

February 4, 1972

Information on Talks with the Soviet Military Attaché in the DPRK

Citation:

"Information on Talks with the Soviet Military Attaché in the DPRK", February 4, 1972, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Diplomatic Archive, Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sofia. Obtained by the Bulgarian Cold War Research Group. Record 28, File 1705, pgs 14-16. Obtained and translated by Sveta Milusheva.
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/110155>

Summary:

Yanakiev and Bulanov discuss Albania's relations with the DPRK, China, and USSR as well as Sino-Korean relations and other events in China.

Credits:

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

Original Language:

Bulgarian

Contents:

Translation - English
Translation - Korean

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To: The ambassador of the PR [People's Republic] of Bulgaria to the DPRK
Comrade Yancho Georgiev

Report

From: Zachary Yanakiev-Third Secretary

Comrade Ambassador,

As requested by the assistant military attaché at the Soviet embassy, Major Bulanov, and with your permission, today I visited the attaché at the Albanian embassy in Pyongyang, Kostatz Chifliku.

In the process of the discussion we exchanged opinions on a number of issues, on which he expressed the following point of view:

1. On the topic of relations between Albania and the DPRK.

He thinks that during the past year, 1971, they have developed some, although not significantly.

A delegation from the Albanian Youth Organization visited the DPRK in order to participate in the work of the sixth congress of the Korean Socialist Youth Organization. [And the DPRK was also visited by] a delegation of specialists researching the DPRK's experience with chicken production, with the goal of purchasing [equipment] for a chicken factory.

An invitation was sent to the KWP [Korean Workers' Party], [asking them] to send a delegation to take part in the work of the Albanian Party's Congress, which took place last year. This invitation was declined by the Korean comrades because of "certain circumstances."

The trade contract for 1972, which foresaw an increase of 20 % in comparison to 1971 and amounted to 1 million rubles in both directions [imports/exports], was signed in a timely manner. During the negotiations, both countries expressed interest in broadening their trade relations. One obstacle in that direction was the issue of transportation. Because of the small quantities of goods, the Albanians had no interest in sending their own ships to the DPRK, and because of that, the goods were sent off by train from the DPRK to Chinese harbors.

2. In response to the question I put forth concerning Sino-Albanian relations and the standpoint of Albania on the issue of Nixon's visit to China, he [Kostatz Chifliku] stated the following:

Relations have not changed. Since the Albanian leadership considered Nixon's visit to be an "internal Chinese issue," they did not make an official statement. Nothing was mentioned on that topic at the Congress either.

3. To my question concerning the perspectives for the normalization of relations between Albania and the USSR, [he] answered that this question had been clarified by Enver Hoxha at the congress. The Soviet Union explored options for the normalization of relations, but all turned futile.

4. On the issue of Sino-Korean relations.

[He thinks that [relations] are developing quickly and have even surpassed those between the DPRK and the USSR, in spite of the claims that the DPRK is trying to keep a balance in its relations with the two countries. According to him though, the quick progress of Sino-Korean relations was not at the expense of the DPRK's relations with the USSR.

I asked him if he had information to give me something more specific about the Sino-Korean relations. He stated that the Chinese were not telling them anything and that is why, they themselves do not know anything more specific.

[He] announced that the Chinese embassy was very interested in the visits of the Korean delegations, headed by Pak Seong-cheol [Pak Song Chol], Jeong Jun-taek [Jong Jun Thaek] and Heo Dam [Ho Tam], to the European socialist countries, Latin America, and the Near East. [They] were interested in the issue of which delegation would visit which country.

I asked him if any of these delegations would visit Albania, Yugoslavia, and China. He answered that up to now, the Koreans have not discussed any such issue. Regarding a visit to Yugoslavia, he knew nothing either. He stated that there were rumors that a high-ranking Korean delegation was going to visit China. But he did not know anything more specific.

5. On the topic of the events in China.

He thinks that there was a dissent in the leadership, that Liu Shaoqi was alive, and he did not say anything specific about Lin Biao, except that he had intentions to flee the country, but he was not on the airplane that crashed in Mongolia. According to him, it is more likely that the former chief of the general staff of the army, Xian Yun Shen, was on the airplane.

He did not reply to my remark that according to the British press, the USA's CIA helped to uncover Lin Biao's group.

6. On the topic of Kim Il Sung's proposals for the peaceful unification of Korea, he thinks that they are results of the changes in China's position in that direction, which until recently insisted on resolving the problem through military ways.

For my part, I informed him about Bulgarian-Korean relations, emphasizing mainly the economic ties and the delegations, which have visited the DPRK.

At the end he asked me if I had the KWP's booklet of by-laws with the changes approved at the Fifth Congress, to give it to him so he could look it over, or [if I could] tell him what the more important changes were.

I told him that I did not have it, that I had not inquired, but if I learned anything I would tell him.

Comrade Ambassador, since Chifliku and I know each other from our college years, the meeting went without any nagging on his part.

During the conversation he took pains to seem sincere, mainly in his explanations that the Chinese embassy does not inform them about anything. Of course something like this can be presumed. But together with this, there was a feeling that he did not wish to talk in more detail on the topics related to Sino-Korean and Sino-Albanian relations.

Pyongyang, 4 February 1972

