Letter from GDR Embassy in the DPRK to State Secretary Hegen
December 12, 1966

Embassy of the GDR in the DPRK
Pyongyang, 12 December 1966

To: Secretary of State and First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Comrade Hegen

Dear Comrade Hegen!

In this letter I just want to address briefly some subjects concerning the domestic situation of the DPRK. From sources accessible to us, we learned that since the party conference there has been a very intense campaign among the people concerning preparation for a potential war. The correctness of our information was corroborated by diplomats from the Soviet and other friendly embassies.

Political propaganda among the people for a potential war with the U.S. contains the following elements:

- The USA is preparing for war. Johnson's visit to South Korea equals Dulles' visit before the outbreak of the Korean War.
- The U.S. imperialists are expanding war in Asia and will attack the DPRK.
- We have to be prepared for an attack every hour, there must be no surprise.
- As the USA is preparing its attack, and is arming the South Korean puppet army with modern aircraft, tanks and missiles, there might occur a situation within the Asian context when we have to preempt an attack by the U.S.

Besides political preparations for a potential war, there are checks in the residential areas for stockpiles of rations and other things needed in case of war. The training period for militias has been extended and is more intensively pursued.

Notwithstanding all those events mentioned above, we still stick to the opinion that there is no reason for assuming that either of the two sides (the U.S. and the DPRK) currently have intentions to trigger a conflict. Probably for the DPRK there are mostly propagandistic reasons behind the present positions.

With socialist wishes

[signed]

Brie

Report, Embassy of Hungary in the Soviet Union to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry
November 25, 1967

As is well-known, Comrade Brezhnev received Comrade Choe Yonggeon during his stay here [in the USSR]. Comrade Brezhnev raised two groups of issues at this meeting. On the one hand, the problem of the international Communist meeting; on the other hand, the issue of the tension between North and South Korea along the demilitarized zone. [...]

Basically, the Soviet Union does not accept the standpoint of the DPRK with regard to the cause of the tension along the demilitarized zone. It thinks–and it also gives expression to that vis-a-vis the Korean comrades–that the United States does not intend to increase tension in this region, and nothing points to [the U.S.] really aiming to start a new Korean War. It is obvious that various factors of the USA's international situation, such as the Vietnam War, do not make the perspective of a new Asian war attractive for the United States.

On the basis of the available evidence–including the statements made by the Czechoslovak and Polish members of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission–the Soviet Union has concluded that it is the DPRK that initiates the majority of the incidents occuring along the demilitarized zone.

Despite the aforesaid issues, it is the impression of our comrades that at present the DPRK, for its part, does not strive to escalate military actions, but by the regularly provoking border incidents and the accompanying propaganda campaign it intends to justify the militarization of the country and the fact that they [the KWP leaders], their official standpoint notwithstanding, can not develop the defense strength and the economy of the country simultaneously but lay stress only on the increasing of military strength, [which results in] the neglect of economic development and the stagnation of living standards.

In addition to the aforementioned issues, with regard to the internal situation of the DPRK, they [the Soviets] remark that lately the personality cult of Kim Il Sung has further increased to a great extent. Recently, a number of functionaries have been removed from the posts they occupied and have disappeared from public life. During the first wave of purges it seemed that it was carried out primarily against those leaders who had adopted a more or less pro-Chinese standpoint and against those who may have opposed the shaping of the Korean Workers' Party's independent policy that rejected the political line of the Chinese party leadership. Later, however, there occurred a second round of the purges, whose political content has not yet become clear for our comrades. In their view, the party functionaries involved in this round hardly seem to be the representatives of some Chinese line within the Korean party. Therefore they [the Soviets] feel uneasy about the further developments of the internal political situation.

József Oláh
(chargé d'affaires)

Letter from GDR Embassy in the DPRK to Secretary of State Hegen
December 8, 1967

Dear Comrade Hegen!

You asked me repeatedly about the current situation at the armistice line and the reason for the increase in incidents. At the same time, it is necessary to answer the question whether the current situation in Korea implies an acute danger of war. Since the experience of aggression in the Middle East provides us with reason to focus on these questions, I have attempted to present my view in this letter by making use of, among others, information from the Polish and Czechoslovak commissions.
There are some differences in the tendencies of the information and opinions from the members of the Czechoslovak and Polish commissions. While the Czechoslovak commission, and especially the ambassador, Comrade Holub, is crediting the aggravation of the situation exclusively to the DPRK, the Polish comrades are expressing the opinion that though the majority of incidents were caused by the DPRK, currently all three parties, that is to say, the DPRK, the U.S., and South Korea, are interested in a tense situation at the armistice line. In my opinion, the estimation of the Polish comrades corresponds more fully to the real situation.

