



NORTH KOREA INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTATION PROJECT

WORKING PAPER #3

"Mostly Propaganda in Nature":
Kim Il Sung, the Juche Ideology,
and the Second Korean War

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December 2010

NKIDP



THE NORTH KOREA INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTATION PROJECT WORKING PAPER SERIES

Christian F. Ostermann and James F. Person, Series Editors

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"Mostly Propaganda in Nature:" Kim Il Sung, the *Juche* Ideology, and the Second Korean War

Mitchell Lerner¹

The Key Question

"The key question," asked the *New York Times* on January 28, 1968, "is why did they do it?"² The *Times* was referring to the North Korean seizure of the USS *Pueblo* in the Sea of Japan five days earlier, an event that left one American sailor dead and eighty-two others held captive in prison camps of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) for almost a year. Still, the question could have been applied to North Korean behavior during much of the late 1960s, as the *Pueblo* attack was just one in a series of aggressive North Korean military actions during this period. Earlier in January 1968, a group of 31 DPRK soldiers crossed the DMZ on a mission to assassinate ROK President Park Chung Hee, which culminated in a series of gun battles in and around Seoul. Less dramatic but equally troubling signs of increased North Korean belligerency could be found well before these two events. In 1966, military incidents along the DMZ had caused just 42 American and South Korean casualties; the first nine months of 1967 saw the number rise to almost 300.³ Suddenly, American troops assigned to South Korea routinely found their tours of duty extended to meet the growing danger, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff quietly reclassified the northern part of South Korea as a hostile fire zone, making troops stationed there

¹ The author wishes to thank Bruce Cumings, James Matray, Nicholas Evan Sarantakes, Jeremi Suri, and Balazs Szalontai for their valuable assistance in the preparation of this paper. Special thanks are due to James Person of the North Korean International Documentation Project for his advice, support, and patience throughout the process, and to the Cold War International History Project and its director, Christian Ostermann, for all of its contributions to the study of international history.

² *New York Times*, January 28, 1968, p. E1.

³ The estimated number of military incidents actually vary by source, but there is no doubt that the increase was substantial. These estimates, which are actually fairly conservative, come from "Mr. Bundy's Meeting with Mr. Colby, September 15, 1967," memorandum of conversation, September 15, 1967, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964–1968 Volume XXIX*, Part 1, Korea, document #127, note #3.

eligible for combat pay, as well as for the Combat Infantryman Badge and Combat Medical Badge. Nor was the West the only side concerned by what some would call the "Second Korean War." "Never," wrote the East German Ambassador to North Korea as 1967 drew to a close, "since the end of the Korean War, have there been so many and such severe incidents at the armistice line as in 1967."⁴

Long overshadowed by the Vietnam War, the Korean crisis of the late 1960s has only belatedly attracted the attention of scholars. A number of works over the past decade have examined the situation in some detail, but because of source limitations, they have generally focused on the American side of the story.⁵ Only in the last few years have scholars been able to open a window into the North Korean side of the conflict, largely by examining the relevant records of the DPRK's allies, most of which have been obtained and organized by the Cold War International History Project in Washington D.C.⁶ What follows here is an attempt, based primarily on these new materials, to do four things: 1) to chronicle the events of the "Second Korean War"; 2) to offer some details about North Korean relations within the communist bloc, particularly with regard to the two communist superpowers; 3) to provide a more extensive examination of changing internal DPRK circumstances in the 1960s; and 4) to draw some larger

⁴ Letter from GDR Ambassador to DPRK, December 8, 1967, to State Secretary and First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ministerium für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten der DDR [Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the GDR (henceforth: MfAA), G-A 320. **[Document 5]**

⁵ See for example Richard Mobley, *Flash Point North Korea* (U.S. Naval Institute Press, 2003); Daniel Bolger, *Scenes from an Unfinished War*, Leavenworth Papers #19 (Combat Studies Institute, Ft. Leavenworth Kansas), 1991, on line at: <http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/cgsc/carl/resources/csi/Bolger/bolger.asp> (last accessed February 16, 2010); Mitchell Lerner, *The Pueblo Incident* (University Press of Kansas, 2002); and Nicholas E. Sarantakes, "The Quiet War," *Journal of Military History*, April 2000, volume 64, p. 439-58.

⁶ See for example, Berndt Schaefer, *North Korean 'Adventurism' and China's Long Shadow, 1966-1972* (CWIHP Working Paper # 44, 2004), on line at: <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/topics/pubs/swp44.pdf> (last accessed, December 12, 2009); Mitchell Lerner, "A Dangerous Miscalculation: New Evidence from Communist-Bloc Archives about North Korea and the Crisis of 1968," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, volume 6, winter 2004, p. 3-21; and Sergei Radchenko, *The Soviet Union and the North Korean Seizure of the USS Pueblo: Evidence from Russian Archives*, (CWIHP Working Paper #47, 2004), on line at: http://www.wilsoncenter.org/topics/pubs/CWIHP_WP_47.pdf (last accessed December 12, 2010).

conclusions about the making of North Korean foreign policy during this period and the ideological roots that underlay it.

Historians and Historiography

The new materials contribute to our understanding of the Korean crisis in many specific areas. They provide, for example, fresh details about the hostility between North Korea and China during this critical decade. The schism between the two nations, of course, is not a new revelation. However, the new documents flesh out the depth of this animosity by providing some previously unknown details. Similarly, these materials help to better track the relationship between the DPRK and the Soviet Union, a relationship that evolved from a low point in the early 1960s to a much more stable connection by the later years of the decade. Still, the documents suggest that despite a superficial friendship between the two, this alliance remained fraught with tension, perhaps to a greater extent than has been generally recognized. The communist-bloc materials also demonstrate convincingly that Kim actively shaped relations between the DPRK and its communist superpower patrons, rather than, as some have alleged, being a passive actor largely reacting to the whims of the greater powers.⁷ They also reveal the extent to which Kim sought to establish close relations with the emerging Communist states, notably Cuba and North Vietnam, likely with an eye towards creating a bloc of smaller communist nations, with North Korea at the head, that might someday be better positioned to influence larger bloc policy.

⁷ See, for example, Helen Louise Hunter's "North Korea and the Myth of Equidistance," in Tae-Hwan Kwak (ed.) *The Two Koreas in World Politics* (Westview Press, 1985), which claims that, "It has been the Soviets and the Chinese who have taken the initiative in changing relations. Kim has had little—if any—leverage over either" (p. 207).

Most of all, though, the new materials help to better explain the causes of North Korean conduct during this volatile period. Since the onset of the Second Korean War in late 1966, many have struggled to explain this burst of DPRK bellicosity. This confusion existed on both sides of the Cold War division, as records demonstrate the great extent to which DPRK policymaking was often a mystery (and sometimes a source of frustration) to even its closest allies. Many different interpretations have been advanced, both during the crisis and after, to try to account for the explosion of hostilities. Yet, since there has been virtually no access into the DPRK until recently, almost all writing on the topic has been largely speculative and inferential, derived primarily from American and South Korean sources and a sort of *post-hoc, ergo propter-hoc* logic. Since this paper seeks to wade into this complex historiographical thicket, a detailed discussion of the different explanations thus seems to be in order.

Most interpretations for Pyongyang's belligerency during the Second Korean War can be lumped into one of six general explanatory categories. There are, of course, some significant drawbacks to the creation of such clearly delineated groupings. First, there is much overlap between these historiographical interpretations, so dividing them into distinct groups represents something of an oversimplification. Having one school of thought rooted in the Vietnam War and another in the changing dynamics of the larger Cold War, for example, ignores the fact that these two issues were obviously inter-related. Moreover, almost all historical accounts of the period recognize that more than one factor contributed to the explosion of hostilities in the late 1960s. The following efforts to establish separate and clearly defined interpretative schools is therefore not meant to imply that authors within one school have not recognized that other factors were relevant as well. Still, most explanations do emphasize one central factor even while acknowledging the impact of others, thereby allowing for a basic historiographical framework.

Of the six hypotheses, one can be largely rejected based on recent materials. This interpretation suggests that the North Korean attacks were actually defensive, driven by increased South Korean and American provocation. Frank Baldwin advanced this argument in the early 1970s, suggesting that North Korean actions were "defensive responses to U.S.- R.O.K. attempts to harm or destroy the D.P.R.K."⁸ Baldwin, and the few others that echoed this argument, generally relied on American sources, but Park Tae-Gyun has more recently integrated some communist bloc materials to reach similar conclusions, suggesting that North Korea had "a very defensive strategy in 1966 and 1967," and that the conflict was created, to a significant degree, by ROK desires to justify their increased aid requests from the United States.⁹ As more evidence from the archives of the DPRK's allies emerge, however, it has become clear that North Korea was the aggressor. While there is no doubt that South Korean officials did try to use the growing crisis to manipulate their American benefactors, the overwhelming preponderance of evidence suggests that the North provoked the vast majority of the military confrontations. "The incidents in the demilitarized zone and to the south of it," concluded a lengthy report from the Czechoslovakian government in 1968, "are intentionally and purposefully provoked mostly by the DPRK."¹⁰

A second category puts the Vietnam War at the center of the equation. Noting the similarities of timing between the American escalation in Vietnam and the DPRK actions, some have speculated that the two were connected. Many specific factors have been cited as possible reasons for this alleged relationship. Some have suggested that Kim Il Sung had been inspired by the success of the guerilla tactics of the North Vietnamese, and believed that similar tactics might

⁸ Frank Baldwin, ed., *Without Parallel: The American-Korean Relationship since 1945* (Pantheon, 1974), p. 33.

⁹ Park, Tae-Gyun, "Beyond the Myth: Reassessing the Security Crisis on the Korean Peninsula during the mid-1960s," *Pacific Affairs*, Volume 82, spring 2009, p. 93-110.

¹⁰ "Information about the Situation in Korea," February 5, 1968, State Central Archive, Prague, Central Committee of CPCZ Archive, File #3750, Fund 02/1, Vol 68, Ar. J. 61, p. 13.

work in Korea.¹¹ Some have argued that Kim was trying to help his Vietnamese allies by forcing the American military to divide its resources between the two fronts.¹² Others have claimed that Kim believed that America's commitment in Southeast Asia would prevent the U.S. from responding forcefully to his provocations against the South.¹³ Still another school of thought suggests that Kim was trying to warn the United States that attempts to replicate the Vietnam War through attacks in Korea would be met by harsh resistance.¹⁴ Recent documents from the communist side do suggest that Kim was paying close attention to events in Vietnam, and that there may be a kernel of truth to all of these suppositions. Still, a detailed examination suggests that other factors were likely more important. Kim was certainly aware of the American escalation of the War, and was greatly troubled by it. But there seems to be little concrete evidence connecting the two escalations. A coincidence in timing does not necessarily indicate causation.

A third category is even broader, as it connects the DPRK escalation to changing circumstances within superpower Cold War relations. There is again a wide range of specific arguments made within this framework. Cho Soon Sung has argued that Kim felt that the growing US-USSR rapprochement, by removing the threat of Soviet reprisal, had encouraged the US to increase its attacks against the smaller communist nations; North Korea, in this argument, had little to lose by increasing its activities against the South since the U.S. was likely planning

¹¹ See, for example Robert Scalapino and Chong-Sik Lee, *Communism in Korea* (University of California Press, 1972), p. 594-6.

¹² See, for example, Frank Baldwin, "Patrolling the Empire," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, Volume 4, summer 1972, p. 54-74; and Vandon Jenerette, "The Forgotten DMZ," *Military Review*, Volume 68, number 5, May 1988, p. 32-43.

¹³ See, for example, Donald Zagoria and Young Kun Kim, "North Korea and the Major Powers," in *Asian Survey*, Volume 15, December 1975, p. 1018; Narushige Michishita, "Calculated Adventurism," *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Volume 16, Number 2, Fall, 2004, p. 187; Daniel Bolger, *Scenes from an Unfinished War*, chapter 1, on-line at: <http://carl.army.mil/resources/csi/Bolger/bolger.asp> (last accessed December 14, 2009).

¹⁴ Yongho Kim, "North Korea's Use of Terror and Coercive Diplomacy: Looking for their Circumstantial Variants," *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, Vol. XIV, No. 1, Spring 2002, p. 8-9

increased actions against them regardless.¹⁵ Bradley Martin has offered a similar interpretation, one that adds the declining DPRK-China relationship to the equation by suggesting that Kim also felt abandoned by the Chinese, because of their focus on the Cultural Revolution.¹⁶ Bernd Schaefer has also stressed the impact of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, arguing that the chaos in China convinced Kim that he might emerge as the dominant Asian communist leader, but only if he could first demonstrate to other Communist states his commitment to fighting Western imperialism.¹⁷ Kathryn Weathersby has taken a different Cold War slant, suggesting that Kim was emboldened by his success in the preceding decade in maintaining his independent policy line despite the concerns of the Communist superpowers, largely by playing them off against each other. Accordingly, she speculates, Kim was encouraged to believe that he could increase his efforts against the South without serious ramifications.¹⁸ Regardless of the specific interpretation, however, this school is generally united by the belief that changing external circumstances, largely rooted in Beijing, Moscow, and Washington, were central in determining the DPRK policies.

A fourth category finds the defining imperative to be much closer to home by placing South Korean developments at the forefront of the escalation. In this interpretation, Kim recognized the growing economic might and political stability in South Korea, rooted particularly in the consolidation of power of the Park Chung Hee government, the massive economic and material support coming from the United States, the 1965 normalization of ROK-

¹⁵ Soon Sung Cho, "North and South Korea," in *Asian Survey*, Volume 9, January 1969, p. 35-6.

¹⁶ Bradley Martin, *Under the Loving Care of the Fatherly Leader: North Korea and the Kim Dynasty* (Thomas Dunne, 2004), p. 121-24. Chapter 7 of Martin's book, it should be noted, speculates that specific DPRK actions such as the *Pueblo* seizure and the Blue House raid may have reflected external factors such as the Vietnam War as well. Still, he is clear that the longer process of increased belligerency that started earlier in the decade was rooted in his relations with the Communist superpowers.

¹⁷ Schaefer, "North Korean 'Adventurism' and China's Long Shadow, 1966-1972."

¹⁸ Kathryn Weathersby, "Dependence and Mistrust," *US-Korea Institute Working Paper Series*, WP 08-08, December 2008.

Japan relations, and the elimination of most of the pro-Kim underground groups in the South. Fearful of falling behind in this critical competition, Kim thought it necessary to act to balance the scales. Again, there are subtle differences within the advocates of this position. Some have argued that Kim had a genuine belief that he might spark an indigenous uprising against the Southern government by reassuring Park's domestic opponents of Northern support;¹⁹ others have argued the opposite, suggesting that Kim recognized that no such opposition movement existed in the South in the face of the growing strength of the Park regime, and that he would therefore have to increase efforts to destabilize the government himself.²⁰ Still others have suggested that Kim knew that he could not directly influence the Southern political situation but thought he might discourage foreign investment into the region by creating unstable conditions, slowing down ROK growth while driving a wedge between the ROK and their foreign investors.²¹ Others have claimed that Kim's overseas audience was not limited to the West, but that instead he sought to show the world, particularly the Third World and the smaller Communist states, that the North was not intimidated by Southern advances and was still a power to be taken seriously.²² Regardless of the specifics, however, this school is rooted in the idea that Kim's paradigm shift in the late 1960s derived largely from the improving domestic situation within South Korea.

A fifth framework shifts the focus from the international to the domestic, and suggests that internal conflicts were at the heart of DPRK policy. Two specific interpretations dominate this school. The first focuses on the emergence of a more hard-line faction in DPRK politics.

¹⁹ Martin, p. 127

²⁰ See, for example, Charles Armstrong, "Necessary Enemies," *US-Korea Institute Working Paper Series*, WP 08-03, September 2008, p. 6; Bolger, *Scenes from an Unfinished War*; Balazs Szalontai, *Maneuvering Between the Battling Whales: North Korea's Involvement in the Second Indochina War, 1964-1975*, unpublished paper in author's possession.

²¹ Yong Soon Yim, "The Dynamics of North Korean Military Doctrine," in Kwak, *The Two Korea in World Politics*, pp. 124-26

²² Wayne Kiyosaki, *North Korea's Foreign Relations* (Praeger, 1976), p. 80.

Kim, in this argument, began in the late 1960s to rely more closely on a group of conservative, largely military, leaders who supported greater emphasis on military and defense spending, a focus on heavy industrial growth at the expense of consumer products, and a reduction of Chinese influence within their government. The growing influence of these more aggressive figures birthed the more strident military maneuvers against the South, designed both to reunify the country and justify the pro-heavy industry and military development positions of these men, according to this interpretation.²³ Another explanation that focuses on the domestic argues that the economic decline of the 1960s was at the heart of the matter, as Kim is alleged to have created this military crisis with the West in order to distract the public from their economic hardships, to have a convenient scapegoat for his economic failures, and/or to mobilize his people to work even harder to rebuild their manufacturing base in preparation for the inevitable American invasion. Kim, explained Robert Scalapino and Lee Chong-Sik, sought "to keep the tension high in order to justify the new sacrifices for which he was now calling."²⁴

A final explanation is perhaps the most complicated, and is the one that is largely championed in this paper. This argument also looks inside North Korea to explain Kim's aggressive behavior, but situates it in ideological rather than immediate political and economic imperatives. The critical piece to this interpretation is the ideological construct North Koreans call *Juche*, which roughly translates into "self-identity" or "self-reliance." *Juche*, which embraces Korean nationalism above all else, was first introduced by Kim in the 1950s and soon became the nation's governing precept. In this interpretation, various factors in the mid-1960s exacerbated Kim's need to demonstrate that he was still acting in accordance with *Juche*, specifically its emphasis on Korean nationalism and the cherished value of independent

²³ Dae-Sook Suh, *Kim Il Sung* (Columbia, 1988), especially p. 227-248; Mobley, pp. 103-04.

²⁴ Scalapino and Lee, pp. 596-97; Martin p. 127.

policymaking. We shall examine *Juche* in more detail shortly; for the purposes of this exercise in general categorization it is sufficient to note that this school cites many of the specific factors analyzed by the other schools: the steady economic decline of the 1960s; the domestic political instability rooted in the purge in 1967 and the subsequent purge of the militants a few years later; the difficulties in balancing between the superpowers, especially during the Cultural Revolution and the Soviet-US rapprochement; and more. Yet, this interpretation sees these events as important not simply in terms of their immediate practical result but in the way they encouraged (some would say forced) Kim to behave in ways that demonstrated that he could still act to defend Korean nationalism and independence in accordance with the critical belief system that defined his nation and his regime.

Understanding *Juche*

Since the concept of *Juche* is so vital to this argument, a basic overview of its origins and evolution seems appropriate. This belief system was first formally articulated by Kim Il Sung in a December 1955 speech entitled "On Eliminating Dogmatism and Formalism and Establishing *Juche* in Ideological Work." Here, Kim argued that the lack of emphasis on Korean heritage and uniqueness was hindering the success of the DPRK's revolution. "If we ignore the history of our country and the traditions of our people," he warned, "and take no account of our realities and the level of preparedness of our people, and copy from foreign experience mechanically, it will lead us to commit dogmatic errors and will do much harm to the revolutionary cause."²⁵ The solution was an emphasis on the uniquely Korean aspects of society, an emphasis that became the central tenet of Kim's subsequent domestic propaganda. On a basic level, Kim's concept of *Juche* was a

²⁵ Kim Il Sung, "On Eliminating Dogmatism and Formalism and Establishing *Juche* in Ideological Work," (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1964).

state of mind in which Koreans were free to advance their own interests, and the interests of their nation, without external influence. North Korea, it demanded, needed to develop in accordance with the country's traditions and values, driven by the genius and abilities of the Korean people, and under the guidance of only indigenous leaders. Within a decade, *Juche* had assumed a position of overwhelming dominance, the lens through which all actions were evaluated and all information was filtered. The word "*Juche*" regularly appeared in common DPRK colloquialisms; school textbooks were revised to place great emphasis on *Juche*; it became enshrined in the DPRK constitution as the official governing principle in 1972; the North Korean calendar was redrawn, to start in the year 1912 (the year of Kim's birth), which was renamed "*Juche* 1"; North Korea began hosting international seminars on the *Juche* idea; and the *Juche* tower was constructed, a 170-meter monument honoring *Juche* and its ideals, complete with 25,550 blocks of white granite, one for each day of Kim's life from birth to his 70th birthday (soon, *Juche* towers were replicated throughout the country, hovering over almost every city, village, and farm). It would be hard to overstate the impact the ideology has had on North Korean life. One historian has described it as: "a subjective, solipsistic, state of mind, the correct thought that must precede and that will then determine correct action, but also as a means of defining what is simultaneously modern and Korean...For a foreigner its meaning is ever-receding, into a pool of everything that makes Koreans Korean... [It] is the opaque core of North Korean national solipsism."²⁶

Kim's success in making *Juche* the dominant precept of DPRK society stemmed from a number of factors. Most obvious was the personality cult that he developed with increasing fervor in the 1960s, and which gave his every utterance an air of almost divine pronouncement. Photos of Kim littered the nation, with his face appearing in every school, home, public office,

²⁶ Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun* (Norton, 1997), pp. 403-04.

factory, street, bus, train, and subway station. Children called him "our father" and thanked him at the beginning of each meal. Brides and grooms swore allegiance to him at their weddings. "All people of North Korea are required to worship Kim Il Sung with all our hearts and might," recalled one who escaped into China.²⁷ Kim's self-glorification reached such extremes that even some of his communist allies found it troubling. The personality cult, noted Czech officials in 1968, had "reached unprecedented magnitude...Kim Il Sung is credited with all successes and victories past and present without regard to historical facts."²⁸ At the same time, the government controlled all media, and repressed those sources of information that might contradict him. In the end, these conditions allowed Kim to spread his ideas more effectively than almost any other modern leader. "The North Korean people have no alternative but to accept propaganda as true, given lack of access to outside reporting or information," recalled Hwang Jangyeop, a close advisor to the Kim family.²⁹ *Juche* thus became almost a mandated aspect of North Korean life. Everyone was required to memorize the "Ten Principles for the Establishment of the One-Ideology System of the Party," and to visit regularly any of the estimated 45,000 "Kim [Il Sung] Revolutionary Research Centers" for instruction and inspiration about the basic principles Kim championed. In such an atmosphere, it is no surprise that he was successful in forcing the construct into the heart of DPRK ideological life. "*Juche*," recalled one defector, "is the only religion North Korean people can have."³⁰

²⁷ Interviewee 17, quoted in "Thank you Father Kim Il Sung," a report prepared by the U.C. Commission on International Religious Freedom," p. 34, at: http://www.uscirf.gov/countries/region/east_asia/northkorea/NKwitnesses.pdf#search=%22cumings%20bruce%20juche%20confucianism%22 (accessed August 24, 2006).

²⁸ "Information about the Situation in Korea," p. 5.

²⁹ From "Testimonies of North Korean Defector: North Korean Foreign Relations," reprinted at: <http://www.fas.org/irp/world/rok/nis-docs/hwang6.htm> (accessed October 17, 2006).

³⁰ Quoted in "Thank you Father Kim Il Sung," a report prepared by the U.C. Commission on International Religious Freedom," November 2005, p. 33.

However, Kim's personal influence would not have been enough to lift *Juche* to its dominant position if the ideology did not conform to the nation's heritage and already existing beliefs. Even Kim, whose dominance within his country was beyond question—and perhaps beyond comparison in the 20th century—could not simply force onto the nation a defining paradigm that did not resonate with the values that already existed. *Juche*'s appeal therefore also reflected the population's fierce sense of nationalism. "Kim used this psychology in his politics in creating *Juche*," explained one North Korean official. "[Kim Il Sung] successfully uses the nationalistic self-reliant consciousness of the Korean people."³¹ In speeches and writings, Kim repeatedly played to this nationalist sentiment. "As far as the Korean revolution is concerned," he declared in 1969, "Koreans know about it better than anyone else. The masters of the Korean revolution are the Korean people and our own strength is the decisive factor in its victory . . . In order to ensure that the Korean revolution is a success, its masters, the Korean people themselves, must use their brains, solve all problems that arise through their own efforts and settle them in conformity with the interests of the Korean revolution."³² Although nationalism was of course not unique to Korea, the nation's long history of colonial occupation and resistance, common language and shared ancestral culture, and critical Cold War position between three superpowers made it particularly strong at the time of Kim's emergence. *Juche*'s nationalistic appeal was further strengthened by Korean history, since most of the nation had come to resent decisions made by the nation's leadership under the Yi Dynasty to become essentially a vassal state of China for hundreds of years. This sycophancy, labeled *sadaejuui* (or, "serving the great") was widely regarded as a betrayal of the nation's interests and was a critical factor in the constant

³¹ Kim Jong-min, quoted in Martin, *Under the Loving Care of the Fatherly Leader*, p. 772, footnote 88.

³² From "Answers to the Questions Raised by Abdel Hamid Ahmed Hamrouche, General Manager of Dar-El-Tahrir for Printing and Publishing of the United Arab Republic," July 1, 1969, in Kim Il Sung, *On Juche in our Revolution*, volume 2 (Weekly Guardian Associations 1975), p. 196.

struggle against foreign occupation. The Japanese occupation in the early 20th century contributed as well, since their efforts to eradicate all vestiges of Korean culture and national identity sparked a backlash that encouraged its rebirth after their departure, and further enhanced the appeal of Kim's stress on the defense of all things Korean.³³

Juche's appeal was further enhanced by the fact that the ideology built on the strong Korean traditions of Confucianism. Confucianism had a long history in the region, arriving from China during the Three Kingdoms period roughly two millennia ago. It reached a peak of influence during the Joseon Dynasty, which essentially adopted it as the national ideology in the late thirteenth century.³⁴ Confucianist schools flourished; Confucianist educational reforms emerged; Confucianist "community compacts" that established local codes of conduct and responsibilities proliferated; and Confucianist administrative models were implemented across governmental and other bureaucratic hierarchies. The Korean version of Confucianist thought was essentially conservative, encouraging such values as a belief in a hierarchical society rooted in political centralization, traditional veneration of the national past, loyalty to one's family and elders, and obedience and subordination to authority. The first Confucian community compact in many ways foreshadowed the restrictive principles implemented by Kim and underpinned by *Juche*, as it defined as punishable offenses: "Disobeying parents"; "Interfering with official business and meddling in village affairs"; "Insulting village elders"; "Criticizing those who govern in public or private assemblies"; "Failing to respect village ordinances"; and even "Failing to attend, for no good reason, farewell feasts for departing officials."³⁵ Thus, Kim's conception of

³³ Balazs Szalontai, *Kim Il Sung in the Khrushchev Era* (Stanford University Press, 2006).

