



Woodrow Wilson
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CRISIS AND CONFRONTATION ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA

1968-1969 • A Critical Oral History

Edited By Christian F. Ostermann and James F. Person

History and Public Policy Program
Critical Oral History Conference Series

Christian F. Ostermann / James F. Person, eds.

**CRISIS AND CONFRONTATION
ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA**
1968-1969
A Critical Oral History



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Cover image: US and North Korean military officials in negotiations
over the release of the U.S.S Pueblo's crew

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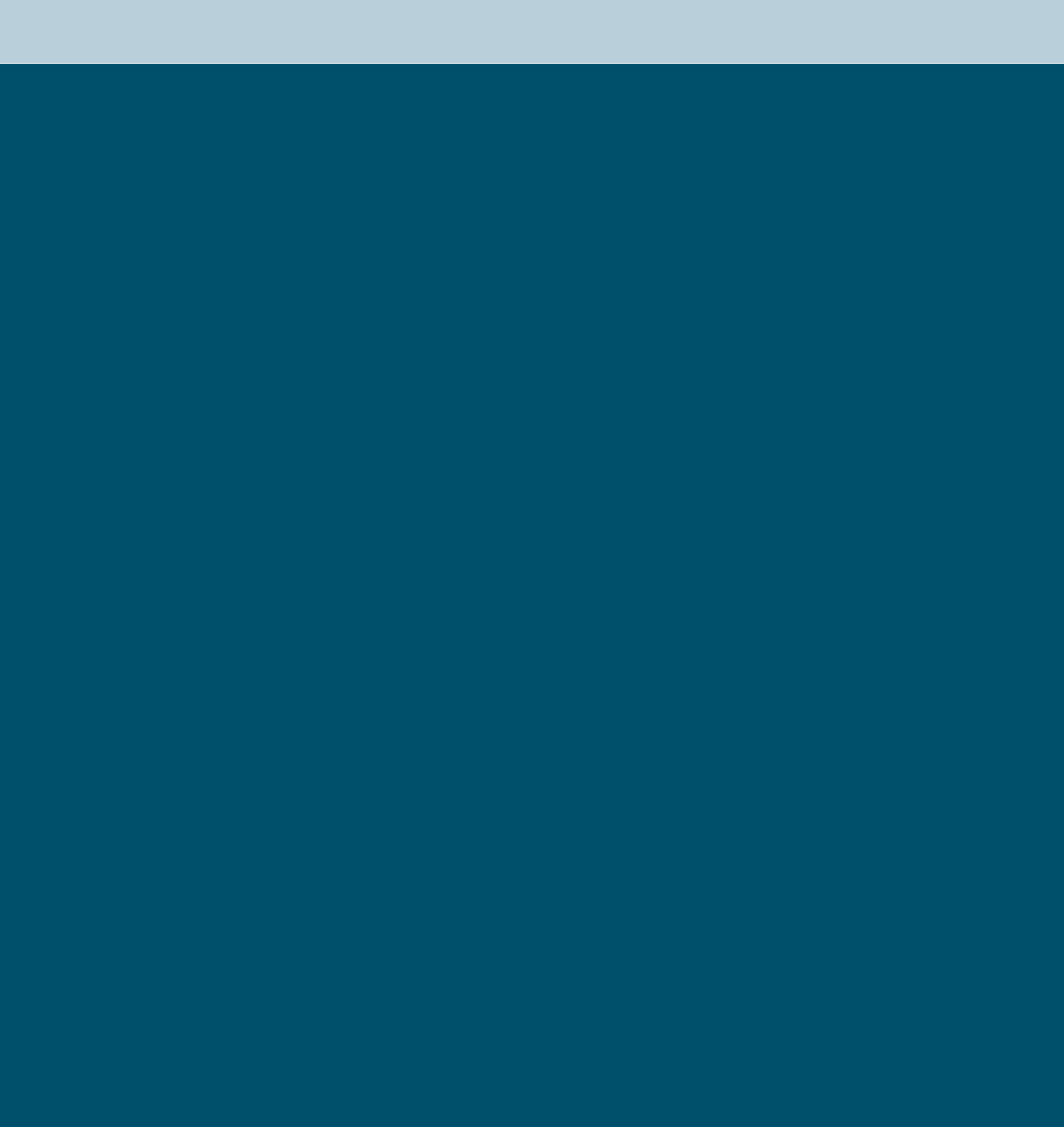
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Acknowledgements

This transcript is the first from a series of critical oral history conferences jointly hosted by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars' North Korea International Documentation Project and the University of North Korean Studies. The first conference was held on 8-9 September 2008 in Washington.

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Christian Ostermann
James Person



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Preface

Clarity is a utility one must strive for to obtain. This is especially true for a nation when it seeks to explain events of magnitude in its own history. For the two Koreas, the years 1968 and 1969 were a turbulent period marked by some of the most brazen military provocations by North Korea: The commando raid on the Blue House in Seoul in January 1968; the seizure of the *USS Pueblo* on the high seas two days later; the infiltration of special guerrilla forces in the Ulchin and Samcheok areas in November 1968; and the shooting down of the U.S. Navy EC-121 reconnaissance aircraft in April 1969. Providing clarity on these history-changing events can only assist our comprehension of the past, and help guide our decision making in the future.

In 2008, the University of North Korean Studies (ROK) and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars (USA) held in Washington a critical oral history conference that focused on the above mentioned incidents, among others, that shaped the politics of late-1960s Korea. Key veteran diplomats and policy makers from Korea, the United States, and even the former East Germany were assembled to give their testimonies on the events and diplomacy surrounding the Korean Peninsula in the late 1960s. By reexamining these turbulent times, conference participants were able to bring us new insights and hence greater clarity of what took place. The conference also demonstrated the significant role of oral history perspectives in our examination of the past.

The University of North Korean Studies in Seoul is proud to be a partner with the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars on this meaningful task of uncovering the reality surrounding these and other historical events in the history of the Korean Peninsula during the Cold War. The conference marked the fourth year of a quite successful and productive multi-year project, one in which we will continue to build around new agenda to help us make “history matter.”

This book is one concrete outcome of what we have been able to accomplish through our strong academic collaboration, and an accomplishment we look forward to building on. We hope that the readers will find it a valuable resource.

Park Jae-Kyu
President, Kyungnam University

Participants

EYEWITNESSES

HORST BRIE began his diplomatic career in 1958 when he joined the GDR foreign ministry. He was immediately sent to the People's Republic of China to serve as a counselor until 1964. Brie was appointed ambassador to North Korea in 1964, charged with the task of improving economic ties between East Berlin and Pyongyang. Brie returned to East Germany in early 1968 and, after serving as head of the planning department at the foreign ministry for a few months was sent to Japan to serve as the GDR's first ambassador to Tokyo. While in Tokyo, Brie remained deeply involved in North Korean affairs. He also served as the GDR's ambassador to Greece.

WALTER CUTLER is a former president of Meridian International Center. During his diplomatic career, he was twice ambassador to Saudi Arabia, ambassador to Tunisia and Zaire, and was ambassador-designate to Khomeini's Iran before diplomatic relations were broken. In addition to an earlier assignment to Iran, he served in Algeria, Cameroon, Korea as political-military advisor in the late 1960s, and in Vietnam. Ambassador Cutler was also senior deputy assistant secretary of state for congressional relations and staff assistant to the secretary of state.

THOMAS HUGHES is president emeritus at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, having served as president from 1971 to 1985. He is also a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the American Academy of Diplomacy. Dr. Hughes also served as director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) at the Department of State from 1963-1969.

KANG IN-DEOK is a senior researcher at the Institute for Far East Studies and a visiting professor at Seigakuin University, Tosaki, Japan. In the 1960s and 1970s,

Dr. Kang served as director of the the Korean Central Intelligence Agency's North Korea bureau and from 1998-1999 as minister of unification. He received his Ph.D. from Kyunghee University (Seoul, ROK) in political science.

JAMES F. LEONARD is a member of the Scientists Working Group on CBW of the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation. In his Foreign Service career, he was country director for Korea from the fall of 1968 to the spring of 1969, U.S. representative to the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva, deputy permanent representative to the United Nations in New York, and deputy special representative for Middle East peace negotiations. In private life, Ambassador Leonard has been president of the United Nations Association of the USA and adviser to the Palme Commission, the Canberra Commission, and other groups in the field of arms control.

DAVID REUTHER is currently affiliated with the George Washington University. He was an East Asian analyst with the National Security Agency from 1967 to 1970 before joining the Foreign Service. During his three years with the NSA, Reuther worked on North Korea and China.

YOON HA-JUNG is currently a co-representative of Free Thinkers 300 and the founding director of the People's Unification Party. He is also the former deputy secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1976-1978). His career in the Foreign Service included two ambassadorship postings—as the ROK ambassador to Sweden in 1978 and ambassador to Australia in 1980. Ambassador Yoon also served as director of the Europe and United States division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the late 1960s.

SCHOLARS

GREGG A. BRAZINSKY is assistant professor of history and international affairs at the George Washington University in Washington, D.C. Professor Brazinsky is pursuing research on various projects, including a study of the cultural impact of the Korean War in America, Korea and China. His publications include *Nation Building in South Korea: Koreans, Americans, and the Making of a Democracy* (University of

North Carolina Press, 2007). Brazinsky also serves as co-director of the George Washington University Cold War Group and as senior advisor to NKIDP.

JAMES G. HERSHBERG is associate professor of history and international affairs at the George Washington University's Elliott School of International Affairs. Author of *James B. Conant: Harvard to Hiroshima and the Making of the Nuclear Age* (Knopf, 1993; Stanford University Press, 1995), Professor Hershberg's recent scholarship has focused on the Cold War and nuclear issues including the Cuban Missile Crisis, the wars in Vietnam and Afghanistan, and the Iran-contra affair. Prof. Hershberg also serves as co-director of the George Washington University Cold War Group. He was director of the Cold War History Project and editor of the project's bulletin from 1991-1996.

HONG SEUKRYULE is assistant professor in the history department at Sungshin Women's University in Seoul, and an advisor for the Republic of Korea's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Professor Hong holds a Ph.D. in Korean History from Seoul National University, and has also spent time as a visiting researcher at the University of Maryland at College Park (1999-2000). He specializes in the modern history of Korea, and specifically, U.S.-ROK and inter-Korean relations during the Park Chunghee administration. Prof. Hong's publications include *The Unification Issue and Socio-political Tension in South Korea: 1953-1961* (Seoul University Press, 2001), as well as "Pueblo Incident in 1968 and U.S.-ROK-DPRK Triangular Relations," *The Journal of Korean History* (2001); and "US-DPRK Relations in the early 1970s," *The Korean Journal of International Relations* (2004).

MITCHELL LERNER is associate professor of history at the Ohio State University and the Mershon Center for National Security Studies. He is the author of *The Pueblo Incident* (Kansas, 2002), and has published articles about US-Korean relations in *Diplomatic History*, *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, the *Korea Society Quarterly*, and the *Journal of Cold War Studies*. Professor Lerner is also the editor of *Looking Back at LBJ* and *Passport: The Newsletter of the Society of Historians of American Foreign Relations*.

CHRISTIAN F. OSTERMANN is the director of European Studies and the History and Public Policy Program at the Woodrow Wilson Center, as well as director of the

Center's North Korea International Documentation Project (NKIDP) and Cold War International History Project (CWIHP). He is also co-editor, along with Christopher E. Goscha, of *Connecting Histories: Decolonization and the Cold War in Southeast Asia, 1945-1962* (2010). Before joining the Wilson Center in January 1997 as associate director of CWIHP, he worked as a research fellow at the National Security Archive, a non-governmental research institute and repository based at the George Washington University. He is a co-editor of *Cold War History* (London), and a Senior Research Fellow, National Security Archive (George Washington University). He also served as a lecturer in history and international affairs at the George Washington University and professorial lecturer at Georgetown University. He has been a consultant on several historical documentaries. Prior to coming to Washington, he studied in Bonn, Cologne and Hamburg and was a research fellow at the Commission for the History of Parliament and Political Parties, Bonn (Germany).

PARK TAE-GYUN is assistant professor of modern Korean history and Korea's international relations at Seoul National University's Graduate School of International Studies. From 2007-2008, Prof. Park was a visiting scholar at Harvard University. His publications include *Sources on Modern Korean History* (Seoul: Tolbegae, 1998) and numerous journal articles, among them "Reappraisal of Introductory Books on Korean History in the U.S.: From Slave Society to Colonial Development," *The Review of Korean Studies* (2002); "Research in Development Economics in 1950s," (in Korean) *Society and History* (2002); and "W.W. Rostow and Economic Discourse in South Korea in the 1960s," *Journal of International and Area Studies* (2001).

JAMES F. PERSON is coordinator of the Wilson Center's NKIDP and a program associate with the Wilson Center's History and Public Policy Program. Person is currently completing a Ph.D. in history at the George Washington University, writing a dissertation on North Korea's relations with the Soviet Union and China from 1953-1967. His publications include "We Need Help from Outside: The North Korean Opposition Movement of 1956" (CWIHP Working Paper No. 52) and "New Evidence on North Korea in 1956" (CWIHP *Bulletin* 16).

SERGEY RADCHENKO is a professor of history at the University of Nottingham, Ningbo, China, and a former fellow with the international history department at the London School of Economics (LSE). Dr. Radchenko has written on the history of the Cold War, on Soviet foreign policy during the Cold War years, and on the regional history of North East Asia, including China, Mongolia, Korea (South and North) and Japan. Among his numerous publications is “The Soviet Union and the North Korean Seizure of the USS Pueblo: Evidence from Russian Archives” (CWIHP Working Paper No. 47). He is also co-author of *The Atomic Bomb and the Origins of the Cold War* (Yale University Press, 2008).

RYOO KIHJAE is an associate professor at the University of North Korean Studies (UNKS) in South Korea, and a Woodrow Wilson Center public policy scholar. He is currently studying the domestic politics and foreign relations of the DPRK from 1965-1974. Now he is a member of the Policy Advisory Committee to the senior secretary of the President, and to the Ministry of Unification of the ROK government. Professor Ryoo is also the chair of the Committee of North Korea and Unification, Korean Association of International Studies.

BERND SCHAEFER is a senior scholar with the Woodrow Wilson Center’s Cold War International History Project. Previously he was a research fellow at the German Historical Institute in Washington D.C. and at the Hannah Arendt Institute at the Technical University of Dresden. He also served four years as secretary for the East German Catholic Church’s Stasi lustration commission in Berlin. Dr. Schaefer’s publications include “North Korean “Adventurism” and China’s Long Shadow, 1966-1972” (CWIHP Working Paper No. 44).

SHIN JONGDAE is a professor at the University of North Korean Studies, Seoul and a former visiting scholar with NKIDP at the Woodrow Wilson Center. Prof. Shin’s current research focuses on North Korea’s foreign relations and inter-Korean relations in the 1970s. His numerous publications include *Principal Issues of South Korean Society and State Control* (co-author) (Yonsei University, 2005); and *Theory of Inter-Korean Relations* (co-author) (Hanul, 2005).

WILLIAM STUECK received his Ph.D. in history from Brown University in 1977. He has written widely on U.S.-Korean relations and the early Cold War. Among his books are *The Korean War: An International History* (Princeton, 1995) and *Rethinking the Korean War: A New Diplomatic and Strategic History* (Princeton, 2002). He is currently distinguished research professor of history at the University of Georgia.

SUN JOUNYUNG is a professor at the University of North Korean Studies, Seoul, and is also currently the vice-president and CEO of the United Nations Association for the Republic of Korea. Ambassador Sun served as vice minister of foreign affairs and trade, deputy foreign minister for trade, and South Korea's ambassador to the United Nations, Switzerland, and Czechoslovakia.

BALASZ SZALONTAI teaches in the department of political science at the Mongolia International University. Szalontai received his Ph.D. in history from Central European University in Budapest, Hungary. Among his publications is *Kim Il Sung in the Khrushchev Era: Soviet-DPRK Relations and the Roots of North Korean Despotism, 1953-1964* (Stanford, 2006), and "North Korea's Efforts to Acquire Nuclear Technology and Nuclear Weapons: Evidence from Russian and Hungarian Archives" (CWIHP Working Paper No. 53), co-authored with Sergey Radchenko. Dr. Szalontai's research interests include the modern history of Korea, Vietnam, Mongolia, China, and Albania.

ROBERT A. WAMPLER is a senior fellow at the National Security Archive and director of its Korea Project. He joined the Archive in 1993 to direct its U.S.-Japan documentation project, which produced two collections of declassified documents on U.S.-Japanese relations between 1960 and 1992. In connection with the Korea Project, he is preparing a major collection of declassified documents on U.S.-Korean relations since the Nixon era, and editing a collection of studies by the project research fellows with the working title of *Trilateralism and Beyond: Great Power Politics and the Korean Security Dilemma During the Cold War and After*. In addition to the Korea Project, Dr. Wampler also directs the Archive's environmental diplomacy project. His publications include articles on NATO nuclear history, Kissinger and the Year of Europe (with William Burr), and the uses of history for strategic planning.



CHRISTIAN OSTERMANN AND
AMBASSADOR SUN JOUNYUNG

Opening Remarks

by Christian F. Ostermann and
Ambassador Sun Jounyung

OSTERMANN: I welcome you to the Woodrow Wilson Center and to this conference, Crisis and Confrontation on the Korean Peninsula: 1968 - 1969. This critical oral history was co-organized by the Center's North Korea International Documentation Project and the University of North Korean Studies. I direct the Center's History and Public Policy Program, of which the North Korea International Documentation Project is a major part. Many of you are familiar with the other project that we run out of this program, the Cold War International History Project, which collects, translates, and publishes documents from the former Communist-world archives and is in many ways linked to the North Korea International Documentation Project.

This conference is part of a larger oral history project, a series of critical oral history conferences that the University of North Korean Studies and the North Korea International Documentation Project are organizing over the coming months and years. Today's meeting launches this critical oral history conference series.

The North Korea International Documentation Project was established at the Center in 2006 in cooperation with Kyungnam University and the University of North Korean Studies. Initially, much like the Cold War International History Project, its focus was on collecting, translating and disseminating new documentation on North Korea to scholars, officials, journalists and really anybody interested. Given the scarcity of empirical evidence on North Korea's foreign policy, on policy-making in Pyongyang, our road to understanding emerged from a method similar to that used by the Cold War Project. By looking at the now open archives of North Korea's former communist allies, we found an avenue into North Korean policy, mindsets, and worldviews. Over the past few years, we have pub-

lished, including in this last issue of the *Cold War Project Bulletin*, documents from the Hungarian, German and Polish archives, as well as others, on key issues in North Korean foreign policy.

Ambassador Sun, our partner at the University of North Korean Studies, brought up the idea of doing oral history on U.S.-Korean relations and policy towards North Korea. It is Ambassador Sun and our colleagues at the University of North Korean Studies who have inspired this conference.

Let me point out that this is a very special type of conference. It is not your run-of-the-mill, traditional scholarly conference with presentations, comments, and a tiny bit of discussion. What we will engage in here over the next day- and-a-half is critical oral history. The methodology was developed by Jim Blight and Janet Lang, long-time partners of the History & Public Policy Program, who have led a number of critical oral history conferences over the last two decades on important subjects, including the Cuban Missile Crisis.

The Cold War Project and the National Security Archive, our partner here in Washington, have also conducted a number of these conferences over the years. Topics have included the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Polish martial law crisis, and a number of other Cold War flash points and crises.¹

The idea behind critical oral history is to engage in a conversation about key episodes and events; a conversation that will ideally unfold between the experts, the eyewitnesses, and the documents, all of which are assembled around the table here.

Let me point out that the eyewitnesses, the policy veterans, and the former officials and diplomats take center stage at critical oral history conferences. Eyewitnesses to events dating back thirty, forty years, and sometimes even further are by nature a diminishing resource, and it is the point of these conferences to capture these sources for history. Therefore, in the best of circumstances, we will have a conversation between the officials who are here presenting various sides of “Crisis and Confrontation on the Korean Peninsula.”

The experts also play a very important role. We are not doing this for the sole purpose of collecting recollections and reminiscences about past events. The purpose is to extend the historical record in a meaningful way. The experts will guide us through these discussions. They know what questions scholars wrestle with, the



AMBASSADOR SUN JOUNYUNG

white spots in the history of these years, and so I look forward to your interjections and questions as we explore this history.

Central to these efforts are the documents. They stimulate the recollections. They allow us to focus the discussion. Our specificity, in the end, will be helpful to future generations of scholars and others interested in U.S.-Korean relations and policy on the Korean Peninsula. The documents also help to check the recollections. And so my hope is that all of you had a chance to look at this formidable document reader that my colleague James Person and other colleagues have put together over the past summer.

Feel free to refer to documents and don't hold back on commenting on the documents. We wish we had more and even better documents. This is the best that we have been able to do, thanks again in large measure to many of the historians and archivists around the table here.

Let me make a couple of suggestions. My appeal to the experts is to please be brief in your comments and questions. Time is of essence here. To the officials, the eye witnesses, try to be as specific but also as candid as you can. This is for the historical record, and it is material that future generations of historians will take into consideration in writing history. Our aim is to get as close to the events as they unfolded at the time. We are obviously also interested in your retrospective views on what went on, but at the core, I'd like you to put yourself back into those days of the late 1960's, early 1970's, your background, your experience, your thoughts, your views back then as they are perhaps reflected in some of the documents that some of you have, in fact, authored. That will be of most interest to historians here and more importantly to many others who we hope will get to read the transcript.

**“This is an
historic
conference.**

It’s unlikely
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in this combination.
It’s a unique
opportunity
that we
have here.”

We will record these discussions, transcribe and eventually publish them. Our point here is to extend the historical record. We will make these documents and conversation available to others outside of this conference room.

As the conversation unfolds and you would like to comment on, ask a question, raise your hand and the moderator will recognize you. If you have an immediate follow-up question on a point that was just raised in the conversation, if you want to follow up on something specifically, raise two fingers and you will get to jump the line, because we really want to engage in a conversation here, not a string of separate monologues and statements that do not relate to each other.

Please state your name before you speak. It will make the transcription a lot easier later on. I’ve asked the chairs to call on you by name even if you’ve spoken a few times.

This is an historic conference. It’s unlikely that this group will come together again in this formation, in this combination. It’s a unique opportunity that we have here.

In conclusion, I would like to thank a number of people who have made this conference possible. My thanks, of course, go to Ambassador Sun Jounyung and our colleagues from the University of North Korean Studies. Over the last two years we have developed a close partnership. It is wonderful to have had a number of UNKS faculty members here with us as visiting scholars at the Wilson Center. Their intellectual input, experience and documentary work has been essential to the preparations for this conference. We are indebted to the Korea Foundation, represented here by Director Suh Ah-jeong and her colleagues which has helped to underwrite expenses for this conference. I would also like to thank the Academy of Korean Studies, Ohio State University, and the Wilson Center for making this event possible.

My thanks go to my staff. First and foremost, I thank James Person, who coordinates the North Korea International Documentation Project at the Center, and Tim McDonnell for putting this conference together in its many dimensions. I would also like to recognize the Director of the Center’s Asia Program, Dr. Robert Hathaway, who is a close partner and collaborator in all that we do on Korean issues and history. I thank our interns and junior scholars, a number of whom have been involved at all levels: Kian Byrnes, Erin Choi, Eunice Eun, Grace Jeon, Charles Krause, Joeeun Kim, Svenja Laender, Holger Ludloff, and Maria Elizabeth Neuhauss. I’m blessed with a brilliant, dedicated, and talented staff and

my heartfelt thanks go out to all of them for the tremendous work that they have contributed to this effort.

SUN: I would like to express my thanks to the History and Public Policy Program at the Woodrow Wilson Center for organizing this important conference in such an outstanding manner.

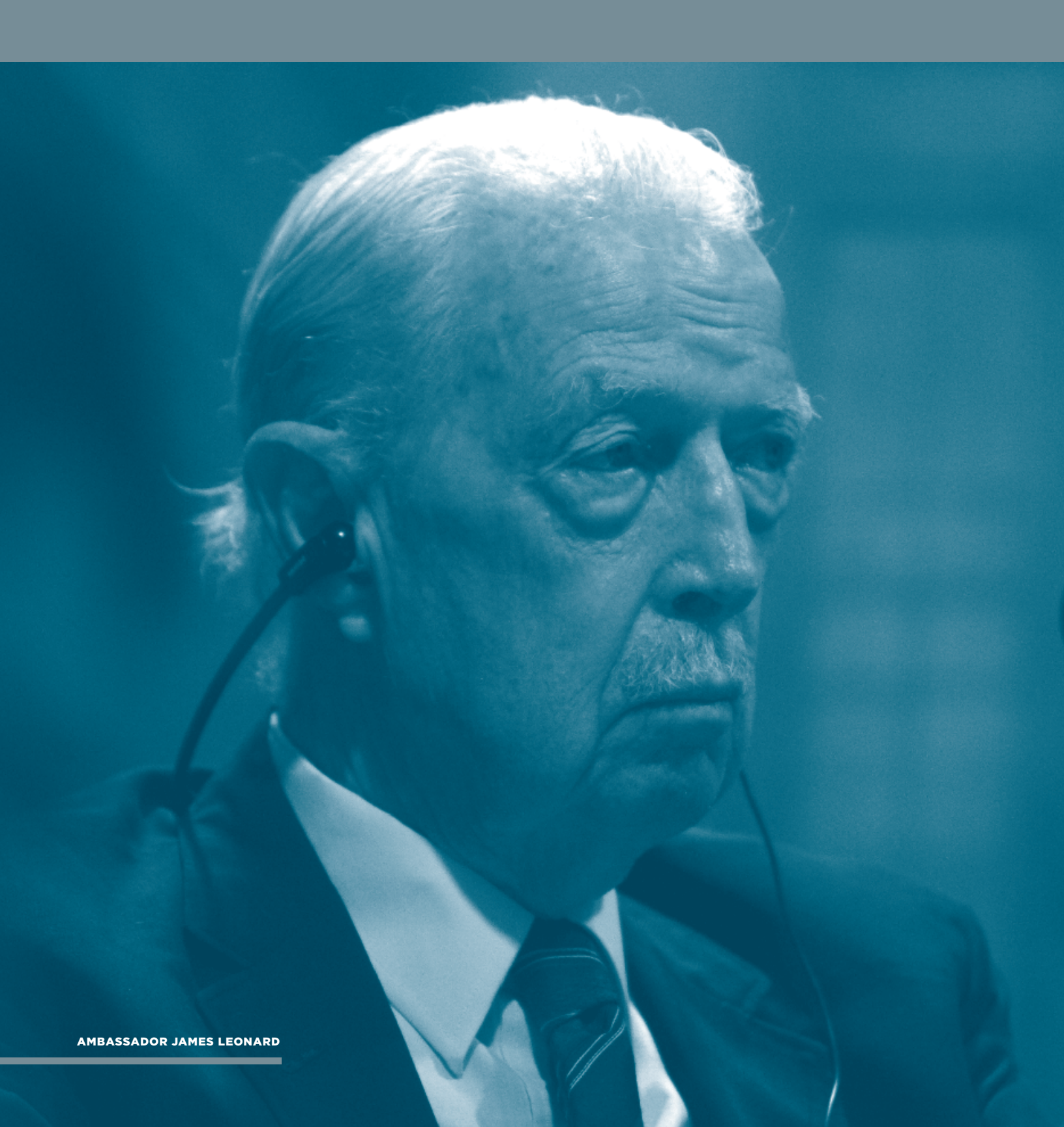
I would also like to express my thanks and appreciation to the policy makers and diplomats for their participation, to which we attach great importance. They were directly involved in dealing with the security crisis during 1968 and 1969. These policy-makers and diplomats, together with the outstanding scholars and experts, will fill in many missing parts of the jigsaw puzzle that pertain to the background and aftermath of this crisis.

We highly value this conference because we are convinced that it will contribute to our preparation for fundamental change on the Korean Peninsula. Inevitably, in the not-too-distant future, we will see North Korea denuclearize, change leadership, and open its borders.

These joint critical oral history projects which are being conducted in partnership with the Woodrow Wilson Center and our university in Seoul will certainly continue in revolutionary and expansive ways for years to come. I look forward to seeing this conference emerge as a highly productive and rewarding oral history.



CHRISTIAN OSTERMANN AND
SUN JOUNYUNG



AMBASSADOR JAMES LEONARD

Panel I

Preludes to a Second Korean War? The Blue House Raid and the *USS Pueblo* Incident

Chair: *Christian Ostermann*

Provocateurs: *Mitch Lerner, Shin Jongdae*

LERNER: Allow me to direct the ensuing discussions with a quick personal anecdote that dates back to January 14, 1998. At that point I was a graduate student at the University of Texas working on a dissertation about the *USS Pueblo*, and that morning I interviewed former National Security Advisor Walt Rostow about the *Pueblo*. It was early in my research but I communicated to Walt my findings. I had not discovered any Soviet or Chinese role in the planning of the North Korean attack and I suspected that Kim Il Sung backed it on his own and for his own reasons. Moreover, I was critical of the Johnson Administration for what I thought was an instinctive response that dismissed the possibility that North Korea might have acted for North Korean reasons and instead looked for a larger master hand.

Well, Walt looked at me with sympathy welling up in his eyes, and he told me that the reason I didn't understand the *Pueblo* was because I was too young. Walt told me, "If you had been around in 1968"—Walt was apparently unconcerned by the fact that I had been—"If you had been around in 1968" he told me, "you would understand the way the world worked back then. We had to show the Communists we could stand up to them, whatever they threw in our direction, and there was no doubt to anyone who really understood the Cold War that this was all part of the big picture."



MITCHELL LERNER

I can't say I was surprised by that response. It was a matter of hours, and Walt Rostow had become one of the leading voices championing the idea that this was part of a larger Cold War conspiracy. In fact, I believe that two days after the seizure Walt suggested the United States respond by orchestrating the seizure of a Soviet ship, an idea that he called, "the most symmetrical suggestion I have seen."

I returned home that afternoon with Walt's words ringing in my ears. I was in the middle of doing a series of interviews with crewmen from the *USS Pueblo*, and I had an e-mail waiting for me from Frederick Schumacher who was the ship's operations officer. I had asked him about his treatment in North Korea. Schumacher told me that his captors "either were unaware of the vast knowledge and experience some of the members of the crew had or else they had no further interest in our intelligence operations. Our value to them was apparently as propaganda pawns only." The more people I spoke with, the more I got the same story. The North Koreans had never displayed interest in any of the topics you would suspect, had this really been part of a larger Communist controlled gamut.

For me, this became the defining dichotomy of the *Pueblo* incident. On the one hand, the administration was telling me that it was all about a larger Soviet-dominated Communist conspiracy, and on the other hand, the North Koreans didn't seem to be acting as if that was the case.

As I flipped through this briefing book in preparation for this conference, I heard the echoes of Walt Rostow and Skip Schumacher all over again. Inside the Johnson Administration there was, in my view, an almost instinctive reaction to look for a simple answer, something that could neatly tie together the Blue House raid, the *Pueblo* attack and all of the other North Korean actions from late 1967 into 1968 into a neat little bundle that did not require contemplating the complex and the sometimes messy realities of foreign policy in Korea. Although I'm about to ask the panelists a series of questions, the thread that I think ties them together and the area that I would like to see most explored over the next two days are the assumptions and the misperceptions that clouded American policymaking from the moment that they began planning the *Pueblo* mission in March of 1967 until these men were finally released at the end of 1968.

Allow me to pose three questions. First of all,—and this is perhaps most targeted towards our guests with insight into the Communist Bloc and Eastern European

records, Ambassador Brie, Dr. Kang, perhaps. I would like to ask you to speculate in your expert opinion as to why North Korea entered this more aggressive phase of foreign policy in the middle of 1967. The documents collected here suggest to me that the Communist superpowers did not have a hand in planning or orchestrating these North Korean policies. Perhaps Ambassador Brie, Dr. Kang or others with insight into the Communist bloc and Eastern European records might talk about the reactions within the Communist bloc to this North Korean aggression and the impact that these North Korean policies had on their relationship with the other Communist bloc states.

My second question shifts our focus to Vietnam. If there is not a clear link between the Communist superpowers and the events of early 1968, were the events linked to other international factors? Whether there is a link between these events and the events in Vietnam has long been a subject of study and debate, and I won't go through the historiography. However, we must wonder whether or not Kim Il Sung felt emboldened to act because of America's military presence in and economic focus on Vietnam. Perhaps instead, Kim Il Sung felt driven to act because of the overt commitment of South Korean forces in Vietnam. In particular, I would like to ask those with South Korean expertise if President Park Chung Hee's implicit threat, conveyed through many of these documents, to withdraw the two divisions of South Korean forces fighting in Vietnam and to deny the third division that he had promised in 1967 was bluster. Was he bluffing in the hopes of increasing the influx of aid from the United States, or was it a legitimate threat that reflected his concerns in anticipation of another Korean War?

I will direct my final question toward the American experts, Ambassadors Leonard and Hughes, Ambassador Cutler, and Dr. Reuther. There is ample evidence of elevated tension on the Korean Peninsula before 1968, before the Pueblo, and before the Blue House Raid. At that time, North Korean violations of the military armistice agreement increased and North Korea stepped up its harassment of coastal ships in South Korean waters. In light of Washington's awareness of regional tensions of the time, how was a mission in those waters approved with a minimal risk assessment? Why wasn't the United States better prepared to respond? Furthermore, is it possible that an earlier American response to these North Korean provocations of 1967 might have dissuaded this North Korean ac-



CREW OF U.S.S PUEBLO BEING
REPATRAITED IN DEC. 1968

tivity? Finally, I ask you to comment on American diplomacy during this time period. Do you think that, in its response, the Johnson Administration treated these events as a Cold War crisis or a Korean crisis? Take us through the critical moments of the decision-making process. Tell us whether or not the decision-makers themselves recognized and considered in the process the complicated Korean imperatives that were at play and what impact that did or did not have on the resolution of the crisis.

SHIN: I have just two questions: We can define both the Blue House raid and the Pueblo incident as anticipated. They were not isolated provocations. There were, in fact, many harbingers from 1967 including North Korea's increasingly provocative behavior and its allegations of U.S. espionage. There were also President Park Chung Hee's repeated warnings of an impending large-scale, provocation. With such ample warning, how were these incidents allowed to occur? Secondly, if the U.S. and South Korea had taken resolute counter-measures against North Korea from 1967 or in the immediate wake of these incidents, would they have escalated the situation into a broader conflict or would such counter-measures have been enough to deter additional North Korean provocations?

BRIE: I can only contribute to this discussion in a limited manner. In my view, many of the remarks made thus far show a great misunderstanding for the situation. North Korea's actions resulted from a decision by Kim Il Sung and the North Korean government. North Korea was not influenced by China, the Soviet Union, or any other power. This viewpoint also applies to Vietnam. The Vietnamese did not obey orders from China or from the Soviet Union. They determined strategy and tactics on their own. Examination of the Cold War era dispels the notion that certain Asian socialist powers ruled the others. Each decided completely on its own.

OSTERMANN: Ambassador Brie, was this the understanding and your perception that of your colleagues in the East German Foreign Ministry at the time?

BRIE: Yes, however, not everybody agreed. In particular, my view on Vietnam was never completely accepted in our foreign office.

OSTERMANN: Concerning North Korea, was this the consensus within the office?

BRIE: Yes. I was sent to North Korea to find out if Kim Il Sung was following China or the Soviet Union. After I was received by Kim Il Sung I determined that he was only following his own views and his own position, not those of anybody else.

OSTERMANN: Just to be clear, were you sent to North Korea prior to the events of 1968?

BRIE: Yes.

LERNER: Ambassador Brie, can you tell us more about the response to these particular provocations from inside the Communist bloc governments? How much of an impact did it have on relations between the Communist powers that North Korea was taking such provocative actions?

BRIE: The main question for us was the possibility of a new Korean war. We determined that North Korea would never decide on its own to attack South Korea or the Americans by military force. We knew that they were able to fight a defensive war but not an offensive war without help from outside. They were not capable of fighting a war exceeding two or three months on their own. We never believed in the threat of a new Korean War beginning over the actions of North Korea.

LERNER: Ambassador Brie, in late 1967 you sent a lengthy analysis from Pyongyang to East Berlin. In the report, you laid out several potential scenarios that could unfold on the Korean peninsula. Your report basically stated that Kim Il Sung wanted to achieve the reunification of Korea during his lifetime. You indicated that there was a certain urgency that involved preparations for some major event or incident in North Korea proper which included the evacuation of Pyongyang. One option you discussed was that North Korea might help to start an uprising in the south, some sort of revolution, as a means of intervening in South Korea. In January 1968, after you left Pyongyang, this seemed to happen

“I was sent to North Korea

to find out if Kim Il Sung was following China or the Soviet Union. After I was received by Kim Il Sung I determined that he was only following his own views and his own position, not those of anybody else.”

**“...When an
emergency
message**

was relayed to
the air force in
Korea, where there
were F4s that could
have reached the
scene in a matter
of minutes, it was
found that the
only bomb racks
available were
fitted for nuclear
weapons. The
planes could not
hold conventional
weapons, and
therefore, they were
not sent.”

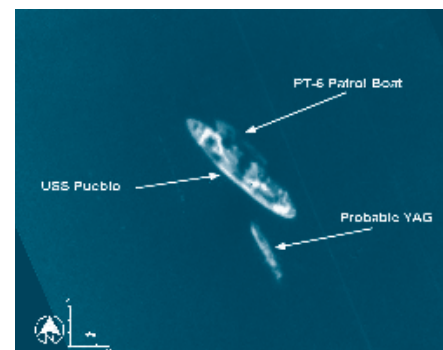
with the raid on the Blue House. The raid, the assassination of the South Korean president, and maybe even the start of an uprising were conceived by the North Korean leadership. About one month prior, in your report, you raised several such options. Why at that time did you think North Korea was eager to spark a revolution in South Korea through a bold action in Seoul?

BRIE: I didn't think that it would necessarily be through a bold action. I think that the big change occurred in 1966 when Kim Il Sung dropped the idea of peaceful democratic revolution, of unification.

LEONARD: I will address the last of Professor Lerner's questions and I will try to comment on what I think was the second question. With tensions so obviously high on the Korean peninsula, how could it have happened that no protection was provided for the Pueblo? I was not involved at all in these decisions. At that time, I was working for Ambassador Hughes in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) on quite different matters. But, I had the task, after the Pueblo was captured, of compiling a report on the whole crisis to be presented to Senator [J. William] Fulbright. This gave me the occasion to go back and look at as many of the files as were readily available. I had to be careful not to use classified information in the report to the Congress. Nevertheless, I was able to read most anything I could get my hands on. I came to exactly the same conclusion: that the Pueblo incident was a disgrace, that the Defense Department should have been more alert to the possibility and should have had emergency air cover available for the Pueblo if help was needed. I think that the Defense Department came to the same conclusion in its review in the summer of 1968. I can't say for a fact, but I heard that the career of Rear Admiral [Frank L.] Johnson, who I believe was in command in Japan at that time, was not advanced because of his decision not to send any sort of help. There is a little known element that I will be stating as fact. Although I have not seen it published, I saw in classified materials at the time, that when an emergency message was relayed to the air force in Korea, where there were F4s that could have reached the scene in a matter of minutes, it was found that the only bomb racks available were fitted for nuclear weapons.

The planes could not hold conventional weapons, and therefore, they were not sent. I think if I had been the commander, I would have tried to send them anyway, but I was not a commander. I had not been a military man for a long time before that.

With regard to Professor Lerner's third question about the attitudes within the State Department, within the U.S. Government, I think he makes a mistake in using the phrase "U.S. Administration." Like most governments, it was not a monolith, and I am sure that we have had to learn this very slowly and carefully, painfully over many years, that other governments are not monolithic. There had been and there were remnants of this belief obviously available. I read with care the minutes of the meetings of the White House immediately following the capture, and there are a regrettable number of the kinds of comments that Walt Rostow gave to you when you had your little discussion with him. But, they were not the only comments that were made. There were those in the room who questioned [the idea of North Korea acting as a pawn of other communist powers]. If historians are looking at the American decisions regarding a response in the wake of the capture, it is worth looking very carefully at the comments of [member of the President's Intelligence Advisory Board] Clark Clifford. I was struck by them. He took an occasion toward the end of one of the meetings to say, "Mr. President, could I say a few words?" And at that point he made it perfectly clear that he differed with the tone and recommendations of everything that had gone before; that he thought it was a mistake to consider retaliation of some kind and run any risk of opening a new war. I never knew Clifford, but I did know [Defense Secretary] Mr. [Robert] McNamara, [Deputy Secretary of Defense] Mr. [Cyrus] Vance and [Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs] Mr. [Paul Culliton] Warnke, all of whom are now regrettably dead, so we can not ask them². I am very confident that Cyrus Vance was on the same wavelength with Clark Clifford. It is well known that they were very close friends. I would also bet that Paul Warnke was on the same wavelength, and I would bet anything that in their discussions away from the White House, they were chewing this over and that Clark Clifford was in fact reflecting their views as well as his own. And I think it is prudent to be very cautious when considering these potentially flippant and regrettable, stupid comments by Rostow,



ARIEL PHOTO OF U.S.S. PUEBLO AT
POINT OF SEIZURE, JAN 23, 1968



SHIN JONGDAE

McNamara, and [Deputy Secretary of Defense] [Paul] Nitze. A lot of us thought that these guys were kind of far out, even at that time and at the working level. The idea that we were faced with a monolithic Communist conspiracy was ten years out-of-date. It had vanished when signs of a Soviet split became evident in 1960 and 1961, and it became clear that North Korea was maneuvering between Moscow and Beijing.

LERNER: I think Ambassador Leonard has hit the nail on the head. I find it striking that if you dig beneath the surface, if you move beyond Johnson, McNamara, Rostow, and a few others, there is wonderful work being done by American intelligence and other analysts. I think State Department INR, above all, really gets it right. Yet, it doesn't seem to me, from my brief look at the record, that the principles like Johnson, McNamara, and Rostow are willing to accept INR's stance. When you boil it all down, they are still convinced that there has to be something else out there. Whether it's the Soviets or whether it's Vietnam, there must be something else. I would like to ask if the Ambassador or Dr. Hughes would respond to how their dealings with the administration, with the higher-ups, went when they presented these analyses, which were spectacular in my view. Were they fully accepted by those who were making the decisions in the end?

HUGHES: I agree with everything that my colleague Jim Leonard has said. It's misleading, I think, to talk about an administration viewpoint, especially concerning the Johnson Administration, and most especially the Johnson Administration in 1968. I could go on for several minutes characterizing the varying viewpoints of Rostow, who represented the extreme right of the situation, and of L.B.J., who fluctuated, and [Under Secretary of State] [Nicholas] Katzenbach, who was given the portfolio to handle the Pueblo, certainly did not agree with either of them. Taking into account the viewpoints of Vance and U. Alexis Johnson in Japan, there is quite a variety. The fact that people were second-guessing how Johnson would respond didn't help matters. Nor did the fact that [Director of Central Intelligence] Richard Helms represented both the overt and the covert sides of the CIA help, because when he was speaking with one voice he had a certain viewpoint, and when he was speaking with the other voice he had another. Document

No. 1, which is from Helms to the Intelligence Community the day the Pueblo was captured, suggests that it was a unilateral act, not a result of orders from Moscow or anywhere else. As recorded by the White House minute-taker, on that day and the following, Helms' comments to Johnson reflect quite a different viewpoint.

1968 was an exceedingly difficult year. There were infinite distractions and multiple crises. You couldn't predict ahead of time how many people would be involved at what time of the day on what crisis. The Tet Offensive came immediately after the Pueblo incident. Johnson was worried about Berlin retaliation every time Rostow talked about the Red Menace. Rostow influenced Johnson himself to change his viewpoint and come, more or less, to the conclusion that the INR paper, for instance, was right. I noticed that one of the INR papers has Rostow's signature on it. Rostow was the stopgap inside the White House for INR material. If he liked it, he would send it on to the President. If he wanted to caveat it, he would caveat it and send it down. Or, if he didn't like it, he wouldn't send it down at all. This was a clear change from Mac Bundy and the way he had operated under both Kennedy and Johnson where we were sure that we had Presidential readers. In cases such as this, we vend our product all over town whether or not it is reviewed by the President. As such, recipients included Vance and Katzenbach. I had a chance to look at how the policymakers were reacting, and I would be happy to pursue this at length with anybody eager to discuss.

