

**June 26, 1991**

**J. P. Kavanagh, 'Note of the Secretary-General's  
Meeting with the Permanent Observer of the  
Democratic People's Republic of Korea, H.E. Mr. Pak  
Gil Yon'**

**Citation:**

"J. P. Kavanagh, 'Note of the Secretary-General's Meeting with the Permanent Observer of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, H.E. Mr. Pak Gil Yon'", June 26, 1991, Wilson Center Digital Archive, S-1024-0055-08, United Nations Archives and Records Management Section (UN ARMS). Contributed by James Person and transcribed by Seoyoung Oh and SongYi Kim. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/209256>

**Summary:**

Permanent Observer of DPRK broached two questions to SG regarding the situation on the Korean peninsula and the application of UN membership.

**Credits:**

This document was made possible with support from Kyungnam University

**Original Language:**

English

**Contents:**

Transcript - English

[...]

Confidential

NOTE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL'S MEETING WITH THE PERMANENT OBSERVER OF  
THE DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA H.E. MR. PAK GIL YON

Held at Headquarters, Wednesday 26 June at 4.00 p.m.

Present

□□□

□□□□

The Secretary-General

H.E. Mr. Pak Gil Yon

Permanent Observer of the

Democratic People's Republic

of Korea □□□

□□□□

Mr. J.P. Kavanagh

One aide □□ □□

The Ambassador would have preferred to see the Secretary-General some weeks earlier, but the latter had been away on official travel. During that time a number of important decisions had been taken. These had nonetheless been communicated officially to the Secretary-General's office. He had requested the present meeting in order to broach two questions with the Secretary-General.

(a) The situation on the Korean peninsula

N.B. The Ambassador's presentation on this question was considerably milder than corresponding exposes he had made in months and years gone by.

The Ambassador recalled that the Korean peninsula was an "intense area", both militarily and politically. The DPRK for its part had tried its best to relax the tense situation there. Since the 1950s there had been a United States nuclear threat to Korea. Against that background the DPRK had joined the NPT regime some time ago. The DPRK had also launched an initiative for a nuclear-free and peace zone in Korea. The DPRK would try its best in the future also to carry out faithfully its treaty obligations: "our relationship with the IAEA is almost settled. We have told the IAEA that we shall soon send to its headquarters in Vienna an expert team to adjust the text of our safeguards accord. We shall do the necessary in the context of the treaty."

"At the same time we have stressed the importance of the need to remove the nuclear threat to the Korean peninsula represented by the US nuclear weapons there. Especially in Europe, we have seen a relaxation in the world situation. Relations between the US and the USSR have improved to a point where they are more or less in detente". One was entitled to ask what was the point in such circumstances to the continued maintenance of nuclear weapons in South Korea. It would be much better to remove them, thus doing away with the threat to the people of Korea and to the people of Asia more broadly. The DPRK was concerned by these questions, and a statement broadly supported by the main political parties and groups there had been issued recently in that regard. For its part, the DPRK could be relied upon to continue its efforts to lessen tension on the peninsula.

With regard to relations between the north and the south, the Ambassador said that the DPRK was attaching great importance to the adoption of a bilateral Non-Aggression Declaration. He explained that his government did not have in mind a treaty. This idea, said the Ambassador, had been initiated by the south. It had been put forward by President Roh Tae Woo at the General Assembly in 1988. Subsequently there had been a series of bilateral meetings at the Prime Ministerial level. In that forum the DPRK had made its own counter-proposals. It had seemed certain last December that a Non-Aggression Declaration would be adopted. Nonetheless a full meeting of minds had proved elusive. As of now, the DPRK was looking forward to the adoption of such a declaration by the North and by the South with a view to removing any military tensions on the peninsula.

The Ambassador expressed the hope that the Secretary-General would "pay due attention in the future, as you have in the past, to these questions".

