

March 13, 1952

Report on the Korean War, the Armistice Negotiations, and the Domestic Situation in Korea

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Summary:

A letter addressed to Feder reports on the Korean War, peace negotiations, and the domestic situation in Korea, calling for larger assistance on Romania's part.

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Pyongyang, 13 March 1952

Comrade Feder,

I am taking advantage of Comr[ade] Wasilkowska's departure and am sending you some news from Korea.

1.- War situation. There are no major changes on the front. Here and there, one of the sides captures some mountain peak or comes down from one, but the front line remains at essentially the same positions. It was the Americans' intention to take the Anju-Wonsan frontline, and recently they have again been putting strong pressure on the western bank of Nampo and eastern Wonsan. This frontline tempted them very much. But our a[rmies] pushed back all their attacks. And as vice-premier Pak Heon-yeong [Pak Hon Yong] announced, today we are prepared not only to repel all attacks, but also to conduct an offensive. The American air force is bombing the rears non-stop and inflicting serious losses on the civilian population. The American air force has now switched to increased night bombardments. During the day, they suffer large losses from anti-aircraft artillery, from the volunteer anti-aircraft rifle teams and from our aviation. There are many of our airplanes these days and they nearly always take on air battles. Thanks to the actions of our aviation, the Americans have completely stopped using the heavy B-29 bombers (flying fortresses) and B-26 bombers during the day. There were days when 8 of them would be lost in one day. During the day, fighter planes and ground attack aircraft, which can take on a small supply of bombs, fly. At night they bomb rail lines, road transportation and everything that shows any sign of life. Whenever the least little light appears, a bomb drops on it immediately. Recently, the American used bacteriological weapons. They massively drop flies, mosquitoes, ants, mice infected with cholera, typhus and the plague. They also drop insects that harm plants, such as our potato beetle in Poland.

The government of the DPRK has undertaken the appropriate preventive measures. They have disinfected the areas where the insects have been dropped, mobilizing for this work the whole Party, Un[ion] of Democratic Women, Un[ion] of Democratic Youth, Ministry of Public Security, military and civilian Health Service. Enhanced help is also arriving from abroad. A sanitary team of 2 thousand people is arriving from People's China, bacteriologists have arrived from the Soviet Un[ion], Hungarian bacteriologists are on their way. A few days ago I spoke with Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs Ri Jong-geun [Ri Jong Gun] (recently appointed to replace Pak Dong-cho [Pak Tong Cho] , who perished near Pyongyang), who told me that Korea is not threatened by an epidemic and the situation is under control. We have enough bacteriologists for now. But disinfection substances, vaccinations against typhoid in particular and also cholera, this we need very much. The American air force has recently been dropping large numbers of barrels filled with flammable substances and burning forests. Every night there are fires. The Koreans, taking advantage of the quiet on the front, are quickly training military cadres. The number of American troops engaged in Korea today is calculated at 250 thousand (Soviet comrades gave me this figure). Apart from this, there are the Syngman Rhee armies and the armies of other nationalities.

2. Negotiations in Gaeseong-Panmunjeom. Right now, there is a dispute about 3 fundamental questions: 1. The Americans do not want to accept the Soviet Union's participation in military inspections. 2. The Americans are demanding that the repatriation of prisoners-of-war take place voluntarily, so that in this way through terror and deceit they could hold on to every prisoner who is inconvenient to them. 3. The Americans are demanding that the DPRK not build military airports. All other issues are less important and do not present insurmountable difficulties. But at the same time Vice-Premier Pak Heon-yeong said that "the war in Korea will be a long war."

3. The domestic situation in Korea. The DPRK government estimates that more or less since June of last year, life has stabilized in Korea. The frontline is not changing. The daytime air operations have seriously diminished. The old order has been restored, i.e., during the day people work and during the night they sleep. Even a year ago there was such a situation that the American air force executed so many raids every day that it was simply impossible to work. Every few minutes we needed to run to a shelter. Even driving through the city of Pyongyang during the day was dangerous. Today the situation has changed. Offices are functioning normally, various workshops and little factories are working. The mail is working. The government is planning to reconstruct industry and transportation by 1952. They have begun to build 3 metal factories underground, in which they will produce machines for processing metals. The Korean government is trying to bring industry up to such a level as to be able to conduct renovations of the means of transportation as quickly as possible. Right now, 100% of industry is damaged and everything that needs to be renovated must be taken to China. The second burning issue which the Koreans are addressing is the reconstruction of railroads. The Koreans have ordered many materials for communications in Poland (I have sent a list of these materials to the Foreign Ministry). The Koreans are counting on getting the materials they have ordered in Poland. In 1952 the Koreans plan to sign a trade agreement with Poland. They will want to pay with the raw materials and high-value ores which they possess in Korea. The Korean Trade Attaché is soon supposed to travel to the Embassy of the DPRK in Warsaw.

