international community (including the U.S. State Department). In

addition to FTP, an additional clue has been raised that “other English sentences also emerged,” but as these have not yet been disclosed, the situation is portrayed as foreshadowing an even larger revelation.

- **(Relationship between A-WEB and FTP)** President Yoon Suk-yeol informed people of the A-WEB issue together with the China issue, and President Trump raised the issue of A-WEB together with USAID. Kim Mi-young, representative of VON News, organized the subject of that relationship as follows: ① Why do globalists pursuing an open society join hands with the closed Chinese Communist Party? ② USAID is an organization that works on projects related to social rights (Covenant A) under the U.N. human rights covenants, so why is it involved in projects related to voting rights, which are related to civil and political rights (Covenant B)? ③ Why does A-WEB carry out projects related to civil and political rights (Covenant B) in the form of official development assistance (ODA), thereby intervening in the internal affairs of other countries with Korean taxpayers' money? ④ While China refuses to become a member state of the U.N. Covenant B and denies free elections in both the mainland and Hong Kong, is it using the A-WEB framework to destroy free elections in Korea and around the world in pursuit of an evil hegemony?
- It is argued that A-WEB, while transferring electronic vote-counting systems to countries around the world, may at the same time have opened the conditions for China to intervene, and it is thought that if the election-fraud cartel currently under investigation in the United States comes to the surface soon, the truth regarding that relationship will be revealed.

3. Comparative Policy Analysis of Overseas Electoral Fraud Cases

U.S. Election Fairness Bills

Background of U.S. discussions on election fairness

- The United States is a federal state in which election–management authority is dispersed among the states, but the legitimacy and reliability of presidential elections and federal congressional elections are matters directly connected to political stability at the federal level. In particular, after the 2020 presidential election, social conflict over the legitimacy of the election results became extreme, which in turn triggered large–scale legislative discussions centered on the integrity of the electoral system, the transparency of voting procedures, and the problem of verifying voter eligibility¹⁶¹). This situation became an occasion for recognizing election fairness not as a mere administrative issue but as a core democratic foundation of national survival.

Restoring Faith in Elections Act(H.R.160)

- The Restoring Faith in Elections Act is a bill introduced in the 119th U.S. Congress that sets restoration of public trust in elections as its core goal¹⁶²). The bill is characterized by its attempt to establish minimum federal standards regarding voting procedures, management of voter rolls, and vote–tabulation methods across federal elections as a whole. This is based on the recognition that election rules differing by state cause confusion and distrust, and it particularly emphasizes the following matters. First, it specifies the need to secure nationwide consistency in voter registration and voting procedures. Second, it includes efforts to institutionalize audit and post–election verification procedures in the election–management process. Third, it aims to establish the basis for technical and financial support by the federal government in relation to election security¹⁶³). However, criticism is simultaneously raised that this bill may infringe upon the autonomy of state governments, and the possibility of conflict with the principles of federalism continues to be discussed.

Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act (SAVE Act, H.R.22)

161) AP News, House Republicans propose voting changes as Trump administration eyes the midterms.

162) U.S. Congress, H.R.160, Restoring Faith in Elections Act

163) Ibid.

- The SAVE Act is a bill that would require the submission of documents proving U.S. citizenship at the time of voter registration for federal elections. The bill is premised on preventing from the outset the possibility of illegal voting by non-citizens, and is strongly supported mainly by Republicans. The central logic of this bill is the claim that election fairness should take precedence over voting access, and that verification of citizenship is the minimum safeguard of democracy.
- On the other hand, Democrats and civil society organizations criticize the bill on the ground that it could discourage voting participation among low-income voters, elderly voters, and racial-minority voters. The SAVE Act is not simply a case of strengthened administrative regulation, but a legislative example symbolically showing the clash of values in American society over the scope and nature of voting rights.

○ **Securing Our Elections Act(H.R.156)**

- The Securing Our Elections Act contains provisions mandating the presentation of photo identification when voting¹⁶⁴). The purpose of this bill is to minimize the possibility of proxy voting or duplicate voting by strengthening identity-verification procedures on election day. The bill is designed so that, in the case of a person who does not possess identification, a provisional ballot is permitted, but its validity is determined through subsequent verification. This is evaluated as a compromise approach between strengthening election security and protecting voting rights¹⁶⁵).

○ **John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act**

- The John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act is a bill aimed at restoring and strengthening the 1965 Voting Rights Act in a modernized form. In particular, it focuses on reviving the preclearance system that had been weakened by decisions of the federal Supreme Court. The bill includes a mechanism intended to prevent the introduction of discriminatory electoral systems by requiring prior approval from the federal government when a particular state or locality changes its election system. This is a representative case of approaching election fairness not only from the perspective of “preventing fraud,” but also from that of “preventing discrimination.”

164) U.S. Congress, H.R.156, Securing Our Elections Act

165) Ibid.

○ Election Security Act family of bills

- The family of Election Security Act bills discussed in the U.S. Congress is evaluated as a legislative trend focusing, among election–fairness discussions, especially on strengthening the technical and physical security of election infrastructure¹⁶⁶). The purpose of these bills is to institutionally secure the verifiability and resilience of the election results themselves, rather than the advantages or disadvantages of a particular party. The most central content of the Election Security Act family is the mandatory introduction or strengthened maintenance of paper ballot records (paper ballots or voter–verified paper audit trails). This is intended to ensure that all electronic tabulation results can be reverified through physical records in response to concerns that electronic voting machines or electronic vote–counting systems may be vulnerable to hacking, errors, or internal manipulation. These bills do not completely deny the use of electronic voting systems, but proceed from the recognition that it is difficult to secure public trust in election results by means of electronic systems alone. Accordingly, even when electronic voting machines are used, they provide that a paper record directly verifiable by the voter must be generated and recognized as primary evidence with legal effect. In addition, the Election Security Act family includes the introduction of Risk–Limiting Audits (RLA) as an important element. A risk–limiting audit is a method of statistically evaluating the possibility that an election result could be overturned, and then conducting a recount by randomly extracting the minimum necessary sample. This system is evaluated as an institutional device that can reduce the social cost of full recounts while substantially deterring the possibility of result manipulation.
- In addition, the Election Security Act family sets as a major task the establishment of a response system to the possibility of election intervention by foreign powers, especially threats of cyberattacks and information manipulation. To this end, it expressly provides in law for a cooperative framework between the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), and state election authorities, and establishes the basis for federal–level technical and budgetary

166) U.S. Congress, S.5615 and related Election Security Act bills: legislative materials on election infrastructure security, paper ballot records, and Risk–Limiting Audit (RLA).

support. The Election Security Act family also provides for strengthened security–certification standards for election equipment. By requiring the use only of voting equipment approved by the federal government, and by establishing minimum standards concerning verification of source code, security updates, and physical access control, it aims to reduce disparities in equipment quality among the states. What is particularly noteworthy is that these bills define election security not as an area of political controversy but as an area of national security, and cyberattacks against election systems are recognized not as mere election–fraud issues but as national–security threats shaking the democratic system itself. Although some state governments criticize this as excessive federal intervention and concerns are raised that the setting of federal security standards may infringe upon state autonomy in election administration, with cost burdens also emerging as an issue, the Election Security Act family is evaluated as an area receiving relatively bipartisan support in U.S. discussions on election fairness.

- This is based on a common sense of crisis that, if distrust in election results continues, not only the legitimacy of the government but the constitutional order as a whole may be shaken. In sum, the Election Security Act family may be evaluated as a legislative trend that redefines election fairness not as the question of “who won,” but as the question of “how the result can be proven.”¹⁶⁷⁾. This approach serves to increase the acceptance of the result by the losing side and institutionally supports the sustainability of democracy.

4. Review of International Electoral Fraud Cases

1) United States

- Submission concerning Trump’s speeches on election fraud and the search of a U.S. election commission**
- Former President Trump’s speeches regarding election fraud**
 - After the 2020 presidential election, former President Trump raised issues regarding the election results and, through many official speeches, press conferences, and interviews, stated that there were suspicions of election fraud while raising \triangle claims of lack of procedural transparency by

¹⁶⁷⁾ *Ibid.*

election–management bodies △ issues of reliability in ballot management and in the processes of counting and storing ballots △ claims that sufficient verification of election records had not been carried out △ and suspicions of poor voter management, such as the possibility of voting by foreigners and illegal residents.

- **(Ripple effect)** These speeches became an occasion for spreading debate throughout American society over the fairness and reliability of the election system, and resulted in increasing demands for institutional review of election–management procedures and records management.

□ **FBI search and seizure of an election authority (Fulton County, Georgia)**

○ **Background of the search and seizure**

- In January 2026, the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), pursuant to a court–issued warrant, searched and seized the election–record storage facilities of the election authorities of Fulton County, Georgia. This search and seizure was conducted not as a determination on the claims of a particular politician, but as a judicial verification procedure in order to confirm the legality of the management and preservation of election records and compliance with relevant laws and procedures. In the United States, it is evaluated as a case showing that election–management bodies also may become targets of compulsory investigation and record verification by federal investigative authorities when legal issues are raised.

○ **Targets and scope of the search**

- Items seized and secured included △ ballots related to the 2020 presidential election △ electronic vote–count records and server materials △ and internal documents related to election operation and management, and these are said to contain material for securing the statistical facts of election fraud.

○ **Analysis of the difference from the Korean system**

- The United States does not have a single central election commission in the form of a constitutional body like Korea; election administration is handled by administrative agencies at the state and county levels, and they are subject to law enforcement in the same way as ordinary administrative agencies.
- **(U.S. investigative and judicial–control structure)** When issues arise concerning election–related criminal records, the FBI, state prosecutors, and

federal prosecutors may all become investigative bodies, and when a court warrant is issued, search, seizure, and compulsory investigation can be carried out against election offices, election-record storage facilities, and electronic vote-counting systems. Election commissions are one type of administrative agency, can become targets of investigation, and are not exempt from criminal or administrative responsibility apart from their political neutrality.

- **(Korea's election-commission system and the problem of sanctuarization)** Korea's National Election Commission has the status of a constitutional organ, based on Article 114 of the Constitution. On the ground that its independence and political neutrality are to be guaranteed, it has a structure that receives strong protection from control by other administrative bodies and investigative agencies. Accordingly, the scope of audits by the Board of Audit and Inspection is limited, and due to the legal and customary burden of direct intervention by investigative agencies, it has a structure in which constant judicial control is in practice difficult. Since, in most cases, it responds to suspicions raised from outside only through internal audits or explanatory responses, it has the problem of limitations in investigation and auditing, and concerns have continuously been raised regarding △ absence of judicial verification △ imbalance between responsibility and authority △ limitations in the effectiveness of control by the National Assembly △ and the structure of accumulated distrust.

□ Cases related to mail-in voting

- Cases of fraud related to mail-in voting and absentee ballots may largely be classified into ① organized fraud cases ② individual-level fraud cases ③ and cases of institutional vulnerability, and there have been actual cases in which election results were overturned or re-elections were conducted, with most cases being detected in the course of investigation and resulting in punishment or invalidation of the election.
- Mail-in voting fraud cases
 - **(1997 Miami mayoral election mail-in voting manipulation case)** In the Miami mayoral election, Joe Carollo and Xavier Suarez competed, and although Carollo was ahead in in-person voting, Suarez won overwhelmingly in mail-in voting, which prompted an investigation when unusual patterns were found. As a

result of the investigation, more than approximately 400 mail-in ballots were confirmed to be illegal, including Δ votes cast in the names of deceased persons Δ preparation of false applications Δ proxy voting Δ and the purchase of ballots. The court accordingly defined this as organized and intentional fraud and invalidated the election result, which later led to a major expansion of discussions on strengthening the management of mail-in voting.

- **(2003 East Chicago, Indiana mayoral primary election)** This case was likewise one in which the election result was overturned due to mail-in voting manipulation. In the Democratic primary, the challenger candidate won in in-person voting, but the incumbent mayor showed an overwhelming victory result in mail-in voting. The investigation revealed Δ unlawful proxy applications Δ the preparation of false mail-in ballots Δ and organized ballot collection. The court judged the election result to be invalid and ordered a re-election.
 - **(2009 Rensselaer County, New York mail-in voting manipulation case)** In a local election in New York, McDonough and Smith competed, and this was a case in which absentee ballots were manipulated in large numbers by a political organization. After the case occurred, the investigation found that more than about 50 absentee ballots had been falsely prepared; votes had been recorded although voters had not applied; and circumstances were revealed showing that a political organization had filled out ballots on behalf of voters. The case came to light as several residents stated that they had not applied for absentee ballots.
- Structural vulnerabilities of the mail-in voting system
- **(Ballot collection problem: Ballot harvesting)** Political organizations collect voters' ballots on their behalf, which creates problems affecting the voting process. Some states restrict or prohibit this.
 - **(Signature-verification problem)** Mail-in voting verifies identity by signature verification, but signature reading is a highly subjective matter, and controversy frequently arises because standards and procedures differ by region.
 - **(Postal delivery process)** Problems may arise during the voting process because of ballot loss, delay, address errors, and problems in verifying the identity of recipients during the delivery of mail.

