

October 1, 1964
**Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the
Hungarian Foreign Ministry**

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Summary:

Hungarian diplomats discuss a five-year agreement between North Korea and the Soviet Union for the exchange of lumber.

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On 24 August, the Provisional Chargé d'Affaires of the Soviet Embassy, Comrade Pimenov, told Comrade Fendler that recently problems had recently arisen in Soviet-Korean cooperation for lumber. In accordance with the five-year agreement signed in 1957, the DPRK lumbers free of charge, with its own workforce, in the Amur region. In 1961, during Kim Il Sung's visit to Moscow, the agreement was extended, at the request of the Korean side, for another 10 years. The DPRK has hitherto lumbered approx. 2 million cubic meters of wood, and at present there are still approx. five thousand Koreans working in the forests around Khabarovsk. In the last months the Korean workers and their leaders have been behaving more and more provocatively, they are violating the rules aimed at the protection of forests, and the articles of the intergovernmental agreement, etc. The competent Korean authority is intentionally raising difficulties in the work with the local Soviet organs, and finally the head of the Korean enterprise made an ultimatum-like statement, according to which they would cancel the agreement unless the Soviet side fulfilled a good many demands of theirs. At the same time, they are taking advantage of the relaxed rules of border crossing to ship large quantities of vodka, apple, salt, Japanese goods, transistor appliances, etc., from the DPRK for the workers, and the Korean workers are carrying on a speculative trade with the local population by selling these goods. This had assumed such proportions that the local organs were obliged to report it to Moscow. On 17 August the Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister sent for the Ambassador of the DPRK, and gave him a verbal warning; at the same time, he reminded him that since it was an intergovernmental agreement they were talking about, the government of the DPRK should officially confirm the statement of the aforementioned managing director, and in this case, if the DPRK wanted to cancel the agreement, the Soviet side would not make difficulties over that. Deputy Minister Kim Yeong-nam also sent for Comrade Pimenov about the issue, and he blamed the Soviet organs for the difficulties.

On 8 September Comrade Pimenov also informed Comrade Fendler about the fact that three days ago Deputy Minister Kim Yeong-nam had again sent for the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires, and handed him the letter of the Korean government, in which they proposed the cancellation of the agreement, laying the blame on the Soviet side.

Following that, Comrade Moskovsky told me that recently he had met Deputy Minister Kim Yeong-nam. The Deputy Minister raised the issue of the cancellation of the Khabarovsk lumbering agreement [...].

Thereupon the Soviet Ambassador replied the following: [...] Unfortunately, the competent Korean authorities took unfair advantage of the helpfulness of the Soviet Union.

For one thing, recently the Korean lumberers have been exploiting the forests really ruinously, they are cutting down even the saplings, and, as a consequence, it will take a long time to reforest the area.

Secondly, the Korean organs took advantage of the relaxed rules of border crossing [...] to smuggle in Chinese anti-Soviet propaganda material, and they also involved the employees of the Korean Consulate in Nakhodka in that. [...]

Finally, Comrade Moskovsky emphasized to the Deputy Minister that if this activity continued, the Soviet organs would be obliged to close the Korean Consulate in Nakhodka and arrest certain persons so as to put an end to these unfriendly, destructive activities against the Soviet people.

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(Ambassador)