

**July 29, 1968**

**A Conversation with the 1st Secretary of the  
Embassy of the USSR in the DPRK, Comrade  
Zvetkov, and Comrade Jarck.**

**Citation:**

"A Conversation with the 1st Secretary of the Embassy of the USSR in the DPRK, Comrade Zvetkov, and Comrade Jarck.", July 29, 1968, Wilson Center Digital Archive, MfAA, G-A 320; translated by Karen Riechert  
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**Summary:**

With the lack of coal, coke, water, steel, and iron Kim Il Sung expresses the domestic problems in the DPRK to Comrade Novikov. He thanks the USSR for their aid and stresses the importance of the organization of Communist countries especially after the Pueblo incident.

**Original Language:**

German

**Contents:**

Translation - English

Embassy of the GDR in the DPRK  
Pyongyang, 29 July 1968

To:  
State Secretary and First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Comrade J[osef] Hegen  
102 Berlin  
Marx-Engels-Platz

Stamped: State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 5 August 1968

Dear Comrade Hegen!

Attached I send you as confidential matter a memorandum on a conversation I recently had with a Soviet comrade. He informed [me] about the statements by Comrade Kim Il Sung to Comrade Novikov on 31 May 1968.

From our files I cannot assess whether we have already reported the content of this conversation to Berlin. I have also sent a copy of this confidential matter to Comrade Markowski, but not to the Information Department and the regional department of the Foreign Ministry, because this conversation dates already from about two months ago.

If the opinions and facts stated in this conversation might not be known from other sources, and if you might assign the Information Department to process this memorandum accordingly, please do not mention the source of this information.

With socialist wishes

[signed]  
Jarck  
Acting Ambassador

Embassy of the GDR in the DPRK  
Pyongyang, 29 July 1968

Stamped: Confidential Matter 22/68  
Stamped: Declassified 5 June 1987

#### Memorandum

on a Conversation with the 1st Secretary of the Embassy of the USSR in the DPRK, Comrade Zvetkov, and Comrade Jarck on 26 July 1968 between 14.30 and 16.15 in the USSR Embassy

At the latest meeting with Comrade Zvetkov, I inquired whether there had been a top-level meeting during the visit of the Soviet delegation that participated in the meeting of the joint Korean-Soviet consultative economic committee. Comrade Zvetkov confirmed that [there had been] and promised to inform us about the relevant contents of this conversation.

At the beginning I informed Comrade Zvetkov about the meeting with the DPRK Foreign Minister, Comrade Pak Seong-cheol [Pak Song Chol] (see memorandum VD Nr. 54/68).

Continuing, Comrade Zvetkov made the following remarks: Comrade Novikov was received by Kim Il Sung on 31 May 1968. Comrade N. forwarded the greetings of the leading comrades from the USSR and made brief statements about the domestic situation of the USSR.

Then Kim Il Sung made the following statements on the domestic situation of the DPRK: In 1967 the plan was fulfilled in industry and agriculture. Industrial production increased by 17 percent (in value). Construction was lagging behind, this has become already notorious. It constitutes a very serious question. Harvest would not have been bad last year. Without the flood, one would have been able to stock up reserves. Damages caused by the flood totaled nearly one billion won. By now they have been overcome. In this context Kim Il Sung thanked us for the support [we gave] to overcome the effects of this flood. Here he mentioned in particular the aid for the reconstruction of the textile factory [in] Pyongyang and the speedy completion of the thermo-electric power plant [in] Pyongyang.

On the economic situation in 1968 the following remarks were made: The plan has mostly been fulfilled in the first quarter. There are, however, two major problems. One is defined by the fact of low precipitation over the winter, which caused difficulties for the hydroelectric power plants. Deficient energy production had an impact primarily on the metallurgical and chemical industries. Both industrial branches could only run at around 50 percent of their capacities. For that matter, the plan had obviously not been fulfilled. In this context Comrade Kim Il Sung emphasized the importance of the thermo-electric power plant in Pyongyang built with the support of the USSR. So far it has been the only major thermo-electric plant providing adequate service.

The second problem in the economy during the first quarter of 1968 consisted of the fact that the DPRK did not have at its disposal sufficient amounts of coke and coal. The metallurgical industry could fulfill its plan in the first quarter only by 70 percent. As a result, currently there are insufficient amounts of steel and iron in the country. In combination with the power deficits mentioned previously, this causes very negative consequences for mechanical engineering. As a consequence, industry will fulfill the plan for the first half of 1968 very badly.

In 1968 the target for the increase of industrial production has been set at 18 percent over 1967.

Mining is going well in the DPRK. The metallurgical industries, among them the non-ferrous metal industry, has a lot of raw materials. They lag behind in processing, however, since there is not sufficient electrical power.

The drought in the winter and spring had a major impact on cultivation in the case of wheat and barley. It is likely that only 50 percent of the quantities set for the plan will be harvested.

Major difficulties are continuing in transportation, Comrade Kim Il Sung remarked. In particular there was a lack of freight cars.

