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E-DOSSIER #5

## New Romanian Evidence on the Blue House Raid and the USS Pueblo Incident

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**NKIDP**



**NEW ROMANIAN EVIDENCE ON  
THE BLUE HOUSE RAID AND THE USS *PUEBLO* INCIDENT  
NKIDP E-DOSSIER**

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## INTRODUCTIONS

### **“This Warmongering State of Mind:” New Materials on the Korean Crisis of 1968**

Mitchell Lerner

AS 1967 DREW TO A CLOSE, much of the world’s attention was focused on the conflict in Vietnam, where a series of prolonged battles along the border and a surprising buildup of communist forces in the area of Khe Sanh foreshadowed the growing violence that would explode in 1968. But Vietnam was not the only area of turmoil in Asia at that time. Voices from Korea were beginning to sound alarms as well about the growing hostilities on the peninsula. The relative tranquility along the 38th parallel that had marked the middle years of the decade was suddenly shattered by a wave of North Korean (DPRK) provocations in 1967. Military incidents across the peninsula increased from forty-two in 1965 to 286 in the first six-months of 1967 alone, and the American Joint Chiefs of Staff soon classified Korea as a hostile fire zone, making troops stationed in the area once again eligible for combat medals and awards.<sup>1</sup> Foreign officials in Korea fretted over this sudden explosion of violence. “Never,” wrote the East German Ambassador to North Korea in December 1967, “since the end of the Korean War, have there been so many and such severe incidents at the armistice line as in 1967.”<sup>2</sup>

This tension reached its peak in January 1968, threatening once again to plunge the world into a major conflagration in Korea. On January 21, thirty-one North Korean commandos launched an assassination attempt against South Korean (ROK) President Park Chung Hee at his official residence in Seoul, failing in their effort by only a narrow margin. Two days later, DPRK air and naval forces in the Sea of Japan attacked the USS *Pueblo*, an American spy ship that was collecting intelligence information near the North Korean coast. *Pueblo*, a slow, decrepit, and lightly armed supply vessel that had been retired for a decade before its reinstatement and conversion as part of Operation Clickbeetle in the 1960s, proved no match for its attackers, and Commander Pete Bucher quickly surrendered his ship. The *Pueblo*, with one man dead and many injured, was soon boarded by its attackers and towed into Wonsan Harbor.

For nearly one-year, the crew of the *Pueblo* was held in North Korean prison camps, where they were subjected to torture, abuse, and public humiliation. American threats and overt pressure were unable to convince Kim Il Sung to release the men under anything less than his terms, as did less overt but still significant urging from the Soviet Union. The prospect of war hovered over the peninsula. “If the DPRK does not accede to U.S. demands to return the ship and crew,” the Polish Ambassador to the DPRK warned, “We might probably witness an armed

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<sup>1</sup> “Telegram From the Commander in Chief, United Nations Command, Korea and the Commander of United States Forces, Korea (Bonesteel) to the Commander in Chief, Pacific (Sharp),” July 21, 1967, National Security File, Country File, Korea, Vol. IV, Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, Austin, Texas.

<sup>2</sup> Document No. 5, Letter from GDR Ambassador to DPRK, December 8, 1967, to State Secretary and First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, reprinted in Mitchell Lerner, “‘Mostly Propaganda in Nature:’ Kim Il Sung, the *Juche* Ideology, and the Second Korean War,” *NKIDP Working Paper 3* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2010), 61.

conflict here.”<sup>3</sup> Diplomatic efforts, through formal talks at the Military Armistice Commission in Panmunjom and informal contacts through intermediaries, dragged on until an unusual resolution was reached in December 1968. U.S. officials agreed to sign a document prepared by the DPRK admitting that the *Pueblo* had violated North Korean waters, apologizing for the transgression, and providing assurances that it would not happen again; this document, however, would first be publicly renounced by the American government, which declared that it was being signed “to free the crew and only to free the crew.”<sup>4</sup> A few hours after American Major General Gilbert Woodward signed the letter of apology, the *Pueblo* crew was released, and a second Korean War was avoided. “It has been proven once again that diplomacy is still not bankrupt,” celebrated the *Berita Harian* (Kuala Lumpur), “and that restraint in the face of a crisis such as this can benefit mankind.”<sup>5</sup>

The Romanian documents presented in this e-Dossier open an exciting new window into communist bloc policies and perspectives on both the *Pueblo* crisis and the broader issue of inter-bloc relations as a whole. In some cases the materials simply confirm what we already knew; in other cases they offer new details about what we suspected; and in still other cases they offer new insights that merit further exploration. Regardless of the specific nature of their contribution, however, the documents demonstrate above all else that no history of the Cold War can be considered complete without the sort of documents that the North Korea International Documentation Project and the Cold War International History Project are devoted to unearthing.

Perhaps most importantly, these documents confirm that the relationship between the USSR and the DPRK, which was already on the decline, suffered further damage as a consequence of Kim’s aggressive actions in 1968. The extent of this tension between the two nations would likely have come as a surprise to American policymakers at the time, many of whom were quick to assume that the Soviets had been consulted in advance of the attack.<sup>6</sup> Yet, as this e-Dossier makes clear, the Soviets were not only uninvolved in the planning but they were also exceedingly unhappy with both the attack itself and Kim’s unwillingness to accept an early resolution. “When we try to moderate this warmongering state of mind,” lamented one Soviet official, “our position is not taken into account” (**Document No. 5**. See also **Document Nos. 16 and 27**). Little wonder, then, that at the April 1968 Plenum of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party, Party General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev harshly criticized North Korea harsh speech and made clear his unwillingness to get dragged into a war with the United States over the *Pueblo*.<sup>7</sup> Nor was the Soviet Union the only member of the socialist bloc who was unhappy with Kim’s actions. Romanian Ambassador Popa described the attempted assassination of President Park as “narrow-minded” and “seriously alarming” (**Document No. 1**).

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<sup>3</sup> Document No. 8, “Note on a Conversation with the Polish Ambassador, Comrade Naperei, on 26 January 1968, in the Polish Embassy,” 27 January 1968, in Lerner, “Mostly Propaganda in Nature,” 71.

<sup>4</sup> *New York Times*, December 23, 1968, 3.

<sup>5</sup> “Worldwide Treatment of Current Issues,” reports on December 23 and December 27, 1968, White House Aide Files, Fred Panzer papers, Box 224, Johnson Library

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, “Summary Minutes of Meeting,” January 24, 1968, United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964–1968, Volume XXIX, Part 1, Korea* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2000) 468-475.

<sup>7</sup> See Document No. 13 in Lerner, “Mostly Propaganda in Nature.”

Even North Vietnam, which many in the US assumed was thrilled by Kim's diversionary tactics, instead complained about numerous aspects of the seizure (**Document Nos. 18 and 20**).

The severity of the crisis, and the possibility of its escalation, is also clearly reflected in these materials, as officials on both sides of the Cold War worried about what the immediate future held. Ambassador Popa wrote to his superiors a few days after the *Pueblo* seizure that American "air force fighter units" stationed in Japan had been ordered to "take action against the DPRK if necessary, as long as the North Koreans do not release the captured American vessel" (**Document No. 4**). Soviet officials echoed this concern, with the Second Secretary of the Soviet Embassy in Pyongyang worrying that his nation might be "presented with a *fait accompli*, in the sense of the resumption of an all-out war" (**Document No. 5**). Others exposed to the crisis, including the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission at Panmunjom (**Document No. 12**) and a Czech diplomat (**Document No. 27**), also expressed such fears, ones that were no doubt exacerbated by the demands for action that rang out from across the Pacific Ocean. "Once," wrote the *Lynchburg (VA) News*, "the American nation was led by men of courage and integrity. Now it is led by appeasers, liars, and cowards, who sneer at honor and truth as luxuries we can no longer afford."<sup>8</sup> "I'd select a target," declared one American senator. "I'd do like Truman did—let one of them disappear."<sup>9</sup>

While the documents provided here do not answer the long-asked question about North Korea's motivations for launching the wave of attacks, the documents do demonstrate that even the North's allies were very much in the dark about Kim's goals and strategies. The February 7, 1968, telegram from the Romanian Embassy in Pyongyang is particularly remarkable and revealing. The Romanian Embassy informed Bucharest that North Korean "malleability" had been on clear display one day earlier when it returned the bodies of two dead *Pueblo* crewmen to the United States and pledged to soon return others who had been wounded, two gestures that would have been more convincing if either had actually occurred (**Document No. 15**). (In fact, there was only one dead *Pueblo* crewman, whose body would be returned only in late December with the rest of the crew.) Historians thus searching for clues about the underlying source of the conflict can at least take some solace in the fact that Kim simply answered to no one, leaving even his allies scrambling to decipher his intentions. At different times, communist representatives implied that Kim was acting in tandem with a larger plan to reunify the country through force (**Document No. 1**); to generate domestic propaganda and to rally the North Korean people (**Document No. 24**); and to take advantage of U.S. involvement in Vietnam and improve his position vis-à-vis the South (**Document No. 19**). One supposition, however, that the South was equally to blame for provoking the conflicts, is clearly refuted by these materials: "We believe that the provocations which have emerged recently belong exclusively to the North Koreans," explained Ambassador Popa (**Document No. 2**).

