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Alliance of “Tooth and Lips” or Marriage of Convenience? The Origins and Development of the Sino-North Korean Alliance, 1946-1958

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ALLIANCE OF “TOOTH AND LIPS” OR MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE?

Sino-North Korean relations were and continue to be a sensitive subject in mainland China. China’s archival documents on this subject are extremely difficult to access. In fact, during the Cold War era, China’s publications on this subject were usually for propaganda purposes, rather than based on scholarly research. However, in the past ten years or so, the declassification of an increasing volume of Chinese and Soviet documents on the Korean War have produced new studies on Soviet and Chinese involvement in the Korean War, shedding light on the murky history of Sino-North Korean relations. It is fortunate that scholars can finally begin to look into the myth of the Sino-North Korean alliance.¹

From a legalist perspective, China and North Korea entered into alliance in 1961 when they concluded the Sino-Korean Alliance Treaty. In reality, however, the two countries entered into an unofficial alliance in 1950, when the Chinese People’s Volunteer Army (CPVA) crossed the Chinese-Korean border to help fight the Korean War. Beginning with the “Resist United States Aggression and Aid Korea” campaign of 1950, the Chinese were taught that the relationship between China and North Korea was like “tooth and lips,” meaning that the fates of the two countries were closely connected.² For example, the First Sino-Japanese War of 1894 (*Jia Wu Zhan Zheng*) was over Korea, in which China dispatched its newly built navy to protect Korea, but tragically lost to Japan. In 1950, China’s new communist regime once again sent out thousands of soldiers to aid Korea against U.S. aggression, despite the possibility for U.S. retaliation on China. It is arguable that in both cases, China was concerned that the fall of Korea could threaten China’s survival, because when “the lips perish, the teeth become cold.” However, these geographic and emotional connections between China and Korea began to fade with the rise of post-WWII independence movements and the beginning of the Cold War. Instead, revolutionary and political factors began to play increasingly important roles in shaping the course of Sino-North Korean relations. We must take this shift into account in order to understand the evolution of Sino-North Korean relations.

This article attempts to examine the early history of the Sino-North Korean alliance by using recently declassified documents from Chinese and Soviet archives, as well as oral histories. Specifically, this article will discuss the opening of the Pyongyang office of the Northeast Bureau of the Chinese Communist Party in the summer of 1946, the return of the first group of the ethnic Korean People’s Liberation Army (PLA) soldiers to North Korea, the building of an informal comradeship between China and North Korea, China’s entry into the Korean War, and the materialization of a Sino-North Korean alliance in October 1950. Moreover, this article analyzes the constant conflicts between Chinese and North Korean leadership during the Korean War, the changes in the Sino-North Korean relationship after the Korean War, the August Incident of the Korean Workers’ Party (KWP), and the causes and consequences of China’s volunteer withdrawal of the CPVA from North Korea in October 1958. By examining these historical events, this paper intends to explore the nature of this type of alliance which was characteristic of Cold War alliances.

I. CHINESE-KOREAN REVOLUTIONARY TIES

Japanese militarism and expansionism caused great suffering in modern Chinese and Korean history. Beginning during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904, and especially after Japan’s annexation of Korea in 1910, large numbers of Koreans migrated to Northeast China. In Northeast China, many ethnic Koreans joined anti-Japanese activities.³ After the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War (known in China as the War of Resistance against Japan), various ethnic-Korean anti-Japanese forces in northern China united and accepted the leadership of China’s Eighth Route Army and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). In January 1941, the North China Korean Youth Association was founded in Tongyu of Shanxi, where the headquarters of the Eighth Route Army on the Taihang Mountains was located. The first president of this association was Mu Chong. In June 1941, the Korean Volunteer Corps-North China Branch was established, which was under the direct leadership of the Eighth Route Army. In July 1942, supported by the CCP, the North China Korean Youth Association was renamed the Korean Independence League, which was led by Kim Tu-bong and Choe Chang-ik. Meanwhile, the Korean Volunteer Corps-North China Branch expanded and was reorganized into the Korean Volunteer Army (KVA), of which Mu Chong was the chief commander and Pak Hyo-sam and Pak Il-yu were deputy commanders. Towards the end of World War

II, the leadership of the Korean Independence League moved to Yan’an, where the CCP’s Central Committee dwelled. In Yan’an, young Koreans such as So Hwi and Yun Kong-hum joined the leadership of the Korean Independence League.⁴ These Koreans were later branded the “Yan’an faction” after their return to North Korea.

Besides the “Yan’an faction,” Kim Il-sung’s “guerrilla faction” also returned to Korea from China after WWII. According to Soviet documents, Kim went to northeast China in the early 1930s and was entrusted by the Central Committee of the CCP to organize anti-Japanese guerrilla campaigns in Jilin. He held the offices of regiment and division political commissar, and later became a chief commander in the southeast front.⁵ Due to the Kwandong Army’s encirclement, many of Kim’s guerrillas lost their lives and the few who survived withdrew to the Soviet Far East, where they received military training and were resupplied arms and equipment. In July 1942, the Soviet Far East Front was ordered to organize the No. 88 Independent Infantry Brigade in the area east of Khabarovsk. The commander of this brigade was Zhou Baozhong, a member of the CCP. Kim Il-sung and his guerrillas joined the No. 88 Brigade in 1942. These guerrillas were merged into the First Battalion, of which, Koreans were the majority. Kim Il-sung excelled in terms of military performance, as well as language (Russian) learning. He received many praises and quickly became the leader of his battalion. After the defeat of the Japanese, the Soviets sent Kim Il-sung and his comrades, such as Kim Il, Kang Gen, and Choe Yong-gon, back to Korea in mid-September 1945. Kim Il-sung became the assistant to the Soviet representative of the Soviet Occupying Forces in Pyongyang.⁶

However, soon after Kim’s return to North Korea, U.S.-Soviet relations deteriorated and the Korean peninsula, which had been divided by U.S. and Soviet occupying forces along the 38th parallel, plunged into political turmoil. After the Moscow Conference in December 1945, the Soviets ousted the local nationalists and put Kim Il-sung in power. With Soviet endorsement, Kim Il-sung allied himself with ethnic Koreans from the Soviet Union such as Ho Ka-yi, and representatives of the Korean Communist Party from the south, such as Pak Hon-yong and Pak Chong-ae, to establish a pro-Soviet North Korean regime.⁷

In the post-WWII decolonization movement, communist party-led revolutions were the rising tide in Asia, and revolutionaries looked to Moscow for ideology, as well as material aid. With the outbreak of the Cold War in 1947 and the rise of a Socialist bloc, Asian communist parties set their sights on establishing an Asian socialist system, a goal which fueled ongoing national liberation movements. In this context, shared revolutionary ideals and mutual help were the foundations for close Chinese and Korean communist ties. This revolutionary factor gave a new life to the “tooth and lips” relationship between China and Korea that was traditionally based on their proximity.

On August 11, 1945, General Zhu De issued the No. 6 Order in Yan’an, which ordered the KVA to march with the Eighth Route Army to Northeast China to annihilate the Japanese and puppet troops, and to prepare for the liberation of Korea.⁸ On August 12, 15, and 18, the Korean Independence League issued three proclamations which appealed to the ethnic Korean soldiers among the Japanese army to surrender to the Eighth Route Army and the New Fourth Army, and called on local ethnic Koreans to join the KVA and fight for a new Korean republic.⁹ The CCP’s Central Committee dispatched Chen Yun to Northeast China as the advance party for the takeover. According to Chen Yun’s report on October 27, the Municipal Committee of Changchun decided to send out a large group of cadres to the area west of Changchun to expand the army, mobilize the masses, and take over the administration.¹⁰

At the same time, the advance troops of the KVA arrived in Antong, but the Soviet army stopped them from entering Korea based on the Allies’ agreement regarding the 38th parallel. By early November, Mu Chong led the KVA’s main force of over 3,000 soldiers to Shenyang. Following advice from the CCP’s Central Committee, the majority of the KVA stayed in Northeast China. Only 70 or so cadres of this army, including Mu Chong, Kim Tu-bong, and Choe Chang-ik, returned to Pyongyang via a Soviet-provided train on December 13.¹¹

Ethnic Korean officers who stayed in Northeast China were reorganized into Units 1, 3, 5, and 7. They set out for areas with high concentrations of ethnic Koreans in order to mobilize the populations and accumulate strength for the Chinese and

Korean revolutions. They quickly expanded their units by recruiting local ethnic Koreans as well. These expanded units were later integrated into the Northeast Democratic Allied Army (the predecessor of the Northeast People’s Liberation Army), and played an important role in the War of Liberation in Northeast China. For instance, during the Chinese Civil War, 34,855 ethnic Koreans from the five counties of Yanbian, Jilin, fought for the CCP, and over 100 thousand ethnic Koreans joined local communist-led military organizations, such as the public security troops and militias.¹²

Until 1949, the CCP’s core leadership was generally clueless about the situation in Korea,¹³ preoccupied instead, by the Chinese Civil War. The core figures of the KVA had already left China for Korea and the establishment of the army itself no longer existed. However, Chinese-Korean interactions did not come to a complete halt. Instead, the revolutionaries within the two countries maintained close ties and provided mutual assistance through the CCP’s Northeast Bureau office in Pyongyang.

At the beginning of the Chinese Civil War, the CCP faced enormous difficulties in Northeast China. In South Manchuria, the Nationalist army had cut off communist connections to North Manchuria, forcing the CCP to turn to Korea for supplies. Korea was located right across the river from South Manchuria and shared an 800 kilometer-long border with China. In July 1946, the CCP’s Northeast Bureau opened an office in Pyongyang and appointed Zhu Li-zhi the plenipotentiary. The Northeast Bureau then renewed the CCP’s contact with Korean leaders. Zhu Li-zhi had an especially close relationship with the Koreans, including Choe Yong-gon and Kim Il-sung. He partied frequently with the Koreans who had lived in Yan’an, including Pak Il-yu, Mu Chong, and Kang Gen, drinking heavily together and recalling their shared pasts. Even the Soviet officers in Pyongyang loved to call on Zhu’s residence to eat and drink in the name of developing friendly contacts.¹⁴

According to Zhu Li-zhi’s report to the Northeast Bureau of the CCP dated June 27, 1947, the Koreans had generously helped the Northeast Bureau in many ways through his office. For instance, after the fall of Tonghua and Antong, 15 thousand wounded and sick Chinese communist soldiers, along with their families, retreated to North Korea and lived with Korean families.

Koreans had also supplied the Northeast Bureau with all kinds of materials, including weaponry. By June 1947, the Northeast Bureau had received between 800 to 1,000 freights of supplies, mainly military supplies, from Korea. Some of these supplies were obtained through barter and some were acquired by the Soviets from the defeated Japanese. It was Kim Il-sung’s idea to ask the Soviets to leave the Japanese arms and equipment in Korea, which he then transferred to the CCP.

Moreover, Korea also received Chinese communists in transit. It was estimated that 20 thousand Chinese communists had passed through Korean territory with a period of nine months, including Northeast Bureau staff and the transit troops of the communist army. Finally, Koreans also helped the CCP store and transfer goods and materials. The CCP had entrusted the Koreans with 20 thousand tons of goods when its army had to retreat. The KWP had been enormously helpful in shipping these goods back and forth, for which the Northeast Bureau paid less than one percent transit duties and a bargain shipping rate. During urgent times, Korea even suspended its passenger transport in order to guarantee freight transport for the CCP. In short, Kim Il-sung did exactly what he promised in his letter to General Lin Biao: to do everything within his capacity to help the CCP.

Zhu Li-zhi commented that North Korea was the bridge that kept the supply line open to the Chinese communists, especially for the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) in South Manchuria. North Korea was the obscure, but critical rear that offered tremendous support to the PLA, which was in fact, the exact intention of the Northeast Bureau.¹⁵ From the second half of 1947 to early 1948, more than 520 thousand tons of goods belonging to the CCP were transshipped or exchanged via North Korea. At the same time, over 20 thousand CCP members and supporters crossed Korea. For instance, a single port at Tumen-Nanyang received 8,685 Chinese passengers in 1948. Chen Yun, Zhu Rui, Liu Yalou, Xiaohua, Zhang Aiping, and many other big names of the Northeast Bureau all passed through Korea several times. Later, many influential democratic persons and overseas Chinese representatives who attended the New Political Consultative Conference also came to the mainland via North Korea from Hong Kong, among whom were Li Jishen, Shen Junru, Zhanglan, Ma Xulun, and Cai

T'ing kai.¹⁶

The CCP reciprocated Kim Il-sung's help by supplying him grain and soldiers. In the late summer and early fall of 1946, via Ding Xuesong, who had just returned to Korea from Yan'an, Kim Il-sung asked the Northeast Bureau for grain aid. According to Zhu Li-zhi, by the summer of 1947, the Northeast Bureau sent 10 thousand tons of grain to Kim via Liu Yalou. This bureau later gave Kim an additional 2,000 tons of grain. Including the grain exchanged for Korean goods, the CCP provided Kim a total of around 30 thousand tons of grain.¹⁷

Moreover, the CCP helped Kim to build an army that was composed mainly of ethnic Koreans who had served in the former KVA and the Northeast Democratic Allied Army. The transfer of these ethnic Korean PLA soldiers to Kim Il-sung was arguably the greatest help that the CCP could have provided. After August 1946, Kim Kwang-hyob, Kang Gen, and Choe Kwang began to lead the ethnic Korean PLA soldiers in Northeast China to return to Korea in batches. By the inaugural meeting of the Korean People's Army (KPA) on February 8, 1947, these returnees from China comprised the First Division of this army, with Kim Ku as the division's commander and Kang Gen as general staff. In addition to this first group of returnees, incomplete statistics show that about 800 ethnic Korean military cadres and military school students returned to Korea from the liberated area in Northeast China between 1946 and March 1949. These experienced ethnic Korean officers had survived the test of war in China and quickly became the backbone of the KPA.¹⁸

Both Kim Il-sung and Mao Zedong understood how important cooperation was to their respective struggles for power. Kim Il-sung expressed that it was the lofty, internationalist obligation of the Korean communists and people to aid the Chinese people's revolutionary cause. Moreover, he believed that the victory of the Chinese revolution would benefit Korea's security and development.¹⁹ Mao Zedong also firmly believed in the unity of Asian anti-imperialist forces. He said that it was impossible for any true people's revolution to succeed or consolidate its success in one country without different forms of support from the international revolutionary forces.²⁰ This revolutionary internationalism explained the readiness of Mao and Kim to lend a hand to each other whenever necessary. With victory for the CCP around the corner, people even began to talk about the possibility of an alliance of all Asian communist parties.²¹ It seemed evident that the time was ripe for China and Kim Il-sung's Korea to enter a formal alliance along the lines of the Sino-Soviet treaty. Unfortunately, this process was disrupted by Kim's further revolutionary moves.

