

**March 4, 1972**

**Report by Etre Sándor, 'Korean opinion on various  
current issues'**

**Citation:**

"Report by Etre Sándor, 'Korean opinion on various current issues'", March 4, 1972, Wilson Center Digital Archive, MNL OL XIX-J-1-j É-Korea, 1972, 60. doboz, 81-146, 00394. Translated by Imre Majer. <https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/123115>

**Summary:**

A report by Etre Sandor on a conversation between Pak Seong-cheol and Frigyes Puja regarding Nixon's visit to China, Chinese-North Korean-Soviet relations, and the situation inside North Korea.

**Credits:**

This document was made possible with support from Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY)

**Original Language:**

Hungarian

**Contents:**

Translation - English

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MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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Korean Branch

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TOP SECRET!

Produced in 6 copies for:

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- Comrade Péter János
- Comrade Puja Frigyes
- Comrade Gyenes András
- Comrade Marjai József
- Department

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The note was viewed by: Comrade Puja F. □□ □□

Record

Subject: Korean opinion on various current issues

On 1972 February 29, Comrade Frigyes Puja accompanied Comrade Pak Seong-cheol [Pak Song Chol], the leader of the Korean government delegation, on his visit to the countryside. On their way to Tihany, Comrades Pak Seong-cheol and Puja exchanged thoughts on various matters on the initiative of the Korean party. Besides Comrade Pak Seong-cheol, no other Korean guest or interpreter was present in the automobile. The conversation was interpreted by presenter Etre Sándor.

#### 1) Nixon's visit to China

Comrade Pak was interested in whether Comrade Puja had read the Chinese-American joint statement concerning Nixon's visit, and how its international reception was. Upon receiving his answer, Comrade Pak quoted Kim Il Sung and pointed out that there is nothing special in the American president's visit to China. This visit is the defeat of the Americans. Before the actual visit took place there were many guesses about it, but in the light of the published statement, these guesses proved to be baseless. Why should there be anything extraordinary in Nixon's visit in Beijing when this year he already visited Moscow too? In his answer Comrade Puja also commented on the anti-Soviet motifs of the visit and the advancement in Chinese-American relations. Comrade Pak expressed the Korean opinion on multiple issues of relevance to this.

#### 2) Evaluation of the Chinese-Soviet, the Korean-Chinese, and the Korean-Soviet relations

Comrade Pak Seong-cheol stressed that it is important to take into account the opinion of the Chinese comrades as well. The Chinese claim that they have no wish to stand against the Soviets, but the Soviets claim the exact opposite. It is difficult to find one's way around these opinions that state the direct opposite of one another.

The Korean leaders wish to maintain good relations with both of the great socialist countries. The DPRK seeks to further strengthen the current amicable ties with China

and to build good relations with the Soviet Union. The DRPK faces the enemy directly and they cannot afford to lose either of their allies. The Korean standpoint in the dispute of the two greats can only be neutral. The Koreans can think only with their own heads and not with the heads of others.

During the Chinese Cultural Revolution, the Chinese "were criticizing us a little", continued Comrade Pak, but the conflicts between the two countries have been resolved since then. The main disagreement between the leaders of China and the DPRK was that the Koreans did not agree to openly attack the Soviet leadership. The DPRK does not regard the Soviet leadership as "social-imperialist". It was impossible to comply with the Chinese demands, especially as surfacing the disagreements would influence the opposition against the enemy in an unfavorable way. The Korean leaders asked the Chinese to refrain from speeches that openly attack the Soviet Union if they visit Pyongyang. They turned to the Soviets with a similar request as well. Both the Soviets and the Chinese asked the Korean leadership to authorize the publication of their articles in the Korean newspapers. The Koreans did not consent to this; no press items can be purchased in the DPRK that would contain either anti-Soviet or anti-Chinese statements. (Note: This is untrue. Red Flag, the CCP's theoretical magazine is sold in Pyongyang whereas the Soviet Kommunist is not.)

The Koreans would like if China and the Soviet Union could come to an agreement on their disputed issues. This would result in many benefits for Korea. The Hungarian comrades asked the Korean leadership, considering their favorable position and connections, to appeal to the Chinese leaders in improving the Soviet-Chinese relations. (Note: According to Comrade Pak this request was made by Comrade Losonczi, but in reality it was Comrade Gáspár who made it.) They, continued Comrade Pak, cannot do this. They do not know who is right in the dispute because both parties are shifting blame onto the other. The Soviets attack and slander the Chinese, and the Chinese are doing the same thing. To be able to judge objectively one must listen to the opinion of both parties. Comrade Pak, reacting to a comment from Comrade Puja, stated that the Hungarian comrades only listen to the Soviet side, whereas the Koreans listen to both. The full picture cannot be obtained if we act like this. Comrade Puja emphasized that it is not us but the Chinese who refuse to improve the relations and attack us with revisionist claims among others. Comrade Pak replied that that is our own business. They, Koreans, listen to the opinion of the Chinese too. The negotiations in Beijing about the Soviet-Chinese border issues cannot proceed because the Soviets do not conform to the Chinese conditions, namely that the Soviets should withdraw their armed forces of millions from the border and should not put pressure on the Chinese. The Soviets are claiming the exact opposite. It is quite difficult to judge who is right with certainty, as he (Pak Seong-cheol) was not allowed by either side to visit the Soviet-Chinese border to ascertain the truth. At the same time, he does not believe that the Chinese would join forces with the Americans against the Soviets. Nothing supports this. The Chinese are supporting their own fight, and the fight of the peoples of Indo-China. In summary, it is a fact that the DPRK wishes to fight alongside both China and the Soviet Union. The Chinese New Year article states that China is marching alongside the DPRK and the DRV to fight against the American imperialism, while they are also standing with Albania in their fight against social-imperialism. Phrasing it this way reflects the Chinese policy well-said the Korean leader.

