

**July 18, 1967**

**Memorandum on a Meeting with a Delegation from  
the Supreme People's Assembly of the DPRK on 3  
July 1967**

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**Summary:**

A memorandum of conversation between Ri Yeong-ho and Hermann Matern in which two discuss bilateral relations, East Germany's domestic and foreign policy, North Korea's foreign policy, incidents in the Demilitarized Zone, and North Korea's military policy.

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Department of International Relations  
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#### Memorandum

On a meeting between Comrade Hermann Matern, member of the Politburo of the Central Committee, Comrade Hermann Axen, candidate for the Politburo and Secretary of the Central Committee, and the delegation from the Supreme People's Assembly of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 3 July 1967.

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The delegation was led by Comrade Ri Yeong-ho [Ri Yong Ho], member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Korean Workers Party and Deputy Chairman of the Presidium of the DPRK's Supreme People's Assembly. Participants on the Korean side were the members of the delegation, two escorts, and the DPRK's ambassador to the GDR.

Participating from our side were:

Comrade Horst Schumann, member of the Central Committee Comrade Paul Markowski, candidate for the Central Committee Comrade Gerd König, Section Leader, Department of International Relations

Comrade Matern welcomed the delegation warmly and outlined a few issues that were identified at the VII Party Congress of the Socialist Unity Party and at the Karlovy Vary conference. He stated that the conference in Karlovy Vary was very important for the development of the international Communist and workers movement. Agreement was reached on the basic issues of further development in Europe. Also, the conference of 46 fraternal parties, which took place in mid-June in Prague on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, demonstrated that cooperation between the fraternal parties is necessary and possible. The US imperialist global strategy would not be possible if we acted with unity and resolve. Comrade Matern then explained the imperialists' intentions to push back the socialist countries in a frontal attack-intentions that failed. Because of this fact, the imperialists attempt to light small fires in every corner. They strengthen the reactionary movement, as the Israeli aggression, the military coup in Greece, and the events in Ghana and Brazil have indicated. They try to bring reactionary regimes to power wherever they can. The events in Indonesia were a serious blow for the world Communist movement. The events in Vietnam speak for themselves. The US is using every resource to support the reactionary regime in South Vietnam and to force the Vietnamese people to their knees. All of these events demonstrate that they are trying to attack at as many points as possible. All of the events are closely related. Imperialist thrusts against the DPRK from South Korea also testify to this. The military coup in Greece is an attempt by imperialism to push into the Balkans. They are primarily attempting to penetrate into Albania, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria. The unusual policy of our Romanian comrades is therefore no coincidence. Israel's aggression is meant to expand imperialism's base in this region. But this attempt will also fail, as did so many attempts in the past.

We hold that many meetings should be held among fraternal parties in order to create the conditions for preparing for an international conference. We believe that it is necessary and possible to prepare for and hold such a conference. Unfortunately the US can still exploit the sharply different opinions the fraternal parties have. The unity and solidarity of the world Communist movement is particularly important for us and for you. West Germany has the strongest army in eastern Europe. It is also the strongest economic power. This military and economic force is hostile to the GDR,

and is located right next to us.

The discord between the imperialist powers continues to increase. Today NATO is not what it was a few years ago. France is withdrawing from military integration. It also opposes letting England join the European Economic Community and opposes the Israeli aggression. It is ironic that Couve de Murville demanded that Israel return the territories taken and at the UN meeting told Romanian Foreign Minister Manescu that Romania should at least support France's position. Couve de Murville is a French nobleman, while Manescu is a member of the Communist Party. In other words, Romania currently stands to the right of France. Our Romanian comrades have demanded that Israel and the Arab nations negotiate directly with one another and that in this manner the UN be excluded from the process.

Discord is developing between the classes in West Germany, although slowly. Representatives of both the reactionary monopoly capital and the Social Democratic Party's leadership are currently included in the Bonn government. Students play a major role in West Germany in the opposition against the government. Apart from platonic statements in favor of the West German stance, West German monopoly capital will obtain hardly any active assistance from the other imperialist states in accomplishing their revanchist objectives. Their objective is to separate the GDR from the other socialist countries in order to be able to work on the GDR. West German imperialists are involved in all of the reactionary thrusts in the world.

