



March 07, 1967
**The DPRK Attitude Toward the So-called 'Cultural
Revolution' in China**

Citation:

"The DPRK Attitude Toward the So-called 'Cultural Revolution' in China," March 07, 1967, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, AVPRF f. 0102, op. 23, p. 112, d. 24, pp. 13-23. Obtained by Sergey Radchenko and translated by Gary Goldberg.
<http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114570>

Summary:

The Soviet Embassy reports on the deterioration of Chinese-North Korean relations as a result of the Cultural Revolution in China.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from the Leon Levy Foundation.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

- English Translation

"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 Jin-u, 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 [Yong-guk] 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 [Cheon-seok], 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 DPRK."

In the words Kim [Yeong-nam], 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.