

TELEGRAM 075.345

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

From: the Romanian Embassy in Teheran

Subject: Iranian-North Korean relations

Date: May 24th, 1978

Classification: Secret

On May 20-24 1978, Gang Ryang-uk, the DPRK Vice-President, paid an official visit to Iran. He was accompanied by the minister of education, the deputy foreign minister, and the deputy foreign trade minister.

The North Korean Vice-President was received by the Shah. [The North Korean official] transmitted a message from President Kim Il Sung and had a conversation with the Shah. No joint communique was released; no documents were signed.

According to the North Korean diplomats, the aim of the visit was to refresh North Korea's friendly relations with Iran, and, at the same time, to counter-balance South Korea's efforts in this country.

Before arriving in Iran, the delegation made official visits to Nigeria, Togo, Benin and Zaire. In Zaire, the delegation witnessed the events [we have already mentioned to you].

Note: South Korea is very active in Iran, both in terms of economic and political relations. About 5000 South Korean qualified workers and technicians were hired in Iran and they work in various economic facilities: building harbors, drivers on trucks etc. The two countries agreed to cooperate in the field of fishing, food canning, agriculture, etc.

From the information we have, construction work on a refinery in Seoul, with a capacity of 60,000 barrels/day has started; the raw materials for this [refinery] will be provided by Iran for a 15-year period.

Last year, the South Korean Prime Minister, Choe Gyu-ha, paid an official visit to Iran.

Meanwhile, North Korea's trade with Iran is almost equal to zero; North Korea's presence in Iran is not felt in any way.

Iran is striving to maintain the appearance of a balance in its relations with the two Koreas, but its sympathy is obviously tilted towards South Korea.

Signed

Agop Bezerian