

CIPHERED TELEGRAM No. 100269

To Comrade RAZUVAEV.

Discuss the following telegram with Comrade Kim Il Sung and his closest friends and communicate their opinion.

1. It is possible to consider it incontestable that the present [North] Korean divisions are less battle capable than the old divisions in the summer of last year. This is explained by the fact that the Koreans had 10 divisions, well fitted out with officer corps and more or less satisfactorily trained. And now the Koreans have 28 divisions, of which 19 divisions are at the front and 9 are in Manchuria. It is clear that the Koreans are not in a position to supply such a large number of divisions with officer corps. According to our norms, each division, having, let's say, 8,000 men must have at least 800 officers, not counting sergeants. I have in mind the genuine officers, capable of cementing a division, and not hastily commissioned officers. It is clear that the Koreans still don't have such a number of officers. Therefore the present Korean officers are understrength, unstable and little capable of battle. The Koreans increased the number of divisions and forgot about quality, but quality plays the decisive role here.

2. It would be advisable in the given situation to have not more than 23 divisions in the Korean army, so that the officer corps of the reduced 5 divisions can be used to fill out the officer corps of the remaining weak divisions, and the rank and file to use as reinforcement. This will strengthen the divisions, lessen the expenses and make for a gain in arms. The same needs to be said regarding the four Korean infantry brigades which are in poorly combat readiness and which also can be used to fill out the divisions with officers and rank and file.

3. At this stage the organization of corps administration is inadvisable, since there are no, or almost no, commanders capable of leading the corps, but there are already army apparatuses. It would be better to organize the 5 army administrations with 4 divisions in each army, so that the army apparatus itself directly commands its divisions. In this case the Korean armed forces would have in its composition 5 armies (in all 20 divisions), and 3 divisions could be in the reserve of the main command for assisting the most needy armies according to the course of the operation. With time, when the commanders mature, when there will be enough of them and when they learn to command joint divisions, then it will be possible to transfer to a corps system.

Of course, this reform should not be carried out now, but during a time of rest after conducting the operation.

Discuss these proposals and communicate your opinion.

30 Jan 1951

FENG XI [FYN SI; Stalin]

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Copies: Stalin, Vasilevsky, Shtemenko

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