

February 19, 1968
Telegram from Pyongyang to Bucharest, TOP SECRET,
No. 76.046, Urgent

Citation:

“Telegram from Pyongyang to Bucharest, TOP SECRET, No. 76.046, Urgent,” February 19, 1968, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Political Affairs Fond, Telegrams from Pyongyang, TOP SECRET, 1968, Archive of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Obtained and translated for NKIDP by Eliza Gheorghe.

<http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113958>

Summary:

The Embassy of Romania in the DPRK reports on war preparations have intensified in both Korea following the Blue House Raid and the USS Pueblo seizure.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from the Leon Levy Foundation.

Original Language:

Romanian

Contents:

- English Translation

We would like to draw your attention to the fact that, over the past few days, war preparations have intensified in both Koreas. People in South Korea are fearfully talking about the massive concentration of North Korean troops in the vicinity of the demilitarized zone, so as to carry out a surprise attack, while the North keeps stressing the news about how the United States and the South Korean authorities are ready to unleash a new war on the DPRK.

On both sides, military provocations continue in the vicinity of the 38th parallel, with increased intensity and frequency, leading to frequent meetings of the Military Armistice Commission in Panmunjeom. In an interview granted to the Korean Central News Agency (ACTC) on February 17, Pak Seongcheol, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, underlined that the situation in Korea is extremely tense; that the Americans and Park Chung Hee are the only ones to blame in case of a resumption of the war in Korea, given the intensity of their aggressive provocations; that any reprisals toward the USS Pueblo incident from the United States and South Korea will trigger the resumption of war; that the outbreak of war and its absence depends entirely on the United States and South Korea, etc.

We also noticed that both the radio channels and the press are increasingly using terms like: 'we are awaiting the order of our leader to liberate South Korea,' 'we are ready for the liberation of the South.' North Korean categorical statements have multiplied: 'we will respond to retaliation with retaliation;' 'we will respond to war with war,' etc.

Judging from the current situation, we believe that these intense preparations and massive movements of North Korean troops of all categories to near the demilitarized zone are not so much dictated by self-defense concerns but by the intentions of the DPRK to launch a surprise attack to unify the country, by capitalizing on an incident caused by the South and on the current circumstances in Vietnam, where the United States finds itself in an unfavorable situation.

We believe the North Korean authorities want to take advantage of the chaos and disorder existing in the South and not give the South enough time for mobilization, for physical and psychological preparations, as well as for the deployment of the latest technologies recently promised by the United States to South Korea. They [the North Koreans] also do not want to miss this auspicious moment created by the situation in Vietnam. Given the fact that the DPRK leadership cannot conceive of the reunification of the country without the use of force, we believe that the beginning of the unification depends on finding the most propitious moment, by all means not after solving the Vietnamese conflict, the USS Pueblo incident, or after the restoration and strengthening of the South Koreans' fighting capacity.

Signed: N. Popa