II. ISSUES REGARDING KOREA'S REUNIFICATION

In the second half of 1949, Mao Zedong and Kim Il-sung were both eager to reunify their countries. Mao wanted to liberate Tibet and Taiwan, and Kim wanted to reunify with the south. In order to realize their goals, Mao and Kim competed for Moscow's help. In my opinion, the outbreak of the Korean War indicated that Moscow favored Pyongyang over Beijing in this regard. In the past, the “collaboration” theory was very popular among traditionalist scholars who believed that the Soviet Union, China, and North Korea collaborated in making the Korean War.²² The recently declassified documents, however, have disclosed a far more complicated story. Initially, both Joseph Stalin and Mao Zedong were opposed to Kim Il-sung's premature plan to use force to reunify the Korean Peninsula. Later, Stalin changed his mind, gave Kim the green light, and forced the war on Mao. On this issue, the relationship between China, the Soviet Union, and North Korea was delicate and complex. Although the CCP did not agree with Kim Il-sung's adventurism, it had to support him after he took action.

It was April 1949 when the CCP first realized that Kim Il-sung was planning to reunify the south by force. At that time, it was rumored that the U.S. would soon withdraw its troops from South Korea, and that the Rhee Syngman regime was busy preparing for a major offensive against the north.²³ In response, Kim Il-sung secretly sent Kim Il, head of the Political Department of the KPA, as his envoy to China to ask for help. Kim Il met with Mao Zedong, Zhu De, and Zhou Enlai. Mao's concern was that Rhee Syngman might launch a military offensive against the north at any time and thus, advised Kim Il-sung to be thoroughly prepared for an attack. Should that happen and should Japan intervene on Rhee's behalf, Mao promised to send Chinese troops to North Korea to help. However, Mao also made it crystal clear that Kim Il-sung should

not be tempted to launch the first strike. In Mao’s analysis, if Kim Il-sung attacked the south, General Douglas MacArthur would transfer the American occupying forces in Japan to Korea faster than what the CCP would be able to respond to while the main PLA forces were stationed south of the Yangtze River.

Kim Il-sung also asked Mao for the return of the ethnic-Korean PLA soldiers. Mao pointed out that there were three PLA divisions consisting of ethnic Koreans, of which two were stationed respectively in Shenyang and Changchun, and the third was still in military operation in South China. Mao indicated that the CCP was ready to return the two divisions in the north-east at any time, along with all the division’s arms and equipment. However, the third division had to complete its operations in the south before returning to Korea. Furthermore, Kim Il-sung proposed to establish an Oriental Intelligence Bureau, which Mao dismissed as premature. Mao explained that given the fact that both China and Indo-China were still at war, and the situation on the Korean Peninsula was rapidly deteriorating, people might mistake such a bureau as a military alliance.²⁴ It was evident that Mao did not want Kim Il-sung to take any military action before the CCP accomplished the reunification of China. This was the real reason why Mao was not interested in the intelligence bureau proposed by Kim. For Mao, the purpose of the CCP’s aid, including the return of ethnic Korean troops, was to help Kim defend the north, not to help him to start war against the south.

According to Russian documents, soon after the American troops left the Korean Peninsula in June 1949, Kim Il-sung became increasingly eager to launch the first strike against the south. On September 3, Kim submitted a proposal to Moscow via the Soviet embassy in Pyongyang, suggesting an offensive to seize the Ongjin Peninsula and the area between the Ongjin Peninsula and Kaesong.²⁵ In late September, the Political Bureau of the SCP’s Central Committee discussed Kim’s proposal and decided to oppose it. In Moscow’s reply to Kim, it was explained that to attack the south meant to start a war, for which North Korea was not yet ready either politically or militarily. Moreover, if the military conflicts initiated by the north evolved into a lasting war, it would give the Americans an excuse to openly interfere in Korean affairs.²⁶ On this issue, Beijing and Moscow were on the same page.

After the founding of the People’s Republic of China (PRC), Kim Il-sung once again raised the issue of Korea’s reunification. On October 21, 1949, Mao Zedong telegraphed Stalin, telling him that the Korean comrades wanted to reunify the south by force, but that CCP leaders had advised them not to do so.²⁷ On October 26, Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov drafted the reply for Stalin: “We agree with you that the KPA should not attack the south (yet). We also pointed out to our Korean friends that the KPA was not prepared for the proposed attack in either military or political aspects.”²⁸ Andrei Gromyko, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, perhaps felt Molotov’s draft was too direct and sent out a revised version: “We think that we must inform you that we support your opinion on the issue under discussion, and we would advise our Korean friends according to that spirit.” Apparently Stalin shared Mao’s objection to Kim Il-sung’s scheme to initiate war.

Stalin, however, changed his mind regarding the Korean question during Mao Zedong’s trip to Moscow. It was during this trip that Mao forced the renewed Sino-Soviet Alliance Treaty on Moscow.³⁰ On January 30, 1950, Stalin let Kim Il-sung know that he thought favorably of Kim’s plan now, and called Kim to Moscow for secret talks. Stalin did not tell Mao about this meeting even though Mao was in Moscow at the time. After Mao left Moscow, Stalin and Kim held extensive talks between April 10 and 25 regarding launching war on the Korean Peninsula. Finally, Stalin instructed Kim to obtain Mao’s endorsement before taking action. This deference to China may have been Stalin’s way of showing respect for the division of labor between the CCP and SCP, so that he would not be cornered on the Korean question in the future.³¹

On May 12, 1950, as Stalin requested, Kim Il-sung decided to make a secret trip to Beijing “to inform [Mao] about their intentions to unify the country by military means and to report about the results of the discussions on this question in Moscow.” Kim, in fact, was reluctant to see Mao. He told Soviet Ambassador and general military advisor to Pyongyang, Terenti Shtykov, that “he had no further requests for Mao’s assistance, since all his requests were satisfied in Moscow and the necessary assistance was given to him there.”³² Nevertheless, Kim Il-sung flew to Beijing on May 13. On the same day, Kim and Chinese leaders had their first meeting, of which, no records are available. However, Soviet Ambassador to Beijing

Nicolai Roshchin’s report indicated that the first meeting between Kim and the Chinese leaders did not proceed well and was, in fact, suspended later that night. According to Roshchin’s telegram to Moscow, Zhou Enlai called the Soviet embassy that night at 23:30 and asked to communicate with Stalin via telegraph immediately. Zhou’s message read: “The Korean comrades notified us of Comrade Filipov’s instructions as the following: The situation has changed and now it is okay for North Korea to make a move; but North Korea must discuss this issue with the Chinese comrades and Mao Zedong himself...Comrade Mao Zedong would appreciate Comrade Filipov’s personal explanation on this issue.” At the end of the telegram, it was stressed that the Chinese comrades demanded an immediate reply.³³

By now, Stalin had to explain to Mao that the Soviet government had changed its position on the Korean question. Stalin sent a telegram to Mao on May 14 to confirm what Kim had told Mao. But Stalin also stressed in his telegram that the Korean question eventually had to be resolved by joint Chinese-Korean efforts. Therefore, said Stalin, if the Chinese comrades opposed Kim’s plan, they needed to reconsider this question. Stalin suggested to Mao to get the details of the Stalin-Kim meetings on this question in April from Kim.³⁴ Since Stalin and Kim had already reached an agreement, Mao had no choice but to support Moscow’s new position. Meanwhile, Mao cautiously proposed to postpone the signing of the Sino-Korean Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance until North Korea reunified with the south, to which Stalin agreed.³⁵ Due to the lack of materials, it is not yet clear when and how the issue of a Sino-Korean Alliance Treaty was raised in the first place. Nevertheless, Mao’s putting off of the treaty seemed to indicate his dissatisfaction and reservation about Stalin’s and Kim’s plans.

When he met with Kim on May 15, Mao explained that he had wished Kim could wait for the CCP to unify Taiwan before launching an attack against the south, so that China could provide sufficient assistance to North Korea. But since Kim had made up his mind to take action, Mao expressed his respect for Kim’s decision. Mao promised that China was prepared to provide necessary assistance to North Korea because unification of Korea was the common cause of the Korean and Chinese people. Mao proposed to dispatch Chinese troops to Korea if America intervened in the war. He also offered to transfer some Chinese troops closer to the Chinese-Korean border and give arms and equipment to the KPA if Kim thought it necessary. Kim thanked Mao but declined this offer. As soon as the meeting concluded, Kim declared in front of the Soviet Ambassador that China and North Korea had agreed on all the issues discussed in the meeting.³⁶ It is imaginable how complacent Kim was and how embarrassed Mao must have felt at that moment.

By then, ill feelings had grown between North Korean and Chinese leadership. Kim resented the fact that Mao had been reluctant to support the proposal for immediate unification of Korea by military means, despite all the things that he and his people had done for the CCP during the Chinese Civil War. In principle, Mao was not against national unification by military means, and he understood that Kim’s attempt was echoing China’s example. Rather, Mao believed that the CCP’s unification (of Taiwan, and most likely Tibet) should have priority over Korea’s unification. An impatient Kim thus turned to Moscow for help, which made Mao very unhappy.

Because Kim was upset with and distrustful of the Chinese, he did not inform the Chinese government of North Korea’s war mobilization progress at all after he returned to Korea.³⁷ By the time Kim sent a military officer to notify Beijing of new developments, three days had already passed since the outbreak of the Korean War. Mao was understandably outraged. He told Shi Zhe: “They are supposed to be our next-door neighbor, but they did not consult with us before taking military action, and they did not even notify us of the outbreak of the war until now.”³⁸ This disturbing episode, however, did not undermine Mao’s determination to dispatch Chinese troops to aid the North Koreans.

III. CHINA’S ENTRY INTO THE KOREAN WAR

After more than a decade of studies of Chinese and Russian documents, scholars have come to a general consensus on the history of China’s entry into the Korean War.³⁹ The most recently declassified documents have disclosed many additional details of this history. These documents reveal the differences between Mao, Stalin, and Kim on the issue of China’s entry

into the war before the United Nation troops crossed the 38th parallel.

Although Mao took issue with what Stalin and Kim did behind his back, he still tried to aid North Korea when America entered the war. In early July 1950, the Chinese government agreed to send the 200 ethnic Korean cadres in the northeast military district back to Korea. Moreover, the Chinese government made great efforts to mobilize ethnic Korean doctors, nurses, drivers, and engineers to go back to Korea and serve their motherland. Between late June and early September, 347 ethnic Korean cadres, soldiers, and technicians applied to the Northeast Foreign Affairs Bureau for repatriation. Meanwhile, Zhou Enlai informed Roshchin that China approved Moscow's request to use China's Changchun railway and territorial sky to transport military supplies to North Korea.⁴⁰

Chinese leaders also mentioned to the Soviets that China was willing to offer military aid to North Korea. On July 2, 1950, Zhou Enlai met with Roshchin regarding China's thoughts on the war. Zhou said that the U.S. would probably dispatch more troops to Korea, land them in some southern ports, and then direct them to move northward along the railway. Zhou advised that the North Koreans should advance southward as fast as they could to take over these ports, and pointed out that the North Koreans should build an especially strong defense line around the Inchon area in order to protect Seoul and prevent American reinforcements from landing there. Although Zhou Enlai complained that Kim ignored Mao's repeated warnings about American intervention, he made it clear that if American troops crossed the 38th parallel, Chinese soldiers would put on KPA uniforms and fight the Americans as volunteers. Zhou told Roshchin that China had concentrated 3 armies, totaling 120 thousand soldiers, in the northeast and asked if the Soviet Union would provide air cover for these forces.⁴¹ On July 4, Zou Dapeng, Head of the General Intelligence Bureau of China, detailed for Roshchin China's plans to transport North Korean troops to South Korea via China's Shandong Peninsula, and to send Chinese military experts to South Korea to help the KPA.⁴²

Stalin immediately gave his blessings to China's plan. He said that it was the right time for China to assemble 9 military divisions along the Chinese-Korean border so that China could take immediate action should the Americans cross the 38th parallel. Stalin also promised to do his best to provide air cover for these troops,⁴³ and urged China to send representatives to Korea to enhance Sino-Korean communication and deal with potential problems.⁴⁴

At this time, Ni Zhiliang, Chinese Ambassador to North Korea, was still at home on sick leave. In order to keep in contact with North Korea, Zhou Enlai decided to send Chai Junwu (name later changed to Chai Chengwen) to North Korea as a political counselor as early as June 30. Before Chai left for Pyongyang, Zhou Enlai made the comment that the Korean people were now on the very first front of the communist struggle. Zhou instructed Chai to show China's support for the Korean people, ask them what China can do for them, and tell them that China would do its best to help.⁴⁵ On July 12, Zhou told Kim Il-sung that China would not tolerate America's interference in Korean affairs and that the Chinese government was prepared to help North Korea as much as possible. At the same time, China requested North Korea to furnish the Chinese troops with 500 Korean maps of the scales of respectively 1:100,000, 1:200,000, and 1:500,000, along with sample KPA uniforms.

Kim immediately informed the Soviet Ambassador of Zhou's word, commenting: Since the U.S. and some other countries have openly intervened on Rhee Syngman's side, it is now justified for countries such as Czechoslovakia and China to commit troops to help North Korea. But Shtykov deliberately ignored Kim's remark.⁴⁶ On July 19, Kim Il-sung once again informed the Soviet embassy of the conversation between Kim's envoy in Beijing and Mao Zedong. Mao promised to provide the KPA with arms and equipment, and said that China was willing to dispatch its own troops to Korea if necessary. For that purpose, China had so far organized 4 armies, totaling 320,000 men. Mao expected a reply from Kim by August 10.

When Kim asked where Moscow stood on the issue regarding China's entry into the war, Shtykov replied that he did not know. Kim then said that he did not realize that Mao had not yet consulted with Stalin on the issue regarding China's entry into the war. Shtykov once again said that he did not know anything about it. The Soviet Ambassador then sent a telegram to Moscow to inquire about Stalin's stance on this issue so that next time, he could answer Kim's questions.⁴⁷ Stalin never

responded. It seemed that Stalin did not really want China to send its troops to Korea unless a more urgent situation demanded so. After several probes, Kim got Stalin’s message.

