April 23, 1968

Memorandum On the Visit of the Party and Government Delegation of the GDR, led by Comrade Prof. Dr. Kurt Hager, with the General Secretary of the KWP and Prime Minister of the DPRK, Comrade Kim Il Sung, on 16 April 1968, 5:00p.m. until 6:50 p.m.

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Summary:

In a meeting with Dr. Kurt Hager, Kim Il Sung fully says he fully supports East Germany GDR and describes North Korea's relations with other Communist countries.

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SED Central Committee, Department of International Relations
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Memorandum
On the Visit of the Party and Government Delegation of the GDR, led by Comrade Prof. Dr. Kurt Hager, with the General Secretary of the KWP and Prime Minister of the DPRK, Comrade Kim Il Sung, on 16 April 1968, 5:00p.m. until 6:50 p.m.

At the beginning Comrade Kim Il Sung asked about the well-being of the delegation and the health of Comrade Walter Ulbricht and the other leading comrades of the SED and the government of the GDR. Comrade Hager expressed the greetings of Comrade Walter Ulbricht and congratulations on the 56th birthday of Comrade Kim Il Sung.

Then Kim Il Sung stated:

We welcome the visit of your delegation in our country and want to thank the GDR government, the Central Committee of the SED and Comrade Walter Ulbricht in person for sending the delegation. Kim emphasized that the visit of the delegation will contribute to further consolidation of the relations between our parties and states, since there are many commonalities between our two countries. You live in a divided country and we do as well. Like our country, yours is threatened by imperialism. Both our countries fight against imperialism, we support the national liberation movement and both countries are building socialism. Although we are quite distant geographically, the relationship between our two countries is a good one. Therefore both our parties can work closely together as well. Our country has received great support from you in its most difficult period. Already during the war you accepted orphans and students from our country and you gave us material and moral support of all kinds. In the city of Hamheung you built many residences and a lot of factories. This was an expression of truly internationalist solidarity. Our people will never forget that. I want to seize the opportunity to ask you again to express our thanks for all that to the SED and the government and people of the GDR.

Comrade Hager stressed the commonalities between our two countries as we belong to the socialist camp and are building socialism. He thanked them for their support of the policy of our party and government.

Comrade Kim Il Sung expressed in return his thanks for their support of the struggle of the Korean people for reunification of the fatherland, against American imperialism and resurging Japanese militarism. In the negotiations between our delegations opinions were exchanged, and I think you have been informed about the situation in our country and our struggle. I only want to emphasize that our countries and parties have many things in common because of our joint membership in the socialist camp. I am convinced we can cooperate well starting from that base. Concerning the development of the Korean revolution, we see the only way to reunify our country in speeding up the development of the North and the strength of revolutionary forces in South Korea, in close conjunction with all socialist countries and anti-imperialist forces. We particularly must consolidate the ties with the GDR, since the GDR defends socialism at its Western outpost and we do so at the Eastern outpost.

We talk a lot about self-reliance, and many people misunderstand that. We don't ask, however, for self-reliance outside the socialist camp. We ask for self-reliance in the interest of consolidating the unity of the socialist camp. The self-reliance we stand for, lies within the interest of the international alliance and is in accordance with the principles of the declarations of the Moscow meeting. We ask for self-reliance in the interest of the education of our people. Some countries want us to follow them blindly, but we cannot do that. The line of our party on self-reliance reflects the

conditions in our country and is not related to nationalism or national egotism. We must strive to win the middle class in South Korea to achieve unification. Therefore we have to devote special attention to the reeducation of the middle class in our republic. Thus we cannot follow one country and have a cultural revolution here. If we want to bring about unification, we cannot fight against the old professors and intellectuals. We have to transform and unite them in order to have them participate in the revolutionary movement. When we ask for self-reliance, we argue against blind followership of other countries and not against the unity of the socialist camp.

We have quite some pecularities, therefore we cannot eliminate the old intellectuals. In South Korea many intellectuals support us. If we suppress them in the North, the intellectuals in South Korea will turn against us. I don't know whether there has been a plot between the Park Chung Hee clique and Bonn, but many South Korean intellectuals have been deported. They support us, and we cannot follow one country and make a cultural revolution. So the emphasis on self-reliance is an action of self-defense. It does not aim at slandering others or coming out against them.

When our neighbor started the cultural revolution, the South Korean intellectuals asked us: What will happen to us after reunification? For us there was only one response, namely we will cooperate with the intellectuals. We want to revolutionize them and move together towards communism. Our self-reliance is not directed against the cultural revolution. The latter is an internal matter of our neighbor. We will not promote that. Self-reliance is an action of self-defense for the education of the party and the people. Therefore we have published the article "Let's Protect Self-Reliance" and talked about it during our party conference in October 1966. Self-reliance is important for the education of the intellectuals and the people in South Korea. In South Korea there are many intellectuals, capitalists and public servants who have not yet given up their illusions about U.S. imperalism. They are also afraid, however, about the USA and thus want to lean on Japan.