It just happened that, in a previous incarnation, I worked on Capitol Hill for Senator Humphrey, who became Vice President under Johnson. I was also in charge of briefing him as well as his Senate colleagues from Minnesota; McCarthy and later Vice President Mondale. McCarthy was already running against Johnson for President. He was on the Senate foreign relations committee and very interested in not replaying the Gulf of Tonkin and was very closely related to Fulbright's interest in not managing any more Senate resolutions. Mondale was in Moscow by happenstance and was briefed by the Russians as well as Ambassador [Llewellyn 'Tommy'] Thompson the very week of the Pueblo. He was told by the Russians that there were ways that they might possibly be of assistance if we didn't do certain things. When Mondale came back he got in touch with us, asked for the INR product, and had conversations with us. McCarthy, in his role as a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, was asking for hearings that involved INR



BODIES OF NORTH KOREAN
COMMANDOS KILLED AFTER FAILED
ATTEMPT TO ASSASSINATE SOUTH
KOREAN PRESIDENT PARK CHUNG HEE

material, so the INR material got around town. It may not have gotten to L.B.J., but it certainly got to a lot of other people. 1968 was an election year. Everybody was looking at who was going to run and who was not. Everybody was taking up posture position. There were the assassinations of King and Bobby Kennedy and the Czech Invasion in August. It was quite a year, and the attention span on North Korea was always very short. There were very few experts in the government on North Korea. They would brief when warnings would come about increased provocations in 1967, but there was no carryover in the minds of the receivers who had long forgotten about North Korea between every incident that arose.

OSTERMANN: Could you elaborate a little bit about the impressions that Mondale brought back from Moscow in his conversations with the Russians?

HUGHES: Well, he was intrigued that the Russians had told him, and I think there's a cable, I think, from Tommy Thompson, maybe about this interview. Anyway Ambassador Thomson and Mondale worked together with someone from the Soviet foreign ministry in Moscow, and it was on the whole a forthcoming and positive conversation. At least Mondale got the impression that the Russians might be willing to do something to help if we didn't exacerbate the problem and make it worse.

HERSHBERG: Ambassador Hughes, could you elaborate on the attitude regarding the focus on the Soviets in trying to deal with the North Koreans? Is it fair to say that there was not any interest in trying to establish some alternative method of communication directly with the North Koreans? Were they viewed as puppets to the extent that the primary channel was going to be the Soviets, or were there other third parties who were considered or used to try to get to Pyongyang during the affair? How analogous was your thinking about this affair to what you had been going through for three or more years in trying to communicate with Hanoi in a similar situation?

HUGHES: There were third parties in Washington who were more than willing to volunteer their help. In particular, the Polish Ambassador, Michalowski, who I believe played a role as the former Polish foreign minister, was involved with the

North Vietnamese and he was at one time ambassador in Hanoi. He was a familiar character and he was always willing to help with the North Koreans but I don't think anybody asked him to. One never knew what the conversation would lead to and what other people would make of it, but in terms of the overall willingness to go to the Russians and try to seek assistance, even [Secretary of State] Dean Rusk was in favor. By that time in 1968, Rusk, who was deeply enmeshed and embarrassed by Vietnam, certainly didn't want another war on his hands. He had [the 1967 Glassboro Summit between President Johnson and Soviet Premier Aleksey Kosygin] behind him; he had a new stake in the nuclear nonproliferation treaty, and he was working the Russian side of the fence. He had belatedly come to recognize the Sino-Soviet split, and that the Chinese would henceforth be the threat in Vietnam, not the Russians. He recognized that the Russians were going to be part of our peace policy. Rusk, by the time we got to 1968, is no longer the Rostow-like cold warrior that he appears to be at some points in the previous regime. However, you do find as you look across the spectrum of personalities that were involved that the unregenerate cold warriors are there and my friend Walt Rostow is the chief among them. While the new book written about Rostow, *America's Rasputin*, overdoes it a bit, in terms of perception and attitude, it's true that Rostow went beyond anyone else in the administration in blaming incidents on a concerted Communist effort, including the president.

I believe it was the day after the Pueblo crisis broke when Lyndon Johnson called George Ball, a private citizen between roles as undersecretary of state and ambassador to the U.N., and asked him to organize a committee. The Ball Committee, composed of prominent generals and admirals, met in utmost secrecy to discern why the vessel was sent there in the first place, why it was unprotected, and whether and where it went on its trip.

In Ball's memoirs, he devotes a couple of paragraphs to describing how he negotiated the language with every general and admiral on the committee. He also wrote that Johnson told him to discuss it with Clark Clifford, which he did, and Clifford advised him to brief the President orally only. He was advised to use no written document and to retrieve all drafts. All drafts were retrieved and shredded. Ball said that he didn't even keep one for himself, and he doubted that anybody still had one. It's obvious that the committee discussed the question of intrusion, how far the boat might actually



THOMAS HUGHES



NORTH KOREAN COMMANDO
KIM SHINJO APPREHENDED IN
THE DAYS AFTER THE RAID ON
THE BLUE HOUSE. ALL OTHER
COMMANDOS WERE KILLED.

have gone in Korean waters. As a caveat on this, Johnson noted in his own memoirs, “If it unwittingly went further than it was ordered to do,” and so on and so forth, and so forth. The Ball Committee Report is a fascinating document. I was involved in listing the questions that were asked of the admirals and the generals. Working with Ball on that project was yet another extracurricular role that I found myself playing.

LEONARD: The degree of secrecy that was maintained by George Ball was astonishing. I was doing a parallel project with the aid of other people in the State Department, and I never heard of the Ball project. I had never heard of it until Tom Hughes told me about it this morning. That was one case where secrecy was actually maintained on an American operation.

Back to Professor Lerner’s point, and I’m sorry if this seems like piling on, but I do want to disagree with the implications of the comments that Professor Lerner made about the unwillingness to recognize that this was an autonomous Korean operation. I think that the implications are rather modest. What one does about the capture of the *Pueblo* in the days immediately after is not essentially different, whether it is believed that the act originated in Moscow or with Kim Il Sung in Pyongyang, as we are now pretty well convinced it was. The appeal to Moscow for help and the warning to them that this could be very serious seems a normal, natural response to the crisis. Perhaps, in their view, it served as a reminder that their intelligence ships were also vulnerable. The idea of actually launching attacks goes beyond that, obviously. In the end, the situation was handled as if, from the outset, we had accepted that it was an autonomous North Korean action. We dealt with the crisis solely through Panmunjom. To my knowledge, no other channels of response or efforts of any kind impacted the way the *Pueblo* crisis worked out. In that sense, it was not a failure of American policy originating in an outdated framework for thinking about the incident. Instead, it was a regrettable consequence of a failure on our part to heed warnings and to take precautions that would have avoided the incident in the first place.

CUTLER: I cannot speak to the larger picture because I was a mid-level officer in our embassy in Seoul, a political military officer, and I was brought there essentially to keep our embassy and Washington informed of what was going on

with respect to North Korean infiltrations, which had jumped almost 500 or 600 percent between 1966 and 1967. In response to your question why, given this increase, we were not more prepared for both the Blue House Raid and the Pueblo, I can only speak to the Blue House Raid as I saw it. I was living about three blocks from the Blue House in a temporary apartment. I had just arrived when suddenly the sky lit up over Seoul, and a huge firefight broke out.

What was extraordinary was that it was in the middle of January. I think the reason that the penetration of the DMZ was not taken more seriously, is that it was in the middle of January while the infiltrations along the coast had been largely seasonal, and nobody believed that 31 North Korean commandos had actually tunneled under the DMZ. As I recall, there was a lot of snow on the ground. Thanks to the woodcutters [South Korean woodcutters the commandos encountered en route to Seoul], we knew that a breach had occurred and that the North Korean commandos were headed South. Interception forces were set up, but the commandos were moving so fast at night that suddenly, there they were in the heart of the capital. Even in the embassy we just did not believe this could happen. This event occurred some two to three days before the Pueblo, and there is a suggestion in the documents that the Pueblo came along and overshadowed this tremendous attack, this attempt to assassinate the president of South Korea. In the embassy, it did not overshadow the Blue House Raid. Given what had happened, the Blue House Raid and then the Pueblo, we didn't know what might be coming next. These events had already exceeded the level of expectations of what might go on. We were concerned about what might be coming next. I can understand that in Washington, considering the 82 captured Americans, perceptions might have been a little different. I remember the demonstrations, day after day, near the embassy. People in South Korea were saying, "Why can't you stand up to the North Korean aggressors?" All I can say is that our attention to incursions from the North and our expectations of the unimaginable went up in the embassy. As for the Pueblo, while it occupied us for 11 months, it did not overshadow our concern for what the North Koreans might do next.

OSTERMANN: Was there active consideration of the imminence of the outbreak of a second Korean war?

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AMBASADOR WALTER CUTLER

CUTLER: Not so much. At least not at my lowly level. I am sure there was a great concern as to what might come next. You could see the pressure for retaliation, from us or from the South Korean forces, increasing, and there was the potential that things could get out of hand. However, according to my recollection, we did not expect a second Korean war.

STUECK: One of the most striking documents in this early series is, to me, the February 20th report by Vance. One of the things that is in that report is an expression of great concern about South Korean incursions into the North, which I believe had been going on for about six months at that time according to his report. He conveys the sense that the Americans had just learned of these incursions recently, that we were unaware for some time. That is one of several reasons that Vance expresses great concern about the South Korean government and Clark's response to what was going on. I wonder if you, Walt Cutler, have any recollection of the South Korean incursions into the North when you and people in the embassy became aware of them, and what your attitude was towards them.

CUTLER: I don't, specifically. I would say we were probably more aware after the fact than before or during.

RADCHENKO: It seems that the documents that we have in this reader actually show that the U.S. policy of blaming everything on the Soviet Union was actually a very successful policy. Uneasy about the situation, the Soviet Union dictated steps to influence North Korea which it carried out very effectively. In many ways, by raising the stakes and bringing the matter to the Soviet Union instead of trying to deal with the North Koreans, the Americans were in the right. They actually followed the correct policy.

I also wanted to ask Ambassador Hughes about the so-called secret channels of diplomacy which was mentioned earlier by James Hershberg. There is a document in the reader about an assessment of different countries and the roles they played in trying to pressure North Korea. There is an assessment of Poland, Romania, Pakistan, Indonesia, and some other countries, and the conclusion is, well, they don't really have any influence. The question I have is: why do the people who

drafted this document conclude that those countries did not have any influence? Was it because they thought that North Korea was particularly stubborn and nobody had any influence on North Korea? Or, was it because they considered those countries to be satellites of the Soviet Union and that, therefore, the Soviet Union had everything in its hands, and nobody else had any influence?

HUGHES: I am not sure. I read much of the book, but I do not remember the particular document you are referring to. I suspect it was written by desk officers from various countries in the State Department and not by the intelligence community. I do not recall any such requests, anyway. I should abstain from comment because I do not know what you are referring to.

LEONARD: I think most everyone felt that, compared to Moscow, the Hungarians, Poles, Czechs, East Germans, and anyone else would have very little influence in Pyongyang. We were not sure that Moscow had very much influence, but there was at least a possibility.

KANG: I will explain how Korean intelligence circles, or the KCIA, assessed North Korea's situation at the time. I assume that you are all familiar with the kind of policy North Korea used from 1961 until 1968. During this period, North Korea conducted its strategy of fomenting South Korean revolution based on three practices: first, strengthening the bases in North Korea; secondly, strengthening the underground party organization in South Korea; and thirdly, execute the mission of the international Communist movement, thereby rallying support for its cause. Following the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, North Korea came up with four major military policies: fortification of the entire country, arming the entire population, the modernization of its military, and establishing ranks in the military. After North Korea formulated its four major military policies, we were convinced that it was going to be the major thrust of their policy toward South Korea.

In other words, we came to the conclusion that they were going to launch a very strong military provocation. And therefore, in October of 1967, I made a direct report to the president. I reported that there would be a large-scale guerilla infiltration in early January, 1968. After I gave my report, the president called a

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and the attack on the Blue House, had nothing to do with Soviet or Chinese influence. They were launched in conjunction with Juche ideology that was promulgated by Kim Il Sung: Juche in thought, political self-determination, economic self-reliance, and obtaining military self-defense capability. In keeping with these four principles, North Korea probably felt that it should do its share in international Communism by promoting these incidents toward South Korea and the U.S. at the height of the U.S. war effort in Vietnam.”

meeting with the minister of national defense and chiefs of the Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps. The president asked me to repeat my report to him, to the military chiefs, and to the minister of national defense, and I did. At this meeting, President Park remarked that such a military provocation is no longer the affair of the counter-espionage division of the KCIA, but is a problem that should be handled by the military through military operations.

The government came up with three types of scenarios: A, B, and C. In an A-type scenario, the Korean National Police will handle the situation. A B-type situation would be handled by the Korean National Police and the military, and a situation calling for C would be an all-out emergency decree. After establishing these three levels, President Park went to the military operations room of the First Republic of Korea Army (FROKA) headquarters, located in Wonju, Kanwon-Do, on January 6. There, at the president’s order, I conducted a briefing for ranking officials of the Korean military, the Korean National Police, and Korea’s intelligence community. The group, which tallied 180, included all of the cabinet ministers and all of the division commanders of the Korean military, every provincial chief of the Korean National Police Agency, and provincial bureau chiefs from the Korean Central Intelligence Agency. As I said earlier, we came to an assessment that in January, there would be a large-scale guerilla infiltration. Just as we predicted, the attack came on January 21, in the form of the Blue House raid.

To be frank, I was young, in my 30s, and very bold. As a result, I was able to make the report directly to president. I do not think I could have made the same report at my current age. I was asked by many of my seniors whether my report would be true. “Would they really come in such large groups?”

They did come on the 21st of January, and only two days later, the Pueblo was taken by North Korea. When I heard of the incident, I was sure that this all fit into North Korea’s military policy as I have explained it to you before. Some people said that the Soviet Union was involved, but I was convinced that Soviet Union had nothing to do with this. We knew very clearly that it was Kim Il-sung’s own decision.

Let us go back and review the situation of 1968. As you know, China had been involved in a Cultural Revolution since 1965, and there was not much coordination between China and North Korea. North Korea’s relationship with the Soviet

Union was on the rocks. It somewhat improved when Premier Kosygin visited Pyongyang in 1965 on his way back from a visit to Hanoi, North Vietnam, but we concluded that the attack on the Blue House and the *Pueblo* incident were certainly initiated by Kim Il Sung.

North Korea had trained about 2,400 special forces, a group it called Unit 124. We heard of the training of these troops and were sure that they were going to use these special forces. At the time, we estimated that the attack on the Blue House was launched by a company. In fact, only 31 guerillas infiltrated. It is my belief that what happened in 1968, the *Pueblo* incident and the attack on the Blue House, had nothing to do with Soviet or Chinese influence. They were launched in conjunction with *Juche* ideology that was promulgated by Kim Il Sung: *Juche* in thought, political self-determination, economic self-reliance, and obtaining military self-defense capability. In keeping with these four principles, North Korea probably felt that it should do its share in international Communism by promoting these incidents toward South Korea and the U.S. at the height of the U.S. war effort in Vietnam. The immediate objective was to conduct its policy toward South Korean revolution. That was their major thrust. We perceived the situation in this way.

PARK: I have a question about the preparation of the South Korean government and the United States. As Dr. Kang mentioned, the South Korean government was very sensitive to the North Korean provocations of 1966 and 1967. On January 6, President Park Chung Hee organized a meeting of the leaders of South Korean security organizations in Wonju, South Korea. There, he alerted the military and the Korean National Police of the impending attack, stressing the security of Seoul. These organizations raised their defenses, but they could not block the North Korean raid which came only ten days after the meeting and two days before the *Pueblo* incident. Based on documents in the FRUS, Foreign Relations of the United States series, the American side also noticed the increase in provocations as early as December. UNC General Bonesteel reported to the State Department and President Johnson directly about the security crisis on the Korean Peninsula in 1967, and he anticipated the increase in the number of North Korean infiltrations in 1968. There was a very interesting incident on the 24th or the 25th of December



U.S. AND NORTH KOREAN REPRESENTATIVES SIGN AGREEMENT FOR THE RELEASE OF THE PUEBLO'S CREW

1967. At that time, one month before the Pueblo incident, the North Korean government announced that they captured a U.S. intelligence ship. According to some documents in the FRUS, the ship was not a U.S. intelligence ship, but a South Korean fishing vessel. However, forty or fifty South Korean fishing vessels had already been captured by North Korea in 1967. I believe it was also at that time, in December 1967, that President Johnson and Rostow asked President Park to send one more South Korean combat division to Vietnam. Yet, they were very aware of the security crisis on the Korean Peninsula. The American officials were therefore willing to provide anti-infiltration weapons, such as helicopters. As a result, I think that they were very sensitive, and they were aware of the increase in clashes between the North and South. Therefore, I think they could have prepared to block that kind of the incident from happening by the middle the January.

KANG: Let me explain the situation. On January 19, thirty-one North Korean commandos infiltrated through the sector guarded by the U.S. Second Infantry Division. By 2 p.m. on the 19th of January, they arrived in Moonsan military base, where they ran into a South Korean wood cutter. Fortunately for us, they did not kill the wood cutter. They just let him go, and the wood cutter made the report of seeing them at 9:00 p.m. Upon this report, we immediately deployed our troops. We were unable to stop them until they reached the vicinity of the Blue House, twenty-four hours later. The reason why we could not stop them was because we made an incorrect calculation of their marching speed per hour. It is generally assumed that troops march at the speed of four kilometers per hour. However, the commando group from 124 Military Unit, from North Korea, marched at the speed of ten kilometers per hour. As a result, when we deployed our troops, they had already passed that area, and when we deployed the second line of defense, they had already passed that area, too. Because we were unable to stop them, they were able to reach the vicinity of the Blue House.

On the perimeter of the Blue House, the South Korean police, who had been alerted of situation A, stopped them. They questioned the group. “Where are you coming from?” The South Korean police followed the group for about two, three kilometers, asking questions about where they were coming from. As such, we came to the conclusion that there was a tactical error on our part. I regret very

much that we at the KCIA should have been responsible for our being unable to stop the North Korean commandos. Furthermore, President Park pinned the failure on the Korean Ministry of National Defense and we were spared the blame. I feel very, very sorry, even at this moment.

YOON: First of all, I have listened to these statements concerning the facts surrounding both of these incidents with great interest. My conceptual understanding of the situations is almost the same as the explanation Dr. Kang just stated. And, I think I can confirm all of these statements myself. We have not yet answered the question why the North Koreans adopted an aggressive policy that resulted in these provocations. We do not have any overall answers for this question. I believe this is most appropriate and basic question raised at this conference. Overall discussion should start from this very basic question. Until now, everybody has stated the facts surrounding these incidents, but I have to make a very basic statement. There is just one reason why we are faced with these difficult questions and the reason why North Korea undertook these provocations is just; that is North Korea's paramount state objectives. First, the preamble of the Korean Worker's Party's constitution, which is most dominating and supersedes even their own state constitution, is that North Korea's objectives are revolution and liberation of South Korea. These two basic objectives are of paramount importance, and North Korea is supposed to be a base for achieving these very objectives. North Korea's policy, strategy, and statistics, all emanate from these very basic state objectives. This explains everything. It explains why they are so provocative, aggressive, and always cause such international troubles.

Policy emanating from North Korea takes on two forms. Policy aimed at South Korea takes the form of domestic policy while all other outward policy is considered foreign policy. Their domestic policy is directed at fomenting a revolutionary atmosphere within South Korea. This is the very reason why they caused so many armed provocations in the DMZ and surrounding areas. In their effort to incite this revolutionary atmosphere, they recourse to these means: armed provocation, armed attacks, and anything short of total war.

The very basic diplomatic objectives of North Korea's approach towards the international community are the expulsion of the United States military stationed in Korea and the weakening of the Korea-U.S. alliance and joint command. Through



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“Initially, North Koreans were set

on five different targets: first was the Blue House; second, the U.S. Embassy; third, Republic of Korea Army headquarters; number four on their list was Seoul prison; and the fifth was the North Korean agent interrogation center”

maneuvering in the United Nations, North Korea seeks at every opportunity, to challenge us and to exert diplomatic aggression towards us. They seek America’s expulsion, through both political and military means. I emphasize that this theory regarding the dichotomous nature of North Korea’s ROK/U.S. policy explains the preconditions that culminated in their provocative policy.

SZALONTAI: My question is directed partly toward Mr. Cutler and partly toward Mr. Kang. As we know, at least from Mitchell Lerner’s book, the raid against the Blue House was meant to be performed in concert with a number of attacks on other targets. In the case of success, there would have also been an attack on the U.S. embassy. How did the KCIA learn about this? Did they learn about it from the one surviving commando who was captured and interrogated? We discuss whether the Pueblo incident and the Blue House Raid were linked to other Communist governments and concluded that they were not. However, in that discussion we focused on China and the Soviet Union. My question is whether there was any possibility of a link with Vietnam. It is interesting that one objective of the Tet Offensive was to kill the two most important leaders in South Vietnam, and a second objective was to attack the U.S. Embassy. They actually broke the wall of the U.S. Embassy.

KANG: Initially, North Koreans were set on five different targets: first was the Blue House; second, the U.S. Embassy; third, Republic of Korea Army headquarters; number four on their list was Seoul prison; and the fifth was the North Korean agent interrogation center which was under the control of South Korean Military Security Command. In order to attack the five different targets, they initially organized a 35-member commando group. However, they realized that the targets were too diffused, and decided to concentrate on one target. As a result, the 35-member group was reduced to a 31-member group, and the Blue House was set as the sole target. In my view, it must be related to the problem of Vietnam.

OSTERMANN: Was this your perception at the time, and what sources was it based on?

KANG: Oh, I see. I did not tell you about the source where I got the information. I got it as a result of the interrogation.

CUTLER: Let me add that I do not recall any advance information regarding the American Embassy being one of the targets. I do not recall any particular security steps being taken or the staff being alerted that the embassy might be attacked. I was not in our intelligence agency but, as far as I am concerned, the attack on the Blue House was not anticipated.

KANG: I wanted to address the question of whether or not the U.S. Embassy as a target of attack was notified beforehand. The answer is that we did not inform them because at the time our assessment was not very precise; it was rather broad. For example, potential targets, as we saw them, included the Blue House, Korean government ministries, and the U.S. Embassy or Ministry of National Defense and any communication facilities. As you see, our assessment included a wide array of targets. And we weren't, you know, 100 percent sure that the U.S. Embassy was going to be attacked. That's why we did not inform. As for the five possible targets, we learned that our predictions matched with the statements obtained by interrogating Kim Shinjo, who was the sole survivor of the group in our custody. The number of subgroups seemed to support our initial assessment of multiple targets.

CUTLER: I was not aware that any special precautions were taken at the embassy in anticipation of an armed attack, and I infer from that that we were probably not aware of this original list of five targets, which included the embassy. I gather from what you've said that the other targets were dropped from the list.

OSTERMANN: Thank you very much. Ambassador Cutler, I'd like to bring this first session to conclusion. As with every good session, it raised more questions than it answered, but I think we are off to a terrific start. Thank you.



U.S.S. PUEBLO



AMBASSADOR YOON HA-JUNG

Panel II

Solidarity or Demise: North Korea's Aggressive Behavior and the U.S.-ROK Alliance

Chair: *Ambassador Sun Jounyung*

Provocateurs: *Gregg Brazinsky, Park Tae-Gyun*

SUN: As you know, the topic of panel two is “Solidarity or Demise: North Korea’s Aggressive Behavior and the U.S.-ROK Alliance.” Before inviting Professor Brazinsky to speak, I would like to suggest that both questions and answers be succinct and clear cut. I invite Professor Brazinsky to start us off.

BRAZINSKY: If you look at the topic of this panel, “Solidarity or Demise: North Korea’s Aggressive Behavior and the U.S.-ROK Alliance,” the implication seems to be that North Korean behavior did something to the U.S.-South Korean Alliance. Based on what I have seen in my research on this period, there is a case to be made that these North Korean provocations richened relations between the United States and South Korea and that they were also a factor in precipitating Park Chung Hee’s slow turn towards greater authoritarianism during the late 1960’s which would ultimately culminate with the *Yusin* System in 1972.

However, there is also another way to look at it. There are certain tendencies in the U.S.-South Korean alliance that were set in motion in 1964 and 1965. As the economic situation in South Korea improved and as rapid economic development began, South Korea gained greater autonomy from the United States. As Korea became more autonomous, it was also able to resist and reject American demands and was willing to take somewhat greater risks in its relationship with the United States than it had during the previous era.

I have several questions for our policymakers. What was the relative weight of these factors on the U.S.-ROK Alliance? How much were these tendencies a continuation of those that had already existed in the U.S.-South Korean alliance? Especially considering such things as Park Chung Hee's move toward greater authoritarianism, on what level was this change caused directly by North Korea? To what extent were these changes born out of security concerns about North Korea, and how much was this change attributable to Park Chung Hee's intentions from the outset? Was he able to do more of what he wanted to, or move toward those goals more directly because the U.S.-South Korean relationship was evolving?

PARK: Before focusing on the 1968 crisis, I think that we should pay attention to its background and origins in the mid-1960's, a period that I am particularly concerned about. As Dr. Hughes mentioned in the last session, many events and incidents occurred in 1968. Similarly, in the mid-1960's, before 1968, there were many events and incidents in both North and South Korea.

First of all, in 1965, there was the Korean-Japanese normalization. That was a very important event for U.S.-Korean relations because the United States' normalization with Japan in the 1950's coincided with the origin of the South Korean government. However, it wasn't until 1965, after more than ten years of negotiation, that Korea and Japan normalized diplomatic relations. A second important event was the sending of Korean combat troops to Vietnam in 1966. Even after the crisis in January of 1968, President Johnson asked President Park to send one more combat division to Vietnam. Those, I think, are the very important events in the 1960's. There is a possibility that North Korea provoked some of the problems or incursions in order to disrupt South Korea's sending of more combat troops to Vietnam. It is a possibility, but I think that Ambassador Brie is more qualified to answer that question.

The second issue is the timing of the Blue House Raid and the Pueblo incident. Yet, I do not know whether we can make a clear judgment retrospectively. Thus far we have focused on 1968, but considering South Korea's internal situation, I think that the years 1964-1965 would have been very good timing from the viewpoint of North Korean leaders. In 1964, there were huge anti-government demonstrations, and the South Korean government carried out martial law. There was such an unstable situation in South Korea in 1964 and 1965.

My third question involves the South Korean government's role in the increased clashes between South and North Korea. This question is very closely related to those asked by the professors in session one. I found very interesting materials in the FRUS which were from 1964 and 1968. I also found similar documents in the National Archives indicating that there were several occasions in 1966 and 1967 on which the South Korean government launched incursions into North Korea. Interestingly, in November of 1966, when President Johnson visited Seoul, North Korean soldiers attacked a United Nations patrol. Six Americans and one Korean were killed in the attack. After Johnson left, the United Nations Command investigated the incident. Their conclusion was that a week before President Johnson visited Seoul, the South Korean army had attacked the North Korean headquarters and that the North Korean attack during Johnson's visit in Seoul was retaliatory.

In 1967, there were also several instances where the South Korean army attacked North Korea. That said, I believe that most of them were in retaliation. They were responses, not independent acts. However, Ambassadors Brown and Porter and General Bonesteel warned Prime Minister Jung Ilgwon and even President Park on several occasions not to carry out aggressive retaliation. According to one document, they explained that "Such actions undercut the ROK's position at the U.N., provided fodder for North Korean propaganda, undercut General Bonesteel's authority, and jeopardized U.S. Congressional support for military assistance to Korea."

That was the situation before 1968. I think that the South Korean government was anything but passive. Although we should consider North Korea's new strategy after the October 1966 meeting of the Korean Worker's Party, the possibility also exists that the escalation began in late 1966 with South Korean incursions. I would like to ask Dr. Hughes and Ambassador Cutler about that, because I found many materials that indicated U.S. attentiveness to South Korean government actions across the armistice line before the 1968 crisis.

The Johnson administration, based on U.S. doctrine in 1967, did not want to open up a new battleground in addition to Vietnam. The South Korean government in 1966 and 1967 wished to reap benefits similar to those enjoyed by Japan during the Korean War. It was clear in 1967 that both the American government and the South Korean government wanted to avoid any potential obstacles to their



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relationship. Why did South Korea adopt such an aggressive strategy? Perhaps President Park feared that failure to retaliate would damage the morale of the South Korean people and South Korean soldiers.

With the security crisis on the Korean peninsula, it was not possible for the American government to ask the South Korean government to send more combat troops to Vietnam. I cannot understand why this situation occurred during a honeymoon period in South Korean and U.S. government relations. Comparatively, I think that the relationship between the ROK government and the American government was best in the mid-1960's. Think about the 1950's tension between President Syngman Rhee and the United States. Consider Koreagate, the Kim Dae Jung incident in Tokyo and the nuclear problems of the 1970's.

Generally, it is believed that the Nixon Doctrine and the reduction of U.S. forces in South Korea marked a crucial turning point in the U.S.-ROK relationship. However, looking at 1967 and 1968, it is possible to find an earlier turning point in the relationship. This is evidenced in the negative views expressed by the U.S. ambassadors and even the special envoy, Cyrus Vance, about the South Korean government. In my view, the turning point was the 1967 and 1968 crisis. I would like to hear the positions of Ambassadors Hughes and Cutler and also the Ambassador from Korea regarding my assertion.

HUGHES: I do not have much to add. However, I would like to emphasize that beginning with the escalation of the American involvement in Vietnam in 1965, the Johnson White House was determined, desperate to do everything it possibly could to get more commitments of foreign troops from anywhere in the world. He was not focusing solely on Korea. He was scouring the earth. If he could get Bolivian troops, that would be terrific in his mind. He would have settled for anything. SEATO, particularly in Rusk's mind, was the legal rationale for the involvement of the troops he sought, and he was very disappointed when he failed to get troops from Thailand, Pakistan or the Philippines. As such, I think that the Korean pressure and the discussion should be seen in that overall context of a really desperate search for more flags in Vietnam.

YOON: Professor, you raised many questions which centered on the so-called friction, or tension between the U.S. and Korea. Among other things, you mentioned the increase of special Korean troops in Vietnam and the restoration of diplomatic relations between Korea and Japan. Speaking as one of the men in charge of American affairs in those days, during all of these instances that you have illustrated here, we did not feel any serious tension at all. We received some advice from the U.S. Embassy there. It was not delivered with any pressure. To my knowledge we took no special action in response to American advice there. We took care to address good advice which we were often given by the Americans. But from ministers on down, we did not feel any significant sense of tension or pressure from the United States Government.

OSTERMANN: Dr. Kang, since this session focuses on ROK-U.S. relations and the impact of the crisis, to what extent did you at the KCIA and other Korean security organizations share intelligence findings with the U.S. Embassy and with the U.S. intelligence community? To what extent did the U.S. and R.O.K. come up with different assessments? I also have a question for the Americans: to what extent did you feel fully informed by the Korean side during the prelude to these incidents and on these incidents after they had taken place?

SUN: Before Dr. Kang responds, Sergey, you had a question?

RADCHENKO: I have follow-up questions for Dr. Kang. The story of the Blue House raid is based primarily on the KCIA's interrogation of one man. What do you know about the reliability of his testimony? I do not know what interrogation techniques were used, but I suspect that the KCIA was not the gentlest agency at the time. Can we trust the information that was gathered about the Blue House raid? My second question goes back to what you said in the previous session regarding the North Korean commando unit of 2,400 people. In one of the documents in the reader, President Park tells the Americans that Korea is prepared to attack this unit and destroy it, wipe it out. Was that a simple bravado or was there a real operational plan for striking this North Korean unit of commandos?

“The North Koreans were insisting on bilateral talks, and we agreed to that. I think that there were some concerns on the part of our South Korean colleagues. They wanted to know why the talks were not trilateral. This was a point of some tension but I think the need for bilateral negotiation was understood.”

CUTLER: Allow me to make a couple of quick comments. I second what Tom Hughes said about the obvious importance that the United States placed on having foreign forces, in this case South Korean, in Vietnam. That was always a major priority of ours, and the Pueblo and Blue House incidents complicated that. However, I do not remember the issue ever reaching a point of great tension. To my recollection, if there was any tension, it arose when the negotiations started in Panmunjom. The North Koreans were insisting on bilateral talks, and we agreed to that. I think that there were some concerns on the part of our South Korean colleagues. They wanted to know why the talks were not trilateral. This was a point of some tension but I think the need for bilateral negotiation was understood.

In regard to the issue of intelligence sharing, I was not involved in that part of the embassy’s operation, and I cannot speak on that matter.

HERSHBERG: I would like to bring documents directly into the discussion on the issue of tension in the relationship, especially concerning the presence of South Korean forces in Vietnam. According to the documents, there was one extremely tense encounter on February 14, 1968 when Cy Vance was visiting Seoul. I will quote from the cable he sent home which references a conversation he had with Prime Minister Chung. The cable is reproduced on page 423 of the briefing book: “When Chung stated that national assembly pressure might force his government to withdraw their troops from Vietnam, Vance told him flatly we would reciprocate by withdrawing our troops from Korea. He gasped, sputtered and immediately went out and brought another [Lee Hurak] into the meeting.” The next day, Vance came back to Washington and reported to Johnson and his advisors that the Prime Minister had turned ashen at this. This made me wonder if the Americans had considered this policy thoroughly. Did our desperation for “flags” in Vietnam extend to South Korea to the extent that it was a direct quid pro quo for our troop presence there? Regardless of the intrinsic merits of the American deterrent force on the Korean peninsula, if the South Koreans left Vietnam would the Americans have really left Korea? Or was this a rash, emotional, and impulsive statement made in the heat of the Tet offensive crisis? Was South Korea’s active, fighting troop presence in Saigon a direct result of America’s pressure that made



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it a condition for the American presence to defend South Korea, or did it derive from South Korea's own political foreign policy interests?

YOON: Mr. Hershberg, the issue of whether America's troop presence in Korea was conditional was raised by our National Assembly, but it did not develop into a serious problem. The suggestion may have served to apply pressure, but it did not extend beyond that.

CUTLER: There was the question of that third division. That question did come into play. I assume that we wanted Korea to send a third division to Vietnam, but it did not happen.

KANG: There were many questions asked about my earlier statement. Let me answer one of them with respect to sharing information between KCIA and the U.S. CIA. Since the U.S. CIA was in Seoul, U.S. CIA representatives were able to come to my office to talk freely about any issue. We had a very frank exchange in views on topics that included the possibility of North Korean attack. I cannot recall exactly what was said. It was a very long time ago. However, I do believe that I informed the U.S. CIA representative that there was the possibility of an attack from the North in January.

A few speakers commented that information regarding the January attack came from a single source. Let me explain. The first information regarding the creation of North Korea's Military Unit 124 reached us in 1967, but the more precise reason why I determined that the attack would come in the month of January was because of an unexpected incident that happened in January of 1967. Three North Koreans infiltrated a sector guarded by the U.S. Second Infantry. The

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three North Koreans turned out to be pickpockets who were serving prison time in North Korea. They were released for this purpose. In the eyes of North Korea, they were expendable.

I was curious why they infiltrated in the month of January. We had never had such an incident in the winter months. Instead, the North Koreans usually took advantage of thick foliage during the summer months. It was inconceivable that they would attempt infiltration when everything was white, covered in snow. Of the three men, one was arrested in front of a Seoul railway station, the second was arrested inside of a movie theater in Kansung, and the third was arrested while he tried to return to North Korea. An interrogation yielded no results. They simply said “We were told to go infiltrate in South Korea. And that’s all.”

The incident was on my mind for the next six or seven months. From the time of its occurrence, I thought every day about why they would try to come in January. I began receiving intelligence reports that North Korea had created a special forces unit, Military Unit 124. It dawned on me that the North Koreans were probably plotting a winter operation in the month of January. I want you to know that this information regarding the potential time of infiltration, the month of January, did not come from the interrogation. Some information came from the interrogations, but our speculation was based on a comprehensive assessment by our analysts. In other words, the assessment that North Korean forces would enter in January was made solely by government analysts based on their knowledge.

It is often wondered whether President Park was considering a retaliatory attack on North Korea in the wake of the Blue House raid. Although I was very close to him physically while making my report, I did not sense that he was considering such an attack. I do not believe that such an attack would have caused another war. We were enraged that the thirty-one-member commando group attacked the Blue House. It could have been regarded as a provocation for war. In the old days, the attack would have been a legitimate cause to declare a war. I recall the discussions that occurred among military chiefs very clearly. General Jang Jinyeong, the Chief of the Korean Air Force, said he had no plans for bombing attacks on North Korea. He certainly did not have any F-4 Phantoms. He said that the planes he did have, F-5As, were incapable of launching such attacks on North Korea. Mr. Kim Seonguk, the Minister of National Defense, seconded the air chief’s view.

The division commanders along the front line were very angry, and they wanted to retaliate. I did not think that the supreme commander, our president, would allow a war to break out on account of the Blue House raid.

YOON: Initially, at the Panmunjom talks, there was some conflict between America and Korea. Frankly, we expressed our desire for the talks between North Korea and the United States to be open. Due to the urgency of the problem, we recognized the need to have an immediate session of armistice talks in Panmunjom. Because of the the Pueblo incident, we understood and thought it quite natural that the American public's sentiment and the U.S. government's concern focused mainly on the Pueblo and on the captives. Two of them were actually killed. Naturally American attention strayed from the general talks. The American's had a unique window through which to address the Pueblo problem instead of holding general talks. The attack on the presidential residence, which we saw as a pressing national security issue, was a secondary matter to the Americans. We recognized that bilateral talks between the Americans and North Koreans would exclude South Korea's interest. As such, we insisted on our participation. We were adamant that these talks equally address South Korea's interests. The Americans were generous. They agreed on the importance of South Korea's involvement. However, we found that our participation encumbered the talks and delayed a solution for the captured American crew. Our attendance there precluded smooth talks with North Korea. In fact, it encouraged the North Koreans to adopt a very serious approach to their interactions with the United States. As a result, the United States encouraged us to withdraw and President Park concurred. We notified the Americans that we would abstain from participation on one condition: before and after the talks the Americans had to inform us about the process and content of the talks. Faithfully, the Americans informed us of every detail before and after each conference. We found that this method alleviated the tension afterwards.

HONG: In my opinion, the reason why there was a conflict between the U.S. and South Korea in respect to the Pueblo incident was because of differing views regarding the motives behind North Korean aggression. My analysis, which is based on a review of new documents, seems to indicate that the U.S. thought

North Korea's actions were motivated by a desire to support North Vietnam in its war effort. A wealth of documentary evidence supports the United States position that North Korea was harassing South Korea as part of its support for North Vietnam. By contrast, as Ambassador Yoon pointed out earlier, the South Korean government sensed that North Korea's actions were designed to create an atmosphere conducive for revolutionizing South Korea with a goal of unifying it under Communist control, although there were some in South Korea who also thought that North Korea's actions were part of an effort to support North Vietnam in the war. If that was the case, I am curious to know why there was such a rift in the analyses of North Korea's motives between the U.S. and South Korea. Where did this difference originate from? Did it derive from different viewpoints, or were differences based on conflicting intelligence information?

YOON: Simply put, there was not particular reason for that difference.

HUGHES: I will respond briefly to Jim Hershberg's question about the Vance mission to Seoul. Cy Vance was the Deputy Secretary of Defense. It was a month after Tet and he was very much involved with Vietnam. Vance was a soft-spoken troubleshooter for Lyndon Johnson whenever it appealed to Lyndon Johnson to send him somewhere. On this special occasion Lyndon sent him off to Seoul. The next month he sent him to Detroit to pacify Detroit during the Martin Luther King riots. He was available for special missions. Making threats was not his specialty at all. Threats were not part of his DNA. He was a very soft-spoken character. It was unusual for him to have been involved in this kind of tension but I think the previous four days of negotiations were probably weighing on him, and he was eager to get back to Washington.

SUN: To my recollection Cyrus Vance was not the Secretary of Defense when he went to Korea for negotiations.

HUGHES: You are correct. He was not Secretary. He was Deputy Secretary to McNamara.

LEONARD: I think it might be useful to give my impressions of the state of relations there even before I got on the Korea desk. I think they were excellent. However, I do not think it would be correct to say that both the United States and South Korea shared all thoughts and all plans with each other. I do not know of a case where any two governments do that. Take the U.S. and the United Kingdom, for example. There are always areas that are off limits. It is clear from the documents here that the U.S. was not informed in advance of at least some of the South Korean intrusions into North Korea. General Bonesteel had to remonstrate with the Defense Minister about this. Even after his remonstrance, I do not think that General Bonesteel felt that he was always going to get information in advance.

In the same way, in my view, the tension in Washington over the consequences of the Pueblo are very evident from the meetings at the White House and from the cables which Ambassador Porter was sending back about President Park's state of mind. I think that the Vance mission and then the meeting in Honolulu addressed the problem that was worrying us and not to the general state of U.S.-Korean relations. As Tom Hughes said, we did not want another outbreak of even modest warfare anywhere in that part of the world, or anywhere for that matter, because of what was going on in Vietnam. This was occurring when McNamara had given up on Vietnam. He had decided that it could not be won and he was in the process of turning it over to Clark Clifford who had a very different approach to the whole thing. I think there was a real fear in Washington and that Vance was sent out there, in large part, to make sure that President Park was aware of how disturbed the United States would be if he did anything that led to a larger conflagration of any kind. And I believe that when he came back, he not only gave the written report, but I believe that he also brought back word that he was worried about President Park's state of mind, and he was concerned that if anything else happened, it would be very difficult to predict exactly how the Republic of Korea government would react. There were questions as to whether it would be possible to keep the South Korean Government's reaction under control. As Tom has said, Vance was a very low-key person but he took the charge from Johnson very seriously. He was to convey to President Park, the Prime Minister, and the Defense Minister the seriousness of the situation that would result if South Korea responded in the way that it felt entitled to respond to North Korean provocations.

"I think there was a real fear

in Washington and that Vance was sent out there, in large part, to make sure that President Park was aware of how disturbed the United States would be if he did anything that led to a larger conflagration of any kind."

“We had, of course, the overwrite formula.

Then suddenly this other formula fell in our laps. General Woodward, who was our negotiator, took one look at it, and he said, “I think they’ll buy it.” And, of course, they did.”

SUN: When the crew of the Pueblo was released some time in December 1968, I remember that the U.S. confessed to violating the territorial water of North Korea. Then, immediately after the confession, the U.S. denied it. We call this the confession repudiation formula. I believe that that formula, combined formula, came from you, Mr. Leonard.

LEONARD: Not quite. The real author is my wife. I enjoyed the comment that Mr. Rusk made about that formula in the press conference that he held on the night that the crew was released. He said it was like giving a check to a man who was blackmailing you. When you give it to him, you tell him “here it is, here’s your \$10,000. I have stopped payment on the check at the bank. That’s what it’s worth. You’ve got it.”

SUN: I also remember that a certain U.S. Senator from Vermont made comments on the formula. He wanted to close the Vietnam War in a similar fashion. He ventured that the U.S. could simply pull out our forces and shout victory.

CUTLER: I spent 11 months sculling these negotiations at the embassy. By that I mean I was just somebody who watched and tried to make a contribution without much success. We had, of course, the overwrite formula. Then suddenly this other formula fell in our laps. General Woodward, who was our negotiator, took one look at it, and he said, “I think they’ll buy it.” And, of course, they did. This seminar induced me to go to my bookshelf where I found Trevor Armbrister’s book called *Matter of Accountability* which was written in 1970. In *Matter of Accountability* there is a chapter which talks about the Leonard Proposal because that is what eventually unlocked the gate. It gives full credit to Jim Leonard’s wife. Mrs. Leonard, over breakfast one morning in Bethesda, Maryland, said “Honey, why don’t you do it this way?” And that is the way it happened.

LEONARD: With regard to what Ambassador Yoon’s earlier comments, I think it was very well understood in Washington that the general public in Korea, the government, and the high officials were upset, resentful at the thought that the United States gave more importance to the Pueblo affair than to this attempt on

the President of Korea's life. That was very much on the minds of the people in the White House. You can see it in the verbatim accounts of the meetings. It heavily influenced the instructions that were given to Cyrus Vance when he went on the mission, and it was certainly in our minds when we were conducting these discussions with the North Koreans through Panmunjom. We wanted to do anything we could to prevent that from becoming a serious problem between the United States and Korea. I am very pleased that, in the end, the Korean public saw that this whole business was better solved than continuing on the way it had been. It would have continued to nag at us and cause friction in our relations with each other. In the end, it worked out well. I know it was not the sought-after solution. If you think the South Koreans resented the solution that my wife came up with, you should hear what the U.S. Navy thought of it. The U.S. Navy wanted to court-martial Captain Bucher as soon as they got their hands on him, and he never got another post of any importance. The idea of apologizing for having surrendered a ship was, even for the U.S. Government, very hard to swallow.

BRAZINSKY: In the aftermath of the Blue House raid and the Pueblo crisis, Park Chung Hee's attitude towards the United States and his level of trust, in my view, did not seem quite the same. I think there was a sense of abandonment on the South Korean side. There is a wealth of historical scholarship that attributes later South Korean efforts to develop nuclear weapons and South Korea's increasing thrust towards military and economic autonomy in South Korea to these events in 1968. I am curious to hear the U.S. and South Korean reaction to that and thoughts on that point.

RADCHENKO: My reading of the story of the Soviet-North Korean relationship brought to mind that Kim Il Sung's promotion of greater militancy and his call for war. Time and again, he reduced his cries for war in return for economic aid from the Soviet Union. From reading these documents on South Korea, it seems to me that President Park was engaged in a similar game. Can any of our Korean participants or the American policymakers comment on this point. It is a blatantly controversial question, but I am curious if anyone would like to comment.

