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December 23, 1968

Note about a Conversation between Comrade Herrmann and Comrade Putivez, 2nd Secretary of the USSR Embassy, on 9 December 1968 in the USSR Embassy

Citation:

"Note about a Conversation between Comrade Herrmann and Comrade Putivez, 2nd Secretary of the USSR Embassy, on 9 December 1968 in the USSR Embassy", December 23, 1968, Wilson Center Digital Archive, SAPMO-BA, DY 30, IV A2/20/253. Translated for NKIDP by Bernd Schaefer. https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/111143

Summary:

Hermann questioned Putiwtz on North Korea's foreign policy, including its relations with other socialist countries, Pakistan, and capitalist coutries while Putiwitz discussed economic cooperation and political relations between the Soviet Union and North Korea.

Credits:

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

Original Language:

German

Contents:

Translation - English

SED Central Committee
Department of International Relations
SAPMO-BA, DY 30, IV A2/20/253

GDR Embassy in DPRK

Pyongyang, 23 December 1968

Confidential

N o t e
about a Conversation between Comrade Herrmann and Comrade Putivez,
2nd Secretary of the USSR Embassy,
on 9 December 1968 in the USSR Embassy

Also present was Comrade [female] Jarck as interpreter.

Comrade [GDR Ambassador] Henke had asked the Acting USSR Ambassador to arrange for my conversation with a comrade of their embassy to talk about foreign policy developments in 1968.

First I informed about the development of relations between GDR and DPRK in 1968. Furthermore I listed which questions of DPRK foreign policy are of special interest to me:

- How stable did political relations between the DPRK and the socialist countries develop although there is no complete agreement on several issues?
- The problem of DPRK relationships with developing countries, especially as countries in proximity to the DPRK are concerned, like for instance Pakistan.
- Foreign policy relations between the DPRK and socialist countries.

Comrade Putivez first addressed the relationship between USSR and DPRK. He informed about the development of relations since 1964. Since that time, relations have developed actively. -I do not want to repeat this in detail as the facts are well known.-

The protocol signed between both states on 2 March 1967 results in several obligations for the USSR. For instance, the construction of a thermoelectric power plant in Pukchang with a capacity of 600,000 kilowatt. Though in the Soviet Union plants with much higher capacity are getting built, this is still the first giant for the DPRK. The DPRK is interested in particular in the construction of thermoelectric plants since they allow for stable and continuous energy supply. Thermoelectric plants are problematic though, especially in springtime. On the one hand water is needed to irrigate the fields, on the other hand though for the energy of the pumps.

Construction of the Pyongyang power plant with a capacity of 400,000 kilowatt is already completed. West Germany did install a turbine there.

Currently the DPRK is establishing a new industrial sector, namely the crude oil refining industry. It is supposed to refine about 2 million tons annually. In this context the Soviet Union will build a power plant with a capacity of 100,000 kilowatt.

In 1967 a protocol was signed about logging in the Khabarovsk area.

In 1966 and 1967 trade issues were discussed between USSR and DPRK, which resulted in a long-term agreement covering the period between 1966 and 1970. Accordingly, the trade volume is supposed to increase 2.0 to 2.5 times. In addition to the larger projects mentioned above, the USSR is also providing support to smaller projects. This applies, for instance, to the metallurgical factory in Chongjin where capacities to produce raw iron are insufficient. So far steel cannot be produced there. The Soviet Union will thus deliver needed equipment, so that steel and rolled stock will be produced there in the future. All objects under construction in the DPRK supported by the USSR are scheduled to be finished until 1973.

Overall [according to Putivez] it is noteworthy that the DPRK makes efforts to sign long-term agreements with the USSR and discuss pertinent issues. One can draw the conclusion that the DPRK is interested to develop long-term and lasting relations with the Soviet Union. The agreements signed provide a long-term warranty in this regard.

On political relations the following statements were made [by Comrade Putivez]. Delegations were exchanged by both countries on most diverse levels. For instance, a USSR delegation headed by Comrade Polyansky visited the DPRK at the occasion of the 20th DPRK Anniversary. He said our [GDR] embassy got already informed about this.

