

March 05, 1949 Meeting between Stalin and Kim Il Sung

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Summary:

Kim Il Sung and Stalin discuss the military and economy in North Korea, Soviet-North Korean relations, and North Korea's relations with other foreign countries.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

- English Translation

[Notes of the conversation between Stalin and a governmental delegation from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea headed by Kim Il Sung. The meeting began at 8:00 p.m. Present were A.Ia. Vyshinsky, T.F. Shtykov, Kim I.M. (Translator). On the Korean side: Pak Heon-yeong [Pak Hon Yong], Hong Myeong-hui [Hong Myung Hwi], Jeong Jun-taek [Jung Jun Tek], Jang Shi-u [Jang Si U], Baek Nam-eun [Bek Nam Un], Kim Jeong-ju [Kim Jung Ju], the Korean ambassador to the USSR Ju Yong-ha [Ju Yong Ha], Mun Il (Translator).]

Stalin asks the members of the delegation how their trip was, was it difficult on the journey?

Kim Il Sung thanks the Soviet Government for its attention to them and says that they arrived safely.

Stalin asks how they traveled--by railroad or by air.

Kim Il Sung answers that they came by railroad.

Stalin asks whether they became ill on the way.

Kim Il Sung answers that they were healthy.

Stalin suggests that they proceed to business and asks what will be the questions.

Kim Il Sung says that after the liberation of Korea by Soviet troops, the Soviet Government and the Soviet Army rendered aid to Korea in the matter of economic development, in the matter of the development of Korea along the democratic path, and that the Korean government understands that without further economic and cultural aid from the Soviet Union it will be difficult for the DPRK to restore and develop its national economy and culture. The assistance of the Soviet Union is required for the further development of the Korean economy and culture.

Stalin asks what kind of aid.

Kim Il Sung answers--economic and cultural.

Stalin asks what precisely is needed.

Kim Il Sung says that they have confirmed a two year plan for the restoration and development of the national economy. They need economic assistance to fulfill this plan and to strengthen the foundation of the economy. They need machines, equipment and spare parts for industry, communications, transport and also for other branches of the national economy. They also need technical assistance: sending Soviet specialists to Korea, drafting plans for the construction of new objects (factories and plants), conducting geological exploratory work.

Stalin asks what kind of objects?

Kim answers, e.g., irrigation structures [at] Anju, the construction of which they have now moved toward, but they do not have enough specialists, and also the restoration and completion of the Seisin [Cheongjin] metallurgical plant, repair of the Sufun hydroelectric plant and others.

Stalin asks if there is iron ore in Korea.

Kim answers that there is very much iron ore in Korea.

Stalin says that it is possible to render this assistance, and it is also possible to provide specialists.

Kim indicates that until now trade between the two countries has been conducted successfully, but in the future, for the fulfillment of the two year plan, they need to import from the Soviet Union

equipment, steam engines, electric locomotives, spare parts and equipment for the textile industry. But exports from Korea will not cover the imports, therefore they need credit from the Soviet government.

Stalin says "Fine" and asks in what amount they need credit.

Kim answers from 40 to 50 million American dollars.

Stalin--fine, what else?

Kim Il Sung answers that for convenient transport and for strengthening the economic ties between our countries it is necessary to build a railroad from Aoji to Kraskino.

Stalin asks where this is and how many kilometers is the distance of this railroad.

Shtykov reports that this railroad should be built from the station at Kraskino (Soviet territory) to the station at Aoji (Korean territory) for a total distance of 58 km, of which 10 km is on the territory of Korea and 48 km is on the territory of the USSR.

Stalin says that we will think about it and asks if there are some more questions.

Kim Il Sung indicates the necessity of establishing air communications between Korea and USSR and says that they do not yet have their own transport planes and no pilots, but an air link is needed.

Stalin asks aren't there Russian planes in Korea.

Kim answers that after the withdrawal of Soviet troops Soviet aviation units and planes were not left in Korea. He indicates that they now have begun the preparation of their own pilots.

Stalin asks if they have their own planes.

Shtykov reports that they have their own training aviation regiment and they have training and military planes, but they do not have transport planes.

