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Korea in the Bulgarian Archives, 1945-1995: An Introduction

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NKIDP



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Korea in the Bulgarian Archives, 1945-1995: An Introduction

Jordan Baev and Soyoung Kim

In December 2014, several institutions in Korea and Europe launched a multilateral project to identify, digitize, and publish archival sources from Eastern Europe relevant to the histories of North and South Korea. With the support of the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF-2014S1A5B4063341), Sungkyunkwan University and Sofia University began to explore state records in Bulgaria related to Korean history since 1945.

In Korea, the project is managed by Professor Jaekyo Jin, Director of the Academy of East Asian Studies at Sungkyunkwan University. In Bulgaria, the project is coordinated by Soyoung Kim, a Visiting Associate Professor with the Korean Studies Department, Center for Eastern Languages and Cultures, at Sofia University. Professor Jordan Baev, the coordinator of the Bulgarian Cold War Research Group, serves as a senior advisor for the project. Professor Alexander Fedotov, who chaired the Korean Studies Department in previous years and currently is director of the Center for Eastern Languages and Cultures of Sofia University, also continues to consult the team of young scholars and postgraduate students.

During the first two years of the project (2015-2016), the research team worked in six different state archives in Bulgaria. The archives contained 36 relevant fonds (record groups), comprised of more than 150 opises (records) and about 1,800 archival units (folders) related to Korea. The folders (*archivna edinitsa*, or *A.E.*; previously also described as *papka* or *delo*) are organized chronologically, thematically, or geographically. Each folder can include as little as a single document composed of a single page or a collection of documents reaching as many as 200-300 pages. In total, for the period from 1945-1995, the Bulgarian archives contain more than 30,000 pages broadly related to Korea. This *Working Paper* describes some of the research

team's principal findings as it sought to unearth archival sources about North and South Korea in Bulgaria.

Bulgaria's Archives

Legal changes in Bulgaria over the last two decades offer researchers extremely broad access to almost all state archives dating from the Cold War era. For political and diplomatic historians, the most important document collections are kept at the Central State Archives in Sofia. Due to the strictly centralized political management under communist rule in Bulgaria, all top secret political, diplomatic, military, intelligence, and security information was distributed to the leadership of the Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP). All key decisions were made by the BCP and sent downward for execution by government agencies and public organizations. Therefore, the most significant documents can be found in the records of the BCP Central Committee and Politburo. The Central State Archives also includes the official and confidential records of the National Assembly (parliament), the Council of Ministers (government), many ministries and state agencies, and leading public non-state organizations, as well as the personal papers of some influential statesmen and public persons. Not all key records are held by the Central State Archives, however. The official records of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs up to 1976 were transferred to Central State Archives, while the post-1976 files are kept at the Diplomatic Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In 1999, the holdings of the Central Military Archive in the mediaeval capital of Bulgaria, Veliko Tarnovo (150 miles from Sofia), were moved to the Archives State Agency at the Council of Ministers. In 2010, approximately 95-percent of all military documents produced prior to the 1990s were made accessible to the public at the State Military Historical Archive. In 2007, following a special parliamentary decision, a new state Committee on Disclosure of Documents

and Announcing Affiliation of Bulgarian Citizens to the State Security and the Intelligence Services of the Bulgarian National Army was established. The Committee organized a State Security Centralized Archive in Bankya (20 miles from Sofia), where almost all intelligence and counterintelligence records for the period up to July 1991 are stored.

In addition to textual collections, the research team worked with visual materials at the Photo Archive of Bulgarian Telegraph Agency (BTA), the Video Archive of Bulgarian National TV (BNT), and the Bulgarian National Film Archive (BNFA).¹ For the period 1944-1989, North Korea-related audiovisual content is generally available for major historical events: the Korean War and its aftermath, visits of delegations between the DPRK and Bulgaria, and Bulgaria's economic support of the DPRK. At the Film Archive, holdings include a film produced in 1952 about the life of Korean children who found shelter in Bulgaria after the bombing of North Korea; a documentary about the Bulgarian doctors and nurses in the DPRK during the Korean War; and a film about Todor Zhivkov's second visit to the DPRK in 1985.²

Bulgaria's Relations with North Korea: The Early Period

The earliest records uncovered in the Bulgarian archives date to the establishment of diplomatic relations between Bulgaria and North Korea in November 1948.³ The Bulgarian Ambassador in Beijing, Yanko Petkov, was appointed on 20 July 1950 to represent his country in Pyongyang and Hanoi. Due to the war in Korea, he delivered his accreditation letter to the

¹ The photographic records of events displayed mainly the visits of Kim Il Sung in Bulgaria and of Todor Zhivkov in North Korea - 1956/537-549; 1984/1610-1617, 1622-1645; 1085/1277.

² The study of Bulgarian audiovisual historical records was organized by Associate Professor Dr. Andronico Martonova, a young scholar in Cultural Studies and Asian Filmography at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

³ Bulgarian Prime Minister, Georgi Dimitrov, entered a note in his personal diary that during his medical treatment in Moscow he had talks on 27 October 1947 with the Commander of the Soviet troops in North Korea, Col.-Gen. Sergey Biruzov, who related "many interesting things" about the actual situation in Korea. However, there was not any more information on the subject within the personal records of Dimitrov.

North Korean government in December 1950 and visited the country only twice over the next three years. The most important information about Korea was therefore received via Moscow, rather than directly from the frontlines. The Bulgarian Ambassador in Moscow, Stela Blagoeva, informed Prime Minister Valko Chervenkov and the rest of the Bulgarian Communist leadership about requests for humanitarian aid, which came usually through the North Korean Ambassador in the Soviet Union Ju Yeong-ha (Chu Yongha).⁴ In September 1952, the North Korean Ambassador in Romania was appointed to head the diplomatic mission of his country in Bulgaria, but he too arrived in Sofia for the first time only in January 1953. Bulgaria and North Korea upgraded their legations in Sofia and Pyongyang to embassies in May 1955.

During the first few weeks of the Korean War, the Bulgarian government used several public organizations to announce its official positions.⁵ On 1 July 1950, the Communist leadership in Sofia approved a resolution, proposed by one of its youngest leaders, Todor Zhivkov, “to organize a campaign all over the country in support of the fight of the Korean nation for national unification.”⁶ In August, the Bulgarian political leadership received a cable from Mikhail Suslov, Secretary of the Bolshevik Party in Moscow, with a request to organize mass protest campaigns against the “American intervention” in Korea. On 22 August, a special resolution of the Central Committee Politburo of the Bulgarian Communist Party recommended public organizations in the country deliver protest telegrams to the UN Security Council in New York.⁷ The propaganda campaign was a part of the so called Soviet bloc “Peace offensive,” which had started the year prior. In terms of the campaign’s intensity, it can be compared with

⁴Central State Archives, (*TsDA*), Sofia, Fond 141-B, Opus 2, A.E. 38.

