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December 12, 1966
Letter from GDR Embassy in the DPRK to State Secretary Hegen

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Summary:

Horst Brie reports on war preparations inside of North Korea.

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Embassy of the GDR
in the DPRK
Pyongyang, 12 December 1966
To:
Secretary of State and First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
Comrade Hegen
104 Berlin
Luisenstraße 56

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Dear Comrade Hegen!

In this letter I just want to address briefly some subjects concerning the domestic situation of the DPRK. From sources accessible to us, we learned that since the party conference there has been a very intense campaign among the people concerning preparation for a potential war. The correctness of our information was corroborated by diplomats from the Soviet and other friendly embassies.

Before his departure, the British correspondent from Morning Star (Alan Winnington, correspondent in Berlin; with [Australian journalist Wilfred] Burchett he was journalistically and politically active here during the Korean War) was invited in late November to visit several families of mid-level Korean cadres he had known since the Korean War. By North Korean standards that is highly unusual. During those visits and his final conversation in the Central Committee, political preparations for a war with the U.S. were evident. Likewise it was of interest to note how the Korean comrades, in their conversations with Alan Winnington, directed stinging criticisms in identical fashion against the Soviet Union as well as the PRC. This is again confirming the existence of differentiated speech codes for Korean cadres pertaining to the Soviet Union, other friendly states, and representatives from other countries' parties.

Criticism was voiced towards the PRC for rejecting joint actions to support Vietnam, and towards the Soviet Union because of insufficient support for Vietnam.

Political propaganda among the people for a potential war with the U.S. contains the following elements:

- The USA is preparing for war. Johnson's visit to South Korea equals Dulles' visit before the outbreak of the Korean War.
- The U.S. imperialists are expanding war in Asia and will attack the DPRK.
- We have to be prepared for an attack every hour, there must be no surprise.
- As the USA is preparing its attack, and is arming the South Korean puppet army with modern aircraft, tanks and missiles, there might occur a situation within the Asian context when we have to preempt an attack by the U.S.

Besides political preparations for a potential war, there are checks in the residential areas for stockpiles of rations and other things needed in case of war. The training period for militias has been extended and is more intensively pursued.

Notwithstanding all those events mentioned above, we still stick to the opinion that there is no reason for assuming that either of the two sides (the U.S. and the DPRK)

currently have intentions to trigger a conflict. Probably for the DPRK there are mostly propagandistic reasons behind the present positions.

I have also consulted on these questions with the Soviet comrades. The fellow at the embassy who is especially concerned with these matters holds this opinion: neither the USA nor the DPRK is currently able to trigger a war in Korea. DPRK policy, however, has the potential for serious dangers in the future. One might assume that the DPRK would also address questions such as organizing joint actions regarding Vietnam in a different way from other socialist states. Concerning incidents at the border, he held the view that they were mostly instigated by the DPRK.

Finally, we want to mention a remark by the Cuban ambassador pertaining to the DPRK's position on a potential international conference [of communist parties]. He told me that Korean comrades would very likely not participate in such a conference. They had expressed to Cuban comrades, however, that they would fully understand and even support it if the Cuban party participates in such a conference. The KWP would be convinced that in such a case the Cuban party would fully represent the interests of the Korean party as well.

With socialist wishes

[signed]

Brie