

July 29, 1968

Note on the Farewell Visit of the Polish Ambassador to the DPRK, Comrade Naperei, with Comrade Jarck on 26 July 1968 between 11:00 and 12:30 hours

Citation:

"Note on the Farewell Visit of the Polish Ambassador to the DPRK, Comrade Naperei, with Comrade Jarck on 26 July 1968 between 11:00 and 12:30 hours", July 29, 1968, Wilson Center Digital Archive, PoIA AA, MfAA, G-A 360. Translated for NKIDP by Karen Riechert. <https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/116684>

Summary:

The German and Polish ambassadors in North Korea review clashes along the DMZ, the capture of the USS Pueblo, and the connections between Prague Spring and events in Korea.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

Original Language:

German

Contents:

Translation - English

GDR Embassy to DPRK
Pyongyang, 29 July 1968

N o t e

on the Farewell Visit of the Polish Ambassador to the DPRK, Comrade Naperei, with Comrade Jarck on 26 July 1968 between 11:00 and 12:30 hours

The visit was arranged on Polish initiative. Despite my attempt to persuade Comrade Naperei to allow me to visit him in the Polish Embassy, he insisted on coming to the GDR ambassador's residence. Comrade Naperei thanked for our cooperation that made his work during his stay in the DPRK easier. He is convinced that it [Polish-GDR cooperation] will thrive also in the future and be of mutual benefit to both sides given the situation here [in Pyongyang].

Myself I thanked for all the support I received from Comrade Naperei himself and the other employees in the Polish Embassy. I assured him that the team of the GDR Embassy is fully committed in the future to also work closely with the comrades of the Polish Embassy. Comrade Naperei asked to forward greetings to [former GDR Ambassador] Comrade Brie and [future GDR Ambassador] Comrade Henke.

Comrade Naperei informed that he had paid farewell visits with leading Korean personalities like Choe Yong-geon [Choe Yong Gon], Pak Seong-cheol [Pak Song Chol], Ri Ju-yeon [Ri Ju Yon] and Paek Nam-un [Paek Nam Un] (Chairman of the Supreme People's Assembly). In all these meetings the more or less serious concern of all Korean comrades about the situation in Czechoslovakia was on display. Comrade N. continued how he never initiated this topic but commented after the Korean comrades had raised it. He related the opinion of the Polish party as outlined in the letter of the five parties [to the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia/CPC by the ruling parties of USSR, Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary, GDR]. The Korean comrades are very worried about current developments in the CSSR. So asserted e.g. Pak Seong-cheol that in his opinion Dubcek is not a Marxist-Leninist and consequently does not pursue a Marxist-Leninist policy. Very clearly the Korean comrades expressed repeatedly that they do not understand positions like those of the Romanian, Italian or French communist parties, not to talk of the Yugoslav party.

Comrade N. used the opportunity of the farewell visits and discussions about the above topic to inquire whether the Korean party intends to publish in its press a statement about events in Czechoslovakia. The Korean comrades responded that they are about to prepare material for publication but it would be extraordinarily difficult for them to figure out whom in Czechoslovakia they are supposed to support.

Comrade N. continued that he himself considers the situation in Czechoslovakia as very serious. He has seen many Czechoslovak publications he received by airmail from Warsaw which clearly express the stated goal to eliminate the leading role of the CPC. In our conversation we agreed that the rightist forces within the country and the reactionaries from outside are determined to a silent liquidation of achievements of the Czechoslovak people. They want to avoid events like in Hungary [1956] in order to prevent to deliver any justification for a tough response with the support of the other socialist countries. We also continued to agree about the need for joint efforts by the socialist countries to further positive developments in the CSSR.

Comrade N. thought that after conversations with the four mentioned Korean comrades he has the impression that the situation in Czechoslovakia must obviously have been discussed in the [KWP] politburo here. It is very hard to say at which conclusion concerning these events the Korean comrades will arrive. He assumes, however, Comrade N. literally remarked that events in the CSSR might have negative

impacts on Korean attitudes toward the socialist countries in Europe. Elaborating on that, Comrade N. argued that the events in Czechoslovakia apparently prove the absolute correctness of the KWP political line. This might lead to further petrification of Korean positions.

Myself I emphasized that now we must, more than ever, work actively with the Korean comrades, explain to them positions of our parties, and try to enlighten them that historical developments and the situation in Europe demand to apply particular measures [in Czechoslovakia] that might be inappropriate in a DPRK context. Comrade N. fully agreed with this opinion.

I asked Comrade N. whether he could provide some information about the current situation along the DMZ. In summary, Comrade N. made roughly these statements:

☐☐ The Polish comrades view the situation at the DMZ continuously as one characterized by tenseness and nervousness on both sides.