“He [President Park] was indignant

because the North Koreans attacked the Blue House where, not only the President, but his whole family lived. There was an atmosphere of great tension at the time due to this presidential sentiment.”.

YOON: When these incidents occurred we were astonished. In the days following the North Korean attack on the Blue House, I perceived that President Park was very indignant.

OSTERMANN: What was he indignant about?

YOON: He [President Park] was indignant because the North Koreans attacked the Blue House where, not only the President, but his whole family lived. There was an atmosphere of great tension at the time due to this presidential sentiment. However, after a conference between Ambassador Porter, General Bonesteel and his staff, and President Park and his cabinet members in the Blue House, my President's indignation was soothed and trust between them was restored. I was impressed by General Bonesteel's very sincere attitude. He was deeply apologetic for the penetration of the zone guarded by United Nations forces of which he was the commander. He sincerely expressed his responsibility for the occurrence of this incident, especially the penetration that took place in the defense perimeter of the second division, the American defense perimeter. His attitude was very sincere. I felt this and I was quite moved. He pledged that such an incident would not recur as long as he was in command. The sincere attitude of General Bonesteel apparently moved President Park and dissipated his indignation and distrust in our military defense of the front line.

After that, cooperation improved, and talks toward solutions of this question went very smoothly. I cannot stress enough the moving atmosphere of this first meeting at the Blue House between American Embassy officials, the United Nations Command, our President, and our inner cabinet members. The Vance mission was really decisive. I just don't see this kind of action taken by the United States. Originally, I thought the foreign ministry recommended this high mission. Later I found out that it was Ambassador Porter who proposed a discussion about having the United States send a presidential mission. At first, President Park was somewhat apprehensive about the presidential mission. Finally, he agreed. After the presidential decision was rendered, we quickly cabled the White House. Immediately, the White House replied that Johnson was going to send Mr. Vance. Without this mission, I doubt that this issue would have been

resolved. Another buildup of Korean defense forces and American military assistance took place later. This Vance mission was decisive. The Vance mission was a solution to the whole problem.

OSTERMANN: Ambassador Yoon, were you present at the Vance and Park conversation, the first meeting?

YOON: Yes, I took the notes.

OSTERMANN: You have a prime vantage point from which to address this. I would like you to respond more specifically to Dr. Brazinsky's question regarding the long-term impact of the crisis. I understand your point about the short-term.

YOON: I think this renewed confidence between the United States and Korea. The Pueblo incident helped the United States and Korea strengthen our defense capability. In fact, you rightly pointed out that the 1.21 incident, or Blue House raid, was akin to a second Korean War. Initially, I feared that a wrong move in our relations with the U.S. could lead to major hostilities between the South and North. As time went on, our president himself changed his attitude and his positive image of the American Embassy was firmly established at that moment. Without this reestablished confidence between the American and Korean governments and between Presidents Park and Johnson, issues related to the Pueblo and Blue House attack incidents would not have been resolved satisfactorily.

BRAZINSKY: There was a transition in the White House during this period. At first, Park was dealing with Johnson and then he dealt with Nixon. Was Park more confident in dealing with Nixon or Johnson?

YOON: The relationship between Nixon and Park is an entirely separate matter. It does not relate to the problem we are talking about. As far as the relationship between Nixon and Park is concerned, there were some opportunities for meeting. However, Nixon's doctrine caused some apprehension within the Korean government.



KIM IL SUNG INSPECTING GOODS
WHILE CONDUCTING ON-THE-
SPOT GUIDANCE

STUECK: Defense Minister Kim, who was mentioned earlier by Dr. Kang, is referenced by Vance at least twice in his documents. Vance indicates that Defense Minister Kim was a loose cannon. Can either of you speak more about him?

KANG: The time span during which the U.S. and Korea had conflicting opinions on this incident lasted about two weeks. The Pueblo crisis began on January 23 (Korean Standard Time), and, until the arrival of special emissary Mr. Vance, we were enraged. We were young, and I was very angry. Many young members of the division commanders were also very angry. They were angry at the U.S. because as soon as Pueblo was taken, the USS Enterprise was dispatched to the East Sea. The U.S. Fifth Air Force was on alert, and Korean artillery was deployed closer to the front. All of the soldiers who were on leave were recalled. We were in a state of combat readiness and waited through a period of no action until the end of January. We did not know why the U.S. would take no action when it dispatched the USS Enterprise to the East Sea. After the arrival of Special Emissary Vance, I believe the issues involving the third clause of the U.S.-South Korea Mutual Defense Treaty were satisfactorily addressed.

On the 6th of February, our president declared the creation of the Homeland Reserve Force upon the recommendation of the Ministry of National Defense. The Force, which was made possible by a substantial amount of aid from the United States, was activated in April. America's assistance went a long way toward restoring our trust in the U.S. and helped put U.S.-Korean relations on its normal footing.

I'd like to say a few words about the earlier discussion on the difference in perceptions of the Blue House attack between the U.S. and Korea. It was suggested that the U.S. perceived the attack as part of a North Korean attempt to impact the Vietnam War whereas South Koreans felt that it was aimed at South Korea. I think that the difference stems more from perceptions of the severity of the crisis. As a result of the South Korean public's anger over North Korea's threat and the mounting discontent, the president had no other recourse but to view the incident as a threat to South Korea. As I said earlier, I always considered three issues before coming to an assessment. Let me repeat them for you. North Korea would use operations against South Korea as a means of strengthening their bases in North

Korea, building the capability for a united front in South Korea, and contributing to the international Communist movement by aiding the war effort in Vietnam. It is my view that these three different objectives were behind North Korea's actions, such as the January 21 attack on the Blue House. It seems appropriate that the U.S. would react to North Korean actions in a diplomatic and military fashion. On the other hand, we in Korea had to take into account the political, the social, and even the mindset of our citizens in addressing the January 21 incident, the attack on the Blue House. As I mentioned earlier, Defense Minister Kim Sung Yun and the military chiefs were of the opinion that the crisis should not be escalated. Although I was following the January 21 incident, I was very busy with military operations and was unable to go to the Blue House as often as I would have liked to. During the few times I went there in the wake of the incident, I could sense that, although initially there was a lot of anger, it subsided in about two week's time.

YOON: I would like to add that, to my knowledge, the President's sense of indignation lasted quite a long time. He calmed down. Then he thought of a realistic approach to strengthening our defense capability. Accordingly, we expected large scale American military assistance because the incident itself was a real threat. We emphasized that the North Korean threat must be taken very seriously and Bonesteel and Porter agreed. We had to do something, and the only way to achieve self-protection was to strengthen our military capability. When we are weak, North Korea always provokes us.

My next point is to dispel the misunderstanding that there were serious clashes between the South Korean and U.S. governments. In truth, there were no serious clashes at all. The only thing that we insisted, and America agreed, was that we were against an appeasement policy, both for United States and President Park. It always came up as a problem. In this case, due to the captivity of the American crew, perhaps it was not excessive for the United States to adopt an appeasement policy. However, America's low posture could have resulted in misjudgment on the part of North Korea. It had the potential to cause another ruthless North Korean provocative action or even a war. But since the beginning of the war, we never believed the North would be the initiate major hostilities. Nonetheless, I

“North Korea would use operations

against South Korea as a means of strengthening their bases in North Korea, building the capability for a united front in South Korea, and contributing to the international Communist movement by aiding the war effort in Vietnam.”

“Our main worry was that as a price of the solution of the Pueblo incident, America would enter into an appeasement strategy with North Korea.”

noticed that hawkish, radical statements were commonly made among ourselves. It is quite true that President Park, in the first few days following the attack, proposed a reprisal, a troop advancement of about ten kilometers to the North. He also considered military enclosure of the Wonsan base. My point is that, this argument between the two governments wasn't substantive at all. It was talked about among ourselves. In some sense, military action was considered but war wasn't thought of by anybody. There was some sense of relief after we prevented major hostilities between the two governments. It encouraged a sense of easiness among the Korean population and increased our own confidence in American forces and in the United States government. This restoration of confidence was genuine.

RADCHENKO: I would like to examine this more closely. Ambassador Yoon, you say that nobody felt there was going to be a war in Korea, a major war in the Korean policymaking circles. Yet, in the documents we see that during the meetings between President Park and the Americans, President Park kept talking about the possibility of a conflict. My question is: Did President Park, in some sense, invent this indignation that you are talking about in order to get aid?

YOON: It was an emotional sense of indignation. Of course, it eventually calmed down as we expected.

RADCHENKO: Do you mean to say there was no design behind his indignation?

YOON: I do not think so. President Park was a very sensible man. I do not think he himself personally thought that we were going to war.

RADCHENKO: No, but it is a very sensible thing to play up a threat in order to get some aid. It sounds to me like a very sensible thing to do.

YOON: Our main worry was that as a price of the solution of the Pueblo incident, America would enter into an appeasement strategy with North Korea. Until that time, there was no incident of exclusive, bilateral U.S.-North Korea talks. We maintained that we would not allow any North Korean and American bilateral talks.

That is why we insisted on our participation in military commission talks before this incident occurred. However, later, we conceded due to the American appeal.

STUECK: Let me ask a version of Sergey's question to the American policymakers who are here. Under President Johnson, about \$100 million in military assistance was approved for South Korea in the wake of this. Was the sense among American policymakers that this aid was necessary as a legitimate means of preventing further North Korean insurgency, or was this seen more as a means of keeping South Korean troops fighting in Vietnam?

SUN: After Mr. Szalontai raises questions, we will ask the American policymakers to answer.

SZALONTAI: According to the information that I found in the Hungarian documents, on that 31st of March, President Johnson announced that the U.S. was willing to enter talks with North Vietnam and stop the bombing of North Vietnam, the decision very much worried the South Korean and Thai governments. [The South Korean Government] responded that it would be better not to have talks with North Vietnam, and that if the U.S. decided to do so anyway, South Korea should have some say in those talks because of its combat status in Vietnam. Can you tell us something about this issue?

CUTLER: Because the questions address military aid and are policy matters, I am going to duck them. I was out in the trenches, and Mr. Leonard and Hughes were back in Washington. I will defer.

LEONARD: None of us, certainly not I or Tom Hughes, were policymakers. However, from my point of view, I do not see why the aid, \$100 million or later the F-4s, had to fall into only one category. We knew the embassy was reporting considerable indignation within Korea about the fact that we seemed to be paying more attention to the Pueblo problem than the Blue House problem. Therefore, coming through with aid, whether it was military aid or economic assistance, was a way of dealing with that indignation. In addition, we were well aware that the

Korean army did not have the capabilities, specifically in the air, that the North Koreans appeared to have. Whether they had well-trained pilots for their MiGs was another question, but they appeared to be stronger in the air. Dealing with this through aid was a reasonable thing to do, one which tackled both of the problems that you raised.

That might amuse you. I can give you a very brief anecdote from the Honolulu meeting which I cannot verify as true. In late 1968 Ambassador [William J.] Porter told me that at the Honolulu meeting there was a tet-a-tet meeting between President Park and President Johnson and that each of them had only one other man present. President Park had an assistant who spoke good English and served as the translator, and Ambassador Porter was the other American present. President Park brought up, as we knew he would, the question of getting more airplanes, and Johnson indicated that he would provide the requested planes. President Park requested one or two squadrons of F-4s. According to what Ambassador Porter told me, the briefing for the meeting had indicated that we would make available a squadron or two squadrons of F-5s. The two Americans whispered together, and Porter asked Johnson, "What's the difference between an F-4 and an F-5?" Johnson said, "I don't know." And Porter said, "I don't know either, but the F-4s are a lower number, probably they're cheaper," and it went through. When it got back to Washington, I was involved in it. There was an effort to correct the mistake. It turned out that the United States Air Force wanted them to have the F-4s because those had already been in our pipeline and were replaced by a newer model of F-4s. Therefore, the Air Force defended the Johnson/Porter agreement with President Park for the F-4s. It went through and Korea got the F-4s.

YOON: And also a last, immediate response to the issue. Anyway, besides that, I want to emphasize that at the time of these dealings, early January 1968, a serious military imbalance existed. Maybe this assessment was done by Mr. Kang. Korean military assistance to America was concentrated in Vietnam. Some of our aid has been forgotten. If I may say, we expected assistance would be coming, as we should have. When our expedition forces went to Vietnam, we went without any weapons at all. We were surprised at the M-16s in Vietnam. And when we returned, we returned without any weapons. The North Korean military, on the

other hand, was at its peak. From the time of the Korean War, the Soviets gave them all of the current equipment. We were in a very poor situation. I know this because I provided a shopping list of what we actually needed to the Americans. I asked the defense ministry what we needed, and I informed the Americans of every item. We sent this to the American side I believe when Mr. Vance came. Looking at this list there, I was really astonished how poorly outfitted we had been until this incident occurred. This incident was really quite fortunate for us. Kim Il Sung helped us in that sense. That is why we felt that the incident was more of a threat than a real crisis at the time. American assistance rebuilt our armed force into a modern armed force creating a balance with North Korea. Perhaps our military surpassed North Korea's at that time. What I mean to say is that a modern Korean army was built after this incident due to American military assistance. The improvement can also be attributed to the firm determination of President Park and the generosity and similar determination of President Johnson. This is an example of real genuine cooperation between two governments. America was very generous. Some news commentators went as far as saying that the Americans were too compliant with our requests.

SUN: Thank you very much, Ambassador Yoon.



AMBASSADOR YOON HA-JUNG



AMBASSADOR HORST BRIE

Panel III

“We are against taking the matter towards unleashing a war:”

Fractures in DPRK Relations with the Communist Bloc

Chair: *Bernd Schaefer*

Provocateurs: *Sergey Radchenko, Ryoo Kihljae*

OSTERMANN: Welcome back. Today we have three sessions. The first one will look at DPRK relations with the Communist bloc and perceptions within the Soviet bloc and U.S. perceptions thereof. The second panel will look at Nixon’s first year and Korean policy, and the final panel this afternoon will look at peace and reunification initiatives in the midst of crisis and confrontation.

Before I turn the floor over to Dr. Bernd Schaefer, a senior fellow here at the Center, I would like to draw your attention to a couple of things that we have distributed. For one thing, all of you have in the pile in front of you a copy of the most recent issue of the *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*. There are materials in there on Korea but they relate to an earlier period, 1956, as well as—and this is really the centerpiece of this *Bulletin*—documents on China’s foreign policies from 1954 all the way through the Cultural Revolution. You also have in front of you this morning draft translations of newly obtained documents. First, you will find a June 1971 conversation between Kim Il Sung and the Romanian dictator, Nicolai Ceaușescu. I call this document to your attention. We just obtained this from the Romanian archives. We also have just translated and distributed to you two documents from the archives of the East German foreign ministry, obtained by Bernd Schaefer, documents offered by a very young Horst Brie in Pyongyang in late 1967. Again, these are draft translations. For the final publication, they will undergo some heavy editing. I think they make an important contribution to this discussion nonetheless and are definitely worth looking at, in



BERND SCHAEFER

particular the December 1967 cable. The cable really brings out some of the key issues as they presented themselves to the East German mission in Pyongyang at the time, including the fact that, as Ambassador Brie points out at the very end of the cable, that much of his assessment was based on, as he writes, "insufficient information." My hope is that he will talk a little bit about the difficulties in obtaining information on what was going on in Pyongyang. The cable is also interesting in that it highlights the rising tensions on the Korean peninsula. As he writes, "Never since the end of the Korean War have there been so many and such severe incidents at the armistice line as in 1967." And, as he writes, "incidents at sea are occurring more and more as fishing boats are being seized." Also quite interesting to me is his characterization of the U.S. delegation and of U.S. policy, as he writes, "The composition and attitude of the U.S. delegation in Panmunjom have changed in comparison to 1966 and early 1967. Until early '67, the command had been in the hands of officers who saw their duty mainly in tough anti-Communist propaganda against the DPRK and the PR of China. Now, U.S. representatives are typically high ranking military cadres of the Pentagon." As he writes later on, "In my opinion, the U.S.A. is currently interested in a tense situation along the armistice line, but not in the outbreak of war."

Just to highlight a couple of the findings in this cable, and again, my hope is that Horst Brie will further elaborate on them: his assessment of the DPRK and his argument that the DPRK delegation is currently focusing on unmasking the role of the U.S.A. in Korea and Asia. Right above that, in terms of the U.S. side, he writes "the U.S. side now negotiates with great prudence and avoids, to a large extent, any propaganda against the DPRK and to PR China." By contrast, his characterization of the North Koreans—if you look at the fourth page, "the DPRK tries to portray the situation as if an attack by the U.S.A. is imminent in order to justify their positions domestically and externally."

"Currently," Brie writes back to Berlin, "one can assess that the DPRK has totally given up the idea of a peaceful and democratic unification of the country. Also, one does not seem to believe any more in the possibility of a broad revolutionary development in South Korea. Therefore, only the two latter adventurous options remain, which they seem to be increasingly aiming at." Ambassador Brie, in the preceding paragraph, had outlined some of the options to the North

Koreans. “In conclusion,” as he writes, “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 presently involved wanting to start a war.”

With these very interesting observations by a young East German diplomat at the time, I would like to turn it over to Bernd Schaefer and the experts who will start us off for the first panel.

SCHAEFER: Good morning everybody. Christian has already made some very incisive remarks about the East German documents and about Ambassador Brie, who at the time really was one of the most brilliant ambassadors the GDR had. If you read all his communication from Pyongyang, you will find that his reports were among the best. We are very glad that we have him here today, and we will be happy to hear from him later.

To stimulate the memories of the witnesses, we have two statements by our so-called provocateurs, Sergey Radchenko and Ryoo Kihljae. Let me just briefly make one remark without taking anything away from them. If we talk about the relationship within the socialist camp and the position of the DPRK in 1968 and 1969, one country we cannot talk much about is the Peoples’ Republic of China, because in ’68 and ’69 there were tensions and therefore no relations between the DPRK and China. But the fact that there were basically no relations with China due to all of the problems coming with the Cultural Revolution and the fact that North Korea did not want to copy the Cultural Revolution as Mao wanted is one of the most important clues to North Korean actions in ’66 and beyond. This is because the conflict and tension with China freed the DPRK for action. North Korea would not have been able to do engage in such activities when Sino-DPRK relations were better, or while the DPRK was under Chinese tutelage, as had been the case until 1966, and again from late 1969. This was really a window of opportunity for Kim Il Sung, allowing him some maneuvering room that he used it for various purposes as we will hear.

I would now like to turn things over first to Sergey and then to Kihljae, and then I will start the discussion. Sergey, please.

RADCHENKO: Thank you very much. We had a wonderful discussion yesterday which I think focused primarily on the extent to which North Korea's adventurism affected the ROK-U.S. alliance. The question of North Korean actions *per se* received limited attention. Inasmuch as it did receive attention, we talked about the possible connections between Vietnam and North Korea's intention. That brings me to the big question which was asked by Mitch Lerner yesterday as his first question and was later elaborated on by Ambassador Yoon, the question of North Korean intentions. It is a big question. What did North Korea want out of its military adventurism from 1966 until 1968? Was it true that it was concerned with the state of its own economy? Did Kim Il Sung sense that his time was slipping away, that he would have to act quickly or else lose out to South Korea? Or were there other reasons for North Korea's militancy? It is interesting if you look at our documents here. Something that really excites me is that now we have materials from the South Korean foreign ministry archive, South Korean analysis of North Korea's intentions. We also have the same from East European allies of North Korea. Something that comes across from this analysis is that they actually coincide. I want to show you something here. We have the February 4, 1968 Czechoslovak analysis from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which argues that, "The leadership of the KWP is following with growing anxiety the development in South Korea where younger, more flexible state leadership has been able to bring the country [back] from the brink of total collapse after the fall of Syngman Rhee and has been successful in more-or-less stabilizing conditions in the country with the help of foreign capital, mainly from the U.S., Japan, and West Germany." The Czechoslovak document here argues that the cause was basically economic. They were afraid that South Korea was getting ahead, that it was time to act. Now we turn to South Korean analysis of the same situation, from the same year. You know, the analysis is only separated by a few days. The South Korean perspective follows: "If we limit analysis to the North Korean puppet regime itself, the recent rapid economic development in South Korea and consequent prosperity of people living there and its status in the international society are a transformation which the puppet regime in North Korea can hardly accept, and if the situation continues, it will become a serious threat to the existence of the North Korean puppet regime." That is very interesting. We have two analyses on opposite sides of the Cold

War basically arguing the same thing. I want our policy-makers and participants to reflect on this. Does that hit the nail on the head? Is that why North Korea became more militant in '66, or were there other reasons? The other question, also a big question, is to what extent were North Korea's socialist allies able to influence North Korean behavior?

It has been something of a popular argument in recent historiography among scholars that North Korea was very difficult and that it did not listen to the advice of its socialist neighbors, such as the Soviet Union and China. However, if we look at materials in this document reader, we have a speech by Soviet General Secretary Brezhnev on page 519 in which he argues that the Soviet Union actually had a lot of influence. I quote, "We managed to exert considerable dissuading influence on the leadership of the DPRK." That is on page 519 of the document reader. So, did the Soviet Union have any influence or did it not? Did other socialist allies have influence or did they not? And with that, I pass on to Professor Ryoo.

RYOO: Good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen. I believe that the moment in history which we are discussing, the period from 1966 to 1969, is the most important moment for both North Korea and South Korea. This is especially true for North Korea. Its political regime underwent a fundamental change during this period in history, as I have argued.

My first question is related to Sergey's first question. I would like to shed more light on the domestic cause of North Korea's 1968 and 1969 outward provocation, especially as it concerns South Korea. We have discussed and we have heard mainly from the veterans. They have described, citing many documents, the external causes, the external intentions toward the outside world, which is a very important factor. We heard that North Korea sought to provide help to the Vietnamese Communist Party in Vietnam as it faced the United States in war. As such, the first major cause was to help with the Vietnamese war. The second intention of North Korean was to communize the entire Korean peninsula. The first cause is international, the second is Korean. Thirdly, I would like to ask the former minister of unification, Kang In-Deok, who was in charge of gathering information on Vietnam as well as intelligence on the domestic political and military situation in North Korea, to what extent did you think the domestic factor



RYOO KIHJAE

was related to the North Korean intention to provoke South Korea and the United States through the Blue House raid and the Pueblo incident? As is well known, at those times, North Korea had a serious political struggle, a rivalry. How did the political struggle and domestic rivalry influence North Korea's external policy towards South Korea? Also, how did you incorporate the information and intelligence cooperation with the United States? How did you share—to what extent did you share the information about the domestic political situation with the United States intelligence departments and organizations?

My second question is to Ambassador Brie. In the briefing book, I found very interesting documents. February 2, 1968 from the East German Embassy in Pyongyang to the GDR foreign ministry—"There was much talk in this context that the DPRK would possess nuclear weapons. People are said to be convinced that, in case of war, the Soviet Union would fight on the side of the DPRK using nuclear weapons. China would also do so because the Pueblo had invaded the territorial waters of the DPRK, and China would take sides in the wake of such an outrageous provocation." I think it is not so convincing. To what extent did you evaluate the credibility of rumors such as this? From what sources did these rumors spread? For example, was it part of the Korean Worker's Party's intentional policy or something of that nature? I believe the mention of nuclear weapons is a very strange thing, I cannot imagine why they mentioned nuclear retaliation and cooperation with the Soviet Bloc. How did you evaluate the credibility of this rumor? Thank you.

SCHAEFER: Thank you both very much. I think we now want to focus on what both Sergey and Kihl Jae have stressed, and I think the major points for this morning's first panel will be on North Korean intentions in the period between 1965 and 1969 and then the causes of the policy shift and the increase in militancy of the North Korean regime. Secondly, we will talk about the position of the DPRK within in the Socialist system. That is, what kind of influence, if at all, did the Allies and, in particular, the Soviet Union, which is the ally that really counted, have on the DPRK in this period? Of course, we will start with an extensive account from Ambassador Brie, but I also intend to call on both the U.S. and Korean witnesses and participants to reflect on what they thought at the time from their

intelligence information. What was the position of the North Koreans within the Communist world, within the Communist bloc? Was it still a Communist bloc and how was North Korea positioned? What was known about the extent to which North Korea had conflicts with China or about its tense relations with the Soviet Union? We will first start with Ambassador Brie, who has been repeatedly called on. Ambassador Brie, I ask you to start with when you came to North Korea in 1965. I believe you were there when Kosygin visited, and then you actually lived through this shift between 1965 and 1967. Please reflect, Ambassador Brie, on how North Korean intentions and policies evolved between 1965 and 1967.

BRIE: First of all, the situation developing in Korea was very difficult, because there was no possibility of obtaining reliable information, not on [North Korea's] economic methods, not on military methods. From the Chinese side, it was not possible to get any statement about their position and their intentions regarding the situation in Korea. From the Soviet side, there was readiness to improve the economic situation with North Korea, but the military assistance was limited only to defensive purposes, and all demands by the North Koreans to get the most modern weapons were not fulfilled. The Soviet Embassy had only limited trust in the policy of North Korea. Yesterday and also today, there was a lot of discussion about the intentions behind North Korea's temporary militant policy. I think there were two reasons for it: one was the internal motive of keeping control of the population with the daily threat of a coming war, and the second was to get more help from Russia economically and militarily because of the critical situation on the peninsula. I think in this respect, they succeeded. I may even say that this applies also to the other side. I mean, America also had to increase the military and economic aid to the South Korean Republic because of the situation.

OSTERMANN: Was this your perception at the time?

BRIE: No. That is my opinion now.

OSTERMANN: What was your perception at the time? That is what we are interested in.

“From the Soviet side, there was readiness

to improve the economic situation with North Korea, but the military assistance was limited only to defensive purposes, and all demands by the North Koreans to get the most modern weapons were not fulfilled. The Soviet Embassy had only limited trust in the policy of North Korea. “

BRIE: Regarding the pressure on Russia for military and economic aid, it was my perception at the time, and they succeeded in that. That is how I saw it at the time and how I see it today. If we speak about the attitude of the Eastern European countries toward the critical situation in Korea, of course, none of the East European countries were playing any real role in Korea. Our main concern was that the international situation might be affected by the situation in Korea and that the progress of disarmament and rapprochement between Soviet Union and America would be affected by the situation. That was our main concern when we looked at the situation in Korea. I do not think I can say anything more.

SCHAEFER: Why do you think North Korea gave up the hope for peaceful unification? In your 1967 cable which was quoted by Dr. Ostermann you wrote, "they have given up on the peaceful way of reunifying." Why did they arrive at this very militant, and, as you write in your report, even "adventurous" decision?

BRIE: Regarding my position on why North Korea was adventurous, I am of the opinion that it was to demand more economic and military help—that is easy to understand. However, there are a lot of contradictions regarding peaceful unification. In the official propaganda of 1965, there was never any vote against peaceful unification, but in some official talks at high levels, Kim Il Sung repeats this slogan again without meaning it, but he did, of course, because he sometimes was inclined to adapt his words to the person visiting him. I think Kim Il Sung knew that his policy regarding the Republic of Korea had failed, because at the time we are speaking of now, South Korea was a stable country and he knew that he could not expect sympathy from the majority of the people of Korea.

SCHAEFER: But it was different at the beginning. You mentioned that you had arrived in 1965, and you were present when there was this quite important visit by Soviet Prime Minister Kosygin to North Korea. What was the situation back then, and why did it change?



AMBASSADOR HORST BRIE

BRIE: No, the change in the situation was not related to the point of view of Mr. Kosygin, because Kosygin was one of the few very realistic Soviet politicians. He was the last one who had this critical discussion with Mao Zedong on the question of war and peace, and so he knew how explosive the situation could be because of such things. When he was in Korea, his main intention was to gain greater influence through economic relations with North Korea and to grant a limited increase in military assistance, which was not negotiated by others. He gave assurances that something would be done.

SCHAEFER: When the Soviet Union found out that China and North Korea had major tensions over the Cultural Revolution and when North Korea was very critical of China in 1966 and the years to follow, did the Soviet Union then view the DPRK as an ally? Did the Soviet Union see it as a chance to get closer to North Korea and to get them away from the Chinese?

BRIE: We always use the words Soviet bloc, but we are speaking about a time when the real united or unified bloc no longer existed. The process was already starting; the unity of this bloc was diminishing.

HERSHBERG: This is also for Ambassador Brie, and this follows on your last comment that the unity of the bloc was diminishing. I wonder if you could describe a little bit, based on your experience as ambassador in Pyongyang and also your broader diplomatic career; what was the atmosphere and the process like for the Central and East European ambassadors in terms of their relationships with each other and with the Soviet ambassador? Would you simply wait to receive directions on the policy line and the appropriate reaction from the Soviet ambas-

sador, or was there more of an independent process where different East European ambassadors could confer with each other without necessarily receiving guidance from the Soviet ambassador?

BRIE: For many years as a diplomat, I never got any instructions from the Soviet Union. I draw your attention to what you find in these documents, because you do tremendous work collecting the records from the Cold War. What you find in these documents—I speak now of documents from East Germany—the content in the official papers of East Germany from the Foreign Office is very limited. I will tell you why. You are all brought up and you all work in your political life in a country where foreign policy is made by the prime minister or by the government and the foreign office, but this was not true to East Germany, because the foreign policy in East Germany was done by party leadership. And I resigned from the Planning Department because I recognized that you could not do it this way. The planning for foreign policy was done somewhere else. That is why I do not know if you can acquire these papers. When I had something very serious to discuss, for instance a question of war and peace in Korea, I spoke to the leadership of the party because I knew that was the only place where, if I was able to convince them, I saw results. In the papers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, you won't find all of the answers about the views of people like me.

SUN: I have two questions. In those years, in 1965 through 1967, did you have regular or frequent meetings among the ambassadors of these satellite countries? And my second question is: what was the relative position of the East German ambassador among the satellite countries?

BRIE: You put me in a very difficult position. I only want to say something very general. The situation for healthy people in North Korea was so depressing that there was a tendency of demoralization. People became alcoholics and things of this nature. Please forgive me when I say this. Only very few withstood this. You must understand, people had no possibility to communicate, to move about, and it was very, very demoralizing. But please forget what I said about the situation with morale.

SCHAEFER: Was there any chance to get information out of North Korea for diplomats like you? How did you? Were you able to collect information in North Korea about what was going on?

BRIE: You should never give up. You get tiny, tiny stones that you can put together by observation, by speaking with people at a lower level. However on the official level, you couldn't get any information. Because even with economics, we realized that it was all—and I want to use a very bad word here—it was all bogus. What the Koreans had told us about the results of their economic progress we knew was not true, because we had access to certain factories where we delivered machinery and so on. We knew that factories were only operating temporarily or not working at all. We knew that there was no energy. These are all reasons why Korea could not wage an offensive war. They did not even have twenty-four hours of energy. They built all of their factories underground. They had their aircraft underground and deep in the mountains. They could start from there, but they had limited resources, limited energy, and very few spare parts. This we knew, and because of this knowledge we could draw certain conclusions.

OSTERMANN: Just to follow up on the earlier questions and in particular Ambassador Sun's points, could you talk a little bit about differences between the satellite embassies in their assessment? You hint, for example, in this one cable at slightly different interpretations. One may not want to overestimate those differences, but were there different schools of thinking about what was going on? Were there deeper differences? Then the second question, to follow up on what you just said about the importance of the party, what we have from you are cables to the Foreign Ministry. Was there ever any occasion in those years that you were there where you contacted the party leadership directly?

BRIE: Every year. Every year I did this.

OSTERMANN: Could you describe that and elaborate a little bit more?

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about the results of their economic progress we knew was not true, because we had access to certain factories where we delivered machinery and so on. We knew that factories were only operating temporarily or not working at all. We knew that there was no energy.”

BRIE: Well, I had the advantage of having a personal relationship with Honecker, and to a certain extent, I had the trust of Ulbricht when he was in power. You see, it was like this when there were very critical questions. Most bureaucrats were very hesitant to face the leadership with these things. For instance, when the Chinese threatened us not to come to the Leipzig Fair, which was for us the most important trade fair in the National League, unless we gave limited possibility also for the works of Mao Zedong, my ambassador said, "Oh, that's a very difficult question. You better go to Berlin and settle this." And I went to the Minister, and he said, "Oh, that is very critical. You better go to Ulbricht." He had a solution, but nobody wanted to touch that issue.

OSTERMANN: Do you remember such instances regarding North Korea?

BRIE: It is not clear but I remember the question, "Are we facing danger of a war on the Korean Peninsula?" I denied the possibility of this. I said, "How could such a war, I mean, a real war start?" The Russians didn't want it because Russia is a neighboring country of North Korea, and China is a neighboring country of North Korea. And Kim Il Sung knew that he could not hope to get the full support of those two powers. The other problem was that, and this is mentioned in the documents, all of this happened at the height of the Vietnamese War. We also knew that America was not interested. When we read these materials in the document reader, you can see that America, in this critical situation, played a brilliant role by not giving up anything but also by preventing the crisis from developing further.

OSTERMANN: Thank you. This is very helpful. If you could just respond to that first question regarding differences, maybe in regard to different schools of thought.

BRIE: Yes, I will. At that time, Ceaușescu, Tito and others, conducted a very independent policy toward Russia. And, of course, this was also the case for Kim Il Sung. Romania refused to take part in party leadership conferences. So did Korea and China. There was great assistance for Kim Il Sung because Kim Il Sung mandates that if everybody takes part then we will take part. It was very easy for

him to answer this question. It was also up to the individual. At first, some people really take their work seriously and try to find answers, and some are just flexible.

OSTERMANN: Who were the serious ones?

BRIE: I don't want give notes, please. That would be not fair. Please do not ask.

PERSON: I have an question about gathering information. According to Bernd Schaefer's research with East German documents and to what you have already described, the North Koreans did their best to keep even fraternal allies isolated. It was difficult to obtain information on what was happening inside the party, inside the country. Up until the late 1950s, the Soviets had a more or less reliable source of information in the Soviet Koreans, these ethnic Koreans who had lived in the Soviet Union. This source was no longer there after their purge in the late 1950s.

BRIE: That was like all of the Chinese people, the Chinese who came from north of China.

PERSON: Right, but from the late 1950s, they were also purged, the Soviet-Koreans and the Chinese-Koreans were no longer a source. Did the fraternal countries find another source for gathering information? Did the East German Embassy in the 1960s find a new source? Did you have a network for gathering intelligence in North Korea?

BRIE: No, we didn't have any networks, we didn't have any spy cells. We only kept our eyes open, and they gave us what we got in one hour's talk. We retained maybe five minutes of it. It was very difficult, but you should not give up if you have such a job. However, we could not get reliable information. We could not even find enough information to put together. I think if you are in prison, and you are clever, you might get more [information] out of prison than you could get out of North Korea.

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SCHAEFER: To the credit of your embassy, the Korean-speaking women of your embassy had quite some contact, and really did some good reports. They had, in fact, a little network. Okay, we now have two questions here. Sergey first, and then Bill Stueck.

RADCHENKO: It is just a follow-up, a little bit provocative. I know Ambassador Brie asked us to forget about it, but I just want you to elaborate a little bit about this so-called drinking problem. Did people go crazy there? It is very important to understand, the positions of the ambassadors and how they lived. What was your—

BRIE: Not all of them became alcoholics.

RADCHENKO: Not all of them. Could you elaborate that?

BRIE: No.

RADCHENKO: No? Okay, a follow up question is what did you observe about the increasing militarization of life in Korea from 1966 to 1968? Could you give some examples? How did it feel?

BRIE: All public demonstrations which were made at this time were not spontaneous. They were all done under strict control. They were permanently mobilizing. From time to time, people were taken out of their jobs and put into the army. All of this was going on, and the newspaper was always proclaiming that aggression could come at any day.

STUECK: I am curious about how you folks explained the conditions in North Korea. Did you attribute those conditions to the nature of the North Koreans, or to the nature of the situation involving South Korea?

BRIE: No, no. It was the system in Korea, I would say.

STUECK: How was North Korea's system distinct from the systems in other Communist countries?

BRIE: You could not apply such a system in an Eastern European country.

STUECK: And to what did you attribute the existence of that particular system in North Korea?

BRIE: It is very difficult to answer this question. I have always tried to analyze things in a broad context. For three months before I go into a country, I try to study that country's development, and I knew that Korea was emerging from the most brutal colonial system of Japan. Nobody in Korea before independence had any experience in a Democratic society. Many Asian countries are very absolute. Even in such a prosperous country like Singapore, they barely have a one-party system. In Asian countries such as China, there was never any democratic system.

HERSHBERG: I am sorry to dwell on this so much. However, in order to get to the bottom of this issue of morale, just speaking for yourself and not for other persons, when you saw the nature of the regime up close and the problems—

BRIE: It was very depressing.

HERSHBERG: But what I am wondering gets into the role of diplomats in these situations. In your own thoughts, did you feel that maybe it was not such a great policy to be essentially on the side of this regime, or did you simply take the historical circumstances into account? Did you think "We are still on their side. We should be on their side. I am doing the right thing supporting them. This is simply a problem of development?"

BRIE: In newspaper articles and statements we were on their side but not in reality.



JAMES HERSHBERG

STUECK: You mention in your document that there were increasingly reactionary policies in South Korea. Did you have a sense that something very dynamic was going on in South Korea that was pulling South Korea out of a situation that was maybe not equally depressing as what you were experiencing in North Korea, but certainly not optimistic?

BRIE: Korea developed as a democratic country, but it took some years.

STUECK: I meant from the perspective of 1966 to '68. Obviously, South Korea was not fully democratic at the time. When you say reactionary, what do you mean? What does that mean to you in '67?

BRIE: Regarding that time period, I am saying that they did not have the same kind of labor movement, trade union movement. Maybe others saw it differently, but I was younger at this time, as Minister Kang said yesterday. In your youth, you often see things as black and white.

OSTERMANN: Just to follow up, Sergey Raachenko and Ryoo Kihljae asked about this transformation that was taking place in South Korea. Beyond the labor movement at the time, what was your sense of how South Korea was developing in 1967 and 1968?

BRIE: I must admit that the only information I had about South Korea was from *Far Eastern Economic Review* and economics newspapers. I had never gotten any information about South Korea from my government or from my employers.

SCHAEFER: Okay. One last one and I then I think we will open it up to the Americans.

LEONARD: I want to express to the Ambassador that his reports at the end of 1967 are extraordinary, and I certainly offer my compliments as a professional.

BRIE: No, no, it is not as good as you say.

LEONARD: Well, it is much better than anything I saw coming from our Central Intelligence Agency or even from our Bureau of INR, Intelligence and Research, but with regard to his last question about South Korea, weren't the members of the NNSC, the neutral nations, I think that's—including Poland and Czechoslovakia, the neutral nations, whatever they were called, were they not traveling back and forth between Pyongyang and Seoul?

BRIE: Yes, that is true. And that was only one of my sources of information because I was not entitled to go to Panmunjeom unless they took me there. They took me there several times. That was for me a great gift because I could watch the--

LEONARD: I presume they had observations about the situation in South Korea that rather contrasted with the situation in North Korea.

BRIE: For me it was just the opportunity. I do not know exactly how far it was, but I remember that there were 200 or 300 kilometers, of countryside, harvest, and livestock to observe, and there was also this unbelievable spectacle going on there. I am not referring to the serious negotiations. I am referring to these people who were there complaining that the food was on the other side of the bowl and things of that nature which were forbidden. It was unbelievable.

SCHAEFER: I will take two more questions, and then I wanted to open it up to American analysis of the situation. Are there any follow-up questions right now to Ambassador Brie? I'll take questions from Bob Wampler and Ambassador Sun and then we will open it up to Tom Hughes.

WAMPLER: As a historian, I am getting frustrated with talking about states as opposed to people. It just seems like we have an opportunity here. I would like to understand or hear what Ambassador Brie has to say about his assessment of Kim Il Sung. You know, what was this person like? What was driving him? Did anybody influence him? You had to assess this person for your government or the party. How did you assess him?

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BRIE: I assessed him as a very, very skillful politician, I mean, in regards to gaining and preserving power. I do not know if this is understood in all parts of the world. He was like a Byzantine ruler. He succeeded in getting all people who could be dangerous to his power out of the leadership. I cannot remember which American said this, I think it was Nixon, who said, "He's a skillful man; one must take him, in this respect, seriously." I think this is true because you must imagine that he was installed by the Soviet Union as, I believe, an officer of the Red Army, and built up all these nice worship places all over Korea where he had allegedly fought, although he had never been there in his lifetime. There has already been a question as to why I think he feared war. It was because if a war would have broken out in Korea, he would have lost his power, because during the Korean War he was not playing any role. China and Russia were in control of everything. He knew that if it came to a war, he would have lost his power. Nobody would have kept him in power if there was a new Korean War.

CUTLER: This is a question, not a comment, and I am sure the answer is someplace in that marvelous collection of documents. I have yet to go all the way through every page. However, I seem to recall a, perhaps, particularly significant speech by Kim Il Sung in December of 1967 which would have been only a month or so before the Blue House Raid and Pueblo incident. I seem to recall—because I was just arriving in Korea at that time—that the analysts were taking a particularly keen look at this speech. Does anybody recall that? If so, would that help in any way to explain what was about to happen? It is someplace in the documents here. Does it ring any bells? It may be entirely my faulty memory.³

OSTERMANN: Or a good lead to follow up.

SCHAEFER: We will follow it up. Ambassador Sun.

SUN: Yes, I have just one simple question which is very important to me as a diplomat. The reports you sent back to the Foreign Ministry from Pyongyang are excellent, but is this a comprehensive annual report that you sent in December or is this the *ad hoc* report you sent—

BRIE: My goodbye letter.

SUN: But was the letter sent once every year, or—

BRIE: No, I had concluded my job there. When I finished a mission abroad I always sent a report at the end. An end of tour report?

SUN: Oh, yes. I see.

OSTERMANN: But you do say at the beginning of your cable that we've looked at—the 8 December, 1967 cable—that the foreign ministry had repeatedly asked about the situation at the armistice line. So there was concern in East Berlin with this situation, and this was not just your final report—and you put everything in?

BRIE: There was still a special relationship between me and the ambassador of China when I wrote this in secrecy, so I knew that one could trust him, and even if I said something that was not welcome, it wouldn't have done any harm to me.

OSTERMANN: Thank you. One more follow up question, if I may. You talk on several occasions about temporary limited conflict. What did you have in mind at the time? Was this a very real possibility?

BRIE: Actually, conflicts were taking place every month, every week, and I think this was intended by Kim Il Sung. He needed two things for the strengthening of his power. Internally, he had to paint the picture in the mind of his people that war could break out any day. He had to convince them that they had to prepare for it. Secondly, he had to get more economic and military help from those who were willing to give it to him.

SCHAEFER: We will take final follow-up questions.

“... conflicts were taking place

every month, every week, and I think this was intended by Kim Il Sung. He needed two things for the strengthening of his power. Internally, he had to paint the picture in the mind of his people that war could break out any day. He had to convince them that they had to prepare for it. Secondly, he had to get more economic and military help from those who were willing to give it to him.”



RYOO KIHJAE

SZALONTAI: I would like to ask you, Mr. Ambassador: During the time when you were there, were you ever under the impression, or was it ever the impression of your colleagues, that some of these incidents along the DMZ were possibly provoked by the South Korean or the American side? Or did you feel that mostly North Korea was responsible or that both sides were responsible? What was your impression at that time?

BRIE: First of all, I must say, we could not check what happened from the South Korean side except by reading newspapers because we had no source from the South regarding what their intentions were. However, on the side of the North, I realized that they were interested in such militant actions.

PARK: I have a very simple question. There is one incident in South Korea that is very closely related to West Germany at the time. Six or seven Korean artists and intellectuals were arrested by the Korean CIA on suspicion of North Korean espionage. They visited North Korea before 1967 through the east valley, and they were arrested in 1967. Then they went back to South Korea and to prison. Did you hear about this?

BRIE: No, I don't remember.

PARK: I see. Thank you.

RYOO: In my first question to Minister Kang, I asked how the South Korean intelligence agency, the KCIA, evaluated North Korean domestic factors in understanding North Korea's provocations. Maybe this document from the East German Embassy in Pyongyang to East Germany on December of 22, 1967, can shed light on the issue. In the first summary of information, the first section is about domestic and political

affairs. The first clause reads as follows: In the areas of domestic and foreign policy, the conflict between the heightened nationalistic outlook of the KWP [Korean Worker's Party] and the government of the DPRK has intensified. Based on this heightened conflict, an opposition movement has developed in the party leadership over the stance on domestic policies." This is perhaps a reference to the so-called 'Kapsan faction,' the former members of the Kapsan Operations Committee from before Korea's liberation in 1945, which was purged in May 1967. Continuing, "In my opinion, this opposition group in the party leadership does not show any essential change in the nationalistic policy, but rather a certain modification of the contemporary policy can be seen."