### 3) The opinion on Vietnam

After Comrade Puja mentioned the obstacles that China erected against helping Vietnam, Comrade Pak Seong-cheol expressed that after deeply researching this matter, they found it untrue that the Chinese obstructed the supplies sent for helping the Vietnamese on purpose. The difficulties arose due to the insufficient relay capacity of the Chinese trains. The DPRK alone provided true aid for the DRV. When the Vietnamese comrades requested volunteers, the DPRK sent pilots who participated in the fights, dressed in Vietnamese uniforms. China did not prevent this,

even though the pilots were travelling through Chinese territory. Comrade Puja noted that we did not send volunteers because the Vietnamese did not request it, but we were ready to do so. Besides, Chinese let through Korean volunteers, but they would not have done so with volunteers from the European socialist countries. Anyway, the Vietnamese comrades were not in need of manpower; the goal of their independent nation was to demonstrate the unified counteraction of the socialist countries. Comrade Pak responded to this by saying that we do not know the facts as there was an entirely different reason for why the Vietnamese did not receive any volunteers. Neither the Soviet Union nor other socialist countries wanted to send volunteers to Vietnam, and neither did the Chinese probably. The Koreans were the only ones who supported the Vietnamese not just with promises but with real actions and volunteers.

It is worthy to remark that after Comrade Puja talked approvingly about our good collaboration with the Vietnamese and their flexible politics, Comrade Pak Seong-cheol did not continue the discussion of this topic.

#### 4) Albanian-Korean relations

The Korean leadership asked the Albanians not to send any greeting letters with anti-Soviet sentiments and not to hold speeches in Pyongyang that could attack anybody. Nevertheless, the Albanians held speeches at the Youth Congress of 1971 that contained parts with anti-Soviet sentiments, but this was not translated by the Korean interpreters. Because of this and because of leaving out the anti-Soviet parts of the greeting letter, the Albanians protest regularly. The Koreans consider Enver Hoxha to be a stupid man who cannot sit tight, as he is not supposed to "jump around".

#### 5) The DPRK's internal situation

The leadership of the DPRK is making effort to continue building socialism. Due to their difficult situation they cannot allow themselves to rest, to recreate, etc. In recent years there are more and more people though who look back dearly to the old days; the land and factory owners are waiting for their chances, waiting for South Korea to "liberate" them so that they could get back their lost property. Besides them there are many, mainly employees and intellectuals, but even many among the farmers and workers too who claim to be very tired and thus want to rest. They believe that they have worked enough, want to acquire income without work, and buy goods like transistor radios, wristwatches, etc. with it. There are also many who only care about their own happiness. Comrade Kim Il Sung held a speech in regard to this issue where he stated that everybody has to arm themselves with the unified ideology of the party, every member of the society has to be "revolutionized" and "working classified". "Revolutionization" means that everybody should work and live in a revolutionary manner, actively taking part in advancing the revolution. The main goal of "working classification" is that every member of the society should arm themselves with the ideals of the working class and act accordingly as a worker. Otherwise educating the youth is a huge problem. To reach the indicated goal, they are rewriting every textbook starting from elementary school to college. We also achieved our cultural revolution, but way more cleverly than our neighbor, said Comrade Pak Seong-cheol. Their main and central goal is to plant the revolutionary ideas and concepts of the current leadership and Comrade Kim Il Sung into the heads of the new, growing generation, so that they could finish building socialism-communism with the established methods. Naturally, this is not an easy task. That is why we are strengthening the organizational life among the youth and workers. We are trying to achieve the condition that one can only get a higher income through hard and concentrated work.

#### 6) Opinion about our country

Comrade Pak Seong-cheol seemingly had difficulties in understanding the reasoning of Comrade Puja for the need to develop tourism. According to him, the visits of western tourists in our country necessarily bring along the spread of bourgeois ideologies, and added that opening to the west is extremely dangerous. Bringing up the example of Czechoslovakia, he warned us about the dangers of western tourism. Western tourism incites people to only see dollars in front of themselves, whereas our ideologies should not be exchanged for dollars. One should reckon that among every ten western tourists there are 2-3 spies.

To Comrade Puja's argument that our seclusion before 1956 could not save us from the counter-revolution either, and that closing the borders in the European socialist countries is impossible, Comrade Pak did not say anything.

Comrade Pak again did not understand our church polity and the situation of religion in Hungary. Jokingly-but with obvious criticism-he added that if priests can preach every day in churches, why can the secretaries of the party not do the same? It seems that the Hungarian people listen to priests advocating idealism and cannot hear the words of the party. They know the word of the church better than the declarations of the central committee of the party. Why is predication not forbidden, or at least possible for the party secretaries to let people know about the policy of the party after the mass? How do we Hungarians want to build socialism with these conditions? One should make people listen to the word of the party and not the lies of the church. Comrade Pak listened but did not react to Comrade Puja's explanation about our church polity and our relations with the Vatican. He pointed out that in their country there are no churches, the people only hear the word of the party.

Even though they had different viewpoints on various issues, the discussion between Comrades Pak Seong-cheol and Puja took place in a friendly, cordial mood.

Note: First the counselor of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, then Comrade Pak Seong-cheol invited Comrade Puja to Korea too.

Budapest, 1972 March 4.