Perhaps because of Stalin, the Korean government cut the Chinese embassy out of the loop. As Chai Chengwen recalled, Kim Il-sung received him with high courtesy when he first arrived in Pyongyang. Kim said that Chai had access to Kim himself at any time. Kim also appointed So Hwi, the KPA’s Deputy Chief of the General Political Bureau, to brief the Chinese military attachés daily on the development of the war. But the Chinese soon realized that So Hwi’s briefings were not much different from the propaganda broadcastings in the evenings, and that Chai did not really have easy access to the core North Korean leaders. The North Koreans kept delaying their reply when the Chinese embassy asked them to arrange for the Chinese deputy military attachés to visit the KPA. After contact with several levels of Korean officials, Chai came to the conclusion that the North Koreans were prohibited from giving any military intelligence to the Chinese. Even those Korean cadres of the Yan’an faction with whom Chai had fought side by side, never mentioned to him what was happening on the front lines. Chai was convinced that these cadres were strictly prohibited from doing so.⁴⁸ Meanwhile, the North Korean government refused to receive the Chinese staff that the PLA had planned to send to North Korea on a fact-finding mission.⁴⁹

Despite these dealings, the war in Korea was protracting and Chinese leaders were feeling more and more urgency to be prepared to enter the war. On August 11, in accordance with Mao’s instructions, the Thirteenth Army Group held a general meeting to educate and prepare Chinese officers. Gao Gang, Commanding Officer and Political Commissar of the Northeast Military District, explained the purpose and significance of getting ready for China’s entry into the war. He said that China must volunteer to aid the Korean people. He instructed: “The troops will be going to Korea in the name of the volunteer army. The troops will wear Korean uniforms, use Korean designations, and fly KPA’s flag.” Gao Gang even instructed the major officers and cadres to use Korean names. He ordered that each preparation task should be assigned to a specific person, carried out strictly, and completed on time.⁵⁰

On August 19 and 28, Mao Zedong talked about the Korean War with the Soviet Philosopher-Scholar P. F. Yudin, who was then in Beijing to help edit and publish *The Selected Works of Mao Zedong*. Mao nervously pointed out the most updated intelligence showing that the U.S. was determined to escalate the war by committing more troops to Korea.⁵¹ If that turned out to be true, the North Koreans would not be able to deal with it on their own and would need direct assistance from China. In August and early September, Mao Zedong held two meetings with Korean representative Lee Sang-jo to discuss the war situation. Liu Shaoqi also pointed out that the North Korean government needed to prepare the Korean people psychologically for a prolonged war.⁵² In early September, after Mao’s repeated urgings, the Chinese military decided to expand the Northeast Border Defense Army to 700,000 men, with the addition of 200,000 replacement troops, and to update the army’s equipment.⁵³ China obviously did this to get prepared for possible American actions that could draw China into the war.

Kim Il-sung understood Mao Zedong’s intention to enter the war, but had to consult with Moscow first. On August 26, Kim informed the Soviet Ambassador of intercepted intelligence indicating that the Americans were planning to land in Inchon and Suwon. Kim expressed that he would take necessary measures to fortify the defense of the concerned area. That evening, at Kim’s order, Mun Il told Shtykov that Kim was still thinking about asking the Chinese comrades to send troops to aid Korea due to the difficult conditions for the KPA in the front.” Mun Il said that Kim would like to know Moscow’s opinion on this issue. Mun Il mentioned that Kim wanted to write to Stalin several times and to submit this question to the Politburo of the KWP for discussion. Having noticed that Shtykov had no intention to discuss this subject, Mun Il quickly explained that he raised all of the above issues on his own initiative, and that Kim had not asked him to do so. Shtykov noticed that Kim was losing faith in the KPA’s ability to win the war, which explained his multiple attempts to win the Soviet embassy’s support for importing Chinese troops. But after sounding out the Soviets through Mun Il, Kim never mentioned this question again.⁵⁴

What concerned Stalin was that China’s entry into the Korean War would greatly complicate the East Asian situation. Therefore, he wanted to keep the Chinese troops out of Korea unless he had no other choice. In response to Kim Il-sung’s repeated inquiries, Stalin explicitly dismissed Kim’s request for international assistance. On August 28, Stalin told Kim Il-sung by telegraph that he: “had no doubt that in the soonest time the interventionists will be driven out of Korea with ignominy. Comrade Kim Il-sung should not be embarrassed by the fact that he does not have solid successes in the war against the interventionists, that the successes are sometimes interrupted by delays in the advance or even by some local set-backs.” Finally, Stalin promised: “If it is necessary, we can throw in additional assault aircraft and fighter aircraft for the Korean air force.”⁵⁵

On August 31, Soviet Ambassador Shtykov reported to Stalin, “KIM IL SUNG received your letter very well, thanking you several times.” Kim underscored that it was a very good letter and asked if he could “bring it to the notice of the members of the PolitSoviet [Political Council] of the CC.” Kim explained “some members of the PolitSoviet are in a poor state of mind. It will be useful to them to know the contents of this letter.”⁵⁶ At that time, Kim could not have been surer about Stalin’s opinion on China’s entry into the war and never again raised this issue. Instead, he placed all his hope on Moscow.

Kim Il-sung seemed to be regaining his confidence because of Moscow’s promise. When Chai Chengwen mentioned directly to Kim that the war was now in a stalemate, Kim replied optimistically that the battle of Pusan had begun and the shock brigade would soon break the deadlock. When asked about the possibility of an American landing behind the KPA’s back, Kim asserted that the American troops were not able to launch a counteroffensive for the time being. He insisted that the American troops were not anticipating significant reinforcements, and that it was very difficult to land in those ports. Kim’s tendency for adventurism became increasingly evident. As Chai reported, at first, Kim did not take into account the possibility of American intervention and anticipated the war to end in one month.

After America intervened, Kim boasted that all the problems would be solved before August 15 and that August would be a month of victory. The total mobilization of manpower and materials, including technician workers and students, that followed, indicated that Kim intended to stake everything on a single throw. These efforts only ended up in enormous waste of manpower and materials. On September 10, Chai returned to Pyongyang from Beijing with a message for Kim from Zhou Enlai. Zhou asked Kim to consider a strategic retreat, to which Kim replied, “I would never consider retreat.”⁵⁷

After American troops landed successfully in Inchon, the situation on the Korean Peninsula changed drastically. The Chinese leadership felt that China was already on the road to the war. On September 18, Zhou Enlai summoned Roshchin and Soviet military advisors, complaining to them that the North Koreans barely shared any military intelligence with the Chinese. China had notified North Korea that China wanted to send some military engineers to Korea to investigate the battlefields, but North Korea never replied. Zhou believed that North Korea should withdraw its main force to the north if it truly lacked a reserve army of 100,000 men, as official statistics were indicating. Zhou deliberately pointed out that Western countries, unprepared for a lasting, large-scale war, were now deeply worried that the Soviet Union and China might intervene. Zhou told the Soviets: “We should take advantage of the fear of the Western countries and take actions to demonstrate our intentions. From this perspective, China’s transfer of troops from the south to the northeast was enough to upset the British and American governments.” In the end, Zhou asked Roshchin and Soviet military advisors to inform the Soviet government of China’s point of view as soon as possible and expressed his wish for a quick reply.⁵⁸

Moscow replied on September 20. Moscow criticized the North Koreans for not furnishing the Chinese government with updated military intelligence but also explained that it was because the North Korean leadership was young and inexperienced. Moscow agreed with Beijing regarding the immediate withdrawal of KPA’s main forces to the north and the building of a defense line around Seoul. However, Stalin did not respond at all to the issue of China’s entry into the war raised by Zhou.⁵⁹ Zhou had no choice but to advise Kim to concentrate North Korean forces on protecting the 38th parallel, upholding the spirit of self-reliance, and preparing for lasting war.⁶⁰ On September 21, Liu Shaoqi told Roshchin that the Chinese government believed that the Chinese revolution was not over yet, and if Americans won the upper hand in Korea,

China would be obligated to help their Korean comrades.⁶¹

At the same time, Zhou Enlai inquired about the North Korean opinion on this issue. On September 19, Zhou called in the North Korean Ambassador, Yi Chu-yon, to inform him of the conversation he had with Roshchin the previous day and to inquire what China could do for North Korea after the Inchon landing.⁶² The next day, Kim informed the Soviet Ambassador of Zhou’s inquiry. Kim explained to Shtykov that the Chinese and North Korean governments had an agreement that if the enemy landed in the KPA’s rear, China would send troops to Korea to help. Kim then asked Shtykov how to reply to the Chinese inquiry. After the Soviet Ambassador replied with “no comment,” Kim immediately said that the Chinese army was excellent and had plenty of combat experience, but it was still an open question as to how they would perform under America’s continuous and intense bombing. The majority of North Koreans present followed up by stating, “If [we] let the Chinese army enter the war without proper air cover, the rough situation in the front would not improve much.” Only Minister of Foreign Affairs, Pak Hon-yong, explicitly expressed his hope for China’s entry into the war. Without instructions from Moscow, Shtykov “avoided answering this question.”⁶³

On Sept. 21, the Politburo of the KWP held a meeting to discuss how to respond to China’s proposal for sending Chinese troops to Korea. Pak Hon-yong, Kim Tu-bong, and Pak Il-yu all believed that North Korea obviously could not depend solely on its own forces to defeat the Americans, and therefore must ask the Chinese government to send troops into Korea. But Kim Il-sung stated: “Given the fact that the Soviets have given us all the weapons that we asked for, on what basis should we ask for the Chinese help?” He believed “the Soviets and Chinese will not allow the Americans to seize Korea.” Finally, Kim Il-sung suggested holding off on any resolution asking for Chinese assistance and writing to Comrade Stalin first to seek his advice on this issue. Kim Il-sung emphasized that “if [we] asked for Chinese military assistance without referring [the question] to the Soviet Union, the Soviets might complain, ‘Isn’t it enough that we sent over all these advisors and weapons?’” Kim Il-sung also said that if North Korea accelerated the building of a new army, it would not be necessary to seek assistance from the Chinese. No resolution was passed at that meeting.⁶⁴

On September 30, Moscow received a report from Shtykov that Seoul was probably already lost, and that the road for the KPA to retreat northward was blocked and communications were cut off. That same night, Kim sent a personal letter to ask Stalin for “direct military assistance.” If that was not possible, Kim asked for “international volunteers from China and other democratic people’s countries.”⁶⁵ Stalin finally gave in under this unprecedented emergency. On October 1, Stalin sent a telegram to Mao Zedong, requesting Chinese troops to enter Korea as volunteers, organizing defenses in the areas north of the 38th parallel. Stalin stated disingenuously: “I have not mentioned this to the Korean comrades and am not intending to do so. But I have no doubt that they will be very happy to hear this news.”⁶⁶

From October 1 to 19, Mao Zedong managed to override all dissenting voices within his government and led China into the Korean War. Although the Soviets explicitly told the Chinese not to expect Soviet air cover for the time being, Mao was determined to enter the war anyway. As an ally, Mao believed that China was obligated to help North Korea even in the absence of an official alliance treaty requiring them to do so.⁶⁷ On the issue of China’s entry into the war, Pyongyang generally took its cues from Moscow. No evidence has proven that it was because of the existence of a Yan’an faction in North Korea that Kim Il-sung was reluctant to welcome the Chinese troops to Korea. What is apparent, however, is that Kim Il-sung valued and trusted the Soviets over his Chinese socialist brothers. From Stalin’s perspective, China was supposed to assume responsibility for the security of North Korea and the Socialist East after U.S. intervention in Korea. Thereafter, Moscow adjusted its position to match up with Beijing’s and supported China whenever China and North Korea had disagreements on war-related issues.

IV: CHINESE-NORTH KOREAN DISPUTES DURING THE WAR

The first question raised by China’s entry into the war was who should command the joint army. Kim Il-sung had intended to take over the commandship of the CPVA and proposed to combine the Chinese and Korean command posts.⁶⁸ However,

Peng Dehuai did not touch on the issue at all when he met with Kim on October 21, 1950. In order to maintain contact between the two armies, Kim had to appoint Pak Il-yu liaison officer to Peng's headquarters.⁶⁹ With the expansion of the CPVA operations, the lack of coordination between the CPVA and KPA became more and more troublesome and unification of Chinese and Korean military leadership became urgent. In early November, Peng raised the issue of military coordination with Kim and suggested relocating KPA headquarters closer to the CPVA's. However, Kim rejected this suggestion. In mid-November, Peng put forward a specific plan for unifying the commanderships: Kim, Shtykov, and Peng would form a three-man group to jointly direct and coordinate all troops. Kim did not comment on this proposal. Meanwhile, Mao informed Stalin of this situation and asked Stalin to mediate. Stalin replied immediately and expressed his total support for Peng's proposal, promising to notify Kim and Shtykov of his opinion. As a result, Kim arrived in Beijing on December 3 to discuss this issue with Mao in person and together they established the Joint Command of the CPVA and KPA in which the Chinese assumed the chief posts and the Koreans assumed the deputy posts. In March 1951, the Air Force Joint Command of the CPVA and KPA was established as well. It hurt Kim Il-sung's nationalist pride to give up the commandership of the North Korean troops. However, from a practical perspective, it was necessary to concentrate military leadership in the hands of the CPVA in order to win the war.

The second issue was deciding whether or not the Sino-North Korean troops should continue to advance after they crossed the 38th Parallel. Although the CPVA won two major campaigns, the U.S. Air Force still dominated the skies. Moreover, the Chinese army was badly strained, having previously lost significant manpower and supplies from two tough campaigns. Therefore, Peng Dehuai suggested that the troops should stay north of the 38th Parallel for the time being. Concerned with international politics, Mao ordered the CPVA to immediately launch the third campaign and regroup after they crossed the 38th Parallel. Peng followed Mao's order. However, right after the CPVA captured Seoul on January 8, 1951, Peng ordered the troops to stay where they were and begin to regroup and rest. Kim, the Soviet Ambassador to North Korea, and the Soviet military advisor to China, all strongly opposed Peng's order. Consequently, Kim and Peng had heated arguments on January 10 and 11. Peng contended that he would not revoke his order even if it would cause him to be fired, court-martialed, or even killed. Peng took such an uncompromising stance because Stalin had intervened in Peng's favor. Stalin suggested that in order to minimize international pressure on China, the CPVA should be responsible for the defense of the coast and inland north of the 38th Parallel, while the KPA could continue to advance southward. Kim had no choice but to agree to let all the troops take time to regroup. According to the Soviet Ambassador to North Korea, this episode damaged China's prestige among North Korean leaders.⁷⁰ Long after the end of the Korean War, it was still rumored within the KWP that the CPVA seemed reluctant to pursue the total liberation of Korea when the American aggressors were losing the war in early 1951.⁷¹

The third point of Sino-North Korean conflict was over control of the North Korean railroad. At the beginning of the war, the established principle was military control of the railroad under the command of the CPVA headquarters. By spring of 1951, as the war was protracting, Sino-North Korean disagreements over railroad control emerged. North Korea was concerned about economic recovery and demanded priority be given to the transport of civilian materials. China, on the other hand, was mainly concerned with the development of the war, and insisted priority be given to the transport of military supplies. As a result, the two sides competed for cargo trains and rails, which ended up delaying or even paralyzing railway transportation in general and enabling the U.S. Air Force to destroy many materials that were left stranded on the roads. In this regard, North Korea established a Military Transportation Bureau independent of the existing Bureau for Military Control of the Railroad. North Korea insisted that the responsibility of the Bureau for Military Control of the Railroad should be limited to drafting transportation plans and supervising railway transport, while any additional responsibilities should be left to the North Korean government. After several rounds of discussion, a compromise was found. China agreed that the North Korean Transportation Ministry should control the administration of North Korean railways, but that China could send personnel to the ministry to assume deputy posts; a joint command of military transportation should be established, with the Chinese to be chief and Koreans to be deputy; and a joint command of the railway engineering corps should be established again, with the Chinese as chief and Koreans as deputy. During the negotiations, the North Koreans

were hesitant to give up command of the railway engineering corps, but once again, Moscow’s intervention persuaded North Korea to accept China’s proposal. When China and North Korea were about to sign the agreement, Stalin sent a telegram explaining that the Korean railroad must be placed under the control of Chinese headquarters in Korea,⁷² which led Chinese negotiators to immediately take a hard line stance on military control of the railroad. On May 4, 1950, the two sides concluded *The Agreement On Military Control of the Korean Railroad during the War*.

