

October 02, 1991 Record of Conversation between F.G. Kunadze and Son Seong-Pil

Citation:

“Record of Conversation between F.G. Kunadze and Son Seong-Pil,” October 02, 1991, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF) fond 10026, opis 4, delo 2803, listy 1-3. Obtained and translated by Sergey Radchenko
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Summary:

G.F. Kunadze pressures North Korean Ambassador Son Seong-pil about the DPRK concluding an agreement on nuclear safeguards with the IAEA.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from the Hyundai Motor Company.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

- English Translation

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

OF THE R[ussian] S[oviet] F[ederation] S[ocialist] R[epublic]

1921

02.10.91

From the diary of G.F. Kunadze

RECORD OF CONVERSATION

with the Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of the DPRK in the USSR

Son Seong-pil [Son Song Pil]

20 September 1991

Invited DPRK Ambassador in the USSR Son Seong-pil for a conversation.

Related [to him] that, in accordance with the agreement of the President of the USSR and the President of the RSFSR, the sphere of bilateral relations will from now on be the prerogative of the sovereign republics—subjects of the former Union of SSR. In this connection, one can confidently say that in the next few years Russia will become the DPRK's main partner.

Congratulated the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with its acceptance to the UN and expressed a sincere hope that this event will open up new opportunities for the stabilization of the situation on the Korean peninsula, for the entry of both states into the world community.

Then drew the interlocutor's attention to the state of trade-economic relations between the USSR and the DPRK, which do not always develop in ways one would expect. There are instances of non-implementation by the Korean side of the agreed supplies; the DPRK's indebtedness is growing, approaching 3 billion rubles.

In recent times, one has witnessed growing appeals by the public [in Russia] to substantially decrease and even fold up economically unprofitable ties with a series of countries, and first and foremost, military aid. The main military industry is located, as one knows, on Russia's territory. In connection with the transfer of this industry, as well as the entire national economy, under the jurisdiction of the RSFSR, the continuation of economically unprofitable external relations and, especially, of military aid, would be an uneasy burden for us. Stressed that the aforesaid applies to all countries and that the announcement about a substantial decrease in the military aid to Cuba was not made because the USA insisted on it, but in light of the situation which has developed in the USSR, and first and foremost the demands of the Russian public. Speculated that in relations with the DPRK in the near future we cannot avoid the reassessment of economic and military ties. The position of the M[inistry] F[oreign] A[ffairs] and of the government of Russia is nevertheless such that we should not immediately tear up all previous ties. Noted that our efforts at rationalization could encounter a lack of understanding on the part of the public because of the actions of the DPRK itself. In this connection pointed to the fact of the DPRK's refusal to sign the safeguard agreement with the I[nternational] A[tomic] E[nergy] A[gency].

Reminded about the obligation of each state, signatory to the treaty of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, to conclude an agreement on safeguards with the IAEA within 18 months (the DPRK joined the treaty in December 1985). This obligation has a universal character and cannot be linked to the satisfaction of any kinds of preliminary demands.

Expressed disappointment with the events of the recent past when the government of the DPRK once again refused to sign the agreement with the IAEA in spite of the fact that the Korean side

has long declared its readiness to carry out its obligations under the Treaty of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Expressed doubt in the legality of linking this agreement with the withdrawal of American nuclear weapons from the south of Korea or with the conduct of DPRK inspections on American nuclear sites in the ROK.

Noted that in case of further procrastination with the resolution of this very important question we could run into serious problems in economic and military cooperation with the DPRK. The decrease, or termination of assistance may affect the construction of the N[uclear] P[ower] P[lant], the supply of MiG-29 fighter planes, and, subsequently, the supply of fuel resources.

Related that a section of the people's deputies of the RSFSR have an intention to raise the question of reassessing [our] approach to economic and military ties with the DPRK on the account of non-implementation on its part of its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We sincerely want to avoid such a turn of events.

In conclusion repeated that Russia, as the closest neighbor of the DPRK and ROK is interested in the stability on the Korean peninsula, in the existence of the DPRK as an authoritative member of the civilized world community.

Son Seong-Pil thanked for the frank conversation and declared that the problem of concluding agreement on safeguards is a problem of the DPRK and the IAEA, and the problem of the conduct of nuclear inspections is that of the DPRK and the USA, and this should not, in his opinion, reflect on our relations. The DPRK would like to sign an agreement on safeguards in case if the USA undertake the obligation of non-use of nuclear weapons against the DPRK (to this, the interlocutor was told that the best guarantee of this is the Agreement on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance between the USSR and the DPRK). "The USA are making demands upon the non-nuclear DPRK about conducting inspections, ignoring Pyongyang's appeal about the conduct of inspections at nuclear sites in the South," noted the Ambassador. He also reminded that the recent statement by a representative of the MFA DPRK assessed the resolution of the IAEA Board of Governors as intrusion in the DPRK's internal affairs.

The Ambassador stressed that the DPRK intends to move things in the direction of signing the agreement with the IAEA if the international pressure ceases.

In conclusion Son Seong-pil officially invited a delegation of the MFA RSFSR to visit the DPRK.

On my part, thanked for the invitation. Expressed a hope that the conversation which has taken place will be reported to Pyongyang and that there follows a constructive reaction to our appeal on the part of the government of the DPRK.

The First Secretary of the A[sia] P[acific] Department E. Iu. Tomikhin was present at the conversation.

Deputy Minister [signature] G. Kunadze