

June 11, 1956

**Summarizing Protocol of the Politburo Meeting with
the Korean Comrades on 8 June 1956 at 1730 hours**

Citation:

"Summarizing Protocol of the Politburo Meeting with the Korean Comrades on 8 June 1956 at 1730 hours", June 11, 1956, Wilson Center Digital Archive, SAPMO-BA.
Translated for NKIDP by Bernd Schaefer.
<https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/112731>

Summary:

Discussion on North and South Korean politics and economy, with detailed account on North Korean economic development.

Credits:

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

Original Language:

German

Contents:

Translation - English

SAPMO-BA, Berlin
[archival signature missing]
SED Politburo

To:
Comrade Walter Ulbricht
Schö/Gl, 11 June 1956

Dear Comrade Ulbricht!
Attached I forward a summarizing protocol of the Politburo meeting with the Korean comrades on
8 June 1956.
[signed] Schön
Office of the Politburo

CC:
Comrade Ulbricht
Comrade Grotewohl
Comrade Rau

Summarizing Protocol

of the Politburo meeting with the Korean comrades
on 8 June 1956 at 1730 hours

After a brief welcome by Comrade Ulbricht, Comrade Kim Il Sung outlines some aspects of Korea's economic situation.

It is considered as a primary task to build up the economy in order to create an economic basis for Korea's reunification. The Korean people are working towards the fulfillment of the 3-Year-Plan to reach the pre-war economic level.

Particular problems in reaching this pre-war economic level exist with regard to electricity and coal.

The pre-war level has been surpassed in the area of light industries.

In agriculture, the size of land usable for seeding was increased significantly. Deficits in agriculture are due to the lack of artificial fertilizer. In 1956/57 an artificial fertilizer factory will be completed and those problems will thus be overcome.

Before the war, there was an annual production of fabrics of 9,000,000 meters. Now it is 40,000,000 meters, but this is insufficient for the needs of the population. Production including imports amounts to 5 meters per capita of the population.

Before the war cattle breeding was not developed. Despite all efforts, cattle breeding has still not yet reached a sufficient level due to impacts and damages from the war.

The fishing industry has the same problems it had prior to the war. This year's catching plan is 344,000 tons. The pre-war level will probably be reached next year.

The construction sector is mostly concerned with the building of factories. The construction industry suffers from a lack of cement. The problems will probably be overcome this year. There exists a lack of iron material. Building the Hwanghae factory will probably help to overcome this problem. Plans this year for the production of cement amount to 580,000 tons, and to 130,000 tons in the case of iron material. Yet this is insufficient. Next year it will be possible to produce 1 million tons. This will be sufficient to meet the demand.

The Three-Year Plan stipulates 3,600,000 square meters of residential living space. This means 7 square meters per worker. This is not enough. If the construction industry is more developed next year, it will be possible to build 8 million square meters of living space.

The grain problem is still unresolved. Imports from the Soviet Union and China are helping here. It is assumed that demand can be met by domestic means in two to three years.

Regarding the supply of the population, the lack of textile products is of primary concern. There exist two factories, but one of them is not yet fully completed. If this factory will be completed as well, then there is a chance to produce 150 million meters [of fabrics]. This will be 15 meters per capita of the population.

The Presidium of the Korean Workers Party makes the following proposal to the Politburo:

Currently the GDR provides aid for construction of a diesel engine factory. Instead of delivering supplies for this factory, it would be better to deliver textiles instead. If the blueprints for the factory are already completed, the Korean comrades will obviously take them. However, they ask to terminate the production of parts and equipment. In case equipment parts were already produced, they will also be accepted though only in years to come. Currently there exists a small engine factory [in the DPRK], which is sufficient. If possible, the [Korean] comrades ask for a long-term credit to supply the population with textiles. This is, all kinds of textiles.

