

August 21, 1976
**Telegram from Pyongyang to Bucharest, SECRET,
Urgent, No. 067.212**

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Summary:

The Embassy of Romania in Pyongyang reports on the Panmunjeom or "Axe Murder" Incident of August 1976.

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Urgent

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No.: 067.212

To: Comrade C. Oancea

Regarding the Incident in Panmunjeom

The August 18th incident in Panmunjeom represents almost the only topic covered by the written press and by radio broadcasts in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Starting with the afternoon of August 18th, radio broadcasting stations and television stations are repeatedly broadcasting about the aforementioned incident, they broadcast the entire text of the Supreme Commandment of the Korean People's Army communiqué, the orders of the Supreme Commandment regarding the activation of its "readiness for battle" mode, as well as the declaration of the Korean Central Telegraph Agency on the same matter.

Commentaries are being transmitted and published, in which it is underlined that the "Korean people is not afraid of war and if such a war is imposed upon itself, then it will crush the aggressor." The determination of the Army, of the entire [Korean] people, to defend its homeland, is being expressed. Snapshots depicting the preparations of the Army, its technical endowment, etc., are being shown. Television stations are reproducing caricatures and critical commentaries towards President Ford, the US administration, the American armed forces, movies and caricatures regarding the defeat of the United States in various parts of the world, including in Korea in the 1950-1953 War.

On August 20th, in Pyongyang and Wonsan, and according to the information we received, in other parts of the country as well, anti-air military defense drills took place.

We noticed that the population is preoccupied, being more worried than on other occasions by the situation which was thus created, but it is not alarmed, [nor] confused.

At the same time we believe that the current situation is special compared to previous periods when such incidents, more or less similar, took place.

Although, according to some open sources, a great concentration of human forces and military technology is currently taking place in South Korea, both the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and South Korea declared state of emergency.

We do not possess enough pieces of evidence on which to draw the conclusion that a large-scale military conflict could break out of this situation.

Signed: Dumitru Popa