

1967**Information about Development of Politics of the
Democratic People's Republic of Korea and of
Czechoslovak - Korean Relations****Citation:**

"Information about Development of Politics of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and of Czechoslovak - Korean Relations", 1967, Wilson Center Digital Archive, State Central Archives, Prague. File A. Novotny, foreign affairs, KPDR. Sign 50, b. 4, pp.15. Translated by Adolf Kotlik.

<https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/116740>

Summary:

Czech diplomats review the DPRK's foreign relations with Eastern Europe and Asia, especially the USSR, China, and Czechoslovakia.

Original Language:

Czech

Contents:

Translation - English

Politics of the Korean Workers Party and the government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea showed some more positive development since September 1965 when the last information about development of Czechoslovak - Korean relations was submitted. Objections to reckless policies of the PRC increased and relations of the DPRK with the USSR and other socialist countries also improved.

On our part, we have consistently followed directives of the CPCZ CC Presidium from April 24, 1962 and January 14, 1964. In line with them, we have worked to preserve friendly relations with the DPRK.

I.

From the Caribbean Crisis of 1962 till the fall of 1964, the Korean Workers Party was among the closest supporters and promoters of Chinese divisive policies. Its position stemmed from the special geographical location of Korea and her whole history, from the fact that it is a divided country, from strong nationalism, and, last but not least, from low theoretical level of party cadres.

The policy of Chinese leaders was more appealing to the KWP leadership also because of the deeply rooted personality cult of Kim Il Sung. That is why the KWP did not recognize international validity of resolutions of the CPSU 20th and 22nd Congress, and identified itself with Chinese erroneous doctrine and evaluation of the situation in the International Communist and Workers Movement, worldwide and especially in the Far East.

Under the influence of Chinese theories, top representatives of the KWP drew up a strategy of their approach to American imperialism, especially in connection with the effort of the DPRK to unify the country.

The reality that Korea remains divided while in the south, there is a seven hundred thousand South Korean Army and sixty thousand USA army, is a permanently disturbing factor that influences deeply all life in the DPRK.

That is why the KWP and the DPRK government concentrate their efforts on achieving a withdrawal of American troops from South Korea and thus creating the main prerequisite for unification of the country. This challenge must be accomplished still by the current generation, as Kim Il Sung declared at the national KWP Conference in October last year.

The Chinese doctrine is still present in the approach to struggle against American imperialism, which is connected with the issue of country unification and removing the threat of a new aggression from the south. Korean comrades are still stressing a request that given current situation, socialist countries have to hit American imperialists in all areas, fracture their power as much as possible, and "tie their hands and legs everywhere". C. Pak Geum-cheol [Pak Kum Chol], KWP CC Politburo member, Deputy Prime Minister and The DPRK Minister of Foreign Affairs, stressed this doctrine again in a conversation with c. Gomulka in December last year, when he said that if socialist countries want to help Vietnam efficiently, they should fight with imperialism everywhere. He indicated that the Korean side aims at opening some kind of a second front in Europe, and is not enthusiastic about trends towards easing of tension in Europe.

Chinese politics badly affected also the DPRK internal development driven by militarization of the country, which was declared by the KWP CC 5th Plenary in December 1962 and was a result of increasing efforts to achieve unification of the country by avanturist means. Korean economy still suffers due to damaging consequences of this development. This Plenary also mobilized the entire party for

struggle with so-called contemporary revisionism and for support of the Chinese CP policy. In the period following the Plenary, persons or parties being attacked in published materials were not named but with phrases "some people" and "contemporary revisionists", it was clearly implied that these were especially the CPSU and its leadership, who were being accused of divisive politics and interfering with internal affairs of fraternal parties and countries. In his speech at the KWP CC 7th Plenary in September 1963, which was not published, even Kim Il Sung himself accused imperialists together with so-called contemporary revisionists who were in cohorts with them, of causing difficulties in the growth of the DPRK economy. He accused the USSR of exploiting the DPRK and stated that Soviet aid is no different than so-called aid of imperialists. The direct consequence of this situation was further indiscriminating glorification of the PRC and cooling of DPRK contacts with countries that were critical of the Chinese CP and the PRC. During this period, the KWP leadership, too, wowed in harmony with the Chinese CP policies, that they would not compromise with the USSR and that they would not take part in any international conference until all parties confront so-called contemporary revisionism.

