



April 18, 1953

Explanatory Note from Lt. Gen. V.N. Razuvaev to L.P. Beria

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Summary:

Razuvaev explains the steps taken to make it appear that Americans are using biological weapons in the Korean War. China initially sent reports of such weaponry, and soon after Korea, led by Soviet advisors, joined in the falsification of biological attacks by creating false plague regions with the help of the Korean Ministry of Health. After visits from two international delegations, Korea eventually abandoned its plan to falsely accuse America, while China continued to advance the story.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

- English Translation

In the spring of 1952 the government of China gave the government of the DPRK the text of a statement about the use of bacteriological means of warfare by the Americans. Kim Il Sung and the minister of foreign affairs of the DPRK requested consultation with me, [making the appeal] through Petukhov, the secretary of our embassy. Publications about this had already appeared in the press, but our advisers and the organs of power of the DPRK, upon checking, had not confirmed these facts. The publications occasionally contained crude reports. For example, they indicated that the Americans were spreading infected ants, [but ants] cannot be carriers of disease since they contain "spirt" [a venom which counteracts disease-causing agents]. I gave Kim Il Sung our conclusions, with statistical proof, and advised him to ask Beijing for explanation. But several days later the North Koreans published a statement. They did this quickly, since the Chinese wanted to publish their own statement. And exactly two days later the statement of Zhou Enlai followed. I was presented with the North Korean statement beforehand. Shtemenko also did not elucidate this matter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, since he feared revealing reports by technical personnel. Photos were received from the Chinese of anti-epidemiological detachments and of insects they found which the Americans were allegedly spreading in Manchuria. However, such insects exist in Korea but not in China. One commander of the epidemiological detachment of Chinese volunteers showed on a map the zone of infection. This was all of North Korea and Manchuria. At the end of February 1952, Kim Il Sung and his secretary Mun Il declared at the KG KPA that a massive American bombing with bacteriological bombs had been recorded--what is to be done? On 27 February 1952 a meeting was held of the Military Cabinet of the DPRK and a decision was adopted to draft a Military Cabinet resolution about measures for fighting against epidemiological disease on the territory of the DPRK. Later Kim Il Sung and the minister of foreign affairs communicated to me that an international delegation was coming--what is to be done? With the cooperation of Soviet advisers a plan was worked out for action by the Ministry of Health. False plague regions were created, burials of bodies of those who died and their disclosure were organized, measures were taken to receive the plague and cholera bacillus. The adviser of MVD [Ministry of Internal Affairs] DPRK proposed to infect with the cholera and plague bacilli persons sentenced to execution, in order to prepare the corresponding [pharmaceutical] preparations after their death. Before the arrival of the delegation of jurists, materials were sent to Beijing for exhibit. Before the arrival of the second delegation, the minister of health was sent to Beijing for the bacillus. However, they didn't give him anything there, but they gave [it to him] later in Mukden. Moreover, a pure culture of cholera bacillus was received in Pyongyang from bodies of families who died from using poor quality meat.

The second international delegation was in China, it didn't come to the areas of North Korea since the North Korean exhibition was set up in Beijing. In the region the delegation visited land mines [fougasse] had not exploded. By the end of the year propaganda in the press about the American use of bacteriological weapons in Korea and China increased, since the Chinese received information from American prisoners of war about their participation in spreading bacteriological means of warfare. From 8 to 14 December 1952, a quarantine was established at the Soviet-Chinese and Soviet-Korean borders. From January 1953 on, the publication of materials about the Americans' use of bacteriological weapons ceased in the DPRK. In February 1953 the Chinese again appealed to the Koreans regarding the question of unmasking the Americans in bacteriological war. The Koreans did not accept this proposal.

Moreover, the Chinese also wrote that the Americans were using poison gas in the course of the war. However, my examinations into this question did not give positive results. For example, on 10 April 1953 the general commanding the Eastern Front reported to Kim Il Sung that 10-12 persons were poisoned in a tunnel by an American chemical missile. Our investigation established that these deaths were caused by poisoning from carbonic acid gas [released into] the tunnel, which had no ventilation, after the explosion of an ordinary large caliber shell.

Razuvaev