We are for self-reliance. It is not directed against the unity of the socialist camp and doesn't mean any interference in the internal matters of other countries. We are in favor of it, since it is necessary for the Korean revolution, for unification of our country and for the education of our people. We do not want to impose self-reliance on others. We opt for self-reliance because we want to strengthen solidarity with the socialist camp and the national liberation movement. The Korean revolution faces the strongest enemy, namely U.S. imperialism. We want to further solidarity with all revolutionary forces. That is very important for the Korean revolution. I hope that you will well understand our position. Self-reliance is no obstacle to unity between our two parties. To the contrary, it will strengthen it.

We fully support your struggle against the resurgence of West German imperialism, against American imperialism and against all imperialists, for the construction of socialism and the overtaking of West Germany. We thank you for supporting our struggle. We will always support you and hope for your support. Under these conditions our relations will further develop. Therefore we are glad you came to visit us. Last year your military delegation led by Comrade Verner was here. This year we will send a military delegation to the GDR, led by the Chief of the Main Political Administration [of the Korean People's Army]. The exchange of delegations between both countries will increase in the future. This will contribute to a deepening of mutual understanding and of knowing the policy of both parties. So we welcome an exchange of many delegations to consolidate friendship between both parties and countries. Our country is not a big country. Therefore we don't want isolation, but unity. We wish the relations between both parties to develop further. Please forward that also to Comrade Walter Ulbricht and Comrade Willi Stoph.

Comrade Hager expressed thanks for the remarks of Comrade Kim Il Sung and briefly mentioned the creative policy of our party, for instance with regard to the middle class. He thanked him for the explanations on questions concerning the reunification

of Korea. He expressed his full agreement with the remarks on the development of bilateral relations. He emphasized how, in addition to our own creative policy, we particularly pay attention to close cooperation with the Soviet Union and the states of the Warsaw Pact as the cornerstone of our policy. Finally Comrade Hager sketched again our position on the convocation of a new Communist world conference. He said that we agreed with Comrade Pak Seong-cheol [Pak Song Chol] on the necessity of unity. But we have different opinions about the next steps needed to achieve it. These differences of opinion, however, are not an obstacle for the development of mutual relations.

Comrade Kim Il Sung said:

This is correct. We are not at all against your position, but understand it very well. We, too, are for the unity of the international Communist and workers' movement and the socialist countries. If the socialist camp were really united, we would be a strong power. With the exception of the island of Cuba, all countries are linked geographically. We are one billion people. If the socialist camp were united, it could unfold its power in all areas, not just in political but also in economic terms. The socialist world market could be developed and the socialist camp could display its strength. If the socialist camp would be united, it could not only demonstrate its power, but also rally all the young nation states behind it and influence them. We do know from our own experience that the unity of the socialist camp and the entire Communist worldwide movement is by all means necessary, because there are many problems for us arising from division. So it is correct that your country is securing peace within the Warsaw Pact. The NATO alliance is in dissolution, which is not bad. But if we weaken the Warsaw Pact, that would be very dangerous for unity. In this respect we fully agree with you. For geographical reasons we cannot participate in the Warsaw Pact, but by our friendship treaties with the Soviet Union and China we are mutually tied. We think our alliances with the Soviet Union and China are very important for us. Therefore one must not destroy them, despite existing differences of opinion. There may be differences, but one has to come together nonetheless. There are big differences of opinion with China, but we want to maintain the alliance with the PRC, because it is important for securing peace.

Comrade Pak Seong-cheol has already talked about our position on the convocation of a world conference. We are not against your participation in the preparation and the conference itself. Looking at our situation, however, we cannot participate yet. The concrete conditions in our country demand cooperation with the Soviet Union and China. However, this does not mean we will follow China even when the Chinese speak out against a conference forever.

More than one million hostile troops are facing us directly. Therefore we don't want ourselves to end the alliance with China since it would mean we will have enemies also in our back. We have drawn the conclusion to participate only in a conference where everybody participates, but if one country won't be there, we won't either. We have to wait to see how the situation in China is developing. Moreover, Vietnam is fighting against U.S. imperialism and we don't want to obstruct its struggle. If there might be an open split, this won't have a positive impact on the Vietnamese comrades. That not only depends on the Soviet Union and other European socialist countries, but also on China's position. The Chinese and some others want the split now. For them the conference would be a proper opportunity to officially seal the split. With a conference we only display to the enemy the internal situation in our camp. Our party thinks that unity and also discussions between the parties are needed. We ask ourselves, however, whether the time for a conference has already come. We are not against a conference, but think a convocation this year comes too early. We are not against the parties joining in the preparation and participating in the conference itself. Among the socialist countries there are some who have a different opinion about the convocation of the conference in the current year. We think this year is too early for the conference, but we will not slander the participants.