Based on this document, the differences between the Kapsan faction and the ruling forces of the KWP seem to be in domestic policy, not foreign policy. I do not know the connection between the purge of the Kapsan faction and changes that occurred in the DPRK's foreign policy after the purge of the Kapsan faction. How could the purge be linked to North Korea's outward provocations? After the purge of the Kapsan faction, the newly reshuffled cadres came to be in charge of South Korea policy. For example, Lee Hyosoon, who was one of the main figures of the Kapsan faction, was purged in 1967. He had been in charge of South Korea policy, and he had dispatched spies to South Korea before 1967. After he was purged, that same position was held by a member of the partisan group, Heo Bonghak. North Korea's South Korea policy became a more militaristic and active policy of provocation. My question is; what is the connection between the purge of the Kapsan faction and North Korea's hostile policy toward South Korea? How do you evaluate the linkage?

BRIE: I cannot answer this question because I do not know the answer. My deep conviction was that the only two aspects which were moving Kim Il Sung was militant nationalism, nationalistic motivation. Communism did not mean anything to him other than the aspect of power. For the future, one day we will, I hope, see the unification of Korea. This nationalistic feeling can be used by South Korea in achieving it. That is my private opinion.

SCHAEFER: I finally now call on Tom Hughes and I apologize that it took so long. We really look forward to the American assessment of North Korean's position within the socialist world at that time.

HUGHES: The question was raised about bloc influence and bloc relations and there was a certain irony at work in Washington surrounding this whole question of the bloc and how much of a bloc there was. Americans watched and reacted to a changing rhetoric as well as changing reality about the so called "Communist bloc" in the 1960's in various ways. Some elements of the United States government clearly saw a gradual disintegration of the so-called bloc, and others had a big personal stake in perpetuating the notion of bloc rhetoric, if not reality. Assistant for National Security Affairs Walt Rostow for instance, is a major case in point. I am thinking of the ironic role of Jerzy Michalowski, the Polish ambassador in Washington. He was a very intelligent, very charming man who had been ambassador to London and ambassador to Hanoi. He had a picture of George V and of Ho Chi Minh on his desk. He was quite active in suggesting the possibility of a Polish role, but when word reached the press that Rostow and others were talking about possibly seizing a North Korean ship in retaliation to the Pueblo capture, Michalowski arrived on the scene and said something to the effect of, "We want you to know that"—and I think this is in the document somewhere—"We want you to know that we in the bloc would be unable to take any helpful initiatives if you went ahead and escalated the crisis in the way of capturing the ship." And he would use the phrase "we in the bloc." This pleased people who were interested in perpetuating the bloc notion. Here, an active member of the so-called bloc, referred to the bloc. This encouraged the people who wanted to keep talking bloc language in Washington, to persist. In a way, this artificially helped perpetuate the bloc notion beyond its actual lifetime. We were left guessing, for instance, in the Michalowski case whether he was often a product of his own sort of rhetoric, whether he hoped that using bloc language would puff up the possible inflated role which Poland might be able to play in the situation. It was let loose in the great democracy of Washington. This kind of language would reverberate around. It was used by people that were not intended to use it, and it was something that our analysts had to watch carefully.

SCHAEFER: Did you consider North Korea as part of the bloc, of which bloc?

HUGHES: We didn't use bloc language. We did not use it, but I was saying that, rhetorically in Washington, there was an artificial perpetuation of the life of the bloc that therefore added currency on Capitol Hill with the press, the public, and those people in the administration who had a stake in continuing the bloc language.

SCHAEFER: How was North Korea perceived within the different agencies?

HUGHES: Well, if there was a bloc, North Korea was perceived as being part of it. It was used, therefore, to prove the collusion, to prove the conspiracy, and to prove Russian connections with the North Korean activity.

SCHAEFER: Did you have any clues on Chinese-North Korean relations at the time, which at that time were tense?

HUGHES: Not especially. I was just referring basically here to the semantic point that the use of the bloc terminology got in the way of a lot of things, including some serious analysis.

RADCHENKO: But wasn't there a bloc?

HUGHES: Well, that is the argument: how much of a bloc was there and when and for how long.

SCHAEFER: What was the position of the U.S. government in 1968? How much of a bloc was still there?

HUGHES: I think you really must stop talking about the position of the United States government. We talked about this yesterday.

SCHAEFER: I meant within the United States government. I was not referring to the government's official position.

**"As seen from
the American
Embassy
in Seoul,**

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infiltrations and the
attacks across the
DMZ. I think there
were something
like 348 individual
incidents during
1967, which is
almost one a day.
And then this
leads right to the
question of why?"

HUGHES: In the 1960s, Lyndon Johnson was the president, but he was really the Senate majority leader. He was not the president of the United States. His interests were Capitol Hill and votes. This is what he knew about. This is what he counted. To look for sustained serious policy, the inability to shift policy, is a mistake. As a matter of fact, speaking generally, I was struck listening to this whole discussion yesterday because in a sense, on the Communist side of the argument, you have relatively more coherent, reliable foreign policies. There were serious foreign policies. They were reacting to other serious foreign policies. On the American side, you have the great democratic free-for-all foreign policy, and this is not stable. It was not something to be analyzed in the same terms as communist policy. This is the difference, partly, between authoritarianism and democracy, but things were very much up for grabs in Washington. There were changes. There were changes of personnel and there were changes in the minds of people who were in the government. Clifford moves from being a hawk to a dove rather rapidly. The wise men, who one day were saying, "persist in the Vietnam War," turned around and said, "forget it." This is something that doesn't occur, I think, in authoritarian governments.

SCHAEFER: Are there any other comments or questions on the American perceptions of North Korea at the time?

PARK: I think that the situation in 1967 was like that of 1949, one year before the Korean War. As someone mentioned yesterday, the clashes in 1967 increased tenfold compared to 1966 to an estimated 500 times in a year. However, I found the following point very interesting. General Bonesteel, the United Nations commander at the time, the U.S. ambassador, and even the State Department clearly had an idea at the time that the clashes and the conflicts were escalating. So the idea may have occurred that a very dangerous situation like the Korean War, or a second front line would open up on the Korean Peninsula along with the Vietnam War. However, I found a very interesting thing repeated again and again in State Department and the other intelligence reports. They stated that there was no possibility of total war breaking out on the Korean Peninsula. I wonder where the U.S. side was able to get that kind of information. Was it from the Eastern European countries or was it from Russia? Why did the U.S. at that time believe



BERND SCHAEFER

that a second Korean War would not start in spite of the very serious situation in 1967 and 1968?

CUTLER: As seen from the American Embassy in Seoul, there definitely was a dramatic increase in the infiltrations and the attacks across the DMZ. I think there were something like 348 individual incidents during 1967, which is almost one a day. And then this leads right to the question of why? Why, as we have been discussing? I think that our thinking at the time was that the clashes were for internal reasons, that Kim Il Sung wanted to show that, by God, there was still an enemy out there and that reunification at some point was still a goal. I also think that there may also have been some military and intelligence pressure from within his regime that said let's keep doing something. But in any case, our thinking was that perhaps this was not just a way of showing that Pyongyang still counted for something in the South, but also perhaps to collect intelligence. I am interested in any comments on that. A lot of these infiltrations were almost irrational in our view. They were almost suicidal. Every day there would be some landing or some fisherman would be taken and so on. I do not know, frankly, how many. I cannot recall how many South Koreans may have been abducted, kidnapped and taken back for intelligence purposes, recruitment. Was it possible that Kim Il Sung was operating under some sort of delusion that by doing this he could in fact give rise to some sort of a resurrection, some sort of a recruitment of enough people by showing the power of the North and intimidating the South to the point where there is a weakening of support for the government in Seoul? I don't know. We had great trouble coming up with a rational explanation for these kinds of almost suicidal infiltrations. I do wonder if they were designed to collect intelligence and to actually lay the foundation for some



PARK CHUNG HEE
AND LYNDON JOHNSON

sort of eventual major military action against the South. I do not think that our intelligence showed that there was a serious mobilization in the North and a plan to actually start a war. This was a way of looking ahead, perhaps satisfying certain pressures in the North for action and also for keeping the pot boiling in the South. I am very interested in others' perceptions.

BRIE: May I ask you sir, by these dramatic incidents, did the North Koreans mean, for the first time, to enter direct talks with the Americans.

CUTLER: Well, that was a result of the Pueblo incident.

BRIE: But it hadn't resulted from their attacks against American ships or all of these other provocations?

CUTLER: There had been discussions at Panmunjom all the way along but not bilateral discussions.

BRIE: That's what I mean. Maybe he intended to achieve bilateral talks by being militant.

CUTLER: I do not see how that would have occurred just by virtue of the infiltrations. When it came to capturing an American ship, that was another matter.

BRIE: Of course, I admire very much that America reacted by giving priority to the humanitarian aspect of all of this.

SCHAEFER: Ambassador Kang, would you want to comment on what Ambassador Cutler was asking about the infiltrations and how they were perceived at the time? Perhaps you could also comment on the extent to which you sought information on North Korea's role in the Communist bloc?

KANG: As I have been stating since yesterday—there were a number of significant changes that occurred between 1961 and 1969 in the internal situation of North

Korea. Professor Ryoo Kihljae, have you read the book called *The History of North Korean Operations Against South Korea* that is based on declassified material?

RYOO: No, I have not.

KANG: The book, although published in 1974, has a lot of information on the changes that occurred in North Korea and it is based on the assessment of our analysts at the KCIA. We excluded secret matters but it is still useful and you will be able to understand the trend.

What I want to say is that every time they had a party congress, they announced a policy operation against South Korea. For example, as I said yesterday, in 1961 they announced three capabilities for revolutionizing South Korea, and in December 1962, in the fifth plenum of the fourth congress, they announced the four major military doctrines. At the Korean Workers' Party delegates conference held in October of 1966 a doctrine involving legal, illegal; violent, non-violent; economic struggle and political struggle; small scale struggle and large scale struggle; and a combination thereof was announced. Immediately following the announcement of this doctrine, as I stated yesterday, a special force of troops was organized within the Korean People's Army. Unit 124 was created and led to the attack on January 21st on the Blue House in 1968.

The question asked by Professor Ryoo Kihl-jae concerns a very major change in North Korea in April of 1967. That is the purging of the Kapsan faction in North Korea, which paved the way for the dictatorship of Kim Jong Il himself, the heir of Kim Il Sung. It was our assessment that in order to pave the way for the dictatorship of Kim Jong Il, the heir, North Korea had no other recourse but to rely on a hard-line policy against South Korea. But one thing we should keep in mind is that in 1965, normalization of relations between South Korea and Japan was realized.

Following the normalization, the South Korean economic process really began to surpass that of the North Korean economy. North Korea established the seven-year economic development plan in 1961 at its fourth party congress. It was to be completed by 1967, but it ended up being a total failure. The reason for the failure was that there was no aid from the Soviet Union and also from China

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the seven-year economic development plan in 1961 at its fourth party congress. It was to be completed by 1967, but it ended up being a total failure. The reason for the failure was that there was no aid from the Soviet Union and also from China because of the Cultural Revolution.”

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because of the Cultural Revolution. With no assistance, failure was inevitable. We at the KCIA were on top of the North Korean situation at the time in 1966, and we were beginning to feel that we were going to prevail over North Korea in our competition for economic investment.

In 1974, a nine-volume work called *Comparison of the North and South Korean Economies* was published. Beginning in 1968, it was authored by a total of 1,000 different writers and was not completed until the early 1970s. Of the 1000 writers, 800 were technicians and about 200 were economists. It is a very comprehensive book including topics such as inter-finance and the budget, industry, and everything else. In 1969 a comparison of North and South Korea's economic capacity was made through the comparison of per capita income.

We made a report to the president at the beginning of 1969 showing that the economic disparity between North and South Korea tipped in the favor of South Korea. South Korean per capita income in 1969 was \$205 to \$208, and North Korean per capita income was between \$194 and \$197. Since the South Korean population was many times the size of the North Korean population, we were clearly ahead. That was the gist of my report to the president. I cannot forget how overjoyed the president was with this report. He went on to comment that if our situation becomes like that of East and West Germany's, we would then take initiative on the unification issue.

With the balance of economic power having tipped in South Korea's favor. I assume that the North was distressed at this change. The twentieth plenum of the fourth central committee meeting was held in December of 1969. Their party made official acknowledgement that their seven-year economic development plan had not been implemented as well as planned. Secondly, they discussed their plans regarding the implementation of the six-year economic development plan in which they anticipated the importation of further capital from the Soviet Union and China. Prior to that, North Korea's relations with the Soviet Union improved somewhat when Premier Kosygin paid a visit to Pyongyang in 1965 on his way back from Hanoi.

Because China was in the middle of the Cultural Revolution, there was no hope of receiving Chinese aid. As such, discussion centered on what they could do about introducing foreign capital. They didn't want discussion about when they

should invite the communist delegates from China and Japan to North Korea's fifth party congress. They debated over whether they should try to get assistance from Communist Party delegates from China and Japan and whether, if assistance was not forthcoming, they should invite them. We collected a wealth of information on the so-called conflicts between North Korea and the PRC between 1966 and 1968.

I forgot most of them but I seem to remember one incident that I want to share with you. One day, intelligence information came from North Korea that North Korea was moving cement blocks to the Yalu River. They were very thick and large concrete blocks. We began wondering why they were transporting these things to the North Korea-China border area. We learned later that the border between North Korea and China was shifting, because the deepest part of Yalu River is the actual border line between North Korea and China. The North Koreans were using concrete to prevent the water from flowing in a manner that would change the border in China's favor. In addition, these were to prevent war between China and North Korea.

Using loud speakers over the Yalu River, the Chinese Red Guards severely criticized Kim Il Sung. With such situations emerging, we would determine that there was no Communist bloc to speak of, that there was a definite rift between China and North Korea and the Soviet Union. There are many anecdotes surrounding this issue, so please refer to that book for further information.

One more thing, you talked about the sharing of intelligence information between South Korea and the U.S. My office was the only "open" office in the entire Korean CIA. It was open to the people from various embassies who were researching North Korea and especially to the CIA officers based in Seoul who were always voluntarily visiting my office. Since there also were many Korean CIA operatives that were present, we were able to engage in very free discussion on subjects concerning North Korea. Of course, I am uncertain whether these discussions were reported or not. As for official government documents on the North Korean situation at the time, I remember discussing it in detail, but I do not know how it became stated in the official reports.

Let me reiterate how important it was that the Kapsan faction in North Korea was purged. From North Korean material that was made available only much later,

“Let me reiterate how important it was that the Kapsan faction in North Korea was purged. From North Korean material that was made available only much later, we were able to determine that the purging of the Kapsan faction in 1967 was designed to pave the way for Kim Jong Il’s appearance.”

we were able to determine that the purging of the Kapsan faction in 1967 was designed to pave the way for Kim Jong Il’s appearance. I had no idea that Kim Jong Il was being prepared as an heir at the time. And the material released now by North Korea in the present states that Kim Jong Il was behind the taking of the Pueblo and the attack on the Blue House. I doubt this very much because he was born in 1942, thus he would have been only 25 years old in 1968. How could a 25 year-old eliminate such powerful military leaders as General Heo Bonghak, General Kim Jangbong, and Lieutenant-General Kim Jungtae. I highly doubt this, and I think it was done by Kim Il Sung himself to pave the way for his one-man dictatorship. The cause he put forth was self-reliance, *Juche sasang* in modernizing North Korea’s military. This one cause unhanded these powerful generals and Kim Il Sung got rid of them in order to pave the way for his one-man dictatorship since these people did not listen to him. This is shown in the unofficial report made by Kim Il Sung in the fourth KPA Party Committee meeting held in February 1969.

RYOO: Wait, I think you were slightly confused between 1967 and 1969.

KANG: And so after the Kapsan faction was removed in a purge, General Heo Bonghak was purged as a result of the Blue House raid. General Choi Hyeon, in 1969, became the minister of the People’s Armed Forces and O Jinu become chief of the politburo of the KPA. As such changes occurred in North Korea’s military leadership, there were also changes in North Korea’s policy toward the South. However, in 1967 when the Kapsan faction’s Lee Hyosoon, chief operator of South Korean operations, and Pak Geumcheol were purged, North Korea’s policy shifted to rely mainly on armed infiltration. This was the last of the Kapsan faction. They were all purged in November following the January 21st [Blue House raid] incident. When I went to Pyongyang in 1972, Kim Il Sung stood before us. I asked him, “Didn’t you attack in such a way?” And Kim Il Sung replied, “I had nothing to do with it. It was adventurists such as Heo Bonghak and Kim Jungtae acting on their own will. So I purged them.” It was apparent that they were not purged because of the failed attack on the Blue House but because they did not heed Kim Il Sung’s advice on reforming the North Korean military. Namely, they did not run the North Korean military in a self-reliant fashion based on the *juche* ideology. What

this meant was establishing a light infantry division, literally very lightly armed infantry units. It is described in reports of Kim Il Sung in 1969.

He had the following questions: Why did you bring in direct-firing guns (*chiksapo*) when in view of the mountainous nature of Korea, we should have had more Howitzers (*koksapo*)? Why are there many high-speed airplanes when slower airplanes could be more useful when Korea's mountainous terrain is taken into account? And so that is when North Korea adopted the Alien 2 crop duster plane. It is my view that the political change that took place during this period within North Korea heavily influenced North Korean policy towards South Korea. The South Korean economic development may have been one of the factors that influenced North Korean decision-making.

Still another factor was North Korea's desire to do its part in the international communist movement, especially by supporting the war in Vietnam. Some of you have mentioned other very unreasonable behavior of Kim Il Sung and I think we should come to grips with this. For example, you can identify a kind of mismatch between the actions of the North KPA and that of their foreign ministry. I think the lack of coordination resulted because the military followed one chain of command, whereas the ministry of foreign affairs had its own chain of command. It was up to Kim Il Sung to correct the discrepancy.

North Korean documents seem to always indicate very dogmatic and unreasonable decision-making. It is beyond our comprehension, but when it becomes very necessary in the final stage, Kim Il Sung makes the adjustment. That role, I assume, is now taken by Kim Jong Il. North Korea's decision-making process seems very unreasonable to us.

For example, North Korea's strategy against South Korea between 1961 and 1968 was very farfetched considering the North-South relations of the time. It had almost no possibility of success, but they still used it. As for us, there was no way to prevent this kind of behavior. We could only hinder it as much as possible. So we tried to prevent their actions with all of our efforts. I hope that you will keep this in mind.

LEONARD: First I would like to say how impressed I was by the quality of the analysis that Ambassador Brie was able to provide to his government in a very difficult situation. As I told him last night, I had a visit to Pyongyang in 1994. And in the course of the visit, I was with a non-official track two group of people, and

**"I think the
Blue House raid**

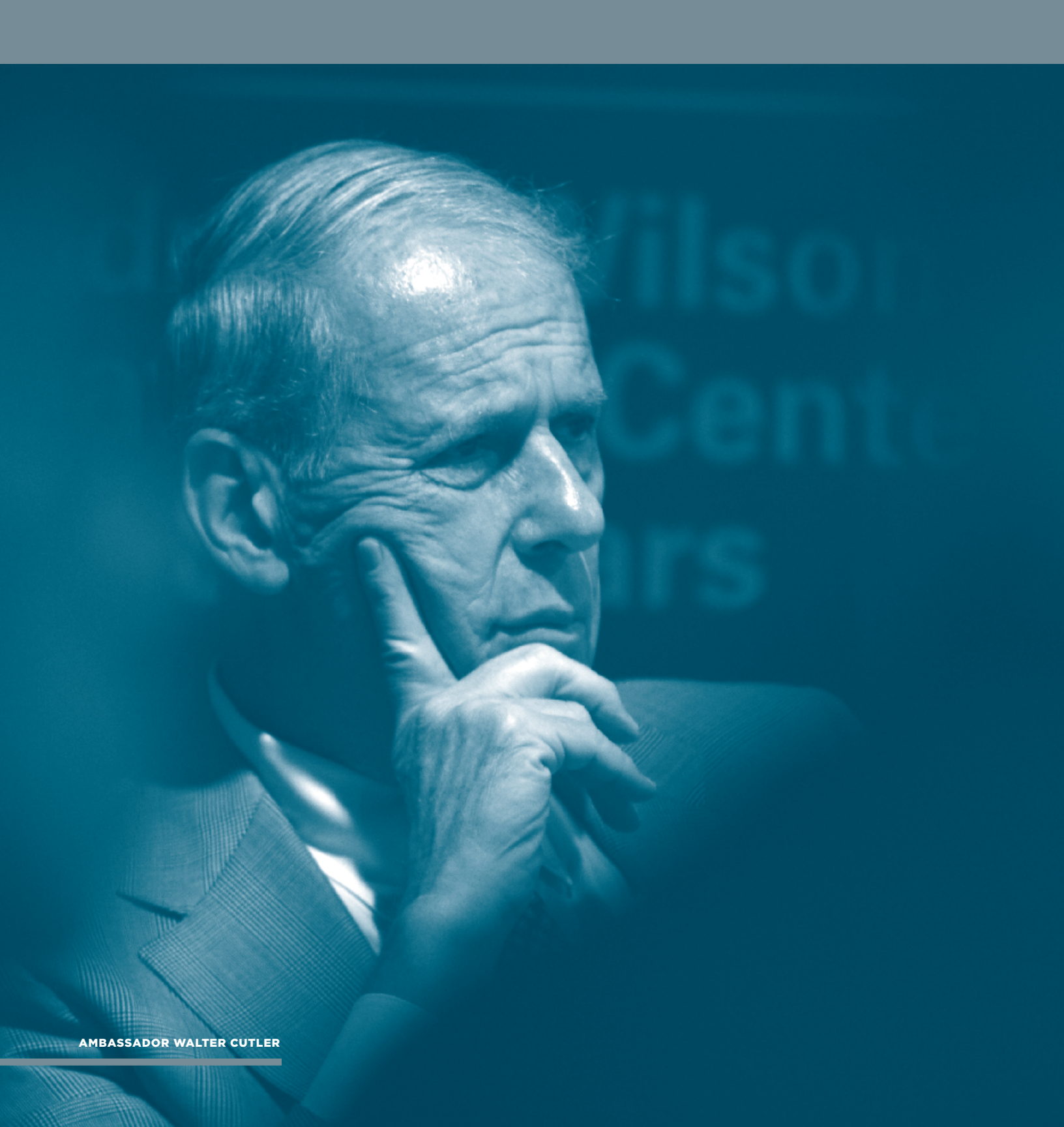
woke us up. We understood that this was something that was very different, and if there had been any more of a gap between the Blue House raid and the Pueblo, we might have taken the measures we should have taken to give the Pueblo protection in its mission."

we were entertained by a couple of different ambassadors there in Pyongyang. The situation there was, for them, simply awful, and that was 26, 27 years after the situation that ambassador Brie was exposed to. We were given a dinner, if I can remember correctly, by the Indian ambassador. We rang the doorbell and walked into the house. He immediately turned on his stereo, his Hi-Fi, as loud as he could—just blasting the entire house. I remember the Egyptian ambassador was there. There was quite a group of foreign ambassadors. Not all of them, by any means, were close friends of the United States in their national relations. And one after another, they were so eager to talk with us. We were visitors from another world, and they began to tell us the most derogatory and bitter comments about the DPRK and the situation within North Korea. There was a famine going on at the time, and they were well aware of this. They were unable to have any contacts outside of the very limited group of liaisons made available to them in the foreign ministry, but they knew what was happening in the countryside. I must say that this was the one element of the North Korean situation which I think the United States was well aware of all the way through. There were enough outside visitors going in and out of North Korea throughout the entire period of the 1950's, '60's, and '70's, that we knew very well what a desperate economic situation there was there and how the plans, such as the Seven Year Plan, were failing drastically. The only other information that I think we had available to us in 1967 and 1968, was numerical, quantitative information that Walt Cutler has referred to on the number of occasions, and although we knew that a certain number of these may have been initiated by the South Korean side, we knew the great bulk of them were North Korean enterprises. We could see that there was a bad situation. I think the Blue House raid, however, woke us up. We understood that this was something that was very different, and if there had been any more of a gap between the Blue House raid and the Pueblo, we might have taken the measures we should have taken to give the Pueblo protection in its mission. I do not think we would have called it off, but we might have done what we did not do, and that is have some air cover readily available.

I would like to add a word about the bloc, because, as Tom Hughes has said, there was a variety of views in Washington on the reality or unreality of the bloc. The bloc had different elements of solidarity within it, and when I left the Korean

desk, my next job was to serve as the U.S. representative in Geneva at the disarmament conference there. The disarmament conference was basically managed by the two co-chairmen, the U.S. ambassador and the Soviet ambassador. Whenever anything happened there, the two sides, the NATO bloc would meet, the—what we called the Eastern bloc would meet, and the non-aligned bloc would meet and discuss the situation. We knew very well what happened with the non-aligned bloc. The Soviet ambassador gave instructions to the other ambassadors in line with the position of the socialist bloc on whatever event was taking place, and with one exception, the Eastern bloc then carried out the instructions that were delivered by the Soviet ambassador. The one exception was Romania, and in this period, 1969, Romania began the divergence from its rather slavish solidarity with the Soviet Union, and under Ceaușescu began to take a different view on some things. I developed a warm personal relation with the Romanian ambassador and was able to talk with him in a way I was not able to talk with the Polish or the Czech representatives. There weren't any East German or other East European representatives there. Although the bloc had a certain solidarity even in 1969, we knew very well that the monolith had disintegrated long ago in the split between the Soviet Union and China in 1960-1961. As such, we were not under any illusion that this was the monolith that it had perhaps been or perhaps had never been at an earlier state. However, I want to underline that I do not think that we ever had in our materials on North Korea the kind of analysis that Ambassador Brie was presenting to his government back home. I wish we had. I think it would have been useful and might have helped us understand better what was going on there. I cannot recall anything from our CIA or anything that came to us from KCIA that was of the same analytical quality as what we have seen here in front of us this morning.

SCHAEFER: Well, thank you Ambassador Leonard, and thank you everybody for a really excellent panel this morning.



AMBASSADOR WALTER CUTLER

Panel IV

Confrontation Continues: Nixon's First Year and the Korean Peninsula

Chair: *Jim Hershberg*

Provocateurs: *William Stueck, Robert Wampler*

HERSHBERG: We are now moving into the Nixon administration. As the documents show, there was a very interesting transition in U.S.-Korean relations during the Cold War. I just want to say a couple of words in introduction, since obviously our provocateurs will have much more specific questions. I just want to urge you not to lose sight of the broader context of the bilateral relationship. This is a fascinating moment in the Cold War in the early months of the Nixon administration. In March, we saw the outbreak of violence on the Sino-Soviet frontier which pointed to the irreversibility and the reality of the Sino-Soviet split. As U.S.-Korean relations evolved, certainly the Nixon administration was developing its strategy of triangular diplomacy. It was moving simultaneously towards an opening of relations with communist China, a balancing of Beijing and Moscow, and simultaneously using that relationship to try to bring to an end to the Vietnam War. You also had a very tumultuous situation in U.S. domestic politics. The anti-Vietnam War movement was extremely strong, and this was pushing and pressing Washington to develop new strategies that would minimize U.S. obligations abroad. Of course, this emerged in the form of the Nixon Doctrine, which related directly to developments and tensions in U.S.-South Korean relations in 1969. As we will hear, we have a couple of key issues that emerged fairly quickly, such as the shoot-down of the EC-121 in April. As with the Pueblo, there were questions about the form of the U.S. reaction: was it to be diplomatic, political, or military? The question of why the reaction was not tougher is a fascinating one in this history. By the end of the first year of the Nixon Administration, 1969, after a Nixon summit with Park in August,

Nixon expressed his determination to reduce the American troop presence in Korea by half. This, of course, led to tensions. Without further ado, let me turn it over to our two provocateurs, starting with Bill Stueck, and after him Bob Wampler. Bill?

STUECK: Thank you. Bob and I have coordinated this, so my assignment is to ask some very pointed, specific questions, and then Bob is going to set a broader, strategic framework.

First, I will start chronologically with the EC-121 and the decision to withdraw a division of troops. Those were the two big incidents or events of the time period we are talking about. Was there any connection between the EC-121 incident and the U.S.-South Korean military exercises in March, 1969, Focus Retina? I confess. I did not learn about Focus Retina until I was going through these documents. I am interested in hearing from the Americans and any South Koreans who could comment on how large an operation that was and if that could have been a provocation to North Korea?

A second specific question: Why didn't the United States provide fighter escorts for U.S. spy planes in areas off the coast of North Korea after the Pueblo incident? As was pointed out yesterday, it was outrageous enough that the Pueblo, under the circumstances, was not given any protection whatsoever. It seems to me even less excusable, after the Pueblo, that these spy planes in the area would not have been given some kind of protection. Once the shoot-down had occurred, the obvious question is: Why didn't Nixon choose military retaliation against North Korea in response to the EC-121 shoot-down? We do have documentation that Nixon did convey through the Soviet Union a threat to North Korea that if another incident occurred, the United States immediately and without warning would retaliate. He used the word "disproportionate" in terms of retaliation. The documents that Bob shared with me yesterday from the Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) Volumes indicated that [National Security Advisor Henry] Kissinger had in fact conveyed this warning through [Soviet Ambassador to the United States Anatoly] Dobrynin, but he had not used the word "disproportionate." I'm curious if anybody has any comments or insights on that.

A fourth area for consideration: Why was there a change from the Pueblo incident regarding the American analysis of the Soviet role in the EC-121 incident? It seems the

documents indicate that the Americans were perfectly prepared from top to bottom to accept the idea that the Soviet Union had played no role in the initiation of the EC-121 incident. As such, what is the explanation for the disappearance of the Rostowian view. I know Rostow was no longer in the White House. Maybe that is the sole explanation, but I am curious if the Americans have any comments on that.

As far as the Nixon Doctrine is concerned, Don Oberdorfer, who was at Guam at the time, once remarked to me that the Nixon folks that were there after Nixon had made his announcement were actually surprised by it. This is not in Don's book *The Two Koreas*.⁴ I checked just recently. Was there a level of spontaneity to that announcement or was this a carefully staged event? Who knew about it?

Another area regarding the whole conception of North Korea that relates to what we were talking about in the first session this morning, in the NSC meeting of August 14, 1969, Kissinger refers to the North Koreans as "irrational" and then, soon after, he refers to them as very calculating. CIA director Helms later refers to Kim Il Sung as "vain but not irrational." Again, I am wondering if there would be further comments on just how the Americans in general perceived Kim Il Sung at that time. I would also like to hear from Dr. Kang and the South Koreans as well. In the August 1969 summit that came right after that NSC meeting, Nixon told President Park that the United States was not considering a withdrawal of U.S. troops from Korea. Did the Americans under Nixon consider this misleading at the time given the fact that, internally, the Nixon Administration was actively considering the withdrawal of troops from Korea? When the United States did in fact decide to withdraw a division in early 1970, did the South Koreans feel that they had been misled? On the withdrawal issue, in this collection of documents is a memorandum that Nixon sent Kissinger on November 24th, 1969. Nixon says, "We don't want to delay anymore on this withdrawal matter. I want to move forward with a decision for withdrawal of one division, and I want you to give me a memo on the matter by the end of the year." There is not much leading up to that document but if you look at the general context, Nixon's summit with Sato, prime minister of Japan, had just been completed days earlier. Sato had made public statements to the effect that Korea's defense was pertinent to Japan's security and that American forces in Okinawa could be used in pursuing that defense. I am wondering if there is a connection there because, in the summit with Park, Park makes a definite point of saying that he is watching that Okinawa situation very clearly. Obviously he is

very concerned. Did the resolution or at least the movement forward on that issue with the Japanese spark Nixon's memo of November 24?

Finally, why is Nixon willing to go ahead with this withdrawal at a time? It was not at all clear that Congress was going to be amenable to the modernization program that the American analysts and, even more so, the South Korean analysts think it essential for South Korean parity in the face of an American drawdown? I am very interested in hearing the Americans' comments on the perceptions within the Executive Branch regarding relations with Congress and whether any kind of interaction with Congress had preceded the decision to finally withdraw the division in March of 1972.

WAMPLER: First I want to start out, I guess with an observation about these types of exercises, and this goes back to an anecdote from one I did about 20 years ago. While I was talking with a number of people dealing with NATO and nuclear strategy, one of the people around the table was Andrew Goodpaster. He made a remark at one point saying, "Well now that I've seen these documents, now that I've read your paper, I finally understand what was going on in Washington," which leads me to make the statement that, assuming that everyone has read this book of documents, you probably know more than the people at the time knew about what was going on in this crisis. We have superior knowledge to them. The difficulty is in trying to re-create the gaps in people's knowledge and to make decisions with imperfect knowledge, which is where I hope the people around the table can help us here, in particularly, we need help in going through these documents and answering the following questions: What is significant knowledge that you wish you had the time, and what is this interesting detail in these documents? There is a lot of material here from very different levels, different places in the food chain of the bureaucracy, and we have a lot of people who have produced analyses, but I do not have a good sense about how well those analyses were being consumed. This leads me to a process question here. It somewhat fits in with what was going on in the Nixon administration. As everyone knows, when Nixon came in, he and Kissinger began this process of revamping the foreign policy-making. They began shifting the center of gravity to the National Security Council. In effect, this shifted the Secretary of State further and further to the side. So this earlier—who do you mean when you say

the government—really takes on added force with this administration because you’ve got the State Department, you’ve got the NSC, Kissinger talking to people directly. You had Nixon saying things as well. In trying to figure out what the determinant voice was among all of these voices and trying to figure out what the U.S. was trying to do, I think it is very important to try to do using these documents and the discussion as the basis. You get a very nice look at this in the case of the EC-121 because this is a nice sample case of the administration and particularly Kissinger coming to grips with a first full blown crisis. We had questions being asked, like “What can the bureaucracy do for me here in this?” “What can we do in terms of planning?” “What can we do in terms of contingencies?”

One of the documents that I brought over yesterday was a critique of the process. It pointed out that it took almost twenty-six hours before they could even get Nixon a list of viable military options in response. As you see throughout the summer, there is a demand that continuously ran from Nixon to Kissinger to [Secretary of Defense Melvin R.] Laird to [Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Earle] Wheeler and back up again: “I want more options, I want more options.” This seems to be part of this process that may play into what Bill was asking about, why was there a turnaround. That summer served as an education. There were military options, but none of them were great in terms of potential unknowns and outcomes. In the end, there was almost a “speak softly and carry a big stick” type of approach, where the big stick message was given to the Soviets and the North Koreans. In the end, there was further discussion between Nixon, Dobrynin and Kissinger and the other memo where Nixon was thanking Dobrynin for the Soviet cooperation in dealing with the situation which allowed the U.S. to pull their fleet back. We wanted to keep a lid on this. So it is an interesting example of how they came to grips with dealing with the bureaucracy, seeing what can be done, and seeing what sort of tools there were to deal with the situation. I would like to see how the people around the table viewed that in terms of this learning process that was going on.

Also, as Jim mentioned, there was a larger diplomatic arena. There were many things going on here which leads me to wonder: What were the priorities for Nixon and for Kissinger and where does Korea fit amongst those priorities? What you end up with, entering this situation, you might say, “Okay, *a priori*, there is a crisis. There is a need to reassure South Korea. There are going to be a lot of reasons here that I



HONG SEUKRYULE AND
WILLIAM STEUCK

would like to bulk up the military side of this.” But as Bill pointed out, at the end of this whole process we are still saying, “We’re going to cut back.” While EC-121 is an interesting crisis, did it really have any effect on the ship of state as far as Nixon was concerned and what he wanted to do in the final analysis? Or did he decide that this needed to be done for a variety of reasons? Did the manner in which EC-121 worked out show that perhaps he had some maneuverability and tools that would allow him to have a little room on this? Because language was developed leading up to the summit that said something to the effect of “Reassure the South Koreans and make clear to them that it is up to the United States to define what is effective support of South Korea and a provision our security guarantee.” That way, they cannot be disappointed if we don’t do A, B, C, or D precisely. We determined that we would do what we feel is necessary to achieve this. As an example, there is a very long letter that Park sends to Nixon in the summer after the EC-121 crisis, in which he really lays out everything about what needs to be done to re-strengthen the alliance and get South Korea ready to deal with this. He goes on for something like 10-12 pages. Nixon’s reply is rather brief. It said something to the effect of “Thank you for sharing. We’ll keep this in mind.” I think Park probably didn’t take this too well. I am again wondering where Korea fit into the overall structure of foreign policy priorities that were being developed by Kissinger and by Nixon. Does that explain the sense that the U.S. saw part of its role emerging as working eventually with Russia, with China, and making sure that their allies/clients didn’t go too far off the reservation in creating instabilities? What you might see here is that there was a *modus vivendi* developing. I get the sense that the decision-making followed a path of making sure South Korea didn’t do anything to upset things and trying to work through Russia to make sure that North Korea didn’t do certain things. What is the practice that is evolving out of this? And what does this say about the priorities of the Nixon administration?

HERSHBERG: Thank you Robert. There are a lot of questions on the table. I think the way I am going to try to organize this is to first call on the former American officials to comment on and to respond to specific questions that have been raised. I am also curious if you had any general comments on the transition to the Nixon administration since most of your tenures overlapped the two administrations, and at least reached 1969 in the case of Tom Hughes and a couple of others. I would also like

to add one thing that struck me. In many presidential administrations during recent U.S. history, there is a sense that domestic politics and foreign policy require a tough response to an early foreign policy challenge. One thinks of the *Mayaguez*⁵ during Ford and other cases where there is a fear in the U.S. that if a new administration is tested, probed, challenged and does not respond forcefully, then it will be perceived as weak. Somehow the Nixon administration does not feel compelled to act forcefully in response to what is seen as a blatant, aggressive act that, unlike the Pueblo, costs more than 30 American lives. Had there been some limited military action, I think we would have all been presuming that it would have been inevitable given those circumstances, and yet it does not take place. I would like for the Americans to start off responding to both specific questions and some more general conversations beginning with James Leonard. Perhaps Tom Hughes, David and Walt might chip in. I am also very curious to hear from the former Korean officials about their perceptions of the Nixon administration as it came into power. How did the equation shift in your view? Then we will move to more specific query. Who would like to kick off? James?

LEONARD: Sure, with the hope that Tom will correct me where I get off track. First of all, with regard to the technical question of why we did not have air cover out over the EC-121, I can only say that, as far as I was concerned, I did not know it was there. I am interested in hearing Tom's explanation of what was the routine situation with regard to notification of the State Department, with regard to intelligence missions of this type. I can recall when I was on the Korea desk, being asked to clear the mission of the SR-71. But the mission of the SR-71 had a particular character that was different from other missions because of the character of the airplane. The arch in which it flew had to pass over Chinese territory and perhaps over Russian territory as well. It was not just a matter of flying over North Korea; it was a matter of flying over at least one, maybe both neighbors. I believe that normally such an unusual mission would be cleared with the State Department. As far as I was concerned, from the Korea desk, I saw no problem with it and gave my approval. And as far as I knew, we got results. I do not recall exactly but I do not think that they were especially useful for us. With regard to the EC-121, I simply do not know. If I had been asked, I think I would have suggested that they have access to Quick Reaction planes that were ready for flight in the area. These QRF's that we had around the

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world could get in the air in less than four or five minutes and be on the spot in a short time. I would have recommended also that they be properly equipped. As I noted, the F-4’s were not, during the actual Pueblo affair.

With regard to the reaction of the Nixon administration, I personally was surprised that it was not stronger. I had no role in the decision-making, but the reports that we got back indicated that there had been some effort on the part of other officials, and a particular finger was pointed at Alex Johnson. He had been ambassador to Japan, but at that time, I believe he was the undersecretary of state or deputy undersecretary of state, the number three position in the State Department. He had a personal relationship with Nixon which went back to a time when Nixon was not a president and a vice president, but was just traveling around the world and I think he had gone to wherever Johnson was stationed at the time. Anyway, Johnson was in the scuttlebutt that I picked up. He was given credit for discouraging an unwise and militant reaction. But I think we know much more than I certainly did now that we have read these documents, Tom and I were talking yesterday about how astonished we were to hear that Secretary [of State William P.] Rogers and Secretary Laird threatened to resign if Nixon reacted in an unwise fashion to the event; we didn’t know we had that kind of doves in the new Nixon Administration. After all, the whole point of the squeeze play, as Katzenbach described it in that memo, was to put the fear of God and the fear of Richard Nixon into the North Koreans and use that to get the crew back. This was a turn around that we certainly, at my level, had no expectation of.

Now, about the question of blaming the Soviets, that is another matter entirely. When Kissinger came into office he immediately hired Tom Hughes’ top Soviet expert [INR Director for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe] Helmut Sonnenfeldt to go over to the White House and head his staff on East/West relations in the NSC. Although Sonnenfeldt—I think Tom probably would agree—was a little bit to the right of me on these things, he was a very hardheaded analyst of Soviet affairs and was under no illusions that the Soviet Union would be pulling the strings on this sort of thing. Among Soviet experts of that period, as I have said a number of times here, that was not a question at all at this stage.

HUGHES: The change in administration brought in some people that were well known personalities, and others that were not yet tested. Nixon himself had years

to think about what his posture and his role was going to be. During those years, among other things, he developed his mad man theory, which later on was quite explicit. He wanted the world to understand that he was capable of almost any kind of retaliation. People who knew Nixon well knew that his own tendencies wouldn't have been retaliations in such an incident, which makes the reaction all the more peculiar and offers some grounds for speculation. Rogers and Laird were both totally untested in their new positions. They had just come through. We are talking now about a shoot down that occurred three months after the administration took office. It was not yet fully staffed. Rogers and Laird both had their confirmation hearings and on opening day, the opening salvo came from the North Koreans who alleged that the U.S. had intruded into their territory and who criticized, in person, Rogers and Laird for their congressional testimony. I suppose somebody should look that up and see what they said about Korea or about spy planes. There must be some connection. There are five documents from INR about the EC-121 crisis, and the first one written the same day as the shoot-down, April 15th, mentions the broadcast criticizing Laird and Rogers. I am sure that Rogers and Laird took that aboard and regarded this therefore as a personal attack and it probably made them less adventurous than they might otherwise have been. This was especially true for Laird, who had generally, over the years, been associated with the right-wing Republican congressional group and whose friends were all steeped in the notion of Communist perfidy and the rest of it. So there were some surprises.

Nixon's reference to "disproportionate" is a reflection, in the miniature at least, of his mad man theory. We will hear more about that in later years. His performance, I must say, is also surprising to me, and it surprised a lot of people in Washington. And the fact that he apparently was bowing to the resignation threats of Rogers and Laird at the beginning of his administration, when they practically had just taken office the day before yesterday, is quite extraordinary. This, of course, is based on memoirs from Kissinger and Haldeman. Haldeman is probably quite reliable of his recollections. Henry already had Rogers in his sight to shootdown early in the administration as an ineffectual rival. Henry tends his own aggrandizement as the foreign policy chief in Washington, and that is clear from the beginning. In briefing Rogers, it is clear to me that he had chosen a target that was an easy pushover. I used to brief Dean Rusk and Katzenbach together every morning, and I tried to



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continue the same with Rogers and [Secretary of Commerce Elliott] Richardson, but Rogers had a very short attention span and was often late and was quite leisurely about his general approach to things. Richardson was an intellectual who was interested in international law, among other things, and that may have well played a role in his reaction to the spy plane flights. I think he probably felt they were illegal. He had not quite come to grips with this. Rogers quickly announced that, “Elliot, if you want to pursue this, you and Tom can talk about this on your own time.” So we split up the double briefing, and I thought, “Well, Henry knows a good talker when he sees one, Mr. Rogers.” Curiously enough, even though we were producing anticipated reactions from Moscow, Beijing, and Tokyo right away, on opening day, and those would have been distributed around the government immediately, much of the government was nonetheless surprised at Nixon’s press conference when he announced that retaliation would not be appropriate. We now know that he wanted to retaliate but that he decided, for whatever reasons, not to do it, at least for the moment, until he found a better opportunity. This misled all kinds of people, including the President’s Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board which suddenly got active. PFIAB, used to be chaired by [Secretary of Defense] Clark Clifford and was variously known as the Killian Committee. I do not know who finally was put in charge of it in the Nixon administration, or whether the appointees who had already come through had been confirmed. But people like [former Ambassador to Italy] Clare Boothe Luce and so forth were waiting to take their role as advisors. I suddenly got a call the day after Nixon’s press conference from the staff director of the President’s Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board ordering me to come over to testify, to explain the relevance of the intelligence to the public statement that Nixon had made against retaliation. Obviously, the intelligence community in some sense thought that we had an opportunity here for retaliation, and so some of Nixon’s political friends who were going to be sitting on PFIAB must have been quite upset about Nixon’s apparent softness on this incident. So I had to go over and testify on the basis of the papers that are in the documents, all of which were perfectly consistent with a possible stronger reaction than Nixon actually took. You have various people assuming peculiar postures in Washington under misleading impressions about what Nixon actually was up to, and it would not be the last time. Mentioning the President’s Foreign Intelligence

Advisory Board reminds me that we really have not discussed a lot. I will not pursue this unless you want to later on, but there were elements in the intelligence community that crossed over into the policy community. Clifford, for instance, had been chairman of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board for some years. He carried, therefore, a background of awareness of approval of covert operations of one kind or another to his new position as Secretary of Defense. Vance for years had represented the Pentagon on the 40 Committee, which was the [Executive branch] committee that was basically in charge of approving covert operations. In answer to the question of whether the State Department would have been involved in this, we would have, in a general way, provided the paperwork for Secretarial approval of such operations. But if there was an unusual operation, and if this happened to be regarded as specifically unusual, then it would have been handled directly. I can imagine that there has previously been long-term approval of things such as spy plane trips, and I do not know whether this was regarded as a particularly unusual event. The key person in all of this, when he was in town, was always U. Alexis Johnson, who was the State Department representative on the 40 Committee. Along with Vance from the Pentagon, they would have personally been involved over the years in this kind of activity and were quite permissive about it. I remain to be enlightened about what role the State Department actually played, if any, in the approval of this particular flight.