³⁴ For good discussion of the impact of Confucianism and neo-Confucianism on Korea, see William Theodore de Bary and JaHyun Kim Haboush (eds.), *The Rise of Neo-Confucianism in Korea* (Columbia University Press, 1985); Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun* (Norton, 1998); Edward Chung, *The Korean Neo-Confucianism of Yi Toegye and Yi Yulgok* (SUNY Press, 1995); and Martina Deuchler, *The Confucian Transformation of Korea: A Study of Society and Ideology* (Harvard University Press, 1995).

³⁵ Sakai Tadao, "Yi Yulgok and the Community Compact," in de Bary and Haboush, p. 324-25.

Juche, with its stress on national traditions, the preservation of existing institutions, and obedience to higher authority, found a receptive audience in North Korea, one whose basic heritage offered a rock upon which Kim could build. *Juche*, to oversimplify dramatically, used Korean nationalism to support Kim's Stalinism.

Although *Juche* was first promulgated as a general call for self-reliance, it was soon defined more narrowly. Kim spelled out three specific realms in which *Juche* was vital, demanding: "independence in politics, self-sustenance in the economy, and self-defense in national defense—this is the stand our Party has consistently adhered to."³⁶ In each of these fields, *Juche* insisted on an assertion of North Korean exceptionalism and a rejection of all external forces; Koreans, Kim proclaimed, would never "dance to someone else's tune."³⁷ In the political realm, *Juche* called for *jaju*, in which North Korean leaders governed without constraint from outside pressure or internal challenge. This ability to act independently, Kim claimed, was "the prime criterion of any sovereign state."³⁸ A government that acted under pressure from another power," he warned, "cannot be called a genuine peoples' government responsible for the destiny of the people."³⁹ Economically, *Juche* promised *jarip*, which required a largely self-contained economy based on domestic workers using domestic resources to satisfy domestic needs. "The labor of North Korean workers," Kim claimed, could "produce all the material riches of society, and bring about social renovation and progress."⁴⁰ In matters of national defense, *Juche* advocated *jawi*, a foreign policy based on complete equality and mutual respect between

³⁶ From "On Socialist Construction and the South Korean Revolution in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea" lecture at the Ali Archam Academy of Social Sciences of Indonesia, April 14, 1965 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1968), p. 38.

³⁷ "DVO [Far East Department] Memorandum about Sino-Korean Relations," March 7, 1967, AVPRF, f. 0102, op. 23, p. 112, d. 24. **[Document 3]**

³⁸ From "On Present Political and Economic Policies of the DPRK and Some International Problems," January 10, 1972, in Kim Il Sung, *On Juche in our Revolution*, volume 2, p. 395

³⁹ Kim Il Sung, *Juche!* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1972), p. viii.

⁴⁰ From "Let us Further Strengthen The Socialist System of our Country," December 25, 1972, in Kim, *On Juche in our Revolution*, volume 2 (Weekly Guardian Associates, 1977), p. 472.

nations as well as the right of self-determination and independent policymaking. The DPRK, Kim insisted, "formulates its foreign policy on the basis of the *Juche* idea and is guided by this idea in carrying out its external activities. In a word, our republic firmly maintains its independence in its foreign activities."⁴¹ In each of these areas, the people of the DPRK were constantly pushed to advance through their own efforts, following the path charted by their leaders, and in accordance with the heritage and traditions of their nation. "The KWP leadership asserts that the KWP policy has always been right," wrote Czech officials in Pyongyang in 1967, "and it also maintains that it will be unwavering in following these principles: in ideology—*Juche* (application of the fundamental principles of Marx-Leninism to Korean conditions), in politics—independence, in economy—self sufficiency, and in national defense—self defense."⁴²

Although few historians question the central role that *Juche* played in the DPRK, there is a debate about the authenticity of Kim's commitment to it.⁴³ Some scholars have suggested that Kim had a true dedication to its principles, that he was genuinely devoted to precepts that accorded with the traditions and values that were rooted in the long history of the people and the region, and which he was determined to defend regardless of the international constraints, the opinions of his allies and enemies, and even the potential consequences from beyond the peninsula.⁴⁴ Kim's policies, they suggest, might have been anathema to people steeped in modern Western liberalism but they nonetheless genuinely reflected his nation's historic circumstances and his immersion in its indigenous values. "North Korea's independent line in foreign policy was determined by the desire for genuine independence in decision-making and in implementing

⁴¹ Quoted in Kiyosaki, *North Korea's Foreign Relations*, p. 25.

⁴² "Information about Development of Politics of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and of Czechoslovak-Korean Relations," 1967 (no date), State Central Archive Prague, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, file: 022.480/67-3, p. 6.

⁴³ For a different interpretation about the importance of *Juche* on DPRK society, see especially Brian Myers, "The Watershed that Wasn't," *Acta Koreana*, Volume 9, Number 1, January 2006.

⁴⁴ See, for example, Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun*, and Byun, *North Korea's Foreign Policy*.

its policy," concluded one study. "Many Western scholars see North Korean foreign policy as nothing more than a dangerous acrobatic attempt by Kim Il Sung to preserve his regime. But such a view often overlooks the essential nature of North Korea's policy."⁴⁵ Others, however, have seen *Juche* as a more manipulative ploy, primarily devoted to preserving Kim's government.⁴⁶ In this interpretation, *Juche*'s neo-Confucian overtones, with its emphasis on hierarchy, obedience, and submission to authority, helped deter possible domestic opposition. Its emphasis on Korean nationalism helped rally people to him in times of crisis, regardless of whether the crises were genuine or manufactured. Moreover, Kim's *Juche* specifically emphasized the role of a single leader, the *suryong*, an almost God-like figure without whose guidance the masses would be unable to act collectively, develop revolutionary consciousness, or discern the correct path toward their socialist destiny; Kim obviously envisioned himself as the one filling that role. *Juche*, concludes one study, was therefore "an instrumental principle, not an abstract norm, designed largely to cope with the continuing crisis of legitimacy."⁴⁷ Regardless of the extent of his commitment, however, the impact of the *Juche* ideology on the evolution of Korean society is clear and irrefutable. By the 1960s, it had become the defining aspect of DPRK life. Yet, the impact of this ideological paradigm on the shaping of North Korean foreign policy is often overlooked. The Second Korean War can serve as a demonstration of the significant role that it played.

⁴⁵ Byun, *North Korea's Foreign Policy*, p. 77.

⁴⁶ See, for example, Lerner, *Pueblo Incident*, chapter 5; Samuel Kim "Pyongyang, the Third World, and Global Politics," in Kwak, *The Two Koreas in World Politics*; and Jae Kyu Park, "North Korea's Policy toward the Third World, in Kwak, *The Two Koreas in World Politics*.

⁴⁷ Samuel Kim, "Pyongyang and the Third World," in Kwak, *The Two Koreas in World Politics*, p. 61.

The Second Korean War

Korea has been one of the "hottest" of the proverbial Cold War hot spots since its division at the end of World War II. Tens of thousands died in skirmishes even before North Korean forces crossed the 38th parallel in 1950. Although the fighting officially ended in 1953, tensions have persisted. In August 1955, DPRK anti-aircraft artillery downed an American T-6 training aircraft, killing one man. Three years later, they shot down an F-86 Sabre Jet that strayed over the restricted zone, holding the pilot prisoner briefly before returning him to the United States. Northern rhetoric was even more belligerent. DPRK children, claimed *Pyongyang Radio* in 1959, were being kidnapped and sold to the United States, where "most of them were divided among American capitalists and plantation owners, and many children died while they were being sold around like animals in the foreign land."⁴⁸ Yet, despite the occasional flare-up, the overall level of violence declined dramatically after the 1953 Armistice. Incidents along the DMZ still occurred but to some extent it was their very infrequency that seemed to make them newsworthy. American soldiers manning the demilitarized zone (DMZ) still faced dangers, wrote the *New York Times* in 1962, but since the North seemed to have adopted a "soft, pro-coexistence line," such service was now considered "generally tedious."⁴⁹

The calm, however, began to fade in the mid-1960s. The explosion of violence started in late 1966, when Kim began sending guerrillas into South Korea for the first time since the Korean War. The relative stability along the DMZ was soon shattered. Military incidents grew from 42 in 1965 to 286 in just the first 6 months of 1967, and mutual exchanges of gunfire across

⁴⁸ *Washington Post*, June 8, 1959, p. 6.

⁴⁹ *New York Times*, November 23, 1962, p. 28.

the armistice line had become a daily event by late 1967.⁵⁰ Overall, according to the Australian Ambassador to the USSR, DPRK troop incursion into the South increased from 150 in 1966 to 566 in 1967.⁵¹ Direct attacks on US property were not uncommon; one attack, in May 1967, resulted in the destruction of two US infantry barracks, killing two men and leaving 19 wounded.⁵² That year also saw two ship-to-shore firefights along the Southern coast, a North Korean attack on a ROK army barracks, and large-scale guerrilla infiltration. Nor was it just the area along the parallel that came under increased pressure, as DPRK forces expanded their infiltration efforts into remote rural areas, likely scouting for possible bases for future operations. They also, largely in the wake of improved defensive systems implemented along the DMZ, increased naval infiltration of the South. North Korean propaganda stressed American responsibility for the provocations and warned of an impending attack, but even the DPRK's allies knew who was responsible for the outbreaks; Soviet officials in North Korea, according to one report, "held the view that they were mostly instigated by the DPRK."⁵³

The violence reached a peak in early 1968. On January 17, thirty-one North Korean Army officers crossed through the DMZ on a mission to assassinate ROK President Park Chung Hee. Four days later, while disguised as ROK soldiers, they reached the "Blue House," the official presidential residence in Seoul. A suspicious ROK policeman stopped them shortly before they could attack, and the ensuing firefight saw eight South Koreans and five members of the commando team killed. The rest of the guerrillas fled, sparking a nationwide manhunt that

⁵⁰ "Telegram From the Commander in Chief, United Nations Command, Korea and the Commander of United States Forces, Korea (Bonesteel) to the Commander in Chief, Pacific (Sharp)," July 21, 1967, Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library (henceforth "LBJL"), National Security File, Country File, Korea, Vol. IV.

⁵¹ "Record of a Conversation with J. [Rowland], Australian Ambassador to the USSR, 29 January 1968," from the journal of S.P. Kozyrev, 30 January 1968.

⁵² "Security Conditions in South Korea," CIA report, June 23, 1967, LBJL, National Security File, Country File, Korea, Vol. IV.

⁵³ Letter to Secretary of State and First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Comrade Hegen, from Embassy of the GDR in the DPRK, December 12, 1966, Archives of the Foreign Office, Berlin, Collection MfAA, G-A 316.

[Document 2]

left all but one of the intruders dead. An infuriated ROK population demanded retaliation. The Korean Peoples Anti-Communist League sponsored a rally in Seoul; despite twenty-degree weather, 100,000 people showed up to march three miles and burn a ten-foot straw effigy of the North Korean leader. Similar feelings were echoed throughout the nation. Anti-DPRK sentiment, wrote the Czech embassy to Pyongyang, was so strong that "South Korean authorities did not even have to apply direct pressure to ensure participation in these demonstrations."⁵⁴ When President Park ordered the creation of a local defense force, the Homeland Reserve Defense Force, to supplement the regular army, 2 million South Koreans volunteered within six months. Under fierce American pressure, Park managed to restrain his military from taking major retaliatory actions against the North, but it was not easy. "Few people" recalled one American general, "realize how close we came to war on January 21."⁵⁵

Within a week, war seemed even more likely. On January 23, North Korean air and naval forces surrounded the USS *Pueblo*, an American spy ship operating off the DPRK coast in the Sea of Japan. "Heave to," one of the ships ordered, "or I will open fire." *Pueblo* had been warned to expect some routine harassment, and Captain Pete Bucher confidently raised his ship's signal flags: "I am in international waters. Intend to remain in the area until tomorrow." Suddenly, a North Korean P-4 torpedo boat backed down on the American ship, with an armed landing party set to board *Pueblo*. The spy ship's engines slipped into gear at the last moment, but escape proved impossible. The faster DPRK ships again closed on *Pueblo* and opened fire, scattering destruction across the deck. With his ship virtually unarmed, and with no support on the horizon, Bucher surrendered. *Pueblo*, now with one man dead and numerous others injured, was boarded and sailed into Wonsan Harbor. The crewmen were violently dragged onto land and bused to a

⁵⁴ "Pueblo and American-South Korean relations," February 9, 1968, Political Report #11, Czech Embassy in the DPRK, Report # 031/68, SM-021712/68.

⁵⁵ Anonymous general quoted in *New York Times*, August 16, 1968.

North Korean prison camp, where they were held for eleven months of torture, abuse, and public humiliation.

For much of 1968, a second Korean War thus seemed imminent. An outraged American public demanded retaliation, especially as the DPRK regularly used the *Pueblo* men as propaganda pawns by bringing them into public for press conferences and other appearances throughout the year. Senator Russell Long (D-LA) suggested the United States begin sinking North Korean gunboats and holding their merchant ships hostage; "If the Soviets want to deal itself in on it," Long trumpeted, "they can get in on it, too."⁵⁶ Senator Mendell Rivers (D-SC) agreed. "I'd select a target," he told the media. "I'd do like Truman did--let one of them disappear."⁵⁷ The American public was also outraged. Telegrams flooded the White House. One from Los Angeles asked Johnson to "drop a juicy bomb on their capital" and another from Philadelphia demanded, "drop the hydrogen bomb and let's end it."⁵⁸ South Korea was equally aflame. In February, over 1,000 ROK high school students protested in front of US Information Service Centers at Daegu and Kwangju, demanding action against the North and an end to "boot-licking conferences."⁵⁹ One ROK newspaper blasted the "humiliating appeasement posture of the United States," and another concluded, "Instead of dealing a severe blow of retaliation against a series of barbarous acts of bellicosity committed by the North Korean communist aggressors, the world's biggest power seems to have started dancing to the communist

⁵⁶ *Philadelphia Enquirer*, January 29, 1968

⁵⁷ *Washington Post*, January 27, 1968.

⁵⁸ Los Angeles telegram from Irving Pell, Philadelphia telegram from Herbert Trulick, in Johnson Library, White House Central Files, subject file, defense, ND 19/CO 151, box 210.

⁵⁹ "Chronology of Diplomatic Activity in Pueblo Crisis," U.S. State Dept. report, April 29, 1968, Declassified Document Record System, document #CK3100150473, p. 298.

propaganda tune."⁶⁰ Park himself, wrote Secretary of State Dean Rusk, had "become increasingly obsessed with the desire to strike back across the DMZ."⁶¹

Many on the Communist side also expected war, including the Polish Ambassador to North Korea. "If the DPRK does not accede to U.S. demands to return the ship and crew," he told a fellow Ambassador, "we might probably witness an armed conflict here."⁶² Chinese officials reported that the North Korean people were rallying for war, confident that the USSR and China would back them with nuclear weapons if needed.⁶³ The Embassy of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) agreed, adding that "the most significant element of the current domestic situation in the DPRK is the creation, respectively fueling, of an all-out war psychosis among the population.... Average citizens must arrive at the conclusion that war is imminent in the very near future. Apparently there are discussions about this context in wide swaths of the population."⁶⁴ Moscow desperately tried to keep Kim under control. The Soviet government, noted a Hungarian official, believes that, "the further prolongation of the crisis would be seriously dangerous...[and] strives to induce the DPRK to find a right time for handing over of the *Pueblo* and its crew...so as to put an end to the crisis."⁶⁵ In mid-February, the Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK quietly informed Kim that "we need a peaceful resolution and a

⁶⁰ "Humiliating appeasement" in telegram 4015 from American Embassy Seoul to State Department, February 6, 1968, LBJL, NSC Histories, *Pueblo* Crisis, 1968, box 34-5, volume 16, telegrams from Seoul, tabs 1-5; "propaganda tune" in *New York Times*, February 8, 1968, p. 15.

⁶¹ Telegram 120315 from Rusk to Porter, February 24, 1968, National Archives II, 1967-69 Central Files, Pol 33-6, box 2255, 2/21/68 folder.

⁶² "Note on a Conversation with the Polish Ambassador, Comrade Naperei, on 26 January 1968, in the Polish Embassy," GDR Embassy to DPRK, 27 January 1968, PolA AA, MfAA, G-A 360, p.1. **[Document 8]**

⁶³ East German in "Memorandum on an Information of 1 February 1968," Embassy of the GDR in Pyongyang, 2 February 1968, MfAA C 1023/73; Chinese in "Excerpt from a Personal Letter of the Acting Ambassador of the GDR in Pyongyang, Comrade Jarck," attachment to a letter from GDR Foreign Minister Hegen to GDR officials, February 23, 1968, MfAA C1093/70.

⁶⁴ Letter from GDR Embassy to DPRK, March 4, 1968, to State Secretary and First Deputy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, PolA AA, MfAA, G-A 360, p. 2. **[Document 11]**

⁶⁵ "Report, Embassy of Hungary in the Soviet Union to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, 30 January 1968," MOL, XIX-J-1-j Korea, 1968, 58. Doboz, 3, 00894/8/1968. **[Document 9]**

reasonable solution."⁶⁶ Soviet frustration with their ally sometimes even exploded into the public arena. At the April 1968 Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party Plenum, Party General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev blasted North Korea in a lengthy speech. "The measures taken in this case by the government of the DPRK appear unusually harsh," he declared. "We insistently advised the Korean comrades...to show reserve, not to give the Americans an excuse for widening provocations, to settle the incident by political means...But the Korean comrades maintained [a] fairly extreme position and did not show any inclination towards the settlement of the incident." North Korean officials, he reported, "spoke to the intentions to bind the Soviet Union somehow, using the existence of the treaty between the USSR and the DPRK to involve us in supporting such plans of the Korean friends, about which we knew nothing." Accordingly, Brezhnev had summoned DPRK policymakers to Moscow, where he informed Defense Minister Kim Changbong that they considered the treaty to be defensive in nature, and that military actions in the matter were "a very difficult question."⁶⁷

Still, the DPRK refused to yield, demanding the United States apologize and take other actions to ensure that the "national dignity of the DPRK was not insulted."⁶⁸ The North massed its defense forces along its harbors and the DMZ, and kept a number of jets constantly in the skies.⁶⁹ Nor were their actions strictly defensive. Kim, lamented a Polish member of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission shortly after the Blue House and *Pueblo* attacks, was still

⁶⁶ "Note on a Conversation with the USSR Ambassador, Comrade Suradikov, on 16 February 1968 between 16:15 and 17:30 hours," GDR Embassy to DPRK, Pyongyang, 20 February 1968, PolA AA, MfAA, G-A 320.

⁶⁷ "Excerpt from Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev's speech at the April (1968) CC CPSU Plenum," *On the current problems of the international situation and on the struggle of the CPSU for the unity of the international communist movement*, 9 April 1968, Russian Government Archives of Contemporary History, fond 2, opis 3, delo 95, listy 50-58.

⁶⁸ "Information about the Situation in Korea," p. 15. [Document 10]

⁶⁹ Jets in "Memorandum on an Information of 1 February 1968," p.1; defense forces in "Study of Tension in the Korean area (Military Part), February 4, 1968, Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs, State Central Archive, Prague, file: 020.873/68-3, p. 3-4. [Document 10]

launching "continuous attempts" to infiltrate South Korea with commandos.⁷⁰ In April 1968, an ambush of a United Nations Command (UNC) truck along the DMZ left four UNC soldiers dead. A few months later, the Polish Ambassador to the DPRK reported that armed clashes over the preceding six weeks had resulted in an estimated 30 deaths along the southern side of the DMZ.⁷¹ In October, the North landed approximately 120 soldiers at different locations along the east coast of South Korea, between the towns of Uljin and Samcheok, sparking a series of fights that left 63 Southerners and many more Northerners dead. The violence had reached levels not seen since the end of Korean War in 1953, and there seemed no end in sight. "The recurrence of similar events can be expected," predicted the East German Ambassador to the DPRK. "Thus the tensions, which are also created by other factors, will certainly not diminish but rather will increase."⁷²

This dire prediction, however, soon proved erroneous. North Korea began to reverse course in 1969, and tensions returned to the level of the years that had preceded the Second Korean War. Military incidents still occurred occasionally, most notably the DPRK shoot-down of an American EC-121 reconnaissance plane that had been conducting aerial intelligence collection operations about 70 miles southeast of Cheongjin, killing all 31 Americans on board. Still, Northern bellicosity was clearly on the wane. The number of firefights along the DMZ fell from 236 in 1968 to 39 in 1969, and the number of South Korean soldiers killed in action fell from 145 to 1 in the same period.⁷³ The *Pueblo* men came home, and within a few years the Nixon administration began publicly discussing the possibility of removing most American

⁷⁰ "Note on a conversation with the Polish Ambassador, Comrade Naperei, on 26 January 1968, in the Polish Embassy," p.1. [Document 8]

⁷¹ "Note on the Farewell Visit of the Polish Ambassador to the DPRK, Comrade Naperei, with Comrade Jarck on 26 July 1968, between 11:00 and 12:30 hours," GDR Embassy to DPRK, July 29, 1968, PolA AA, MFAA, G-A 360, p. 2.

⁷² "Excerpt from a Personal Letter of the Acting Ambassador of the GDR in Pyongyang, Comrade Jarck," p. 1.

⁷³ Bolger, *Scenes from an Unfinished War*.

troops from South Korea. Even the EC-121 attack appears to have likely been the result of a command-and-control failure between DPRK local commanders and the fighter pilot, done without the approval of higher authorities. Still, the period of the Second Korean War stand as one of the most dangerous times on the Korean peninsula since 1953. And the key question remains: "Why did they do it?"

The Sources of North Korean Conduct

Many hypotheses have been put forward to explain DPRK behavior in this critical period. They posit a multitude of different factors, ranging from Vietnam to South Korea, from scaring away Western investment in the South to encouraging increased Communist aid to the North, from Kim's need to placate a growing military faction within his government to his desire to impress the Third World, among other explanations. This paper does not deny the impact of any of these factors. No doubt all of them played some role in the events of this critical period. History is rarely uni-casual. However, the materials that have emerged from the communist bloc archives over the past few years suggest that DPRK behavior cannot be understood by looking at these immediate factors unless they are placed within a larger framework that ties these short-term stimuli to more deeply-rooted structural forces embedded in North Korea's defining ideological paradigm. Specifically, this argument suggests, Kim manufactured the Second Korean War for two primary and related reasons: first, to ensure that he had a scapegoat for his obvious failures in the vital economic (*jarip*) and political (*jaju*) realms of *Juche*; and second, to demonstrate to his domestic audience that he remained true to *Juche* principles and traditions in the arena of defense and foreign affairs (*jawi*). Kim, to put it simply, was compensating for internal failures by generating external crises that would help him offset any potential threat to his control largely by using these crises as a platform to demonstrate his adherence to the nation's

primary value system. Or, as the Czech Ambassador to North Korea wrote, "Instead of mobilization to accomplish work goals, all attention is focused on foreign policy issues, combat readiness and unity of Asian and African countries. We agree with our friends that with all these actions—[the] number of various mass gatherings all over the whole DPRK...and [the] mass welcomes of various delegations—the KWP is trying to distract people from pressing economic problems and to drown internal difficulties in similar actions."⁷⁴

Understanding this argument requires stepping back from the immediate crisis of the late-1960s, and understanding what had transpired within North Korean society in the years immediately preceding it, with an eye towards determining what might have sparked Kim's pugnacious behavior. For approximately ten years after the end of the Korean War, the DPRK was generally characterized by stability in all three of the vital *Juche* areas. Kim seemed to turn his attention inward, focusing on rebuilding the national economy and solidifying his political control. He generally succeeded in both objectives. Politically, his rule stabilized, especially after he outmaneuvered a series of opponents at the August Party Plenum in 1956.⁷⁵ Any doubts about his control should have been vanquished by the results of the 1957 elections to the Supreme Peoples Assembly, which reported that 99.82% of the electorate supported his chosen slate of candidates.⁷⁶ By 1958 Kim's loyal supporters from the so-called Kapsan faction had consolidated their control of the KWP, the military, and the bureaucracy to such an extent that one scholar has called it part of a "second Korean revolution."⁷⁷ By 1962 Kim could truthfully tell the Soviet Ambassador, "Inside our party the situation is also good. We have now achieved firm unity and cohesion; there are no anti-party groups. In our opinion, the KWP is now cohesive and battle-

⁷⁴ "On the Development of Situation in DPRK in May 1965; Political Report #8," May 27, 1965, cable from Czech Ambassador to North Korea, State Central Archive, Prague, file # (not visible/65), p. 5. **[Document 1]**

⁷⁵ The best analysis of this critical moment in Kim's political rise is found in James Person, *We Need Help from Outside': The North Korean Opposition Movement of 1956*, CWIHP Working Paper #52, August 2006.

⁷⁶ Bon-Hak Koo, *Political Economy of Self-Reliance*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Cincinnati, 1992, p. 93.

⁷⁷ Barry Gills, *Korea versus Korea* (Routledge, 1996), pp. 59-60.

ready as never before."⁷⁸ His success also appeared in the economic realm. The Five-Year Plan established in 1957 actually achieved its targets in four years. Especially significant, particularly in the sense that it offered clear signs of *Juche*, was the growth of local industry, which was producing an estimated 100% of the nation's soft drinks, wine, and beer, along with over 90% of the bean paste and soy sauce.⁷⁹ And while definitive economic statistics about North Korea are obviously hard to come by, most evidence points to an impressive growth rate, significant personal wealth advances, and increased educational opportunities, all of which dwarfed the comparable rates of its Southern rival.

Overall, North Korea seemed to be entering the 1960s poised for continued success. In September 1961, Kim informed the Fourth Party Conference that, "The historic revolutionary tasks of completing socialist transformation in town and country, and building the foundation of socialism have been triumphantly carried out."⁸⁰ He predicted that by the middle of the decade his people would have "A rich life, living in tile-roofed houses, eating rice and much meat, and wearing fine clothes . . . all aspects of our people's life will become bountiful, modern, and more enjoyable."⁸¹ He also celebrated the unity of the Korean Workers Party; "Never before in the history of the Korean communist movement has the Party's ideology and organization been as strong as today," he informed Conference delegates. And he left little doubt that *Juche* was the glue that was holding it all together. "There have never been such close ties between the party

⁷⁸ "Memorandum of Conversation between Soviet Ambassador to North Korea Vasily Moskovsky and Kim Il Sung," November 14, 1962, CWHIP Virtual Archive, *North Korea in the Cold War*.

