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**From the Journal of N.G. Sudarikov, 'Record of a  
Conversation with Kim Il Sung, General Secretary of  
the KWP CC and Chairman of the DPRK Cabinet of  
Ministers, 9 May 1972'**

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**Summary:**

Kim Il Sung credits the diplomatic achievements and economic development of North Korea for creating greater opposition and chaos in South Korea. He also broaches how the two Koreas have different opinions on family reunions.

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from the journal of  
N. G. SUDARIKOV

#### RECORD OF A CONVERSATION

with KIM IL SUNG, General Secretary of the KWP CC and Chairman of the DPRK  
Cabinet of Ministers

9 May 1972

In accordance with instructions of Headquarters [Tsentrl] I had a meeting with Cde. Kim Il Sung.

1. I presented Kim Il Sung with the ideas Moscow has about an award to him by the Soviet Union on the occasion of his 60th birthday.

Taking this information with notable excitement, Kim Il Sung began to discourse about how in personal terms a 60th birthday is not an especially happy event in life, and he did not want to note it too widely.

Kim Il Sung said, at one of the recent meetings of the CC Political Committee I said that my 60th birthday would better be noted by work for the cause of fulfilling the six-year plan, the cause of improving the people's welfare. Comrades from the Political Committee agreed with me, to put off some events which were planned to be held, in particular, a parade, a rally, and a state reception to a later time and to time them to the 40th anniversary of the creation of the People's Revolutionary Army of Korea. However, all the events cannot be nevertheless cancelled since guests have come with congratulations from several countries. A limited reception for guests who have come from abroad and the diplomatic corps will have to be held.

[Translator's note: there are several handwritten notations at the bottom of the first page: "To the Archive. 16 January 1979". some illegible names, and a faded stamp]

Switching then to the question of an award to him Kim Il Sung said that he would first of all like to cordially express gratitude for such great attention to him. The interlocutor said, we view the intention of the CPSU CC and Government of the Soviet Union about my award as an expression of trust and a recognition of the merits of the Korean people and the Korean Worker's Party. If this intention is understood as such, then, of course, I cannot fail to agree. I am passing the resolution of this question to the discretion of the CPSU CC and the Soviet government and will comply with any decision made in Moscow".

Kim Il Sung continued, our peoples have travelled a great path of joint struggle against common enemies. Our friendship formed in this struggle has strengthened, and no one can destroy it.

2. Kim Il Sung asked how the question of Pak Seong-cheol is being decided in Moscow.

I replied that in Moscow in principle they regard the arrival of Cde. Pak Seong-cheol

favorably. We will report an approximate date of arrival in the next few days.

Kim Il Sung asked [me] to pass Cde. L. I. Brezhnev his personal gratitude for the favorable resolution of this question. Pak Seong-cheol is going in order to frankly share our ideas about the situation in Korea, the prospects for the reunification of the country, and to express some of our thoughts in connection with the upcoming negotiations between the Soviet leaders and President Nixon.

3. Kim Il Sung recalled the invitation to our government military delegation. He said that they attach primarily political, and not military, significance to the 40th anniversary of the creation of the People's Revolutionary Army of Korea. We express a hope for the arrival of a Soviet delegation of a good level. It would not be a bad thing if the delegation includes not only military but also civilian comrades. We will try and receive them well, and let them see how we live and work. But let the Southerners know that also we have reliable allies and numerous friends.

In the course of the conversation Kim Il Sung said that 10 years ago no foreign delegations were invited when they celebrated the 30th anniversary of the People's Revolutionary Army of Korea, but the Chinese decided to send a delegation themselves. The Chinese delegation then was headed by Peng Zhen.

This time, when noting the 40th anniversary of our army, we decided to invite delegations from those countries which have official diplomatic or simply friendly relations with us. [We] also invited a delegation from China, but the Chinese have still not replied whether they will send someone or not.

We in the Political Committee have had various opinions regarding the invitation to delegations. At first we thought of inviting only our long-term comrades-in-arms and allies to this celebration, that is, delegations of the Soviet Union and China, but this would have led to us offending friends from other countries.

There were also different points of view about the nature of the delegations. [We] wanted to invite purely military delegations, but this wouldn't have been completely right because the creation of the Army had not just military but also political importance. Our Army was the main force of the revolution. [We] wanted to call the delegations Party-government [delegation] but this would have caused difficulties with young developing countries. And finally we came to the conclusion that it would be correct to invite government military delegations.

According to all information, said Kim Il Sung, the delegations will come from many countries. Consequently some organizational and everyday difficulties might arise since something or other didn't manage to finish getting built, but we think that the guests will regard this with understanding.

