

January 18, 1968

Note Number 48 from Louis de Guiringaud to His Excellency M. Couve de Murville, 'Relations between Communist Countries'

Citation:

"Note Number 48 from Louis de Guiringaud to His Excellency M. Couve de Murville, 'Relations between Communist Countries'", January 18, 1968, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France. Obtained by Enrico Fardella and translated by Garret Martin.

<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/116445>

Summary:

Describing problems amongst communist countries, the Polish Ambassador to Japan reports that "Mao Zedong considered himself as the heir of the Chinese Emperors and treated the Ambassadors as such." The Ambassador also describes kidnappings carried out by the North Korean government.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from MacArthur Foundation

Original Language:

French

Contents:

Translation - English

French Embassy in Japan
Note number 48
Tokyo, 18 January 1968
Confidential

Louis de Guiringaud
French Ambassador in Japan

to

His Excellency M. Couve de Murville
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Asia-Oceania Department

Relations between Communist countries

During a recent conversation, Polish Ambassador M. Domagala gave me some information about Poland's relations with China and North Korea, which highlight in a clear manner the relations between Communist countries. Before coming to Tokyo, my colleague was in charge for two-three years of Asian affairs in the Foreign Ministry in Warsaw, which adds a certain interest to his words.

It had always been difficult, according to the Ambassador, to expect normal behavior from the authorities in Beijing. The latter tended to treat smaller countries in a way that would surprise many, if it was widely known amongst the public in Poland. That behavior had always existed, even in 1955, 1956 or 1957, when conflicts between member states of the Communist camp had not yet broken out. Mao Zedong considered himself as the heir of the Chinese Emperors and treated the Ambassadors as such. The latter could expect to be convened at any time of the day or night and hosted anywhere, with Mao Zedong calling on them either near a swimming pool, only wearing a swimming trunk, or in his bedroom. In that last case, he would be in his bed and would not offer any of the tea he was being served to the Ambassadors, pretexting that he was ill. During an official visit to China, the President of the Polish Republic had been subject to that treatment: M. Ochab's predecessor had only been given a delay of fifteen minutes to put on his suit and tie and rush to see Mao, who had requested his presence at three in the morning.

The Polish Ambassador added that his colleague posted in Beijing had fallen ill because of the bad treatment from the Chinese authorities. When you protested to the latter, they would not hesitate to remind you that China had 600 Million people and Poland only 30. Warsaw is looking for a new Ambassador, but there does not seem to be many candidates.

M. Domagala spoke with the same candidness of the problems that his country had experienced in the past with North Korea. The regime established by Kim Il Sung was 'Stalinist'. Around 1963, he had not hesitated to kidnap North Korean citizens who were studying in Poland and wanted to remain there, rather than return to North Korea where they were being recalled. The Polish police had managed to find them in the train where they had been forced to board. The Polish government had then granted them asylum.

In the same way, the Pyongyang authorities had not hesitated to expel the European wives that Korean student interns had met in the Communist Eastern European countries and that they had brought back to North Korea. This expulsion had led to human dramas that the Ambassador still remembered all too well. 'Westerners only

tend to think of the difficulties they have in their own relations or in their relations with the socialist countries. They forget the problems that the Communist countries experience in their mutual relations' concluded my Polish colleague philosophically.