⁷⁹ Hy-Sang Lee, *North Korea* (Praeger, 2001), p. 34.

⁸⁰ From "Report on the Work of the Central Committee to the Fourth Congress of the Workers Party of Korea," September 11, 1961, in Kim, *On Juche in our Revolution*, volume 1, p. 226.

⁸¹ From "Report on the Work of the Central Committee to the Fourth Congress of the Workers Party of Korea," September 11, 1961, in Kim, *On Juche in our Revolution*, volume 1, p. 305-311.

and the people under a single ideology as today," he told them.⁸² "The government of the Republic," he echoed a few years later:

has been able to score great victories and successes in the revolutionary struggle and construction work, as it has persistently endeavored to solve all problems independently, in conformity with the specific realities of our country and mainly through its own efforts, guided consistently by the *Juche* idea of the Workers' Party of Korea...[*Juche*] has enabled us to build a socialist state in a short time, which has political independence, economic self-sustenance and national self-defense.⁸³

Defense Minister Kim Changbong agreed. "Our Korean People's Army has solidly armored itself with the unitary ideology of our party," he announced. "She is fiercely loyal only to the great revolutionary ideology of Comrade Kim Il Sung, our respected and beloved leader, and does not know any other ideology."⁸⁴

If the three aspects of *Juche*—politics, defense, and economics—were emerging in the late 1950s as the central principles that defined DPRK society, this period thus saw Kim safely wrapped in a cocoon of economic and political stability. His nation seemed prosperous because of its own resources and people, and seemed stable because of the strength and brilliance of its own leaders. Increasing conflict with the United States and South Korea at this point was not only unnecessary but could be potentially damaging to the *Juche*-based harmony that Kim was using to unite the country under his leadership. In fact, starting in the late 1950s, Kim made a number of proposals ostensibly designed to move the peninsula towards peaceful reunification, including plans for a non-aggression pact and simultaneous troop reductions; participation in an international conference to oversee reunification; all-Korean elections to be held under the

⁸² Quoted in Ilpyong Kim, "North Korea's Fourth Party Conference," *Pacific Affairs*, Spring 1962, p. 48.

⁸³ "Let us Embody the Revolutionary Spirit of Independence, Self-Sustenance and Self-Defense More Thoroughly in All Fields of State Activity," speech at the Fourth Supreme People's Assembly of the D.P.R.K, December 16, 1967, reprinted in *For the Independent Peaceful Reunification of Korea* (New York: International Publishers, 1975), p. 112.

⁸⁴ Letter from GDR Embassy to DPRK, to State Secretary Hegen, March 4, 1968, p. 6. [Document 11]

supervision of neutral nations; and dramatic expansions of direct North-South talks on cultural and economic links. These propositions were made with increasing frequency. "On practically every ceremonial occasion," one study concluded, "at every mass meeting, in every important speech made in North Korea, and during every night of radio broadcasting to South Korea, the North Koreans have parroted these proposals as if they were the only solution."⁸⁵ Such plans went nowhere, which is where most in the United States and South Korea—probably correctly—believed they were intended to go. Kim no doubt desired re-unification but he wanted it only on his terms, and such terms were not yet attainable. Still, the fact that unification plans, rather than bullets, were emanating from the North was an obvious sign that the tensions that had marked the preceding years had lessened. "We know ... that American forces will not leave the South any time soon, and one must have patience and time [to tolerate] that," Kim told the GDR Ambassador to Pyongyang in 1962. "We have those, we shall accumulate economic wealth, and win time. We do not need a war."⁸⁶ Awash in a sea of *Juche* at home, Kim seemed to have no need to pursue additional evidence from abroad.

Internal conditions, however, soon began to change. By the mid-1960s, the North Korean economy was showing obvious signs of collapse. Food and housing shortages swept the nation, while industrial and agricultural production slowed dramatically. In 1966, the Seven-Year Plan was extended to ten years to meet its targets, and still objectives went unrealized in important industrial areas such as steel, cement, chemical fertilizers, and machinery.⁸⁷ Kim's willingness to admit these shortcomings in public demonstrated the extent to which they were recognized by the DPRK population. He commented on the economic decline as early as 1963, in a New Year's

⁸⁵ Cho Soo Sung, "The Politics of North Korea's Unification Policies, 1950-65," *World Politics*, 1967, volume 19, number 2, p. 233.

⁸⁶ "Conversation between Soviet Ambassador in North Korea Vasily Moskovsky and German Ambassador Schneidewind, September 20, 1962 reprinted in CWHIP Document Archive, *North Korea's Efforts to Acquire Nuclear Technology and Nuclear Weapons: Evidence from Russian and Hungarian Archives*," document #5.

⁸⁷ Koh, *The Foreign Policy Systems of North and South Korea*, p. 41.

address that acknowledged economic problems in the crucial areas of coal and steel, and ordered the mobilization of one million women into the labor force.⁸⁸ The following year he admitted that production was, "not abundant as to meet all the requirements of the people," and in 1966 he told the Second Korean Workers Party Conference, "We must . . . radically improve the material and cultural life of the people."⁸⁹

Recent revelations from the communist archives more fully demonstrate the depth of the economic crisis. As early as 1963, Kim confessed to Soviet Ambassador V.P. Moskovsky that coal and ore mines had fallen very much behind and were "failing to satisfy consumption."⁹⁰ The nation was suffering from serious power shortages, which by 1966 were so extreme that newly built industrial plants had to postpone their operations.⁹¹ Agriculture was afflicted as well, Moskovsky reported, hindered by antiquated equipment, outdated approaches, and a manpower shortage so extreme that about a million urban industrial workers had recently been relocated to work the farms.⁹² Even the DPRK military suffered. A visiting Czechoslovakian colonel who participated in DPRK exercises in 1965 pronounced their equipment outdated by 15-20 years, noting that more than half of the tanks used in a recent exercise had broken down before reaching their targets; the following year officials had to delay the construction of a series of mountain fortifications and a Pyongyang subway system that was being built for military purposes.⁹³ Kim's allies not only recognized the decline but also worried about its impact on

⁸⁸ Suh, *Kim Il Sung*, p. 218.

⁸⁹ From "The Present Situation and the Tasks of our Party," October 5, 1996, in Kim, *On Juche in our Revolution*, volume 1, p. 575.

⁹⁰ "Memorandum of a conversation with the USSR Ambassador c. V.P. Moskovskiy and the GDR Ambassador c. Otto Becker," Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 7th Territorial Department, May 16, 1963, State Central Archive in Prague, File # 267, 261/01-OZU, p. 2.

⁹¹ February 25, 1966 report from Hungarian Embassy, in North Korean International Documentation Project (NKIDP) electronic archives, at http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=topics.home&topic_id=230972.

⁹² "Memorandum of a conversation with the USSR Ambassador c. V.P. Moskovskiy and the GDR Ambassador c. Otto Becker," p. 4.

⁹³ Tanks in May 15 1965 memo by Hungarian Ambassador Jozsef Kovacs in North Korean International Documentation Project (NKIDP) electronic archives, at

economic relations. Czech officials expressed concerns that not only was the DPRK likely to request adjustments to their repayment schedule for a loan granted the previous decade, but that the poor quality of North Korean imports and the failure of the DPRK to deliver promised goods in 1965 and 1966 also made stable trade relations even more unlikely.⁹⁴ No surprise, then, that a 1967 request by DPRK officials to the Czech Ministry of Foreign Trade for a large credit to purchase Czech industrial equipment was rejected.⁹⁵

Beyond the specific details of economic deprivation, however, it was clear that the economic situation was failing on another important level: as a sign of the government's ability to maintain *Juche* in economic relations. The inability to reach widely publicized objectives, the public admissions of shortcomings, the presence of massive amounts of imported goods, the inadequacy of shelter and sustenance, and the obvious cancellation of many major industrial and social projects, had fostered problems that transcended simple economic need. Since North Korean society evaluated everything from within a construct that demanded economic stability and independence, the failure to achieve these results was a violation of the most sacred precepts of North Korean life. A decline in public morale had become noticeable; "living standards had stagnated in the last years," reported a Romanian official, "which caused tension in the country."⁹⁶ Kim, for the first time in a decade, appears to have had legitimate reasons for concern about the stability of his regime.

Perhaps the poor economic performance would have been less threatening had Kim's pursuit of *Juche* in political life been more successful, but circumstances beyond his control

http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=topics.home&topic_id=230972 ; Subway in February 25, 1966 report from Hungarian Embassy, in North Korean International Documentation Project (NKIDP) electronic archives, at http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=topics.home&topic_id=230972 .

⁹⁴ "Information about Development of Politics of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and of Czechoslovak-Korean Relations," 1967 (no date), p. 10-11.

⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 11.

⁹⁶ February 25, 1966 report from Hungarian Embassy.

dictated otherwise. Although internal KWP tensions did not reach the level they had in 1956, the mid-1960s saw a revival of factionalism and instability that threatened (or at least offered hints of impending threats) Kim's unquestioned power for the first time in a decade. Although historians still disagree about the fundamental reasons for the internal divisions, the KWP was torn by a series of purges that clearly reflected some instability at the top ranks of government. The first signs emerged in the spring of 1964, when former Minister of Foreign Trade Li Ilgyeon became the scapegoat for unsuccessful trade policies. Li was quickly dismissed, tried, and hanged, with his brothers sent to work in mines and his wife and children deported from Pyongyang.⁹⁷ More significant change emerged the following year with the removal of Kim Changman, a former vice chairman of the Party Central Committee and someone who had generally been considered a member of Kim's inner-circle.⁹⁸ A flurry of major structural reforms that included a reorganization of the Party's Political Committee followed the 1966 KWP Conference, as did the appointment to high-ranking positions of a number of professional military men and other conservative reformers. Their rise came at the expense of a group of experienced party bureaucrats, including such prominent figures and longtime allies as Pak Geumcheol, vice chairman of the Party Central Committee, and Li Hyosun, whose position as Director of Southern Strategy for the KWP's Central Committee placed him fifth within party hierarchy. Soon, however, Kim turned his focus on this more militant group, replacing a number of its leaders as well.

The political instability was both clear and revealing. By 1967, the East German Ambassador was writing of a "tightened conflict, an oppositional movement in the party

⁹⁷ April 22, 1965 report, Hungarian National Archives in North Korean International Documentation Project (NKIDP) electronic archives, at http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=topics.home&topic_id=230972

⁹⁸ "Information on the Korean Workers Party, undated 1966 report, AQPPSH, MPP Korese, D 10, V., p. 17

leadership...regarding the stance on domestic policy"⁹⁹ Of the eighteen members of the party's Political Committee holding office in 1964 (twelve full members, six alternate members), only five were reappointed at the Fifth Party Congress in 1970. Three of those purged simply moved to lesser positions, but nine others vanished from the party completely. Lower level officials saw a significant reshuffling as well, especially those working in the fields of the economy, ideology, and national unification.¹⁰⁰ In the end, almost two-thirds of key local government and party posts were left vacant by 1968.¹⁰¹ Most of Kim's allies saw these changes as his attempt to remove those who might question his leadership; the reforms, noted a Soviet official in Pyongyang, were "evidence of a desire of the Korean leadership to involve new people in running the party and the country from among those who unquestionably approve of Kim Il Sung's current domestic and foreign policies."¹⁰² It should be noted that by all accounts there was no real political danger to Kim's rule. Reformers within the KWP generally sought practical policy changes, rather than regime change. Still, for a government predicated on the idea that it could guarantee political stability and independent policymaking, even these small signs of turmoil could be potentially troubling.

At the same time, North Korea faced inter-bloc challenges to its independence as well. Relations with the Chinese had been strong in the preceding years, particularly in the military arena. Chinese weapons flowed to the North, military delegations were regularly exchanged, and DPRK military personnel were trained in Chinese academies. By the mid-1960s, however, the

⁹⁹ Letter from GDR Ambassador in Pyongyang to State Secretary and First Deputy of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs Comrade Hegen, December 22, 1967, in North Korean International Documentation Project (NKIDP) electronic archives, at http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=topics.home&topic_id=230972.

[Document 6]

¹⁰⁰ Memo from Czech Embassy in Pyongyang, "Military-Political Situation in the DPRK," Political Report #21, June 4, 1968, Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, SM-023846/68, p. 2 **[Document 12]**

¹⁰¹ Dae-Ho Byun, *North Korea's Foreign Policy*, p. 34.

¹⁰² "The DPRK Attitude Toward the So-called 'Cultural Revolution' in China," Memorandum from Soviet Embassy in DPRK, March 7, 1967, AVPRF f. 0102, op.23, p. 112, d. 24, page. 2.

good feelings were crumbling. Chinese material support proved to be more limited than Kim had hoped, and paled in comparison to what the Soviets were giving their close allies. Travelling DPRK officials who visited Cuba, North Vietnam, and Indonesia appear to have brought back to Pyongyang tales of military munificence provided to these countries by the Soviets, likely helping to encourage Kim's disenchantment.¹⁰³ Kim was also troubled by Chinese policies towards the Vietnam War. He believed, according to Soviet officials, that the "Chinese ruling group was hiding behind high-sounding phrases about the battle against imperialism," but was in reality doing little to help.¹⁰⁴ Accordingly, he was not sure that he could rely on them to defend his country as they had promised.¹⁰⁵ Vietnam further exacerbated tensions since Kim resented the fact that the Chinese frequently encouraged greater North Korean involvement in the conflict, despite his belief in the paucity of their own contributions.¹⁰⁶ The Cultural Revolution also created problems. Kim described the turmoil as "incredible madness," and "mass lunacy," and insisted that it violated true Marxist-Leninist principles.¹⁰⁷ He also worried that the Chinese might try to export their vision of change to the DPRK. "The KWP will accept the conditions for maintaining normal relations only if the Maoist-group gives up trying to expand and to transmit the 'Cultural Revolution' and domestic conflicts with the DPRK," concluded an East German official.¹⁰⁸ Most significant, though, appears to be Kim's growing fear that the Chinese expected

¹⁰³ "Some New Aspects of Korean-Chinese Relations in the First Half of 1965," June 4, 1965, AVPRF f. 0102, op. 21, p. 106, d. 20, listy 14-27.

¹⁰⁴ "Memorandum on Sino-Korean Relations," December 2, 1966, Soviet Embassy in the DPRK, AVPRF f. 0102, op. 22, p. 109, d. 22.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ "DVO [Far East Department] Memorandum about Sino-Korean Relations," March 7, 1967. **[Document 3]**

¹⁰⁷ "DVO [Far East Department] Memorandum about Sino-Korean Relations," March 7, 1967; "Note on a Conversation with the First Secretary of the Soviet Embassy, Comrade Zvetkov on March 15, 1967," GDR Embassy in Pyongyang, in James Person (ed.), *North Korea International Documentation Project Document Reader #2*, "Limits of the 'Lips and Teeth' Alliance: New Evidence on Sino-DPRK Relations, 1955-1984," document # 12, p. 38.

¹⁰⁸ "Information about the relations between the DPRK and the PR China," Department of the Far East, Section Korea, October 19, 1967, North Korean International Documentation Project (NKIDP) electronic archives, at http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=topics.home&topic_id=230972.

him to follow their policy line without question, thus offering a threat to his ability to exert his cherished policymaking independence.¹⁰⁹ The Chinese, complained one DPRK official, viewed the relationship with North Korea "in a way similar to the [ones] that had existed under feudalism, when a weak man, if slapped by a strong one, was required to turn the other cheek so as to get a second slap."¹¹⁰ Kim, conditioned by a personal commitment to *Juche* and cognizant of the many challenges he faced at home, was unwilling to be slapped.

The once-close relationship quickly collapsed. In early 1965, the Czech Ambassador to Pyongyang reported that contacts between the two governments had "weakened noticeably."¹¹¹ The following year, reported the Albanian embassy in Pyongyang, students and professors at DPRK universities began openly criticizing Chinese policies.¹¹² Soon, DPRK officials changed the frequency band on which Chinese radio broadcast into their nation and the hours they were available, making them harder for the people to access.¹¹³ Korean servicemen studying in Chinese military academies were recalled, and the works of Mao Zedong virtually disappeared from the bookstores.¹¹⁴ "Sino-Korean cultural exchange," reported the Soviet Embassy in Pyongyang at the end of 1966, "have been reduced to zero."¹¹⁵

Kim generally tried to avoid open condemnation of the Chinese, for fear of provoking a response that might endanger his regime. Still, the Chinese reaction was harsh. Korean citizens

¹⁰⁹ See, for example, "Some New Aspects of Korean-Chinese Relations in the First Half of 1965," June 4, 1965, AVPRF, fond 0102, opis 21, papka 106, delo 20, listy 14-27; and December 2, 1966 memo, "Memorandum on Sino-Korean relations," Soviet Embassy in the DPRK, Person (ed.) *North Korea International Documentation Project Document Reader #2*, document # 6.

¹¹⁰ April 11, 1967, report from Hungarian Embassy in China, Person (ed.) *North Korea International Documentation Project Document Reader #2*, document # 13.

¹¹¹ "On the Development of Situation in DPRK in May 1965; Political Report #8," p. 4.

¹¹² "Information on the Korean Workers' Party," undated 1966 report.

¹¹³ "Memorandum on Sino-Korean relations in 1966," December 2, 1966.

¹¹⁴ Ibid; Mao in January 22, 1967 report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, MOL, XIX-J-1-j Korea, 1967, 61. Doboz, 1, 001200/1967.

¹¹⁵ "Memorandum of the Soviet Embassy in the DPRK," December 30, 1966, Person (ed.) *North Korea International Documentation Project Document Reader #2*, document #7.

living in China came under greater scrutiny and even harassment by local authorities.¹¹⁶ In 1967, China stationed several army divisions just north of the Yalu River, igniting border clashes between the two sides; it also renewed claims to disputed land along the Sino-Korean border.¹¹⁷ Critical exports to the DPRK such as sulfur, cotton, petroleum, and vegetable oil were reduced and then halted completely, and Chinese authorities banned Korean fishermen from their coast.¹¹⁸ Tensions reached such heights that in late 1967, Chinese Red Guards killed a number of ethnic Koreans living in the PRC, and then placed the dead bodies on a freight train that returned to the DPRK with anti-Korean writings scrawled all over it; "That's how you will fare as well, you little revisionists," warned one message.¹¹⁹ Kim himself also became a target of abuse. One Chinese publication called him, "An out and out counter revolutionary revisionist, as well as a millionaire, an aristocrat, and a leading member of the bourgeoisie."¹²⁰ Another PRC paper in October 1967 alleged that the DPRK was digging up the graves of the Chinese soldiers who died fighting in the Korean War; "We sternly warn Kim Il Sung and his ilk," it concluded, "that those who cooperate with the USA and the revisionists, and pursue an anti-Chinese policy, will come to a bad end."¹²¹ Chinese media spread rumors about an alleged coup in the DPRK, and Chinese

¹¹⁶ January 22, 1967 report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry,

¹¹⁷ March 7, 1967, DVO Memorandum about Sino-Korean Relations [Document 3]; observe in "Activity of the Chinese Embassy in Pyongyang," Memo of the Soviet Embassy in the DPRK, August 5, 1967, Person (ed.) *North Korea International Documentation Project Document Reader #2*, document #14.

¹¹⁸ March 7, 1967, DVO Memorandum about Sino-Korean Relations [Document 3]; "Memorandum of the Conversation with the charge d'affaires of the PR Poland, comrade Pudisch, at the embassy of the People's Republic of Poland, on 9 October, 1967, from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.," from the Embassy of the GDR to the DPRK, in North Korean International Documentation Project (NKIDP) electronic archives, at http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=topics.home&topic_id=230972; "Note on a Conversation with the Acting Ambassador of the People's Republic of Poland, Comrade Pudisz, on 9 October 1967 between 1000 and 1130 hours in the Polish Embassy," GDR Embassy to the DPRK, October 20, 1967, Person (ed.) *North Korea International Documentation Project Document Reader #2*, document 15.

¹¹⁹ "Note on a conversation with the Acting Ambassador of the People's Republic of Poland, Comrade Pudisz, on 9 October 1967 between 1000 and 1300 hours in the Polish Embassy."

¹²⁰ Research Memorandum from State Dept. Director of Intelligence and Research, February 15, 1968, "North Korea's Balancing Act Between Russia and China," National Archives II, 1967-69 Central Files, pol 33-6, box 2258, 1/1/67 folder, p. 5; *Washington Post*, "Parade Magazine," July 14, 1968.

¹²¹ Report from the Embassy of Hungary in China to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, November 20, 1967, document #16 in Person (ed.) *North Korea International Documentation Project Document Reader #2*.

officials in Pyongyang built a glass display case at their embassy glorifying the Cultural Revolution despite the complaints of DPRK officials; when Chinese officials refused to remove it (informing Korean officials that they would "observe the laws of the DPRK which they like and would not observe those which they did not like"), DPRK officials banned North Koreans from walking near the embassy.¹²²

The explosion of hostility helped convince Kim to turn to the Soviet Union to try to mend fences, both in the hopes of replacing the lost economic and military assistance and for increased protection. It would prove to be a difficult task. Kim had been critical of the Soviets during his earlier pro-Chinese phase, most notably attacking Khrushchev's policy of "peaceful co-existence" with the West. At one point he had gone so far as to accuse the Soviet Union of cooperating with the imperialists to exploit the DPRK economy.¹²³ Still, the obvious dangers from the Chinese situation forced him to act. In November 1964, a delegation of party leaders that included the vice chairman of the KWP's Central Committee travelled to Moscow to pay their respects, and DPRK newspapers began to replace their criticisms of the Soviet Union with more favorable articles. Kim and other officials matched the efforts with public hints to the USSR of their hopes for friendship and their disenchantment with the Chinese. Overall, the maneuvers produced some successes. In 1965, a military agreement was reached, providing significant Soviet military supplies to the DPRK, and expanded exchanges followed.¹²⁴ The

¹²² Coup in "Information about Development of Politics of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and of Czechoslovak-Korean Relations," 1967 (no date), p. 8; case in Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, March 9, 1967, in Armstrong collection, doc 1; and March 7, 1967, Memorandum from Soviet Embassy in DPRK, "The DPRK Attitude Toward the So-called 'Cultural Revolution' in China,"

[Document 3]

¹²³ "Information about Development of Politics of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and of Czechoslovak-Korean Relations," 1967 (no date), p. 4.

¹²⁴ "Report, Embassy of Hungary in the Soviet Union to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, 25 November 1967," Person (ed.) *North Korea International Documentation Project Document Reader #2*, document 18. **[Document 4]**

second half of the decade saw a steady increase in visiting delegations from each country, a growing trade relationship, and better overt relations between the leaders.

Still, new materials from the Communist bloc archives suggest that the deeply rooted hostility and suspicions never dissipated. When Soviet Premier Alexsey Kosygin met with Kim during a visit to the DPRK in early 1965, as the first overt step towards re-establishing ties, tensions were obvious.¹²⁵ Kosygin criticized the DPRK for its verbal attacks on Soviet policy in the recent past. "You accused us of making a deal with imperialism," he charged. Kim defended himself, faulting the previous Soviet leadership for inadequate defense of the international socialist bloc. "We actually thought at that time," he told Kosygin, "that Khrushchev would sell the GDR to West Germany." Subsequent years saw little real improvement. In 1966, Soviet officials grumbled to Hungarian representatives about the DPRK insistence that its policies were the only correct path towards socialism; about its rigidity regarding other communist states having any interactions with Seoul; and about its excessive spending on defense.¹²⁶ The following year, Soviet officials bemoaned the lack of DPRK public support for their foreign policies.¹²⁷ They also complained that Kim seemed more concerned about impressing Third World officials than about his relations with the USSR, noting that he was writing articles that highlighted the DPRK's differences with the Soviets for the Cuban party journal, while rejecting invitations to write for *Pravda*.¹²⁸ Perhaps most striking was the extent to which Soviet officials resented Kim's refusal to provide them with information related to their policymaking. The Hungarian Ambassador to the DPRK reported on the unhappiness of the Soviet Ambassador,

¹²⁵ Memo from the Hungarian Embassy in Pyongyang, February 19, 1965, Hungarian National Archives, in North Korean International Documentation Project (NKIDP) electronic archives, at http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=topics.home&topic_id=230972.

¹²⁶ See, for, example, "Report, Embassy of Hungary in the Soviet Union to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, 25 November 1967," in Person (ed.) *North Korea International Documentation Project Document Reader #2*, document 18. **[Document 4]**

¹²⁷ *ibid*

¹²⁸ *ibid*

noting that, "the Korean organs did not allow him to contact the people, they kept him away from the population. Nor had he, the Ambassador of the Soviet Union, any contact with the members of the Korean government; for instance, Kim Il Sung received even Japanese prostitutes, but he had not been willing to meet him [Moskovsky] for more than a year." Soviet diplomats, he concluded, "got information about the host country almost exclusively from the press."¹²⁹ The Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK echoed the complaint, noting in late 1967 that he had been waiting four weeks to hold an important conversation with Kim, despite the fact that his counterpart in Moscow was never forced to wait more than 48 hours to meet with Kosygin.¹³⁰ Even when information was provided, the Soviets knew that it was rarely accurate. In late 1967 Brezhnev met with KWP Vice Chairman Choe Yonggeon, informing him that the Soviet Union "does not accept the standpoint of the DPRK with regard to the cause of the tension along the demilitarized zone;" the aggressive DPRK behavior, he explained, was the reason why the Soviets limited their military assistance to defensive weapons.¹³¹ It was clearly a tenuous relationship at best. "Economic contacts between the two countries are improving," noted officials in the Soviet Ministry in 1967. "Unfortunately, this statement cannot be applied to other fields of the relationship."¹³²

The mid-60s thus saw Kim facing major problems along the *Juche* front. His economy was on the brink of collapse; he faced political complications at home; and his relations with the

¹²⁹ "Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, 29 June 1964," in Hungarian National Archives, MOL, XIX-J-1-j Korea, 5. doboz, 5/bc, 004558/RT/1964, on-line at the CWIHP virtual archive at: http://wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic_id=1409&fuseaction=va2.document&identifier=3A616E1F-F724-FC1F-B218FB1DBA0747DC&sort=Coverage&item=Korea (last accessed February 1, 2010).