The damage to the DPRK national economy due to the policy of militarization of the Korean society and the effort to transform the whole country into a so-called impenetrable fortress, as well as several years of fight with so-called contemporary revisionism, is for the DPRK the more painful the more the South Korean puppet regime is able, with American and recently especially with Japanese aid, to stabilize its position, strengthen the country economy and, to a degree, also improve the living standard of its population. The KWP leadership started to realize that many years of the DPRK positive example, achieved with the help of socialist countries, may lose its appeal for people in South Korea, and started to recognize that the policy of isolation from the USSR and European socialist countries, and of so-called building up national economy with their own resources, was not the best. It also realized that it cannot unify the country on its own, without help from the USSR and socialist countries. It arrived at a conviction that adventurist ways are not realistic and are even dangerous. That is why it rejected a Chinese proposal to open a "second front" in Korea. However, the attitude of the Korean side to the demilitarized zone on the 38th parallel does not show that the DPRK would have any serious interest in easing tension in this area.

The KWP is now turning the revolutionary forces and people of South Korea towards forming a wide ranging unified front for "driving" American troops from South Korea, for engaging in a joint fight against policies of war and fascist reprisals of American imperialist and their henchmen, against sending South Korean troops to Vietnam, and against the South Korean - Japanese treaty.

Even though the KWP leadership still considers "arming of all people" the most efficient defense system for repelling every enemy attack, it does not underestimate any more the importance of modern weapons for country defense; it is even trying to acquire it.

Some positive results of the South Korean regime and certain stabilization of conditions in South Korea are also reflected in growing international authority of this regime. Korean comrades are therefore concerned that recognition of South Korea by other countries would make foreign policy position of the DPRK more difficult. They realized that they would not be able to prevent this without decisive support of the USSR and European socialist countries. Their efforts to gain such support intensified especially recently in connection with the decision of the South Korean government to push for participation of their citizens in international events that are going to take place in socialist countries. In this, the DPRK requests from socialist countries unconditional support of its policy towards South Korea, it requests that they strictly deny entry to South Korean citizens, without any regard to possible specific foreign policy interests of other socialist countries. A feeling of immediate threat of the American aggression from the south is thus today one of the most important factors

behind the request and wish of Korean comrades to preserve the unity of socialist countries and the ICM. A generous initiative of the CPSU and our fraternal parties after October 1964, a wider view of the development of the international situation, which the KWP gained from discussions with representatives of the USSR and other fraternal parties and countries, increasingly depressing situation of the national economy and most of all, gradual collapse of all illusions about the correctness of the Chinese CP politics are the reason why since the end of 1964, the KWP is again beginning to make wider contacts with the USSR and European socialist countries. It is an important change even though the KWP leadership asserts that the KWP policy has always been right, and it also maintains that it will be unwavering in following these principles: in ideology - "Juche" 1 (application of the fundamental principles of Marx-Leninism to Korean conditions), in politics - independence, in economy - self-sufficiency, and in national defense - self-defense. Kim Il Sung elaborated on these ideas and stressed them at the national KWP Conference in October 1966 in his speech that was supposedly also a response to the Mao Zedong's letter to Kim Il Sung from the middle of the last year, in which Mao Zedong asked whose side the Korean leadership was on.

Even though the KWP leadership maintains that the KWP line has not changed, the undeniable reality is that during last two years, the KWP policy underwent certain positive changes due to objective development, especially as to the content. Events in Indonesia, attitude of the PRC to the USA aggression in Vietnam, development of Sino-Cuban relations, dangerous development in the PRC associated with unfolding of the so-called cultural revolution and with isolation of China in the world, could not have been without influence on the KWP leadership when it was formulating policy and relations of the KWP to the ICM and to socialist countries. Patient efforts of the CPSU and the USSR and other fraternal parties and countries for improvement in relations with the KWP and the DPRK were an especially important factor in this process. Generous Soviet aid in building modern DPRK defenses, along with new huge economic aid in the order of many hundred million rubles, all flowing in based on c. Kosygin's promise during his visit in the DPRK in February 1965 and based on negotiations of the DPRK delegation headed by the DPRK 1st Deputy Prime Minister c. Kim Il in Moscow in February 1967, and Soviet Union's full support of Korean positions on solution of the so-called Korean issue, makes it not only possible for Korean comrades to mitigate the consequences of Korean economy deterioration from previous years; it also creates conditions for strengthening their economy and their defense. Considerable military, economic and political help from the Soviet Union probably also convinced the Korean side that they will be able to count on similar increase of economic aid even from other countries of the socialist camp. Indeed, the DPRK started to request from socialist countries more efficient aid and support in strengthening its international authority, especially in relation to South Korea. That is why, instead of demanding harsh criticism and rejection of cooperation with so-called contemporary revisionists, the KWP is now stressing most of all concurrence of opinions on the issue of the fight with imperialism, and is

