

April 1950

Record of a Conversation of Cde. Stalin with Kim Il Sung and Pak Heon-yeong

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"Record of a Conversation of Cde. Stalin with Kim Il Sung and Pak Heon-yeong", April 1950, Wilson Center Digital Archive, "Report on Kim Il Sung's visit to the USSR, March 30 - April 25, 1950. Prepared by the International Department of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik), APRF. Translated by Gary Goldberg. <https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/114905>

Summary:

Kim Il Sung and Stalin discuss the North Korean economy and Soviet-North Korean cooperation.

Credits:

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Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

[Translator's Note: Although the date of this conversation is not given, Bulganin served as Minister of the Armed Forces from March 1947 to March 1949; however, later in the conversation Kim refers 5 years as having passed since Korea's liberation by the Soviet Army, which would make the year about 1950. He also make reference to May being later in that year. This meeting may indeed have taken place during Kim's visit in April 1950, when Bulganin was Deputy Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers; he may still have been overseeing the defense sector] Record of a conversation of Cde. Stalin with Kim Il Sung and Pak Heon-yeong [Pak Hon Yong] Interpreted by Mun Il [Mun Il]

Kim Il Sung turns to Cde. Stalin and says that the approved 2-year plan for development of the Korean economy ends this year. In this regard the question arises about drawing up a new plan. In connection with a new plan several questions have arisen which we would like to discuss with you.

1. About industrial engineering [mashinostroyeniye]. In the near future we will have no possibility of broadly developing industrial engineering. Therefore we would like to develop the ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy required for industrial engineering. We want to somehow receive from the Soviet Union production for industrial engineering of automobiles, tractors, locomotives, instruments, etc.

As is known, in the earth of Korea there are many minerals which constitute the main hard-currency reserve [fond] of Korea.

Cde. Stalin asks by way of clarification asks: what minerals?

Kim Il Sung explains that in the earth of Korea there is much gold, silver, tungsten, lead, and other minerals.

Cde. Stalin: That's good.

Kim Il Sung further explains that they would like to agree with the Soviet government what is better to develop in Korea and what the Soviet Union is interested in.

Replying to the question of Kim Il Sung, Cde. Stalin explains that the Soviet Union is interested in receiving lead, tungsten, tin, and gold from Korea. These we will buy for many years.

Further Kim Il Sung indicates that in Korea besides anthracite there is no other coal. The prices for rail shipments are very high. In Korea there is much hydroelectric power. Therefore we would like to electrify the railroads. In this matter we need the aid of the Soviet government in the form of electromechanical equipment, electric locomotives, transformers, etc.

Cde. Stalin says that the Soviet Union makes this equipment and we will help you.

Kim Il Sung further raised the question of the development of shipbuilding in Korea, pointing out that in Korea there are the conditions for developing shipbuilding, there are shipyards, a workforce, but no experienced technical personnel or drawings from which ships could be built. We request that the Soviet government help us in this matter.

Cde. Stalin said that if you have repair shops then they need to be developed where you have such shipyards.

Kim Il Sung explains that there are such shipyards in Sensin [Wonsan], Geltsun [Galcheon], and Tsenasin [Cheongjin].

Cde. Stalin: We are a position to help you in developing shipbuilding.

Further Kim Il Sung appealed to Cde. Stalin, saying: we would like to ask you, Cde.

Stalin, to permit us to send a large group of workers to the Soviet Union for practical production experience, in order that they can master production of rail cars, mechanical picks, rubber articles, housing construction, etc.

We sent 29 people last year.

Cde. Stalin asks: But where are they working and are they not complaining about anything?

Kim Il Sung says that they are working at Soviet factories and are very satisfied with their working conditions.

Cde. Stalin says that we can take [them] in the [Far] East; we have such concerns.

Kim Il Sung says that up to the present time, excluding military advisers and instructors at higher educational schools institutions 136 Soviet specialists are working in Korea; of them, 73 (have finished) their service and will return to the USSR. We would like to ask [you] to send additional Soviet specialists for which we will present an additional request.

