

March 1, 1975
Telegram from Pyongyang to Bucharest, SECRET,
No. 059.060

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Summary:

The Romanian Embassy in Pyongyang reports on the Northern Limit Line (NLL) dispute based on the remarks of Ri Jongmok, North Korean Deputy Foreign Minister

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TELEGRAM

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To: Comrade Stancu (handwritten)

To continue our telegram no. 059.057, we would like to inform you that after four days since the Yellow Sea incident between South Korean and Democratic People's Republic of Korea vessels, a fiery debate on this topic continues, in which the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is seeking to involve the support of those countries with which it has friendly relations; in this respect, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is releasing numerous official documents to the press and it is summoning the diplomatic corps at various levels.

At a meeting with the heads of diplomatic missions to Pyongyang, Ri Jong-mok [Ri Jong Mok] the North Korean Deputy Foreign Minister, asked on behalf of his government that the governments of all states represented in Pyongyang support the measures undertaken by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on matters related to this conflict.

At the reunion of all ambassadors with Ri Jong-mok, our attention was caught by the fact of the insufficient preparation of the North Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs to be able to completely and accurately inform the heads of diplomatic missions about the February 26th incident.

When asked to elaborate on whether the US air forces, involved in the incident, opened fire on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea vessels, the Deputy Foreign Minister said that because of the darkness in which the incident occurred, it is impossible to accurately know what happened, although the briefing contained formulations with clear accusations in this respect.

After omitting to inform that the North Korean fishing ships were themselves protected by military vessels and aircraft which took part in the conflict, a fact which is absent from public documents, Ri Jong-mok admitted to this fact only after being repeatedly and directly asked about it by the diplomats present at the meeting.

The opinion of our mission is that the February 26th incident eloquently reflects the high level of tension between the North and the South, tension which often turns into military conflict.

By insisting on not avoiding such situations, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea tries to demonstrate the righteousness of its statements regarding the aggressive nature of the current South Korean administration, [which enjoys the] support of the United States, regarding the irreconcilable character of North-South relations, and consequently, regarding the need to "prepare for war," an idea put forward in recent [official] documents.

The increased frequency of armed clashes, the last one being of noteworthy seriousness, and the aggravation of inter-Korean disagreements give birth to the danger of sparking new conflicts of this sort.

Signed: General Dumitru Popa