

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

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Summary:

The Embassy of Romania in the DPRK reports on the Soviet Union's response to the Blue House Raid and the seizure of the USS Pueblo.

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On January 24, Aurelian Lazar had a discussion with S. Golosov, Second Secretary of the Soviet Embassy in Pyongyang, during which Golosov told Lazar 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