

## **December 15, 1977**

# **The Official Visit of the GDR Party and State Delegation led by Erich Honecker to the DPRK**

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<https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/114861>

### **Summary:**

The Romanian Embassy in Pyongyang reports to the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the official visit of the GDR party and state delegation led by Erich Honecker to the DPRK. A recurring theme is the DPRK's commitment to the solidarity of the international Communist movement, and its reluctance to discuss international issues. The DPRK emphasizes bilateral relations, good relationships with both the Soviet Union and the PRC, and agrees to develop economic cooperation with the GDR.

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To: the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to comrade Constantin Oancea and Ion Ciubotaru

From: the Romanian Embassy in Pyongyang

Subject: the official visit of the GDR party and state delegation led by Erich Honecker to the DPRK

Date: December 15, 1977

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Following an invitation from the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea and from the DPRK government, a party and state delegation led by Erich Honecker, General Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party and Chairman of the State Council of the German Democratic Republic, made an official visit of friendship to DPRK during December 8-11.

The visit is part of the DPRK's program of developing and consolidating its relations with socialist countries, and it is also seen as "contributing to strengthening the cohesion among socialist countries."

Despite adverse weather conditions, the reception and all other preparations were not substandard, but commensurate with the standard level of preparation for such visits to the DPRK.

What was particularly notable was that, during the two receptions, President Kim Il Sung spoke exclusively about bilateral relations, without referring to international problems, whilst Erich Honecker touched upon a wide array of current global issues. Referring to the organization, evolution and content of the visit, during a recent discussion with Victor Nanu, East German Ambassador to the DPRK Franz Everhartz recounted several difficulties in drafting the joint press release.

The [North] Koreans, after receiving a first draft of the press release from the East Germans, proposed without further explanations to include in the final version only aspects regarding bilateral relations. Referring to similar previous cases, including the Romanian-[North] Korean joint press release of 1975, the East Germans insisted on also including international issues.

After lengthy discussions and President Kim Il Sung's personal intervention in the matter, the [North] Koreans agreed to include aspects related to global issues in the final press release.

During prolonged and troublesome negotiations over the final draft, it appeared that the DPRK did not agree with the East German phrasing regarding disarmament, contemporary revolutionary forces, socialist principles, and European peace and security.

The two parties could not reach a consensus over a mutually acceptable formulation of current international affairs and of the situation in South Africa.

Initially, according to the East German Ambassador, the [North] Koreans categorically denied mentioning in the joint statement any aspects related to GDR-FRG relations, West Berlin and the October Socialist Revolution.

According to Ambassador Franz Everhartz, during talks between the two delegations, Erich Honecker discussed at length Sino-East German relations. It was noted, among others, that the GDR suggested several times that PRC end its public polemics,

without avail. According to West German mass media, the PRC is continuously developing its relations with the FGR. Furthermore, Honecker brought up the PRC's position against the USSR, noting that "a potential war declared by the PRC against the USSR is, implicitly, a war against the GDR."

East German officials explained the GDR's stance towards the Warsaw Pact, emphasizing its defensive character.

Honecker noted that the GDR is ready to develop friendly and collaborative relations with the PRC as long as its Chinese counterpart also manifests interest in this.

Within context, referring to the "misunderstandings and discrepancies" between certain socialist countries, President Kim Il Sung mentioned that "such a state of affairs is regrettable as it negatively influences the entire international communist and labor movement."

The DPRK has close friendly and collaborative relations with all other socialist countries. They have always substantially aided the DPRK, for which the Korean party and state leadership is highly grateful. "[North] Korea is a historical ally of the USSR and the People's Republic of China." Kim Il Sung noted that his country was freed with the help of the USSR.

He further mentioned that geographically (a 1480-kilometer long international border) and historically, Korea is closely connected to the PRC. Following Japan's surrender in 1945, Korea supplied China with a substantial amount of weaponry; Korean soldiers fought in China. Chairman Mao Zedong noted: "The Chinese flag also bears the mark of the Korean soldiers." In return, Chinese volunteers offered substantial assistance during the Korean War (1950-1953).

"Although we have close ties with the People's Republic of China," claimed President Kim Il Sung. "We do not agree with many of the Chinese leaders' positions on both internal and external issues. We have not copied the China model in many respects. Nonetheless, it is necessary to maintain close relations with China. Having good relations with China does not mean we are opportunists," mentioned President Kim Il Sung. The DPRK does not agree with the Chinese position against the USSR. The Korean Workers' Party and the DPRK government are promoting a foreign policy of strengthening the cohesion and collaboration among socialist countries.

The DPRK wishes - and is acting accordingly - to maintain good relations with the USSR, the PRC and all other socialist states. "Given its completely unique situation," claimed President Kim Il Sung, "the DPRK cannot always be open about several political issues. Allegations are that the DPRK is pro-Chinese. Such contentions do not correspond to reality."

The DPRK maintains good and even very good relations with socialist countries, despite disagreements over certain domestic and international issues.

President Kim Il Sung discussed at length the role and importance of the Non-Aligned Movement, the good relations between the DPRK and Third World countries, national emancipation movements, etc.

Regarding issues in the region, the Korean delegation discussed the situation in the Korean peninsula, emphasizing the importance of bilateral relations. The GDR proposed enlarging and diversifying North Korean-East German relations. Thus, it was agreed that by the end of this year the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany present a collaboration proposal for the following two years, which is to

include provisions regarding information and diplomatic exchanges.

On this occasion, an agreement for developing economic, technological and scientific cooperation between the DPRK and the GDR governments was signed. The agreement stipulates, among others, that the DPRK use the credits offered by the GDR several years prior as soon as possible. Reimbursement of the credits at a 2% interest shall be deferred until after 1980.

The GDR will supply the DPRK with equipment for the chemical industry, geological explorations, machinery, etc. Furthermore, the GDR will grant the DPRK licenses for synthetic rubber production and the oil industry.

On this occasion, a new convention for consular relations was also signed.

Furthermore, a long-term trade agreement for 1978-1984 is to be signed by June 1978.

Erich Honecker proposed signing a treaty of friendship and collaboration between the two countries. Kim Il Sung accepted the proposal; it was agreed that the treaty will be signed during President Kim Il Sung's next visit to the GDR.

Everhartz concluded that Erich Honecker and the East German delegation are satisfied with the visit, the information exchange, and the open and sincere manner of the discussions.

In turn, President Kim Il Sung mentioned during the reception hosted by the GDR that the visit constitutes an important moment in the development of a longstanding friendship and collaboration between the two countries.

Signed: V. Nanu