2) Ukraine

□ Ukrainian presidential election

- The 2004 Ukrainian presidential election is a representative case that is often analyzed in international political–science research as an incident in which election–rigging allegations led to a large–scale civic movement and judicial intervention. The election was contested between pro–Russian candidate Viktor Yanukovich and pro–Western candidate Viktor Yushchenko. After the second runoff, victory for Yanukovich was announced, but numerous abnormal statistics and administrative interventions were reported during the election process.
 - The election observation mission of the Organization for Security and Co–operation in Europe reported that it had confirmed discrepancies in voter lists during the counting process, abnormally high turnout in particular regions, and intervention by administrative power in the election, and in some regions turnout rates approaching or exceeding 100% were reported. In addition, statistical anomalies such as a sharp increase in voter registration immediately before the election were observed, and these problems led to large–scale civil protests, which later expanded into the political movement known as the Orange Revolution.
- The Supreme Court of Ukraine judged that the reliability of the election results had been undermined, invalidated the runoff result, and ordered a revote. The re–election was held in December 2004, and Yushchenko ultimately won. Political–science research evaluates this case as an example of a democratic correction mechanism of election–rigging allegations → civic resistance → judicial intervention → re–election¹⁶⁸).

168) Norris, P. (2014). *Why Electoral Integrity Matters*. Cambridge University Press. OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Report (2004).

3) Belarus

2020–2025 Belarusian presidential election

- The Belarusian presidential election is often analyzed in international election–observation research as a case of restricted electoral competition under an authoritarian regime. In particular, the 2020 election triggered international controversy when long–ruling President Alexander Lukashenko declared victory with more than approximately 80% of the vote. During the election process, restrictions on the candidacies of opposition candidates, control of the media, and suppression of civil–society activities were reported, and access by independent election observers was also restricted. The European Union and many international organizations criticized the election as not having been conducted under conditions of free and fair competition, and the Organization for Security and Co–operation in Europe also evaluated that election observation activities had not been sufficiently guaranteed and that transparency in the election process had been lacking. Large–scale civil protests then occurred immediately after the announcement of the election results, and international human–rights organizations reported cases of harsh suppression of protesters and political persecution.
- Political–science research¹⁶⁹⁾ analyzes such cases as characteristics of competitive authoritarianism or electoral authoritarianism. In other words, elections formally exist, but actual political competition and the possibility of alternation of power are structurally limited; for that reason, some Western countries did not recognize the legitimacy of the election results and announced diplomatic sanctions.

4) Venezuela

2024 Venezuelan presidential recall referendum

- The presidential recall referendum held in Venezuela in 2004 is a representative case that is frequently analyzed in political science and election studies as a case in which direct democracy and controversy over election reliability appeared simultaneously in a modern democratic system, and the Venezuelan

169) Levitsky & Way (2010). *Competitive Authoritarianism*. Cambridge University Press. European Parliament Reports on Belarus Elections (2020).

Constitution provides that a recall referendum on the president may be requested during the presidential term through the signatures of a certain number of citizens. This became an important political event reconfirming the political legitimacy of then-President Hugo Chávez through a referendum. The opposition launched a large-scale signature campaign citing economic crisis and political conflict, and the election-management body acknowledged that the necessary conditions had been met and held the recall referendum in August 2004. The official count result announced approximately 41% in favor of recall and approximately 59% opposed to recall and in favor of maintaining the president, and accordingly President Chávez continued in office. However, some opposition groups and researchers raised issues concerning the election process, claiming that the voting result differed considerably from pre-election opinion polls and exit-poll results. In particular, some statistical analysis studies argued that there were distributions of results in certain regions that were difficult to explain statistically, analyzing correlation patterns between electronic voting data and signature data; most notably, a study by economists analyzed the relationship between electronic voting results and data from the previous signature campaign and raised the possibility of irregularities¹⁷⁰). On the other hand, international election observers reached a different evaluation. The Organization of American States and The Carter Center¹⁷¹) reported, after conducting on-site observation and sample audits, that the voting procedures themselves had proceeded generally normally and that no evidence of organized manipulation had been found. In particular, the Carter Center announced that, as a result of random recount audits conducted at some polling stations, the degree of consistency between the electronic voting results and the actual voting records was high.

- This case sparked an important debate in academia because statistical analyses of the election and the evaluations of international observers conflicted more than the result itself. Some researchers argued that electronic voting systems and centralized tabulation methods could weaken transparency¹⁷²), while other

170) Hausmann, R., & Rigobón, R. (2004). In Search of the Black Swan: Analysis of the Venezuelan Recall Referendum.

171) The Carter Center (2005). Observing the Venezuela Presidential Recall Referendum.

172) Weisbrot, M., Rosnick, D., & Tucker, T. (2004). Black Swans, Conspiracy Theories, and the Venezuelan Referendum.

researchers pointed to bias in exit-poll samples or problems in poll design as the cause. This debate later led to expanded research emphasizing the importance of independent audits of electronic voting systems, verifiability of voting, and statistical election audits, and the 2004 Venezuelan recall referendum is evaluated not so much as a definitive case of proven manipulation of the result itself, but as a representative case that sparked academic controversy surrounding election technology, statistical analysis, and the role of international observation.

5) Australia

□ Australia NSW electronic voting

- The iVote online voting system used in the 2015 election in New South Wales (NSW), Australia is a very important case in electronic-voting security research. The iVote system is an internet-based voting system introduced to expand participation by voters who have difficulty accessing polling stations, such as persons with disabilities, persons with visual impairments, and overseas voters, and it was designed so that a voter submits a ballot online and can later verify through a separate verification system whether his or her vote was properly recorded. At the time, approximately several hundred thousand voters participated in voting through this system, and during the election period security researchers conducted an analysis of the system and discovered potential security vulnerabilities¹⁷³).
- **(Vulnerabilities of the electronic voting system)** In particular, the research team found that there were vulnerabilities in the external cryptographic library and network-connection structure used in the voting-verification process of the iVote system, and this study was jointly conducted by the University of Michigan, the University of Melbourne, and security researchers. According to the research results, a specific web-security vulnerability (a cryptographic weakness similar to the FREAK attack) existed, and it was detected that an attacker might carry out a man-in-the-middle attack by intercepting data in the middle of the network. According to the researchers' analysis, if such an attack succeeded, the attacker could alter the content of the vote submitted by the voter or expose the voter's choice¹⁷⁴). In particular, the research team

173) Halderman, J. A., et al. (2015). Security Analysis of the NSW iVote System.

pointed out that the security–authentication procedures in the connection process between the vote–verification server and the main voting server might not be completely secure. However, the researchers stated that they did not find evidence that such an attack had actually been carried out in the election, and the election authorities also announced that no evidence had been found that the election result had been manipulated.

- **(Expansion of controversy)** This incident greatly expanded the international debate over electronic–voting technology. Many researchers¹⁷⁵⁾ have pointed out that internet–based voting systems may theoretically be exposed to complex attacks, and that especially in large–scale elections it is difficult to guarantee complete security and anonymity at the same time. Afterward, academia saw an expansion of research arguing that institutional mechanisms such as paper trails, independent security audits, public source–code verification, and statistical election audits are necessary in order to secure the reliability of electronic–voting systems.

174) Teague, V. (2016). Electronic Voting and Security Risks.

175) Australian Electoral Commission Technical Review.

IV

Strategic Response Framework for Safeguarding Elections in a Liberal Democracy

1. Policy of Hand Counting

□ Introduction

- The electronic and automated vote-counting systems and digital tabulation systems currently implemented in the Republic of Korea are highly vulnerable to hacking and manipulation, and although the National Election Commission argues in terms of efficiency, elections must place greater emphasis and importance on fairness than on efficiency, and therefore it is appropriate to conduct manual counting and verification. Pippa Norris argued in her research on electoral integrity that “elections must not only produce accurate results, but citizens must also be able to trust those results,” and accordingly a number of countries and international organizations have presented verifiable election models centered on paper ballots and manual counting as important alternatives.
- **(Election observation guidelines of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe)** In presenting a verifiable election model, it sets forth that elections around the world should satisfy △ transparency of the voting process △ the ability of citizens and political parties to observe △ verifiable counting procedures △ and the principle of fairness in result tabulation.

□ Basic Structure and Method of the Manual Counting Model

- The manual counting model proceeds in a manner in which human beings directly conduct the count centering on paper ballots, and in this model △ paper-ballot-based voting △ sealing of ballot boxes △ election-day voting and on-site public manual counting procedures △ and result verification are treated as the core elements.
- **(Paper-ballot-based voting)** All votes are recorded on paper ballots, and it is proposed that ballot-route transparency be ensured by using unique identification numbers and barcodes on the ballots (excluding QR codes). In addition, it is proposed that anti-counterfeiting printing be applied to paper

ballots, and that only ballots bearing the personal seal of the counting staff be classified as authenticated ballots.

- **(Sealing of ballot boxes)** Ballot boxes are to be made transparent, and after voting ends, manual counting is to be conducted directly at the polling station in the presence of observers.
- **(Election-day voting and on-site public manual counting procedure)** After voting ends, the process proceeds in the order of opening the ballot box, sorting the ballots, tallying by candidate, recording the results, and confirmation by observers, and is carried out at a location where private-sector and party observers participate.
- **(Result verification)** After manual counting, a counting sheet is prepared and tabulated, and in this process a secondary verification count is conducted. The tally sheets upon completion of verification are aggregated by region and then centrally tabulated, after which random nationwide recounts are conducted to confirm statistical significance.

2. Scenario for the Introduction of Risk-Limiting Audit (RLA) Systems

Introduction

Introduction to Risk-Limiting Audit (RLA)

- Risk-Limiting Audit (RLA) is a post-election audit technique that statistically guarantees the accuracy of the final result after the election has ended, and unlike the conventional fixed-rate audit method, it introduces the concept of a statistical risk limit and is a procedure that verifies the accuracy of the final result by limiting in advance the “probability that the election result has been incorrectly produced.”¹⁷⁶⁾. This procedure secures statistical evidence by directly comparing the results produced by election equipment and tabulation systems with paper ballots on the basis of random sampling. RLA is designed so that, if the result differs from the actual result, it can be expanded up to the level of a full hand count, and the lower the risk limit, the higher the level of confidence, in which process the size of the audit sample or the number of repeated verifications increases. Ibid. In the United States, several states have

176) Risk-Limiting Audits: A Gentle Introduction, IEEE Security & Privacy, Vol. 10, No. 5, 2012.

already implemented RLA, and reports by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) also emphasize the need for the global expansion of RLA¹⁷⁷). In order to introduce this system domestically, it is necessary to establish a legal basis, define audit procedures and statistical methodologies, build an implementation system, and ensure consistency between election laws and information–security laws and regulations¹⁷⁸).

○ Need to introduce Risk–Limiting Audit (RLA)

- Although Korea centrally manages elections through the National Election Commission, public distrust has continuously been raised with respect to the reliability of the electronic vote–counting system, the physical custody of ballots, and the verification of voting results. Accordingly, it is necessary to establish a statistical verification system for election results, and RLA is an appropriate means of institutionalizing “verifiability.” Since it is not a simple administrative audit but rather a procedure that fundamentally assesses the statistical confidence level of election results, upon introduction it is necessary to prescribe by law a “risk limit” establishing the threshold and to standardize the audit methodology¹⁷⁹).

○ Basic concepts and procedures of Risk–Limiting Audit

- 1. Risk limit means the maximum allowable probability of error established so that the audit can statistically identify an incorrect election result. For example, if the risk limit is set at 5%, the probability that the audit procedure will approve an incorrect result is limited to a maximum of 5%¹⁸⁰).
- 2. Random sampling method identifies tabulation errors by randomly selecting paper ballots and comparing them with machine–tabulated results¹⁸¹).
- 3. Escalation is a structure in which, if sufficient statistical confidence is not obtained from the sample audit, the scope of inspection can be expanded or a full review can be conducted¹⁸²).
- RLA procedures use statistically validated methodologies (e.g., ballot comparison, ballot polling, batch comparison), and each of those methodologies

177) *Ibid*

178) Risk–Limiting Audit Rules and Procedures, Colorado Revised Statutes & Administrative Rules.

179) Handbook for the Observation of Electronic Voting, OSCE, 2013.

180) Securing the Vote: Protecting American Democracy, The National Academies Press, 2018.

181) Risk–Limiting Audits: A Gentle Introduction, IEEE Security & Privacy, Vol. 10, No. 5, 2012.

182) Handbook for the Observation of Electronic Voting, OSCE, 2013.

has its own advantages and disadvantages¹⁸³). For example, ballot comparison RLA can secure a high degree of confidence with a relatively small sample by comparing the Cast Vote Record (CVR) generated by the voting machine with the actual physical ballots¹⁸⁴).

□ Introduction Scenario

- **(Establishing the legal basis)** It is necessary to insert provisions on Risk-Limiting Audit into the Public Official Election Act to prescribe the timing of RLA application, the setting of the risk limit, audit procedures, and the conditions for expanding the audit. The following is an example of statutory provisions for this purpose.