⁵More about the issue in: Jordan Baev, “Bulgaria and the Korean War” in: *ACTA 2016. Local Wars – Global Impacts. Proceedings of the 42nd ICMH Congress, 4-9 September 2016*, Sofia University Press, 2017 (forthcoming).

⁶*TsDA*, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opus. 6, A.E. 949, p. 1-2.

⁷*TsDA*, Fond 1-B, Opus 7, A.E. 1597, p. 1; Opus 6, A.E. 1002, p. 1-2.

the so-called “Crusade for Freedom” campaign, organized at the same time by the National Committee “Free Europe” in the United States as a part of the mass “psychological warfare” against the Communist world.

In early 1951, the Bulgarian government organized a “voluntary aid campaign” for the delivery of food and clothes to the “fighting Korean people.”⁸ A second aid campaign was announced in December 1951 and lasted from January to April 1952. It was organized by the National Peace Committee and the Bulgarian Red Cross with the support of some women’s organizations, youth groups, and other mass committees. The Chairman of the Organizational Committee was Professor Georgi Nadzhakov, Vice President of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. In the first few weeks of the campaign, many aid committees were established in 96 regions, districts, and cities. For instance, in Plovdiv region, 3,500 local committees were established with 9,735 members; in Tarnovo region, 2,900 committees with 7,140 members; in Stara Zagora region, 2,196 committees with 6,470 members. About 1,174,000 pieces of clothing and a large amount of food worth more than 50 million BGN were collected and delivered to the “Korean people” during the four months of the campaign. The goods were transported by 60 freight wagons which traveled to North Korea through Romania, the Soviet Union, and China.⁹

At the same time, in 1953-1954, Bulgaria and North Korea signed two economic agreements that called for free technical and industrial aid of about 80 million Rubles (including the construction of two factories) to support the postwar recovery of the North Korean economy. A new agreement for the delivery of free economic aid was signed during Kim Il Sung’s visit to Sofia in June 1956.¹⁰

⁸*TsDA*, Fond 1-B, Opis 6, A.E. 1253, 1257; Opis 32, A.E. 309.

⁹*TsDA*, Fond 1-B, Opis 6, A.E. 1540; Fond 136, Opis 86, A.E. 119; Fond 412, Opis 1, A.E. 42-47.

¹⁰*TsDA*, Fond 1-B, Opis 6, A.E. 1872, 2899; Opis 91, A.E. 372.

The Bulgarian Medical Missions in the Korean War

On 22 February 1951, the Bulgarian government announced that it would send free equipment and drugs for a surgery hospital with 250 beds (valued at 80 million BGN) to North Korea. Shortly thereafter, the Bulgarian government also decided that it would send a 50 person medical mission to North Korea, far exceeding the size of other Eastern European medical teams.¹¹ Dr. Konstantin Michev, who served as a head of a surgery hospital in the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), was appointed to head the team. The Bulgarian medical brigade initially planned to stay in Korea for less than a year, but it ultimately stayed for through April 1954.

Soon after the medical mission arrived in March 1952, Bulgaria's physicians were sent to three military hospitals with more than 5,000 beds in total: Hospital No. 51 with 1,000 beds was in Pakcheon (Pakchon); Hospital No. 55 with 2,000 beds was established in May 1952 in Sukcheon (Sukchon); and the largest, Hospital No. 53 with 2,500 beds.¹² The reports of the medical mission paint a grim picture of life on the ground during this phase of the Korean War. Much of the medical treatment was improvised, with facilities hastily constructed, and the medical team itself faced considerable risks. On 27 March 1953, Dr. Zahari Donchev, the chief of a surgery division at Hospital No. 55, was killed during an intensive air bombardment at Kusong.

¹¹ From 1951-1957, the Romanian government sent even medical teams to North Korea. See Radu Tudorancea, "Helping our Korean Brothers. The North Korean Children in People's Republic of Romania during the Korean War (and After)," in *Korean Historical and Cultural Trends*, eds. Alexander Fedotoff and Kim So Young (Sofia University Press, 2016), pp. 113-127.

¹²Due to the intensive air bombardments in June 1952 (on 23 June, three air raids destroyed almost all the wooden houses and cabins, used for medical treatment including surgery operations), Hospital No. 55 was moved in July approximately 100 km in the suburbs of the city of Guseong (Kusong). Similarly, Hospital No. 53 was located in Jeongju (Chongju) but in January 1953 moved to Daegwan (Taegwan). Hospital No. 51 moved to the Chinese-Korean border at the city of Sinuiju.

According to official reports received in Sofia, about 40-percent of all wounded North Korean officers and soldiers, or 25,000 individuals, were treated in the hospitals administered by Bulgarian doctors. The medical mission offered a broad range of services: surgery, traumatic treatment and therapy, neurology, virology, ophthalmology, pediatric care, medical prevention, and so on. From January 1953 on, Bulgarian personnel also provided medical treatment for many of the wounded Chinese “volunteer” soldiers. These doctors also treated about 3,000 North Koreans after their release from prisoner of war (POW) camps.

The first Bulgarian medical team also organized two research and practical conferences in August 1952 and in August 1953 to share their experiences with audiences in Pyongyang. Several professional courses for Korean nurses were also organized. A year after the medical team returned to Bulgaria, a large academic military medical conference was organized in Sofia with 27 papers on different medical cases and new methods of surgery operations, including treatment for victims of napalm attacks. During their stay in North Korea, the Bulgarian physicians and pharmacists also studied some achievements of traditional Korean medicine. In a few reports presented at the military medical conference, the speakers described using 36 herbal medicines created using 16 different kinds of local Korean herbs. The war time experience was carefully studied later in Bulgaria.¹³

After their mission in Korea, many of the members of the first Bulgarian medical brigade had very successful professional career as respected medics. In 1956, Dr. Dimitar Arnaudov departed again to Asia with the first Bulgarian medical brigade to North Vietnam, while the former deputy-commandant in North Korea, Colonel Dr. Ivan Kopchev, led the first Bulgarian medical military team in Algeria in 1962-1963.