calling for creation of a unified action front of all socialist and anti-imperialist powers.

The National KWP Conference in Pyongyang from 5th to 12th October 1966 was an important milestone in this process. Position taken by the KWP at the national conference marks a considerable progress compared to the previous course and somewhat resembles the policy of the KWP until the Caribbean Crisis of 1962, although with the difference that now the KWP started to criticize, albeit not in name, the Chinese politics. Accordingly, the KWP leaders are now putting forth an ideological battle on two fronts. They say about contemporary revisionism that it suffered a severe blow thanks to principled struggle of Marx-Leninist parties. Nevertheless, they want a continuation of a decisive fight with it. On the other hand, though, they increasingly call to arms against left-wing opportunism. The KWP is declaring the position of independence and sovereignty of fraternal parties and countries as the only correct political line. As for the joint steps of communist and workers parties and socialist countries, it considers them useful only for

anti-imperialist actions. According to the KWP, maximum help of fraternal parties and countries in the fight against American aggression in Vietnam is also the only distinguishing criterion for and a border between Marx-Leninism and revisionism. Hinting at the China CP, they (KWP) state that nobody should be exempt from this fight. However, characteristic for the current attitude of the KWP to the Vietnamese issue is that the KWP keeps on scorning efforts to create a front of political struggle, and would rather prefer a military solution. The relation of the KWP leadership to the LCY and SFRY shows how much the leadership is captive to its own previous orientation. It still maintains that inclusion of "Tito's Yugoslav group" into the socialist camp and of the LCY into the International Communist Movement remains one of the most serious obstacles to unity of socialist countries and the ICM. The DPRK also still refuses to normalize its relations with the PRB and to exchange ambassadors again with it until the PRB repatriates students who were granted a political asylum there.

However, the speech of c. Kim Il Sung at the national conference was not clearly anti-Chinese or anti-Soviet. The presented principles can be applied to both sides. Nevertheless, number of practical steps in the KWP politics, and statements of the KWP top representatives in conversations with some titularies in Pyongyang (Cuba, GDR) show that reservations about the China CP policy prevail heavily in current situation. That is especially due to a change in the PRC relations with the DPRK. Korean comrades, though, do not want to alienate the PRC. They therefore carefully weigh their every step and action towards their two big neighbors in order to retain favors from the both sides because they consider it vitally important. That is why the KWP leadership is very careful in denouncing inflammatory actions of the PRC Embassy and provocations of Chinese citizens in the DPRK. Korean press admittedly limits writing about the PRC, does not inform about development of the so-called Cultural Revolution in China, and does not publicize Chinese attacks against the USSR but it did not widen nor qualitatively change publicity about the Soviet Union and its political steps either.