¹³⁰ Memo from GDR Ambassador in Pyongyang to State Secretary and First Deputy of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs Comrade Hegen, December 22, 1967, p. 4. **[Document 6]**

¹³¹ "Report, Embassy of Hungary in the Soviet Union to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, 25 November 1967," Person report, doc 18; Memo from Czech Embassy in Pyongyang, "Military-Political Situation in the DPRK," Political Report #21, June 4, 1968. **[Document 12]**

¹³² Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, May 8, 1967, XIX-J-1-j Korea, 1967, 60. Dobox, 40, 002128/1/1967.

communist superpowers were difficult. Signs of his failures in the critical *Juche* realms of economics and politics were obvious, ranging from food shortages to an influx of foreign goods, from political purges to border conflicts. Kim had predicated his very regime on a promise to bring stability and prosperity by relying on Korean traditions, values, and skills; "*Juche*," he had declared, "represents the most correct Marxist-Leninist idea of leadership for the successful accomplishment of our revolution and construction and is the invariable guiding principle of the Government of the Republic in all its policies and activities... the establishment of *Juche* is a question of key importance on which the success of our revolution depends, a vital question which will determine the future of our nation." His government, Kim pledged, would "continue to adhere firmly to the principles of settling independently all the problems that arise in revolution and construction, studying and analyzing the realities of Korea in strict accordance with the *Juche* idea of the Workers' Party of Korea."¹³³ The obvious evidence of his government's shortcomings in this area now forced him to face the potentially serious consequences of this failure. DPRK students studying overseas in the early 1960s began resisting government demands to return home for the summer; "They would rather already live in socialism than to help building [sic] it in Korean conditions," lamented the DPRK Minister of Higher Education.¹³⁴ Their unhappiness appears to have been echoed among the Korean people, many of whom began questioning their leadership. "Indifference, passivity, and distrust concerning the regime's policies were observable in the population's attitude," wrote the Hungarian Embassy in 1966. The Central Committee, they added, had been forced to "launch a

¹³³ "Let us Embody the Revolutionary Spirit of Independence, Self-Sustenance and Self-Defense More Thoroughly in All Fields of State Activity," speech at the Fourth Supreme People's Assembly of the D.P.R.K., December 16, 1967, reprinted in *For the Independent Peaceful Reunification of Korea* (New York: International Publishers, 1975), p. 111.

¹³⁴ "Report of c. Durcak's conversation with the USSR Ambassador c. Moskovskiy," August 28, 1962, (illegible) 267261/01, in North Korean International Documentation Project (NKIDP) electronic archives, at http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=topics.home&topic_id=230972

campaign aimed at improving public mood and increasing the trust of workers in middle-level cadres."¹³⁵ Accordingly, Kim turned to foreign affairs and self-defense, the one realm still available to him to obtain signs of his successful pursuit of *Juche* that might rally the people behind him.

Kim's actions throughout the Second Korean War support the idea that his intention was to remind his people of the constant threat presented by the imperialists and the strong and dramatic actions he was taking in response. In 1966, rations started to be stockpiled and the training period for militias was extended, in preparation for the impending US attack that North Korean officials regularly predicted.¹³⁶ Factories were relocated, street patrols were intensified, and the resettlement of families outside of the capital began in 1967. By the end of that year, North Korean citizens were not permitted to go more than 2 kilometers from their homes without official permission.¹³⁷ Pro-government and anti-American rallies were organized to unify the people against the external threat.¹³⁸ Allegations of impending American attacks were raised with increasing frequency throughout 1968. In February, Pyongyang was placed on high alert to prepare for an attack, students were taken out of schools, and many residents were ordered to relocate to the countryside. All Koreans older than four were required to carry backpacks of necessities in case of emergency evacuation, and the government started assigning people to the mountain regions to dig protective bunkers.¹³⁹ Air raid alerts were run regularly; air raid shelters

¹³⁵ Report from Hungarian Embassy, February 25, 1966, in North Korean International Documentation Project (NKIDP) electronic archives, at: http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=topics.home&topic_id=230972.

¹³⁶ See, for example, December 12, 1966 letter to Secretary of State Hegen from Embassy of the GDR in the DPRK, Archives of the Foreign Office, Berlin, Collection MfAA, G-A 316.

¹³⁷ Letter from GDR Ambassador to DPRK, December 8, 1967, to State Secretary and First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. **[Document 5]**

¹³⁸ "Note on a Conversation with the Director of the 1st Department of the Foreign Ministry of the DPRK, Comrade Ri In-gyu, on 15 June, 1968, from 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.," from GDR Embassy, Pyongyang, 18 June, 1968, MfAA C 1091/70.

¹³⁹ "Memorandum on an Information of 1 February 1968," Embassy of the GDR in Pyongyang, 2 February 1968.

were constructed; leading officials and scientists were evacuated from the cities; and romantic stories, operas, and love songs were banned, in order to ensure that the people were focused on the threat from the West.¹⁴⁰ Specific battles were even invented, always with the DPRK driving away the American imperialists; in February, Kim described a failed attack on a sentry post in the western section of the DMZ, and in March claimed two American defeats in the same area.¹⁴¹ Other U.S. spy ships were reported to be launching raids on North Korea; one on February 16, for example, supposedly attacked Surido before being repulsed.¹⁴²

Domestic propaganda, particularly that surrounding the *Pueblo* crewmen, focused on the same message: Americans were always scheming against the North and planning to attack; only DPRK strength and sacrifice could withstand them; and the leadership of North Korea was wise, strong, and impressive. Overall, Kim released ninety-one *Pueblo*-related propaganda statements of over three hundred words. Tellingly, none of these took the Cold War or the international sphere as a main theme; instead, they usually had a domestic focus, with fifty-two of them stressing the need to remain strong against future American espionage against the North.¹⁴³ One study that analyzed all such statements concluded that they demonstrated, "an increasingly insecure North Korean regime," and reflected "a DPRK fear of isolation, but at the same time a strong sense of national pride used to justify a continued Stalinist political and economic program and to insulate the country from outside influence."¹⁴⁴ The *Pueblo* men agreed. His captors, one officer recalled, showed no interest in larger Cold War matters; "Our value to them,"

¹⁴⁰ Memo from GDR Embassy to DPRK, March 4, 1968, to State Secretary and First Deputy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. [Document 11]

¹⁴¹ State Department Korean Task Force situation report, February 18, 1968, LBJL, NSF, NSC Histories, *Pueblo* Crisis, 1968, volume 7, box 29 and 30, day by day documents, part 13.

¹⁴² State Department Korean Task Force situation report, February 16, 1968, JL, NSF, NSC Histories, *Pueblo* Crisis, 1968, volume 7, box 29 and 30, day by day documents, part 12.

¹⁴³ Sheldon Simon, "The *Pueblo* Incident and the South Korean Revolution," *Asian Forum*, 1970, volume 2, #3, pp. 201, 203-05.

¹⁴⁴ Simon, "The *Pueblo* Incident and the South Korean Revolution," p. 212.

he concluded, "was apparently as propaganda pawns only."¹⁴⁵ Confessions, which were regularly beaten out of the crewmen and then reprinted in DPRK newspapers, were focused almost exclusively on admitting American transgressions and praising North Korean strength. Flattering references to North Korea and Kim were common, but mentions of the Soviet Union, China, capitalism, or communism were almost nonexistent. In fact, most of the crew's "confessions" read as if the outside world did not exist; a thirty-five paragraph "Joint Letter of Apology" signed by the entire crew in February, failed to make even one reference beyond the Korean peninsula.¹⁴⁶ The focus almost always seemed to be on justifying domestic shortcomings and rallying the people behind the government in its determined battle against the imperialists; "All our functionaries and working people," Kim announced at the Fourth Supreme People's Assembly, "should work like masters, and live frugally, with a great revolutionary zeal, in the lofty spirit of supporting the South Korean people more actively in their anti-U.S., national salvation struggle, and of expediting the revolutionary cause of the reunification of the country. We can never get complacent and lax nor countenance the slightest laziness, immorality, or luxury."¹⁴⁷

Other aspects of Kim's handling of the crisis suggest his focus was on appearing strong at home. When, in March 1968, the main routes along Pyongyang were closed down to allow military units to march through town, the East German Embassy recognized who the regime was trying to impress; "Judging by the marching route...it must be presumed this was primarily

¹⁴⁵ Frederick Schumacher, *Bridge of No Return*, (Houghton Mifflin, 1971) p. 158.

¹⁴⁶ "Alleged 'Joint Letter of Apology' by Crew of USS *Pueblo* to North Korean Government," LBJL, NSF, NSC Histories, *Pueblo* Crisis, volume 13, public statements, tabs G-I.

¹⁴⁷ "Let us Embody the Revolutionary Spirit of Independence, Self-Sustenance and Self-Defense More Thoroughly in All Fields of State Activity," speech at the Fourth Supreme People's Assembly of the D.P.R.K., December 16, 1967, reprinted in *For the Independent Peaceful Reunification of Korea* (New York: International Publishers, 1975), p. 124.

intended as a demonstration to the population."¹⁴⁸ "All these measures," officials concluded, "are amplified through massive propaganda in the press, radio, and in newspapers propagating the situation as so tense that an outbreak of war can be expected every day.... [even though] an analysis of the facts we were able to obtain on U.S. positions shows that the Americans are not interested in a major armed conflict in Korea."¹⁴⁹ It was the same at MAC negotiations, where DPRK officials seemed focused above all else on publicly demonstrating the determination of their leadership to withstand American pressures; "Speeches made by the Korean delegate are mostly propaganda in nature," wrote the Czech Embassy, "and are used mainly for the DPRK's internal propaganda."¹⁵⁰

Repeatedly, Kim's communist allies described his actions as efforts by the regime to excuse domestic shortcomings and to rally the people behind his fervid defense of North Korea against outside aggressors. Visiting Communist officials in Pyongyang reached such conclusions as early as 1966. One Hungarian diplomat wrote to his superiors that year that the tension along the DMZ was useful to the North, "since they could refer to it when they condemned US policies."¹⁵¹ A letter from the East German embassy in North Korea agreed, noting that since the October Party Conference, "there has been a very intense campaign among the people concerning preparation for a potential war... Probably for the DPRK," it concluded, "there are mostly propagandistic reasons behind the present positions."¹⁵² As the conflict intensified, this sense that Kim was trying to impress his domestic audience increased. In 1967, the East German

¹⁴⁸ Memo from GDR Embassy to DPRK, March 4, 1968, to State Secretary and First Deputy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, p. 3. **[Document 11]**

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ "Information about the situation in Korea," p. 9.

¹⁵¹ December 29, 1966, summary of meeting between Hungarian and Czech diplomats, in North Korean International Documentation Project (NKIDP) electronic archives, at:
http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=topics.home&topic_id=230972

¹⁵² Letter to Secretary of State and First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Comrade Hegen, from Embassy of the GDR in the DPRK, December 12, 1966. **[Document 2]**

Ambassador explained that the DPRK's increased provocations had been undertaken "in order to justify their positions domestically and externally." The "scope and severity" of future incidents, he concluded, depended on the "political intentions" of the key parties.¹⁵³ Czech officials agreed, noting that the "spreading military psychosis had other functions, like distracting people from the existing economic difficulties, 'justifying' stagnation of the standard of living, demanding the strictest discipline and obedience, and preventing any criticism."¹⁵⁴ "All propaganda means of the DPRK," the Czech embassy reported, "continued to strive to generate the conviction that the Americans were going to provoke war at any time."¹⁵⁵ Hungarian officials, made the same point: "The DPRK," they explained:

does not strive to escalate military actions, but by the [*sic*] regularly provoking border incidents and the accompanying propaganda campaign it intends to justify the militarization of the country and the fact that they...can not develop the defense strength and the economy of the country simultaneously but lay stress only on the increasing of military strength [which results in] the neglect of economic development and the stagnation of living standards.¹⁵⁶

Although the newer materials suggest that the *Juche*-based interpretation of DPRK policy may be correct, it should be noted that they do not reject either of the two interpretations within that school. Evidence suggests instead that both views might be correct, that Kim did have a genuine commitment to the *Juche* ideology while at the same time also using it to further his political agenda at home. Kim, in other words, may have embraced the political benefits of *Juche*

¹⁵³ Letter from GDR Ambassador to DPRK, December 8, 1967, to State Secretary and First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. [Document 5]

¹⁵⁴ "Information about the situation in Korea," attachment IIIa, p. 4.

¹⁵⁵ Memo from Czech Embassy in Pyongyang, "Military-Political Situation in the DPRK," Political Report #21, June 4, 1968, p. 2. [Document 12]

¹⁵⁶ Report, Embassy of Hungary in the Soviet Union to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, 25 November 1967," Person (ed.) *North Korea International Documentation Project Document Reader #2*, document 18. [Document 4]

as some have alleged but that does not mean that he, like the rest of the nation, was not also genuinely committed to its precepts. Repeatedly, Kim spoke in language echoing *Juche* principles in his quiet meetings with foreign leaders, even when there was no political benefit at home in doing so. "We are for self-reliance," Kim told a visiting East German delegation, as part of long, rambling statement about his nation. "It is not directed against the unity of the socialist camp and it doesn't mean any interference in the internal matters of other countries. We are in favor of it because it is necessary for the Korean revolution, for the unification of our country, and for the education of our people."¹⁵⁷ DPRK successes, echoed the North Korean Ambassador to Moscow in a meeting with Kosygin, "are the result of wise leadership of the party and consistent implementation of the spirit of independence and self-reliance."¹⁵⁸

Moreover, Kim's actions also seemed to reflect his genuine commitment, particularly demonstrated by the frequent criticisms he directed at his allies, especially at the very moment that he was accepting their assistance. At a time when one might reasonably expect Kim to be at his most servile, he often instead seemed to go out of his way to stress his continued devotion to his policymaking independence, even if it provoked a backlash at the worst possible time. During his first meeting with Kosygin in 1965, for example, Kim asked the Soviet leader to provide his country with economic and military assistance, but admitted that he could not pay for it; once Kosygin agreed to provide missiles, Kim proceeded to criticize Soviet interference in the internal affairs of the Japanese Communist Party.¹⁵⁹ In a similar meeting with Brezhnev in December 1966, Kim submitted a long list of aid requests, but continued to proclaim his commitment to independence; the KWP, he told Brezhnev, would "neither participate with you, nor with the

¹⁵⁷ "Memorandum on the visit of the Party and Government Delegation of the GDR..." April 23, 1968, in Schaefer, *North Korean 'Adventurism' and China's Long Shadow, 1966-1972*, p. 65.

¹⁵⁸ "Record of conversation between the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR A.N. Kosygin with the ambassador of the DPRK in Moscow Ten Du Hwan," May 6, 1968, AVPRF, fond 102, opis 28, papka 25, delo 2, p. 1

¹⁵⁹ Memo from the Hungarian Embassy in Pyongyang, February 19, 1965.

Chinese."¹⁶⁰ Even at the height of tension in early 1968, a time when Kim clearly needed to stay on the good side of his allies, he continued to push a strong independent line regardless of the wishes of his supporters. "It is quite usual that in relations of the DPRK to fraternal parties and countries, Korean comrades strive to have their opinions fully accepted and supported," noted the Czech Embassy. "[They] demand their socialist partners support them thoroughly without regard to the common interests of the whole socialist community."¹⁶¹ Most found this North Korean ingratitude shocking, which by outside standards it generally was. The fact that Kim, at the very times that he was most desperate for economic assistance and military support, would risk it by releasing pointed, and often public, criticisms seemed patently illogical. Yet, they do make sense if one accepts the critical role of *Juche* within Kim's worldview, since his actions reflected above all else a genuine devotion to Korean nationalism and independent policymaking that trumped short-term needs. Such an argument does not necessarily reject the more manipulative view put forth those who argue that *Juche* was callously designed to manipulate the people, thereby preserving Kim's regime. Instead, it suggests that both interpretations may be correct; Kim appears both to have believed in his own construct and have internalized its principles as his own guiding precepts, while at the same time utilizing it at home in ways that best advanced his own political power.

In his "Long Telegram" of February 1946, George Kennan wrote famously that Soviet leaders had embraced Marxist-Leninist principles because it offered them an external threat in capitalism that could be used to validate their repressive regime. This dogma, he wrote, justified "the dictatorship without which they did not know how to rule, for cruelties they did not dare not

¹⁶⁰ "Note on a Conversation with the First Secretary of the Soviet Embassy, Comrade Zvetkov on March 15, 1967," GDR Embassy in Pyongyang, in Person (ed.) *North Korea International Documentation Project Document Reader* #2, document #12.

¹⁶¹ "Information about the situation in Korea," attachment IIIa, p. 4.

to inflict, for sacrifice they felt bound to demand."¹⁶² Recent materials from the Communist-bloc archives about the Second Korean War suggest that one might reasonably draw a similar conclusion about *Juche* and its role in North Korea. Kim appears to have used it to justify his demands for sacrifice, and to strengthen his dictatorship. And when his regime faced even small hints of potential weakness, he created opportunities to demonstrate his devotion to its principles of Korean strength, nationalism, and independence. Yet, unlike the Soviet leaders portrayed by Kennan, Kim appears to have had, at least to some extent, a genuine commitment to these principles as well. Regardless of whether one accepts the more manipulative view or the more benign view of *Juche*, however, it appears from the newest communist bloc materials that this ideology played an important role in policymaking in the Second Korean War, and perhaps in DPRK foreign policy throughout the Cold War.

¹⁶² *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946. Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, Volume VI (1946)*, p. 700.

DOCUMENT APPENDIX

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DOCUMENT No. 1

[Source: Czech Foreign Ministry Archives; Translated for NKIDP by Adolf Kotlik]

Report, "On the Development of Situation in the DPRK in May 1965"
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Prague
May 1965

(stamp)
STATE CENTRAL ARCHIVE IN PRAGUE
DEGREE OF SECRECY CANCELED
Reason: file no. 267 261/01- OZU
(OZU = Section for Special Assignments)
Date: 01/11/02 Alena Noskova, Ph.D.
Signature: (illegible)

Attach. To file No.
025.128/65 – (illegible)

(not visible)/65

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Department 7
P r a h a

B y c o u r i e r !

Classified

Referent: Pecl

Political Report No. 8

On the Development of Situation in the DPRK in May 1965

Last month, the focus of attention of the DPRK was again most of all issues of international politics. The main focus of attention was intensification of struggle with American imperialism, especially in connection with development in South East Asia.

A delegation of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, headed by the NLF CC member Nguyen van Hieu, was staying in the DPRK where it received a grandiose welcome. The NLF delegation's leader attended a SPA DPRK session where he delivered a speech, and huge gatherings were organized in Gaeseong, Wonsan and Pyongyang in honor of the delegation. Every day, the press dedicated a lot of space to development of the situation in Vietnam.

Events in the Dominican Republic met with somewhat smaller response in the DPRK. Along with the campaign for support of the South Vietnam people's fight, issues of fighting unity of Asian and African countries were emphasized more than ever before, especially in connection with 4th Solidarity Conference of Asian and African countries, when the press published all documents agreed upon at this conference.

Issues of fighting unity of Asian and African countries enjoyed wide publicity during the visit of Indonesian Parliament's Chairman Arudji Kartawinata, who also appeared at a SPA DPRK session and at mass gatherings in Hamheung and Pyongyang. It seems that in some comments about the current center of national liberation movement, and other things, the Chairman of the Indonesian Parliament went farther than what was at the time

tolerable for the hosting side, and therefore, those particular passages in his speeches were in the Korean press modified or removed (see our 103).

In the situation when Asian and African issues were in the focus of attention, our embassy tried to find out from the Korean side its position on 2nd Conference of Asian and African countries being organized in Algiers. Despite all efforts, we were unable to find out what this position was. Korean comrades on various levels resorted only to a stereotype answer that the role the DPRK plays at the conference and the very relevance of Korea do not make it possible for the DPRK to get more actively involved in these issues. Of course, they said, the DPRK was going to help strengthening the unity of socialist camp countries with the National Liberation Movement. As for the USSR participation at the Afro-Asian conference, friendly embassies tend to believe that the DPRK will probably join the majority vote on this issue (see our 98).

In its approach to the International Communist and Workers Movement, the KWP CC consistently maintained its existing orientation, which is evident not only from Kim Il Sung's speech at the Academy of Social Sciences in Djakarta that we sent, but also from the continuing visit of representatives of pro-Chinese communist countries, and from the overall bias of the press.

As for the relations to the PRC, direct contacts have weakened noticeably (exchange of delegations almost stopped). It is evident from the conversation of Kim Il Sung with the Soviet Ambassador Moskovskiy before his return to the homeland, that the KWP is trying to distance itself from the latest slanderous materials of the Chinese CP, and that it has certain reservations about the PRC attitude to Vietnam and to Soviet aid to the DRVN. Recent Chinese slanderous materials did not find their way into the Korean press nor the confidential bulletin CTAK. Despite of that, there is undoubtedly still a close concurrence of opinions between the leadership of the Chinese CP and the KWP. It shows in the the KWP CC reaction to 2nd nuclear test in the PRC, in a message of Korean representatives and celebratory articles in Korean press, which praised this explosion, as well as in an editorial in Nodong Sinmun to the 20th anniversary of Soviet Union's victory over German Fascism, where the role of J.V. Stalin during the Great Patriotic War highly esteemed.

In relation to European socialist countries, the KWP leadership is still trying to differentiate itself; however, celebrations of 20th anniversary of the CSSR liberation, Korean presence at a reception of the Czechoslovak Ambassador and number of actions organized by the Korean side for this anniversary (see our file No. 548/65 and dispatch 94), sending a high level delegation for celebrations in the GDR and a high level military delegation to Moscow, indicate that the Korean side is currently interested in certain improvement of contacts with our countries, albeit on the state level only.

We think the KWP is taking these steps due to economic interests and also due to the necessity to increase defense readiness of the DPRK.

Further deepening of economic difficulties was characteristic for the internal situation in the DPRK. The agriculture, too, is facing serious problems because sowing of rice seedlings was delayed almost by a month due to dry and cold spring, and shortage of water limited possibilities of rice paddies irrigation. It is interesting, though, that compared to previous years, the press last month stopped wide coverage of economic issues, and unlike in past years, no national movements are organized for increase of production and quality, for completion of spring seasonal work, and so on.

Instead of mobilization to accomplish work goals, all attention is focused on foreign policy issues, combat readiness and unity of Asian and African countries. We agree with our friends that with all these actions – number of various mass gatherings all over the whole DPRK (in support of Vietnam, against South Korean – Japanese negotiations, for solidarity of Afro-Asian countries, etc.), and mass welcomes of various delegations – the KWP is trying to distract people from pressing economic problems and to drown internal difficulties in similar actions.

A session of the Supreme People's Assembly confirmed this opinion as well. Although a spring session is usually in March or April, this year it was only from 20th to 24th May, and it was obviously timed to coincide with the arrival of the NLF delegation of South Vietnam and with the arrival of the Chairman of the Indonesian Parliament. Both the NLF delegation leader and the Chairman of the Indonesian Parliament took part in the SPA session and delivered long speeches from its platform. A speech of a South Korean delegate then concluded the range of issues the SPA concentrated on – struggle with imperialism, support of the fight of the South Vietnamese people, unity of Asian and African countries, revealing the nature of South Korean – Japanese negotiations, and unification of the country.

Only at the end of the SAP session, the Finance Minister delivered a report about budget performance for 1964 and a budget for 1965. His presentation was unusually general, and he mentioned only cursorily some difficulties of national economy. We sent preliminary information about Embassy's assessment of the SAP session in a dispatch No. 101, and a separate report covers the content of the discussions.

Upon his own request, Soviet Ambassador V.P. Moskovskiy returned to his homeland on 05/12, after almost three years duty in the DPRK. He was replaced by A.I. Gorchakov, whose arrival is expected by the beginning of June this year. Before his departure, c. Moskovskiy was received by comrades Kim Il Sung, Choe Yonggeon and other members of the KWP CC Politburo. As c. Moskovskiy told the Czechoslovak titular before departure, the content of all conversations with Korean representatives was almost identical. The Korean representatives indicated their disagreement with the PRC position on events in Vietnam, and emphasized a demand of fighting unity of socialist countries and the National Liberation Movement; they mentioned difficulties of the DPRK national economy, poor quality of Korean products, and stressed their interest in development of mutual contacts.

They also pointed out an incorrect approach of the CPSU to the Japanese and Indonesian CP. Representatives of the KWP were somewhat disappointed with current development in South Korea, and admitted that the student movement was isolated from workers.

It became clear from the conversations that Korean comrades are aware of the lack of anti-American sentiment among South Korean population. A piece of information from the SPA session is interesting in connection with this: Propaganda of the DPRK in South Korea will try more to exploit anti-Japanese sentiments of South Koreans, and direct them against American imperialism that is backing South Korean – Japanese negotiations.

Celebrations of 20th anniversary of the CSSR liberation were the most important event in Czechoslovak – Korean relations. Headquarters were informed about their content and scope in a special report. We can say that attention and care the Korean side gave to the celebrations surpassed our expectations.

Our Embassy used this occasion most of all to express the Czechoslovak position on international problems and to make Korean public familiar with successes the CSSR accomplished during past 20 years. The celebrations were dignified and received positive response in the press and in public. As we have reported, the Korean side was displeased that the Czechoslovak press did not mention the celebration at all. The fact that the press informed about the celebrations in all other socialist countries (including the PRC and the DRVN) makes this even less comprehensible.

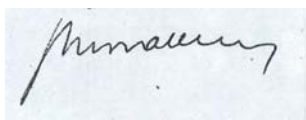
In performance of the 1965 Trade Agreement with the DPRK, Czechoslovak import has currently contracts for goods in the amount of 5.2 million Rb (probably Rubles – note of translator), which is 64% of the import part of the 1965 Agreement. By the end of May this year, goods for about 1.5 million Rb were loaded on ships (about 1/5 of the agreement volume). Part of these goods was loaded on the Czechoslovak ship Mir that arrived at the port Cheongjin and Heungnam in the second half of May.

According to the preliminary information from the Headquarters, we expect that the response of the Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Trade to the letter of the Chairman of the Committee for the Promotion of International Trade at the DPRK Council of Ministers in the matter of previous deliveries of equipment for the Pyongyang power plant will be delivered soon.

We also expect information when discussions about a plan of cultural cooperation for 1965 will be concluded. Korean comrades are openly indicating that current delays are not their fault.

We conclude with information for the Headquarters that Korean transcription of the name Czechoslovakia was changed from previous “Čekchoslovakija” to “Československo”. Similarly, transcription of other names of states was changed (for instance instead of previous “Pcharan”, Poland is now written in Korean as “Polaka”, instead of the name “Pukjong” for Beijing, transcription “Peičing” is used, and so on). Korean transcription thus approximates pronunciation of the particular language.