Concluding this subject, Comrade Kim Il Sung explained that those problems have to be taken into account, but they would not be of relevant importance. It would be relevant for the Korean people to understand those difficulties and make all effort to mark the 20th Anniversary [of the DPRK] highly successfully.

On the foreign policy of the DPRK, Comrade Kim Il Sung stated the following: Relations with the USSR and the European socialist countries are developing well, also relations with the DRV [Democratic Republic of Vietnam]. Concerning the

relations with the PRC, there was a complete standstill; notwithstanding trade, which was going badly, though. Although there had been a protocol signed about foreign trade between the DPRK and the PRC in 1968, it was foreseen that the PRC's obligations would not be met. In many cases, according to Comrade Kim Il Sung, they do not have what they agreed to deliver. The Chinese side met their commitments on deliveries of coke and coal by only 50 percent.

There would be no contacts and exchanges of delegations between the DPRK and the PRC.

Concerning the case of the Pueblo, the position of the DPRK is clear, Kim Il Sung stated. The DPRK would extradite the Pueblo crew if the American side would issue an apology. Apparently the USA is not in a hurry to do that, so the DPRK would likewise not speed up the extradition of the crew. Comrade Kim Il Sung added that he thinks there will be no aggravation of the situation because of the Pueblo.

The remarks Comrade Kim Il Sung made on the situation in South Korea, according to Comrade Zvetkov, could be summarized with the conclusion that South Korea had exploited the Pueblo incident to receive major aid from the U.S., particularly in military terms. Now and in the nearest future, South Korea would receive modern fighter jets and other modern weapons and equipment. Comrade Zvetkov added that the Pueblo incident doubtlessly had an impact, but one should not overlook the fact that the events in Seoul, which occurred before the Pueblo incident, would also have constituted a major reason for the U.S. to concede to South Korean pressure for the delivery of modern weapons and equipment.

Concerning the economic relations between the DPRK and the USSR, Comrade Kim Il Sung remarked as follows: He expressed thanks for the USSR's support of the DPRK through deliveries of coke and coal, oil products and other goods. He asked for an acceleration in construction of the second thermo-electric power plant in Puktschan. After completion of this power plant, the DPRK will have a capacity for energy production in thermo-electric power plants of 1000 megawatts (400 megawatts in Pyongyang, 600 megawatts in Puktschan).

Comrade Kim Il Sung asked Comrade Novikov to ask in Moscow whether the USSR would be willing to deliver 20,000 tons of aluminum in exchange for zinc. Furthermore, he asked Comrade Novikov to use his influence for a positive decision on the question of building an aluminum factory to take advantage of allegedly existing bauxite deposits. Comrade Kim Il Sung added that there were problems in the DPRK because it does not have sufficient quantities of copper wire. Moreover, he asked him to address the question of delivering various goods by sea.

Comrade Kim Il Sung continued that he would like to ask Comrade Novikov to forward the following request to the leading comrades of the USSR: The government of the DPRK is requesting the government of the USSR for permission to use an air route for special flights by members of the party leadership or the government [of the DPRK], which would fly over the mainland straight from the DPRK into the USSR. In this way, any contact with Chinese territory or flight over the open sea would be avoided.

Explaining this request, Comrade Kim Il Sung said that a forced landing might happen on flights over Chinese territory and insults by Red Guards might occur. The flight route over the sea would be dangerous, especially after the Pueblo incident. Comrade Zvetkov remarked that Kim added: "We do not fear death, but we have to live in order to finish the revolution."

Finally, Comrade Kim Il Sung talked about how the Korean comrades are always aware that the USSR liberated the country, and that the Soviet people have shed

their blood in Korea. Thus the Korean people would forever support friendship with the USSR and would honor those deeds of the USSR forever. The Korean comrades are pleased that relations have been developing in a fine way since 1964.

I thanked Comrade Zvetkov for this extensive information. There was a subsequent exchange of opinions on the subject that recently in various publications, speeches and similar things, new codes were used pertaining to DPRK national policy. Whereas in previous times, and since the Pueblo incident almost exclusively, they talked about the expulsion of U.S. troops from South Korea, they now use the term withdrawal. They also have begun again to say that the basic line of DPRK policy for solving the national question is the peaceful reunification of the country without interference from outside. The Soviet comrades have also noted that change of argumentation. Comrade Zvetkov opined, however, that it certainly would be premature to decide at this point whether this is a tactical move or whether there are certain real modifications in the DPRK positions on these problems. Comrade Zvetkov emphasized that one should not forget that at the same time there are publications which continuously point to an armed liberation of South Korea.

I myself stated that we are aware of those facts, and it would undoubtedly be premature to draw certain conclusions from those contradictory facts. One has to diligently observe those things, however, and to collect material in order to draw reasonable conclusions at an appropriate moment. Comrade Zvetkov fully agreed on that and suggested that we talk about those questions again later.

[signed]

Jarck

Acting Ambassador

Copies:

1 x State Secretary Comrade Hegen

1 x Central Committee, IV. Department, Comrade Markowski

1 x Embassy, Secretariate