

October 27, 1976
Telegram from Norwegian Embassy in Moscow,
'North Korean Diplomats'

Citation:

"Telegram from Norwegian Embassy in Moscow, 'North Korean Diplomats'", October 27, 1976, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Dossier 14.1/45, 1970-1979, Archives Section, Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway. Obtained by Charles Kraus and translated by August Myrseth. <https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/134895>

Summary:

A Soviet diplomat confirms that North Koreans have been expelled from Moscow for drug smuggling.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Kyungnam University

Original Language:

Norwegian

Contents:

Translation - English

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27.10.76, 09.09 AM

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NORTH KOREAN DIPLOMATS

During a lunch meeting on 25.10, my Soviet host mentioned that diplomats had been involved in spreading material for NTS. I replied that this was of course objectionable, and expressed my hope that no Norwegian diplomats were involved. To this he replied that if that was the case, he would have notified me.

I went on to elaborate on the North Korean activities in Norway and how this stands in bleak contrast to the high moral principles to which the North Koreans claim to adhere. I added, in a playful tone, that rumors had it that eight North Korean diplomats had been expelled from the Soviet Union.

To this he replied that North Korea was a special case strongly influenced by Kim Il Sung's Napoleon complex. The rumors regarding the expulsion of North Korean diplomats were untrue. It was however true that some North Koreans had left Moscow as a result of their involvement in drug smuggling. However, not only North Koreans had been involved in this smuggling.

Substance abuse was becoming a problem in Moscow and other major cities, even if the problem was not yet as widespread as in the US and Western Europe. It was on this background Soviet authorities saw it necessary to react with strong punishments for a number of foreign nationals who were involved in drug smuggling.

To my remark that I believed all the foreigners had been in transit, he replied that for many of them, this was not the case. He also said there were also diplomats among the foreigners.

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It seems natural to interpret these statements to mean that North Korean diplomats have been forced to leave Moscow after involvement in drug smuggling. However, this does not necessarily mean that the Nordic embassies have received their narcotics from Moscow. It should however not be seen as entirely unlikely that this is the case.

[Petter] Graver