

Title: Conversations Stalin with Kim Il Sung and Pak Hon-yong**Author:****Date:**

Source: Report on Kim Il Sung's visit to the USSR, March 30-April 25, 1950. Prepared by the International Department of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik), APRF. Cited in Bajanov and Bajanova, pp. 40-42. "Should We Fear This?" Stalin and the Danger of War with America Kathryn Weathersby Working Paper No. 39 pp.9-11

Description: report prepared by the Central Committee's International Department summarizing the conversations Stalin had with Kim Il Sung and Pak Hon-yong during their April meetings.

Comrade Stalin confirmed to Kim Il Sung that the international environment has sufficiently changed to permit a more active stance on the unification of Korea.

Internationally, the Chinese Communist Party's victory over the Guomindang has improved the environment for actions in Korea. China is no longer busy with internal fighting and can devote its attention and energy to the assistance of Korea. If necessary, China has at its disposal troops which can be utilized in Korea without any harm to the other needs of China. The Chinese victory is also important psychologically. It has proved the strength of Asian revolutionaries, and shown the weakness of Asian reactionaries and their mentors in the West, in America. Americans left China and did not dare to challenge the new Chinese authorities militarily.

Now that China has signed a treaty of alliance with the USSR, Americans will be even more hesitant to challenge the Communists in Asia. According to information coming from the United States, it is really so. The prevailing mood is not to interfere. Such a mood is reinforced by the fact that the USSR now has the atomic bomb and that our positions are solidified in Pyongyang.

However, we have to weigh once again all the 'pros' and 'cons' of the liberation. First of all, will Americans interfere or not? Second, the liberation can be started only if the Chinese leadership endorses it.

Kim Il Sung expressed his opinion that Americans won't interfere. Now that they know that the USSR and China are behind Korea and are able to help it, Americans will not risk a big war. As for Comrade Mao Zedong, he always supported our desire to liberate the whole country. Comrade Mao Zedong said on a number of occasions that after the Chinese revolution is completed, China will help us, if necessary, it will provide troops. However, we want to rely on our own forces to unify Korea. We believe that we can do it.

Comrade Stalin emphasized that a thorough preparation for war was a must. First of all, armed forces have to be elevated to an upper level of preparedness. You have to form elite attack divisions as well as create additional units. Divisions have to have more weapons, more mechanized means of movement and combat. Your request in this respect will be fully satisfied.

Then a detailed plan of the offensive must be drawn. Basically it has to have three stages.

1. Troops are concentrated in the designated areas, close to the 38th parallel.
2. The highest bodies of power in North Korea make fresh proposals for peaceful unification. These will certainly be rejected by the other side. Then, after they are rejected, a counterattack must take place. I agree with your idea to engage the adversary in the Ongjin peninsula as it will help to disguise who initiated the combat activities. After you attack and the South counterattacks it would give you a chance to enlarge the front. The war should be quick and speedy. Southerners and Americans should not have time to come to their senses. They won't have time to put up a strong resistance and to mobilize international support.

Comrade Stalin added that Koreans should not count on direct Soviet participation in the war because the USSR had serious challenges elsewhere to cope with, especially in the West. He again urged Kim Il Sung to consult with Mao Zedong and mentioned that the Chinese leader had a good understanding of Oriental matters. Stalin repeated that the USSR was not ready to get involved in Korean affairs directly, especially if Americans did venture to send troops to Korea. Kim Il Sung gave a more detailed analysis of why Americans would not interfere. The attack will be swift and the war will be won in three days; the guerilla movement in the South has grown stronger and a major uprising can be expected. Americans won't have time to prepare and by the time they come to their senses, all the Korean people will be enthusiastically supporting the new government. Pak Hon-yong elaborated on the thesis of a strong guerrilla movement in South Korea. He predicted that 200,000 party members will participate as leaders of the mass uprising. It was agreed that the North Korean army would be fully mobilized by the summer of 1950 and by that time the Korean General Staff, with the assistance of Soviet advisers, will draw the concrete plan for the offensive.

Remarks

North Korea's leaders were in Moscow for almost the entire month of April, meeting with Stalin three times. Stalin gave tentative approval for an invasion, outlining his views on preparations for the war. No minutes of the conversations have surfaced, but recollections of those present and foreign ministry reports provide information on what transpired. Stalin confirmed to Kim Il Sung that the "international environment has sufficiently changed to permit a more active stance on the unification of Korea." He pointed to the Communist victory in China as having "improved the environment for actions in Korea" because Beijing was no longer distracted and "can devote attention and energy to the assistance of Korea." This included the possible use of Chinese troops. Mao's triumph, Stalin elaborated, is also important psychologically. It has proved the strength of Asian revolutionaries, and shown the weakness of Asian reactionaries and their mentors in the West, in America.

Americans left China and did not dare to challenge the new Chinese authorities militarily. A second factor was the signing of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance. "According to information coming from the United States," Stalin explained, this agreement had made the United States much "more hesitant to challenge the Communists in Asia." "The prevailing [U.S.] mood is not to interfere" because the Soviets now had the atomic bomb and "our positions are solidified in Pyongyang."

Despite his decision to authorize planning for an invasion, Stalin still was fearful of US military intervention. In preparation for this contingency, he declared that North Korea could stage an offensive only if the PRC approved. Stalin emphasized the necessity for thorough preparation. He promised to satisfy the need for more mechanized means and weapons for a strike force of fully-equipped attack divisions. He outlined a plan calling for movement of assault troops into position and then announcing a proposal for peaceful reunification. North Korean forces would strike first at Ongjin, "as it will help to disguise who initiated the combat activities," and broaden the front in response to South Korean counterattacks. "The war should be quick and speedy," Stalin stressed. "Southerners and Americans should not have time to come to their senses ... to put up a strong resistance and to mobilize international support." But "Stalin repeated that the USSR was not ready to get involved in Korean affairs directly, especially if Americans did venture to send troops to Korea." Moscow had too many other problems to cope with elsewhere. Kim Il Sung then reiterated that a military victory would be easy, especially because of support from the guerrilla movement and an expected uprising. "Americans won't have time to

prepare," he insisted, "and by the time they come to their senses, all the Korean people will be enthusiastically supporting the new government." Stalin instructed the DPRK's Command General Staff to devise concrete plans with the help of Soviet advisors.