Among all the issues which China and North Korea disagreed, the issue regarding control of the railway was the only one that affected North Korea’s domestic affairs and touched on its national sovereignty. Peng Dehuai did not avoid this issue even when he was harshly criticized in 1959. Peng emphasized that military takeover of the railroad was an unavoidable expediency under war conditions, and that authority over the railway would be restored to the North Korean government immediately after a cease-fire agreement was signed.⁷³ Nonetheless, it left hard feelings in Kim Il-sung’s heart that China imposed its opinion on him with Moscow’s help.

The fourth point of Sino-North Korean conflict was over timing for ending the war. In late May 1951, China decided to adopt the strategy of “negotiating while fighting, striving for a solution through negotiations.”⁷⁴ Kim Il-sung was opposed to China’s policy and demanded the Sino-North Korean joint army to launch a final offensive. Thanks to Stalin’s intervention, Kim accepted China’s proposal for truce negotiation. By the second half of 1952, the truce negotiation in Panmunjon reached an impasse over prisoners of war (POWs). Mao refused to make any concession on this issue and insisted on continuing to fight, despite the North Koreans’ preference to compromise and conclude the war as quickly as possible. Stalin once again sided with Mao based on his own concerns about Soviet-American global competition. On July 15, 1951, Mao informed Stalin about the status of the truce negotiations, explaining that China would not concede on the issue of POWs even if it meant the disruption of negotiations. Mao asserted that this was a political issue that would not only affect China and North Korea, but the entire revolutionary camp.⁷⁵ Stalin replied the next day: “We consider your position in the negotiations on an armistice to be completely correct.”⁷⁶ In early September, Stalin summoned Kim to Moscow and informed Kim of his support for China’s position in front of Zhou Enlai and Peng Dehuai. It is evident that Kim Il-sung was deeply influenced by the self-interests of North Korea on this question. Mao, however, was more concerned with the security of the Northeast Asian socialist camp or even the entire Asian socialist camp, which explains why Stalin sided with Mao on timing.

V. THE AUGUST INCIDENT AND THE RESULTING CHANGE IN CCP POLICY

Despite the Korean War truce, the war parties were unable to conclude a peace treaty during the Geneva Conference in 1954. It was clear, however, that no one wanted to see more military conflicts in Northeast Asia. After the war, North Korea had the enormous task of reconstructing its economy, facing difficulties as pressing as the war itself. To help with North Korea’s economic recovery and development, China offered tremendous economic aid: in the four years between 1954 and 1957, China gave North Korea 8 trillion Chinese yuan or 1.6 billion rubles, for free; it also forgave all its wartime aid from 1950 to 1953, totaling 7.29 trillion Chinese yuan or 1.45 billion rubles; China adopted 22,735 ethnic Korean war orphans in Northeast China during the three years of war and paid Korean citizens and their families of a total 31,338 people to educate these orphans. Compared to Soviet aid, China provided North Korea considerably more aid under much more favorable conditions.⁷⁷ Unfortunately, China and North Korea still could not build a closer relationship.

From 1954 to 1956, the CCP and SCP were aligned on both foreign and domestic policy. Internationally, they emphasized peaceful coexistence; domestically, they focused on economic restructure. They hoped other communist parties in power would follow suit.⁷⁸ North Korea, however, resisted. The Soviets in North Korea noticed that the North Korean government still overvalued military means in foreign policy, and overemphasized heavy industries in their economic policy.⁷⁹ The Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs observed that on both foreign relations and economic development, the Korean comrades overestimated their own capacity and underestimated that of the democratic camp. Likewise, the North Koreans did not give enough credit to Soviet, Chinese, and other countries for providing them aid.⁸⁰

Another report from the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs mentioned that Sino-Korean relations were awkward. For instance, the CPVA headquarters was several miles away from Pyongyang. The living conditions at headquarters were poor, and the Korean leaders barely visited there. The report also mentioned that Kim Il-sung planned to systematically remove those who had lived in China from their government and party posts. I. F. Kurdiukov noticed that after China recalled its ambassador to North Korea in 1952, it did not appoint a new ambassador to Pyongyang until January 1955. In the receptions held by the North Korean Embassy in Beijing, Zhou Enlai almost never chatted with the North Koreans. He concluded that the Chinese comrades were not happy with the Koreans, but they never expressed their unhappiness in public and they exercised great restraint in their interactions.⁸¹

The Soviet observations were generally correct,⁸² but overstated Kim Il-sung’s intention to remove the Yan’an factionists from their posts at that time. Given the result of several years of intra-party political struggles, Kim Il-sung’s power struggle was not simply against the Yan’an faction. To some degree, it perhaps was not against the Yan’an faction at all.

The Korean Workers’ Party was founded not long before the war. It combined four major groups. The Kim Il-sung-led guerrilla faction did not constitute the majority, but still dominated the party. The Yan’an Faction included many military leaders and played an important role in the war; and the Moscow faction included ethnic Koreans from the Soviet Union. The Moscow faction and the southern faction were the less influential groups in the party, but contributed a few influential party leaders.

Kim Il-sung started to purge those who could potentially challenge his power and prestige at wartime. His first targets were the Yan’an faction cadres who were in charge of the military. In December 1950, Mu Chong was removed from his post after the fall of Pyongyang. Soon, Pak Il-yu was removed from his post and Bang Ho-san was arrested. However, the next target of Kim’s political power struggle was the Moscow faction. In November 1951, Ho Ka-yi, the most famous figure from the Moscow faction, was excommunicated from the party because his opinions differed from Kim’s. Ho was allowed to keep his post of vice prime minister only with Moscow’s intervention, but he did not escape a trial, and eventually committed suicide in early 1957. In August 1953, Lee Sung-yob and other cadres from the southern faction were tried for being American spies, sabotaging the southern revolution and attempting to overthrow the republic. Essentially, this case was the preview for Pak Hon-yong’s trial. Pak Hon-yong was the leading figure of the southern faction who, two years later, the North Korean Supreme Court convicted for spying and sentenced him to death.

After several rounds of internal struggles, Kim Il-sung established his authority over all groups within the KWP. The postwar leadership of North Korea included Kim Il from the guerrilla faction, Kim Tu-bong and Kim Chang-man from the Yan’an faction, Pak Chang-ok and Pak En-bin from the Moscow faction, and even Pak Chong-ae from the southern faction.⁸³ However, the divergence and conflict within the KWP were only temporarily suppressed, not totally uprooted.

Some scholars argue that the *juche* ideology that Kim Il-sung put forward for the first time in December 1955 was intended to eliminate the Soviet influence in the KWP, while strengthening North Korea’s ties to China. One piece of evidence that supports this view was the new round of political struggles against Pak Chang-ok, Pak En-bin, and other ethnic Korean cadres from the Soviet Union not long after Kim Il-sung introduced *juche*. On the other hand, Kim mentioned that the CCP’s rectification movement was worth learning to purify the party spirit of KWP members.⁸⁴ It is a solid argument that *juche* was aimed at eliminating the Soviet influence from North Korea, given Moscow’s far-reaching influence in the socialist countries. But it is more or less unfounded to say that this ideology was aimed at strengthening North Korea’s ties with China. It was typical for Kim to switch sides between Moscow and Beijing from time to time; sandwiched between two powerful countries, Kim had to for national survival and other interests. At the same time, Kim would not tolerate any threat to his position in North Korea from either country. What happened in August 1956 and after proves my point.

After the Twentieth Congress of the SCP, dissenting voices in the KWP surged under the influence of a Nikita Khrushchev-launched anti-personality cult movement. On March 19, 1956, Kim Il-sung received a written version of Khrushchev’s speech, “Personality cult and its consequences,” via the Soviet ambassador and expressed that the KWP would act in the

spirit of this speech.⁸⁵ However, Ambassador Ivanov learned that, besides Choe Yong-gon, who had just returned from Moscow and given a report, only three people, including Kim Il-sung, spoke in the next day’s Plenary Session of the KWP’s Central Committee which was devoted to studying materials on the Twentieth Party Congress of the Soviet Union. When Kim spoke about personality cult, he focused on how the southerners in the party worshipped Pak Hon-yong, but did not mention the fact that many party members worshipped him. Kim instructed that the press and other propaganda agencies should not emphasize individual contributions any longer. Khrushchev’s secret speech was read loud in Korean to the plenum, but was not discussed.⁸⁶ After this plenum, the KWP’s Central Committee issued a secret document to instruct party agencies at all levels to study the spirit of the Twentieth Congress. This document insisted that personality cult used to exist within the party and Pak Hon-yong was the only reason for its existence.⁸⁷

Between April 23 and 28, 1956, the KWP held the Third Party Congress. The main agenda of this congress included a reshuffling of personnel and further elimination of dissent. This Congress did not discuss the problem of personality cult, despite many rumors about it among the people, nor did it address the dissatisfaction shared by several cadres regarding the recent personnel changes; it did not even study the economic difficulties and livelihood problems affecting that the masses. Instead, Kim Il-sung devoted his lengthy report to bashing southern factionists, such as Pak Hon-yong, and activities aimed at splitting the party. It also celebrated the political and economic achievements of North Korea. No where during the Congress did Kim celebrate or oppose the spirit of the Twentieth Congress of the SCP or the principle of collective leadership. Moreover, although several people wanted to speak during the Congress, they were not permitted to do so. Instead, the Congress reshuffled the personnel of the Central Committee to guarantee the committee’s loyalty to Kim Il-sung. Among the 71 Central Committee members, 43 were newly elected, and only 28 were former members. Among the 45 alternate members of the Central Committee, 43 were new elected and only two were former alternate members.⁸⁸

During the Congress, the press and party speakers praised Kim Il-sung higher and higher, which the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs felt to be very abnormal.⁸⁹ Kim Chang-man’s speech in a preceding conference held by the Pyongyang Metropolitan Committee for party activists to implement the spirit of KWP’s Third Congress is illuminating. Kim Chang-man, Deputy Chairman of the KWP, was a loyal follower of Kim Il-sung’s. He spoke highly of the significance of the Third Congress and then turned to the issue of personality cult. He insisted that the problem no longer existed within the KWP. It had occurred in the past, said Kim Chang-man, in the south it was the cult of Pak Hon-yong and in the north it was the cult of Ho Ka-yi. He warned activists against spreading the rumor that a personality cult still existed within the party, insisting that anyone who made such a comment would be punished because such allegations could only weaken the party.⁹⁰

The reshuffling of personnel in the Third Congress was actually directed against the Moscow faction. Before the start of the Congress, a meeting was held to review the candidates for the KWP’s Central Committee. At this meeting, Kim Il-sung pointed out that some cadres who had returned from the Soviet Union had retained dual citizenship (Korea and the Soviet Union). He opposed their election to the Central Committee based on these grounds. Choe Yong-gon angrily proposed to kick them out for their “straddling of two boats.” Consequently, these cadres were all excluded from candidacy. After the Congress, Kim stressed the problem of intelligence security and discipline at a Standing Committee meeting. His remark was directed against those Moscow faction cadres who frequented the Soviet embassy. He demanded that any contact with foreigners had to be made through the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade from that point on.

While Kim Il-sung targeted the Moscow faction, he showed great tolerance towards the Yan’an faction. At the same Standing Committee meeting, Kim suddenly started to talk about Pak Il-yu. He explained that after investigation it was still unclear what, specifically, Pak had done wrong. Kim Tu-bong and Kim Kwang-hyob then proposed the immediate release of Pak Il-yu. Choe Yong-gon, however, insisted that Pak should be shot to death. Nam Il also argued that Pak should be punished. Finally, Kim Il-sung concluded that Pak Il-yu should be released—eventually.⁹¹ Kim Il-sung also released the Yan’an faction’s Lee Sang-jo. Lee was Kim’s envoy to Beijing at the beginning of the Korean War and then North Korean Ambassador to the Soviet Union. He came back from Moscow to attend the Third Congress. During the Congress, he wrote twice to the presidium to suggest discussing the problem of personality cult in the KWP, but was ignored and harshly criticized by Kim

Chang-man. Choe Yong-gon, Pak Kym-cher, and a few even proposed to remove Lee from his ambassadorial post. This episode ended only when Kim Tu-bong told Kim Il-sung directly that he could not agree to punish Lee.⁹²

Kim Il-sung was aware that conflict with Moscow was unavoidable due to his purging of Moscow faction cadres, and thus, exercised great restraint dealing with the Yan'an faction. Even before the SCP's Twentieth Congress, the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs took note of the emerging cult of Kim Il-sung within the KWP and suggested the SCP's Central Committee to warn Kim against it.⁹³ The Intelligence Committee, under the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs, observed this connection between the demotion of Moscow faction comrades and their repeated warnings to Kim Il-sung about the danger of personality cult, and suggested that the SCP's Central Committee should help the KWP correct its mistakes.⁹⁴

The Soviet Far East Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs wondered if the political struggles against those comrades, such as Pak Chang-ok, signified the beginning of an anti-Soviet Korean movement.⁹⁵ In late 1955, there were 136 Soviet Korean cadres in North Korea. According to a decision by the Supreme Soviet on December 31, 1955, Soviet Koreans were forced to choose between Korea or the Soviet citizenship, though many indicated a preference for North Korean citizenship. 24 people expressed their wish to have double citizenship. However, after Pak Chang-ok and Pak En-bin were removed from their posts, several regretted choosing North Korean citizenship, noting the extreme discrimination about Moscow faction cadres. Some even secretly went to the Soviet embassy to inquire about keeping or regaining their Soviet citizenship.⁹⁶