. Over the last six weeks there have been armed clashes resulting in about 30 deaths at the South Korean-American side of the border. Contrary to previous customs there was nothing published in the Korean press. A reason for this non-publication is not evident to the Polish comrades. We have to see whether this pattern continues, or whether it is only a temporary phenomenon possibly caused by an upcoming anniversary.

. There are still ongoing attempts to infiltrate armed units into the South. It is, however, getting ever more difficult to actually accomplish this, as the entire land border is basically hermetically sealed. Yet it is said that recently four small units were still infiltrated through the border. In response, there was a large search effort launched in the South in the areas North of Seoul. Allegedly some members of these groups have been captured when they had to surrender due to lack of food.

☐☐

Comrade N. continued that the Polish comrades given their local expertise do not exclude the option that, in light of complications to infiltrate groups, the DMZ might be breached through a much larger [DPRK] armed unit. This breach could be utilized for infiltration into South Korea, and the larger unit could then withdraw behind the DMZ. However, Comrade N. added so far there is no evidence whatsoever for such intentions.

☐☐ As far as activities of the South Korean-American side are concerned, there is no evasion of the fact of apparently frequent provocations towards the Northern side from those stretches along the DMZ manned by South Korean forces. Primarily those provocations are committed with handguns, but sometimes also with heavier weaponry and direct attacks on individual border guards or the like. Those parts of the DMZ manned by Americans basically do not see these types of incidents. There is no doubt that the South Koreans are interested to increase tensions to make further demands to the U.S. for more financial and military support.

☐☐

☐☐ With regard to the Pueblo negotiations, Comrade N. does not see new movements. The DPRK still insists toward the U.S. on an unconditional apology.

☐☐

In this context, Comrade N. referred to a talk he had with DPRK Foreign Minister Pak Seong-cheol during a reception for the Polish national holiday. At this reception, Comrade Pak Seong-cheol stated that the Pueblo crew will have to face responsibility if those in fact responsible are still unwilling to admit their guilt. Comrade N. followed up by asking Comrade Pak Seong-cheol what this phrase means: Are you maybe thinking of staging a trial against the Pueblo crew in the near future? Comrade Pak

Seong-cheol evaded a straight response but indicated it is not acceptable that the Americans think further procrastination concerning an apology will be completely risk-free for them. Given this context, Comrade N. nonetheless stated to me his current opinion that the Pueblo problem will not lead to the rise of serious tensions. Yet he added that a trial of the crew obviously might change this again and lead to heightened conflict.

During the same talk with Comrade Pak Seong-cheol at the reception for the Polish national holiday, he confirmed to Comrade N. that the DPRK will invite government delegations, and not party AND government delegations, for its 20th Anniversary. An employee of the Polish Embassy was told by an official from the DPRK Foreign Ministry during an event at the Polish Embassy that originals of this invitation will be handed over here in Pyongyang soon. The DPRK ambassadors in those countries with invited delegations will only receive copies. Such was hinted to the Poles, as the new DPRK ambassador in Warsaw might attempt to link the transfer of the invitation to a reception by [Polish Prime Minister] Comrade Cyrankiewicz. Due to his busy official schedule Comrade Cyrankiewicz had so far no time to receive the ambassador. So far he has also not been received by [Polish Communist Central Committee First Secretary] Comrade Gomulka either. In general, Comrade Gomulka only rarely meets with ambassadors, as he has no position within the state apparatus. Yet if Kim Il Sung will still invite Comrade Naperei before his departure, there is the option that Comrade Gomulka will also see the new DPRK ambassador in Warsaw. Yet Comrade N. added it is unrealistic that Comrade Kim Il Sung will receive him since he currently stays outside of Pyongyang.

Finally, I asked Comrade N. if he knows something about a KWP decision whether to send a delegation to the forthcoming communist party congress in Czechoslovakia. Comrade N. said until recently there has been no decision made. Certainly, he continued, this decision is anything but easy for the KWP. Before they decide whether to send a delegation or not, they have to agree on a certain position the delegation would have to convey if it participates in the Party Congress. Given the current situation in the CSSR it is, however, very difficult to state the true opinions of our parties there.

In conclusion, I informed Comrade Naperei about my own meeting with Comrade Pak Seong-cheol of 20 July 1968.

Jarck
Acting Ambassador

CC
1x State Secretary Hegen (Foreign Ministry)
1x Central Committee, Department IV, Markowski
1x Foreign Ministry, Information Department, Comrade Pfützner
1x Embassy/Secretariat