

**November 22, 1979**

**Telegram to the Asia Department Head from  
Information and Culture Department, 'North Korea  
Holds Chief Diplomatic Officers Conference'**

**Citation:**

"Telegram to the Asia Department Head from Information and Culture Department, 'North Korea Holds Chief Diplomatic Officers Conference'", November 22, 1979, Wilson Center Digital Archive, "Buk Han donghyang, 1979" ("Northern Trends, 1979"), Roll 2009-35, File 18, Frames 64-76, South Korean Foreign Ministry Archive.  
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/118395>

**Summary:**

The Information and Culture Department of the South Korean Foreign Ministry analyzes the outcomes and reasoning behind the recall of North Korea's diplomatic staff from around the world, speculating that the maneuver is related to a North Korean attempt to take advantage of the situation in South Korea following Park Chung Hee's death.

**Credits:**

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

**Original Language:**

Korean

**Contents:**

Translation - English

## Request for Cooperation

Category :

File No. : Jongi 770-2571 Date : 1979/11/22

To : Asia Department Head Cc (Copy) :

From : Information and Culture Department

Title : North Korea Holds Chief Diplomatic Officers Conference

First Opinion:

In regards to the title, please refer to the attached report which was submitted to the acting President.

[...]

## MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Information to Report

File No. : Jong-i 770-2571 Date : 1979/11/22

To : the President Cc (Copy) :

From :

Title : The North Korean Puppets Hold Conference of the Heads of Overseas Missions

## 1. Report Details

To our knowledge, the North Korean puppets recalled the heads of thirty overseas missions and held a conference on November 20 in Pyongyang (Status of the return of the heads of overseas missions: attached separately).

## 2. Analysis

## A. Status of the conference of the heads of overseas missions

-February 1976 (Pyongyang)

Heads of overseas missions from twenty five countries where the South and North are both represented and in confrontation returned (encompassing Asia, the Americas, Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East)

-December 1977 (Pyongyang)

Heads of overseas missions from twenty countries where the South and North are both represented and in confrontation returned (encompassing all regions)

## B. Consulting measures to strengthen diplomatic offensive concerning our state of emergency

-While the upcoming conference of the heads of overseas missions is thought to be convened following the practice of holding one every two years, it is believed that they are meeting to discuss ways to strengthen their external offensive during our country's state of emergency.

-The North Korean puppet regime is expected to take advantage of the period of our constitutional transition to instigate internal confusion in our country and strengthen their offensive position internationally in the following ways:

1. As they have in the past, intensify their deceptive peace offensive by proposing the resumption of inter-Korean dialogue and their approaches to the United States (FYI: Ambassador to the UN Han Si Hae met with the UN Secretary-General and discussed the issue of inter-Korean dialogue. On November 9, an editorial in Rodong Sinmun expressed willingness to resume inter-Korean dialogue).

2. Intensify their schemes to isolate the ROK from the Non-Aligned Movement

3. Consult the measures for establishing and strengthening a united front against the ROK

### 3. Response

A. On November 2, this department instructed all overseas missions to intensify their intelligence gathering activities concerned with the North Korean puppet regime's overseas activities connected with our country's state of emergency, and has ordered that this information be reported immediately.

B. This department will respond to the intensification of the North Korean puppet regime's expected external schemes by taking measures to increase our country's diplomatic activities aimed at countering them.

Case Number: Reclassified as a general document (June 30, 1980)

[...]

(Attachment)

Current Status of the Return of the North Korean Puppet Regime's Heads of Overseas Missions

Host Country / Departure Date /Remarks

#### Asia

Bangladesh / November 8

India / November 10

Singapore / November 11

Indonesia / November 11

Pakistan / November 11

Burma / November 12

Karachi/ November 14

(Consulate General)

#### Europe

Norway / November 6

Denmark / November 12  
France (UNESCO) / November 14  
Finland / Middle of November  
Sweden / November 11  
Austria / Middle of November

#### The Americas

Jamaica / November 7  
U.N. / November 9

#### Middle East

Egypt / October 31  
Lebanon / November 8 / Accompanied by family  
Sudan / November 11  
Jordan / November 7  
Tunisia / November 15

#### Africa

Central African Republic / November 7  
Sierra Leone / November 9 / Accompanied by family  
Uganda / November 11 / Accompanied by second-grade secretary  
Ethiopia / November 11  
Upper Volta [Burkina Faso] / November 11  
Senegal / November 12  
Benin / November 12  
Togo / November 12  
Cameroon / November 9  
Chad / November 9

Out of a total of eighty four overseas missions, thirty four heads of overseas missions were recalled. The conference began on November 17 and will end on November 29. The heads of overseas missions will take part in a tour of industries and education sessions before returning to their host countries in early December.