We are about to rebuild a chemical factory. Technical support would be desirable in this case. The factory is producing viscose fibers. This factory needs to replace some spare parts, although not to major extent. Currently it does produce 2,000 tons of fibers and 8,000 tons of cellulose. When the factory is completed, 10,000 tons of fibers can be produced. The GDR has major experience in this area, this is why we ask here for technical support. A large factory is getting rebuilt in Hamhung. We are asking here for specialists from the GDR to provide assistance to us on site.

The Five-Year Plan stipulates the construction of additional mines to extract iron ore, non-ferrous heavy metals, and precious metals. It would be desirable that the GDR supplied two to three specialists in order to determine the capacities of the mines and the needs for respective equipment. We ask for this technical support by way of long-term credits. Later on, produce from those mines can be delivered to redeem the credits.

Comrade Ulbricht suggests the Korean comrades put their requests in writing. Then we can take positions, talk with experts and thus respond. Comrade Ulbricht asks whether this is doable by Saturday morning. Comrade Kim Il Sung affirms.

Comrades Rau and Leuschner are asked to do the consultations prior to the Politburo session.

In addition, Comrade Ulbricht asks from where the special pipes and steel equipment needed for the chemical factories will be delivered.

Comrade Kim Il Sung replies this equipment exists on site in the viscose factory. Only a little bit is needed here. Concerning Hamheung, specialists have to drive there for a check. Currently they are producing carbide there, but the factory is in need of further development.

Comrade Grotewohl also asked the Korean comrades to put their requests in writing so that consultations can be arranged to arrive at a decision.

Comrade Ulbricht asked for some information, which new methods are applied in the current situation to conduct the struggle for Korean unity.

Comrade Nam Il [Nam II] thought we are familiar with the material of the III KWP Party Congress. There decisions were made concerning Korea's peaceful reunification. The first and most important method is Korean peaceful reunification, where the first task consists in economic stabilization of the DPRK and the improvement of living standards of the North Korean population. The next important step is rapprochement between North and South Korea. In contrast to our [German] situation, there exist no human ties at all between North and South Korea. There is not even an exchange of mail. This why the Korean comrades are making efforts, for instance, to create mutual economic and cultural ties between the people from South and North Korea.

In South Korea the freedom of action for political parties is said to be restored. Thus the declaration by the Party Congress demands the establishment of contacts between South and North Korea. It was already a result of the Party Congress to realize a plan of an expanded Korean unity front.

Those are the domestic problems. International problems mandate us to turn the current armistice into a peace treaty. This includes the demand for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Korea and to implement a guarantee from all countries regarding non-interference in internal Korean affairs. Korean problems are the business of Korea. This is why we need an international conference to resolve all these questions. Via China the North Korean government has addressed the British government and the other parties of the armistice to convene such a conference. Yet the latter have rejected this. They did not just reject the proposal, but at the same time they dissolved the neutral monitoring commission. The North Korean government agrees with the withdrawal of representatives from neutral countries from the monitoring commission. Yet they ought to be ready to reconvene at any time at any place.

If the conditions are met, general elections can be held in all of Korea. For that purpose we proposed to establish a joint committee for North and South Korea.

Most people in South Korea support our proposals but the Syngman Rhee regime is undermining everything. We will nonetheless continue to make our proposals. The recent elections in South Korea are characteristic for the situation there. Only 57 percent voted for Syngman Rhee. Our organizational assistance in South Korea is

small. Yet other democratic parties in South Korea are of great help. The result of the vice presidential elections is showing this.

Comrade Grotewohl asked about living standards in South Korea, and whether they are worse than in North Korea. It was replied that South Korea has a population of 18 million of which more than 1 million are unemployed. South Korea has more light industries. They also have larger areas for seedings and the Americans support the South Korean regime with their aid. Prices in South Korea are somewhat higher than in North Korea.

Responding to Comrade Grotewohl's question what the cessation of activities by the armistice commission means, Comrade Nam Il explained that this action is foremost of political importance. It means a violation of certain provisions from the armistice agreement. We are viewing this as a threat. Comrade Kim Il Sung added that the DPRK accepted a compromise on this issue. We do not agree with the liquidation of this commission, but only with its withdrawal.

[signed] Schön