

March 1, 1967
Telegram from Pyongyang to Bucharest, No.76.075,
TOP SECRET, March 1, 1967

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Summary:

N. Popa discusses the alleged decisions by the United States and South Korea to bomb the North Korean coast after the sinking of a South Korean boat. Although the true intentions of such plan is not clear, North Korea signaled its unwillingness to confront with the two countries.

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Translation - English

The Polish First Secretary told Comrade T. Ionescu that the US Ambassador to Seoul informed the Swedish Ambassador in the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission about the following matters:

At the time of the sinking of the South Korean escort boat No. 56, the US and South Korea decided that their air forces bomb several defense units on the North Korean coast.

This plan received the approval of the two governments in Washington and Seoul respectively, but it was postponed at the last minute owing to the evolution of operations in Vietnam.

The US Ambassador told the Swedish Ambassador that this decision would be implemented whenever the North Koreans would attempt similar attacks.

The Polish diplomat said that they interpreted the statements of the American Ambassador as dishonest, being in fact an attempt to prod the North Koreans to reveal their intentions and to frighten them at the same time. However, the Polish Ambassador continued, it was not unconceivable that the US had actually taken this decision, with the thought of implementing it in the future. [']The Americans and the South Koreans are aware of the North Korean military capabilities, especially the situation of the [DPRK] air force, which would not allow the North Koreans to undertake defensive actions against or to counterattack against an air attack from the South or to improve their air defense.[']

The Polish diplomat thought that the North Korean reaction to the incident was interesting, probably after he had heard the point of view of the US Ambassador.

If immediately after the incident the Pyongyang authorities prided themselves in sinking the ship, started a vast press campaign, congratulated and decorated the subunit involved in the sinking, all these manifestations ended abruptly and the whole event was forgotten. Additional measures were taken so that in the future nobody can open fire on a target without Kim Il Sung's approval.

According to the Polish diplomat, this reaction indicates that the North Koreans are rather afraid of a potential confrontation and are not prepared to withstand it.

Signed: N Popa
28.II./5