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March 9, 1973
Telegram from Pyongyang to Bucharest, SECRET, No. 061077

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Summary:

Lazar reports on the tense 3rd meeting of the South-North Coordination Committee but expects the meeting to conclude with a reaffirmation of inter-Korean cooperation.

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02/01650/13.III

Today there was a simultaneous communiqué in Pyongyang and Seoul that between 14-16 March, the third meeting of the SNCC [South-North Coordinating Committee] will take place, preceded on 10 March by a meeting of the common secretariat in Panmunjeom.

We are mentioning that this is the first official meeting of the two sides during the last three months after the reunion in Seoul of the SNCC, when the representative of North Korean Co-president, Deputy Prime Minister Pak Seong-cheol [Pak Song Chol], carried discussions with South Korean President Park Chung Hee.

We note that the third meeting of the SNCC is taking place in a climate of tension in North-South relations, which is unprecedented since the adoption of the Joint Communiqué in June 1972.

Additional to the points of tension mentioned above, there is also the incident on 7 March, in the demilitarized area, where casualties were registered on the Southern side, the first such incident since the declaration was signed.

This conflict was preceded as we previously informed, by an unsuccessful attempt at landing a group of North Koreans in the South, a moment which accelerated Seoul's decision to accept a new meeting with Pyongyang.

The meeting on 14 March is preceded these days in Pyongyang by a sustained propaganda campaign against the South, a campaign which, by size and means of expression, reminds of the tense relations between the two sides prior to 1972.

We mention that the South Korean propaganda means accessible to the embassy, are not engaged in such a campaign or aimed at antagonizing the North.

Publicity from the side of the DPRK regarding certain political theses underlying the meaning and direction of North-South dialogue, has intensified. Among these we mention the firm rejection of ideas such as "confrontation" or "economic competition," supported by the South, together with the insistent mention of dialogue and multilateral cooperation.

Given the difficult conditions in which the planned session will be taking place, we expect it will ultimately amount to a re-affirmation of principles found in the Joint Communiqué, the toning down of the tense atmosphere, the renewal of bilateral agreements concerning mutual reparations, and expressing points of view about the final purpose and stages of the dialogue between north and south.

Contacts at the level of Coordinating Committee will create the environment for reopening discussions between Red Cross Committees, expected for 21 March in Pyongyang.

Signed: Aurelian Lazar

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