<Draft Act on Risk-Limiting Audit>

Article ○○ (Definition of Risk-Limiting Audit)

- ① “Risk-Limiting Audit” means an audit procedure implemented for the purpose of limiting the possibility that an election result is statistically erroneous to within a predetermined risk limit.
- ② The Election Commission shall conduct a risk-limiting audit within a certain period after the election in accordance with this Ordinance.

Article ○○-2 (Risk Limit and Sample Selection)

- ① The risk limit shall be prescribed by administrative rule of the Election Commission, with the principle that it be set at 5% or below.
- ② The Election Commission shall select samples by random extraction, and the procedure shall use random selection by means of a random number generator.

Article ○○-3 (Escalation Procedure)

- ① If sufficient statistical confidence is not obtained as a result of the risk-limiting audit, the Election Commission may expand the scope of the audit.
- ② The expanded audit may conduct a recount on the basis of the entire sample of the relevant electoral district.

183) Securing the Vote: Protecting American Democracy, The National Academies Press, 2018.

184) Ibid.

- **(Criteria for setting the risk limit)** In domestic introduction, it is necessary that the standards for setting the risk limit be clearly prescribed by law, and the guidelines of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) indicate that RLA can be applied in a wide variety of ways globally. Risk-Limiting Audit Rules and Procedures, Colorado Revised Statutes & Administrative Rules. The risk limit may vary depending on the scale of the election, the number of candidates, the number of polling places, and the final vote margin, and for example, if the risk limit is set at 5%, it guarantees a 95% probability of correcting the result when the result is wrong¹⁸⁵).
- **Measures for implementing risk-limiting audit**
 - **(Sample extraction and performance of the audit)** Risk-limiting audit is centered on statistically random sample extraction. The Election Commission must secure transparency in the sample-selection process by automatically selecting the sample to be audited through a random number generator after the election ends. Ibid. The selected sample is then checked by an independent audit team comparing the machine-tabulated result with the paper ballots, and if errors are found, additional samples are extracted through statistical analysis or the process is escalated to a full recount¹⁸⁶).
 - **(Data security and privacy)** Because risk-limiting audit is closely linked to election-data security, ballots and tabulation data require appropriate secure storage, and an integrated security system must be established through review of coordination with the Personal Information Protection Act, the Electronic Government Act, and related laws.
 - **(Training and personnel development)** Alongside the establishment of the legal basis, it is necessary to train specialized personnel capable of performing risk-limiting audits, provide education in audit techniques, and provide verification training on random extraction algorithms. At this time, it is necessary to form an independent body requiring the joint public-private placement of experts in statistics and auditing, and to form a process in which citizens participate in education within the independent audit body and in the authority to appoint system practitioners.

185) Securing the Vote: Protecting American Democracy, The National Academies Press, 2018.

186) Handbook for the Observation of Electronic Voting, OSCE, 2013.

3. Reform of the Authority Structure of the National Election Commission and an Integrated Security Audit Model

□ Overview

- **(Introduction of an election security audit system)** The National Election Commission of the Republic of Korea is a constitutional organ and a core institution guaranteeing the fairness and neutrality of elections, and it possesses broad authority over election administration as a whole. However, under the current structure, the functions of execution, management, supervision, and audit are concentrated within the same institution, and criticism has continuously been raised that external verification and ex post control over election results have not been institutionally secured to a sufficient degree. In particular, under circumstances in which technical and procedural distrust is expanding with respect to the electronic vote-counting system, early-voting management, ballot storage, and the counting process, there is an observation that merely improving internal rules while maintaining the existing authority structure of the National Election Commission has limitations in restoring social trust. Accordingly, with reference to internationally used Election Security Audit models, it is necessary to introduce an independent security audit system linked to reform of the authority structure of the National Election Commission.
- **(Comparison of overseas election-management bodies and audit structures)** Major democratic countries overseas have adopted structures in which election-management bodies and election-audit functions are separated to some extent, or in which external independent institutions participate in the audit. In the United States, state election authorities administer elections, but audit procedures such as Risk-Limiting Audits are performed according to independent audit standards, and participation by federal-level guidelines and external expert groups is institutionally guaranteed¹⁸⁷⁾. Elections Canada possesses election-execution authority, but its post-election audit and evaluation reports are submitted to Parliament, and it maintains a structure in which independent accounting audits and technical audits are carried out in parallel¹⁸⁸⁾. Germany likewise has the Federal Election Committee manage

187) Philip B. Stark, Risk-Limiting Election Audits, IEEE Security & Privacy, 2012

elections, but election litigation and vote-count verification are designed so that the final judgment is rendered by the Constitutional Court and the ordinary courts¹⁸⁹). These cases show that, in order to maintain the neutrality and reliability of election administration, it is an international trend to institutionally disperse executive authority and verification/audit authority.

- **(Limitations of the concentrated authority structure of the National Election Commission)** Under the current system, the National Election Commission of the Republic of Korea exclusively performs most functions, including election preparation, voting management, vote-count execution, result finalization, and internal audit. Although such a structure may have advantages in terms of administrative efficiency, when objections or demands for verification concerning election results arise, it exposes the essential limitation of being a “self-audit” structure. In particular, under conditions in which IT-based election administration is expanding, it is pointed out as a problem that internal technical verification by the National Election Commission alone is insufficient to secure trust regarding external hacking, internal error, or system-design problems. The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) has pointed out that long-term technological monopoly by election-management bodies may deepen election distrust¹⁹⁰).
- **(Basic principles for the introduction of a security audit model)** A security audit model linked to reform of the authority structure of the National Election Commission must satisfy the following basic principles. The principles below are of core significance in transforming election security from a mere issue of internal control into a domain of public verification within democracy.
 - **(First)** The audit body must be guaranteed organizational and personnel independence from the National Election Commission.
 - **(Second)** The subjects of audit must include technical, procedural, and physical security throughout the entire pre-election, during-election, and post-election process.
 - **(Third)** The audit results must be subject to a transparent reporting system under which they can be disclosed to the people and the National Assembly.

188) Elections Canada, Post-Election Evaluation and Audit Framework

189) German Federal Constitutional Court, Judgment on Electronic Voting Machines, 2009

190) IFES, Election Management Bodies and Electoral Integrity, 2020

□ **Design of an Independent Security Audit Body Separate from the National Election Commission**

- **(Establishment of an independent Election Security Audit Commission)** In light of overseas examples, the establishment of an independent Election Security Audit Commission separated from the National Election Commission may be one alternative. This body would perform technical and procedural audits of the election–execution results of the National Election Commission, and would report the results to the National Assembly and the people. Its membership could be composed of experts in statistics, information security, election law, constitutional law, and systems engineering, and in order to secure political neutrality, a mixed method of recommendation by the National Assembly and appointment by the President could be considered¹⁹¹).
- **(Scope of audit and authority)** The scope of audit by the security audit body should include the following: verification of the source code of the electronic vote–counting system, analysis of system–access records, physical security inspection of the printing, storage, and transport of ballots, and verification of whether Risk–Limiting Audits were conducted and of their results¹⁹²). In addition, the audit body must possess legal authority, when necessary, to require the National Election Commission to submit materials, and it must be institutionalized so that legal sanctions are possible for interference with the audit or concealment of materials.

□ **Scenario for Legal Reform**

- **(Direction for amendment of the Public Official Election Act)** It is necessary to create a new Chapter in the Public Official Election Act concerning election security audits, clearly specifying the basis for the establishment of the audit body, its authority, audit procedures, and reporting obligations. The following is an example of statutory provisions.

191) Elections Canada, Post–Election Evaluation and Audit Framework

192) Risk–Limiting Audits: A Gentle Introduction, IEEE Security & Privacy, Vol. 10, No. 5, 2012.

<Draft Public Official Election Act Provisions on Election Security Audit>

Article 〇〇 (Establishment of Election Security Audit)

- ① In order to secure the fairness and security of elections, an independent Election Security Audit Commission shall be established.
- ② The Election Security Audit Commission may audit the entirety of election execution by the National Election Commission.

Article 〇〇-2 (Scope of Audit)

- ① The audit shall include the election information system, ballot management, counting procedures, and whether risk-limiting audits have been carried out.
- ② The results of the audit shall be disclosed to the National Assembly and the people.

- **(Redefinition of the authority of the National Election Commission)** The purpose of introducing a security audit model is not to weaken the authority of the National Election Commission, but rather to serve as an institutional device supplementing the legitimacy and reliability of the Commission's decisions. The National Election Commission would maintain its role as the specialized institution for election execution, while the fields of verification and audit would be handled by an external independent body, thereby clarifying the division of roles. Such a structure is also evaluated internationally as an effective method for protecting the political neutrality of election-management bodies¹⁹³).
- **(Phased introduction strategy)** Rather than introducing the security audit model in a single comprehensive step, it is desirable to adopt a phased approach of pilot application in selected constituencies → nationwide expansion → constitutional and statutory reform. In particular, it is realistic first to introduce audits linked to Risk-Limiting Audits in order to accumulate technical trust, and thereafter complete the institutional independent-audit system.

193) Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters, CDL-AD(2002)023rev.

Policy Proposals for Strengthening Electoral Integrity through ROK–U.S. Cooperation

1. Request for Technical Assistance from the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) to Enhance Electoral Integrity in the Republic of Korea

Problem Statement and the Standard of International Norms

- Elections are a core institution that forms the legitimacy of a democratic system. The fairness and transparency of elections go beyond the mere accuracy of the result and form the foundation of “political trust,” through which citizens accept the result. The United Nations states in its principles of electoral assistance that “credible elections are a precondition for the peaceful transfer of power and democratic stability.”¹⁹⁴). In addition, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) defines electoral integrity as “a condition in which the legal framework, administrative capacity, transparency, citizen participation, and dispute–resolution structures function organically together.”¹⁹⁵).
- The Republic of Korea is a country that constitutionally possesses an independent election–management system, but in recent years social questions have been raised regarding the operation of electronic vote–counting equipment, the management of early voting, and the scope of information disclosure in relation to certain election processes. If such controversy continues over the long term, the “loser’s consent” regarding election results may be weakened. This may expand beyond a simple political conflict into a problem of institutional trust.

Implications of Academic Research on Electoral Integrity

- Pippa Norris presents the legal foundation, administrative professionalism, media environment, and citizen perception as factors determining trust in

194)United Nations. (n.d.). Principles and types of UN electoral assistance. United Nations Electoral Assistance Division.

195) International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. (2014). Electoral management design: The International IDEA handbook (2nd ed.). International IDEA.

elections, and analyzes that election failure often stems more from “lack of transparency and information asymmetry” than from the existence of fraud itself¹⁹⁶). Pippa Norris presents the legal foundation, administrative professionalism, media environment, and citizen perception as factors determining trust in elections, and analyzes that election failure often stems more from “lack of transparency and information asymmetry” than from the existence of fraud itself¹⁹⁷). In particular, it is pointed out that as the introduction of election technology expands, “verifiability” becomes more important. This does not mean that electronic equipment necessarily causes errors, but rather that trust can be maintained only when an objective verification system exists for the possibility of error. The Republic of Korea uses electronic vote-counting support equipment, but while the final tally is conducted through manual counting, a system of periodic technical audits by an external independent institution has not been institutionalized.

- In such a situation, academia recommends “functional evaluation by an independent international specialized institution” as a way of resolving political controversy¹⁹⁸). IFES is an institution that has carried out election-management capacity-building projects in more than 145 countries and possesses the expertise to conduct technical and institutional diagnostics.

□ International Standards for Electronic Election Technology and Security Audits

- The ODIHR under the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has presented, as recommendations when using electronic counting or electronic voting technology, ① securing access to source code, ② independent security audits, ③ post-election random sample audits, and ④ establishment of a procedural double-verification system¹⁹⁹). In addition, several states in the United States have institutionalized Risk-Limiting Audit (RLA). This concept was systematized by a group of statisticians at Stanford University and is

196) Norris, P. (2015). *Why elections fail*. Cambridge University Press.

<https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107280671>

197) Electoral Integrity Project. (n.d.). *Perceptions of Electoral Integrity dataset (PEI)*. University of Sydney & Harvard University.

198) Norris, P. (2015). *Why elections fail* (Chap. 6). Cambridge University Press.

199) Stark, P. B., & Wagner, D. A. (2012). Evidence-based elections. *IEEE Security & Privacy*, 10(5), 33-41. <https://doi.org/10.1109/MSP.2012.117>

defined as “a statistical audit method designed so that, if the election result is wrong, it can be detected with high probability.” RLA functions as a device for systematically verifying the possibility of machine error or administrative mistake.

- The Republic of Korea likewise needs, in terms of securing international trust, to consider ① conformity assessments of election equipment with international standards, ② expanded participation by experts in cryptography and information security, and ③ institutionalization of a random audit system, and this is not a measure to deny a particular result but a preventive measure to strengthen institutional stability.

□ **Governance and Independence of Election Management Bodies**

- The independence of election–management bodies is a core element in measuring the quality of democracy. The European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) recommends that, in order for election–management bodies to be truly independent from political influence, they should possess balance in appointment procedures, budgetary autonomy, and external oversight systems²⁰⁰). IFES has likewise conducted consulting on structural reform of election–management bodies in many countries and has emphasized “multi–layered checks–and–balances structures and transparent information disclosure.”⁹ The National Election Commission of the Republic of Korea is constitutionally an independent institution, but recently it has faced issues of trust amid political controversy. Functional diagnostics by an external international institution can be used as an opportunity to strengthen institutional independence.

