

# The diplomatic relationship between South Korea and Hungary from 1948 to 1982

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## ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

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### ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the process by which the Republic of Korea (hereafter, ROK or South Korea) and Hungary established diplomatic relations. Given the complexity of the process, the subject was divided into two papers, the first of which concerns the period 1948 to 1982 and the second that of 1982–1988, the last year being that in which the diplomatic relationship was officially declared. Moreover, it employs the two countries' confidential diplomatic documents as primary sources. This article focused on the first part of the above period.

### KEYWORDS

confidential diplomatic documents, South Korea, North Korea, National Archives of Hungary, diplomatic archives of the Republic of Korea

## INTRODUCTION

Taking a general view of the diplomatic relations of the two countries, the Joseon and the Austro-Hungarian empires signed treaties of friendship, commerce and navigation, and entered into a practical diplomatic relationship on June 23, 1892. However, the ratification of these treaties did not occur until over a year later, on October 5, 1893 (Fendler 151); thus, it appears that only then did active exchanges begin. After that point, the two countries, swept by drastic change, were in the crucible of world history. Thus, the Joseon Dynasty fell and the Korean Empire emerged in 1897; Japan colonized Korea, which underwent a long period of occupation

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and war, before receiving its independence, albeit as a divided nation, following the Second World War. The Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy also collapsed at the end of the First World War; Austria was seized by Nazi Germany in 1939, and Hungary became its ally; at the end of the war, the Soviet Union occupied Hungary, which became a Soviet socialist state. Thus, South Korea and Hungary found themselves on opposite sides of the Cold War divide, with conflicting ideologies and political systems. However, South Korea did have exchanges with socialist countries, even in this period without formal diplomatic ties. The South Korean – Hungarian exchange can be divided into three periods, each marked by important historical events, and these can also be traced through the diplomatic documents.<sup>1</sup>

## FIRST PERIOD, 1948–1972

The first period begins in 1948, when South Korea and North Korea (the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, hereafter, DPRK or North Korea) established their governments and started their independent diplomatic activities. Thus, the Korean diplomatic documents that were published in 1994 begin in 1948, as do those of Hungary, and those concerning South and North Korea also carry the date of that year.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the first period terminates in 1972, when signs of the reconciliation between South and North Korea became evident in the “7.4 South-North Joint Statement,” which was issued on July 4, 1972.<sup>3</sup> This statement is also of importance because reflects the first discussion the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party (*Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt-MSZMP*, hereafter HSWP) Political Committee’s (*Politikai Bizottság-PB*, hereafter

<sup>1</sup>South Korea reveals its diplomatic documents after 30 years; this policy is based on the law “Rules on Publication of Diplomatic Documents” (<http://www.law.go.kr/lsEflInfoP.do?lsiSeq=128205#0000> accessed April 1, 2015). However, publication is limited by eight clauses under “Article 9 of Public Information Act of Public Institutions” and a provisory clause, which states, “current diplomatic and external works should not be affected and [publication] is not discrepant with the national interest.” Currently, diplomatic documents until 1983 have been revealed. The confidential diplomatic documents of Hungary are defined by Article 5 Clause 6 of 2009 Law No. 155 on the “Protection of Rated Data” (2009. évi CLV törvény a minősített adat védelméről), which stipulates that the most confidential data (*Szigorúan titkos*) and second-degree confidential data cannot be made public for at least 30 years; third-degree (*Bizalmas*) for at least 20 years; and other restricted confidential data (*Korlátozott terjesztésű*) for at least ten years. However, as in South Korea, in matters relating to national defense and national security, publication is limited by Article 5 Clause 7 of this law. Therefore, some diplomatic documents of each nation could not be consulted for this research, even though the terms of their secrecy have passed. The materials related to some diplomatic events may consequently be weak or very limited.

<sup>2</sup>The Hungarian diplomatic documents that have been released are currently stored at the National Archives of Hungary (NAH); they are divided into confidential administrative documents (*TÜK iratok*) and ordinary administrative documents (*Általános ügykezelésű iratok*). These classifications are not related to their confidentiality rankings; for example, many ordinary administrative documents fall under the classification “top secret” (*Szigorúan titkos*). The confidential administrative documents are related to politics, and the ordinary administrative documents are largely concerned with education, culture, economics and are closely related to the confidential documents. The oldest among the confidential administrative documents is dated 1949 (two documents); five ordinary administrative documents are dated 1948, and all these contain information on the relations of Hungary to North and South Korea.

<sup>3</sup>On June 23, 1973, about a year after this statement was announced, the declaration of the peaceful unification policy of the president, including the abandonment of the Hallstein principle, was announced; accordingly, the initiative of the coordinating committee of South Korea continued; however, it would be appropriate to consider it as the diplomatic expansion of “7.4 South-North Joint Statement”.



PC) discussion of contacts with South Korea and its decision to refrain from such contacts. This policy endured until 1983.

From 1948 to 1972, only five South Korean diplomatic documents directly involve Hungary. Only two South Korean diplomatic documents touch directly on the relationship,<sup>4</sup> the “Korea-Hungary trade promotion”<sup>5</sup> of 1971 and the “Promotion of the visit to Hungary by the agricultural attaché Joo-in Song at the Italian Embassy”<sup>6</sup> of 1971–72. These two sources speak of Hungary and Poland, noting that the person in charge of the Korean Embassy in Rome contacted the embassies of the Eastern European countries in that city, the consulate general in Milan, and trade representatives. Both Poland and Hungary viewed South Korea’s efforts positively and were open to visits.<sup>7</sup>

In this paragraph, Hungarian diplomatic approaches to South Korea are highlighted in diplomatic documents from the South Korean Embassy in Italy. The first document is “The issue of South Korean personnel’s visit to Hungary” (*Dél-koreai személyek beutazásának kérdése*)<sup>8</sup> of April 22, 1966. The report highlights South Korea’s possible decision to send representatives to governmental and non-governmental meetings in socialist countries, and the latter’s attendance at similar events in Korea. It reports that Korea sent a delegation to an international conference in Prague that was backed by the World Health Organization, but Czechoslovakia asked the Korean delegates to leave, because they lacked visas. In contrast, it states that Yugoslavian representatives were accepted at the 15th General Meeting of the International Union of Educators held in Seoul.<sup>9</sup> It indicates that Hungary considered South Korea’s strategy to be injurious to North Korea’s reputation.<sup>10</sup> Few contacts with South Korea are mentioned before the 1970, but they increase after this date. About 21 documents concern

<sup>4</sup>Others are as follows: The 1958 “Message to the UN Secretary General regarding the execution of former Prime Minister Nagy Imre of Hungary” (Diplomatic Archives of the Republic of Korea, hereafter, DAROK, Class No. 722.9HG 1958. Reg. No. 70. Film No. C-0001. Frame No. 2114-2135) and the documents, from 1957 to 1959, of the “Germany asylum problem for international students from East Germany, Hungary, and North Korea” (DAROK Class No. 743.73GE/KN 1957–1959. Reg. No. 329. Film No. K-0001. Frame No. 0180-0204). The latter have no relevance to the Korea-Hungary relationship. The contents of the generalized system of preferences (GSP) of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) related to Hungary in 1972 also has no bearing on the South Korea-Hungary relationship, since it concerns information requested by Hungary on the most favoured nation (MFN) treatment of 25 developing countries (DAROK Class No. 732.299BL/HG 1972. Reg. No. 5242. Film No. I-0038. File No. 09. Frame No. 0001-001).

<sup>5</sup>DAROK Class No. 765.6HG 1971. Reg. No. 4666. Film No. N-0010. File No. 16. Frame No. 0001-0013.

<sup>6</sup>DAROK Class No. 727.6HG 1971-72. Reg. No. 5116. Film No. 19. E-0009. File No. 19. Frame No. 0001-0023.

<sup>7</sup>In the case of Hungary, this was an individual rather than an official visit; however, because of the situation in South Korea, the visit eventually foundered (Loc. cit). The South Korean embassies in Italy and Belgium tried to contact Poland; its ambassador in Belgium visited the South Korean ambassador and mentioned that if the South Korean ambassador wished, he could directly issue the visa (DAROK Class No. 765.61PD 1972. Reg. No. 5552. Film No. N-0012. File No. 03. Frame No. 0001-0011).