¹³*TsDA*, Fond 1-B, Opis 91, A.E. 371; State Military Historical Archive (*DVIA*), Veliko Tarnovo, Fond 42-B, Opis 1, A.E. 1-12; Fond 42-O, Opis 7, A.E. 22.

Yet the Bulgaria medical mission in North Korea was not without its problems. One of the team members sent a critical letter to the Communist leadership and the Ministry of National Defense in Sofia and denounced the head of the brigade, Dr. Konstantin Michev, and several others for their “liberalism” and lack of management skills. One of the “incriminations” against Michev was his reported “demoralization and depravity.” The author cited the case of a love affair between one of the deputy commanders of the brigade, Col. Yordan Kosashki, and a Korean nurse, known in Bulgarian reports as Lt. Zhi Un Gun. According to the letter, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Korean Workers’ Party even discussed the affair. When the letter was received in Sofia, the Prime Minister and Secretary General of Bulgarian Communist Party, Valko Chervenkov, issued a resolution demanding a careful investigation. After talks with the members of the brigade, the Bulgarian ambassador in Beijing/Pyongyang, Yanko Petkov, rejected the denunciations.¹⁴ Finally, in September 1953, the North Korean government approved for Lt. Zhi Un Gun to marry Col. Kosashki and to depart to Bulgaria. Over the next few decades, she served as a nurse in a prestigious hospital in Sofia, while her husband became Associate Professor and a chair of department at “Rakovski” National Defense College. Unfortunately, the authorities in Pyongyang never allowed Zhi Un Gun to visit her relatives in North Korea again, and she passed away in 2012.

In April 1954, the second Bulgarian medical brigade arrived in North Korea. It was led by Professor Dr. Gerasim Mitrov (in the next decades he was elected a Corresponding Member of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and a Vice-Rector of one of the leading academic medical institutes) and consisted of 47 personnel, including 27 physicians. They served in military hospitals No. 31 in Sinuiju and No. 32 (with 2,000 beds) in Ganggye (Kanggye). Later, a civilian

¹⁴*TsDA*, Fond 1-B, Opis 6, A.E. 1680, 1699; Opis 24, A.E. 134.

hospital was also established in Sinuiju. The second Bulgarian medical brigade stayed in North Korea two more years until March 1956. Beyond their primary professional duties, the Bulgarians organized several courses for Korean pharmacists, medical assistants, and nurses. From May 1956 till May 1957, a smaller medical surgery mission, led by Dr. Dimitar Marinov, served at the hospital in Sinuiju.¹⁵

Korean Orphans in Bulgaria

Eastern Europe's embrace of many orphaned Korean children from 1952 through 1960 is an increasingly well-known chapter of the Korean War. Bulgaria agreed to receive orphans during its national campaign for humanitarian aid to the Korean people in January 1952. The first group of 200 Korean orphans, aged from six to twelve years old, arrived in Bulgaria by train on 28 June 1952. Housed in a medical facility about 20 miles from Sofia, most of the children were reported to be unhealthy and requiring much medical treatment. In September 1952, all the Korean children started school and enrolled in courses in history, geography, Korean language and literature, and other topics. Initially, all teaching was done by Koreans in the Korean language, but gradually the students were exposed to Bulgarian language, literature, and history. The Bulgarian Red Cross provided funds for the orphans' accommodations and schools, while the Ministry of National Education delivered textbooks and educational materials. In June 1953, the North Korean government asked Bulgaria to accept a second group of war orphans. Three hundred additional Korean children arrived in Bulgaria in late September 1953, and were accommodated in newly reconstructed buildings about 100 kilometers from the Bulgarian

¹⁵ *TsDA*, Fond 1477, Opis 27, A.E. 1689, p. 12-13, 19.

capital. Most the orphans returned to North Korea between 1956 and 1958, and the last group left Bulgaria in January 1960.¹⁶

More than 1,200 young Korean students also arrived in Eastern Europe during the Korean War, with 200 coming to Bulgaria in 1953-1954. The students received free education at several Bulgarian universities and specialized high schools, mainly in technical and economic disciplines.¹⁷

The Korean Students Crisis in Bulgaria

Immediately after the Korean War, bilateral contacts between Sofia and Pyongyang intensified, culminating in the visit of Kim Il Sung to Bulgaria in June 1956. Bulgaria's economic and technical aid to North Korea increased during this period, and clear progress was made in cultural, scientific and educational exchanges. Unfortunately, the maturation in relations was also accompanied by a lack of substantive reporting from the Bulgarian Embassy in Pyongyang. Generally, Bulgaria's diplomats avoided offering any critical assessments about North Korea's politics, particularly when it came to the DPRK's announcement of an "independent" political course and the purges against the inter-party "factions" in September 1956. When a government delegation led by Prime Minister Anton Yugov visited North Korea in 1957, the representatives of Bulgaria simply repeated Kim Il Sung's explanations about these purges.

Several years later, however, a so called "Korean students case" provoked an unexpected crisis in bilateral relations. In 1959, when North Korean students in Bulgaria returned home for

¹⁶*TsDA*, Fond 1-B, Opus 6, A.E. 1825; Opus 32, A.E. 310; Fond 296, Opus 8, A.E. 54; Opus 9, A.E. 10; Fond 1260, Opus 1, A.E. 45, 47, 57; Fond 1477, Opus 9, A.E. 2055.

¹⁷*TsDA*, Fond 1-B, Opus 6, A.E. 1791; Fond 1477, Opus 9, A.E. 1343, 3177; Opus 11, A.E. 520.

vacation, they were required to perform self-criticisms and to describe their life abroad in detail. After these self-criticisms and follow-up interviews, about one-third of the students were considered to be seriously affected by “Europeanism” and were forbidden from returning to Bulgaria. Several of the students, shocked by the internal situation in North Korea, decided independently that they would seek asylum upon their return to Bulgaria. Eventually, these students realized that they had conceived the same plan and made a pact to escape together.