Other interesting topics are touched upon in less detail, ranging from the severity of the Sino-Soviet split (**Document No. 5**); to the potential mediating role of the United Nations (**Document No. 10**); to the inner workings of the Military Armistice Commission (**Document Nos. 6, 12, and 22**); to the divisions emerging between the United States and South Korea

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<sup>8</sup> *Lynchburg News*, January 30, 1968, 14.

<sup>9</sup> Senator Mendell Rivers (D-SC) quoted in *Washington Post*, January 27, 1968.



(**Document No. 15**); and relations between China and North Korea (**Document No. 28**). Kim's personality cult makes an occasional appearance in the e-Dossier (**Document No. 17**), as does the impact the incident had upon daily life inside of the DPRK (**Document Nos. 23 and 24**). Through the entire e-Dossier, though, runs the idea that Kim Il Sung held all the cards, and that, short of war, little could be done by either friend or foe to alter his agenda.

On December 24, the men of the USS *Pueblo* returned to San Diego. They were greeted with both a heroes' welcome and, for some of them, a board of inquiry, letters of admonition, and a recommended court-martial that was averted only because of the public outcry. Quickly, the Korean crisis abated, and the world's attention returned to Vietnam. Still, for almost two years, Korea had again teetered on the brink of a war, one whose consequences would have been particularly devastating. The documents enclosed here help us to better understand how and why those potential consequences were narrowly avoided.



## **The Sino-North Korean Alliance and Kim Il Sung's Military Adventurism**

Jong-Dae Shin

WHY HAVE NORTH KOREA'S leaders pursued policies of military adventurism and confrontation for the past fifty-years? Many explanations have been proposed, but without access to reliable information—namely, the internal documents of the North Korean government and the Korean Workers' Party (KWP)—rendering a final judgment on this question has become nearly impossible.<sup>1</sup> Beyond the usual secretiveness of the North Korean political system, the KWP has often purposefully concealed and distorted its real intentions. Indeed, strategic ambiguity has been integral component to North Korea's military adventurism.

This selection of twenty-eight Romanian documents, however, helps us to make sense of North Korea's aims during at least two adventurist episodes, the Blue House Raid and the seizure of the USS *Pueblo*. Above all, the documents suggest that North Korea may have sent commandos into South Korea in mid-January 1968 and then seized the USS *Pueblo* in Wonsan Harbor on January 23 as a means to reinvigorate the then fragile Sino-North Korean alliance.

To be sure, Romanian diplomats also offered a number of different explanations for North Korea's behavior in January 1968. In **Document No. 24**, the Romanian Ambassador N. Popa suggests that Kim Il Sung seized the USS *Pueblo* in order to revitalize revolutionary spirit in North Korea and strengthen the *Juche* ideology. By aggravating international tensions, Kim could conceal his regime's domestic failures and at the same time prevent the emergence of any potential threat to his authority.<sup>2</sup>

The Romanian documents also highlight how Kim Il Sung's aims vis-à-vis inter-Korean relations also motivated his military adventurism. Just as many South Korean authors have argued that the struggle between the two Koreas prompted the Blue House Raid, **Documents No. 1 and No. 19** also suggest that North Korea sought to undermine the Park Chung Hee administration and wreak havoc upon the South Korean economy.<sup>3</sup> **Documents No. 18 and No.**

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<sup>1</sup> See Chuck Downs, *Over the Line: North Korea's Negotiating Strategy* (Washington, DC: AEI Press, 1999); Mitchell B. Lerner, "‘Mostly Propaganda in Nature:’ Kim Il Sung, the *Juche* Ideology, and the Second Korean War," *North Korea International Documentation Project Working Paper No. 3* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2010); and Narushige Michishita, *North Korea's Military-Diplomatic Campaigns, 1966-2008* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> See also, Mitchell B. Lerner, *The Pueblo Incident: A Spy Ship and the Failure of American Foreign policy* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 193-214.

<sup>3</sup> "Pueblo ho phenapsakunul wiyohan Jeongsewa approui Junmang" ("The Circumstances and prospects of the Pueblo Incident"), in *Jumidasakwanie waemubuchangkwanegge bonaen boko* (The ROK Embassy in the U.S. to the ROK Foreign Minister), 1968. 1. 26 *Jeongboboko* (26 January Information Report), No.778-157, 1.21 *Mujanggongbi chimtu mit Pueblo ho nappuksakun*, 1968-69 (The Guerrilla Infiltration of 21 January and the Pueblo Incident, 1968-69), (Seoul: Waemubu), Vol.1, No.729, 55, 2662.

**20** indicate that Kim Il Sung even wished to spark an indigenous revolutionary movement in South Korea akin to the struggle in South Vietnam.<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, Kim Il Sung may have also been motivated by socialist internationalism and a professed desire to take on a more leading role in the Asian communist movement. **Documents No. 8, No. 16, and No. 19**, for example, suggest that in seizing the USS *Pueblo*, North Korea wanted to assist North Vietnam and open up a second front against the United States.<sup>5</sup>

As the preceding discussion suggests, many factors appear to have influenced North Korea's military adventurism in 1968, but one important thread which runs throughout this collection is the role of China. **Document No. 28**, in particular, prompts us to reevaluate the Blue House Raid and the USS *Pueblo* Crisis as part of a concerted North Korean effort to restore and strengthen its alliance with the People's Republic of China.

The Chinese Cultural Revolution and the Sino-Soviet split exposed and aggravated tensions between Pyongyang and Beijing, and by late 1967 the Sino-North Korean alliance was greatly weakened. Many reports produced by the Romanian Embassy in Pyongyang point to the serious deterioration of bilateral relations between China and North Korea during the late 1960s. In March 1967, for example, Romanian diplomats reported that the North Korean Foreign Ministry had been criticizing the Chinese government for spreading false information about the Korean Workers' Party.<sup>6</sup>

Although the icy-relationship between China and North Korea was obvious in 1967, many socialist bloc diplomats speculated that Sino-DPRK relations could improve. And although North Korea sent about 100 pilots to North Vietnam in 1967, the Chinese leadership had stressed that the best assistance the DPRK could offer to Vietnam would be to open up a second front against the Americans on the Korean Peninsula.<sup>7</sup> The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leaders apparently promised that if North Korea were to launch such an attack, China would provide Pyongyang with extensive aid and assistance.<sup>8</sup> The idea of liberating South Korea and waging a war against the United States was also regarded by socialist bloc countries as a means to bring about a rapprochement between North Korea and China.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See also Bernd Schaefer, "North Korean 'Adventurism' and China's Long Shadow, 1966-1972," *Cold War International History Project Working Paper 44* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2004).

<sup>5</sup> Vandon Jenerette, "The Forgotten DMZ," *Military Review*, Vol. 68, No.5 (May 1988): 32-43.

<sup>6</sup> Telegram from the Romanian Embassy in the DPRK to the Romanian Foreign Ministry, March 7, 1967. Archives of the Romanian Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Documents, No. 76.084.

