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April 9, 1966

Record of Conversation between Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko and North Korean Foreign Minister Pak Seong-cheol

Citation:

"Record of Conversation between Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko and North Korean Foreign Minister Pak Seong-cheol", April 9, 1966, Wilson Center Digital Archive, AVPRF, fond 0102, opis 22, papka 107, delo 4, listy 1-5. Obtained and translated for NKIDP by Sergey Radchenko. https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/110504

Summary:

Pak Seong-cheol claims that the American forces in South Korea are a hindrance in the way of reunification and comments on Soviet-North Korean relations and Japan.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from ROK Ministry of Unification

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English
Translation - Korean

SEND TO THE MEMBERS OF THE POLITBURO OF THE CC CPSU AND CANDIDATE MEMBERS OF THE POLITBURO OF THE CC CPSU

23 May 1966 A. Gromyko

From the diary of
A.A. Gromyko Secret, Copy #40
N1550/GS

RECORD OF CONVERSATION
With the minister of foreign affairs of the DPRK comrade Pak Seong-cheol [Pak Song Chol]

9 April 1966

I received Foreign Minister of the DPRK comrade Pak Seong-cheol, who is in Moscow as part of the delegation of the Korean Workers' Party to the 23rd Congress of the CPSU.

In the course of the conversation, comrade Pak Seong-cheol told [me] about the situation in the DPRP. As a whole, things in Korea, he said, are going well, but they would be still better if it were not for the presence of the American forces in South Korea. As everyone knows, he continued, we are currently not in a state of peace, but of armistice, various clashes occur, the enemy is searching out our weak points, and would use them gladly.

In light of such circumstances, great attention is paid in the DPRK to strengthening the defense capability of the country, and this causes delays in the implementation of the 7-year plan of economic development. The implementation of the 7-year plan is lagging behind by two years. The Korean Workers' Party put forward the slogan "arm the entire people," "turn the country into an impregnable fortress." These are not simply words - we are forced to direct substantial funds into the strengthening of the country's defense.

Of course, said comrade Pak Seong-cheol, we would not be able to handle the task of strengthening the self-defense capability of our country by ourselves, and we asked for help. The Soviet Union met our wishes [poshel nam na vstrechu] and provided good military and economic aid.

As everyone knows, the main task of the Korean communists is the liberation of the South Korean people, who are under the yoke of American imperialism. The Korean Workers' Party's position on this question is to achieve unification of the country peacefully, on a democratic basis, relying on the Korean people, to make the American imperialists get out of South Korea. The struggle of the South Korean population themselves plays a very important role in this regard.

We are also counting on international support of the efforts of the Korean people to achieve unification of their motherland by peaceful means. Of course, the enemy will stand in the way. The American imperialists who are trying to turn the whole of Korea into their colony would like to destroy the DPRK. The South Korean puppet clique of Park Chung Hee is sounding trumpets about a Northern expedition, unification of Korea under the "supervision of the UN." We are resolutely against this.

The Soviet government supports our position on the question of Korean unification. Using this opportunity, I would like to thank [the Soviet Union] once again for supporting our struggle. With a feeling of deep gratitude we heard the expression of this support in the report of comrade L.I. Brezhnev at the 23rd Congress of CPSU.

We believe, said comrade Pak Seong-cheol, that the first of the most urgent tasks is the withdrawal of American forces from South Korea, dissolution of the so-called "UN Commission on the Unification and Reconstruction of Korea." We are confident that in the future Soviet comrades will support our position in international organizations, at international meetings, conferences, etc. In this connection, I would like to ask that you continue to expose the fact that the American forces in South Korea are there under the UN flag. In reality, the forces in South Korea are not UN but American

forces, and they should not be allowed to use the name of the UN for justification of their presence in South Korea.

Furthermore, comrade Pak Seong-cheol remarked that currently Japanese militarism is rapidly resurrecting, and it presents a danger to peace-loving peoples equal to that from West German revanchism in Europe. The US imperialists, who are resurrecting the militarist forces of Japan, made the Japanese government enter into a conspiracy with South Korea, with the aim of putting together a military bloc in which they also plan to involve Taiwan, South Vietnam and other countries.

We consider the signing of the Japanese-South Korean treaty the first concrete step on the road to the resurrection of the overseas expansionism of the Japanese militarists. Everyone knows about the Japanese plans for the operations of the so-called "3 arrows" and the "flying dragon," which are directed against our countries. Japan is providing weapons for South Korea. That is why we come out against the resurrection of the militarist forces of Japan, expose the intrigues of the Japanese army machine [voenshchina]. In our opinion, this helps the struggle for peace in the Far East and in the world as a whole. We know that the Soviet government supports us in this, and are confident that the same support will be provided in the future.

