

May 4, 1972

Conversation between Kim Il Sung and Lee Hu-rak

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Summary:

Kim Il Sung presents his "Three Principles of National Reunification" as he and Lee Hu-rak debate whether Pak Seong-cheol's visit to Seoul should be preceded by a visit from Kim Yeong-ju.

Original Language:

Korean

Contents:

Translation - English

Conversation with Kim Il Sung

Date and Time: May 4, 1972 00:15-01:30

Location: Kim Il Sung's Mansion, Mansu Hill, Pyongyang

Participants:

From Seoul

LEE Hu-rak Director of KCIA

JEONG Hong-jin Director of Conference Management, Conference Office, Korean Red Cross

From Pyongyang

KIM Il Sung Premier

PAK Seong-cheol [Pak Song Chol] 2nd Vice Premier

KIM Yeong-ju Director of Organization and Guidance, Korean Workers' Party

KIM Joong-lin Secretary of Central Committee, Korean Workers' Party

RYU Jang-sik Deputy Director of Organization and Guidance & Director of External Affairs, Central Committee, Korean Workers' Party

KIM Deok-hyeon Chief Officer of the Politburo, Central Committee, Korean Workers' Party

South: I learned that the Premier contributed tremendously in the development of a Socialist nation during this visit to Pyongyang.

North: I am very pleased to meet you. It's a great pleasure to meet a distant brother. How is the President?

South: He asked me to deliver his regards. He was slightly injured while taking a walk but he is very healthy in general.

North: The fact that President Park sent you to Pyongyang is a display of his trust in us, coming from his determination for reunification. He made a great decision.

South: That is a great comment. I had an intensive discussion with Director Kim over the issue. As you might have noticed, in the South, there are people who believe we should reunify through the support of the four big powers rather than through our own will. Also, there are people who believe we should reunify by force. President Park and I believe that we must reach reunification through our own will. Moreover, reunification is not a matter for the four big powers to intervene. It is a matter for us to voluntarily decide. That is what President Park intends. I discussed the issue with Director Kim for a long while. There were some disagreements. However, I am not disappointed because we had different opinions. I believe the discussion itself bears significance. Yesterday, Director Kim pointed out a critical aspect. He asked if the South is acting as an agent for the United States and Japan. I assure you that we are not. We believe we should be able to resolve issues ourselves.

North: First of all, I trust that President Park sending Director Lee to Pyongyang stems from an ardent desire for reunification. That is the reason I am delighted to meet you. Of course, there are many misunderstandings and distrust due to our separation for over 20 years. If these misunderstandings and distrust were to be resolved through a few discussions, we wouldn't have been separated in the first place for about 26

years. Nonetheless, all the issues will be resolved through our meetings and discussions.

South: That is very true. That is the reason why I made the visit.

North: That's why I am certain Director Lee is a brave person.

South: That is not true. I came because we must leave a unified motherland as a heritage to our descendants. There were many people who opposed my visit. However, I am confident that we will be able to solve the issues by discussing them on our own. Even if we fail to find a solution for the issues today, our meeting itself is greatly significant. I have no doubt that we will be able to solve the issues eventually.

North: It is of great significance. I am very glad that you visited, Director Lee. You are truly a hero.

South: Thank you for meeting us so late at night.

North: It is my habit to work until late. We also have schedules for tomorrow... I am very sorry to have the guests working until late. Please accept my apologies. I heard what you mentioned to the Director of Organization and Guidance. Our stance is to be against foreign reliance in the issue of reunification. Above all, this is the common ground that President Park and I have.

South: It cuts to my heart having outsiders intervening in our matters. It's a huge disgrace being unable to resolve our own issues and is greatly humiliating. How would the outsiders view us?

North: That's a great point. That's why you are a daring person.

South: I was impressed by your anti-Japanese struggles described in the opera today and also the Mangyongdae house where you were born. Allow me to tell you, your patriotism is just like my feelings towards the country and it is what brought me here.