The leader of these students, Choi Dong Sung, arrived in Bulgaria in 1955 and was strongly influenced by the Hungarian uprising in October 1956 and the “de-Stalinization” process in the Soviet Union. He first tried to meet the Soviet ambassador in Sofia at the end of 1961 to plead his case, but was refused. Then in June 1962, Choi Dong Sung and Lee Sang Jong visited the Foreign Policy and International Relations Department of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party and delivered a political declaration and request for political asylum. The North Korean authorities immediately sent their security officers (under diplomatic cover) to organize against the student “rebels” and “traitors.” After arresting four of the students and detaining them inside of the North Korean embassy in Sofia, the Bulgarian government issued an official protest and requested that the students be immediately released. On 5 September, the Bulgarian government declared the North Korean ambassador in Sofia “*persona non grata*,” which was followed next day by an identical action against the Bulgarian ambassador in Pyongyang. Meanwhile, two of the arrested students escaped after being tortured for one month inside the North Korean embassy and sent a detailed letter to the Bulgarian Communist leader Todor Zhivkov. Although North Korean diplomats and security officers tried to forcefully return the other two students to North Korea, the students were released at the last moment by the Bulgarian police at Sofia Airport. The four Korean students received Bulgarian citizenship

and later worked as engineers or economists in different Bulgarian cities. Unsurprisingly, they never had an opportunity to visit their relatives in North Korea.¹⁸

The “incident” with the North Korean students in Bulgaria was not an isolated one. Some North Korean citizens in Moscow, influenced by the more liberal Soviet political climate in the first years of “de-Stalinization,” openly expressed their disgust with North Korean policy and went so far as to ask for asylum in the USSR. The then North Korean ambassador to Moscow, Ri Sang-jo, joined the dissenting students in applying for asylum (which was duly granted). From 1957-1959, North Korean intelligence agents attempted at least three times to abduct these students. North Korean operatives were successful on 24 November 1959, when in broad daylight, they kidnapped Yi Sang-gu, a promising musician who had applied for asylum while studying in Moscow. Yi was injected with narcotics and sent back to North Korea.¹⁹ Another case involved a North Korean student in Budapest, Inhwan Choi, who escaped to Yugoslavia during the Hungarian Revolution in October 1956. However, in mid-1960, Choi was caught returning to Budapest and was repatriated to Pyongyang by the North Korean embassy in Hungary.²⁰ Finally, a similar “incident” happened in Poland in January 1975, when a North Korean student, Kim Han, was detained by the North Korean embassy in Warsaw and accused of planning to escape to the West. In the wake of Kim’s capture, the authorities in Pyongyang decided to repatriate all their students in Poland.²¹

¹⁸ For more on the case, see Soyoung Kim, John Harbord, “A Disparity between Faith and Actuality: A Story of North Korean Political Defectors in Bulgaria,” *Wiener Beiträge zur Koreaforschung* 6 (2014).

¹⁹ Andrei Lankov, “Soviet-DPRK Relations: Purges, Power, and Dissent in North Korea’s Formative Years,” *Sino-NK.com* (29 March 2013). See more in Andrei Lankov, *Crisis in North Korea: The Failure of De-Stalinization, 1956* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii, 2007).

²⁰ Bogook Kim, “Forgotten Era: Forgotten People: The North Korean Diaspora,” *Hungarian Studies* 2 (2014), p. 260-261.

²¹ *TsDA*, Fond 1477, Opis 31, A.E. 1921, p. 4-5.

The “Korean students” incident in Sofia disrupted bilateral relations between Bulgaria and DPRK for nearly six years and became an unprecedented event in the history of North Korea’s relation with the Eastern bloc. The situation only began to ease in 1966, when Leonid Brezhnev and Kim Il Sung agreed to jointly reject Mao’s Cultural Revolution. Following Brezhnev and Kim’s agreement, Moscow insisted that its most loyal East European ally, Bulgaria, had to mend fences with Pyongyang. Over the next two years, the relationship was partially repaired via the “good offices” and mediation of several East European diplomats, such as the Hungarian foreign minister. Ultimately, it was Bulgaria’s pledge not to permit any incidental contacts with South Korean citizens or even acknowledge the existence of two Korean states that enabled the re-development of relations between Sofia and Pyongyang. According to North Korean diplomats, the establishment of normal political, economic and cultural relations between South Korea and Soviet bloc countries would “perpetuate the division of the country” and impede its eventual unification.²²

Renewed Contacts between Bulgaria and North Korea, 1969-1985

Cooperation between Sofia and Pyongyang reached its peak from 1973 through 1985, when the leaders of the two countries, Todor Zhivkov and Kim Il Sung, exchanged official visits twice. Along with these high-level talks, the two countries reached several long-term agreements for mutual economic, scientific, technical, cultural, and even mass media cooperation, including projects for organizing of joint ventures in the field of machinery construction and agrobiolgy.

From the 1970s onward, the quality of the Bulgarian embassy in Pyongyang’s reporting improved significantly. This was partially due to the arrival of a Bulgarian defense attaché in

²²DVIA, Fond 42o, Opis 7, A.E. 22, p. 38.

1970. Yet Bulgarian embassy reporting from this period also highlighted a new phenomenon in North Korea's foreign policy behavior: even diplomats of "friendly" socialist countries in Eastern Europe faced serious obstacles in their work. Often forbidden from communicating with ordinary North Korean citizens, socialist diplomats received only selective information from official state agencies. In this milieu, the diplomatic and military representatives from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe shared information often and periodically organized joint consultations to discuss the internal and foreign policies of DPRK (much as had been done in Beijing during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution). North Korea's relations with China, Albania, and Romania during this period were of special interest for the Bulgarian embassy and Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Sofia, as was the activity of Pyongyang in Asia and Africa. The "Korean Question" at the United Nations also became a key theme in Bulgaria's diplomatic reports.

South Korea's rapid economic growth and outward-looking strategy in the 1970s and 1980s coincided with increased political and economic cooperation between Bulgaria and North Korea. When, in 1971, the government in Seoul undertook some initial steps to establish diplomatic relations with the "non-hostile Communist states" in Eastern Europe, Bulgaria's leadership strictly avoided making any contact with South Korean representatives, even in academic, cultural, and athletic spheres. Bulgaria's policy of non-recognition remained unchanged until the end of the 1970s.

In April 1980, the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry learned that a Bulgarian shipping company named *Koraboimpex* had proposed establishing contacts with the South Korean Hyundai Group. Exactly at the same time, the Bulgarian embassies in Tokyo and Paris reported that several South Korean sports journalists had applied to visit Bulgaria. Then in August 1980, the Bulgarian State Committee for Tourism informed the Foreign Ministry that a South Korean tourist group wished

to visit the country.²³ According to archival sources, initial contacts between the Bulgarian Trade Industrial Chamber (BTPP) and the Korean Trade Promotion Corporation (KOTRA) were established in 1981.²⁴

In the first half of the 1980s, there was a clear trend toward establishing and maintaining contacts with various South Korean commercial, industrial, academic, cultural, sport, and non-government organizations. Yet many of these initiatives were blocked by the government in Sofia because of its relations and cooperation with North Korea, which were, by that time, reaching a zenith. During the visit of Kim Il Sung to Sofia in July 1984, Bulgaria and North Korea brokered a Treaty for Friendship and Cooperation, an historic first. One clause in the treaty required Bulgaria to support the “peaceful unification” of Korea. When Todor Zhivkov visited Pyongyang the following year, the two sides reached a long-term agreement (1986-1990) for economic and commercial cooperation.

