

N° 1211-1220 3 July 1953 2340

At 0330 3 July at the instruction of Zhou Enlai Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Wu Xiuquan came to the Embassy and delivered a draft reply of Kim Il Sung and Peng Dehuai to Clark's letter of 29 June (it is proposed to send the reply to Clark on 5 July), and also a note which describes the PRC government's assessment of the current state of armistice negotiations and measures planned in connection with Clark's letter.

We cite the complete text of these documents below:

"The current state of armistice talks and measures in connection with Clarks' letter.

The state of the talks. For the past 12 days, when Syngman Rhee released POWs and unleashed a campaign against an armistice, the US, reaching an impasse in the Korean War, primarily engaged in urging Syngman Rhee to cut back his campaign against an armistice and reaching a compromise with him.

In order to pacify Syngman Rhee, the Americans are trying to conclude a temporary agreement with him. This would provide an opportunity to sign an armistice agreement and allow the US to get out of the current difficult position. However, Syngman Rhee is seriously trying to draw the Americans into his plans. He cannot be satisfied by the conclusion of a temporary agreement and continues to advance the demand that the political conference be limited to three [Translator's note: the typed word is very faded here, but is probably "*mes.*" (months)], at the end of which military operations would be resumed and he would be granted the right of veto at the conference. This demand is at odds with the US resolve to end the war. Accordingly, the two-day talks on this issue between the US and Syngman Rhee reached an impasse. Right now, the Americans are inclined to put pressure on Syngman Rhee.

On 29 June Clark unexpectedly replied to Kim Il Sung and Peng Dehuai's letter in the above circumstances. The purpose of this reply is, first, to show Syngman Rhee that the limit to concessions has been reached and that the US cannot make further concessions, and to try to sign an armistice agreement, ignoring Syngman Rhee's opposition; second, to show us to what limits he (Clark) can go in his guarantees; by signing an armistice agreement he hopes to strengthen his position in talks with Syngman Rhee (after an armistice it will be easier to limit weapons supplies to Syngman Rhee) and to remove the issue of the 27,000 POWs; third, to show the entire world that the US wants to end the war.

It can be assumed that Syngman Rhee, who deeply understands the United States' weak points, will not make concessions. However, the US plays the main role in the war in Korea and it is possible for the sake of its own interests that it will increase pressure on Syngman Rhee at the necessary time. Therefore, although there are certain very great differences between Syngman Rhee and the US on the issue of an armistice, one can nevertheless speak of the possibility of achieving an armistice in Korea and at the same time say that Syngman Rhee will continue minor provocations after the armistice.

Countermeasures

Based on the above situation and also bearing in mind the vacillation in US policy caused by the complex domestic and foreign differences with respect to South Korea, we suggest holding to the following policy:

Retain the initiative in achieving an armistice, try to achieve a common point of view with the US on the issue of an armistice in order to isolate Syngman Rhee and strike him a blow, and also to force the US to put pressure on Syngman Rhee, and deepen the domestic and foreign differences of the American side. It is proposed to take the following steps in accordance with this policy:

1. Prepare and send the reply of Kim Il Sung and Peng Dehuai to Clark on 5 July. In the reply agree to a resumption of negotiations, criticize the American side, and also indicate the possible consequences for the policy of collusion being pursued by the US.

The text of the letter of reply is attached.

2. Prepare and launch a strike on the puppet troops of Syngman Rhee before the signing of an armistice in order to move the front line to the south. After the resumption of the meetings point out to the opposite side that, inasmuch as the signing of an armistice has been hampered through the fault of Syngman Rhee, the situation has changed and, based on the agreement that a settlement ought to be achieved on the basis of the actual situation, propose revising the line of demarcation again.

It can be assumed that the other side will agree with this proposal as a consequence of the complexity of its relations with Syngman Rhee at the present time. However, it is also quite possible that the other side will not make concessions and will resort to propaganda gimmicks. In this event, we are prepared, [after] having selected a suitable moment, to make the concessions in the end and set the line of demarcation as was agreed to on 17 June 1953.