HERSHBERG: Tom, one brief follow up before we move on. One issue you were tracking very closely at INR was the sign of the Sino-Soviet split, and you had seen the outbreak of the border clashes the month before. Another piece of context that might or might not be relevant is that in the same month, I believe that Nixon surprised people by not bombing North Korea. He actually launched the secret bombing of Cambodia. So, you know, it was a fairly unpredictable administration.

HUGHES: That may have played a role if he had the Cambodians in mind.

HERSHBERG: Well, I'm just wondering, should we focus on events extrinsic to the peninsula in explaining this seemingly surprising decision not to retaliate. In particular: Do you now or did you then see any connection to calculations about

the bigger game with the Soviets and the Chinese in what was obviously a very unstable and volatile and possibly fluid situation?

HUGHES: Well it is all speculation, but I think that Henry [Kissinger] has probably written about it at great length.

STUECK: No, he wanted retaliation. What I think Jim is getting at is: Did Nixon have a larger conception that retaliation would have undermined his efforts with the Soviet's and the Chinese?

HUGHES: Well, if the resignations of Rogers, Laird and Helms are all at stake in April, it is hard for me to believe this actually, but this is what Kissinger and Haldeman say. And they certainly did not want to face massive resignations in the opening days of the administration. Laird would be deeply involved, pretty soon anyway, in the Cambodia planning. He himself would therefore have a particular interest in that. Rogers probably was a cipher in the whole business. Helms, who wanted to stay as Director of Central Intelligence did not want to resign. This was very atypical for him to threaten resignation; it makes me suspect the whole story.

But in any case, he knew that he was on difficult ground with Nixon and I don't know at what point Nixon was telling him he had to come up with the papers that proved that Kennedy was responsible for the Bay of Pigs and assassinating Castro and so forth. All of this was sitting there as raw material for the question of whether Helms would be retained or not.

STUECK: You could see both a political and domestic dimension in this too. Nixon was very much aware of the anti-war movement and he was buying time in Vietnam where he was already committed.

HUGHES: Yes, there was a reversal of roles between Johnson and Nixon. Johnson was petrified about the Republican right and the Democratic right. Nixon did not have to worry about them. In that sense, Nixon had freedom of action on both Russia and China, but Johnson never did.

HERSHBERG: In other words, Herbert Humphrey would have retaliated?

HUGHES: Herbert? He had to wait for advice.

STUECK: Well, all us kids would have retaliated.

HUGHES: By the way, you mentioned student protests and I guess we should just mention on the table, all of these events regarding Korea quickly became the subject of student protests around the country; the Pueblo thing was all over campuses and students were rioting about the Pueblo just as compared to the Gulf of Tonkin and to the Battleship Maine in the Spanish-American War and all the rest of that sort of thing. The EC-121 shoot down also immediately fed into the student protest movement; they all saw it as a *raison d'être* for getting into a new war, extending the old one.

CUTLER: Again, a couple of comments from a very limited standpoint, given my somewhat lowly position in the American Embassy at the time compared to all of the generals and others that were all over the capital. I do not recall our embassy, Ambassador Porter, making any strong recommendations for retaliation. Maybe it is in these documents and I missed it.

STUECK: Just the opposite.

CUTLER: Just the opposite? However, soon after the Nixon Administration came in, the discussion began about reducing American troops in Korea. Some of you may have known Ambassador Porter. Within the Foreign Service, he is something of a legend. He was viewed as something of a maverick, not in the political sense that we hear today, but he was a very forthright and candid person. He came up through the ranks, starting as a coat clerk with very little formal education. I first served with him in Algeria. This was two years before I went to Korea to rejoin him. He believed in seeing things for himself, and he loved to go on spontaneous field trips, which I am sure drove not only our Korean hosts a little crazy at times, but also his own staff. He would call me first thing in the morning and say, "Get your bag packed, we're leaving at noon," and he would simply visit different places in Korea he wanted to see for himself. I remember one time we visited an American military base unannounced. Instead of going to the officers club for lunch, he said, "No, I want to go to the enlisted

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in to his office. He rolled out a map of Korea, and all of the U.S. military facilities were in red. It almost looked like a measles patient. These red splotches were everywhere, and he said, ‘You know, maybe this is simply too much. I’m not sure, looking ahead, that our Korean friends really want all of this presence, as reassuring as it may be.’”

men’s cafeteria.” So, all of the sudden here you have the American ambassador showing. He wanted to sit down with the American troops to talk, and he wanted to get a feel directly for what they were thinking. As you can imagine, the base commander, I think a Colonel, was suddenly seen rushing over: My God, what is the American ambassador doing here in my base and in the enlisted men’s cafeteria? This was the way he was, and, as you can imagine, this made for some lively exchanges within the American official community. On the other side you had General Bonesteel, a brilliant person. Generally, I think the relationship between Porter and Bonesteel was pretty good considering the potential for real problems between a strong minded civilian leader in the field and a strong minded military leader. At least according to my recollection with respect to the Blue House raid and Panmunjeom meetings on the Pueblo, their coordination was pretty good. Although, inevitably, communications were not as quick and as full as they might have been.

However, soon after the Nixon administration came in, Ambassador Porter called me in to his office. He rolled out a map of Korea, and all of the U.S. military facilities were in red. It almost looked like a measles patient. These red splotches were everywhere, and he said, “You know, maybe this is simply too much. I’m not sure, looking ahead, that our Korean friends really want all of this presence, as reassuring as it may be.” He asked me to work quietly in looking at which facilities might be eliminated in the context of a troop reduction. Again, I do not know what the discussion was in Washington at that time, but it was obvious that Ambassador Porter had had a request to at least start contingency planning on reducing the American military presence in Korea. This was to be done very quietly at the embassy, and I proceeded to work on that as a low level analyst. It was only sometime later that I think our military people in Korea became aware of what the embassy had begun in the way of contingency planning. At that time discussion took place which was not all behind closed doors. I can recall that the Porter-Bonesteel personal relationship was strained at that time and then, perhaps luckily, I was reassigned. I did not get to see the full inner discussion play out regarding what we should be doing or recommendations to Washington. However, my next assignment was Vietnam and that is how I kept in touch with Korea, because I was partially involved in relations with the Korean forces in Vietnam. But that’s about all I can tell you. It’s all sort of in-the-trenches stuff.

HERSHBERG: I have one more trench question. I am glad you have talked a little bit about Porter, since he is lurking in the background of a lot of this story and yet unlike Kissinger and others, you know, he is not focused on. Between the time you served with him in Algeria and in South Korea, Porter was DCM [deputy chief of mission] and often ambassador in Saigon, dealing with Henry Cabot Lodge, General Westmoreland, and with Nguyen Van Thieu and Nguyen Cao Ky. I am curious if you got any sense from him about how the Vietnam experience and dealing with another strong, anti-Communist, somewhat military-oriented government, influenced him. I am especially interested because this is another country with which the U.S. was an ally and yet there were submerged tensions. When we move to the Korean veterans, I am curious to hear about their perceptions of Porter's role as a transmission belt between the governments.

CUTLER: Well, only that I think his experience in Vietnam gave him a special interest in and feel for importance of Korean forces in Vietnam. Incidentally, when Ambassador Porter left Algeria, he was assigned to Saudi Arabia. He got back to Washington and the State Department was looking for a deputy to Cabot Lodge who was known to be a very demanding person. Not everybody was volunteering for the job. They asked Porter, "Would you be willing to go out to Saigon?" Being a good Foreign Service officer, he saluted, and his assignment to Saudi Arabia was canceled. It came up again six or eight or ten years later. In any case, I think that probably gave him some credibility. I don't know, in dealing with our Korean colleagues about the situation in Vietnam. He'd been there, and it probably raised the priority in his mind about the importance of Korean forces there. That's about all I can say.

LEONARD: I could offer a comment on the strategic framework with which the Nixon Administration approached the problems that we are talking about here. I think that for Nixon, Kissinger, and Laird, Vietnam was an absolute priority. The war there was going very badly, and obviously, the previous administration had basically given up on it. McNamara was at least saying to himself, "We can't win it." I think Clifford had reached a very similar conclusion as had Vance. It was being transferred to a new administration which had a different attitude. I think they came in determined to win the war in Vietnam. It was very much like



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the situation we had in the summer of 2006 with regard to Iraq, where—as we learned from Mr. Woodward—the White House realized it was losing the war in Iraq and had to develop a new strategy. Part of this was to focus everything on Vietnam and not be distracted by anything anywhere else, and one element of that was certainly to improve relations with Moscow. I was relieved from the Korea desk in April and sent to Geneva. My instructions there, conveyed to me not by Nixon or Kissinger but by my boss, [Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA)] Gerard Smith, were to try to negotiate a treaty with the Russians. We were so desperate to get a treaty that we made one up, a meaningless treaty. It was an idea that had been floating around, and nobody took it seriously. The idea was to do a treaty on the seabed. In fact, we developed a treaty that prohibited the stationing of nuclear weapons on the seabed. We were successful in negotiating this by September of 1969 and reported this back to Washington. Jerry Smith took it into Kissinger. To his surprise, he was scolded by Kissinger who said, “That’s too soon! You told me, Jerry, it would take at least a year to do this. Here you’ve brought it back in three months, and we can’t have this sort of lack of discipline in this administration.” But at the same time, they were conducting a strategic review which involved things much more serious than this seabed stuff. They were doing the national security study memorandum, which led to the discussions on SALT, which were opened in November of 1969. They also did one on biological and chemical weapons which led to the well-known decisions in November of 1969 to abandon and destroy our stocks of both biological and chemical weapons. It also led to the negotiation of a treaty on biological weapons, which was our charge in Geneva for the year 1970. This caused considerable discontent because only we and the British thought this was a good idea. Even our NATO allies were hostile to it to the extent that the Canadian ambassador tried to have me removed from my job in Geneva—to get me fired. We used to joke that the Romanians were the Russian’s Canadians. The Romanians were showing the same indiscipline that the Canadians were showing in our NATO caucus there. I think that that overriding desire to deal with Vietnam and deal with it successfully was what led Nixon and Kissinger to accept the strong recommendations of Laird. Whether they threatened to resign or not is not clear. They took a dovish view on the situation in Korea, and certainly

the only one in the group with whom I had any contact was Elliot Richardson. Tom had mentioned that he was very strongly on that side and he was a strong supporter of trying to do things with the Russians and even eventually with the Chinese. There was a note written on the side of a cable that I had sent in reporting my conversation with the Romanian ambassador about China. Kissinger apparently wrote on the side of this cable: “Good job. We should have more of this.” My friends in the White House then passed this on back to me so that I would be encouraged to talk with this dissident member of the Socialist bloc on improving relations with China, which obviously was very much on the minds of the White House at that point.

HERSHBERG: Of course, the Romanians, along with the Pakistanis, served as a conduit between Washington and Beijing. We are going to move on to David, but before we do, Bob Wampler has a quick question.

ROBERT WAMPLER: I want to make one point here regarding the larger context and the State Department’s role. In looking at EC-121, Vietnam also seems to be a real constraining factor, because all the plans say effect on Southeast Asia operations. If you get beyond a certain point—the one day, two day—you start having an impact. The same deal with the Seventh Fleet. They don’t want to have to be repositioned too long, because it’s tied into what we’re doing in Vietnam. So that seems like a real hinge to me on Nixon and Kissinger thinking about what we can really do without having an impact on what they’re doing in Vietnam. Regarding the State Department’s role on reconnaissance, there is an interesting piece of information here which strikes me as kind of surprising. On the 24th, Kissinger recommended to the President on the resumption of reconnaissance flights. “The President should instruct the Secretary of State to approach the government of South Korea and get their agreement to allow us to fly out protective aircraft from bases in South Korea to protect our reconnaissance aircraft.” This leads me to believe that, before then, we could not use our aircraft in South Korea to protect our reconnaissance planes. Also, it seems to me that State got involved there, but also the rules of engagement were slightly different, and we were having to operate offshore to protect these planes before this happened.

REUTHER: As Bob said, there was significant participation, and then there was detailed participation in some of these events. I was way down in the weeds at this time. I was a lowly analyst at the National Security Agency, and that was our airplane, the EC-121. It was flown by the Air Force, and we were in contact with it until it disappeared. We were the people in charge of providing the rest of the intelligence community with all the physical details: where it was located, where the attackers came from, where the wreckage might be found. Do you remember yesterday when we talked about how important these issues were? Well, there was one red-headed NCO and myself. We were the North Korean desk, and we got dumped with this problem. Literally, we were locked in a room for thirty-six hours and told to produce the intelligence to support the community. I noticed later on the television that some of our stuff was being used in the UN presentations.

I have subsequently come to find out a number of the things Bob has been pointing out. If you are going to use military force, one of the things that you have to understand is that the military wants to lower risk and ensure success by training for what it intends to do. As a result, you have SOPs (standard operating procedures), which are very important to them. We have all seen the movie where the boys that bombed Tokyo practice and practice and practice taking off from a short field. You do not simply say, “Oh, take this aircraft carrier and go here and do that.” There were no SOPs at the time for air cover for these kinds of operations, because they were so standard. Certainly at the time, they were proved on an inter-agency basis on a broad scale, and there was nothing particularly interesting about them. We did them and the Soviets conducted similar operations at the time. There was a kind of a gentlemen’s agreement that this is what you do, and this is how you conduct yourself. This plane was quite far in a protected zone. There was no perceived danger. It was not flying close to North Korea at all, and so it was doing what a gentleman’s intelligence collection aircraft was doing, whether it was American or Soviet or of any other origin. Once you got into military responses, then you begin to see the problem that there’s something you have not trained for. I think if you go through the documents here and some of the new stuff that Bob and I have worked on, you will see this struggling to find targets. Are you going to bomb it? How many B-52s are you going to use? It goes back to the question, “I can’t give you any B-52s because I’m using them all in Vietnam.”

I'd also like to point out a point that you were making earlier, Jim. The environment in which this was all happening—now we're focused, for the purpose of this program, on Korea—but in fact, there's a number of things going on in the larger environment that either absorbs attention or resources or impacts on the planning. Vietnam is obviously key in that sense, but coming down the pipe and already in the mindset of some of the decision makers of this time was the reversion of Okinawa. If you look at the military records of this time, the only way they were going to respond militarily to the EC-121 was use equipment out of Okinawa. That immediately involves Japan in what you're doing, and that impacts, then, on that relationship and how much permission you have and those sorts of issues. So if you're researching this, you really do want to not put the camera on telephoto, but a wide angle lens.

HERSHBERG: Okay, but before we move on to Ambassador Yoon and Dr. Kang, one follow up question, David. You've given a very dispassionate recollection and analysis of what it felt to be in that room generating intelligence. But I'm just curious, since one rarely hears the perspective from the entrails of the intelligence collection machine, how did you feel about this? Was there an anger to hit them back? Or, conversely, were you a part of that generation so overwhelmed by Vietnam and anti-war movements that you were more dovish? That, you know, "Let's not open a second front. Let's be cautious." How did you guys feel? I mean, this was one of yours that had been shot down.

REUTHER: Well, yeah, but you've got a third alternative that you're missing, and that's professionalism. Those of us who are in the Foreign Service have an approach to our careers and the execution of our duties that our colleagues in the uniformed services have. That's why we have a very similar personnel system. It was simply our professional duty to make sure that the intelligence got produced, that it got to the right place. We weren't in a position to have an emotional reaction to this in that kind of op-ed way.

HERSHBERG: Or even a more visceral way. Thank you very much, that was very illuminating. Bernd has a—a couple of—two fingers have come up. Bernd, go ahead.



ROBERT WAMPLER (LEFT) AND
DAVID REUTHER (RIGHT)



CREW OF *USS PUEBLO* BEING
REPATRIATED IN DECEMBER 1968

SCHAEFER: It remains, of course, still very much a mystery why the North Koreans did that. There are many theories, but we don't know. One of the theories is that there was an attempt by the North Koreans to force this airplane into landing somewhere before they shot it down? Or was it a stray shoot down without any warning?

REUTHER: Yeah, they just came up and shot it down.

SCHAEFER: There was no prior communication? Nothing?

REUTHER: No.

SHIN: I have a simple question. Why did North Korea once again engage in something like the shoot-down of the EC-121 just one year after the Pueblo incident? Perhaps it was because North Korea perceived the U.S. as a mere paper tiger or Kim Il Sung testing the new Nixon administration's resolve. In the same thinking, how did North Korea once again engage in military adventurism against South Korea in the same year as the Blue House raid in 1968? Specifically, I mean the Uljin-Samcheok intrusion incident by 100 North Korean commandos. How could this incident have happened, and how can this be explained? Would you comment on this, Mr. Kang?

HERSHBERG: This is a good question for several of us, and also this is a challenge to Christian, because, lacking North Korean archives, I think that with the focus really on collecting materials on 1968, maybe getting some East bloc documentation from Pyongyang on April '69, there should be some analysis of why the North Koreans did this because obviously from the outside there can only be speculation.

HUGHES: I just wanted to mention that the first item on our memo on opening day of the shoot-down crisis, on pages 735 and 736, we discuss Japan, and we warn quite explicitly that demonstrations are already underway against the Sato government. He's in a very weak position. That the Okinawa reversion demonstrations are on. The use of Okinawa would be particularly calamitous for the Sato

regime. So there is three paragraphs of fairly strong warning about the Japanese possible reaction to a military retaliation.

HERSHBERG: Now, let's turn to the South Koreans, beginning with Ambassador Yoon. There are a lot of questions on the table.

YOON: I at first wondered if I could really make any substantial statement regarding this incident here. From the beginning, I always considered the EC-121 a great puzzle. We all initially greeted this as just another big-game provocation by North Korea. There were many other similar instances. We didn't attach any significance. But I thought this could develop into a big incident, which could affect peace in the Far East. But strangely enough, it just died down. As I remember, the first thing we did was check if this incident constituted a violation of our truce agreement. Then we tried to find out where this EC-121 was based. If it were based somewhere in Korea, it might have posed a problem. But everybody said, "There's no sign of an EC-121 base within Korean territory." Interestingly, I got no information from the Korean CIA or Ministry of Defense in those days. I don't remember anything. Then I had a conversation with Mr. Judd, the political consular of United States Embassy in Seoul. We had our own position of course, that is: be firm against these incidents. That was our usual position against any North Korean provocation against the United States. Our position was to not appease North Korea over this incident there. That's about all I told Mr. Judd on this matter. I really wanted to know what had happened there. His reply wasn't very concrete, as I remember. Nobody knows what occurred, especially those who were reporting about the incident in the newspaper. Also, the Korean public didn't make any fuss, compared with the Pueblo. There also wasn't a response from the National Assembly. As far as we were concerned, the Foreign Ministry had nothing to do in this case.

Clearly this incident was a hazard to us. We couldn't understand why the United States didn't take any actions on this initially. We didn't get any information from the embassy, except from my conversation with Mr. Judd, and I told Mr. Judd that we would just see how things developed, though we believed that this could bring great trouble to this part of the world. We didn't take any significant actions at all. In other words, this whole incident didn't surface on the diplomatic

front. The United States Embassy was puzzlingly silent on this matter. I thought the United States—due to the gravity of the incident—was just restraining itself. We just observed what was developing. I thought this was quite puzzling. We have an old saying that when a big mountain shakes and nothing comes of it but one rat scurrying away. That's about all I can say.

STUECK: Bernd, do you have a question you'd like to direct directly to Ambassador Yoon?

SCHAEFER: No, it wasn't a question. If there are questions, I defer to other people. I just wanted to say something about the theories we have on the incident. Jim Hershberg said we should look into Eastern European and other files on this incident. We have already done this. So I could say something about that, but I'm not sure whether it's appropriate at this point. I could mention some theories the socialist diplomats had about what happened. Its all still a mystery.

STUECK: Dr. Kang, would you like to comment on this?

KANG: With respect to this issue, my recollection is not so specific. At the time, we thought that the EC-121 incident would be resolved in the same manner as the Pueblo incident. And it happened that way exactly.

For your information, I would like to tell you a little more about our assessment during those days at the KCIA. I want to speak about the Nixon doctrine. We reported to the president, suggesting that the U.S. intended to pull out one division of troops from South Korea when South Korean troops return from Vietnam. In his August 20 meeting, the president said that among the many things to be discussed at this meeting, the withdrawal of a U.S. division was included, and so we made a report to the president suggesting that since there were two divisional flags, we should leave the flags untouched and just pull out their troops.

Because the KCIA determined that the Nixon doctrine would lead to the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Korea, we conducted investigations in camp towns surrounding U.S. military bases. We learned at camp towns that there were fewer U.S. soldiers on leave. We asked why there were few women and other people at



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bars and restaurants in the camp town. The waitresses there told us that maybe they went on vacation. We were very nervous about how the Nixon doctrine would apply to Korea. The intelligence agents with whom I worked were sure that the U.S. was going to pull out a division of its troops from Korea. There probably are documents relating to this analysis.

Secondly, I want to share a personal event that I had. I think it was in 1969. [KCIA] director Kim Hyung-wook called me and said, "I want you to meet some VIPs coming in from Japan." I met them at the Chosun Hotel in downtown Seoul, and they turned out to be real VIPs. One of them was Kusumi Tadao. The other person was Saeki Giichi. He is probably well-known amongst many. Dr. Saeki is Japan's top strategist. Kusumi Tadao was the Japanese Navy commander. These were the people who discussed the issue of returning Okinawa with Henry Kissinger in Kyoto. When they requested a meeting, I asked him what the purpose of the meeting was and they told me what effect the return of Okinawa to Japan would have on the Korean security. So I asked them: "You keep talking about the Okinawa issue. Is Okinawa Japanese territory?" And they answered, "Of course." I said it was occupied by Japan in the late 19th century and before that it was an independent kingdom, and they said, "It is our territory."

I then asked another question. "What are you going to do with the U.S. bases on Okinawa?" They said there's going to be no change at all regarding U.S. bases, their function, and their size. So I told them, "Why would we have any objection to Okinawa being returned to Japanese control? We are not concerned about Okinawa. Our concern is with the U.S. troops stationed on Okinawa. If there is not going to be any changes in the strength of U.S. troops on Okinawa, we have no reason to object to Okinawa being returned to Japanese control." And the two gentlemen, Mr. Kusumi and Dr. Saeki thanked me profusely.

Dr. Saeki Giichi is a man who served as deputy director of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation that was being managed by Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro. After this meeting, we determined that the return of Okinawa to Japanese control was not going to cause any security problem for us. As for the Nixon Doctrine, we thought that if the Americans remove their forces, wouldn't we —.

STUECK: Do you remember the day of that meeting at the Chosun Hotel— when you met with the generals from Japan?

KANG: I can't recall the exact date but it was immediately before the resignation of KCIA director, Kim Hyeonguk. It was probably some time in 1969⁶, towards the end of summer. That's when Kim Gyewon replaced Kim Hyeonguk as KCIA director.

PARK: I have seen in the documents that the South Korean government proposed to U.S. officials that U.S. military bases could be moved to Jeju Island from Okinawa after the U.S. returned Okinawa to Japan. Can you remember that or do you have any information on that?

KANG: I didn't say anything like that. Perhaps it was a statement by the Korean Ministry of National Defense. I don't recall saying anything except, you know, what we said regarding Okinawa's return to Japanese control.

YOON: Let me just add, Kissinger just wrote about the Nixon doctrine, et cetera. I remember I accompanied my president at the time to California where we had a conference on the base of the 6th Army and also at a San Francisco hotel. I can only say that we got a very favorable response from Nixon. I am not free to go into too much detail on this matter, but my president seemed very satisfied to me. That's all I can say. The Nixon doctrine didn't create any unfavorable situation as far as we were concerned. That's all I can say.

STUECK: Mr. Yoon, just to follow up on that, in the documents, both the American and the South Korean documents that we have in the briefing book, Nixon is said to make pretty explicit statements to the effect that the United States

was not planning to withdraw a division. So were you very surprised and did you feel that you had been misled at the end of the year when the Americans informed you that they were planning to withdraw a division?

YOON: No, I was just discussing the results of the summit meeting at that time. Our president and Foreign Minister Choe Gyuha very much stressed the importance of America stationing troops in Korea and strongly persuaded them not to reduce the number of American forces in Korea. Before that, I think Ambassador Porter recommended in very strong terms against any radical reduction of U.S. forces in Korea. I thought that Porter's suggestions eventually influenced the policy of the Nixon administration. That is my impression of those days.

KANG: Let me make a comment. Following the announcement of the Nixon doctrine at some point, Prime Minister Jung Ilgwon called us to a meeting and the Prime Minister suggested that we foster public opinion that opposes the pullout of U.S. forces from Korea. I remember that subsequently I got together with scholars and created an movement to discourage the withdrawal of U.S. troops.

In the end, a division of U.S. troops was pulled out from Korea but on the eve of the withdrawal I was still actively opposing it; however, at this time Vice President Agnew paid a visit to sign a treaty, to sign an agreement. Prime Minister Jung Ilgwon asked me to come with him on his way to make a report to the National Assembly, so we went together. "Since they signed the agreement, we can cease all activities opposing the withdrawal, right?" to which he replied, "We must continue to oppose the U.S. withdrawal until the day when the U.S. provides us with what they have promised."

So I asked him, "So when they give us everything that has been promised, we should change our stance and say that it is okay to withdraw?" The Prime Minister said, "Yes, you can do it. Reverse our statement." So to our citizens we were ordered to say, since one division of U.S. troops is withdrawing and another is to remain, the U.S. will take full responsibility of our nation's path and take action accordingly. As such, he told us to reverse our statement, which left me perplexed. After all, an order is an order, so we changed our statement.

After that, I remember persuading others that when the decision was made to permit the withdrawal of one division, this will be satisfactory.

SCHAEFER: As far as what we can say from the Eastern European archives—and maybe Sergey knows something about Soviet archives—the EC-121 incident does not come up very much, which indicates it was completely different from the Pueblo incident. There is no contingency plan, no kind of war emergency preparations before the shoot-down, as had been in the case of the Blue House raid and Pueblo incident. There was basically no public propaganda, nothing. After the shoot-down, the North Koreans didn't even take credit for it in public. There was no information for the diplomatic corps in Pyongyang. I believe it was only after five or six days that they approached the Soviets, for the first time, and asked for protection. I think at that point the American flotilla already moved toward North Korea, and that is when they approached the Soviets to help them to intervene with the Americans to stop the American attack. So they didn't take credit for it. I think there is a speech by Kim Il Sung somewhere, but it wasn't a public speech, to the military where he had some praise for the leaders who carried out this shoot-down. But this also didn't become public at all. So the theories at that time which were circulating though this one is completely wrong—were that the North Koreans wanted to actually force the plane to land and maybe capture the crew. Since this didn't work out, they shot it down accidentally. The other theory is it was just a birthday present for Kim Il Sung. The third theory is that it was a signal to the Soviet Union and China, who had just engaged in a really major conflict in March 1969, to unite against the real enemy. The North Koreans wanted to show the Americans what the communist world has to do; fight the Chinese and Russians and not fight with each other. These are the basic theories, but none of them have any traction in the documents.

STUECK: Ambassador Brie, were you still in Pyongyang?

BRIE: No.

CUTLER: So this wasn't played up in their propaganda? You mentioned a speech to the military. Nothing was seized upon as a propaganda opportunity?

SCHAEFER: No. So it might have been just an accident.

RADCHENKO: I'm sorry, you just forget one other alternative, which I think Ambassador Brie mentioned, and that is to use it as a ploy to say that we're still under attack to get more aid from the Soviet Union. That's a possibility.

STUECK: Well, of course by that time, the Soviets presumably had made it clear they weren't too happy about the Pueblo incident.

RADCHENKO: But they were still giving aid.

LEONARD: If you permit, I would just like to make a general comment about this question that keeps getting asked and never gets answered, as to why exactly, at the time that it happened, did the Pueblo happen. And why was the EC-121 shot down? I think people don't seem to doubt at all that these were with the orders or approval of Kim Il Sung, and I don't think that it's likely any real explanation of what was in his mind is going to come forward until North Korean documents, internal documents of the KWP and the DPRK government actually are opened up for scholars to study and examine and the personal memoirs or testimony of senior officials become available. These are, of course, remote and unlikely circumstances at this time. And, even when they happen, I would just like to offer a personal comment on the unreliability of such things, because I had a friend who was a Russian diplomat—Soviet diplomat—who was at one point given the job of taking notes in a Politburo meeting, and after he had done so he showed his draft to Gromyko and Gromyko gave him hell. He said, "You idiot! You put down exactly what happened, and that's not what you're supposed to do. Here is what you're supposed to do," and he dictated off a couple of points that were not said in the meeting at all and that completely misrepresented the gist of the discussion within the meeting. Gromyko said, "Look, these documents someday are going to become available to the capitalists, the imperialists, and they're going to draw



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conclusions from them, and you've got to safeguard against that by the way you present the materials that we compile today." And I would doubt that the materials of the Central Committee or the Politburo or whatever the central organs are in Pyongyang are going to be a great deal more reliable than those of Moscow. It's a different matter at lower levels and in less vital, less important circumstances, although this particular incident that I'm talking about was not a really major issue. I can't recall anymore what it was. It was something to do with east-west relations, but it was—I just think that you really cannot expect to find answers to these questions of just why at this moment or at that moment these particular events took place. You will only get speculations of the sort we've been exchanging here.

LERNER: I have a question for Ambassador Brie. Ambassador, one of the things that has struck me about the EC-121 as opposed to Pueblo—was the Soviet response. To the EC-121, the Soviets were almost immediately willing to provide overt assistance, which they were not willing to do after the seizure of the Pueblo. The Chinese really used this offer to assist the U.S. to blast the Soviets for having abandoned the cause of the revolution. Can you comment on the relationship, the perceptions within the communist bloc to the Russian response and then to the Chinese attacks on the Soviets?

BRIE: It all happened during the time when the country was very, very shocked on many aspects within the so-called communist movement, and so it's explained. It was a very hard situation.

STUECK: Let me just raise one thing that I didn't bring up, and no one else has; Nixon's trip to Korea as a private citizen in 1966. There was a story that circulated, and I think it appears in this briefing book, that Nixon was treated shabbily, that he wasn't treated to a dinner. I guess he had a lunch or tea with Park in the Blue House. Do any of the Americans or Koreans have any recollection of that story, any response to it and as to the possibility—given how sensitive Nixon was as a person—at least that was his reputation, that personal slights, if this may have had any impact on his thinking once he got into office?

HUGHES: Well, he certainly liked the Romanians and Ceaușescu. He liked de Gaulle. I mean, it was typical of him to remember favorably any favorable treatment he had and also the reverse.

STUECK: What about Focus Retina? Can any of the Americans comment on the scope of that exercise? My impression is that it was the first such exercise that had occurred between the American and Korean militaries. Was it kind of a precursor to Team Spirit?

REUTHER: I can't speak to that, but one of the things that fits into this and connects to the session we had yesterday, is that at this time frame in 1968, slightly before the EC-121, but in April 1968, you have the Johnson-Park meeting, and then in May of 1968 you have the very first U.S.-Korean security consultative meeting. This is a device that the U.S. uses with its key allies to better coordinate and see what stereotypes people are using, what equipment, and come to a more common position on things, and this would be a vehicle at which it would be the first time perhaps—not the first time—but more details would be given on troop withdrawals or troop needs and whatnot. Now, Bob's working on some documents with regard to the SCM—the Korean-American SCM—but I would ask Ambassador Cutler, since he was the political-military official, I believe at that very time, what got it started in May of 1968?

CUTLER: In May of 1968, yeah. I can't honestly recall, I mean, to be very frank with you.

REUTHER: Slow start.

CUTLER: Yeah, yeah. Forty years is a little too much on this one.

STUECK: Well, we're over time, so unless there are further questions or comments, I suppose there's some people who are hungry in here.

A blue-tinted photograph of two men, Thomas Hughes and Park Tae-gyun, seated at a table. Thomas Hughes, on the left, is an older man with light hair, wearing a suit and a patterned tie. Park Tae-gyun, on the right, is a younger man with dark hair and glasses, also wearing a suit and tie. A microphone is positioned in front of them. The image has a solid blue overlay.

THOMAS HUGHES
AND PARK TAE-GYUN

Panel V

Encouraging Dialogue: Peace and Reunification Initiatives in the Midst of Crisis and Confrontation

Chair: *James F. Person*

Provocateurs: *Gregg Brazinsky, Hong Seukryule*

OSTERMANN: So to the policy and diplomatic veterans, we can put ourselves once more back into those early days of 1968, 1969, and 1971, the crisis years, and look back at those years under the perspective of encouraging dialogue, peace and the reunification initiatives in the midst of crisis and confrontation. My colleague, James Person, will chair this session and call on the provocateurs.

PERSON: Thank you, Christian. Before I do that, though, I know Dr. Hughes has to leave a bit early today. Several people have been asking about the role of INR in the State Department, so I'd like to give Dr. Hughes a few moments to discuss that.

HUGHES: Thank you. I'll be very, very quick. INR's role outside Washington, of course, was almost nonexistent. We had no agents abroad, we simply interpreted the material that came into Washington through other agencies and through the State Department. We distributed our material to embassies abroad and widely in Washington so that even though the documents are addressed to the Secretary of State, they got much wider distribution than that.

We represented, in Washington, the State Department on the United States Intelligence Board along with CIA, DIA, NSA, FBI, Atomic Energy Commission and so forth.

But basically, what's interesting about INR, I think—especially in the 1960s, which was kind of a golden period for it—was that we were the accidental beneficiaries of strong support from the top of the State Department. Our autonomy was the

accidental beneficiary. We were freer from policy pressures, I think, than INR has ever been before or since. This was partly the accidental result of having Dean Rusk in as secretary for eight of those years and then of having Elliot Richardson follow him at least as deputy secretary for the next period under Nixon. Both of them were legally trained. Both of them had a sense of procedure. Both of them guaranteed the autonomy of INR against outside criticism, whether it was from other agencies or inside criticism from geographical bureaus. So we benefited enormously from that kind of support.

At one point, in 1963, McNamara wanted to fire me, and Rusk protected the organization, protected me, even though we were disagreeing with McVee's body count figures from Vietnam and so forth. So there were high points of that period where the autonomy meant something. This was a risk, in a way, for secretaries of state because we were constantly grinding out intelligence notes and research memoranda that didn't exactly help the champions of the Vietnam War or Rusk in particular. But nevertheless, he, I must say, gave us unfailing support.

Second, inside INR, we made it clear, both Roger Hillsman, the first director in '61 and '62, and myself, when I became director in '63, that analysts were to write without considering the political correctness of their reporting and their analysis. They were not running for election or re-election themselves. They could be aware of their audience, but their message was not supposed to be geared by that awareness.

It was our responsibility to defend them, and they were to call things as they saw them. So they were supposed to be essentially politically free from domestic American influence and from Washington influence. It didn't make any difference what they were reading in the newspapers about congressional action or presidential intention. They were to write things as they saw them, and we would protect them if they did, and that worked quite well.

We had a combination of civil servants, permanent civil servants and temporary Foreign Service officers. Foreign Service officers brought in experience from the field in a particular area. Civil servants brought in an academic background, occasionally visited the field, but were there more or less as permanent members of the staff. This combination was unlike any other combination in Washington, and I think we benefited enormously from that.

There were only 300 people in total in INR when I was director, including the secretaries. We were organized geographically. The documents that are in your collection here came from two of our offices, RSB and REA. RSB was the research office on the so-called Sino-Soviet bloc, though this was not really the Sino part, though. It was the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe office and the director during this whole period was Helmut Sonnenfeldt, who later on was known as Kissinger's. Kissinger had him moved from INR to the White House when the Nixon administration took over.

REA was the East Asian Research Office, headed for many years by Allen Whiting. At a previous conference here at the Wilson Center, Kissinger himself credited Whiting with telling him, in 1969, the time had come for an opening to China—credited Allen with clairvoyance leading to the Kissinger opening to Beijing.

When he left in 1967, Fred Greene and John Holdridge ran the office. John Holdridge, like Sonnenfeldt moved from being office director in INR to a policy position in the State Department with Kissinger in 1969. So in effect, we had both office chiefs of the two offices most concerned about writing on these Korean subjects and reactions to the Korean crises, prominent enough to move on to much higher responsibilities.

OSTERMANN: A quick follow-up question, Dr. Hughes. Would—actually two quick questions—would you agree with Ambassador Leonard's earlier statement this morning that the administration really did not have at its disposal, the kind of quality reporting that Ambassador Brie was doing from Pyongyang to Berlin? We obviously didn't have an embassy in Pyongyang, but—

HUGHES: We would have given anything to have that high quality—we had no reporting basically out of North Korea. People would read foreign broadcasts. There would be some people who academically studied North Korea. But—

OSTERMANN: South Korean reporting out of South Korea on North Korea.

HUGHES: Yes, also. But no, I think North Korea was really, if not *terra incognita* to us, at least it was secondhand information from a variety of sources, not anything as acute or as accurate as the East German reports.

OSTERMANN: And was there any sort of exchange or awareness of similar type of strategic analytical work being done by the ROK government, you know, at the KCIA and elsewhere? And was there an active exchange?

HUGHES: I'm sure there was. The CIA would be more responsible for that than INR. My impression is that there were good relations and that there was good exchange.

OSTERMANN: But this would have come through the CIA?

HUGHES: What the volume of it was, I really can't remember.

LEONARD: One point that Tom didn't make is that in addition to the official distribution of notes and so on, some of the more notable people there, in particular Allen Whiting, developed a personal relationship with other officials and were preparing memos to assist. I think the role of George Ball as an opponent of the Vietnam War is pretty well-known. But a lot of the notes that George Ball took over to the White House with him to argue against escalation and so forth were actually drafted by Allen and reviewed by Tom. And the same sort of relationship, I think, operated between Allen and Jim Thompson and Mac Bundy. There were these informal channels. I think, Tom, you had other channels, still informal, that you could move things through when it was thought to be useful to do so.

HUGHES: Thank you for mentioning that. Another one of our most important office directors, of course, was Mr. Leonard himself.

SCHAEFER: Can I just ask you a very practical question? What kind of material did INR have at its disposal to write the reports?

HUGHES: Well, we like to think that we had all of the foreign related material coming into Washington. That's diplomatic reporting into the State Department, CIA agent reporting, DIA reports. We probably didn't have all of them, probably got some of them, but we always got them if we wanted them. There was a wide exchange of information in town.

Basically, we were interpreting the same material that the CIA estimators were interpreting. Therefore, when it came to special national intelligence estimates, we would be a participating party along with the other agencies in the production, and that, therefore, meant that the net result was likely to be a compromise in cases of severe disagreement. But very often, we had a lot of agreement with CIA analysts. On the whole, I think we had a very pleasant and good relationship with the analytical side of the agency.

PERSON: Thank you very much. Okay. We'll go ahead and get started with the final panel today. The topic of this panel is going to serve—well, this panel is going to serve somewhat as a segway to the topic we will be discussing in our next critical history conference. That is, how do we get to 1972, the July 4th North-South declaration when from 1967, we have conflict, crisis, and confrontation?

Ambassador Cutler mentioned, in 1967, there were 437 incursions into South Korean territory. In 1968, we have, of course, the raid on the Blue House and the seizure of the Pueblo. In 1969, we have the shootdown of EC-121. We have the helicopter incident in late 1969. We also have a Korean Air flight hijacked into North Korea from Gangneung. So how then, do we get to 1972? How do we actually begin the process towards—and this notion about peaceful reunification, establishing a peace regime on the Korean peninsula.

So we have then two provocateurs. I will call on Dr. Hong to ask his questions first.

HONG: There's an old saying in Korea: the ground becomes firmer after rain. Although we had very serious militarization between the years 1968 and 1969, and that the results would be seen later in the '70s, I think this period led to a shift in U.S. and South Korean policy toward North Korea, into a more flexible, less confrontational and conciliatory way. You may say that we earned an opportunity in the middle of a crisis.

With this in mind, I'd like to ask a few questions. I'll ask just two questions. My first question is directed to U.S. officials. Looking at the compilation of documents in front of us, it appears that the Nixon administration began urging South Korea to adopt a more conciliatory posture toward North



JAMES PERSON AND JONG-DAE SHIN

Korea and other communist nations. I'd like to know why this change in U.S. policy. Where did it come from, and why did it come about? For example, President Nixon met President Park in San Francisco in August of 1969— if we look at the talking points produced by White House staff for President Nixon, in particular the summary of possible topics which could be brought up in the meeting, it states that South Korea was lagging behind North Korea in proposing peaceful unification in international committees. There is information about the South Korean government taking a more conciliatory posture toward North Korea and the communist world. And though this point was not brought up during the actual talks between President Nixon and President Park, it continued to be mentioned in subsequent documents. Ambassador Porter was probing about the possibility of North-South dialogue as he was meeting with Korean officials. So I'd like to know why the U.S. government decided to shift its policy in the midst of a crisis; what were the reasons? The military tension in Korea in 1969 was very intense, so the U.S. would be put in an awkward situation should something like the Vietnam War arise on the peninsula. Were such domestic Korean concerns the primary cause, or was it Nixon's Détente policy, such as its diplomacy to China? Or, was it due to the U.S. domestic situation? As the situation on the peninsula was costly for the U.S., as Washington had to continue providing military assistance, perhaps the lessening of tensions on the peninsula became a goal so that the U.S. could decrease its military aid.

My second question is directed to Minister Kang and Vice Minister Yoon. It appears that there was a new round of discussions on South Korea's policy toward North Korea. It surfaced in the form of the August 15 declaration in 1970, whereby President Park released a statement, asking North Korea to enter into a good-hearted competition to provide for better living conditions for their respective people. And that certainly indicates a watershed in South Korean policy toward North Korea. It was more of a conciliatory policy which sought more dialogue with North Korea. Although the declaration was revealed on August 15, 1970, I think preparations for this new policy must have been made from 1967 or 1968. Please tell us how these preparations for such dramatic policy shifts are made, and why South Korea changed its policy.

BRAZINSKY: I want to build on the questions that Professor Hong asked. He started out by asking, from the U.S. perspective, why the United States chose, or did the United States actually choose, to promote reconciliation between the two Koreas, or to try to encourage South Korea to pursue better relations with the DPRK. I am interested in one other element, which hasn't been spoken about that much, but that has to do with U.S. economic policy towards Japan and South Korea. Previous presidents had said the U.S. should build up Japan economically; the U.S. should build up South Korea economically. Nixon seemed to come along and say Japan is our competitor economically. South Korea is our competitor, economically. So I wonder how much of this shift in Nixon administration thinking comes from this sort of shift in perception, which, you know, I think Nixon was a lot less clear cut on who in Asia were our friends and who our enemies were. So I'm interested if that played into U.S. policy towards promoting reconciliation.

For our Korean guests, again, I want to build on Professor Hong's question and bring in a few more specific points. He asked why the South Korean government made these efforts to reach out to North Korea. I would just add a few more specific points. What were some of the specific considerations? How much of this was American influenced? How much of this was something that Park Chung Hee wanted to do? How much of this was Park Chung Hee looking at the international situation and seeing things evolve in Vietnam, in Sino-U.S. relations and deciding to make these gestures?

The other question I have for the South Koreans is how sincere was the South Korean government in making these gestures toward reconciliation with North Korea? What did they expect to get out of it? What sort of expectations did they have? Did they really think this would work, or was it just for propaganda purposes, or was it just to appease the United States? Those are the questions I would like to ask.

PERSON: Thanks, Gregg. So the National Unification Board was established in March 1969. We then have, in 1970, the August 15th declaration when President Park declared his Peaceful Reunification Initiative. How do we get here following several years of provocations? I'd like to first ask Dr. Kang.

KANG: Yes, after the 1-21 incident in '68, we were much agitated, and it was true that there were voices calling for retribution against the North. But we felt that retaliation

**“There
was never
an instance in
which I was asked
to follow an order
based on a U.S.
proposal.”**

was impossible. Also, this was a time period in which a series of incidents occurred, from the Nixon doctrine which transformed U.S. policy to—of course this is later, but—Kissinger’s visit to China which led to the normalization of relations between the two nations. Such changes were taking place, but as for us, we attempted to initiate peace offensives and unification offensives with every opportunity we had.

One of such instances was in December of 1967, when the 4th session of the first order of the North Korean Supreme People’s Assembly took place. At the time, the Ten Principles were adopted in which North Korea suggests that the issue of unification be resolved within our generation. In other words, we were caught in a situation in which North Korea threatens us with military provocation on the one hand, and, on the other, raising the issue of unification through peace initiatives.