<sup>8</sup>XIX-J-1-j Korea, 1966. Box No. 75. Archives No. 82-36. Doc. No. 003535.

<sup>9</sup>A well-known fact is that Yugoslavia was a socialist country that had conflicts with Soviet Union and other socialist countries. Comparing it to other socialist countries, Yugoslavia was flexible in its dealings with South Korea. Nevertheless, because of North Korea, Yugoslavia did not open its doors to South Korea.

<sup>10</sup>The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary sent a circular message to a Hungarian domestic organization which stated that an international administrative meeting with South Korean participants could not be held in Hungary. For such a meeting, the invitations of South Korean and South Vietnamese attendees would have to be approved by the minister of foreign affairs (XIX-J-1-j Korea, Box No. 68. Archives No. 82-577. Doc. No. 00431/3).



South Korea directly or indirectly. The latter country seems to have approached Hungary's diplomatic offices not only in Rome, but also in Washington,<sup>11</sup> Stockholm,<sup>12</sup> Vienna,<sup>13</sup> and even in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.<sup>14</sup> Summarizing the important points of the 1971 documents, Hungary sought to pacify South Korea, rather than to reject its approaches, about which North Korea complained. The following is a more detailed summary of the events:<sup>15</sup>

–March 3 1971: A person in charge of United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Mrs. R. Lusardi from the United States, gave a negative reply to South Korea's inquiry to exhibit its products at the Budapest International Fair (*Budapesti Nemzetközi Vásár*, BNV) in 1971.<sup>16</sup>

–August 12, 1971: The Hungarian Ministry of Commerce told the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary (hereafter, MFAH) that the establishment of a commercial relationship with South Korea did not benefit the Hungarian economy.<sup>17</sup>

–August 20, 1971: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the DPRK sent a formal document to MFAH that requested a flat refusal of South Korea's recent approach.<sup>18</sup>

–August 22, 1971: North Korea explained to Hungary that the South Korean approach was a scheme of that nation and the United States and formed part of their strategy to (1) win the recognition of the legality of the South Korean administration and (2) to evade international isolation.<sup>19</sup>

–August 24, 1971: A report by the Hungarian Embassy in Moscow indicated that the Soviet Union had taken note of South Korea's attempts to enter the Socialist zone. It felt that the approach should not be overtly rejected because South Korea may be useful in the future.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>11</sup>XIX-J-1-j Korea, Box No. 68. Archives No. 82-57. Doc. No. 002746/14.

<sup>12</sup>XIX-J-1-j Korea, Box No. 68. Archives No. 82-57. Doc. No. 002746/17.

<sup>13</sup>XIX-J-1-j Korea, Box No. 68. Archives No. 82-57. Doc. No. 002746/10. Vienna contains the fierce objection of North Korea that Hungarian trade organization received a sample of the South Korean product through Vienna instead of content that Korea approached Hungary through Vienna.

<sup>14</sup>XIX-J-1-j Korea, Box No. 68. Archives No. 82-57. Doc. No. 002746/7. On February 17, 1971, as a result of a governmental council for this region, the Korean mission to the UN in Geneva and the Korean embassies in Sweden, Great Britain, Austria, and Italy were identified as contact points to Eastern European countries. (DAROK Class No. 765.6 1971-72. Reg. No. 5550. Film No. N-0012. File No. 01. Frame No. 0085). The April documents indicate that the South Korean embassy in Italy was identified as having contacted Yugoslavia, and Austria's embassy was identified as a contact point for Czechoslovak and Polish institutions (DAROK Class No. 765.6 XH/AV 1971. Reg. No. 4667. Film No. N-0010. File No. 17. Frame No. 0005). However, it seems that this policy was not applied as planned. Since contact with Hungary took place in Austria, it seems that approaches through a third power, such as Ethiopia, were also possible.

<sup>15</sup>The summary below is based on documents that amount to 100 pages. In case of Hungarian foreign documents, they should be regarded with caution, since the diplomats did not write lucidly. They tended to employ indirect expressions. Thus, it is quite important to understand the documents accurately.

<sup>16</sup>XIX-J-1-j Korea, Box No. 68. Archives No. 82-577. Doc. No. 00431/3.

<sup>17</sup>XIX-J-1-j Korea, Box No. 68. Archives No. 82-57. Doc. No. 002746. After this event, North Korea realized that the Hungarian and South Korean sides had met, and it tried to prevent such meetings(XIX-J-1-j Korea, Box No. 68. Archives No. 82-57. Doc. No. 002746/6).

<sup>18</sup>XIX-J-1-j Korea, Box No. 68. Archives No. 82-57. Doc. No. 002746/16. This official document has three versions of the same contents in Hungarian, South Korean, Russian, and the original text is retained.

<sup>19</sup>XIX-J-1-j Korea, Box No. 68. Archives No. 82-57. Doc. No. 002746/1.

<sup>20</sup>XIX-J-1-j Korea, Box No. 68. Archives No. 82-57. Doc. No. 002746/2.



–August 30, 1971: North Korea wanted to confirm the fact that a Hungarian company ordered products from South Korea.<sup>21</sup>

One may ask why South Korea engaged in diplomatic activities with the Socialist countries starting in 1971. The most common understanding of this action is the so-called “8.15 Peaceful Unification Plan Declaration” of August 15, 1970, which is considered the cornerstone of North and South communications. Although the historical, political, and economic background of this event would require much deeper research, if one observes the above declaration through South Korea’s diplomatic sources on Eastern Europe or Hungary, one senses a desire for “Eastern Europe as a new market.” On February 10, 1971, South Korea held “Economic and diplomatic committee meetings regarding the issue of trading with the communist zone.”<sup>22</sup> According to the minutes of meetings held on March 20 and 27, 1970, two rounds of general talks of the “Economic Diplomacy Coordination Committee” took place; these were attended by personnel of the Economic Planning Board, the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, and the Central Intelligence Agency. Because of the meetings, Article 2 of the “Trade Act,” which concerns trade with Communist countries, was revised on December 31, 1970.<sup>23</sup> However, South Korea indirectly exported its products to the Eastern bloc; the total value of its exports to the Eastern European countries amounting to \$1,860,000. Sources state that South Korea amended its laws and gathered the advice of relevant institutions in order to export more products by replacing the indirect export path to Eastern Europe with a direct export system.<sup>24</sup>

Hungary did not receive special attention from South Korea. In fact, South Korea initiated more exchanges with Yugoslavia than with Hungary, and these were more productive. Thus, the documents of 1970 alone reveal the following facts: the entry of two Yugoslavians as researchers at the World Bank,<sup>25</sup> the participation of South Koreans at a concert in Split,<sup>26</sup> the participation

<sup>21</sup>XIX-J-1-j Korea, Box No. 68. Archives No. 82-57. Doc. No. 002746/3. The complaints of North Korea regarding these orders were continuous and intense. According to a report from the Hungarian embassy in Pyongyang, on October 14 of the same year, North Korea complained to Hungary, mentioned the names of the relevant South Korea companies (Kirjun, Szamna, and Jodzin), and the quantity of clothes (2,800 pieces). In response, Hungary officially clarified that the information of North Korea was groundless; the event was concluded when North Korea stated that it had simply made an inquiry (XIX-J-1-j Korea, Box No. 68. Archives No. 82-57. Doc. No. 002746/15). However, Hungary denied direct imports from South Korea but did not deny the possibility of indirect imports (XIX-J-1-j Korea, Box No. 68. Archives No. 82-57. Doc. No. 002746/18); Hungary is included in the 1970 list of countries trading with Korea (DAROK Class No. 765.6 1971-72. Reg. No. 5550. Film No. N-0012. File No. 01. Frame No. 0148); in 1971, the Austrian embassy reported indirect Korean trading with Hungary (DAROK Class No. 765.6 XH/AV 1971. Reg. No. 4667. Film No. N-0010. File No. 17. Frame No. 0017-0018); and the South Korean documents mention “continue pending transit trade with Hungary” (DAROK Class No. 765.6 1971-72. Reg. No. 5550. Film No. N-0012. File No. 01. Frame No. 0142). Thus, it seems that transit trade between South Korea and Hungary took place.

<sup>22</sup>DAROK Class No. 765.6 1971-72. Reg. No. 5550. Film No. N-0012. File No. 01. Frame No. 0001-0154.

