

July 2, 1962

**Foreign Office, Northern Department, 'China-Soviet
Union-Korea-Vietnam' [Excerpt]**

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Summary:

This excerpt from an exploratory minute attempts to pinpoint North Korea's shifting position between Moscow and Beijing by examining the speeches that Peng Zhen and Choe Yong-geon (Ch'oe Yonggŏn) made during the former's visit in the DPRK.

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Contents:

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be significant.

13. The public Soviet reaction to the Korean visit to China and the Korean War anniversary was less meagre than the reaction to the A.J.P.D. celebration and the Chinese visit to Korea (paragraph 7 above). Pravda carried a number of brief factual reports, and also reported Chinese and Korean speeches. These reports, however, disguised the all-embracing and furious anti-American line of both Chinese and Koreans and carried none of the remarks singled out above as of Sino-Soviet significance.

Discussion

14. This paper has been written on the assumptions that China and the Soviet Union still disagree on vital matters of strategy and tactics, that signs of difference, or rudeness, even though indirect or slight, are prima facie evidence of sub-surface dissension, and that the structure of the bloc is such that when China and the Soviet Union have disputed publicly they must each be anxious to win support from lesser Communist Powers. Before discussing the evidence which has been presented, one should consider whether these events cannot be satisfactorily explained simply as anniversaries and visits designed to support a North Korean campaign for the "recovery" of the South. The A.J.P.D. celebration, for example, does have a strong theme to the effect that the South Koreans should throw out the Americans and join the North, and there is no doubt that both Russians and Chinese support this aim. The case for ~~xxxx~~ believing that these events must also be considered for the light thrown on intra bloc relations rests on these arguments:-

- (a) A 30th anniversary of an event claimed to be of key importance for a Communist Party is ipso facto of importance to other Communist Parties. One would therefore expect a flow of delegations, and at the very least a turn out of ambassadors and some friendly press comment. In particular one would expect the Soviet Union, liberator, aider and powerful neighbour *of Korea* to give patronage to such a festivity. The absence of these phenomena, whatever caused them, suggests prima facie that normal relations are disturbed.

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- (b) Soviet failure to notice P'eng Chen's visit to Korea, set against ability to notice Pak Keum-chul's return visit to China, is also abnormal and suggests strain.
- (c) Some of the Chinese and Korean remarks are so needling (e.g. paragraph 11 (b) above) or present such novel concepts (e.g. 12) that even if they had occurred out of the blue they would arouse attention. Set against two years dispute, it is impossible to read them except as part of the dispute.

15. It could also be objected that since the picture of the K.W.P. emerging from a partisan movement led by Kim Il-sung was a Soviet creation in the first place, it is impossible that the A.J.P.D. anniversary could be in any way objectionable to the Soviet Union or meant to mark Korean disagreement with the Soviet Union. But this objection is not necessarily valid. The Soviet Union created the partisan picture in about 1945 in order to disguise the fact that Kim had assumed power in Korea as a Soviet puppet and thus to make him a more acceptable and effective instrument in their puppet régime. At that time there was no dispute with China about Communist strategy in colonial territories and therefore no disadvantage to giving Kim a "Chinese" past. In the last few years the situation has changed. Events in Europe show that Soviet puppets can achieve a certain degree of freedom and P'eng Chen has derived from Korean "experience" (whether historically true or false) a series of texts which support the Chinese in their recent disputatious attack on Soviet strategy. In the context of 1962, therefore the A.J.P.D. celebration could have a generally anti-Soviet tenor.

16. If it is granted that these events have significance for intra-bloc relations, then one can sketch a possible course of events. At some unknown date the Koreans decided to strengthen the picture of Kim Il-sung as a partisan leader by celebrating the 30th Anniversary of the A.J.P.D. It was clear that this celebration would strengthen the Chinese arguments on disputed points and stress Sino-Korean similarities. The Koreans either failed to invite the Russians, or the Russians refused and the Koreans nevertheless pressed on with their arrangements: in either event they were taking a step towards China and away from the Soviet Union. The Chinese used the occasion to put forward their arguments on

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disputed points, to stress similarities between China and Korea, to flatter the Koreans and to slight the Soviet position in Korea. The Koreans attempted to redress the balance by paying some tribute to the Soviet Union, but cannot undo the fact that on this occasion they built the platform from which the Chinese have launched further statements on disputed issues. The North Koreans returned the Chinese visit with remarkable speed and when in China Pak Keum-chul made statements likely to offend Soviet susceptibilities. Both Koreans and Chinese, moreover, took steps towards the definition of an Asian group within the bloc. The subsequent Korean War anniversary provided a further occasion to demonstrate Sino-Korean solidarity on current issues.

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17. Our full length study of Sino-Soviet Relations in North Korea (LR 2/5) was dated May 5, 1961. It concluded that China was bidding for influence in North Korea and that the Soviet Union must seek to restrict Chinese intervention, and suggested that the Soviet-Korean economic link would prevent the North Koreans from readily siding with China against the Soviet Union. Developments since then may be briefly summarised:-

- (a) The Sino-Soviet dispute re-opened over Albania, and on that occasion Korea adopted a stance friendly to Albania and faintly regretful with regard to Soviet action.
- (b) China, Korea and Vietnam have failed to be represented by observers at a C.M.E.A. meeting.
- (c) Korea is now prepared to take the Chinese line on U.S. imperialism, and in so doing separate itself from the more circumspect Soviet position. Isolated remarks from the Korean side show a willingness to attack the Soviet Union for its failure to fight during the Korean War.
- (d) Korea has joined with China in creating the new concept of "Asian Socialist countries" which seems to cover a China-centred group within the bloc.

18. Taking these four points together, one must, I think, conclude that in the last nine months Korea has moved some way into the Chinese orbit and away from the Soviet orbit. The Soviet Union must dislike this development, but we have no

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