

August 9, 1977

**Telegram 085068 from the Romanian Embassy in
Pyongyang to the Romanian Ministry of Foreign
Affairs**

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Summary:

The Romanian Embassy in Pyongyang reports to the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on US-ROK relations and the DPRK's desire for bilateral exchange with the US, which the US administration is unwilling to engage in without North Korea's inclusion of South Korea in future interaction. The US State Department's perspective of the DPRK is also noted.

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During a discussion with Third Secretary Petre Anghel, Edward Hurwitz, Director of the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs at the US Department of State, noted the following:

1. Relations between the US and South Korea are currently less tense than when President Carter announced the decision to withdraw American ground troops from South Korea. The tension at the time was a product of the sudden manner in which the drawback was announced, without prior consultation with the South Korean and Japanese authorities. Subsequently, however, following discussions with American officials, the ROK came to terms with the idea of US troop withdrawal despite preferring otherwise. The Carter administration reassured the ROK that the drawback will not damage the military balance in the Peninsula and that the US will help strengthen South Korean forces in order to effectively replace US troops.

The most delicate part of the issue is now in the hands of the US administration which will have to make serious efforts to persuade Congress of the opportunity for withdrawal and the need to offer additional military assistance to the South Korean government - in particular, loans for acquiring military equipment.

Troop withdrawal has been another contentious point between the administration and Congress, which recently decided that every troop reduction in South Korea must have explicit Congress approval. Congress opposition against troop withdrawal is due to the large number of Congressmen who believe the drawback will instigate aggression from North Korea and, therefore, alter the fragile military balance in the region.

2. Recently, a move towards the idea of a bilateral meeting with the US has been noticeable in the DPRK's conduct. Also notable has been the manner in which the North Korean authorities solved the recent helicopter incident, leaving a good impression.

Nonetheless, the US administration believes it would be detrimental to positively respond to the DPRK, as long as the DPRK intends to avoid South Korean participation in future talks.

The DPRK's recent decision to establish a 50-mile militarized zone in the ocean is considered unilateral, arbitrary and against the armistice. The US administration has not managed to fully decipher the intent behind this decision, particularly since it did not affect the supply to several islands in the zone. The US Department of State tends to believe that the decision is simply the materialization of a Third World conference on maritime law.

3. The US has no knowledge of the DPRK's intentions regarding the next UN General Assembly. However, the State Department believes that the current international scene is not favorable for introducing a pro-North Korean resolution due to the 'scandal' regarding North Korean diplomats' illegal currency dealings in various countries, as well as to the American decision to withdraw ground troops from South Korea, which is likely to reduce, if not eliminate, attacks against the US.

Signed: Advisor Gh. Ionita