<sup>7</sup> Far Eastern Department of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, "Memorandum about Sino-Korean Relations," March 7, 1967, in AVPRF, f. 0102, op. 23, p. 112, d. 24, pp. 5-12; Hungarian Embassy in the USSR to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, October 20, 1966, MOL, Top Secret Documents, 1966, 74.doboz, IV-250, 005007/1966. See also Merle Pribbenow, "North Korean Pilots in the Skies over Vietnam," *North Korea International Documentation Project e-Dossier 2* (November 2011).

<sup>8</sup> Soviet Embassy in the DPRK to the Soviet Foreign Ministry, "Memorandum on Sino-Korean Relations in 1966," December 2, 1966, in AVPRF, f. 0102, op. 22, p. 109, d. 22, pp. 38-49.

<sup>9</sup> Telegram from the Romanian Embassy in the DPRK to the Romanian Foreign Ministry, April 18, 1967. Archives of the Romanian Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Documents, No. 76137.

In 1967, Vietnamese diplomats accredited to Korea emphasized that the leadership of the KWP purposefully exaggerated clashes in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) in order to compel socialist bloc countries to fulfill North Korean requests for military, economic, and political assistance. Accordingly, the North Korean war scare was also a signal to the CCP that the DPRK did not support Soviet revisionism and in fact sought, as China wished, to “start a war with the Americans.”<sup>10</sup> Chinese diplomats likewise recognized that North Korean propaganda about the imminent danger of war on the Korean Peninsula was “directed at the normalization of relations with China.”<sup>11</sup>

If these observations are correct, one might conclude that, in January 1968, the North Korean leaders were finally attempting to follow the advice of the CCP and, in exchange, expected to receive extensive Chinese support and aid. The comments of Wang Peng, counselor and Chargé d'affaires of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Pyongyang, found in **Document No. 28**, are particularly revealing. By March 1968, Wang Peng's attitude toward the DPRK had “completely changed,” a Romanian diplomat noted, and Wang had become “an active supporter of the forceful line promoted by the DPRK.” Perhaps even more important, Wang signaled that the Chinese Communist Party was ready to offer support and assistance to North Korea. “We, the Chinese diplomat added, share the conviction of the Korean comrades that war is drawing near and the People's Republic of China has repeatedly declared that it would grant its full support to the DPRK.” The Embassy of Romania concluded that, as a result of the Blue House Raid and the USS *Pueblo* Crisis, “Sino-Korean bilateral relations have been reinvigorated” and that “past quarrels” were quickly fading.

As long as Pyongyang's state and Party archives are closed to the outside world and the memoirs and testimonies of senior North Korean officials are hidden from public view, a conclusive assessment of Kim Il Sung's rationales and strategies in launching the Blue House Raid and seizing the USS *Pueblo* in January 1968 will be difficult to reach. This collection of Romanian documents, however, does bring us closer to better understanding why Kim Il Sung pursued military adventurism, particularly in terms of the Sino-North Korean relationship.

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<sup>10</sup> Telegram from the Romanian Embassy in the DPRK to the Romanian Foreign Ministry, April 18, 1967. Archives of the Romanian Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Documents, No. 76137.

<sup>11</sup> Telegram from the Romanian Embassy in the DPRK to the Romanian Foreign Ministry, April 7, 1967. Archives of the Romanian Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Documents, No. 14.213.



## DOCUMENT No. 1

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

*[Source: 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]*

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



## **DOCUMENT No. 2**

### **Telegram from Pyongyang to Bucharest, TOP SECRET, No. 76.013, Flash, January 24, 1968**

*[Source: 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]*

1. On January 24, propaganda organizations in the DPRK issued elaborate news bulletins with regard to the actions undertaken by the armed groups who are dealing blows to the American and South Korean units in the ROK.

According to the South Koreans, South Korean units and American troops are pursuing the North Korean group which initiated the attack on January 21 in Seoul and which is currently retreating towards the DPRK. Out of the 31 members of the group, 15 people were shot in isolated clashes with the South Koreans and one was taken prisoner.

Judging from the way the North Korean press is presenting the situation in the ROK, we realize that they are exaggerating a great deal and they purposely distort the truth so as to create the impression of a truly revolutionary state of mind. Although news reports are also concerned with the twentieth anniversary of the creation of the DPRK Army, the North Korean press is in the midst of an intense campaign against the Americans and the South Koreans. Scenes from the fighting during the war and the liberation of Seoul in 1950 cover the pages of North Korean newspapers almost entirely.

2. At the same time, it was announced that on January 22 an American military ship was captured [by the North Koreans] in the waters of Wonsan Harbor (it was not specified whether in the territorial waters of Wonsan—our note).

The South Korean radio station announced that the ship in question, weighing 906 tons and having a crew of 83 people, was captured from international waters and forced to enter Wonsan Harbor. This action was meant to make the emerging situation [on the peninsula] even more tense; the state of the South Korean army and fleet was changed to ‘fighting’ mode, and the American aircraft carrier *Enterprise* departed from the Japanese port Sasebo and will be stationed in the waters in front of Wonsan harbor in the DPRK.

3. Judging from the things we’ve remarked upon recently, over the last three days the North Koreans have established many military checkpoints; they carry out daytime and nighttime raids; throughout the city there are more and more armed groups of civilians (even 4 to 5 people); the nightshift guards for embassies have doubled; and an increasing number of policemen are posted in front of embassies. This explains the recently enforced prohibition on foreigners traveling outside of Pyongyang.

We believe that the provocations which have emerged recently are attributable to the North Koreans entirely and in this way they put into practice the motto: 'let us be ready and take initiative to welcome the forthcoming great revolutionary event of the reunification of the motherland.'

Although the North Koreans are currently testing the nerves and feeling out the attitudes of all elements in South Korea, including the US, towards a potential large-scale military confrontation, we believe it is not impossible that the aggravated situation in South Korea will lead to the resumption of hostilities (stopped in 1953).

Signed: N. Popa



### **DOCUMENT No. 3**

#### **Telegram from Pyongyang to Bucharest, TOP SECRET, No: 75.015, Flash, January 24, 1968**

*[Source: 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]*

On January 24 at 9:00 pm, Kim Jaebong, the DPRK Deputy Foreign Minister, summoned the chiefs of all diplomatic missions from socialist countries accredited to Pyongyang and the representative of the National Liberation Front (NLF) from South Vietnam to the North Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs to inform them of the capture of the American military ship *USS Pueblo* weighing 1000 tons by the North Korean coastguard after [the ship] ventured deep into North Korean waters. The Deputy Foreign Minister explained that the ship was observed at a distance of 10 miles away from the coast and was captured after it advanced up to 7.6 miles away from the coast in the waters of the bay formed by the Hodo Peninsula and the Yeodo Island.

Kim Jaebong informed the diplomats that the ship was meant exclusively for intelligence gathering (focusing in this case on the military bases on the coast), having, at the same time, a great quantity of arms on board. The crew numbered 83 people, of whom six were officers, 75 were sailors, and two were civilian technicians. One member of the crew died following fire exchanges, which resulted from the crew resisting measures undertaken by the North Korean military; three people were injured, one of whom was gravely injured.

Judging this provocative act directed at gathering intelligence as the most outrageous one [committed by the United States] since signing the Armistice [in 1953], the Deputy Foreign Minister asked the chiefs of diplomatic missions to report back to their governments on this new and serious provocative action undertaken by the American imperialists and expressed his conviction that the governments [of socialist countries] would take the appropriate actions and vehemently condemn these pirate-like acts.

He laconically added that it was likely for the situation to become worse because the American imperialists had already deployed an important unit from the Seventh Fleet to the seas neighboring the DPRK.

Answering the questions of certain ambassadors, Kim Jaebong declared that although the DPRK had not publicly announced the width of its territorial waters, he said, for the personal use of those present, that the DPRK had a territorial waters width of 12 miles.

He added that his government was going to release a declaration on this matter.

Judging from the sources of the Czechoslovak Embassy, which was promptly informed by its delegation in the Armistice Commission, we know that the *USS Pueblo* was captured by the



*New Romanian Evidence*  
*NKIDP e-Dossier*

North Korean coastguard when it was 16 miles away from the DPRK shore, while press agencies stated that the ship had been 25 miles away from the shore when it was captured.

