

September 15, 1963

Minutes of Conversation between Liu Shaoqi and Kim Il Sung

Citation:

"Minutes of Conversation between Liu Shaoqi and Kim Il Sung", September 15, 1963, Wilson Center Digital Archive, PRC FMA 203-00566-05, 91-100. Obtained by Shen Zhihua and translated by Jeffrey Wang and Charles Kraus.
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Summary:

Chairman Liu Shaoqi and Premier Kim Il Sung discussed about friendly foreign relations between China and North Korea, as well as Sino-Soviet Split.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from MacArthur Foundation

Original Language:

Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English

Top Secret, Document 731

Time: 5 September 1963, 5:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.

Location: Korean Workers' Party Central Committee Office Building

Participants:

From China: Lin Feng, Ye Jianying, Wu Xiuquan, Ji Pengfei, Wan Li, Qiao Guanhua, Yu Peiwen, Cao Keqiang, Ji Suhua, Li Shuhuai

From Korea: Choe Yong-geon [Choe Yong-geon], Kim Il, Pak Geum-cheol [Pak Kum Chol], Kim Chang-man [Kim Chang Man], Ri Hyo-sun [Ri Hyo Sun], Kim Gwang-hyeop [Kim Kwang Hyop], Pak Seong-cheol [Pak Song Chol]

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Documentation: Wang Fei and Kim So-seong [Kim So Song]

Chairman Liu [Shaoqi] (to be abbreviated as Liu): Comrades Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, Zhu De, and Deng Xiaoping, among other comrades, send their regards to Comrade Premier [Kim Il Sung] and to other leading comrades of the Korean Party and Government.

Premier Kim [Il Sung] (to be abbreviated as Kim): Thank you. The Central Committee of the Korean [Workers'] Party, the [Korean] Government, the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly and each and every Korean welcome Chairman Liu's visit.

Liu: It has been my wish to visit Korea, to meet with the people and leaders of your country.

Kim: Thank you.

Liu: Many of my comrades have [already] visited, [but] I have fallen behind. I must catch up.

Kim: Comrades Zhou Enlai and Zhu De, among others, have visited in the past, but you have not been here before.

Liu: That is true.

Kim: There is a Korean saying, "Joyous occasions which come later will be given preferential treatment." [So] the Korean people, from their hearts, are happy about Chairman Liu's visit.

Liu: As we arrived in [North] Korea today, we witnessed an enthusiastic welcome from the Korean people. They were very warm, very pleasant.

Kim: The Korean people have deep feelings for the Chinese. During three years of war, our people shed blood together. There are many graves for comrades of the [Chinese People's] Volunteer Army in Korea. The [People's] Volunteer Army was in [North] Korea for eight years. Eight years is not a short time, so [our] feelings run deep. We were together during the [Korean] War, and we were together during the

period of post-war reconstruction. The Corps of Engineers of the Volunteer Army took part in the reconstruction of Pyongyang, and many comrades of the Volunteer Army participated in construction [activities]. The Daedong [Taedong] Bridge was also repaired by the Volunteer Army. We did not have brick kilns then, so a regiment of the Volunteer Army helped us to build one. I once watched [a group of] laboring [People's] Volunteer Army soldiers at a work site, where they were lugging piles of bricks back and forth. [This] was quite encouraging for us. A technique to build brick kilns was also given to us by the Volunteer Army. In short, [we] fought together, [we] suffered together, [and we] rebuilt together. [Our] affinity runs deep. [One] could not even write a novel [about these things]. When the Volunteer Army left Korea, many [of our] people shed tears. With such close relations, how could the Korean people not sincerely welcome a visit by the representatives of the Chinese people with their hearts? From my view, how they welcomed you is genuine.

Liu: I agree with the view of Comrade Premier. The friendship of the Chinese and Korean peoples was formed through a long period of struggle. The one million soldiers of the [People's] Volunteer Army mainly came for combat. They were good at combat and work, but there were mistakes and shortcomings. To speak truthfully, we should recognize that the Volunteer Army made contributions, but [they] also made mistakes and had shortcomings. That there are graves of the Volunteer Army in Korea is a good thing. There are many graves of Korean comrades in China as well. I also knew many Korean comrades who were killed in China, [as] I worked at the Manchurian Provincial Committee and there were many Korean comrades there. We recently published an article about Stalin. Did Comrade Premier read it yet?