<sup>23</sup>Two revisions of the Trade Act, Section 2 symbolically reflect the exchanges between South Korea and the socialist zone. Section 2 of the Trade Act of 1967 completely prohibits the trade of products with the socialist zone, but Section 2 of the law of December 31, 1970 approves trade with it through a “legally appointed person” and contains an exemption to the Anti-communist Law and National Security Law. This clause was again revised by enlarging the permissible range from “legally appointed person” to “an executive order.”

<sup>24</sup>DAROK Class No. 765.6 1971-72. Reg. No. 5550. Film No. N-0012. File No. 01. Frame No. 0148.

<sup>25</sup>DAROK Class No. 727.6YG 1969-70. Reg. No. 3619. Film No. E-0007. File No. 13. Frame No. 0004-0009.

<sup>26</sup>DAROK Class No. 727.6YG 1969-70. Reg. No. 3619. Film No. E-0007. File No. 13. Frame No. 0010-0015.



of South Korea in the Interregional Seminar on Physical Planning for Tourism Development held in Dubrovnik,<sup>27</sup> an invitation to South Koreans to compete with the male Yugoslavian basketball team *Plastika*,<sup>28</sup> the reception of a male Yugoslavian basketball team in South Korea, and the South Korean consul general's contact with a Yugoslavian diplomat in Islamabad, Pakistan.<sup>29</sup> Hungary's reports reveal much about the relationship of Yugoslavia and South Korea.<sup>30</sup> At the same time, these records report on Romania's acceptance of the trade proposal of South Korea,<sup>31</sup> on a comment in the bulletin of the North Korea Central News Agency on Seoul's situation as seen by its media,<sup>32</sup> and, most interestingly, Bulgaria's ordeal after North Korea questioned its exchanges with South Korea.<sup>33</sup>

## FROM 1972 TO 1982

The South and North Korean exchanges reached their peak with the declaration of the "7.4 South-North Joint Statement" in 1972.<sup>34</sup> For South Korea and Hungary, this statement was a turning point because the PC of the HSWP decided on a policy regarding contact with South Korea. This policy provided a theoretical foundation for Hungary's economic and diplomatic

<sup>27</sup>DAROK Class No. 727.6YG 1969-70. Reg. No. 3619. Film No. E-0007. File No. 13. Frame No. 0016-0023.

<sup>28</sup>DAROK Class No. 727.6YG 1969-70. Reg. No. 3619. Film No. E-0007. File No. 13. Frame No. 0024-0027. Since the dispatch of governmental and nongovernmental representatives to various events held in the socialist countries was approved by cabinet meeting bill No. 335 of April 22, 1966, legal problems with participation did not exist at that time. However, even before Bill No. 335 was approved, there were cases when South Korean representatives participated in international events held in Poland, Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia (DAROK Class No. 727.6XH 1969. Reg. No. 3088. Film No. E-0006. File No. 07. Frame No. 0001-0009).

<sup>29</sup>DAROK Class No. 727.2 1970. Reg. No. 3607. Film No. E-0007. File No. 01. Frame No. 0001-0005. This also concerns the attempts by Bora Geftie, the ambassador of Yugoslavia, to expand the trade relationship with South Korea. He stated that a South Korean delegation might visit Yugoslavia.

<sup>30</sup>XIX-J-1-j Korea, Box No. 68. Archives No. 82-57. Doc. No. 002746. This box contains documents of a discussion between an official of the embassy of South Korea (Yong-chol Ahn) and the director of the commercial chamber in Milan (Hee-pal Song), who visited the commercial attaché of Hungary in Milan without notice. During the discussion, the South Korean side felt that it had received a favorable response and mentioned that South Koreans had already visited Yugoslavia.

XIX-J-1-j Korea, Box No. 68. Archives No. 82-57. Doc. No. 002746/17. According to the report of the commercial attaché of Hungary in Stockholm, a local South Korean visited the commercial chamber director and South Korea would install a commercial chamber in Yugoslavia in 1972.

XIX-J-1-j Korea, Box No. 68. Archives No. 82-57. Doc. No. 002817/1. On August 27, 1971, a report written by the embassy of Hungary in Beograd, "Relationship of South Korea and Yugoslavia" describes the sports, trade, economics, and diplomatic relationships in separate chapters.

<sup>31</sup>XIX-J-1-j Korea, Box No. 68. Archives No. 82-57. Doc. No. 002746/6.

<sup>32</sup>XIX-J-1-j Korea, Box No. 68. Archives No. 82-57. Doc. No. 002746/12. This box contains the report of Nak-seon Lee, the Minister of Commerce and Industry of the National Assembly Trade Commission and mentions the types of products exported to each Eastern European country: Yugoslavia (22 products, such as synthetic resins and car tires), Czechoslovakia (18 products, such as synthetic resins), and Hungary (14 products, such as synthetic resins and woollen fabrics).

<sup>33</sup>XIX-J-1-j Korea, Box No. 68. Archives No. 82-57. Doc. No. 002746/16.

<sup>34</sup>Officially, the Hallstein Doctrine was abandoned in the "6.23 Peaceful Unification Diplomatic Policy Declaration" of 1973. Many believe that the declaration was the origin of Nordpolitik (*Shin 75*), but actually, it had a propaganda effect; institutional exchanges with the socialist countries had already been implemented in an earlier period.



approach to South Korea until 1983, when it was amended. As mentioned in the previous section, the “7.4 South-North Joint Statement” of 1972 certainly provided the groundwork for this Hungarian reassessment. At the same time, it may be assumed that Hungary was also motivated by its own interests in rethinking its relationship with South Korea. However, Hungary’s policy was arrived at in consultation with other Eastern bloc states. The decision of the political committee was as follows:

### Draft Decision<sup>35</sup>

The Political Committee accepts the report of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and approves the following for our party and national organizations.

1. Continuously supporting the North Korean people’s righteous fight for the unification of Korea, based on peace and democracy;
2. Seeking possibilities for action, in close cooperation with brother parties in the socialist countries, and supporting socialist values in issues related to South and North Korea.
3. Maintaining a high-level relationship with the Leader of DPRK in service of these goals (However, comrade János Kádár must avoid inviting the DPRK).
4. Supporting future development of Hungarian-South Korean relations by focusing on the current interests of the DPRK and coordinating the opinions of allied countries to subordinate them to the developing relationship of the DPRK and the ROK. (Until then, attempts of South Korea to establish relationships should be avoided.)

### János Péter

The above document was written on September 14, 1972 and is composed of nine pages of proposals, including this decision, and seven pages of discussion. The proposal explains the background of the “7.4 South-North Joint Statement” of 1972, the secret meeting of high-ranking representatives of South and North Korea, and the implicit agreement of China and the United States. In particular, it contains information on the attitudes of the Soviet Union and its Eastern European satellites, which are contrasted to that of China, whose diplomats held secret talks to prepare for the “7.4 South-North Joint Statement.”<sup>36</sup> Aside from North Korea being granted a loan of some 15-20 million Rubles and being assured of economic support,<sup>37</sup> it is notable that most of the meeting’s attendees, including Prime Minister János Kádár, expressed a critical view of that nation.

While the decision does not clarify Hungary’s path to an active relationship with South Korea, it served as a diplomatic compass until June 21, 1983, when a more accommodating approach was adopted. The spirit and value of the “7.4 South-North Joint Statement” declined<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup>NAH M-KS 288. F. 5/591. ő.e. (1971.09.19.) 32R/239, NAH M-KS 288. F. 5/591. ő.e. (1971.09.19.) 33R/239. There are two copies of two different drafts, but most of the draft presented is verified by the dialog records.

<sup>36</sup>NAH M-KS 288. F. 5/591. ő.e. (1971.09.19.) 29R/239.

<sup>37</sup>NAH M-KS 288. F. 5/591. ő.e. (1971.09.19.) 201R/239. North Korea started to have a direct relationship with the United States through the mediation of Japan, and sources indicate that it undertook negotiations with the UN Secretary-General.