Of course, I believe that there were instructions from the U.S.; however, I have never received such an order. There was never an instance in which I was asked to follow an order based on a U.S. proposal. In this situation, the President gave us his suggestions for dealing with North Korea’s peace offensive while simultaneously remarking, “Shouldn’t we be attacking the North also?” He said this in several instances.

In these circumstances, the unification policy of the Supreme People’s Assembly was announced. We thought that we should study such topics also, which is why the National Unification Board was established in 1969. The first president of the Board was Dr. Shin Taehwan, who studied economics. The question of why it was a “board” (*won*), rather than a “ministry” (*bu*) can be explained as follows. A board is not a place for business activities; it is a place for conducting and planning studies. In other words, its function was not involving itself in public affairs targeting the citizens. Its function was different from that of the present-day Ministry of Unification; at the time, the goal was to develop this into a research institute that conducts research with long-term plans. So, on the question of who would provide the necessary materials for the board’s research, we received an order from the president stating that we would be responsible for providing the board with research material and documents. But, for us, the KCIA, we were dealing with North Korea’s peace offensives, so we felt that we should devise a counter-plan. We decided to strengthen our propaganda mechanism. This was the situation in 1969.

In 1970 the Blue House informed us that the President would like to prepare a speech on August 15th. When composing a presidential speech, each department

sent pertinent materials. Then, the chief of the Office of Public Information becomes responsible for the actual writing. So we also sent some of our documents. But—I remember it was in early August; a Saturday, I believe—when I received a telephone call from the chief of the Public Bureau who was writing the presidential speech. He asked whether I could come to his house immediately. The house was located in Myeonmok-dong, a region that is a bit far from downtown. So I went.

When I arrived, I saw the Vice Foreign Minister, Yoon Seokheon. There were the two of us, as well as two scholars. While having dinner, we conversed—about the state of foreign affairs, as Vice Minister Yoon was in the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and discussed other subjects as well. When it became 11 o'clock, I was given a document with the word that this was the speech that the President was to make on August 15th, but that the President had indicated that he was not satisfied with it. “Why don’t you take this, revise it, and since tomorrow is Sunday, return it to us in the morning?” he said. I do not know whether you are familiar with the situation of the time, but back in those days, there was a curfew. You could not walk around outside at night. Since my car had a pass that enabled me to travel the streets at night, I took two scholars in my car and went to the Bando Hotel—which is now gone—and worked all night on the speech. The next morning, I sent it off.

In this revision, I devised a grand plan. The proposal included issues such as economic and cultural exchange; the issue of separated families; Red Cross talks—all of which were topics that had been proposed by the North. Of course, this document was revised once more by a speech-writer to match the president’s style of speech; in accordance to the language frequently used by the President.

After this, I thought my job was complete. But, around five days before August 15th, I think it may have been August 9th, I received a call from the Blue House. So I went. I heard that the president was waiting for me, so I went inside. When I went in, the Minister of Justice Lee Ho was sitting there, along with several prosecutors who were in charge of security affairs. I also saw the newly appointed minister of the National Unification Board, Kim Yeongseon, who had formerly been a member of the opposition party. The Minister of Justice and the Chief Secretary of Press were sitting there, facing each other.

“At that same time, around 1969, North Korean military armed provocations significantly decreased in number and the Fifth Party Congress was held in North Korea. It was a year in which a kind of atmosphere emerged in which North-South dialogue could be possible.”

So, I asked what the issue was in hand, and it turned out that they were reviewing the draft of the presidential speech. As we were the initial drafters of the document, we sat in the middle of the discussion and kept silent. Minister of Justice Lee Ho was reviewing the document, going through the pages in front of the president. After a short examination, he said that the contents were in violation of the constitution, and that the president should not be making such statements in public. It was against the sovereign powers of the president to surpass such authority, he said. After listening to Minister Lee, the president ordered us to review it once more and report to him again.

So, we all left the room and went to the chief secretary's office. We worked on it all day, but could not find a solution. Neither side would compromise. As for the chief secretary of press, he maintained his stance that he was to follow the president's wishes to make a clear and strong speech in public and write accordingly. The minister of justice's perspective was that such was unacceptable.

At five o'clock in the afternoon, and the president called us in once more. Upon our entrance, he asked, “Is there a resolution?” So I answered, “No.” Then, the president asked for a pen, crossed out sections of the draft, and gave it to the minister of justice.

And the Minister of Justice saw it and circulated it among the prosecutors in charge of North Korean affairs. The prosecutor agreed to it and the president then gave the document to me and said, “Hold on to it until August 15th and use it on that date.” And that is what became the declaration of August 15th. In that declaration, President Park urged North Korea to come out in the arena of competition to show which side could provide a better life for its people. Its beginning also has criticisms of the North Korean provocations, et cetera. And in its conclusion, it urged North Korea to enter into friendly competition and good will to provide better living conditions for people on both sides of the DMZ. That became the basis of our unification policy.

At that same time, around 1969, North Korean military armed provocations significantly decreased in number and the Fifth Party Congress was held in North Korea. It was a year in which a kind of atmosphere emerged in which North-South dialogue could be possible. As things went on, Kim Gyewon was replaced as director of the KCIA by Lee Hurak. Lee Hurak worked as chief of staff for President Park and then went on to become the ambassador in Japan and came

back to direct the KCIA. He called me and asked me to come up with a concrete method of opening a dialogue between South and North Korea.

Initially I was the only one tasked with this project and after struggling with it for three months I implored him, “I can’t do it by myself. Please assign more people.” And so I received the help of 3, 4 section chief level officers—fellows with a peculiar streak. We were able to come up with plans for Red Cross talks between South and North Korea, and that’s how the South-North Red Cross talks were opened. If you need it, I would be very happy to provide the material concerning this.

OSTERMANN: Thank you very much, Dr. Kang. This is precisely the kind of account we need because this is not what you can find in the documents, the circumstances, the context for these discussions. Let me just, for clarification, ask and confirm that you stated that while you did not receive, personally, any suggestions from the American side to open this dialogue, it’s your understanding that President Park did? And that caused him to go and develop—give the speech?

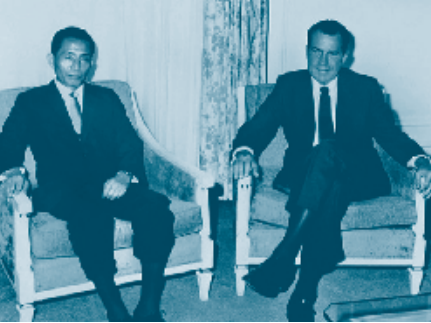
KANG: I said that I did not receive orders [directly from the U.S.]. I do not know whether the President received anything. As for myself, I acted on orders from the president, and I didn’t follow orders from Americans.

OSTERMANN: That’s helpful. Thank you for this clarification. I also wonder if you could just clarify again what your particular input was in the initial draft. You said you separated some of the larger issues from smaller issues such as family reunions and these kinds of things. Could you point to the KCIA’s and to your particular distinctive input into this declaration?

KANG: Let me tell you how the president’s speeches were prepared; its process—speeches that are to be delivered at events such as August 15th or March 1st. The established practice was that initial materials were gathered by each post; when there was a request from the Blue House, we contributed pertinent information. And it was incorporated into the main text of the speech and then it was made -- written into the speech by speech writers and then it was sent to the president for approval.



KANG IN-DEOK



PARK CHUNG HEE AND
RICHARD NIXON

But for the August 15th speech, I heard that the president requested to the public information officer at the Blue House that the speech should include some proposals geared to the North. The speech was written and then sent down to Jinhae where the president was vacationing. The president reviewed it and sent it back saying he was not satisfied with it. The draft did not contain any specifics, such as let's do this or that. So during the discussion of the draft, I thought, "what about discussing proposals for economic and cultural exchanges?" Of course, issues such as Red Cross talks and the reunion of separated families were included as well.

The problem was that such a proposal to North Korea was in violation of the South Korean constitution. Legal experts advised the president that proposing such things to a hostile country like North Korea was way beyond the ruling power of the president. This was why all the proposals in the draft of the speech were removed. Only basic principles were included. The president posed the question, "In reality, which side provides better living conditions for its respective people?" He invited North Korea to join an arena of good-will competition. That is the key to this draft. And the president thought that since this point remained intact, his wishes were conveyed in the speech.

PARK: According to the document on page 1056 in the briefing book, American officials were aware of the North Korean proposal to South Korea, including the exchange of letters and meetings of separated families in the DMZ. These documents are dated from the middle of 1969; maybe it's shortly before the summit between President Park and Nixon in San Francisco. I wonder how much information the Korean government, and in particular the Korean CIA, had about that. I also wonder whether the North Korean proposal influenced the policy of the South Korean government.

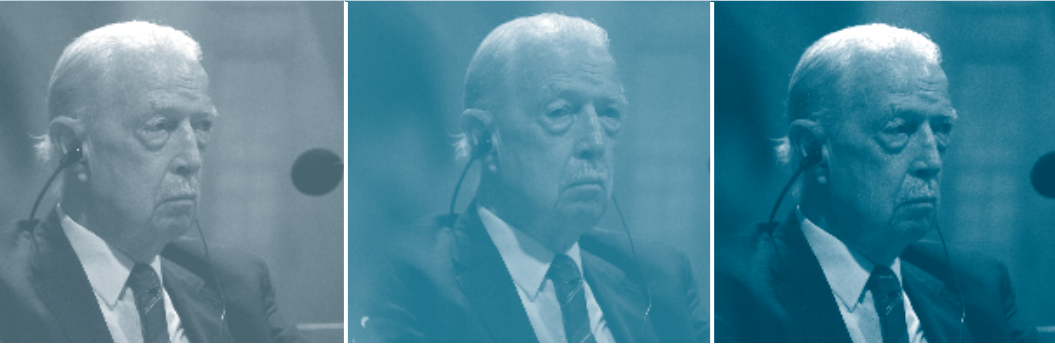
KANG: North Korea's peace proposal took varied forms. The proposals were not limited to issues such as the reunion of separated family members, but also cultural and economic exchanges. Although they did not make any official announcements, many of these proposals came to us through The General Association of Korean Residents in Japan (*choch'ongryun*). We completely ignored them because we were in no position to accommodate them, especially in view of the fact that it

was at the height of North Korean provocations against South Korea. How could these proposals be realized? We had great doubt about them, so we ignored them. So when I made the proposal to be included in the president's speech, I didn't keep the North Korean proposals in mind.

HONG: I might ask an additional question. It was 1971 when the South Korean government made its first proposal to North Korea for Red Cross talks leading to the reunion of separated families. But we know also that within South Korea there are all kinds of talks about the method of exchange with North Korea and how we did it prior to this period, suggestions about exchange in communication, correspondence and the exchange of journalists. And just as the U.S. and China could exchange table tennis athletes, there was a suggestion that North and South Korea should exchange athletes as well.

Among all of the options, on the question of exchanges with North Korea, why did you decide on the reunion of separated family members? Korean feminists expressed their dissatisfaction with the proposal on the grounds that the proposal was heavily rooted in the traditional Korean emphasis on blood relations. This ties in with all of the questions by Professor Brazinsky in tactical terms. I think the exchange of letters or journalists could have been accomplished much more easily than the reunion of separated family members. There are therefore many people who question the motives of the South Korean government in proposing the reunion of separated families, knowing that this will be very difficult to accomplish.

KANG: Let me explain that. Let me first explain the process of the Red Cross talks. Of all the proposed issues to discuss, they believed the least problematic in terms of security to both North and South Korea were talks on humanitarian issues. Humanitarian issues can be taken care of at any time, even in the middle of a war, as you know. So from an international administrative point-of-view, it was the most universal value and it takes precedence over other issues, we thought. As you know, cultural exchanges or exchanges in the correspondence are directly tied to the security of the system. It is tied to whether to open the system or not and they are very difficult to be accomplished.



AMBASSADOR JAMES LEONARD

Of course, we studied all of the proposals and came to the conclusion that this humanitarian exchange was the least problematic for both North and South Korea. We were confident that our proposal would be accepted by North Korea. And in our estimate, this carried the least amount of risk. And as you might well know, this was announced by the president of the South Korean Red Cross on August 12th. Originally, it was set for release on the August 15th of 1970. The reason for moving it up to the 12th of August was because there was a report in Yomiuri Newspaper of Japan that South Korea was planning to have Red Cross talks with North Korea in late July of the same year. It was a leak in security. We wondered how it may have leaked; director Lee Hurak asked how it may have. The more we thought about it, we came to the conclusion that it could not have possibly been let out by us. After an investigation on the matter, we learned that it wasn't from us but rather from Office of Prime Minister. Perhaps, a leak was intentional by those who opposed the proposal.

Mr. (Genro) Shimamoto of Yomiuri, who is now one of the organizers of the Council on Korea-Japan Exchange, first got wind of it from somewhere and had another person write an article about it, since he himself could not. Since our plans were revealed in such a way, Director Lee Hurak was very concerned that North Korea might make a preemptive announcement ahead of South Korea. I tried to assure him, but he was still very anxious so he suggested that we reverse our plan.

Instead of the president making the announcement on August 15th and President Choe Duseon of the Red Cross presenting it to North Korea, Director Lee proposed an alternative route—that President Choe make the statement first, then have the Korean government follow with support for his speech. And so the announcement was made on August 12th. Before, there was a question about this proposal being too mild and why we did not make the most demanding proposal.

But to tell you the truth, any proposal, whether it was economical or cultural, would all have entailed some problematic aspect. In particular, we did not believe that things such as letter exchanges would go too well. So among the various proposals, the most practical, obtainable one was the humanitarian Red Cross talks, as Shimamoto's article also pointed out. Plus, we ran into the legal dilemma preparing for a speech of President Park on August 15th. So we concentrated instead on Red Cross talks with a view to family reunion.

Later we had the opportunity to discuss this humanitarian issue with Kim Il Sung. Apparently, he was not too happy with this "humanitarian" idea. So, because of such diverse ideas about humanitarian issues, the Red Cross talks did not yield many results.

PERSON: Dr. Kang, please explain this issue in further detail.

KANG: To explain in further detail, Kim Il Sung said that they will approach the humanitarian issue in the way that the International Red Cross does. In other words, we were saying that first we must make sure that they are living or dead. If they are alive, there should be an exchange of correspondence, which should be followed by a reunion. And once that meeting is accomplished, there should be a decision as to where they would like to meet. So we suggested this four-step approach. On the spot, Kim Il Sung asked why had to use such a complicated method. In a counter-proposal, he said "Let's do it simpler way. Just free visitation. Free mutual visitation. First the meeting will be conducted at the place of separation, and if the other party has moved, the meeting will be arranged at the place of the new location." He went on to say, "I'm going to send 40,000 to 50,000 North Koreans to South Korea. Why doesn't the South Korean government reciprocate by sending an equal number of South Koreans to North Korea? Then, wouldn't it become simple?" So we said, "Yeah, that's a good idea."

But then, he changed his words. He said, "However, in South Korea there are laws such as the anticommunist law, the national security law, etc., and you have anticommunist education at all levels. So we cannot have free mutual visitations." I never fully trusted Kim Il Sung, but I didn't know that he would carry on his lying to this extent. He claimed that in North Korea there is freedom to criticize communists and

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freedom of movement throughout the country. What kind of communist country has such kind of freedom? No matter how much I think we put into Red Cross talks, these basic differences could not be resolved. We were beating our brains, we were trying to come up with ways to resolve the difference, and the opportunity came when we went to Pyongyang for the first time in November of 1972 at a dinner hosted by Kim Il Sung. I brought it up in front of Kim Il Sung at the dinner table. Kim Il Sung said that in order for this to happen South Korea's anticommunist laws, the national security law, and anticommunist education, and anticommunist mass media—must all be eliminated. He said, “Aren't these problems that cannot be solved by the Red Cross? So let's have a political meeting. Let's solve this problem politically.”

So what started as a humanitarian issue quickly turned into a political issue. This is Kim Il Sung's logic. What started out as an issue of separated family members, a humanitarian issue, in no time turned into a political issue. So it could not be resolved. I wonder if there's any text supporting this in Korea. I would be happy to provide you with relevant documents, if necessary.

Let me reiterate. We kept on having preliminary Red Cross talks, but could not have the main meeting. This is because North Koreans kept on applying political issues to what started as a humanitarian issue. And we were able to confirm North Korean intentions when we went to Pyongyang, following the July 4, North-South joint declaration. It says “July 4 declaration is of a political nature, then and only then can the main meeting of the Red Cross talks be convened.” Only after a shift in political issues between the North and the South, main meeting of Red Cross talks could convene. For an entire year, we had just planning, preparatory preliminary meetings and did not have a single main meeting. Through these kinds of experiences, we learned how difficult it is to try to have a dialogue with North Korea.

Many people are raising the question why the KCIA was in charge of this. Consider the situations of Korea at the time. The KCIA was the only government agency that was able to handle this. First of all, there was an issue of security, because it has never been done before. And it also required pulling talents that were able to come up with all kinds of strategies, etc. And the only way we could have done it was by including personnel from many different government departments, whereas the KCIA had all of these people in one place. And we had the proper human resources and a secure place to do it, too. And I assume the president gave

the order to the former director of the KCIA to make a study of it, and the director then, in turn, gave it to me.

We did not have any networks in North Korea that had been connected with this. When we made our first proposal to North Korea, it was done over radio broadcast, and North Korea replied in a likewise manner. And that's how our first meeting came about. The first North-South dialogue was convened in this manner.

PERSON: Before we move to American policy makers, I have a question for Ambassador Brie. I wonder if you could tell us a little bit about motivation in North Korea's peace initiatives. What do you think motivated Kim Il Sung—were his initiatives purely for domestic consideration, domestic consumption, or did he genuinely try to improve inter-Korean relations. Was he genuine in his promotion of letter exchanges or family exchanges?

BRIE: Well it is difficult for me to answer this question because nothing happened actually. You can only test this if you either accept it or refuse it. I cannot answer this question.

KANG: I'll answer that. The July 4 North-South Joint Declaration includes three major principles for reunification. The three major principles of reunification, first is self-reliance, second is peace, and third is Korean national unity. KCIA director Lee Hurak made a secret trip to Pyongyang in May of 1972. And at this meeting, Kim Il Sung stressed the three principles. Director Lee Hurak took it from Kim Il Sung, and incorporated it into the declaration, which was made on July 4. As a working-level official, I could not see how it could work. How could you be self-reliant? The North Korean interpretation of self-reliance was the withdrawal of U.S. troops from South Korea. "Peace" in the North Korean view meant that there's no strengthening of South Korea's military capability. And Korean national unity meant a United Front. From the point of a working-level official like me, this was unacceptable. So it should be changed into focusing on peaceful first. Because if peace could be guaranteed on the Korean peninsula, U.S. troop withdrawal could be considered. However when there's no peace and North Korea insists upon U.S. troop withdrawal first, it

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he was determined to block any attempt by North Korea to infiltrate into the south or form a United Front. And Mr. Lee Hurak, the director of the KCIA, he wanted to return to the old days—confrontation without dialogue. From now on, it was going to be confrontation with dialogue.

doesn't really make sense. So we said no to North Korea's proposal, because they insisted on the withdrawal of U.S. troops from South Korea, and they banned the strengthening of South Korea's military, and so on. Their proposal fit well with their ambition to conquer South Korea and make it communist; that's the basis of our criticism of the North Korean proposal.

However, the three principles were incorporated into the North-South joint declaration on July 4, and the joint declaration ran into a lot of the criticism from South Koreans. Mr. Lee Hurak, the director of the KCIA, said that in order to begin North-South dialogue, it was necessary that we accept the proposal from North Korea. If time permits, I'd like to talk a little bit more about this point, later on.

OSTERMANN: Just one more follow up question. Did the KCIA monitor the impact of the August 15 declaration and ensuing steps in North Korea beyond what you've told us so far? Was there any measurable impact given the way North Korean society is organized?

KANG: We didn't monitor it closely, but there was an immediate response to that. They made the announcement unilaterally. In order to explain the August 15 declaration to the South Korean people, we gathered together religious figures, journalists, scholars, and academics. So we explained our position to the people of South Korea. We did not think that North Korea would okay this, and we were sure they were not going to accept it. They did come up with proposals, according to their own demand, their own principles for national unification.

STUECK: Very brief follow up question. You said that the hardcore element of July 4th statement is independence, self-reliance, peace and then national consolidation; solidarity. What do you think of June 15th Joint Declaration of 2000? Is there any difference in essence between the June 15th declaration and then the July 4th declaration because the paragraph 1 of June 15th declaration is more or less of the same nature.

KANG: I did not get involved with the June 15 declaration, but the major difference is that it contained proposals for confederation. Discussing the various later stages.

RYOO: I don't think that is of such importance. I think the issue is the first clause of the declaration, which states that we, Koreans, should independently solve this problem of national unification.

KANG: Of course content-wise, it is similar. I think the central issue is how we responded to it. In the case of the President Park Chung Hee, he was determined to block any attempt by North Korea to infiltrate into the south or form a United Front. And Mr. Lee Hurak, the director of the KCIA, he wanted to return to the old days—confrontation without dialogue. From now on, it was going to be confrontation with dialogue. So now we were engaged in dialogue. We were determined to block any North Korean attempt to infiltrate South Korea.

To illustrate that point, let me share with you an anecdote. When we were returning from our first trip to Pyongyang, the president requested that we come directly to the Blue House to brief him. As soon as we came back by way of Panmunjeom, we went straight to the Blue House, and reported to the president. The president had called the prime minister; Kim Jongpil. So KCIA director Lee Hurak, and vice premier, Jang Giyeong and special advisor to the president, Choe Gyuha gathered together and asked questions.

At the time actually, I was the one in charge of North Korea. I was director of the North Korean bureau at the KCIA. There was a talk about the economy and so on. Then, a question was directed at me, asking, "Director Kang, what is your appraisal?"

Because I felt that it was my duty to make very accurate report to the President, I said, "Mr. President, there is no change in North Korea. And just because of a change in their strategy—agreeing to a dialogue with South Korea, we cannot make any accomplishments that improve North-South relations." That is all I said. And then the president turned to the prime minister, and asked a question: "What do you think prime minister?" And the prime minister said, "I agree with Director Kang. I believe that the reality is that there is no change in North Korea. I second his opinion." And the president said, "Yes, I believe there's no change." The president had a meeting with an emissary from North Korea, Pak Seongcheol, in May of that year. In May of 1972, Pak Seongcheol came to Seoul in secret. And President Park listened to what Pak Seongcheol had to say, which included an invitation to visit North Korea for a summer talk, and proposals



THOMAS HUGHES

for very speedy progress in North-South talks. And President Park responded to Pak Seongcheol's proposal saying, "What are we going to do when we two meet? Are we going to eat some nengmyun or dine? I don't need that. What we need is a tactical solution of the problem. We must think of it like bricklaying, and start solving it one by one."

So we could see that, even from this personal meeting with Pak Seongcheol, President Park did not have any high expectations of results from North-South dialogue. But he thought at the same time that in order to improve the situation between North and South Korea, probably some dialogue was more useful than no dialogue. So he ordered us to continue discussions with the North. So we, as a working-level official engaged in North-South dialogue, had an easy time with it. First of all, we were not under tremendous pressure to produce results. It did not matter too much whether something good or bad came out of the dialogue. So I began the North-South dialogue with a relaxed mind.

OSTERMANN: We are going to lose Ambassador Cutler shortly. I would like to get at least his initial reaction to some of these inter-Korean developments on the record in terms of, did you follow these, what was your attitude, and I'd like to invite Ambassador Leonard as well.

CUTLER: Yeah, you're right. I do have to leave. And we're at a time frame where I had already left Korea and now was happily ensconced in Saigon. But I was not aware, and I was not aware of any high level effort by the United States to push, to induce South Korea to start a any kind of reaching out to North Korea. It may have happened, but my guess is that certainly in 1969, in the early years the months of 1969 anyway, we fully shared the Koreans' skepticism with regard to any overtures by Park Chung Hee. Skepticism or suspicion that this probably was more for propaganda.

On the other hand, we have to recognize that we were entering a new era of the cold war in the 1970s when Nixon came in. I think it's a greater sophistication on the part of the United States government in viewing the cold war and in viewing the so-called communist threat. We began to realize that it was not monolithic as we discussed here before. We knew that there was the Soviet Union and there was China. In other words, there were many different points of power within the com-

munist world and that as I say, we were getting a little more sophisticated in how we deal with this. We ourselves began to talk with the North Vietnamese. Do you remember Kissinger's private talks and so on? We realized that we had to leave some sort of accommodation in Vietnam. And it would be hard to imagine that at least a little later on, we would have trouble with the idea of Seoul and Pyongyang talking at least, particularly if it starts with humanitarian and family communication.

I'd just like to leave with a final comment here. So much has happened. When I was in our foreign service, for 35 years it was all during the cold war. When I was in Seoul, the idea of anybody, any American going to Pyongyang was just out of the question. Never mind the New York symphony and a few other things that have happened since. But I had this cold war view of the world at that time and with good reason, having just gone through another month of agony with respect to the Pueblo, and having seen the attack on the Blue House just a few blocks from my home, and having realized that the North Koreans seem to do the most outrageous kinds of things, as I followed day after day, week after week, all of these infiltrations. So you couldn't have any confidence in North Korea's actions nor did you have any real thought that in a matter of years, in 1972, the director of the KCIA would go to Pyongyang. I mean in 1968 and 1969 that was just unthinkable.

Just as it was unthinkable that some years later I would be going to Hanoi. When I was in Saigon, the idea of going to Hanoi was just out of the question because we were bombing it. And yet many Americans go to Vietnam now. We almost all have the same experience. Are you an American? You are? And they hug you. Now that's not necessarily because Vietnamese love Americans. You can be a little cynical and say that well, one reason they hug you is because they feel sorry for you—you lost the war. Or most Vietnamese that you meet are frankly too young. They don't even remember the war. Times are changing, and I know that Korea is changing in that respect, too.

But still, times have changed, and I think that despite the fact that we are still going to have a lot of problems. And we see them now. These walls are coming down, and I think they will continue; they can't help it in a world is getting smaller and smaller everyday- technology alone is going to bring down a lot of these walls. It's going to raise problems too, like a nuclear North Korea.

Anyway, these are all generalities and things with which you are very familiar, but I leave these two days with a great respect for the value of such sessions as this, stepping

back and looking at the problem and having access, any access to documentation that we never thought would ever be available, ever. I didn't in my life time. So I wanted to thank you. And I want to thank the organizers of this for a superior job. Special thanks to the interpreters there in the booth. Thank you very much. And I got to run.

LEONARD: I would only echo the sentiments that Ambassador Cutler has just articulated and our gratitude for the conference and our appreciation of how dramatically it has underlined the way that the world has changed since 1968 and 1969. And thank God for that.

PERSON: Ambassador Leonard, are you familiar with any U.S. pressure on South Korea to begin this process of dialogue in the early years in 1968 or in 1969?

LEONARD: No, I cut out of the whole Korean situation in May of 1969. But I didn't even hear of any such things in that period. Absolutely nothing.

OSTERMANN: Can I ask that to David? First, what was the U.S. policy toward the improvement of South-North relations, and also, what was the relationship or connection between the U.S-China normalization and the improvement of South-North relations in 1971 and 1972 including the détente situation there.

REUTHER: Well, I have to be speculating as a researcher, but it always seemed to me that there are trends afoot in Asia that began to allow other people either to mirror what's going on or to seek to mirror. I mean, the United States and the Republic of Korea have had their special relationship. Then, the United States has its relationship with China. Well if you are sitting in Pyongyang, you're thinking why can't I at least mirror the U.S-China relationship? And I think that is a viable question that you can ask most of the people in the documents in the area.

PERSON: Dr. Kang is there anything you would like to end with? Anything you would like to add?

KANG: There was a question before; though I did not understand the second question clearly. Did you ask about Director Lee Hurak doing something to Kim Il Sung?

SCHAEFER: Can I repeat it? The question was whether Director Lee Hurak informed the leadership in North Korea a few days before the announcement of Yusin of what was to come, and that President Park was going to declare emergency rule. There are East German documents in which the North Koreans claimed that Lee Hurak informed them prior to this announcement that this is going to come, and he said they would do this without any interference by foreign forces and would not listen to the United States. They would do this on their own. And they informed North Korea because they did not want this to derail talks which they had held over the previous couple of months.

KANG: Okay. As for the first question, you asked whether the North-South dialogue had anything to do with Yusin.

From the standpoint of a working-level official like me, we were involved only in North-South dialogue. We hadn't even heard about the word Yusin, it was when it was announced for the first time I heard it, and I was shocked. The Minister of Education called me. He asked me to conduct a briefing for university presidents, explaining what Yusin was about. So I asked him, "You know, honestly speaking, I don't know anything about it. Why should I be explaining Yusin to university presidents?"

Then he asked, "Have you heard any instructions from your director?," referring to Director Lee Hurak. "I haven't," I replied. And that was the entirety of our telephone conversation. A little while later, Director Lee Hurak told me, "You go ahead and brief people on Yusin." So I asked him, "I don't know what it's all about; what is it about?" And he asked, "Haven't you seen the President's speech?" And I answered, "No I haven't." He said, "Why don't you read the president's statement, and then based on that, can't you explain to the people?" So I got hold of the statement, and at first I thought that Yusin was being proclaimed in order to improve North-South relations, although I cannot recall in great detail.

I was very much at a loss. I could not disobey my director's order, so two days later, I went to brief university presidents. I clearly remember saying, "Like a student from the country-side who goes to Seoul to study and returns home for summer vacation and explains how much change has occurred in Seoul to village elders, I will explain the changes that have occurred. When addressing them, I did not use terms, such as "university president" or "dean." In Korean there's a word called *seonsaeng* (teacher or mentor), a term used when respecting teachers. I used

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So I've never been
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the term, “*seonsaengnim* (honorable teacher).” And so instead of talking about Yusin, I talked about North Korea. Even to this day, I wonder whether Director Lee Hurak had Yusin in mind when he first initiated North-South dialogue. Until the end, he did not reveal his intentions to me. After he and I retired from government positions, I called to visit and pay him respect on New Year’s Day. But he told me not to come. So I’ve never been able to visit him.

The Second question concerns whether director Lee Hurak informed Kim Il Sung that Yusin was in the making. I have no knowledge of that. I’m hearing it for the first time today. I will verify this information on my own.

OSTERMANN: Unless there are any other questions that you cannot live without having answered today, I would like, in that case, to bring the proceedings to a close. This is only the first step in what we envision to be a series of critical oral conferences. I think we are off to a terrific start. Let me thank my co-conspirator, Ambassador Sun and the colleagues at the University of North Korean Studies for their support in all of this. Let me thank the chairs and the provocateurs for playing their role here at the conference. Let me of course; enormously thank the policy and diplomatic veterans for sharing their insights and experiences with us. This is invaluable, this is history-making, if you want. Thank you to the experts for their questions and comments. Not in the least, let me thank Director Seo and the Korea Foundation for making all of this possible. My thanks to the translators for a really ardent job, and again, last but not least, my heartfelt thanks to James and Tim, and the team of interns who have been working assiduously throughout the last few days and making this entire event turn out the way it did, and I think they desire a round of applause..

SUN: In concluding our session of our forum here, I wish to express my, for one, sincere appreciation for your leadership in leading this forum and discussion to a very successful, fruitful conclusion. Dr. Ostermann, you have taken every care with arrangements for our guests in attendance, including travel and accommodation. And I think everybody will agree with me when I say that without Dr. Ostermann’s good leadership, we couldn’t carry this very significant and fruitful conference to such a successful conclusion. Thank you very much sir.

Document Appendix

DOCUMENT NO. 1

[Source: MfAA, C 1088/70. Obtained for NKIDP by Bernd Schaefer and translated for NKIDP by Karen Riechert]

Memorandum

On Audience for Comrades Heintze and Breitenstein with Comrade Pak Seongcheol, Member of the Politburo, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, 12 May 1967, 5.20 p.m.

GDR Embassy in the DPRK
Pyongyang, 13 May 1967

Further persons present:

Comrade Strauss, Acting Ambassador

From the Koreans:

A Deputy President of the Korean Trade Union

Comrade Shin Taein as interpreter

Comrade Heintze thanked us for the invitation and acknowledged the success of the Korean workers in rebuilding their homeland and economically strengthening the Republic. He also mentioned some of his impressions, e.g. from the mass demonstration or from the visit to the Pioneers' Palace, which proved to be gratifying for the Foreign Minister.

Comrade Pak Seongcheol then made the following remarks:

“The population of the DPRK is a united front behind Comrade Kim Il Sung. After the speech of Comrade Kim Il Sung at the Party Conference in October 1966, we have to concentrate at the same time on strengthening defense and on developing the economy. A share of 30 percent of our budget is for defense matters. Because we are compelled to make tremendous efforts in this field, we cannot introduce the five-day work week, as you recommended at the occasion of your 7th Party Congress. We

are unable to do that because the enemy stands right across [the border]. He provokes [us] every day, blood is shed almost every day.”

“If the enemies attack, we will inflict a crushing defeat on them. In order to do that, we have to increase defense capabilities. We aspire to equip everybody with arms, to modernize weapons, and to build an army of professional cadres. We have already succeeded in almost all of this, but there are still many efforts required. You saw our worker militias on May 1st. Some said: ‘Maybe this was the army, only wearing different uniforms?’ But why should we do that? Those were all factory workers. We have plenty of them. Within ten minutes, all of them would be ready for action.”

“The enemy is threatening us with nuclear bombs. But we are not afraid. Of course, the nuclear bomb is dangerous because it is a weapon of mass destruction. It is bad, however, to be just afraid. There are also ways to fight it. We are, for example, prepared to protect all our people in underground facilities. Before long, we will operate an underground transportation system. It has been under construction for 12 years already. In times of peace, it will serve as an underground train; in an emergency, it will protect our people. We have been digging underground everywhere; for more than 17 years now, all over the country. We are prepared and are not afraid of nuclear bombs.”

“During the war (1950-1953), the Americans dropped thousands of tons of bombs every day and destroyed our country, but the people stayed. The U.S. may have modern technology, but they don’t have good infantry. Therefore, it doesn’t make sense for the Americans to occupy Korea because this would mean they would have to surrender, even in the case of victory, since they don’t have a good infantry (Comrade Pak Seongcheol obviously seemed to allude to guerilla warfare). One has to understand that. If you don’t understand that, you cannot fight U.S. imperialism. Vietnam had, at the beginning only its fists and the Americans came with plenty of weapons and ammunition. Of course, this was sort of a disadvantageous situation. But now the Americans have reached an impasse. They have the tiger by its tail but can neither regain their grip nor let go of the tiger. If you consult history, you will find that a just war never ended in defeat. Besides, of all those American troops in Vietnam, less than half of them really count as soldiers. A quarter of them have to carry out transportation duties. Another quarter is constantly on the move. Furthermore, the American soldiers willfully let mosquitoes bite them and intentionally fill water into their boots, which were supposed to protect them from the swamps. They do not want to fight.”

“Why do I mention all of this? One should not be too afraid of the U.S. Currently, there is such huge propaganda to inspire fear of nuclear bombs, but that is not justified. The American troops are scattered all over the world. Therefore, it is necessary to unite

the forces of the Afro-Asian and Latin American people to actively carry out the battle against U.S. imperialists and to inflict wounds on them everywhere. Although, the socialist camp is currently not united and there are differences of opinion between the Soviet Union and China, Kim Il Sung said at the conference in October that the socialist camp should come together, put aside differences and unite. China rants against the Soviet Union, and the latter replies. The Soviet Union has to respond, of course.”

At this point, Comrade Heintze remarked that the Chinese leadership is also ranting against us and everybody else.

Comrade Pak Seongcheol replied: “Yes, against everybody.” He continued: “The U.S.A. applauds these disagreements. Some even think the Americans in Vietnam could expand the war because of China’s attitude. However, we think the arguments are an internal matter. Whether China or the Soviet Union commits mistakes—they both claim to be right—they both need to move towards each other.”

At this point Comrade Heintze remarked that it does not matter much whether there have been mistakes or not. This is about the basics of Marxism-Leninism and about supporting the Vietnamese people more effectively in their struggle. And the latter is getting obstructed by the Chinese leadership.

Pak Seongcheol replied: “The Vietnamese comrades are telling us that they receive material and use it in combat. They have Soviet missiles. Yet, even if transports through China are indeed obstructed, you must not mention that. This causes damage. For instance, the Vietnamese comrades requested material from us. We quickly prepared the shipments, but the Chinese comrades told us we have to submit delivery lists six months in advance. Then, we just shipped the material to the border ourselves, handed it over to the Vietnamese comrades, and a month later they had it in their home country. Obviously, these problems have to be addressed. But there is no value in public polemics.”

Then, Comrade Pak Seongcheol turned to relations between our two countries and stated: “The situation in both our countries is identical in many respects. However, the method of struggle is different. We will not make assessments which method is superior; this depends entirely on the situation. During my visit to the GDR in November [1966], I had the chance to state our opinion clearly. Since we are both divided countries, we need to strengthen our collaboration and develop our relations. I think it is mandatory and possible to solidify our relations with the GDR in the future, as we did in the past. I hold this opinion: Now our relations are good.”

Strauss
Acting Ambassador

* * *

DOCUMENT NO. 2

[Source: PolAA, MFAA, G-A 360. Obtained and translated for NKIDP by Bernd Schaefer]

*Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
of the German Democratic Republic
to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea*

Pyongyang, December 22, 1967
State Secretary and First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
Comrade Hegen

102 Berlin
Marx – Engels –Platz 2

Dear Comrade Hegen,

Our embassy's analytical work and report for 1967 has dealt primarily with the following issues:

- The economic development of the DPRK;
- Domestic developments since the Party Congress (especially after the June Plenum);
- The KWP's attitude towards different aspects of the world communist movement;
- The DPRK's relationship with the PRC, Vietnam, Cuba, the Soviet Union, and other European socialist states;
- The intensification of tensions along the line of demarcation and the reasons [for the intensification].

In December, the Far Eastern department suggested that we work out a prognosis for the development of the DPRK and the relationship between the GDR and the DPRK. The goals and structures of such a prognosis have been sent for approval to the Far Eastern department and thus to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Due to the embassy's extensive way of reporting, an exact report of the domestic and foreign policy of the DPRK by the GDR Embassy is no longer necessary. If the administration needed such a summary, it could be compiled from our section reports.

As a final analysis of my work done this year in the DPRK, I want to express my opinions regarding several aspects.

In the areas of domestic and foreign policy, the conflict between the heightened nationalistic outlook of the KWP and the government of the DPRK has increasingly intensified. Based on this heightened conflict, an opposition movement has developed in the party leadership over the stance on domestic policy. In my opinion, this opposition movement in the party leadership does not represent any fundamental shift in the nationalist-centered policy, but, rather, a slight modification of the contemporary policy can be seen. It seems that this opposition movement primarily advocates a more realistic economic policy (also an increase in living standards) and a more flexible policy regarding the national question. Regarding foreign policy, they seem to have argued for a policy which is based more on the actual capabilities of the DPRK. There are no signs that this opposition wanted to connect a modification of policy to a coup against Kim Il Sung. Obviously, they strive to achieve such a modification with his help by acknowledging his position of authority. Pak Geumcheol and Lee Hyosoon were doubtlessly in the forefront of this opposition movement. Furthermore, there are no signs that this opposition movement worked with the assistance of foreign forces such as the PR China. In my opinion, it is generally wrong to evaluate contemporary and prospective developments in the DPRK by labeling certain persons pro-Soviet or pro-Chinese.

The changes in the leadership of the party and the state reflect two important tendencies:

At the Party Congress in October 1966, the leadership of the military cadres was strengthened. In 1967, this process continued and resulted in similar changes taking place in the Supreme People's Assembly, the government, and governmental institutions.

There was a wide reorganization of the party, and the state cadres were developed under the leadership of Kim Il Sung. He was also responsible for their advancements. This reorganization of the party cadres, in some cases, resulted in a nomination of functionally competent comrades. On the other hand, it also brought some incompetent nationalistic careerists.

The year 1967 was significant in increasing the nationalist-centered policy of the DPRK and the KWP. This process was mostly seen at the ideological level.

The cult of personality of Kim Il Sung increased to a degree comparable only to the contemporary cult of Mao. But in my opinion, it is impossible to put the political assessment of this cult of personality on par with the development of the PR

China. The enhancement of this cult will have negative domestic affects, especially in terms of ideology as well as in strategy and administering the national economy. Regarding foreign affairs, this cult concerns mostly the Maoist group's claim of leadership. Furthermore, this cult is certain that in part it will contribute to the contemporary development of the PR China. (Shielding against the influence of Mao as a revolutionary world leader and, particularly, against Mao as the leader of the Korean revolutionary forces.)

Regardless of the DPRK's desire to have normal relations with the Soviet Union as well the PR China, due to the Maoist group, the relationship with the PR China hit rock bottom at the end of 1967. This was expressed, among other ways, through a harsh protest that the Deputy Secretary of State, Heo Seoktae, also mentioned in November of this year. Protests were towards the Charge d'Affairs of the PR China, Wang Peng, concerning the offenses against Kim Il Sung and the policy of the DPRK.

I want to once again emphasize that, in my opinion, the DPRK still endeavors to have good governmental relations with the PR China as well as with the Soviet Union in the future. The DPRK does not strive to make a commitment to governmental political relations.

The relationship with socialist countries in Europe continued to improve in 1967. In certain circumstances, the DPRK was prepared to discuss essential problems in which they are most interested. Beyond this, they are making serious attempts to improve economic relations with most of the socialist countries in Europe.

Aspects, such as the visits to the GDR by leading DPRK personnel, the improvement of foreign trade relations, the willingness to reach long-ranging agreements with the GDR, and endeavoring new forms of a technical and scientific cooperation, have all been areas where the DPRK has worked towards the improvement of relations between our countries. In my opinion, this process will also prevail on the governmental level. In the field of relations between parties, the reluctance of the KWP towards the SED and other Marxist-Leninists Parties will continue. The position of the DPRK and the KWP towards the GDR is, in my opinion, influenced by the following aspects:

In the eyes of the DPRK, the GDR is an economically developed country with a very stable economy. Regarding cooperation with the GDR, the DPRK desires sustained economic support. Thereby, the DPRK expects a certain amount of aid from the GDR.

For the leadership of the DPRK, our party is an especially self-reliant, stable, and ideologically strong party, which has an important influence on the international communist movement, and also, in part, on the national liberation movement.

The ensuing and resolute position of the GDR in the conflict with American and West German imperialism and the major political and material support of Vietnam have been positively assessed.

The DPRK has some misgivings with our strategy and tactics on the national question, in terms of the policy of European security and against a tight brotherhood between the SED and the CPSU, the GDR and the Soviet Union and in the economic cooperation.

7. It is certain that, during the next few months, the cooperation of the embassy with different DPRK government and political organs will get more difficult and complicated. On the one hand, all cadres of the party and state machinery have obviously been instructed to behave cautiously and proudly towards all foreign representation. Presently, this arrangement mainly concerns the Soviet Embassy, to which the Koreans are behaving, in spite of the amount of military and economic assistance, especially discriminatory. To some extent, they are also behaving in a similar manner towards us and other embassies. Beyond this, the cooperation will get more complicated because of the political insecurity of the new cadres and their missing motivation to exchange opinions.

One important tactical question is how we should react towards the cautious behavior of the Koreans. In the context of this end of mission report, I want to respond to this. From my point of view, it is necessary to think carefully about this aspect and not to jump to conclusions.

To better characterize the behavior of the Koreans, I will provide several examples.

The Soviet ambassador formulated the request to transfer a movie about the OVV delegation's stay to a member of the delegation. In addition to transferring the movie, it was also allowed to be shown.

The Korean foreign minister responded that they suggest that a member delivers the movie to the record department.

For the disposal of notably important army transfers, like missiles, aircrafts, modern tanks etc., the Soviets suggested to accomplish it in a ceremony. But the Koreans didn't show any willingness towards this. Finally, the disposal found its place in a small room with tea and cigarettes.

The Koreans urgently requested help from the Soviet Union, due to the fact that their production of steel would be disrupted without an immediate shipment of additional coke. Five days after the Korean request for help, Comrade Novikov personally

phoned Ambassador Comrade Sudarikov. He advised Sudarikov of the willingness to immediately deliver an additional amount of coke. Further, he asked him to clear just one question with the government in order to start the deliveries immediately.

While I was present at an event, the Soviet ambassador asked Kim Gwanghyeop for two minutes time in order to solve the above-mentioned question. The chief of records came back from Kim Gwanghyeop only with the information that the Soviet ambassador should call the foreign ministry the next day in order to ask for an appointment. Thus, he would get further information.

Just a few Korean comrades arrived at the departing ceremony of the Soviet military attaché (degree general), and the main guests came 30 minutes too late. The main guest was a general responsible for the execution. (At the departing ceremony of our military attaché, there was a high attendance including the deputy chief of the general staff and a very high Korean attendee). The Korean representatives were not even present at the train station during the departing ceremony of the Soviet attaché.

As another example, the Soviet ambassador has been waiting nearly four weeks for an important conversation with Kim Il Sung, regardless to the fact that the Korean ambassador in Moscow never has to wait more than 48 hours for a meeting with Kosygin.