Upon returning to Moscow, Lee Sang-jo met with Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Fedorenko. Lee first briefed Fedorenko on Kim Il-sung's plan to visit the Soviet Union and other East European countries to solicit economic aid. He then gave a detailed report on abnormal phenomenon in the KWP, emphasizing that the cult of Kim Il-sung had spread throughout all of North Korea, that the KWP was not exemplifying the spirit of collective leadership, and that Kim Il-sung decided everything. Lee explained to Fedorenko that Kim Il-sung was extolled to the skies, reporting: “The North Korean People's Revolutionary Museum was turned into a museum of Kim Il-sung's personal career history.” It was even rumored that “during his childhood, Kim Il-sung had begun to lead the Korean people in the liberation movement against the Japanese.” Lee pointed out all kinds of mistakes that Kim Il-sung made in economic and personnel affairs, as well as those that Kim made during the wartime. Lee repeated his hope that the SCP's Central Committee would help the KWP get back on the right track, and help Kim Il-sung especially, to overcome his weaknesses as soon as possible.⁹⁷ At another meeting, Lee suggested that the Soviet leaders should ask the entire North Korean delegation to attend their meeting with Kim Il-sung, otherwise the KWP members would not hear Moscow's opinions.⁹⁸

On June 8, 1956, North Korean Deputy Prime Minister Choe Chang-ik, had a secret, one-on-one meeting with the Soviet Ambassador. Choe talked about the new developments in North Korea, especially the misdirected personnel policy. Choe highlighted the discrimination acted against those outside Kim Il-sung's guerrilla faction. He lamented that those who were recently promoted were uneducated, inexperienced, and only good at flattering their superiors. He believed that these troublesome personnel practices were fueling the spread of personality cult. Choe also urgently requested Soviet help in correcting missteps by the KWP, hoping Moscow would advise Kim Il-sung on these matters as Kim Il-sung always listened to Moscow.⁹⁹

Because few documents are available regarding Kim Il-sung's meetings with the Soviet leaders during his trip to the Soviet Union, scholars only know that Khrushchev received Kim Il-sung, gave him some advice, but admitted that he did not know the whole situation and entrusted the Liaison Department to investigate. Kim Il-sung expressed his acceptance of Khrushchev's critique, and offered his assurance that the appropriate changes would be made. Later, Moscow notified the CCP's Central Committee of the meeting between Khrushchev and Kim. Mao commented positively on the way the Soviets dealt with Kim.¹⁰⁰

On August 2, the SCP's Central Committee expressed its wish for Kim Il-sung to take more initiatives to criticize the KWP's mistakes.¹⁰¹ Beijing and Moscow had already voiced their disagreement regarding Kim Il-sung's purging of his opponents several times.¹⁰² Moscow was obviously unhappy that the KWP had purged Moscow faction cadres and continued to

encourage personality cult around the time of the SCP’s Twentieth Congress. Beijing especially, encouraged dissent in the KWP, hoping that the external pressure would put Kim Il-sung on the defensive. Moscow’s disapproval offered encouragement to dissenters to launch an offensive against Kim Il-sung during the August Plenum of the KWP’s Central Committee.

According to Russian documents, a group of North Korean leaders grew dissatisfied with the personality cult, personnel changes, and economic policies of the KWP. This group included Kim Tu-bong, Choe Chang-ik, Pak Chang-ok, Pak Ui-wan, So Hwi, Yun Kong-hum, and Kim Cyn-khva. They planned to expose and criticize these mistakes in the upcoming August Plenum. However, Kim Il-sung returned from his trip in early August, learned of the plot against him and immediately took preventive measures.

First, Kim Il-sung, Nam Il, and Pak Chong-ae contacted the Soviet embassy several times. They reiterated their acceptance of Moscow’s critiques, and argued that the dissenters were splitting the party by falsely accusing the leaders around Kim Il-sung of incompetence, fawning, and historical problems and asking for their removal from their posts. They argued that these dissenters were dedicated to stalling the party’s agenda and inciting dissatisfaction. They concluded that these dissenters comprised an anti-party clique that had tarnished the party’s reputation, harmed the party’s status, and caused a dangerous situation.

At the same time, Kim Il-sung and his followers held repeated talks with individual dissenters. They used both sticks and carrots to divide the dissenting group. For instance, they successfully won over Kim Tu-bong, neutralized Pak Ui-wan, and sent Kim Cyn-khva away to Moscow to study. In addition, Kim Il-sung ordered police officers to spy on the dissenters, and to interrogate their drivers and maids. Kim also summoned Pan Khak-se, Minister of Internal Affairs, to return immediately from his official trip to take preventive measures. As a result of these efforts, Kim Il-sung gained the upper hand.

The attitude of the Soviet embassy satisfied him. Ivanov made it clear that the goal of the upcoming plenum should be the consolidation of the KWP’s ruling status and unification of the party. Therefore it was okay for Kim Il-sung to hold a Standing Committee meeting to unify the minds. Although Ivanov also asked Kim to take initiatives to correct the KWP’s mistakes and to not avenge the dissenters in accordance with Moscow’s instruction, he, in fact, implied that Moscow did not support the dissenters’ call for the removal of the leaders around Kim. The Soviets assured explicitly that they would not interfere with North Korea’s domestic affairs, which made Kim Il-sung relieved.

During the Standing Committee meeting between August 21 and 23, despite a few dissenting voices, it was concluded that the general policy of the Central Committee was correct. The Committee decided that it was mainly Ho Ka-yi, Pak Chang-ok and some other individuals who had made mistakes, and that the Standing Committee would take actions regarding that. When it came to the newly promoted leaders, the conclusion was that the investigation did not prove any wrongdoings and thus, there was no reason for their removal.

On August 28, the Standing Committee passed the speech that Kim Il-sung would give during the upcoming plenum. The speech included the results of the delegation’s trip, the domestic situation, and the state and task of the KWP. The tone of the speech was the same as Kim Il-sung’s previous speeches. It did not discuss the party’s internal affairs, but only mentioned, in passing, that the plenum could discuss these issues. At the end, Kim suggested that factionism was dying in the party and called upon all party members to be vigilant and do their part to fight it.¹⁰³

The Plenum of the KWP’s Central Committee was held between August 30 and 31. Kim Il-sung spoke first, delivering the speech passed by the Standing Committee. The following two speakers reiterated everything that Kim had said. The fourth speaker was Yun Kong-hum, who had a Yan’an background and was then the Minister of Foreign Trade. In his speech, Yun angrily exposed many mistakes that existed in the party. During his speech, Yun was interrupted multiple times and his voice was drowned out by unfriendly shouting from the audience. Choe Yong-gon even left his seat to yell at Yun. The conference hall fell into chaos. Alarmed by this situation, Yun Kong-hum, So Hwi, Chairman of the Trade Union, Kim Gan, Deputy Minister of Culture, and Li Pkhir-giu, Director of the Bureau of Building Materials, left the conference during the lunch

break and secretly escaped to China. For the rest of that day, only Choe Chang-ik and Pak Chang-ok expressed their support for Yun Kong-hum's speech. Almost all other speakers condemned Yun and his supporters on the basis of their speeches being anti-revolution and anti-party. They accused Choe Chang-ik of being the leader of this anti-party clique.

The next day's meeting passed a resolution to excommunicate Yun Kong-hum, So Hwi, Kim Gan, and Li Pkhir-giu from the party, and to remove Choe Chang-ik from the Standing Committee and Pak Chang-ok from the Cabinet and the Central Committee on the basis that they all had devoted themselves to anti-party activities. Soon afterwards, Pak Chang-ok was sent to the east coast to take charge of a small sawmill, and Choe Chang-ik was assigned to a pig farm. After the plenum, North Korea witnessed endless searches, arrests, and suppression of dissent across the country. The truth regarding many important questions in the party was distorted and the struggles within the party were presented to the public as a sort of palace coup plotted by a few dissenters who had issues with some party and governmental leaders. On September 1, Kim Il-sung and Choe Yong-gon respectively called on the Soviet and Chinese embassies to brief them on the situation of the plenum and its resolutions.¹⁰⁴

On September 3, the North Korean government notified the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs that four Korean citizens crossed the border at Antung and were intercepted by the Chinese border patrol. The North Korean government demanded the Chinese government repatriate these four. On receiving this message, Chinese Ambassador Qiao Xiaoguang replied that it was impossible for China to force the four Koreans to return to Korea due to their uncommon status. Qiao then asked Ivanov about Moscow's opinion on this issue.¹⁰⁵ Evidently, Beijing had already made its decision beforehand, while Moscow's attitude was cautious.

On September 5, North Korean Ambassador Lee Sang-jo asked to meet with Fedorenko and submitted his letter to Khrushchev at the meeting. Lee criticized Kim Il-sung for suppressing those who tried to advise him and asked the SCP's Central Committee to intervene. Lee also reported that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had summoned him home twice. He claimed that he was sick and could not go.¹⁰⁶ On September 6, the Presidium of the SCP's Central Committee held a meeting to discuss the Korean issue. The Presidium decided to entrust Boris Ponomarev, chief of the International Department of the SCP's Central Committee, to receive Lee Sang-jo after considerable thinking, and replied to the Chinese ambassador that the SCP's Central Committee would entrust the Soviet delegation to consult with the CCP's Central Committee on the Korean problem.¹⁰⁷ At the meeting on September 10, Ponomarev told Lee Sang-jo: The Soviet Communist Party was concerned with what is going on in North Korea. The SCP's delegation in Beijing would consult with the KWP's delegation that was also in Beijing, as well as the CCP, but it would not interfere with the KWP's internal affairs. Ponomarev rejected Lee's request for the SCP to publicize its critiques of the KWP.¹⁰⁸ However, The CCP's Central Committee publicized its opinion on April 4. The resolution passed by the SCP's Central Committee on June 20 reflected this shift in attitude.¹⁰⁹ In later conversations and correspondence with Kim Il-sung, the Soviet leaders disclosed these situations, and showed their caution in terms of continuing the struggle against personality cult. Kim Il-sung passed this information to KWP members immediately.¹¹⁰ It is only fair to say that the shift of Soviet attitude was a factor that emboldened Kim Il-sung to take harsh measures to deal with the problems in the KWP.

In order to ease tensions in the KWP and win Moscow's support, Kim Il-sung adopted a policy of conciliation towards the formerly purged or suppressed Moscow faction cadres after the August Plenum. Pak Chong-ae assembled about two thirds of the Moscow faction cadres, around a hundred or so, on the afternoon of September 14. The purpose of this meeting was to announce that the Central Committee would change its policy towards the cadres of Moscow background and rehabilitate them.¹¹¹ The reason for this change was simple: the main target of Kim Il-sung's political struggles had shifted to the Yan'an faction. According to Kim's report to Moscow, it was mainly the Yan'an faction cadres, such as Choe Chang-ik and Kim Tu-bong, who were involved in the anti-party incident in August. This was why Kim Il-sung changed his attitude towards the Moscow Faction: he wanted to concentrate on dealing with the mounting pressure from Beijing.

On the evening of September 18, Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, and Peng Dehuai discussed the Korean problem with the Soviet

delegation. Mikoyan said that he talked with the Korean delegation and criticized them. He said that Choe Yong-gon did not take his critique well. Choe replied that the SCP did not really know what was going on and had not formed a final opinion yet. Choe suggested the SCP and CCP send representatives to Pyongyang to find out the truth.

Mao Zedong expressed deep concern with the fact that many Korean comrades had been arrested, excommunicated from the party, and removed from their posts without good reason. Mao said: Kim Il-sung was following Stalin’s example—refusing to hear any dissenting voice and trying to kill whoever opposed him. Mao said that the purpose of sending Chinese and Soviet delegations to Pyongyang was not to “find out the truth,” but to advise Kim Il-sung to unite the comrades, to reverse the current course of political struggles, and to rehabilitate those who were excommunicated and removed from their posts. Mao said: “What we want to say to Kim is that we do not want to overthrow you, but to help you; but you must correct your mistakes.” Mao also said: “We will also advise those who were subjected to these struggles to adopt a conciliatory attitude, we will advise the two sides to be reconciled.” In order to be reconciled, Mao suggested the KWP to hold a politburo meeting or a plenum of the Central Committee, with the presence of the Soviet and Chinese delegations, to pass a resolution of reconciliation and publicize this resolution. Mao then turned to Mikoyan and complained: Kim Il-sung has issues with us and does not listen to us. It has to be you [to work on him] this time. Mikoyan did not give Mao a straight-forward reply. He said that he would go talk to Kim and see what happened, but that he had a lot of work to do back home and could not stay in Korea for long.¹¹²

The CCP leaders then met with the Korean delegation. From the beginning, Mao pointed out that there were serious problems with North Korea’s economic and personnel policies. Mao told them that the CCP and SCP would send delegations to Pyongyang the next morning and asked Choe Yong-gon to accompany them. Mao said the purpose was to help North Korea solve its problems, not to jeopardize its interests. Mao mentioned that this was not his first time having issues with the KWP. For instance, before the outbreak of the Korean War, he warned Kim Il-sung not to start the fight. After its outbreak, he warned Kim that the enemy might land in the rear. Peng Dehuai and Li Kenong even questioned the Korean delegation: Who started the Korean War? The American imperialists or you guys? At last, Mao said that he could ask the Koreans who fled to China to return to Korea, but Kim must give them back their party membership and their posts upon their return. Mao advised to solve these problems rationally through party meetings.¹¹³ In short, the CCP’s attitude was clearer than that of the SCP. But the CCP did not have intentions beyond demanding Kim Il-sung to correct his mistakes.