<sup>38</sup>North Korea explained its meeting with South Korea in relation to the “7.4 South-North Joint Statement” to Hungary as a “meeting on a strategic point of view”(NAH M-KS 288. F. 5/591. ő.e. (1971.09.19.) 199R/239).



when South Korea proclaimed the October Revitalizing Reform and North Korea adopted a socialist constitution; however, South Korea officially affirmed the abandonment of the Hallstein Doctrine when it issued the Diplomatic Declaration of Peaceful Unification in the following year. This document may be considered as foreshadowing its continuous exchanges with the socialist countries, despite the decline of the South-North relationship.<sup>39</sup>

### Korean documents concerned with the exchanges between the two countries from 1972 to 1982

Most Hungarian documents on South Korea concern economic exchanges. Among these sources, the following are relevant:

- Using a Viennese trading company, South Korea indirectly participated at the Budapest International Fair<sup>40</sup> of May 1973. Afterwards, this form of participation was questioned, and a direct link to Hungarian buyers was judged as more effective.
- Korean-Hungarian trade was encouraged.<sup>41</sup> On October 30, 1973, the consul at South Korea's Embassy in Vienna met an official in charge of economic affairs from Hungary. The Hungarian official stated that it would be difficult to normalize South Korean-Hungarian relations, but that a gradual economic approximation was possible.
- The petition of a Korean musician, who was invited by Hungarian national television (MTV) to tour Hungary, was rejected at the airport, when he attempted to enter the country.<sup>42</sup>
- Four South Koreans received Hungarian visas in Paris to attend the 4<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of IEA (International Economic Association) in Budapest<sup>43</sup> in August 1974.
- The Frankfurt branch manager of the Korean Exchange Bank visited Hungary in February 1975 and met with officials of the Central Bank of Hungary, the chamber of commerce, and the International Exhibition. Transaction contracts, periodic exchanges, and mutual visits were discussed.<sup>44</sup>
- Three representatives of South Korea participated in the 8th International Symposium of the Society for Comparative Literature held by the Hungarian Academy in August 1976.<sup>45</sup>

In January 1977, a correspondent of the Hungarian News Agency in Tokyo, Béla Éliás, visited South Korea; this was the first visit of a journalist from Eastern Europe.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>39</sup>It can be interpreted as the reaction of South Korea to the easing of international tensions between the U.S. and China and the Armistice Agreement between the U.S. and the Viet Minh (League for the Independence of Vietnam). As is mentioned footnote 34, "Declaration 6.23" has been accepted as part of the origins of Nordpolitik, the foreign policy of Tae-woo Noh. However, the term Nordpolitik originates from a speech delivered by Beom-seok Lee, the former minister of foreign affairs (Shin 75).

<sup>40</sup>DAROK Class No. 695.91 HG 1973. Reg. No. 6509. Film No. N-0015. File No. 10. Frame No. 0001-0050.

<sup>41</sup>DAROK Class No. 765.2 HG 1973. Reg. No. 6468. Film No. N-0013. File No. 03. Frame No. 0001-0014.

<sup>42</sup>DAROK Class No. 727.12 HG 1974. Reg. No. 7105. Film No. E-0012. File No. 06. Frame No. 0001-0032.

<sup>43</sup>DAROK Class No. 761.36 1974.Reg. No. 7494. Film No. M-0028. File No. 22. Frame No. 0001-0036.

<sup>44</sup>DAROK Class No. 761.2 HG 1975. Reg. No. 8652 (10337). Film No. H-0033. File No. 06. Frame No. 0001-0012.

<sup>45</sup>DAROK Class No. 727.12 HG 1978-79. Reg. No. 9374. Film No. E-06-0014. File No. 02. Frame No. 0001-0047.

<sup>46</sup>DAROK Class No. 754.522 HG 1977. Reg. No. 10878. Film No. 2007-49. File No. 06. Frame No. 0001-0076.





–Ten Koreans participated in the Junior Weightlifting World Championship held in Debrecen, Hungary in July 1979, and three Koreans applied to participate at the General Assembly of the International Society for Classical Literature that was held in Budapest from August to September of the same year.<sup>47</sup>

–South Koreans participated in the Budapest International Fair of September 1979.<sup>48</sup>

–South Korean students at the Stuttgart College of Music in West Germany travelled to Budapest to perform in November 1980.<sup>49</sup>

I have so far attempted to summarize the archival sources that concern South Korean-Hungarian contacts up to 1982. (Most South Korean archival sources do not touch directly on the relationship with Hungary; rather, information is found in the documents relating to other nations.<sup>50</sup>) As in the previous period, South Korea did not prioritize contacts with Hungary over that with other Eastern Europe countries. Rather, it focused its diplomacy<sup>51</sup> on Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union.<sup>52</sup> In terms of commerce, culture, study and diplomacy, Hungary represented no special importance. Therefore, it can be said that the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries was not based on continuous interactions in this period. For instance, the South Korean Government permitted that medical theses should be copied and sent to Hungary's scientific institutions, but offered Poland far more extensive academic support. The relative importance of Hungary is revealed in the figures on South Korea's trade with Eastern Europe, the total volume of which was \$2,000,000 at the end of 1974, with Hungary falling to third place in terms of its participation in that trade

<sup>47</sup>DAROK Class No. 727.12 XH 1978-79. Reg. No. 2605B (13072). Roll No. 2009-37. File No. 02. Frame No. 0001-0184.

<sup>48</sup>DAROK Class No. 765.91 XH 1978-80. Reg. No. 26143 (13774). Roll No. 2009-83. File No. 11. Frame No. I-403.

<sup>49</sup>DAROK Class No. 727.12 XH 1980. Reg. No. 26059 (14428). Roll No. 2010-36. File No. 03. Frame No. 1-58.

<sup>50</sup>These documents cover such events as Germany's establishment of diplomatic relations with Hungary and Bulgaria (DAROK Class No. 722.12 GE/BL/HG 1973 Reg. No. 5791. Film No. C-0061. File No. 02. Frame No. 0001-0009) and the treatment of the head of the diplomatic corps (the Ambassador of Hungary) (DAROK Class No. 727 1974. Reg. No. 7100. Film No. E-0012. File No. 01. Frame No. 0001-0026).

<sup>51</sup>The report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the president of March 2, 1974 describes the trade of Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Yugoslavia (DAROK Class No. 765.2 XH 1973-74. Reg. No. 7585. Film No. N-0016. File No. 09. Frame No. 0079-0099).

<sup>52</sup>Japanese trading companies often opened instalment L/Cs for orders from the Soviet Union through transferable L/Cs; the products were transferred to Nakhodka by ship and the Trans-Siberian Railway (DAROK Class No. 765.2 XH 1973-74. Reg. No. 7585. Film No. N-0016. File No. 09. Frame No. 0018-0019). Meanwhile, South Korea focused on the Soviet Union, which had a huge market and a large population and which kept a certain distance from China and North Korea. In early 1974, the Asian sectional chief of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed the South Korean embassy in Rome about the attitude of the Soviet Union. He indicated that the Soviet Union wanted to normalize its relationship with South Korea, but it desired that an Eastern European nation take the lead. It showed a profound interest in the relationship between South Korea and China; it would normalize its contacts with South Korea as this nation's relationship with China improved. (DAROK Class No. 722.2 UR 1973-74. Reg. No. 6825. Film No. Re-0022. File No. 46. Frame No. 0019). In July 1974, the Indian Foreign Minister spoke of the key role that the Soviet Union could play in improving the relationship between South Korea and Eastern Europe (DAROK Class No. 722.2 UR 1973-74. Reg. No. 6825. Film No. Re-0022. File No. 46. Frame No. 0037). *Pravda* flatly denied a secret meeting between the Soviet Union and South Korea that had been reported by *Frankfurter Allgemeine*. It certainly appears that contacts took place between the two countries. Furthermore, the Eastern European countries were all under the dominance of the Soviet Union, except for Romania and Yugoslavia (DAROK Class No. 727.11 XH 1974-76. Reg. No. 8286 (10358). Film No. E-0013. File No. 02. Frame No. 0006).