Ambassador



(illegible)

* * *

DOCUMENT No. 2

[Source: Archives of the Foreign Office, Berlin, Collection MfAA, [hereafter MfAA], G-A 316; Obtained for NKIDP by Bernd Schaefer and translated for NKIDP by Karen Riechert]

Letter from GDR Embassy in the DPRK to State Secretary Hegen December 12, 1966

Embassy of the GDR
in the DPRK

Pyongyang, 12 December 1966

To:

Secretary of State and First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
Comrade Hegen
104 Berlin
Luisenstraße 56

Stamped: State Secretary for Foreign Affairs II, 21 December 1966

:

Stamped: Confidential Matter 17/66

Stamped: Declassified 5 June 1987

Dear Comrade Hegen!

In this letter I just want to address briefly some subjects concerning the domestic situation of the DPRK. From sources accessible to us, we learned that since the party conference there has been a very intense campaign among the people concerning preparation for a potential war. The correctness of our information was corroborated by diplomats from the Soviet and other friendly embassies.

Before his departure, the British correspondent from *Morning Star* (Alan Winnington, correspondent in Berlin; with [Australian journalist Wilfred] Burchett he was journalistically and politically active here during the Korean War) was invited in late November to visit several families of mid-level Korean cadres he had known since the Korean War. By North Korean standards that is highly unusual. During those visits and his final conversation in the Central Committee, political preparations for a war with the U.S. were evident. Likewise it was of interest to note how the Korean comrades, in their conversations with Alan Winnington, directed stinging criticisms in identical fashion against the Soviet Union as well as the PRC. This is again confirming the existence of differentiated speech codes for Korean cadres pertaining to the Soviet Union, other friendly states, and representatives from other countries' parties.

Criticism was voiced towards the PRC for rejecting joint actions to support Vietnam, and towards the Soviet Union because of insufficient support for Vietnam.

Political propaganda among the people for a potential war with the U.S. contains the following elements:

- The USA is preparing for war. Johnson's visit to South Korea equals Dulles' visit before the outbreak of the Korean War.
- The U.S. imperialists are expanding war in Asia and will attack the DPRK.
- We have to be prepared for an attack every hour, there must be no surprise.
- As the USA is preparing its attack, and is arming the South Korean puppet army with modern aircraft, tanks and missiles, there might occur a situation within the Asian context when we have to preempt an attack by the U.S.

Besides political preparations for a potential war, there are checks in the residential areas for stockpiles of rations and other things needed in case of war. The training period for militias has been extended and is more intensively pursued.

Notwithstanding all those events mentioned above, we still stick to the opinion that there is no reason for assuming that either of the two sides (the U.S. and the DPRK)

currently have intentions to trigger a conflict. Probably for the DPRK there are mostly propagandistic reasons behind the present positions.

I have also consulted on these questions with the Soviet comrades. The fellow at the embassy who is especially concerned with these matters holds this opinion: neither the USA nor the DPRK is currently able to trigger a war in Korea. DPRK policy, however, has the potential for serious dangers in the future. One might assume that the DPRK would also address questions such as organizing joint actions regarding Vietnam in a different way from other socialist states. Concerning incidents at the border, he held the view that they were mostly instigated by the DPRK.

Finally, we want to mention a remark by the Cuban ambassador pertaining to the DPRK's position on a potential international conference [of communist parties]. He told me that Korean comrades would very likely not participate in such a conference. They had expressed to Cuban comrades, however, that they would fully understand and even support it if the Cuban party participates in such a conference. The KWP would be convinced that in such a case the Cuban party would fully represent the interests of the Korean party as well.

With socialist wishes
[signed]
Brie

* * *

DOCUMENT No. 3

[Source: AVPRF f. 0102, op. 23, p. 112, d. 24, pp. 13-23. Obtained for NKIDP by Sergey Radchenko and translated for NKIDP by Gary Goldberg]

Memorandum from the Soviet Embassy in the DPRK, "The DPRK Attitude Toward the So-called 'Cultural Revolution' in China"

March 7, 1967

"Events in China associated with the so-called 'Cultural Revolution' have seriously alarmed the Korean leadership, which has reason to fear its negative influence on the DPRK"

"During the period of the Korean-Chinese rapprochement people came to leadership at various levels of the Party and government apparatus who completely approved of the Korean leadership policy of rapprochement with China and weakening ties with the USSR"

"After the Korean leadership began to retreat from a unilateral orientation toward China it made several corrections to its ideological work with the population. It began to criticize both the CPSU and the CCP, trying to show that only the KWP policy took the correct position."

"The so-called 'Cultural Revolution' in China has forced the Korean leadership to take steps to strengthen Party and government personnel both at HQ and at the grass roots."

Steps were taken at the end of 1966 to reorganize the highest echelon of the Party apparatus, apparently not ignoring the possible negative consequences for the DPRK of the so-called "Cultural Revolution."

The increase in the number of members and candidate members of the Politburo and KWP CC secretaries and the appointment of a Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers is evidence of a desire of the Korean leadership to involve new people in running the Party and the country from among those who unquestionably approve of Kim Il Sung's current domestic and foreign policy."

"With the exception of Kim Il Sung, Korean workers avoid conversations on this subject [of the Cultural Revolution] or limit themselves to general phrases which mean nothing.

As events develop in China the KWP leadership has exhibited ever-growing concern and caution. In a conversation with the Soviet Ambassador in November 1966 Kim Il Sung said, "The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution has seriously alarmed us." Explaining the reasons for such alarm, Kim Il Sung pointed to the fact that KWP members "still are not so experienced [*zakaleny*] as to correctly understand everything" (See ref. N° 313 of 2 December 1966)

The need has arisen to conduct such explanatory work among KWP members as a result of which they would, on the one hand, as before be convinced of the correctness of the policy of the Korean leadership and, on the other, unquestionably approve of the negative attitude of the Korean leadership toward the so-called 'Cultural Revolution.'"

"According to information available to the Embassy explanatory work among KWP members in connection with the so-called 'Cultural Revolution' in China is of quite a critical [*ostryy*] nature."

"The leaders of the KWP speak of the so-called 'Great Cultural Revolution' as a 'great madness [*obaldenie*]', having nothing in common with either culture or a revolution."

In restricted propaganda the repression of intellectuals by the government, the destruction of cultural monuments, and the anti-Sovietism which has become the main substance of the policy of the ruling group of China are condemned (See our ref. N° 49 of 21 February 1967).

"The Korean comrades speak of the 'thousands of victims during the so-called 'revolution', the 'suicides', the 'political chaos', and the 'chaos in the economy,' about Mao Zedong as 'an old fool who has gone out of his mind.' In lectures they cite instances of political and economic pressure on the DPRK from the Chinese government."

"Speaking at a festive meeting (dedicated to the 19th anniversary of the Korean People's Army) O Jinu, Deputy Minister of Defense, said, 'The hope of any rift in our Party and our revolutionary ranks is stupid naïveté.' This statement might be regarded as a response to the Chinese for their attempts to conduct a campaign of slander against the DPRK."

"Questions (about the Cultural Revolution) were raised in a report by Kim Il Sung at a KWP Party conference (October 1966). Although there was no direct criticism of the Chinese leadership in his speech, it was later explained to KWP members in lectures and conversations to whom the accusations of left opportunism were addressed. In a conversation with the Soviet Ambassador in October 1966, Kim Il Sung said that, "They could not fail to touch on theoretical issues at the KWP conference inasmuch as right now a

big uproar had developed in China around the 'Great Cultural Revolution,' which might exert a great influence on our Party (see our ref. N° 286 of 21 October 1966).

"Among the articles of the Korean press published in the second half of 1966 in response to the so-called 'Cultural Revolution,' the most important is an editorial of the newspaper 'Nodong Sinmun' of 12 August 1966, 'In Defense of Independence.' In unofficial conversations with Soviet workers, Korean comrades have tried to stress that the article is mainly directed against the Chinese leaders."

In January 1967 a republic meeting of mechanical engineers was held with the involvement of Korean leaders and a large number of workers from around the country, and in February a Congress of cooperative workers [was held]. It is also intended to hold a meeting of construction workers, teachers, and others.

In a conversation with the Soviet Ambassador, Candidate Member of the KWP CC Politburo Pak [Yongguk] said that, besides the practical tasks of improving the work of sectors of the economy, the meeting had the goal of "raising the level of consciousness of the masses" (see our ref. N° 31 of 7 February 1967).

"Korean-Chinese relations continue to worsen, despite of the wishes of the Korean leadership."

The DPRK MFA requested that all accredited embassies in Pyongyang remove photographic showcases beginning 1 February. The Korean comrades did not conceal that this measure was directed against the Chinese government. All embassies except China's carried out this instruction. The photographic showcase propagandizing the so-called "Cultural Revolution" still hangs at the Chinese Embassy in Pyongyang. Repeated statements of the DPRK MFA directed at the Chinese Embassy remain unanswered. The Korean authorities have resorted to "administrative measures," forbidding residents of the city from walking past the showcase. Also, a photographic showcase was recently reopened by the Albanian Embassy in Pyongyang. The Korean authorities regarded these actions by the Chinese and Albanians as "provocative and criminal."

Speaking before representatives of the accredited embassies of the socialist countries in Pyongyang, Pak [Cheonseok], the Chief of the Protocol Department of the DPRK MFA, said that "our people are indignant at the 'arrogant' behavior of the Chinese. The Chinese and the Albanians are behaving like hysterical people," "they are not able to avoid responsibility for the criminal actions damaging the interests of the DRPK."

In the words Kim [Yeongnam], a Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, a strong protest has been sent to the Chinese leadership in connection with the anti-Korean slander which is being spread by the Red Guards in Beijing.

Chinese students and part of the specialists have left Pyongyang.

The newly appointed DPRK Ambassador to China has not yet left for Beijing. The Korean leaders speak indignantly of attacks by the Red Guards on officials of the Korean Embassy in Beijing.

In conversations the Korean leaders sharply condemn the actions of the Mao Zedong and his group, and correctly assess the harm events in China are causing to the international Communist movement and the socialist camp. At the same time, the Korean leadership does not dare openly criticize the Chinese, trying to avoid anything that might be used by the Chinese for anti-Korean purposes.

Anti-Chinese actions [*vystuplenie*] in the DPRK are of a retaliatory nature. It is supposed that the Korean leaders will act that way in the future when it is a matter of DPRK prestige in the international arena.

The Korean leadership does not denounce the anti-Sovietism of the Chinese ruling group. In restricted propaganda it continues to accuse the CPSU of displaying "weakness" toward the US, of "colluding" with the US to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, of an incorrect attitude "toward Yugoslavia the reactionary forces of India, and interference in the affairs of fraternal Parties ["]].

In conversations with foreigners the Korean leaders have begun to talk somewhat more freely about events in China. However, the impression is formed that the Korean leadership is taking a close watch so that the anti-Chinese sentiments which have recently intensified do not take the shape of open resentment of the people. Most of the Korean population is poorly informed about the situation in China and about the actions of Mao Zedong and his group.

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DOCUMENT No. 4

[Source: MOL, XIX-J-1-j Korea, 1967, 61. doboz, 5, 002126/3/1967. Obtained and translated for NKIDP by Balázs Szalontai]

Report, Embassy of Hungary in the Soviet Union to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry November 25, 1967

According to the information received from the competent department of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, several signs indicate that Sino-Korean relations keep worsening. Among these signs, we mention first of all that recently new pamphlets were published in Beijing, which contained a sharp attack on the Korean Workers' Party and the person of Kim Il Sung, threatening the leader of the Korean Workers' Party that the Korean people would take vengeance upon him for his revisionist policy. The estrangement of relations was also indicated by, for instance, the circumstances under which the latest Chinese holiday was celebrated in the DPRK. At the reception of the Chinese embassy, the level of representation on the Koreans' part was very low, the telegram of congratulations the Korean leaders sent to the Chinese was very cold, and no festive mass meetings took place in the country on the occasion of the Chinese national holiday. According to the information available for our [Soviet] comrades, the Chinese chargé d'affaires to Pyongyang complains that his opportunities to maintain contacts are very limited.

In the course of their contacts with the Soviet comrades, the Koreans, on their part, lay a rather great stress on the worsening of Sino-Korean relations, and they particularly emphasize that these relations have worsened in the economic field as well, for China does not supply those traditional export articles which are of primary importance for the Korean national economy, or it supplies [only] a relatively small amount of them. For example, coking coal, without which the furnaces of the DPRK would cease to work, is such an article.

Nevertheless, it is the impression of our comrades that although the Chinese side indeed tends to reduce its economic contacts with Korea, the Korean side exaggerates the

extent of that [pressure] while negotiating with the Soviet comrades. The obvious reason of this is that they strive to bring the Soviet Union to increase [Soviet-North Korean] economic contacts to such an extent that would also include certain opportunities of over-insurance for the DPRK. This manifested itself quite clearly during the talks a Korean economic delegation headed by Deputy Premier and Minister of Foreign Trade Li Juyeon, a member of the Korean Workers' Party P[olitical] C[ommittee], had in the Soviet Union.

[...]

In the course of the Moscow negotiations, which lasted approximately for a month, [...] the Korean side proposed a substantial extension of the list of articles exchanged between the two countries, namely, by increasing Soviet exports through the increased supply of machinery and equipment, auto and tractor tires, rolled non-ferrous metals, and other „hard” goods, whereas it intended to increase [North Korean] exports to the Soviet Union by [supplying] goods whose exports had already been halted and of which the Soviet Union had, and has, little need. Despite that, the Soviets, on their part, showed willingness to accept, on the whole, the Korean proposal, with regard to both exports and imports, and consequently in 1968 the exchange of goods between the two countries will increase, in all likelihood, by some 49 per cent in comparison with the previous year, and it will practically rise to the level planned for 1970.

[...]

Thus the economic contacts between the two countries are improving, albeit the developments are not necessarily beneficial for the Soviet Union in every respect. „Unfortunately,” [the officials of] the MID [the Soviet Foreign Ministry] point out, „this statement cannot be applied to other fields of the relationship between the two countries.” Here they concretely mention, on the one hand, those disagreements which exist between the two countries and the two parties with regard to the evaluation of the situation of the Communist and world movement and of the international situation in general, and, on the other hand, that therefore one can hardly speak of the intensification of political cooperation between the two countries. In the Soviet Foreign Ministry [officials] emphasize that despite the support the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries gave, and give, to the DPRK in the UN with regard to the Korean question, in many respects the DPRK quite rigidly refuses to express its support for the international policy of the Soviet Union.

In the course of the conversation our official [András Köves] had in the MID, [...] the Soviet side made the—obviously by no means official—statement that the Koreans and a few other parties—the Cubans, the Japanese CP, and this group also regarded the Vietnamese Workers' Party as one of their own—which increasingly consider themselves to be the vanguard parties of the international Communist movement, which, on the one hand, play the greatest role in the struggle against imperialism, and, on the other hand, have solely fought a consistent battle in the Communist movement against leftist and rightist revisionism, and in the future might also intend to provide this political standpoint with some formal base.

It is well-known that the CPSU—like the majority of the Communist parties of the world—has positions on a number of questions of the international situation and the world

Communist movement that are fundamentally different from [the position] of these parties. For instance, in the view of the Korean comrades the task is to increase international tension and, on this basis, intensify the struggle against American imperialism, while in the opinion of the CPSU it is international détente that guarantees better circumstances for the anti-imperialist struggle of the peoples. Perhaps this is the fundamental antagonism [between the USSR and the DPRK], and it is of relatively secondary importance how one evaluates the role Korea or, for instance, Cuba strives to play in the anti-imperialist struggle of the socialist camp and the Communist movement in general. One can hardly accept the statement that Korea and Cuba are the advanced posts of the [anti-]imperialist struggle in the east and in the west respectively, and that they alone are subjected to the greatest pressure in the struggle against imperialism. On the contrary, the truth is most probably that it is exactly in Europe where the front between the two systems is the sharpest. [...]

As is well-known, the Korean party and government delegation headed by Comrade Choe Yonggeon that had participated in the celebrations of 7 November left [the USSR] for Cuba for a few days. Thus it returned President Dorticos' official visit to Korea. Having returned from Cuba, the Korean side very emphatically told the Soviet comrades that this visit had been a matter of protocol, but this way they actually reinforced the impression of our comrades that negotiations aimed at the intensification of bilateral Cuban-Korean cooperation had taken place in Havana. It is well-known that precisely because of the political essence of that cooperation, our comrades are not enthusiastic about [Cuban-Korean cooperation], particularly when it is accompanied by certain gestures which are not exactly friendly toward the Soviet comrades, for example, when Comrade Kim Il Sung does not write the article for *Pravda*, despite having been asked (along with the leaders of a number of other Communist parties) by the central paper of the CPSU on the occasion of 7 November, but publishes an article in a journal of the Cuban party instead, and this article once again highlights those issues in which the Korean Workers' Party adopts a unique standpoint that is opposed to [the position of] the majority of the parties of the international Communist movement.

As is well-known, Comrade Brezhnev received Comrade Choe Yonggeon during his stay here [in the USSR]. Comrade Brezhnev raised two groups of issues at this meeting. On the one hand, the problem of the international Communist meeting; on the other hand, the issue of the tension between North and South Korea along the demilitarized zone. [...]

Basically, the Soviet Union does not accept the standpoint of the DPRK with regard to the cause of the tension along the demilitarized zone. It thinks—and it also gives expression to that vis-a-vis the Korean comrades—that the United States does not intend to increase tension in this region, and nothing points to [the U.S.] really aiming to start a new Korean War. It is obvious that various factors of the USA's international situation, such as the Vietnam War, do not make the perspective of a new Asian war attractive for the United States.

On the basis of the available evidence—including the statements made by the Czechoslovak and Polish members of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission—the Soviet Union has concluded that it is the DPRK that initiates the majority of the incidents occurring along the demilitarized zone.

The Soviets, for their part, expound to our Korean comrades that they understand the necessity of the DPRK's struggle for the unification of the country. They support this

struggle, but they are of the opinion that one should pay due regard to the concrete Korean and international conditions of the actual period when choosing the means and methods of the struggle. Therefore the Soviet side doubts that armed struggle is an appropriate method to reunify Korea.

For instance, in a military sense it would be, in all probability, inappropriate to come to such conclusions that the numerical superiority the DPRK's army has over the South Korean and American armies stationed in South Korea, and the essential militarization of the country, would render it possible for the DPRK to carry out successful military actions. Besides, the Soviet Union also tries to caution the DPRK against possible ill-considered actions through the military assistance it gives to that country by confining assistance to the supply of defensive arms. But the Korean comrades may make the mistake of not taking the nature and character of modern warfare into consideration to a sufficient extent.

Despite the aforesaid issues, it is the impression of our comrades that at present the DPRK, for its part, does not strive to escalate military actions, but by the regularly provoking border incidents and the accompanying propaganda campaign it intends to justify the militarization of the country and the fact that they [the KWP leaders], their official standpoint notwithstanding, can not develop the defense strength and the economy of the country simultaneously but lay stress only on the increasing of military strength, [which results in] the neglect of economic development and the stagnation of living standards.

In addition to the aforementioned issues, with regard to the internal situation of the DPRK, they [the Soviets] remark that lately the personality cult of Kim Il Sung has further increased to a great extent. Recently, a number of functionaries have been removed from the posts they occupied and have disappeared from public life. During the first wave of purges it seemed that it was carried out primarily against those leaders who had adopted a more or less pro-Chinese standpoint and against those who may have opposed the shaping of the Korean Workers' Party's independent policy that rejected the political line of the Chinese party leadership. Later, however, there occurred a second round of the purges, whose political content has not yet become clear for our comrades. In their view, the party functionaries involved in this round hardly seem to be the representatives of some Chinese line within the Korean party. Therefore they [the Soviets] feel uneasy about the further developments of the internal political situation.

[...]

József Oláh
(chargé d'affaires)

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DOCUMENT No. 5

[Source: MfAA, G-A 320; Obtained for NKIDP by Bernd Schaefer and translated for NKIDP by Karen Riechert]

**Letter from GDR Embassy in the DPRK to Secretary of State Hegen
December 8, 1967**

The Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Ambassador of the GDR in the DPRK
Pyongyang, 8 December 1967

To:
State Secretary and First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
Comrade Hegen
102 Berlin
Marx-Engels-Platz 2

Stamped: State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 18 December 1967
State Secretary for Foreign Affairs I, 18 December 1967
Office of the Minister, 21 December 1967
Stamped: Confidential Matter
Stamped: Declassified 5 June 1987

Dear Comrade Hegen!

You asked me repeatedly about the current situation at the armistice line and the reason for the increase in incidents. At the same time, it is necessary to answer the question whether the current situation in Korea implies an acute danger of war. Since the experience of aggression in the Middle East provides us with reason to focus on these questions, I have attempted to present my view in this letter by making use of, among others, information from the Polish and Czechoslovak commissions.

There are some differences in the tendencies of the information and opinions from the members of the Czechoslovak and Polish commissions. While the Czechoslovak commission, and especially the ambassador, Comrade Holub, is crediting the aggravation of the situation exclusively to the DPRK, the Polish comrades are expressing the opinion that though the majority of incidents were caused by the DPRK, currently all three parties, that is to say, the DPRK, the U.S., and South Korea, are interested in a tense situation at the armistice line. In my opinion, the estimation of the Polish comrades corresponds more fully to the real situation.

1. On the situation at the armistice line:

- Never, since the end of the Korean War, have there been so many and such severe incidents at the armistice line as in 1967.
- Besides more serious incidents, which left wounded [men] and casualties, mutual exchange of fire by guns and artillery became an almost daily phenomenon at certain parts of the armistice line.
- Incidents at sea are occurring more and more, in the course of which fishing boats are being seized.
- Incidents with casualties and wounded happen almost exclusively on South Korean territory. The U.S. regularly offers its help in investigating the incidents on the spot. Except for one incident, when four soldiers of the KPA [Korean People's Army] were killed, the Korean side did not suggest such, or rather rejected U.S. suggestions in

this respect. (Since 1953, the time of the armistice agreement, there have been only two cases when the Korean side has agreed to inspections on the spot, or has suggested them.)

- The U.S. side argues that the dead, the wounded and the equipment prove their theory that the incidents were caused by the DPRK (at the same time there is a willingness to hand over the dead).
- The North Korean side is arguing in their version that the incidents at the armistice line have been caused by the U.S., with the caliber and number of projectiles fired onto the territory of the DPRK, recorded statements of agents, and with the old type of weapons allegedly used by the agents (The guns are exclusively of an older type, that is to say, from the time of the Korean War.)
- The composition and attitude of the U.S. Delegation in Panmunjom have changed in comparison to 1966 and early 1967. While until early 1967 the command had been in the hands of officers who saw their duty mainly in tough anticommunist propaganda against the DPRK and the PR of China, the U.S. representatives currently in command are typical high-ranking military cadres of the Pentagon. The Commander of the U.S. side is now Rear-Admiral Smith. He had been commander of a MTB brigade [*Schnellbootbrigade*]; at that time [his] father had been commander of the entire Pacific fleet; then [he was] vice commander of the operative division of the U.S. Marine Corps and, before his current post in Korea, [he was] liaison officer of the staff of the U.S. Navy at the Committee of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the U.S. forces.
- The U.S. side now negotiates with great prudence and avoids to a large extent any propaganda against the DPRK and the PR China.
- Since 1967 the South Korean side has been represented by high ranking officers of the Tiger-Division.
- While in 1966 and early 1967 the head of the DPRK delegation stood for an objective handling of all incidents and accused the USA of using Panmunjom as a means for anticommunist propaganda, currently the DPRK delegation is focusing on unmasking the role of the USA in Korea and Asia.
- The U.S. has installed a very expensive electronic system along the armistice line in order to prevent incursions into South Korea. The costs for the installation of this system are said to be about 25 million dollars for the area of one division. In the opinion of the Czechoslovak and Polish comrades, this system creates extraordinary difficulties for infiltrating Korean cadres to the South by land. (The installation has been almost completed along the entire line).
- In the past the DPRK has again infiltrated cadres to the South. We cannot evaluate to what extent the USA claim is correct that the number of infiltrated cadres increased after the party conference of October 1966. The Czechoslovak comrades hold the opinion that the assertions of the USA are basically correct in this respect. The Polish comrades say that there has been a certain increase, but certainly not to the extent that has been alleged by U.S. propaganda.
- In my opinion the increasing armed incidents in the southern part of the [armistice] line are also due to more effective security measures by the USA and South Korea than they had in the past. Even in South Korea itself, tightened security measures have been implemented. Seoul has been surrounded by a security zone, street

patrols increased and all strategic, military and industrial sites placed under protection.

- The rigid security measures already existing in the DPRK have been intensified. People are not allowed to go more than two kilometers away from their homes without official permission. Also, street patrols have been intensified. According to unconfirmed information, the evacuation of parts of the population of Pyongyang has begun out of military considerations. 200,000 to 300,000 inhabitants are said to be affected (The total number of the population, according to Korean sources, is about one million, according to our estimation it is 800,000 to 900,000).
- For the future it must be expected that the incidents will occur increasingly in the coastal areas and at sea. Incursions of cadres into the South by land will be very difficult in the future, and the DPRK will try to do this by sea.
- The USA and the South Korean side have also taken measures in this respect, and now they employ faster and more modern coastal patrol ships (special motor torpedo boat brigades and radar stations on the coast) in order to secure the sea front.
- In my opinion, the incidents will continue in the future. Their scope and severity will be influenced to a large extent by the current political events.
- As all sides involved respond to any incident with military means, there might be the potential danger of a temporary local conflict. The latter might become more extensive, though, in my opinion, without any of the sides involved presently wanting to start a war.

2. Which are the causes of the current incidents and to what extent is there an imminent danger of war in Korea?

A) Attitude of the USA

In order to realize their global strategy, the USA is increasingly utilizing the extremely reactionary South Korean regime for their political and military plans.

- In my opinion the USA is currently interested in a tense situation at the armistice line, but not in an outbreak of war.
- The USA makes the most out of the tensions in order to justify the role of their troops in South Korea and to enable them to act as defenders against the expansion of communism in Asia. This attitude is directly linked to the current politics proclaimed by Johnson that, as in Europe after World War II, the USA has to erect a shield against communism. The USA saved Europe from the expansion of communism, and today the USA and its soldiers accomplish this in the interest of "the free nations of Asia." The USA attempts at the same time to exploit the tense situation at the armistice line in order to maintain the status of their troops under the flag of the United Nations. Among those nations who formally participate in this contingent of troops, there is increasing resistance to further engaging politically and militarily in Korea 15 years after the armistice. A number of representatives have uttered this openly during confidential talks in New York with diplomats of socialist countries.
- The following reasons account, in my opinion, for the fact that the USA is currently not interested in the outbreak of a war in Korea:

- The USA is primarily preoccupied in Vietnam
- The aim of the USA [is] to increase the discrepancies between the PR China and the Soviet Union. Attacking Korea would immediately touch upon the interests of the Soviet Union as well as of the PR China. War in Korea could force the PR China to seek joint action with the Soviet Union to defend the DPRK and to protect its own interests. In any case, those forces in the PR China fostering the normalization of the relationship with the Soviet Union out of national interests would possibly be emboldened.
- The USA cannot currently count on the same international support as in 1950 for an aggressive war against Korea, and the USA is in general very isolated due to the aggression in Vietnam.

b) The Attitude of the South Korean Regime

The South Korean regime is one of the most reactionary of the regimes in Asia whose policies are broadly determined by the USA.

