

April 18, 1961

Report on Political Development in the DPRK

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Summary:

An analysis on the political development in the DPRK, including the Juche ideology, and North Korean foreign policies.

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Esteemed Comrade,

Based on reports from our Embassy in Pyongyang, I informed you in my letter No. 021.913/61 about the position of Korean comrades on relations among socialist camp countries. Our Embassy in Pyongyang just provided more detailed information about the position of Korean comrades in a special political report whose copy I enclose for your information. I am also sending a copy of the report to the Prime Minister c. Siroky and to the Deputy Prime Minister and to the Chairman of the State Planning Committee c. Simunek.

With comradely greeting,

(Vaclav David)

Esteemed Comrade
Antonin Novotny
1st Secretary of the CPCZ CC
and President of the CSSR
Prague

COPY

Ministry of Foreign Affairs Prague

Subject: Special political report No. 5
Some misguided trends in the political
development of the DPRK.

By the end of the last year, national trends in the political development of the DPRK strengthened and at the same time, a double-dealing policy of Korean comrades, under the influence of the PRC, was growing more noticeable. This policy was also reflected by the conduct of the highest party and government officials of the DPRK during a friendly welcome on a highest level of a Chinese military delegation, commemorating an anniversary of Chinese volunteers, and by the absence of Kim Il Sung at Moscow meetings of communist and workers parties, and also at a Soviet Embassy's reception celebrating an anniversary of the October Revolution. However, it was the most apparent during discussions with the KWP delegation at the Moscow meetings, where Korean comrades assumed a position of compromise.

Nationalistic tendencies were also apparent in exaggeration of their own power and capabilities, and in the lack of appreciation of the substantial aid from the SCC (Socialist Camp Countries), without which the DPRK could not actually achieve such a recovery and development of its national economy so fast. Korean comrades eventually became completely silent about the SCC aid at the Supreme People's Assembly [in Czech, NLS or Nejvyšší lidové shromáždění]. November session while discussing the results of the 1st five-year plan and proposals for peaceful unification of Korea. In this case, not mentioning the substantial aid of the SCC was a gross mistake because there was a unique opportunity to show not only to people of South Korea but to the whole world, what an effect fraternal aid and mutual cooperation between socialist countries has, and how it can upgrade in a short time even an undeveloped country as the DPRK was.

By strengthening national self esteem, exaggerating their own power and emphasizing the specificity of their conditions, Korean comrades are erroneously nurturing counterproductive national-chauvinist tendencies and thus undermine workers' education in principles of the International Proletariat. Instead of emphasizing the study of Marx-Leninism, they base ideological education on experiences of anti-Japanese guerillas. They intentionally exaggerate the importance of guerilla warfare and of the person of Kim Il Sung, around whom they are creating a strong personality cult for unification of Korea, while on the other hand, they diminish the liberation role of the USSR, or even keep quiet about it. An illustrative example of this is the newly built museum in Pyongyang of revolutionary fight, where even the least important actions of guerillas are shown in 11 large rooms but only two photographs and a sign mention the liberation by the Red Army. Also, passed over in complete silence is the six-year stay of guerilla leaders and groups headed by Kim Il Sung and Choe Yong-geon in the USSR after a Japanese offensive in Manchuria at the beginning of the WWII.

Not even after the Moscow meetings of communist and fraternal parties, which received almost no attention in KWP organizations, did they choose the right direction in workers' education; on the contrary, they increased even more the nationalistic tendencies by a misguided application of the "juche" principle. According to Kim Il Sung, "juche" means "to do everything in such a way that it is in harmony with concrete conditions in our country, and to creatively apply common principles of Marx-Leninism and experiences of other countries to our situation. Carrying out the Korean revolution correctly and suitably to the concrete conditions of the country is the duty of communists, and that is how we contribute to the International Communist Movement." However, this basically correct principle was in most cases applied altogether the wrong way, which lead not only to revision of acquired experience of other SCC but even to its outright rejection.