North: Please deliver this message to President Park. We agree that we would promote reunification peacefully and independently, without military conflict and foreign intervention. Since we were torn apart for so long, we have many misunderstandings. However, misunderstandings can be easily fixed depending on the intensity of our patriotism. What matters to us is finding commonalities, not arguing over past faults. It is conducting a sin towards our people.

South: I can't agree with you more.

North: That is why our people must come together. A nation should stand together instead of being divided. We should live in peace, not fight against each other, regardless of the great powers surrounding us. Why would people of same nation argue over who's right and wrong? If we are to reunify, we should start from a ground of solidarity. If we pursue solidarity among our people, we can put behind our pasts, misunderstandings and distrust and look beyond the differences in religion. The principle of solidarity is what matters and we must start from there.

South: What you just mentioned is exactly the same as what President Park has in mind. President Park always mentions that the issue of our nation is not something for foreigners to intervene in. In terms of solving the issue of reunification, he has similar thoughts with the Premier. In order to achieve the goal, I shall discuss with

Director Kim to find commonalities in the method.

North: Director Lee would have an idea regarding the methods and it is likely that we have another opinion. We can't expect the ideas will be the same at once [in the first place]. Therefore, we should think about what we can do for the unity of our nation in advance to figuring out the methods. So is the idea of not engaging in military conflicts. Nixon recently visited China and stated that they shouldn't have a military conflict for [at least] a generation. So the Chinese asked, "How would you define a generation?" Nixon answered, "I intended for the remaining 70s, 80s and 90s." In other words, they wish to have no military conflicts for the remaining of the 20th century. Of course, imperialists say so and often don't keep their words. However, a statement is valuable. Not long ago, Japanese journalists asked me how I viewed Nixon's visit to China. I answered, "Take a look at the Joint Statement. The United States just acknowledged the five principles of peace and the five principles of the Bandung Conference, which they had refused for a long time. I read it myself and my assistants who read it also reported to me that the U.S. has recognized the five principles." It means something. So far, the U.S. had refused to recognize the principles but they just did. Then, isn't this all good and not bad? I wrote an editorial regarding the announcement of the Joint Statement. I received many compliments. When Nixon visited the Great Wall, he commented, "a Great Wall should not exist anywhere in the globe and we must live in peace." I think it is a great speech. Coming from a president of a country, it certainly is a great comment. It provides us the freedom to argue, if you don't want the Soviets to build a great wall, why would you divide us with a Military Demarcation Line, wearing hats that read MP. In other words, no one, including Nixon, China and the Soviet Union, is obligated to any decision in the issue of Chosun.

South: That is absolutely true. No one [other than the Koreans] have the right to [make decision in the issue of Korea]. The Premier mentioned, the Capitalists and the Imperialists say and act differently. We are also a Capitalist country. However, our words and actions are the same.

North: What I mentioned were the Imperialists. South Korea is not an Imperialist country, is it?

South: In fact, it is the great powers that created the thirty-eighth parallel. If we unite as one, we are capable of demolishing the thirty-eighth parallel. If we attempt to abolish it with the help from the great powers, we will soon face another barrier.

North: That is correct.

South: Premier, I have come here in order to avoid engaging in a war.

North: That is true. Armed conflict does not resolve any problem. Please convey my message to President Park that I do not wish for an armed confrontation...

South: I will clearly and accurately report your statements.

North: I don't want any war or any defamation.

South: I spoke over the issue thoroughly with the Director of Organization and Guidance.

North: We can mention virtues a hundred times. We must discuss the issues of our nation in a peaceful manner, without any military conflict. In terms of the methods, it is possible that we have a number of arguments. However, we must argue to resolve

the issue, to unite as one.

South: Solidarity without arguments is worthless solidarity.

North: If we argue in order to reach solidarity, we will eventually find a solution.