We believe that, owing to the uncertainty around the conditions in which the incident took place, it is not advisable for us to take any particular measures. Nevertheless, we suggest that our press organs publish the news issued by the Korean Central News Agency, quoting the sources it uses, as well as inserting a line about the forthcoming declaration of the North Korean government.

Signed: N. Popa

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**DOCUMENT No. 4**

**Telegram from Pyongyang to Bucharest, TOP SECRET, No. 76.016, Flash, January 25, 1968**

*[Source: 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]*

Since the North Koreans refuse to release the American military ship [the USS *Pueblo*] that they captured on January 22, the US authorities have deployed two other air force fighter units from Okinawa to South Korea, in addition to a part of the Seventh Fleet which is in the Sea of Japan, probably with a view to intimidate [the North Koreans] or even with a view to use them. These two [air force] units will be based next to Munsan and Gunsan in the vicinity of the DMZ.

Moreover, all American air force units in Japan have been instructed that they will take action against the DPRK if necessary, as long as the North Koreans do not release the captured American vessel.

Signed: N. Popa



## **DOCUMENT No. 5**

### **Telegram from Pyongyang to Bucharest, TOP SECRET, No. 76.017, Flash, January 25, 1968**

*[Source: 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]*

On January 24, Aurelian Lazăr had a discussion with S. Golosov, Second Secretary of the Soviet Embassy in Pyongyang, during which Golosov told Lazăr that Soviet diplomats were extremely worried with respect to the unrestrained actions undertaken by the DPRK against the ROK (the January 21 attack in Seoul) and against the USA, manifested in the capturing of the military vessel AGER-2 [the USS *Pueblo*]. The Soviet diplomat pointed out that if the DPRK continued to undertake such initiatives to speed up the reunification of the country, it would be possible for the Soviets to be presented with a *fait accompli* in the sense of the resumption of an all-out war.

S. Golosov said: ‘the North Koreans know the unfavorable position of the USSR towards the intentions and the tendencies to hasten reunification through the use of force and therefore we are afraid that we will not be consulted; and this situation is caused by the fact that we do not know the dynamics of Sino-Korean relations and the attitude of the People’s Republic of China towards the Korean issue, particularly in its recent form shaped by the DPRK [since the January 21 attack].’ Lastly, the Soviet diplomat added that the North Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been trying, at all levels, to find out the answer to one pressing question: ‘Whether the USSR will help the DPRK and in what form in the case of the resumption of an all-out war on the Korean Peninsula.’ ‘When we try to moderate this warmongering state of mind,’ Golosov added, ‘on many occasions, our position is not taken into account.’

The Soviet diplomat pointed out that there is a possibility that the North Koreans, taking advantage of the fact that the USA does not intend to get involved in a new conflict in Korea, are using the tense situation to make clear some aspects of the KWP’s [Korean Workers’ Party’s] internal and external policies, and intentionally caused the incidents on January 21 and January 22.

Commenting on the article written by Paul de Groot and published in the Korean press on January 17 and January 18, Golosov described it as being utterly anti-Soviet and that its publication represents a negative answer given to the organizers of the Consultative Meeting in Budapest in February [1968]. The publication of this article, the Soviet diplomat added, ‘strengthens our opinion that Soviet-Korean bilateral relations, except for economic relations, which the North Koreans are keenly interested in, have started to deteriorate. (our note—Golosov hinted at the fact that the Soviet government might have been too optimistic to think that an intensification of economic aid would make the North Koreans accept the political conditions which came with it).

On a different topic, the Soviet diplomat showed us that recently elements which the [North Korean] security apparatus could not trust have been removed from the city of Pyongyang. Golosov said that he knew for a fact that Kim Il Sung had left Pyongyang for the countryside a while ago (at least a few weeks).

With respect to a question from the Romanian diplomat about the urgent departure to Moscow of the Soviet Ambassador to Pyongyang ten days ago, the Soviet diplomat said that his ambassador was supposed to return to his post rather quickly but, given the recent events in Korea, his return was postponed by another week.

In my opinion, the Soviet Ambassador to Pyongyang was invited to go back to Moscow to give an explanation on the recent events in Korea and the likely outcomes [of these events].

Also, in my opinion, the Soviet Ambassador to Pyongyang provided misguided information to his government about the situation in Korea, in the sense of an exceedingly optimistic perspective and in total contradiction with the real situation and the intentions of the DPRK leadership with respect to the reunification of the country.

Signed: N. Popa



## **DOCUMENT No. 6**

### **Telegram from Pyongyang to Bucharest, TOP SECRET, No. 76.018, Urgent, January 26, 1968**

*[Source: 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]*

On January 26 Aurelian Lazăr had a talk with L. Kaoskovcki, Third Secretary of the Polish Embassy, who told our diplomat the following:

1. At the meeting of the NNSC [Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission] in Panmunjeom on January 24, attended by Polish representatives, the North Koreans and the Americans, contrary to their usual hardline and rude postures, exchanged their views in an extremely calm atmosphere, but with resoluteness, which denotes the great caution with which they are handling the situation. The North Koreans refused to discuss the January 21 incident, arguing that it cannot be the subject of the Armistice Commission, given that it was an act of South Korean patriots. As for the capture of the American ship, the North Koreans claim that it [the USS *Pueblo*] violated their territorial waters and it is therefore its prisoner, together with its entire crew.

The Polish representatives at Panmunjeom were surprised at the promptness of the DPRK's acceptance of the meeting proposed by the Americans to discuss the incidents on January 21 and January 22. According to the Polish diplomat, this fact denotes that the North Koreans, as the instigators of these incidents, anticipated the request for this meeting and had prepared an answer in advance.

2. The Polish diplomat said that he had been informed that from January 10 to January 12 North Korean troops and peasant-worker guards conducted joint military exercises in the south of the DPRK. The senior leadership was satisfied with the outcomes of these exercises. Moreover, he pointed out that during the evenings of January 22 and January 23, several military units and workers' guards departed from the Pyongyang railway station.
3. On January 22 the North Koreans announced to the Polish Embassy that a military facility would be erected in front of the Embassy and, more exactly, they would start working on an underground facility, which, according to the Polish diplomat, would function as either the entrance or the exit for a great underground bunker in Pyongyang.
4. The Polish representative told A. Lazăr that the Polish Embassy was preparing its staff, especially the female personnel, to receive the news of the outbreak of a large-scale military conflict with as little panic as possible.

Signed: N. Popa



**DOCUMENT No. 7**

**Telegram from Pyongyang to Bucharest, TOP SECRET, No. 76.020, Flash, January 26, 1968**

*[Source: 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]*

The Chargé d'affaires of the [Embassy of the] German Democratic Republic in Pyongyang told A. Lazăr on January 26 that on that day he had had a meeting with Pak Seongcheol, member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Korean Workers' Party, Vice President of the Cabinet and Foreign Minister of the DPRK, to whom he delivered a letter from the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany together with the speech of Walter Ulbricht regarding the need to adopt the new constitution of the GDR.

On this occasion, the German diplomat asked Pak Seongcheol for his opinion on the current situation in Korea.

Pak Seongcheol did not make any comments regarding the incident in Seoul on January 21, describing it as an act carried out by patriotic South Korean groups. With respect to the capture of the American ship USS *Pueblo*, the North Korean Minister of Foreign Affairs pointed out the following: 'The American ship violated the territorial waters and undertook provocative acts against the DPRK. The decision to capture it was based on the principle of self-defense. The North Korean government will take the same form of action in the future, capturing or even sinking any enemy ship which violates North Korea's territorial sovereignty. If the US undertakes any acts of intimidation or uses force, the DPRK will reply through the same means, including force. The resolution of conflict depends entirely upon the Americans.

'The government of the DPRK is the only authority to decide whether to free the crew or not.

'We are content with the fact that the Soviet Union refused to mediate the matter of the captured vessel. We will regard those who will accept the United States proposal to mediate this matter as friends of the Americans.'

