

March 19, 1953

Resolution, USSR Council of Ministers with draft letters from Soviet Government to Mao Zedong and Kim Il Sung and directive to Soviet delegation at United Nations

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Summary:

A resolution of the USSR Council of Ministers which states the coordination that will need to take place between the Soviets and Chinese at the UN regarding the question of POW's. It then suggests that this should be used as a lead-in to introduce resolutions on the resolution of the Korean conflict. Corresponding letters, directed to Mao and Kim Il Sung, and the Soviet delegation to the UN are attached.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS USSR
RESOLUTION
Of 19 March 1953 No. 858-372cc.
Moscow, Kremlin

Question of MID

The Council of Ministers of the USSR RESOLVES:

1. To confirm the attached draft letters of the Government of the USSR to Comrades Mao Zedong and Kim Il Sung (Attachment No. 1).

To transmit the present letter to Comrade Mao Zedong through Comrade Zhou Enlai and Comrade Kuznetsov V.V., and [the letter] to Comrade Kim Il Sung through Comrade Malik, who will immediately be sent to Pyongyang.

2. To confirm the directive to the Soviet delegation in the General Assembly (Attachment No. 2).

Representative of the Council of Ministers of the USSR G. Malenkov

Business Manager of the Council of Ministers of the USSR M. Pomaznev

Attachment No. 1

The Soviet Government has thoroughly reviewed the question of the war in Korea under present conditions and with regard to the entire course of events of the preceding period. As a result of this, the Soviet Government has reached the conclusion that it would be incorrect to continue the line on this question which has been followed until now, without making those alterations in that line which correspond to the present political situation and which ensue from the deepest interests of our peoples, the peoples of the USSR, China and Korea, who are interested in a firm peace throughout the world and have always sought an acceptable path toward the soonest possible conclusion of the war in Korea.

It is not necessary to dwell in detail on all that the aggressor has done in the course of the war in Korea. In the eyes of honest people of the whole world, the actions of the aggressive Anglo-American bloc in Korea more and more expose that bloc, and especially the aggressive forces of the USA, as an international factor that is pursuing a policy of preparing a new war and is ready to shift to a policy of broadening the war solely in order to dictate to people their aggressive imperialistic will, which expresses an aspiration for world domination, for the subjugation of peoples to their imperialistic aims.

The Soviet Government considers that we should regard all these important circumstances of the international order in the same way that we have regarded them until now. This does not mean, however, that in present conditions we must simply mechanically continue the line followed until now in the question of the war in Korea and not attempt to display initiative or to use an initiative of the opposing side and to secure the withdrawal of Korea and China from the war in accordance with the fundamental interests of the Chinese and Korean peoples and also in accordance with the interests of all other peace-loving peoples.

In connection with all the above stated and taking into account the concrete facts of late regarding the war in Korea, we consider it urgently necessary to carry out a

number of measures, in particular:

1. It is necessary that Kim Il Sung and Peng Dehuai give a positive answer to the appeal of General [Mark W.] Clark on February 22 on the question of an exchange of sick and wounded prisoners of war.
2. Immediately after the publication of the answer of Kim Il Sung and Peng Dehuai, an authoritative representative of the government of the PRC (best of all would be Zhou Enlai) should make a statement in Beijing in which is underscored a positive attitude toward the proposal on an exchange of sick and wounded prisoners of war, and also to indicate that the time has arrived to resolve the entire question of prisoners and, consequently, to secure the cessation of the war in Korea and the conclusion of an armistice.
3. Simultaneously with the aforementioned statement in Beijing, the head of the government of the DPRK, Kim Il Sung, should make a statement in Pyongyang which declares full support for and the justice of the aforementioned statement of the government of the PRC.
4. We consider it also advisable that immediately after the aforementioned statements in Beijing and Pyongyang, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR make a statement in Moscow with corresponding full support for the Beijing and Pyongyang statements.
5. In accordance with the four measures enumerated above, the Soviet delegation to the General Assembly of the UN in New York should do everything possible to support and move forward the new political line which is laid out above.

We consider it necessary to give the following elucidation of the above stated:

First. About the answer to General Clark. We consider that the response letter of Kim Il Sung and Peng Dehuai to General Clark should express full agreement with Clark's proposal to conduct an exchange of sick and wounded prisoners of war, with an indication that they have in mind a positive resolution of this question in accordance with article 109 of the Geneva Convention.

In the answer to Clark indicate that the question of the exchange of sick and wounded prisoners has the greatest significance for a successful resolution of the entire question of prisoners of war, and consequently, for a successful resolution of the question of the cessation of the war and the conclusion of an armistice. In view of this, propose to resume the negotiations in Panmunjeom [Panmunjom] between the main representatives of both sides to negotiations for an armistice.

