

May 29, 1957
Journal of Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK A.M.
Puzanov for 29 May 1957

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Summary:

Kim Il Sung requests technical assistance from the Soviet Unions for currency reforms in DPRK. He and Puzanov then discuss plans for elections in North Korea, DPRK agricultural and fishing conditions, progress in construction, and the exchange of delegations between the two countries. Later, Puzanov meets with the PRC Ambassador to the DPRK, Qiao Xiaoguang. They discuss the potential American bid to legalize weapons deliveries to South Korea as well as USSR and PRC consultation for the DPRK five-year plan.

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SOVIET EMBASSY IN THE DPRK TOP SECRET

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The Journal of Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK A. M. PUZANOV
for the period 6 through 29 May 1957

Pyongyang

[...]

29 May 1957

I visited Kim Il sung at his invitation.

Kim Il Sung asked me to pass a request to the Soviet government to print new currency for the DPRK, manufacture and issue small metal coins, and give the necessary assistance in preparing and conducting an exchange of old currency notes for new ones. It is being proposed to conduct the exchange of old notes for new ones at the end of 1958 or the beginning of 1959. At this point we will evidently have the opportunity to exchange ration coupons [kartochki] for some food and industrial goods. We understand that this is an issue of great state importance and it requires careful preparation and experienced people. We conducted the first monetary reform thanks to comprehensive aid from the Soviet Union and with the aid of Soviet people. Now we also need help. Therefore the DPRK government will carefully prepare and address the Soviet government with a request

to charge the USSR Minister of Finance and the Board of the State Bank with receiving a group of our officials who are now engaged in preparing new models of currency and give them the necessary help;

to print new DPRK currency and small metal coins;

to send a group of specialists to the DPRK to help prepare the measures associated with the exchange of money.

At this point Kim Il Sung noted that it was difficulty for they to determine the number of such officials themselves. Of course, the USSR Ministry of Finance has great experience and they themselves will be able to give advice as to what number of specialists ought to be sent to the DPRK.

I told Kim Il Sung that the Soviet government would be told about this request.

Then in the conversation which took place Kim Il Sung reported about the KWP CC Presidium decision to set the elections to the Supreme People's Assembly for 27 August of this year and that the elections will be only conducted from the population of North Korea. On the issue of the elections, although there was the suggestion of Kim Du-bong to hold them as in 1948, from the population of South and North Korea, but after careful discussion it was unanimously decided to hold elections only from the population of North Korea.

I noted that the collective leadership means different points of view and to a certain degree a clash of opinions in an entire number of cases about a series of questions. The task is to carefully hear out different opinions about one and the same issue, look into it from all sides, and adopt the correct decision on its merits expressed by the majority or, even better, when members of governing bodies who hold to another point of view, come to one decision with a majority as a result of the discussion; such a method of leadership in deciding issues allows possible mistakes to be better avoided, but in practice this matter is more difficult, yet it is more effective and correct.

Listening closely, Kim Il Sung completely agreed with the comments expressed.

Kim Il Sung then talked in detail about the state of affairs in agriculture. Planting is going considerably more successfully than last year, although spring was somewhat late. However, rain is needed and at the present time the planting is suffering badly from a lack of moisture; in particular, the plantings of barley have almost died everywhere. But this situation is not yet disturbing them especially. The KWP CC and DPRK government have been giving advice and serious work is now being pursued at the grass roots to search for additional sources for artificial irrigation and also to replant the areas that have died.

Where there is moisture in the soil they are already planting corn; where the soil is dry, they are cultivating seedlings of corn in order to transplant them after the first rain. Kim Il Sung noted at this point that they have barley; the corn is clearly unpromising, giving a very small crop, and that perhaps they ought to replace plantings of barley with plantings of other higher-yield crops.

I noted that back in the Soviet Union, especially in recent years when at the suggestion of the CPSU CC plantings of corns were introduced everywhere, the collective farmers were convinced that it was completely inadvisable and not beneficial to plant barley, and right now barley crops remain only to meet the needs of brewing.

It is considerably better, of course, and economically more beneficial to replace barley crops with corn. Kim Il Sung completely agreed and said that they will replace barley crops with corn, noting in the process that historically barley crops were produced because previously many peasants had far from enough food before the new harvest and therefore planted barley to get a new crop a little earlier in the spring. Now the situation is different in this respect.

He then said that the transplanting of young crops cultivated by the so-called cold procedure is going successfully, that peasants are already expressing an opinion about mass plantings of rice next year by such a method. At his recommendation last Sunday, 26 May, many Presidium members went to an agricultural cooperative of the village of Songseokri, Pyongwon District, South Pyeong-an Province, which transplanted rice on 18 April. The crops seem very good and green. Members of the agricultural cooperative told them that they have given a commitment to take a

harvest of nine tons each, and now anticipate taking up to 12 tons of rice from each hectare.

Kim Il Sung said that the transplanting of rice seedlings cultivated by the cold procedure will give them a large increase in the harvest and in 1958 they intend to do such plantings in up to 50% of all planted rice areas in the republic.