Bulgaria’s Rapprochement with South Korea

In 1984-1985, the North Korean leadership exerted strong pressure on the East European governments to back its proposal for the forthcoming 24th Olympic Games to be held simultaneously in Seoul and Pyongyang. When that idea failed, North Korea then demanded that all Soviet bloc countries boycott the Seoul Olympic Games in 1988. In order to avoid unwanted complications with the North Korean regime, special representatives of the Warsaw Pact foreign ministries jointly decided in February 1988 that the East European delegations at the 24th Olympic Games should be “tactful” and not “affect” the DPRK’s stand.²⁵ However, these efforts

²³Diplomatic Archive of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DA), Sofia, Opis 34, A.E. 1784, 1786, 1787.

²⁴DA, Opis 39, A.E. 1757.

²⁵DA, Opis 45-10, A.E. 28, p. 35.

did not appease Pyongyang, particularly because of the slogans of “openness,” “democratization,” and “radical reforms” in Moscow and a few other East European countries. On the other side, the participation of large East European delegations at the Olympic Games in Seoul had a strong effect on the Soviet bloc societies, which, for the first time, became acquainted with the actual realities in South Korea. The next challenge to Pyongyang was the official announcement from the Hungarian government that it would establish diplomatic relations with the Republic of Korea. The North Korean government warned its other Eastern European partners that it would consider the establishment of diplomatic relations with South Korea a “betrayal” of the cause of unification of their country.²⁶

Despite that Bulgaria had recently signed a long-term agreement for economic cooperation between with North Korea, bilateral commercial, industrial, and scientific-technical cooperation was in fact beginning to stagnant. This prompted Bulgaria to search for new partners with South Korea’s increasingly prosperous business community. The annual reports of the commercial and economic office at the Bulgarian embassy in Pyongyang for 1986-1989 are revealing of these changes. In January 1987, the Bulgarian commercial representative wrote that North Korean often decreased it planned exports to Bulgaria because of a “lack of experience and manufacturing difficulties.” Trade for 1987, for example, reached only 50-percent of the originally planned amount. In 1988, due to the permanent “difficulties” of North Korean industry, trade continued to decrease, with only 27 to 32-percent of targets reached in some areas.²⁷

Bulgaria’s commercial contacts with South Korea were stimulated by similar negotiations with other East European countries. On 13 July 1988, Asen Manolov, head of the Asia

²⁶*TsDA*, Fond 1-B, Opis. 101, A.E. 1905, p. 1-6.

²⁷*TsDA*, Fond 259, Opis 45, A.E. 691, pp. 92-93, 108, 134-135.

department at the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations, sent a report to his minister Andrei Lukanov with information stating that KOTRA had opened an office in Budapest in December 1987 and in Warsaw in March 1988. In East Berlin, an office of DAEWOO Group had opened as well. “Obviously, the question is ripe,” wrote Manolov, “for the best resolving of the issue with the commercial contacts with South Korea to overcome the existing accidental contacts and the use of jobbers, which had an adverse effect on our currency results.” Manolov suggested several steps be undertaken immediately. First, a small group of representatives from the Ministry, the Bulgarian Trade Industrial Chamber, the industrial association for electronics, and the Bulgarian Foreign Trade Bank should accompany the official Bulgarian delegation to the Olympic Games in Seoul with a task to carry out direct negotiations with their official South Korean counterparts. Second, the Bulgarian commercial representatives in Vienna, Tokyo, and Singapore should be instructed to contact their South Korean counterparts in order to propose such negotiations in Seoul. Third, Bulgarian commercial representatives at the embassies in Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and China should have consultations with the authorities in those countries and obtain more information about their relations with South Korea. Fourth, in August 1988 a representative from the Ministry should take part in a secret trilateral meeting in Sofia between experts from some electronic firms in Bulgaria, the Soviet Union, and South Korea.²⁸

Because of these proposed actions, a Bulgarian commercial delegation, led by the Chairman of Bulgarian Trade Industrial Chamber Petar Rusev, visited the Republic of Korea for two weeks in September 1988. The members of the delegation held talks at the South Korean Ministry of Foreign Trade, and with the presidents or vice presidents of Samsung, Hyundai,

²⁸*TsDA*, Fond 259, Opis 45, A.E. 689, p. 83-87.

Daewoo, and Lucky Goldstar (LG) corporations.²⁹ It was agreed that, in October, the President of KOTRA, Yi Sun-gi, would visit Bulgaria to sign a bilateral agreement with the BTPP. The agreement was finally signed in November 1988, just a few days before the signing of a similar agreement in Moscow. Unlike in Hungary, however, the commercial negotiations between Bulgaria and South Korea were not accompanied by political negotiations, at least until the end of 1989.

A South Korean economic delegation visited Sofia in June 1989 in connection of the opening of the KOTRA office in Sofia. During the talks with Stefan Polendakov, Deputy Minister of the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations, the South Korean representatives raised what steps could be taken to establish diplomatic relations between the two countries. Geon Won Bae, President of ISU Chemical Company,³⁰ visited Bulgaria in the last week of August 1989. He was announced as an “unofficial representative of the government of Republic of Korea” with authorization to suggest new steps in bilateral relations to his Bulgarian hosts. Geon Won Bae informed that the government of Republic of Korea is anxious to develop its commercial and industrial cooperation with Bulgaria, and proposed the establishment of consular offices as an intermediate step to the full establishment of diplomatic relations. If the Bulgarian side was eager to follow such steps, the government of Republic of Korea would grant a 50 million USD credit to Bulgaria and another 200 million USD credit line for the purchase of Korean industrial goods and machinery. On the next day, an “unofficial” response was given by the Bulgarian representatives. They underlined that the Bulgarian government also expressed interest in the development of the bilateral relations and would be ready to discuss the proposal

²⁹*TsDA*, Fond 259, Opis 45, A.E. 689, p. 94-105.

³⁰In that time 65 per cent of the shares in ISU Chemical Co belonged to the Daewoo Group.

for establishment consular offices “with some diplomatic functions.”³¹ This was, indeed, the first ever hint of a probable willingness in Sofia to start negotiations for establishment of diplomatic relations with Republic of Korea.