The Soviet ambassador arranged a cocktail party on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the diplomatic service of the Soviet Union. In addition to ambassadors, Chargé d'Affaires and other diplomats, the deputy of the foreign ministry of the DPRK and many other comrades had been invited. The highest Korean guest was the assistant conductor of our national department.

At the opening of a huge book exhibition by the Soviet ambassador on December 12, approximately 30 Korean comrades were present. At our opening one year ago in the same accommodation, there were around 150 Korean comrades.

I have elaborately discussed these aspects already with Comrade Sudarikow. Thus, I asked him, if, due to the fact of such different behavior, the party and government of the Soviet Union will not draw any conclusion and change their policy towards the Korean comrades.[...]

Comrade Sudarikow answered: With calm and factuality, we have to try now for some duration to work insistently in gaining the confidence of the Korean government. It is important that the Koreans recognize that we, that is, the Soviet Union, simply have the best intentions towards the DPRK. He (Comrade Sudarikow) could assure me, that the Soviet Union would not make any rash reactions towards the contemporary behavior of the Koreans.

From my point of view, we should not react too rashly to the party's impolite attitude towards us. This attitude expresses itself during the long moment of waiting for the announcements at the foreign ministry, repeated queries about topics, and so on.

Regardless of the fact that our Korean partner is speaking in conversations in the style of newspaper articles, in the year 1968, we should strengthen the endeavors in the embassy, to explain our policy not only in the foreign ministry but also in other governmental institutions. Further, we should use all protocol possibilities to speak out on invitations of the embassy. In order to explain our policies and speak out about the low political value of talk compared to the effort at the embassy, which has proven urgent due to staff decreases, we must endeavor to keep up and deepen our relations with the Koreans.

There is a constant discussion in our embassy concerning the right proportions between events with other diplomatic representatives and Korean personalities. We always had to face the fact that these events developed in proportions to the disadvantages of the Korean personalities.

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DOCUMENT NO. 3

[Source: /1/Source: Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, Pueblo, 23 January 1968 to December 1968. Secret; Immediate; Noform.]

Telegram From the Commander in Chief, United Nations Command, and Commander of United States, Korea (Bonesteel) to the Commander in Chief, Pacific (Sharp)/1/

Seoul, January 23, 1968, 1405Z.

231405Z/UK 50223.

Subject: Briefing of ROK Minister of Defense on Pueblo incident (S).

1. (S) C/S UNC/USFK briefed ROK MND at about 1830 I, 23 Jan 68, local (0930 Z) after approval received for classified briefing. MND was emotionally irate and indicated US had done little after North Korean raid aimed at assassination of President Park except call meeting at Panmunjeom and take normal operational steps, but be-

cause of Pueblo incident brought F-105's into Osan without prior ROK knowledge, was moving Enterprise, and seemed to be ready to risk war.

2. (S) He said would refrain from retaliatory raids against North Korea for time being, but if North Koreans made other significant raids, he would promise nothing further.
3. (S) He commented it would be wrong to cancel Armistice Commission meeting set for 1100 hours tomorrow because it had been announced publicly with purpose to protest vicious attack on President's mansion, Seoul.

* * *

DOCUMENT NO. 4

Notes of Meeting

Washington, January 24, 1968, 1 p.m.

Subject: Notes of the President's Meeting With the National Security Council

PART I

THE PRESIDENT: The Security Council meeting was set up before the ship incident. I want Secretary McNamara to bring you up to date on this matter. In addition we have asked Cyrus Vance and Lucius Battle for their opinions and judgments on Cyprus.

SECRETARY MCNAMARA: All of you know the information which has been published. I will not go over any of that. We do not know what happened except that this incident was pre-planned. The earliest date on which it could have been planned was January 10 since this was the first time the North Koreans knew that the ship would be in the area.

Three things are clear:

1. It was a conscious effort to provoke a response or a lack of response.
2. The Soviets knew of it in advance.
3. The North Koreans have no intention of returning the men or the ship. I view this situation very seriously.

There are three key questions which are unanswered:

1. Why did they do it?
2. What will they do now?
3. How should we respond?

THE PRESIDENT: Did the skipper ask for help?

GENERAL WHEELER: There was a message from the ship “These fellows mean business. SOS. SOS.” His next message was that they were boarding the ship.

At 1200 (noon) the first North Korean vessel made contact with the Pueblo. One hour later, 3 other North Korean vessels appeared and several MIG fighters were seen overhead.

It is important to remember that we have harassments of this type all the time. The skipper probably considered it just that--a harassment--until between 1:00 and 1:45. This was when he recognized it as a very different situation from a normal harassment. At 1:45 he sent out the call for help.

Convert that to Eastern Standard Time, the first encounter was at 2200 (10:00 p.m. EST). This was when he was ordered to “heave to or I will open fire on you.” At 2345 (11:45 EST) Pueblo radioed she was being boarded. At 2354 (11:54 EST) the first SOS came.

We ceased to hear from the Pueblo 31 minutes later.

THE PRESIDENT: Were there no planes available which were prepared to come to the aid of this vessel? Every press story I have seen this morning said that U.S. planes were only 30 minutes away.

SECRETARY MCNAMARA: Air defenses in the Wonsan area are extensive. If we had sent airplanes to support and intercept, it is likely that these extensive air defense measures would be brought into play. In addition, it is necessary to consider the time of day and the approach of darkness.

GENERAL WHEELER: Aircraft would have needed to refuel in the air. Twilight comes at 5:09. Darkness comes at 5:38. There were only 3-1/2 hours of light. The Commander of the Fifth Air Force issued an order to dispatch aircraft but then reversed the order because of the approach of darkness and the superiority of enemy forces in the area.

SECRETARY MCNAMARA: The North Koreans have a large air base in Wonsan.

WALT ROSTOW: We need to get together on these times. I have a document which agrees with yours that the first contact was at 2200. I have that the first SOS was received at 2328. McNamara said this was 2354. I have information that the ship went off the air 0032. Secretary McNamara said the ship went off the air at 0025. For a matter of historical accuracy, we need to determine what is the correct time.

THE PRESIDENT: I want you to assemble for me all the facts on this matter. Until now, I have been under the impression that the ship did not ask for help. Get all the facts and document them well so I can study this matter further.

SECRETARY RUSK: The negative reaction of North Korea and the Soviet Union was to be expected. One would expect the Soviets not to take responsibility. The reaction of the North Koreans last night at Panmunjeom was consistent with what I had expected. There are two conclusions:

1. It looks as if this incident was pre-planned.
2. The Soviets may have had advance notice of what was planned.

THE PRESIDENT: What were the reasons for it?

SECRETARY RUSK: It could be a number of things. They may be trying to put additional pressure on us with reference to Vietnam. They may be trying to open up a second front. I do not see much in it unless they had either of these two objectives in mind.

THE PRESIDENT: Have you fully briefed the members of Congress?

GENERAL WHEELER: General Brown already has talked with Senator Russell. He will see Senator Mundt, Senator Dodd and Senator Thurmond later today as directed by the President. Senator Russell seemed satisfied with the explanation given him today by General Brown. He was unhappy that an American ship was taken without a shot being fired on our side. The House Armed Services Committee was briefed this morning at its regular meeting. I will give the President a full report on that as soon as possible.

THE PRESIDENT: All of the Committees will begin investigations of this incident once it cools down. Should we do anything to head this off?

SECRETARY MCNAMARA: Until we know precisely what we are going to do, I do not recommend meeting with the Congress. They are not interested as much in what happened, which I think has been explained, as in what we plan to do.

SECRETARY RUSK: In my meeting with the House Foreign Affairs Committee this morning, they were outraged at the action by the North Koreans. They realize it is a very serious matter. They were understanding and were not pushing any particular course of action.

THE PRESIDENT: What other ways are there for us to find out more about exactly what happened?

GENERAL WHEELER: We will receive additional information for continued research by NSA on intercepts. In addition we will learn more from statements by the North Koreans and the Soviets.

LEONARD MARKS: From North Korean press reports, it is obvious they are trying to create the following impressions:

1. They want to create fear among the South Koreans.
2. They are trying to create the impression that increased infiltration will take place.
3. They are making very flat statements about this being a “spy boat” which was carrying on hostile actions.

RICHARD HELMS: I would agree with what has been said. This appears to be an effort by North Korea to support the North Vietnamese in their efforts. They want to distract attention from Vietnam.

THE PRESIDENT: They may also want to detain the Carrier Enterprise. The President then read the Reuters wire account of an alleged confession by Commander L.M. Bucher, Captain of the Pueblo. The text of alleged confession is attached at Appendix A.

SECRETARY RUSK: We should analyze the tapes to determine if this is Bucher. I frankly do not see how they could get a U.S. Navy Commander to make statements like that.

THE PRESIDENT: Look very closely at this record.
(General Wheeler and Secretary McNamara said this was being done.)

SECRETARY MCNAMARA: It is important to remember that we did not know where this ship was prior to the time of this incident. Our best reports are that the ship was outside of territorial waters.

THE PRESIDENT: Is there much chance of error?

SECRETARY MCNAMARA: Admiral Moorer, Chief of Naval Operations, said there is less than 1% chance of error in daylight conditions such as existed at the time. The radio intercepts of the North Korean craft placed them in the same area reported by the Pueblo; that was between 15-1/2 and 17-1/2 miles from shore.

RICHARD HELMS: Our fix is 15-1/2 to 17. Both of these figures are outside of territorial waters.

SECRETARY MCNAMARA: The ship did destroy some of its classified equipment. We do know that not all classified equipment was destroyed.

THE PRESIDENT: How much of a problem does that create for us?

SECRETARY MCNAMARA: This is much less of a problem than the diplomatic problems and the prestige.

WALT ROSTOW: The confession by the Captain appears to have been written by the Soviets. This is not the language of an American ship captain. The Soviets may have had a hand in drafting it.

SECRETARY MCNAMARA: The impression that the Soviets were informed in advance is supported by their actions in Moscow. When Ambassador Thompson went to the Soviets, he received a Soviet position on this quite promptly. It is unlikely that the

Soviets could have reached [received] the information about the incident, conferred about it, and then taken a position so quickly without advance knowledge that the incident was to take place.

RICHARD HELMS: This is a very serious matter. It appears the North Koreans are doing this in support of the North Vietnamese against us. It looks, at this time, like collusion between the North Koreans and the Soviets. It appears to be another attempt to divert us from our efforts in Vietnam.

Last August, the Polish Military Mission went to North Korea. It was learned [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] that the North Koreans have sent 30 pilots to North Vietnam. They also gave the North Vietnamese 10 MIG-21's. North Korea wants to do all it can to help the North Vietnamese. In addition, they want to keep the ROK from sending more troops to assist the South Vietnamese.

[less than 1 line of source text not declassified] said the Soviets are putting pressure on North Korea to take some of the pressure off Vietnam. They advised that 2500 North Korean officers have been trained for sabotage and terrorism in South Korea.

THE PRESIDENT: Would not it be wise now that we have definite information where the incident occurred to tell Senator Fulbright so that he will be more responsible about his statements?

* * *

DOCUMENT NO. 5

[Source: PolA AA, MfAA, G-A 360. Obtained for NKIDP by Bernd Schaefer and translated for NKIDP by Karen Riechert.]

GDR Embassy to DPRK
Pyongyang, 27 January 1968

Memorandum on a Conversation with the Polish Ambassador, Comrade Naperei, on 26 January 1968 in the Polish Embassy

The appointment was arranged by mutual initiative.

I first informed Comrade Naperei about the statements made by Comrade Pak Seongcheol when I handed over the letter by Comrade Ulbricht (without references to the content of the letter).

Comrade Naperei delivered his assessment of the situation as being extraordinarily dangerous. 'If the DPRK does not accede to U.S. demands to return its ship and crew, we might witness an armed conflict here.'

It is known through the members of the commission in Panmunjeom that the United States has relocated two squadrons of F-105 aircraft from Okinawa to South Korea. By noon on January 26, 19 men from the 31-person commando group planning to stage the attack in Seoul have been killed and two captured. Of those two prisoners one killed himself and the surrounding policemen with a hand grenade. The Polish commission members have informed the Polish Embassy that there are continuous attempts to send new commandos into South Korean territory.

Polish officers serving with the commission constantly travel by train between Panmunjeom and Pyongyang. They noticed that almost every train arrives with considerable delay here in Pyongyang and that many freight trains travel southward.

Furthermore, the Polish Ambassador informed that the Swiss representative in the Neutral Commission has approached the heads of the Czechoslovak and Polish part of the commission to inform them about his conversation with General Friedmann (Chief of Staff of the 8th U.S. Army deployed in South Korea). Friedmann stated the U.S. is willing to retaliate if the DPRK takes steps indicating that they are going to launch an armed conflict. The U.S. will not back down from its demands for the return of its ship and crew. As a member of the Neutral Commission, the Swiss representative asked the Czechoslovak and Polish comrades to inform their embassies and transmit the U.S. position to the [North] Koreans. The Swiss delegate said he is taking this step to contribute towards the preservation of peace in Korea.

Comrade Naperei also informed that the United States has approached all members of the Neutral Commission and asked for their support to receive from the [North] Korean side a list of names of Pueblo crew members with details about those wounded and killed.

If the DPRK will tell the members of the commission in preparation for the next meeting [in Panmunjeom] that this constitutes an exclusive matter between DPRK and the U.S., the Czechoslovak and Polish commission members will try to find a clause in the Neutral Commission's statute providing the option for a legal argument to define the American request not as part of the commission's duties. If the DPRK will take a different

position, all four members of the commission will sign the U.S. request letter and forward it to the DPRK.

Note: I heard from the CSSR Ambassador that the next commission meeting will take place no earlier than 30 January 1968.

Jarck

Acting Ambassador

CC

1x Comrade Schneidewind (Foreign Ministry)

1x Embassy/Secretariate

* * *

DOCUMENT NO. 6

[Source:1/Source: National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1967-69, POL 33-6 KOR N-US. Secret; Flash; Exdis.]

Telegram from the Embassy in Korea to the Department of State/1/

Seoul, January 24, 1968, 2105Z.

3600. From Ambassador Porter. Ref: State 103652

1. General dearth of hard info on North Korea here makes it difficult to judge NK motivations and interests. In case of Pueblo, it is more difficult for us to make judgment [sic] since we do not know how long Pueblo was in area and what its actions and equipment were.
2. Pueblo incident and Blue House raid are clearly related. Once Seoul raid had been successfully carried out, North Koreans, uncertain of what actions we and ROKs might take, may have desired to remove major source of information on their own counter-measures. In so doing, North Koreans may well have had Israeli action against USS Liberty in mind. Although there has been some speculation that action was taken to provide KPA with major "victory" for its 20th anniversary February[sic] 8, it seems unlikely to us that North Koreans would have taken such grave risk for propaganda purposes alone.

3. While timing of Pueblo seizure is related to Seoul raid, there is complex of reasons why NK would undertake both. In this, Vietnam plays central role. Kim Il-Sung has long advocated greater Communist assistance to NVN and his latest pronouncement, calling for “more positive actions” to aid Hanoi, was carried by AP on Jan 18. At time when all aspects of Vietnam struggle are intensifying, NK leadership may well have felt that they could make no greater contribution to Communist cause and to their own purposes in Korea than to take bold actions designed to reduce support in ROK for augmented or even continued participation in Vietnam, to take advantage of current political difficulties of and to further reduce public confidence in Pak govt, and to shake mutual confidence between U.S. and ROK. Bold action could also, of course, create a diversion in Korean peninsula and force U.S. to divert military resources from Vietnam effort and stimulate additional domestic and overseas pressures against U.S. Asian policy.
4. Forecasting NK actions is risky game. Certainly their past conduct in refusing to release our helicopter in 1965 and returning pilots only after lengthy negotiation, plus their pattern of treatment of ROK fishermen, gives no ground for optimism that they will react favorably by releasing vessel and crew immediately. We are more inclined to believe that they will attempt to exploit their possession of ship and crew to maximum extent from both technical and propaganda points of view. After these purposes have been ably served, they will probably return crew, but under conditions of considerable humiliation to U.S.
5. Although activities of past few days may cause them to proceed with caution, we can expect North Koreans to continue to carry out their basic plan for increased subversive effort against ROK this year, especially if they are not penalized in some way for these two coups. Their propaganda is attempting to make it appear that major revolt is already sweeping South, which they must sustain by action.
6. NK will not permit any action by us to go unchallenged. They seem confident and sure of themselves and appear convinced that we have neither capability nor determination to deal with them while so heavily engaged in Vietnam.

Porter

* * *

DOCUMENT NO. 7

[Source: Czech Foreign Ministry Archive. Translated for NKIDP by Adolf Kotlik]

No. 016/68

Pyongyang, 28 January 1968

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Classified

3. Territorial Department

By courier!

Declassified per file no. 267.261/2001- OZÚ

(OZÚ = Section for Special Assignments]

Date: 22 May 2001

Processed by: (initial illegible)

Information about the Incident with the Ship Pueblo

Political Report No. 10

Written by: B. Schindler

7 x Prague

On January 23rd, 1968, naval vessels of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea intercepted an American ship, the Pueblo, which weighed about 1,000 tons. According to the information from the DPRK (including the published confession of the captain of the ship), this ship is equipped as an oceanographic vessel, but its main mission was to spy.

According to the information from the DPRK, the ship Pueblo was intercepted in the territorial waters of the DPRK in the area of the Eastern Korean Bay at the point of 39 degrees 17 minutes 4 seconds of northern latitude and 127 degrees 46 minutes 9 seconds of eastern longitude. According to these reports, the ship was intercepted 7.6 miles from the small island of Jodo in the vicinity of the port town of Wonsan along the eastern coast of the DPRK.

The Deputy Kim Jaebong, who briefed the ambassador to the DPRK on January 23rd, in agreement with the DPRK press, stated the following: The ship of about a

thousand tones was armed and was carrying a total of 83 armed persons: 6 officers, 75 sailors, and 2 members of technical personnel. The latter were identified as CIA operatives. It was published that one crewmember was killed when the DPRK ships approached Pueblo and that three were injured, one of them seriously. As for the weaponry, the ship was equipped with an anti-aircraft machine gun, tens of thousands of hand grenades and other military material. According to these reports, the ship was equipped with special electronics for radio-surveillance and locating radars.

Some other information: According to the DPRK press, the Captain of the ship, Lloyd Mark Bucher, military number 58215401, born in Pocatello, Idaho, USA, admitted to spy activities and also stated that Pueblo belonged to the Pacific Navy and that it was on a special mission from the CIA. According to Bucher's testimony, on December 2nd 1967, Pueblo received orders in the Japanese port of Sasebo from Rear Admiral Frank A. Johnson, commander of the U.S. Navy in Japan, to carry out military reconnaissance in the Soviet littoral and in the area of the eastern coast of the DPRK. As per testimony published in the DPRK, Bucher said that his ship has carried out similar activities in territorial waters of other socialist countries, with special emphasis on reconnaissance of these waters in order to gather information about military installations located along the coast of socialist countries. The collected data was passed on to the CIA. The ship was to operate under the cover of oceanographic research on the opened sea, examination of electric and magnetic phenomena, and so on. Bucher said that Pueblo explored the far eastern coast of the USSR and then, on January 16th 1968, arrived in the DPRK waters where, in the area of Cheongjin, Wonsan and elsewhere, data was secretly collected about the depth of coastal waters, water currents, water temperature, quality of the sea bottom, translucency and salt concentration of water, location of DPRK radars, capacity of ports, number of departing and arriving ships and maneuvering capabilities of military ships of the Korean People's Army (KPA).

According to Bucher's published testimony, Pueblo opened fire on the approaching patrol boats of the KPA (South Korean news also mentioned two fighter jets, MIG, and the deputy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Heo Seoktae allegedly said that the military vessels of the KPA approached Pueblo from the open sea, thus cutting off its way to retreat) but when the situation became critical for Pueblo, and one sailor was killed and three injured, one of them seriously, Pueblo surrendered, as per Bucher's testimony.

In his confession published in the DPRK, Bucher stated that he was aware it was a criminal act, violation of the Ceasefire Agreement, and that the operation of his ship was of aggressive nature from the beginning to the end.

Bucher also said “the ship was not flying the U.S. flag in order to keep ship’s operation secret” ... “the crime my sailors and I committed cannot be redeemed in any way.”

South Korean news reacted very quickly to the Pueblo detention, and the South Korean high command put the South Korean Navy on alert immediately after the report that the nuclear aircraft carrier Enterprise was on its way to the area. However, as it appears from some other news from South Korea and Tokyo, the U.S. has not accepted the South Korean offer yet and, so far, is trying to resolve the matter on its own. Some other uncorroborated news from South Korea talked about U.S. nuclear submarines, headed by the Polaris, supposedly coming to the area around Wonsan. On the other hand, South Korea aired reports about the movements of KPA submarines in the area of Wonsan. Also, ships from the USSR were mentioned twice – the first report described movements of a Soviet tanker and a destroyer which at the time the Pueblo was detained were in the vicinity and allegedly changed course to the east towards the Tsushima [Ulleung] Basin. South Korean news talked about some meetings in South Korea, concerning these two Soviet ships. Another South Korean report talked about two Soviet military ships that, on 26th January, were allegedly approaching the Wonsan area from the north but changed direction suddenly and sailed back to Vladivostok.

Besides reports of the ship’s detention, articles connecting the incursion of the Pueblo into DPRK waters with the heightened U.S. efforts to ignite a new war in Korea, the confession of Captain Bucher and news about a press conference for newspaper and radio journalists held at an undisclosed location, the daily press has not published any international reaction to this incident. On the other hand, the confidential monitor CTAK was closely following reaction in America to the detention of Pueblo, and reports about the efforts of the American ambassador in Moscow to secure the mediation of the USSR in this matter. However, daily news did not even reprint the reaction of TaSS (USSR Press Agency) to the incident with Pueblo.

As it became clear from the discussion between the Hungarian ambassador to the DPRK Kadesh and the deputy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Heo Seoktae, the DPRK disagrees in principle that the UN Security Council should deal with this problem; on the other hand, Heo Seoktae conveyed to the Hungarian dignitary the decision of the DPRK government to attend the UN Security Council meeting if there are conditions for that and should South Korea and the U.S. badmouth the DPRK there, which (part of sentence not copied) the DPRK to the UN.

As shown in the reply of the Major General Pak Jungguk to Admiral Smith, the DPRK is willing to negotiate the issues of Pueblo through the military commission for ceasefire in Korea with the provision that DKNS (acronym unknown) in this matter is inappropriate.

Reports about the continuing concentration of military arsenals and units north of the Demilitarized Zone, the ongoing evacuation of civilians from the capital of the DPRK, together with the decision of the DPRK Ministry of Foreign Affairs to not to allow foreigners to leave Pyongyang, create very high tension. If we take into account the concentration of the South Korean forces not only as a consequence of the Seoul incident on 21st January and unverified reports of KPA jets making patrol flights over the Demilitarized Zone and the area of Wonsan, it is understandable that the Pueblo problem is beginning to outgrow the context of the Korean Peninsula and is becoming one of the new serious problems that can have very serious consequences sooner or later.

Ambassador: (Holub)

* * *

DOCUMENT NO. 8

Telegram from the Embassy in Korea to the Department of State

Seoul, January 28, 1968, 0923Z.

3706. Country Team Message. Ref: (A) State 106065; (B) State 106066; (C) State 106070; (D) USFK Message UK-50285 DTG 261115Z.

1. We deeply concerned over adverse impact procedure suggested Refs (A) and (B) would have on US/ROK relations. As we have reported, ROKs from President on down are convinced that our actions and statements since Pueblo incident simply do not recognize extreme gravity of threat to internal security and political position of ROKG represented by Blue House raid and North Korean determination to increase subversive effort.
2. We have not informed ROKG of exchange between ourselves and North Korea through NNSC members. Despite security precautions we cannot keep this from them for very long. We have already received anguished approach from Foreign Ministry voicing suspicion that we are attempting to contact NK directly at other locations, notably Warsaw, and that we therefore intend to confine negotiations to retrieval of Pueblo and crew. We have ample evidence that suspicions are also growing at highest levels that once we succeed in obtaining release of ship and crew, we will

withdraw force augmentations and leave ROK problem in status quo ante Pueblo with no improvement in President Park's political or security problems. We have had broad hints that ROKs are talking among themselves of possible withdrawal ROK armed forces from operational control CINCUNC and, because of concern over reopening of hostilities here, return of ROK troops from Vietnam. We do not believe they are serious, but fact that senior ROKs imply such consideration is indicative of psychological climate we must deal with here. Should ROKs learn that we have requested meeting of senior members MAC solely to discuss Pueblo incident, as suggested Refs (A) and (B), without parallel effort on intrusion problem, results could be explosive.

3. Moreover, whatever subject matter, believe it would be highly inadvisable to express willingness to hold open MAC meeting. Presence of press and other witnesses at open meeting would impel Pak to put on propaganda show and attempt to place US in most humiliating light possible.

4. Accordingly, urgently request we be authorized to follow procedure outlined below:

(A) Immediately send KPA/CPV senior member first four paras of reply contained Ref (A) plus para 5 ending after words "joint duty officers." Such reply is currently being translated and prepositioned for immediate delivery by secure means. By limiting this reply to request for information on condition of crew members, we would also provide NNSC opportunity to follow through with letter they suggested to us yesterday (Seoul 3697).

(B) Ambassador will seek soonest possible appointment with President Park to inform him of dealings which have already taken place through NNSC and of request for information on crew by senior member UNCMAC. Ambassador will state that senior member UNCMAC is also requesting a private senior member meeting to discuss problem of obtaining release of Pueblo and crew and to impress on North Koreans in most forceful terms gravity of situation posed by continuing North Korean infiltration. If President insists that UNCMAC senior member demand guarantee from North Korea that there will be no further intrusion, Ambassador will respond that it probably impossible to obtain. However, to ease President's very real concerns, request Ambassador be authorized if necessary to inform him that USG will do following:

(1) Retain substantial proportion of force augmentation in and near Korea until such time as developments indicate infiltration threat and its attendant political and psychological problems materially lessened.

(2) To provide tangible evidence that we are doing something directly for the ROKs, USG will airlift available CIGCOREP items as requested in Ref (D), which USFK is passing separately directly to Dept.

(3) Acknowledge firm commitment on spring delivery first destroyer, which heretofore [sic] has been tied to additional dispatch of ROK troops to Vietnam. We are under no illusions that these items, if agreed, would entirely eliminate pressures on US arising from Park's internal political position. They may ease pressures for time being, however, if carefully publicized.

(C) Senior member UNCMAC will then send separate message to senior member KPA/CPV side requesting private senior member to senior member MAC meeting. Request update guidance contained Ref (B).

4. Ambassador will raise problem of ROK attendance at UNSC (Ref C) at time he makes approach mentioned para 4(B) above.

Porter

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DOCUMENT NO. 9

[Source: AVPRF, f. 102, op. 28, pap. 55, d. 2. Obtained for NKIDP by Sergey Radchenko and translated for NKIDP by Gary Goldberg]

From the Journal of S. P. Kozyrev
30 January 1968
N° 128/GS-ns

Record of a conversation with Canadian Ambassador to the USSR R. Ford
29 January 1968

I received Ford at his request.

Referring to the instructions of his government, the Ambassador raised the issue of the detention of the American ship by the DPRK. He said that the Canadians know about the mood and trends in Washington better than anyone. In connection with this incident, the Canadian government is seriously concerned that the U.S. Congress and the American public are beginning to put ever-growing pressure on President Johnson for him to make a decision about a retaliatory attack. It is quite evident to the Government of Canada, Ford continued, that the release of the ship and its crew are absolutely necessary for talks to begin to settle this entire issue. Regardless of the statements made by both sides, whether the ship was seized in territorial or international waters, the Ambassador stressed that it is necessary to release the ship's crew if only for humane reasons. Regardless of the legal aspect of the matter, right now, it is politically important to do something for the release of the ship and its crew. In this event, the U.S. will be ready, so they understand in Canada, to agree to the creation of a special international commission to investigate and settle this incident and possibly make compensation for material damages if the commission recognizes this to be necessary. Considering the dangerous situation which has been created, the Canadians would like to discuss this issue with the Soviets in order to prevent a worsening of the situation in this region of the world. In this regard, the Ambassador was interested in any possible ideas from the Soviets about how the tension could be eliminated and whether the Soviet government could make the settlement of the incident easier. To assist in the investigation at the site where the incident occurred, the Canadians have already, unofficially, proposed sending an intermediary to Pyongyang, who could act as a representative of either the UN Secretary General or the Security Council or in some other capacity.

In expressing these ideas, the Ambassador noted that he was not speaking on behalf of the U.S., but, as they understand in Canada, the Americans would be ready to agree to this.

I promised to report to the Minister about the ideas that the Ambassador expressed. I said that the USSR could not take on itself the role of an intermediary in settling this incident. The DPRK is an independent and sovereign country and the U.S. should deal directly with the DPRK. The substance of the incident is that the U.S. violated the norms of international law: the American ship was detained in the territorial waters of the DPRK and not in international waters as the Americans are asserting. In regards to the Canadians' concern about what sort of pressure there is on Johnson, the problem is not that pressure is being put on the President of the United States but that the U.S. it-

self is using the method of pressure and threats with regard to the DPRK. The Canadian government also ought to know well both Johnson's statements and the measures that he has adopted in order to apply such pressure on the DPRK (calling up reservists, sending naval forces to the shores of the DPRK, and others). However, it will be impossible to settle the incident with the uproar, threats, and pressure that is being artificially fanned in America, and the U.S., on whom rests the entire responsibility for the incident, should soberly assess the situation to find an opportunity for a settlement by customary means on the basis of respect for the DPRK's sovereign rights, thereby abandoning the use of the method of pressure. From the ideas described by Ford, it follows that Canada essentially supports the position of the Americans when he says that it is first necessary to release the ship and the crew and then investigate all other issues connected with the incident. A settlement can hardly be achieved on such a basis.

The Ambassador stressed that Canada does not always automatically share the point of view of the Americans, especially regarding their actions in military issues. In accordance with the available information at this time, though the American intelligence ship was actually detained in international waters, one can speculate that it really had been in the DPRK's territorial waters, which is, of course, inexcusable. But even in this event, it is necessary to settle the incident as quickly as possible. According to the assessments of the Canadians, Ford stressed, a dangerous situation has been created, and in Washington, pressure is growing sharply in favor of a military solution to the incident. These sentiments are growing stronger inasmuch as in the last six months, numerous provocative incidents have taken place in Korea. In regards to Canada, it is a peace loving country, and its actions are completely dictated by a concern for maintaining peace and reducing international tension and by a desire to prevent the dangerous consequences of developing events.

In connection with this comment made by Ford, I pointed out that attempts to place the blame on the DPRK for the situation in Korea are directed at deceiving the world public opinion. Everyone knows that provocative acts are being made against the DPRK and that the presence of American troops in South Korea is the reason for the situation in this region.

If they are really inclined in the U.S. to settle this incident by military means, then it will be the worse for the U.S. They would thus, again, reveal themselves before the entire world as aggressors. The Canadian government would be doing a useful thing if it advised the U.S. not to give in to emotion and not to inflame the situation and, rather, realistically assess this issue on the basis of respect for the sovereign rights of

the DPRK. Such a decision would meet the interests of peace, and it would be in the interests of all countries.

The Ambassador noted that, in principle, he agrees with this; however, right now, it is important to settle the incident as soon as possible. In connection to this, he was interested in whether, for example, such a measure as the withdrawal of the aircraft carrier Eisenhower and other American warships from the area of the incident would help. [I] again stressed that it is important, right now, not to inflame the situation but to abandon pressuring the DPRK and facilitate the establishment of a quiet atmosphere in which it would be easier to settle the incident by the customary ways and means accepted in international practice.

Ye. N. Makeyev, Deputy Chief of the Second European Department, and Third Secretary of the Department V. I. Dolgov were present at the conversation.

DEPUTY USSR MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

/signature/ (S. Kozyrev)

[reverse side] Distributed to:

Cdes. Gromyko, Kuznetsov, Vinogradov, Il'ichev, Kozyrev, Orlov, Semenov, Firyubin, Blatov, Zhukov, Zamyatin, Zemskov, Kovalev, Korniyenko, Likhachev, Novikov, and Falin.

* * *

DOCUMENT NO. 10

[Source: AVPRF, fond 102, opis 28, papka 55, delo 2. Obtained and translated for NKIDP by Sergey Radchenko]

“31” January 1968

N 129 / GS-NS

Record of a Conversation between A.A. Gromyko and Charge D’Affaires of the DPRK in the USSR Kang Cheoljin⁷

KANG CHEOLJIN, having repeated the statement of the DPRK Government dated January 27, 1968 in connection with the capture of the American spy ship Pueblo by the DPRK coast guard, passed over the text of the statement and expressed his hope that the Soviet Government will support the position of the DPRK government in regards to the capture of the American ship.

A.A. GROMYKO replied that the Soviet Union has already taken a series of measures in support of the [North?] Korean friends. When approached by the Americans, the Soviet Union firmly declared that any pressure on the DPRK on the part of the U.S. is unacceptable. The Soviet representative in the Security Council spoke out resolutely in support of the position of the DPRK government. The Soviet ambassador in Pyongyang informed Comrade Kim Il Sung about all the measures that had been taken.

A.A. GROMYKO asked Comrade Kang Cheoljin to explain how the Soviet side could use the copies of the confession by the captain of the Pueblo and the tape recording of his statement provided by the [North?] Korean comrades. Wide circulation of these materials would help expose the U.S. position.

KANG CHEOLJIN promised to clear up this question in Pyongyang and make a reply. He asked about the prospects of discussing the question of the Pueblo in the Security Council.

A.A. GROMYKO replied that one should not expect the Security Council to make a mutually acceptable decision. Probably, the veto will be used. Some members of the Council, in particular, representatives of the Afro-Asian countries (Algeria, Ethiopia, India, Pakistan, Senegal) may take certain measures in the direction of settling the conflict between the U.S. and the DPRK. The Afro-Asians pay the greatest attention to the possibility of providing good will service or mediation in this or that form on either U Thant's part or his special representative or themselves, the Afro-Asian members of the Council. However, one could not say anything concrete about this at the moment.

COMRADE KANG CHEOLJIN asked us to continue informing him in the future about the work of the Security Council, and, in particular, about the possible steps by the Afro-Asian members of the Council.

The meeting was attended by the Deputy Head of the FED [Far Eastern Department] A.I. Elizavetin, Second Secretary of the FED Yu. D. Fadeev, Second Secretary of the Embassy of the DPRK Comrade Son Jeongmo and interpreter Comrade Kim Ham.

Correct: [Signature]

Sent to:
Comrades Gromyko
Kuznetsov
DVO
OMO
file

* * *

DOCUMENT NO. 11

[Source: PolA AA, MfAA, G-A 360. Obtained for NKIDP by Bernd Schaefer and translated for NKIDP by Karen Riechert]

GDR Embassy to DPRK
Pyongyang, 01 February 1968

Memorandum

on a Conversation with the First Secretary of the CSSR Embassy, Comrade Horshenevski, on 30 January 1968 between 15:00 and 15:40 hours

The conversation was arranged following a suggestion from the Czechoslovak side.

At the beginning, we talked about the current situation. Both sides agreed that currently there are no indications whatsoever of further escalation - if one ignores the war-mongering propaganda of many Western press publications. In this context, Comrade Horshenevski mentioned that there are some new developments in Panmunjeom. He himself has not been fully informed yet. However, Ambassador Holub intends to join our meeting and provide the latest news. Around 15:20 hours, Comrade Holub joined us and reported the following:

On 29 January, General Pak Jungguk received at 16:30 hours CSSR General Toman (head of the CSSR delegation in the Neutral Commission) and the acting head of the Polish delegation, General Jaroszinski. He informed them both about the DPRK government's declaration of 27 January. Hereby, he frequently mentioned an incident from 1963 when an American spy plane was shot down over DPRK territory. Comrade Pak emphasized that back then the United States apologized before the bodies of the dead crew were returned.

On 29 January, Counter Admiral Smith sent a letter to General Pak. It expressed the following thoughts:

I received the information you transmitted through the members of the Neutral Commission. As my response to your questions, I refer to the television speech by President Johnson from 26 January where he clearly stated our position regarding the ship Pueblo and its crew. The crew of this vessel consists of sailors and officers of the U.S. Navy and two specialists from the hydrographic service. This ship is part of the American war navy. Accordingly, its crew is protected by the Geneva Conventions from 1949 signed also by you, the DPRK. I have noted, with relief, how it was possible to receive information through unofficial channels that the crew is doing fine, the wounded receive medical attention, and the body of the killed individual is preserved. You also told me that a direct contact is possible. Therefore, I request to be told as soon as possible the names of the wounded and killed people from the Pueblo crew. In addition, I request a meeting of the heads of the armistice commission from both sides.

At around 9:00 hours on 30 January, Counter Admiral Smith forwarded another letter to General Pak Jungguk. The content of this letter is as follows:

In order to achieve progress in solving the problem of interest to both sides, I propose an immediate meeting by the heads of the armistice commission from both sides. I propose to hold it as a for-eyes-only meeting with only one translator from each side present. If the Korean side prefers to have one additional officer from each side around, we will have no objections to that. It must be arranged, however, that those [additional officers] do not sit at the negotiation table. I ask for your response.

Moreover, Smith stated in his letter that he believes there will be better results if the private meeting is held with translators only. If the Korean side, the letter continues, prefers, however, to hold an official meeting of the armistice commission, I am ready to participate. If there will be only a private meeting of the heads of the armistice commission, this meeting should take place in the meeting rooms of the Neutral Commission in case the members of this commission agree. Finally, Counter Admiral Smith wrote that he is fully

aware not to expect an immediate response to his letter. However, he is asking to keep the delay between the transmission of this letter and the response as short as possible.

Comrade Holub stated that the members of the Czechoslovak group in the Neutral Commission interpret this letter as a further element towards a peaceful solution of the conflict. He applied the perspective that the American side has de facto agreed to the proposal to define the members of the ship crew as prisoners of war. The United States has also accepted the [North?] Korean proposal to hold direct talks about these issues.

In case there is new information coming out of Panmunjeom, we agreed to meet again on 31 January.

Jarck
Acting Ambassador

CC

1x State Secretary Hegen (Foreign Ministry)
1x Comrade Markowski (Central Committee)
1x Embassy/Secretariat

On 1 February, I was informed by the First Secretary of the CSSR Embassy that General Pak told Smith he agrees to a private meeting, with one translator and one additional officer each from both sides to be present as well.

* * *

DOCUMENT NO. 12

[Source: MfAA C 1023/73. Obtained for NKIDP by Bernd Schaefer and translated for NKIDP by Karen Riechert]

Embassy of the GDR in the DPRK, Pyongyang
2 February 1968
stamped: confidential matter

Memorandum on Information of 1 February 1968

On the day the Pueblo had been seized, there was no light in North Korea in the evening, for they were obviously afraid of serious consequences. Ever since there have been jets in the air. Massive defense forces are concentrated in the harbor area. Although we believe the situation is already being stabilized, there are rumors that people still expect the outbreak of a war. According to public talk, in the event that South Korea should not attack, the DPRK would be required to do it. The situation should be ripe for that. A clear indication would be that workers in South Korea had risen up for an armed struggle. There was much talk in this context about the DPRK possessing nuclear weapons. People are said to be convinced, that in case of war, the Soviet Union would fight on the side of the DPRK using nuclear weapons. China would also do so because the Pueblo had invaded the territorial waters of the DPRK, and China would take sides in the wake of such an outrageous provocation.

A relative, who had already been called to the mountains for several months in the summer to dig bunkers, is said to have been assigned there again. Recently, the militias have exercises every Saturday and Sunday in larger groups, whereby they practice in particular long marches. All Koreans, starting at the age of five, have to carry their necessities in a backpack all the time.

[...]

Signed: Herrmann

* * *

DOCUMENT NO. 13

[Source: AVPRF. f. 102, op. 28, pap. 55, d. 2. Obtained for NKIDP by Sergey Radchenko and translated for NKIDP by Gary Goldberg]

From the Journal of S. P. Kozyrev

2 February 1968

N° 140/GS-ns

Record of a Conversation with Canadian Ambassador to the USSR R. Ford

2 February 1968

I received Ford at his request.

Referring to our conversation of 28 January about the detention of the American ship by the DPRK, Ford said that he would like to continue the discussion of this issue. If he correctly understood the point of view of the Soviet side, it basically comes down to the following: 1) the U.S. should not yield to emotion and should examine the issues associated with this incident in a calm business-like atmosphere; 2) the U.S. should abandon the threat to use force in order to settle the incident; 3) there should be direct talks about this issue between the Americans and the North Koreans; 4) it is necessary to eliminate the fever of propaganda and the campaign and uproar around the discussion of this matter in the Security Council.

The Ambassador noted that the government of Canada is grateful with respect to these ideas and, for its part, has used its influence both in Washington and New York for the quickest possible settlement of the incident by customary peaceful means. At the present time, it seems that there is an opportunity to begin direct talks between the Americans and the North Koreans within the framework of the Armistice Observation Commission [Translator's note: SIC, probably the Military Armistice Commission] in Korea, and this opportunity ought not be lost.

Ford then reported that the Canadian government was especially interested in the Americans purpose in sending the aircraft carrier Eisenhower and other American warships to the shores of the DPRK. The Americans, in the Ambassador's words, replied in the sense that the interested sides themselves can determine with what purpose the American ships were sent to this region, especially since the Eisenhower is located 290 miles from Busan and not Wonsan, which substantially changes the matter.

The Ambassador noted that the Soviet side, of course, cannot verify the reliability of this information and expressed a desire to hear possible additional views of the Soviet side with respect to the prospects for settling the incident with the American ship Pueblo.

I promised to report to the Minister about the ideas expressed by the Ambassador.

I, then, said that the position of the Soviet Union regarding the incident was described in detail during the last conversation.

In regards to the Ambassador's comment about American attempts to discuss this issue in the Security Council, the Soviet Union has always opposed and does oppose putting the Korean issue on the Security Council's agenda. Right now the issue concerning this incident is about reasons of principle and not just about promoting the spreading uproar around the incident with the Pueblo, which has begun in the U.S. I expressed satisfaction with the favorable attitude of the Canadian government toward the position of the Soviet Union

in regards to the issue about the Pueblo incident and the efforts undertaken by Canada in order to settle this incident with the methods which are customary and generally accepted in international practice. I stressed the importance of settling this question through direct talks between the interested countries, that is, between the U.S. and the DPRK.

In regards to the aircraft carrier Eisenhower and the other American warships, they were undoubtedly sent to the shores of [North] Korea with the object of placing pressure on the DPRK. The transfer of combat aircrafts to South Korea is being done for these same purposes. It stands to reason that the DPRK will not agree to a settlement under the threat of a use of force or pressure in any form whatsoever.

Having noted that he was expressing his personal opinion, Ford tried to make a link between the latest serious attacks against the Americans by South Vietnamese patriots and the incident with the ship Pueblo. Personally he, the Ambassador, does not believe that such a connection exists, but if it does, this undoubtedly complicates the position of the Americans and, in particular, the withdrawal of their troops from Korea. The Ambassador was then interested in whether talks between the [North] Koreans and the Americans would lead to positive results.

I replied that there really is a connection between the events in Vietnam and Korea in the sense that the U.S. is pursuing the same policy of aggression and interference in the internal affairs of Vietnam, Korea, and other countries. The Americans love to talk of their desire for peace and an easing of tensions; however, the facts and their deeds are evidence of the opposite. The U.S. does not want to withdraw its troops from Korea and other countries and continues its provocative acts against the people of these countries, leading to a worsening of the situation. The Canadian government knows very well the point of settlement of the Soviet side with regard to U.S. foreign policy. In regards to the actions of the South Vietnamese patriots, we understand these actions, for no one can live under the bayonets of occupiers.

I told the Ambassador about a statement made by a senior DPRK leader, in which he clearly said that the DPRK government is not willing to talk with the U.S. under pressure or threats but will be ready to talk with the Americans if they want a settlement by the customary means accepted in international practice. In this event, it is the U.S. which is violating international law and the sovereignty of the DPRK, and it ought to take steps in the direction of settling this matter. The ball is now in their court.

In connection with the Ambassador's statement with regard to a so-called stage-by-stage solution of the problems in this region, namely, first settling the Pueblo incident and then the Vietnamese problem, I said that here, too, everything depends on the U.S.

and its approaches to these problems. If the U.S. really wants a peaceful settlement of these problems, then they ought to act in a different manner. However, their words about a desire for peace do not match their deeds. Instead of settling the Pueblo incident by customary peaceful means, the U.S. has begun to concentrate its naval forces along the shores of [North] Korea and has increased its air forces in South Korea, thereby aggravating the already tense situation in this region further. The Americans are pursuing the same policy in Vietnam. Not without reason, a few days ago P[aul] Martin, the Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs, called the U.S. position with respect to settling the Vietnam conflict “inflexible!” However, Martin is evidently conscientiously mistaken, for the Americans, judging from everything, are not trying to settle this problem at all but are pushing the matter toward a further escalation of the war. They are refusing to stop the bombing and other military actions against the DRV and are ignoring the proposals of the DRV and NFOYuV [National Front for the Liberation of Vietnam] with regard to ways to peacefully settle the Vietnam problem.