volume (Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Yugoslavia, and the Soviet Union).<sup>53</sup> South Korea's trade with Hungary remained relatively unimportant even in the late 1970s and early 1980s compared to trade with other Eastern European countries.<sup>54</sup> It signed an Interline Traffic Agreement which provided for cooperation between the two countries on December 31, 1978, but South Korea had signed a similar treaty with Poland on August 31, 1977 and with Yugoslavia much earlier, on April 1, 1963.<sup>55</sup> In addition, international telephone repeater stations, which allowed for smooth communications, were set up with Yugoslavia in 1971, Romania in 1974, and the Soviet Union and Bulgaria in 1979, while a similar station was not created with Hungary until 1978.<sup>56</sup> As to South Korea's postal records with eight nations – the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, East Germany, and Romania – Hungary ranked 4th in 1974, 5th in 1975, 4th in 1976, 7th in 1977, and 6th in 1978.<sup>57</sup> As for the number of South Korean visitors to Eastern European countries, including the Soviet Union (in 1980), Hungary had the fewest, with the exception of Albania.<sup>58</sup> When Puja Frigyes, Hungary's Secretary of Foreign Affairs, visited Japan on February 18, 1980, he did not comment on South and North Korea.<sup>59</sup> This fact assumes importance when we compare it to the role of Yugoslavia at that time. In 1977, Yugoslavia functioned as an intermediary power<sup>60</sup> in the three-party conference of the United States, South Korea and North Korea, which was made possible after the proposals of the North America Conference (Kim 183). The distance which

<sup>53</sup>DAROK Class No. 765.2 XH 1973-74. Reg. No. 7585. Film No. N-0016. File No. 09. Frame No. 0005-0007. As shown in the data, South Korea considered Yugoslavia to be an important trading partner. Furthermore, there may be several technical reasons for its relatively inactive trading relationship with Hungary. The diplomatic documents of South Korea indicate a marks-of-origin requirement for its import items from Hungary, unlike those of other Eastern European countries, which may explain the stagnant trade (DAROK Class No. 765.2 XH 1973-74. Reg. No. 7585. Film No. N-0016. File No. 09. Frame No. 0027, 0047); further, only two Japanese companies sent resident employees to Hungary. This is an extraordinarily small number compared to those of other Eastern European countries—except for Albania—and it shows that trade between Hungary and the developing Asian countries was relatively undeveloped (DAROK Class No. 765.2 XH 1973-74. Reg. No. 7585. Film No. N-0016. File No. 09. Frame No. 0009).

<sup>54</sup>The figures of overseas embassies and those of the customs offices differ (regarding the data on standard of customs clearance, are taken from DAROK Class No. 765.2 XH 1979. Reg. No. 26106 (13719). Roll No. 2009-80. File No. 12. Frame No. 10, and DAROK Class No. 727.11 XH 1979-80. Reg. No. 10209 (14427). Roll No. 2010-36. File No. 02. Frame No. 135); for 1974, Hungary had the lowest export value to South Korea of the Eastern European countries, except for East Germany; in 1975, it had the lowest value of exports, and in 1976 it exported the least to South Korea, except for Bulgaria (DAROK Class No. 765.2 XH 1976-77. Reg. No. 8730 (13718). Roll No. 2009-80. File No. 11. Frame No. 24). In 1977, Hungary had the lowest amount of trade with South Korea, except for Czechoslovakia and Romania; in the first half of 1978 and 1979, it was South Korea's least important trading partner in Eastern Europe (DAROK Class No. 765.2 FN/XH 1979. Reg. No. 26111 (13713). Roll No. 2009-80. File No. 06. Frame No. 42). In 1980, its trade was greater than Bulgaria's, Czechoslovakia's, and Romania's, although only slightly superior to that of the last two nations (DAROK Class No. 765.2 XH 1980. Reg. No. 10202 (14939). Roll No. 2010-68. File No. 06. Frame No. 53).

<sup>55</sup>DAROK Class No. 765.82 XH 1979. Reg. No. 26907 (13764). Roll No. 2009-83. File No. 01. Frame No. 11.

<sup>56</sup>DAROK Class No. 765.82 XH 1979. Reg. No. 26110 (13765). Roll No. 2009-83. File No. 02. Frame No. 8.

<sup>57</sup>DAROK Class No. 765.82 XH 1979. Reg. No. 26110 (13765). Roll No. 2009-83. File No. 02. Frame No. 15.

<sup>58</sup>DAROK Class No. 727 XH 1980. Reg. No. 24928 (14426). Roll No. 2010-36. File No. 01. Frame No. 13.

<sup>59</sup>DAROK Class No. 772 XH 1980. Reg. No. 25386 (15116). Roll No. 2010-79. File No. 02. Frame No. 186-191.

<sup>60</sup>DAROK Class No. 726.23 US/YG 1977-1980. Reg. No. 5555 (14418). Roll No. 2010-35. File No. 07. Frame No. 1-150. DAROK Class No. 726.23 US 1977-1980. Reg. No. 6210 (14419). Roll No. 2010-35. File No. 08. Frame No. 1-210. DAROK Class No. 726.23 US/YG 1977-1980. Reg. No. 15754 (14420). Roll No. 2010-35. File No. 09. Frame No. 1-97.



characterized the relationship of Hungary and South Korea is also evident in the lack of comment by Hungary on the division of Korea. In fact, the documentary evidence indicates that the exchanges between Hungary and South Korea were not sufficient to create a diplomatic relationship.<sup>61</sup>

### Hungarian Foreign Affairs Documents on the exchanges between the two countries from 1972 to 1982

Hungary's diplomatic sources reveal that the country responded passively to approaches from South Korea. The following is a brief summary of the matter progressing by year:

- 1972: The South Korean assistant administrator of the Lutheran World Federation was denied entry into Hungary.<sup>62</sup>
- 1972: Hungary's Vice-Director in Charge of Trade agreed to contact Kwang-sup Shin, the Director of the Stockholm branch of KOTRA (Korea Trade Promotion Corporation) on a commercial matter in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. According to Shin, the branch was to open in 1972, and he planned to visit the trade commissioners of Poland and Bulgaria in Stockholm. However, Hungary's headquarters firmly warned the vice-director not to engage in such contacts.<sup>63</sup>
- 1972: North Korea indicated that South Korea's economic situation was very unstable. South Korea was trying to sell products in Europe because the products of its light industry were not accepted in the United States. Thus, the Eastern European countries must reject such South Korean approaches.<sup>64</sup>
- 1972: Documents from May to December 1971 contain information on South Korea's economic situation. Some of these had been published in the South Korean press and some had been received by the Soviet Embassy in Pyongyang.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>61</sup>The Soviet Union, Romania, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Poland are central in the evidence of 1979, but Hungary is exempted (DAROK Class No. 772 XH 1979. Reg. No. 10646 (13872). Roll No. 2009-89. File No. 12. Frame No. 1-102); the information relative to Hungary takes up less than a page of the 185 pages of the "Improvement of Relations with the Eastern European Bloc" (DAROK Class No. 727.11 XH 1979-80. Reg. No. 10209 (14427). Roll No. 2010-36. File No. 02. Frame No.182). Only Czechoslovakia, Poland, East Germany, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria's participation in the exhibition is described in detail in the files entitled "Participation to 1980 International Exhibition hosted by East-European bloc" (DAROK Class No. 765.91 XH 1979-80. Reg. No. 26138 (15013). Roll No. 2010-72. File No. 04. Frame No. 1-247) and "Indirect Participation to 1981 International Exhibition hosted by East-European bloc" (DAROK Class No. 765.91 XH 1980-81. Reg. No. 26139. Roll No. 2011-0074-0001. File No. 10. Frame No. 1-90). There is no evidence of a noticeable exchange with Hungary in this period of time. Although the negotiations with Yugoslavia failed, it is evident that a trade representative was established in that nation as early as 1977 (DAROK Class No. 726.23 US/YG 1977-1980. Reg. No. 5555 (14418). Roll No. 2010-35. File No. 07. Frame No. 120).

<sup>62</sup>NAH Roll No. 53706. Frame No. 2008 0000 0148. The Hungarian National Records Centre keeps the most confidential documents of the MFAH for the period 1945 to 1989 on microfilm. Since researchers must consult these microfilms rather than the original documents, the serial numbers of the microfilms are used in place of document numbers. Among the Hungarian documents of the previous section, those with document numbers are original sources, not microfilm facsimiles.

<sup>63</sup>NAH Roll No. 53697. Frame No. 2007 0000 2647.

<sup>64</sup>NAH Roll No. 53697. Frame No. 2007 0000 2765.

<sup>65</sup>NAH Roll No. 53697. Frame No. 2007 0000 2767.



