

TELEGRAM 084354

To: the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

From: the Romanian Embassy in Washington, DC

Subject: the Korean question

Date: March 21, 1977

Classification: Secret

During 8-10 March, the South Korean Minister of Foreign Affairs visited Washington to consult with the US on the matter and met with President Carter at the latter's request.

During the meeting with the South Korean Minister, President Carter reaffirmed:

- the United States' commitment to maintain and preserve security in South Korea;
- the United States' decision to gradually withdraw American ground troops from South Korea in consultation with South Korea and Japan, without damaging South Korea's security or altering the strategic and military balance in the Korean Peninsula;
- the US administration's firm position regarding human rights issues and the need for Seoul to take appropriate measures so as not to compromise the development of bilateral relations in the future.

Edward Hurwitz, Director of the Korea Desk in the US Department of State, told Comrade Petre Anghel, Third Secretary, that the South Korean Minister's discussions with President Carter and State Department representatives have managed to reduce South Korea's concerns regarding allegations of a diminished US interest in their bilateral relations and in the region.

US officials reassured the South Korean Minister that they will not proceed to an immediate withdrawal of American troops and that the process will be gradual, with the direct cooperation and participation of South Korean authorities. Concurrently, American representatives reiterated the position that the US will not accept discussing solutions to the Korean issue in the absence of envoys from Seoul. According to the US diplomat, the DPRK sent a message to the new administration via the Pakistani government, proposing to initiate a dialogue with the US in order to sign a definitive peace treaty and establish stable bilateral relations.

The US responded that it cannot accept a dialogue with the DPRK, which excludes South Korea, and proposed a four-party meeting to discuss a new settlement initiating a constructive bilateral dialogue between the two Koreas.

According to Hurwitz, although it is difficult to estimate if and to what extent the DPRK will abandon the rigid position upheld hitherto, a less aggressive tone has been noticeable in its recent statements regarding the United States.

In regards to discussing the Korean issue at the UN, the US would prefer a situation similar to the one from the last General Assembly. Thus far, American representatives have no knowledge of the issue's inclusion on the agenda for the next Assembly. However, if this were to happen, it would only lead to sterile discussions and a potential intensification of the tensions in the Korean Peninsula.

Signed: Nicolae M. Nicolae