

May 1965

On the Development of Situation in the DPRK in May 1965

Citation:

"On the Development of Situation in the DPRK in May 1965", May 1965, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Czech Foreign Ministry Archives. Translated for NKIDP by Adolf Kotlik.
<https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114568>

Summary:

The Czechoslovak Ambassador to North Korea assesses North Korea's foreign policy toward the Third World, relations with China and the Soviet Union, and military policy in 1965.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

Original Language:

Czech

Contents:

Translation - English

Report, "On the Development of Situation in the DPRK in May 1965"
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Prague
May 1965

(not visible)/65

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Department 7
P r a h a

Referent: Pecl

Political Report No. 8

On the Development of Situation in the DPRK in May 1965

Last month, the focus of attention of the DPRK was again most of all issues of international politics. The main focus of attention was intensification of struggle with American imperialism, especially in connection with development in South East Asia.

A delegation of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, headed by the NLF CC member Nguyen van Hieu, was staying in the DPRK where it received a grandiose welcome. The NLF delegation's leader attended a SPA DPRK session where he delivered a speech, and huge gatherings were organized in Gaeseong, Wonsan and Pyongyang in honor of the delegation. Every day, the press dedicated a lot of space to development of the situation in Vietnam.

Events in the Dominican Republic met with somewhat smaller response in the DPRK. Along with the campaign for support of the South Vietnam people's fight, issues of fighting unity of Asian and African countries were emphasized more than ever before, especially in connection with 4th Solidarity Conference of Asian and African countries, when the press published all documents agreed upon at this conference.

Issues of fighting unity of Asian and African countries enjoyed wide publicity during the visit of Indonesian Parliament's Chairman Arudji Kartawinata, who also appeared at a SPA DPRK session and at mass gatherings in Hamheung and Pyongyang. It seems that in some comments about the current center of national liberation movement, and other things, the Chairman of the Indonesian Parliament went farther than what was at the time tolerable for the hosting side, and therefore, those particular passages in his speeches were in the Korean press modified or removed (see our 103).

In the situation when Asian and African issues were in the focus of attention, our embassy tried to find out from the Korean side its position on 2nd Conference of Asian and African countries being organized in Algiers. Despite all efforts, we were unable to find out what this position was. Korean comrades on various levels resorted only to a stereotype answer that the role the DPRK plays at the conference and the very relevance of Korea do not make it possible for the DPRK to get more actively involved in these issues. Of course, they said, the DPRK was going to help strengthening the unity of socialist camp countries with the National Liberation Movement. As for the USSR participation at the Afro-Asian conference, friendly embassies tend to believe that the DPRK will probably join the majority vote on this issue (see our 98).

In its approach to the International Communist and Workers Movement, the KWP CC

consistently maintained its existing orientation, which is evident not only from Kim Il Sung's speech at the Academy of Social Sciences in Djakarta that we sent, but also from the continuing visit of representatives of pro-Chinese communist countries, and from the overall bias of the press.

As for the relations to the PRC, direct contacts have weakened noticeably (exchange of delegations almost stopped). It is evident from the conversation of Kim Il Sung with the Soviet Ambassador Moskovskiy before his return to the homeland, that the KWP is trying to distance itself from the latest slanderous materials of the Chinese CP, and that it has certain reservations about the PRC attitude to Vietnam and to Soviet aid to the DRVN. Recent Chinese slanderous materials did not find their way into the Korean press nor the confidential bulletin CTAK. Despite of that, there is undoubtedly still a close concurrence of opinions between the leadership of the Chinese CP and the KWP. It shows in the the KWP CC reaction to 2nd nuclear test in the PRC, in a message of Korean representatives and celebratory articles in Korean press, which praised this explosion, as well as in an editorial in Nodong Sinmun to the 20th anniversary of Soviet Union's victory over German Fascism, where the role of J.V. Stalin during the Great Patriotic War highly esteemed.

In relation to European socialist countries, the KWP leadership is still trying to differentiate itself; however, celebrations of 20th anniversary of the CSSR liberation, Korean presence at a reception of the Czechoslovak Ambassador and number of actions organized by the Korean side for this anniversary (see our file No. 548/65 and dispatch 94), sending a high level delegation for celebrations in the GDR and a high level military delegation to Moscow, indicate that the Korean side is currently interested in certain improvement of contacts with our countries, albeit on the state level only.

We think the KWP is taking these steps due to economic interests and also due to the necessity to increase defense readiness of the DPRK.

Further deepening of economic difficulties was characteristic for the internal situation in the DPRK. The agriculture, too, is facing serious problems because sowing of rice seedlings was delayed almost by a month due to dry and cold spring, and shortage of water limited possibilities of rice paddies irrigation. It is interesting, though, that compared to previous years, the press last month stopped wide coverage of economic issues, and unlike in past years, no national movements are organized for increase of production and quality, for completion of spring seasonal work, and so on.