3. Prepare for a resumption of the meetings of delegations after 6 July at which the following questions are to be put to the other side regarding the realization of an armistice agreement:

- 1). The revision of the line of demarcation;
- 2). Will Syngman Rhee be a party to the armistice and the associated issue of the timely evacuation of troops from the demilitarized zone in accordance with the armistice agreement?
- 3). Will Syngman Rhee's clique participate in the joint inspection groups of the military armistice commission?
- 4). The charging of the American side with the responsibility for returning the 27,000 POWs; if the American side declines this responsibility then we will retain the right to raise this question for discussion [at] the political conference;
- 5). Guarantees for the security of the Red Cross joint groups when they conduct surveys of POWs and of the representatives for conducting explanatory work;
- 6). Ensuring that POWs who insist upon repatriation are not subjected to forcible retention;
- 7). The question of how to ensure the realization of "the rights of a repatriation commission of neutral countries" when it resolves the problem of POWs not being directly repatriated and how to guarantee the security of the personnel and troops of this commission;
- 8). The time that the work of the neutral observation commission is to begin work;
- 9) [When] the armistice enters into force.

4. Staff officers and interpreters should prepare for the signing of the armistice agreement simultaneously with the start of the meetings of the delegations. The construction of the premises in which the signing of the armistice is to be signed is being resumed.

5. We think that the signing of the agreement might be scheduled for about 15 July. It is necessary to announce that the Polish and Czechoslovakian representatives and their deputies in the observation commission of neutral countries, members of 20 inspection groups, and also at least their operations staffs needed for the initial period will arrive in Peking on approximately 10 July. Be ready to report about this to the other side at the meeting of delegations".

"To the Commander-in-Chief of the United Nations Armed Forces, General Clark".

In your letter of reply of 29 June 1953 you admitted that the forced release of POWs of the Korean People's Army from POW camps by the Syngman Rhee clique and the forcible retention of these POWs is a serious and regrettable incident. This is correct. However, your explanations and the measures you have adopted with respect to this incident cannot be considered satisfactory.

All the simple facts confirm that the UN forces cannot completely shed their responsibility for this incident. It has long been evident that the South Korean government and army prepared this incident in advance and your side knew about this but however took no steps to prevent it. After this incident emerged your side took no effective measures against the actions of the South Korean security detachments under the control of UN forces. These actions were directed at wrecking the agreement on POWs and forcing the POWs to leave the POW camp. After our letter of 12 June in which we pointed out that your side should pay serious attention to this, you as before allowed the South Korean security detachments to continue the forcible release of POWs from the camps. As a result of this the total number of POWs forcibly retained by the Syngman Rhee clique is more than 27,000, including more than 50 Chinese people's volunteers. In the 18 June letter of the chief of your delegation, General Harrison, and in your letter of reply of 29 June it says that measures are being taken at the present time to return the POWs "who fled". However, at the same time these letters contain a statement about the impossibility of completely returning these POWs. In fact the gendarmes of your side received an order not to take any steps with respect to the POWs "who fled". In addition, it was complicit in the forcible sending of these POWs to military training centers of the Syngman Rhee army. In military terms the position taken during this period by UN forces boils down at the very least to complicity in the actions of the Syngman Rhee clique and the creation of obstacles in realizing an armistice.

You try to compare the humane actions of our side which released POWs on the field of battle before the start of the armistice talks with the disruptive actions of the South Korean security detachments which forced POWs to leave camps after the conclusion of the POW agreement. This is completely untrue. With respect to the POWs "who fled" your side will bear full responsibility for their return in any event. We are forced to warn you that the Syngman Rhee clique is still continuing to shout that it intends to release and forcefully detain more than 3,500 POWs of the Korean People's Army who are not being directly repatriated. The Syngman Rhee clique in collusion with agents of Chiang Kai-shek is trying to force the Chinese people's volunteers POWs to leave the POW camps and thereby once and for all wreck the POW agreement which has already been reached by both sides. With respect to this incident, we think that your side should accept full responsibility and give guarantees that such incidents will not be repeated.

