

TELEGRAM 078.081

To: the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Fourth Directorate)

From: the Romanian Embassy in Tokyo

Date: September 6th, 1978

Classification: Secret

On September 3rd and 4th, the 10th Japanese-South-Korean Ministerial Conference took place in Seoul. The Japanese delegation, comprising 6 ministers, was led by Sunao Sonoda – the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The main point of the discussions was the peace treaty signed between Japan and People's Republic of China, about which the South Koreans, led by the Minister of Foreign affairs Pak Dong-jin, expressed its concern regarding the possible influences over the situation on the Korean peninsula. Moreover, in this context, the Japanese minister Sonoda assured that signing the treaty with the People's Republic of China will not change Japan's position on the Korean question, but it will contribute to the stability in Asia. At the same time, he hinted that the perspective of establishing relations between Japan with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is in the attention of the Japanese government. During a meeting of the committee for foreign affairs of the House of Representatives, one week ago Sonoda declared that the issue of relations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea can no longer be ignored.

The ministerial reunion has not brought anything new to the issues of reducing the deficit in the balance of trade with South Korea which currently amounts to 3 billion US dollars. Moreover, the Takeshima island matter was not mentioned, both sides being aware that there is no mutually convenient solution for the time being.

A new element in the current relations between the two countries was the proposal of the Japanese Prime Minister, Takeo Fukuda, transmitted to the minister of foreign affairs S. Sonoda, to meet with the president of South Korea, Park Chung Hee. The proposal was accepted, and the date is going to be decided by the [two ministries of foreign affairs]. It is worth mentioning that the last meeting of this kind took place in 1967 when the Japanese ex-prime-minister, Saku Sato, visited Seoul.

Even though a concrete outcome on bilateral relations was not reached, the Ministerial Conference was considered a success by the Japanese because the South Korean officials expressed their interest regarding the treaty signed by Japan with the People's Republic of China.

Signed

Radu Bogdan