

June 28, 1978

**Telegram to the Minister of Foreign Affairs from the
Ambassador in Finland, “Report on Dialogue with
Vainiomaki, Ex-Commercial Attaché in Pyongyang”**

Citation:

"Telegram to the Minister of Foreign Affairs from the Ambassador in Finland, “Report on Dialogue with Vainiomaki, Ex-Commercial Attaché in Pyongyang”", June 28, 1978, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Roll 2008-29, File 03, Frames 45-49, South Korean Foreign Ministry Archive. <https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/118387>

Summary:

A summarized report of dialogue with Finnish Ex-Commercial Attache in Pyongyang, who describes North Korea's military schemes, Kim Jong Il's car accident, and an agreement between North Korea and Finland for dispatching skilled engineers to help construct a pulp factory in North Korea.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Kyungnam University

Original Language:

Korean

Contents:

Translation - English

Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Finland

File No.: Fin Jung [Finland Political] : 770 - 116

To: Minister of Foreign Affairs

Cc: Deputy Director General for European Affairs Bureau, Deputy Director General for Information and Culture

Title: Report on Dialogue with Vainiomaki, Ex-Commercial Attaché in Pyongyang

Related document file no. : FNW - 0837 [number is assumed]

Attached is the report on dialogue with [Arto] Vainiomaki, ex-commercial attaché to Pyongyang, who has come back to Finland after two years of service.

Enclosure: Report on dialogue with Vainiomaki, ex-commercial attaché to each recipient

Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Finland

Report on Dialogue with Vainiomaki, Ex-Commercial Attaché to Pyongyang

1. Date & Time: 12:30 - 14:30 June 28, 1978

2. Place : Hotel Torni in Helsinki

3. Attendee : Arto Vainiomaki, ex-commercial attaché to Pyongyang

Kim Hyun-kin, commercial attaché of the Korean Embassy to Finland

Chung Dong-gyun, first secretary of the Korean Embassy to Finland

4. Content of the dialogue: Below is the summary of what Vainiomaki ex-commercial attaché told.

a. I (Vainiomaki) was appointed to Pyongyang in May 1976 and came back recently after two years of service. As I promised at the end of last year, I wanted to visit the ROK right after I left Pyongyang, but it could not be realized due to a sudden turn of events. I proposed a visit to Korea to my government. The government replied to me that "At the beginning of this year, a Swedish diplomat visited South Korea right after finishing his service in Pyongyang. His visit became known because South Korean newspaper and broadcasting companies spotlighted him," opposed the visit to South Korea because of possible diplomatic complications, and encouraged me to visit South Korea at an appropriate time in the future. Thus, I gave it up. I told my trip plan to a friend of mine, a Head of Sweden mission of the United Nations Command Military Armistice Commission (UNCMAC) in Pyongyang. He promised that he would gladly arrange the trip to South Korea by his own car through Panmunjeom.

b. According to the Soviet Ambassador and the Ambassador of the P.R.C. in Pyongyang, I was told that North Korea evacuated civilians who lived around the truce line, or civilians of Kaesong, as a preparation for war, and that Kim Song-man, second-in-command of the North Korean armed forces, suddenly disappeared last months, but it was disclosed later that he had been commanding the 7th Fleet of the North Korean armed forces near Hamheung to reinforce them. Two ambassadors of the Soviet Union and of the P.R.C. told the fact mentioned above with anxiety. I believe the truth of the evacuation of the civilians can be checked by the Swedish Head of the UNCMAC.

c. Hua Guofeng visited the North Korean puppets in the beginning of this May and

offered them the following:

- i. Free supply of oil up to 1.5 million ton
- ii. Assistance for construction of two paper-mill factories (for newspapers and paper kraft, respectively)
- iii. And cooperation to construct about 30 factories (purposes of factories unknown).
- iv. Also, Communist China had already provided North Korea with \$100 million loan through the Beijing Bank at the beginning of the year.
- v. However, the Communist China rejected North Korea's request for military aid.

