

**March 17, 1973**  
**Telegram from Pyongyang to Bucharest, SECRET,**  
**No. 061084**

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<https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114041>

**Summary:**

Lazar discusses the stalling inter-Korean negotiations and blames the overly cautious attitude of the South and the 'all or nothing' strategy of the North. He also notes that the North Koreans are buying time until the US disengages from the peninsula to ensure a position of superiority.

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Concerning the second meeting of the SNCC [South-North Coordinating Committee] taking place in Pyongyang throughout two sessions between 14-16 March, we inform you:

Taking place on the background of strong tensions generated by two military incidents resulting in deaths, this meeting ended without clear results in any of the addressed issues, due to fundamental differences between the two sides' positions.

During the press conference held in Panmunjeom before entering the DPRK area, South Korean Co-president Lee Hu-rak said he is taking to Pyongyang a message of goodwill from President Park Chung Hee together with a positive answer to some of the previous proposals from the North.

During discussions (delayed by one day at the request of the North), the representatives of Pyongyang, abandoning the questions still open since the past session, have proposed new ideas which surprised the South Korean delegation and which, due to their complexity, could not be translated into practical measures at this particular moment in time, nor were they retained by the South in view of a future study.

Thus, the North, underlining the need for eliminating military confrontation between the two sides, presented a 5-point-plan consisting of: mutual disarmament, reducing troops to 100,000 people or less together with limiting arming, stopping the introduction of foreign weapons, withdrawal of foreign troops from the peninsula, including U.S. ones, banning of weapon usage and the closing of a peace agreement between the two sides.

The North Korean co-president proposed that the 5 members of each side of the SNCC be doubled with the chiefs of staff from both armies, or that a subcommittee made up of representatives for chiefs of staff be charged with putting into practice the program's five points.

Pointing that this new position goes beyond its mandate and its realization is unfeasible for the moment, the South Korean delegation suggested (starting with the present session) the creation of two subcommittees: economic and social-cultural. Representatives of Pyongyang refused to take in consideration the creation of only two subcommittees, insisting on the simultaneous creation of all five (political, military, diplomatic, economic and cultural) planned in the second session of co-presidents in November 1972. This proposal was not accepted by Lee Hu-rak.

Thus, due to the cautious attitude of the South and the "all or nothing" strategy of the north, the session ended without any notable success.

At the press conference held on 16 March by Pyongyang-assigned co-president (to which press attaches of diplomatic missions were present),

Deputy Prime Minister Pak Seong-cheol [Pak Song Chol] criticized South Korean authorities for fragmenting the issue of reunification in "simple" and "complex" issues, as well as for introducing "priorities" and "procedural sequences." Pak Seong-cheol underlined that the "sincere wish towards reunification is sufficient for solving all problems, be they simple or complex, without any pre-established order and without preconceived procedures."

After analyzing the proceedings of the recent session, the rigid position of the DPRK who rejected Southern proposals (which, though did not exhaust all available possibilities, offered nevertheless the framework for economic, cultural, sports, etc. types of exchanges and contacts), we consider that the visible change of stance from the past of the DPRK has a lot to do with the country's first victories resulting from synchronizing the inter-Korean dialogue with international developments (the opening of Sino-American dialogue regarding withdrawal of U.S. troops from South Korea).

It is obvious that the DPRK is attempting, with the help of P.R. China or by itself, to gain the time necessary for obtaining the disengagement of the U.S. from the peninsula, which in turn would ensure a position of superiority for Pyongyang in inter-Korean negotiations.

At the same time, the DPRK is expecting practical results from the comprehensive international campaign to make contacts (visits to approximately 45 different countries) aimed also at undermining South Korea externally.

Encouraging existing trends of opinion at the international level concerning withdrawal of foreign troops from other territories, as well as increased demands of U.S. political personalities for withdrawal from South Korea and cessation of military help for Seoul, are of great interest to the DPRK.

We therefore consider that the new DPRK tactic aims at achieving immediate objectives of unification without South Korea, even against it.

The continuation of inter-Korean dialogue will therefore retain a formal character, depending mostly on indirect actions and various contingencies.

Signed: Aurelian Lazar