4. Further in the conversation Kim Il Sung touched on several questions connected with the situation on the Korean peninsula, the problem of the reunification of the country, and described the domestic situation in the DPRK in general outline.

The KWP CC has recently been devoting especially great attention to the problem of the reunification of the country, considerably more than ever before. Our general policy is the reunification of the country by peaceful means. We have no intention of attacking South Korea. Although Park Chung Hee is strenuously spreading rumors about our warlike intentions, this is a lie. He has even introduced a state of emergency in the South, but this is nothing other than political speculation calculated on suppressing opposition and the mass movement for reunification which is growing ever stronger in the South of the motherland. The progressive figures of South Korea openly declare this, for example, Kim Dae Jung, presidential candidate at the recent

elections and leader of the opposition, who frankly declared that Park Chung Hee needs the state of emergency to scare the people with a threat from the North. This puts Kim Dae Jung in a difficult position.

In order to support the opposition and to drive Park Chung Hee even more in a corner at the upcoming Supreme People's Assembly session, which is scheduled for 20 April, it is proposed to adopt an appeal to the parliament and population of South Korea calling for [them] to conduct political negotiations, sign a peace agreement between the North and South, and peacefully reunify the country.

Kim Il Sung continued, we proposed holding the next meeting in Panmunjom on 17 April at the level of the Red Crosses, and to submit some new proposals at this meeting in order to solve the question of the search for family members and relatives and free visits by them to the South and North. The South Korean representatives have still not agreed to free visits and propose that the meetings of families and relatives be held only at one certain place - Panmunjom, where people should come from the South and the North. But we don't agree with such a suggestion since the visit of relatives would remind one another of a situation like a prison or a camp.

At the negotiations at Panmunjom we will seek the fastest possible switch from preliminary [negotiations] to the main negotiations. In order for the views and actions of the current political figures of the South to gradually be changed [to those] favorable to the DPRK, Kim Il Sung said, in my New Year's speech I declared that we will not ask people who committed crimes about the past and will give them the opportunity to atone for their guilt, that is, we are ready to forgive them for past sins if they would like to come to their senses.

We also declared that [we] are ready to hold talks with representatives of the current ruling Democratic Republic Party, and this means also with Park Chung Hee, who is President of the country and chairman of this Party.

I would like to tell the Soviet ambassador about a secret, that we have had some unofficial contacts with representatives of the South. Last year our people in Japan met with one South Korean general. This general expressed the thought that the current South Korean rulers ought to be promised that they will be forgiven for their previous crimes. We bore this in mind and in [my] New Year's speech I said that if the South Korean rulers abandon an orientation toward outside forces and an anti-national policy, and take a position of genuine Koreans then we will not ask them about the past and are ready to solve the problem of the reunification of the country by peaceful means with them.

There was yet a second case. Not so long ago a secret agent was sent to the DPRK by either the Americans or the South Koreans - it is hard to say exactly which. He was an ethnic Korean, but lived in America\*. He wanted to sound out our attitude toward Park Chung Hee in the event that he abandons his current policy.

\* Obviously Kim Il Sung meant South Korean citizen Ko Byung Cher [sic], with whom we had a conversation in the Embassy on 30 April. Its content has been reported to Headquarters.

We told this Korean that if Park Chung Hee obtains the withdrawal of American troops and does not let Japan commit aggression against South Korea again, and acts from positions of national interests, and not as a foreign puppet, then we are ready to hold talks with him.

I don't know exactly whether these words reached Park Chung Hee, but according to the information of our people in the South it recently became known that friction has

appeared in Park Chung Hee's relations with the Americans.

Differences are becoming aggravated inside the ruling party of South Korea, especially between President Park Chung Hee and Prime Minister Kim Jong Pil. Premier Kim Jong Pil lets it be understood that he would like organize contacts with us. We are taking this into account. Thus, not only at the lower and middle levels, but also at the South Korean upper levels movement is occurring in favor of the DPRK and this creates certain preconditions for the success of peace negotiations, which is what we, too, are striving for. We know that right now in the South they say, "If Nixon went to Beijing and plans to go to Moscow then why can't Park Chung Hee visit Pyongyang[?]".

In reply to our question, how would they take it in Pyongyang if Park Chung Hee actually wants to come here, Kim Il Sung said evasively that Park Chung Hee is afraid to come to Pyongyang, but if he wants to come we think, why not receive him.

