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From a 2 June 1967 Memo of the Soviet Embassy in the DPRK (1st Secretary V. Nemchinov) about Some New Factors in Korean-Cuban relations

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Summary:

A description of North Korea's close and supportive relationship with Cuba.

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Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

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In recent years (1966-67) the Korean leadership has strenuously demonstrated the existence of the close and especially confidential relations which have been established with the Cuban leadership, invariably stresses the correctness of F. Castro's policy on all issues of domestic and foreign policy, and declares complete support for current Cuban policy.

It ought to be noted that the Korean leadership also completely approves of those actions and statements of F. Castro which do not meet the interests of the socialist camp on the whole and lead to an aggravation of the situation in Latin America...[54] The Korean press extensively reports events associated with Cuba and it publishes all the main speeches of F. Castro in complete or detailed form. In April 1966 the KWP publishing house issued a collection of his long-winded speeches titled, "[Raise] the Banner of Revolution in Latin America Higher".

The Korean leadership calls F. Castro "the great leader of the Cuban revolution and the Cuba people". For his part, F. Castro characterizes Kim Il Sung as "one of the most eminent, outstanding, heroic leaders of socialism".

During the visit to the DPRK by a Cuban Party and government delegation at the end of October 1966 headed by O. Dorticos both sides stressed in every way the complete consensus of opinion between the KWP and the Cuban CP on the problems of the current situation in the world and the international Communist movement. The Cuban delegation noted that the point of view of the Cuban CP on the problems of the international Communist movement agree with the positions described in Kim Il Sung's report at the KWP conference. Things reached the point that at a mass rally in Pyongyang delegation member R. Castro declared in a sycophantic fervor, "If anyone wants to find out the opinion of Cde. F. Castro about the fundamental issues of modern times then he can ask Cde. Kim Il Sung about this".

Bringing the armed struggle against American imperialism to the forefront is typical of the position of the KWP and the Cuban CP. "The most effective method of defending peace", declared R. Castro in Pyongyang, "is to launch an open struggle against US imperialism".

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The Korean [SIC] leadership has repeatedly declared its readiness to aid and support [SIC, perhaps "oppose" was intended] armed aggression against Cuba. "At the request of the Cuban government it agreed to send a group of up to 700 volunteers with weapons and equipment to Cuba".

The interest of the DPRK and Cuba in mutual support and cooperation is dictated by their desire to pursue a special, so-called "independent policy" in the international Communist movement and the socialist camp. Both countries mutually declare the absolute correctness of the policy of the KWP and the Cuban CP and stress that all other Parties should treat their positions with understanding. The leadership of the KWP and the Cuban CP assert [56] that Korean-Cuban relations are "a model of relations between the Communist Parties and governments of socialist countries and that these relations are in complete accord with the principles of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism".

In the opinion of the Embassy, the emphatically friendly attitude of the Korean leadership toward Cuba is to a certain degree a reaction to the actions of Chinese leaders, which have led to an aggravation in Cuban-Chinese relations. At the same time, as is clear from a conversation between Kim Il Sung and the Soviet Ambassador

on 12 May 1966, the KWP leadership has shown a certain wariness in connection with the critical statements of Castro directed against Peking. Regarding such statements by Castro, Kim Il Sung said that "attacks on others will not do any good"...

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It is still difficult to understand right now all the reasons by virtue of which both the Koreans and the Cubans mutually demonstrate a special warmth in the inter-Party and intergovernmental relations of both countries. The process of their close rapprochement needs additional observation. Evidently the role played here by the desire of both leaders to win personal popularity, one in Latin American, the other in Asia, and hopes of winning a leading role in the future are of no little importance. This is possibly also a unique counterbalance against the obvious deterioration of relations between Cuba [on the one hand] and China, the Soviet Union, and a number of fraternal countries [on the other], and between Korea and China, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia and a recent cooling in relations with Albania and Czechoslovakia.