

**October 24, 1972**

**Note On a Conversation with the 1st Secretary of  
the USSR Embassy, Comrade Kurbatov, on 18  
October 1972 in the GDR Embassy**

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**Summary:**

Merten summarizes a conversation with the first Secretary of the USSR Embassy, regarding the DPRK's reaction to the West German visit to China, and North-South relations with an emphasis on Park Chung Hee's motivations to bolster his position in negotiating with the North.

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#### N o t e

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At the beginning of our conversation, I informed Comrade Kurbatov about the stay of [West German Foreign Minister Walter] Scheel in Beijing and about Chinese positions toward the GDR and the policy of the community of socialist states in Europe. I also remarked that the Confidential Bulletin of the DPRK news agency devotes some attention to Scheel's visit to Beijing. Comrade Kurbatov asserted the Koreans take it for an irreversible fact that China will be recognized by capitalist states. In his opinion, the DPRK cadres were informed about all nuances of Scheel's talks in Beijing through the Confidential Bulletin. It is certainly anything but uninteresting that Foreign Minister Heo Dam [Ho Tam] stays in Beijing during the PRC visit of [Japanese Prime Minister] Tanaka as well as during the Scheel visit. As far as he [Kurbatov] knows, there are currently numerous West Germans in the DPRK for business reasons. Apparently the DPRK is interested to establish economic ties with West Germany.

During the following course of conversation, we exchanged opinions about the declaration of emergency and the state of war in South Korea.

Comrade Kurbatov noted that he can only voice his temporary opinion. Park Chung Hee is eager to solidify his position to lead the negotiations with the North from a position of the strongman. Kim Yeong-nam [Kim Yong Nam], 1st Deputy Head of the International Department in the KWP Central Committee, said during a conversation that Pak Seong-cheol [Pak Song Chol] will actively join the talks with Lee Hu-rak and will not just be a listener. Pak Seong-cheol will exert pressure. Apparently the DPRK as well as the South do think that negotiations are only feasible from a position of strength. He [Kurbatov] thinks, the South Korean side will not abandon the concept to achieve unification on its own terms. The concept of unification has the attention of both the North and the South.

The question is from which position the respective side begins with. South Korea is eager to implement unification from a capitalist angle. Like Kim Il Sung, Park Chung Hee has declared he views towards unification as a historic mission. Park Chung Hee will attempt to hold on to his position and win certain concessions from the DPRK. The emergency measures speak to that. The DPRK wants to move Park Chung Hee into a corner using the principles of the Joint Declaration. The DPRK's restraint after the declaration of martial law [in the South] demonstrated that it is still eager to continue the dialogue. The DPRK aims its demands at the abolition of anti-communist security laws and the creation of a democratic situation [in the South].

Kurbatov knows that Pak Seong-cheol asked Lee Hu-rak in a meeting why the anti-communist laws were not repealed. Lee Hu-rak responded that there are no communists in the South and their activities are restricted. The communists would come from the North. Therefore the laws are not directed against the South Korean population but against the intruders from the North.

Park Chung Hee will attempt to repress the emotions of the people and strengthen his position. He will also try to build up South Korea economically. He will attempt to

exploit the principles of the Joint Declaration for his own purposes. South Korea's efforts to establish relations with socialist countries show that the South Korean regime wants to be recognized as a state and have the realities of Korea acknowledged.

Comrade Kurbatov also informed about a meeting organized by the KWP Central Committee with comrades from the Soviet Embassy for the occasion of the 27th Anniversary of the foundation of the KWP. Kim Yeong-nam, 1st Deputy Head of the International Department in the KWP Central Committee, participated. Similar meetings were arranged by the Central Committee for the embassies of China, Vietnam and Cuba on different days and at different locations.

Furthermore Comrade Kurbatov remarked that currently KWP party cells are studying a Red Letter from Kim Il Sung. There is not much known about its content except that it deals with questions of unification policy and ideological questions for the KWP, namely increasing implementation of the Juche ideology.

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