From 19 to 22 January 1990, government delegations from Bulgaria and South Korea held a series of talks in Tokyo, Japan, to discuss the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. The Bulgarian delegation was headed by Philip Ishpekov, a Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, while the head of the Korean delegation was Ambassador Soon Young Hong, special emissary of the South Korean foreign minister. In a secret report to the Bulgarian Foreign Minister, Boyko Dimitrov, on 1 February 1990, the head of the delegation Philip Ishpekov informed about the negotiations in Tokyo. According to the document, the Bulgarian representatives proposed that the establishment of diplomatic relations be considered along with a program for the extension of economic cooperation between the two countries, which was accepted fully by the South Korean delegation. The next request of the Bulgarian side was that South Korea deliver a 500 million USD government loan with a 10-year term. Though this was declined, the South Korean government pledged to encourage private firms to develop cooperation with Bulgaria.

In confidential face-to-face talks between the heads of both delegations, Ambassador Soon Young Hong informed his counterpart about the loans and credits South Korea agreed to deliver to Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. He assured Bulgaria that it would receive similar economic aid from the special program of South Korean Foreign Ministry. The head of the South Korean delegation also described the transition from authoritarian to democratic society in his country and the course of economic liberalization and openness to the world. He

³¹*TsDA*, Fond 259, Opis 45, A.E. 689, p. 88-92.

expressed a strong interest in the transformation process and radical reforms in Eastern Europe, and particularly in Bulgaria, and was ready to share South Korea's own experience in political and economic development. In addition, Ambassador Soon Young Hoon underlined his government's support for Bulgaria's position that the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries should not concern the good relations between Bulgaria and North Korea. On the contrary, "it must serve to the interests of the whole Korean nation, to contribute for the maintaining of the dialogue between the South and North, and for establishment of circumstances favorable to the peaceful and democratic unification of Korea."

In his report to the foreign minister, Ishpekov proposed that the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry undertake several steps to "decrease the negative impact of the establishment of diplomatic relations with Republic of Korea on the relations with the DPRK." One of the measures, proposed by the deputy foreign minister, was to increase positive comments about North Korea in Bulgarian media at the same time as the official release of the joint declaration for establishment of diplomatic relations with South Korea.³²

In pursuance of the proposed measures toward North Korea, on 6 February 1990, the head of the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry's Fifth Department (Asia) and the former ambassador in China (1983-1989) Doncho Donchev, held a meeting with North Korean Ambassador Kim Pyeong-il (Kim Pyong-il).³³ The meeting was undertaken at North Korea's initiative in order to deliver a letter from Foreign Minister Kim Yeong-nam (Kim Yong Nam) to the Bulgarian Foreign Minister Boyko Dimitrov. The North Korean foreign minister restated the official position of his government that the admission of Korea into United Nations could be possible

³²*TsDA*, Fond 259, Opis 45, A.E. 689, p. 50-62.

³³Kim Pyong Il was youngest son of Kim Il Sung and a half-brother of Kim Jong Il. In 1988, he was appointed as ambassador to Hungary, but was transferred in 1989 to Bulgaria in response of Hungary's opening of diplomatic relations with South Korea. Later, he served as the ambassador in Finland, Poland, and Czech Republic.

only after the unification of the country. Kim Pyeong-il delivered to Donchev also a declaration from his foreign ministry regarding the military exercises “Team Spirit-90” in South Korea. Ambassador Donchev assured the North Korean ambassador that Bulgaria would support position of North Korea against the US-South Korean military exercises on the Korean Peninsula.

Furthermore, Donchev informed Kim Pyeong-il about the negotiations in Tokyo and the decision of the Bulgarian government to establish diplomatic relations with Republic of Korea in the near future. He explained that this step was prompted by the qualitative changes in both the international atmosphere and in the internal situation in Bulgaria. “The necessity of such decision has been confirmed as well with undertaken of similar steps by the other socialist countries,” underlined Donchev. The Bulgarian official added further that the position of his country in regard to the peaceful and just resolution of the Korean issue and the unification of Korea remained unchanged. He assured the North Korean ambassador that Bulgaria would continue to give full support to the policy of the DPRK and its proposals for the normalization of the situation on the Korean Peninsula. The Bulgarian government considered the establishment of diplomatic relations with South Korea as one more opportunity for rendering support to North Korea’s position. The reaction of the North Korean ambassador was unsurprisingly negative. Kim Pyeong-il stressed that such a decision “was unacceptable” for his government, and requested that the decision of Bulgarian government to establish diplomatic relations with South Korea to be “nullified or, at least, its execution to be postponed indefinitely.” At the end of the unpleasant conversation, Ambassador Donchev voiced the firm view of his government: “We

cannot take away the right of DPRK for the assessment of that our step, but at the same time we hope that you will show understanding of the motives that move us.”³⁴

Because of the intensive talks with the South Korean partners, a common decision was agreed to establish a bilateral Bulgarian-South Korean trade and economic committee with the participation of more than 50 Korean firms and banks. The establishment of diplomatic relations between Bulgaria and Republic of Korea on 23 March 1990 was a strong stimulus for the fast development of political, economic, cultural, and social relations between the two countries over the next few years. In just a relatively short period (1991-1995), several high level Bulgarian delegations visited South Korea: in May 1991, Foreign Minister Victor Valkov and Finance Minister Ivan Kostov; in September same year, the Minister of Industry and Commerce Ivan Pushkarov; in September 1993, the Minister of Industry Rumen Bikov; in June 1994, Foreign Minister Stanislav Dimitrov; and in April 1995, Bulgarian President Zheliu Zhelev. In less than three years (1991-1993), bilateral commercial exchange increased three times. It was, indeed, not a specific matter only for Bulgaria, but a common trend in the relations of South Korea with the former socialist countries. According to a report from the commercial representative at the Bulgarian Embassy in Seoul, in 1996 commercial exchanges with South Korea grew by 61-percent over a one-year period for Bulgaria; for the Czech Republic, 99-percent; for Romania, 116-percent; for Poland, 189-percent; and for Slovakia, 368-percent.³⁵

On the other hand, economic and commercial relations with North Korea after 1989 witnessed a constant “decline and stagnation,” as it was described in several reports of Bulgarian experts and officials. The 19th session of the bilateral consultative committee for economic and technical cooperation, initially scheduled for May 1990, was postponed several times and held

³⁴*TsDA*, Fond 259, Opis 45, A.E. 689, p. 68-71.

