



September 10, 1951
[Top Secret] Report to Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK,
'Political Attitudes and Korean-Chinese Relations in
Connection with the Armistice Talks'

Citation:

"[Top Secret] Report to Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK, 'Political Attitudes and Korean-Chinese Relations in Connection with the Armistice Talks,'" September 10, 1951, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Archives of the Russian Ministry of Defense (TsAMO), f.45, op.7, d.347. Obtained by Andrei Mefodievich Ledovskii.
<http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/117422>

Summary:

Report on "Political Attitudes and Korean-Chinese Relations in Connection with the Armistice Talks"

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from the Leon Levy Foundation.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

- English Translation

Received by diplomatic pouch from
Cde. Razuvayev, the Soviet Ambassador
to the DPRK, 2 October 1951

Top Secret

[handwritten:] 10 September 1951

[Handwritten:]

f.45

op.7

d.347

POLITICAL ATTITUDES AND KOREAN-CHINESE RELATIONS IN
CONNECTION WITH THE ARMISTICE TALKS

Political Attitudes

The proposal about armistice negotiations was greeted with some caution by the Korean leaders, without straightforward or outspoken statements.

Although the majority of them understood the situation which has developed and agreed on the need for an armistice nevertheless the conclusion can be drawn from personal observation that the Korean leaders were depressed by the realization that the war which has ruined the country has not led to the unification of Korea and that now they have been forced to reconcile themselves to the restoration of the prewar status quo in considerably worse conditions.

The statement of Cde. Malin was viewed by the Koreans as an expression of the evident desire of China to seek an armistice and free itself from the burden of aiding Korea. This desire was noted by Kim Il Sung with great disappointment as a result of a trip to [Beijing] in July. At the same time Kim Il Sung objectively evaluated China's strength, capabilities, and interests along with Korea's role in the overall struggle of the democratic camp. Warning of the desire of some comrades to ask for aid from the Soviet Union Kim Il Sung repeatedly spoke in the tone that the Soviet Union represents the main reserve of the democratic camp for which it is premature to enter the fight.

The same ambivalence has also been observed in the attitudes of the broad circles of the Korean public. On the one hand, a general war fatigue and a desire to avoid further ordeals have been sensed. On the other, feelings of disappointment have become widespread that the armistice proposal was taken as a crushing of the hopes for final victory.

The spread of similar attitudes has been promoted to a considerable degree by the fact that for several days after Cde. Malin's statement the North Korean press and other propaganda organs did not explain the significance of his proposal and did not comment on it at all. Only after the address of Ridgway and Kim Il Sung about the start of negotiations did the Korean press devote a number of articles to Cde. Malin's proposal, welcoming it, and until recently systematically covered the negotiations and the issues associated with it in the spirit of the above proposal.

The Koreans have done much propaganda work around the negotiations, exposing the aggressive position of the Americans through the press and radio, inciting public opinion against them, and providing substantial support to the Chinese-Korean delegation at Kaesong. (We have not cited the response of the Korean press to the armistice negotiations inasmuch as they have been widely

reproduced by the Soviet press).

It ought to be pointed out that the attitudes against an armistice noted above turned out to be fluctuating and quickly changed in favor of ending the war. This was facilitated by many circumstances: the calamities endured by the population, general war fatigue, the wrecking of the economy, and an increase of American air raids, the prolonged lack of success at the front, the influence of democratic propaganda, etc. During the negotiations at Kaesong the Koreans have become accustomed to thinking of a possible end to the war and breakdowns in the negotiations are received by the Koreans with alarm and disappointment every time.

In South Korea Malin's proposal was greeted with open hostility by the Syngman Rhee regime, which had cherished hopes that it would spread its authority to all Korea with help from the interventionists. The South Koreans organized protest demonstrations against the armistice negotiations. At the end of June the National Assembly of South Korea opposed ending the war at the 38th parallel.

Although a representative of the South Korean army was included in the delegation to conduct negotiations at the instructions of the Americans the Syngman Rhee government did not stop opposing an armistice. On 31 July it organized a mass demonstration under the slogan, "Unification or death!". At the same time it undertook a number of diplomatic demarches in the same direction. For example, at a press conference on 10 August [Li An Muk], the South Korean envoy to London, spoke of his appeal to the British government:

"I request that the British government not try to establish a false peace in Korea. The real situation needs to be studied for this. A fierce war is unfolding in Korea right now and there cannot be talk of peace at this time". [Li An Muk] declared that his government considers the disarmament of the Communists of North Korea necessary and for such a situation to be ensured through the UN in which third countries cannot give North Korea military, economic, or other aid.

The hostile attitude of the South Koreans to the armistice negotiations is evidently explained not only by the fact that in an armistice they see the collapse of their plans to seize North Korea but also that their position completely suits the Americans. The latter, [to put] pressure on the Chinese-Korean side during the negotiations, second, to put pressure on their satellites who are insisting on an armistice and, third, to raise the [political] prestige of the South Koreans in the event of a collapse of the negotiations.

Chinese-Korean Relations

During the entire history of the negotiations a difference can be observed in the approach to them by the Chinese and the Koreans.

Recognizing the military and political necessity of concluding an armistice, Kim Il Sung and other Korean leaders considered it mandatory to hold negotiations in order not to damage the honor and undermine the prestige of the DPRK. The Chinese were inclined to make concessions to the Americans just to obtain an armistice agreement.