They are placing great stress on the development of education and culture. The schools are functioning, albeit in very difficult conditions, but they are open. The Kim Il Sung University is open, and for now it is located near the Chinese border, but they have announced that they will move it to Pyongyang soon.

The Koreans are working a lot to develop the theater. [...]

The Party and Government are paying much attention to the Korean countryside. They have recently issued a decree according to which democratic agit-points will be created in villages. The directors of these agit-points are being trained in the Ministry of Culture and Propaganda and are dispatched to the villages permanently. Their task is to inform about the government's goals and efforts in the war against the American aggressors and about the direction of politics, and overall to raise the political level, they are calling for vigilance and an intensified effort in the current year. In 1951 the Americans dropped over a dozen thousand of Syngman Rhee's military and political saboteurs, most of whom settled in villages. The captured saboteurs have been judged publicly.

The Korean countryside is preparing for the spring sowing. Over a million men mobilized by the party in the cities helped in the sowing work last year. In the Korean countryside the Korean woman is the main workforce. Men are either in the military or they have been abducted by American and Syngman Rhee's armies. Three times a year, the party mobilized people in the cities to send them to assist the countryside: sowing, replanting rice and the harvest. Office workers and workers from the ministries and various institutions are mobilized, and for a period of a week or two they go to the countryside. Vice-Premier Pak Heon-yeong has announced to us that the harvest of 1951 was very good, despite the typhoon and despite the shortage of hands to do the work, because the Korean nation worked a lot and well.

M[inistry] of F[oreign] A[ffairs] here has appealed to our Embassy in writing to ask for note sheets for Polish songs as well as Korean songs translated into Polish. [...]

4. Assistance to Korea. Our assistance to Korea is very modest and insufficient. The Koreans expect greater help from us, a country of 25 million. I want to tell you how other countries are assisting them, but I will not bring up the USSR and People's

China.

Hungary. There has been a Hungarian hospital in Korea which can accommodate 3,000 patients for 20 months. The full equipment and constant supplying of the hospital with drugs is paid for by the People's Republic of Hungary. Everything beginning with bedroom slippers for the patients to the most modern apparatus is imported from Hungary. The team of doctors consists of 22 persons. The Hungarians have also given a lecturer to Kim Il Sung University, they ride trains transporting ammunition as heads of health teams. The Democratic Women's Union of Hungary has sent 4 trainloads of clothes in the last half-year. They are sending radios, cameras etc. 200 orphans and 21 students have gone to Hungary and to our country. The state song and dance ensemble, which was in Hungary, brought back many gifts.

Romania. Also has a hospital for 3,000 people, is also supplied by everything that a hospital needs by Romania. Doctors' team of 20 people. 500 orphans have gone to Romania. Apart from this they have sent no less clothing in 1951 than we did. They have also donated the full equipment for the hospital to Korea.

Czechoslovakia. This month a doctors' team is coming and opening a hospital in the same way as the Hungarians and Romanians. 20 students and 200 orphans have gone to Czechoslovakia. They are sending huge quantities of medicines.

Mongolia. They have sent 7,000 horses to Korea, and in January of this year they have sent 500 tons of meat, 40 tons of butter, 5 thousand sheepskin coats, many pairs of shoes and various clothing. In January of this year, a Mongolian delegation was in Korea, headed by a member of the Party Politburo. I have listed only the most valuable gifts that have been sent. Apart from them, numerous smaller things are being sent, which are of significant importance.

In light of the assistance of these countries, our help (that I know about) is very modest. The Koreans are currently planning to renovate their industry, and it would be good for, for example, the Central Council of Labor Unions to conduct a collection and send some dozen machines for processing metals and to send them together with master craftsmen and locksmiths who would set up the machines and teach the Korean teams to work at these machines. This would be both nice and useful.

It is too bad that Comr. Wasilkowska did not bring a serious gift from the Women's League for the use of Pak Jeong-ae [Pak Jong Ae], so that Pak Jeong-ae could distribute them to the work leaders, or, let's say, some model female workers.

Embassy issues. Our Embassy in Korea is the smallest and we do not look serious. [...]

We have one more difficulty in our work. No foreign-language press appears here. [...]

With a proletarian greeting

[Illegible]