

July 3, 1979

**Interoffice Memorandum from Ellen Lukas to the
Office of the Secretary-General, 'North Korea
Denounced US-South Korea Communique Calling for
Trilateral Talks on Reunification'**

Citation:

"Interoffice Memorandum from Ellen Lukas to the Office of the Secretary-General, 'North Korea Denounced US-South Korea Communique Calling for Trilateral Talks on Reunification'", July 3, 1979, Wilson Center Digital Archive, "Democratic People's Republic of Korea," Office of Secretary-General - Kurt Waldheim, S-0904-0025-13, United Nations Archives and Records Management Section (UN ARMS), New York, NY. Obtained by James Person. <https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/119192>

Summary:

Han Si-hae and Secretary General Kurt Waldheim discuss the dialogue initiative involving the US, North Korea, and South Korea, and the role of the United Nations in facilitating such discussions.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from ROK Ministry of Unification

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Transcript - English

DATE: 3 July 1979

9:15 a.m.

TO: Office of the Secretary-General

THROUGH:

FROM: Ellen Lukas, ERD/DPI

SUBJECT: North Korea denounced US-South Korea communique
calling for trilateral talks on reunification

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[...]

At a luncheon given by the Permanent Observer of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ambassador Han Si Hae, the Secretary-General enquired whether the Ambassador has received any information on the proposal he had put forward to President Kim Il Sung on the appointment by him of an observer to the North/South talks. The Secretary-General recalled that President Kim's initial reaction had been rather favourable but he had stated that the definitive answer of his Government would be communicated through the Permanent Observer. The Ambassador replied that he had been informed about the proposal and was told that the Government's response would be communicated to him in due course for transmittal to the Secretary-General. The Ambassador then asked what would be the role of the observer in relation to the talks North Korea had proposed to have with the United States on the replacement of the armistice agreement by a more permanent peace arrangement. The Secretary-General replied that the proposal of the North Korean Side had been duly conveyed by him to President Carter as well as to Secretary of State Cyrus Vance. He was awaiting their response which he expected to receive after President Carter's return from his visit to Seoul. Such a role for his observer, if it were to facilitate contacts, would certainly not be excluded in this context.

The Secretary-General referred to the question of unification of families which he felt should be one of the first objectives in the North/South dialogue. The Ambassador stated that his Government had proposed this a long time ago but the main impediment was the anti-communist law in South Korea which forbade contacts with communists and made it an offense even to praise anything North Korean. The South Koreans further proposed that contacts between divided families should take place at Panmunjom. This meant that the South Koreans approached the whole problem on the basis of two countries rather than one people. The North Korean side felt that the members of the divided families should be free to visit each other and even to decide in which part of Korea they wanted to live when united as a family.

The Secretary-General then turned to the question of resumption of trade and economic relations between the two parts. The Ambassador again asserted that North Korea had proposed this more than thirty years ago. The South Koreans however insisted that such an exchange should be made on a Government-to-Government basis while they wanted enterprises on both sides to be free to deal directly with each other.

The Secretary-General expressed the view that many of the problems could be removed if there was a better way of communicating with each other. It is for that reason that he had put forward his second suggestion to try to facilitate communications through his contacts with the two Permanent Observer Missions in

New York.

The Secretary-General asked the Ambassador to request his Government to give an early response to his proposals which he knew were acceptable to the South Koreans.

(signature)

Rafeeuddin Ahmed

Cc. Mr. J. Perez de Cuellar