

October 24, 1957

**Notes from a Conversation between the 1st
Secretary of the PRL Embassy in the DPRK with
Comrade Pelishenko, Counselor of the Embassy of
the USSR**

Citation:

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Summary:

Brzezinski Henryk and Comrade Pelishenko discuss the "August Group" in North Korea, providing details on the investigations and arrests that followed the August 1956 Plenum.

Original Language:

Polish

Contents:

Translation - English

Embassy of the Pyongyang, 24.X.1957
People's Republic of Poland
in Pyongyang [trans. note: tilted stamp]

No. 828/154/2421/57/tjn. [trans. note: most likely short for tajne, secret; added by hand)

N o t e

From a conversation with comr. Pelishenko Counselor of the Embassy of the USSR on 22.X.1957

Pelishenko is in close contact with leading personalities of the DPRK and is well-oriented in the overall picture of issues in the DPRK.

The conversation aimed to gain information on the issue of the Pak Chang-ok [Pak Chang Ok] and Choe Chang-ik [Choe Chang Ik] group. Pelishenko believes that the matter of the group ought to be examined against a background of the general situation in the party and in the country. The party and government conducted a whole range of positive steps last and this year. In the autumn of last year, elections were held to the local People's Assemblies. The elections were organized well and brought good results. This year, after 9 years, elections were held for the Supreme People's Assembly. The leadership of the DPRK clearly strengthened its authority and its ties to the public. An all-Korean discussion about the draft five-year plan was conducted. In agriculture, a new, better structure of sowing was introduced. One could give more examples testifying to the correct domestic policies of the DPRK.

An exchange of party cards has been conducted in the party, from May of this year a campaign of strengthening and raising class upbringing is being conducted. In the sphere of foreign policy, achievements are also noted. Certain trade contacts have been made with Japan, Burma, Indonesia. So that in the totality of areas one observes a strengthening of the party and government, s strengthening of unity in the party. It is against the background of these achievements that one must analyze the issue of the Pak Chang-ok and Choe Chang-ik group. Pelishenko stated that the leadership of the DPRK believes that issues raised by the Pak Chang-ok and Choe Chang-ik group did not fit into the party framework. He did not give his own view of this subject.

Pelishenko stated that some of the persons from the Pak Chang-ok and Choe Chang-ik group (Pak Chang-ok, a Korean who came from the USSR, Choe Chang-ik from China) brought up the question of a Korean Poznań at the August plenum this year.

Following the known position taken by the Workers' Party leadership toward the Pak Changok and Choe Changik group at the August and September plena, the whole process of escapes to China began.

It is Pelishenko's opinion that the group's main organizers are in China. The process of escapes to China lasted until January 1957. In this period the minister of internal trade was one of the people who escaped. In 1957 no further escapes to China were observed. Pelishenko assesses the pronouncements of a small group of professors (not many over 10 persons) at the University in Pyongyang as hostile, reactionary. According to Pelishenko, three persons were arrested. Then in June and July a certain group of the mid-level activists escaped to China.

The investigation that is being conducted in the DPRK in connection with the

suspensions of the activities of the Pak Chang-ok and Choe Chang-ik group has so far rendered no results. In Pelishenko's opinion, this group's activity is of a character that is purely internal for North Korea. It is a result of Korean conditions, of a composite, complex character. The DPRK leadership is attempting to approach this matter cautiously so as not to cause distortions. At the same time, the fact is being taken into account that a change needed to be made in the position of the general prosecutor, for a bad carrying out of the amnesty. (It was necessary to re-arrest some of those who had been let go of/ from the Chende/Jingde [Cziande in Polish] organization. See note No. 616/134/2421/57/tjn - we are entering an amendment to that note in which we had written the name of this organization inaccurately as Czindale).

The DPRK leadership is trying to carry out only a few arrests. In Pelishenko's opinion the main arrests are carried out in the ministry of culture and education, as well as the ministry of construction. Pelishenko denied that broader arrests are being carried out in the Office of the Council of Ministers. In his opinion, one person has been arrested in the Office of the Council of Ministers.

The campaign of meetings is being conducted in those ministries where there are people connected to the group. At this moment one cannot gauge the situation relating to the activities of the group from the lack of data from the investigation.

Pelishenko stated that in his view China does not intend to hand over the escapees. At some point the Korean side brought up this matter. The talks ended without a result. The Korean side will not bring up this matter a second time.

At the end of the conversation Pelishenko stated that the DPRK is conducting preparations for a party conference related to the passage of the 5-year plan.

On the issue of production of textiles in Pelishenko's opinion in the DPRK [trans. note: illegible figure] of cotton cloth per capita [trans. note: last eight words are illegible].

Made 3 cop[ies]

1 cop[y] MSZ [trans. note: Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych-Ministry of Foreign Affairs] Dep[artment] V

1 cop[y, rest illegible]

1 cop[y, rest illegible]

Brzezinski Henryk

[trans. note: followed by signature]

1st Secretary of the PRL Embassy in the DPRK