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North Korea and Cuba to Establish Diplomatic Relations

North Korea has received its first diplomatic recognition outside the bloc with the 29 August agreement to exchange ambassadors with Cuba "as soon as possible." The announcement was made in a joint declaration issued in Havana after Cuba's acting Foreign Minister Cepero Bonilla and North Korean Finance Minister Han Sang-tu had signed a cultural exchange agreement.

Before this agreement with Havana, Pyongyang had been conspicuously unsuccessful in its efforts to gain recognition from non-Communist countries, although it did manage to make a few trade and cultural contacts. Now it will make every effort to flaunt its first nonbloc embassy in efforts to convince neutral nations they too can ignore Western opposition and accept the Pyongyang regime as a member of the international community.

Havana's action is consistent with the increasingly close ties being developed between Cuba and the Sino-Soviet bloc and may foreshadow recognition of Peiping, with which Cuba concluded a trade pact in July. Communist China has displayed particular sympathy for the Cuban revolution, and Chou En-lai on 15 August pledged the Cuban people "every possible aid, with no strings attached," in their anti-US "struggle."

Fidel Castro, in his recent public attacks on the United States, has repeatedly declared Cuba's intention "to be the friend of the Soviet Union and the Chinese Peoples' Republic because they have proved to be our friends." On 30 August, he condemned "US intervention everywhere in the world--in Korea, Taiwan, Indochina, and everywhere else. . . defending the Chiang Kai-shek puppet."

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