After Mikoyan and Peng Dehuai arrived in Pyongyang, they met with Kim Il-sung alone. After two intense conversations, Kim largely accepted their opinions. On September 22, the Plenum of the Central Committee passed a resolution that admitted that the August resolution was premature, and agreed to rehabilitate Choe Chang-ik and Pak Chang-ok to their former posts and readmit those who had fled to China back into the KWP. Mikoyan declared the mission accomplished, but Mao believed that the problem was not over, but rather had just begun. Mao was right. As the Soviet Ambassador observed, the CCP and SCP imposed their opinions on Kim Il-sung, forcing him to replace the August resolution with a September one. Therefore, after the Chinese and Soviet delegations left Pyongyang, Kim Il-sung did not publicize the September resolution in the press as he promised Mikoyan and Peng Dehuai. Kim only informed the party members of the September resolution and the newspaper only mentioned this resolution in passing. Instead, Kim continued to purge dissenters from the party and forced more to escape to China. Kim did not follow through his promise to release Pak Il-yu either, or to resume food provisions to the families of Yun Kong-hum and others. Despite China’s continued pressure, Kim Il-sung continued to delay the enforcement of the agreement that he reached with Mikoyan and Peng Dehuai.¹¹⁴

VI. THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE CPVA AND THE CONTINUING OF SINO-NORTH KOREAN ALLIANCE

While tension was growing among Sino-North Korean relations, Kim Il-sung started to lean on Moscow. When the Soviet Union sent troops to Hungary, Nam Il told the Soviet Ambassador on November 2, that North Korea must take all necessary measures to strengthen its friendship with the Soviet Union from that point forward. He further remarked that all

progressive forces must unite closely around the Soviet Union.¹¹⁵ When North Korea’s new ambassador to the Soviet Union was leaving for Moscow, Kim Il-sung told him that North Korea had no other political agenda than to build a strong and close relationship with the Soviet Union.¹¹⁶ Another measure that Kim took to win Moscow’s favor was to have the Ministry of Foreign Affairs pass information about China along to the Soviet embassy to foment Sino-Soviet discords. The information included reports of China’s Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs summoning the Korean, Vietnamese, and Mongolian ambassadors individually to brief them on the Hungarian incident, claiming that the Soviets admitted that they made mistakes on the Polish issue, and that Lee Sang-jo admired China, but despised the Soviet Union, etc.¹¹⁷

After the Polish and Hungarian crises, Mao began to question the Soviet Union’s new policy which downplayed class struggle and emphasized détente with the U.S. Mao further questioned the Soviet Union’s capacity to lead the Socialist bloc, especially after the Moscow Conference in November 1957, where Sino-Soviet discords deepened.¹¹⁸

For the sake of its own interests, the CCP exercised great restraint towards the North Korean government. First, China became less sympathetic to the Yan’an faction cadres in exile. Some local Chinese documents disclosed the following story: Kim Chyn-sik was the former Director of the Department of Organization of the Metropolitan Committee of Pyongyang who moved to Chang Chun, China, to escape political struggles in North Korea. He wrote to Wu De, First Secretary of the Provincial Committee of Jilin, on March 4, 1957, requesting materials on himself and the KWP be submitted to the Central Committees of the CCP and the SCP. He expressed his hope to go to Beijing to submit these materials in person.¹¹⁹

If he had made this request a few months earlier, the CCP would probably have shuffled him in and accepted his materials with great interest. However, the CCP did not care anymore. At a meeting with Fu Zhensheng, Secretary of the Provincial Committee of Jilin, Kim Chyn-sik was chastised: The way you came to China was not legal or normal. We asked you to go back to your own country, but you insisted on staying. We had no choice but to let you stay...the CCP and the KWP are always friendly to each other. China does not wish to interfere with the domestic affairs of its brother-like party and country. Finally, in accordance with the instructions from the CCP’s Central Committee, Fu Zhensheng advised Kim Chyn-sik to avoid all contact with the Koreans and Korean Chinese, and to refrain from discussing Korea-related problems with anyone.¹²⁰

There were clear signs of rapid improvements in Sino-North Korean relations around this time. During the August incident, the Chinese government had remained silent on North Korea’s request for additional free aid or a loan of 50 million Chinese yuan for the year of 1957. Eventually, China denied this request. In return, North Korea cancelled the China trip of its economic delegation led by Kim Il.¹²¹ But things had changed since then. The Chinese government now did everything it could to welcome Kim Il’s economic delegation. This delegation arrived in China in September 1957 to discuss issues regarding the targets of North Korea’s First Five Year Plan and economic aid.¹²² On October 25, the seventh anniversary of the CPVA’s entry into Korea, Sino-North Korean relations warmed considerably. Kim Il-sung sent a letter to Yang Yong, Commander of the CPVA, to express their gratitude. Kim also sent a congratulatory cable to Mao Zedong, and received Mao’s personal thank-you cable in return. The North Korean government also held a commemoration meeting in Pyongyang, and organized the masses to express sympathy and erect statues for those sacrificed during the war, and pay respects at their tombs. On the anniversary of the October Revolution a few days later, the *People’s Daily* reported the festive atmosphere in the CPVA camp.¹²³

In such a warm atmosphere, Mao Zedong and Kim Il-sung met during the Moscow Conference in November 1957. During their meeting, Kim stressed the independent status of North Korea in legalist terms and explained that the essence of the August incident was a conspiracy that was aimed to sabotage the KWP; Mao agreed. After Kim returned to Korea, he took immediate action to further purge his opponents within the KWP. Kim Tu-bong was this time unable to escape his demise. He was excommunicated from the party, arrested, and sent to the Sunan Farm for reform through labor. Others purged included cadres with a Yan’an connection and non-Yan’an leaders who were dissatisfied with Kim Il-sung, such as Kin Von-bon and Cho Co-an.¹²⁴

The Chinese embassy in Pyongyang obtained a copy of a written speech distributed internally within the KWP. It read: By early 1958, North Korea had exposed and smashed those anti-North Korea and anti-KWP factionists completely, and further eliminated the poisonous legacy of Choe Chang-ik, Pak Chang-ok, Yun Kong-hum, Kim Cyn-khva, So Hwi, Li Pkhir-giu, and other anti-KWP factionists. When it came to international relations, this speech used the phrase, “the socialist camp led by the Soviet Union and China,” and praised China for its unmistakable strength and tremendous role in resolving international conflicts.¹²⁵ The flattery of North Korea’s remark was, of course, a result of improved Sino-North Korean relations.

By now, the CCP had completely changed its opinion about the KWP and the August incident. In one of his speeches, Mao praised Kim Il-sung for his signing of the Moscow Declaration, as well as his insistence on anti-imperialism, socialism, and proletarian internationalism. Mao also said that despite good intentions, it was a bad move for the Soviets and Chinese to go to Pyongyang and interfere in North Korea’s domestic affairs. After returning from his trip to North Korea in February 1958, Zhou Enlai also said that those who ran away from North Korea to China were biased, and the biased information that they provided misled the Chinese.¹²⁶ The *People’s Daily* published excerpts from Pak Kym-cher’s speech in the KWP’s congress, of which one long paragraph was solely devoted to criticizing Choe Chang-ik and Pak Chang-ok, calling them the “anti-party faction.”¹²⁷

In order to comfort Kim Il-sung and further strengthen Sino-North Korean relations, Mao made one more important decision: to withdraw the CPVA from North Korea completely. From the Soviet perspective, it was basically China’s job to deal with issues caused by the division of the Korean Peninsula after the Korean War. After Sino-North Korean relations grew estranged, China and North Korea could not see eye-to-eye on how to solve the problem of Korea’s division and Pyongyang attempted to undercut Beijing’s control over this issue. In November 1956, the North Korean government sent a memorandum to the Chinese government, proposing to invite the United Nations to help solve the Korean problem. China opposed it and argued that this proposal contradicted the principle that the Soviet Union, China, and North Korea had agreed upon during the 1954 Geneva Conference. On December 8, after consulting with Moscow, the Chinese government replied that the United Nations was not qualified to be the mediator between the two Koreas because it was a war party in both realistic and legalist terms, and it only recognized the South Korean government. The Chinese government asserted that the time was not ripe for solving the Korean problem once and for all and that it would take long-term struggles to realize the unification of Korea.

Meanwhile, the Chinese government was facing a trickier problem. Some individual CPVA officers had offended Korean laws and customs, treated the Korean people with arrogance, and even interfered in North Korea’s domestic matters. Thanks to these few individual cases, some Korean citizens, and even some leaders, compared the CPVA to occupying forces, and believed that they undermined North Korea’s sovereignty. They did not approve of the idea of the CPVA remaining in Korea.¹²⁸ Mao Zedong was aware of this situation and mentioned to Mikoyan that Kim Il-sung might ask China to withdraw the CPVA from Korea in September 1956, but the Soviets remained unconvinced.¹²⁹

After the end of the Korean War, the Chinese troops began to return to China in succession. Seven divisions returned in September 1954 and six in March 1955. By April 1956, the number of the Chinese troops that remained in Korea was 440 thousand.¹³⁰ In the eyes of the Chinese and the Soviets, the CPVA was the main force from the Socialist bloc which counter-balanced American forces in South Korea. China called for mutual withdrawal of Chinese and American forces from the Korean Peninsula in April 1956. But China’s call was mainly aimed to relieve some pressure from the neutral countries. It was a response to America’s attempt to disband the Neutral Countries’ Committee and had no practical meaning. Before Zhou Enlai’s trip to the Soviet Union in January 1957, the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs worked out talking points regarding the Korean problem which echoed China’s opinion that it was necessary for the CPVA to remain in Korea given the current situation, for the benefit of the Korean People and the entire socialist camp.¹³¹

By November 1957, however, Mao Zedong changed his mind completely. During the Moscow Conference, Mao met with Kim Il-sung twice, and proposed a withdrawal of all remaining CPVA troops from North Korea. Mao remarked that the

situation was favorable now, the “eastern wind” was overriding the “western wind,” and the Americans were afraid of taking action. This was a surprise to Kim Il-sung who, caught off guard, could not react first, but then quickly expressed his agreement and thanks. Kim agreed with Mao that the Chinese troops’ withdrawal could press the Americans to do the same. After returning to Korea, Kim Il-sung immediately held a meeting to discuss Mao’s offer. He sent two telegrams to Mao informing Mao of his party’s approval of the CPVA withdrawal and proposing a concrete action plan. China and North Korea finally worked out a plan: first, the North Korean government would issue a statement demanding the withdrawal of both Chinese and American forces from the Korean Peninsula. The Chinese government would then respond to North Korea’s demand favorably and begin the process of unilateral withdrawal. China agreed to finish the process of total withdrawal by the end of 1958.

On January 8, 1958, Zhou Enlai notified the Soviet ambassador of this plan.¹³² On January 16, the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs replied that it was a wise plan.¹³³ Therefore, the North Korean government issued the statement on February 5, calling for mutual withdrawal of Chinese and American forces from North and South Korea, the holding of free elections and the peaceful reunification of the two Koreas. On February 7, the Chinese government issued its own statement in response to North Korea’s call. China expressed that it was prepared to negotiate with the Koreans on this issue and to withdraw its troops. China also called on America and other countries to withdraw their troops from South Korea. Soon afterwards, the Soviet Union issued a statement showing support for this formula.¹³⁴

On February 14, Zhou Enlai led the Chinese delegation to Korea to discuss the specifics of the withdrawal. The two sides agreed that the remaining Chinese troops would exit Korea in three groups from March to the end of the year. They also issued a joint statement, emphasizing that the Korean problem should be resolved by the Koreans themselves through negotiation and that foreign interference was unnecessary. The first group of six divisions totaling eighty thousand men, departed Korea from March 15 and April 25; the second group of six divisions and other special troops totaling a hundred thousand men departed between July 11 and August 14; and the third group totaling seventy thousand men, including the headquarters, three divisions, and the logistical troops, departed between September 25 and October 26. The CPVA then transferred all its camps, arms and equipment, and other supplies to the KPA for free.¹³⁵ After eight years of military cooperation, the CPVA finally returned to China, in total, undoubtedly boosting Sino-North Korean relations.¹³⁶

By the end of 1958, Kim Il-sung had consolidated his power in North Korea, the effects of the August incident had faded away, and Sino-North Korean relations had entered a new stage. Although China and North Korea had not signed an alliance treaty before the outbreak of the Korean War, as Kim Il-sung had suggested, they had, in fact, been in alliance since 1950, when the CPVA had entered North Korea. The alliance had endured many political storms and survived the departure of the CPVA from Korea. Two and a half years after the CPVA’s departure, China and North Korea finally concluded a treaty of friendship, cooperation, and mutual aid, the content and wording of which, was almost exactly the same as the Sino-Soviet Alliance Treaty.¹³⁷

VII. CONCLUSION

It is necessary to study the relations between China, North Korea, and the Soviet Union in order to understand the origins of the continued conflict in the Korean Peninsula and the political restructuring of post-Cold War East Asia. Those who are searching for a solution to the conflict on the Korean Peninsula must take the historical realities into account. This article examined the Sino-North Korean relations between 1946 and 1958 and concludes that the essence of the Sino-North Korean alliance was a marriage of convenience. In other words, their relationship was not a kind of “tooth and lips” relationship as it was made to look in public.

Two major thought processes influenced Mao in terms of Sino-North Korean relations. Traditionally, Chinese rulers identified China as the Middle Kingdom and took it upon themselves to protect and help China’s smaller neighbors. Mao inherited that mentality. Moreover, Mao considered himself a leader of the socialist bloc and felt obligated to help all Asian socialist

countries. Specifically, Mao looked at the Sino-North Korean alliance from the angle of a global Cold War: this alliance was necessary because it served the interests of the Asian revolutionary movement and it helped consolidate China’s leadership in the international communist movement. This was why he risked his own prestige and his country’s safety to lead China’s entry into the Korean War, despite the fact that China did not take a part in starting the war. This was also why he looked the other way when Kim Il-sung was purging Yan’an faction members and continued to provide enormous economic aid to North Korea.

To Kim Il-sung, however, the Sino-North Korean alliance was a means to protect Korea’s sovereignty and consolidate his leadership in North Korea. It is worth noting that Kim understood that he should place the interests of the socialist camp as a whole before North Korea’s national interests, according to the revolutionary teachings. He also understood that he had to do so even from a realistic perspective, as there would be no KWP without the socialist camp. This was why he accepted Moscow and Beijing’s domination, at the cost of his country’s sovereignty and his personal pride during the crisis of the war. But this experience only strengthened Kim’s nationalism. After the focus of the international conflict shifted, North Korea, as a revolutionary force which proved to be a formidable component of the communist struggle, played with the inter-bloc conflicts, Sino-Soviet conflict specially, for its own interests. In this context, Kim reinvented the *Juche* ideology to emphasize North Korea’s independence, not only from Moscow, but also from Beijing.

Beneath the “tooth and lips” appearance, Sino-North Korean relations were volatile in nature, a characteristic which was common among socialist alliances in general. The sources for such tension included two major structural principles within the socialist camp. First, communist theory rejected the concept of a sovereign nation state. Therefore, a communist party, in power or not, should place the interests of the international communist movement before any national interests. Second, hierarchy, instead of equality, governed the international communist community. After some communist parties came to power, the hierarchy between them was transferred to the diplomatic relations between their respective nation states. Over time, many communists in power came to the realization that a state’s national interests should govern its foreign relations. However, they were afraid of denying the international communist hierarchy because that denial could be equated to a denial of Marxism and Leninism, and even a denial of the legitimacy of their own communist regimes.¹³⁸ This explained the

¹ The English translations of the Russian and Chinese documents on the Korean War are mainly published in *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. For the Chinese translations of the Russian documents, see Shen, Zhihua ed., *Chaoxian zhan zheng: Eguo dang an guan de jie mi wen jian*, 3 v, Zhong yang yan jiu yuan jin dai shi yan jiu suo shi liao cong kan, 48 (Taipei Shi: Zhong yang yan jiu yuan jin dai shi yan jiu suo, 2003). For the most recently published Chinese documents on this topic, see Zhou, Enlai, *Jian guo yi lai Zhou Enlai wen gao* (Beijing: Zhong yang wen xian chu ban she, 2008). Important studies touching on Sino-North Korean Relations include: Sergei N. Goncharov, John W. Lewis, and Xue Litai, *Uncertain Partner: Stalin, Mao, and the Korean War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993); Chen Jian, *China’s Road to the Korean War: The Making of the Sino-American Confrontation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); Andrei Lankov, *From Stalin to Kim Il Sung: The Formation of North Korea 1945-1960* (London: Hurst & Company, 2002); and Shen Zhihua, *Mao Zedong, Sidalin yu Chaoxian zhan zheng*, revised edition (Guangzhou: Guangdong ren min chu ban she, 2007). To be frank, however, none of the above are specifically devoted to Sino-Korean relations.