Kim: I have not yet read it. Because Comrade [Dipa Nusantara] Aidit has only just left, and I was talking with him, I have not had time to read it.

Liu: [It is] an open letter criticizing the CPSU. The first article was already published, this was the second. The second article is even better than the first one, [as] it strikes harder [at the Soviets]. [We are] preparing to issue more in the future. [We] will issue an article every five to seven days. When a month passes by and there is a new situation, then we will write according to that new situation. [We] will see if they break. If they do, then it should be due to this second article.

Kim: That powerful! I think it is better to publish more. These articles are not what Khrushchev needs; they are what the people of the world need.

Liu: We have thought about Khrushchev's revisionism for several years, [but] now it is necessary to publish these types of articles. There are some people who are more anxious than us, and they said that we have been too slow [to respond to Khrushchev]. Some people wrote to us and asked that we hurry and be more resolute. There are also even more people who say that we are excessive; they said "you have [good] reasons," but they also have [their own] opinions. It seems that mainly they are afraid of a split, afraid of a Sino-Soviet split, a split of the international communist movement. Other things they agree with, but they do not agree with a split. There are also some people who oppose our views. Throughout the world though, including [even] the vast majorities who are in agreement with us, everyone is slightly afraid of a split. At present, we have resorted to an open debate with the leadership of the CPSU. In the past, we did not resort to pointing out names, [but now] we have pointed at the CPSU leadership and Khrushchev.

Kim: They were the first to [conduct] ad homonym attacks. You cannot exercise patience.

Liu: Indeed, we are behind.

Kim: We agree.

Liu: It is not a certainty that your method will be the same as ours. [You] can use different methods [than us]. We understand that your position and views on the major international issues are completely the same as ours. But methods can be different. Our method is different from Albania's.

Kim: Right now you are conducting [the struggle], [but] next time it will be our turn. There is no other way. At present, we are making preparations, [we are] preparing to enter the fight. We are mobilizing several people to write articles. [Our] strengths are deployed, [we] are working on the economy, [and] in order to participate in the debate, we must make excellent preparations. We absolutely cannot not participate in this struggle. In order to protect the purity of Marxism and oppose revisionism, this is a necessary path [and we must] participate in this struggle. Albania and China are leading the charge, and we are behind [Albania and China].

Liu: I am afraid that the struggle cannot be avoided.

Kim: There is no one inside of our Party who is afraid of entering into a battle. This is because we have already conducted ideological preparations within our Party. However, there are still some issues with individuals, particularly those from the intelligentsia, but they are not many. There was an issue last winter and this spring, but it was not a big [problem]. Some university professors had said that [we] should engage in an economic division of labor with the Soviet Union, [believing] that we cannot develop on our own. In addition, [there are some] who fear a split. We offered interpretations for these situations. [And now] they already understand that the Party's direction is correct. Some time ago I went to Ryanggang [Province], and the Chairman of the Provincial Party Committee told me about two university professors from the Forestry University who fit the situation [that I just described]. So I talked with the Dean and the Party Secretary [of the University] and told them that we must educate well. Do not suppress [erroneous views], but [instead] explain [the truth]. As long as [we] educate [them], we can turn [them] around and [they] will follow us; they will not be scared away. In the past, we only conducted general education about anti-revisionism; [we] seldom discussed the harm which [revisionism] has reaped upon our country. That was a shortcoming. If we can concretely carry out [anti-revisionist] education, there will be a great effect. After doing this in Pyongyang for three years, there have been many examples [which show] the effectiveness [of such education]. Among the workers and peasants, there is not even one person who supports revisionism and Khrushchev. There are some individual intellectuals who do, [but] not many. We discovered these few [individuals], [but] there could still be some who have not been identified [yet]. Either way there is no problem, for [they] cannot influence our Party's entry into the battle; rather, as our Party enters into the fight, this will elevate the consciousness of these individuals. We are currently in the preparatory stages.

Liu: Good. Openly criticize by name-slowly is okay, no need to rush.

Kim: When considering this issue, the main thing is how to carry [this] out without affecting national relations [with the Soviet Union]. In reality, we already do not have much contact with them [the Soviets]. In terms of the economy, there is only a small trade relationship. They are conducting [ideological] education against our Party within their country and party. Not only do they oppose you, they also oppose us. This is very clear; they do not agree with our Party's policies. It is certain that they do not approve of our Party. They do not publicly criticize us by name [because] they cannot but consider the kind of [possible] consequences which would arise among the Soviet people and working people of other countries. Therefore they do not condemn us by name, but not because they love us. They will condemn us sooner or later. If they publicly [condemn us], we also will publicly [condemn] them. We are already

prepared for this.