³⁵*TsDA*, Fond 259, Opis 46, A.E. 82, p. 25.

only in May 1994. One of the main obstacles in the realization of joint economic cooperation was the existence of negative trade balance in favor of Bulgaria. For the previous period covering up to December 1990, North Korea owed over 4 million rubles to Bulgaria, while in 1991 the bilateral trade exchange was converted to USD currency. According to the signed Protocol of the 19th session, the North Korean side had until the end of December 1995 to restore its financial obligations by delivering “goods and services.”³⁶ However, on 27 September 1995, the Bulgarian ambassador and the commercial attaché in Pyongyang were informed officially that the North Korean side “could not fulfill its obligations under the repayment of the balance” and requested that Bulgaria “show understanding of the grave economic situation in which has fallen DPRK.”³⁷

The Bulgarian commercial representative in Pyongyang warned in several reports to Sofia about the unfavorable circumstances for the development of economic and trade cooperation between Bulgaria and North Korea. On 1 August 1996, he sent a detailed analysis “On the Trade and Economic Relations between Bulgaria and DPRK after 1990.” He underlined that, since 1990, no form of economic cooperation existed and that Bulgarian exports to North Korea were based on separate single transactions. Both sides, according to his assessment, “displayed passiveness and lack of interest,” while “the Korean side has no exact idea on the use of more flexible and pragmatic forms of bilateral economic cooperation.” In the conclusion of his report, the Bulgarian commercial attaché summarized: “The continuous trend of stagnation of our trade and economic relations in the last two and a half years is largely a result of the deteriorating economic situation in DPRK.”³⁸

³⁶*TsDA*, Fond 259, Opis 46, A.E. 85, p. 1-2.

³⁷*TsDA*, Fond 259, Opis 46, A.E. 88, p. 23

³⁸*TsDA*, Fond 259, Opis 46, A.E. 87, p. 2-8.

Political changes in Bulgaria in November 1989 and the beginning of the transition to a pluralistic democratic system, especially after the termination of the Warsaw Pact, directly influenced the development of the political and military relations with North Korea. Already on 16 January 1990, the Chief of the “International Relations” Department at the Bulgarian Ministry of Defense, Gen. Spas Stoimenov, sent new instructions to the Bulgarian military attaché in Pyongyang Col. Mikhail Gigov, stating that “In connection with the ongoing changes in our country do not show any initiative on the implementation of the aforementioned events (provided in the bilateral plan visits to Bulgaria of working groups of the headquarters of the Korean People's army ground troops and air defense).”³⁹ On 18 January 1991, Col. Mikhail Gigov was summoned to the International Relations Department of the North Korean Ministry of Defense and reminded that, during the previous year, two Korean People's Army working groups had not visited Bulgaria as originally planned. The new Head of “International Relations” Department, Col. Todor Hristov, immediately responded from Sofia: “The Minister [Gen. Yordan Mutafchiev] has agreed that their delegations can come, but will consider further the issue with of eventually sending of our delegations.”⁴⁰

During the coalition government of Prime Minister Dimitar Popov in the spring of 1991 it was decided to radically decrease diplomatic and military staff abroad. According to the government's decision, Bulgarian military representation at the embassy in Pyongyang ended in June 1991. A further formal complication in the bilateral diplomatic relations happened after the appointment of the former minister of defense, Gen. Mutafchiev, as the ambassador to DPRK. Due to the DPRK's unilateral withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in March 1993, Mutafchiev presented his credentials after a four-month delay. His stay in Pyongyang

³⁹DVIA, Fond 42o, Opis 7, A.E. 160, p. 8.

⁴⁰DVIA, Fond 42o, Opis 7, A.E. 160, p. 9.

continued about four years. By decree № 95 of 13 March 1997, the new conservative Bulgarian government closed its embassy in DPRK.⁴¹ However, in 2005 the new coalition government of Sergei Stanishev approved a new resolution to reopen the Bulgarian embassy in Pyongyang.⁴²

Publishing Bulgarian Sources on North Korea

As part of the research project “Korea in the Bulgarian Archives, 1945-1995,” selected documents from the Bulgarian archives (perhaps 25-percent of all relevant files) were scanned and arranged in a large database with short annotations. The annotations were translated into Korean, and digitized copies of the documents along with the annotations will soon be available at Academy of East Asia Studies at Sungkyunkwan University in Seoul and at the Korean Studies Department of Sofia University. The next goal of the project is to edit and publish—in both Korean and English—a detailed catalogue with information on all Bulgarian archival sources relevant to Korea. A similar catalogue for Hungarian diplomatic records on Korea was published in 2012 by one of the members of our international project, Dr. Bogook Kim, currently a lecturer at Sungkyunkwan University.⁴³

To build on the systematic exploration of the Bulgarian archives, the Academy of East Asian Studies in Seoul and Sofia University began a new joint educational project in late 2015.

Supported by the Core University Program for Korean Studies of the Ministry of Education of

⁴¹When Bulgarian ambassador Yordan Mutafchiev informed the North Korean foreign ministry about this decision, on 20 March 1997 North Korean deputy foreign minister Lee In asked him if a similar step was decided toward the Bulgarian embassy in Seoul. He stressed that if only the embassy in Pyongyang was closed, “it violates the principle of equality in the attitude toward the two Korean states.” See the memoirs of Yordan Mutafchiev, *On the Main Direction* (Sofia: Media Print, 2014), p. 435.

⁴²In 2014, the Bulgarian diplomatic mission in Pyongyang was authorized on a rotary base to represent the European Union to the North Korean government.

⁴³*Nam-Pukhan kwallyyon Honggari oemubu kimil oegyo munso mongnokchip, 1945-1993* [Catalogue of the Confidential Diplomatic Documents Concerning South Korea and North Korea from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary (1945-1993)], by Bogook Kim (Wonju: Prang kwa Changmi, 2012). A newly edited version of the Catalogue for the period 1965-1990 was published also by Dr. Bogook Kim in 2016.

Republic of Korea and the Korean Studies Promotion Service of the Academy of Korean Studies (AKS-2015-OLU-2250004), the project is titled “Establishment of a Combined Education and Research System for Root-taking and Spreading of Korean Studies in Eastern Europe.” As part of the project, Sofia University created a new master’s program in the Korean Studies Department. Students in the program will explore the newly digitized archival sources and make use of them in their master’s theses. In this way, the new archival findings on Korea will be immediately put to use, helping to push the historiography forward while working toward the goals of the 2010 Framework Agreement between the European Union and Republic of Korea for enhanced mutual understanding in science and cultural cooperation.