² According to the author’s rough counting, there were 66 articles from *People’s Daily* that used the phrase “tooth and lips” to describe the Sino-North Korean relationship in the two years between November 1950 and December 1952.

³ See Park Seo Nang, *Dongbei kang Ri yi rong jun* (Beijing: Zhongguo you yi chu ban she, 1998). See also A.N. Pochtarev, “Iz istorii sovetsko-koreiskikh otnasheni v 1920-1950-e gody” (“The History of Soviet-Korean Relations, 1920-1950”), *Novia i noveishaia istoriia (Modern History)*, 1999, no. 5, pp. 135-160.

⁴ Shi Yuanhua, *Zhongguo gong chan dang yuan zhu Chaoxian du li yun dong ji shi, 1921-1945* (Beijing: Zhongguo she hui ke xue chu ban she, 2000), pp. 269-273, 299; Liu Jinzhi ed., *Zhong Chao Zhong Han guan xi wen jian bui bian* (Beijing: Zhongguo she hui ke xue chu ban she, 2000), pp. 727, 801.

⁵ APRF (Archive of the President of the Russian Federation), f. 3, op. 65, d. 840, l. 16, in A.N. Pochtarev, *Iz istorii sovetsko-koreiskikh otnasheni*, p.140.

⁶ TsAMOPF (Central Archive of the Ministry of Defense, Russian Federation), f. 1896, op. 1, d. 1, l. 1; d. 4, l. 29, in A.N. Pochtarev, *Iz istorii sovetsko-koreiskikh otnasheni*, pp.140-143.

⁷ For details, see Lankov, *From Stalin to Kim Il Sung*, pp.1-48; Gang In Deok ed., *A Complete Book of North Korea* v. 1, (Seoul: The Research Center of The Far East Issue, 1974), pp. 254-255; Seo Dae Suk, *Kim Il Sung: The North Korean Leader*, Translated by Seo Joo Seok (Seoul: Research Institute of Cheonggye, 1989), pp. 112-113; and Shen, *Mao Zedong, Sidalin yu Chaoxian zhan zheng*, pp. 29-44.

⁸ Zhongyang dang’an guan ed., *Zhong gong Zhong yang wen jian xuan ji*, v. 15 (Beijing: Zhong gong Zhong yang dang xiao chu ban she, 1991), p. 223.

⁹ Shi, *Zhongguo gong chan dang yuan zhu Chaoxian du li yun dong ji shi*, pp. 389-390.

¹⁰ Zhong yang wen xian yan jiu shi ed., *Chen Yun wen ji*, v. 1 (Beijing: Zhong yang wen xian chu ban she, 2005), pp. 447-452.

¹¹ Shi, *Zhongguo gong chan dang yuan zhu Chaoxian du li yun dong ji shi*, pp. 394; Li Xiangshu, *Guan yu Wu Ting de kang Ri ge ming buo dong yan jiu* (unpublished master thesis, 2006), p. 56.

- ¹² Yan bian Chaoxian zu zi zhi zhou dang an guan ed., *Yan bian di wei zhuang shu zhong yao wen jian hui bian*, no. 1, December 1986, unpublished. From Xu Longnan, “Yan bian ji Chaoxian ren min jun tui wu jun ren cai fang lu,” Li Danhui ed., *Leng zhan guo ji shi yan jiu*, no. 7, forthcoming. For more details on the ethnic Korean troops, see Zhongguo “Chaoxian zu li shi zu ji bian ji wei yuan hui,” *Sheng li* (Beijing: Min zu chu ban she, 1992), pp. 57-83.
- ¹³ In the CCP-controlled *Jie fang jun ri bao*, *Jin cha ji ri bao*, and *People’s Daily* between 1946 and 1948, Lao dong dang (the KWP in Chinese) was translated to Lao gong dang, Jin Richeng (Kim Il-sung) was translated to Gai Misheng, or Jin Yisun, Jin Kefeng (Kim Tu-bong) was translated to Jin Tuoben, or Jin Doufeng, and Pak Hon-yong was translated to Bai Hengning. These mistranslations proved that the CCP leaders were not familiar with the situation in Korea. For details, see Liu, *Zhong Chao Zhong Han guan xi wen jian xi liao hui bian*, pp. 1217, 1249, 1403-1575.
- ¹⁴ Wu Dianyao and Song Lin, *Zhu Lizhi zhuang* (Beijing: Zhong gong dang shi chu ban she, 2007), pp. 468-470.
- ¹⁵ For the full text of Zhu Lizhi’s report, see Zhong gong he nan sheng dang shi yan jiu shi ed., *Ji nian Zhu Lizhi wen ji* (Beijing: Zhong gong dang shi chu ban she, 2007) pp. 239-241, 242-244.
- ¹⁶ Wu and Song, *Zhu Lizhi zhuang*, p. 461; Ding xuesong, *Hui yi Dongbei jie fang zhan zheng qi jian Dongbei ju zhu Chaoxian ban shi chu*, Zhonggong dang shi zi liao, 17, pp. 197-200, 202-204.
- ¹⁷ *Ji nian Zhu Lizhi wen ji*, pp. 239-241; Ding Xuesong, “Di yi wei nv da shi—Ding Xuesong hui yi lu,” edited by Yang Dehua according to Ding’s oral account, *Tianjin ri bao* zhuan fu kan di shi yi ban, March 14, 2001.
- ¹⁸ *Ji nian Zhu Lizhi wen ji*, p. 241; Jin Jingyi, “Guan yu Zhongguo jun dui zhong Chaoxian guan bing fan hui Chaoxian de li shi kao cha,” *Shi xue ji kan*, Issue 3, 2007, p. 58; Xu, “Yan bian ji Chaoxian ren min jun tui wu jun ren cai fang lu.”
- ¹⁹ *Collected Works of Kim Il-sung*, v. 8 (Pyongyang: the Korean Workers’ Party Press, 1993), pp. 284-389.
- ²⁰ Zhonghua ren min gong he guo wai jiao bu and Zhonggong zhongyang wen xian yan jiu shi ed., *Mao Zedong wai jiao wen xuan* (Beijing: Zhongyang wen xian chu ban she, Shi jie zhi shi chu ban she, 1994), pp. 66, 94.
- ²¹ Artiom Ivanovich Mikoyan expressed his support for a CCP-led Asian Communist Bureau during his secret trip to Xibopo in February 1949. See APRF, f. 39, op. 1, d. 39, l. 47-53, A.M. Ledovskii, R.A. Mirovshchkaia, and V.S. Miasnikov ed., *Russko-kitaiskie otnashenie v XX veke, Dokumenty i materialy, Tom V, Sovetsko-kitaiskie otnashenie, 1946 - fevral’1950, Kniga 2: 1949 - fevral’1950gg* (Moskva: PIM, 2005), pp. 62-66. Soon, the Burmese, Malaysian and Indo-Chinese communist parties also wrote to the Central Committee of the CCP to suggest to establish an intelligence bureau that would include all oriental communist parties. But Mao Zedong thought that the time was not ripe due to the ongoing Chinese Civil War. See Shen ed., *Chaoxian zhan zheng: Eguo dang an guan de jie mi wen jian*, p. 188, 189. During Liu Shaoqi’s trip to the Soviet Union in July 1949, Joseph Stalin once again suggested to establish an East Asian Communist Alliance. See Goncharov, Lewis and Xue, *Uncertain Partner*, pp.71-73, 232-233. See also Shi Zhe, *Zai Lisbi Juren Shen bian—Shi Zhe Huiyilu*, Revised edition, edited by Li Wenhai according to Shi Zhe’s oral account (Beijing: Zhongyang Wenxian Chubanshe, 1995), pp. 413-414.
- ²² For a comprehensive introduction to this theory, see Mineo Nakajima, “The Sino-Soviet Confrontation: Its Roots in the International Background of the Korean War,” *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, 1979, no. 1, pp. 19-47.
- ²³ Shen, *Chaoxian zhan zheng: Eguo dang an guan de jie mi wen jian*, pp. 170, 172-173.
- ²⁴ Shen, *Chaoxian zhan zheng: Eguo dang an guan de jie mi wen jian*, pp. 187-188; APRF, f. 45, op. 1, d. 331, l. 59-61. See also AVPRF (Archives of Foreign Policy of Russian Federation), f. 059a, op. 5a, d. 11, p. 3, l. 46-53.
- ²⁵ Shen ed., *Chaoxian zhan zheng: Eguo dang an guan de jie mi wen jian*, pp. 230, 238-254.
- ²⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 255-260.
- ²⁷ Author’s interview with Professor Shepilovkii in Moscow on July 31, 1996. Shepilovkii works for the Far East Branch of Russian Academy of Sciences.
- ²⁸ APRF, f. 45, op. 1, d. 332, l. 47-48, in *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia*, 2005, no. 5, pp. 92-93. According to Shepilovkii, “yet” was added by Stalin. This showed that Stalin understood that Mao did not oppose reunification by military means in principle, but was concerned with the timing to do so.
- ²⁹ Shen ed., *Chaoxian zhan zheng: Eguo dang an guan de jie mi wen jian*, p. 276.
- ³⁰ For Sino-Soviet negotiations on the treaty, see Shen Zhihua, “Interests Conflicts and Their Solution during the Talks on the Sino-Soviet Treaty of 1950,” *Social Sciences in China*, v. 23, no. 2, Summer 2002, pp. 41-53.
- ³¹ For details, see Shen, *Mao Zedong, Sidalin yu Chaoxian zhan zheng*, pp. 129-158.
- ³² Kathryn Weathersby, “New Russian Documents on the Korean War,” *CWHP Bulletin*, Issues 6-7, Winter 1995/1996, p. 39. Translated From APRF, *Listy 151-154, Fond and Opis not given; and AVPRF, Fond 059a, Opis 5a, Delo 3, Papka 11, Listy 100-103*.
- ³³ APRF, f. 059a, op. 5a, d. 11, d. 3, l. 100-103. Filipov was Stalin’s pseudonym.
- ³⁴ APRF, f. 45, op. 1, d. 331, l. 55.
- ³⁵ RGASPI (Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History), f. 558, op. 11, d. 334, l. 56, 57, in *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia*, 2005, no. 5, pp. 94-95.
- ³⁶ AVPRF (Archive of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation) ed., *Khronologiia osnovnykh sobytii kanuna i nachal’nogo perioda koreiskoi voyny, ianvar’ 1949-oktiabr’ 1950 gg.* (Chronology of basic events on the eve of and in the first period of the Korean War, January 1949-October 1950), Manuscript, pp. 30-31. See also Goncharov, Lewis and Xue, *Uncertain Partner*, p.145.
- ³⁷ A former North Korean high ranking military officer recalled that all Soviet military aid was shipped to North Korea by sea, not by Chinese railroad, before the outbreak of the Korean War. The purpose of this was to prevent China from learning about North Korea’s mobilization for the upcoming war. Goncharov, Lewis and Xue, *Uncertain Partner*, pp. 153, 163.
- ³⁸ See Li Wenhai, “Zhonggong Zhongyang jiu jing he shi jue ding Zhiyuanjun chu guo zuo zhan?” *Dang de Wenxian*, no. 5, p. 85.
- ³⁹ Important studies on this issue include Chen Jian, *China’s Road to the Korean War*, A.V. Torkunov *Zagadochnaia voina: koreiskii konflikt 1950-1953 godov* (The mysterious war: the Korean conflict 1950-1953), (Moskva: RPE, 2000), and Shen, *Mao Zedong, Sidalin yu Chaoxian zhan zheng*.
- ⁴⁰ Zhonggong Zhongyang Wenxian Yanjiu Shi ed., *Zhou Enlai nian pu, 1949-1979*, v. 1 (Beijing: Zhongyang Wenxian Chubanshe, 1997), p. 54; AVPRF ed., *Khronologiia osnovnykh sobytii kanuna*, p. 38; The Archives of the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs of China, 118-00080-03, pp. 67-68; *Jian guo yi lai Zhou Enlai wen gao*, v. 3, pp. 31-32, 60.
- ⁴¹ AVPRF ed., *Khronologiia osnovnykh sobytii kanuna*, pp. 35-37. The establishment of the Northeast Defense Army was announced on July 7. See *Zhou Enlai nian pu*, p. 52-53. The fact that Zhou informed the Soviets of it five days before the announcement indicated Zhou’s eagerness.
- ⁴² Memorandum of Conversation between Ambassador Roshchin and Zou Dapeng on July 4, 1950. Quoted from O.A. Westad, “The Sino-Soviet Alliance and the United States: Wars, Policies, and Perceptions, 1950-1961,” presented at the conference *An International Conference: The Cold War in Asia*, Hong Kong, January 1996.