South: I've gained confidence as I heard you speak. I am confident we will achieve unity.

North: We may have to deal with some adventurous types of people. Please mention this to President Park. What was the incident? The Blue House raid? It was such a regretful incident to President Park. The incident was entirely plotted by the extreme leftists and did not reflect my intent or that of the Party. Back then, we knew nothing about it. I demoted the head of Security Department, Chief of Staff and the Director of Reconnaissance. Now they work somewhere else.

South: I've heard sufficient explanation about the incident.

North: We need to deal with such misunderstanding first of all. Why would I attempt to kill President Park? Communism is not abolished by killing Kim Il Sung.

South: I apologize for interrupting, but I spoke to the Director [Kim] regarding the issue. There are leftist opportunists, rightist opportunists and extreme leftists. It is likewise in the South. There are terrorists who would attack me for sitting with you today. Nevertheless, we must control these people as we proceed.

North: We must mutually restrain such extremists. Please convey this message to President Park.

- We must reach reunification without the help of foreign powers.
- We must reunify in peace, not through a war.
- We must find a starting point that will enable the unity of our people.
- I believe we could find the methods through discussions.

South: There may be differences in the methods. However, it is insignificant. If we have a common purpose, it will be resolved eventually. We should not have armed conflicts, should not defame each other, and discipline the extremists, as you mentioned. To continue our conversation is to find a solution to the issue, isn't it?

North: The most significant aspect [for our reunification] is to begin with the pursuit of our nation's solidarity, to promote peace instead of conflict, and to be self-determined instead of relying on the foreign powers. Doing so will take care of all of the matters.

South: I'd like to bring up that President Park detests foreign intervention.

North: I would say then the issue is quite ripened. Without foreign intervention and armed conflict, our nation shall reach solidarity. Let's keep other issues such as Communism, Capitalism and so on off the table for now.

South: I believe what you mentioned are the three fundamentals, Premier.

North: Then, the time is ripe as well. President Park must really trust me to have sent you as a representative to the North, don't you agree?

South: I came because I have trust in you, Premier. I would not have come if I didn't. Regarding the methods, please allow me and Director Kim to decide

North: Very well. It is better that we keep it confidential for now. The outsiders often try to interrupt our reunification and they get in our way to reach solidarity.

South: It is exactly the same as what I mentioned to Director Kim. 40~50 million people make the country a powerful nation. About 100 years ago, we had no choice but to cringe to the great powers because we were not strong enough. However, in the future, the great powers of today will cower before us. I clearly mentioned that the great powers wanting our reunification is only a lie they tell on the outside. In fact, they do not wish for it in the inside.

North: The great powers and the Imperialists are keen to divide a nation and split them into many [small groups]. A nation should have the same language and customs. Some people suggested that we reform our writing system after liberation. I opposed the proposition because I was concerned that if we reformed the alphabet when we were not yet reunified, we could split into two nations. I was regarded as a conservative, but I argued that the reform should come after our reunification. A revision of our writing system comes about from rash acts and nearsightedness.

South: I agree with you.

North: We should move onto the path of solidarity rather than falling for others' plots... We shouldn't depend on foreigners. Listening to Director Lee, it seems President Park and I have complete agreement in thoughts. We must begin with the three principles of national reunification: solidarity, peace, and self-determination.

South: With the three principles as pillars of reunification, we will achieve reunification. President Park has exactly the same thoughts.

North: From now on, we will be able to resolve misunderstandings through conversations and discussions. President Park sending Director Lee to represent him suggests a great trust towards us. I will send the Second Vice Premier with trust towards President Park. The Second Vice Premier is in charge of all the interior affairs. He is well aware of how we function internally... We need discussion... I believe it is the best. Although I hear it is a slight injury, I hope President Park recovers soon. Please tell him that I wished the best for his health. From now on, we should trust each other and have heart-to-heart conversations in the future. We shouldn't be uncomfortable because of foreign powers. Since we even have a telephone line now [connecting the South and the North], isn't it delightful that we meet and speak to each other?