However, relations between the DPRK and the PRC continue to worsen. Previous very close contacts between the KWP and the Chinese CP were interrupted in the last two years, and the notorious grudge of Mao Zedong against Kim Il Sung grew only stronger. According to information from our Embassy in Pyongyang, Kim Il Sung allegedly told in connection with that to a Cuban titulary in the DPRK that he ceased to believe in honesty of Mao Zedong's self criticism as it was presented to him in 1957. According to the same source, the PRC also tried to transfer so-called Cultural Revolution to the DPRK, too, which the KWP had to resist vigorously and even had to take administrative steps without hesitation. How strong the PRC positions in the DPRK are is evident also from conversations of some diplomats with the DPRK representatives, according to which "even the concentrated power and authority of Kim Il Sung was not sufficient for departure from the pro-Chinese direction". It was even necessary to carry out number of significant cadre and organizational measures. Currently, there are only those people in the KWP leadership who are fully supporting Kim Il Sung. A strong reaction of the KWP leadership was provoked by Mao Zedong's address to the Albanian Convention in November 1966, in which he says that in a fight between Marx-Leninism and so-called contemporary revisionism, there is not and cannot be a middle way, and that anyone who wants to take part in joint actions with so-called contemporary revisionists is thus automatically in opposition to the People's China. Korean leaders accepted even with more indignation the direct, rude and slanderous attacks of Chinese against the KWP leadership in the PRC, and fabricated assertions about an alleged coup in the DPRK, which the DPRK had to deny in press.

It seems that the KWP leadership already expects relations between the DPRK and the PRC to continue worsening. That is why it is probable - if there is no meaningful change in politics of the PRC and its relations with the DPRK - that the Korean leadership will increasingly stress strengthening and widening of contacts with the USSR and European socialist countries. At the same time, though, it would be unrealistic to expect any time soon that the KWP would fundamentally revise its

current position especially in ideology, and fully identify itself with the general direction of the International Communist Movement. As evident from the latest statements of Kim Il Sung, the KWP will continue to put forth its so-called "independent" policy and to look for its closest allies among fraternal parties and countries, like DRVN, Cuba and the Japanese CP, with whom it shares the concept of struggle with imperialism, opinions about unity of the International Communist and Workers Movement, struggle with American aggression in Vietnam etc., and with whom it hopes to form a nucleus around which other socialist countries and communist and workers parties could coalesce some time in the future.

II.

Despite the efforts of the Czechoslovak side to preserve friendly relations, in line with the CPCZ CC Presidium directives from 04/24/1962 and 01/14/1964, Czechoslovak - Korean relations were affected by the negative attitude of the DPRK towards European socialist countries for as long as fall 1964. Gradual warming of Czechoslovak - Korean relations on the state level is evident since the beginning of 1965. A formal manifestation of that were improved relations of Korean representatives with the Czechoslovak Embassy in Pyongyang and with the Czechoslovak delegation at the Supervisory Commission of Non-Aligned States in Korea, and increased activity of the DPRK Embassy in Praha. In conversations, Korean comrades often stressed the necessity to develop mutual relations, and emphasized their interest in deepening our contacts, even though statements were very declarative and general, devoid of concrete proposals. The Korean side was evasive about concrete Czechoslovak proposals for exchange of party, union and youth delegations, for an invitation of the DPRK Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs to vacation in the CSSR etc., and blamed refusals of these actions on internal problems.

A more active interest of the Korean side in developing mutual contacts became noticeable only since the KWP National Conference (October 1966). In its efforts to develop contacts in the political area, the Korean side is trying to use especially its concept of struggle with imperialism. In this spirit, it requests support of fraternal countries on the international political arena, and evaluates the revolutionary level of fraternal parties. In consistence with active directives, the DPRK enjoyed permanent Cs. support of its efforts for peaceful unification of the country, and support in strengthening of its international position, especially at the UN forum. After a long time, a direct consultation with the Korean side took place again in 1966 during preparation of the Cs. delegation for the 21st Session of the UN General Assembly. In connection with the preparation of this year's Session of the UN General Assembly and in an effort to gain from the CSSR even more effective support on the international forum, the DPRK is going to send to the CSSR its Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs in April this year.

We also supported the DPRK against discriminatory measures of the Japanese Volleyball Federation during preparation for the World Championship in women's volleyball in Tokyo; Cs. Red Cross supported the DPRK position against the decision of Japanese authorities to terminate the agreement about repatriation of Korean citizens from Japan; the Korean Embassy in Praha was continuously receiving requested information, and so on. Also, Czechoslovak press covered extensively the DPRK foreign policy measures and published many pieces of information and commentaries about these issues. By the end of last year, the DPRK Minister of Foreign Affairs appreciated the Cs. support of the DPRK foreign policy efforts in a letter to Minister c. V. David.

