

Pyongyang, 9 June 1972

Note

On Information by DPRK Deputy Foreign Minister, Comrade Ri Man-seok [Ri Man Sok], on 8 June 1972 for the Ambassadors of the European Socialist Countries (except Albania)

(content already reported in telegram of 9 June 1972)

Comrade Ri Man-seok had invited to provide the following collective information. Orally he informed extensively about the historic course of the Red Cross Organization talks between the DPRK and South Korea:

They had begun on 20 September 1971 on DPRK initiative in accordance with the DPRK course of peaceful and independent unification. The South Korean side had to agree to these talks following domestic and external pressure.

During the entire course of talks the South Korean side applied delaying tactics. Yet the patience and perseverance of the DPRK in defense of the justified national interest of the entire Korean people led to a certain interim result.

In order to reach a final agreement on the proposed agenda for substantial content negotiations, the preparatory meetings were interrupted through confidential expert negotiations that took place in the time between 21 February and 5 June 1972. The most recent expert meeting resulted in the following agreed upon agenda for the content of negotiations:

1. Research and transmission of addresses and the fate of family members and relatives scattered over the North and the South;
2. Implementation of free visits and free reunions between family members and relatives scattered over the North and the South;
3. Implementation of free postal exchange between family members and relatives scattered over the North and the South;
4. Re-integration of family members and relatives scattered over the North and the South on the base of declarations of free will;
5. Other questions to be resolved on humanitarian grounds.

The expert talks stretched over some time as the South Korean side wanted to propose another course through its delaying tactics. The South Korean side desired to have the first reunion between such family members and relatives in Panmunjeom, or another location to be decided under control of the Red Cross organization. Also the exchange of letters should be conducted under supervision of the Red Cross. The DPRK, however, demanded all along to have free visits and free reunions at a location to be chosen by family members and relatives themselves. During the course of meetings the South Korean side finally ran out of arguments and agreed to the correct argumentation of the DPRK.

With the agreement on a proposal for a joint agenda the confidential expert meetings have now ended. During the next, the 20th, meeting of the preliminary talks scheduled for 16 June 1972 this joint proposal must now be finally confirmed. Those preliminary meetings also have to decide on the composition of delegations and the date for the first meeting of content negotiations, as well as on additional procedural matters.

The DPRK wants to start the content negotiation as soon as possible "to minimize the suffering of the people and to serve as a springboard to unification." The DPRK is expecting further delaying tactics by the South Korean side, but it will continue also in the future to display patience and perseverance. Swift progress on this question now depends entirely on the South Korean positions.

USSR Ambassador Comrade [Nikolay Georgievich] Sudarikov thanked for this information in the name of the ambassadors present and asked for a continuation of this form of information policy. He wished the Korean comrades the best to achieve their just objectives.

Addendum

Comrade Ri Man-seok did not mention that the DPRK also had made concessions during the course of negotiations. In our assessment, this applies in particular to the fact that the term "friends" was eliminated from the original DPRK proposal of "family members, relatives and friends."

During all our recent conversations, in the Foreign Ministry as well as in the KWP Central Committee department, the Korean comrades showed vivid and concrete interest on how visits are organized between West Germany and the GDR, as well as between West Berlin and the GDR. They asked straightforward whether the same extent of visitor traffic between West Berlin and the GDR is also organized between the GDR and West Germany, and the GDR and West Berlin. I explained the political reasons still advocating against a wide extension of the latter direction of visitor traffic. I expressed our principled and cautious approach on this issue. The Korean comrades always responded that they desire "completely free mutual traffic." Ambassador Sudarikov told me during a conversation that Kim Il Sung had once used this metaphor: "White is easily colored over red, yet it is much harder to color red on white."

There is no doubt that the DPRK comrades are harboring certain illusions on the question of unification in general, as well as on the issue of visitor traffic. Obviously we support through our remarks and statements the meanwhile more realistic DPRK position to the fullest extent and wish for its success.

Henke

Ambassador

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