

March 4, 1953

**Report, Legation of Hungary in North Korea to the
Hungarian Foreign Ministry**

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Summary:

Detailed report from Minister Károly Pásztor on his meeting with Kim Il Sung on 17 February 1953.

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Contents:

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The Legation of the Hungarian People's Republic.
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Pyongyang 4 March 1953.

Subject: Delivery of Comrade Rákosi's verbal greeting and gift to Comrade Kim Il Sung.

On 17 February, based on a previous appointment, I visited Comrade Kim Il Sung with the purpose of fulfilling the necessary visit upon my return from vacation and delivering Comrade Rákosi's verbal greeting, best wishes, and his previously-mentioned gift to Comrade Kim Il Sung. Despite being occupied [with work], Comrade Kim Il Sung received me very quickly, on the third day after my request, at 12 p.m. at General Headquarters. He welcomed my arrival-as he usually does-with a cheerful and good-humored smile. Our conversation lasted for 108 minutes, and during this entire time he maintained his cheerfulness and good humor.

Comrade Kim Il Sung spoke in Korean, which was translated into Russian by Comrade Deputy Foreign Minister Ri Dong-geun, and he talked for so long that I had difficulty remembering everything word-for-word. I apologized for disturbing him and immediately explained that the reason for my visit was to deliver to Comrade Kim Il Sung and the entire Korean people Comrade Rákosi's verbal greeting and best wishes, in which he wishes the earliest possible victory over the enemy. Please allow me, Comrade Kim Il Sung, to deliver Comrade Rákosi's modest but cordial gift as well. Comrade Kim Il Sung first [shook my hand] with his usual laughter, which expressed his fullest and honest delight, then repeated the handshake in a serious and strong way and thanked [me] for Comrade Rákosi's greeting and gift. He immediately offered me a seat and also offered biscuits and apples, which were served quickly.

Comrade Kim Il Sung briefly inquired after our well-being. Surely we must be having some difficulties, he said, to which I responded that we are having difficulties only in the sense that we would like to work more than we have managed to do so far. Other than this, we cannot speak of difficulties, since the Korean government-under the leadership of Comrade Kim Il Sung-does everything possible to provide us with the appropriate and necessary undisturbed working conditions, with which we are fully satisfied. Comrade Kim Il Sung then began [the conversation by] saying that the Eisenhower [government] is making a big noise which they think they can use to scare us, but we will not be scared by their noise, [since] our people have been forged and soldered together in this war. We are not alone. Chinese volunteers are fighting on our side, and, headed by the Soviet Union, all democratic countries-among them the Hungarian people-are giving us every support. Of course, he said, without this powerful assistance, we would be unable to continue successfully the fight against such an enemy as American imperialism. This is why we cannot give enough thanks for this help to the friendly countries, the Hungarian people, and Comrade Rákosi, who is so attentive and who took a position so resolutely to help the Korean people from the very first day of the war. We will never forget this, said Comrade Kim Il Sung.

Our hinterland is steady and we are stronger than ever before, and if the enemy dares to attack we will destroy them. Comrade Kim Il Sung repeated this with the following words: "We will inflict a destructive blow upon the enemy."

Following this, he listed some data concerning the assistance given by friendly China and Mongolia. They received 5,000,000 items of clothing and pairs of shoes from

China. (One can see people everywhere wearing warm, blue Chinese clothes.) They also received a large amount of wheat from China.

From Mongolia, they [the Mongolians] intend to send 86,500 various animals again this year, among them 16,000 horses. This is extremely important, said Comrade Kim Il Sung, because until now the soldiers have been forced to carry various equipment on their backs and to haul military equipment [themselves], but this work can now be done by horses. With this, the situation of the soldiers is greatly improved. Comrade Deputy Foreign Minister Ri Dong-geun [Li Dong Kun] told us that on one occasion, Comrade Kim Il Sung expressed himself on this topic in front of a Mongolian delegation visiting in January in the following way: they are a new kind of volunteer.