We ask you also not to insult us for not participating. There are many common things between us. In some respects our positions differ, but this is no obstacle for the development of our relations.

Currently there are big differences of opinion with the Chinese, but they still say they will fight together with us against U.S. imperialism if that proves necessary. They say our deep differences are of tactical and not of strategic nature. They slander us as revisionists but we always stay calm. When the Red Guards insult us, the Chinese tell us that the party and government are not responsible. Only if e.g. "People's Daily" [Renmin Ribao] attacks us would they be responsible. Some comrades in the politburo have suggested that we should also organize Red Guards to insult the Chinese, but should not write articles. I am against that. It doesn't work that way.

There are big differences of opinion with the Chinese, but the unity in actions against U.S. imperialism is maintained. The [friendship] treaty is still valid and in spite of these differences we wait. The PRC has issued a government declaration on the ‘Pueblo' case and supported our position. This shows how they stand by the treaty as well as for a united front against imperialism. There are a lot of complicated questions and we are directly confronted by the enemy. So we don't have the option to participate in the conference. China and some others constitute one side, the Soviet Union and all the others the other side. We don't want to participate in a conference where only one side is represented. There are still many against such a conference, therefore we think the time hasn't yet come. China will not participate, others will do likewise. We cannot participate. Certainly the majority will participate, but if some, who directly fight against U.S. imperialism, are not present, what will be the importance of such a conference?

Comrade Ponomarov was here and we told him our opinion. Concerning this question, the many difficulties faced by the Asian parties must be taken into consideration. We are not against your being in favor of this conference, and we will not insult you.

The differences of opinion with China came along with different positions towards the Soviet Union. In March 1965 there was a conference in Moscow. Back then the Chinese comrades said that all participants must be denounced as revisionists. Articles bearing the character of declarations were written, slandering all participants as revisionists. We came out against that.

There are also other differences of opinion with China. The Chinese said that the Soviet Union is a policeman just like the USA. We couldn't agree with that as the Soviet Union will always remain the Soviet Union. The fundamental difference between the Soviet Union and the USA, between socialist and capitalist society, remains, even when the Soviet Union maintains relations with the USA. As you see, there are differences of opinion about the relationship with the Soviet Union.

The Chinese say that Soviet support for Vietnam just seems to be support. But only the Vietnamese comrades can assess that. A third party is not entitled to make judgments. Vietnamese questions have to be solved by the Vietnamese comrades themselves. The Vietnamese party is an autonomous party, which has extensive experience in the fight against imperialism. It has developed its own strategy and tactics. They are capable of judging the real character of support. The Vietnamese comrades are very grateful towards the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries for their support.

There have been differences of opinion with the Chinese previously, when they propagated the theory of the "intermediate zone". Certainly one can define the young nation states as an intermediate zone, but when the Chinese declare all capitalist countries except the USA as part of the intermediate zone, even West Germany, we cannot agree with that. On that question they didn't communicate directly with us,

but have sent Grippa. We cannot understand this Chinese position and don't know according to which Marxist-Leninist principles they have come to that position.

Comrade Hager said that such Marxist-Leninist principles do not exist.

Comrade Kim Il Sung replied: That is correct. There are also other questions, e.g. the question of revolution. We will support every revolution if conditions have matured. A revolution, however, without pre-existing conditions is just damaging for the cause of revolution. There are many more questions where we don't agree with them, e.g. India and Indonesia. Therefore they say, they have tactical differences of opinion with us, but they jointly want to fight with us against imperialism. By our own initiative we will not destroy our alliance with the Chinese. Relations between us and China, between Vietnam and China are an important question in Asia. We therefore hold the opinion that the European comrades should well understand the conditions we have in Asia and reflect on them thoroughly. You may want to consider all of that when making your decisions. We haven't insulted the Moscow conference and didn't say a word about the Budapest [meeting], and we don't regard it as bad when the comrades come together and have conferences. We ask you to report to Comrade Walter Ulbricht that from Asia maybe only the Indian party might join, though it cannot represent Asia. It is possible the conference will be a European conference, because the Asian parties won't join.

Nevertheless we will continuously strive for the consolidation of the friendship with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, in particular for the friendship between both our parties and countries.