

March 28, 1973

**Note On a Conversation with Comrade Kurbatov, 1st
Secretary of the USSR Embassy, on 26 March 1973
in the USSR Embassy**

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Summary:

A note on PRC-DPRK relations, especially regarding the issues of Korean unification, China-North Korea border issues, and the withdrawal of U.S. troops.

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- Political Department -
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On a Conversation with Comrade Kurbatov, 1st Secretary of the USSR Embassy, on 26 March 1973 in the USSR Embassy

Comrade Kurbatov informed in this conversation about his recent visit to Beijing where he exchanged opinions about PRC-DPRK relations with the comrades of the USSR Embassy in Beijing, among others with Comrade [USSR] Ambassador [to CPR Vasily Sergeevich] Tolstikov.

The Soviet comrades in Beijing including Comrade Tolstikov are firmly convinced that the Chinese are not interested in Korean unification.

There are facts bolstering this opinion. Causes for the lack of Chinese interest into a unified Korea are that a unified Korea with a population of 50 million would become an important political factor and stress its independence even stronger. In addition, it would be led by a man like Kim Il Sung who would not limit his leadership ambitions to Korea.

Chinese policy aims at having small countries along its borders. Therefore, China would also be interested in the division of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.

Though Chinese propaganda supports the DPRK concerning the unification of the country and the withdrawal of U.S. troops from South Korea, China is only prepared to support North Korean requests as long as the DPRK supports positions and policies of the Chinese. The Chinese would support Korean unification only if they had guarantees that a unified Korea would follow a pro-Chinese course.

It is noteworthy that the PRC increases pressure on the DPRK in order to push it towards a pro-Chinese course. The DPRK currently supports the PRC, for example, on foreign policy issues like Chinese policy vis-à-vis capitalist states.

However, there are also contradictions in PRC-DPRK relations. For example, there is so far no agreement to sort out border issues. Also both countries have different positions regarding the role of the Soviet Union. Yet both countries are interested not to touch upon these questions in their bilateral talks. The Chinese pursue primarily their own interests. The DPRK does not appear to be fully pleased with the results of Heo Dam's [Ho Tam] visit to Beijing. The PRC does not subscribe to DPRK interests in every respect, like the question of the withdrawal of U.S. troops from South Korea. Apparently the DPRK expected more from the Chinese talks with Kissinger. The Chinese were said not to have insisted enough on the withdrawal of U.S. troops from South Korea.

Close attention also has to be paid how future relations between PRC and South Korea might come about.

Comrade Kurbatov also reported that the division head for the USSR in the DPRK Foreign Ministry had informed him: At the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the DPRK's foundation on 9 September there will be grand events, and there are plans to invite party and government delegations from the socialist countries.

Merten

Embassy Counselor

CC:

1x Foreign Ministry/Far East/2

1x Foreign Ministry/Far East - China Section

1x Central Committee/Department IV

1x Embassy