In response, the Secretary-General said that he had taken good note of the Ambassador's comments. He recalled that the broad position of the United Nations on nuclear weapons was in the direction of their eradication. Accordingly, he had taken note with interest of the DPRK views concerning the dismantling of any nuclear weapons on the southern part of the peninsula. Concerning the possibility of a Non-Aggression Declaration, the Secretary-General said that this too was in line with the philosophy of the United Nations and he would take good note of the DPRK's views in that connection.

#### (b) Application for membership of the United Nations

The second question on the Ambassador's mind was the application for membership of the United Nations. He recalled his government's announcement on 27 May that it would apply for membership of the Organization. He explained it in line with the statement issued by his authorities at the time and circulated as a document of the Security Council (S/22642). He acknowledged in passing the comments made by the Secretary-General through his Spokesman at the time. To date, said the Ambassador, there had been a unanimous and warm welcome around the world for the DPRK move.

The Secretary-General said that the DPRK would be most welcome as a member of the Organization.

The Ambassador resumed, saying that the DPRK would try in the long run to have Korea represented in the Organization by a single seat. Such efforts on its part would show the world that the division of Korea was a temporary affair. In this respect, he said that he would appreciate greatly the assistance of the Secretary-General and of his colleagues in the Secretariat.

Already, said the Ambassador, he had had consultations with representatives in the Security Council, with some members of the General Assembly, and with some officials of the Secretariat. These had been almost unanimous in saying that the decision of the DPRK had been a wise one and that it would be widely welcomed.

On the basis of his consultations to date the Ambassador had received the impression that the most convenient time to apply for membership would be "not later than the end of July. Definitely our application will come in time for it to be taken up on the opening day of the 46th session of the General Assembly in September".<sup>[1]</sup> The Ambassador had no doubt that he could continue to count on the cooperation of the Secretary-General and his colleagues.

The Secretary-General again welcomed the decision of the DPRK to join the

Organization as a full member. He had received this as a very good piece of news. The decision had been a wise one. He was very familiar with the position of the DPRK to the effect that its membership of the United Nations should not be construed as acceptance of a definitive partition of the peninsula. The Secretary-General was himself of the view that the two thoughts need not arise together. After all, the two German states had been admitted separately, later to merge in a single representation at the Organization.

The Secretary-General confirmed that he and his colleagues in the secretariat would extend every cooperation to states, including DPRK, applying for membership. He recalled that he had himself been a national representative on the Security Council at the time, in 1973, when the two German states had been admitted to the organization. In fact, he had had the pleasure of voting in favour of both applications.

As for the case of the two Korean states the Secretary-General wondered if it might be useful for the Security Council and the General Assembly to take up consideration of both applications at the same time. This would require a measure of coordination, not least between the two Korean states themselves. The Secretary-General said that he and his colleagues would be prepared to facilitate such coordination, if the two sides wished. Such simultaneity would after all serve to emphasise the fact that the two Korean states were twins. The Cabinet of the Secretary-General could be instrumental in putting the Observer Missions in touch with PSCA.

The Ambassador thanked the Secretary-General for his remarks and for his willingness to be of assistance. He had studied the records of the Organization and specifically those of the Security Council and of the General Assembly particularly regarding the admission of new member states. He noted that the two German states had made separate applications for membership. The GDR had made its application on 12 June 1973, while the FRG had made its application on the following day. The Security Council had considered both applications simultaneously, approving them by way of a single resolution, adopted unanimously. The DPRK for its part would have no objection if that precedent were followed in the case of the two Korean applications. "So you see, Mr. Secretary-General, we can follow your advice if the other party agrees."

The Secretary-General said that he would be leaving Headquarters on Friday 28 June. He was scheduled to return to the office on Monday 15 July. The Ambassador said that he would maintain contact in the Secretary-General's absence with Mr. Kavanagh (without knowing that the latter would accompany the Secretary-General on his forthcoming trip overseas.)

[signature]  
J.P. Kavanagh  
26 June 1991

[1] It had emerged from earlier consultations within the Secretariat that an application should be received no later than 8 August if, assuming that all rules of procedure were observed in full, the application was to be assured of being processed in time for consideration in the General Assembly on the opening day of the new session.

Cuba will be in the Chair of the Security Council during the month of July.