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Puzanov for 23 March 1960

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Summary:

Kim Tae-hui briefs diplomats in Pyongyang on U.S.-South Korea military relations and the 1960 elections in the ROK.

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[handwritten:

"to Cdes. [[N. P. Varnov?]] and Samsonov, G. Ye.

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JOURNAL

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

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Pyongyang

[...]

[Translator's note: the following was also sent to the USSR MFA separately on 25 March as an entry in Puzanov's journal and numbered N° 54. Handwritten notations on the copy instruct it be shown to A. F. Dobrynin, K. V. Novikov, and G. Ye. Samsonov.]

I was present at a press conference about the issue of the military-political situation in South Korea organized by the DPRK MFA for the ambassadors of the socialist countries accredited in Pyongyang. Deputy DPRK Minister of Foreign Affairs Kim Tae-hui [Kim Thae Hui] gave a statement.

At the start of his statement Kim Tae-hui expressed gratitude to the governments of the USSR and the other socialist countries for support of the DPRK government's position on the issue of the peaceful reunification of the country. He then said the following.

In spite of a general easing of the international situation which has come thanks to the efforts of the USSR and other peace-loving countries, the situation in South Korea continues to worsen. The Americans and South Koreans are striving to increase the tension in Korea. This is evident from the following:

- 1) the modernization of the weaponry of the American army in Korea;
- 2) a reorganization of the South Korean army;
- 3) an increase of American control [kontrol', which can also mean "monitoring"] over the South Korean army;
- 4) maintenance of an atmosphere of war hysteria
- 5) an increase of provocative statements by Americans and Syngman Rhee supporters [Iisynmanovtsy].

Kim Tae-hui cited a number of examples of gross violations of the Korean armistice agreement by the American side. In particular, the Americans wrecked the convening of a political conference on Korea, unilaterally halting the activity of inspection groups, and at the 75th meeting of the Military Armistice Commission in June 1957 declared a refusal to abide by point D of Article 13 of the armistice agreement prohibiting the introduction of new military materials.

Since this time the Americans have been bringing in new types of weapons into South

Korea. In 1957 the headquarters of UN forces was moved from Tokyo to Seoul. The Americans are striving to turn South Korea into an atomic base. In July and August 1957 they reorganized the 7th Division into the 5th division equipped with atomic weapons. The 1st Motorized Mechanized [Cavalry] Division transferred from Japan to South Korea was also reorganized into a division equipped with atomic weapons at the end of 1957. At the end of 1957 and the beginning of 1958 Honest John rockets, a Matador guided missile battalion, and a battalion of 280-mm atomic cannon were introduced into South Korea. The Americans are also proposing to bring in Lacrosse missiles. On 26 February 1959 an experimental firing of a Matador guided missile was conducted from the Osan base. The issue of the experimental launches of guided missiles was raised at the 116th meeting of the Military Armistice Commission. The Americans declared that this is being done in the interests of maintaining balance in the armed forces. The senior delegate of the Korean-Chinese side stressed that to preserve balance it is necessary for the American army to be withdrawn from the territory of South Korea and the South Korean army to be reduced since the units of the Chinese people's volunteers have been withdrawn from North Korea and the DPRK armed forces were reduced. The strength of the South Korean forces has been increased. In accordance with the 1954 Korean-American protocol the level of South Korean armed forces was 720,000 men by 1955, including 661,000 ground forces, 16,000 naval forces; 27,000 assault [forces]; and 16,000 air forces. In 1953 South Korea had 16 divisions and in 1959, 31 divisions, and the firepower of the divisions had been increased. In May 1960, 250,000 men will be mobilized.

Training has begun in the South Korean army to wage atomic warfare. It is being proposed to reorganize one division into a division equipped with atomic weapons. Officer personnel are being trained in the National Defense Academy to wage an atomic war. Such personnel are being trained in accordance with a four-year (1960-1963) plan. The high command of the South Korean army numbers 220 generals.

Joint maneuvers of the American and South Korean army are widely conducted. In 1959, 64 joint military exercises were conducted, and a state of emergency was declared in the country 10 times. Some maneuvers are conducted in the area of the demilitarized zone in conditions close to an atomic war. Much military construction is being done in South Korea: plants to produce ammunition and repair small arms are being expanded, new air bases are being built to accept jet aircraft, ports are being rebuilt, etc.