The previous period saw a widening of direct, mostly written contacts of Cs. organizations and institutions with partners in the DPRK. Mutual exchange of delegations, proposed by the CS. side, fell on deaf ears in the DPRK. The CTK Beijing correspondent was accredited also for the DPRK after his successful visit in the DPRK

(May 1966). In the next period, we can expect that the Korean side will not accept favorably and with an understanding the admission of the South Korean team to the World Championship in Women's Basketball, taking place in Praha in April this year.

Mutual exchange of goods between the CSSR and the DPRK fluctuated in last years. While in 1965 its volume increased compared to the previous year, a decline started in 1966 and continues in 1967. The following table shows a summary of goods exchange from 1965 till 1966 and a forecast for 1967, compared to 1964: □□□

□□□□
In millions of CZK □□□
□□□□

1964	
Index	
1965	
Index	
1966	
Index	
1967	
Index	□□□
□□□□	
Cs. export	
21.6	
100	
24.8	
114.8	
16.2	
75	
agreement	
14.8	
68.5	□□□
□□□□	
Cs. import	
60.8	
100	
64.8	
106.6	
65.2	
107.2	
60.0	
98.7	□□□
□□□□	
Total	
82.4	
100	
89.6	
108.7	
81.4	
98.8	
74.8	

Cs. import includes goods delivered as a payment on a loan granted to the Korean side in 1954, which is being repaid from 1962 till 1975. Individual payments were 17.6 million CZK a year from 1962 till 1965, reached a maximum of 46.3 million CZK in 1966, and will gradually decrease in coming years. The payment will be 40 million CZK including interest in 1975. Total credit was 449.5 million CZK; the Korean side paid 116.7 million CZK so far.

Besides shipments under mutual exchange, Cs. export includes machinery for mines and ore preparation plants under a purpose loan from 1962, as a part of cooperation in copper ore mining. Payments on this credit totaling 45 million CZK should start in 1969 in the form of 1,300 tones of electrolyte copper and 275 kg of gold a year over 10 years. Considering the DPRK orientation on export of non-ferrous metals to capitalist states, there are legitimate concerns that the Korean side will request payment adjustments not advantageous for the CSSR.

Payments on the 1954 loan affected mutual exchange of goods from 1965 to 1966. The Korean side limited import of goods from the CSSR due to the lack of exports suitable for the needs of Cs. national economy. Conversely, the Cs. side, trying to secure loan payments very high compared to the volume of goods exchange, was importing goods that was not of adequate quality, and also goods that, according to measures carried out in Cs. economy, will be impossible to import in coming years because of rejections from domestic consumers. These goods are first of all various kinds of steel and machine tools whose value represents a substantial part of the total volume of imports.

During negotiations about the 1967 Agreement, a problem surfaced namely with securing import of non-ferrous metals. At first, the Korean side was refusing to make any deliveries. Only after three months of negotiations, 600 tones of non-ferrous metals could be secured (3,200 tones in 1966). There is a danger that in 1968, the Korean side will deny us any deliveries of non-ferrous metals because of the needs of their foreign trade with capitalist countries. We can therefore expect that securing deliveries of suitable goods as payments on the loan will be even more difficult in future years.

There are also considerable difficulties in performance of yearly agreements on goods exchange. There are long delays, especially in Korean export to the CSSR. Unfulfilled deliveries reached 20.4 million CZK in 1965 and 11 million in 1966. The most important among unfulfilled deliveries were non-ferrous metals in the amount of 1,190 tones. The Cs. side insists that agreed upon obligations should be honored.

Recently, the Korean side asked through Enterprises of Foreign Trade for a new Cs. credit of about 40 million CZK. It is interested in equipment for hydro power plants, for which it wants to compensate with goods deliveries under trade agreements. Considering the current situation in Czechoslovak - Korean trade relations, the Ministry of Foreign Trade rejected that request.

