

November 25, 1967
**Report, Embassy of Hungary in the Soviet Union to
the Hungarian Foreign Ministry**

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Summary:

The Hungarian Embassy in the Soviet Union reports that Sino-Korean relations continue to deteriorate, along with the capabilities of the Korean People's Army.

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According to the information received from the competent department of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, several signs indicate that Sino-Korean relations keep worsening. Among these signs, we mention first of all that recently new pamphlets were published in Beijing, which contained a sharp attack on the Korean Workers' Party and the person of Kim Il Sung, threatening the leader of the Korean Workers' Party with that the Korean people would take vengeance upon him for his revisionist policy. The estrangement of relations was also indicated by, for instance, the circumstances under which the latest Chinese holiday was celebrated in the DPRK. At the reception of the Chinese embassy, the level of representation on the Koreans' part was very low, the telegram of congratulations the Korean leaders sent to the Chinese was very cold, and no festive mass meetings took place in the country on the occasion of the Chinese national holiday. According to the information available for our [Soviet] comrades, the Chinese chargé d'affaires to Pyeongyang complains of that his opportunities to maintain contacts are very limited.

In the course of their contacts with the Soviet comrades, the Koreans, on their part, lay a rather great stress on the worsening of Sino-Korean relations, and they particularly emphasize that these relations have worsened in the economic field as well, for China does not supply those traditional export articles which are of primary importance for the Korean national economy, or it supplies [only] a relatively small amount of them. For example, coking coal, without which the furnaces of the DPRK would cease work, is such an article.

Nevertheless, it is the impression of our comrades that although the Chinese side indeed tends to reduce its economic contacts with Korea, the Korean side exaggerates the extent of that [pressure] while negotiating with the Soviet comrades. The obvious reason of this is that they strive to bring the Soviet Union to increase [Soviet-North Korean] economic contacts to such an extent that would also include certain opportunities of over-insurance for the DPRK. This manifested itself quite clearly during the talks a Korean economic delegation headed by Deputy Premier and Minister of Foreign Trade Yi Ri Ju-yeon [Ri Ju Yon], a member of the Korean Workers' Party P[olitical] C[ommittee], had in the Soviet Union.

[...]

In the course of the Moscow negotiations, which lasted approximately for a month, [...] the Korean side proposed a substantial extension of the list of articles exchanged between the two countries, namely, by increasing Soviet exports through the increased supply of machinery and equipment, auto and tractor tires, rolled non-ferrous metals, and other "hard" goods, whereas it intended to increase [North Korean] exports to the Soviet Union by [supplying] goods whose exports had already been halted and of which the Soviet Union had, and has, little need. Despite that, the Soviets, on their part, showed willingness to accept, on the whole, the Korean proposal, with regard to both exports and imports, and consequently in 1968 the exchange of goods between the two countries will increase, in all likelihood, by some 49 per cent in comparison with the previous year, and it will practically rise to the level planned for 1970.

[...]

Thus the economic contacts between the two countries are improving, albeit the developments are not necessarily beneficial for the Soviet Union in every respect. "Unfortunately," [the officials of] the MID [the Soviet Foreign Ministry] point out, "this statement cannot be applied to other fields of the relationship between the two countries." Here they concretely mention, on the one hand, those disagreements which exist between the two countries and the two parties with regard to the evaluation of the situation of the Communist and world movement and of the international situation in general, and, on the other hand, that therefore one can

hardly speak of the intensification of political cooperation between the two countries. In the Soviet Foreign Ministry [the officials] emphasize that despite the support the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries gave, and give, to the DPRK in the UN with regard to the Korean question, in many respects the DPRK quite rigidly refuses to express its support for the international policy of the Soviet Union.

In the course of the conversation our official [András Köves] had in the MID, [...] the Soviet side made the - obviously by no means official - statement that the Koreans and a few other parties - the Cubans, the Japanese CP, and this group also regarded the Vietnamese Workers' Party as one of them - increasingly considered themselves the vanguard parties of the international Communist movement, which, on the one hand, undertook to play the greatest role in the struggle against imperialism, and, on the other hand, it was solely [these parties] which, on this basis, fought a consistent struggle in the Communist movement against leftist and rightist revisionism, and in the future they might also intend to provide this political standpoint with some formal base.