The South Korean puppet regime, comrade Pak Seong-cheol said further, is trying to avoid isolation in the international sphere. With this aim, the South Koreans, in particular, are trying actively to penetrate various international organizations, to participate in international negotiations, conferences, and meetings. Using international meetings, they are trying to invite to such meetings in Seoul representatives of, among others, socialist countries, and to travel to the socialist countries, if international meetings take place there.

We are aware, the minister said, that there will be a UNESCO [United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization] meeting on oceanography in Moscow this May. The South Koreans intend to send their delegation to this meeting. I am confident that the Foreign Ministry of the USSR will not grant entry visas to the South Koreans. I also think, comrade Pak Seong-cheol said, that in case an international meeting takes place in Seoul, none of the socialist countries will send her representatives there.

Pak Seong-cheol also touched on the question of the Koreans who live in Sakhalin. According to reports, the South Korean authorities allegedly requested the Japanese government that Japan, either itself or through the International Red Cross, help the return of the Sakhalin Koreans to South Korea. Having said that he does not know whether the Japanese side has put this question before the Soviet side, Pak Seong-cheol expressed his hope that with regard to the Koreans who live on the territory of the USSR, the Soviet government will conduct business only with the government of the DPRK, and not with the government of Japan or the International Red Cross.

On my part, I replied to comrade Pak Seong-cheol that we fully support the position of the DPRK regarding the question of the unification of the country, withdrawal of American forces from South Korea, and consider that the policy of the DPRK government on this question is correct and that it serves the interest of the entire socialist camp. Struggle against the aggressive intrigues of American imperialism generally and in the Far East in particular is our common policy. We have followed, are following, and will follow this policy. We have always exposed and will expose the intrigues of US imperialism in South Korea, using the UN for this purpose.

I said that if the Korean comrades have any concrete wishes with regard to international meetings, conferences, sessions of international organizations, we would like them to put forward these wishes to us so that the Soviet representatives could take them into account in the diplomatic and political struggle against the US imperialists and Japanese militarists.

As far as the departure of Koreans from Sakhalin to South Korea is concerned, we do not intend to discuss this with the Japanese or with any international organization.

With regard to the participation of the South Korean representatives in international meetings, comrade Pak Seong-cheol was told that neither have the South Koreans visited the USSR nor our representatives visited Seoul to participate in international meetings. This is our definite policy. One should not doubt that this time, too, the

South Korean representatives will not be allowed to participate in the oceanography conference in Moscow.

Pak Seong-cheol remarked that the DPRK comes out for improving relations with Japan, but that the Japanese ruling circles treat the DPRK with hostility.

In this connection, I told comrade Pak Seong-cheol that in the course of the postwar years, Soviet-Japanese relations have remained somewhat cool. We do not have a peace treaty with Japan, and this has its effect on our relations. The government of Japan every once in a while tells us about its territorial claims, but we do not discuss this question, as in reality it does not exist. It has long been solved. At the same time, we maintain diplomatic, political, and economic relations with Japan. In our position with respect to Japan, we take into account that Japan is an ally of the United States, we come out against its aggressive course, strive to pull it away from the US in the interests of our common struggle against American imperialism.

In Soviet-Japanese relations certain practical questions, such as trade, economic relations, and cultural exchanges, may be further developed. Exchange of visits will continue. As you know, the Japanese foreign minister, [Etsusaburo] Shiina, visited the Soviet Union. He invited the minister of foreign affairs of the USSR to visit Japan.

Comrade Pak Seong-cheol said that they, of course, do not think that the Soviet Union must break off its diplomatic relations with Japan, or not carry on cultural or economic exchange with her. This also applies to Soviet-American relations. But, he continued, it is important that there be a difference between diplomatic activity and our common political posture.

I replied to comrade Pak Seong-cheol that the external policy of the Soviet Union was defined clearly by the 23rd Congress of the CPSU, and all diplomatic or other activity is subordinated to the implementation of this external policy. In our work, we direct ourselves according to the instructions of V.I. Lenin about the necessity of going sometimes even into the enemy's lair in order to carry out successfully our policy for socialism. We have a lot of work ahead of us. In light of the decisions of the 23rd Congress of the CPSU, we are planning new activities, new steps in the sphere of foreign policy, and we intend to begin their implementation with renewed energy.

Pak Seong-cheol thanked me for the important explanations given to him.

The conversation lasted for 1 hour. The conversation was attended by the charge d'affaires of the DPRK in the USSR Ho Gan, a member of staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of DPRK Li Syn Hek, Ambassador of the USSR in the DPRK Gorchakov A.I., head of the DVO Sudarikov N.G.

In the course of the breakfast that followed I confirmed the invitation previously extended for comrade Pak Seong-cheol to visit the Soviet Union with his family for rest and [medical] treatment when he finds it convenient.

The conversation was recorded by the third secretary of the DVO Putivets A.D.

A. Gromyko

Correct: [Signature - Putivets]

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