

April 27, 1968

**Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the
Hungarian Foreign Ministry**

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Summary:

Pak Seong-cheol voices North Korea's views on the capture of the USS Pueblo, relations among communist countries, and events in Czechoslovakia.

Credits:

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Translation - English

[...]

Appendix II. Information Report, „Conversation with Comrade Pak Seong-cheol [Pak Song Chol] During the Dinner of April 9, 1968.“

[...]

4.) He [Pak Seong-cheol] described the capture of the ship Pueblo. He enumerated the events which had taken place from the capture up to now. The action was allegedly carried out by [only] 5 Korean soldiers. He spoke about the military steps of the USA. Then he informed us [a HSWP CC delegation headed by Árpád Pullai] about the course of the secret negotiations. At present the negotiations have gotten stuck, for the Americans do not want to apologize, it is difficult for them to do so. They bring up various pretexts, and they keep threatening [the DPRK] with reprisals. For the time being they (the Koreans) stick rigidly to their conditions.

5.) The subject of the support and economic assistance given to the Third World also cropped up. At first he made critical remarks, saying that [the aid] provided by the socialist countries was not sufficient. He criticized that credit was insufficient, commercial prices were high, and the quality of goods was poor. „True, this is an idealist and unfeasible [idea],“ he said, „but if the one billion people [living in the Communist countries] worked 1 hour more and one appropriated the value thus produced for the support of the Third World, it would be a great assistance.“

Following this, when [secretary of the HSWP CC] Comrade Pullai remarked that there were also other substantial problems - e.g., the insufficient use [of aid], our decentralized assistance and the efforts [of the Communist countries] to outbid each other, and so on -, he illustrated with examples of his own that there were indeed many other, real difficulties. He criticized the excessive and swaggering pretensions, the issue of the construction of stadiums and hotels, and [the fact] that in these countries people simply did not want to work. It is not only facilities that they ask for but also labor. As a consequence, in a certain country a porcelain factory that they (the Koreans) sold on credit cost 100,000 instead of 50,000. He agreed with that there were a lot of unreal demands, and in some countries one could also notice that the leaders had become corrupt. Finally he argued that some caution was absolutely justified and the opportunities of the socialist countries were not unlimited.

6.) He inquired about the Czechoslovak events. Comrade Pullai set forth some main characteristics. He expounded that anxiety was justified but the Czechoslovak party was an experienced [party] and it seemed that it had the situation under control. Our task is to trust it and provide it with support. A long discussion evolved, during which Pak Seong-cheol harped on the same superficial aspects, and exasperatedly criticized the problems mentioned by the press organs and the other media. With the usual Korean self-assurance, he censured the absence of the leading role of the Party, the insufficient use of the coercive side of proletarian dictatorship, and the weakness of ideological educational work in Czechoslovakia. His argumentation then shifted toward the praise of ideological educational work and of human consciousness, [describing the latter as] the sole redeeming [power]. He cited known examples so as to demonstrate that a self-conscious man could overcome any obstacle. Both in this respect and in the entire conversation the simplification of questions, and the resulting Korean self-satisfaction with that in the DPRK a right policy was pursued with regard to the basic issues, strongly manifested themselves. Due to the calm reasoning of Comrade Pullai and the description of the problems, Pak Seong-cheol composed himself, and his final conclusion was that the Czechoslovak events were the internal affairs of the Czechoslovak comrades and hopefully they would straighten them out. [...]

Kádas

(ambassador)

István