□ **Social Trust and Economic Ripple Effects**

- The World Bank analyzes that institutional trust is directly linked to economic stability²⁰¹). If political uncertainty expands, it may lead to contraction of investment and increased social costs. A situation in which broad doubts concerning election results persist may deepen political polarization and increase the institutional costs of democracy. The participation of an international

200) European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission). (2002). Code of good practice in electoral matters: Guidelines and explanatory report. Council of Europe.

201) World Bank. (2023). Worldwide governance indicators. World Bank.

specialized institution can have the effect of shifting domestic political controversy into a discussion centered on objective data. This is also a matter directly connected to the international standing of the Republic of Korea. As an advanced democratic country, accepting transparency inspections consistent with international standards can have a positive effect on enhancing national credibility.

□ Conclusion and Formal Requests

- The Republic of Korea has been regarded as one of the most institutionalized democracies in Asia and as a country that has accumulated experience in regular transfers of power and peaceful transfers of authority; nevertheless, the social doubts recently raised regarding the entire election process are being recognized not as mere political controversy but as an issue directly connected to the sustainability of democratic institutions. The essence of elections lies not only in the “accuracy of the result” but also in “broad trust in the procedure.” Democracy can operate stably only when not only those who support the election result but also those who lost can accept the result. In this context, objective inspections and institutional improvements conforming to international standards are not measures that intensify conflict, but rather responsible choices that institutionally absorb and alleviate conflict.
- The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) is a specialized institution that over the past several decades has provided comprehensive support in a variety of political and social environments, including election–management capacity building, legal reform, technical audits, and stakeholder coordination. IFES’s participation should not be understood as intervention intended to support the claims of a specific political force, but as a process through which the Republic of Korea’s election–management system receives an objective diagnosis of what strengths and areas for improvement it has in comparison with international best practices. Such a process can become an opportunity to internationally reaffirm the legitimacy of the Korean electoral system. Accordingly, the following specific measures are formally requested.
 - (1) Invite an independent IFES technical diagnostic team to conduct a comprehensive technical evaluation of the electronic vote–counting support equipment, the early–voting management system, and the overall procedures

for data tabulation and storage. That evaluation should be published in the form of a public report, including comparative analysis with international standards.

- (2) Jointly conduct a feasibility study on the introduction of a statistically based Risk-Limiting Audit. This can function as a post-election verification system supplementing the current manual-counting procedures and can become a preventive device that strengthens institutional trust.
 - (3) Conduct an international comparative study on the governance structure of the Election Commission, personnel appointment procedures, budgetary independence, and the scope of information disclosure, and prepare a mid- to long-term institutional reform roadmap.
 - (4) Transparently disclose the entire inspection and recommendation process, and at the same time hold public explanatory sessions and hearings involving civil society, academia, and political party representatives. This will serve as a safeguard to prevent technical discussions from being distorted into political misunderstanding.
 - (5) Establish a follow-up evaluation mechanism to re-examine whether the recommendations have been implemented after a certain period of time. It is important to create not a one-time diagnosis but a sustainable system of institutional improvement.
- This request is intended to transform domestic controversy into the realm of objective data and comparative research through the cooperation of an institution possessing international expertise and neutrality, and if the Republic of Korea, as a mature democratic state, voluntarily accepts transparency inspections consistent with international standards, this is expected to become an opportunity to further strengthen international trust in its democratic capacity. Therefore, we respectfully request the establishment of a cooperative framework based on the expertise and experience of IFES, and through this we hope that the stability and fairness of the Republic of Korea's electoral system will become even more firmly established both domestically and internationally.

2. Request for Guarantees of Electoral Integrity Based on the ROK-U.S. Strategic Alliance

□ Overview of the ROK-U.S. Alliance

- **(Definition of alliance)** In the United States, the United Kingdom, and France, an alliance is referred to as Alliance or Partnership, and in Germany as Allianz or Bündnis, and the dictionary definition of alliance can be summarized in three ways²⁰²⁾.
 - 1. It means an entity formed by several countries joining together by treaty for a certain common purpose²⁰³⁾.
 - 2. It means a union between two or more countries for the purpose of jointly defending against attack from a third country²⁰⁴⁾.
 - 3. It means an international agreement pledging certain common political action by treaty²⁰⁵⁾.
- **(The ROK-U.S. alliance through the Mutual Defense Treaty)** The ROK-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty was initialed in Seoul on August 8, 1953 by Foreign Minister Byeon Yeong-tae and U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, and was formally signed in Washington, D.C., the capital of the United States, on October 1, 1953. It subsequently entered into force on November 18, 1954, and consists of a preamble and six articles.
 - 「한미상호방위조약」²⁰⁶⁾

본 조약의 당사국은 모든 국민과 모든 정부와 평화적으로 생활하고자 하는 희망을 재확인하며, 또한 태평양 지역에 있어서의 평화기구를 공고히 할 것을 희망하고, 당사국 중 어느 일국이 태평양 지역에 있어서 고립하여 있다는 환각을 어떠한 잠재적 침략자도 가지지 않도록 외부로부터의 무력공격에 대하여 자신을 방위하고자 하는 공통의 결의를 공공연히 또한 정식으로 선언할 것을 희망하고, 또한 태평양 지역에 있어서 더욱 포괄적이고 효과적인 지역적

202) Kim Ye-seong. 2020. Analysis of Factors Determining the Strength of the ROK-U.S. Alliance and a Study on Measures to Strengthen the Alliance. Hannam University. Master's thesis.

203) Lee Taek-gyu, New Dictionary of Jurisprudence (Seoul: Beopryul Publishing Co., 1997), p. 380.

204) Editorial Committee of the Political Science Encyclopedia, Encyclopedia of Political Science (Vols. I & II) (Seoul: Academia Research, 2002), p. 645.

205) Jeong In-hong, Kim Seong-hui, and Kang Ju-jin, Encyclopedia of Political Science (Seoul: Pakyongsang, 1998), p. 465.

206) Syngman Rhee Memorial Hall website. http://xn-zb0bnwy6egumosul1g.com/bbs/board.php?bo_table=reference&wr_id=31 (accessed Jan. 22, 2026).

안전보장조직이 발달될 때까지 평화와 안전을 유지하고자 집단적 방위를 위한 노력을 공고히 할 것을 희망하여 다음과 같이 동의한다.

제 1조

당사국은 관련될지 모르는 어떠한 국제적 분쟁이라도 국제적 평화와 안전과 정의를 위태롭게 하지 않는 방법으로 평화적 수단에 의하여 해결하고, 또한 국제적 관계에 있어서 국제 연합의 목적이나 당사국이 국제 연합에 대하여 부담한 의무에 배치되는 방법으로 무력으로 위협하거나 무력을 행사함을 삼갈 것을 약속한다.

제 2조

당사국 중 어느 일국의 정치적 독립 또는 안전이 외부로부터의 무력공격에 의하여 위협을 받고 있다고 어느 당사국이든지 인정할 때는 언제든지 당사국은 서로 협의한다. 당사국은 단독적으로나 공동으로 자조와 상호방위원조에 의하여 무력공격을 저지하기 위한 적절한 수단을 지속하며 강화시킬 것이며, 본 조약을 실행하고 그 목적을 추진할 적절한 조치를 협의와 합의하에 취할 것이다.

제 3조

각 당사국은 타(他) 당사국의 행정지배하에 있는 영토와 각 당사국이 타(他) 당사국의 행정지배하에 합법적으로 들어갔다고 인정하는 금후의 영토에 있어서 타(他) 당사국에 대한 태평양 지역에 있어서의 무력공격을 자국의 평화와 안전을 위태롭게 하는 것이라고 인정하고 공통한 위협에 대처하기 위해 각지의 헌법상의 수속에 따라 행동할 것은 선언한다.

제 4조

상호 협의에 의하여 미 합중국의 육군, 해군, 공군을 대한민국의 영토 내(內)와 그 부근에 배비하는 권리를 대한민국은 이를 허용하고 미 합중국은 이를 수락한다.

제 5조

본 조약은 대한민국과 미 합중국에 의하여 각자의 헌법상의 수속에 따라 비준되어야 하며, 그 비준서가 양국에 의하여 워싱턴에서 교환되었을 때 효력을 발생한다.

제 6조

본 조약은 무기한으로 유효하다. 어느 당사국이든지 타(他) 당사국에 통고한 후 1년 후에 본 조약을 중지시킬 수 있다.

이상의 증거로서 하기 전권(全權)위원은 본 조약에 서명한다.

본 조약은 1953년 10월 1일에 워싱턴에서 한국문과 영문으로 두 벌로 작성됨.

대한민국을 위하여: 변영태 미 합중국을 위하여: John Foster Dulles

「Mutual Defense Treaty Between the United States and the Republic of Korea」²⁰⁷⁾
The Parties to this Treaty,
Reaffirming their desire to live in peace with all peoples and an governments, and
desiring to strengthen the fabric of peace in the Pacific area,
Desiring to declare publicly and formally their common determination to defend
themselves against external armed attack so that no potential aggressor could be
under the illusion that either of them stands alone in the Pacific area,
Desiring further to strengthen their efforts for collective defense for the preservation
of peace and security pending the development of a more comprehensive and effective
system of regional security in the Pacific area,

Have agreed as follows:

ARTICLE I

The Parties undertake to settle any international disputes in which they may be involved by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security and justice are not endangered and to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force in any manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations, or obligations assumed by any Party toward the United Nations.

ARTICLE II

The Parties will consult together whenever, in the opinion of either of them, the political independence or security of either of the Parties is threatened by external armed attack. Separately and jointly, by self help and mutual aid, the Parties will

207) Ibid

maintain and develop appropriate means to deter armed attack and will take suitable measures in consultation and agreement to implement this Treaty and to further its purposes.

ARTICLE III

Each Party recognizes that an armed attack in the Pacific area on either of the Parties in territories now under their respective administrative control, or hereafter recognized by one of the Parties as lawfully brought under the administrative control of the other, would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes.

ARTICLE IV

The Republic of Korea grants, and the United States of America accepts, the right to dispose United States land, air and sea forces in and about the territory of the Republic of Korea as determined by mutual agreement.

ARTICLE V

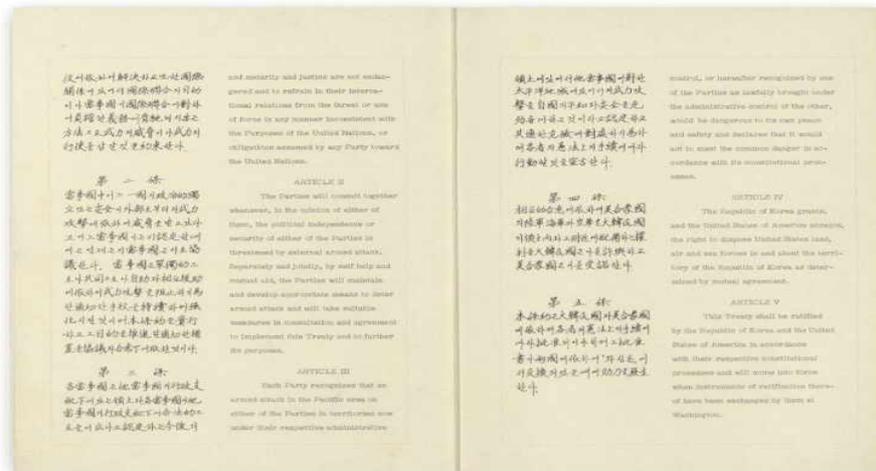
This Treaty shall be ratified by the United States of America and the Republic of Korea in accordance with their respective constitutional processes and will come into force when instruments of ratification thereof have been exchanged by them at Washington.

ARTICLE VI

This Treaty shall remain in force indefinitely. Either Party may terminate it one year after notice has been given to the other Party.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the undersigned Plenipotentiaries have signed this Treaty.

DONE in duplicate at Washington, in the English and Korean languages, this first day of October 1953.



Original Text of the U.S.-Republic of Korea Mutual Defense Treaty

- (Application of the ROK-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty to cyberattacks) In October 2024, during talks held in Washington, D.C., the two governments, specifically invoking Article 3 of the ROK-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty for the purpose of national security against external threats, confirmed that “attacks to, from, or in space pose a clear challenge to the alliance’s security, and that in certain circumstances such attacks may lead to the invocation of Article 3 of the ROK-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty.” In addition, both sides confirmed that international law applies in cyberspace, and that in certain circumstances cyberattacks may constitute an armed attack for purposes of Article 3 of the ROK-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty. The two countries announced that, to strengthen the cyber-security alliance, they would establish cooperation channels (△ National Security Office-U.S. NSC channel △ launch of an ROK-U.S. Cyber Cooperation Working Group △ institutionalization of cooperation among ROK-U.S. cyber-security agencies) and public-private-academic cooperation networks (△ cyber training △ security research △ talent cultivation)²⁰⁸).

