

September 21, 1950

Telegram from Soviet Defense Minister A.M. Vasilevsky to Stalin

Citation:

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Summary:

Vasilevsky reports on the state of Korean fighter aviation regiments, damaged Soviet regiments in Korea, Korean maintenance crews and transport of battalions and munitions supplies to Korea, allowing Stalin to decide, pending further calculations, whether or not it would be logical to transfer aircraft to Pyongyang.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

To Comrade STALIN

Regarding the question of the transfer of fighter aviation regiment of "YAK-9s" to provide air cover to Pyongyang, I herewith report:

1. In order to speed up the regiment transfer, we consider it the most expedient to use the 84th fighter regiment of the 147th aviation division based on 40 metal-made "YAK-9s", deployed in the Maritime Region in the vicinity of Voroshilov. The regiment shall be dispatched by air via Chinese territory by the route Yanji-Andong-Pyongyang. The regiment's overflight should take two days. During the preparation for the overflight one has to take into account the inevitability of air combat in the area of Andong-Pyongyang.

2. In a very cautious manner, we made a number of inquiries to Comrade Shtykov concerning the following questions:

- the suitability for the landing of our aircraft of airbases in the vicinity of Pyongyang which have been badly damaged by the enemy's air raids, especially lately;
- the availability of aircraft maintenance personnel, fuel, and munitions thereat.

3. If the Koreans do not have aircraft maintenance crews, before the regiment's transfer we will have to dispatch an aviation maintenance battalion for this regiment, composed of 223 men with air-base equipment, to Pyongyang by the railroad via Andong. It is likely to take us five-six days to transfer this battalion, given the transport overload across the Yalu River in the vicinity of Andong.

If the Koreans do not have fuel and munitions, we will have to ship them to Pyongyang simultaneously with the battalion transport.

In this case, accounting for the transfer of the personnel, it is likely to take up to eight-ten days for the final readiness of the regiment for combat in the vicinity of Pyongyang.

4. Bearing in mind the lack of Korean aerial surveillance and alert system in the vicinity of Pyongyang, in order to create normal conditions in combat for our regiment, we would consider it necessary to dispatch along with the regiment at least several radar units designed to locate the enemy's aircraft, as well as a team of radio operators who can set up communications between the airbase and these radar posts. Otherwise, our airplanes on the ground will be subject to sudden raids by the enemy's aviation.

5. We ask You to give us permission to report all our final calculations regarding the regiment's transfer to Pyongyang as soon as we find out in Pyongyang the details related to the questions of the regiment's redeployment. At the same time, we will report to You our considerations concerning the organization of the air defense system of the airbase from which the regiment will operate.

[signature]

V A S I L E V S K Y

"21" September 1950

No. 1172cc

Copies: Stalin, Malenkov, Beriya, Mikoyan, Kaganovich, Bulganin, Khrushchev.