

**January 21, 1988**

**Memorandum of Conversation between the  
International Olympic Committee President and  
Eduard Shevardnadze, Minister of Foreign Affairs,  
the USSR, regarding the negotiations with North  
Korea on the 1988 Olympics**

**Citation:**

"Memorandum of Conversation between the International Olympic Committee President and Eduard Shevardnadze, Minister of Foreign Affairs, the USSR, regarding the negotiations with North Korea on the 1988 Olympics", January 21, 1988, Wilson Center Digital Archive, International Olympic Committee Archives (Switzerland), SEOUL '88, POLITICAL MATTERS 1988-89; SEOUL '88/ POLITIQUE (JANVIER - JUILLET). Obtained for NKIDP by Sergey Radchenko. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113489>

**Summary:**

Memorandum of a discussion between IOC President Samaranch and Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs, Shevardnadze. The two discuss other issues for a while before turning to the "Korea question," as Shevardnadze puts it. Samaranch explains the series of discussions and compromises that have already occurred, as well as expresses some doubt that North Korea is serious about making cooperation happen and that he'd need assurance about the "Olympic family" being able to cross the border. Shevardnadze expresses confidence that that wouldn't be a problem.

**Original Language:**

English

**Contents:**

Transcript - English

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Madric, 21st January, 1988.

On 20th January 1988, I met the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Schevarnadze, during a reception given in his honour at the Palacio de Viana in Madrid by his Spanish counterpart.

During the cocktails, when the introductions took place we exchanged a few pleasantries without mentioning any critical subject. Mr. Schevarnadze told me that he clearly recalled the time spent in Moscow as Spanish ambassador.

None of this formal conversation broached the subject of the Games, and during dinner conversation turned to a completely different topic.

When the coffee arrived and when everyone was standing up, I had the chance to go over to him to congratulate him on his speech and wish him success with his trip.

He then took me by surprise by asking totally out of the blue how the Korean question was going. I told him that we were having a number of difficulties in our discussions with the DPR Korea, although we were very satisfied with the final number of inscriptions for the Games. I reminded him that we had already held four three-way meetings with the two Korean NOCs, and added that the IOC was extremely disappointed to see that the DPR Korea was turning down the exceptional offer we had made. I then said that I thought it would be very difficult to reach an agreement and how much I deplored the very low level of the North Korean negotiators who had always gone into the meetings with very strict instructions which they were forbidden to alter, be it only a comma. I reminded him that we had made the DPR Korea the offer of holding certain sports and events, an offer which we even improved after I went to Cuba and had a long interview with president Castro.

After asking me exactly which sports had been envisaged, Mr. Schevarnadze told me that this offer was in fact extremely close to what the president of the DPR Korea, Mr. Kim IL Sung, had told Mr. Gorbachev when he visited Moscow.

Mr. Schevarnadze asked if the IOC was ready to increase its offer, and I replied that we were certainly willing to continue discussions in an attempt to find an agreement. I said that I was even ready to go to Pyong Yang in person if necessary, but only on condition that I had definite assurances that the DPR Korea really did wish to reach an agreement. I added that one of the main problems that would have to be settled as a result would be getting the Olympic family across the border.

Mr. Schevarnadze then declared that he was absolutely certain that this would not present any problem, and asked me whether he could mention our conversation and make sure of the information I had just given him, to which I willingly gave my consent.

He then took his leave of me, repeating that I would soon [hear] from him through the intermediary of the representatives of the USSR in Switzerland.

Juan Antonio Samaranch  
IOC President