Liu: [If they] publicly condemn you, then you can only publicly condemn [them as well].

Kim: Of course, we are not that foolish.

Liu: Even if it comes to naming, [you] can proceed slowly. [You] can use the first and second echelon method.

Kim: Temporarily, we do not need to name names, but [we] want to publish theoretical essays. [The essays] will educate the people and can influence other parties. And so we are prepared to join the war of words.

Liu: It is possible to not name names when participating in the [Sino-Soviet] debate. Khrushchev's way is that he provides one name and then ten other parties provide names. Last winter, forty or so parties named our Party. They do not understand the tactic of first and second [echelon]. I think this tactic is not very good. Why not conduct [affairs] in phases? If everyone rushes in a crowd without success, then [the argument] cannot be won. It is now our turn to attack them. We will not follow their method.

Kim: I think their method is despicable; it is illogical nonsense. Many countries do not believe them because what the [Soviet Union] says is illogical. The article you published, [though], has had an important effect upon the world workers' movement.

Liu: We must continue to debate until a result arises.

Kim: The letter published on 14 June [1963] was effective and seems to have caused dissension among some parties. [It had] a positive influence upon us. Our university professors also said it was very good. Teachers and students at universities have carefully studied this letter. I think this letter will produce an effect among other parties. It seems that the situation within Bulgaria is not stable. After this letter was issued, the leftist group within the Bulgarian [Communist] Party became more active. There is also dissension within the Italian and French [Communist] Parties. This is a good thing.

Liu: [The letter] has also affected the Soviet [Communist] Party and [communist [parties] in Eastern Europe, forcing them to publish the letter in Pravda. Other countries also followed them and published the letter. Poland and Romania did not publish the full text. After Soviet Pravda published [the letter], the paper's circulation was diminished [so] people cannot buy it. There were two versions of Pravda on the day [it was published]. The Moscow Pravda published [the letter] but local versions did not publish [it]. Workers wanted to purchase it but could not buy it anywhere. Some people bought it but the paper was recollected by the party. Czechoslovakia used this same method. From these places, [we] can know that they have a guilty conscience and they are weak and afraid.

Kim: Doing bad things tends to produce a guilty conscience.

Liu: Their days of getting by through producing rumors and slander are numbered. Many people are worried, afraid that we will be isolated; they say we are the minority. The truth is, they are the minority and we are the majority. Particularly after the article on Stalin is published, those people inside of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Eastern European and other parties who want revolution will become anti-Khrushchev. Since the signing of the tripartite treaty, there have been

people who have begun to support him, but this is only temporary. They say we are the minority. After two or three years, when the treaty loses its influence, people will stop believing, that or the ranks of people who believe will become thin. The issue over Stalin will be the same.

Kim: In regards to Stalin, many Soviet people support your viewpoint. There are many Soviet people there who are not satisfied with the current situation. They are the people who espouse your article.

Liu: There are many people in the Soviet Union who support the Stalin article. Khrushchev completely denied Stalin's [achievements]. [Our] article hurts him the most, because he rose [only] by opposing Stalin. He did not oppose Stalin for the sake of opposing Stalin. Rather he opposed Stalin in order to take over the party's political leadership. He has bad intentions. People with bad intentions are afraid of being exposed by others. Our article has hurt him.

Kim: Such is the motivation of Khrushchev to criticize Stalin. Committee Chairman Choe said that the 22nd Congress burned Stalin. A few before them burned Lenin also. [But] now they have to preserve Lenin's body in order to cheat the people.

Liu: [I want] to use this visit as an opportunity to exchange views on these issues. This is because it is an issue which concerns all of humanity, and is of particular [importance] to us and you. The struggle has already entered into a new phase, and communists all over the world must consider it [carefully]. [I am] prepared to candidly tell you our thoughts [on the issue]. The views and positions of our two parties are completely unanimous. We will not mention the opinions we have exchanged in the past. There are still some new questions that require an exchange of views. We would like to request your views on several issues. [We] should comprehensively exchange the views of our two parties on various aspects of international issues.

Kim: Very good. It is necessary to further study the new trends.