Signed: N. Popa



## **DOCUMENT No. 8**

### **Telegram from Pyongyang to Bucharest, TOP SECRET, No. 76. 022, Urgent, January 27, 1968**

*[Source: 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]*

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





## **DOCUMENT No. 9**

### **Telegram from Pyongyang to Bucharest, TOP SECRET, No. 76.024, Flash, January 27, 1968**

*[Source: 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]*

On January 27, the DPRK Deputy Foreign Minister Heo Dam summoned the chiefs of diplomatic missions from all socialist countries in Pyongyang to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to whom he presented the declaration of the DPRK government on its position towards ‘the campaign of calumnies and threats launched by American imperialists’ in the aftermath of the capture of the USS *Pueblo*, as well as the discussion of the issue in the Security Council of the United Nations.

A note from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was attached to the document for the diplomatic missions of socialist countries in Pyongyang in which they were asked to present the text of the declaration to their respective governments, hoping that the position outlined in the declaration would resonate well with those governments, which would then undertake the appropriate measures to actively support it. The note did not ask for a reply.

After justifying the capture of the USS *Pueblo* as a self-defense measure and stating that the threats and blackmailing undertaken by the aggressors would not frighten the North Korean people, who are always ready to repel any sort of aggression, the document condemned the fact that the incident was discussed by the United Nations Security Council. The document describes the discussion of this internal matter of the DPRK as illegal and advised the UN not to repeat its shameful history as a tool of aggression against the Korean people.

We believe it is advisable to explore the possibilities to insert a paraphrased text of the aforementioned declaration in our press, quoting its source; a reserved position towards the Korean request would upset the Korean leadership, which we should avoid, especially now that our bilateral relations are experiencing a turning point in their development.

The title of the declaration was released on January 27 by the Korean Central News Agency ACTC.

Signed: N. Popa

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**DOCUMENT No. 10**

**Telegram from Pyongyang to Bucharest, TOP SECRET, No. 76.025, Flash, January 29, 1968**

*[Source: 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]*

I would like to inform you about my discussion with I. Kados, the Hungarian Ambassador to Pyongyang, who told me that after repeated discussions with the leadership of the North Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the issue of the USS *Pueblo* incident at the United Nations Security Council, the North Korean government informed the Hungarian government (which is currently a non-permanent member) that it was ready to send its delegation to the meeting of the Council, provided it was invited.

Although claiming that discussing the USS *Pueblo* incident at the UN represents a brutal interference in the internal affairs [of the DPRK] and that any resolution adopted will be considered null and void, the North Korean government has decided to take part in the discussion of this matter ‘to be able to defend itself against the calumnies brought up with respect to the USS *Pueblo* incident, as well as against the insinuations regarding the latest events in Seoul’ and to unmask the provocative actions of the US and of its South Korean puppet.

We predict that Hungary, the Soviet Union, and Algeria will press to have the DPRK delegation invited to New York.

Signed: N. Popa



## **DOCUMENT No. 11**

### **Telegram from Pyongyang to Bucharest, TOP SECRET, No. 76.026, Flash, January 29, 1968**

*[Source: 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]*

On January 29, D. Tsvetkov, First Secretary of the Soviet Embassy in Pyongyang, informed comrade A. Lazăr about the following:

1. On two different occasions, the Soviet Chargé d'affaires visited Pak Seongcheol, the Foreign Minister of the DPRK, to inform him about the US proposal for the USSR to mediate the USS *Pueblo* incident and about the Soviet refusal to do so. Pak Seongcheol appreciated the position of the Soviets, underlining that it proved [the Soviet Union] respected the sovereignty of the DPRK.

Our opinion is that, through the two meetings with the Korean Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Soviets probed the position of the North Koreans towards the incident and towards the prospects of resolving the situation.

2. Tsvetkov said that on January 27 the Soviet Ambassador to Pyongyang returned to his post, and that he would be ready to take action to moderate the Korean leadership, bringing it back with its feet on the ground, but he would not act until the position of the People's Republic of China was known (maybe it will be too late—our note). 'We believe that it is not impossible that behind the Koreans stand the Chinese, and if Soviet advice runs against the Korean line, that may bring about the exact opposite outcome from what we envision,' said the Soviet diplomat.

The fact that the Soviet Ambassador returned to Pyongyang on a special plane makes us think that he did not come back alone, but together with several other Soviet leaders, to discuss the current situation with the Korean leadership.

3. The Soviet diplomat showed that the Soviet air fleet in the Pacific was ordered to move close to the military ships deployed by the US from its Seventh Fleet in the Sea of Japan.
4. With respect to the internal situation, Tsvetkov said that Soviet diplomats thought that the DPRK had secretly called for general mobilization and that they obtained reliable information that large troop movements were being moved towards the southern and the eastern borders.

Signed: N. Popa



## **DOCUMENT No. 12**

### **Telegram from Pyongyang to Bucharest, TOP SECRET, No. 76.027, Urgent, January 29, 1968**

*[Source: 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]*

From our discussions with M. Golub, the Ambassador of Czechoslovakia to Pyongyang, on January 29, we gathered that a dialogue between the representatives of the DPRK and American envoys took place and is expected to continue.

With the help of the four neutral generals, Freeman, the Chief of Staff of the Third American Army stationed in South Korea, warned the head of the North Korean delegation at the Armistice Commission that in the event North Korea opened fire on South Korea, the armed forces of the United States would use the most modern means and weapons available, including the nuclear bomb, against the North Korean people. The document released by the United States asks the North Koreans for detailed information about the health of the USS *Pueblo* crew members.

General Pak Jungguk answered both verbally and in writing that these threats did not intimidate the Korean people. He then discussed the health of the USS *Pueblo* crew members, warning that if the US tried to liberate the 83 crew members by force, they would only retrieve their corpses. According to Golub, it is promising that a dialogue on this issue began, even though the parties involved are using very harsh language.

Based on the briefings received today from the general in Panmunjeom, the neutral parties believe that the current situation is extremely dangerous. Golub informed us about some of the latest developments, which only make the current situation worse; he told us that the entire South Korean army was carrying out drills and preparations in response to the new and exceptional state of affairs, under the command of General [Charles H.] Bonesteel; six additional mining ships and torpedo boats were moving towards the DPRK waters; and two Soviet ships were stationed in the vicinity of the American carrier USS *Enterprise*, to monitor its activity.

It is foreseeable that, in the future, more ships from the Soviet Pacific fleet will move to this area. Golub remarked that among the latest developments was the fact that members of the North Korean military delegation in Panmunjeom started to describe the USS *Pueblo* crew members as 'prisoners of war,' which means that the North Koreans did not intend to bring them before court.

Describing the continuation of diplomatic activity to solve the conflict as a positive development, the Czechoslovakian diplomat mentioned that South Korea had recently invited U Thant to Seoul to show him the 'revolutionary circumstances' which the North keeps touting. At the same time, he pointed out the fact that Robert Kennedy advised President Johnson to urgently explore the possibility of signing a bilateral treaty with the Soviets to refrain from intervening in the case of

a war in Korea, based on the legal commitments that the two countries have towards North Korea and South Korea, respectively.

M. Golub pointed out that only the Soviet Union would have the influence over the DPRK to ameliorate the situation, since it is beyond any doubt that the Chinese would push the events towards a military conflict.

Signed: N. Popa



## **DOCUMENT No. 13**

### **Telegram from Pyongyang to Bucharest, TOP SECRET, No. 76.032, Flash, February 2, 1968**

*[Source: 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]*

To the Foreign Relations Department of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party, Comrade Vasile Vlad

On February 2, talks resumed in a very good atmosphere.

Judging from our talks with the North Korean comrades, our positions are very similar or even identical.

1. I am copying here the entire account of their position on the USS *Pueblo* incident.

‘I would like to talk about the violation of our territorial waters by the armed espionage vessel and the counter-measures we took to defend ourselves.

‘We are not trying to inflate this matter but the American imperialists are trying to use this incident to launch a larger-scale military operation against our country and they seek to aggravate the situation even more.

‘No matter when and where these American imperialists try [to attack us], our people will deal them a powerful blow. However, we do not believe that the USS *Pueblo* incident provides a good enough reason to go to war and therefore we are trying to solve the matter peacefully.

‘However, if the Americans threaten us, the matter will not be solved.

‘In order to solve all problems appropriately, the Americans should put an end to all threats and military blackmail against us, and they should do this not through words but with actions.

‘We are not paying attention to empty words and articles written by journalists.

‘Moreover, if the American imperialists want to solve this matter peacefully, they would have to turn the circumstances back to how they were before the occurrence of this incident.