In reply to my question about how the fish catch is going, Kim Il Sung said that considerably more fish have been caught in the current year compared to the same period of last year; right now fishing is going on in the west coast in the Yellow Sea; the mackerel are still not approaching and they are fishing for other kinds of fish on the east coast. He cited several examples of how workers of various factories help the fishermen with the additional manufacture of spare parts, the supply of materials and equipment in short supply, etc. He expressed confidence that the fishing plan will be fulfilled this year.

Next in the conversation Kim Il Sung also talked in detail about the progress of the construction of housing and reconstruction of Pyongyang with public resources: students, manual laborers, and office workers. Students of the Wonsan Agricultural Institute, the pedagogical institute, and others are especially noteworthy in this work, and have overfulfilled norms by two or three times. The population of the city treats those working with great attention and love, and helps them in every way: they bring them boiling water for drinking, they send pads for supporting their shoulders when moving heavy objects, etc. Our officials of the Ministry of Construction and the construction committee were mistaken in their calculations and assumptions in giving some norms, but the students and others participating in the planning and provision of the public amenities of Pyongyang are considerably overfulfilling them.

I noted in this regard that the planners and economists are often mistaken and talked about a very interesting speech by Cde. N. S. Khrushchev at a conference of agricultural officials of the northwestern districts of Leningrad. Kim Il Sung listened to this information with great interest.

Kim Il Sung said that beginning yesterday at the recommendation the KWP CC Presidium all senior officials of the CC, government, ministries, and departments are going to public works for the public amenities of the city. They will each work several (three to six) hours, and not just a single time.

At the end of the conversation I informed Kim Il Sung that Cde. V. Ye. Voroshilov was sincerely grateful to the Korean comrades for the invitation to visit the DPRK; however due to the state of [his] health and in connection with pressing business he unfortunately cannot visit the DPRK. Kim Il Sung said that he completely understands and shares the opinion of Cde. K. Ye. Voroshilov.

I also informed Kim Il Sung that I had sent on their request for an unofficial reception of a delegation about the draft five-year plan. Kim Il Sung thanked [me] and said that he was somewhat concerned that he had not yet passed us the final draft of the five-year plan.

I passed to Kim Il Sung the desire of the Soviet journalists to respond to the invitation of the head of the delegation of Korean journalists which had been in the USSR to visit the DPRK. Kim Il Sung said that they will be very glad, but it would be good for the visit of the Soviet journalists here to coincide with elections to the Supreme People's Assembly. I told him that I would pass on [his] desire about this.

Nam Il was present at the conversation, which lasted 2 ½ hours.

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I received PRC Ambassador Qiao Xiaoguang at his request.

In the beginning of the conversation Qiao reported that during a visit to Nam II he passed a PRC government suggestion to him about publication in the press of a DPRK MFA statement in connection with the statement of American official circles concerning the delivery of new weapons to South Korea. Referring to Nam II's words, Qiao said that the statement would be published on 30 May.

I said that I had passed a similar suggestion to Nam II on 28 May at the instruction of the Soviet government. In a conversation with me yesterday Nam II reported that the statement will be published in two or three days, therefore they will hardly be able to do it on 30 May.

Referring to our conversation of 22 May, Qiao said that he had received a reply from his government about the DPRK government's request to consult and coordinate the five-year plan. The substance of the reply comes down to the following: the government is read to receive a DPRK government delegation, however in view of the fact that the next session of the National People's Representatives Congress will be held in June it is desired that the arrival of the delegation be in July, and not at the beginning of June, as was indicated in the request.

In return, I told Qiao that in a conversation with Nam II yesterday he had said that the DPRK government has decided to send an unofficial delegation to the USSR for consultation in drawing up a five-year plan. I noted that evidently Nam II had initially said that the delegation would be sent to the USSR and then to China in connection with the above reply of the DPRK government. In reply to Qiao's question about the composition of the delegation and the proposed duration of its stay in the USSR I replied: we know that the delegation will be headed by Kim II and Gosplan chairman Ri Jeong-ok. Up to eight officials from Gosplan and other departments will go with them. There was no discussion of the duration of the delegation's stay in the USSR.

Then Qiao, in accordance with a request that I had previously stated, talked about the movement to regulate the work style which is being done right now in the PRC.

I thanked Qiao for the interesting and substantive information.

Referring to my conversation with PNR Ambassador Siedlecki yesterday, I said that the latter had reported about the American intention to raise the question in the Military Armistice Commission about reexamining Article 13 of the Armistice Agreement. I asked whether the Ambassador knew anything about this issue.

Qiao replied that it was known previously that the US intended to reconsider Article 13 of the Armistice Agreement in the direction of legalizing the delivery of new types of weapons to South Korea, and to reexamine the quantitative aspect of this issue. It was not known when the US intended to bring up this issue.

Qiao also said that in a conversation with him Nam II reported the existence of different opinions about the approach to this issue (the content of Nam II's conversation as passed by the Ambassador corresponds completely to what Nam II said to me personally on this issue. See the record of the 28 May conversation).

I expressed my views about this issue in the same way as I told them to Nam II.

Qiao completely approved of [my] opinion, directed at refusing to discuss the issue of reexamining Article 13 of the Armistice Agreement.

The conversation lasted two hours and thirty minutes. Interpreters M. P. Kurbatsky and Wan Baoqing were present at the conversation...

[...]

SOVIET AMBASSADOR IN THE DPRK
[signature] (A. PUZANOV)

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