Stalin: Good. Since part will leave then [they] can be sent. Just send a request [naming] who is needed.

Kim Il Sung: The next question we would like to raise is about land development in Korea. After land reform we will considerably raise the standard of living of the peasants, [although] some part of the peasants could turn into kulaks. We would like to consult [with you] and receive instructions from you. Cde. Stalin asks: Do you want to organize collective farms?

Kim Il Sung explains that for now the question has not come up in as much as the country has not been unified, but we should provide for [this] in our future plan.

Cde. Stalin, replying to a question of Kim Il Sung, points out that it's not necessary to be hasty in such a matter. If you do not have collective/state farms [khozy], evidently you have little land.

Kim Il Sung explains that they have state collective/state farms [gos khozy], but not many.

Cde. Stalin asks if [you] know how much arable land there is in Korea. Kim Il Sung gives the figure. Cde. Stalin says that is little land and asks if you have swampland.

Kim Il Sung explains that they do not have swampland, but they have lands which during tidal surges [priliva] are flooded with salty sea water and they want to reclaim about 300 thousand hectares by building a dam.

Cde. Stalin asks how far the mountain range goes into the distance of the country from north to south.

Kim Il Sung explains that the mountain range goes from the border with Manchuria to the south. Cde. Stalin, turning to Kim Il Sung, points out that they have little land.

Kim Il Sung explains that they want to begin construction of a dam in order to reclaim a large territory from the sea and as Korean specialists confirm that this does not require great resources. They want to create state farms [gos khozyaystva] on this land.

Cde. Stalin Yes, this is possible. Half of the Netherlands is in dykes. You needn't be in a hurry with collective farms. We will give you tractors and you need to develop the state farms.

Further Kim Il Sung raises the question of Mortrans. When the Mortrans company [obshchestvo] was created the Koreans agreed to transfer to the company a port belonging to a metallurgical plant. Now it has been decided to restore the plant. Consequently, the plant needs the port. Perhaps the port could be returned to the plant so that the Koreans could somehow be compensated for this port.

Cde. Stalin: Of course, this is possible. [They] can be compensated. Kim Il Sung explains the need to transfer the port to the plant.

Cde. Stalin replies: What you want can be done. It's possible to liquidate the company. Whatever you want, so it will be. Kim Il Sung No, the company is needed; just transfer the plant's port to the plant.

Further Kim Il Sung turns to Cde. Stalin with a request to help with personnel, instructors for a military academy. They want to create a military academy and they need 7-8 instructors.

Cde. Stalin, turning to Cde. Bulganin, asks: What do you think, can [we] help?

Cde. Bulganin replies that [they] can help.

Further Kim Il Sung turns to Cde. Stalin with a question: do they consider it possible to create a Cominform bureau of Eastern Communist parties and workers' parties? This would help coordinate the actions of these parties.

Cde. Stalin indicates that it's necessary to hold off on this question. It's not clear to us how the Japanese Communist Party [is doing] there, it's not clear to us in the Philippines. In India there's a Communist Party, but its situation is not clear.

So you and we can understand one another. You, we, and the Chinese can agree and understand one another.

Kim Il Sung replies that it's good. Now it is clear to him.

Kim Il Sung, turning to Cde. Stalin further, says that 5 years have passed since the liberation of Korea by the Soviet Army and that a great deal has been done in that time. Regarding the rebirth of national culture and art what we want is to send a group of 75-100 artists to the Soviet Union to exhibit the achievements of Korean art.

Cde. Stalin replies that it is possible to send [them] but it should be in summer.

Kim Il Sung: Yes, we want to send [them] in May-June of this year, about 75-100 people. Cde. Stalin asks whether you plant cotton. Kim Il Sung replies that yes they plant cotton. Further, Cde. Stalin asks: but are there textile mills?

Kim Il Sung replies, explaining...