‘Therefore, the nuclear carrier and all other ships and military troops should be withdrawn to prevent the deterioration of the situation.

‘Moreover, the American imperialists demand that we apologize to them for this incident and that we pay damages and return everything unconditionally.

‘We will not enter negotiations with them under these conditions and we will not kneel down when confronted with such threats. We are determined to fight if we need to fight.

‘Under these circumstances we would like to thank socialist governments for their support.

‘You, the Romanians, have also helped us tremendously and we are certain that you will help us with these matters even more in the future.

‘In the given circumstances, we need to strengthen our unity with socialist countries, with the Soviet Union, with China, with all communist countries, with all anti-imperialist countries, so as to fight adamantly against imperialists and reactionaries.’

2. With respect to the international meeting of communist and workers’ parties, the basic position of the Korean comrades is in essence identical with ours.

They mentioned that they made their position known, as clearly as possible, to the Soviets.

With respect to the meeting in Budapest, they said:

‘We were not informed nor consulted in advance on this matter either and we do not really know how the meeting was convened. We have a tense situation here now, we are faced with lots of complicated problems, so we couldn’t have really extended talks within our leadership circles and we did not take a decision yet, but we hope to discuss this matter later on and decide.

‘We understand the position of the Romanian Communist Party, we do not have a different position on this and we do not have any objection on the participation or the non-participation of certain parties to this meeting.’

3. The delegation will leave the country on Sunday morning, February 4, and will arrive in Bucharest during the evening.

Signed: N. Popa



## **DOCUMENT No. 14**

### **Telegram from Pyongyang to Bucharest, TOP SECRET, No. 76.033, Urgent, February 5, 1968**

*[Source: 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]*

On February 5, A. Lazăr received T. Surgov, Second Secretary of the Bulgarian Embassy to Pyongyang. Surgov wanted to know if, during the visit of comrade Gheorghe Apostol, the North Koreans had mentioned any details about their participation in the international meeting in Budapest, whether they had brought up the issue of how to solve the USS *Pueblo* incident, and whether the North Korean leadership had given us any hints about when reunification would take place.

A. Lazăr said that he had not attended the discussions of the two delegations, but afterwards, he had noticed that the Korean Workers' Party had not taken a firm decision with respect to its participation in the international meeting in Budapest. With respect to the other issues raised by Surgov, the Romanian diplomat said that they had not been discussed in detail and that he could not decipher the intentions of the North Koreans as these issues were mentioned in passing.

Surgov said that he raised the first question because Soviet and Czech diplomats in Pyongyang were spreading the rumor that the delegation of the Romanian Communist Party tried to influence the leadership of the Korean Workers' Party to take part in the international conference in Budapest and to adopt a similar position to its own. A. Lazăr said that the Romanian Communist Party had been consulting and would continue to do so with all parties on the main problems of common interest and on the matters of the international communist movement and it would be wrong to think that this activity was an attempt to exert influence. A. Lazăr said that if the Soviets, or any other [party], believe that the Korean Workers' Party can be convinced to take part in the conference or dissuaded from doing so, they should carry out this kind of action themselves, as the organizers of this conference in Budapest.

On a different matter, the Bulgarian diplomat said that T. [Todor] Zhivkov cancelled his visit to Havana, arguing that he could not have subscribed to the claims of the Cuban leadership with respect to the anti-party Soviet cliques which had been discovered and unmasked recently within the Communist Party of Cuba.

Signed: N. Popa





## **DOCUMENT No. 15**

### **Telegram from Pyongyang to Bucharest, TOP SECRET, No. 76.035, Urgent, February 7, 1968**

*[Source: 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]*

With respect to the secret negotiations which are currently taking place in Panmunjeom between the North Koreans and the Americans on the USS *Pueblo* military vessel seized by the DPRK on January 23, we would like to inform you about the following matters:

The central press agencies released a brief statement revealing that, due to the persistent requests of the Americans, the North Koreans have agreed to enter into talks at Panmunjeom on the USS *Pueblo* incident.

We know that the Koreans are usually extremely calm in their discussions and they are trying to drag their feet as much as possible to extend the length of these talks. One of the signs of the DPRK's malleability is the fact that on February 6 it returned the bodies of the two USS *Pueblo* crew members who died during the incident while also expressing its intent to release the two or three wounded members of the crew.

As far as we know from what the Press Director of the DPRK Ministry of Foreign Affairs told us on February 6, the Americans are searching for the best possible pretense to excuse themselves in front of the North Korean authorities and international public opinion, putting all the blame on the USS *Pueblo* commander who 'lacked the consent of his superiors and, acting upon his own judgment, violated the territorial waters of the DPRK.'

The fact that the Americans started their secret talks with the DPRK and that they are strictly discussing the USS *Pueblo* incident without linking it to the incidents in South Korea (the infiltration from the North on January 21), together with the tendency of the Americans to admit their guilt in one way or another in front of the North Koreans, gave rise in South Korea to the biggest repulsion towards the United States of America in the last twenty years.

The South Korean authorities and all parties and organizations in South Korea laid official complaints and openly condemned the meek attitude of the United States, which is manifested in their willingness to enter secret talks with the DPRK on the USS *Pueblo* incident.

Over the last few days, intense anti-American demonstrations have taken place in Seoul and in all urban centers in South Korea, underlining the dissatisfaction with the secret negotiations in Panmunjeom and asking Park Chung Hee's government to revisit its position vis-à-vis the United States of America (which is discounting South Korea's ability to pursue its own interests); in order to enhance its self-defense capabilities (given that the United States of America is no longer offering the appropriate guarantees), it was asked to withdraw South Korean troops from South Vietnam, to take serious measures to prevent such incidents from occurring in the future,

etc. Under these circumstances, it has become even more obvious why the DPRK is extending its negotiations with the United States as much as possible.

The diplomatic corps in Pyongyang believes that the South Koreans are intensifying this anti-American campaign so that after solving the USS *Pueblo* incident, they will be able to obtain more substantial military aid from the US.

We think that irrespective of the means the US will use to draw closer to South Korea, the prestige and reputation of the Americans in the eyes of the South Korean people has been seriously undermined. In this respect, we take into account the fact that the United States accepted to sit down and talk to the DPRK, to whom they will apologize, as well as the fact that the majority of the infiltrations from the North are being carried out through the perimeter guarded by the American Second division, which has generated a lot of mistrust in the way the US is ensuring South Korea's security.

Due to the instability, confusion, and dwindling trust of the support offered by the US, South Korea adopted a series of serious measures to strengthen its self-defense capabilities. Thus, President Park Chung Hee ordered the mobilization of 2.5 million people on February 7, pausing all retirements in the armed forces and creating armed self-defense units (troops) in every large village.



**DOCUMENT No. 16**

**Telegram from Pyongyang to Bucharest, TOP SECRET, No. 76.040, Regular, February 12, 1968**

*[Source: 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]*

The North Korean press released a declaration from the DPRK Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the title ‘The Korean people are effectively prepared and always ready to fight alongside the Vietnamese people, whenever the Vietnamese people need it,’ through which the North Koreans condemned the atrocities committed by the United States in South Vietnam.

The document underlined the unanimous support for the February 4 declaration of the spokesman of the Central Committee of the National Liberation Front in South Vietnam and the February 5 declaration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

The North Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that the US aggression against the Vietnamese people is also an act of aggression against the Korean people and therefore, upon the request of the Vietnamese people, the DPRK is always ready to offer it all the help it needs.

The declaration asked for the immediate and unconditional termination of all American warmongering activities, and for the most urgent withdrawal possible of American and foreign troops in Vietnam.

Signed: N. Popa



**DOCUMENT No. 17**

**Telegram from Pyongyang to Bucharest, TOP SECRET, No. 76.042, Regular, February 15, 1968**

*[Source: 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]*

On February 14, the Bulgarian Second Secretary, Surgov, told A. Lazăr that the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party would hold a plenum to debate a series of ideological issues.

All Bulgarian diplomatic missions in socialist countries were asked through a note to compile a summary of the new aspects and trends in the ideological activity of the Korean Workers' Party; its general activity and specific methods for agitation and propaganda; the training programs for top cadres; the latest measures or trends to improve the activity of the party and state apparatus; and the general planning and organization of scientific research in the DPRK.

