

June 5, 1956

Memorandum of Conversation with Pak Ui-wan

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Summary:

Ambassador Ianov discusses with Vice Premier and Minister of Light Industry Pak Ui-wan on his hope that Kim Il Sung's trip to the GDR would bring changes in North Korean economic policy.

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DIARY

Ambassador of the USSR in the DPRK, Cde. Ivanov V.I.
For the period from 24 May to 11 June 1956.

Pyongyang

5 June

I received Pak Ui-wan [Pak Ui Wan] at his request. Pak said that before the departure of the government delegation to the GDR he had raised the issue of leave with Kim Il Sung and asked to go to the Soviet Union since his wife needs a spa cure. At the same time, said Pak, he expressed doubt to Kim that, since he had accepted Korean citizenship, they would not start accusing his trip to the Soviet Union of being a vacation. Kim agreed to the trip and said that he would give the necessary instructions to Choe Yong-geon [Choe Yong Gon].

I replied that the necessary steps would be taken to organize the cure for him and his wife.

Pak then expressed the hope that Kim Il Sung's trip would bring changes in economic policy and with regard to the people. He said that Kim had begun to change for the better but makes mistakes in leadership and it is hard for him to correct them and abandon them.

In maintaining his thought, Pak pointed out that three Soviet-Koreans were promoted to leadership posts at the 29 May political council meeting.

In recent times not one Soviet Korean was in leadership posts in the Korean Workers' Party Central Committee (KWP CC) apparatus since a certain policy had been pursued that only local Koreans ought to work in the Central Committee and therefore all Soviet-Koreans had been removed.

Completely unexpectedly for Pak, at the 29 May CC Presidium [SIC] Kim proposed the appointment of former chief of the First Department Ko Hwi-man [Ko Hi Man] as KWP CC Transportation and Construction Department deputy chief. Pak pointed out in spite of the appointment that Ko Hwi-man was not suited for this work. However, Kim did not agree and noted that Ko Hwi-man could be appointed Minister, he deserved it, but there were already many Soviet-Koreans in these posts, meaning Nam Il, Kim Seung-hwa [Kim Seung Hwa], Pak Hong-seok [Pak Hong Sok], Pak Chang-ok [Pak Chang Ok], and it was allegedly necessary at the same time to maintain certain proportions in appointing officials.

Pak Ui-wan noted that Kim Il Sung continued to divide workers into Soviet, local, Southerners, and partisans, and thinks that necessary proportions need to be considered when appointing workers to leadership positions.

Tak Yang-ik [Tak Yang Ik] was promoted to Deputy Chairman of Gosplan and Park Won-gu [Pak Wongu] was promoted to the post of Deputy Minister of Machine-Building at this same CC Presidium meeting. Both of these comrades are Soviet-Koreans.

Then Pak pointed out that the Czechs are designing a general machine building factory for them where cable products and electrical instruments are to be produced. At one time [Vice Premier and Minister of Heavy Industry] Jeong Il-yong [Jeong Il Yong] had issued a plan to build a 300,000 m² factory. The Czechoslovak planners calculated and came to the conclusion that the cost of such a factory would be 200 million rubles. They can only give 100 million rubles in free aid. After long discussion it was decided to cut the amount of work in half, which made the Czechoslovak comrades very happy. However the issue of the construction is being delayed since the factory will have to be planned again.

Pak Ui-wan also said that when assessing [Deputy Prime Minister] Choe Chang-ik [Choe Chang Ik] Kim Il Sung seriously insulted him in connection with the fact that Choe Chang-ik had declared that worse than no position is taking a certain position in the party while feeling inside that he was not needed, a dead person, and he could not agree to such a role and was dissatisfied with his position.

Pak Ui-wan also said that Hong Myung-hee [Hong Myeong Hui] is an eminent figure in Korea and the people consider him a genius. When talking with Pak, Hong Myung-hee told him that he is 70 years old and, not being a party member, he does not serve just to make a living but because he loves the DPRK system. While he was younger he was not tempted by a Japanese offer and did not serve them. He was therefore surprised at the words of Kim Il Sung, who declared to Hong Myung-hee that he didn't work much, that there were many hard workers without him, and that they need him, Hong Myung-hee, as a figurehead [figura].