

January 22, 1968
Telegram from Pyongyang to Bucharest, TOP
SECRET, No. 76.012, Urgent

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Summary:

The Embassy of Romania in the DPRK offers an initial assessment of the Blue House Raid based upon broadcasts from a Seoul radio station and speculates how North Korea will respond to allegations that it dispatched commandos into South Korea.

Credits:

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On January 22, 1968, a Seoul radio station continuously broadcasted special news bulletins on the armed clash that took place on the outskirts of Seoul on January 21 around 10:00 pm between the city police and 'an armed group of diversionists and spies from North Korea' (more than 30 people).

According to the information provided by the radio station, the clash in question, which is the first attempt on behalf of elements from the North to attack premises in the South Korean capital, resulted in the death and injury of several South Korean civilians and policemen. For the North Korean side, as of now, five people were killed, two were captured alive, and the rest of the group withdrew to the North. The South Koreans continued to pursue them, but they couldn't find anything more than abandoned weapons and military equipment.

The South Koreans declared an emergency situation in Seoul and the surrounding areas, forbidding movement [of citizens] during the night and taking measures to prevent the infiltration of new elements [from North Korea]. According to the testimony of one of the North Koreans who was captured alive, the purpose of the incursion was to attack the presidential palace in Seoul and to shoot President Park Chung Hee. In the DPRK, the 024 Special Unit is currently preparing eight more groups of 300 people each to deploy in guerilla fights against South Korea. The prisoner declared that the military group he was a member of crossed the border on January 17 and was supposed to return [to North Korea] via the same path.

In our opinion, although the purported aim of this incursion in Seoul seems unlikely to us, we believe that this action was incredibly daring and narrow-minded. This attempt to attack a location in Seoul represents a seriously alarming sign about the implementation of the hard line [policy] promoted by the DPRK, which seeks to force and hasten a forthcoming great revolutionary event-the unification of the country through the use of force.

We believe that this action, which created panic and tension in South Korea (they convened a special parliamentary session on January 30), will only aggravate the situation in Korea and will give rise to new conflicts between the two sides.

We believe that the North Koreans will give a different interpretation of this action, denying their involvement in this event and will probably explain this violent act as a manifestation of the increased revolutionary spirit of South Korean masses against the regime of Park Chung Hee.

Signed: N. Popa