#### Host Countries of Recalled Heads of Overseas Missions

Current as of November 22, 1979

#### Asia

Bangladesh, India, Singapore, Pakistan 2 (Karachi), Burma, Indonesia (7)

#### Middle East and Africa

Ghana, Cameroon, Chad, Libya, Tunisia, Togo, Benin, Senegal, Jordan, Upper Volta, Central African Republic, Sierra Leone, Lebanon, Sudan, Uganda, Ethiopia, Egypt (17)

#### The Americas

Jamaica, U.N., Peru, Cuba (4)

Europe

Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark, UNESCO, France

Total

34 diplomatic offices, 35 people

<Analysis>

1. It has been a standard practice for the North Korean puppets to convene the conference of the heads of overseas missions at the beginning of the year, but it is notable that this year's conference was held particularly early.

A. This may be a reaction to the series of changes in the international environment, including changes in Korea due to the "October 26 Incident" and predicament the United States is facing domestically and externally (the situation in Iran and the presidential election).

B. The conference may aim to send instructions regarding diplomatic activities for the 1980s at an early date.

2. As a result, the strategic direction of the conference of heads of the overseas missions of the North Korean puppets may be as follows:

A. The North Korean puppets may view this transitional period of political change as a period of slowdown in diplomatic activity and,

-while trying to penetrate into countries with which the South and North compete for support or countries which are friendly to us,

-and by accusing the current transitional government of being successor to the Yushin regime and placing emphasis on its suppression of the people,

- the North Korean puppets are placing its main drive on expanding anti-ROK, anti-government forces and turning them in to a united front against the ROK

B. Using the current domestic and external situation facing the United States

-placing pressure on the United States to "Koreanize" the Korean question and counsel the ROK to democratize and tolerate those political forces not opposed to communism,

- focusing on alternating between hard-line and soft-line tactics in trying to realize the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Korea and direct negotiations with the United States.

2. Characteristics of this conference:

A. The North Korean puppets pursued the participation of the wives of Kim Dae Jung and Yu Bo Son in the conference in an attempt to secure direct links with domestic anti-government forces.

B. In regards to the recent domestic situation, the North Korean puppets made the

decision organize and expand (by each leader) the support activities for the democracy struggle of anti-government leaders and North Korea's unification line.

C. The North Korean puppet regime invited representatives (anti-South, pro-North forces) from the United States, Japan, and Italy and other Western countries to attend. They sent a resolution to the governments of the United States and Japan in an effort to use the current situation in Korea to increase public support in those countries for a change in policies toward the North Korean puppets.

3. Given these circumstances:

A. After the October 26 incident this year, the North Korean puppets held anti-South Korean propaganda meetings (thirty one countries, eighty four times) in various parts of the world along with its first international conference, and has engineered an increase in anti-South Korean activities internationally by spreading the main points of policy toward South Korea to various countries.

B. At various other international conferences that support the North Korean puppets in the future,

-The North Korean puppets appears have strengthened its international offensive by having unified South Korean anti-government and anti-regime leaders, overseas anti-South Korea groups and domestic South Korean representatives (Revolutionary Party for Unification, etc).

-By making it appear like what is being talked about at the conference is the shared opinion of North and South Koreans, the North will continue attempts to change attitudes toward the ROK in Western countries, including the United States and Japan.

2. This recent recalling of the heads of the North Korean puppet regime's overseas missions

A. follows changes that have occurred since the demise of His Excellency, whereby the importance of North Korea's traditional foreign policy goals focused the so-called anti-Park [Chung Hee], anti-Yushin question and human rights issues have receded

- along with intensifying the anti-ROK offensive by denouncing the transitional new regime as "effectively succeeding the Yushin regime by the military"

-while propagandizing that the conditions favorable to unification under the leadership of the North Korean puppets are emerging, intensifying their peace offensive based on a dialogue-centered approach, such as South-North political negotiations conference

B. focuses on achieving results in political and economic diplomacy in their host countries

C. [furthermore it] appears that the North Korean puppet regime is aiming to move forward with approaching the United States and strengthen their ties with the Non-Aligned Movement.

3. It is expected that the North Korean puppet regime will instigate the penetration into the ROK by various anti-ROK groups and overseas anti-government figures and actively seek to expand foreign trade, in light of the possibility that our foreign trade might increase and lead to the enhancement of our international competitiveness as

our new political leadership seeks to advance political development.

[...]

### 1. The Mass Return of the North Korean Puppets' Heads of Overseas Missions

From November 6-14, the North Korean puppets recalled the heads of their overseas missions from seventeen countries in order to conduct consultations on their assignments.

Date	Name of country summoned from
November 6	Norway
7-8	Central African Republic,
9-10	Jamaica,
11	U.N.,
13-15	Lebanon,
Total	Bangladesh
	Sierra Leone,
	Uganda,
	India
	Sudan,
	Pakistan,
	Singapore,
	Ethiopia
	Karachi,
	Sweden,
	Denmark,
	UNESCO
	Seventeen Missions

#### <Analysis>

The reason the North Korean puppet regime recalled the heads of their overseas missions has not been made clear. The conference of the heads of overseas missions that has taken place early in the year has not been convened since 1978. But due to the recent political changes as a result of the sudden contingency in the ROK, the North Korean puppets appear to have wanted to convene the conference of the heads of overseas missions earlier than usual to readjust the goals and direction of their foreign policy.