

May 24, 1960
Journal of Soviet Ambassador in the DPRK A.M.
Puzanov for 24 May 1960

Citation:

"Journal of Soviet Ambassador in the DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 24 May 1960", May 24, 1960, Wilson Center Digital Archive, AVPRF fond 0102, opis 16, delo 6, p.164-183.
Translated for NKIDP by Gary Goldberg.
<https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/116113>

Summary:

Pak Seong-cheol provides Puzanov with a thoroughgoing analysis of the situation in South Korea and the Korean question at the United Nations following Syngman Rhee's removal from power.

Credits:

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

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

USSR EMBASSY IN THE DPRK [faded USSR TOP SECRET

MFA stamp: Copy N° 3

N° 92 01166s

31 May 1960 6 June 1960]

[Handwritten notations:

to [[illegible name] and

G. Ye. Samsonov]

JOURNAL

of Soviet Ambassador in the DPRK A. M. PUZANOV for the period

29 April through 30 May 1960

Pyongyang

[...]

24 May 1960

I visited Pak Seong-cheol [Pak Song Chol] by previous agreement. Pak Seong-cheol said that as a consequence of the great workload (a meeting in the KWP CC, a city-wide rally) he could not receive me yesterday, as had been arranged on 21 May at the meeting at Pak Jeong-ae's [Pak Jong Ae].

I told the Minister that in a conversation with me at the end of April you asked me to find out through the Soviet Representative to the UN the assessment of the situation in South Korea by Representatives of the capitalist countries to the UN. The USSR MFA leadership has charged me with informing you about this issue (see N°N° 53-55 for the content).

Pak Seong-cheol expressed gratitude for the information.

After the briefing a long conversation resulted in which Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Kim Tae-hui [Kim Thae Hui] took part.

At the beginning of the conversation I asked Pak Seong-cheol to tell about the situation in South Korea at the present time.

Pak Seong-cheol replied that during this period Heo Jeong, who heads the provisional government of South Korea, is not offering a specific political platform, striving to calm public opinion by promising to hold new elections by the end of July. Two groups have formed inside the ruling Liberal Party one of which insists on the disbandment of the Party and the other, on its reorganization in order to prepare for the new elections. An extraordinary congress of the Liberal Party is set for 31 May.

Jang Myeon, the leader of the Liberal Party [sic, the Democratic Party], is making statements that the overthrow of Syngman Rhee was achieved thanks to the fact that the students and youth of South Korea rose up to fight at the call of the Democratic Party and therefore the credit for the triumph of the April anti-Syngman Rhee movement belongs to the Democratic Party. Jang Myeon's statements stress that if the Democratic Party wins a decisive victory in the new elections and becomes "the first party" then it will oppose the creation of a coalition government and favors the

distribution of leadership positions only among members of the Democratic Party.

At the present time a process of creation of new political parties and public organizations is underway in South Korea. They include: the Youth Party to Save the Motherland, the Socialist Party, the Socialist Masses Party, and others.

One of the demands of the Socialist Masses Party is the arrest and imprisonment of Syngman Rhee as the chief culprit in the rigging of the 15 March 1960 elections. The leadership of this party is counting on getting 2 million votes in the new elections and getting 150 seats in the National Assembly.

The struggle of the people of South Korea for their vital rights continues. A characteristic feature of popular statements at the present time is the advancement of specific demands of a mass nature. For example, workers are announcing a strike, demanding an eight-hour workday and an increase in wages. Bus drivers and dock workers are making such demands, for example. Students are demanding the removal of pro-Syngman Rhee instructors. Merchants are demanding tax cuts. In a number of locations the population is demanding that the chief culprits and participants in the mass killings of civilians during the last war be severely punished. The resignation of Defense Minister Kim Jeong-yeol, the retirement of Song Yo-chan, the commanding general of the troops which implemented the state of emergency, and who expressed a desire to leave the army and live in a village, has had a certain influence on the situation in the country. When Song Yo-chan was Commanding General of the Ground Forces of the South Korean army he removed from their posts about 2,000 officers, many of whom are now expressing their dissatisfaction.

