

April 30, 1962

**Minutes of Conversation between Deng Xiaoping
and the North Korean Ambassador to China Han
Ik-su**

Citation:

"Minutes of Conversation between Deng Xiaoping and the North Korean Ambassador to China Han Ik-su", April 30, 1962, Wilson Center Digital Archive, PRC FMA 106-01380-18, 61-66. Obtained by Shen Zhihua and translated by Jeffrey Wang and Charles Kraus.
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/116538>

Summary:

Chairman of China Deng Xiaoping and the DPRK Ambassador to China Han Ik-su exchange views about the relationship between China and North Korea. They reiterate the need to strengthen the unity of socialist camp and the fraternal relationship between China and North Korea. They also agree that the truth about communism is to combine Marxism-Leninism with the actual conditions of one's own country, not to blindly follow Soviet Union dogma in all circumstances.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from MacArthur Foundation

Original Language:

Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English

(Not yet proofread)

Time: 30 April 1962, 11:00 a.m.

Location: Zhongnanhai, Juren Hall

Accompanying personnel: Department Head Zhou Qiuye

Translator: Kang Ryong-gu [Kang Ryong Gu]

Documentation: Tang Yingbin

Han Ik-su : [I am] ten minutes late. Is Comrade General Secretary healthy?

Deng [Xiaoping]: Not bad, just some small problems.

Han: I am happy to see that the comrades of the [Chinese] leadership are in good health.

Deng: Yes, it is better to first complete our historical duties. For example, others always say that we cannot do it, we must wait until we can do it, and then we can conclude.

Han: The reason they say that we are incapable is that they do not understand.

Deng: It is better that they say we are incapable. We need to hurry and move forward while they say we are incapable. Did [your country] not also develop from being incapable to capable? Comrade Peng Zhen received a very welcoming reception during his visit this time.

Han: [We are only] doing what we should.

Deng: This is very good. If relations are good, then they call it dogmatism, sectarianism! It is natural that [our] relations should be warm and intimate. It is good [that way].

Han: It does not matter what other people say. The relations between China and [North] Korea are fraternal relations, the more intimate the better.

Deng: Our crime is at most national communism. At the Moscow Conference, [we] argued over this for days. What is national communism? It is not [following] them. If we [follow] them for everything, and we do not have our own [thoughts], then is that not true dogmatism?

Han: People who call us nationalist communists are only proving that they do not understand the truth about communism. Comrade Kim Il Sung often instructs us that communists must fully understand their own people and their own motherland.

Deng: Yes, true dogmatism is not combining Marxism-Leninism with the actual conditions of one's own country. We have always firmly opposed dogmatism, we are genuinely opposed to it. Cuba's [Fidel] Castro strongly opposes [dogmatism]-did you see the Havana Declaration? They oppose dogmatism very strongly! We have just received the full text of the declaration, but a while ago we published the main points of the declaration in [our] newspapers and now we are going to publish the full text in the form of a small booklet. It is all right to call us dogmatists as long as we are not

called revisionists. Since you have arrived in Beijing, how is the atmosphere of Beijing's diplomatic community?

Han: I just arrived and I haven't had much contact yet. I met some Chinese comrades and comrades of the leadership from various fields. They are all very concerned about our work and they are willing to assist us. I am very content, very satisfied. I think from today onwards, I will not have much difficulty in my work.

Deng: Do you have contact with others? With other fraternal countries?

Han: Not really. Recently among the capitalist and neutral states, [I] met the Burmese Ambassador to China. He told us that their situation is similar to how our situation was in the past. [He] expressed satisfaction with the friendship and mutual assistance between our two countries.

Deng: Between our fraternal countries, it should not be external relations; it should be internal relations. However, over a long period of time, most fraternal countries are conducting external relations and not internal relations. The atmosphere of Beijing's diplomatic community is not positive; it is possible that you came at a good time since recently it has improved. Even people from capitalist countries feel this way; the Ambassador of Pakistan publicly said in Hong Kong that the atmosphere of Beijing's diplomatic community is a bit strange; socialist countries oppose China. Of course, he is not speaking about [North] Korea and [North] Vietnam. Our relations are that of comrades. We conduct internal relations and not external relations. [Our] relations are completely comradely. Here we have the [CCP] International Liaison Department, from today onwards if anything arises you can contact them. You can also contact Premier Zhou [Enlai] or contact Comrade Chen Yi. It is also very convenient [for you] to contact the marshals. If there is a need, you can also contact me. The viewpoints of our two countries are exactly the same. The issue which we currently have deals with the border. It is an issue of how to draw the border on the map and it is easy to resolve.

Han: (Laughter)

Deng: We have not finished preparations [but] we do not think there are any issues. Negotiations will provide resolution [because] there are no major issues.

Han: Earlier Comrade General Secretary discussed the atmosphere of Beijing's diplomatic community and that there are no external relations between our countries. In the future, we need to strengthen the relationship between our two countries. Premier Kim often talks of the need to strengthen the relations between our two countries. In the future, I also plan to do exactly that in my work.

Deng: Yes, we need to conduct internal relations between us.

Han: Comrade General Secretary has already discussed some of the recent situations. We still need to continue to work hard towards strengthening the unity of the socialist camp.

Deng: We need to insist upon unity, insist upon principles.

Han: Of course, we also need to insist upon principles. Comrade General Secretary said we should not conduct external relations between us, rather we should conduct internal relations; this is something that we ought to do. In certain occasions we still need to present a form of external relations; in actual work, though, we can skip the conduct of external relations. In the future, if we have any actual issues then we will

certainly mention it.

Deng: Yes, we need to be particular about form. Between us we conduct internal relations and not external relations. However, you will encounter many [situations of] external relations. You engaged in guerrilla warfare with Comrade Premier Kim right? The fighting continued until when? 1945?

Han: [I] engaged in guerrilla warfare with Premier Kim continuously since the 1930s.

□

Deng: The revolutionary tradition in education [in your party] is done very well. Your militias are also managed very well.

Han: 50,000 people attended the review of the Red Guards in Pyongyang.

Deng: Last year I was with [F.R.] Kozlov and Premier Kim. [The Soviets] worked on atomic weapons and we worked on militias. We want to work on atomic weapons but we also do not want to abandon the militias. If actual fighting does occur, it will not amount to much. Not to mention it is not necessarily the case that fighting will occur. Currently both sides have atomic weapons. The United States is very active in Asia, Africa, and Latin America; it possesses nuclear weapons and conducts conventional warfare. Now they are even working on the so called special warfare, which is counter-guerrilla warfare. Kennedy is currently studying Comrade Mao Zedong's writings on guerilla warfare, but can they learn it? In reality, they cannot.

Han: The Americans know themselves that atomic weapons cannot decide victory or defeat in a war. People decide [the outcome of war]. In the past they have used aircrafts and atomic weapons to intimidate people, but it does not have much effect. We can conduct defensive preparations, dig tunnels, and strengthen fortifications. Our tunnels are not afraid of atomic weapons, not even American atomic weapons.

Deng: You have very good terrain.

Han: Have you been there?

Deng: I have been there. I have been to Panmunjeom [Panmunjom], Hamheung [Hamhung], and Geumgangsan [Kumgangsan]. The terrain is good, a small plain surrounded by mountains. The mountain sceneries are also excellent. Do you still have work today?

Han: I still have work at 12:00 p.m.

Deng: All right, then let us talk another time. This is already our second meeting. In the future we can meet at any time. I welcome you to visit frequently.

Han: If I have any difficult matters in the future, I will visit Comrade Secretary General often.

Deng: Good.