Instead of mobilization to accomplish work goals, all attention is focused on foreign policy issues, combat readiness and unity of Asian and African countries. We agree with our friends that with all these actions - number of various mass gatherings all over the whole DPRK (in support of Vietnam, against South Korean - Japanese negotiations, for solidarity of Afro-Asian countries, etc.), and mass welcomes of various delegations - the KWP is trying to distract people from pressing economic problems and to drown internal difficulties in similar actions.

A session of the Supreme People's Assembly confirmed this opinion as well. Although a spring session is usually in March or April, this year it was only from 20th to 24th May, and it was obviously timed to coincide with the arrival of the NLF delegation of South Vietnam and with the arrival of the Chairman of the Indonesian Parliament. Both the NLF delegation leader and the Chairman of the Indonesian Parliament took part in the SPA session and delivered long speeches from its platform. A speech of a South Korean delegate then concluded the range of issues the SPA concentrated on - struggle with imperialism, support of the fight of the South Vietnamese people, unity of Asian and African countries, revealing the nature of South Korean - Japanese negotiations, and unification of the country.

Only at the end of the SPA session, the Finance Minister delivered a report about budget performance for 1964 and a budget for 1965. His presentation was unusually general, and he mentioned only cursorily some difficulties of national economy. We sent preliminary information about Embassy's assessment of the SPA session in a dispatch No. 101, and a separate report covers the content of the discussions.

Upon his own request, Soviet Ambassador V.P. Moskovskiy returned to his homeland on 05/12, after almost three years duty in the DPRK. He was replaced by A.I. Gorchakov, whose arrival is expected by the beginning of June this year. Before his departure, c. Moskovskiy was received by comrades Kim Il Sung, Choe Yong-geon and other members of the KWP CC Politburo. As c. Moskovskiy told the Czechoslovak titular before departure, the content of all conversations with Korean representatives was almost identical. The Korean representatives indicated their disagreement with the PRC position on events in Vietnam, and emphasized a demand of fighting unity of socialist countries and the National Liberation Movement; they mentioned difficulties of the DPRK national economy, poor quality of Korean products, and stressed their interest in development of mutual contacts.

They also pointed out an incorrect approach of the CPSU to the Japanese and Indonesian CP. Representatives of the KWP were somewhat disappointed with current development in South Korea, and admitted that the student movement was isolated from workers.

It became clear from the conversations that Korean comrades are aware of the lack of anti-American sentiment among South Korean population. A piece of information from the SPA session is interesting in connection with this: Propaganda of the DPRK in South Korea will try more to exploit anti-Japanese sentiments of South Koreans, and direct them against American imperialism that is backing South Korean - Japanese negotiations.

Celebrations of 20th anniversary of the CSSR liberation were the most important event in Czechoslovak - Korean relations. Headquarters were informed about their content and scope in a special report. We can say that attention and care the Korean side gave to the celebrations surpassed our expectations.

Our Embassy used this occasion most of all to express the Czechoslovak position on international problems and to make Korean public familiar with successes the CSSR accomplished during past 20 years. The celebrations were dignified and received positive response in the press and in public. As we have reported, the Korean side was displeased that the Czechoslovak press did not mention the celebration at all. The fact that the press informed about the celebrations in all other socialist countries (including the PRC and the DRVN) makes this even less comprehensible.

In performance of the 1965 Trade Agreement with the DPRK, Czechoslovak import has currently contracts for goods in the amount of 5.2 million Rb (probably Rubles - note of translator), which is 64% of the import part of the 1965 Agreement. By the end of May this year, goods for about 1.5 million Rb were loaded on ships (about 1/5 of the agreement volume). Part of these goods was loaded on the Czechoslovak ship Mir that arrived at the port Cheongjin and Heungnam in the second half of May.

According to the preliminary information from the Headquarters, we expect that the response of the Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Trade to the letter of the Chairman of the Committee for the Promotion of International Trade at the DPRK Council of Ministers in the matter of previous deliveries of equipment for the Pyongyang power plant will be delivered soon.

We also expect information when discussions about a plan of cultural cooperation for

1965 will be concluded. Korean comrades are openly indicating that current delays are not their fault.

We conclude with information for the Headquarters that Korean transcription of the name Czechoslovakia was changed from previous "Cekchoslovakija" to "Ceskoslovensko". Similarly, transcription of other names of states was changed (for instance instead of previous "Pcharan", Poland is now written in Korean as "Polaka", instead of the name "Pukjong" for Beijing, transcription "Beijing" is used, and so on). Korean transcription thus approximates pronunciation of the particular language.

Ambassador
(signature)