It is becoming more and more difficult for the imperialists to spread their lies about the GDR. Two million West Germans come to the GDR every year, and 1 million travel to West Germany. You can draw your own conclusions about developments in the two German states. The backwardness the GDR experienced at first in a few areas has slowly been overcome. Today the fundamental differences between West Germany and the GDR are becoming increasingly evident, to the benefit of the GDR. At first there was a tremendous boom in West Germany. Eighty percent of Germany's heavy industry was in West Germany. It had a stronger raw material base than we did, and US imperialism pumped huge amounts into West Germany. West Germany was built up more rapidly. In addition, a fairy tale was spread around that capitalism had changed, that everyone had work and a high standard of living. This was not without its effect on the GDR. But now trends in West Germany are reaching crisis proportions, rising unemployment, and assaults on the populace's standard of living resulting from increased taxes, wage freezes, and other measures. The West German government is in fact to be militarized by the elimination of democratic rights, adoption of emergency laws, and other measures. In fact the same thing is to be prepared that we already experienced in Greece. So conditions in Germany have changed rapidly since 1961. Our job is to force the Kissinger government to accept that both German states can exist adjacent to one another. We do not stress unity for Germany. This process will take a long time and will require fundamental changes in West Germany. The current priorities are, first, a binding agreement on nonaggression by West Germany against the GDR, and second, reducing by half the number of arms in the two German states.

Our Party is extremely interested in an agreement among the Communist and workers parties. The Moscow Declaration of 1957 and 1960 was unanimously adopted by those present, including even the Communist Party of China. These documents established that we are in the transition phase from capitalism to socialism, that the socialist world system is increasingly becoming a determining factor in the world. Today communists in all nations of the world stand at the forefront of the movement for socialism, peace, and democracy. It is our goal to prevent a new world war, all of our policies are oriented toward achieving this goal. The socialist camp must be strengthened on all sides such that it is no longer possible for there to be world war. The urgent task is to make Israeli aggression ineffective. Perhaps it is healthy that some leaders of the Arab countries learn to find their support in the masses. We believe Nasser would have been overthrown had it not been for the Soviet Union.

Naturally the Israeli aggression and its repercussions are a blow for the national liberation movement. The Soviet Union will certainly continue to supply weapons to the UAR and Syria and to support the strengthening of progressive forces.

Of course assistance for the Vietnamese people must also be increased. The war demonstrates that the Vietnamese people cannot be destroyed. We believe that the military, political, and diplomatic struggle must be coordinated even more. We must get the US to a point in which the war holds no prospects for the future. It cannot be waged until the last Vietnamese is annihilated. Our Vietnamese comrades will not be able to win by themselves, even with our substantial aid. They can see to it that the path is blocked to US imperialism, but victory will only be possible as a result of a worldwide political action. If all socialist countries were to come together, including the major fraternal parties in the capitalist lands, and using commensurate countermeasures were to demand that the war be ended, then it would probably be possible to end the war.

This is a broad-brush overview of how we see the international situation.

Comrade Ri Yeong-ho expressed his thanks for the detailed information. He stated that militarism in West Germany has reappeared due to support from US imperialism, that the policies of West German imperialism have been directed against the GDR from the very beginning. The DPRK supported and continues to support the GDR. We must also support Vietnam in every way possible so that the US withdraws its troops and soldiers. The socialist camp must use every means to rescue Vietnam. If things go badly in Vietnam, then all socialist countries and the international revolutionary movement will have suffered a great blow. We must therefore do everything we can to prevent this.

The Korean Workers Party has always advocated unity and solidarity among the socialist nations and the communist and worker's parties. We have urged this in the past, and we continue to urge it now. This is why all Marxist/Leninist parties and socialist countries must truly fulfill the Moscow Declaration. The socialist camp must be united and must act in a united fashion and exercise strong influence on the communist parties in the capitalist nations. It will not be possible to achieve this objective unless endeavors are consistent on all sides. We must consider the differences in views between the Parties to be an internal matter for the Parties.

West Germany is pursuing a policy of war against the GDR. Everyone must therefore protect the GDR. While West Germany is the warmonger in Europe, Japan is the warmonger in Asia.

