

April 19, 1956

Memorandum of Conversation with Kim Il Sung

Citation:

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Summary:

Diary entry of a conversation between V.I. Ivanov and Kim Il Sung about whether Pak Heon-yeong should be put to death or not.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

DIARY

Ambassador of the USSR in the DPRK, Cde. Ivanov V.I.

19 April

I visited Kim Il Sung and gave him the telegram from the CPSU CC with thanks for the invitation to the Third Party Congress.

Later I informed him that the CPSU CC approved the order of the formation for May 1st demonstrations. It was considered useful to decorate Red Square and other locations of workers' demonstrations, and also the party committee buildings with the portraits of Marx and Lenin. Participants will march in columns carrying portraits of Marx, Lenin, and leaders of the Communist Party and the government of the USSR and portraits of leaders of communist parties and governments of the Peoples' Republics.

Moreover, participants in the demonstration will be given the opportunity to carry portraits of Stalin and other figures at their own discretion.

I said that I told him this in order to keep him informed. Kim Il Sung thanked me for informing him.

Later, having explained to Kim Il Sung that Korean comrades twice visited our head advisor from the KGB and were interested in his thoughts regarding the Soviet position on carrying out the death penalty in relation to [former DPRK Foreign Minister] Pak Heon-yeong, I said to him that according to the Soviet position, it would be advisable to refrain from such measures in relation to Pak Heon-yeong, keeping in mind that from the moment the sentence was pronounced, a lot of time has passed and that Pak Heon-yeong is politically ruined, isolated, and that carrying out the sentence now might lead to undesirable repercussions both in Korea and also abroad.

Having listened to my thoughts about that, Kim Il Sung was clearly perturbed and vexed. He indicated that, even in his time, Ambassador Suzdalev inquired with regard to the situation of Pak Heon-yeong, but no answer followed from Moscow and we considered that the matter of Pak Heon-yeong to be of no concern to Soviet interests. I was obliged to explain that even now the Soviet position is not interfering in the matter of Pak Heon-yeong, I was only expressing my opinion in connection with the visit of Korean comrades to the head advisor from the KGB. In this case it would be expedient to act taking into consideration the present situation, which speaks in favor of the corresponding stance.

Kim Il Sung said that the comrades who were interested in the thoughts of the head advisor of the KGB on the Soviet position on the future condition of Pak Heon-yeong, acted on their own behalf at the same time there exists a party decree to carry out the sentence in relation to him. Kim Il Sung noted that he will find out why that decree has not yet been carried out since a month and a half has already passed since Pak Heon-yeong was required to describe some additional circumstances, that the order was given to the MIA [Ministry of Internal Affairs] to carry out the sentence.

An open trial was conducted in relation to Pak Heon-yeong, he said, and there are no grounds or signals about the incorrect conduct of the affair. He admitted to all crimes he was accused of, both in the preliminary investigation and in court; he is a spy and the death sentence will be carried out. The Korean people unanimously approve and there will not be any undesirable consequences abroad.

Kim Il Sung said that his personal feelings have come to this; that it is necessary to carry out the sentence and there is no need to reconsider. But since there are other thoughts on Soviet appeals, we will discuss these circumstances in the Political Council.