The assistance provided by friendly countries is ever increasing-just as Hungary increased its support for this year by 15 percent-so we are becoming ever stronger, said Comrade Kim Il Sung. Of course, we are receiving the most assistance from the Soviet Union, it helps us with everything, he said. In addition to this great support, we also do everything possible in order to strengthen the front and the country on our own. The mining industry is meeting the state plan, despite the fact that they had to work under very difficult conditions. Of the required 65 million meters of cloth, we are producing 40 million meters-primarily white linen-by ourselves. We have an underground textile factory equipped with 1,500 spools. (At this point, Comrade Kim Il Sung asked me whether I have seen this factory). No. They will show it [to us]. In addition to this, we have two smaller textile factories, he said. (We saw one of them in Pyongyang in a narrow [air raid] shelter.) In our meat production, we expect 60,000 tons this year, he said.

At this point, he turned to the subject of the importance of cadres, and referred to Comrade Stalin's well-known thesis that [the quality] of cadres determines everything. In connection with this, he spoke again of the help given by the friendly countries. Today we still have great deficiencies [in this field] and difficulties that result from it, but in a few years time we will have many well-experienced cadres, who are now studying in friendly countries. This help is also of immeasurable value for us, said Comrade Kim Il Sung.

Here he mentioned that because of the difficulties caused by last year's drought [in Hungary], they had not planned to send any new orphans to Hungary this year, but since they received our official request and approval concerning this, they will send them [after all]. They are very pleased to accept this help from us. In connection with this, he mentioned that the Korean children are being treated very well in Hungary, they have great opportunities to study, and in every respect they are being taken care of in the best manner. Comrade Kim Il Sung thanked us for this as well. This very serious help gives great strength to our people, he said.

Later, he inquired about the work of our hospital and the well-being of our medical staff. We are surely having difficulties, aren't we? Our hospital has very good and safe underground working places. Our doctors can work undisturbed. I said that the frequent shortages of electricity are causing some difficulties in their work, but we can manage that. There were greater difficulties in terms of providing the labor force necessary for the construction. At the moment, our hospital is located in four villages. It was decentralized in this way due to the conditions of earlier times. Recently, however, as prescribed by order of the Military Medical Command, hospitals must be even more decentralized (outside of the villages), so we began with the construction of free-standing buildings and sickrooms that are located below ground level. The construction of the hospital was begun by our own forces, which is making it go very slowly. So far we have managed to build only four smaller buildings for 60 patients, and the groundwork for some more buildings is underway. The other patients in the villages are exposed to the greatest danger.

Comrade Kim Il Sung told us that certain military units are now under reorganization, but this will soon end, and then he will immediately send assistance to accelerate the construction [work], because it is very important that the patients get out of the villages as soon as possible. Concerning our hospital, Comrade Kim Il Sung mentioned that our doctors are working very well and that our hospital has become very well known among the Korean people, and further added that ["I have already promised to visit the Hungarian hospital named after Comrade Rákosi, but unfortunately I have not yet had time for it. From now on, however, the moment I have some [free] time, I will visit it."] I said that this would be our great pleasure, since Comrade Kim Il Sung's visit will surely give a further impetus to the work of the hospital's entire personnel.

Comrade Kim Il Sung then asked again whether we are having any further difficulties because of the bombing. With regard to the hospital we are not, I said. I see difficulties with respect to the work of the legation; we would like to work harder, but language problems on the one hand, and the war conditions on the other make our work more difficult. The staff of our legation has increased, [but] so have our tasks, I said. We find it very important to learn about the valuable experiences of the Korean people, who are bearing [the burdens of] a long war. Comrade Kim Il Sung reacted keenly to this, and listed several things, such as the fight of the heroic railroad workers and engine-drivers, the steadfast work of the peasantry to provide bread, and the heroic deeds of the partisans, etc. These are all providing [us with] important experiences, of which we have ample, he said. He also mentioned the story of the seventy heroic fishermen. While fishing, they were spotted by the crew of an enemy cruiser, which wanted to capture them. The fishermen did not surrender, and all of them jumped into the water and tried to swim to the seashore. Out of 70, only three drowned while the rest reached the shore.

I also mentioned that we are very interested in how the different organs and organizations execute and organize their work under the difficult war conditions. I mentioned, for example, the work of the Peace Council, Trade Union, Democratic Women's Association, Youth Association, and, in the realm of culture, the work of the recently established Academy of Sciences. We would like to learn about their work, experiences, and the difficulties they face, in order to [know how we could] help them. We would like to provide the Academy of Sciences regularly with academic material, but we also would like to help in other fields. In order to do so, however, it is necessary to get in closer touch with them, in order to discuss with them from time to time what kinds of materials they need.