It is well-known that the position the CPSU - like the majority of the Communist parties of the world - has on a number of questions of the international situation and the world Communist movement is quite fundamentally different from [the position] of these parties. For instance, in the view of the Korean comrades the task is to increase international tension and, on this basis, intensify the struggle against American imperialism, while in the opinion of the CPSU it is international détente that guarantees better circumstances for the anti-imperialist struggle of the peoples. Perhaps this is the fundamental antagonism [between the USSR and the DPRK], and it is of relatively secondary importance how one evaluates the role Korea or, for instance, Cuba undertakes to play in the anti-imperialist struggle of the socialist camp and the Communist movement in general. Namely, one can hardly accept the statement that Korea and Cuba are the advanced posts of the [anti-]imperialist struggle in the east and in the west respectively, and it is they which are subjected to the greatest pressure in the struggle against imperialism. On the contrary, the truth is most probably that it is exactly in Europe where the front between the two systems is the sharpest. [...]

As is well-known, the Korean party and government delegation headed by Comrade Choe Yong-geon [Choe Yong Gon] that had participated in the celebrations of 7th November left [the USSR] for Cuba for a few days. Thus it returned President Dorticos' official visit to Korea. Having returned from Cuba, the Korean side very emphatically told the Soviet comrades that this visit had been of an exclusively protocollary character, but this way they actually reinforced the impression of our comrades that negotiations aimed at the intensification of bilateral Cuban-Korean cooperation had taken place in Havana. It is well-known that precisely because of the political essence of that cooperation, our comrades are not enthusiastic about the latter, particularly when it is accompanied by certain gestures which are not exactly friendly toward the Soviet comrades, for example, when Comrade Kim Il Sung does not write the article for Pravda for which the central paper of the CPSU asked him (and the leaders of a number of other Communist parties) on the occasion of 7th November but publishes an article in a journal of the Cuban party instead, and this article once again highlights those issues in which the Korean Workers' Party adopts a special standpoint that is opposed to [the position of] the majority of the parties of the international Communist movement.

As is well-known, Comrade Brezhnev received Comrade Choe Yong-geon during his stay here [in the USSR]. Comrade Brezhnev raised two groups of issues at this meeting. On the one hand, the problem of the international Communist meeting; on the other hand, the issue of the tension between North and South Korea along the demilitarized zone. [...]

Basically the Soviet Union does not accept the standpoint of the DPRK with regard to

the cause of the tension along the demilitarized zone. It thinks - and it also gives expression to that vis-a-vis the Korean comrades - that the United States does not intend to increase tension in this region, and nothing points to that [the U.S.] really aims at starting a new Korean War. It is obvious that the various factors of the international situation of the USA, such as the Vietnam War, do not make the perspective of a new Asian war attractive for the United States.

On the basis of the evidence available for it - among others, the statements made by the Czechoslovak and Polish members of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission -, the Soviet Union has concluded that it is the DPRK that initiates the majority of the incidents occurring along the demilitarized zone.

The Soviets, on their part, expound to our Korean comrades that they understand the necessity of the DPRK's struggle for the unification of the country. They support this struggle, but they are of the opinion that one should pay due regard to the concrete Korean and international conditions of the actual period when choosing the means and methods of the struggle. Therefore the Soviet side doubts that armed struggle is an appropriate method for the restoration of the unity of Korea.

For instance, in a military sense it would be, in all probability, inappropriate to come to such conclusions that the numerical superiority the DPRK's army has over the South Korean and American armies stationed in South Korea, and the essential militarization of the country, would render it possible for the DPRK to carry out successful military actions. Besides, the Soviet Union also tries to caution the DPRK against possible ill-considered actions by that the military assistance it gives to that country is confined to the supply of defensive arms. But the Korean comrades may make the mistake of not taking the nature and characteristics of modern warfare into consideration to a sufficient extent.

Despite the aforesaid issues, it is the impression of our comrades that at present the DPRK, on its part, does not strive for a wider military action but by the permanent provoking of border incidents and the accompanying propaganda campaign it intends to justify the militarization of the country and the fact that they [the KWP leaders], their official standpoint notwithstanding, do not develop the defense strength and the economy of the country simultaneously but lay stress only on the increasing of military strength, [which results in] the neglect of economic development and the stagnation of living standards.

In addition to the aforementioned issues, with regard to the internal situation of the DPRK they [the Soviets] remark that lately the personality cult of Kim Il Sung has further increased to a great extent. Recently a number of functionaries have been removed from the posts they occupied, and they have disappeared from public life. During the first wave of the purges it seemed that it affected primarily those leaders who had adopted a more or less pro-Chinese standpoint and who may have opposed the shaping of the Korean Workers' Party's independent policy that rejected the political line of the Chinese party leadership. Later, however, there occurred a second wave of the purges, whose political content has not become clear yet for our comrades. In their view, the party functionaries got involved in this wave hardly seem to be the representatives of some Chinese line within the Korean party. Therefore they [the Soviets] feel uneasy about the further developments of the internal political situation.

[...]

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