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Journal of Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 29 July 1957

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Summary:

Puzanov and Pak Jeong-aei discuss potential KWP leadership promotions, the combining of several ministries, and relations between the Chinese People's Volunteers and the North Korean population.

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The Journal of Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK A. M. PUZANOV
for the period 11 through 31 July 1957

Pyongyang

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[…]

29 July 1957

We returned to Pyongyang with Pak Jeong-ae [Pak Jong Ae]. She touched on the following issues in the conversation which took place.

Concerning the leadership of the Cabinet of Ministers. It is absolutely impossible to promote Choe Yong-geon [Choe Yong Gon] to the post of premier, as was intended by Kim Il Sung in 1956. In her words, Kim Il Sung himself is also convinced of this. While at the dacha Kim Il Sung consulted with Pak Jeong-ae as to whether officials from among local Koreans ought not be promoted to the post of premier and then named Minister of Finance Ri Ju-yeon [Ri Ju Yon].

For her part, noted Pak Jeong-ae, I categorically objected to this proposal and said that there are two alternatives:

The first is for Kim Il Sung to continue to hold both the posts of Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers and Chairman of the KWP CC;

The second is to appoint Choe Yong-geon as Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly and Kim Il as Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers, and Kim Il Sung as Chairman of the KWP CC, concentrating attention on Party work.

Kim Il Sung, in her words, said that [we] ought to think about this suggestion.

Pak Jeong-ae said that Choe Yong-geon will be satisfied wit this post and there will not be any complications in connection with the fact that he will not be premier. As regards Kim Il, he is an energetic, sufficiently trained, and serious official who has worked for a long time with Kim Il Sung, who knows him well. Kim Il is connected with a broad strata of officials and workers in his work. He is consulted on important fundamental issues, and will listen closely and carry out the instructions of the CC Presidium. Therefore Kim Il is the most suitable and best candidate for the post of premier. Kim Chang-man, Nam Il, and Kim [Hwang Heb] agreed with this opinion,

noted Pak Jeong-ae, convinced that other KWP CC Presidium members will also agree.

With respect to Kim Du-bong Pak Jeong-ae said that he should not be appointed again as Chairman of the Supreme People's Assembly: he does not exhibit any activity in work, is of an advanced age (68), and permitted non-Party behavior, namely:

during the war, after critical comments were made against him at the KWP CC Political Council (in connection with the loss of decorations manufactured in the USSR and shortcomings in the Presidium's work) he declared at a meeting of the Supreme People's Assembly in the presence of non-Party members that the Political Council was ignoring the Supreme People's Assembly and is not letting it exhibit independence, and that, if it were not wartime, he would retire from the post of Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly.

after the KWP CC August plenum when the issue of releasing several senior officials who were members of the anti-Party group from the posts they occupied should have been discussed at the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly, referring to the fact that he had booked a train to go on vacation, Kim Du-bong left the Presidium meeting and essentially intentionally and deliberately did not want to examine the issue of releasing several senior officials who were participants of the anti-Party group from the posts they occupied inasmuch as he himself sympathized with and supported them.

Pak Jeong-ae then said that it was advisable to appoint Kim [Hwang Heb] (Chief of the General Staff and member of the KWP CC Presidium) as Minister of Defense, and appoint Nam Il as Deputy Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

She spoke very highly of the work of Pang Hak-se as Minister of Internal Affair and noted that at the next congress he ought to be elected a candidate member of the KWP CC Presidium.

Concerning the merger of several ministries. Pak Jeong-ae reported that a decision had been made to merge the Ministry of Culture and Education, to merge the Department of Construction Materials with the Ministry of Construction, and to merge the Ministry of Procurement with the Ministry of Municipal Services, although the name of the last ministry has still not been determined.

I noted that merging the Ministry of Culture and Education, and the Department of Construction Materials with the Ministry of Construction is obvious and advisable; as regards merging the Ministry of Procurement and the Ministry of Municipal Services into one ministry, then I don't understand at all how these two ministries which have little in common in their work can be combined.

Pak Jeong-ae did not cite any views or justification.

Concerning relations between the Chinese People's Volunteers and the Korean population. I asked Pak Jeong-ae how one should characterize the relations between the Chinese People's Volunteers and the Korean population, whether there are any misunderstandings or mutual complaints.

Pak Jeong-ae spoke well of the attitude of the Chinese People's Volunteers toward the Korean population. It is true that initially there were cases of arrogance - "we are from a big country and you have a small country, therefore we can do what we consider necessary", but this was categorically stopped at the order of Cde. Mao Zedong. Several people were even shot for an incorrect attitude toward the

population, although we asked that such extreme measures not be taken. Now everything is normal, not counting individual minor incidents which are even to a large degree also committed by soldiers of the Korean People's Army…

[…]

SOVIET AMBASSADOR IN THE DPRK

[signature] (A. PUZANOV)

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