Comrade Matern asked for an assessment of the situation in South Korea since the visits by Humphrey, Lübke, and Sato.

Comrade Ri Yeong-ho said that Japan is a vassal state of the US. The Japanese government is pursuing the same imperialist policies as the US. The Japanese imperialists want to re-conquer Korea. Japanese capital has penetrated South Korea in 100,000 capitalist undertakings. They cloak this penetration with pretenses such as reparations to South Korea, assistance in developing mineral resources, developing the land, etc. But the purpose of all of it is to conquer Korea and to make the old Japanese dream a reality. The Japanese government is in fact involved in the war against Vietnam by making airfields available, repairing war materials, etc. Japan sends technical assistance to South Vietnam. But Japanese monopolies have also gotten a foot in the door in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. They have invested more than \$3.6 billion there. The situation is similar to that with West Germany. Therefore the united anti-imperialist front absolutely must be created. The Korean government understands very well the issues of unity for Germany.

In closing, Comrade Ri Yeong-ho conveyed his best wishes for a very successful election. He expressed his sincere wishes for great success, both economically and politically.

Comrade Hermann Matern responded to Comrade Ri Yeong-ho's statements. He said that Japan is playing a role in the US' global strategy that is similar to the role West Germany plays. There is one difference, however. While the two superpowers, the US and the Soviet Union, are head to head in Germany, this is not the case in Korea. So the situation is somewhat different. The US would run directly into the Soviet Union and the other Warsaw Pact nations in Germany. There would be a blitzkrieg there provoked by them. The "October Storm" exercise proved this clearly. So the military path is closed to the West German imperialists. We must push back the power of monopoly capital in West Germany. Although this is complicated to do, progress is slowly being made. The classes in West Germany are becoming increasingly polarized. Both the reactionaries and the progressive democratic forces are growing in number. But reactionary forces are growing more rapidly. Therefore we must make great efforts to promote the growing process for the progressive forces.

The economy of the GDR has made great progress. The process of developing agriculture was a stormy one. There were a good number of people who worried about whether we could create socialist agriculture. Now it has been proved that socialism can be employed in agriculture, as well. We have good returns and are transitioning to industrial types of production and management in agriculture. The most important thing is that our Party acts with complete unity. We have solid development. There is no change in Party or state leadership. We have found a correct transition in attracting younger people, and last but not least, our Party has always had a clear, proper relationship to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, to the Soviet Union. We are quite intentionally aiming for an even closer melding of the GDR's economy with that of the Soviet Union. At the conference in Prague, which our Romanian comrades also attended, they stated that the Romanian workers movement was already further along in the last century than the Russian workers movement, and that the Romanian people had liberated themselves and the Hungarian people in 1944. It is hard to understand Romania's economic policy in some ways. They currently owe West Germany more than 1 billion marks. They built up 158 million marks of debt just in the first 4 months of 1967 alone. Now West Germany is to build major operations in Romania. But that is our Romanian comrades' business. We are not doing anything like that, anyway.

If we have debt in capitalist countries, we do not relinquish our positions by any means. Our policy toward West Germany has proved this clearly. The struggle against West German imperialism is very complicated. The main thing is the issue of who and whom, so you can't do something dumb and make mistakes, you have to proceed with great cleverness and deliberateness.

Comrade Ri Yeong-ho responded that the Americans frequently do dumb things (he was referring to the raids on the South Korean border), so that now and then we have to give them a whipping so that they don't get even more fresh. He said it is no coincidence that provocative incidents on the border became more frequent after Johnson's visit in October 1966 and after Lübke's visit in early 1967. The Korean Workers Party paid close attention to this. The Korean People's Army is trained as cadre. The people are armed. The 7-year plan was extended by three years in order to improve defense readiness. We have 14 percent growth in industrial production annually in industry. Now our job is to build up the economy and at the same time improve defense readiness. More than 30 percent of the budget annually goes to military purposes. If our enemies attack us again, we fully intend to liberate South Korea. This is why the Korean People's Army is well armed, it has sufficient experience and well trained specialists. Both the People's Army and the populace are politically well prepared.

Comrade Ri Yeong-ho then established that there will still be an opportunity to discuss these issues in more detail.

Our Korean comrades once again thanked us for meeting with them and took their leave.