

September 27, 1963

**Conversation between Soviet Ambassador in North
Korea Vasily Moskovsky and Soviet Specialists in
North Korea**

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Summary:

Soviet specialists in North Korea inform the Ambassador that the Koreans are attempting to acquire large amounts of uranium ore.

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[I] invited Soviet specialists comrades Konstantinov V.M. and Syromyatnikov B.N., who study uranium ore in the DPRK, for a talk at the Embassy. [...]

The Soviet specialists said that the Korean side insistently tries to obtain information about the deposits and quality of the uranium ore mined in the Soviet Union. But our comrades have been instructed on this account, and know how to evade answering such questions.

Our specialists reported that the Korean uranium ore is not rich and is very scarce. The mining and processing of such ore will be extremely expensive for the Koreans. But from conversations with the Korean specialists they learned that the Koreans, despite all odds, want to develop the mining of uranium ore on a broad scale. In all probability, comrades said, uranium ore mined in the DPRK will be supplied to China, since in order to satisfy one's own internal needs for one's own atomic reactor, one needs a very minor amount of uranium ore.

Our comrades are trying to express a thought to the Koreans to the effect that it would be much easier for the economy of the DPRK to satisfy all internal needs by means of purchasing a small amount of the necessary processed "product."

The Koreans replied to this by saying that they must extract uranium ore in large quantities.

I think that by sending specialists to the DPRK from the Soviet Union we are helping China, and at the time of the current struggle against the Chinese splitters, one should not do this.