

January 27, 1968
Telegram from Pyongyang to Bucharest, TOP
SECRET, No. 76.022, Urgent

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Summary:

The Embassy of Romania in the DPRK summarizes the views of Esmat Naguib, Chargé d'affaires of the United Arab Republic to Pyongyang, who had recently attended a briefing on the USS Pueblo seizure at the North Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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On January 26, from our discussion with Esmat Naguib, Chargé d'affaires of the United Arab Republic to Pyongyang, we noted the following issues:

1. On January 25, Naguib was summoned to the North Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs and informed about the capture of the American espionage ship [USS Pueblo] by the North Korean coast guard for violating the territorial waters of the DPRK.

On this occasion, the Arab diplomat asked the Deputy Foreign Minister, Comrade Heo Dam, whether it was true that the United States had asked the Soviet Union to press the North Korean government to free the American vessel and its crew.

The Deputy Foreign Minister replied that the DPRK would never allow a third party, no matter whom, to meddle in this matter, which is under the exclusive authority of the DPRK. The Deputy Foreign Minister concluded that any request of this sort will be considered as interference into the internal affairs of the DPRK.

2. The Arab diplomat said that according to the information he had received, the recent actions by the DPRK in Seoul and the capture of the American vessel were carried out with the aim to effectively and directly help the North Vietnamese people and with the consent of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. We believe the statements of the Arab diplomat are unsubstantiated and likely pure speculation.

3. Naguib said that he had received information from the Cambodian Chargé d'affaires in Pyongyang that, following the meeting of Prince Sihanouk with the American Ambassador to India and the position Prince Sihanouk adopted toward his [American] interlocutor, the leadership of the DPRK became extremely dissatisfied [with Prince Sihanouk], which will probably lead to a deterioration of the relations between the two countries.

4. With respect to the briefing we gave to Naguib about the activities undertaken by our country to celebrate the Day of Solidarity with the Arab people, he conveyed his gratitude and praise for the honest and consistent policy adopted by the government of the Socialist Republic of Romania towards his country, reminding us that other socialist countries, which initially made a lot of noise, changed their initial position on the Middle East bit-by-bit. He was briefed once again on the position of our country on the problems in the region and on the solutions for these problems.

5. The Arab diplomat said that his country was dissatisfied with the moral support offered by the DPRK to his country, adding that this support is currently almost nonexistent.

Signed: N. Popa