- Despite a certain political and economical stabilization in South Korea, according to the scarce data available to us, there are serious internal conflicts between various groups. There is also opposition to the deployment of troops to South Vietnam.
- The Park Chung Hee regime attempts more and more to educate the entire population in accordance with a bourgeois-nationalistic anticommunist ideology. Currently there is a particularly strong anticommunist movement in South Korea aiming at suppressing any oppositional currents. In order to justify this reactionary anticommunist propaganda, the South Korean side is interested in a tense situation and in the aggravation of incidents.
- Despite certain remarks by the Park Chung Hee regime at official occasions about the reunification of Korea via the United Nations, the real concept of the South Korean regime is to conquer North Korea by military means. Even the Park Chung Hee regime [however] seems to be conscious of the fact that this is currently impossible.
- The USA is eager to maintain and expand South Korea as a crucial strategic base. However, the USA currently cannot risk South Korea unleashing a local war without becoming actively involved.

c) The attitude of the DPRK

- The attitude of the DPRK is expressed in the documents of the Party Conference, the article in "Nodong Sinmun" from 16 November 1967, and partly also in talks with our military delegation.
- The DPRK tries to portray the situation as if an attack by the USA is imminent, in order to justify their positions domestically and externally.
- At the same time the DPRK tries to practice its policy of dealing U.S. imperialism blows from the outside and to convince other socialist countries and leaders of the national freedom movement to adhere to a similar policy. This is also in close correlation with the current policy of Cuba (as far as my material justifies such an opinion).
- According to my handwritten notes, which I took during the three years of my work here, the leadership of the DPRK recognizes three possible solutions to the national question:
- In the context of a major revolutionary uprising of the people's masses in South Korea;

- In utilizing a coup d'état by military leaders against Park Chung Hee (and in the context of the temporary disorganization having been caused by this coup);
- In utilizing an aggravated international situation that committed U.S. forces to such an extent that they cannot support the South Korean regime.

Currently one can assess that the DPRK has totally given up the idea of a peaceful and democratic unification of the country. Also one does not seem to believe any more in the possibility of a broad revolutionary development in South Korea; therefore remaining are only the two latter adventurous variations, which they seem to be increasingly aiming at. Despite this opinion, I currently do not believe that the leadership of the DPRK plans any activities for a forceful solution of the national question in the near future. The following reasons may explain my opinion:

- The modernization of the KPA and the mastering of modern arms technology will take another two to five years. It is not possible to predict an exact time frame. On the one hand, the subjective opinions of the military leadership concerning the time needed for mastering modern arms technology cannot be evaluated from our side. On the other hand, the speed of arms deliveries from the Soviet Union will certainly depend on the political attitude of the DPRK, [and] on the assessment of the general situation.
The Korean leadership, especially Kim Il Sung, knows at the same time that a conflict with the USA is currently impossible without major support from the PR China. On the one hand, the willingness to provide such support is questionable in light of the domestic situation in China and the attitude of the Chinese leadership towards the USA, and on the other hand, Kim Il Sung will have to fear that a longer intervention by the PR China in case of a war might lead to his fall from political power.

Summarizing I would like to express the following opinion:

The incidents at the armistice line will continue in the future. Their scope and severity will mainly be determined by the political intentions of all three parties involved. Severe incidents will happen in particular when one of the parties involved is interested in an aggravation of the situation. The extremely tense situation does not exclude the option of larger local, temporary conflicts. I currently consider an immediate outbreak of war improbable, however I fathom the potential danger of the outbreak of a future war in Korea, taking into account the aforementioned political attitudes of the DPRK leadership, the Park Chung Hee regime, the U.S., and also the policy of the Mao faction. Therefore we have to follow the situation extremely closely. Also for the reasons mentioned, there is, among others, the need to devote highest attention to the relation between the GDR and the DPRK, the SED and the KWP, in order to further positive tendencies and to counter those tendencies that are adventurist and dangerous for the socialist world system.

I have insufficient information at my disposal to elaborate on this opinion. For that reason alone a miscalculation cannot be precluded. Notwithstanding that, I thought it would be appropriate to make the attempt and outline my opinion in light of the international situation as well as the situation in Korea.

With socialist wishes
[signed]

Brie

Enclosure

* * *

DOCUMENT No. 6

[Source: PolA AA, MfAA, G-A 360; Obtained and translated for NKIDP by Bernd Schaefer]

**Letter from GDR Embassy in the DPRK to State Secretary Hegen
December 22, 1967**

The Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Ambassador of the GDR in the DPRK

Pyongyang, December 22, 1967
State Secretary and
First Deputy of the Minister
For Foreign Affairs
Comrade Hegen

102 Berlin
Marx – Engels –Platz 2

Dear comrade Hegen,

Our embassy's analytical work and report for 1967 has dealt primarily with the following issues:

- The economic development of the DPRK
- Domestic developments since the party conference (especially after the plenum in June)
- The KWP's attitude towards different aspects of the world communist movement
- The DPRK's relationship with the PRC, Vietnam, Cuba, the Soviet Union, and other European socialist states
- The intensification of tensions along the line of demarcation and the reasons [for the intensification]

In December, the Far Eastern department suggested to work out a prognosis for the development of the DPRK and the relationship between the GDR and the DPRK. The goals and structures of such a prognosis have been sent for approval to the Far East department and thus to the administration of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Due to the embassy's extensive way of reporting, an exact report of the domestic and foreign policy of the DPRK by the GDR embassy is no longer necessary. If the administration needed such a summary, it could be compiled due to our section reports.

As a final analysis of my work done this year in the DPRK, I want to express my opinions regarding several aspects.

1. In the areas of domestic and foreign policy, the conflict between the tightened nationalistic outlook of the KWP and the government of the DPRK has increasingly intensified. Based on this tightened conflict, an oppositional movement in the party leadership has developed regarding the stance on domestic policy. In my opinion, this opposition in the party leadership does not show an essential change of the nationalistic centralist policy, but rather a certain modification of the contemporary policy can be seen. It seems that this opposition mainly argued for a more realistic economic policy (also an increase of living standards) and a more flexible policy regarding the national question. Regarding the foreign policy, they seemed to have argued for a policy which is more based on the actual potencies of the DPRK. There are no signs that this opposition wanted to connect a modification of policy in a putsch against Kim Il Sung. Obviously they strived to achieve such a modification by his help in acknowledging his executive position. Doubtless Pak Geumcheol and Li Hosun were in the forefront of this opposition. Furthermore, there are no signs that these oppositions worked with the help of foreign forces such as the PR China. In my opinion, it is generally wrong for the evaluation of contemporary and prospective developments of the DPRK to assess certain persons to be pro Soviet or pro Chinese.

2. The changes in the leadership of the party and of the state reflect two important tendencies:

- At the congressional party in October 1966, the leadership of the military cadres was strengthened. In 1967, this process continued and resulted in same changes taking place at the supreme discussion (OVV), the government, and their governmental institutions.
- There was a wide regeneration of the party – and the state cadres were developed under the leadership of Kim Il Sung. He was also responsible in their advancements. This regeneration of the party cadres, in some cases, resulted in a nomination of functional capable comrades. On the other hand, it also brought some incompetent nationalistic careerists.

3. The year 1967 was significant in tightening the nationalistic centralist policy of the DPRK and the KWP. This process was mostly seen at the ideological level. The cult personality of Kim Il – Sung degenerated in dimension as it is comparative to the contemporary cult of Mao. But in my opinion, it is impossible to put the political assessment of this cult personality in par with the development of the PR China. The enhancement of this cult will have negative domestic aftereffects, such as in terms of ideology as well as in strategy and administrating the national economy. In regard to foreign affairs, this cult concerns mostly the claim of leadership of the Maoist – group. Furthermore, this cult is certain that in part it will contribute to the contemporary development of the PR China. (Shielding against the influence of Mao as a revolutionary

world leader, and particularly against Mao as the leader of the Korean revolutionary forces.)

4. Regardless of the DPRK's ambitions in having normal relationships with the Soviet Union as well the PR China, due to the Maoist group, the relationship with the PR China hit rock bottom at the end of 1967. This was expressed, among other things, in a harsh protest that the deputy secretary of state, Ho Seoktae, also mentioned in November of this year. Protests were towards the charge d'affaires of the PR China, Wang Peng, concerning the offenses against the person of Kim Il Sung and the policy of the DPRK.

I want to emphasize one more time, that in my opinion, the DPRK still endeavors to have good governmental relations with the PR China as well as with the Soviet Union in the future. The DPRK does not strive in making a commitment to governmental political relations.

5. The relationship to the socialistic countries in Europe continued to improve in 1967. In certain circumstances, the DPRK was prepared to discuss essential problems in which they are most interested. Beyond this, they seriously attempted to improve economical relations with most of the socialist countries in Europe.

6. Aspects such as the visits to the GDR by leading DPRK personnel, improvement of foreign trade relations, the willingness to reach long-ranging agreements with the GDR, and endeavoring new forms of a technical and scientific cooperation, have all been areas where the DPRK worked towards the improvement of relations between our countries. In my opinion, this process will also prevail on the governmental level. In the field of relations between the parties, the reluctance of the KWP towards the SED and other Marxist – Leninists Parties will continue. The position of the DPRK and the KWP towards the GDR is, in my opinion, influenced by following aspects:

- In the eyes of the DPRK, GDR is an economically developed country with the most stable economy. Regarding cooperation with the GDR, the DPRK wishes for efficient economic support. Thereby the DPRK expects a certain amount aid from the GDR.
- For the leadership of the DPRK, our party is an especially self –contained, stabile, ideological strong party, which has an important influence towards the international communist movement, and also in part towards the national liberation movement.
- The consequent and resolute position of the GDR in the conflict with the American and West German Imperialism and the big political and material support of Vietnam have been positively assessed.
- The DPRK has some provisions against our strategy and tactic in the national question, in terms of the policy of the European security and against a tight confraternity between the SED and the CPSU, the GDR and the Soviet Union and in the economical cooperation.

7. It is certain that during the next months the cooperation of the embassy within different governmental and political places of the DPRK will get more difficult and complicated. On the one hand all cadres of the party and state machinery have obviously been instructed to behave notably cautious and proud towards all foreign representation. Presently this arrangement mainly concerns the Soviet embassy, to which the Koreans are

behaving, in spite of the amount of military and economic help, especially discriminatory. To some extent they are also behaving in a similar manner towards us and other embassies. Beyond this the cooperation will get more complicated because of the political insecurity of the new cadres and their missing motivation to exchange opinions. One important tactical question is how we should react towards the cautious behavior of the Koreans. In the context of this concluding letter I want to be essentially responsive to this. From my point of view it is necessary to think carefully about this aspect and not to jump to conclusions.

For characterizing the behavior of the Koreans, I am accenting now several examples.

The soviet ambassador formulated the request to transfer a movie about the stay of the delegation of the OVV to the member of the delegation. In addition to the transferring it was also allowed to show the movie.

The Korean foreign minister responded that they suggest that a member delivers the movie to the record department.

For the disposal of notably important army transfers, like missiles, aircrafts, modern tanks etc., the Soviets suggested to accomplish it in a ceremony. But the Koreans didn't show any willingness towards this. Finally the disposal found place in a small room with tea and cigarettes.

The Koreans urgently requested help from the Soviet Union, due to the fact that their production of steel would disrupt without an immediate shipment of additional coke. Five days after the Korean request help, comrade Nowikow personally phoned the ambassador comrade Sudarikow. He advised Sudarikow of the willingness of the immediate delivery of an additional amount of coke. Further he asked him to clear just one question with the government in order to start the deliveries immediately. While I was present at an event, the Soviet ambassador asked Kim Gwanghyeob for two minutes time in order to solve the above mentioned question. The chief of records came back from Kim Gwanghyeob only with the information that the Soviet ambassador should call the foreign ministry the next day in order to ask for an appointment. Thus he would get further information.

Just a few Korean comrades arrived at the departing ceremony of the Soviet military attaché (degree general), and the main guests came 30 minutes too late. The main guest was a general responsible for the execution. (At the departing ceremony of our military attaché there was a high attendance including the deputy chief of the general staff and a very high Korean attendance.) The Korean representatives were not even present at the train station during the departing ceremony of the Soviet attaché.

As another example, the Soviet ambassador has been waiting nearly four weeks for an important conversation with Kim Il Sung, regardless to the fact that the Korean ambassador in Moscow never has to wait more than 48 hours for a meeting with Kosygin.

The Soviet ambassador arranged a cocktail party on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the diplomatic service of the Soviet Union. In addition to ambassadors, chargé d'affaires and other diplomats, the deputy of the foreign ministry of the DPRK and many other comrade have been invited. The highest Korean guest was the assistant conductor of our national department.

At the opening of a huge book exhibition by the Soviet ambassador on December 12, approximately 30 Korean comrades were present. At our opening one year ago in the same accommodation, there were around 150 Korean comrades.

I have discussed these aspects already elaborately with comrade Sudarikow. Thus I asked him, if, due to the fact of such different behavior, the party and government of the Soviet Union will not draw any conclusion and change their policy towards the Korean comrades.

Comrade Sudarikow answered: With calm and factuality we have to try now for some duration to work insistently in gaining the confidence of the Korean government. It is important that the Koreans recognize that we, that is the Soviet Union, simply have the best intentions towards the DPRK. He (comrade Sudarikow) could assure me, that the Soviet Union would not make any rash reactions towards the contemporary behave of the Koreans.

From my point of view, we should not react too rashly to the party's impolite attitude towards us. This attitude expresses itself during the long moment of waiting for the announcements at the foreign ministry, repeated queries about topics, and so on.

Regardless to the fact that our Korean partner is speaking in conversations in the style of newspaper articles, we should strengthen in the year 1968 the endeavors in the embassy, to explain our policy not only in the foreign ministry, but also in other governmental institutions. . Further we should use all protocol possibilities to speak out on invitations in the embassy.

To accomplish this method of working in the embassy in a determined way, which is mainly urgent due to the staff decreases, concerning the low political value of talk compared to the effort of time, the endeavors in keeping up and deepens the relations with the Koreans.

There is a constant discussion in our embassy concerning the right proportions between events with other diplomatic represents and Korean personalities. We always had to face the fact that these events developed in proportions to the disadvantages of the Korean personalities.

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DOCUMENT No. 7

[Source: MfAA, C 1088/70; Obtained for NKIDP by Bernd Schaefer and translated for NKIDP by Karen Riechert]

Memorandum, GDR Embassy in the DPRK, "Summarizing Memorandum on two Informational Reports" January 5, 1968

GDR Embassy in the DPRK, Pyongyang
5 January 1968 [typing error on original: 5 January1967]

Summarizing Memorandum on two Informational Reports

It is said that the population of the capital should be reduced by 300,000 and that, at the same time, a certain number of factories should be relocated to other parts of the DPRK

in order to “minimize the risk to Pyongyang of a military attack.” The resettlement of families is said to have started already in November 1967.

Also the official permission for domestic traveling, which had been introduced early this year, is to be seen in the context of an increased defense alertness, since they want to be able to assign everybody at any time far from his home. It was noted how a Korean woman who wanted to travel to a nearby village for her son’s funeral had been treated in a very unfriendly way by the police; obviously in order to have her renounce her travel plans. This new policy can be readily observed by the fact that the trains are now almost empty, while in the past one had to show up at the station much earlier in order to get access to the train. If the police now issue a travel permit, one gets a special passport valid only for one particular journey.

They banned all romantic lyrics and old Korean love stories because love would distract the people from their revolutionary thinking. These prohibitions also extend to the romantic operas (as our colleagues call them), the fiction book “How the Steel was Tempered”¹⁶³ and the music of Beethoven as he is not considered a revolutionary. [...]

(Signed)

Herrmann

* * *

DOCUMENT No. 8

[Source: PolA AA, MfAA, G-A 360; Obtained for NKIDP by Bernd Schaefer and translated for NKIDP by Karen Riechert]

GDR Embassy "Note on a Conversation with the Polish Ambassador, Comrade Naperei, on 26 January 1968 in the Polish Embassy" January 27, 1968

GDR Embassy to DPRK
Pyongyang, 27 January 1968

Note on a Conversation with the Polish Ambassador, Comrade Naperei, on 26 January 1968 in the Polish Embassy

The appointment was arranged by mutual initiative.

At the beginning I informed Comrade Naperei about the statements by Comrade Pak Seongcheol when I handed over the letter by Comrade Ulbricht (without references to the content of the letter).

¹⁶³ Soviet Classic of ‘Socialist Realism’ from 1932-36 by Nikolaj Ostrovskij.

Comrade Naperei stated his assessment of the situation as being extraordinarily dangerous. If the DPRK does not accede to U.S. demands to return ship and crew, we might probably witness an armed conflict here.

It is known through the members of the commission in Panmunjom that the United States has relocated two squadrons of F-105 aircraft from Okinawa to South Korea. Until January 26 noon, so far 19 men from the 31-person commando planning to stage the attack in Seoul have been killed and two captured. Of those two prisoners one killed himself and the surrounding policemen through a hand grenade. The Polish commission members have informed the Polish embassy that there are continuous attempts to launch new commandos on South Korean territory.

Polish officers serving with the commission constantly travel by train between Panmunjom and Pyongyang. They noticed that almost every train arrives with considerable delay here in Pyongyang and many freight trains travel in Southern direction.

Furthermore the Polish Ambassador informed that the Swiss representative in the Neutral Commission has approached the heads of the Czechoslovak and Polish part of the commission to inform them about his conversation with General Friedmann (Chief of Staff of the 8th U.S. Army deployed in South Korea). Friedmann stated the U.S. willingness to retaliate if the DPRK will take steps indicating that they are going to launch an armed conflict. The U.S. will not back down from its demands for the return of ship and crew. As a member of the Neutral Commission, the Swiss representative asked the Czechoslovak and Polish comrades to inform their embassies and transmit the U.S. position to the Koreans. The Swiss delegate said he is taking this step to contribute towards the preservation of peace on Korea.

Also Comrade Naperei informed that the United States has approached all members of the Neutral Commission and asked for their support to receive from the Korean side a list of names of "Pueblo" crew members with details about those wounded and killed.

If the DPRK will tell the members of the commission in preparation for the next meeting [in Panmunjom] that this constitutes an exclusive matter between DPRK and USA, the Czechoslovak and Polish commission members will try to find a clause in the Neutral Commission's statute providing the option for a legal argument to define the American request not as part of the commission's duties. If the DPRK will take a different position, all four members of the commission will sign the U.S. request letter and forward it to the DPRK.

Note: I heard from the CSSR Ambassador that the next commission meeting will take place not earlier than 30 January 1968.

Jarck
Acting Ambassador

CC
1x Comrade Schneidewind (Foreign Ministry)
1x Embassy/Secretariate

* * *

DOCUMENT No. 9

[Source: MOL, XIX-J-1-j Korea, 1968, 58. doboz, 3, 00894/8/1968. Obtained and translated for NKIDP by Balázs Szalontai]

**Report, Embassy of Hungary in the Soviet Union to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry
January 30, 1968**

On the basis of the conversation our official [András Köves] had in the MID [Soviet Foreign Ministry], I report the following:

Following the disclosure of the incident and the related American steps, the Soviet side asked the DPRK for information about the incident. They did get that information. The Korean side informed the Soviet comrades that the *Pueblo* had been brought to in the territorial waters of the DPRK, within the 12-mile area measured from the shore (or the coastal island in question). (By the way, our Korean comrades remark, though publicly do not emphasize, that in principle they regard the whole East Korean Bay as the inland sea of the country – this concept is known in international law, the USA and the Soviet Union regard the Hudson Bay [sic] and the bay around Vladivostok respectively as such inland seas –, and actually the territorial waters of a country should be measured from the boundary of this inland sea, rather than from the shore ...) The *Pueblo* did not fly any flag while being in this area, and it did not reply to the first question of the DPRK's ships, which inquired about the nationality of the ship. Instead, the ship began to flee, but it was caught up with, encircled, and – as is well-known – captured by the fast coastal ships of the DPRK. Besides this information, the Korean side also says that they do not rule out that the *Pueblo*, while fleeing from the Korean ships, left the territorial waters [of the DPRK].

Accepting this description of the events, the Soviets, on their part, remark that they find it completely obvious that it was proper and necessary to take some steps against that obviously provocative American step, especially as the act of catching the Americans red-handed provided [the DPRK] with an excellent opportunity for propaganda.

However, the real issue is the nature of the steps to be taken, and with regard to that question, the Soviet side remarks that the 1958 Geneva Convention on Maritime Navigation deals with the measures to be taken against warships violating the territorial waters [of a country]. The 23rd paragraph of the convention states that warships should be treated in a way that is different from the one applicable to civilian ships, and the [war]ships which violate one's territorial waters should be removed from these territorial waters. True, the Soviet Union had reservations with regard to the 23rd paragraph in the sense that it found it necessary to make a special declaration about that foreign warships could not be in the territorial waters of a given country without the consent of the state in question, but it is nevertheless obvious that, on the basis of international customs, the capture of the warship and its crew is such an excessively radical step that is out of proportion to the violation of laws committed by the Americans [i.e., by the *Pueblo*].

Nonetheless, the Soviets, on their part, find it necessary to give full support to the DPRK with regard to the case and to reveal the Americans.

The Soviet side asked the Korean comrades what sort of solution to the question they could imagine. The Koreans, on their part, expounded that they strove for a peaceful settlement, and if the Americans had not made such a provocative fuss about the issue, if they had not resorted to the method of utterly extreme threats against the country [the DPRK], they would have released the crew of the *Pueblo* long ago, in the same way as they had always done in comparable previous cases (e.g., South Korean fishing boats, American helicopters). But at present, facing the American threats, they cannot take such measures for the time being.

The Soviets, on their part, are of the opinion that by now the DPRK and the socialist countries have already achieved practically everything that could have been achieved at the expense of the USA, in the revealing of the aggressive foreign policy of the USA, etc., in the wake of the incident. The further prolongation of the crisis would be seriously dangerous, however, and therefore the Soviet side strives to induce the DPRK to find a right time for the handing over of the *Pueblo* and its crew (in the view of the Koreans, primarily the crew) so as to put an end to the crisis. With regard to that, our [Soviet] comrades say the following:

It seems obvious that the Johnson administration really strove, and still strives, for a diplomatic solution to the crisis. This is indicated by the contacts established between American official personages and socialist diplomats in Moscow, New York, and elsewhere, and also by the actions of the Americans, for one can hardly accept the explanation that it was only due to technical reasons that the Americans „allowed” the DPRK to capture the *Pueblo*. Evidently the Americans are seriously afraid of that if they took military steps, this would carry incalculable consequences. The Soviets, on their part, repeatedly emphasized that now a new Korean War, let alone a greater possibility of some Soviet-American military confrontation, would hardly serve American interests.

However, the question is whether a possible prolongation of the crisis will bring forth circumstances which may induce the Johnson administration to head towards a military solution against its wishes. For instance, the question is how much [36th President of the U.S.] Johnson will be able – and willing – to resist the extremely provocative attitude of the Congress that demands immediate military actions against the DPRK, in the light of, for example, the considerations of the election struggle... On the other hand, the Johnson administration already made use of the Korean crisis to draft reservists, that is, to take a step it had not dared take for long years because of the [prospective] reaction of public opinion. In this sense one can hardly preclude that the Korean crisis reinforces the [position of the] hawks with regard to the further shaping of the American policies related to the Vietnam War.

Therefore the Soviet side considers that the next task is to strive to induce the Korean comrades to seek, and find, a „moment” that will be convenient for the solution of the crisis. As we mentioned before, the opinion they form of the Korean standpoint is that it will be possible to influence our Korean comrades in such a way. Another aspect of the question is that the Afro-Asian member states of the SC [the UN Security Council] extremely strongly press for a peaceful solution. Thus in case of the further prolongation of the affair the DPRK and – partly – the socialist countries, if they themselves do not take steps toward a settlement, will easily lose the political capital they have made.

[...]

[signature]
(Ambassador)

* * *

DOCUMENT No. 10

[Source: Czech Foreign Ministry Archives; translated for NKIDP by Adolf Kotlik]

**Memo from Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the KPCZ CC Presidium
"Information about the Situation in Korea"
February 4, 1968**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of National Defense Ministry of the Interior to the
KPCZ CC Presidium and the Czechoslovak government
File no.: 020.873/68-3
4 February 1968

Information about the situation in Korea
Attachment III a/

Tension in the Far East has escalated seriously as of late in connection with the detention by the Korean People's Army patrol boats of the American spy ship *Pueblo* along the DPRK coast and in connection with armed actions of Korean patriots in South Korea. These events have brought the situation on the Korean Peninsula to a head and have threatened to create another center of military conflict in this area.

Development of the situation on the Korean Peninsula is characterized in the presented information.

I.

The main source and cause of persistent tension on the Korean Peninsula is the fact that Korea remains a divided country, and strong American and South Korean armies with state-of-the-art weapons are positioned in the South. This circumstance has a profound influence on all life in the DPRK and is reflected in the political direction of the Korean Worker's Party. The leadership of the KWP is following with growing anxiety the development in South Korea where younger, more flexible state leadership has been able to bring the country [back] from the brink of total collapse after the fall of Syngman Rhee and has been successful in more-or-less stabilizing conditions in the country with the help of foreign capital, mainly from the U.S., Japan, and West Germany. It seems that this relative stabilization of the South Korean regime, accompanied by strong anti-communist propaganda and police terror, has paralyzed revolutionary sentiments in the country and is skillfully discrediting the authority of the DPRK and diminishing her influence among South Korean population. This is also somewhat supported lately by a more tactful behavior of U.S. troops towards the South Korean public. On the other hand, the initial political but

mainly economic supremacy of the DPRK, still noticeable at the beginning of the 60's, has been gradually eroding due to economic stagnation, characteristic of the period of close cooperation of the DPRK with the PRC (People's Republic of China). With no less anxiety, the DPRK is following also the extensive foreign affairs and military activity of the South Korean regime, which is gaining international authority and sustaining and strengthening the positions of world imperialism in Asia, pointed mainly against socialist countries.