208) Office of the President materials.



2024년 10월 워싱턴 DC에서 회담을 가진 (왼쪽부터) 김용현 국방부 장관, 조태열 외교부 장관, 앤터니 블링컨 미국 국무 장관, 로이드 오스틴 미국 국방장관. 사진 제공: 채드 J 맥닐리(Chad J. Mcneeley)/미국 국방부

October 2024 ROK-U.S. Ministerial Meeting in Washington, D.C.

- **(Washington Declaration)** The Washington Declaration, adopted at the ROK-U.S. summit on April 26, 2023 on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the conclusion of the ROK-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty, is the first agreement document at the summit level between the Republic of Korea and the United States that explicitly set forth operational measures for extended deterrence, and it largely contains △ reaffirmation of the Republic of Korea’s longstanding commitment to obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime, and compliance with the Agreement for Cooperation Between the Government of the Republic of Korea and the Government of the United States of America Concerning Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy △ establishment of the Nuclear Consultative Group (NCG), a standing vice-ministerial-level consultative body between the ROK and the U.S. △ and regular enhancement of the visibility of strategic assets, including port calls in Korea by strategic nuclear submarines.

- 「워싱턴선언」 209)

대한민국 윤석열 대통령과 미합중국 조셉 R. 바이든 대통령은 한미동맹 70주년을 기념하기 위해 오늘 2023년 4월 26일에 회동하였다. 우리 두 나라의 동맹은 공동의 희생 속에서 구조되고, 항구적인 안보협력을 통해 강화되었으며, 양국의 외교 역량을 활용한 긴요하고 전략적인 대업을 평화롭게 달성 가능케 한 긴밀한 연대를 자양분으로 하여 발전해왔다. 안보 파트너십으로 시작된 한미동맹은 민주주의 원칙을 옹호하고, 경제협력을 강화하며, 기술 발전을 주도하는 진정한 글로벌 동맹으로 성장하고 확장되었다. 우리의 동맹은 연이은 도전에 맞서서도, 언제나 굴하지 않고 일어섰고, 한반도와 인도-태평양에서 변화하는 위협에 대응하였다.

우리 동맹에 역사적인 해를 기념하기 위해 윤 대통령과 바이든 대통령은 더욱 강화된 상호방위관계를 발전시키기로 약속했으며, 한미상호방위조약에 따른 연합방위태세를 유지하겠다는 공약을 가장 강력한 언어로 확인한다. 한미 양국은 인도-태평양의 평화와 안정을 위해 노력하며, 우리가 함께 취하는 조치들은 이러한 근본적인 목표를 더욱 발전시킬 것이다.

한국은 미국의 확장억제 공약을 완전히 신뢰하며 한국의 미국 핵억제에 대한 지속적 의존의 중요성, 필요성 및 이점을 인식한다. 미국은 미국 핵태세보고서의 선언적 정책에 따라 한반도에 대한 모든 가능한 핵무기 사용의 경우 한국과 이를 협의하기 위한 모든 노력을 다할 것임을 약속하며, 한미동맹은 이러한 협의를 촉진하기 위한 견실한 통신 인프라를 유지해 나갈 것이다. 윤 대통령은 국제비확산체제의 초석인 핵확산금지조약(NPT)상 의무에 대한 한국의 오랜 공약 및 대한민국 정부와 미합중국 정부간 원자력의 평화적 이용에 관한 협력 협정 준수를 재확인하였다.

한미동맹은 핵억제에 관해 보다 심화되고 협력적인 정책결정에 관여할 것을 약속하며, 이는 한국과 지역에 대해 증가하는 핵 위협에 대한 소통 및 정보공유 증진을 통하는 것을 포함한다. 양 정상은 확장억제를 강화하고, 핵 및 전략 기획을 토의하며, 비확산체제에 대한 북한의 위협을 관리하기 위해 새로운 핵협의그룹(NCG) 설립을 선언하였다. 아울러, 한미동맹은 유사시 미국 핵 작전에 대한 한국 재래식 지원의 공동 실행 및 기획이 가능하도록 협력하고, 한반도에서의

209) Embassy of the Republic of Korea in the United States website.
https://www.mofa.go.kr/us-ko/brd/m_4487/view.do?seq=1347536 (accessed Jan. 22, 2026).

핵억제 적용에 관한 연합 교육 및 훈련 활동을 강화해 나갈 것이다. 양 정상은 핵억제를 이행하는 차원에서, 한미동맹은 핵 유사시 기획에 대한 공동의 접근을 강화하기 위한 양국간 새로운 범정부 도상 시뮬레이션을 도입하였다.

바이든 대통령은 한국과 한국 국민들에 대한 미국의 확장억제가 항구적이고 철통같으며, 북한의 한국에 대한 모든 핵 공격은 즉각적, 압도적, 결정적 대응에 직면할 것임을 재확인하였다. 바이든 대통령은 한국에 대한 미국의 확장억제는 핵을 포함한 미국 역량을 총동원하여 지원된다는 점을 강조하였다. 나아가, 미국은 향후 예정된 미국 전략핵잠수함의 한국 기항을 통해 증명되듯, 한국에 대한 미국 전략자산의 정례적 가시성을 한층 증진시킬 것이며, 양국 군 간의 공조를 확대 및 심화시켜 나갈 것이다. 나아가 한미 양국은 한미동맹이 잠재적인 공격과 핵 사용에 대한 방어를 보다 잘 준비할 수 있도록 확장억제전략협의체(EDSCG)를 포함해 확장억제에 관한 정부간 상설협의체를 강화하고, 공동 기획 노력에 정보를 제공하기 위한 시뮬레이션을 실시할 것이다.

윤 대통령은 한미동맹의 연합방위태세에 한국의 모든 역량을 기여할 것임을 확인하였다. 이는 한국의 새로운 전략사령부와 한미연합사령부 간의 역량 및 기획 활동을 긴밀히 연결하기 위해 견고히 협력하는 것을 포함한다. 이러한 활동에는 미국 전략사령부와 함께 수행하는 새로운 도상훈련이 포함된다.

이러한 중요한 발전들의 견지에서, 윤 대통령과 바이든 대통령은 양국의 공동의 안보에 대한 모든 위협에 맞서 함께 할 것이라는 확고한 메시지를 국제사회에 전하며, 확장억제 강화를 위한 향후 조치들에 대한 긴밀한 협의를 지속해 나갈 것이다. 동시에 양 정상은 한반도의 완전한 비핵화 달성이라는 공동의 목표를 진전시키기 위한 수단으로 북한과의 전제조건 없는 대화와 외교를 확고히 추구하고 있다.

- 「Washington Declaration」²¹⁰⁾

President Joseph R. Biden of the United States of America and President Yoon Suk Yeol of the Republic of Korea (ROK) met on this 26th day of April, 2023, to mark the 70th anniversary of the U.S.–ROK Alliance. The Alliance between our two nations has been forged in shared sacrifice, fortified by enduring security cooperation, and nourished by our close kinship that has enabled both countries to leverage their diplomatic resources to peaceably achieve crucial, strategic outcomes. What began as a security partnership has grown and expanded into a truly global Alliance that champions democratic principles, enriches economic cooperation, and drives technological advancements. Our Alliance has been tested many times, and in every instance we have risen to the occasion and responded to the changing threats on the Korean Peninsula and in the Indo–Pacific.

To commemorate this historic year for our Alliance, President Biden and President Yoon have committed to develop an ever–stronger mutual defense relationship and affirm in the strongest words possible their commitment to the combined defense posture under the U.S.–ROK Mutual Defense Treaty. The United States and the ROK are committed to peace and stability in the Indo–Pacific, and the measures we take together are in furtherance of that fundamental goal.

The ROK has full confidence in U.S. extended deterrence commitments and recognizes the importance, necessity, and benefit of its enduring reliance on the U.S. nuclear deterrent. The United States commits to make every effort to consult with the ROK on any possible nuclear weapons employment on the Korean Peninsula, consistent with the U.S. Nuclear Posture Review's declaratory policy, and the Alliance will maintain robust communication infrastructure to facilitate these consultations. President Yoon reaffirmed the ROK's longstanding commitment to its obligations under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty as the cornerstone of the global nonproliferation regime as well as to the U.S.–ROK Agreement for Cooperation Concerning Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy.

210) Ibid

The Alliance commits to engage in deeper, cooperative decision-making on nuclear deterrence, including through enhanced dialogue and information sharing regarding growing nuclear threats to the ROK and the region. The two Presidents announced the establishment of a new Nuclear Consultative Group (NCG) to strengthen extended deterrence, discuss nuclear and strategic planning, and manage the threat to the nonproliferation regime posed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). In addition, the Alliance will work to enable joint execution and planning for ROK conventional support to U.S. nuclear operations in a contingency and improve combined exercises and training activities on the application of nuclear deterrence on the Korean Peninsula. In keeping with the Presidents' commitments, the Alliance has established a new bilateral, interagency table-top simulation to strengthen our joint approach to planning for nuclear contingencies.

President Biden reaffirmed that the United States' commitment to the ROK and the Korean people is enduring and ironclad, and that any nuclear attack by the DPRK against the ROK will be met with a swift, overwhelming, and decisive response. President Biden highlighted that the U.S. commitment to extended deterrence to the ROK is backed by the full range of U.S. capabilities, including nuclear. Going forward, the United States will further enhance the regular visibility of strategic assets to the Korean Peninsula, as evidenced by the upcoming visit of a U.S. nuclear ballistic missile submarine to the ROK, and will expand and deepen coordination between our militaries. Furthermore, the United States and ROK will strengthen standing bodies for consultations on extended deterrence, including the Extended Deterrence Strategy and Consultation Group, to better prepare the Alliance to defend against potential attacks and nuclear use and conduct simulations to inform joint planning efforts.

President Yoon affirmed that the ROK will apply the full range of its capabilities to the Alliance's combined defense posture. This includes working in lockstep with the United States to closely connect the capabilities and planning activities of the new ROK Strategic Command and the U.S.-ROK Combined Forces Command. Such activities will include a new table-top exercise conducted with U.S. Strategic Command.

In view of these critical developments, President Biden and President Yoon send a firm message to the international community that the United States and the ROK will stand together in the face of any and all threats to their shared security, and continue their close consultations on further steps to strengthen extended deterrence. In parallel, both Presidents remain steadfast in their pursuit of dialogue and diplomacy with the DPRK, without preconditions, as a means to advance the shared goal of achieving the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

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Full text of the Washington Declaration

□ The Multidimensional Importance of the ROK-U.S. Alliance

○ I. Economic importance: an alliance that serves as a base of the anti-communist economic order and structurally blocks dependence on China

- (1. **Theoretical starting point: security alliance and the anti-communist free-market economic order**) The economic importance of the ROK-U.S. alliance cannot be sufficiently explained by traditional trade and investment indicators. A core proposition repeatedly raised in international political economy (IPE) is that “the security order defines the economic order.” In particular, in the confrontation between the communist system and the free-market system, economic choice itself becomes an ideological choice and a national survival strategy²¹¹). A communist planned economy can secure short-term mobilization power by having the state control the means of production and allocation of resources, but in the long term it has inevitably been accompanied by lack of innovation, inefficiency, and political coercion²¹²). In contrast, the free-market economy is premised upon private ownership, competition, the rule of law, and contractual stability, and such conditions have the structural vulnerability of collapsing easily in the absence of military and political security guarantees²¹³).

It is precisely at this point that the ROK-U.S. alliance has functioned as an “external constitution” of the Republic of Korea’s economic system. The ROK-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty was an institutional device that structurally blocked the Republic of Korea from deviating toward the communist model, going beyond mere deterrence of war²¹⁴). This means that the alliance was a precondition for economic growth.

- (2. **After the Korean War: economic experiment as an anti-communist outpost**) Immediately after the Korean War, the Republic of Korea was a frontline state directly facing the communist bloc. If, at that time, the Republic of Korea had been neutralized or incorporated into the communist bloc, it is highly likely that the southern Korean Peninsula would have been incorporated

211) Gilpin, Robert. *The Political Economy of International Relations*. Princeton University Press, 1987.

212) Kornai, János. *The Socialist System: The Political Economy of Communism*. Princeton University Press, 1992.

213) Olson, Mancur. *Power and Prosperity*. Basic Books, 2000.

214) Cha, Victor D. *Powerplay: The Origins of the American Alliance System in Asia*. Princeton University Press, 2016

into the same planned-economy system as North Korea and China. In fact, North Korea for a certain period after the war displayed higher industrial indicators than South Korea and advertised the superiority of the communist economy²¹⁵), but in the long term the difference in systems produced decisive outcomes. U.S. military protection and economic aid forced the Korean government to choose a market-, export-, and competition-centered strategy rather than nationalization and collectivization²¹⁶). This was not a mere policy choice, but a strategic necessity to demonstrate the superiority of the free-market model in system competition with communism, so South Korea's economic growth became empirical evidence for anti-communist propaganda, and the ROK-U.S. alliance was the infrastructure behind it. In other words, the Korean economy was designed and operated as a "showcase of the free-market system" within the Cold War order²¹⁷).