Surgov mentioned that he discussed these issues with two Soviet diplomats, which helped him realize that these diplomats had radically changed their views on Kim Il Sung. Surgov pointed out that Soviet diplomats were increasingly disgruntled with Kim Il Sung and thought that 'the independence with which he makes decisions on his own' is the product of the full development of his cult of personality.

The Bulgarian diplomat answered one of A. Lazăr's questions by pointing out that the Soviets, when referring to Kim Il Sung's independence, alluded to the decision of the Korean Workers' Party not to participate in the consultative meeting in Budapest, to the USS *Pueblo* case, and to the fact that the North Koreans decided not to consult [the Soviets] on the ways and especially on the moment when unification ought to be achieved, etc.

Signed: N. Popa



## **DOCUMENT No. 18**

### **Telegram from Pyongyang to Bucharest, TOP SECRET, No. 76.044, Regular, February 16, 1968**

*[Source: 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]*

Following the events in Seoul on January 21 and the USS *Pueblo* incident [on January 23], one can notice a conspicuous cold attitude on behalf of the Vietnamese diplomats (from the delegation of the National Liberation Front, NLF, and from the Embassy of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam) toward the North Korean comrades.

In a recent discussion between the Romanian Ambassador and Vu Ngoc Ho, the representative of the NLF in Pyongyang, the latter stated with unrestrained anxiety that the North Koreans, in an attempt to underline the alleged similarity between the situation in South Korea and that in South Vietnam, affirmed that just like the revolution in South Vietnam cannot endure for too long without the help of North Vietnam, so the revolution in South Korea needs the help of North Korea.

This uninspired comparison referring to the revolutionary situation in the southern parts of the two countries was sensitive for the Vietnamese diplomats, because, according to the Czech Ambassador, they were the ones to approach this issue openly in many conversations with members of other socialist diplomatic missions in Pyongyang.

We believe that there are other factors contributing to this deterioration [of relations between the Vietnamese and the North Koreans], namely the USS *Pueblo* incident and the incident in Seoul, through which the North Koreans muted any similarity of the events in Vietnam, which took place at the same time, attracting the attention of the international public opinion on contingent actions without any prospects and without an adequate revolutionary basis (in South Korea—our note).

On the occasion of the Army Day Anniversary in North Korea, the two Vietnamese delegations sent only staff at the level of ‘First Secretary’ to the many activities organized by the North Koreans (the Ambassador invoked health problems and the NLF representative left Pyongyang before February 8).

Signed: N. Popa



## **DOCUMENT No. 19**

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

*[Source: 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]*

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



## **DOCUMENT No. 20**

### **Telegram from Pyongyang to Bucharest, TOP SECRET, No. 76.047, Regular, February 19, 1968**

*[Source: 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]*

I would like to convey the following notes I took during my February 19 conversation with Le Thet Hung, the Ambassador of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam to Pyongyang:

1. Two offensives are being carried out by the forces of the National Liberation Front in South Vietnam and are part of a tactical cycle which aims to continue the fight and gain the initiative while expanding the battlefield.

The main purpose of these large-scale offensive actions is to shatter to the ground the regime in Saigon and thus rally the entire people to take up arms, to counter all the actions of the Saigon army, to divide it and isolate it from the American troops.

Secondly, [the aim is to] simultaneously attack all American bases and inflict severe damages in terms of personnel, materiel, and military equipment; to create even more confusion; to disrupt the ranks of the American military and of its satellites; and to weaken their morale, which is already very low anyway.

These offensives offer the opportunity to fully resupply the troops in South Vietnam with weapons and ammunition, which are so needed to maintain and further the successes they achieved so far.

2. According to the Vietnamese diplomat, the United States of America will not dare and will not be able to use tactical nuclear weapons in South Vietnam. He pointed out that since South Vietnam was not an organized battlefield, without a front and a back, the use of tactical nuclear weapons would be more damaging for American troops and bases than for the national liberation forces.

Secondly, the United States would not dare to use tactical nuclear weapons fearing that the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China would retaliate.

Thirdly, the United States is also fearful of public opinion and the American people, which are increasingly opposed to the war in Vietnam.

3. When asked whether the upcoming elections in the United States would influence the resolution of the conflict in Vietnam, the Vietnamese diplomat said that the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the National Liberation Front are not linking the matter to the

upcoming elections. The future elections would only change the wolf at the helm of the United States with a different one.

4. My interlocutor then mentioned the fact that ‘some’ try to draw a comparison between the war and the revolution in South Vietnam and the war in Korea. He said that such a comparison did not make any sense, being completely unrealistic. It is imbued with wishful thinking, it denies the nature of the mass revolution of the Vietnamese people, and it does not recognize the efforts and successes achieved by the Vietnamese people (we believe that these references were made with certain North Korean personalities in mind).
5. When asked for his opinion on the timing of the Korean unification, the Vietnamese diplomat said that the North Koreans are intensively preparing for this action and it would be possible that when the United States is almost crushed in South Vietnam, the North Koreans will take advantage of this moment and pursue the liberation of the South.
6. As for the USS *Pueblo* case, the Vietnamese Ambassador said that the Americans were not interested in starting another war in Korea because they would be easily defeated there just as they are in South Vietnam.

It seems that the peaceful resolution of this case through direct negotiations with the Americans would also be to the liking of the North Koreans, who realize that they are not yet totally ready [for war] and that it is not a propitious moment to pursue such a large-scale operation in the South.

Signed: N. Popa



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## **DOCUMENT No. 21**

### **Telegram from Pyongyang to Bucharest, TOP SECRET, No. 76.048, Urgent, February 22, 1968**

*[Source: 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]*

On February 22, I was invited to meet with Pak Seokkyun, the Director of the Second Directorate–Liaison within the DPRK Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who gave me a set of materials on the USS *Pueblo* incident, comprising the translations of the *Pueblo* crew members' testimonies, original copies of these testimonies, and photographs. All these documents were released to the public a while ago.

In his statement, Director Pak made reference yet again to the well-known aspects of the incident, underlining that it can be solved peacefully only if the United States admits to the criminal act it had committed by deploying the USS *Pueblo* spy ship in the territorial waters of the DPRK. He remarked that in the current situation of maximum tension, war can break out at any moment in time and the American imperialists are the only ones to blame, adding that the future of the USS *Pueblo* depends entirely upon how the United States and their puppets in Seoul act.

Pak Seokkyun expressed his gratitude for the manner in which our central press agency and the propaganda agencies in Romania reflected the Korean position with respect to the USS *Pueblo* incident, and then he underlined that in the current circumstances, it was paramount to thoroughly unmask the aggressive policy of the United States. He added that he would like to ask the Romanians to step up their condemnation of the US aggressive policy, including through governmental actions (here he was obviously hinting at the release of a governmental statement or at least of a statement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

With respect to the USS *Pueblo* case, I would like to inform you that the declarations of the People's Republic of China, Democratic Republic of Vietnam, National Liberation Front in South Vietnam, the Communist Party of Cuba, the Mongolian Ministry of Foreign Affairs were published, while the foreign ministers of the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, and Soviet Union apparently held talks with the Korean ambassadors in their respective countries, under the guise of press interviews.

We believe that for the time being, there are no special actions that the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs should take to preempt a recurrence of the USS *Pueblo* incident. The most appropriate form of support for the North Korean position is to continue to reflect the situation based on the news broadcast by the Korean Central News Agency (ACTC).

The materials we received will be sent to Bucharest through courier.

Signed: N. Popa



## **DOCUMENT No. 22**

### **Telegram from Pyongyang to Bucharest, TOP SECRET, No. 76.049, Flash, February 23, 1968**

*[Source: 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]*

On February 22, M. Sindler, the attaché of the Czechoslovak Embassy in Pyongyang, told A. Lazăr that the head of the Czechoslovak delegation to the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission in Panmunjeom had talked to General Pak Jungguk, the head of the North Korean delegation about the following issues:

After the first two or three secret meetings between the North Koreans and the Americans, General Pak Jungguk has been avoiding the Czech and Polish generals, or when he does meet them, he does not mention anything about the USS *Pueblo* incident.

