

April 18, 1967
Telegram from Pyongyang to Bucharest, No.76137,
TOP SECRET, April 18, 1967

Citation:

"Telegram from Pyongyang to Bucharest, No.76137, TOP SECRET, April 18, 1967", April 18, 1967, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Archive of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Obtained and translated for NKIDP by Eliza Gheorghe.
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/116700>

Summary:

The remarks of a Vietnamese diplomat on the incidents between South and North Korea, who explains that the South and North exploit tensions for their own political agendas.

Original Language:

Romanian

Contents:

Translation - English

In a conversation with the Counselor of the DRV Embassy, Huang Mîoi, Ionescu Teofil brought up the issue of the increasing tensions on the 38th parallel, of the frequent armed clashes and especially of the decisive tone adopted by the North Korean press on these matters. Mentioning their previous discussion and given the fact that both in Pyongyang and elsewhere 'the red guards' and the civilian population were making intense military preparations, he asked whether all of these manifestations could not indicate that the North Koreans set out to put their plans into action.

The Vietnamese Counselor-Minister replied that his belief, based on the information he had been given, was that there were no serious reasons to worry. The fact that the current state of tension is occurring in spring, before elections in South Korea and before the May 1st big-scale celebrations in North Korea, makes one think that both the South Koreans and the North Koreans have limited and immediate goals in mind.

The Vietnamese diplomat remarked that these incidents and the state of tension on the 38th parallel had a concrete explanation, which indicated that they would soon subside in magnitude. In this respect, he mentioned that for many years the DPRK had been sending 30-40 people every year to the South, past the 38th parallel.

They are sent there to maintain the network of spies up and running, to gather information on the internal, economic and military state of affairs, and to establish the premises for a guerilla movement in South Korea.

Due to objective conditions in South Korea, these agents cannot stay there during winter - they cannot feed themselves, they cannot travel from one place to another and they cannot hide - they go back to the North in autumn. For these reasons, incidents increase numerically in spring and autumn.

This year, given the upcoming elections in South Korea and Pyongyang's future intentions, the DPRK increased the number of agents to 100. Therefore the number of groups infiltrated in the South increased and sparked more incidents. By the end of April, these crossings will end which lead to a decrease in the number of incidents.

The Vietnamese diplomat expressed his belief that the South Koreans had good intelligence about these crossings of North Korean groups and managed to seal off the border, causing all these incidents but also inflicting a lot of damage on the North Koreans.

In the given circumstances, each side exploits this situation for propagandistic purposes, to their own interests.

In the South, this situation is used in the electoral campaign, stirring anticommunist sentiment and disarming the opposition.

Moreover, by exploiting this situation, the South Koreans want to persuade the Americans to be more generous with their military and economic aid to South Korea.

As the DPRK is trying to achieve several goals at the same time, the situation on the 38th parallel is grossly exaggerated and interwoven with an intense military preparation of the population, whose purpose is merely to celebrate May 1st when there will be ample parades of the Red Guards and of the self-defense battalions. According to the Vietnamese diplomat, the May 1st manifestations will be a show of force to convince foreign delegations of the seriousness of the situation on the Korean peninsula and of the readiness of the North Korean forces. The North Koreans' manifestations for May 1st are aiming at making a very good impression on their guests, so as to mitigate the effects of the posters which appeared in Beijing on the

internal situation in the DPRK.

Overall, the Vietnamese diplomat added, by exaggerating these incidents on the 38th parallel and by creating a warmongering psychosis, the North Koreans wanted to put pressure on socialist countries, especially the USSR, to pay more attention to the DPRK, to answer Pyongyang's requests for military, economic and political assistance more promptly.

The North Koreans also want to temperate the Chinese, to whom the DPRK wants to prove that by siding with the USSR they did not give in to revisionists but on the contrary, they managed to impose their revolutionary fervor on the USSR. The North Koreans are making a lot of noise about liberating South Korea and about starting a war with the Americans, because they know that the Chinese really appreciate these ideas and in 1965 tried to push the North Koreans to do exactly that, but the Koreans refused, viewing this plan as adventurous. The Vietnamese diplomat believes that the North Koreans suddenly became revolutionary, after being criticized in the posters of the Chinese Red Guards.

The idea of a war to liberate South Korea by fighting against the Americans brings about the possibility of an improvement in relations between the DPRK and the PRC.

Note:

The remarks of the Vietnamese diplomat on the current situation in the DPRK also correspond to the views of our official.

Signed: N. Popa

17.IV./13.