- **(3. Provision of security and capital accumulation: structural formation of investment trust)** Capital accumulation is a core element in economic development, but long-term capital does not easily flow into a country where the possibility of conflict always exists. Through military deterrence, the ROK-U.S. alliance structurally lowered the war-risk premium on the Korean Peninsula, and this became an essential condition enabling foreign investment and technology transfer²¹⁸). According to international finance research, countries with high security uncertainty tend to have higher capital costs even if they possess the same growth potential²¹⁹). By alleviating this structure, the ROK-U.S. alliance created an environment in which the Republic of Korea could pursue long-term planning, heavy and chemical industry investment, and export-industry development. This stands in contrast to communist countries, which possessed military power but failed in private investment and technological accumulation.
- **(4. Structural contrast with Chinese-style state capitalism)** The state-capitalist model pursued by the Chinese Communist Party is a structure in which the Party's strategic goals directly intervene in decisions on firms,

215) Lankov, Andrei. *The Real North Korea*. Oxford University Press, 2013

216) Amsden, Alice H. *Asia's Next Giant: South Korea and Late Industrialization*. Oxford University Press, 1989.

217) Cumings, Bruce. *Korea's Place in the Sun*. W. W. Norton, 2005.

218) Li, Quan & Vashchilko, Tod. "The Impact of Security Alliances on Foreign Direct Investment." *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 47, No. 5, 2010.

219) Collier, Paul et al. *Breaking the Conflict Trap*. World Bank, 2003.

finance, and trade. This makes short-term growth and mobilization possible, but structurally damages the rule of law, transparency, and predictability²²⁰). The ROK-U.S. alliance has served to restrain the Republic of Korea from being incorporated into such a model. This does not simply mean a reduction in trade with China, but has the institutional effect of blocking the internalization of Chinese-style economic operating norms. As confirmed in the THAAD dispute, China can transform economic interdependence into a means of political coercion²²¹). At such times, the ROK-U.S. alliance and the free-world network have absorbed the shock by providing alternative markets, normative solidarity, and diplomatic lines of defense.

- **(5. Alliance effects in supply chains, technology, and geoeconomics)** Since the intensification of U.S.-China strategic competition, the economy is no longer a neutral domain, and supply chains, technology, and standards have become core components of security²²²). In semiconductors, batteries, defense, and artificial intelligence, the ROK-U.S. alliance forms a complementary industrial structure and operates as a practical means of checking China's technological rise²²³). Although this entails short-term costs, in the long term it is a choice to secure technological sovereignty and strategic autonomy.
- **(6. Summary: the ROK-U.S. alliance as a device for choosing an economic order)** In conclusion, the economic importance of the ROK-U.S. alliance lies not in increased trade or attraction of investment, but in the fact that it has structurally fixed the question of which economic system the Republic of Korea would belong to. It was the institutional foundation for maintaining the anti-communist free-market order and a safety device preventing subordination to a China-centered authoritarian economic sphere. The ROK-U.S. alliance did not merely help Korea's economic growth; it was an alliance that compelled Korea to choose a system in which growth was possible.

220) Naughton, Barry. *The Chinese Economy: Adaptation and Growth*. MIT Press, 2018.

221) Farrell, Henry & Newman, Abraham. "Weaponized Interdependence." *International Security*, Vol. 44, No. 1, 2019.

222) Blackwill, Robert & Harris, Jennifer. *War by Other Means*. Harvard University Press, 2016.

223) Miller, Chris. *Chip War: The Fight for the World's Most Critical Technology*. Scribner, 2022.

○ II. Political importance: an institutional anchoring device for the liberal–democratic political order and an alliance restraining the spread of communist and authoritarianism

- (1. Theoretical starting point: an alliance is not a diplomatic instrument but an institutional device for selecting a political system) In international–political theory, an alliance has meaning beyond mere military cooperation, and especially in the fields of comparative politics and international political economy (IPE) after the Cold War, it has repeatedly been demonstrated that security alliances define the character of the domestic political order over the long term²²⁴). This means that the choice of alliance by a state is itself a choice that institutionally fixes what kind of political system, what norms, and what kind of mode of governance it will have. Alliances among liberal–democratic states tend to mutually reinforce political norms such as elections, separation of powers, rule of law, civil society, and freedom of the press²²⁵). Conversely, alliance structures centered on communist or authoritarian states normalize one–party rule, state control, demands for political loyalty, and suppression of opposition²²⁶). In this context, the ROK–U.S. alliance has functioned as an “external political constitution” that has defined the character of the Republic of Korea’s political system. The ROK–U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty structurally excluded political options such as neutralization, non–alignment, or incorporation into the communist bloc²²⁷), and this was not merely a diplomatic line but an institutional anchoring device guaranteeing the sustainability of the liberal–democratic system.
- (2. After the Korean War: formation of the anti–communist political order and irreversibility of entry into the liberal–democratic camp) Immediately after the Korean War, the Korean Peninsula was placed in a politically extreme either–or situation, and if South Korea had failed to remain within the liberal–democratic camp, the possibility that the entire peninsula would have been incorporated into a one–party communist system was very high²²⁸). In fact, China, North Korea, and the Soviet Union continuously supported

224) Walt, Stephen M. *The Origins of Alliances*. Cornell University Press, 1987.

225) Russett, Bruce. *Grasping the Democratic Peace*. Princeton University Press, 1993.

226) Linz, Juan & Stepan, Alfred. *Problems of Democratic Transition*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.

227) ROK–U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty, 1953.,

228) Armstrong, Charles K. *The North Korean Revolution*. Cornell University Press, 2003.

left-wing political forces and anti-American, anti-government movements inside South Korea²²⁹). At this point, the ROK-U.S. alliance performed the role of a “political safety pin” that externally fixed the Republic of Korea’s political system so that it would not be communized, and political and diplomatic support from the United States provided the minimum stability enabling the Korean government to maintain a multiparty system, constitutional order, and electoral institutions²³⁰). This became the fundamental point of divergence from the North Korean-style people’s democracy system. Particularly important is the fact that the ROK-U.S. alliance constrained the choice space of the Republic of Korea’s political elite; despite periods of military coups, authoritarian rule, and political regression, one of the fundamental reasons the Republic of Korea did not deviate into a communist system was that the political standards and pressure of the United States as an allied country continued to operate²³¹).

- **(3. Continuing political effects even after democratization: the alliance’s “normative binding force”)** Even after democratization in 1987, the political importance of the ROK-U.S. alliance did not weaken; rather, after the end of the Cold War, the character of the alliance expanded from a military alliance into a “normative alliance.”²³²). The United States has maintained continuous interest in and evaluation of Korea’s electoral institutions, civil liberties, media environment, and judicial independence, and this has functioned as an external factor restraining Korean politics from regressing sharply into authoritarianism²³³). This phenomenon is referred to in academia as the “democratic alliance effect.”²³⁴). In particular, unlike communist systems or authoritarian states, the ROK-U.S. alliance has a supra-partisan structure that is maintained even after regime change. This means that the basic political line of the state and its diplomatic and security identity are maintained regardless of election results²³⁵), and it significantly reduces the risk of abrupt political upheaval or systemic transition.

229) Lankov, Andrei. *The Real North Korea*. Oxford University Press, 2013.

230) Mason, Edward et al. *The Economic and Social Modernization of the Republic of Korea*. Harvard University Press, 1980.

231) Cha, Victor D. *Powerplay*. Princeton University Press, 2016.

232) Ikenberry, G. John. *Liberal Leviathan*. Princeton University Press, 2011.

233) Freedom House Reports, various years.

234) Pevehouse, Jon. *Democracy from Above*. Cambridge University Press, 2005.

235) Snyder, Jack. *Myths of Empire*. Cornell University Press, 1991.

- **(4. Political contrast with the Chinese Communist Party system: the strategic value of the ROK-U.S. alliance)** In the 21st century, the political importance of the ROK-U.S. alliance has been further strengthened along with the rise of the Chinese Communist Party system, and China has attempted to justify and export an authoritarian political model on the basis of economic power while maintaining a one-party system²³⁶), which means systemic competition against the liberal-democratic camp. The Chinese Communist Party defines elections as a source of instability, inefficiency, and division, and advertises state control and elite rule as a stable model of governance²³⁷). This discourse has had a substantial influence on East Asia and developing-country politics, and Korea is no exception. In such an environment, the ROK-U.S. alliance performs the role of structurally blocking the Republic of Korea from politically tilting toward the Chinese-style authoritarian model²³⁸). Political linkage with the United States greatly increases the diplomatic and strategic costs that would arise if Korean politics were to deviate from norms such as free elections, separation of powers, and the rule of law.
- **(5. Election trust and political stability: indirect effects provided by the alliance)** Recently, election reliability, information warfare, and foreign intervention have emerged as major political issues worldwide. Authoritarian states such as China and Russia have utilized strategies of weakening the legitimacy of elections in democratic countries through cyber operations, information manipulation, and polarization of public opinion²³⁹). In response to such threats, the ROK-U.S. alliance provides indirect stabilizing effects concerning information sharing, cyber-security cooperation, and protection of election systems²⁴⁰). This means that the alliance does not merely deter military conflict, but functions as political infrastructure protecting the reliability of elections, the core institution of democracy.
- **(6. Summary: the ROK-U.S. alliance is not a political option but the political order itself)** In sum, the political importance of the ROK-U.S. alliance is a structural factor defining the character, direction, and limits of the Republic of

236) Naughton, Barry. *The Chinese Economy*. MIT Press, 2018.

237) Shambaugh, David. *China's Communist Party*. University of California Press, 2008.

238) Blackwill, Robert & Harris, Jennifer. *War by Other Means*. Harvard University Press, 2016.

239) Farrell, Henry & Newman, Abraham. "Weaponized Interdependence." *International Security*, 2019.

240) U.S.-ROK Joint Statements on Cyber and Democratic Resilience, various years.

Korea's political system beyond the diplomatic and military dimensions. It has served to restrain the spread of communist and authoritarian political models and to institutionally fix the liberal–democratic order²⁴¹). Therefore, the ROK–U.S. alliance should be understood not as “a diplomatic card whose maintenance is optional,” but as part of the political order of the Republic of Korea itself.

○ **III. Social importance: the ROK–U.S. alliance as a device for internalizing liberal–democratic social norms and restraining the spread of communist and authoritarian social models**

- **(1. Theoretical starting point: alliances are structures that diffuse and anchor social norms and value systems)** In the intersection of international politics and social theory, it has repeatedly been pointed out that alliances between states do not merely amount to military and diplomatic cooperation but play a decisive role in the transfer and anchoring of social norms, values, and identities²⁴²). In particular, alliances among liberal–democratic states have had the effect of internalizing within allied societies such norms as individual rights, civil liberties, equality before the law, and the autonomy of civil society²⁴³). The communist system has defined society not as a sphere of voluntary association and exchange among individuals, but as an object to be controlled, mobilized, and monitored by the state²⁴⁴). By contrast, liberal–democratic society has taken as the core of social order the autonomy of individuals and communities, non–state networks, and coexistence of plural values. Such a social order was difficult to sustain in the long term without military and political security guarantees. It is at this point that the ROK–U.S. alliance has functioned as a structural device externally supporting and protecting the liberal–democratic norms of Korean society. This means that the alliance has not merely been an agreement at the level of state elites, but has played the role of stabilizing the value order of society as a whole²⁴⁵).
- **(2. After war and division: social identity formed in direct contrast with the communist social model)** The Korean War and national division constituted the historical condition under which Korean society most directly compared and

241) Ikenberry, G. John. *After Victory*. Princeton University Press, 2001.

242) Risse, Thomas. *A Community of Europeans?* Cornell University Press, 2010.

243) Finnemore, Martha & Sikkink, Kathryn. “International Norm Dynamics.” *International Organization*, 1998.

244) Arendt, Hannah. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Harcourt, 1951.

245) Ikenberry, G. John. *Liberal Leviathan*. Princeton University Press, 2011.

experienced the communist social model and the liberal–democratic social model. North Korea emphasized socialist equality, state–led welfare, and collectivism after the war, and advertised the superiority of communist society²⁴⁶). But in reality North Korean society became fixed in a structure where freedom of movement, expression, and association of the individual was thoroughly restricted and thought and daily life were controlled by the state²⁴⁷). By contrast, even amid extreme poverty and chaos after the war, Korean society followed a path in which the autonomy of the private sphere and civil society gradually expanded under the external safety net of the ROK–U.S. alliance. U.S. military protection and international support provided an environment in which the Republic of Korea could refrain from adopting a communist–style model of social control and allow the autonomous growth of religion, the media, education, and civic organizations²⁴⁸). This was the decisive point of divergence from the communist system at the social level.

- **(3. Civil society and freedom of association: the social space created by the alliance)** The core of liberal–democratic society lay in the existence of a civil–society sphere separate from the state. Labor unions, religious organizations, academic communities, media, and nonprofit organizations constituted the foundation on which social trust and autonomy accumulated. In communist systems, such spheres were regarded as threats to the regime and became objects of control and dissolution²⁴⁹). Although the Republic of Korea under the ROK–U.S. alliance went through an authoritarian period during the Cold War, civil society did not completely collapse and in the long term grew into of democratization. This was because the civil–society norms and international pressure of the liberal–democratic camp centered on the United States continued to operate²⁵⁰). In particular, religious freedom, media exchange, and academic exchange played a role in restraining Korean society from transforming into a closed and totalitarian society²⁵¹), and the very maintenance of such social space was itself an essential difference from the communist social model.