- ⁴³ APRF, f. 45, op. 1, d. 331, l. 79.
- ⁴⁴ APRF, f. 45, op. 1, d. 331, l. 82.
- ⁴⁵ *Zhou Enlai nian pu*, v. 1, p. 51. Chai Chenwen was the direct contact between the Chinese government and Kim Il-sung during the Korean War.
- ⁴⁶ TsAMOPF, f. 5, op. 918795, d. 122, l. 303-305.
- ⁴⁷ TsAMOPF, f. 5, op. 918795, d. 122, l. 352-355.
- ⁴⁸ Author's interview with Chai Chengwen on September 12, 2000. Wang Dagang, former Chinese Deputy Military Attaché in Pyongyang also recalled the same situation: they could only learn about the war situation from the local ethnic Chinese or the ethnic Korean cadres from China. See Tsui David, “Did the DPRK and the PRC Sign a Mutual Security Pact?” Presented at the conference, *An International Conference: The Cold War in Asia*, Hong Kong, January 1996.
- ⁴⁹ Regarding the aborted visit, Zhou Enlai explained that China cancelled it on its own on a military meeting on August 26. See Zhonggong Zhongyuan wen xian yan jiu shi and Zhongguo ren min jie fang jun jun shi ke xue yuan ed., *Zhou Enlai jun shi wen xuan*, v. 4, (Beijing: Renmin chu ban she, 1997), pp. 45-46. But he later told Soviet Ambassador that the North Korean government rejected it. See AVPRF ed., *Khronologija osnovnykh sobytii kanuna*, pp. 52-54. Some witnesses confirmed the second explanation. See Goncharov, Lewis, and Xue, *Uncertain Partner*, p. 163.
- ⁵⁰ Gao Gang's speech at the Shenyang military conference, August 13, 1950. Quoted from Jun shi ke xue yuan jun shi li shi yan jiu bu ed., *Kang Mei yuan Chao zhan zheng shi*, v. 1 (Beijing: Jun shi ke xue chu ban she, 2002.) pp. 91-92.
- ⁵¹ AVPRF ed., *Khronologija osnovnykh sobytii kanuna*, pp. 45, 47.
- ⁵² AVPRF ed., *Khronologija osnovnykh sobytii kanuna*, pp. 48-49; Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War*, p. 273. Lee Sang-jo recalled this. See Sakurai Yoshiko, “The First Publication on the Truth of the Korean War—Former Senior Official (Lee Sang-jo) exposes the fabricated ‘Kim Il-sung Myth,’” *Bungeishunju*, v. 68, Issue 5, April 1990, pp. 171-172.
- ⁵³ *Jian guo yi lai Zhou Enlai wen gao*, v. 3, pp. 247-251.
- ⁵⁴ TsAMOPF, f. 5, op. 918795, d. 1227, l. 666-669.
- ⁵⁵ Kathryn Weathersby, “New Russian Documents on the Korean War,” *CWIHP Bulletin*, Issues 6-7, Winter 1995/1996, p. 45. Translated from APRF, f. 45, op. 1, d. 347, l. 5-6, 10-11 (original copy); and AVPRF, f. 059a, op. 5a, d. 4, p. 11, l. 155-156.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.* Translated from APRF, f. 45, op. 1, d. 347, l. 12-13 and AVPRF, f. 059a, op. 5a, d. 4, p. 11, l. 159-160.
- ⁵⁷ Interview with Chai. Lee Sang-jo recalled that Kim Il-sung refused to retreat. See also Sakurai Yoshiko, *The First Publication on the Truth of the Korean War*, pp. 171-172.
- ⁵⁸ APRF, f. 45, op. 1, d. 331, l. 123-126, in Torkunov, *Zagadochnaia voina*, pp. 106-108.
- ⁵⁹ Shen ed., *Chaoxian zhan zheng: Eguo dang an guan de jie mi wen jian*, pp. 542-545.
- ⁶⁰ *Jian guo yi lai Zhou Enlai wen gao*, v. 3, pp. 311-312.
- ⁶¹ APRF, f. 45, op. 1, d. 331, l. 133-135, in Torkunov, *Zagadochnaia voina*, pp. 109-111.
- ⁶² APRF, f. 45, op. 1, d. 331, p. 131, *Торкунов*[Torkunov] Загадочная война [The Mysterious War], p. 109.
- ⁶³ TsAMORF, f. 5, op. 918795, d. 125, pp. 86-88.
- ⁶⁴ TsAMORF, f. 5, op. 918795, d. 125, pp. 89-91.
- ⁶⁵ APRF, f. 45, op. 1, d. 347, pp. 46-49, 41-45.
- ⁶⁶ APRF, f. 45, op. 1, d. 334, pp. 97-98.
- ⁶⁷ For a detailed account of the decision-making process and Mao Zedong's calculations on China's entry into the Korean War, see Shen, *Mao Zedong, Sidalin yu Chaoxian Zhan zheng*, pp. 161-208, 278-300. For most recent study on this subject, see Shen Zhihua, “Sidalin, Mao Zedong yu Chaoxian zhan zheng zai yi,” *Shi xue ji kan*, issue 1, 2007, pp. 51-65.
- ⁶⁸ Telegram, Mao Zedong to Kim Il-sung, October 8, 1950; Telegram, Peng Dehuai to Mao Zedong, October 10, 1950, from author's personal collections of Chinese documents (All the documents without notification of sources below are from the author's personal connections); Interview with Chai Chengwen.
- ⁶⁹ Interview with Chai Chengwen; Wangyan ed., *Peng Dehuai nian pu* (Beijing: Renmin chu ban she, 1998.) p. 445.
- ⁷⁰ Shen ed., *Chaoxian zhan zheng: Eguo dang an guan de jie mi wen jian*, pp. 1022-1026.
- ⁷¹ TSKHSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 314, l. 48.
- ⁷² Shen ed., *Chaoxian zhan zheng: Eguo dang an guan de jie mi wen jian*, pp. 724-725.
- ⁷³ Peng Dehuai, *Peng Dehuai zhi shu*, p. 352.
- ⁷⁴ Nie Rongzhen, *Nie Rongzhen hui yi lu*, pp. 741-742.
- ⁷⁵ *Zhou Enlai nian pu*, v. 1, p. 250.
- ⁷⁶ Kathryn Weathersby, “New Russian Documents on the Korean War,” *CWIHP Bulletin*, Issues 6-7, Winter 1995/1996, p. 77-78. Translated from APRF, f. 45, op. 1, d. 348, l. 69, and AVPRF, f. 059a, op. 5a, d. 5, p. 11, l. 89.
- ⁷⁷ AVPRF, f. 0102, op. 7, d. 47, p. 27, l. 115-120; *People's Daily*, November 24, 1953. See also the telegrams regarding the exchange of the approvals for the Sino-North Korean Economic and Cultural Cooperation Agreement, from December 1953 to January 1954, the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, 117-00125-01, pp. 3-14.
- ⁷⁸ For details, see Shen Zhihua, “Mao Zedong, Heluxiaofu yu 1957 nian Mosike hui yi,” *Li shi yan jiu*, Issue 6, 2007, pp. 82-109. Or “Latent Anxiety on the Honeymoon: Mao Zedong, Khrushchev, and the 1957 Moscow Conference,” *Journal of Cold War Studies*, forthcoming.
- ⁷⁹ TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 314, l. 12-15, 33-63, 212-214, 271-279; d. 410, l. 22-25.
- ⁸⁰ TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 314, l. 12-15.
- ⁸¹ TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 314, l. 33-63. See also TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 412, l. 126-127.
- ⁸² For instance, Chinese Ambassador Ni Zhiliang left his post in Pyongyang in March 1952, and China appointed the new Ambassador Pan Zili in January 1955. The Soviet record regarding the War Museum is also reliable. The author visited it in 2006 and it remains just as the Soviet record describes.
- ⁸³ See Gang In Deok ed., *A Complete Book of North Korea*, v. 1, pp. 260-261; Seo Dae Suk, *Kim Il Sung: The North Korean Leader*, pp. 107-122; Committee on Korean Central Yearbook ed., *General Book of North Korea (1945-1968)* (Seoul: The Institute Communist Circle Issue, 1968), pp. 175-176;

Kim Nam Sik and Sim Jee Yeon, *The Criticism of Park Hyon Yong's Line* (Seoul: The World of Books Press, 1986). The author is grateful for the generous help of those who translated these materials for him, especially Professor Yu Weimin. The Russian documents confirmed what these Korean scholars described. See TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 314, l. 33-63.

⁸⁴ Seo Dae Suk, *Kim Il Sung: The North Korean Leader*, pp.125-126. According to the KWP resolution, *On Further Strengthening the Struggles against Reactionary Ideologies in the Literary and Art Sector*, Pak Chang-ok was removed from the Standing Committee of the KWP Central Committee, and Pak En-bin was removed from the Standing Committee and the Central Committee. TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 410, l. 57-67.

⁸⁵ TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 411, l. 164-165.

⁸⁶ TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 411, l. 165-168.

⁸⁷ TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 410, l. 137-139.

⁸⁸ TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 486, l. 1-17; Seo Dae Suk, *Kim Il Sung: The North Korean Leader*, pp. 128-130; TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 412, l. 220-222, 207-211.

⁸⁹ TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 410, l. 163-170.

⁹⁰ TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 412, l. 202-203.

⁹¹ TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 412, l. 227-229; d. 410, l. 174-177.

⁹² TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 410, l. 222-223.

⁹³ TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 314, l. 33-63.

⁹⁴ TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 410, l. 57-67.

⁹⁵ TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 410, l. 163-170.

⁹⁶ TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 314, l. 271-279; d. 412, l. 222-224. Many of them, including Pak Chang-ok and Pak En-bin, visited the Soviet embassy in Pyongyang to reflect the situation. See TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 410, l. 120-121, 57-67; d. 412, l. 220-222, 225.

⁹⁷ TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 412, l. 190-196.

⁹⁸ TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 412, l. 238-241.

⁹⁹ TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 410, l. 210-214.

¹⁰⁰ Memcon, Mao Zedong, and Mikoya, September 19, 1956.

¹⁰¹ TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 410, l. 335-337.

¹⁰² For instance, Mu Chong returned to China after he was removed from his post and escaped the trial. See Seo Dae Suk, *Kim Il Sung: The North Korean Leader* pp. 107-109. According to Soviet intelligence, the Chinese military was not happy with how Kim Il-sung treated Pak Il-yu. TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 314, l. 212-214. During Kim Il-sung's trip to Beijing in November 1953, Mao Zedong asked Kim not to kill Pak Hon-yong. Moscow also advised Kim not to kill via the military advisors. But Kim ignored this advice. Later, when the Soviet Ambassador asked Kim about it, Kim was offended and even had an argument with the ambassador. See Memcon, Mao, and Mikoyan, September 18, 1956; TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 412, l. 214-216.

¹⁰³ These documents are from TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 410, l. 335-359, 317-321.

¹⁰⁴ The concerned documents are from TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 410, l. 319-321, 322-325, 327-332; d. 412, l. 302-303.

¹⁰⁵ TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 410, l. 322-325.

¹⁰⁶ TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 410, l. 224-228. Even the Minister of Post and Telecommunications, who was in the Soviet Union, for medical treatment was afraid of going home because he would be arrested if he did. See Memcon, Mao, and Mikoyan, September 18, 1956.

¹⁰⁷ RGANI, f. 3, op. 12, d. 1005, l. 30, A. A. Fursenko ed., *Prezidium TsK KPSS 1954-1964*, Tom 1, Chernovye protokol'nye zapisi zasedanii stenogrammy (Stenography record of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party) (Moskva: ROSSPEN, 2003), pp. 166-167.

¹⁰⁸ TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 410, l. 228-232.

¹⁰⁹ For details, see Shen Zhihua, “Sugong'er shi da, fei Sidalin hua ji qi dui Zhong Su guan xi de ying xiang,” Li Danhui ed., *Guo Ji Lengzhan Shi Yanjiu*, 1 (Shanghai: Huadong Shifan daxue chubanshe, 2004), pp. 28-70. For the resolution of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party, see RGANI, f. 3, op. 14, d. 39, l. 1, 30-34, K. Aimermakher, *Doklad N.S. Khushcheva o kul'te lichnosti Stalina naXX s'ezde KPSS dokumenty (Khrushchev Report on Stalin's Personality Cult in the Documents of the 20th Congress of the CPSU)* (Moskva: ROSSPEN, 2002), pp. 352-368.

¹¹⁰ TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 410, l. 228-232.

¹¹¹ TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 412, l. 302-303.

¹¹² See Memcon, Mao and Mikoyan, September 18, 1956.

¹¹³ Memcon, Mao Zedong, and Korean delegation, September 18, 1956.

¹¹⁴ See Memcon, Mao and Mikoyan, 23 September 1956; TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 486, l. 1-17, 26, 28-33; d. 412, l. 344-347; d. 411, l. 295-296.

¹¹⁵ TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 412, l. 364-365.

¹¹⁶ TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 411, l. 297-300.

¹¹⁷ TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 411, l. 292-294, 297-300.

¹¹⁸ For details, see Shen Zhihua “Zhongguo dui Dong'ou shi yue wei ji de fan ying he si kao,” *Shi xue yue kan*, issue 1, 2007, pp. 75-89; Shen, “Mao Zedong, Heluxiaofu yu 1957 nian Mosike hui yi,” pp. 82-109.

¹¹⁹ Jilin Provincial Archives, 1-13/1-1957.41, p. 174.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, 1-13/1-1957.41, p. 169.

¹²¹ TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 28, d. 486, l. 1-17.

¹²² For documents regarding the KWP's Central Committee Economic Delegation's visit to China, August 24-September 19, 1957, the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, 117-00665-03, pp. 5-24.

¹²³ *People's Daily*, October 25, 26, 30 and November 9, 1957.

¹²⁴ A.A. Fursenko ed., *Prezidium TsK KPSS 1954-1964*, Tom 1, pp. 960-961; *General Book of North Korea (1945-1968)*, pp.178-179; Gang In Deok ed., *A Complete Book of North Korea*, v. 1, pp. 262-263.

¹²⁵ The internal speeches of the North Korean leaders, January 1958, the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, 204-00612-01, pp. 28-39.

¹²⁶ Memcon, Zhou Enlai, and the leaders of the Liaoning Province, December 21, 1958, Jilin Provincial Archives, 1-14/1-1958.94, pp. 106-108.

¹²⁷ *People's Daily*, March 9, 1958.

¹²⁸ AVPRF, f. 5, op. 28, d. 103, d. 409, l. 139-143; Xin hua she ed., *Nei bu can kao*, 2073, December 8, 1956, pp. 158-163; *Nei bu can kao*, 2111, January 22, 1957, pp. 427-429.

¹²⁹ Memcon, Mao, and Mikoyan, September 18, 1956.

¹³⁰ *People's Daily*, September 9, 1954, March 26, 1955; *Zhou Enlai Nianpu*, v. 1, p. 562.

¹³¹ AVPRF, f. 5, op. 28, d. 103, d. 409, l. 139-143; Dmitri Shepilov to the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party, January 4, 1957, Shen Zhi-hua and Li Danhui ed., *ZhongSu guan xi: Eguo dang an yuan wen fu yin jian hui bian*, v. 11, preserved in the Center for International Cold War History Studies, East China Normal University, unpublished, pp. 2810-2813.

¹³² Memcon, Zhou Enlai and Iudin, January 8, 1958, the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, 109-00828-01, pp. 4-7; Yan Mingfu and Zhu Ruizhen, “Mao Zedong di er ci fang Su he 1957 nian Mosike huiyi,” *Zhonggong Dangshi Ziliao*, Issue 4, 2005, p. 30.

¹³³ Chinese embassy in Moscow to Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, January 16, 1958, the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, 109-01813-01, pp. 1-2.

¹³⁴ *People's Daily*, February 6, 7, and 22, 1958.

¹³⁵ Jin Chongji ed., *Zhou Enlai zhuan*, v. 2 (Beijing: Zhongyang Wenxian Chubanshe, 1998), pp. 370-1370; *People's Daily*, February 21 and October 18, 1958; TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 49, d. 135, l. 1-75.

¹³⁶ The intelligence agency of American Department of State thought of four reasons for China's withdrawal from North Korea, but none of them touched the essence of this question. See Division of Research and Analysis for the Far East, Intelligence Report: Implications of Communist Chinese Withdrawal from North Korea, March 17, 1958, MF2510409-0073, The University of Hong Kong Main Library.

¹³⁷ *People's Daily*, July 12, 1961. Soviet-North Korean Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance was signed in Moscow on July 6. See *People's Daily*, July 8, 1961.

¹³⁸ For a detailed discussion of this question, see Shen, “Zhong Su tongmeng polie de yuanyin he jiegou,” *Zhonggong Dangshi Yanjiu*, Issue 1, pp. 29-42; Shen ed., *Zhong Su Guanxi Shi Gang, 1917-1991* (Beijing: Xinhua Chubanshe, 2007), pp. 466-475.