–1976: A report of April 27 states that North Korea claimed that the countries of Eastern Europe were taking lenient positions with regard to South Korean approaches. It mentions the academic and cultural exchanges of Hungary and Czechoslovakia. It speaks of the visits of the Czechoslovakian and Polish supervisors of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission (NNSC) to Seoul. North Korea complained about these friendly contacts with South Korea.<sup>66</sup>

–1976: North Korea engaged in further diplomatic efforts, but Hungary judged that South Korea had gained diplomatic superiority over North Korea. South Korea actively attempted to collaborate with non-hostile countries. The Hungarian Embassy in Kuwait and the Hungarian Consulate in Cologne reported attempts at contact by South Korea.<sup>67</sup>

–In 1977, South Korea tried continuously to contact the socialist states via Helsinki, Stockholm, Ottawa, Dhaka, and Kuwait. The ambassador of Korea in Helsinki contacted the Hungarian ambassador, and he said that he would like to travel to Hungary. Later, the Hungarian ambassador found that the former diplomat had already been to Yugoslavia.<sup>68</sup>

–1977: A report from September reveals that the Director of the Overseas Economic Research Institute in Korea contacted Dr. Mihály Simai, a Hungarian who had attended an international conference of economists in Tokyo. The Koreans said that they would like to establish relations in the economic and cultural fields and were interested in importing machines from Hungary. They said that they had already contacted Poland. According to the Hungarians, China reacted negatively to this initiative because of North Korea.<sup>69</sup>

–1977: A South Korean team participated in the Summer Universiade, held in Bulgaria. The DPRK strongly appealed to Bulgaria to disallow South Korean participation in the games.<sup>70</sup>

–1973: A report of January 2 indicates that the embassy of North Korea in Budapest had notified Hungary that a South Korean company was trying to contact a Hungarian company through an Italian brokerage firm in Milan. South Korea's export company had attached a list of South Korean firms for the Budapest exhibition of January 1973. The embassy of North Korea acquired the information from headquarters and notified Hungary.<sup>71</sup>

–1973: On December 8, North Korea told Dr. Taraba—the First Secretary of the Embassy of Hungary in Pyongyang—that diplomatic and commercial contacts between Hungary and South Korea occurred on December 8 and 25, 1972, but the Hungarian foreign ministry denied these claims. The file also contains data on the economy of South Korea.<sup>72</sup>

–1974: On May 24, the North Korean ambassador spoke of the flexibility of South Korea's diplomacy in the previous two years. This diplomacy had changed in the context of Middle East policy and aimed to have the developed countries acknowledge the *de jure* existence of the two Koreas. In comparison, North Korea's diplomatic policy showed little change. North Korea

<sup>66</sup>NAH Roll No. 53699. Frame No. 2007 0000 3089.

<sup>67</sup>NAH Roll No. 53700. Frame No. 2007 0000 1268.

<sup>68</sup>NAH Roll No. 53700. Frame No. 2007 0000 2961.

<sup>69</sup>NAH Roll No. 53700. Frame No. 2007 0000 3099.

<sup>70</sup>NAH Roll No. 53700. Frame No. 2007 0000 3105. North Korea was very sensitive about other socialist countries contacting South Korea in all fields of exchange.

<sup>71</sup>NAH Roll No. 53698. Frame No. 2007 0000 1649.

<sup>72</sup>NAH Roll No. 53698. Frame No. 2007 0000 1703.

NAH Roll No. 53706. Frame No. 2008 0000 0174.



seems to have accepted to a certain degree the participation of South Korean representatives at the events of international organizations held in socialist countries. For instance, it did not call into question the participation of South Korea at the IPU autumn meeting in Romania. Nam-hoo Csong of the North Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs commented that it was an internal issue of a socialist country to decide whom to invite and to whom to issue visas. North Korea expressed revulsion towards South Korea's relationship with the socialist countries.<sup>73</sup>

–1974: A circular note shows that governmental bodies and diplomatic personnel were told to report to the MFAH on the more frequent attempts of South Korea to forge relationships with Hungarian institutions.<sup>74</sup>

–1974: A document of April 8, 1974 indicates that the Embassy of South Korea approached the Embassy of Hungary in Jakarta by letter April 3. The Hungarian ambassador politely rejected it. The document was not kept and a reply was not made to it. Several approaches of this type had been made in the previous few years.<sup>75</sup>

–May 9, 1974. The person in charge of a Hungarian company, Chemokomplex, sent a company introduction to South Korea in the form of circular note. North Korea discovered it and lodged a complaint. Hungary's Department of Foreign Trade told Hungarian companies not to contact South Korea directly.<sup>76</sup>

–1975: On March 1, 1975, the Embassy of Hungary in Bulgaria reported on the three diplomatic principles of South Korea: (1) Continuous and firm political, cultural, and economic relationships with the United States and Japan; (2) improved relationships with third-world powers in Africa, Latin America, and Asia to gain support against North Korea in the UN; and (3) establishing relationships with the socialist countries. It had sought the mediation of Japan, India and Finland in establishing links with the socialist countries.<sup>77</sup>

–1975: A document from Jakarta reveals that the Korean ambassador took part in a reception hosted by Iran on March 21. Among other issues, it indicated that South Korea, which had diplomatic links with 102 nations, wanted to improve its relationships with the European socialist countries, including the establishment of formal diplomatic ties with them. The report took note of the fact that North Korea was completely under the influence of China, which rendered unification impossible in the short-term.<sup>78</sup>

–1975: A report from July 15, 1975, from the Hungarian embassy in Pyongyang contains 19 pages of economic data on South Korea (in Russian), kept at the Soviet Union embassy in Pyongyang. The Hungarians requested the Soviet Union to reveal the source for this data. The data were related to the overall economy of South Korea.<sup>79</sup> These documents demonstrate Hungary's interest in South Korea.

–1976: A report from March 10, 1976, indicates that Jong-il Kim, the deputy department chief of the 8th area of North Korean Foreign Affairs, introduced South Korea's diplomatic situation to a

<sup>73</sup>NAH Roll No. 53698. Frame No. 2007 0000 3773.

<sup>74</sup>NAH Roll No. 53698. Frame No. 2007 0000 3784.

<sup>75</sup>NAH Roll No. 53699. Frame No. 2007 0000 0005.

<sup>76</sup>NAH Roll No. 53699. Frame No. 2007 0000 0041.

<sup>77</sup>NAH Roll No. 53699. Frame No. 2007 0000 2433.

<sup>78</sup>NAH Roll No. 53699. Frame No. 2007 0000 2440.

<sup>79</sup>NAH Roll No. 53699. Frame No. 2007 0000 2475.



comrade, Taraba, on the damage inflicted, as Benin, Laos, South Vietnam and Cambodia withdrew diplomatic relations with South Korea in 1972. North Korea considered the three features of the diplomatic policy of South Korea to be (1) strengthening its security, (2) improving its international economic position and (3) realizing its unification policy.<sup>80</sup>

–1976: A document of April 20, 1976 reveals that the Hungarian Embassy in Kuwait reported that the local trade commissioner of South Korea had requested for an unofficial meeting. Although its bid for school and hospital construction was successful, South Korea wanted Hungary’s cooperation and a group of technicians. The Hungarian government ordered that no contact in any form should take place on this matter.<sup>81</sup>

–1976: A document of May 10, 1976 from Khartoum indicates that a delegation of South Korean executives had discussed the establishment of an official relationship of South Korea and Hungary. The North Korean ambassador was aware of this information. Since the Minister of Transport of Sudan was to visit Seoul after a trip to India, there is a high possibility that this information is true.<sup>82</sup>

–1976: A report of March 20, 1976, indicates that Jong-gab Bang of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of DPRK had “officially” stated that the broadcasting company of Seoul reported the following news item on March 26: “The Hungarian Nature Museum sent five bird taxidermies to an ornithology research institute affiliated with Kyunghee University of South Korea and requested for a continuous exchange of birds”. According to a radio report, the “ice” with four socialist countries had been “broken”; this is the first exchange and first request of this type by the socialist countries.<sup>83</sup>

–1977: A document of October 17, 1977, refers to the Hungarian embassies in Stockholm and Ottawa, where local Korean offices tried to contact the diplomats of the socialist countries several times. The Hungarian diplomats followed orders and did not respond. An employee of TASZSZ Communications contacted South Korea with the approval of the ambassador at Ottawa. The South Korean ambassador was pursuing an independent diplomatic route.<sup>84</sup>

–1977: A report sent from Pyongyang on October 13, 1977 speaks of South Korea’s participation in the 64th IPU General Assembly. According to the Bulgarian ambassador, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of DPRK officially announced its nonparticipation because of the attendance of South Korea. However, North Korea, which argued with Bulgaria, finally dispatched a delegation. The North Koreans reacted with anger when the speech by the South Korean delegation received a round of applause.<sup>85</sup>

–1977: A report from Pyongyang states that South Korea participated in an event arranged by the Soviet Union on November 1, 1977. The Soviet ambassador did not mention South Korea’s attendance at a governmental conference on environmental protection hosted by UNESCO that

<sup>80</sup>NAH Roll No. 53700. Frame No. 2007 0000 1260.