Propose that the date of the negotiations be established by the officers connected with both sides.

In the course of the negotiations on the exchange of sick and wounded prisoners, in accordance with article 109 of the Geneva Convention, which stipulates that "not a single wounded and sick prisoner of war can be repatriated against his wishes during military action," add the receipt of a guarantee from the American side that in relation to prisoners of war, under no circumstances will forcible measures be applied to prevent their return to their homeland.

Propose also to establish a commission of representatives of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Sweden and Switzerland to render assistance in returning sick and wounded prisoners to their homeland.

In the negotiations on the exchange of sick and wounded prisoners of war, proceed from that fact that the task consists not only of securing a positive resolution of the indicated question, but also in securing a positive resolution of the entire question of prisoners of war, and consequently, to remove the obstacles to the achievement of an agreement on the cessation of military action and the conclusion of an armistice. Article 109 of the Geneva Convention should be used for this, especially the second paragraph of this article, which stipulates the conclusion of "an agreement on repatriation or internment in a neutral country of healthy prisoners of war who have spent a long time in captivity."

In the negotiations propose that all prisoners of war who insist on repatriation be repatriated immediately, but the remaining prisoners be handed over to a neutral country in order to secure a fair resolution of the question of their repatriation.

With regard to these prisoners add that a classification according to nationality and place of residence be made, as was proposed in the letter from Kim Il Sung and Peng Dehuai to General Clark on October 16, 1952 (this is also in accordance with the Indian draft on Korea).

After the classification, prisoners of war immediately receive the right to return to their homeland, which will be facilitated by the assistance of all interested sides.

Second. About the statement in Beijing. In this statement it would be advisable to say that the government of the PRC has discussed the question raised by General Clark with the government of the DPRK and both the government of the PRC and the government of the DPRK have reached the same conclusion about the necessity to give their representatives in Panmunjeom an order to enter into negotiations with General Clark on the question of the exchange of sick and wounded prisoners of war, having in mind the achievement of a positive resolution of this question in accordance with article 109 of the Geneva Convention of 1949, and also a positive resolution of the question of prisoners of war as a whole. In the statement indicate that in the course of the negotiations between both sides in Gaeseong and Panmunjeom, agreement was reached on all questions except the question of prisoners of war.

Thus, agreement was reached that commanders of military forces of both sides "give an order for the full cessation of any type of military action in Korea by all troops under their command, including all units and personnel of land, sea and air forces, going into effect twelve (12) hours after the agreement on armistice is signed, and guarantee the fulfillment of this order."

There was also agreement on the following important conditions for the armistice:

1) About the determination of a military demarcation line, which must run along the line contiguous to [the position of] the troops of the warring sides on the day the armistice goes into effect, in other words along the line of the front, from which "troops of both sides will withdraw for two kilometers in order to form a demilitarized zone..." (point 1 of the draft agreement on armistice).

2) About the establishment of a Military Commission on the armistice composed of 10 senior officers, from whom five will be named by the Commander in Chief of the armed forces of the UN and five by the Command of the Korean People's Army and the Command of the Chinese volunteers (point 19). The Commission must monitor the observance of the armistice agreement, including monitoring the work of the Committee on repatriation of prisoners of war and regulate through negotiations possible violations of the armistice agreement (pp. 24 and 25).

3) About the creation of a Commission of neutral states to supervise the armistice, composed of representatives from Sweden and Switzerland named by the Commander in Chief of the UN Military Forces and representatives of Poland and Czechoslovakia named by the Supreme Commander of the Korean People's Army and the Commander of the Chinese Volunteers. (pp. 36 and 37)

The Commission may create inspection groups composed of representatives of those states. (p. 40).

The Commission of neutral states must supervise the implementation of the agreement on the armistice and fulfill the functions of control (p. 41).

Inspection groups of neutral states will disembark at the ports of Sineuiju, Cheongjin, Khungnam, Manpo and Sinanju (North Korea), Incheon, Daegu, Busan, Kanchung and Gunsan (South Korea).

Moreover, the sides reached agreement that the commanders of both sides must "recommend to the governments of interested countries of both sides that a political conference of all sides at the highest level be convened within three months of the signing and implementation of the armistice...for the resolution by means of negotiations of questions regarding the withdrawal from Korea of all foreign troops, the peaceful resolution of the Korean question etc." (point 60).

