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**July 24, 1956**

**Memorandum of Conversation with Minister of  
Foreign Affairs of the DPRK, Nam Il**

**Citation:**

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**Summary:**

Nam Il speaks to Soviet Charge d'Affairs about the dangers of recent Soviet-Korean criticism of Kim Il Sung. They fear that Kim Il Sung would misinterpret the criticisms and create international tension.

**Original Language:**

Russian

**Contents:**

Translation - English

Top Secret

From the diary of  
Charge d' Affairs ad interim  
USSR in the DPRK  
Petrov A.M.

I met with Nam Il at his suggestion, who in the meeting explained that on the very first day after the return of the government delegation to the DPRK, i.e. 20 July, he met in his apartment with Pak Chang-ok [Pak Chang Ok] who before that had never visited him at his apartment.

Pak told Nam Il that a group of leading functionaries, including Choe Chang-ik [Choe Chang Ik], Kim Seung-hwa [Kim Sung Hwa] and a number of others were prepared to speak out with severe criticism of Kim Il Sung at the coming plenum of the Central Committee. The main issues of criticism would be the erroneous methods of leadership of the CC KWP and of Kim Il Sung personally, Kim Il Sung's personality cult, incorrect dealings with the Soviet Koreans, and other issues in Party and state life. Pak expressed confidence that if he himself, and also if Choe Chang-ik and Kim Sung-hwa spoke out with that criticism, then he would receive support from individual members of the Presidium and also from several heads of local Party organizations. Pak said that it would be desirable for Nam Il to join that group and speak out with sharp criticism of Kim Il Sung at the Presidium of the CC KWP and at the Plenum of the CC. The possibility of Choe Yong-geon [Choe Yong Gon] taking part in the criticism of Kim Il Sung had not been ruled out.

In connection with that, Nam Il, in his own words, wanted to seek advice on what position he should take. He thought that serious criticism of Kim Il Sung from Pak Chang-ok and others would be improper. Such a sharp propounding of the problem of the personality cult in the Korean context as Pak Chang-ok and others are preparing to do would lead to undesirable consequences. It might undermine the authority of the existing leadership of the Party and government, discredit Kim Il Sung in the eyes of the Party masses and the entire nation, and stimulate considerable discussion within the Party.

Further, Nam Il noted that the observations of the CC KWP about several shortcomings and mistakes in the work of the KWP were correctly and frankly perceived by Kim Il Sung. Kim Il Sung told Nam Il and several other members of the government delegation that he would take measures in order to completely and fully amend these errors and shortcomings, including the issue of the cult of personality. In the opinion of Kim Il Sung, these shortcomings and errors would not be eliminated immediately, not by discussing these issues in a full-scale investigation in the Plenums of the CC or in meetings of Party organs, but little by little without involving the entire Party in the discussion of these issues.

He, Nam Il, and additional members of the Presidium rendered Kim Il Sung all kinds of assistance in eliminating all made errors and deficiencies and took measures so as to regularly prompt Kim Il Sung to rectify them effectively and quickly. Nam Il stressed that in spite of all of Kim Il Sung's shortcomings and mistakes, there was nobody in the DPRK who could replace him, Kim Il Sung was always quite correct in relation to Marxism-Leninism, the general line of the Central Committee of the KWP was correct, and Kim Il Sung personally, although a bit distressed, correctly perceived the criticisms directed at him by the leadership of the CC CPSU.

In connection with the visit of Pak Chang-ok, he, Nam Il, felt himself in a very awkward position. On the one hand, he should, as a member of the Presidium of the Central Committee, inform Kim Il Sung about the conversation that took place with

Pak Chang-ok and identify him as one of those actively preparing to speak out against Kim Il Sung, while on the other hand, since Pak Chang-ok was a Soviet Korean he would not like to inform Kim Il Sung, since he, Kim Il Sung, might improperly connect the demonstration against him with the Soviet Koreans.

I expressed my personal feelings that the danger of Nam Il in connection with the severe criticism of Kim Il Sung deserved a great deal of attention, that the position taken by Pak Chang-ok on that issue was clearly incorrect, that the initiative of severe criticism of Kim Il Sung from the Soviet Koreans might be interpreted incorrectly and it might cause an undesired reaction both inside the country and on the international arena. I said that he should in some way influence Pak Chang-ok, Kim Seung-hwa and other Soviet Koreans so that they rejected the initiative to speak out against Kim Il Sung.

Regarding the question of Nam Il informing Kim Il Sung about the above-mentioned conversation with Pak Chang-ok, that, as I explained, was his own business, but that it would be expedient to refrain for now from naming Pak Chang-ok and Kim Seung-hwa.

Nam Il agreed with me. He thinks that it would be good to warn Kim Il Sung and the Presidium of the Central Committee now so that Kim Il Sung would speak critically of himself at the Plenum in connection with his report about the results of the trip of the government delegation to the USSR and People's Republics.

Nam Il again stressed that he and other members of the Presidium would help Kim Il Sung in every possible way to prepare a speech containing self-criticism.

The discussion lasted 1 hour and 30 minutes.

Charge d' Affairs ad interim  
USSR in the DPRK

/A Petrov/  
31.VII.56