As mentioned above, Communist China's assistance to the North Korean puppets is thought to be a scheme intended to keep the North Korean puppets under its complete control.

d. Kim Il Sung plans a visit to the Soviet Union around this September at the official invitation from the Soviet government (It is said that he may visit Bulgaria during the visit.) The invitation to Kim Il Sung was delivered by a deputy chairman of Kazakhstan Communist Party (name unknown) when he visited the North Korean puppet regime. [It was Dinmukhamed Kunaev who delivered the Order of Lenin to Kim Il Sung in January 1978. He was formerly deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers of Kazakhstan from 1942 to 1952, but was first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan when he visited North Korea.] The Order of Lenin was delivered to Kim Il Sung during the visit. However, Kim Il Sung was so displeased with the fact that the invitation was delivered by a low-ranking official of the Soviet Union and the way in which the Order of Lenin was not bestowed in accordance with ceremonial customs that he seemed to not welcome the trip to Moscow this year. Additionally, Kim Il Sung is trying to find an excuse to take revenge on Korea in return for the recent sinking of a spy boat, and is very likely to take retaliatory action in either July or August. It is circulated in the diplomatic circle in Pyongyang that Kim Il-Sung would instigate such provocations in connection to a request for military aid from the P.R.C. and possibly cite internal circumstances as a pretext to cancel the visit to the Soviet Union.

e. Of special note in the first half of the year are that the authorities of the North Korean puppet regime decided to reinforce their penetration into Korea this year, and the North Korean puppets dispatched a high-level military mission to Communist Vietnam to request the transfer of two ROK diplomats in detention (it is said that one of them is a general-level officer), but the Vietnamese authorities firmly refused on grounds that it would be inconsistent with international conventions. (I was told from a Vietnamese diplomat in Pyongyang.)

f. While the ROK-U.S. joint exercise was being conducted on a large scale this spring, the North Korean puppet regime conducted mass defense drill throughout the nation in response to it. It was estimated that about two million people were mobilized to participate in the drill. During the defense drill, smokes were witnessed from the mountains around Pyongyang due to shots from anti-aircraft guns and rocket launchers and tanks were observed to be rolling from underground, which indicates that the North Korean puppets have placed all of its military equipment underground or under caves in the mountains.

h. Regarding Kim Jong Il, it is said that he has long been hospitalized due to fatal injury sustained in a car accident, but there is no way to confirm it. It is unclear

whether the accident was plotted by his opponents among young officers in the military or by his own mistake; however, he definitely has not been seen in public since last fall. According to a unconfirmed information, he is said to be hospitalized at the Communist Hospital of the North Korean puppets.

i. The North Korean puppets were supposed to pay the interest to the debt of paper factory by June 15 this year, and fortunately, it paid the first installment of interest in the amount of \$250,000 within due (Refer to the report file no. FNW - 0614.). The North Korean puppets paid the first installment of interest based on the agreement of the Finland-North Korean debt negotiations, which was held in Helsinki in March this year. The North Korean puppets requested Finland for expert engineers to help construct a pulp factory in this agreement. A Finnish mission is scheduled to be dispatched by the government to Pyongyang in August to discuss the construction of a pulp factory and conclude the debt problems. I (Commercial Attache Vainiomaki) think that I will visit Pyongyang again as a member of the Finnish delegation.

Incidentally, the Finnish side refuses to dispatch skilled engineers unless the North Korean puppets agree to pay their salaries for six months in advance.

j. My successor to Pyongyang, Mr. Lassi Vuori is a career diplomat aged around 50. The Foreign Ministry had difficulty find the successor because all refused to working in North Korea; however, Mr. Vuori's application resolved the successor problem.

k. When I left my office in Pyongyang, a farewell party was given by the Chief of Protocol of the North Korean Foreign Ministry. When I left Pyongyang at the Pyongyang station, I had a chance to meet with Foreign Minister Ho, Dam; he asked me to refrain from telling unpleasant stories when I came back to Finland. I left Pyongyang by train and arrived home via Beijing, Hong Kong, and India. Now, I am appointed to work in a treaty division of the Finnish Foreign Ministry, and work there.