Stalin asks how many planes they have.

Shtykov answers that they have 48 military and 19 training planes.

Stalin indicates that we now have fewer planes in a regiment, that we have lowered the number of planes in a regiment and asks what other questions they have.

Kim Il Sung indicates the necessity of cultural ties with the USSR. It is hoped, for example, that Soviet teachers could be sent to Korea for work in Korean institutions of higher education, that Korean students could be sent to the Soviet Union for study, that Korean specialists could be sent to the USSR for practical work in production technology, that teaching programs and literature for institutions of higher education and technical schools could be sent to Korea and that there be exchanges of cultural and artistic figures.

Stalin asks if there is an agreement with the Soviet Union on these questions.

Kim indicates that earlier there was such an agreement. Now, after the formation of the government, there is no such agreement.

Stalin indicates that it is possible to do this, but [sending] specialists and students will be difficult, since they do not know the language.

Kim Il Sung says that instruction in Russian language has been organized in all schools and institutions of higher education in Korea. It is necessary to send teachers to Korea from the Soviet Union.

Stalin says that it will be difficult for them because of not knowing the Korean language.

Kim Il Sung indicates that there is not a sufficient number of qualified teachers in Korea, that Soviet teachers are already working in Korea and that they have translators, through whom it is possible to conduct pedagogical work.

Stalin answers that it is possible to send teachers.

Kim says that it is necessary to conclude an agreement on all the above-indicated questions, specifically about economic cooperation and the broadening of trade, a trade agreement, an agreement about technical assistance from the Soviet Union and about cultural ties.

Stalin asks if Kim has thought about credit or a loan.

Kim answers that he has thought about it and that they want to receive credit.

Stalin answers that it is possible to do that and asks for what period they wish to receive credit.

Kim answers that if credit will be given in the amount of 50 million dollars, then it will be paid back from 1951 until 1954.

Stalin asks when will credit be paid.

Kim answers that [it will be paid] beginning with 1951 to 1954.

Stalin asks how they want to receive credit, at one time or in installments over the course of 1949, 1950, 1951.

Kim answers that they wish to receive credit in 1949. If this is not possible for some reason, then in the course of 1949 and the first half of 1950.

Stalin indicates that we cannot do this. You need machines, but machines must be ordered and manufactured. This requires time.

Kim indicates that they need automobiles, steam engines, equipment for the textile industry, and oil, and that it is hoped that they would receive this during this year.

Stalin answers that in one year it is not possible to do this and asks in what currency they wish to receive credit.

Kim answers in American dollars.

Stalin answers that we do not now calculate in dollars but we calculate in rubles and indicated that soon one dollar will equal 5 rubles. Stalin proposed to present equipment and machines in credit in the course of three years in equal portions and indicated that during these three years they will not pay credit, but in the course of the following three years they must produce payment, also in equal portions. For example: credit is given in 1949, 1950, 1951, and perhaps 1952, and payment of credit will begin from the fourth year in equal portions. In such a way, credit will be given out over 6 years. We render assistance to the countries of the peoples' democracies according to these principles. We take the following percentages for the credit received: 2% yearly, if the state has recovered [from the war], and 1% if the state has still not recovered. Moreover, close trade in

goods between the countries will be continued without credit. This order will be established by agreement. Stalin asked if they have any people who can begin work on drafting these agreements.

Kim answers that they have such people.

Stalin indicates that we can give credit in the sum of 200 million rubles, i.e. 40 million dollars. We would give more, but now we are not able.

Kim says that they agree.

Stalin asks if they have any automobiles.

Kim answers that they do not have their own cars, they would like to acquire them in the Soviet Union.

Stalin says that it is possible to provide cars. It is possible also to provide planes.

Shtykov says that the Korean Government wants to receive not only planes, but also to have a joint share aviation society and to build a railroad.

Stalin answers that it is possible to do this. As concerns the construction of the railroad, we will review this question, but there is not a sufficient work force in the Soviet Union for the construction of a railroad, and asks if they have a work force among Koreans.

Kim answers that they do have a work force among Koreans.