As for the scientific - technological cooperation, the DPRK did not show much interest in developing such cooperation. However, at the 21st Session of the Joint Czechoslovak - Korean Commission for Scientific - Technological Cooperation in October 1966, the Korean side asked for a comprehensive Cs. aid with upgrading their industrial production, namely machine industry. Korean comrades would like the CSSR to provide the DPRK, in terms of scientific - technological cooperation, with credit for machine industry, which would be repaid with production from the acquired machinery. That way, as Korean comrades envision, the DPRK would gain a long-term capability to export machine products to the CSSR. Considering that the Korean side predicates further development of cooperation between both countries upon granting

of this request, the State Commission for Technology is submitting it to the operative session of the Bureau of the Government for a decision. The State Commission for Technology suggests that the Chairman of the Joint Czechoslovak - Korean Commission relays to the Korean side what the possibilities of concrete Czechoslovak cooperation in mechanical engineering are within scientific-technological cooperation only, and that Minister of Foreign Trade reviews the Korean request for comprehensive aid in mechanical engineering from the point of view of current situation in Czechoslovak - Korean economic relations.

So far, the Korean side did not show much interest in broadening of cultural cooperation, and cultural exchange is minimal. A notable event was a successful excursion of 25 members of Cs. State Songs and Dance Ensemble to the DPRK in September 1966. The Cultural Cooperation Agreement was extended last year through an exchange of diplomatic notes.

The Korean side is more interested in cooperation between science academies. It submitted wide-ranging requests, among others for admission of Korean scientists to the CSSR (35 people, in average for a 3 to 4 year study) and for 2 million microfiche copies from scientific journals a year. Within its possibilities, the Czechoslovak Science Academy is basically in favor of this Korean initiative.

Widening of publicity in Cs. press about Korean issues was reflected in wider publicity of Korean press about the CSSR, even though news about the CSSR is rather incomplete and unimportant.

Relations of the Korean side to the Czechoslovak delegation at the Supervisory Commission of Non-Aligned States further improved in the previous period. The activity of our delegation is viewed positively. Korean comrades appreciated that a General was again nominated as a head of the delegation.

After the return of a Korean titular from the National KWP Conference, the Korean Embassy in Praha is engaged in vigorous contact activity. In consistence with the current course of the DPRK, it is trying most of all to convince pertinent Czechoslovak authorities about correctness of the KWP policies and the DPRK positions, and to win for these our understanding and support. They are especially interested in our position on the German issue.

III.

Development of the KWP and the DPRK politics and Czechoslovak - Korean relations fully confirmed correctness of our conclusions and conduct in Korean relations. Application of this approach, based on Resolutions of the CPCZ CC Presidium from April 24, 1962 and January 14, 1964, and instructions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from September 1965 contributed significantly to creation of current improved situation in mutual relations. Considering that politics of the KWP and the DPRK government still involves many reservations and divergent opinions about the general course of the International Communist and Workers Movement, and efforts to gain support for their political concept, it will be necessary to deal with the KWP and DPRK according to the principles outlined by the CPCZ CC Presidium in 1962 and 1964. We will continue working patiently for strengthening and deepening of friendly relations between the both countries, contributing proactively and actively to strengthening of positive trends in politics and measures of the KWP and the DPRK government, which will lead to strengthening of unity of socialist camp countries and of the International Communist Movement. Besides developing relations on the state level, it will be also appropriate to strive for development of contacts on the party level, and more broadly, on the level of civil organizations. Deepening of initiatives of the Czechoslovak Embassy in Pyongyang and of Czechoslovak delegation at the

Supervisory Commission of Non-Aligned States in Korea will become even more important. Further development of relations and direct contacts will be oriented in such a way as to make it possible for Korean comrades to become more familiar with the Cs. reality, and make it possible for them to understand our positions. That will require a more active approach during conversations and discussions with Korean comrades. While avoiding criticism of the Korean Workers Party course, it will be still necessary, using well thought political arguments, to keep convincing Korean comrades about the correctness of our positions and reasons for our approach, to clarify to them our interests and our obligations to socialist society and to the International Communist Movement, especially in Europe in connection with the development in the FRG.

In economic contacts, we will continue to do our best to at least maintain the current level of goods exchange and to secure, in individual yearly agreements, loan payments including agreed upon interest. We will evaluate any conceivable requests of the Korean side for additional credit from enterprises or in some other non-governmental form from the point of view of mutual advantage and needs of Cs. economy.

In scientific-technological cooperation, we will, depending on our capabilities, grant Korean requests for admitting specialists to the CSSR. We will accept especially production professionals from areas involved in imports to the CSSR.

We will also pay attention to energizing cultural contacts and we will strive to overcome current lack of interest on the Korean side.