

**July 15, 1978**

**Telegram from the East Europe Division, Foreign  
Ministry, “Prospect of Kim Il Sung’s Visit to the  
Soviet Union”**

**Citation:**

"Telegram from the East Europe Division, Foreign Ministry, “Prospect of Kim Il Sung’s Visit to the Soviet Union”, July 15, 1978, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Roll 2008-29, File 03, Frames 50-54, South Korean Foreign Ministry Archive.  
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/118390>

**Summary:**

The South Korean Foreign Ministry analyzes the possibility and timing of Kim Il Sung's visit to the Soviet Union, discussing the purpose of the visit and relations between the Soviet Union and North Korea.

**Credits:**

This document was made possible with support from Kyungnam University

**Original Language:**

Korean

**Contents:**

Translation - English

## Prospect of Kim Il Sung's Visit to the Soviet Union

Date: 1978. 7. 15

From: East Europe Division, Foreign Ministry

### 1. Possibility and Timing of Kim Il Sung's Visit to the Soviet Union

Based on the information collected through contacts with the government of friendly countries, the below forecasts the timing and purpose of Kim Il Sung's possible visit to the Soviet Union.

#### a. Possibility of Visit to the Soviet Union

i. Expected to accept the invitation of the Soviet Union and visit this year

ii. Confirmed by a staff of Foreign Ministry of the Soviet Union, who accompanied D. Kunaev, leader of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and government delegation in January 1978 that Kim Il Sung accepted the invitation but the date of the visit is not decided yet.

In June 1978, stated by an official of the Soviet Foreign Ministry that the Soviet government expected Kim Il Sung's visit to the Soviet Union this winter, also suggested by the same official Kim Il Sung's visit to East Germany as well as Czechoslovakia.

#### b. Timing of the Visit to the Soviet Union

i. Expected either this winter or the end of the year

(Told by a former commercial attaché of the Finland Embassy in Pyongyang in September 1978 that Kim Il Sung is preparing for the visit to the Soviet Union

Observed by the Japanese Foreign Ministry that the visit would depend on the guarantee of a Soviet high-level official)

ii. Concrete schedule during the visit not yet confirmed

### 2. Purpose of the Visit to the Soviet Union

a. Economic assistance by the Soviet Union, including the supply of oil, on the main agenda; the deferred payment of loan from the Soviet Union

b. Soviet Union: the necessity of improving relations with the North Korean puppets in response to Communist China's active approach to the North Korean puppets; North Korea's geographical significance for the expansion of its influence in the Far East

c. North Korean Puppets: equidistant diplomacy between the Communist China and the Soviet Union; securing both economic assistance and military aid; checking our approach towards the Soviet Union

### 3. Relations between the Soviet Union and the North Korean Puppets

a. Top-level's visits between the Soviet Union and the North Korean Puppets

i. None after Kim, Il-Sung's visits to the U.S.S.R. in July 1961 to sign the bilateral Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance and in October 1961 to attend the 22nd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

(Kim Il Sung did not visit the Soviet Union as had been anticipated around the time of his visit to Communist China in April 1975 and tour of Eastern Europe (Romania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia) in May 1975.)

ii. Chairman Alexei N. Kosygin's visit to the North Korean puppets in February 1965

No head of the Soviet state has visited the North Korean puppets.

b. Top-level's visits between Communist China and the North Korean Puppets

i. Kim Il Sung's visit to China in July 1961 to sign the bilateral Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance

ii. Kim Il Sung's trip to China in April 1975

iii. Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party Hua Guofeng's visit to the North Korean puppets in May 1978.

c. Recent Relations between the Soviet Union and the North Korean Puppets

i. There is no change in the Soviet Union's position of supporting the North Korean puppets; in reality, it maintains the policy of upholding the status-quo on the Korean Peninsula

(The Soviet Union avoids improving relations with us, in light of the equidistant position the North Korean puppets have towards the Soviet Union and Communist China.)

ii. For a long time, relations between the Soviet Union and the North Korean puppets have been stagnant and strained (the Soviet Union's sensitivity to the relationship between Communist China and the North Korean puppets, lukewarm attitude toward the North Korean puppets' request of economic assistance and military aid, and dissatisfaction with the North Korean puppets' declaration of military sea boundary)

iii. Recently noticed signs of somewhat improving relations between the Soviet Union and the North Korean puppets

(Delivered the Order of Lenin to Kim Il Sung when the Soviet delegation headed by Kunaev, among the leadership in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, visited the North Korean puppets in January 1978

A visit by a military delegation headed by Minister of Defense O, Jin-U's on the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the armed forces of the Soviet Union

d. Soviet Union's Assistance to the North Korean Puppets

i. Military assistance

Concluded the Korean-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance in February [sic] 1961 [trans. note-it was actually signed in July 1961.]

Effective for the next 10 years and then automatic renewing every 5 years

Renewed in July 1975 the treaty effective up to year 1981

ii. Economic assistance

1) Assisted in the construction of 50 factories from 1949 to 1970

2) Assisted in the construction of 10 factories from 1971 to 1975

3) Assisted in the construction of 16 factories from 1976 to 1980

(Total amount of assistance spent: around \$100 million)

iii. The North Korean Puppets' loan from the U.S.S.R.: around \$700 million

iv. Scale of Trade between the Soviet Union and the North Korean Puppets  
(unit: million dollars) □□□

□□□□

Year

Trading

1974

1975

1976

1977 □□□

□□□□

Export

196.7

209.7

158.3

□□□

□□□□

Import

256.7

258.7

242.4

□□□

□□□□

Total

453.4

468.4

400.7

469 □□ □□

4. Analysis and Prospect

a. Kim Il Sung's visit to the Soviet Union is expected, judging from the North Korean puppets' equidistant diplomacy between Communist China and the Soviet Union

(Kim Il Sung's visit to China in April 1975,

Hua Guofeng's visit to the North Korean puppets in May 1978)

b. Anticipated that Kim Il Sung would bestow the highest decoration of the North Korean puppets to Leonid I. Brezhnev during the visit, in return for the Order of Lenin bestowed to Kim Il Sung

(The decision to award Kim Il Sung with the Order of Lenin was made in April 1972, but its delivery had been delayed.

The North Korea puppets decided to award Brezhnev with its highest decoration in December 1976.

No delivery of the prize money)

c. The North Korean puppets, in need of the Soviet Union's active economic assistance (due to the deteriorating economy, increasing foreign loan burden, etc.)

Completely dependent on the Soviet Union in the military scene

d. The Soviet Union wants to prevent the North Korean puppets from leaning too much toward Communist China and considers the geographical significance of the North Korean puppets in the expansion of its influence in the Far East.

e. Given the foregoing circumstances, Kim Il Sung's visit to the Soviet Union will likely take place this winter.