

December 8, 1960
**Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the
Hungarian Foreign Ministry**

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Summary:

Károly Práth reports on Czech-North Korean relations, Soviet-North Korean relations, and the status of inter-Korean relations and the prospects for reunification.

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On 7 December, Czechoslovak Ambassador Comrade Kohousek invited me for dinner, together with Comrade Soviet Ambassador Puzanov. In the course of the friendly conversation, I mentioned that the conduct of the Korean DCSO [Diplomatic Corps Supply Office] is somewhat strange and incomprehensible to me, since they have been systematically taking away my best Korean employees on various pretexts. The behavior of the guards charged with guarding the embassies is also very strange, since-despite the emphatic statements of the Foreign Ministry-they constantly stop the Korean comrades visiting the Embassy, and check their identities. We do not take similar measures at the Korean embassy in Budapest; moreover, we do our best to offer them an ever-increasing space for movement and [possibilities to maintain] connections.

Concerning this question, Comrade Kohousek told us that his embassy is experiencing similar [behavior] from the Korean side, and remarked that according to his impression, some of the Korean employees working at the embassy are security people, who follow with great attention the work of the embassies and the Koreans visiting the embassy, and at the same time keep an eye on the other Korean employees as well. When Korean authorities have the impression that one or another of the Korean employees is working well, and that his work is promoting the work of the embassy, then he is removed from the embassy, usually on the baseless pretext of "political unreliability." At this point, Comrade Puzanov interjected that why then do they send "politically unreliable [people]"?!-Comrade Kohousek also pointed out that the Korean side-both official authorities and some of the embassy employees-is trying to restrict the connections between the individual embassies and the Korean comrades who studied in their countries, out of the fear that they [the embassies] can receive some kind of "information" from them [the Korean comrades]. The situation, however, is that these comrades cannot subscribe to foreign specialist literature, and this is why they are always inquiring at the embassies.

In my response, I emphasized that I have no need for the Hungarian-trained Korean comrades to act as "informants" since I have been in the DPRK long enough to be able to form my own opinion on its individual issues and its situation. Comrade Puzanov agreed with this and then said that so far he had no problems with the Koreans working at the Soviet Embassy, and when it comes to signing the collective contract, he determines in advance each employee's sphere of work. Concerning the problems related to free entry at the embassies, since he has also already heard similar complaints from the Bulgarian Ambassador, he had the issue investigated in relation to the Soviet Embassy, and they did not experience similar phenomena (I would like to remark that there is a permanent Soviet janitor service at the gate, so it is not possible for the [Korean] guard to stop visitors). According to Comrade Puzanov, Korean leading comrades do not assume that the embassies would use visitors for the purpose of getting information, such a [notion] can only possibly originate from some kind of lower subordinate. If he [Comrade Puzanov] wants to know about something, then he turns to the Central Committee or to the Foreign M[inistry], and it happened more than once that Comrade Kim Il Sung himself offered materials that were possibly necessary for the work of the embassy. Concerning the conduct of the Korean DCSO and the guards, he strongly stressed that one has to call individual cases to the attention of the competent Korean authorities immediately [after such incidents happen], warning them "what, do you want brotherly reciprocity?!" If something similar would happen to me here, said Comrade Puzanov, then I would ensure that it be reciprocated in Moscow. I interjected that in our work we should not look for what possibly separates us but what unites us, and we must endeavor to strengthen cooperation and friendship. Comrade Puzanov also agreed with this by saying that these are after all minor issues, but they can also express the mutual relationship between two countries. No one in Moscow hinders entry to the Korean or [other] friendly embassies. After this, he firmly stated that concerning his own embassy, he has no information according to which certain Korean employees are engaged in intelligence" activity. If he would experience anything like this, then he would immediately protest to the Korean authorities, noting that he would be obliged to report this to his government and party. He works as the ambassador of a

socialist country in another socialist country, and the Soviet Union does not conduct such activity toward friendly states.

