

May 10, 1967

**Telegram from Pyongyang to Bucharest, No. 76.161,
TOP SECRET, May 10, 1967**

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Summary:

Kim Gwang-hyeop explains that North Korea's standard of living is relatively low because of the need to invest heavily in defense industries, a policy dated back to the October 1966 Party Conference.

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On May 9th, the Romanian labor union delegation was received by Kim Gwang-hyeop [Kim Kwang Hyop], member of the Politburo Presidium of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea. I was also invited to attend this meeting. The following topics covered in the meeting drew my attention:

After thanking the Romanian government for having accepted his invitation and for having sent a delegation to Pyongyang to celebrate, together with the North Korean people, May 1st, Kim Gwang-hyeop repeatedly emphasized on the good relations between the Romanian Communist Party and the Workers' Party of Korea, on the fact that there is a total convergence of viewpoints between these two brother-parties, that there are no divergences which could slow down or cast a shadow on the development of these relations.

Henceforth, he praised the impetuous development of Romania's industry, agriculture, constructions; he appreciated the quality of Romanian products, their technical properties. He repeatedly underlined that in North Korea, the quality of goods and products is lacking and this is happening because of the lack of experience, technical tradition, and because of the need to build a lot and in a very short time, even to the detriment of quality and esthetics. (It is very rare for the Korean party leadership to publicly admit to this).

He mentioned that according to the WPK conference of October 1966, the North Korean economy must develop in two directions. The main emphasis, however, is put on the development of the defense industry. Therefore, Kim Gwang-hyeop added, most investments are channeled into the defense industry, which makes the standard of living of the Korean population rather low and incomparable to the standard of living in European socialist countries. 'Still, our people, Kim Gwang-hyeop added, is able to feed itself, to dress and to live.'

He remarked that the standard of living would not rise unless the country is unified.

'We make tremendous efforts, he added, to elevate the consciousness of the masses, so that they can understand that the current low standard of living is not caused by the socialist regime, but by the general situation of the country, divided as it is, occupied by the Americans in the south, which prevents the reunification of the country and forces North Korea to spend enormous amounts of money to defend itself and to be prepared to liberate the South at any given point in time.'

In conclusion, Kim Gwang-hyeop, on behalf of comrade Kim Il Sung, asked the head of the Romanian delegation to send his best wishes for health and happiness to comrades Nicolae Ceausescu, Chivu Stoica and Ion Gheorghe Maurer.

The meeting lasted for one hour and took place in a friendly, comradely atmosphere.

The Romanian delegation will leave Pyongyang by plane on May 10th.

Signed: N. Popa
9.V./11