

Record of conversation between the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR A.N. Kosygin with the ambassador of the DPRK in Moscow Jeong Du-hwan [Jong Tu Hwan].

May 6, 1968

Jeong Du-hwan passed greetings and the text of the reply telegram for L.I. Brezhnev and A.N.Kosygin with Kim Il Sung's thank you note for the congratulations on his 56<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Then the Ambassador said that he was glad to have been appointed for work in the Soviet Union, which is the liberator and the war friend of Korea, in the period when relations of friendship and co-operation between the two parties, governments and peoples are strengthening. This was to a great extent facilitated by the mutual visits of the heads of both countries. He remarked that Kim Il Sung, before the ambassador's departure for Moscow, gave him the instruction to work in the direction of all-around strengthening of the traditional Korean-Soviet friendship.

Jeong Du-hwan briefly spoke about the situation in the DPRK. He emphasized that after the incident with the American spy ship *Pueblo* the situation in the Korean peninsula region had become rather tense, the US and the South Koreans are resorting to blackmail, provocations, they are hastily preparing for a new war.

Provocations became especially frequent after the talks between Johnson and Park Chung Hee. According to the press reports, the people of South Korea, inspired by the successes of the DPRK, are conducting an energetic military struggle against the puppet regime of Park Chung Hee. In the beginning of this year, a group of South Korean guerrillas undertook an attempt to attack the residence of Park Chung Hee. This year on April 30 there was a raid of the Seoul Telegraph, as a result of which the work of the Telegraph was temporarily paralyzed.

The Japanese militarists contribute to the heightening of tensions on the peninsula. Because of them, talks between the Red Crosses of DPRK and Japan regarding the repatriation of the Korean citizens resident in Japan broke up twice. The Japanese authorities are increasing their penetration of South Korea, they are entering into an ever closer conspiracy with the South Korean puppets: the Japanese militarists are preparing plans for war against the DPRK.

The main position of the DPRK government on the question of peaceful unification of the country remains unchanged. However, in light of the increasing danger of war, the DPRK is facing the task of defending the gains of socialism. That's why construction in the country is proceeding simultaneously in the economic and military fields. Successes in this regard are the result of the wise leadership of the party and the consistent implementation of the spirit of independence and self-reliance (Juche).

The Korean people, fully and wholly supporting the political program of the DPRK government, presented by comrade Kim Il Sung at the session of the Supreme People's Assembly of the DPRK in December of 1967, is achieving successes in the field of economic construction.

The plan of the first quarter of the current year has been successfully implemented. However, in the metallurgic industry, because of the shortage of coke, certain difficulties have emerged.

Considering the tense conditions in Korea and Asia, the government of the DPRK is striving to develop and strengthen co-operation between the DPRK and the USSR.

A.N. Kosygin thanked [the ambassador] for the greetings conveyed from comrade Kim Il Sung, for his reply telegram and for the report made by the ambassador regarding the situation in Korea.

A.N. Kosygin remarked that the content of this report regarding the situation in Korea is accessible to all, we receive similar information from press reports. The difficulty of the situation on the Korean peninsula is understood in the Soviet Union, and developments are closely watched. However, we are not aware of the considerations and plans of the DPRK government with regard to the further development of events. This makes it difficult for the Soviet Union to provide the DPRK with support in the international sphere and, in particular, in international organizations. The Soviet comrades are compelled to only use materials published in the open press. Evidently, the Korean comrades have their own considerations on this account.

A.N. Kosygin asked the ambassador to tell comrade Kim Il Sung that we would like full trust and frankness in our relations. As far as we are concerned, we always acted like this before, and we are acting like this now. We do not have secrets from you, and we tell you everything frankly. In the Soviet Union we understand the difficulties that arose in the DPRK as a result of the decrease in supplies from China, of coke in particular. The Soviet Union is doing the best it can to relieve the economic difficulties of the DPRK. For example, we send coke to the DPRK even from the Donbass basin, even though the cost of transportation in this case is greater than the cost of the coal itself.

However, big difficulties arise when the Soviet coal is unloaded in the DPRK. Sometimes over 2000 train cars are stuck on the Soviet border, and they are stuck there because the Korean side cannot unload them on time.

The Soviet side is planning on continuing economic co-operation with the DPRK in the future. In the near future we will look into the question of sending [Deputy Head of Council of Ministers] V.N. Novikov to Pyongyang to participate in the work of the 2<sup>nd</sup> session of the intergovernmental Soviet-Korean consultative committee for economic, scientific and technological questions.

A.N. Kosygin asked him to tell Kim Il Sung that we remember talks with him in the Soviet Union, when the questions of Soviet-Korean and inter-party relations were frankly discussed. A.N. Kosygin stressed that the spirit of frankness remains the main thing in Soviet-Korean relations.

In conclusion, comrade A.N. Kosygin asked to convey greetings to Kim Il Sung, Choe Yong-geon [Choe Yong Gon], Kim Il and other Korean leaders from comrades L.I. Brezhnev and N.V. Podgomy.

Jeong Du-hwan thanked [him] for the greetings, said that they will be conveyed as addressed. [He] thanked [him] for the understanding of the difficulties the DPRK is going through. [He] expressed his confidence that during the period of his work in Moscow, the Soviet government will co-operate with him.

Member of the Kollegia of the Foreign Ministry of the USSR V.I. Likhachev, counselor of the Korean Embassy Gang Cheol-jin [Kang Chol Jin], 3<sup>rd</sup> secretary Kim Je-rok [Kim Je Rok] were present at the meeting. The conversation was recorded by the attaché of the Department of Far Eastern Affairs of the Soviet Foreign Ministry V. Gorovoi.