In general Park Chung Hee is afraid that South Korea might become "red", which is precisely why he doesn't want South Korean citizens to come to the DPRK, and doesn't want our citizens to go to Seoul. Right now the South Koreans are afraid to open their doors to us because chaos and unemployment reign there. Poor people and prostitutes roam the streets of Seoul. Although there are tall buildings in the city, there are a mass of slums there. This entire unsightly picture forces the South Korean rulers to move away from holding the main negotiations in Seoul and Pyongyang in turn. But we are persistently seeking this. Possibly this year we will exchange delegations and our people will visit Seoul and representatives from Seoul will come to Pyongyang.

Along with this we always take into account that there are still American troops in the South and their big South Korean army, the DPRK ought to be ready for any surprises, and our people should be strong militarily. It is necessary for the enemy to know our might and fear it, and therefore along with stepping up peace negotiations and offering new proposals about the peaceful reunification of the country we have decided to hold a big military parade in Pyongyang on 25 April in connection with the 40th anniversary of the creation of the People's Revolutionary Army.

Our tactic, thus, is that we declare a readiness to reunify the country peacefully and again confirm this readiness by the adoption of a special appeal to the South at a session of the Supreme National Assembly. At the same time we are showing Park Chung Hee that we are sufficiently strong militarily and ready to defeat an enemy if he attacks us. Our military parade which we will hold on 25 April serves these goals.

5. Regarding the domestic situation in the DPRK Kim Il Sung noted that matters in industry and agriculture are going not too badly. In all sectors the people are working a lot and well, with great enthusiasm.

Kim Il Sung continued, for my birthday the workers are making a present of good industrial gifts to the motherland, striving to fulfill the tasks of two years of the six-year plan by the middle of April of this year.

Although in comparison to the Soviet people and the people living in the European socialist countries our people still live worse, nevertheless they are all satisfied, shod, and clothed. Not long ago all children and students were given clothing and shoes free of charge. The children are very satisfied with this, and they have a very good, happy mood.

Sort of joking, Kim Il Sung declared that if birthdays are always noted this way this would help the fulfillment of the six-year plan and promote the improvement of the

lives of the children and the entire people, then such anniversaries could be celebrated annually.

We said that on the basis of personal observations during trips throughout the country it can definitely be said that by and large the Koreans in the DPRK are not living badly. In all the provinces and cities where we visited it is clear that the people are satisfied and clothed, although also without overabundance.

Kim Il Sung replied that not long ago he received correspondents of the [Japanese] newspaper Asahi, and they told him that the annual consumption of meat per person in Japan does not exceed five to six kilograms. The population is experiencing many difficulties in food and everyday things. [Translator's note: the remainder of the paragraph from this point on was highlighted in the left margin]. There are not enough vegetables there, and the Japanese even don't buy radishes whole, but only in small parts. Of course, in comparison with the Japanese the Koreans live worse, but considerably better in comparison with the peoples of the other countries of Asia.

In Japan, they have their difficulties, as in any capitalist country. Sharp variations are exhibited in the standard of living there: along with rich people there are unemployed people, poor people, and homeless people. We have no especially rich people in Korea, but also no one especially poor, poorly-clothed, but also no one especially well-dressed, no hungry people, everyone is well-fed, although people still consume little meat, milk, and butter. In general, we live moderately.

The Party devotes great attention to improving the population's standard of living, and we are confident that in the coming years the people will live better.

6. At the conclusion of the conversation Kim Il Sung, turning to Heo Dam, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who was present at it, said that "Here our Minister told me on arrival from Moscow that Cde. L. I. Brezhnev had reminded [him] about his invitation to visit the Soviet Union and even criticized me somewhat for not coming. [Translator's note: the remainder of the paragraph from this point on was highlighted in the left margin]. Please pass to Cde. L. I. Brezhnev that I have not forgotten about his invitation and I very much want to meet with him and talk about everything. There are many questions which need to be discussed. I am planning a visit the Soviet Union this year and I am thinking of staying a little longer in order to have sufficient time both for conversations and for everything else.

Kim Il Sung said, please also pass my most sincere greetings and best wishes to Cdes. L. I. Brezhnev, N. V. Podgornyy, A. N. Kosygin, and all the leaders of the CPSU and Soviet government. Please pass my gratitude for the attention in connection with my birthday.

Having thanked Kim Il Sung for the detailed and interesting conversation we promised to report everything to the CPSU CC and Soviet government.

Kim Il Sung was in a good mood and held the conversation in a warm friendly tone. He stressed that although 9 April is not a work day, a Sunday, he is nevertheless working and is receiving the Soviet ambassador.

Heo Dam, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and also V. S. Bykov, First Secretary of the Soviet Embassy, were present at the conversation.

SOVIET AMBASSADOR IN THE DPRK  
[signature]

(N. SUDARIKOV)

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2 - to the CPSU CC [International] Department

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