

February 26, 1958
Journal of Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK A.M.
Puzanov for 26 February 1958

Citation:

"Journal of Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 26 February 1958",
February 26, 1958, Wilson Center Digital Archive, AVPRF F. 0102, Op. 14, Delo 6, Listy
32-60. Translated for NKIDP by Gary Goldberg.
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/115968>

Summary:

Puzanov discusses with Nam Il and Kim Il Sung about the US and FRG statements to return two American and two FRG citizens who were on the aircraft which flew into DPRK from South Korea on February 16 and preparations for the DPRK response.

Credits:

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

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

...26 February 1958

I visited Nam Il and passed him the US government Statement about the issue of returning two American citizens to South Korea who were among the passengers of the aircraft which had flown into the DPRK on 16 February and the Aide Memoire of the FRG Embassy in Moscow about the return to Seoul of two FRG citizens who were among the passengers of this aircraft. Then I told Nam Il of the considerations described in the 25 February USSR MFA instructions.

In the conversation which took place Nam Il said that the Germans and Americans will be returned in the next few days. As regards the South Koreans the government will decide the issue about them after an appeal by the appropriate South Korean authorities.

Nam Il characterized the statement of the US government as rude, insolent, and distorting the actual state of the circumstances of the aircraft's flight into North Korea. Then he said that the MFA will make a Statement about the US government Statement and announce the return of the two Americans to South Korea.

For my part I expressed the idea that it would have been more advisable for the Statement to have been made to the DPRK government. Report in this Statement about the transfer of the two citizens to the FRG, refute the US government Statement, then say that you are returning the two American citizens to South Korea, and in this same Statement talk about the return of the South Koreans. Such a Statement would once again show world public opinion the DPRK government's good will and readiness to solve such incidents in the spirit of benevolence and humanity.

Nam Il agreed in principle with the suggestions [I] expressed and said that they will think over these issues when preparing a Statement.

Nam Il reported that that KWP Party conference will open on Monday, 3 March and last four days. Up to two and a half days will be devoted to the discussion of the first issue, the plan of the first DPRK five-year plan, and a day and a half for discussion of the second, the intra-Party issue.

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I visited Kim Il Sung and at the instruction of the CPSU CC passed him information about the 11 February conversation of the Soviet Ambassador in Washington and the nature of the assignment given the Soviet Ambassador in connection with this conversation.

Kim Il Sung thanked the CPSU CC for the information. He then said that evidently the efforts of the Soviet government to convene a conference at a high level with the participation of the heads of government are being crowned with success. This will be good.

I noted for my part that the peace policy consistently pursued by the Soviet Union and the proposals directed at lessening international tension are being met with enormous interest and attention in all strata of the world's population except, naturally, those who are devising aggressive plans to attack the Soviet Union and the countries of people's democracy. World public opinion has well received the proposals of the Soviet government to convene a high-level conference with the participation of heads of government and is demanding that the leaders of the US, Britain, and France agree to such a meeting. Our CPSU CC is doing everything necessary for such a conference to take place. There actually is confidence that such a conference will

take place.

In accordance with USSR MFA instructions of 25 February I told Kim Il Sung that the press and radio of the US and other Western countries are trying to use the case of the overflight of the DPRK by the South Korean aircraft and the delay in the return of the aircraft's passengers to South Korea to unleash a propaganda campaign. Their goal is to distract the attention of world public opinion from the proposals of the DPRK and PRC governments about the issue of the withdrawal of foreign troops from Southern and the Northern part[s] of Korea and a peaceful settlement of the Korean question. I then said what a delay in the solution of the problem of the South Korean aircraft and the return of the foreign passengers to South Korea could lead to, and that in Moscow they hold to the opinion in connection with this that it would be advisable not to drag out the resolution of this incident and, if there are no special reasons or obstacles, to take steps to release the foreign citizens. I also passed on the other views described in the USSR MFA telegram.

Kim Il Sung said that the issue of the return of the foreigners has already been decided. Good living and housing conditions have been created here for all passengers of the aircraft at the present time. They are getting to know Pyongyang. For example, they were at a textile mill. The South Korean citizens have stated that they are seeing such a large mill for the first time and were also very surprised at the large club this mill has.

Kim Il Sung asked [me] to pass to the Soviet government that the foreign passengers will be returned to South Korea in the next few days. Today, said Kim Il Sung, I am inviting the Minister of Internal Affairs and the Minister of Foreign Affairs to my place and will consult with them about the place and procedure for handing over the foreign passengers. Kim Il Sung then said that evidently it is better to hand them over at Panmunjom. However, said Kim Il Sung, the question arises of how to deal with the South Koreans? Hand them over with the Germans and Americans, or leave [them] [ostavit']?

I said for my part that this would be advisable and, it seems to me, it would be well-received by the public if the handover were done without delay and simultaneously. The corresponding statements of the governments of the US and FRG about the handover of the Americans and Germans are available. As Nam Il informed me, there is an appeal from the South Korean Red Cross to the Red Cross organization in Geneva for assistance in returning the South Koreans. Accordingly it could be said in the Statement of the DPRK government that the South Koreans are being returned without delay as soon as the appropriate representatives of the South Korean authorities or the South Korean Red Cross are at Panmunjom to receive their citizens.

Kim Il Sung completely agreed with the stated suggestions. He then said that the MFA will be charged with preparing a Statement in which we refute the incorrect and absurd assertions of the US government that the government or any DPRK organization allegedly had something to do with the flight of the South Korean aircraft into North Korea; we will also talk in the Statement about the return of the foreign citizens.

The prepared Statement will be examined by the CC on 27-28 February and after approval we will send it to the government of the Soviet Union.