Appended below are English translations of 18 documents from the CC BCP Politburo and “Foreign Policy and International Relations” Department records at Central State Archives in Sofia. Covering the period from 1957 through 1988, the files reveal several complicated episodes in Bulgarian-North Korean relations.⁴⁴ An abbreviated version of the catalogue with information about the most important records on Korea stored at the Central State Archives in Sofia and State Military Historical Archive in Veliko Tarnovo, is also included. All documents and folders mentioned are accessible in the Bulgarian state archives, and were scanned over the last two years as part of the joint project.

⁴⁴Researchers working in this area may also want to consult another collection from Bulgaria’s Foreign Intelligence and Military Intelligences services, published in December 2016. See *the State Security and the Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff of Bulgarian National Armed Forces in Asia, 1944-1991*, Sofia, 2016, pp. 978-1149. The volume is available online: <http://comdos.bg/%D0%9D%D0%B0%D1%88%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B5%20%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%B4%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%8F/ds-i-ru-na-gsht-na-bna-v-aziya> .

Document Appendix

[October 30, 1957 - Information on the Bulgarian Government Delegation visit to the People's Republic of China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the Mongolian People's Republic](#)

Excerpts from a report on the Bulgarian government delegation 36-day visit to four socialist countries in Asia.

[November 25, 1960 – Letter from Georgi Bogdanov, Ambassador of the People's Republic of Bulgaria to Pyongyang](#)

The Bulgarian Ambassador to North Korea, Georgi Bogdanov, reports on the restriction of foreign education materials in North Korea.

[January 3, 1962 - Information on the Attitude of the Korean Workers' Party to Some Decisions of the 22nd CPSU \[Communist Party of the Soviet Union\] Congress](#)

Dimo Dichev, Head of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party's Foreign Policy and International Relations Department, reports on North Korea's responses to the 22nd Congress of the Soviet Union.

[March 22, 1962 – Information Regarding the Working Conditions in the Bulgarian Embassy in Pyongyang](#)

Dimo Dichev, Head of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party's Foreign Policy and International Relations Department, reports on the working conditions and visitation restrictions placed on the Bulgarian embassy in Pyongyang.

[April 29, 1962 – Resolution No. B-6 by the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party Politburo, Regarding Repatriation of Korean Students](#)

The Bulgarian Communist Party Politburo details their strong protest against the DPRK's repatriation of four Korean students who sought political asylum in Bulgaria. The Politburo calls for immediate acknowledgment by the DPRK government, threatening to declare government affiliates in Bulgaria as "persona non grata."

June 9, 1962 - Memo to the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party's Secretariat from Dimo Dichev, Head of "Foreign Policy and International Relations" Department

Dimo Dichev, Head of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party's Foreign Policy and International Relations Department, reports on a visit of two North Korean industrial chemistry students, requesting political asylum.

September 3, 1962 - Resolution No. B-7 by the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party Politburo, Regarding Incident with the Korean Students

The Bulgarian Communist Party Politburo entrusts the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to deliver a note of protest to the North Korean government, regarding the repatriation of North Korean students.

October 4, 1962 - Statement by Two North Korean Students in Communist Bulgaria, Addressed to Todor Zhivkov

Two North Korean overseas students in Communist Bulgaria write to Todor Zhivkov and the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party requesting political asylum. The statement details events of abduction, torture, and eventual escape from the North Korean embassy in Bulgaria.

June 8, 1967 - Memorandum from the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry, Regarding Relations with North Korea

A memorandum listing the Bulgarian Communist Party's explicit interest to rebuild relations with North Korea, which wavered in 1962 following an incident involving North Korea students and the declaration of the Ambassador as "persona non grata."

January 26, 1969 - Memo from Bulgarian Ambassador in Pyongyang, Misho Nikolov, to Bulgarian Communist Party's Foreign Policy and International Relations Department

Report by Bulgarian Ambassador to Pyongyang, Misho Nikolov, outlining Pyongyang's requests to discontinue all political recognition, in both imagery and name, of South Korea.

November 18, 1970 - Record of Talks between Kim Il Sung and Bulgarian Ambassador to North Korea, Misho Nikolov

Record of Bulgarian Ambassador to North Korea, Misho Nikolov's farewell visit with North Korean Leader Kim Il Sung, including conversation on North Korea's interest in South Korean Presidential candidate Kim Dae-jung.

May 18, 1971 - Note from Chairman of the Bulgarian Union for Physical Culture and Sport, Regarding 1971 Sofia Wrestling World Cup

The Chairman of the Bulgarian Union for physical Culture and Sport, Tredafil Martinski, details plans to exclude capitalist countries, including South Korea, from participation in the 1971 Wrestling World Cup to be held in Sofia, Bulgaria.

January 4, 1985 - Information from Bulgarian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Peter Mladenov to the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party

Bulgarian Minister of Foreign Affairs Peter Mladenov reports on North Korean Foreign Minister Kim Yeong-nam's visit and discussion with Todor Zhivkov, concerning North Korea's "South-South" initiative for economic cooperation between developing countries.

June 19, 1985 – Statement by Todor Zhivkov on His Visit to the DPRK

General Secretary of the Bulgarian Communist Party Todor Zhivkov reports on his visit to North Korea, describing discussions with Kim Il Sung on North-South Korean relations and capitalism in China.

July 3, 1985 - Letter to the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party, from the Secretary of the Korean Workers' Party, Hwang Jang-yeop

A letter from Secretary of the Central Committee of the Korean Workers' Party, Hwang Jang-yeop, detailing North Korea objections to South Korea hosting the 1988 Olympics and calling for a unified "Korean Olympics."

September 18, 1985 - Memo of Meeting between Bulgarian Deputy Foreign Minister, Maria Zaharieva, and North Korean Ambassador to Bulgaria, Ha Dong-yun

Bulgarian Deputy Foreign Minister, Maria Zaharieva meets with North Korean Ambassador, Ha Dong-yun to discuss North Korea's concerns regarding South Korean involvement in international venues to be hosted in Bulgaria.

September 13, 1988 – Information on the Bulgarian Prime Minister, Georgi Atanasov's Visit to North Korea

Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Bulgarian Communist Party Georgi Atanasov reports on his visit to Pyongyang to celebrate the 40th anniversary of North Korea.

October 21, 1988 - Report on North Korea's International Situation under the New Realities in the World

A report on North Korea's international standing, economic situation, and political relations with Soviet Russia in comparison to South Korea, following the 1988 Seoul Olympics.