

November 20, 1967

**Record of Conversation Between A.A. Gromyko and
Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the DPRK Comrade Pak
Seong-cheol**

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Summary:

A record of conversation on the question of the withdrawal of the US troops from South Korea and the tense situation along the demarcation line.

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Russian

Contents:

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RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Between A.A. Gromyko and Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the DPRK Comrade Pak Seong-cheol [Pak Song-chol]

20 November 1967

In the course of conversation during a breakfast arranged by A.A. Gromyko in honour of c. Pak Seong-cheol, who arrived in Moscow as part of the DPRK party-government delegation on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the October [Revolution], A.A. Gromyko remarked that the invitation to Pak Seong-cheol to visit the USSR for rest and treatment remains in force.

Pak Seong-cheol said that he almost decided to use this invitation last summer, but some events inside the country made him reconsider his plans. At the same time, Pak Seong-cheol noted that c. A.A. Gromyko has visited many countries, but has not been to the DPRK yet, and it would be good if he found an opportunity to visit Pyongyang.

Pak Seong-cheol then expressed thanks for the Soviet Union's support for the DPRK in the international arena. The parliamentary group of the USSR refused to invite South Korean representatives to the 56th Conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. The Soviet Union did not grant visas to the South Korean experts for participation in the International Conference of Meteorologists in Leningrad. A lot of work has been done by the Soviet representatives in preparation for discussing the "Korean question" at the 22nd session of the UN General Assembly. As a result of the joint efforts of the Soviet Union, DPRK and other socialist countries, the number of the neutral countries that support proposals of the socialist countries has increased. One should continue to carry out political work in the future in order to make the USA withdraw its forces from South Korea. While the USA continues to occupy South Korea under the UN flag, there are no real opportunities to achieve a peaceful reunification of the country. In case war resumes on the Korean Peninsula, and the American imperialists are striving towards this, the USSR will also have to shoulder a heavy burden.

The enemies of the DPRK insistently repeat that after the pull-out of American forces from South Korea, North Korean forces would allegedly attack the South. This is nothing but an attempt to mislead world public opinion, to fool the people. There is no basis for saying that North Korea will attack the South after the pull-out of American forces, that North Korea is trying to solve the reunification problem by military means. The government of the DPRK repeatedly proposed to cut down forces both in the South and in the North, to conclude a treaty of non-aggression with South Korea after the pull out of American forces, to sit down at the negotiations table and come to terms.

A.A. Gromyko remarked that it is well understood in the Soviet Union that the question of the pull out of American forces from South Korea is not a conjecture. This is a question of a prolonged and tense struggle. Should the Korean comrades have new considerations, [new] proposals on the Korean question, they will be taken into account by the Soviet Union.

Pak Seong-cheol further said that there are currently almost daily military clashes in the vicinity of the demarcation line, provoked by the Americans. The USA is trying to shift the responsibility for the heightening of tensions to the North Korean side. We do not think that at the present time, when the Americans are fighting a war in Vietnam, when the consequences of the events in the Middle East have not been liquidated, the United States will attempt to unleash a new war in Korea. The Americans experienced for themselves the military might of the DPRK during the 3 year Korean

War in 1950-53.

But the fact is that there remains a tense situation along the demarcation line, which is reminiscent of the events leading to the war in 1950. Recent events suggest that war could be resumed at any time. Separate minor clashes could grow into a major conflict. For example, in the spring of this year, a coastal artillery unit of the DPRK sank a South Korean coast guard vessel that trespassed into North Korean territorial waters. After this, mobilization activities were carried out in the South. Certain steps were taken in the DPRK as well. If an attack from the South occurred, the DPRK would reply with a counter-attack. This would create a dangerous situation.

Some comrades judge the situation approximately this way: the DPRK army is strong, the struggle against the puppet regime is unveiling in the South, the DPRK has strong allies - the Soviet Union and China. In such circumstances the Americans will hardly attempt to resume the war. One could not say that this is an incorrect assessment. However, one should not forget that the Americans have been in occupation of South Korea for 22 years, they will hardly content themselves with this. They want to conquer the whole of Korea so as to use it afterwards as a platform for attack against the Soviet Union and China.

The Americans are trying to involve Japan in the realization of their plans for conquering Korea. In recent times the Japanese have visited the demarcation line more often. Not too long ago, the Japanese military attaché came there from Seoul. The Americans and the Japanese have several times carried out joint military exercises. They have a concrete joint plan of invading North Korea.

A.A. Gromyko stressed that the Soviet Union does not possess any information regarding the American preparation for war in Korea. But imperialism remains imperialism, and one should always be ready for possible provocations. A.A. Gromyko inquired about the situation with the repatriation of Korean citizens from Japan to the DPRK.

Pak Seong-cheol replied that about 90 thousand people had been repatriated. The Japanese are trying to pull out of the repatriation agreement. ... [here follows further discussion on repatriation].

In conclusion, Pak Seong-cheol stressed the necessity of common struggle against imperialism. "We desire peace," he said, "but peace is only possible when the world is rid of aggressors. Under current conditions, peace always remains in danger. The DPRK, the USSR, all socialist countries must commit their efforts in order to rid the earth of aggressors, in order to develop friendship and unity."

[END OF CONVERSATION]