

The December session of the KWP [Korean Workers Party] Central Committee passed a resolution to reinforce the defense of the country. According to the resolution, a strong defense system must be established in the whole country, the population must be armed, and the country must be kept in a state of mobilization.

From what I hear, large-scale work is going on throughout the country; not only entrenchments but also air-raid shelters for the population are being built in the mountains. As the Soviet Ambassador informed me, Kim Il Sung explained to him in a conversation that the geographical conditions of the country (mountainous terrain) give a certain advantage to them in case of an atomic war, for the mountains ward off the explosions to a substantial extent, and a lot of such bombs would be needed to wreak large-scale destruction in the country. The construction of these air-raid shelters is presumably related to this theory.

The Czechoslovak ambassador informed me that the Koreans propagated a theory that cited the South Vietnamese events as an example. In that country, there is essentially a war against the Diem government and the American imperialist troops, and, as is well known, the partisan units have succeeded in winning over more and more territory from the influence of the Diem puppet government. In spite of all this, the Americans make no attempt to use atomic bombs. Does anything support the assumption that the Americans would act otherwise in case of a South Korean war, then? It is obvious that there is nothing to support such an assumption.

Czechoslovak Ambassador Comrade Moravec also told me that at the dinner party held by Deputy Foreign Minister Kim Tae-hwi [Kim Thae Hwi] [...], Major General Jang Jeong-hwan [Jang Jong Hwan], the Korean representative on the Panmunjeom Armistice Commission, approached him after dinner and put the following question to him: "What would you do if some day the enemy took one of the two rooms of your flat?" Comrade Moravec replied, "Whatever happens, I would resort to methods that did not run the risk of destroying the whole building or the whole city [...]." Thereupon [Major] General Jang threw a cigarette-box he had in his hand on the table, and left him standing. [...]

I had a conversation with Soviet Ambassador Comrade Moskovsky about these issues. He told me the following: Recently he paid a visit to CC Vice-Chairman Pak Geum-cheol [Pak Kum Chol], to whom he forwarded a telegram from the competent Soviet authorities that invited several persons for a vacation in the Soviet Union. During his visit he asked Pak Geum-cheol what his opinion was of the fact [...] that Park Chung Hee and the South Korean military leaders recently had a talk with Meloy, the commander of the "UN troops," about the defense of South Korea. In the view of the CC Vice-Chairman, for the time being no adventurist military preparations were to be expected because of the following two reasons: 1) The transfer of power to civilian authorities was going on, that is, they were putting other clothes on the Fascist dictatorship, and they were busy with that. 2) The South Korean economic situation was difficult, and it was inconceivable under the circumstances that they would make serious preparations to pursue adventurist aims.

The CC Vice-Chairman also expounded their viewpoint concerning South Korea. After Syngman Rhee had been driven away, when Chang Myun was in power, but even as late as the beginning of last year, their view on the South Korean situation was that a successful opposition to the Fascist dictatorship, led by the students and the intelligentsia, was possible. By now it has become obvious that there is no chance of it, and Park Chung Hee has even succeeded in improving the country's economic situation to a certain extent. In these circumstances one cannot negotiate with the Fascist dictatorship on peaceful unification, and the process of the country's unification drags on. [...]

With regard to the resolution of the CC, Comrade Moskovsky also thinks that arming the population and keeping it in a state of mobilization is a rather unusual measure in peacetime. The economic situation of both North Korea and China is quite difficult, they have a lot of problems. Under the circumstances a military action is hardly to be expected from them. Or on the contrary? "Would their economic difficulties possibly plunge them into some adventure?" Comrade Moskovsky asked. It is not easy to say yes or no to such questions. The first sentence of the resolution of the December plenum begins as follows: The development of the international situation is favorable to the Korean revolution. However, the remaining part of the resolution tries to refute that, while Pak Geum-cheol said they were not threatened by any southern adventurist provocation. If they look upon the situation in that light, [...] why are these unusual defense measures needed?

As is well-known, last year the Korean leaders had specially asked the Soviet government to have the issue of the withdrawal of American troops from South Korea put on the agenda of the 17th UN session, the Soviet Ambassador went on. But when the session opened, the government of the DPRK declared that the UN was not competent to deal with the Korean question. Unfortunately, the fact was that we often heard contradictory opinions here, Comrade Moskovsky said.

I agree with Comrade Moskovsky that the policy of the Korean leaders is not an unvarying and consistent one. Otherwise, these contradictory statements serve the aim that they [the North Koreans] can justify [their actions] in any event.

József Kovács

(ambassador)