

December 2, 1961

Cable from the Chinese Embassy in North Korea, 'On Chinese Citizens of the Korean Nationality Illegally Crossing the Border to Come to Korea'

Citation:

"Cable from the Chinese Embassy in North Korea, 'On Chinese Citizens of the Korean Nationality Illegally Crossing the Border to Come to Korea'", December 2, 1961, Wilson Center Digital Archive, PRC FMA 118-01026-07, 125-128. Translated by David Cowhig. <https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/188166>

Summary:

The Chinese Embassy in North Korea reports on the growing number of illegal border crossings into the DPRK and some of the problems the new arrivals are facing.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Henry Luce Foundation

Original Language:

Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English

Top Secret

On Chinese Citizens of the Korean Nationality Illegally Crossing the Border to Come to [North] Korea

(61) Korea Consular No. 103

To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Consular Affairs Department and the Ministry of Public Security

On November 10, when the Chinese citizen of the Korean nationality An Zaixiu (An came to Korea holding an exit permit from the Heilongjiang Province Public Security Department and a Chinese passport to participate in construction. Now he works in the North Hamgyong Province People's Committee Labor Office as a counselor mostly involved with finding work for people who cross the border illegally from China) came to the Embassy to apply renounce his citizenship, he happened to mention some information about Chinese citizens of the Korean nationality who come to Korea. We have organized this information in the report that follows.

1. Figures on the number of illegal border crossers. An said that, according to statistics as of November 8, 20,517 Chinese of the Korean nationality have illegally cross the border from China to Korea's North Hamgyong Province. Some people continue to cross the border illegally. According to statistics as of November 8, there are many of them at all the border stations. There were over 700 in Onsong County, over 300 in Hoeryong City, over 250 in Kyongsong County, and over 100 in Musan County.

2. The attitude of Korean side on this and the measures that they are taking. An said that Chinese citizens of the Korean nationality began to illegally cross the international border to North Hamgyong Province during the first half of last year. At first not many people came and they were assigned work. Later, the numbers increased rapidly and the cabinet order all subordinate departments to, at the direction of the Foreign Compatriots Bureau, to set up six border area reception stations within the province (Hoeryong City, Namyang, Houeryong City, Kyongsong County, Musan County etc.) and that the reception stations should be staffed by cadres from the Provincial People's Committee, the Cabinet Office, and the Labor Bureau.

When the border crossers get to the reception station, the Cabinet Office does a files check to determine if there is any problem with the applicant. If not, they are given funds for travel and ration coupons and sent to on of the various People's Committees Labor Bureaus to be assigned work. Over 20,000 have arrived thus far. Most have already been assigned to work in factories or agricultural communes. Those who have had three or more years of university or technical school training, about 500 in all, have already, at the direction of the Korean Central Committee, been introduced to institutions of higher learning, the Heavy Industry Commission etc. by the People's Committees. Later, when some people weren't able to do the work they claimed that they could, it became apparent that some people were lying about their education and experience. After that, the Central Committee said that only people with diplomas or technical certifications would be introduced to the Central Departments.

According to the North Hamgyong Province Provincial People's Committee, many border crossers turned out not to be hard workers once they were assigned a job. Many ran away. Up to the present, over 1500 people have fled their jobs. Some of those fled back across the border to China. Where most of them went is not clear. Most of those who fled were youth age 30 or less. The reason most of them left is because they weren't satisfied with their job. Most of them said that the work was too

hard; some said that they were unable to do the work. Due to that situation, the Provincial People's Committee during July and August gathered together the young people and sent them back to China as a group. That method stirred up considerable opposition. Many young people wrote letters to Premier Kim Il-sung and to the Central Committee of the Worker's Party of Korea to "appeal" it. Later, that measure was abandoned.

When the Provincial People's Committees and the Cabinet Office studied, at the Foreign Compatriots Department, why these people were fleeing or going back to China, they decided that the main reason is that we are not taking care of them well enough. Therefore, the Cabinet Office, in the decision of the Foreign Compatriots Department determined that people illegally crossing the border from China would not be given the same treatment as Overseas Korean compatriots returning from abroad. North Hamgyong Province called a meeting of the people's committees in the prefecture to pass this guidance along and adopted several other measures as well. Recently, the Provincial Administrative Bureau and other concerned departments formed a welcome committee to receive as guests the Korean people coming across the border from China and set up a reception station at the elementary schools in the border areas where the six reception stations are located. The Cabinet Office gave the reception stations 11,000 blankets.

Concerning the citizenship of the illegal border crossers, the provinces along the border all had their Civil Affairs Bureaus issue residency documents. We have been studying how to handle the citizenship of these people and have not yet received word of any decision.

At present, North Hamgyong Province still has a manpower shortage. An said that, according to the labor force allocation plan of the North Hamgyong Provincial Party Committee, the mines in the prefecture are short about 4000 workers. The agricultural communes still need 7000 more people.

3. The arrival of Chinese Korean nationality illegal border crossers has brought many problems.

According to An:

Their arrival has increased the work load of the Labor Bureau and given it many new problems. Some people are not satisfied with the way the Labor Bureau has made job assignments. They ask for jobs in good places and good occupations and then unreasonably stir up trouble when they don't get them, thereby causing the Labor Bureau many difficulties. The Labor Bureau has recently been issuing eighty travel documents every day.

Some illegal border crossers are smugglers who are disrupting markets. They bring daily life sundries from China and then buy shoes, socks and other goods in Korea and bring them back to China to earn a profit. Some people have crossed the border back and forth seven or eight times. Some are petty merchants leftover from the old society who have been unemployed for many years who have gotten involved with smugglers to do their buying and selling. Smuggling has disrupted the market in Chongjin City. According to that city's Civil Affairs Office, they have detained over 50 people who crossed the border for smuggling. The Provincial People's Committee has already sent out guidance about this. The commercial departments of the province may not buy any daily necessities from China from smugglers. Any illegal border crosser who does not hold a travel permit from the Provincial Labor Bureau may not leave the province of their residence address for any other province. All provincial departments who encounter smugglers are to detain them.

Transportation has become very disorderly. According to regulations, any border crosser needs a travel pass issued by the reception station in order to buy the train ticket. However, smugglers without travel passes sneak onto the trains. Some people already assigned work leave without permission to run around wildly wherever they want.

Recently Kilju County, Onsong County and other places have had outbreaks of contagious diseases. Some say that illegal border crossers brought in with them to Korea from China. Now the reception stations are taking measures to prevent this. Anyone who crosses the border to Korea from China must stay at the reception center for fifteen days, wash, be disinfected, be vaccinated, and have a medical examination to ensure that they do not have a contagious disease before they are given a job assignment.

With the rapid increase in the number of people coming to Korea from China, feeding them hasn't been a problem, but housing them has become a big problem. The North Hamgyong Provincial People's Committee estimates that once the river freezes this winter there may be even more people crossing the border to come to Korea.

It is concluded by saying that if the illegal border crossings continue as they have been, housing and clothing the border crossers will become very difficult and there will be many other problems. The Provincial Labor Department has already received a notice from the Cabinet Office at the Foreign Compatriots Department about a meeting that will be held in mid-November held especially to discuss the illegal border crossing problem.

Distribution: Jilin Province; Liaoning Province; Heilongjiang Province; Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region Foreign Affairs Office

[seal] Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

December 2, 1961