Liu: Because new situations have emerged, we should consider new issues. We have felt them out a few times, [and] it seems Khrushchev still does not dare to break relations with us. The possibility of breaking relations is, however, still there. At this moment, what do we do? Is it beneficial to break relations or not [with the Soviet Union]? [If] we break relations [with them], you do not have to break relations; it is still better if you do not break relations.

Kim: If they want to break relations with you, they will also break relations with us. They are not interested in the Far East, they are also not interested in war; [the question of] annexing Korea or not has nothing to do with them. They watch Europe. They view us as toes, and they view Europe as the heart. So we must make preparations. The question is, if they do not raise this issue first, do we initiate it-it is a question of effect rather than anything else. From my view, if they break with you, then they will also break with us. When Stalin was still alive, he wanted to enter the Korean War, but [even] he did not. How would Khrushchev ever do so?

Liu: When the [People's] Volunteer Army entered the Korean War, Premier Zhou [Enlai] and Stalin held negotiations and Stalin agreed and promised to assist us. At that time we did not have an air force, [so] we requested support from the Soviet Air Force. We would fight on the ground and they would send their air force. They promised to help us via their air force, but after two days they changed their minds and said they would not dispatch their air force.

Kim: I know of this situation.

Liu: Therefore, as the [People's] Volunteer Army reached Korea, the skies were filled with American planes. We did not have planes and the [People's] Volunteer Army was exasperated. After continued negotiations, they sent two divisions to Andong [Dandong] but with strict rules not to cross the 38th parallel.

Kim: They did not even go to Pyongyang, [only] to Jeongju [Chongju], Anju and the Cheongcheon [Ch'ongch'on] River.

Liu: The downed [Soviet] pilots and aircrafts all landed in our territory. At that time, [Soviet] support was still there, [the Soviets] supported you. Back then, it was said that munitions and weapons would be sold [by the Soviets to the Chinese] at half price, [however] some items such as cars were still sold at full price; therefore, much of our debt is related to the Korean War. We continue to repay debt [to the Soviet Union]. We can finish paying back our debts either next year or the year after.

Kim: They are aggressively forcing us to repay the debts we incurred during the war. [Anastas] Mikoyan came to specifically ask [for repayment] and we refused; we did not give it to him. We are currently repaying the debt incurred from munitions used to arm troops after the war, every year we pay 25 million Rubles, [or] approximately 100 million old Rubles. Five years from today we can finish repaying [our debts].

Liu: After repaying debts, we will feel more relaxed. We did not refuse our debts. We paid them back so they could not capitalize on our weaknesses. The policy path taken by your country is correct, effective, and [your country's] development has yielded much success. Comprehensively speaking, your achievements are greater than ours. We also have achievements, [but] also weaknesses and errors. For the past three years, we have faced difficulties due to natural disasters, weakness and errors in our work, and Soviet disturbances. We do not blame our difficulties entirely on natural disasters or on Khrushchev. We ourselves are responsible, as are the natural disasters and Khrushchev. During this period of difficulty, [our] industries have decreased their production, agriculture has also decreased their production, and thus, the people are short on food and clothing; they have been trained by hardship. Now, [however], we have basically passed through this difficult [period]. Our Party members, cadres, and people have become stronger and better through overcoming these difficulties. Therefore, we can also exchange some views on development experience. I want to frankly tell you about our past experiences. In particular, I want to candidly tell you about our shortcomings and mistakes and production experience. Negative experiences can be useful for they can be teachers.

Kim: We have shortcomings, but our experience has been smoother. Compared to China, our country is smaller [and we] discovered our shortcomings early on and corrected them. [We also] did not have three years of natural disasters, and pressures from Khrushchev were also smaller. We first experienced difficulties; during three years of war, [we] overcame strenuous training early on, and things are [now] easier to handle. After the war, people received training through another three years of reconstruction; so [we] have solutions to overcome difficulties during development. They [the people] are highly motivated in their work. People who have suffered are not the same [as before]; they are better [now]. For example, there are 80,000 Korean nationals who returned from Japan, and, since returning to Korea, they have been constantly dissatisfied. While in Japan, they did not [even] have work [but] they did not say anything. Now that they are here with careers, stable lives, and everything else, they are still dissatisfied.

Liu: With training, party and government cadres and the military do not fear difficulty; they have the courage to fight. The Soviet people were originally like this, but after what Khrushchev has done, they are no longer decent. The problem is still the leadership.

Kim: I very much agree to further exchange views.

Liu: This time I want to place the priority on exchanging views. Tours and visits will be secondary in terms of priority.

Kim: Okay.