Concluding the survey of the situation in South Korea, Pak Seong-cheol repeated that in the conditions which have been created, Heo Jeong is resorting to various roundabout maneuvers, trying to calm the public, and announcing the holding of new elections.

I asked, what elections this means, the election of a president and vice president or elections to the National Assembly?

Pak Seong-cheol replied that it means the same as the other elections. Only the issue of how the election of the president will be conducted has not been decided, a direct vote or via the National Assembly.

I asked, what actions are the Americans now undertaking in South Korea?

Pak Seong-cheol said that according to incoming reports US Ambassador to South Korea McConaughy and the Commander-in-Chief of the "UN Forces" in South Korea Magruder are continually holding unofficial meetings with Heo Jeong. Talks are being held between the US and South Korea about questions of giving and increasing economic aid. The US intends to conduct an investigation of how the aid they have been giving has been used up to the present time.

I asked, what is the prevailing mood in the South Korean army?

Pak Seong-cheol replied that only the senior officer personnel are sufficiently informed about the events occurring in South Korea. The bulk of the servicemen do not have a correct idea of the latest events in the country since they are forbidden to leave their units, communicate with relatives, or to gather even in small groups for conversations among themselves outside of military classes. Every third day the subunits in the troops implementing the state of emergency are replaced.

I asked, have there been any incidents recently at the line of demarcation?

Pak Seong-cheol said that nothing serious has occurred recently in the area of the 38th parallel. He noted that a large number of correspondents and observers from South Korea were present at the last meeting of the Military Armistice Commission. In conversations with DPRK correspondents the South Korean journalists, evidently expressing the opinion of certain circles, said that the time had come for representatives of the South and North to meet at a roundtable to discuss issues of mutual interest. They expressed the opinion that the current head of the Provisional South Korean government Heo Jeong will not last long in power and that such an old political figure as Jang Myeon will also not be able to normalize the situation in the country. In their opinion, changes in the foreign and domestic policy of South Korea, particularly talks with North Korea, might be carried out when young forces come to power in South Korea.

I asked, does the DPRK government not intend to again propose talks about contacts with South Korea in the near future?

Pak Seong-cheol replied that the DPRK government attaches exceptionally great importance to the 27 April joint statement of the combined meeting of political parties and public organizations in connection with the events in South Korea. He said, it would be very important for us for some South Korean party or organization to express support for this statement.

At the present time the DPRK government is awaiting the reaction to this statement by the political parties and public organizations directed to South Korea. However, there has not yet been a response from South Korea. In the course of events it is evident that some additional steps will be taken. Right now, it is hard to take specific steps when chaos and confusion reign in South Korea for it is doubtful that the Heo Jeong government would meet [us] halfway in establishing contacts between the North and South of the country.

I tentatively asked what proposals about the Korean issue are being planned in connection with the upcoming 15th UN General Assembly session, taking into account the recent events in South Korea.

Pak Seong-cheol reported that the main principles of DPRK policy with respect to raising the Korean issue at the UN still remain in force. He said, we consider the discussion of the Korean issue at the UN to be illegal. However, if such a discussion nevertheless takes place then we will insist on the obligatory participation of a DPRK representative. Pak Seong-cheol stressed, the DPRK government does not desire for the DPRK to join the UN. However, if the Westerners insist on South Korea being admitted to the UN it would then be desirable for us for the socialist countries to oppose this proposal. As a tactical step we will agree to the submission of a proposal about the simultaneous admission of the DPRK and South Korea to the UN, intending that this measure will block South Korea's admission to the UN.

At the present time the DPRK MFA is preparing a memorandum about the Korean issue which will denounce the activity of the so-called "UN Commission for Rehabilitation and Reconstruction". The memorandum will be sent for distribution among delegations of the UN session. Pak Seong-cheol noted, last year we managed to draw up a similar memorandum in a timely manner. Then the Soviet side quickly sent us the report of the so-called "UN Commission." Pak Seong-cheol said, it is desirable that such a report also be sent in a timely manner this time since we are feeling an acute need for this.