The US is helping South Korea strengthen its navy and air force. A new air force division has been created and the delivery of new warships from the US has been promised. However the South Korean air force and navy are weak compared with its ground forces. Kim Tae-hui also noted that anti-Syngman Rhee and anti-war sentiments are growing among the enlisted men and officers of the South Korean army and the disintegration of the South Korean army is intensifying. In 1959 alone 136,000 men avoided service in the South Korean army.

Now in South Korea they are shouting about the threat of an attack from North Korea in order to maintain war hysteria and tension. At the same time the South Koreans increasingly stress the need to "march on the North".

Syngman Rhee, elected President for the fourth time, declared that he soon plans to conduct a "march on the North" to reunite the country and that the Americans should not interfere in the accomplishment of this task. Speaking at a press conference on 19 March, new Vice President Yi Gi-bung declared his full support for the idea of a "march on the North".

Responding to statements by Syngman Rhee President, Eisenhower stressed that if Syngman Rhee acts this way his actions will produce a protest from supporters of

peace in the US.

Therefore there are certain differences between the Americans and Syngman Rhee's supporters on this issue. Syngman Rhee's supporters are expressing dissatisfaction at the reduction of American aid. Less aid was granted in 1959 than in 1958. American aid is being increased somewhat in 1960 and will be \$254,856,000.

In spite of the fact that the Americans openly do not want to take any steps to launch military operations they nevertheless will continue to bring new types of weapons into South Korea and possibly secretly incite Syngman Rhee's supporters to [commit] provocations. There might be individual military clashes in connection with this. However, the might of the socialist camp opposes any provocations.

Kim Tae-hui said, for our part we will wage a tireless struggle to observe the Armistice Agreement and to increase our vigilance. We will oppose the increase of the armed forces, and the introduction of new types of weapons and experimental rocket tests, and will fight for the withdrawal of American troops from South Korea through the press, appeals to world public opinion, and mass movement organizations.

Then Kim Tae-hui briefly dwelt on an assessment of the presidential elections held in South Korea on 15 March 1960. The elections, which were anti-popular, occurred in conditions of unprecedented fascist terror and repression. Taking into account the experience of the last presidential elections and the elections of deputies to the National Assembly, Syngman Rhee's supporters conducted careful preparation for the present elections, strengthened the apparatus of state power, and used all means to ensure the victory of their candidates. Syngman Rhee had no opponent when running for President for the fourth time. His only opponent, Jo Byeong-ok from the opposition Democratic Party [Min-ju dang], died on the eve of the elections from unknown causes. Jang Taek-sang, another contender for President, was not given an opportunity to register his candidacy. Measures were taken when preparing for the elections to increase the strength of the ruling Liberal Party [Ja-yu dang]. Its strength reached 5 million on the eve of the elections. In addition, fascist terrorist organizations were created. During the elections Syngman Rhee's supporters tried by any means to get 85% of the voters ready in advance to vote for the candidates of the ruling party. Ten to fifteen percent of the voters were fictitious people. In many electoral precincts voting was done openly and in the presence of police.

The majority of the press agencies of the US, British, Japanese, and other countries stress that the elections which were held cannot be considered the genuine will of the people.

An increase of the population's struggle against the Syngman Rhee regime was noted in the course of these elections. Even the Americans are experiencing a feeling of discomfort. Secretary of State Herter expressed regret about the bloodshed in Masan to South Korean Ambassador to the US, Yang Yu-chan.

Kim Tae-hui said, our government has not officially taken any steps in connection with the presidential elections in South Korea. We are denouncing the Syngman Rhee supporters through the press and the organization of public rallies and demanding the immediate withdrawal of American troops from South Korea in the interests of the peaceful reunification of the country.

The elections which were held demonstrate the further isolation of Syngman Rhee and his clique from the people. Trying to cover the traces of election fraud, Syngman Rhee is now resorting to subterfuge: he is forcing individual ministers to resign in order to weaken the movement of the population. A further intensification of repression and terror is expected in South Korea after the elections.

At the end of the press conference, replying to a question about the composition of the Japanese delegation which had arrived in the DPRK, Kim Tae-hui reported that that delegation includes Iwamoto Nobuyuki, a deputy of Liberal Democratic Party of the Japanese parliament and Hoashi Kei, deputy of the Leftist Socialist Party. The Japanese delegation sets as its goal to become familiar with the lives of the Korean repatriates and to study the possibility of establishing trade relations with the DPRK.

Qiao Xiaoguang, the dean of the diplomatic corps, thanked Kim Tae-hui for the information.

The information was recorded by Embassy Third Secretary A. [middle initial off the page] Suvorov.

[...]

USSR AMBASSADOR IN THE DPRK

[signature]

(A. PUZANOV)

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