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Journal of Soviet Ambassador in the DPRK A.M.
Puzanov for 1 June 1960

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Summary:

Pak Seong-cheol comments on the protest movement in South Korea, the removal of Syngman Rhee, and U.S. policy toward Korea.

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USSR EMBASSY IN THE DPRK

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[Handwritten notations: to [[illegible name]] and G. Ye. Samsonov]

JOURNAL of Soviet Ambassador in the DPRK A. M. PUZANOV

for the period

1 through 11 June 1960

Pyongyang

1 June 1960

I met with Pak Seong-cheol [Pak Song Chol] and at the instruction of the USSR MFA informed him of the new proposals of the Soviet government on the issue of general and complete disarmament.

After hearing the information Pak Seong-cheol expressed gratitude for the preliminary report about the new Soviet proposals and said that the substance of the information would be immediately passed to the DPRK government.

Pak Seong-cheol declared that the new proposals will be actively supported by our government as before.

In the course of the conversation Pak Seong-cheol talked about the latest events in South Korea. He stressed that at the present time the working class is increasingly active in the struggle for freedom and democracy and its struggle is taking on ever-stronger and deeper forms. The workers are organizing strikes, advancing demands to set an eight-hour workday and to increase wages. Demonstrations by young people and students are continuing. Large student demonstrations occurred in Seoul and Taegu on 29 and 31 May. What is new in the slogans advanced by the demonstrators is that they are demanding the abolition of the Heo Jeong government, are protesting the asylum given to Syngman Rhee and his wife in the US, and are demanding the return of Syngman Rhee to Korea. Such slogans were particularly being advanced by a student demonstration in Taegu in which about 1,500 took part. During a demonstration by students of the "Tandok[sic]" Institute in Seoul in which more than 1,000 people took part the demonstrators declared that they will defend to the end the honor of the democracy for which their comrades shed their blood. The demonstrators demanded the dissolution of the National Assembly and the removal of those politicians who are striving to use the bloodshed by the students in their own interests. The demonstrators expressed mistrust in whomever tries to inherit the dictatorship of Syngman Rhee and demanded to find out who bears responsibility for his escape. Along with the slogan "We will make a contribution to the cause of world peace by achieving the reunification of the motherland!" the demonstrators also offered this, "We will achieve the reunification of the motherland by strengthening the ideas of anti-Communism!"

In addition, during the demonstrations the students are demanding the removal of instructors of educational institutions who have accepted bribes or are profit-seekers. The struggle of petty traders, who are demanding the removal of cruel tax collectors, a reduction of taxes, and a division of tax collections into two stages, at the beginning and at the end of the year, is also intensifying. Statements by the South Korean population which demand punishment for those guilty of the mass murders of civilians during the war under the pretext of their ties with partisans which have been

uncovered stand out especially. At the present time the South Korean press is publishing reports about the arrests of former high-ranking officials implicated in the rigging of the 15 March elections. But this is all being done by the Heo Jeong government only to give the appearance of legality.

Pak Seong-cheol reported that recently a general of the army, the former chief of the joint staff of the ground, naval, and air forces of the South Korean army, had retired. Right now lieutenant generals are the highest in rank in the South Korean army.

Pak Seong-cheol said that during the 30 May demonstration of the residents of Taegu the demonstrators, incensed at the escape of Syngman Rhee, demanded the removal from South Korea of American Ambassador McConaughy, who facilitated the escape of Syngman Rhee.

I noted for my part that this demand demonstrates the growth of anti-American sentiments and told about the statements of the Soviet press and radio concerning the escape of Syngman Rhee from South Korea.

Pak Seong-cheol said that according to information which has been received Syngman Rhee remains in the Hawaiian Islands at the present time. Pak Seong-cheol then noted that the flight of Syngman Rhee is explained not only by the fact that he feared the people's anger and was afraid for his life but mainly as a consequence of the Americans' fear that in case Syngman Rhee was put on trial, which the people are demanding, the whole truth of the predatory American colonialist policy with respect to South Korea would be revealed. Two people knew about this policy and the evil crimes against the Korean people in South Korea by American ruling circles most completely and with all the details, Yi Gi-bung and Syngman Rhee. Yi Gi-bung is dead and Syngman Rhee has fled. The Americans sought to take him away.

I agreed with Pak Seong-cheol's opinion and noted that the people of South Korea understand this. Under the pressure of the people even deputies of the National Assembly demanded that Heo Jeong report to the National Assembly about the facilitation of the flight of Syngman Rhee. I noted that on 21 April, after a festive meeting devoted to the 90th anniversary of the birth of V. I. Lenin Cde, Kim Il Sung told the ambassadors present at the meeting that the South Korean army, the bulwark of the Syngman Rhee regime, still has not made its presence felt. The Americans and Syngman Rhee supporters, fearing unrest in the army, are striving to isolate it from the population. In the case of the resignation of Syngman Rhee there is no figure among the political and government leaders in the South Korean army with any authority. When the unrest and demands make their way into the army, important and interesting events might occur.

Pak Seong-cheol said that the South Korean [press] agencies are reporting that the DPRK government is allegedly striving to demoralize the South Korean army. This is partly true, he said, inasmuch as our radio is waging increased propaganda in this direction.

I noted that the Americans are evidently very afraid of unrest in the South Korea army and are striving to keep it under control.

Pak Seong-cheol agreed with this, saying that the Americans recently announced a salary increase to officers and an improvement of the position of the soldiers in the South Korean army.

I then passed Pak Seong-cheol a collection, "Mir bez oruzhiya, mir bez voyn" [A world without weapons, a world without war]" which gives speeches by Cde. N. S. Khrushchev on the issue of disarmament. I asked the Minister's opinion about

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...successes in his Party and government activity.

At the end of the conversation Pak Seong-cheol reported that at the present time Cde. Kim Il Sung is temporarily not working and is resting in one of the sanatoria. Cde. Pak Geum-cheol [Pak Kum Chol] is substituting for him in the KWP CC for organizational work and Cde. Kim Chang-man for foreign policy. Cde. Pak Jeong-ae [Pak Jong Ae] is on a business trip at the present time.

I thanked Pak Seong-cheol of the conversation.

[The conversation was interpreted and recorded by Embassy interpreter D. A. Priyemsky.]

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