<sup>81</sup>NAH Roll No. 53700. Frame No. 2007 0000 1277.

<sup>82</sup>NAH Roll No. 53700. Frame No. 2007 0000 1290.

<sup>83</sup>NAH Roll No. 53700. Frame No. 2007 0000 1298.

<sup>84</sup>NAH Roll No. 53700. Frame No. 2007 0000 2961.

<sup>85</sup>North Korea did not give Bulgaria any chance to raise objections regarding this event. The Bulgarian ambassador said that there were 22 North Korean inspectors at the *Universtiade* pretending to be tourists (NAH Roll No. 53700. Frame No. 2007 0000 3012).



was held on October 14–26 in Tbilisi to North Korea. The South Korean ambassador in London attended as his country's representative.<sup>86</sup>

–1977: A report sent from Pyongyang on August 12, 1977 reveals that South Korea took part in international sports events organized in Bulgaria. North Korea brought up the South Korean team's involvement in the Universiade held at Sofia in August. Sang-muk Jo, a director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, asked Bulgaria's Ambassador Kelcsev to support the entry of the South Koreans into Bulgaria. On April 21, the head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dam Heo personally mentioned the invitation of the South Korean team to the Sofia Universiade competition.<sup>87</sup>

–1978: A February 15, 1978, document indicates that Mr. Medve from the Hungarian Embassy in Athens reacted favorably to the attempts of South Korea to contact him, thus breaking with official guidelines. In an official document, he was told to rebuff such attempts, while acting with courtesy toward the South Koreans.<sup>88</sup>

–1978: A document from Pyongyang of April 26, 1978, states that a Polish general of the Panmunjom (Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission) observed that South Korea considered Yugoslavia as its most important conversational partner. South Korea tried to approach nonaligned and socialist nations through Yugoslavia. A good relationship between the two countries had been established (*“a két ország között már jó kapcsolat van”*), with an active exchange of scholars, visitors and commodities.<sup>89</sup>

–1978: A May 18, 1978 report from Pyongyang speaks of the cooperation of the Bulgarian embassy at Pyongyang. It is a report on the South Korean news agency and that country's diplomatic association with the Arab states. After the 7.4 South-North Joint Statement in 1972, North Korea's diplomatic victory stirred South Korea, which attempted to change its diplomatic policy, making it more aggressive and basing it on the economy. It was most successful in the Arab world. After the Arab-Israeli War of 1973, South Korea began to shift away from supporting Israel. Afterwards, considerable diplomatic success was achieved. Economic cooperation, especially with Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Iran, Kuwait, and United Arab Emirates, was notable.<sup>90</sup>

–1979: South Korea attempted to establish a relationship with Hungary, whose officials were approached, directly or indirectly, by the South Korean trade commissioner and diplomats in Copenhagen, Ottawa, Vienna, and Helsinki.<sup>91</sup>

–1979: A Report from Pyongyang of August 10, 1979 speaks of information received from the Soviet Embassy in Pyongyang, which indicated the following: (1) A symposium of the International Political Science Association would be held in Moscow on August 11, and sixteen South Koreans had obtained entry visas to attend it. North Korea, which also had received an invitation, refused to attend. (2) South Korean academicians attended the Academic Union Conference of the Pacific Area meeting in Khabarovsk from the end of August until the early

<sup>86</sup>NAH Roll No. 53700. Frame No. 2007 0000 3017.

<sup>87</sup>NAH Roll No. 53700. Frame No. 2007 0000 3105.

<sup>88</sup>NAH Roll No. 53701. Frame No. 2007 0000 0544.

<sup>89</sup>NAH Roll No. 53701. Frame No. 2007 0000 0565.

<sup>90</sup>NAH Roll No. 53701. Frame No. 2007 0000 0570.

<sup>91</sup>NAH Roll No. 53701. Frame No. 2007 0000 1859.



September. (3) In September, the International Social Security Conference was held at Tashkent; a Deputy Prime Minister of South Korea attended as a representative.<sup>92</sup>

-1979: A document from Helsinki of September 24, 1979 indicates that South Korean Foreign Minister Dong-jin Park visited Finland from September 12 to 14. South Korea had desired to diversify its trade relations, relying on the United States and Japan. It requested Finland's assistance in facilitating trade with the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries. Finland rejected this proposal, stating that was a task for companies and not governments. Dong-jin Park said that commercial exchanges with Eastern European countries and the Soviet Union were worth \$100 million in the last year. Hungary was also approached by South Korea in Finland. The Councilor of Embassy of Korea in Finland, Hyon-jin Kim, visited Prague; he wanted to hold a conference on plant equipment purchases with participating companies from Finland; however, Czechoslovakia refused the South Korean request.<sup>93</sup>

-1979: A report from Pyongyang of May 22, 1979 indicated that Hungary evaluated and discussed with the embassies of neighboring countries the economic situation of each relative to South Korea. The current economic situation of Korea and its future prospects were discussed.<sup>94</sup>

-1979: A document from Pyongyang of April 7, 1979 indicates that South Korea wished to participate in the Hungarian Youth Weightlifting Championships and the International Weightlifting Federation on June 13-24. North Korea requested that this participation not be permitted.<sup>95</sup>

-1979: A document of September 24, 1979 indicates that K. Sugimori, Chairman of the Japanese Cultural Association, which had a contractual relationship with the Hungarian Cultural Relations Association (KKI), told Hungary that the South Korean International Cultural Association wanted to host an exhibition on the cultures of the European socialist countries. Sugimori suggested that the Embassy of Hungary in Tokyo "donate" exhibition materials/photos, posters, and documents to the Japanese Cultural Association, which would lend them to the association in Korea. The Hungarians replied that they would speak to the higher authorities, since Hungary did not have diplomatic ties with South Korea.<sup>96</sup>

-1980: A report from Pyongyang on January 17, 1980, provides information from the Soviet embassy in Pyongyang. In 1978, South Korea asked the United States and Japan to act as mediators toward China, which it regarded as a "non-hostile communist country" (*nem ellenséges kommunista országok*). China refused any official announcement of its dealings with South Korea; however, their contacts were profitable to the United States, Japan, China, and South Korea. South Korea also approached third world countries. It criticized South Africa and Rhodesia, and did not seek to establish diplomatic relationships with them; its relationship with Israel also worsened. It received much support from the Middle Eastern countries. South Korea wanted to develop a relationship with socialist countries through international conferences and international sporting competitions. It had requested the assistance of capitalist countries

<sup>92</sup>NAH Roll No. 53701. Frame No. 2007 0000 1873.

<sup>93</sup>NAH Roll No. 53701. Frame No. 2007 0000 1877.

<sup>94</sup>NAH Roll No. 53701. Frame No. 2007 0000 1981.

<sup>95</sup>NAH Roll No. 53701. Frame No. 2007 0000 1995.

<sup>96</sup>NAH Roll No. 53701. Frame No. 2007 0000 2013.