The latest development in South Korea is also connected with many visits in Seoul of representatives of world capitalism, culminating with the trip of President Johnson in 1966. Most of these visits contributed to the further stimulation of the South Korean economy, to the buildup and modernization of the South Korean army, and to the strengthening of "Asian-Oceanic Alliances" under the sponsorship of the U.S..

All this is increasing restlessness on the Korean Peninsula and diminishing chances for a peaceful unification of the country in the near future. The leadership of the DPRK is concerned about aggression from the South, and even expects it, and is preparing the Korean people for a unification of the country by an armed struggle of the Korean people.

This process in the policy of the KWP CC has taken shape during the last year. In the declaration of Kim Il Sung during the nationwide conference of the KWP in October 1966, a thesis was put forth that the unification of the country will be a long-term process requiring, mainly, the creation of a Marxist party in South Korea and establishing close cooperation with non-selective organizations. In conflict with that, the current doctrine of the KWP calls for a liberation of the southern part of the country by force as soon as the conditions are favorable. This new feature is manifested even in the slogan, coined in January 1967 by Kim Il Sung, about the necessity to unify Korea during the life of this generation. The expression "peaceful and democratic unification of the country" disappeared from [North] Korean propaganda. Even the [North] Korean press does not deny that [the country] is preparing for the defeat of American imperialists. The inescapability of war is theoretically explained, its consequences are played down, and the fear of war is countered as a display of bourgeois pacifism and revisionism. While the doctrine of a parallel build-up and defense of the country was declared during the October conference of the KWP in 1966, it is more and more obvious that the defense has gained priority. This was reflected even in the last year's budget of the DPRK, which appropriated more than 30% of expenditures for defense (excluding the free of charge soviet military assistance). The real nature of military measures of the DPRK is discussed in many essays, like, for instance, in an article in the periodical *Korean People's Army*, from November 1967, where it is written: "The military course of our party, drawn by Marshal Kim Il Sung, enables us to reliably protect our socialist homeland by way of preferential strengthening of the defensive military power, and to handle, based on our own initiative, the great revolutionary event – unification of the country."

The [North] Korean propaganda makes every effort to convince the citizens of the DPRK as well as the world's public that the situation is quite similar to that just before the outbreak of the Korean War. Military training of civilians, including women and children, was justified by the thesis of "turning the DPRK into a steel, impregnable fortress" and reached unprecedented magnitude in the DPRK.

We cannot also underestimate the fact that the spreading of military psychosis had other functions, like distracting people from the existing economic difficulties, "justifying"

stagnation of the standard of living, demanding the strictest discipline and obedience, and preventing any criticism.

Especially in the last year, the personality cult of Kim Il Sung reached unprecedented magnitude. Attributes attached to his name often run several lines. Kim Il Sung is credited with all successes and victories past and present without regard to historical facts. Even his parents and grandparents are becoming the objects of celebrations. [North] Korean propaganda places an equal sign between Kim Il Sung and Korea, while Korea is presented as an example for other countries. The intensification of Kim Il Sung's personality cult is inseparable from two other issues, namely, – the importance of the DPRK example for the struggling nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America, and the embellishment of Kim Il Sung's role in the context of the international communist and workers' movement.

Excerpts from the Cuban press, which continually publishes his addresses, are mainly used as evidence supporting the importance of his theoretical works.

Collected writings of Kim Il Sung also constitute the basic and, today actually, the only source for study of Marx-Leninism. [North] Korean citizens get only very limited information about life in other socialist countries or about the situation in the world since all news in the press and radio are bent to the line of the KWP. This practice results in increased isolation of the DPRK from the outside world.

Displays of the personality cult in the DPRK are enhanced by a strong nationalism. All problems involving the DPRK are exaggerated and placed before other international problems.

The personality cult is also supported by personnel policy of the KWP. In the summer months of 1967, a number of influential and mid level party officials were removed. According to some information, members of the Politburo Pak Geumcheol and Li Hosun were arrested during last year's June conference of the KWP CC. Pak Geumcheol allegedly asked Kim Il Sung for a more realistic domestic policy, including improvement in the standard of living and a more realistic approach to the problems of South Korea where the most decisive factor was supposed to be an upsurge of the internal revolutionary forces. According to an assessment of his friends, Pak Geumcheol was considered as one of the most capable functionaries of the KWP and the DPRK, and Li Hosun was engaged in the Politburo of the KWP CC with South Korean issues for a number of years. During the same period, other deputies and officials of the KWP CC and non-selective organizations were removed, such as a chairman of the (Workers) Unions CC, a leader of the YO (Youth Organization) of the KWP CC, a chairman of a youth organization CC, a director of the DPRK press agency, and many others. Demoted functionaries are sometimes replaced with graduates of military institutes.

The leadership of the KWP and DPRK differs in its opinions from the position of most of the fraternal parties, especially in the most pressing current issues – war and peace.

The difference in opinions among [North] Korean comrades is the most pronounced in the approach to fighting world imperialism. The KWP calls, in this case, for a frontal drive for final and immediate destruction of capitalism. According to the [North] Korean concept, the fight against imperialism can be done only by strong verbal attacks or war.

Positions of the KWP on issues of war and peace, peaceful coexistence, and approach to struggle with imperialism are very strongly influenced by the problems of the unification

of the country. Naturally, these positions also shape the attitude of the KWP towards the international communist movement. The leadership of the KWP expresses support for the unity of the ICWM (International Communist Workers Movement) in the struggle with imperialism and for coordination of aid to Vietnam from fraternal countries, but the leadership expects the building of this unity only on the foundation of its own approach to the fight against imperialism and from the point of view of its own interests and goals. Fraternal parties are indirectly reproached for attacking imperialism only verbally, while in reality, they are afraid of it and are giving ground to it. The [North] Korean comrades put their positions forth as the only correct interpretation of Marxism-Leninism.

Countries of the Third World are considered especially important for their pivotal role in increasing the authority and prestige of the DPRK in international affairs. At the same time, the DPRK strives to promote its own example for these countries and to exert influence there by doctrines of "building with own resources," of "independence from big countries," and by radicalism of the [North] Korean positions.

So far, the DPRK did not take its position to the consultative meeting of fraternal parties, held in Budapest in February of this year. According to the opinion of Pak Seongcheol, member of the KWP CC, Deputy of the Council of Ministers and the DPRK Minister of Foreign Affairs, as expressed to the Ambassador of the GDR (German Democratic Republic), conditions for meetings of fraternal parties are worse now than a year ago. In the situation where the rift between the CPSU (Communist Party of Soviet Union) and the CP of China has grown wider and there are not even any diplomatic contacts between the USSR and the APR (Albanian People's Republic), meetings are said to contribute to the worsening of the discord. So far the only published reference in the DPRK press about planned meetings is the information taken from the central body of the CP of Cuba about the latest session of the Cuban CP CC plenum and its decision not to attend the meeting in Budapest.

Moreover, it is quite usual that in the relations of the DPRK to fraternal parties and countries, the [North] Korean comrades strive to have their opinions fully accepted and supported. The DPRK is also issuing to socialist countries imperative instructions on what they can and cannot do in their politics and in relations with imperialist countries. The article "Let Us Point Our Fight Against the American Imperialism," published in the journal *Nodong Sinmun* on 16th October 1967 in commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the Moscow meetings, calls for a tougher stance against the American imperialism, for active support of the struggle of the nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America, and warns that socialist countries must be aware, as well, of the danger of Japanese militarism in Asia and fight against it. At the same time, the wish of the KWP to achieve unconditional support for the [North] Korean course by all socialist countries is expressed, as well, in the request that "each socialist country must respect the policy of the Cuban CP and is obligated only to support the struggle of the Cuban people."

Similar practices are also characteristic of the approach of the [North] Korean comrades towards international organizations where they often try to push unrealistic requirements and, on top of that, demand that their socialist partners support them thoroughly without regard to the common interests of the whole socialist community.

II.

By pressing forward with the current doctrine, the KWP is also contributing to the increase of restlessness especially in the Demilitarized Zone and to the dangerous escalation of tension there, which was quite noticeable last year. Incidents in the zone and to the south of it have, so far, reached an unprecedented number. Incidents result in many casualties. Official sources in the DPRK accuse the Americans and the South Korean regime of importing new kinds of weapons into South Korea and of shooting from the Demilitarized Zone at the North, and they assert that incidents on the territory of South Korea are the result of the growing struggle of South Korean patriots for national liberation. Contrary to that, Americans and South Koreans accuse the DPRK of continuously and increasingly infiltrating the South and of supplying new kinds of weapons.

In a memorandum from October last year on the situation in Korea, submitted to members of the political committee of the UN, the DPRK government pointed out the danger of a new Korean war flaring up as a consequence of American provocations and the necessity to withdraw U.S. troops immediately from South Korea. A letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the South Korean regime, containing a number of attacks against the DPRK and its policy (especially in connection with an “infiltration from the North”), was distributed amongst the committee as well.

According to the opinion of the Czechoslovak delegation with the Supervisory Commission of the Non-Aligned States, as well as to the opinion of our Embassy in Pyongyang, a number of circumstances indicate that the incidents in the Demilitarized Zone and to the south of it are intentionally and purposefully provoked mostly by the DPRK, although it is difficult to judge which side is to blame in such cases. However, increasing tensions on the 38th parallel of latitude and the growing number of incidents corresponds with the [North] Korean concept of the fight against imperialism and with the support of the revolutionary struggle of the people of South Korea. Officials of the DPRK strive to attract the world’s attention to the Korean problem and try to gain support from socialist countries for their policies.

The rapidly deteriorating situation in the Demilitarized Zone and the danger of a possible new conflict was reflected in the negotiations of the Military Commission for Truce in Panmunjeom. At the Commission’s meetings, both sides accused each other of violating the treaty, and the negotiations lead to nowhere. For the [North] Korean side, the Military Commission for Truce is a place where they can confront Americans face to face, and they take full advantage of this opportunity. Speeches of a [North] Korean delegate are mostly propaganda in nature and are used namely in the internal propaganda of the DPRK. Consistently, the negative attitude towards participating in joint investigations of the discussed incidents, as stipulated in the Truce Treaty, is a shortcoming of [North] Korean comrades in their dealing with the Commission.

The DPRK authorities are pressuring the Czechoslovak and Polish delegations with the Supervisory Commission of the Non-Aligned States into making the SCNAS a platform for the anti-imperialistic struggle in the [North] Korean style, without regard to the mandate of the Commission given by the Truce Treaty. At the same time, the [North] Korean comrades only inform the Czechoslovak and Polish delegations about the problems in the Demilitarized Zone sporadically and inaccurately. The Czechoslovak delegation with the SCNAS conducts its activities in agreement with the directive currently in force with the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The situation in Korea lately underwent a very dangerous development. On January 23rd this year, patrol boats of the DPRK detained an American spy ship *Pueblo* with 83 men and escorted it to the North Korean port Wonsan. According to the DPRK's information, the American ship was captured 10 miles away from Wonsan and 7.6 miles from the Jodo Island. The ship was collecting data about water depth, location of troops, and defenses of the DPRK coast.

On January 19th this year, this incident was preceded by an attempt of an armed group of 30 to penetrate the residence of the South Korean president in Seoul, with an objective to assassinate the President and other government officials. There was an exchange of fire for several hours between that group and South Korean police, with dead and injured on both sides. The South Korean regime mobilized armed forces that, together with the American Army, destroyed most of the members of the group.

On January 24th, Americans accused the DPRK at the Military Commission for Truce of an attempt to assassinate the President and high officials of the South Korean regime and of capturing an American ship in international waters. A spokesman for the U.S. said that the capturing of the ship could have grave consequences and endanger peace in the DPRK. He demanded immediate return of the ship with the crew and an apology. He also asked that a serious warning be passed on to Kim Il Sung. The [North] Korean side rejected the accusation.

President Johnson and Minister Rusk characterized the situation as very serious. The United States representative at the UN, Goldberg, expressed to U Thant concerns of the American government about the consequences of the incident and asked for a meeting of the Security Council regarding the capture of the American ship. The U.S. presents the issue of the ship as a part of a continuous violation of the Demilitarized Zone and as a provocation against South Korea. The U.S. asked the USSR to intervene with the [North] Korean side for the release of the captured ship. The USSR declined to intervene and warned the U.S. against any rash actions.

The United States, South Korean regime, and the DPRK introduced a number of military measures in order to increase the combat readiness of their armed forces. These measures, together with the psychological conditioning of the population in the both parts of Korea, create, on their own, a situation when any rather serious incident caused by one of the parties could escalate into a larger scale military conflict.

According to international law, the DPRK's course of action would be legal if the American vessel were engaged in a hostile activity in the coastal waters of the DPRK and offered resistance when ordered to leave. If the incident happened in the open sea, the DPRK's intervention was not legal. It is difficult to judge this matter now. We assume the position of the DPRK that the ship *Pueblo* was in the DPRK coastal waters. From this point of view, detention of the ship appears to be an act of defense of the DPRK's sovereignty.

Soviet ships, with aid for the DRVN (Democratic Republic of Vietnam) and with substantial commercial and military supplies for the DPRK, were passing through the area where the ship *Pueblo* was detained. From this corridor, the ship could have monitored the movement of part of the DPRK's naval forces, including the submarines, one of the main air force bases, a zone of security defense installations of the DPRK, and the movement in the area, which, the U.S. obviously believes, is used for the transportation of North Korean groups to South Korea. It seems that considering the importance of this area and the growing tension at the 38th parallel of latitude, the ship's mission was to determine the

level of readiness of the Korean People's Army, or when possible, how imminent the danger is of carrying out the slogans for the unification of the country by force.

It is necessary to view the current conflict in a wider context because the DPRK has alliance treaties with the Soviet Union as well as with the PRC, in which both countries pledge to help the DPRK if it is attacked and is drawn into a military conflict. The presentation by the U.S. delegate at the Security Council consisted basically of already published accusations from the American party. The Soviet delegate reacted with a strong accusation of the U.S. policy of intervention in Korea, and in the case of the ship *Pueblo*, he operated, namely, with the deposition of the ship's captain to counter the American arguments. Discussion in the Security Council did not result in support of the American version, decisively opposed by the USSR. So far, the American delegation has not presented any resolution to the Security Council. The development of discussion of the matter in the Security Council can be characterized by a proposal of the Soviet delegate to immediately invite the DPRK into the Security Council. The U.S. rejected the proposal, saying that they would be willing to admit the DPRK delegation to the Security Council only if the ship with the crew is released. There is also an effort, especially of developing countries, to mediate the U.S. and the DPRK. The fact that the issue was discussed in the Security Council turned out, in the present situation, to be a positive; it helped to calm military hysteria in the U.S. and bought time to search for a diplomatic solution to the conflict. Due to the offensive of the NLF (National Liberation Front) in South Vietnam, the U.S. was forced to tone down its response to the DPRK in connection with incident of the ship *Pueblo*.

The DPRK preferred direct talks with the U.S. Since February 2nd, the negotiation has been on going in the Military Commission for Truce in Panmunjeom between representatives of the U.S. and the DPRK. According to the reports from our embassy, the negotiation is conducted in a calm manner. According to the press release from the AP in Seoul, representatives of the DPRK negotiating in Panmunjeom expressed a willingness to return to the United States the wounded and killed crew members of *Pueblo*. According to another report from Reuters in Tokyo, referring to the news from a South Korean pressroom, the U.S. and the DPRK reached a basic agreement in Panmunjeom on February 5th about the release of the *Pueblo* crew. The same source reported that the U.S., in essence accepted North Korean conditions, and they will admit that the *Pueblo* entered North Korean sovereign waters. The U.S. allegedly promised a public apology as well. As per the report of the Reuters agency in Washington, the U.S. State Department allegedly made a statement on February 5th that it has no information confirming the report of the basic agreement with the DPRK about the release of the *Pueblo* crew. These reports are not officially confirmed yet. Even if they turn out to be true, we still cannot expect a radical decrease in tension as long as the military measures implemented in connection with the *Pueblo* incident are not revoked.

III.

The acceleration of the dangerous developments on the Korean Peninsula and the complex situation there were the subjects of talks of the KPCZ CC First Secretary, c. A. Dubcek with the representatives of the CPSU CC while he was recently in Moscow. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs consulted this matter with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR in December last year. Follow-up consultation happened through our ambassador in Moscow in the last few days. In both instances, Soviet comrades were made familiar with

our assessment of the developments in Korea and were informed about our concern with some dangerous aspects of the problem. Soviet comrades identified themselves fully with our opinions but stressed that representatives of the DPRK assured the Soviet side that the DPRK would not take any steps that could result in a military conflict. During the recent developments with the ship *Pueblo*, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also received from the Soviet party two pieces of information for the Czechoslovak government, with a description of concrete steps that the USSR is taking.

According to the last information, which the Soviet Ambassador relayed to c. V. David on February 2nd this year, the [North] Korean comrades agree with the position of the Soviet representative during discussion about the U.S. complaint to the UN Security Council. They think it is necessary to stretch the proceedings of the *Pueblo* issue in the Security Council.

Various ideas about mediation to settle the incident are being floated unofficially in the UN Security Council. The Soviet side informed the [North] Korean comrades about it. Since the [North] Korean comrades are able to deal with Americans directly in Panmunjeon, they feel that mediation of third countries is not necessary, in principle. As for the concrete proposals for mediation, our [North] Korean friends believe it is possible to choose tactics according to further developments.

In conversations with the Soviet Ambassador from January 28th to January 31st, concerning further possible steps that the DPRK may take in connection with the incident, the [North] Korean comrades said only that the DPRK is not going to succumb to provocations and is ready to work towards the easing of tensions.

On January 29th, Rusk sent a letter to c. A. A. Gromyko. In this letter, Americans reiterated their version that the ship *Pueblo* was in international waters at the moment of interception. Rusk maintains that Johnson exercises restraint in the matter and believes that settling the issue as quickly as possible would be in the interest of both parties. During unofficial consultations among members of the Security Council, U.S. Representative Goldberg approached the USSR representatives declaring that the U.S. is trying to find a diplomatic solution to the conflict in such a way that would include the repatriation of the ship and its crew, without damaging positions of either party.

In the response to Rusk, as well as in the conversation between the Soviet and American representatives in the Security Council, it was stressed, as the [North] Korean comrades requested, that the incident can be settled if tension in the area does not increase, national dignity of the DPRK is not insulted by making it responsible for the incident, and the policy of threats is abandoned; the U.S. must stop pressuring the DPRK and threatening her.

On January 31st, the USSR representative told the [North] Korean comrades that by adopting tough measures for defense of its sovereignty, the DPRK has politically won. Now, it would be desirable to solidify these results and, at the same time, to demonstrate the peaceful character of the DPRK's course in connection with the incident. That could be achieved by expelling the crew of *Pueblo* from the territory of the DPRK. The [North] Korean comrades were told that such a step from their side could not be interpreted as weakness; on the contrary, it would be appreciated everywhere as a show of a responsible approach, and it would strengthen, even more, the international position of the DPRK.

As far as it is up to the Soviet government, it will, of course, even in the future, see to it that events around the incident do not grow out of certain boundaries, and it will make every effort so that they do not escalate into an armed conflict.

The Soviet comrades also expressed conviction that their Czechoslovak friends share this position because it follows our common course in international issues. They would be grateful to the government of Czechoslovakia if it could, if at all possible, share information it has and comments about that matter.

We consider the USSR's approach as correct and thoughtful because it leads to preventing a wider conflict and to transferring its solution to the diplomatic arena. On January 31st of this year, the Czechoslovak government was informed about the declaration of the DPRK government on February 27th of this year concerning the incursion of the American spy ship *Pueblo* into the sovereign waters of the DPRK. The Czechoslovak government condemned the violation of the sovereignty of the DPRK and expressed to the DPRK government support for the defense of their territory and legal rights. The Czechoslovak press, radio, and television condemned the American provocation against the DPRK and informed the Czechoslovak public about the progress of events. However, the [North] Korean side protested against our press reprinting western information without comments and resolutely demanded that it publish only information released by the DPRK. Our press was notified of some inaccuracies that happened when news from western press agencies was used.

According to the assessment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as Ministry of National Defense, even if the issue of the ship *Pueblo* is settled peacefully, the situation in the Korean area will remain dangerous, especially due to the military measures implemented by both sides.

In current situation, it would be suitable to proceed this way:

- To be permanently in constant contact with the Soviet comrades, keep them up to date about our findings and to continuously consult the development of the situation and coordinate our common steps.
- To support the DPRK politically in defense of its territorial sovereignty and legal rights and to condemn provocations of the U.S. and the South Korean regime against the DPRK.
- To be in contact with the DPRK MFA and with the DPRK Embassy in Prague and to request from them information about positions of the DPRK. To influence the DPRK suitably towards peaceful resolution of the conflict. To that end it is suggested for the KPCZ CC Secretary to receive, as soon as possible, a diplomatic representative of the DPRK and to convey to him our position in a suitable way.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of National Defense, and the Ministry of the Interior will keep continuously informing the KPCZ CC Presidium and the Czechoslovak government.

* * *

DOCUMENT No. 11

[Source: PoIA AA, MfAA, G-A 360. Obtained for NKIDP by Bernd Schaefer and translated for NKIDP by Karen Riechert]

**GDR Embassy Letter to State Secretary Hegen
March 4, 1968**

GDR Embassy to DPRK
Pyongyang, 4 March 1968

State Secretary and
First Deputy of the Minister
of Foreign Affairs
Comrade H e g e n

102 B e r l i n
Marx Engels Square 2

Dear Comrade Hegen!

Following your written instructions of 30 January 1968 I today attempt to write down a summary of most relevant events and likely tendencies. For reasons of efficiency I have chosen to do this by way of a letter to you. Enclosed is the most important material drafted during recent weeks [Translator's note: enclosures are not part of this document]. I have left a copy of this letter in our embassy to provide our new ambassador, Comrade Henke with the opportunity to state his opinion after his arrival. As one copy is staying here, I arranged classification of the most important material as highly confidential or confidential matters.

On the "Pueblo" Question

So far negotiations in Panmunjom are inconclusive with regard to the return of crew and ship. Yet currently it is very difficult to obtain exact information over the substance of negotiations. Apparently both participating sides have agreed to make nothing, or next to nothing, available to the public. Even the Polish and Czechoslovak comrades who have their representatives on site in Panmunjom, and have so far briefed me regularly, do now encounter problems in following the course of negotiations. In recent days, attention is apparently mainly focused on General Park Jongguk's proposal to exchange the "Pueblo" crew against patriots imprisoned in South Korea. This proposal forwarded by members of the Neutral Commission is said to have met the interest of the United States. There are doubts, however, whether the South Korean side is willing to hand over prisoners to the U.S. for a swap with the DPRK. According to the Cuban Embassy here, the DPRK demanded among other things the extradition of the deputy editor-in-chief of the DPRK news agency

[KCNA] who defected in spring of 1967, and the return of the Lieutenant from the Korean People's Army who was arrested during the Seoul events in January 1968. So far there is no confirmation of this information from any other side. Yet if the DPRK is really insisting on the extradition of these two, the U.S. will be in an uncomfortable position toward South Korea. The latter will be hardly willing to extradite the two, as their return to the DPRK would certainly lead to their retraction of everything they divulged in South Korea to possibly save their heads. It is noteworthy that General Park Jongguk indicated that a swap of the "Pueblo" crew against Korean patriots would not necessarily require a U.S apology for the intrusion into DPRK territorial waters. This element increases the attractiveness of the proposal to the United States. Its floating seems to indicate that the DPRK will leave it to the U.S. to launch such a proposal by itself during an official meeting.

Judging from the course of negotiations so far, there is only a very slight probability left the "Pueblo" affair might lead to a heightening of tensions as an actual cause for a military conflict.

On the domestic situation in the DPRK

The most significant element of the current domestic situation in the DPRK is the creation, respectively fueling, of an all-out war psychosis among the population. Given their limited sources of information, average citizens must arrive at the conclusion that war is imminent in the very immediate future. Apparently there are discussions about this context in wide swaths of the population. The KWP central newspaper published an editorial piece on 27 February that responds in both direct and indirect form to those questions discussed by the people (see appendix 5 [not included]). Among other things, this article warns before an all-too-peaceful mood, as such would abandon the brothers and sisters in the South. At the same time, the piece provides a theoretic "reasoning" for the need for "self-defense in the defense of the country".

As our embassy has already reported on the organizational and technical preparations for war, as demonstrated daily to a public forced to participate in them on a broad scale, I limit myself to a condensed outline of major facts:

- At certain points in the city access roads respectively accesses are being built to underground facilities of the "subway" under construction. We are not able to assess to what extent an underground system does already exist. It looks, however, as there are presently major efforts underway to expand current underground facilities and perfect them. The editorial piece from 27 February mentioned above also calls for the construction of defense facilities.
- Mobilization efforts are supposedly already completed. According to internal information we received, the ranks of the KPA [Korean People's Army] swelled by 200,000 to 250,000 men from their current strength of about 400,000 members (see here also appendix 6 [not included]).
- Rehearsals of air-raid alerts with partial or complete cutoff of electricity.
- Employees of our embassy have frequently observed how books, archival material and other things have been removed from public libraries, schools, archives, military offices and other administrative facilities.

- We have learned from foreign citizens living in Pyongyang that many Koreans living with them have received recommendations to travel to visit relatives in the countryside. The otherwise complicated procedural formalities tied to this kind of travel procedure have been supposedly simplified to a minimum.
- Already some weeks ago, leading officials and academics from several institutes of the Academy of Sciences and other research institutions have been supposedly evacuated from Pyongyang.
- Myself I was able to notice how blackout devices were assembled in several central offices, like at the Committee for Economic Relations with Foreign Countries.
- The instructions given to the embassies to build air raid shelters are also part of these measures.
- On 16 and 20 February respectively, the entire traffic was blocked between 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. for the main avenues since military columns were guided through the city. Prior to that, the embassies were informed about roadblocks for civilian vehicles. Moving through the city were T-54 tanks, modern Soviet armored personnel carriers, missiles on launching pads, gun artillery, maintenance trucks, trucks with mounted infantry, and others. Judging from the marching route of the armed units and others accompanying this display of military technology, it must be presumed this was primarily intended as a demonstration to the population.
- Frequent over-flights of the city by low-altitude fighter aircraft, and searchlight exercises in the evenings.

All these measures are amplified through massive propaganda in the press, radio and in newspapers propagating the situation as so tense that an outbreak of war can be expected every day. The visit by Johnson's Special Envoy Cyrus Vance to South Korea is compared with the stay of [U.S. Foreign Minister John Foster] Dulles in South Korea in 1950 at the eve of the Korean War. At the same time the necessity is always emphasized to complete the revolution in all of Korea, to liberate South Korea, and to evict the U.S. from there. Defense Minister Kim Jangbong stated in his speech during the commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of the Korean People's Army that the "Pueblo" incident and everything surrounding it demonstrates how "the maneuver by the U.S. imperialists to unleash a new war in Korea has reached the boiling point". He also declared how "the Korean people do not like to utter empty words and are strong-willed people to follow through by all means with words once spoken".