Following this, the conversation turned to the November session of the DPRK Supreme People's Assembly (due to his Moscow visit, Comrade Puzanov was not present [at this session]). Together with Comrade Kohousek, we found it to be inadequate that when the speakers of the People's Assembly [discussed] such an important event as the completion of the Five-year Plan, they only devoted a brief half-sentence to the huge assistance provided by the socialist camp, and, above all, the Soviet Union, without which the execution of this plan would have been impossible. I reminded Comrade Puzanov that approx. two years ago, Comrade Kim Il Sung personally requested of the ambassadors that the socialist countries assist in the realization of the Five-year Plan. Comrade Kohousek expressed his opinion that Korean comrades would have had a really good opportunity, on the basis of proletarian internationalism, to point out what the support of the Soviet Union, and more generally the socialist camp, can mean for the development of a previously backward and colonial country, especially from the point of view of the recently liberated Afro-Asian countries. It would have been especially important and appropriate to contrast this assistance and the [resulting] achievements with the American aid provided to South Korea. Comrade Puzanov said that the Soviet Union does not need constant expressions of gratitude for its help, but the Korean comrades are displaying too "modest" behavior concerning the assistance, and they try to hush it up. According to him, the core of the issue is not whether or not they speak of the assistance received from socialist countries, but how they educate the people [emphasis in the original]! This is the most important factor, he said. He emphasized that they do not know what the Korean comrades think concerning this issue, he had not yet raised the question with them. It could be that they wish to emphasize to South Korea the independence of the DPRK in all respects, or that they have some other ideas. Comrade Kohousek remarked that any bourgeois economist can easily calculate that the DPRK was unable to reach its achievements on its own, and it is similarly unable to provide the economic aid it recently offered to South Korea from its own resources. In his opinion, the Korean comrades will achieve just the opposite with this, and their proposals can be more easily labeled "Communist propaganda."

Comrade Puzanov declared that due to his absence, he does not yet know in detail the numbers related to the questions discussed by the [Supreme] People's Assembly. He spoke with great appreciation concerning the Korean proposals for the unification of the country. He told us that during Comrade Kim Il Sung's incognito visit to Moscow this June, Comrade Khrushchev briefly asked Comrade Kim Il Sung his opinion concerning a confederation proposal similar to the one on Germany. Comrade Kim Il Sung immediately agreed with the idea, but the Soviet side did not push the issue any further, and the Korean comrades elaborated proposals, that were, in his opinion, very concretely and flexibly aimed at creating state federation entirely independently: free elections, [unification through] either state federation or, for the time being, only a Committee of Economic Cooperation, etc. For his part, he regards the proposals as very thorough and correct. Concerning how realistic the offered economic aid is, he declared that he will examine the material, but he believes that South Korea will reject it anyway. Concerning South Korea, Comrade Kohousek stated that although a popular movement overthrew Syngman Rhee, it [the movement] is basically unable to advance further; moreover, anti-Communist attitudes are also manifesting themselves, especially among the so-called progressive forces of South Korea. In Comrade Puzanov's view, time will decide the question; in any event, the movement seems to be developing anti-Americanism. This, however, has its limits, since the intellectual and other circles see clearly that there are only American products in South Korea, and a potential anti-American movement could lead to the termination of American supplies, while the South Korean economy is unable to fulfill the country's needs from its own resources. For this reason, they are unwilling to risk ending American assistance. It is unquestionable, however, that the DPRK proposals are putting the leading circles of the US and South Korea in a difficult situation.

Concerning the South Korean response to the DPRK's proposals, Comrade Kohousek told us that in accordance with the information received from the head of the Czechoslovak observer committee in Panmunjom, there is some visible change on the Western side. As is known, American authorities already previously made the free movement of the Czechoslovak and Polish observers in South Korea impossible. Now opinions are being voiced that this should be made possible again. Some suggest that in addition to Poland, Czechoslovakia, Switzerland, and Sweden, the neutral observation committee should be enlarged by two new states, possibly with India and Argentina. At the same time, the committee could contribute to developing relations between the two parts of the country. According to the Czechoslovak Ambassador, the first impression is that the enlargement of the committee is not advantageous for us, since at the moment the voting ratio is 2 to 2, while [after the enlargement] this would be 2 to 4, to our disadvantage. In Comrade Puzanov's view, this also does not make any sense, since the activity of the committee is anyway reduced. Promoting relations between the two parts of the country would mean a change in the function of the neutral committee; this, however, would first of all require the consent of the Koreans themselves. Comrade Kohousek further mentioned that the head of the Swiss delegation invited the Czechoslovak general to visit Seoul, which the latter accepted only under the condition that he can go in an official status. The Swiss agreed to this, but the visit has been suspended for various reasons.

We evaluated the above-mentioned diverse Western initiatives as attempts by the USA to find a way to counterbalance the effects of the DPRK's very effective proposals.

Károly Práth
Ambassador