When doing so the Chinese have not always strived to coordinate their position with the Koreans in a timely or tactful fashion, which has often caused the latter obvious irritation. For example, the Koreans sent to [Beijing] their draft reply to Ridgway's first speech, which was essentially little different than [Beijing]'s draft. The Chinese did not reply to the Korean draft but on the evening of 1 August they simply reported that the text of a reply from Kim Il Sung and Peng Dehauai cited in a telegram would be transmitted over [Beijing] Radio at a certain time and which should be simultaneously transmitted over Pyongyang Radio. Inasmuch as the telegram was sent late Pyongyang Radio broadcast [it] an hour later than [Beijing] [Radio], which was immediately noticed by American propaganda. Naturally, Kim Il Sung was upset about such a method of cooperation.

[Beijing] sent to Kaesong a large group of diplomatic and military officials headed by [Li Kuo Nyn]*, a Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and head of the CPC CC Department of Information. This group also included Chao, deputy chairman of a government commission on foreign affairs (Zhou Enlai is the chairman). The Chinese warned the Koreans that, besides instructions from above, their representatives should also be guided the decisions of the joint working meetings of the Chinese and Korean representatives which would be held daily under the chairmanship of [Li Kuo Nyn]. Later, Nam Il complained that he differed on a number of issues with Li, who displayed excessive amenability and compliancy with regard to the Americans.

* The writing of the Chinese names is possibly inaccurate.

Li drew up draft replies to both Joy's speeches as well as Ridgway's statements. However, not all of his drafts were approved by Mao Zedong, especially recently. At the end of August Mao Zedong rebuked Li in connection with the fact that in his formulation of a position he was making the Chinese interest in ending the war too obvious to the Americans and as a consequence this reduced the hope of success in the negotiations.

In connection with the 12 July incident (the issue of not allowing foreign correspondents into Kaesong and the reconsideration of the agreement about the neutral zone) Kim Il Sung prepared his own reply to Ridgway in which he simultaneously exposed the baselessness of the accusations raised by the Americans, while meeting Ridgway's insistence halfway. However, the Chinese, without asking the opinion of Kim Il Sung, simply informed him of the text of Ridgway's reply [SIC, *otvet Ridzhuehya*; should be *otvet Ridzhuehyu*, "to Ridgway"] for transmission via Pyongyang Radio at a certain time. The Chinese reply did not satisfy Kim Il Sung inasmuch as it lacked criticism of Ridgway's purely propagandistic statement. The incident essentially was explained not as a violation of the agreement between liaison officers by the Americans, but simply as lack of agreement and Ridgway's demands were accepted as justified and well-founded. However, Kim Il Sung was deprived of an opportunity to express his opinion.

On 27 May Mao Zedong informed Kim Il Sung that if the Americans insist on recognizing the current front line as the demarcation line the Chinese consider it possible to make the concession to the Americans. Mao Zedong asked Kim Il Sung to report his opinion about this question. Kim Il Sung replied to Mao Zedong immediately that he considers such a tactic impossible because it would mean a serious political blow to the DPRK and also because the regions of North Korea occupied by the Americans have great economic and strategic value.

After Kim Il Sung's reply to Mao Zedong, frustrated, he declared in a conversation with Pak Heonyeong, "I would sooner agree to continue the war without Chinese aid than to make such a concession. It makes no difference, we don't need such a Korea". Evidently, this reply was not casual. It was an expression not only of national sentiments but also of certain political calculations. Kim Il Sung is not inclined to seek an armistice through concessions which undermine the prestige of the DPRK, hoping that in the final account China and the Soviet Union will not allow the DPRK to be defeated.

After the American representatives made an excessive demand about the establishment of a demarcation line in the rear of the people's forces [*narodnye voyska*], on 28 July Mao Zedong sent Kim Il Sung a telegram in which he recommended the American proposal be categorically rejected, to word it strongly, and to remind them that their supremacy at sea and in the air did not prevent the KNA troops from being in the area of Taegu and twice south of Seoul. Mao Zedong's telegram was greeted by Kim Il Sung with great enthusiasm.

The decisive position of the Chinese with respect to recent American provocations in the region of the negotiations also lifted the Koreans' mood.

Nevertheless, it needs to be noted that recent months have brought a cooling in relations between the Koreans and the Chinese and a further strengthening of the Koreans' orientation toward the

Soviet Union. The retreat from Suwon to the 38th parallel at a moment when the Americans were already preparing for an evacuation from Korea, the abandonment of large offensive operations, the constant references to the unpreparedness of the troops for an offensive, the clear desire to end the war at the 38th parallel, all this seriously undermined the authority of the Chinese in the eyes of the Korean leaders, although the latter realize what difficulties China encounters.

The failure in negotiations only strengthens these attitudes. The Korean leaders think, first, that thanks to the Chinese the intentions of the Chinese-Korean side and its interest in peace were too fully identified during the negotiations. All the proposals were described in final form at the very start of the negotiations, which deprived [them] of an opportunity for further bargaining and mutual concessions. Second, Kim Il Sung and Pak Heonyeong are cautiously expressing the opinion that [Beijing] is pursuing an inconsistent policy. All this, in the opinion of the Koreans, explains the uncompromising position of the Americans and their desire to impose the shameful conditions of an armistice.

At the present time a desire is being observed among the Korean friends to possibly achieve an armistice more rapidly.

USSR AMBASSADOR in KOREA

10 September 1951 V. Razuvayev

Authenticated: [illegible signature]

Distributed to

Stalin

v

ov

n

ovich

in

chev

<