Application of "juche" was reflected also in relations with friendly countries. Already very limited possibilities for workers to get acquainted with theoretical literature of socialist countries were very much curtailed, and further development of cultural contacts is restricted as well. Also, business trips of Korean citizens to socialist countries were reduced to an absolute minimum. Under the pretense of increased security, checkpoints were set up and access of Korean citizens to Embassies was restricted.

All these wrong tendencies are closely followed and discussed by the diplomatic corps. Some representatives of friendly countries are displeased with the conduct of Korean comrades and openly voice their concerns where such misguided development can lead in the DPRK and what political and economic damage it can do. Even though it is acknowledged that the KWP is not sufficiently experienced and mature, its functionaries and most members are not mature enough and not sufficiently aware of Marx-Leninist principles, and that the best way to learn is from their own mistakes, the consensus is that Korean comrades could avoid unnecessary

mistakes, losses and damage by taking advantage of abundant experiences of namely the USSR and other socialist countries. I was discussing these issues in detail with the USSR Ambassador c. Puzanov, HDR c. Pratt, GDR c. Schneidewind. Other ambassadors touch upon these matters in routine conversations as well, for instance the PRB Ambassador c. Bogdanov, PRP c. Dryglas, and former HDR Ambassador c. Dasch.

The USSR Ambassador Puzanov, despite of his reservations about the conduct of Korean comrades, sees the whole situation very optimistically. He considers Korean comrades young, inexperienced people who first have to get burned before they understand what they must not do. He has the opinion that basically, Korean comrades are all right, and that their wrong steps follow from their lack of experience and theoretical knowledge. C. Schneidewind and c. Pratt are more pessimistic, especially c. Schneidewind. They think that Korean comrades can avoid mistakes and damage if they draw more on the experience of fraternal countries, and that it is not possible to treat them benevolently all the time. Undoubtedly, these opinions were reflected in the decision of the GDR to restrict its aid with construction of Hamheung, and in concrete requests of the HDR that an offered credit be repaid with certain raw materials that the HDR badly needs. Other ambassadors, for instance c. Dryglas, think that it would not be right to unilaterally accommodate the endless requests of Korean comrades but to lead them to see their capabilities more realistically, to learn managing their economy well and to honor their commitments that they agreed to. I tend to agree with this conclusion even after an assessment with our diplomatic corps; it is reflected in our recommendations in connection with a request of the Korean government for yet another extension of credit, and in our summaries in regular economic reports.

Korean comrades must have sensed lately that their actions in some matters are not correct and that it makes other SCC discontent. Therefore, they started to take some steps in order to remedy the situation and to improve their relations with other SCC. This effort was the most apparent when they organized celebrations in commemoration of 12th anniversary of agreement on economic and cultural cooperation with the USSR. The celebrations were organized on a larger scale than for the 10th anniversary, while there were almost no celebrations for the last year's anniversary. Besides festivities in eight factories built with Soviet help, and numerous other smaller events, a ceremonial gathering was organized on 16th March and a government reception on 17th March, where also titularies were invited and all party and government representatives took part. In speeches of Ri Jong-ok [Ri Jong Ok] (Deputy Prime Minister, Chairman of the Heavy Industry Committee) at the ceremonial gathering and those of Kim Il (1st deputy of Prime Minister) at the reception, the importance of current and future aid of the USSR for the development of the DPRK was emphasized for the first time since the middle of last year. The whole scope of aid from the USSR was mentioned in detail and perhaps first time ever, part of one billion RUB of technological aid that the Soviet Union selflessly provided to the DPRK for free was made public. Speeches at factories were of similar content, and for instance in Kansong Steelworks where shortly before, during an excursion, the director was emphasizing their own efforts in developing the plant and passed in silence the USSR aid, the smallest details about this aid were this time given. These displays were accepted positively within the diplomatic corps and are considered signs of a favorable change.

