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Report of the Hungarian Embassy in Pyongyang to the foreign minister

21 April 1969

Embassy of the Hungarian
People's Republic

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Subject: changes in the Korean leadership
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To Comrade Minister
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Budapest

As has been reported in open telegrams and elsewhere, in the past six months there have been significant changes in the high Korean leadership.

In the military forces the following individuals have been relieved of their post and replaced by others:

Kim Chang Bong	minister of defense, Deputy Prime Minister, member of the Politburo, replaced by
Cho Hyon	chairman of the Military Committee /unpublished post/, member of the Politburo;
Cho Guan	chief of defense staff, substitute member of the Politburo, replaced by
O Dzin U	former political chief of staff, member of the Politburo;
An Yong Hvan	replaced the political chief of staff in his post.

Further high-ranking officials that were replaced include deputy chief of defense staff Kim Dzon The, head of the reconnaissance department, Pak Dze Chol, head of the technical department and Pak Chun Guk, chief delegate of the joint Korean-Chinese party in Panmunjon.

In conversations with some diplomat friends the replacements were justified by the following:

Kim Chang Bong, Cho Guan, Kim Dzung The and Pak Dze Chol were probably unable to meet the military political requirements of the party and they are held accountable for the failure of some partisan actions in South Korea. It is to be noted here that the replaced leaders did not send any greetings in any new capacity to their respective counterparts when they exchanged cards at various occasions. The Soviet military attaché told our military attaché that some 40% of Korean soldiers studying in the Soviet Union did not return to their university after their leave spent at home on the pretext of some "illness." Most of these soldiers who stayed in Korea are the sons of replaced leaders. This fact also suggests that there may be more serious reasons behind the replacements.

There were changes at the head of the Ministry of Public Security too. Deputy Prime Minister and secretary of CC Sok San was relieved of his ministerial duties.

The minister of fishery was also replaced, who was believed by his friends to be unable to manage reconnaissance activities in a satisfactory manner in connection with costal fishing.

According to hitherto unconfirmed news O Bek Ryong was appointed head of the military department of CC /formerly he was Deputy Minister of Defense and Deputy Minister of Public Security/.

Kim Dong Gyu, substitute member of CC was appointed head of the foreign affairs department of CC.

As is well-known, two ministers have deceased recently due to some illness, but we have no knowledge yet as to who succeeded them in their posts.

Finally, we would like to note that our embassy learned about the changes from competent Korean authorities in two cases /changes at the head of the Ministry of Public Security and the Ministry of Defense/, and from our friends and the protocol lists published in the Korean press in several other cases, for the replacements are never mentioned in personal communication or officially in the press.

/ambassador/