(Finland, Norway, and France) to assist in the development of trade relationships with Eastern European countries.<sup>97</sup>

–1980: A report from Kuwait of February 21, 1980 speaks of South Korea's interest in the cooperation of one of its companies with a Hungarian company to work in Kuwait. However, Hungary's ambassador stated that there would be no change in its foreign policy, since it did not wish to interfere in relations between South Korea and North Korea.<sup>98</sup>

–1980: A June 11, 1980, report from the Hungarian embassy in Kuwait speaks of South Korea's nefarious influence on the economy of the Persian Gulf. The information came from the Lebanese and Indian ambassadors. Lebanon submitted a 123 million KD bid to construct a power plant in Doha; however, Korea submitted a 75 million KD bid, an impossibly low price that was offered simply to defeat competitors. Yugoslavia, which dominated the local construction market, was scheduled to withdraw after the construction of a government office building at the end of the year.<sup>99</sup>

–1980: A September 25, 1980 report from Pyongyang indicates that South Korea's national income registered a negative growth of 1.9%, compared to the first half of 1979. An unstable internal political environment was considered the greatest factor for this, though external factors may also have been at work.<sup>100</sup>

–1980: A report from the Hungarian Foreign Ministry in Budapest of May 27, 1980 indicates that Tamás Aján, the Hungarian president of the International Weightlifting Federation, visited South Korea from April 16 to 20; the purpose of his visit being to supervise the Asian Weightlifting Tournament. He wanted to encourage South Korea to take part in the Moscow Olympics; however, because of political pressure from the United States and South Korea, he failed. According to Aján, South Korea had undergone considerable development and had a very well organized sports industry. Residents of Seoul and local people in general appeared well-dressed in fine clothes, they were looking good, necessities were sufficient, and the standard of living was high. South Korea issued a visa, but it was not placed in passports but on a separate sheet of paper (*külön lapra adták ki*). North Korea was not informed about this visit.<sup>101</sup>

–1981: A September 9, 1981 report from Pyongyang speaks of a guide for Soviet diplomats at the Hungarian embassy at Pyongyang. Between June 26 and July 9, 1981, Du-Hwan Chun visited ASEAN countries for nine days. Du-Hwan Chun's visit to these countries was evaluated as successful, and North Korea could not invalidate the results achieved by the South Korean President's visit, since it lacked the financial ways and means to do so.<sup>102</sup>

–1981: A report of from the Embassy of Hungary in The Hague of March 11, 1981 reveals that Van der Linden, the Deputy Head of International Department of ABN Bank, expressed to a Hungarian diplomat that the Consul General of the Embassy of the ROK showed an interest in direct trade; he stated that informal talks could be arranged. This contact was made on the instruction of the South Korean government.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>97</sup>NAH Roll No. 53701. Frame No. 2007 0000 3029.

<sup>98</sup>NAH Roll No. 53701. Frame No. 2007 0000 3037.

<sup>99</sup>NAH Roll No. 53701. Frame No. 2007 0000 3095.

<sup>100</sup>NAH Roll No. 53701. Frame No. 2007 0000 3099.

<sup>101</sup>NAH Roll No. 53701. Frame No. 2007 0000 3105.

<sup>102</sup>NAH Roll No. 53701. Frame No. 2007 0000 3595.

<sup>103</sup>NAH Roll No. 53701. Frame No. 2007 0000 3612.



–A report of March 23, 1982 from Japan states that South Korean diplomats contacted European socialist state diplomats in Tokyo. According to the Japanese information, the Korean diplomats had studied the Russian language and had published a handbook on it. The American ambassador visited the MFAH and suggested that Hungary enter into formal relations with South Korea. He said that such relations would have an effect on the East and West.<sup>104</sup>

–1982: A report of 36 pages reveals that the Foreign Ministry of Hungary did not allow direct exchanges between a Hungarian company, Transelektro, and Hyundai Engineering & Construction. At the intervention of the Embassy of ROK in Vienna, the President of CIB Bank visited Seoul. South Korea's willingness for trade, particularly direct trade, with Hungary was confirmed. A ten million U.S. dollars loan (duration three years, LIBOR at 3/4%) was negotiated with the Korea Exchange Bank. The report also contains information on coal imports from North Korea to South Korea from Japanese source.<sup>105</sup>

–1982: A October 19, 1982 report from the Embassy of Hungary in Paris speaks of Pierre Lagorce, a member of the National Assembly and mayor of Langon, who served as the vice-president of the Friends of Hungary Association. The report indicates that Lagorce spoke of Hungarian moves towards South Korea.<sup>106</sup>

–1982: A copy of the contract between the West German company Kowa Vertriebs and the Czechoslovakian company Investa reveals the export of spinning machines made in Czechoslovakia to South Korea. This document, along with a copy of a letter from the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry of South Korea to a German company, was submitted by German companies, which sought to encourage Hungary's trade with South Korea.<sup>107</sup>

–1982: Young-soo Park, an executive at a subsidiary of the Sunkyung Company in the United Kingdom was able to obtain permission to visit Hungary on business. Other documents from the Embassy of Hungary in Canberra concern the visit to Hungary of a South Korean businessman with Australian citizenship and his company.<sup>108</sup>

–1982: Through an Austrian company, Bulgaria tried to sell asbestos products to South Korea; however, these could not be shipped because of the issue of direct trade. The Austrian company suggested that the Hungarian shipping company (MAHART) transport them to Busan for US \$55 per ton. The Hungarian shipping company contacted the MFAH about this proposal. Hungary did not play a leading role in direct trade with South Korea.<sup>109</sup>

–1982: A report from the Embassy of Hungary in London of August 16, 1982 reveals that Mr. Yoo, a diplomat working at the Embassy of the ROK, proposed trade relations with Hungary. He noted that distribution costs would be significantly reduced by using the Siberian railway. In 1981, South Korea imported products from Hungary worth one million dollars. It hoped that the socialist countries would take part in 1988 Seoul Olympics. The MFAH reacted negatively to direct trade.<sup>110</sup>

<sup>104</sup>NAH Roll No. 53702. Frame No. 2007 0000 0580. This information will receive greater attention in the next paper.

<sup>105</sup>NAH Roll No. 53702. Frame No. 2007 0000 0629.

<sup>106</sup>NAH Roll No. 53702. Frame No. 2007 0000 0689.

<sup>107</sup>NAH Roll No. 53702. Frame No. 2007 0000 0727.

<sup>108</sup>NAH Roll No. 53702. Frame No. 2007 0000 0736.

<sup>109</sup>NAH Roll No. 53702. Frame No. 2007 0000 0760.

<sup>110</sup>NAH Roll No. 53702. Frame No. 2007 0000 0763.



–1982: A Pyongyang report of March 5, 1982 states that South Korea made a request to host the International Competition for the Ice Hockey “C” group in 1983. This request would be approved by the General Assembly in Helsinki in April because no other country sought to host the event. Since Hungary belonged to the “C” group, North Korea requested that Hungary host the International Competition and to not participate if this event was held in South Korea<sup>111</sup>.  
 –1982: In December 1982, North Korea protested the exposure of the flag of South Korea and its athletes on Hungarian TV. However, Hungary had already announced South Korea’s participation to North Korea, and Hungary explained that they considered North Korea’s views.<sup>112</sup>

## CONCLUSION

This study focused on the progressive expansion of contact between South Korea and Hungary in 1982 that led to the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1989. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, South Korea and Hungary engaged in unofficial economic exchanges, but Hungary took a passive stance toward South Korea’s diplomatic initiatives. Hungary was restrained from acting independently because of the positions of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, especially North Korea, on this matter. Hungary’s own stance towards the South Korean approaches appears for the first time on September 19, 1972, with the decisions taken by the PC of the HSWP. At this time, South Korea principally utilized economic strategies in its effort to forge stronger links with Hungary. On June 21, 1983, the PC of the HSWP reached a decision on Korea’s active diplomacy and commerce. The period following this event will be discussed in another research paper. It is difficult to consider Korea and Hungary’s diplomatic process in 1982 as unique. This essay argues that although Hungary was also interested in Korea’s active approaches and collected a great deal of information on South Korea from respective state bodies, its interest was restricted by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, especially North Korea. The more important fact is that Hungary was just one of the socialist countries that South Korea wanted to establish a relationship with within the Eastern European bloc. South Korea had a better relationship with socialist countries like Yugoslavia until 1982. It also means that full diplomatic recognitions in 1989 were not based on the persistent exchanges between South Korea and Hungary. We can assume that the actual process of gaining diplomatic recognition happened after 1983, and not in the period treated in this manuscript.

## ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS PAPER

DAROK	Diplomatic Archives of the Republic of Korea
DPRK	Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea)
HSWP	Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party
MFAH	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary
NAH	The National Archives of Hungary

<sup>111</sup>NAH Roll No. 53702. Frame No. 2007 0000 0769.

<sup>112</sup>NAH Roll No. 53702. Frame No. 2007 0000 0772.



PB Political Committee  
 ROK Republic of Korea (South Korea)

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