Kim says that in the south of Korea there are still American troops and that intrigues against North Korea by the reactionaries are increasing, that they have infantry troops but sea defense almost does not exist. The help of the Soviet Union is needed in this.

Stalin asks how many American troops are in South Korea.

Kim answers that there are up to 20,000 men.

Shtykov--approximately 15-20 thousand men.

Stalin asks if there is a national Korean army in the south.

Kim answers that there is, the number is around 60,000 men.

Stalin asks if this number includes only regular army or also police.

Kim answers that it includes only regular army.

Stalin (joking) asks, and you are afraid of them?

Kim--No, we are not afraid, but we would like to have naval units.

Stalin asks which army is stronger--north or south.

Pak Heon Hyeong answers that the northern army is stronger.

Stalin asks if there are dry docks in Korea left by the Japanese, for example, in Seisin or in other places of Korea.

Kim answers that there are none.

Shtykov reports that there are dry docks, but only small ones.

Stalin says that it is possible to render assistance in this, and that Korea needs to have military planes.

Stalin asks are they penetrating into the South Korean army, do they have their own people there?

Pak Heon Hyeong answers that they are penetrating, but so far they are not revealing themselves there.

Stalin says that this is correct, that it is not necessary to reveal themselves now and indicates that the southerners also, apparently, are sending their people into the army of the north and that they need [to exercise] caution.

Stalin asks what has happened along the 38th parallel. Is it true that several points have fallen to the southerners and have been seized, and then these points were taken back?

Kim answers that they are taking into account that the southerners can send their own people into the [North Korean] army, and that they are taking the necessary measures. Kim reported that there was a clash with the southerners in Gangwon province at the 38th parallel. Their police were not sufficiently armed at that time. When regular units approached, the southerners retreated.

Stalin asks--did they drive away the southerners or did they leave themselves.

Kim answers that as a result of the battle they drove away the southerners, threw them across the border of the country.

Stalin asks if they have a military school.

Kim answers that they do.

Stalin asks if there is a pilot school.

Shtykov reports that they have a training-military aviation regiment.

Stalin remembers that the last time two came to Moscow, and asks, appealing to Pak Heon Hyeong, if he was the second.

Pak Heon Hyeong confirms this.

Stalin says that Kim and Pak have both filled out and that it is difficult to recognize them now.

Kim says that they have a military school, but no military academy and that among the officer corps of the Korean army there is no one who has completed a military academy. He asks permission to send Korean officers to the Military Academy of the USSR for training.

Stalin asks wasn't there such permission.

Kim answers that there was not.

Stalin says that it is possible to permit it.

Kim says that they do not have any more questions.

Jeong Jun-taek asks if it will be possible to send Soviet specialists to Korea and Korean specialists for practical training in production technology to the USSR.

Stalin answers that they have already spoken on that question. Soviet specialists may be sent to Korea and Korean specialists may be received in the USSR.

Stalin asks where the Koreans get cotton.

Kim answers that they want to receive cotton from the Soviet Union. Last year they received already 3,000 tons.

Stalin says, joking, that we ourselves want to receive cotton from Korea.

Stalin asks if they have trade relations with other countries: with Japan, China, Philippines.

Kim answers that they have such relations with China, but China is at war and therefore they cannot conduct regular trade [with China].

Stalin asks--and what about with other countries?

Kim answers that they have not traded with other countries. They conduct trade with Hong Kong, but unofficially and on a case by case basis.

Stalin asks aren't there trading societies among them of their own traders.

Kim Il Sung answers that such a society exists. This society conducts trade in the main with Hong Kong, with the city of Dalny [Dairen] and with China.

Stalin says that it is necessary to have such a society, there is nothing wrong with it. The national bourgeoisie exists; among the bourgeoisie there are, apparently, also good people, it is necessary to help them. Let them trade and deliver goods, there is nothing bad in this. I do not have questions.

Stalin, turning to Vyshinsky, asks if he has questions.

Vyshinsky answers that he doesn't have any.

Hong Myeong-hui thanks Comrade Stalin for the reception.

Stalin in his turn thanks the delegation for coming and for the conversation. The conversation lasted for an hour and 15 minutes. Shtykov and translator Kim I.M. took notes.