

April 14, 1976

**Telegram from Washington to Bucharest, SECRET,
Regular, No. 083.895**

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Summary:

The Embassy of Romania in Washington, D.C., conveys the remarks of Robert Martens, Head of Regional Affairs within the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs from the Department of State, on developments in Korea.

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To: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Second Direction - Relations

Regarding: the Korean Matter

Robert Martens, Head of Regional Affairs within the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs from the Department of State, told Comrade Petre Anghel, Third Secretary, the following things:

1. The situation in the Korean Peninsula remains possibly the most explosive one in Asia, with real possibilities to get the big powers involved in the eventuality of a conflict breaking out.
2. Lately the political tensions in South Korea are rising. The intensification of anti-government demonstrations contributes to maintain this state of tension and the possibility to have the South Korean administration lose control over the situation, which would bring about an even tougher attitude towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, descending into an armed conflict. In addition to the fact that Seoul has a better economic situation, a better trained and better equipped army (the rapport would be 2 to 1 compared to the North Korean army), South Korea is amongst those countries which are capable of producing nuclear weapons, with all the restrictions and preventive measures imposed by the United States of America. All these could compel the Seoul authorities to undertake a military venture.
3. Judging from the data of the Department of State, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea asked for a postponement of its foreign debt repayment, which indicates a bad economic situation. That, combined with an inaccurate understanding of the situation in South Korea (where anti-government demonstrations could be interpreted as a sign of the administration's weakness), could be a reason to accelerate [North Korea's] attacks on South Korea.
4. The Department of State believes that action must be taken with respect to both states to make them abstain from measures or actions which would lead to an increase in the tension on the Korean Peninsula. Therefore, they believe that if the Korean matter cannot be taken off the agenda of the UN General Assembly session, debates should in any case be limited to realities, and sensitive areas which may trigger undesired effects should not be exacerbated.

Signed: Corneliu Bogdan