Your letter contains a guarantee that UN forces will take possible military measures of a preventive nature at the necessary points in order to ensure the implementation of the armistice agreement. We think that this is necessary. However, your side declares that it cannot reliably guarantee the observance by the South Korean government and forces of an armistice agreement reached by the delegations of both sides. At the same time, the Syngman Rhee clique continues to shout that it "will unify Korea by military means". Just this statement alone is evidence of who began the aggression three years ago. If at the present time UN forces continue to indulge the Syngman Rhee clique and allow it to commit all sorts of criminal actions in order to undermine the possibility of solving the Korean issue, this will lead to, as before, [a situation where] armed aggression might flare up at any time against the Korean People's Democratic Government after the signing of an agreement for an armistice in Korea. Therefore, we think that your side ought to take effective steps so that the South Korean government and forces observe an armistice agreement and all other agreements relating to it. Only then might there be a guarantee that an armistice in Korea might not be violated.

Based on the above, although your reply cannot also be considered entirely satisfactory, considering that your side has expressed a desire to exert efforts for a rapid achievement of an armistice and also taking into account the assurances you have given, we agree however to the delegations of both sides setting a meeting time and agreeing on the practical implementation of the issues relating to an armistice agreement which precede the signing of this agreement. The date of the meeting should be set by the heads of both delegations via the liaison officers.

Supreme Commander of the Korean People's Army

Marshal Kim Il Sung

Commanding General of the Chinese People's Volunteers

Peng Dehuai

5 July 1953

After delivering this document Wu Xiuquan then orally reported the following at the instruction of Zhou Enlai.

In the opinion of the PRC government, the latest provocative actions of Syngman Rhee are explained on the one hand by his desire to bargain with the US for a little more aid and on the other by a fear of the Chinese volunteers in Korea and China in general. This is why Syngman Rhee insists so stubbornly on concluding a "mutual defense" pact with the US.

Syngman Rhee's statements that if the US does not meet his demands he will give an order for South Korean troops to fight to the end is an empty phrase.

The PRC government thinks that the US will give Syngman Rhee only limited defensive aid. The US is afraid that if Syngman Rhee is given large-scale aid he might begin serious adventures and draw the US into them. However, the prospect of being drawn into any large adventures in the Far East does not suit the Americans right now. The Americans have certain differences with Syngman Rhee in this regard.

There are also differences between Syngman Rhee and the US about behavior at a future political conference. Syngman Rhee thinks that if the conference does not accept his (Syngman Rhee's) demand then he ought to leave the conference and resume wide-scale offensive operations against North Korea even to the Yalu River, that is to the Korean-Chinese border. The Americans, for their part, think that the talks at a political conference ought to stop only in that the event it becomes obvious that the Korean-Chinese representatives at this conference seek what North Korea and China could not achieve through [force of] arms. Taking all the above into consideration, the PRC government considers it necessary to sign an armistice agreement in the interests of peace. "In this case", Wu Xiuquan joked, "a paradoxical situation will be created inasmuch as we and the US are sort of acting together against Syngman Rhee".

Wu Xiuquan then said that, in the opinion of the PRC government, Syngman Rhee might be able to organize only minor provocations and dirty tricks but will not be able to mount anything more serious.

In conclusion, Wu Xiuquan said that the PRC government awaits the opinion and comments of the Soviet government about the draft reply to Clark, the note, and those ideas which he was charged with describing orally.

3 July 1953 Vas'kov

Printed from: AP RF. F. 3. Op. 65. D. 830. pp. 136-147. Original

* There is a stamp on the document: "Protokol Prezid. (Presidium Record)" PK N° 14. p. 1"

** Time of receipt