246) Armstrong, Charles K. *The North Korean Revolution*. Cornell University Press, 2003.

247) Lankov, Andrei. *The Real North Korea*. Oxford University Press, 2013.

248) Mason, Edward et al. *The Economic and Social Modernization of the Republic of Korea*. Harvard University Press, 1980.

249) Kornai, János. *The Socialist System*. Princeton University Press, 1992.

250) Pevehouse, Jon. *Democracy from Above*. Cambridge University Press, 2005.

251) Freedom House Reports, various years.

- **(4. Education, culture, and exchange: everyday internalization of liberal social norms)** The ROK-U.S. alliance, beyond the military and diplomatic domains, has diffused liberal social norms into Korean society on an everyday basis through education, culture, and human exchange, and exchanges of students, academic networks, and cultural content were the paths through which members of society came to recognize freedom, rights, and pluralism as natural values²⁵²). By contrast, the Chinese Communist Party system has used education and culture as means of strengthening loyalty to the regime while maintaining a strategy of controlling the inflow of outside values²⁵³). This difference produced fundamental differences in the ways members of society think, perceive authority, and perceive the relationship between state and individual. Behind the fact that Korean society came to accept elections, freedom of expression, and criticism of the government as matters of social daily life lay the liberal-democratic social norms that continuously flowed in through the ROK-U.S. alliance²⁵⁴).
- **(5. Attempts at social influence by the Chinese Communist Party and the buffering effect of the alliance)** In the 21st century, China has spread overseas a discourse justifying an authoritarian social order on the basis of economic power and cultural influence, and this was not merely cultural exchange, but a strategy to make state control, collective priority, and illiberal order appear as a normal model²⁵⁵). Korean society has likewise been exposed to such influence through Chinese capital, media content, and academic cooperation, but the ROK-U.S. alliance functions as a social buffer preventing Korean society from rapidly tilting toward the Chinese social model²⁵⁶). Social, cultural, and academic networks with the United States and the liberal-democratic camp were a countervailing structure that enabled Korean society to maintain pluralism, openness, and autonomy.
- **(6. Elections, public opinion, and the information environment: protection of social trust and democratic everyday life)** In a democratic society, elections are not merely an institution but a process of accumulation of

252) Nye, Joseph. *Soft Power*. PublicAffairs, 2004.

253) Shambaugh, David. *China's Communist Party*. UC Press, 2008.

254) Inglehart, Ronald & Welzel, Christian. *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy*. Cambridge University Press, 2005.

255) Brady, Anne-Marie. *Marketing Dictatorship*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2008.

256) Blackwill, Robert & Harris, Jennifer. *War by Other Means*. Harvard University Press, 2016.

social trust, while communist and authoritarian states have defined elections as a source of instability and division and have strategically used information manipulation and social polarization²⁵⁷). The ROK-U.S. alliance has, through cyber-security, information sharing, and discussions on democratic resilience, played a role in lowering the possibility of social collapse when Korean society is exposed to such threats²⁵⁸). U.S.-ROK Joint Statements on Democratic Resilience and Cybersecurity. Thus, the alliance has the function not only of restraining military conflict but also of restraining the collapse of social trust.

- **(7. Summary: the ROK-U.S. alliance as the external safety device of Korean social order)** In sum, the ROK-U.S. alliance has been an external social-constitutional device that enabled Korean society not to deviate into a communist-controlled society, but to internalize, maintain, and expand liberal-democratic social norms²⁵⁹). This means that the alliance is not a mere diplomatic instrument but a structural factor that has defined the character of Korean society.

○ **IV. Military importance: a structural alliance that deters, prevents war, and blocks miscalculation by the communist bloc**

- **(1. The military essence of the ROK-U.S. alliance: not a war-fighting alliance but a “war-deterrence alliance”)** The military importance of the ROK-U.S. alliance cannot be explained simply by the sum of troop numbers or weapons systems; the alliance is not a temporary cooperative body for fighting a war, but a deterrence alliance designed to structurally eliminate the possibility of war itself. This means that the objective of the alliance lies not in victory but in the prevention of miscalculation. In international-political theory, deterrence means a structure that makes the expected cost of attack exceed the expected benefit if the other side carries out aggression. The ROK-U.S. alliance is precisely the device that institutionally fixed this deterrence structure on the Korean Peninsula, and it has played a key role in blocking the adventurist decision-making structure characteristic of communist regimes²⁶⁰).

257) Farrell, Henry & Newman, Abraham. “Weaponized Interdependence.” *International Security*, 2019.

258) U.S.-ROK Joint Statements on Democratic Resilience and Cybersecurity.

259) Ikenberry, G. John. *After Victory*. Princeton University Press, 2001.

260) Snyder, Glenn H. *Deterrence and Defense: Toward a Theory of National Security*. Princeton University Press,

The common feature of communist–bloc military strategy, from North Korea and China to the former Soviet Union, lies in staged provocations testing the opponent’s will and cohesion rather than the initiation of full–scale war itself. To respond to such a strategy, not mere possession of military force but alliance–level automatic involvement and credibility are essential, and in this respect the ROK–U.S. alliance generates a deterrent effect qualitatively different from that of an individual state’s defense system.

- **(2. Strategic significance of U.S. Forces Korea: a “forward–deployed deterrent device”)** The presence of U.S. Forces Korea is often evaluated in terms of troop scale or number of bases, but its strategic significance lies in a forward–deployed political–military guarantee. U.S. Forces Korea is not merely a defensive force but plays the role of a tripwire making U.S. intervention in a Korean Peninsula contingency unavoidable²⁶¹). This structure fundamentally blocks the calculation by North Korea or China that they could achieve their objectives through limited conflict or localized war on the peninsula while excluding the United States. In other words, the ROK–U.S. alliance may be seen as an alliance focused not on the opponent’s military capability but on making the opponent recognize the possibility of escalation of war. In particular, in a situation where China’s military strategy centers on the localization of regional conflict, U.S. Forces Korea is a symbolic and substantive device clearly showing that any conflict on the Korean Peninsula can immediately escalate into a U.S.–China strategic issue.
- **(3. Combined defense system and operational control: the reality of military integration)** The military strength of the ROK–U.S. alliance lies in the operational level of the combined defense system. Going beyond mere information sharing or training exchanges, the two countries have built a substantial structure of military integration through operational plans (OPLAN), the Combined Forces Command, and combined exercises²⁶²). This means that, in a crisis, immediate response is possible not through improvised consultation but according to scenarios jointly prepared in peacetime. Such a

1961.

261) O’Hanlon, Michael. *The Senkaku Paradox: Risking Great Power War over Small Stakes*. Brookings Institution Press, 2019.

262) Feaver, Peter D. *Armed Servants: Agency, Oversight, and Civil–Military Relations*. Harvard University Press, 2003.

level of integration minimizes the “initial chaos” expected by North Korea or China and removes the incentive to initiate war itself. Communist military doctrine emphasizes surprise and speed in the initial phase, but the ROK-U.S. combined system structurally weakens the effectiveness of such a strategy, showing that superiority in organizational and institutional preparedness is more decisive for war deterrence than superiority in military technology.

- **(4. Extended deterrence and the nuclear umbrella: the military implications of the Washington Declaration)** The Washington Declaration adopted in 2023 qualitatively elevated the military character of the ROK-U.S. alliance by one level. This was not a simple political declaration but had the military meaning of the operationalization of extended deterrence²⁶³). Extended deterrence is the U.S. promise to use its nuclear and conventional forces for the defense of an ally, but its credibility has always been questioned. The Nuclear Consultative Group (NCG), newly established through the Washington Declaration, institutionally supplements this problem and created a structure in which Korea can participate in the planning and operational stages of extended deterrence. This transformed the threat of North Korean nuclear use from a mere rhetorical issue into an actual Capable of handling scenario, and has the effect of making China also recognize that the management of a nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula is not a problem for the United States alone.
- **(5. Checking China and the strategic position of the Korean Peninsula)** The Republic of Korea is geopolitically located at the strategic intersection of Northeast Asia connecting China, Russia, Japan, and North Korea, and the Korean Peninsula, as a core part of the Rimland where maritime and continental powers collide, continues to rise in military value in U.S.-China strategic competition²⁶⁴). The ROK-U.S. alliance is a key device blocking the long-term strategy of incorporating the Korean Peninsula into China’s sphere of influence, and if the alliance were weakened or dissolved, China would secure strategic space in which it could expand political and military influence without direct military intervention. Therefore, the military importance of the ROK-U.S. alliance is not limited simply to responding to the North Korean threat, but must be understood in the broader framework of maintaining the strategic balance of Northeast Asia as a whole.

263) The White House. Washington Declaration. April 26, 2023.

264) Mearsheimer, John J. The Tragedy of Great Power Politics. W. W. Norton, 2001.

- **(6. Combined exercises and real deterrent effect)** ROK-U.S. combined exercises are often the subject of political controversy, but militarily they are a core means of practical deterrence; combined exercises are not mere displays, but a process of repeatedly proving to the opponent that the combined system will operate in the event of actual war²⁶⁵). In communist military strategy, testing the opponent's state of preparedness and cohesion is extremely important. Regular and advanced combined exercises neutralize the very possibility of such testing and have the effect of minimizing the possibility of miscalculation.
 - **(7. Military alliance and democratic civilian control)** The ROK-U.S. alliance has also played a role in establishing in Korean society a model of military-force operation under democratic control, rather than merely expanding military power, and this is the structural foundation enabling the military to function not as politics but as an instrument of national defense²⁶⁶). This stands in fundamental contrast to the political-army models of China and North Korea, and shows an experience entirely different from the claim that military alliance necessarily leads to militarism.
 - **(8. Summary: the essence of the military importance of the ROK-U.S. alliance)** The military importance of the ROK-U.S. alliance does not lie in the capability to fight a war; its essence lies in the structure that prevents war from occurring. This alliance, combining deterrence, automatic involvement, extended deterrence, the combined system, and geopolitical position, has continuously blocked strategic miscalculation by North Korea and China. Therefore, a weakening of the military aspect of the ROK-U.S. alliance immediately means instability on the Korean Peninsula, and this cannot but result not in short-term peace but in an increased possibility of long-term crisis.
- **Request for International Cooperation to Guarantee Electoral Fairness in the Republic of Korea Based on the ROK-U.S. Alliance and International Law(Policy Concept Paper for U.S. Engagement on Electoral Integrity in the Republic of Korea)**

265) RAND Corporation. *Deterrence by Denial and Assurance in East Asia*, 2020.

266) Pion-Berlin, David. *Civil-Military Relations in Democratic Transitions*. University of North Carolina Press, 2001.

- **Problem Statement: Crisis of democratic stability in the allied Republic of Korea**
 - **(Significance of the ROK-U.S. alliance)** The Republic of Korea is a key ally that has maintained a military, political, and economic alliance with the United States on the basis of the ROK-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty concluded in 1953, and great significance is attached to the fact that the treaty was concluded on the principle that the two countries would build a cooperative framework to jointly protect political independence and security beyond a simple military cooperative relationship²⁶⁷). In particular, Article 2 of the treaty expressly provides that “if the political independence or security of either country is threatened, the two countries shall consult and respond,” and this means that the purpose of the alliance is a comprehensive concept of security that includes political stability, not mere military defense²⁶⁸).
 - **(Changes in the international political environment and their impact on the Republic of Korea)** The international political environment is changing rapidly, and North Korea’s nuclear threat, the expansion of Chinese influence, and the spread of cyber warfare and information warfare are directly affecting the stability of the Republic of Korea’s democratic system and electoral institutions. In such a situation, if the democracy and fairness of the electoral system of the Republic of Korea are weakened, this may be seen not as a simple domestic political problem but as a factor threatening the strategic stability of the ROK-U.S. alliance as a whole. The Washington Declaration announced at the 2023 ROK-U.S. summit may be seen as having strengthened a system of joint response by the two countries to security threats by defining the existing alliance as an “upgraded alliance in terms of extended deterrence and strategic cooperation.”²⁶⁹), In this respect, the stability of the Republic of Korea’s democratic institutions also needs to be regarded as a core element of alliance security.

○ Legitimacy of intervention under international law and treaty

- **(Protection of democracy based on the U.N. Charter)** The U.N. Charter

267) International Foundation for Electoral Systems. (2020). Electoral integrity and election security in the digital age. Washington, DC: IFES.

268) International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. (2014). Electoral management design: The international IDEA handbook. Stockholm: International IDEA.

269) Mutual Defense Treaty Between the United States and the Republic of Korea. (1953). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State.

prescribes as core principles not only the maintenance of international peace and security but also the guarantee of the political independence and self-determination of states, and in particular Article 1 defines, together with the maintenance of international peace, the self-determination of peoples and the guarantee of political stability as important elements of international order. Because election fairness is regarded in modern international law as a core element of democracy, according to research by the international electoral-assistance organizations IFES and International IDEA, the fairness and transparency of elections are evaluated as being directly connected with a state's political stability and international security.