The above-mentioned editorial in the central newspaper organ from 27 February also attempts to dispel any potential doubts when it makes the assurance that the Korean people have already defeated the United States once. Kim Il Sung stated in his remarks at the reception for the 20th Anniversary of the Korean People's Army that its political-moral superiority provides the opportunity to defeat even an enemy which is better equipped technologically.

Foreign representatives here are always told how one obviously is unable to fathom what is going on in the heads of the American imperialists. Therefore one never knows when the war will start, but one has to face its possibility at any day. Yet an analysis of the facts we were able to obtain on U.S. positions shows that the Americans are currently not interested in a major armed conflict in Korea. This became especially evident in the context of Johnson's Special Envoy Vance's visit to South Korea (see here appendix 4 [not

included]). There is agreement on this in the diplomatic corps here in Pyongyang, except for the Chinese and Albanian embassies to which opinions we are not privy.

Looking at all this, we are drawing the conclusion that all measures mentioned above must serve a different purpose in this case. It is somewhat hard to fathom that a communist party pursues this kind of intentions, yet it appears plausible to me that the DPRK is planning something by its own and views the time to have come for implementing the “great revolutionary event to unite the homeland”. Appendix 8 [not included] contains a comparative analysis of segments from Kim Il Sung’s speeches at the Party Conference in October 1966 and the meeting of the Supreme People’s Assembly in December 1967 where he addresses the situation in South Korea and the solution to the national question. This analysis shows how the assignments to the 1966 Party Conference to develop revolutionary forces and create a revolutionary party in South Korea have changed in a major way. Today the emphasis is essentially on completing the revolution [in South Korea] from outside.

The comrades from the Czechoslovak mission in Panmunjom and the embassy here in Pyongyang are quite frankly in their assessment that in due time – probably in the fall of 1968 – there will be an attempt by the DPRK to solve the national question through a military solution.

Some thoughts on the military part of this orientation are added in appendix 6 [not included]. In this vein I also refer to the same appendix for the translation of a statement by the South Korean news agency about the equipment of the Korean People’s Army. So far we have not heard about this kind of documentation. Therefore it is very hard to evaluate the correctness of this information.

In the given context, the comparatively favorable international situation for such an assignment [of Korean military unification] deserves to be highlighted:

- DPRK relations with the Soviet Union are fine thanks to the efforts by the Soviet comrades, even if the Korean leadership must be aware that the USSR will not support adventurist steps (see appendix 1 [not included]);
- Relations with the PR China seem to have slightly improved in recent months (see appendix 2 [not included]) although there must be probably no doubts that there are still reservations held in the Korean leadership over the leadership presumption of the Mao Group;
- The U.S. aggression in Vietnam and the actions by the National Liberation Front [of South Vietnam] are tying up the major part of the American military potential in Asia;
- The economic development in South Korea and increased American military aid results in further strengthening the Park Chung Hee regime the longer it lasts.

The once existing opposition line within the KWP leadership has been smashed. All the opponents of such a course [of military unification] in national policy have been removed from their influential positions.

The Korean party leadership is, of course, aware that such a course in national policy will not encounter the support of the majority of socialist countries. It [the leadership] has to take this into account. Therefore there have been some new nuances recently. They were most prevalent in the announcement by the DPRK Foreign Ministry from 27 February (text

went to Far Eastern Department [of GDR Foreign Ministry]) when for the first time for a long while there was a reference to previous DPRK proposals about a peaceful solution of the national question. At the same time, it was stressed how the situation is very serious and the future course of events depends on the United States. Phrases like:

"In the past like in the present, the DPRK government has not changed in any way its basic policy directed towards the preservation of peace on Korea and the peaceful solution of the question of Korea's unification."

have not been heard for a while. The chief of the Political Main Administration [of the Korean People's Army], Army General O Jinu, remarked to our military attaché in a conversation during a cocktail for the 12th Anniversary of the National People's Army [of the GDR] that the DPRK does not fear the United States but will never strike first to start a war.

We have to pay careful attention to these new nuances. Right now they rather sound like a new tactic to preempt increasing criticism from the socialist countries and to offer less flanks to the United States and South Korea in their propaganda against the DPRK. Whether we can derive from all that a basic chance of course in national policy represents a question we cannot yet answer at this moment.

Concluding this chapter, we want to draw attention to the fact that developments in the DPRK unfold under the signature of Kim Il Sung's deification matched only by the cult surrounding Mao. Defense Minister Kim Jangbong said in his speech at the commemoration for the 20th Anniversary of the Korean People's Army:

"The unitary ideology of our party is the revolutionary ideology of Comrade Kim Il Sung. It is nurtured by the spirit of *Juche* in ideology, by independence of policy, self-reliance in the economy, and self-defense in defense of the country."

And he said at another point:

"Our Korean People's Army has solidly armored itself with the unitary ideology of our party. She is fiercely loyal only to the great revolutionary ideology of Comrade Kim Il Sung, our respected and beloved leader, and does not know of any other ideology."

Many other such examples could be listed easily.

On the Development of the Economy

Like during previous years, publications on this subject are so insufficient that it is impossible to derive from them a picture even approximately complete. In preparation for the material I include in the appendix, I asked the DPRK Foreign Ministry to help me schedule a consultation about economic development with the official organs responsible. Until today I have not received a response. Therefore the note in Appendix 3 is the only material our Embassy currently has concerning economic development in 1967. Listed numbers might be more or less correct, as they have been calculated, respectively estimated, by experts with solid country expertise. Yet it constitutes an essential deficit of

these data that they do not reflect the actual existing process of the economy's militarization, a certain stagnation of the civilian sector, as well as the difficulties to maintain the modest living standards of the population. These three tendencies become ever more clear. If the current pattern of "parallel development of economy and defense" will be continued, it will result in further increase of already existing disproportions.

On Questions that might be asked from the Korean Side

[during an upcoming GDR politburo visit to Pyongyang in late March 1968]

The range of such questions is very broad. It includes the explanation of main elements of DPRK assessments pertaining to the current situation all over Asia and in Korea in particular. The main focus might be devoted to an emphasis of the possibility of the emergence of a new war in Korea. Simultaneously they will stress the need to unify the country and expel the United States. In this context, they will raise without doubt the necessity for unity among all socialist countries and all anti-imperialist forces. The argumentation will probably follow the line espoused towards our military delegation. Looking at the current actual situation, however, there will be stronger emphasis that the DPRK needs especially good relations with its two major neighbors.

[...] [bureaucratic reference to the 1967 report about the DPRK visit by a GDR military delegation.]

On economic matters it is likely that the Korean side is expecting answers to the following questions:

- Is there a chance the GDR might change its negative opinion concerning the delivery of an optical factory? (see conversation Li Juyeon – [GDR Ambassador] Brie, Confidential Letter Number 119/67).
- Is the GDR willing to fulfill DPRK requests concerning a factory for automation devices? (see the same letter and the final report from the VEB Inex delegation [GDR state company for export of industrial sites] visiting Pyongyang in December 1967).
- Maybe the Korean side will revive the question of whether to deliver a diesel engine factory, as they did already back in 1965.
- Is the GDR willing to deliver the desired equipment for a textile factory in context of the granted credit?

On the DPRK Position towards the GDR

There have been no principal changes in DPRK attitudes towards the GDR during recent months. The main elements to determine the position were spelled out in our top secret letter B 7/10 – 33/67. They are still valid, yet the following facts must be taken into account:

- In Kim Il Sung's speech to welcome the government program in December 1967 there was no mention by even one word of any support for the GDR's fight against West German militarism (see confidential letter B 7/10 – 1/68, p. 11ff.).

- Publication of an article series by [at that time Moscow-critical Dutch communist party leader] Paul de Groot in the KWP central organ [Nodong Sinmun] containing an attack on SED and KPD [the West German communist party loyal to the GDR] (see our telegram No. 14/68).
- There has been so far not one single publication in the DPRK about the draft for a new socialist constitution in the GDR, despite major efforts by our Embassy to stimulate a Korean statement (see our telegram No. 52/68).

Finally I want to inform that so far no reaction and no publication have reached us until today concerning the [communist and workers' parties] consultative meeting in Budapest. Neither the invitation, nor its decline by the KWP, nor the fact of the meeting at all, has been mentioned in the DPRK press. There exist only internal comments made to the Romanian delegation headed by [Romanian Communist Party Politburo Member] Comrade [Gheorghe] Apostol and towards [CPSU Central Committee Secretary] Comrade [Boris] Ponomarev, both about we have already reported.

Jarck
Acting Ambassador

Appendixes [not included]

- 1 – On Current State of USSR-DPRK relations (cosmic top secret)
- 2 – On Current State of USSR-PRC relations (top secret)
- 3 – Note on Economic Development in the DPRK 1967 (secret)
- 4 – Information on Vance Visit to South Korea (secret)
- 5 – Information on Editorial "Nodong Sinmun" 27 February 1968
- 6 – Assessment of National Defense (Cosmic Top Secret) (including translation of South Korean news report)
- 7 – Some remarks on Speech by Defense Minister, Army General Kim Chang Bong, at the 20th Anniversary of the Korean People's Army (Secret)
- 8 – On National Policy (Secret)

* * *

DOCUMENT No. 12

[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, SM-023846/68. Translated for NKIDP by Vojtech Mastny]

"Military-Political Situation in the DPRK"
June 4, 1968

Pyongyang 04.06.68
To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Prague
Military-Political Situation in the DPRK
Political Report No. 21

Re: No. 21 of the Work Plan Prepared by M. Holub

Following the temporary relative relaxation of tension on the Korean peninsula, which became particularly evident in March, a renewed deterioration of the situation was generally expected during the spring months. It was assumed that the political activity of South Korea abroad, which was aimed above all at obtaining guarantees by the United States for immediate support of the South in case of a conflict with the DPRK, and which accelerated the importation of modern armaments and the arming of the territorial defense forces in the South, would result in the DPRK, as well, in an escalation of military preparations for the unification of the country, which remains the main goal of the leadership here. This would naturally lead to an overall deterioration of the situation in Korea.

Developments in the second half of April conformed to these expectations. From the 14th to the 28th of April several incidents took place in the area south of the demarcation line, which reportedly made the so-called United Nations forces suffer the casualties of 9 dead and 11 wounded. The North Korean side does not report its own casualties. Most incidents took place in the sector held by the 2nd US Infantry Division in the western part of the demilitarized zone. The most serious incident was an attack on a vehicle of the United Nations forces that was accompanying a patrol to Panmunjom and the Swedish-Swiss camp, which took place in the immediate vicinity of the camp of the Western members of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission, —at a spot that cannot be reached from the South.

In April, there was also a grenade explosion in the building of the International Telecommunications Exchange in Seoul [...] Soviet friends have been showing impatience in this question [the continued holding of the *Pueblo*]. All friends realize that the DPRK's handling of the *Pueblo* affair has been reverberating against the DPRK's own interest. Soviet representatives have reportedly expressed openly their position along these lines to the Koreans. [...]

In the course of April and at the beginning of May all propaganda means of the DPRK continued to strive to generate the conviction that the Americans were going to provoke war at any time. As part of this propaganda, reports about incidents, even ones involving human casualties, were published that never occurred and the propaganda did not even try to prove them. During briefings about the April incidents, even the Minister of Foreign Affairs tried to convince the diplomatic corps of the acute danger of war. The country continues to be kept in a state of combat readiness and the people are being systematically persuaded of the necessity of liberating South Korea. [...]

In May, however, all those who have been following developments in the DPRK noticed an extraordinary calming of the situation, something without parallel in the last years. Although demobilization down to the level of January of this year was not carried out, according to friends, specialists are being released for civilian assignments. [...]

[...] We have been trying to find the causes that have led and particularly forced the DPRK leadership to adopt the new tactics. It is a difficult task in the conditions here, but after thorough discussions with friends and our own reflections, we are convinced that the changes have been prompted by a whole complex of the following causes:

1. An important cause of the changes is an unfavorable economic situation [...]

2. In a country of such a profound and developed cult of personality, differences of opinion are usually accompanied by sharp intra-party struggle and personnel changes. In connection with the problems mentioned above, rumors have been circulated within the diplomatic corps about the removal of the Politburo members of the Central Committee of the Korean Workers' Party Kim Hwanghyeop, who is at the same time Secretary of the Central Committee of the KWP and Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the DPRK, Li Juyeon (at the same time Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers), and Kim Jangbong, who is also simultaneously Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers and Minister of National Defense. It is a fact that these officials have recently not appeared in public. On the occasion of the visit by Deputy Chairman of the [Soviet] Council of Ministers Novikov, however, Li Juyeon was the partner of the Soviet guest; of course, it cannot be excluded that this was tactics. Kim Hwanghyeop and Kim Changbong, reportedly blamed for the failure of the January attempt to liquidate the South Korean president Pak Chung Hee, are still missing. In the first half of May, the Minister of Defense was to take a trip to [illegible, perhaps China] at the head of a military delegation. At the same time, an extensive reshuffling of intermediate cadres has been taking place in the areas of the economy, ideology and national unification. On the other hand, Minister of Foreign Affairs Pak Seongcheol has been showing that he is on the rise and has become in effect the third highest-ranking person of the regime.
3. In the course of the January events and immediately afterwards, during the mobilization and evacuation, serious deficiencies and difficulties became apparent. Lack of air defense weapons and limited railroad capacity connecting the DPRK with the USSR.
4. The developments in South Korea resulting from the attempted liquidation of Pak Chung Hee and the *Pueblo* affair have been a serious warning for our Korean friends. The situation before January proved that the United States, as well as its South Korean partner, underestimated to some extent the development in the DPRK. The Americans considered the tenfold increase of incidents in the demilitarized zone in the last year in comparison with 1966 as a temporary phenomenon, which could be contained by the installation of electronic detection equipment along the whole demilitarized zone. [...]
5. Some political events abroad have inevitably influenced the situation in this area. The DPRK is undoubtedly concerned about China's efforts to improve relations with Japan, but especially by the ongoing US/Vietnamese negotiations in Paris, which contradict the thesis according to which the forces of imperialism should be tied down anywhere in the world, as well as the thesis about the unification of the country by military force. Forcible unification can only be realized in conditions of international tension and escalation of war anywhere in the world.
6. Finally, in view of the abovementioned factors, the influence of the USSR has been increasing, which has been made possible by, among others, the high level of economic and military assistance. The content of this assistance can be and in fact is manipulated (only defensive military technology is being supplied), quite apart from the fact that Soviet comrades have recently been looking more

critically at the developments in the DPRK than was the case during the January events, which undoubtedly leads to direct, albeit extremely cautious, interventions.

Among diplomats, there has also been the view that the present situation is the calm before the tempest, this being justified by the fact that the high military preparedness has been continuing as has the propaganda campaign aimed at the population and that the changes have concerned phenomena that have visually most impressed the observers here. The embassy is nevertheless convinced that the "postponement" of the deadlines for the unification of the country has been imposed on the Korean leadership by the objective situation and that a removal of the objective causes of the tactical changes will require a longer period of time. The calming down is also confirmed by the fact that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs here, which in March urgently demanded that foreign missions build air raid shelters, currently shows no initiative whatsoever on this issue. [...] It is also not to be neglected that the question of national unification or "liberation of the South" has been recently posed more conditionally, emphasizing the necessity of action by patriots in the South.

[...]

Ambassador Holub

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DOCUMENT No. 13

[Source: Russian State Archive of Recent History (RGANI), fond 2, opis 3, delo 95, listy 50-58. Obtained and translated for NKIDP by Sergey Radchenko]

Excerpt from Leonid Brezhnev's Speech at the April (1968) CC CPSU Plenum, "On the Current Problems of the International Situation and on the Struggle of the CPSU for the Unity of the International Communist Movement"
April 9, 1968

[...] On the international scene during the last several months, events in the Far East have drawn particular attention to the incursion of an American military vessel, the *Pueblo*, into North Korean territorial waters. Despite the limited scale of these events, they had an important principle, both from the point of view of rebuffing the aggressive actions of the U.S. and in terms of our attitude towards certain policy peculiarities of our North Korean friends. The Politburo has reported many times to the CC Plenum regarding our policy towards relations with the KWP and the DPRK. The essence of this policy is to consistently strengthen friendly relations with the KWP and the DPRK despite the existence of different approaches between us and the North Korean comrades on a series of questions of the international communist movement and other problems.

On the whole, throughout the course of the entire preceding [in the text, mistakenly, "subsequent"] period, the situation developed precisely along these lines. We developed contacts with the North Koreans in various spheres, most importantly in the economic sphere. Trade developed; we concluded a series of agreements on cooperative timber clearing, construction of an oil refinery, etc. We continued to provide aid in defending the

DPRK. The North Korean press stopped publishing unfriendly statements about the CPSU and the Soviet Union.

One should remark, in particular, that during his meetings with us, Comrade Kim Il Sung assured us that the North Koreans do not intend to use military means to solve the problem of uniting North and South Korea and, in this regard, do not intend to unleash a war with the Americans, whose forces, as one knows, are stationed in South Korea.

However, several indications, which seem to suggest that the leaders of the DPRK have begun to take a more militant road, have recently appeared. This became particularly noticeable at the time of the incident with the American vessel *Pueblo*.

You know, comrades, the factual side of things. I am talking about the incursion of the American military vessel *Pueblo* into North Korean territorial waters. On 23 January of this year, this vessel was detained by DPRK naval forces (as our friends assert, detained in their territorial waters) and, after a firefight, taken to a port, where its crew was placed under arrest. One should note that the government of the DPRK's response to this incident appears to be unusually harsh: as a rule, in the practice of international relations, in case of an incursion by a foreign military vessel in the territorial waters of any state, it is simply advised that the foreign military vessel leave those waters or be forced to do so.

Washington's reaction was fierce, rude, and aggressive. The U.S. government made accusations and threats towards the DPRK; considerable naval forces and air forces were deployed near North Korea's shores, including the flag carrier of the 7th fleet, the atomic aircraft carrier *Enterprise*. Calls for the mining of Korean ports, the forced return of *Pueblo*, etc. were heard in the U.S.. The Americans clearly counted on the cannon barrels of their ships to force the DPRK's retreat. Besides this, President Johnson used this incident to further increase military preparations and stir up military hysteria on an international scale. New categories of reserves were mobilized within the U.S. army; demonstrative measures were taken to increase military preparedness in Europe.

Under these circumstances, the CC CPSU and the Soviet government found it necessary to voice public support for the DPRK, a socialist country, with which, moreover, we are tied to by a treaty of friendship and mutual assistance. We did as such, supporting the right of the DPRK to defend its security and censuring the aggressive behavior of the U.S.

In addition, the Politburo and the Soviet government considered it worthwhile to exert direct pressure on the U.S. leadership in order to lessen its [the Americans'] urge and desire to inflame provocations in the immediate proximity of the borders of the USSR and with our allied countries. In this regard, a decision was made to send a communication to President Johnson on behalf of the Soviet government.

The 3 February 1968 letter to Johnson drew attention to the fact that the U.S. was concentrating its naval and aerial fleets on an unprecedented scale in the immediate proximity of the Far Eastern regions of the Soviet Union. The American President was told, "in our actions we must take into consideration what is happening near our borders that touches on the security interests of the Soviet Union." At the same time, it was stressed that efforts to threaten and pressure the DPRK can only lead to a dead end and further complications, fraught with far reaching consequences.

Simultaneously, we took certain measures to increase the preparedness of Soviet military forces in the Far East in order to protect the country in case of complications and to let the Americans know that we are not joking but in fact, approach this matter seriously.

The adopted measures worked. On 6 February 1968, Johnson sent a reply in which he tried to explain the amassing of U.S. military forces in the Sea of Japan by referencing militant statements and actions of the DPRK, and assured us that a “prompt settlement [of the crisis] serves our common interests.” The President’s message ended by saying that he “gave an order to stop any further amassing of our naval and air forces at the present time” and decreed that they will pull out one of the aircraft carriers with accompanying vessels from the region of the incident. Indeed, the aircraft carrier *Enterprise* was pulled out from the DPRK’s shores.

At the same time, we insistently advised the North Korean comrades, with whom we maintained systematic contact throughout this period, to show reserve, not to give the Americans an excuse to widen provocations and to settle the incident by political means. When it became clear to the entire world that the U.S. attempts to make the DPRK retreat through blackmail and military threats had failed and when the U.S. government was forced to conduct talks with DPRK representatives in Panmunjeom regarding *Pueblo*, we expressed our opinion to the North Korean leadership that now, without any harm and even with political advantage for the DPRK, they could finish this affair by disgracefully deporting the crew of the U.S. spy vessel from the territory of North Korea.

But the North Korean comrades maintained a fairly extreme position and did not show any inclination towards settling the incident. DPRK propaganda took on a fairly militant characteristic; the population was told that a war could begin any day and that the military forces of the DPRK were “ready to smash American imperialism.” In effect, a full mobilization was declared in the country; life, especially in the cities, became more militaristic. Evacuation of the population, administrative institutions, industries, and factories of Pyongyang began.

At the same time, the leadership of the DPRK took one more step that alarmed us. On 31 January 1968, Kim Il Sung addressed an official letter to Comrade Kosygin, the head of the USSR Council of Ministers. This letter said that “Johnson’s clique could at any time engage in a military adventure in [North] Korea,” that the policy of the American imperialists “is a rude challenge to the DPRK and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, who are bound together by allied relations according to the treaty of friendship, co-operation and mutual assistance; [it is] a serious threat to the security of all socialist countries and to peace in the entire world”.

This message further officially informed the Soviet government on behalf of the government of the DPRK that they were “forced to conduct preparations to give the aggression an appropriate rebuff” and the letter expressed confidence that “in case of the creation of a state of war in [North] Korea as a result of a military attack by the American imperialists, the Soviet government and the fraternal Soviet people will fight together with us against the aggressors...”

Kim Il Sung’s letter ended with a proposal: in case such a situation materialized, “[you should] provide us, without delay, military and other aid and support, to mobilize all means available.”

Matters took a serious turn.

An official communication along government lines, bypassing comradely consultations along party lines, which are usual in such cases, spoke to the intention of the

North Korean leadership to bind the Soviet Union somehow, using the existence of the treaty between the USSR and the DPRK as a pretext to involve us in supporting such plans of the North Korean friends about which we knew nothing. The CC Politburo believed that the time had come to state our attitude clearly to the North Korean comrades regarding these questions and certain peculiarities of their policies that concern our country.

Without giving an official reply to Kim Il Sung's message, we addressed a communication to him, asking him to come to Moscow for a comprehensive exchange of opinions regarding this situation which has emerged. Comrade Kim Il Sung replied that, at the present time, circumstances did not permit him to leave the country. Member of the KWP CC Politburo, Deputy Premier and Minister of Defense Kim Jangbong was instead dispatched to Moscow for the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the Soviet army.

On the Politburo's instructions, I received Kim Jangbong on 26 February 1968 and had a long discussion with him, in the course of which I expressed in all earnestness our position on a series of important questions.

He was told that we still do not depart from the assumption that the Korean comrades maintain a course for the peaceful unification of Korea, for we are not aware of any changes to this course. In any case, under the current circumstances, we are against taking the matter towards unleashing a war, though we fully understand the desire of the DPRK to strengthen its own defense, and we actively support this. We do not understand the meaning of the information that reached us regarding the evacuation of Pyongyang. We have no information from our North Korean friends regarding their talks with the Americans and the aims of these talks.

As far as the question of the Soviet-North Korean treaty and Kim Il Sung's letter regarding this question are concerned, Kim Jangbong was told literally the following: "We indeed have a treaty. Its essence is known both to you and to us. We would like to stress that it has a defensive character and is an instrument of defending the peace-loving position of North Korea. Since Comrade Kim Il Sung did not put the circumstances and the details of the current situation into a concrete form, we consider it very important to conduct serious consultations with him on this question. The question of military actions is a very difficult one, especially under the current circumstances, when the entire world struggles against war. It is impossible to talk about a military situation, much less about some kind of military action, by means of short letters. This is a very serious question, and it demands serious consultations."

At the same time, an opinion was expressed again that the question of the *Pueblo* crew, the whole incident, should be settled by political means without much delay, otherwise the DPRK could lose the serious political gain obtained at the early stage of this incident.

There are reasons to think that the measures taken by the Politburo have born fruit. In any case, one could note the following facts:

1. Soon after the conversation with Kim Jangbong, the DPRK Foreign Ministry published a statement that emphasized "the government of the DPRK, both now and in the past, has not changed its policy directed at the preservation of peace in Korea and the peaceful solution of the question of the unification of Korea."
2. The North Koreans informed our ambassador regarding the progress of talks with the Americans. One should say that these talks have taken on a fairly protracted character.

The North Koreans are demanding official apologies from the U.S., the Americans are offering various compromises, but an agreement has not yet been reached.

3. The North Korean comrades made it known to the United States through neutral countries that they are prepared to exchange the *Pueblo* crew for patriots arrested in South Korea, and that in this case, they will not demand apologies from the U.S.

4. On 1 March 1968, Kim Il Sung invited the ambassador of the USSR [to Pyongyang and asked him to pass onto Moscow his gratitude for the conversation with Kim Jangbong and for the sincere exposition of the opinion of the CC CPSU. At the same time, Kim Il Sung assured him that the evacuation activities conducted in Pyongyang were not out of any emergency, that measures have been taken to stop panicky rumors, and corrections are being made to the statements of the DPRK press. In conclusion, Kim Il Sung said: "we have no intention of raising military hysteria." Indeed, the tone of the North Korean press has recently become calmer.

5. There is also information that the local authorities in the DPRK have been instructed not to overdo various kinds of mobilization-related activities: evacuation of people, industries, and factories. "War is not a question of tomorrow," Kim Il Sung declared at one of the closed meetings in Pyongyang in the beginning of March.

This is how the incident with the vessel *Pueblo* is developing. It [the incident], as one knows, is not yet finished, and the situation might deteriorate yet again. However, the atmosphere has relaxed somewhat, the passions on the North Korean and American sides have calmed down. On the whole, one might say that by pursuing in this affair our consistent and principled line, we managed, first of all, to chip away at the American arrogance [*sbit spes*], to rebuff their blackmail and threats and, secondly, to exert considerable dissuading influence on the leadership of the DPRK, especially in connection with the question of the treaty, which holds important meaning for the state interests of the Soviet Union. [...]

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