[Translator's note: both men use the term "UN Commission" in quotes, but context

suggests it is the UN Korean Reconstruction Agency].

I replied that, as far as [I] know, the "UN Commission" report has still not been distributed. The compilation of such a report is being delayed in the UN, evidently because the Americans are worming their way out of the troublesome situation in which they have found themselves after the recent events in South Korea.

I stressed that we will send Pak Seong-cheol's request to the USSR MFA leadership without fail and I will send the text of the "UN Commission" report as soon as it becomes possible.

Touching on the prospects for the discussion of the Korean issue at the UN, I asked whether the DPRK government intends to especially raise the issue of the withdrawal of foreign troops from South Korea.

Pak Seong-cheol replied that in principle the DPRK government is in favor of raising this issue. In his opinion, it would be better for this issue to be raised by a delegation of some Asian or African country since such a proposal raised by one of the socialist country delegations would perhaps be immediately rejected.

Pak Seong-cheol then reported that before the opening of the 15th General Assembly session the DPRK government intends to send a letter to the Chairman of the Session demanding a DPRK delegation be allowed to take part in the discussion of the Korean issue. The letter would point out that the DPRK government does not recognize any UN decisions if they are adopted without the participation of its representatives. Pak Seong-cheol said, in the event that any decisions are adopted at the session without a DPRK representative we will send a second letter in which we will declare our non-acceptance of the decisions adopted. Thus, the main idea of these documents will be that the Korean issue should be decided by the Korean people themselves. The recent events in South Korea confirm this truth once again. It is obvious from the example of these events to what disastrous consequences UN interference in Korean affairs has led. This is briefly the substance of the main documents on the Korean issue being prepared at the present time by the DPRK MFA, Pak Seong-cheol said in conclusion. If in the near future circumstances change, the appropriate corrections will be made in these documents.

I asked what would be the DPRK government position if the Westerners make a tactical maneuver by proposing that elections be held simultaneously in South and North Korea under UN observation.

Pak Seong-cheol replied that they still hold to the proposals to hold Korea-wide elections after the withdrawal of all foreign troops from South Korea. Pak Seong-cheol said that in the event of a troop withdrawal no observation of elections by the UN will be needed. Korea will be reunited by the efforts of the Korean people themselves.

Pak Seong-cheol stressed that at the present time favorable conditions do not exist for any UN activity in Korea whatsoever. The Korean people well know that it was under the UN flag that a bloody, piratical war was waged against them for three years. The Korean people view this flag as the flag of their enemy. The various "elections" held for 15 years under UN observation in South Korea have brought only misfortune to the Korean people. Until there is a solid majority of socialist countries in the UN or its organizations UN meddling [vmeshatel'stvo] in the solution of the Korean issue is unacceptable. The Minister then noted that sentiments in South Korea are steadily spreading in favor of a peaceful reunification of the country. The recent statement by Heo Jeong that proposals and calls by the Communists for peaceful reunification are fraught with serious danger demonstrates this.

At the end of the conversation Pak Seong-cheol reported that in July the DPRK MFA will send the socialist countries the necessary documents about the Korean issue for the upcoming UN General Assembly session and also materials about the situation in North and South Korea.

I noted for my part that these materials will be of great value to the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries.

I thanked Pak Seong-cheol for the interesting and substantive conversation.

[The conversation was interpreted and recorded by Embassy interpreter D. A. Priyemsky.]

[...]

USSR AMBASSADOR IN THE DPRK

[signature] (A. PUZANOV)

Five copies printed

1st - to Cde. A. A. Gromyko

2nd - to Cde. Yu. V. Andropov

3rd - to Cde. I. I. Tugarinov

4th - to the USSR MFA UVPI [expansion unknown]

5th - to file

Nº 292 31 May 1960