The Soviet titulary c. Puzanov takes this change as a rectification of temporary mistakes that Korean comrades made by underestimating huge help of SCC and keeping quiet about it, and by emphasizing their own capabilities.

One trustworthy official of the KWP CC told Soviet comrades that even while adhering to the principles of "juche", many CC instructions were incorrectly interpreted and distorted. In a conversation with c. Puzanov on March 20,
c. Kim Il Sung started to talk about celebrations of the 12th anniversary of an

agreement with the USSR, and praised that event highly. He said that emphasizing the USSR aid would have a positive effect on people of South Korea and would show them what a strong ally the DPRK has. He also mentioned that they emphasize further development with their own resources only as propaganda towards South Korea.

Based on these statements, it appears that Korean comrades started to realize that their steps in certain issues were wrong. They may have been coaxed into it by conversations of Kim Il Sung with titularies from SCC who are now in the DPRK at yearly meetings, and also by realization that the grand tasks of the coming seven-year plan cannot be accomplished without help of SCC; a desire to secure further aid from SCC follows from that.

The USSR Ambassador thinks that Korean comrades need further help and that it should be given to them. By his account, Korean comrades were very pleasantly surprised that at the December negotiations in Moscow about a long-term agreement, the Soviet side willingly granted almost all Korean requests. He told me he expressed to the Hungarian Ambassador c. Pratt his surprise that Korean comrades were not drawing credit extended to them, by which he meant to indicate that the Hungarian side probably set too difficult conditions.

He also told jokingly to the German Ambassador c. Schneidewind that now, when trade between the GDR and West Germany has been restored, they can hopefully continue helping the DPRK.

To my objections that other, less developed countries, might need aid much more than the DPRK, c. Puzanov admitted that it was true, except why should we lose the influence we have gained in the DPRK? C. Puzanov is convinced that Korean comrades basically follow experiences of the Soviet Union; apparently, he meant his remark as an indication of superior Soviet influence over Chinese. Based on a conversation of c. Puzanov with c. Kim Il Sung about poor deliveries from the PRC, it appears that Korean comrades are well aware of economic difficulties of the PRC and what causes them, which of course is working against the efforts of Chinese comrades to exert political and economical influence over the DPRK. According to c. Puzanov, the CPSU CC does not see the conduct of Korean comrades at the Moscow meetings as support of the Chinese position. Their (Korean) willingness to compromise in some issues was supposedly reflecting an effort to achieve unity, and even Chinese comrades did not see it as support, as they did not with some other countries, with the exception of Albania, because if they (Koreans) could draw support from eight or ten parties, they would be much more uncompromising. C. Puzanov emphasized that in the current situation, it is necessary to strengthen unity of the socialist camp as much as possible and to concentrate especially on what unifies us.

At a meeting of the diplomatic corps of our Embassy, we assessed the new situation and came to a conclusion that it would be helpful, in an appropriate way, to confirm to Korean comrades that their last steps towards improved relations with SCC were correct.

That is why I recommended to the Central Committee to expedite requests of the DPRK government for granting new credit and for accepting the DPRK government delegation coming to talk about this matter. It would also be possible at this occasion to discuss in advance prospects for further cooperation with the DPRK and possibilities of socialist cooperation, as Korean comrades themselves suggested.

This way we could significantly contribute to further development of relations and cooperation with the DPRK, according to principles formulated in the Statement of Communist and Workers' Parties at Moscow meetings in November last year, and

help Korean comrades in correcting some of the wrong tendencies in political development of the DPRK.

Our office will follow closely this development and will suggest to the CC suitable actions that, according to our opinion, could contribute not only to strengthening of our friendly relations with the DPRK but also to positive influence on its development in line with the Statement. I would welcome comments from the CC to this matter, and instructions for further steps of our Embassy.

Ambassador: Kohousek, in my own hand