

**May 12, 1947**

**Cable No. 121973, Meretskov and Shytkov to Cde.  
Stalin**

**Citation:**

"Cable No. 121973, Meretskov and Shytkov to Cde. Stalin", May 12, 1947, Wilson Center Digital Archive, RGASPI, f. 558, op. 11, d. 346, ll. 0004-0006. Contributed by Sergey Radchenko and translated by Gary Goldberg.  
<https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/119373>

**Summary:**

A request to send Soviet specialists to North Korea. The DPRK especially needs engineers to help them build railways. Shytkov notes that if the Koreans don't receive aid from the Soviets, they'll turn to the Americans.

**Original Language:**

Russian

**Contents:**

Translation - English

[handwritten at the top: to Cde. Stalin  
I think that [[we]] ought to support this proposal.  
V. Molotov. 16 May]

TOP SECRET

Copy N° 2

[letterhead of the Second Main Directorate of the USSR Armed Forces General Staff]  
[Translator's note: which is the GRU]

CABLE N° 121973/sh

from PRIMVO [the Maritime Military District]  
sent at 1835 12 May 1947  
received at 1915 12 May 1947

Arrived in the 8th Directorate of the Armed Forces General Staff at: 2015 12 May 1947

[stamp: 10th department of the USSR MFA]

[Stalin's handwritten reply entered across the text: Give five to eight Soviet [specialist] organizers and force the Koreans to learn. I. Stalin]

MOSCOW VKP(b) CC

to Cde. STALIN

In accordance with a Soviet government decree of 26 July 1946 we sent you ideas in Cable N° 15327 on 18 December 1946 about sending 82 Soviet specialists to help the People's Committee of North Korea repair and develop industry and rail transport.

So far not a single Soviet specialist has been sent to North Korea.

We have repeatedly turned to the Ministry of Foreign Trade, but they tell us that the question of sending Soviet specialists should be decided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs they say that this is a matter of the Ministry of the Armed Forces, and the latter said that it does not have specialists at its disposition and is not competent to decide this question.

Thus up to now the question of selecting and sending Soviet specialists for work in North Korea has practically not been solved.

The situation which has developed in North Korea requires the immediate dispatch of Soviet specialists there.

All the Japanese specialists who continued to work in North Korea for some time after the Japanese surrender have been repatriated to Japan.

[Translator's note: the following paragraph was highlighted in the left margin:] As a

result of this the industry and rail transport of North Korea have begun to experience an increasingly acute shortage of engineering and technical personnel and have found themselves in an extremely difficult position.

Because of the shortage of engineering and technical personnel the industry and rail transport of North Korea did not fulfill the 1947 first quarter plan.

The People's Committee of North Korea has repeatedly turned to us for aid with engineering and technical personnel. However, we have not yet been given it this aid.

All this creates among the People's Committee a feeling of uncertainty that they will be able to cope with the management of nationalized industry and transport.

The industry and transportation of North Korea cannot operate without the aid of Soviet or other foreign specialists. We need to send Soviet engineering and technical personnel to North Korea without delay not only to help the People's Committee put industry and transport in order, but also to strengthen the position and influence of our country in Korea for the future.

[Translator's note: the following paragraph was highlighted in the left margin:] If specialists do not arrive in North Korea before the reunification of North and South Korea and the formation of a provisional Korean government then the provisional Korean government, as long as it is not in a position to do without foreign technical assistance, will unavoidably invite American specialists to work in North Korea, which is to the detriment to our state interests and will strengthen the influence of the Americans in Korea. Therefore we ask for your instructions about hastening to dispatch of Soviet specialists to North Korea.

MERETSKOV, SHTYKOV

Nº 6478/sh  
12 May 1947

Sent by Rodina at 2145 12 May 1947

[At the bottom of the first page: deciphered at 1950 12 May 1947 Martynov

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Chief of the 4th Department of the 8th Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed  
Forces [[illegible signature]]