South: Director Kim was considering eliminating the telephone line. Please advise him to keep the phone.

North: Since we have the telephone, we would notice if there is any misunderstanding just by talking on the phone.

South: It is my first time meeting with Director Kim since Mr. Kim Deok-hyeon and Mr. Jeong Hong-jin have been in charge of communications. Nonetheless, it feels like we have known each other for a long time.

North: Since I've met with Director Lee, if I meet President Park in the future, it will be as if we already have an old acquaintance.

South: It is an honor for us to have Vice Premier Pak visit. However, I'd like to suggest that it is more favorable that Director Kim visits us first and the Vice Premier visits afterwards. It is more of a regular procedure that Director Kim makes a visit before Vice Premier Pak visits...

North: In fact, Director Kim is so busy that he doesn't even have time for sleep. He is now not feeling well and was unable to meet with Director Lee. However, I urged him to meet [with Director Lee] in person. He fell ill from overwork and he has been working only half-days lately. I am telling you the truth... He can't deal with tasks that involve a lot of stress.

South: Premier, how about a half-day visit?

North: He is suffering from a neurological disorder. He met with you despite his illness because it was an order from me, the Party and the organization... I will send him later when he recovers from the illness.

South: I don't agree on Vice Premier Pak making the visit first. Politics engage quite informal aspects and since we began our acquaintances with Director Kim, I believe the standard procedure is to proceed with the older acquaintances and then host Vice Premier Pak. Our relationship was initiated with Director Kim Yeong-ju anyways.

North: (Kim Yeong-ju) Isn't it a standard procedure for the Vice Premier to visit before I do?

(Kim Il Sung) Vice Premier Pak is an official I trust as much as my own brother. We have been working together as comrades for about 40 years.

South: I have no doubts that the Premier trusts the Vice Premier even more. Nevertheless, it is just that we began our acquaintances that way....

North: The most important thing is that we determined not to have armed conflicts. Thus, we shouldn't have military conflicts... Conflict relates to misunderstanding and lacks principle... I am confident Director Lee contributed to a great extent. President Park could convey his messages directly through Director Lee, or you could speak to Director Kim or Vice Premier Pak... We should talk on the phone... Comrade Mr. Jeong should visit us often... For now, we need to focus on what we must deal with first. We must deal with such issues. I shall open up to Director Lee and discuss whatever issue that comes to my mind.

South: It is the main reason I visited Pyongyang, to meet with you and discuss the issues and to put what you mentioned into action. I'd like to express my gratitude to you for meeting with us so late at night while you are tired.

North: Recently, I had a group of Capitalist journalists crowding around me... and discussed about the projections for our reunification.

South: Premier, you must not trust journalists. Among them are many who wish to estrange relations between the South and the North. I strongly sense it.

North: I already mentioned that the Imperialists are keen to create division. I told the journalist, "The South is on the same page with the North as they promote independence in politics, economy and defense. Therefore, we are capable of achieving reunification. Do not think our nation is incapable of reaching solidarity. My projection is that we can reach unity. If one attacks the South before we reach unity, we will fight against Japanese militarism. This was not published but [I mentioned that] we must show the world that our nation is strong and is capable of uniting. That

way we will be able to convince the people who are against our reunification. There are people in the South who will get in our way towards achieving reunification. It is the same here and there. Nonetheless, we will need measures for reunification. Instead of arguing "you are better" or "I am better," we must announce a united opinion in order to educate the people. We cannot continue educating them differently for around 20 years. We must express some common idea to the world in order to educate our people... and to let the world know. Regarding the methods and the time, please report them when you return ...

South: It's a matter of the methods and time. I will discuss the issue with Director Kim.

North: When you return, please deliver my regards to President Park that I wished the best for his health.