

November 1, 1962

**Memorandum of Conversation between Soviet
Ambassador to North Korea Vasily Moskovsky and
Kim Il Sung**

Citation:

"Memorandum of Conversation between Soviet Ambassador to North Korea Vasily Moskovsky and Kim Il Sung", November 1, 1962, Wilson Center Digital Archive, AVPRF, fond 0102, opis 18, papka 93, delo 5, listy 135-138. Obtained and translated by Sergey Radchenko. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110488>

Summary:

The Soviet Ambassador Vasily Moskovsky and Kim Il Sung discuss DPRK's border security in the height of the Cuban Missile Crisis. By pointing out North Korea's poor air defense and coast guard capabilities, Kim Il Sung requests an increase in the Soviet military assistance. He clearly states that DPRK is in favor of a peaceful resolution of the Cuban Crisis, because according to him, the socialist camp does not need a military conflict at that time. The two also discuss the economic development of the country.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

1 November 1962

On 1 November at 12 in the afternoon [I] was received by comrade Kim Il Sung at my request. At the beginning of the conversation comrade Kim Il Sung asked what impression I had from my trip to Panmunjeom. [I] told comrade Kim Il Sung that during [my] trip to Panmunjeom I was particularly greatly impressed by the neutral zone, the American houses, the American soldiers, and then - for several kilometers to the South - abandoned land. The picture is not a happy one, when one knows that all of this could be used in the interests of the people if the motherland were reunified. Probably rice was grown and peaceful farmers lived on this land, where now American garrisons are located; therefore, I said, my impression from the trip is a heavy one. Comrade Kim Il Sung agreed with me.

I told comrade Kim Il Sung that the Korean general Chang Jonghwan held a dinner in honor of my visit, at which we had a pleasant and useful conversation, that the general himself made a good impression on me. Further, [I] told comrade Kim Il Sung that Moscow paid great attention to the concern that he [Kim Il Sung] voiced in a conversation with me [on 14 August 1962] regarding the necessity of strengthening the defense of the DPRK and, in particular, anti-aircraft defense.

Comrade Kim Il Sung thanked me for this message [and] took over the initiative in the conversation. He informed me that recently, when [U.S. President John F.] Kennedy made noise about Cuban affairs, they [the North Koreans] had a meeting of the main Military Council under the CC KWP. The meeting discussed the question of the state of defense along the sea and land borders of the DPRK.

We came to the conclusion, said comrade Kim Il Sung, that our border along the 38th parallel is firmly defended [na prochnom zamke]. Defensive lines in several layers, built into the mountains and hills, give us an opportunity to fully destroy the enemy if he attempts to break through to the North. The defense of the coastline and air defense are in much poorer shape. The coastline from Wonsan to Cheongjin and further out is one of our vulnerable places. Major cities, such as Cheongjin, Wonsan, Hamheung, Pyongyang, and others are poorly protected from air [raids]. The Military Council made an appropriate decision regarding further strengthening of the DPRK's defense and improving battle readiness of the forces, but, taking into consideration the presence of new American equipment in South Korea, probably our decisions will not be sufficient. I am pleased, noted comrade Kim Il Sung, that the Soviet government approached with understanding the question of defense of our Republic. If the Soviet government does not mind, we are ready to send a military delegation for talks on the question of providing aid to us.

I said for my part, that [I] will immediately bring this request to the attention of the Soviet government.

Comrade Kim Il Sung further explained his point of view with regard to the events around Cuba. He said that in no country does the revolution go smoothly; that many unexpected matters come up in the course of its development; that the revolution in Cuba was not made by the Russians, the Koreans, the Chinese [or] the Czechs; that it was carried out by the [Cuban] people themselves; and the essence of our task is to support it [the revolution] by all means, but to support it wisely, not to take the matter to extremes.

I know, comrade Kim Il Sung said further, that in some circles the initiative of N.S. Khrushchev is looked upon as a concession to the Americans, but I personally believe that in this complicated situation the Soviet government and N.S. Khrushchev made the sole correct decision, and this decision speaks not to the weakness of the Soviet Union, but to its strength and to the wisdom of its government. The socialist camp does not need a war right now. Comrade Kim Il Sung stressed several times that a

war is not needed right now. If we manage to ensure that the USA removes all kinds of blockades of Cuba, then this will demonstrate not the weakness, but the strength of the Soviet Union and the wisdom of its government.

Comrade Kim Il Sung further inquired how the preparations for the 45th anniversary of the October Revolution are coming along in the Soviet Union.

I told [him] that this year the 45th anniversary of the Great October socialist revolution in our country has been greeted by great successes in industry and good results in agriculture. Therefore, from the point of view of our internal successes, the 45th anniversary of October will be commemorated with festivity. How the international situation will develop is difficult to tell now.

When I talked about the successes of our industry in light of information from the C[entral] S[tatistics] D[irectorate] of the USSR, comrade Kim Il Sung said the following:

A restructuring of industry was recently carried out in the DPRK. The main thing in this restructuring was a change in the system of supplying industry and strengthening party control over industry. We increased the party apparatus in the party com[mittees] of industrial enterprises, gave the party com[mittees] significant rights, and this eradicated [sveli na net] former one-manager's rule [edinonachalie]. Three months have passed and I can state with confidence that all our large enterprises have begun working better.

The thing is that it is becoming difficult for one director and one manager to direct a large enterprise. Therefore we decided to organize a complex management, that is - management by a party com[mittee], which includes the director himself and which controls him. One should say right away that red tape and subjectivism have been reduced considerably in the solution of this or that question, and the directors themselves say that it has become easier for them to manage the enterprise on the basis of a collective decision of a party com[mittee]. [...]