As far as the concrete political relationship is concerned, you can say it is not very broad, but there exists very close cooperation on some issues. This applies, for instance, to questions pertaining to the United Nations. Strategical and tactical questions are discussed in bilateral meetings between representatives from both countries. The DPRK Deputy Foreign Minister is holding regular talks about this subject in Moscow. For example, even individual expression is coordinated sometimes. Then the USSR Foreign Ministry forwards these issues to their ambassadors in neutral states, and the latter talk about them to representatives of their host countries.

Consultations are also held when a DPRK delegation travels to a country where it does not have official relations. Then representatives of the USSR often play the role of mediators. This was the case, for instance, when in September and October the DPRK ambassador in Moscow went on a visit to Finland. There he was received by the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister, and the Foreign Trade Minister. As a result, trade representations were established between both countries. The DPRK has already opened its trade representation in Finland, while Finland has its [trade] interests [in the DPRK] represented through the [Finnish] embassy in Beijing.

In responding to some questions I raised, Comrade Putivez provided the following details:

ad 2.:

DPRK relationships with Asian countries are very active in order to push back against the influence of South Korea. According to his personal opinion, such will continue to be the case in the future. Since spring of 1968 South Korea tries to penetrate those places where the DPRK is officially represented. This results in the abandonment of the so-called South Korean Hallstein Doctrine. An example for that is the United Arab Republic where they had a meeting with President [Gamal Abdel] Nasser. In Comrade Putivez' opinion the DPRK has political intentions when it makes its efforts to win over

the developing countries. Economic factors are used here by the DPRK just as a pretext. The establishment of a trade representation in Finland is a case in point.

On Pakistan:

Here the DPRK is primarily interested to develop trade relations. The DPRK is importing goods from various other neighboring countries, which it cannot obtain from the socialist countries. He [Putivez] has read an announcement that the DPRK trade representative met the Chairman of the Industry and Commerce Chamber for a talk. As a result, the following agreements were made:

The DPRK is importing from Pakistan jute, chrome ore, salt, and sports equipments. It will deliver to Pakistan: Iron, steel, and machine tools. For the fiscal year 1968/69 the trade volume is supposed to be doubled. In fiscal year 1966/67 the trade volume between both countries was 1,700,000 rupees. In fiscal year 1967/68 the trade volume decreased by 600,000 rupees.

[On India:]

[Comrade Putivez said] he is not informed in detail about relations between the DPRK and India. He is aware that Korea has activated its efforts in India. The DPRK has agreed to a simultaneous opening of [Indian] consulates general in Seoul and Pyongyang: It certainly did so since [the Koreans] do want to impair relations with the Republic of India, and the DPRK does not consider the establishment of consulates general as full diplomatic relations.

ad 3.:

Development of DPRK relations with the capitalist countries.

The DPRK has officially declared time and again its readiness to develop relations with all those countries that do not act towards the DPRK in a hostile manner. For instance, France is so far not represented by an official trade delegation in Pyongyang, but just by a representation of France's trade committee. According to [Comrade Putivez'] information, the French government did not want to accept the term "DPRK" on a sign [of a Korean trade representation] in Paris. Instead the title there is "Representation of the Korean Foreign Trade Committee" (Pyongyang). This way this representation does not have political character.

[Putivez] is also not informed about DPRK relations with West Germany. So far there exist no official relations; they are conducted privately on company level. On such a level, for instance, the Krupp Company (Siemens) arranged according to our [GDR] information the assembly of turbines at the thermoelectric power plant.

On Switzerland:

[Comrade Putivez] is aware that the Swiss ambassador has visited Pyongyang. The confidential Korean bulletin indicates that his stay was related to the "Pueblo". Before coming here, the Swiss ambassador had visited Vietnam and held whatever talks. Maybe he was also commissioned to establish ties here in Pyongyang.

ad 1.:

Comrade Putivez also thinks the DPRK has made efforts in 1968 to strengthen relations with the socialist countries. Obviously the DPRK also continues to gain footholds in the countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. However, Comrade Putivez had the impression that this was not the main focus [of DPRK foreign policy]. The latter was directed towards the socialist states and emphasized accordingly. Though the DPRK has not reversed its tri-continental course. However, it would not propagate it any more as openly as it had been the case in previous years.

[signed]
Herrmann
3rd Secretary

[signed] HK
[Henke, Ambassador]

CC:
1x Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Far East [Department]
1x Embassy, Foreign Policy