- **(Political-cooperation clause of the ROK-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty)** The ROK-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty concluded in 1953 was designed as a cooperative framework protecting political stability beyond a mere military alliance, and Article 2 of the treaty provides as follows: “The Parties will consult together whenever the political independence or security of either of them is threatened.”²⁷⁰). This means that cooperation between allies can be justified when political stability is threatened.
- **(Strategic expansiveness of the Washington Declaration)** The Washington Declaration announced in 2023 contains content expanding the ROK-U.S. alliance into a strategic deterrence system, and this declaration has the following characteristics: ① information sharing on the operation of nuclear and strategic assets ② expansion of alliance-based security cooperation ③ strengthening of extended deterrence, and in this sense the declaration is evaluated as a modern expansion of the existing defense treaty²⁷¹). Therefore, democracy and political stability can also be interpreted as important elements of alliance cooperation.
- **(Grounds for U.S. involvement in Korean politics arising from Chinese administrative intervention in the territory of the Republic of Korea)** It has been confirmed that, without the knowledge of the people of the Republic of Korea, there are circumstances in which the current administration has tolerated administrative intervention by China, including △ suspicions of remote control

270) International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. (2014). Electoral management design: The international IDEA handbook. Stockholm: International IDEA.

271) Mutual Defense Treaty Between the United States and the Republic of Korea. (1953). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State.

on a walking path in Gumi City, Republic of Korea △ a confession video of a Chinese national who worked part-time as Korean police △ and the hoisting of the Chinese Communist flag at government buildings and the Seoul Metropolitan Police Agency.

- **(Suspicion of remote control on a walking path in Gumi City, Republic of Korea)** An anonymous informant living in Gumi City, Republic of Korea, stated that while taking a walk, due to an error in a beam projector that illuminates the ground, the desktop screen of the computer connected to the beam projector was projected onto the ground, and on the desktop there were installed WeChat and Tencent QQ, Chinese messaging services used in China, the Chinese security program 360 Safe Browser, WPS Office—which, according to a Business Insight report, uses remote code with malware distribution and defects—and the remote-control execution program Xiangrikui (向日葵)²⁷²). In response, an official from the Gumi City Future City Strategy Department asked, “Gumi City procures Chinese-made beam projectors through the government procurement marketplace, but the equipment is used only through USB, and the risk of security incidents is low.”²⁷³). However, because the program in question operates by remote control, there is suspicion that China appears to be involved in Korean administration.



Desktop screen of a computer with a Chinese remote-control application installed, as it appeared on a walking path in Gumi City, Republic of Korea

- **(Confession video of a Chinese national who worked part-time as Korean police)** The suspicion that Chinese nationals worked part-time for the National Election Commission and the police has been shown to be true, and under Article 8(1) of the Police Officials Act, which provides that “police

272) Business Insight press report. <https://www.gttkorea.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=13273>

273) Sky Daily press report. https://www.skyedaily.com/news/news_view.html?ID=295709

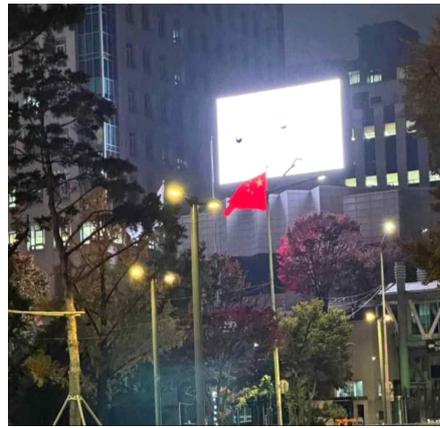
officials shall be appointed from among persons who are sound in body and ideology and upright in conduct,” the content regarding “ideology,” and Article 8(2)(1), “a person who does not have the nationality of the Republic of Korea,” and (2), “a dual national under Article 11-2(1) of the Nationality Act,” such persons not only cannot be appointed as police officials but also constitute disqualifying grounds²⁷⁴). The currently raised issue of Chinese nationals working part-time as police is contrary to law and is a serious matter that infringes on the people’s security and on the freedom of assembly based on liberal democracy. The fact that such Chinese nationals are infringing upon Korean administrative authority has been confirmed not as a suspicion but as a fact.



Confession video of experience working part-time as Chinese police

- (Hoisting of the Chinese Communist flag at government buildings and the Seoul Metropolitan Police Agency) In the Republic of Korea, the national flag, the Taegueukgi, is hoisted at government-operated administrative buildings, civil shelters, and strategic points, and cases in which another country’s flag (foreign flag) is hoisted are, under Prime Minister’s Directive No. 911, effective Jan. 21, 2026, limited to ① when coinciding with a major state visit by a foreign dignitary or an international event ② when coinciding with a local government celebratory day such as a regional festival ③ when coinciding with an event conducted by the state or a local government such as a civil-defense drill, and apart from these cases, “when the national administrative territory has been occupied in war or a similar form.”

274) Republic of Korea Court Judicial Information Disclosure Portal, Police Officials Act and Nationality Act. <https://portal.scourt.go.kr/pgp/main.on?w2xPath=PGP1021M04&&lawNm=%EA%B2%BD%EC%B0%B0%EA%B3%B5%EB%AC%B4%EC%9B%90%EB%B2%95&&c=900>



Government building (left) and police agency (right) flying the Chinese Communist flag

○ History of U.S. involvement in Korean politics

- **(U.S. military government and formation of the political system: 1945–1948)**
After World War II, the United States occupied the southern Korean Peninsula and established the U.S. Army Military Government in Korea (USMGIK). In the process of constructing Korea's political system, the U.S. military government played roles such as ① building the administrative system ② creating legislative bodies ③ designing the election system, and in 1946 established the Interim Legislative Assembly of South Korea and promoted the formation of political institutions²⁷⁵). This means that the United States directly participated in the formation of the Republic of Korea's political structure.
- **(The process of the formation of the Syngman Rhee government)** The U.S. military government supported Syngman Rhee, an independence activist active in the United States, as a Korean political leader, and researchers analyze that the United States at the time regarded Rhee as the key leader for building an anti-communist system²⁷⁶). With U.S. support, Rhee returned to Korea, rose as a political leader, and later became the first President of the Republic of Korea.
- **(The 1948 general election under U.N. supervision)** The first general election of the Republic of Korea in 1948 was conducted under the supervision of the United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK)²⁷⁷). This election

275) Norris, P. (2015). Why elections fail. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

276) United Nations. (1947). United Nations General Assembly Resolution 112 (II): The problem of the independence of Korea. New York: United Nations.

is a representative case in which the international community intervened to guarantee the fairness of elections in the Republic of Korea. This commission, constituted pursuant to a U.N. General Assembly resolution, performed the role of supervising free and fair elections²⁷⁷). The historical fact that the Republic of Korea was founded under appropriate international intervention and supervision at a time when its electoral institutions were unstable is one that confirms the will of the Republic of Korea to protect liberal democracy and guarantee the freedom of its people.

○ **Strategic significance of the ROK-U.S. alliance amid a crisis of democracy in the Republic of Korea**

- **(Strategic environment)** The Republic of Korea is located as a key strategic base of the United States in Northeast Asia, standing on the front line for checking the communist states of North Korea, China, and Russia, and also performs the roles of ① defending against the North Korean nuclear threat ② restraining Chinese influence ③ serving as a strategic hub for information warfare and cyber warfare. Given that the U.S. Department of Defense and strategic research institutions define the Republic of Korea as a core democratic country in the Indo-Pacific strategy, the stability of the Republic of Korea's political system appears likely to operate not as a simple domestic issue but as a core variable in the security structure of Northeast Asia as a whole.

○ **Need for international cooperation to secure election fairness**

- According to international election studies, election fairness consists of the elements of ① transparent voting procedures ② independent election management ③ and an international observation system, and when a crisis of election fairness occurs, internal conflict within a state is likely to intensify and the political system become unstable. Therefore, there is a need to build a mechanism for guaranteeing election fairness through cooperation among democratic allies.

○ **Conclusion and request**

277) United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea. (1948). Report of the United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea. New York: United Nations.

278) United States Department of State. (2023). The Washington Declaration. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State.

- The Republic of Korea and the United States have maintained an alliance based on diplomatic relations lasting more than 140 years, and since the 1882 Treaty of Peace, Amity, Commerce and Navigation between Joseon and the United States, the relationship between the two countries has developed into military and political cooperation²⁷⁹⁾, The ROK-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty and the Washington Declaration are systems that have modernly expanded this alliance. A situation in which democracy in the Republic of Korea is threatened is not a mere domestic political issue but one affecting Northeast Asian security and international order, and cooperation by the allied United States and the international community to protect Korean democracy and election fairness can be said to be a measure possessing international legal legitimacy. Accordingly, the following are requested of the allied United States:
 - ① introduction of an international election–observation system: dispatch of an observation mission based on the OSCE model
 - ② election–security cooperation: cyber–security cooperation and protection of election infrastructure
 - ③ an alliance–based democratic cooperation framework: establishment of an ROK-U.S. democracy consultative body
 - ④ cooperation with international organizations: IFES, International IDEA.

279) United States Army Military Government in Korea. (1947). Political reforms and administrative developments in Korea, 1945–1948. Washington, DC: U.S. Army Historical Division.

1. Recommendations

Policy Objectives and Summary

(Objectives)

- ① Ensuring electoral integrity
- ② Restoring public trust in the electoral system through reform
- ③ Securing international transparency

- (Summary)** After implementing hand counting, institutionalize verifiability, independent auditing, and post-election statistical verification (e.g., Risk-Limiting Audits, RLA) to establish public confidence in election outcomes.

Specific Measures

Legal and Institutional Reform

- **(Implementation of Hand Counting)** Abolish existing electronic and digital vote counting systems and ensure electoral integrity through a fair and transparent hand-counting model.
- **(Legislation of RLA (Risk-Limiting Audit))** Introduce provisions for Risk-Limiting Audits (RLA) into the Public Official Election Act, establishing a default risk limit (e.g., 5%) for all elections and defining procedures for random sampling and escalation.

Administrative and Organizational Restructuring

- **(Reform of the National Election Commission)** Reform the currently insulated National Election Commission by separating the functions of the central commission and establishing an independent security audit body, thereby ensuring transparency in election management and operations.

Technical and Statistical Measures

- **(Development of RLA Implementation Manuals and Statistical Toolkits, and Training)** Develop manuals tailored to the Korean environment, including sampling algorithms and ballot comparison methods, and mandate training for staff of the National Election Commission, local election commissions, and audit bodies.

- **(Introduction of Voting Data Forensics and Monitoring Systems)** Implement anomaly detection algorithms to identify irregular patterns in voting data across time and regions, operate automated alert systems, and incorporate the need for statistical anomaly detection.
- **(Parallel Paper-Based Verification Principle)** Print ballots with unique identification numbers and barcodes, and mandate processes that allow comparison with Cast Vote Records (CVR: Construct Validity Ratio).
- **International Cooperation and Transparency**
 - **(Establishment of Cooperation Frameworks with International Organizations such as IFES, International IDEA, and OSCE)** Institutionalize regular cooperation for technical and procedural advisory support, deployment of international observation missions, and international verification of equipment and processes, including ROK-U.S. cooperation and international monitoring.
 - **(ROK-U.S. Technical Cooperation (Cybersecurity and Information Security))** Recommend the conclusion of MOUs for process monitoring of election systems, joint training on election-related cyber threats, and mutual technical assistance.

2. Comprehensive Conclusion

□ Overall Conclusion

- The electoral integrity of the Republic of Korea occupies a critically important position within both historical and security contexts. Evidence and international case studies confirm that any compromise in electoral integrity directly impacts national legitimacy and security. Furthermore, procedural and technical vulnerabilities, as well as allegations of statistical anomalies raised since the introduction of electronic counting and early voting, clearly demonstrate the necessity of institutional reform.
- **Key Conclusions**
 - **(① Securing Verifiability as the Top Priority)** Verifiability must take precedence over electronic efficiency, and statistical verification mechanisms such as RLA should be institutionalized.
 - **(② Trust Cannot Be Restored Without Procedural Transparency)** In light of extensive evidence and allegations, institutional reforms—including the

abolition of early voting—are urgent, and full transparency in all procedures is essential.

- **(③ Institutionalization of Independent External Audits (Domestic and International))** Introduce independent domestic audit bodies while reinforcing objectivity through cooperation with international organizations such as IFES and OSCE.
- **(④ Strengthening Legal and Administrative Accountability)** It is urgent to establish clear accountability and penalty provisions for procedural violations and security breaches.
- **(⑤ Building Social Consensus Through Pilot and Gradual Implementation)** Adopt a phased pilot approach to evaluate effectiveness and potential side effects, while fostering public consensus.
- **(⑥ ROK-U.S. and Multinational Cooperation as a Strategic Choice)** Electoral integrity extends beyond a domestic issue and is linked to Northeast Asian security and alliance credibility. In particular, ROK-U.S. cooperation and international monitoring mechanisms are essential.