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Bulgaria and the Rapprochement between Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Soviet Bloc in the Face of the Geopolitical Shift in East Asia during the 1970s

(Abstract)

The paper put under analysis the dynamics of the slow but gradual rapprochement in the relations between Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the USSR and the Soviet Bloc from the second half of 60s and the beginning of the 70s of the XXth century. The change is fully related with the shift of the whole geopolitical paradigm of the Cold War in East Asia that became clearly visible since the end of 60s and the beginning of the 70s which is mostly related with the rapprochement between USA and PRC as a consequence from the Sino-Soviet split. This important geopolitical shift has its important impact on the international relations in the region as well as on the situation on the Korean peninsula. One of the main consequences was the new change of the North Korean position from a Chinese ally within the Sino-Soviet split at the beginning of the 60s to a neutral and rather pro-Soviet position at the end of 60s and the beginning of 70s. It was of a great importance for the Soviet Union to somehow counterbalance the new Chinese policy of the US. From this point of view any possibility to bring back the DPRK along to its side was considered from the USSR as an opportunity to return its influence and positions of power in East Asia. The new geopolitical shift which created also new possibilities for solving the Issue about the Korean unification gave the Soviet Union and its ally countries a new political tool used for the returning DPRK back to the positions

of the Soviet bloc against China and USA. This tool was the support (both economic and political) that DPRK desperately needed and the Soviet bloc countries provided to North Korea defending its position within the International community and mainly in the UN. Through the analyses of various Bulgarian archival materials becomes clear that in that process of rapprochement between DPRK and the Soviet Bloc from the beginning of the 70s, very important role has been played by Bulgaria itself which turned out to be a kind of mediator between USSR and North Korea. To some extent Bulgarian government played the role of mediator or transmission in the dialog between Moscow and Pyongyang. At the same time it is clear visible that both countries, Bulgaria and DPRK, took the advantage of the new change in the general geopolitical situation in the East-West relations at the end of the 60s and the beginning of 70s that offered them a new possibilities and opportunities for more intensive and mutually beneficial political and mostly economic relations.

Keywords: Sino-US rapprochement, DPRK-USSR rapprochement, Bulgaria-DPRK relations, DPRK-RoK dialogue, Cold War