[Since] Comrade Kim Il Sung understands Russian quite well, he understood this, and said that this is a very good idea. Thereupon Comrade Deputy Foreign Minister Ri Dong-geun reported to Comrade Kim Il Sung that I have already submitted a number of questions to which we would like to receive answers. He [then] listed the questions, to which Comrade Kim Il Sung responded that this is very natural and experiences must be shared. He requested that we reciprocate by sharing with them all of our people's experiences building socialism, ["because after the war we will also be building["], said Comrade Kim Il Sung. In this respect as well, I said, we will do our best to help as much and as well we can.

At this point Comrade Kim Il Sung emphasized that he will provide all possible assistance to this work, and that they will organize the meetings I requested in order to establish the necessary connections.

Concerning the bombing, I said that we already have a very appropriate air-raid shelter and we can work very undisturbed. I have, however, a very modest remark related to the population. I do not know the entire territory of the country from this respect, but for example from the bombing of two villages in our small working area, I perceived that they were located too close to the rail road's unloading platform, and this is why they were hit so badly that they were almost entirely destroyed.

Comrade Kim Il Sung said that this is indeed true and immediately added that ["] we already gave strict orders to the population to move out from the cities, other dangerous locations, and their immediate vicinity (like railroad stations and unloading locations) to the mountains, and the peasants should build their houses on their land, 150 to 200 meters from each other. With the coming of the winter this work has become more difficult, so the population has not yet been able to move from many dangerous places. Now, in the spring, this problem will be entirely solved,["] said Comrade Kim Il Sung.

The entire conversation was very friendly, and as I could see, Comrade Kim Il Sung also enjoyed it. He did not mind devoting time to it. I was prepared to leave earlier, in order not to take up the time of Comrade Kim Il Sung for such a long while, but he kept on raising new questions, from which I concluded that I could not leave after all. He was glad to have this conversation, and I was just as glad to listen to him.

In the following [remarks], Comrade Kim Il Sung told me that they are receiving a great amount of meat from friendly countries, but now they are also taking the course of developing their stock of domestic animals, although they also have to consider the climate here. They are primarily thinking of raising pigs and sheep, he said, because they have difficulties with respect to the fat provision as well. Corn also grows here, and this provides a great opportunity for good pig breeding. Moreover, I said, you could introduce cows of good breed, which is necessary not only with respect to the meat provision but also with respect to the very important milk provision. To this, Comrade Kim Il Sung took out his notebook and showed me the names of the Caucasian breed cows they have requested from the Soviet Union. Friendly countries are helping us with everything, he said. We are now summoning our ambassador's home, and through them we will also express our special thanks for all the effective assistance the friendly countries have been providing us, said Comrade Kim Il Sung.

When standing up, Comrade Kim Il Sung turned to me and said the following: I ask you to forward my thanks, gratefulness, and love to Comrade Rákosi, the Hungarian government, and the entire friendly Hungarian people for the unselfish and honest assistance that they have provided us, which we will never forget. Then he continued: Moreover, I would like to thank you for your tireless work, which you have been doing in the last two long years in order to help our people under the greatest ordeals and difficulties. With these words, Comrade Kim Il Sung offered his hand, but I asked him to allow me one more minute, first apologizing that I kept him for such a long time, then requesting to respond to the last words of Comrade Kim Il Sung.

My assistance, I believe, can hardly be termed even modest, but in the future I will make every effort to contribute even better work to support the struggle of the heroic Korean people, and to deepen the friendship between our peoples. Concerning our difficulties here, I do not regard them as difficulties, because as I have already said, I see and I am convinced that the Korean government under the leadership of Comrade Kim Il Sung is doing everything in order to provide the appropriate conditions necessary to our work. I could not feel better being here, I am proud that I can work together with this heroic people, and as far as I am concerned, I do not wish to leave the beloved Korean people until it finishes its victorious struggle against the enemy.

Concerning the gift, in Hungary the one who gives the gift usually says to wear and consume it in strength and health, and this is what I also wish now to Comrade Kim Il Sung.

Comrade Kim Il Sung shook my hand again with great fervor and expressed his thanks for the gift several times.

[In the following paragraphs, the Hungarian minister reports that a flat tire made it difficult to arrive at the meeting on time.]

signature

Minister Károly Pásztor