

June 4, 1957
Journal of Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK A.M.
Puzanov for 4 June 1957

Citation:

"Journal of Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 4 June 1957", June 4, 1957, Wilson Center Digital Archive, AVPRF F. 0102, Op. 13, P. 72, Delo 5, Listy 114-130. Translated for NKIDP by Gary Goldberg.
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/115623>

Summary:

Puzanov and Nam Il agree on the need to object to a potential US proposal to modify Article 13 of the Armistice agreement. Nam Il also hints at the desire for Chinese troops to withdraw from the DPRK and expresses the KWP Presidium's concern regarding the issue of the KWP CC premier.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from ROK Ministry of Unification

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

SOVIET EMBASSY IN THE DPRK TOP SECRET

Nº 144 Copy Nº 2

19 June 1957

[partial image of a stamp:

[[TOP]] SECRET

Incoming Nº 07129-gs;

date unreadable]

[USSR MFA Stamp:

Far East Department

Secret

Incoming Nº 01663s

30 July 1957]

The Journal of Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK A. M. PUZANOV
for the period 3 through 18 June 1957

Pyongyang

[...]

4 June 1957

I visited Nam Il at his invitation.

Nam Il reported that the DPRK government agrees with the suggestion to convene a conference of ministers of communication of the countries of people's democracy in December of this year.

Nam Il next reported that today the PRC Ambassador Qiao Xiaoguang had visited him and passed on that Zhou Enlai agrees with the opinion of Nam Il that if the Americans raise the issue of reexamining Article 13 of the [Armistice] Agreement in the Neutral Commission, that is, delivering new weapons to South Korea, then [we] ought to categorically object to a reexamination. Kim Il Sung is of the same opinion. He then said that there is a suggestion to hold an unofficial meeting in the DPRK MFA in the second half of June with the participation of the representatives of China, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Korea in the Neutral and Military Armistice Commissions and with the participation of the Ambassadors of China, the USSR, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. The point of view of the DPRK government on the aforementioned issue will be communicated at this meeting. The goal of the meeting is to come to a common consensus point of view.

I asked Nam Il if the MFA had proposals prepared for the upcoming 12th UN General Assembly session.

Nam Il replied that there is nothing new. Perhaps just, he said with great reservations [ogovorki, which can also mean "slip of the tongue"], just raise the issue of a unilateral withdrawal of troops (I understand that he means a withdrawal of the Chinese People's Volunteers from the DPRK).

I said the following: in my opinion, such a proposal would be incorrect.

Why?

Right now the numerical strength of the troops in South and North Korea is approximately equal. With the withdrawal of the Chinese People's Volunteers the situation will sharply change for the worse for the DPRK. In order that this doesn't happen the DPRK government would then have to draft large groups into the Army and increase expenses for the Army. But it seems to me that the state of the economy and the economics of the DPRK do not allow this to be done.

Nam Il completely agreed with the last comment and added that, speaking of a withdrawal, he means that the withdrawn troops units will be deployed on the border with the DPRK and might rapidly come to aid in event of complications. He added further than he had raised this issue tentatively and it wasn't being discussed anywhere.

This opinion (tentatively) suggests itself to me from the conversation:

The Korean friends have a desire for units of the Chinese troops to be withdrawn from the DPRK and stationed in China along the border with the DPRK.

Speaking of preparations for elections to the Supreme People's Assembly, they touched on the issue of a candidate for the post of premier.

Nam Il said that Kim Il Sung wants to keep the post of Chairman of the KWP CC and right now, even in the KWP Presidium, this issue also has also not been discussed; the issue of the premier worries all Presidium members. The issue is very complex and difficult.

Why?

It was intended to prepare Choe Yong-geon [Choe Yong Gon] for this post. He was actually made First Deputy Premier and First Deputy Chairman of the KWP CC with this purpose. Kim Il Sung withdrew from work in the Cabinet of Ministers with this purpose. However, life has shown that Choe Yong-geon is not suited to this post: he works badly, without effort, he knows the country's economy poorly, and yet does not try to know [it] better. When Minister of Defense he also did not engage in military affairs, and Chief of the General Staff Kim Gwang-hyeop (a member of the CC Presidium) did all the work. Another candidate more suitable for the matter might be proposed for the post. But the problem is that Choe Yong-geon knew what post they are proposing to give him. As a person he is power-loving and vindictive. He has cheap demagogic means of drawing some people to his side. Therefore there is a danger, said Nam Il, that the appointment of another person as premier would cause a sharp reaction from Choe Yong-geon and possible serious complications in the Party.

Speaking of a possible candidate for the post of premier, Nam Il named Kim Il.

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