1. <u>On the situation at the armistice line:</u>
   - Never, since the end of the Korean War, have there been so many and such severe incidents at the armistice line as in 1967.
   - Besides more serious incidents, which left wounded [men] and casualties, mutual exchange of fire by guns and artillery became an almost daily phenomenon at certain parts of the armistice line.
   - Incidents at sea are occurring more and more, in the course of which fishing boats are being seized.
   - Incidents with casualties and wounded happen almost exclusively on South Korean territory. The U.S. regularly offers its help in investigating the incidents on the spot. Except for one incident, when four soldiers of the KPA [Korean People's Army] were killed, the Korean side did not suggest such, or rather rejected U.S. suggestions in this respect. (Since 1953, the time of the armistice agreement, there have been only two cases when the Korean side has agreed to inspections on the spot, or has suggested them.)
   - The U.S. side argues that the dead, the wounded and the equipment prove their theory that the incidents were caused by the DPRK (at the same time there is a willingness to hand over the dead).
   - The North Korean side is arguing in their version that the incidents at the armistice line have been caused by the U.S., with the caliber and number of projectiles fired onto the territory of the DPRK, recorded statements of agents, and with the old type of weapons allegedly used by the agents (The guns are exclusively of an older type, that is to say, from the time of the Korean War.)

- The rigid security measures already existing in the DPRK have been intensified. People are not allowed to go more than two kilometers away from their homes without official permission. Also, street patrols have been intensified. According to unconfirmed information, the evacuation of parts of the population of Pyongyang has begun out of military considerations. 200,000 to 300,000 inhabitants are said to be affected (The total number of the population, according to Korean sources, is about one million, according to our estimation it is 800,000 to 900,000).
- For the future it must be expected that the incidents will occur increasingly in the coastal areas and at sea. Incursions of cadres into the South by land will be very difficult in the future, and the DPRK will try to do this by sea.
- In my opinion, the incidents will continue in the future. Their scope and severity will be influenced to a large extent by the current political events.
- As all sides involved respond to any incident with military means, there might be the potential danger of a temporary local conflict. The latter might become more extensive, though, in my opinion, without any of the sides involved presently wanting to start a war.

2. Which are the causes of the current incidents and to what extent is there an imminent danger of war in Korea?

- The attitude of the DPRK is expressed in the documents of the Party Conference, the article in "Rodong Sinmun" from 16 November 1967, and partly also in talks with our military delegation.
- The DPRK tries to portray the situation as if an attack by the USA is imminent, in order to justify their positions domestically and externally.
- At the same time the DPRK tries to practice its policy of dealing U.S. imperialism blows from the outside and to convince other socialist countries and leaders of the national freedom movement to adhere to a similar policy. This is also in close correlation with the current policy of Cuba (as far as my material justifies such an opinion).

With socialist wishes
[signed]

Brie

Memo from Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the KPCZ CC Presidium
"Information about the Situation in Korea"
February 4, 1968

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of National Defense Ministry of the Interior to the KPCZ CC Presidium and the Czechoslovak government
File no.: 020.873/68-3
4 February 1968

Information about the situation in Korea
Attachment III a/

Tension in the Far East has escalated seriously as of late in connection with the detention by the Korean People's Army patrol boats of the American spy ship *Pueblo* along the DPRK coast and in connection with armed actions of Korean patriots in South Korea. These events have brought the situation on the Korean Peninsula to a head and have threatened to create another center of military conflict in this area.

All this is increasing restlessness on the Korean Peninsula and diminishing chances for a peaceful unification of the country in the near future. The leadership of the DPRK is concerned about aggression from the South, and even expects it, and is preparing the Korean people for a unification of the country by an armed struggle of the Korean people.

The [North] Korean propaganda makes every effort to convince the citizens of the DPRK as well as the world's public that the situation is quite similar to that just before the outbreak of the Korean War. Military training of civilians, including women and children, was justified by the thesis of "turning the DPRK into a steel, impregnable fortress" and reached unprecedented magnitude in the DPRK.

We cannot also underestimate the fact that the spreading of military psychosis had other functions, like distracting people from the existing economic difficulties, "justifying" stagnation of the standard of living, demanding the strictest discipline and obedience, and preventing any criticism.

Especially in the last year, the personality cult of Kim Il Sung reached unprecedented magnitude. Attributes attached to his name often run several lines. Kim Il Sung is credited with all successes and victories past and present without regard to historical facts. Even his parents and grandparents are becoming the objects of celebrations. [North] Korean propaganda places an equal sign between Kim Il Sung and Korea, while Korea is presented as an example for other countries. The intensification of Kim Il Sung's personality cult is inseparable from two other issues, namely,– the importance of the DPRK example for the struggling nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America, and the embellishment of Kim Il Sung's role in the context of the international communist and workers' movement…

The rapidly deteriorating situation in the Demilitarized Zone and the danger of a possible new conflict was reflected in the negotiations of the Military Commission for Truce in Panmunjeom. At the Commission's meetings, both sides accused each other of violating the treaty, and the negotiations lead to nowhere. For the [North] Korean side, the Military Commission for Truce is a place where they can confront Americans face to face, and they take full advantage of this opportunity. Speeches of a [North] Korean delegate are mostly propaganda in nature and are used namely in the internal propaganda of the DPRK. Consistently, the negative attitude towards participating in joint investigations of the discussed incidents, as stipulated in the Truce Treaty, is a shortcoming of [North] Korean comrades in their dealing with the Commission.