



February 26, 1955 Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry

Citation:

“Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry,” February 26, 1955, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, MOL, XIX-J-1-j Korea, 4. doboz, 5/a, 004076/1955. Translated for NKIDP by Balazs Szalontai.
<http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113395>

Summary:

Report from Pál Szarvas, Hungarian Ambassador to the DPRK, describing the seemingly purposeful efforts of the North Korean government to minimize the effectiveness of all foreign delegations in the DPRK. He also talks about the lack of transparency of the government towards not just foreign diplomats but the North Korean populace as well.

Original Language:

Hungarian

Contents:

- English Translation

[...] Our Embassy has not managed to extend its contacts during 1954. [...] recently the Korean organs and the [North Korean] F[oreign] M[inistry] do not give us the assistance that is necessary for the normal pursuance of our activities here. As indicated in earlier reports as well, they are unwilling to establish contact between us and the party. Recently the F[oreign] M[inistry] sends its representative to each meeting, who participates in the conversation from beginning to end. These [measures] make the issue more difficult. They frequently keep delaying meetings and certain programs for weeks instead of organizing them. The ones that are more important for us are arranged only after a long time, while the less important ones are organized rather quickly. As a rule [the North Korean Foreign Ministry] wants to ensure that we do not maintain any personal contacts with the state organs of greater importance but [...] submit questions, to which they reply in weeks, not infrequently in months, in writing and, of course, in Korean. For our part we dared to raise these measures with the Korean Foreign Ministry only very cautiously, because we can see that they would like to curtail the operation and activity of the whole diplomatic corps and keep its operation under rather strict control. We discussed this issue with the Embassies of the other fraternal countries, and we have come to that conclusion. A change in this issue can be accomplished only through rather persistent efforts going into small details. One must also add to the whole question the fact that in the highest Korean state organs, there is a certain incomprehensible secret-mongering aimed at covering up mistakes and difficulties, not just toward the diplomatic corps but toward the Korean people too. Of course, this manifests itself much more sharply toward the diplomatic corps. This cannot be changed solely through the Foreign Ministry, as it is connected with the development of the Korean party and its ideological level, and, last but not least, with the issue of frankness. The latter, though it has improved tremendously since liberation, has not yet managed to completely overcome the effects of the Japanese oppression that lasted for several decades.

[...]

Pál Szarvas
Ambassador