

The Domestic Origins of the Second Korean War: New Evidence from Communist Bloc Archives

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In the late 1960s, the Korean Peninsula suddenly exploded with a violence not seen since the end of the Korean War, driven by a sudden wave of North Korea aggression that culminated in January 1968 with the attempted assassination of Park Chung Hee and the capture of the USS *Pueblo*. For decades, scholars have struggled to understand this crisis, as they lacked access to materials that could open a window into DPRK policy. Only now, with the recent release of new materials collected from the archives of the Communist bloc nations, can we begin to understand the critical events of the Second Korean War and the larger environment that surrounded it. This paper integrates the most recent materials from former Communist bloc states to revisit our understanding of this dangerous situation, and to suggest that it was driven above all else by domestic political and economic circumstances inside North Korea.

Keywords: South Korea, North Korea, Pueblo, Blue House, Second Korean War

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