

April 23, 1973

**Telegram from Pyongyang, No.061.150, Urgent,
SECRET**

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<https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/114053>

Summary:

The Romanians expect tensions to rise in inter-Korean relations after North Korea is accused of sending a group of spies to South Korea. Pyongyang is unable to convincingly deny its direct role in sending the spies and is called duplicitous by Seoul. The report suggests that recent events have acted as fodder for the argument on why US troops should stay on the Korean Peninsula

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To the First Direction, Relations

With respect to inter-Korean relations, we would like to draw your attention to the fact that when important events, reunions, or contacts take place, provocations and sometimes serious incidents resulting in casualties spring up systematically in the demilitarized zone. By infringing on the commitments mutually agreed upon through the Joint Communiqué of July 1972, the situation is growing tense and the smooth development of the inter-Korean dialogue is hindered.

Therefore, on 23 April, at the request of the Americans in the Armistice Commission a session took place at Panmunjeom, where the DPRK was charged with sending a group of spies in South Korea on the night of 17 April (3 people, 2 of whom were shot in the Southern part of the demilitarized zone) and was accused of not accepting to investigate this case jointly.

Although the North Koreans publicly denounced this setting-up, the arguments they invoked were not convincing and categorical enough, which provided the authorities in Seoul and the Americans with plenty of ammunition to condemn the DPRK for "its duplicitous policies, aiming at winning the support of public opinion by charging the South and the Americans [for various things], while in reality being the one committing the provocations and perpetuating a state of tension on the Korean Peninsula."

In these circumstances, we believe that the second meeting of the South-North Coordinating Committee Secretariat, planned for 24 April in Panmunjeom, will unfold in a tense atmosphere.

Irrespective of its authors, the aforementioned incident, as all the others from previous months, provide supportive arguments for the continued stationing of US troops in South Korea, and reasons for easily combating against the letters adopted at the recent session of the Supreme People's Assembly addressed to the US Senate and House of Representatives.

Signed: Dumitru Popa

