

December 10, 1971

Meeting between North and South Korean Delegates at the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission

Citation:

"Meeting between North and South Korean Delegates at the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission", December 10, 1971, Wilson Center Digital Archive, South Korean Foreign Ministry Archive. <https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/111743>

Summary:

In meeting between North Korean delegate Kim Deok-hyeon and South Korean delegate Jeong Hong-jin, the South explains that it wants to see progress within the Red Cross negotiations, while the North presses for a meeting between high level officials.

Original Language:

Korean

Contents:

Translation - English

South: Your amendment excludes friends but why are you so persistent on the details of the project?

North: Once we reach an agreement on the target participants, the details of the project are to be discussed at the main meeting. Why does it matter so much?

South: Our agenda includes reasonable details in accordance with the general custom of the Red Cross Society's projects. Therefore, it is likely that you must accept our proposal.

North: We should leave the Red Cross Conference issues to be discussed between the chief delegates at the [main] meetings. We should discuss other issues. (An attitude treating the Red Cross meetings lightly [observed].)

South: I noticed a very strong political propaganda during the 11th meeting. What were the reasons?

North: I expected an amendment from you at the 10th meeting. However, it was not the case. That was the reason.

South: What is your intention for a political contact?

North: There is currently an international thaw in relations between countries. The two of us should not be the only exceptions, right?

South: During the last meeting you mentioned anyone trusted by their superior is appropriate. What level of officials in detail do you have in mind?

North: High-level officials from the Korean Worker's Party and the Democratic Republican Party would be appropriate. You probably have seen Kim Il Sung's August 6th statement in full. I believe your suggestion for a Red Cross meeting on August 12th is your response to the statement. (Attaching political significance [to the Red Cross Conference].) I am a member of the Party. Mr. Jeong is probably a member of the Republican Party as well. We are not sitting here as individuals. (Suggesting their role is to serve as mediators for political conferences.)

South: How about the location?

North: It could take place in Korea or in a third country. Wherever is fine. If it is a place where we could speak with each other without letting other countries know, especially the United States, the location does not matter.

South: In order for us to examine [the possibility of] political negotiations, we need to have a clearer idea of your intentions..... For instance, what is a preferred way to shift the current South-North confrontation, in other words, how you would like to change the current circumstances. Could you describe such projections more clearly in detail?

North: I cannot speak of such issues with my personal opinion. I will consult with my superiors when I will return and provide answers when we meet next time.

South: Please answer us clearly next time when we meet. If I am to provide a personal opinion as an individual of the country, shouldn't there be a change in the current circumstances before such political conferences develop? Achievements in

the Red Cross meetings might also contribute to the change in circumstances as well but.....

North: What do you mean by changing the current circumstances? Please explain in a way that is easier to understand.

South: For instance, President "Nixon" will visit the Communist China next year. "Kissinger" has been to Beijing twice..... The premise that enabled such progress was the United States first changing the circumstances through the friendly countries obtaining friendly relations with Communist China....., building mutual trust through the invitation of the table tennis team....., and then moving on to "Kissinger" visiting Beijing and President "Nixon's" visit and so on. Everything is initiated from a small matter and advanced one by one; thus maturing the surrounding circumstances, and eventually leading to political negotiations.

North: There are no matters we could not resolve if we met and spoke openly.

South: You are speaking vaguely..... In order to solve the issues, you would need to start recognizing the circumstances in detail first. I've seen the statement from your Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding our announcement of a state of national emergency. It seemed like you somewhat know the details in the South but were far from clear on what it is in fact like. In addition, the speakers at the armistice line were repeating what was stated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the end, you were pledging that you will not invade the South..... What is it worth if you promise a hundred times merely by words? Rather, the promise must be proven through behavior and action. Who would ever believe such a promise when you promote military training regardless of gender and age, calling it National Exercise and requiring elementary school children to play military games? When the reality is left unchanged and when you merely make promises, who would ever believe it?

North: We must broaden our understanding of each other. Shall we meet before our next meeting?

South: We should discuss through "memos" at our next meeting.