After the eighth secret meeting, Pak told the Czech general that the North Koreans would be willing to free the *Pueblo* crew members in exchange for some South Korean patriots 'who are imprisoned in South Korea.' The North Korean general said that if the Americans had agreed to this exchange, the North Koreans would have renounced the demand that the United States recognize that they had violated the territorial waters of the DPRK, however they did not wish to get too much publicity on this.

When asked by the Czech general about the position of the US Army on this matter, Pak said that the North Koreans had not discussed this with the Americans because they expected the Americans to come to them with this proposal.

Sindler said that the Czech general realized that Pak told him about this idea so that this proposal, through the Swedish or the Swiss delegations in the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission, immediately reached the Americans, who would then bring it up at Panmunjeom.

The Czech diplomat said that until that moment, discussions at Panmunjeom had been limited to the demands of the DPRK that the United States admits to being guilty of violating North Korean territorial waters. The American representative supposedly asked the North Koreans to allow him to pay a visit to the USS *Pueblo* crew members in order to corroborate the North Korean version of the story, which would then enable the Americans to admit to having violated North Korean territorial waters.

Taking into account the possibility of talks between the United States and the Vietnamese, which has come up again and again these days, we believe that the North Koreans will try to solve the *Pueblo* case before the American-Vietnamese negotiations begin and this will be done to refute any speculations that the resolution of the Vietnamese matter depended on ending the row over USS *Pueblo*.

Signed: N. Popa



## **DOCUMENT No. 23**

### **Telegram from Pyongyang to Bucharest, TOP SECRET, No. 76.051, Urgent, February 27, 1968**

*[Source: 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]*

On February 26, at a meeting with the North Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we were given a comprehensive presentation which concluded that the situation in Korea had become extremely tense and the outbreak of war was possible at any moment and that the provocations of the Americans and of Park Chung Hee made war inevitable. The Head of the Construction Section told A. Lazăr that all diplomatic missions in Pyongyang were encouraged to build an anti-air defense bunker, in case they did not have one already, to protect foreigners against air attacks.

When asked by the Romanian diplomat about the characteristics of the bunker (depth, shape, resistance) and about the deadline by which this bunker ought to be finalized, the interlocutor answered that after the agreement in principle of the Romanian government, the ODCD [Office of Services to the Diplomatic Corps] would immediately send a group of experts and specialists to the embassy to decide on where to install the bunker, and in accordance with the specific requirements of the ODCD, it would put together the project and the approval and would start the construction work.

With respect to the deadline, he replied that the sooner, the better, as the situation was rapidly deteriorating.

In conclusion, the Korean interlocutor made some vague references to the peaceful intentions of the DPRK, to its desire to prevent grave things from happening, but in the end he emphasized the peril of the resumption of war and the desire to insure the anti-air defenses of foreigners.

With respect to the situation in Korea we would like to inform you about the following things:

A state of general tension prevails in Pyongyang; troop movements and neighborhood anti-air defense drills continue; night alarm drills using planes and floodlights are intensifying; in Pyongyang and in the suburbs, anti-air bunkers from the Korean War have been restored and new bunkers have been built between apartment buildings and next to every single household. Trenches and pits for shooters are being dug, especially at the periphery; and general camouflage measures have been adopted (outside of Pyongyang, trucks and buses circulate only covered in camouflage nets, etc.).

An intense evacuation operation is being carried out in Pyongyang (probably in other densely populated centers as well). The archives of central institutions, a significant part of the State Library and of the Academy, more than half of the machinery used in the Typographic Complex and probably in many other factories have been moved out of Pyongyang.

Given that the Foreign Ministry urged us to provide an answer regarding the size, shape and location for the anti-air bunker for our embassy, we would like to ask you to give us your approval for this construction first, and if possible, to send us a civil engineer, with the mandate to decide on the project and to supervise the execution of this construction work.

We are asking for this since the planning and the execution of the construction work only by locals does not present sufficient guarantees to us.

We are awaiting your response.

Signed: N. Popa



## **DOCUMENT No. 24**

### **Telegram from Pyongyang to Bucharest, TOP SECRET, No. 76.053, Regular, February 28, 1968**

*[Source: 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]*

On February 28, the Korean Central News Agency published a statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman on the extremely tense situation on the Korean peninsula.

After mentioning that over the past year the provocative acts of the American occupiers and their puppets in Seoul have intensified, the statement mentions that, at the moment, the forces of the South Korean army, acting under the protective arm of the United States, are feverishly preparing for war, ‘which creates a very grave situation in Korea so that war can erupt at any point in time.’

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman refutes the attempt of the South Koreans and the United States to put the blame on the DPRK for the current situation and assign guilt to the DPRK for the January 21 events in Seoul and for the illegal capture of the USS *Pueblo* vessel. The document underlines that the American imperialists are trying to use the USS *Pueblo* case to find a pretext for unleashing a war, ‘which is made clear by the fact that, at the negotiating table in Panmunjeom (on this issue—our note), they are not in possession of even the most basic form of scrupulousness, instead creating only obstruction with their hostile positions.’

The conclusion of the declaration points out that ‘as long as the American imperialists are undertaking aggressive and warmongering acts, without assuming responsibility for them (here the North Koreans are pointing to the *Pueblo* incident—our note), and pursuing war maneuvers and blackmailing the DPRK, the current situation of extreme tensions cannot be diffused.’

A day before, the Korean newspapers published a lengthy op-ed along the [party] lines which dealt with the tasks to be assumed by the Korean population in the current circumstances of ‘maximum tension’ and in case a war breaks out. The piece is imbued from the beginning until the end with an emphasis on the sacred duty of every worker and soldier in the People’s Army to ‘arm himself with the great revolutionary ideology of comrade Kim Il Sung, to reject all other ideologies except for this one, to think and to act only along the ideological lines and the will of the leader, to unconditionally carry out the orders and the indications of the leader, to defend with their own lives the Central Committee of the Korean Workers’ Party, led by comrade Kim Il Sung.’

The article also stresses the need for a speedy development of the economy and defense capabilities, and emphasized on the duty of each economic unit to be ready and prepared to produce in the most critical conditions, on the need to efficiently run the military-strategic areas, to rapidly develop the military industry, to create stocks of provisions and fuel, etc.

According to Radio Seoul, significant amounts of American weapons (part of the additional \$100 million aid agreement) have already been shipped to South Korea.

By the end of the month, South Korea will mobilize up to one million soldiers from their 2.5 million reserves, a threshold to be achieved by the summer of 1968.

All South Korean localities are organizing self-defense units, which will be equipped with the light weapons from the South Korean Army, given that the South Korean Army will receive the new weaponry from the United States.

Signed: N. Popa



## **DOCUMENT No. 25**

### **Telegram from Pyongyang to Bucharest, TOP SECRET, No. 76.054, Urgent, March 1, 1968**

*[Source: 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]*

On March 1, a diplomat from the Hungarian Embassy in Pyongyang, S. Erte, told A. Lazăr that during a recent conversation between the Hungarian Ambassador and Kim Changbong, the Minister of Defense of the DPRK, the Korean official asked the Hungarian authorities to approve his visit to Budapest with a Korean military delegation (which was supposed to take place in May—our note) at the beginning of April. The Korean official explained that this date is imposed on him by the situation in Korea and by the fact that after April 20 it would be impossible for him to travel abroad. Kim Changbong's statement, linked with the fact that only four or five days ago all diplomatic missions in Pyongyang were urged to build anti-air bunkers, leads us to conclude that for a period of at least two months from now, the situation in Korea will not aggravate beyond the current point.

On a different topic, the Hungarian diplomat showed that he possessed information according to which two weeks ago Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai had sent a personal message to Kim Il Sung through which he had proposed to jointly normalize Sino-Korean relations and to leave past quarrels behind. In the same message, Zhou Enlai mentioned the traditional friendship between the Chinese and the Korean people and reassured Kim Il Sung of the candor with which the Chinese people would be ready at any given point in time to give its full support to the Korean people.

Asked about the source for this information, the Hungarian diplomat said that he had obtained it from the Chinese and that the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs asked its diplomatic mission in Pyongyang to verify it, if possible.

Signed: N. Popa