A significant portion of the articles of the draft agreement concerning prisoners of war was also agreed to, with the exception of the question of repatriation of prisoners. The government of the PRC (Government of the DPRK), following its policy of preserving and strengthening peace, striving for a peaceful resolution of the Korean question and applying all its efforts to the immediate cessation of the war, proposes to resolve also the question of prisoners of war as a whole. The government of the PRC (Government of the DPRK) on its side is prepared to adopt measures to eliminate the disagreements on this question, which is at present the only obstacle to the conclusion of an agreement on ceasefire and armistice. Toward this goal, the Government of the PRC (DPRK) proposes that all prisoners of war who insist on repatriation be immediately repatriated and the remaining prisoners be handed over to a neutral country to secure a just resolution of the question of their repatriation.

The Beijing statement must also say the following:

Our new step, which is directed at the conclusion of the war in Korea, should also serve as an example for a positive resolution of a number of other important and urgent international questions, first of all the restoration of the rights of China and Korea in the UN.

Third. On the statement in Pyongyang. We suggest that in this statement Comrade Kim Il Sung should indicate that the aforementioned statement of the representative of the PRC was worked out jointly by the governments of the PRC and DPRK and that the Government of the DPRK fully shares both the evaluation of the political situation contained in the Beijing statement and the concrete conclusions and proposals contained in it. In connection with this, underscore not only the full support for, but also the justice of, the statement of the representative of the PRC.

Fourth. About the statement in Moscow. We consider expedient a statement by the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Moscow, which should be made immediately after the aforementioned statements in Beijing and Pyongyang. We see the point of the Moscow statement to be underscoring before the whole world the full solidarity and concordance of action between the USSR, PRC and DPRK on the question of the war in Korea.

Fifth. On the Soviet delegation in the General Assembly of the UN in New York. The Soviet delegation in the General Assembly must act in accordance with the entire above described political plan with regard to the war in Korea. In this connection it is necessary that as soon as the Polish draft resolution "On Averting the Threat of a New World War" comes up for discussion, the Soviet delegation would secure the introduction of the corresponding alterations to this draft in the part concerning Korea and also the necessary statements by the Soviet delegation and the delegations of Poland and Czechoslovakia.

Sixth. Additional notes. It goes without saying that at the present time we cannot foresee all steps and measures which the governments of the USSR, PRC and DPRK will need to make. However, if there is full agreement between our governments in the conduct of a general line on this question, for which we fully hope, then the remaining points can be agreed upon in the course of the affair.

DIRECTIVES FOR THE SOVIET DELEGATION IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UN.

1. To commission the delegation of the USSR in the General Assembly (Comrade Vyshinsky), upon the presentation for discussion of the resolution of the Polish delegation, the part concerning Korea, to make a statement with firm support for the last proposals and statements of the PRC and DPRK.

Having set forth the position of the Soviet Union in the question of exchange of prisoners of war as a position which fully corresponds to generally acknowledged principles of international law and the positions of the Geneva Convention of 1949, which demands repatriation of all prisoners of war, the representative of the USSR must point out the following. The Soviet Union has repeatedly proposed and is proposing to recommend to the warring sides in Korea that they immediately and fully cease military operations on land, sea and in the air.

At the initiative of the Soviet Union, negotiations between the warring sides were begun in Gaeseong in June 1951 for a ceasefire and armistice in Korea. These negotiations led to agreement on all questions except the question of repatriation of prisoners of war. The Soviet Union continues to consider the position taken in this question by the Chinese People's Republic and the Korean People's Democratic Republic to be just and fully in accordance with the principles of international law and international practice, and also the positions of the Geneva Convention of 1949. The Soviet Union fully supports this position.

The question of the exchange of prisoners of war is the single unresolved question in the negotiations between the warring sides in Korea. The governments of the PRC and DPRK have declared their readiness to adopt measures from their sides toward the settlement of this question, in order to remove the last obstacle to a ceasefire in Korea and the conclusion of an armistice.

The Soviet Union welcomes the noble initiative of the Chinese People's Republic and the Korean People's Democratic Republic on this question. The Soviet Union fervently supports the proposal on resumption of negotiations in Korea with the goal of achieving an agreement on exchange of sick and wounded prisoners of war, and also on settlement of the entire question of prisoners of war, and consequently, also the question of cessation of the war in Korea and conclusion of an armistice.

Commission the Soviet delegation in the General Assembly to reach an agreement with the Polish delegation about introducing into the draft Polish resolution on the question of averting the threat of a new world war the following alterations in the part concerning the Korean question: in place of the old text of p. "b)" (about returning all

prisoners of war to their homeland) to include the following text: "b) immediate resumption of negotiations on an armistice between the sides, having in mind that at the same time the sides will apply all efforts to achieve an agreement on the question of exchange of sick and wounded prisoners of war as well as on the entire question of prisoners of war and will thus apply all efforts to remove the obstacles that are hindering the conclusion of the war in Korea."