

May 7, 1978

**Telegram 057.139 from the Romanian Embassy in
Moscow to the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

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Summary:

The Romanian Embassy in Moscow reports on improved USSR-DPRK political relations and an increase of economic cooperation between the two countries.

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TELEGRAM 057.139

To: the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (First Directorate)

From: the Romanian Embassy in Moscow

Subject: Soviet-Korean relations

Date: May 7th, 1978

With a view to preparing for Nicolae Ceausescu's visit to the DPRK, I would like to inform you about the following matters related to Soviet-Korean relations:

Relations between the USSR and the DPRK, based on the principles of equality, respect for state sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-interference in the internal affairs [of each country], stipulated in the friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance treaty, signed in July 1961, have been improving over the past years.

□□

As a result of the interest displayed by the two sides, party and state contacts have intensified, as have delegation exchanges, which resulted in concrete actions for deepening cooperation in various areas. Among the most important action, we would like to mention the 1976 and 1977 [visits] to the USSR of the Prime Minister of the Administrative Council of the DRP, as well as the 1978 visit to the DPRK of a Soviet party and governmental delegation, led by D. A. Kunaev, member of the CPSU Central Committee Politburo.

A noteworthy moment in Soviet-Korean political relations was [marked] by the awarding of President Kim Il Sung of the Lenin order on the occasion of the 60th birthday, as well as the awarding of the highest distinction of the DPRK to Leonid Brezhnev on the occasion of his 70th birthday.

In spite of the fact that the Soviets wanted the Lenin order award ceremony to take place in Moscow, this nonetheless took place in Pyongyang in January 1978, so almost 6 years after the date when it was awarded. On the occasion of the ceremony, D.A. Kunaev relayed a message from the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU and renewed the invitation that President Kim Il Sung pays an official visit to the Soviet Union. In response to this message, Kim Il Sung pointed out that he wanted to visit the USSR in 1978, 'if no unforeseen problems occur.'

According to some Korean diplomats in Moscow, the highest-level Korean-Soviet meeting 'becomes necessary, especially after the visit to Pyongyang of President Hua Guofeng', so as [the DPRK] can preserve a balance in its relations with the USSR and the PRC.

We believe that the Soviets' persistence to [have] President Kim Il Sung visit Moscow reflect the Koreans' interest, internally, so as to complete certain economic facilities, as well as externally, especially for the strong reaffirmation and the materialization of the Soviet Union's support in promoting the DPRK's proposals on the peaceful reunification of the country.

From our conversations with Korean diplomats, we noticed a certain dissatisfaction regarding that after the creation of the DPRK none of the first secretaries of the Central Committee of the CPSU, no foreign minister, no defense minister of the USSR has visited the DPRK.

With a view to creating as favorable an atmosphere as possible for the visit of

President Kim Il Sung to the USSR, in numerous public materials and official statements, the Soviets are underlining the support they are giving to the DPRK with respect to the withdrawal of US troops from South Korea and the peaceful and independent reunification of the country. We would like to add that this position is also reflected in the joint communiqués adopted by the USSR with other states.

□□ Economic cooperation between the two countries has been somehow increasing. The USSR takes part in building certain economic facilities in the DPRK by delivering, on loan, equipment and installations. By 1975, the USSR provided the DPRK with loans worth over 300 million rubles for the construction of 50 big industrial plants (power plants, siderurgy, a refinery, etc.). As a particular form of economic cooperation between the two countries, we would like to mention the March 1977 agreement according to which the DPRK harvests, with the help of its own work force, timber from the woods on the Soviet territory in Khabarovsk province, for its own economy.

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Economic exchanges are still at low levels, amounting to 328.8 million rubles in 1977, which is less than in 1971, when they amounted to 452.3 million rubles. The varying pace and oscillations in bilateral commercial ties are caused, first and foremost, by the economic hardship experienced by the DPRK, by its limited financial resources for repaying the loans on time. These [problems] are also the reasons why the protocol for 1978 has not been signed yet, although the USSR and the DPRK finished their negotiations [about it]. In essence, the Koreans conditioned the signing of the respective protocol on the Soviets' positive reply regarding a new extension for the repayment deadline (note: the USSR agreed in 1960 to extend the repayment deadline of a loan worth 202.5 million rubles).

□□ In the other fields, Soviet-Korean bilateral cooperation is developing normally, without any dramatic expansion, in accordance with the existing agreements.

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□□ We believe that bilateral relations [between the USSR and the DPRK] will continue to develop in the same way, on the basis of the known principles; the Soviets will take into account and respect the DPRK's independent [foreign] policy, its balanced position in relation to all socialist countries, including the PRC.

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Written by I. Mielcioiu, Minister-counselor, and Gh. Micu, counselor.

Signed

Ambassador Gheorghe Badrus