

July 28, 1967
Telegram from Pyongyang to Bucharest, TOP
SECRET, No. 76.247, July 28, 1967

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Summary:

Romanian and Vietnamese diplomats discuss the purges in the Korean Workers' Party and North Korea's reunification policy.

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On the occasion of an exchange dinner offered to Van Pen, the charge d'affaires from the Chinese Embassy on July 27th, we discussed several aspects dealing with domestic politics in the DPRK.

1. Regarding my comment that at the most recent Plenum of the Workers' Party of Korea, it became visible that the composition of the Central Committee Politburo Presidium was reduced by half (excluding President Choe Yong-geon [Choe Yong Gon], who, because of his old age and poor health, is less and less present in the policy-making process of the WPK), Van Pen confirmed the definite disappearance of three of the most prominent leaders of the Korean revolution. He was referring to Pak Geum-cheol [Pak Kum Chol], Ri Hyo-sun [Ri Hyo Sun] and Kim Do-man [Kim To Man], Secretary of the Central Committee and Head of the Propaganda Section of the Central Committee, who were joined most recently by Kim Jong-hang [Kim Chong Hang], the Minister of Higher Education, and Rim Chun-chu [Rim Chun Chu], the Secretary of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly. The Chinese diplomat mentioned that according to the investigations carried out by his embassy, Ri Hyo-sun's elimination was the result of the exposure of the spy network that he had been coordinating in South Korea and across the border.

As for Pak Geum-cheol, the ideologue of the Party, and other cadres in the same department, they were eliminated because of a serious ideological split within the WPK on matters related to the role of some Korean personalities in the revolution and construction of socialism in the DPRK. Pak Geum-cheol and Kim Do-man did not make enough propaganda around Kim Il Sung's cult of personality. 'It is perfectly reasonable for Pak Geum-cheol, the only leader from the current structure who during the harshest years of anti-Japanese fighting operated and endured with great heroism inside Korea, not to accept that all the credit for the revolutionary and socialist construction in the DPRK goes to Kim Il Sung, who spent the entire period of the revolution in China and in the Soviet Union, in much milder conditions,' said Van Pen. He added that by purging the aforementioned officials and those working in the Propaganda Department, the last nationalist personalities who were in favor of friendly relations with the PRC ceased to be make their voices heard in the press and in other propaganda media. Instead, the noisy popularization of those who played a negative role in the evolution of Sino-Korean relations has been increasing at a fast pace. This phenomenon undoubtedly triggers a feeling of sorrow for those who are aware of the human and material sacrifices on behalf of the Chinese people who jumped to the aid of the North Korean people. Van Pen mentioned that during the Korean War, Beijing used half of the credits and aid it received from the USSR in the years following the Revolutionary War, to fund the Korean liberation war (1950-1953) and for the post-war reconstruction of the country. The funds borrowed by China from the Soviet Union were paid back to the last dime.

In response to my question whether the North Korean comrades paid back these loans, at least partially, Van Pen said that to this day, China had not seen any money, but it was not asking for it. 'We don't even have the gratitude of the current leadership of the DPRK for our sacrifices.'

When asked his opinion on the low intensity of North Korea's mobilization efforts to liberate South Korea, manifested after the most recent party Plenum, Van Pen said that only one thing is certain: that as long as Sino-Korean relations are maintained in their current state, North Korea cannot launch any offensive against the South. As a matter of fact, the US keeps saying that a country having tense relations with China will not wage war against the US. When asked whether China would help the DPRK with armament just like in the previous war, should the North Koreans still proceed to liberate the South, currently under American occupation, Van Pen replied that China would eventually intervene but only if radical changes had taken place in Korea (here, he probably referred to a change in the Korean leadership).

Throughout our discussions, Van Pen repeatedly praised the remarkable successes

attained by Romania in all areas of activity, as a result of the just policy adopted by the Romanian Communist Party. He stated that the independent policy carried out by the RCP had a positive impact on others, who have not yet managed to become fully independent.

Signed: N. Popa