

August 29, 1956

Memorandum of Conversation with Pak Ui-wan

Citation:

"Memorandum of Conversation with Pak Ui-wan", August 29, 1956, Wilson Center Digital Archive, RGANI, Fond 5, Opis 28, Delo 410, List 317-319. Obtained by James F. Person and translated by Gary Goldberg.

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Summary:

Pak Ui-wan discusses Kim Il Sung's draft report on his visit to the Soviet Union, the economic situation of the DPRK, party and government measures for the Five-Year Plan, the intra-party situation and the tasks of the Korean Worker's Party. During the conversation, Kim Du-bong notes his concerns over the personality cult, the shortcomings in the work of the Central Committee, and the serious economic situation in DPRK.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

Embassy of the USSR in the DPRK Top Secret

No. 251 Copy No. 3

"15" September 1956

DIARY

Ambassador of the USSR to the DPRK V.I. Ivanov for the period from 29 August to 14 September 1956

Pyongyang

29 August

[Vice Premier and Minister of Light Industry] Pak Ui-wan [Pak Ui Wan] visited the embassy and said that on 28 August the draft report of Kim Il Sung to the CC Plenum to be held on 30 August was examined at a meeting of the KWP CC Presidium.

Kim Il Sung's written report is estimated at 1 hour and 10 minutes and consists of three sections: the results of the trip to the Soviet Union and the countries of the people's democracies; the economic situation of the DPRK, and party and government measures for the five-year plan to expand industry and agriculture and improve the economic situation of the population; and the intra-party situation and the tasks of the KWP.

Pak said that in the section of the report about the intra-party situation, as in the first two sections, great attention was devoted to the party ensuring the early fulfillment of the three-year plan, and great achievements and successes are being stressed. However the serious economic situation in the country is also noted. The enormous importance of the Twentieth Congress in overcoming the cult of personality of Stalin and its consequences not only for the CPSU but for all fraternal parties is also noted in this section. In following the CPSU, the KWP did not have a critical attitude toward the cult of personality and therefore the cult of personality was widely practiced in the KWP. It was expressed in the glorification of the person of [Former DPRK Foreign Minister] Pak Heon-yeong [Pak Hon Yong] and has been retained to the present time in various aspects of ideological work. The KWP CC is correcting the consequences of the cult of personality, but not everything has yet been done. Bureaucratism and other shortcomings in intra-Party work are also pointed out.

At the end of the report the existence of the remnants of cliquishness [gruppirovshchina] and factional activity are noted, in view of which it contains calls to struggle against these influences and to strengthen Party vigilance.

The draft report was adopted. [Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly] Kim Du-bong [Kim Tu Bong] and Choe Chang-ik [Choe Chang Ik] made comments about the need to speak more sharply about the existence of the cult of personality in the KWP and to weaken the formulations about factionalism, explaining this by the fact that the situation in the party demands that less be said about factionalism and more about the cult of personality and its harmful consequences.

In giving an assessment of the report Pak Ui-wan said that the report in the form in which it was adopted at the Presidium meeting did not touch on the main, pressing issues of intra-party life and party members were waiting for a solution to them. But the report will provide grounds to begin a discussion on these issues at the Plenum inasmuch as they were raised in one form or another.

Pak Ui-wan then said that during these days Kim Il Sung, [Chairman of the Central Committee for the Election of the Second Supreme People's Assembly] Pak Jeong-ae

[Pak Jong Ae], and Kim Il [Kim Il] had each called him twice and [Minister of Foreign Affairs] Nam Il and Minister of Internal Affairs Ban [Hak-sae] once. They tried strongly to get Pak to refrain from speaking at the Plenum, presenting pressing issues and, in their expression, "not getting involved in a dirty business". Other senior officials who were of a mind to expose the shortcomings and mistakes of the leadership were also subjected to such treatment.

Pak noted that at the present time cases of reprisals against dissenting officials are already being observed. Just two days before the Plenum, Minister of Construction Kim Seung-hwa [Kim Sung Hwa] was sent to the Academy of Social Science in Moscow to study so that he did not make critical remarks. Kim Il Sung refused to receive him for a conversation because Kim Seung-hwa "had gotten involved in some unsavory business and had to leave".

During a meeting with Pak Ui-wan, Kim Du-bong said that Kim Il Sung and those close to him are going in the wrong direction. They view all the pressing issues like the existence of the cult of personality, the shortcomings in the work of the Central Committee, and the serious economic situation in the country only as the result of intrigues, cliquishness, and the factional activity of individual people.

Kim Dubong, in Pak's words, expressed resentment at the state of affairs where, knowing that matters in the KWP are going in the wrong direction, comrades from the CPSU CC do not want to come and help them figure things out and set them right. In reply to Pak's comments that the CPSU cannot interfere in the internal affairs of the KWP, Kim Dubong declared that it was not a matter of government interference but relations between two fraternal Parties.

Describing his opinion, Pak said that the progressive forces inside the KWP needed to forge a path. Kim Il Sung does not want to boldly undertake a struggle against the shortcomings and will exert every effort to keep malcontents in check.

On 28 August Kim Il Sung threatened Pak Ui-wan that if the malcontents continued to speak against the leadership there was a lot of compromising material on them in the KWP CC and that he, Kim Il Sung, was well known in Moscow and that he would receive support there.

Ambassador of the USSR in the DPRK
/V. IVANOV/

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Drafted by Ivanov
Typed by Alekseev
No. 940