The Ambassador thanked [me] for the explanations.

Ye. N. Makeyev, Deputy Chief of the Second European Department, and V. I. Dolgov, Third Secretary of the Department, were present at the conversation.

DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (S. Kozyrev)

Send to CPSU CC Politburo members and candidate members

27 February 1968. A. Gromyko

* * *

DOCUMENT NO. 14

[Source: Johnson Library, National Security File, Country File, Korea--Pueblo Incident--Cactus II, Cactus Seoul Cables, January 29, 1968 to February 9, 1968. Secret; Flash; Nodis; Cactus.]

U.S. Embassy in Korea to U.S. Department of State
Seoul, 2 February 1968, 0741Z.

Telegram Summarizing MAC Senior Members Meeting held at Panmunjeom between 1100-1158 hrs local, February 2, 1968

Full text follows septel.

2. Begin Summary. RAdm Smith opened with brief prepared statement. Said he had called meeting to discuss serious situation resulting from fact DPRK has possession Pueblo and crew. Said US position is that ship did not enter NK territorial waters until after it was seized and that crew committed no crime whatever. Recognized that US and NK positions differ. Said this situation completely without precedent. Stressed interests of both sides would be served by immediate return of crew and early return of ship to US custody. Expressed hope that meeting would result in agreement in principle on return of ship and crew as soon as physical arrangements can be completed.
3. In response to repeated demands from Pak that Smith say all he had to say, Smith made following additional points:
 - (A) Time would be saved if neither side mentioned confessions, admissions, punishments or apologies.
 - (B) Repeated several times that he had come to request return of ship and crew, names of wounded and dead.
 - (C) Explained at some length why Pueblo case is unprecedented and difference between it and helicopter incident. In accordance guidance received, pointing out that ship had violated no laws, that it was not under UNC command but was unit of US Pacific Fleet, and that there no violation to admit, as was case with helicopter.
 - (D) Set forth international law aspects in accordance guidance contained State 108367, emphasizing that even if Pueblo had been in NK waters, proper procedure would have been to escort it back to international waters as is practice followed between US and USSR.
4. As it became obvious Pak would not respond until he had exhausted efforts to draw Smith out, latter began insisting that Pak make statement to which he would reserve

right to reply. Pak responded that Pueblo crew are aggressors and criminals dispatched to NK territorial waters for aggressive purpose as made clear by their confession. Stated that thanks to humanitarian measures of DPRK, wounded are receiving medical treatment, dead body of one crew member has been preserved, and all remaining members are in good health without any inconvenience. Said it unnecessary to cover up or explain away criminal act. Smith denied commission of criminal act, noting that ship had not fired back, had offered no resistance, had violated no law. Said “criminal act” could only be descriptive of North Korean actions.

5. After further exchange Smith asked Pak to suppose that KPA vehicle in JSA or other neutral area were suddenly seized by UNC, taken South, and its crew were made to confess that truck was South of DMZ. Said he supposed in such case North Koreans would wish to have truck back. Such situation was analogous way we feel about Pueblo.
6. Pak, after obvious pause for editing, then read prepared statement in which he said Smith had merely attempted cover up plain fact of aggression and that US had deliberately dispatched armed spy ship to NK territorial waters, which constitutes most flagrant violation of Armistice Agreement. Claimed North Koreans have in their hands all the material and human evidence to prove US committed act of aggression. Said matter can in no way be solved by US proposal to meet solely for purpose of rejustifying criminal act. Said if US really wants to solve matter it must change stand and attitude in addressing subject.
7. Pak continued that “I have not yet been instructed” to inform US side of names of dead and wounded. He then concluded prepared statement by proposing recess this meeting and saying Smith “will be informed” of date for next meeting.
8. Smith rejoined that he could provide much more proof than he already given that ship was in international waters if such would be useful at this time. Pak rejected this offer and repeated Smith would be informed later of next meeting.

9. Comment follows.

Porter

* * *

DOCUMENT NO. 15

[Source: Archive of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Fund 02/1, Folder 68/61. Translated for NKIDP by Adolf Kotlik]

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.

Development of the situation on the Korean Peninsula is characterized in the presented information.

I.

The main source and cause of persistent tension on the Korean Peninsula is the fact that Korea remains a divided country, and strong American and South Korean armies with state-of-the-art weapons are positioned in the South. This circumstance has a profound influence on all life in the DPRK and is reflected in the political direction of the Korean Workers' Party. The leadership of the KWP is following with growing anxiety the development in South Korea where younger, more flexible state leadership has been able to bring the country [back] from the brink of total collapse after the fall of Syngman Rhee and has been successful in more-or-less stabilizing conditions in the country with the help of foreign capital, mainly from the U.S., Japan, and West Germany. It seems that this relative stabilization of the South Korean regime, accompanied by strong anti-communist propaganda and police terror, has paralyzed revolutionary sentiments in the country and is skillfully discrediting the authority of the DPRK and diminishing her influence among South Korean population. This is also somewhat supported lately by a more tactful behavior of

U.S. troops towards the South Korean public. On the other hand, the initial political but mainly economic supremacy of the DPRK, still noticeable at the beginning of the 60's, has been gradually eroding due to economic stagnation, characteristic of the period of close co-operation of the DPRK with the PRC (People's Republic of China). With no less anxiety, the DPRK is following also the extensive foreign affairs and military activity of the South Korean regime, which is gaining international authority and sustaining and strengthening the positions of world imperialism in Asia, pointed mainly against socialist countries.

The latest development in South Korea is also connected with many visits in Seoul of representatives of world capitalism, culminating with the trip of President Johnson in 1966. Most of these visits contributed to the further stimulation of the South Korean economy, to the buildup and modernization of the South Korean army, and to the strengthening of "Asian-Oceanic Alliances" under the sponsorship of the U.S..

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.

This process in the policy of the KWP CC has taken shape during the last year. In the declaration of Kim Il Sung during the nationwide conference of the KWP in October 1966, a thesis was put forth that the unification of the country will be a long-term process requiring, mainly, the creation of a Marxist party in South Korea and establishing close cooperation with non-selective organizations. In conflict with that, the current doctrine of the KWP calls for a liberation of the southern part of the country by force as soon as the conditions are favorable. This new feature is manifested even in the slogan, coined in January 1967 by Kim Il Sung, about the necessity to unify Korea during the life of this generation. The expression "peaceful and democratic unification of the country" disappeared from [North] Korean propaganda. Even the [North] Korean press does not deny that [the country] is preparing for the defeat of American imperialists. The inescapability of war is theoretically explained, its consequences are played down, and the fear of war is countered as a display of bourgeois pacifism and revisionism.

While the doctrine of a parallel build-up and defense of the country was declared during the October conference of the KWP in 1966, it is more and more obvious that the defense has gained priority. This was reflected even in the last year's budget of the DPRK, which appropriated more than 30% of expenditures for defense (excluding the free of charge Soviet military assistance). The real nature of military measures of the DPRK is discussed in many essays, like, for instance, in an article in the periodical Korean People's

Army, from November 1967, where it is written: “The military course of our party, drawn by Marshal Kim Il Sung, enables us to reliably protect our socialist homeland by way of preferential strengthening of the defensive military power, and to handle, based on our own initiative, the great revolutionary event – unification of the country.”

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.

Excerpts from the Cuban press, which continually publishes his addresses, are mainly used as evidence supporting the importance of his theoretical works.

Collected writings of Kim Il Sung also constitute the basic and, today actually, the only source for study of Marxism. [North] Korean citizens get only very limited information about life in other socialist countries or about the situation in the world since all news in the press and radio are bent to the line of the KWP. This practice results in increased isolation of the DPRK from the outside world.

Displays of the personality cult in the DPRK are enhanced by a strong nationalism. All problems involving the DPRK are exaggerated and placed before other international problems.

The personality cult is also supported by personnel policy of the KWP. In the summer months of 1967, a number of influential and mid level party officials were removed. According to some information, members of the Politburo Pak Geumcheol

and Lee Chesun were arrested during last year's June conference of the KWP CC. Pak Geumcheol allegedly asked Kim Il Sung for a more realistic domestic policy, including improvement in the standard of living and a more realistic approach to the problems of South Korea where the most decisive factor was supposed to be an upsurge of the internal revolutionary forces. According to an assessment of his friends, Pak Geumcheol was considered as one of the most capable functionaries of the KWP and the DPRK, and Lee Chesun was engaged in the Politburo of the KWP CC with South Korean issues for a number of years. During the same period, other deputies and officials of the KWP CC and non-selective organizations were removed, such as a chairman of the (Workers) Unions CC, a leader of the YO (Youth Organization) of the KWP CC, a chairman of a youth organization CC, a director of the DPRK press agency, and many others. Demoted functionaries are sometimes replaced with graduates of military institutes.

The leadership of the KWP and DPRK differs in its opinions from the position of most of the fraternal parties, especially in the most pressing current issues – war and peace.

The difference in opinions among [North] Korean comrades is the most pronounced in the approach to fighting world imperialism. The KWP calls, in this case, for a frontal drive for final and immediate destruction of capitalism. According to the [North] Korean concept, the fight against imperialism can be done only by strong verbal attacks or war.

Positions of the KWP on issues of war and peace, peaceful coexistence, and approach to struggle with imperialism are very strongly influenced by the problems of the unification of the country. Naturally, these positions also shape the attitude of the KWP towards the international communist movement. The leadership of the KWP expresses support for the unity of the ICWM (International Communist Workers Movement) in the struggle with imperialism and for coordination of aid to Vietnam from fraternal countries, but the leadership expects the building of this unity only on the foundation of its own approach to the fight against imperialism and from the point of view of its own interests and goals. Fraternal parties are indirectly reproached for attacking imperialism only verbally, while in reality, they are afraid of it and are giving ground to it. The [North] Korean comrades put their positions forth as the only correct interpretation of Marxism-Leninism.

Countries of the Third World are considered especially important for their pivotal role in increasing the authority and prestige of the DPRK in international affairs. At the same time, the DPRK strives to promote its own example for these countries and to exert influence there by doctrines of “building with own resources,” of “independence from big countries,” and by radicalism of the [North] Korean positions.

So far, the DPRK did not take its position to the consultative meeting of fraternal parties, held in Budapest in February of this year. According to the opinion of Pak Seongcheol, member of the KWP CC, Deputy of the Council of Ministers and the DPRK Minister of Foreign Affairs, as expressed to the Ambassador of the GDR (German Democratic Republic), conditions for meetings of fraternal parties are worse now than a year ago. In the situation where the rift between the CPSU (Communist Party of Soviet Union) and the CP of China has grown wider and there are not even any diplomatic contacts between the USSR and the APR (Albanian People's Republic), meetings are said to contribute to the worsening of the discord. So far the only published reference in the DPRK press about planned meetings is the information taken from the central body of the CP of Cuba about the latest session of the Cuban CP CC plenum and its decision not to attend the meeting in Budapest.

Moreover, it is quite usual that in the relations of the DPRK to fraternal parties and countries, the [North] Korean comrades strive to have their opinions fully accepted and supported. The DPRK is also issuing to socialist countries imperative instructions on what they can and cannot do in their politics and in relations with imperialist countries. The article "Let Us Point Our Fight Against the American Imperialism," published in the journal *Nodong Sinmun* on 16th October 1967 in commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the Moscow meetings, calls for a tougher stance against the American imperialism, for active support of the struggle of the nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America, and warns that socialist countries must be aware, as well, of the danger of Japanese militarism in Asia and fight against it. At the same time, the wish of the KWP to achieve unconditional support for the [North] Korean course by all socialist countries is expressed, as well, in the request that "each socialist country must respect the policy of the Cuban CP and is obligated only to support the struggle of the Cuban people."

Similar practices are also characteristic of the approach of the [North] Korean comrades towards international organizations where they often try to push unrealistic requirements and, on top of that, demand that their socialist partners support them thoroughly without regard to the common interests of the whole socialist community.

II.

By pressing forward with the current doctrine, the KWP is also contributing to the increase of restlessness especially in the Demilitarized Zone and to the dangerous escalation of tension there, which was quite noticeable last year. Incidents in the zone and to the south of it have, so far, reached an unprecedented number. Incidents result in many

casualties. Official sources in the DPRK accuse the Americans and the South Korean regime of importing new kinds of weapons into South Korea and of shooting from the Demilitarized Zone at the North, and they assert that incidents on the territory of South Korea are the result of the growing struggle of South Korean patriots for national liberation. Contrary to that, Americans and South Koreans accuse the DPRK of continuously and increasingly infiltrating the South and of supplying new kinds of weapons.

In a memorandum from October last year on the situation in Korea, submitted to members of the political committee of the UN, the DPRK government pointed out the danger of a new Korean war flaring up as a consequence of American provocations and the necessity to withdraw U.S. troops immediately from South Korea. A letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the South Korean regime, containing a number of attacks against the DPRK and its policy (especially in connection with an “infiltration from the North”), was distributed amongst the committee as well.

According to the opinion of the Czechoslovak delegation with the Supervisory Commission of the Non-Aligned States, as well as to the opinion of our Embassy in Pyongyang, a number of circumstances indicate that the incidents in the Demilitarized Zone and to the south of it are intentionally and purposefully provoked mostly by the DPRK, although it is difficult to judge which side is to blame in such cases. However, increasing tensions on the 38th parallel of latitude and the growing number of incidents corresponds with the [North] Korean concept of the fight against imperialism and with the support of the revolutionary struggle of the people of South Korea. Officials of the DPRK strive to attract the world’s attention to the Korean problem and try to gain support from socialist countries for their policies.

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.

The DPRK authorities are pressuring the Czechoslovak and Polish delegations with the Supervisory Commission of the Non-Aligned States into making the SCNAS a

platform for the anti-imperialistic struggle in the [North] Korean style, without regard to the mandate of the Commission given by the Truce Treaty. At the same time, the [North] Korean comrades only inform the Czechoslovak and Polish delegations about the problems in the Demilitarized Zone sporadically and inaccurately. The Czechoslovak delegation with the SCNAS conducts its activities in agreement with the directive currently in force with the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The situation in Korea lately underwent a very dangerous development. On January 23rd this year, patrol boats of the DPRK detained an American spy ship Pueblo with 83 men and escorted it to the North Korean port Wonsan. According to the DPRK's information, the American ship was captured 10 miles away from Wonsan and 7.6 miles from the Jodo Island. The ship was collecting data about water depth, location of troops, and defenses of the DPRK coast.

On January 19th this year, this incident was preceded by an attempt of an armed group of 30 to penetrate the residence of the South Korean president in Seoul, with an objective to assassinate the president and other government officials. There was an exchange of fire for several hours between that group and South Korean police, with dead and injured on both sides. The South Korean regime mobilized armed forces that, together with the American Army, destroyed most of the members of the group.

On January 24th, Americans accused the DPRK at the Military Commission for Truce of an attempt to assassinate the president and high officials of the South Korean regime and of capturing an American ship in international waters. A spokesman for the U.S. said that the capturing of the ship could have grave consequences and endanger peace in the DPRK. He demanded immediate return of the ship with the crew and an apology. He also asked that a serious warning be passed on to Kim Il Sung. The [North] Korean side rejected the accusation.

President Johnson and Minister Rusk characterized the situation as very serious. The United States representative at the UN, Goldberg, expressed to U Thant concerns of the American government about the consequences of the incident and asked for a meeting of the Security Council regarding the capture of the American ship. The U.S. presents the issue of the ship as a part of a continuous violation of the Demilitarized Zone and as a provocation against South Korea. The U.S. asked the USSR to intervene with the [North] Korean side for the release of the captured ship. The USSR declined to intervene and warned the U.S. against any rash actions.

The United States, South Korean regime, and the DPRK introduced a number of military measures in order to increase the combat readiness of their armed forces. These measures, together with the psychological conditioning of the population in the both parts of Korea, create, on their own, a situation when any rather serious incident caused by one of the parties could escalate into a larger scale military conflict.

According to international law, the DPRK's course of action would be legal if the American vessel were engaged in a hostile activity in the coastal waters of the DPRK and offered resistance when ordered to leave. If the incident happened in the open sea, the DPRK's intervention was not legal. It is difficult to judge this matter now. We assume the position of the DPRK that the ship *Pueblo* was in the DPRK coastal waters. From this point of view, detention of the ship appears to be an act of defense of the DPRK's sovereignty.

Soviet ships, with aid for the DRVN (Democratic Republic of Vietnam) and with substantial commercial and military supplies for the DPRK, were passing through the area where the ship *Pueblo* was detained. From this corridor, the ship could have monitored the movement of part of the DPRK's naval forces, including the submarines, one of the main air force bases, a zone of security defense installations of the DPRK, and the movement in the area, which, the U.S. obviously believes, is used for the transportation of North Korean groups to South Korea. It seems that considering the importance of this area and the growing tension at the 38th parallel, the ship's mission was to determine the level of readiness of the Korean People's Army, or when possible, how imminent the danger is of carrying out the slogans for the unification of the country by force.

It is necessary to view the current conflict in a wider context because the DPRK has alliance treaties with the Soviet Union as well as with the PRC, in which both countries pledge to help the DPRK if it is attacked and is drawn into a military conflict.

The presentation by the U.S. delegate at the Security Council consisted basically of already published accusations from the American party. The Soviet delegate reacted with a strong accusation of the U.S. policy of intervention in Korea, and in the case of the ship *Pueblo*, he operated, namely, with the deposition of the ship's captain to counter the American arguments. Discussion in the Security Council did not result in support of the American version, decisively opposed by the USSR. So far, the American delegation has not presented any resolution to the Security Council. The development of discussion of the matter in the Security Council can be characterized by a proposal of the Soviet delegate to immediately invite the DPRK into the Security Council.

The U.S. rejected the proposal, saying that they would be willing to admit the DPRK delegation to the Security Council only if the ship with the crew is released. There is also an effort, especially of developing countries, to mediate the U.S. and the DPRK. The fact that the issue was discussed in the Security Council turned out, in the present situation, to be a positive; it helped to calm military hysteria in the U.S. and bought time to search for a diplomatic solution to the conflict. Due to the offensive of the NLF (National Liberation Front) in South Vietnam, the U.S. was forced to tone down its response to the DPRK in connection with incident of the ship Pueblo.

The DPRK preferred direct talks with the U.S. Since February 2nd, the negotiation has been on going in the Military Commission for Truce in Panmunjeom between representatives of the U.S. and the DPRK. According to the reports from our embassy, the negotiation is conducted in a calm manner. According to the press release from the AP in Seoul, representatives of the DPRK negotiating in Panmunjeom expressed a willingness to return to the United States the wounded and killed crew members of Pueblo. According to another report from Reuters in Tokyo, referring to the news from a South Korean pressroom, the U.S. and the DPRK reached a basic agreement in Panmunjeom on February 5th about the release of the Pueblo crew. The same source reported that the U.S., in essence accepted North Korean conditions, and they will admit that the Pueblo entered North Korean sovereign waters. The U.S. allegedly promised a public apology as well. As per the report of the Reuters agency in Washington, the U.S. State Department allegedly made a statement on February 5th that it has no information confirming the report of the basic agreement with the DPRK about the release of the Pueblo crew. These reports are not officially confirmed yet. Even if they turn out to be true, we still cannot expect a radical decrease in tension as long as the military measures implemented in connection with the Pueblo incident are not revoked.

III.

The acceleration of the dangerous developments on the Korean Peninsula and the complex situation there were the subjects of talks of the KPCZ CC First Secretary, c. A. Dubcek with the representatives of the CPSU CC while he was recently in Moscow. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs consulted this matter with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR in December last year. Follow-up consultation happened through our ambassador in Moscow in the last few days. In both instances, Soviet comrades were made familiar with our assessment of the developments in Korea and were informed about

our concern with some dangerous aspects of the problem. Soviet comrades identified themselves fully with our opinions but stressed that representatives of the DPRK assured the Soviet side that the DPRK would not take any steps that could result in a military conflict. During the recent developments with the ship *Pueblo*, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also received from the Soviet party two pieces of information for the Czechoslovak government, with a description of concrete steps that the USSR is taking.

According to the last information, which the Soviet Ambassador relayed to c. V. David on February 2nd this year, the [North] Korean comrades agree with the position of the Soviet representative during discussion about the U.S. complaint to the UN Security Council. They think it is necessary to stretch the proceedings of the *Pueblo* issue in the Security Council.

Various ideas about mediation to settle the incident are being floated unofficially in the UN Security Council. The Soviet side informed the [North] Korean comrades about it. Since the [North] Korean comrades are able to deal with Americans directly in Panmunjeom, they feel that mediation of third countries is not necessary, in principle. As for the concrete proposals for mediation, our [North] Korean friends believe it is possible to choose tactics according to further developments.

In conversations with the Soviet Ambassador from January 28th to January 31st, concerning further possible steps that the DPRK may take in connection with the incident, the [North] Korean comrades said only that the DPRK is not going to succumb to provocations and is ready to work towards the easing of tensions.

On January 29th, Rusk sent a letter to c. A. A. Gromyko. In this letter, Americans reiterated their version that the ship *Pueblo* was in international waters at the moment of interception. Rusk maintains that Johnson exercises restraint in the matter and believes that settling the issue as quickly as possible would be in the interest of both parties.

During unofficial consultations among members of the Security Council, U.S. Representative Goldberg approached the USSR representatives declaring that the U.S. is trying to find a diplomatic solution to the conflict in such a way that would include the repatriation of the ship and its crew, without damaging positions of either party.

In the response to Rusk, as well as in the conversation between the Soviet and American representatives in the Security Council, it was stressed, as the [North] Korean comrades requested, that the incident can be settled if tension in the area does not increase, national dignity of the DPRK is not insulted by making it responsible for the incident, and the policy of threats is abandoned; the U.S. must stop pressuring the DPRK and threatening her.

On January 31st, the USSR representative told the [North] Korean comrades that by adopting tough measures for defense of its sovereignty, the DPRK has politically won. Now, it would be desirable to solidify these results and, at the same time, to demonstrate the peaceful character of the DPRK's course in connection with the incident. That could be achieved by expelling the crew of Pueblo from the territory of the DPRK. The [North] Korean comrades were told that such a step from their side could not be interpreted as weakness; on the contrary, it would be appreciated everywhere as a show of a responsible approach, and it would strengthen, even more, the international position of the DPRK.

As far as it is up to the Soviet government, it will, of course, even in the future, see to it that events around the incident do not grow out of certain boundaries, and it will make every effort so that they do not escalate into an armed conflict.

The Soviet comrades also expressed conviction that their Czechoslovak friends share this position because it follows our common course in international issues. They would be grateful to the government of Czechoslovakia if it could, if at all possible, share information it has and comments about that matter.

We consider the USSR's approach as correct and thoughtful because it leads to preventing a wider conflict and to transferring its solution to the diplomatic arena. On January 31st of this year, the Czechoslovak government was informed about the declaration of the DPRK government on February 27th of this year concerning the incursion of the American spy ship Pueblo into the sovereign waters of the DPRK. The Czechoslovak government condemned the violation of the sovereignty of the DPRK and expressed to the DPRK government support for the defense of their territory and legal rights. The Czechoslovak press, radio, and television condemned the American provocation against the DPRK and informed the Czechoslovak public about the progress of events. However, the [North] Korean side protested against our press reprinting western information without comments and resolutely demanded that it publish only information released by the DPRK. Our press was notified of some inaccuracies that happened when news from western press agencies was used.

According to the assessment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as Ministry of National Defense, even if the issue of the ship Pueblo is settled peacefully, the situation in the Korean area will remain dangerous, especially due to the military measures implemented by both sides.

In current situation, it would be suitable to proceed this way:

- To be permanently in constant contact with the Soviet comrades, keep them up to date about our findings and to continuously consult the development of the situation and coordinate our common steps.
- To support the DPRK politically in defense of its territorial sovereignty and legal rights and to condemn provocations of the U.S. and the South Korean regime against the DPRK.
- To be in contact with the DPRK MFA and with the DPRK Embassy in Prague and to request from them information about positions of the DPRK. To influence the DPRK suitably towards peaceful resolution of the conflict. To that end it is suggested for the KPCZ CC Secretary to receive, as soon as possible, a diplomatic representative of the DPRK and to convey to him our position in a suitable way.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of National Defense, and the Ministry of the Interior will keep continuously informing the KPCZ CC Presidium and the Czechoslovak government.

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DOCUMENT NO. 16

[Source: Archive of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Fund 02/1, Folder 68/61. Translated for NKIDP by Adolf Kotlik]

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
File no.: 020.873/68-3
4th February 1968

Study of Tension in the Korean Area (Military Part) *Attachment III b/*

I. General Situation

From the beginning of 1967, the number of incidents in the demilitarized corridor has been growing, which has significantly increased the tension in the Korean area. This tension grew by the end of the year 1967, and on January 19th of this year, an armed group of 30 attempted to assassinate the South Korean president and other government officials.

Tension also increased after the detention of the American radio-technical survey ship Pueblo by the DPRK Navy on January 23rd, 1968.

According to the communiqué of the DPRK government, the ship was captured 10 miles away from the port Wonsan, which is in the territorial waters of the DPRK. The American side denies this claim and demands repatriation of the ship and crew. So far, neither side has proven its assertion about the distance of the ship from the [North] Korean shore at the time of capture.

This incident triggered a number of diplomatic actions from the U.S., accompanied by military measures. At the same time, military measures were implemented in both parts of Korea. The military measures put in place by the interested parties after January 23rd, 1968 increased the number of armed forces in this area and lead to a change in the balance of power. Military measures of the U.S. pertain both to forces deployed in the Far East and to armed forces and reserves on U.S. territory.

In the Far East:

- The American armed forces were put on elevated combat alert.
- Part of the Air Force was moved from the Vietnamese area to the Korean area, and the number of aircrafts increased in the Korean area with planes flown from the U.S..

Findings about military measures of the U.S.:

- From the islands of Okinawa and the Philippines, 5 squadrons totaling 108 tactical planes (50 F-105, 18 F-4, 40 F-102) and HQ of the 18th tactical fighter jet wing were relocated to South Korea.

Relocations from the U.S.:

- South Korea: 2 squadrons of tactical aircraft totaling 48 planes (24 F-4, 24 of an unidentified type) and 16 transport planes (C 141, C 130, C 124) with aviation technical personnel and military material,
- The island of Guam: 2 squadrons of tactical aircraft (33 planes F105).

From the U.S. Navy and Air Force:

- In the area of Vietnam, an attack aircraft carrier Ranger was relocated to the Korean area, and by regrouping the Pacific fleet, an attack formation of 30 ships whose core consists of 2 attack aircraft carriers, 1 anti-submarine aircraft carrier and three missile cruisers, was created in the Korean zone.

Mobilization measures of the U.S.:

- In order to satisfy the possible further strengthening of armed forces in the area of the Far East, about 14,700 reservists were called to active duty and 28 squadrons were mobilized in the U.S. in the first round, itemized as:
- 8 squadrons of tactical aircraft from the Air Force National Guard with total of 200 planes F-100,
- 3 tactical reconnaissance squadrons from the Air Force National Guard with total of 54 planes RF-101,
- 5 squadrons of military air transport from the Air Force Reserves with total of 48 planes C-119 and 32 planes C-124,
- 1 rescue squadron from the Air Force Reserves with 4 planes HU-16B ALBATROS,
- 3 attack squadrons from Navy Reserves with 35 planes,
- 3 tactical fighter squadrons from Navy Reserves with 35 planes,
- 5 unspecified squadrons.
- Strengthening of the U.S. ground forces in the Far East had not happened yet but steps were taken towards the mobilization of two divisions and six brigades of reservists on U.S. territory.

As for the South Korean forces, they were put on elevated combat alert; no further mobilization measures were noticed. However, according to some reports, the South Korean government is considering possibly withdrawing two South Korean divisions from South Vietnam.

In response to the military measures of the U.S. and South Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea put its forces on combat alert and is mobilizing 16 reserve divisions. It also, simultaneously, strengthened the formation of its troops along the Demilitarized Zone. It is said that the military measures of the DPRK are materially supported by the PRC.

Development of the situation and available news do not yet allow the unambiguous determination of each parties' motives, which lead to current situation, and what interests are served by the prolongation of it.

Even though we carefully monitor the development of the situation in the Korean area, we are not able, due to the lack of credible reports, namely, about the intentions of the DPRK and the PRC, to objectively assess the possible consequences of the implemented military and political measures. Due to the mobilization measures in the

DPRK, movement of diplomats, including our military attaché, has been limited, and the Korean side does not inform him of its steps and intentions.

Even our representatives in the SCNAS (Supervisory Commission of the Non-Aligned States) in Panmunjeom do not have an opportunity to receive objective information. However, the extent of military steps taken and the intensive military propaganda in the DPRK indicate strong tendencies towards a military solution.

Nevertheless, we can say that the U.S. utilized the increased tension in the Korean area to push further measures through Congress in order to strengthen the American troops in this zone so that they can increase the pressure on Vietnam once the tension in Korea is resolved.

It is more difficult for the United States to further strengthen their troops in Vietnam due to the steps taken by the DPRK because this situation ties down a considerable number of U.S. forces in the Korean zone, limits the freedom of maneuvering U.S. armed forces in the Far East, and could lead to the transference of two South Korean divisions from South Vietnam to South Korea. Tying considerable U.S. forces to the Korean zone makes the situation for the NLF and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam easier and thus, creates conditions for a successful liberation fight in Vietnam.

The tense situation in the Korean zone and in the Far East generally suits the current policy of the PRC, who is thus able to exert more of its superpower influence.

II. The State of Armed Forces and Mutual Balance of Power

Military measures of the U.S. and the DPRK are carried out in order to equalize the mutual balance of power in the Korean zone, as it follows from the data below:

Before the military measures were introduced, the ratio of power in the Korean zone was favorable for the DPRK in air force (3.5 : 1), for South Korea and the U.S. in ground forces, as to the number of people (2 : 1), and even in tanks 3.3 : 1.

1. Displayed data is taken from public sources, and it does not include worker peasant militias, who, in the DPRK, are militarily trained mainly for defensive purposes.
2. Part of the members of the DPRK Air Force gained considerable experience in combat on the DRVN side.

After measures were introduced on both sides by February 4th, 1968, supremacy of the DPRK Air Force decreased to 1.3 : 1, and the ratio of ground forces as for personnel and light armament more or less equalized. The possible remaining superiority of the South Korean and American ground forces in heavy equipment, namely, tanks, is not a decisive factor due to the terrain conditions in the Korean War theatre.

Substantial supremacy of South Korean and the U.S. Navy remains. The United States is also able, if necessary, to equalize on short notice (in 48 hours) the current unfavorable ratio in Air Force and gain in it, even, considerable superiority. It is within their capability to add about 300 to 500 fighter planes from the 12th Air Force unit and from the mobilized Air Force. However, the lack of suitable bases is a problem, and permission of the Japanese government would be needed for the use of airfields on Japanese territory.

More substantial strengthening of ground forces cannot be done in short time and the transfer of combat ready or, possibly, mobilized units from the U.S. would take one month or more.

The current balance of power does not give any side a substantial superiority in conducting an extensive offensive.

III. The Consequences of Possible Scenarios of Solution to the Conflict

Scenario 1 – Solution by peaceful settlement in a rather short time (2 to 3 weeks)

This scenario assumes a diplomatic solution with mutual concessions.

In case a peaceful settlement of the incident with the ship Pueblo is achieved within 2 to 3 weeks, and the course of diplomatic negotiations will give hope for a peaceful solution, armed forces of the U.S. will remain positioned in the Far East in two areas: Vietnam and Korea.

In this case, we can expect only an increase of American Air Force numbers in the Far East.

The following can be combat ready on U.S. territory during this period: up to 500 planes from the 12th Air Force unit, deployed in the western part of the U.S. and up to 350 fighter planes mobilized from reserves, up to 8 divisions of ground forces and 2 divisions of Marines, part of the 1st Navy fleet from the Pacific fleet.

(NUMBERS OF MAIN BRANCHES OF ARMED FORCES AND ARMAMENTS UP TO JANUARY 23RD, 1968)

| BRANCH | SOUTH KOREA | USA | TOTAL | DPRK | RATIO |
|------------------------------|-------------|-----|-------|-------|---------|
| GROUND FORCES (IN THOUSANDS) | 660 | 45 | 705 | 340 | 2 : 1 |
| DIVISIONS OF GROUND FORCES | 20 | 2 | 22 | 20 | 1.1 : 1 |
| TANKS | 1750 | 280 | 2030 | 600 | 3.3 : 1 |
| FIGHTER JETS | 214 | - | 214 | 2/700 | 1 : 3.5 |

In the DPRK during this period, mobilization steps can be finished, especially in material and technical procurement (also with the help of the allies).

In the case of a peaceful settlement, and if demobilization steps are not taken by the DPRK and tension does not decrease substantially, a considerable part of the U.S. forces will remain tied down in the Korean zone, which will diminish the combat capability of the U.S. in Vietnam. On the other hand, should the DPRK demobilize, we have to expect that part of the freed up U.S. forces, both from the U.S. and from the Korean zone, would be used in South Vietnam, which would change the power ratio to the NLF's disadvantage.

Scenario 2 - Solution by peaceful settlement after longer negotiation (more than 2 to 3 weeks)

In this scenario, the Korean zone would tie down a relatively large number of U.S. forces, and it is probable that these forces would be further strengthened, especially the Air Force and the Navy.

Contrary to the former scenario, 3 more divisions from the reserves could be ready on U.S. territory within 30 days for strengthening the ground forces in Far East, and

(NUMBERS UP TO FEBRUARY 4TH, 1968 AFTER IMPLEMENTED MOBILIZATION STEPS AND STRENGTHENING)

| BRANCH | SOUTH KOREA | USA | TOTAL | DPRK | RATIO |
|------------------------------|-------------|----------------|-------|-----------|---------|
| GROUND FORCES (IN THOUSANDS) | 660 | 45 | 705 | 540 | 1.3 : 1 |
| DIVISIONS OF GROUND FORCES | 20 | 2 | 22 | 36 | 1 : 1.6 |
| TANKS | 1750 | 280 | 2030 | NOT KNOWN | ? |
| (FIGHTER) JETS | 214 | (?) 180 156 | 550 | 700 | 1 : 3.5 |

on top of that, we cannot rule out complementing mobilization of the 1st, 3rd and 5th Navy fleet.

From 5 to 6 ground force divisions may be brought from the U.S. to the Korean zone within 30 days.

The DPRK would continue complementing its armed forces, namely, with weaponry supplied by the allies.

During the resolution of the conflict, more forces would be tied to the Korean area than there are now, but after that, a good part of the forces would probably be transferred to Vietnam. Thus, the ratio of power would worsen for the NLF.

Scenario 3 – Solution through military conflict

This scenario leads to the development of the two fronts in the Far East. New forces will enter the war on both sides. U.S. armed forces in the Far East will grow substantially, but they will be divided between two war theatres. As a result, the American forces in Vietnam would not strengthen as required. The consequence would be a smaller chance of resolving the conflict soon in the Unites States’ favor and objectively worsen the situation of U.S. troops in Vietnam.

The current (and projected) power ratio does not offer a clear chance for quick resolution of the conflict to either side, and it appears that it would have to be changed.

The build up of U.S. forces can be accomplished with the 82nd Paratrooper division (in 3 days), the 2nd and 4th Marine divisions (in 3 weeks), the 5th Mechanized division, three mobilized divisions and six mobilized brigades (in 1 month), which is a total 9 divisions. The 12th Air Force unit can add about 300 fighter planes to the U.S. forces in the Far East. Such steps will result in a power ratio which is advantageous for the U.S. Besides these forces, we can expect strengthening of U.S. forces with 3 more divisions in 50 days and with a portion of the mobilized forces, 1st, 3rd and 5th fleets.

The build up of the DPRK armed forces requires the technical aid of outside armed forces. Without it, successful conduct of even the defense operations is substantially diminished. The extent of aid to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea must be proportionate to its intentions; offensive operations would require quite extensive aid (40 to 50 divisions). Such aid would also lead to the danger of the U.S. using nuclear weapons (if the DPRK forces are successful).

The direct consequence of this variable for the United States will be a substantial increase in the required means for conducting the war in the Far East (armed forces, expenses, and means of transportation). It will also result in limited possibilities for growth of other armed forces and in decreased capability to transfer armed forces to different war theatres.

We can conclude that even strengthening of the U.S. armed forces in the Far East does not offer hope for a quick resolution of both conflicts. The United States is thus confronted with the prospect of a long war that would limit their maneuverability.

Another significant change in the ratio of power would be possible with limited use of nuclear weapons. However, this creates the danger of mutual use (PRC). It also leads to the danger of escalation and a possibility of a direct conflict between the United States and the PRC (attacks against PRC nuclear capabilities) and to the increase of international activity intended to stop the war. Therefore, the use of nuclear weapons does not guarantee the United States a victory in an escalated conflict.

IV. Conclusions

Increased tension in the Korean zone is forcing the United States to keep a larger number of forces in the Korean area, which limits their use on the Vietnamese front.

The crisis in the Korean area makes it possible for the United States to strengthen its armed forces in the Far East. A peaceful settlement of the incident can make it possible for the U.S. to strengthen its armed forces in the Vietnam War theatre and thus, increase the chances for a successful military solution.

Starting a military conflict confronts the U.S. with these alternatives:

- Conventional warfare means a protracted war on two fronts (with all political, economic and military consequences),
- Limited nuclear war means a danger of escalating the war, direct conflict with the People's Republic of China (while the result of the war cannot be predicted with any certainty), and a situation where the world's public opinion would be polarized against the U.S. (efforts to stop the war).

The most advantageous variable for the United States appears to be peaceful resolution of the conflict because it allows the planned steps to proceed, during further negotiations, in order to strengthen the [U.S.] armed forces in the Far East. Peace negotiations make it possible for the United States to regroup their forces in favor of the Vietnam War theatre and to conduct their operations successfully. The extent of regrouping will depend whether the DPRK will demobilize or not.

Increased tension in the Korean zone draws the U.S. military effort from Vietnam and is unintentionally helping the National Liberation Front and the People's Republic of Vietnam.

An early solution in the Korean zone can lead to the renewed use of forces transferred to the Korean area in the Vietnamese War theatre and to a diminished possibility of the transference of mobilized U.S. forces to the Far East. In case they are transferred to the Far East, they would probably be used in the Vietnamese War theatre.

A peaceful settlement after longer negotiations will result in tying part of the U.S. forces down in the Korean area, which will make it easier for the NLF and DRVN. At the same time, the U.S. will be more likely to transfer their armed forces for the Far East into the Korean zone. A peaceful settlement will allow the U.S. to deploy larger forces in the Vietnamese zone than in the previous variable, and thus, it will substantially influence the course of the conflict in favor of the U.S..

In the case of a military solution of the conflict in Korea, there is little chance that the U.S. would decide to get engaged in a protracted war with conventional weapons like in Vietnam. Requests of some senators from the American Congress as well as proposals of top military officials for solving a contingent conflict with nuclear weap-

ons (for instance the Chief of Staff of the 8th American Army [division] in Korea) indicate a dangerous development of a possible military confrontation.

A military solution brings, for socialist countries, an increase in military aid and probably also some measures in the armed forces for the possible escalation, and in general, increased military spending. In addition, it is necessary to take into account the possibility of a limited nuclear war and to think of measures to counter such a situation.

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DOCUMENT NO. 17

[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Czech Republic, No. 031/68, Pages 1-8. Translated for NKIDP by Adolf Kotlik]

9 February 1968

THE EMBASSY OF CZECHOSLOVAK SOCIALIST REPUBLIC
SM – 021712/68
(other notes illegible)

No. 031/68
Pyongyang

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Classified
By courier!

Declassified per file no. 267.261/2001- OZÚ
Prague
(OZÚ = Section for Special Assignments]
Date: May 22nd, 2001
Processed by: (initial illegible)

Pueblo and American – South Korean Relations
Political Report No. 11
Written by: B. Schindler
7 x

When the Pueblo was detained on the night of January 23rd, all of the South Korean propaganda was still fully involved with the case of January 21st of 31 armed persons, who, according to a captured member of the group, were supposed to kill the South Korean president and other key representatives of South Korea and who were still being pursued mainly in the area between Seoul and the Demilitarized Zone.

The Seoul incident from 21st January of this year revealed shortcomings in the security system between the position of the 2nd U.S. Infantry Division in the western part of the Demilitarized Zone and Seoul and showed the poor readiness of the South Korean armed units to counter such a large scale action as the 21st January incident undoubtedly was.

The inefficiency of South Korean troops and police, proven by the incident, raised a wave of dissatisfaction that was reflected in the South Korean press during the days when the Pueblo was detained. South Korean propaganda found some counter-arguments against these reproaches of its own press and soon was able to distract the public and turn its attention to three issues: the Japanese press' interpretation of the January 21st incident, the U.S. position in regards to the Seoul incident and the detention of the Pueblo, and to internal political issues concerning the relations between the ruling Republican Party and the New Democratic Party.

The very first reports of the Japanese press about the Seoul incident caused concern and agitation because of the way in which the news was presented, and it almost immediately resulted in small demonstrations against Japanese journalists accredited in South Korea, calling for their immediate expulsion from the country. These demonstrations were followed by larger demonstration and protest gatherings against the Seoul incident, which were of a pronounced anti-North Korean nature, and contained all the signs of anti-communist hysteria, complete with the burning of straw effigies of Kim Il Sung. Most participants were students, intelligentsia and artists; however, South Korean authorities managed to get labor unions involved as well. Regardless of the fact that the South Korean educational system is selective, especially when it comes to admissions to secondary schools, South Korean authorities did not even have to apply direct pressure to ensure participation in these demonstrations. Their main purpose has been achieved: to turn public attention from criticizing the government, army, and police to a more acceptable matter – against the DPRK, which was a complete success. These tendencies were further strengthened when an underground group of 31 (directed from the DPRK, according to the South Korean press) was arrested, as well as a group of fishermen, who had returned to South Korea after staying in the DPRK.

The South Korean government was able to accomplish all of its intentions; in fact, a South Korean flying squad, with active help from civilians, killed the last of the 31 armed insurgents, even though we cannot say that it was a direct consequence of this propaganda.

South Korean propaganda was able to sustain the wave of anti-communism on the same level by other events as well, like a funeral ceremony for police personnel killed on January 21st and for other South Korean soldiers who were shot while pursuing “armed guerilla groups of South Korean patriots and revolutionaries.” Namely, two funerals were exploited exceptionally: the funeral of a higher commander of the South Korean army and the funeral of a school child, who was killed during an attack of the armed group on the access road to the presidential palace. The widely publicized testimony of the only captive from this armed group [included statements, such as] “we were supposed to cut Park Chung-hee’s head off” and so on, and the alleged threats that armed group members [made] to peasants, [like] “if you don’t help us and report us, we will take revenge on you and your family members when the country is united soon,” had its intended effect. The last ones killed from the group of 31 were physically weak and hungry, which, among other things, showed that by its very first appeals, South Korean propaganda was able to deter civilians from helping the armed group in any way.

These propaganda efforts of South Korean ruling circles were also accompanied by internal measures that were aimed at practically every South Korean and strictly limited possibilities to provide meaningful assistance to members of the armed group.

Some later news also raised speculation that a three member group seen far south-east of the city Daegu had its own mission, not necessarily connected with the mission of the main group in Seoul. That is to say, Park Chung-hee’s villa is near Daegu.

Measures of the South Korean government – accelerated arming of segments of the population (protection of important private production facilities) as well as fast modernization of the South Korean coast guard – further intensified the anti-infiltration and anti-communist propaganda so much that it, at least initially, overshadowed the propaganda around the detention of the Pueblo.

During the Seoul incident, there were disagreements between the ruling and opposition parties; however, right after January 21st, the opposition party showed maximum willingness to cooperate with the ruling party “in the light of serious danger to the security of the South Korean state from North Korean infiltrators,” in the sense that it was not just an isolated action of 31 armed men but a systematic and planned

activity of the DPRK with the final objective of “armed aggression against South Korea.” Therefore, one of the consequences of the Seoul incident was, among other things, that the ruling and opposition parties achieved a certain degree of unity.

Initially, South Korean propaganda accepted the detention of the *Pueblo* as a vindication of its warning that the U.S. is underestimating the danger that manifested itself in Kim Il Sung’s speech on December 16th, 1967, and that the former DPRK KCPA deputy warned against as early as the beginning of the summer after he defected to the South. The first responses to the *Pueblo* incident indicated several facts that must have been unpleasant to Americans, to say the least. One of them was the argument that by crossing the DMZ (Demilitarized Zone) unnoticed in the section of the U.S. 2nd Infantry Division, the armed group revealed, not only, that the U.S. Command in South Korea underestimated the possibility of infiltration from North Korea but that it was satisfied with declarations that the electronic barrier, which was already fully functional in the section of this American unit, was impenetrable. At the same time, South Korean officials argued against the American practice of arming South Korean forces in both South Korea and South Vietnam with dated American weapons, some of which the American Army used already in World War II. As evidence, they pointed out comments from some key South Korean political and military officials about what happened last year when South Korean soldiers in South Vietnam refused to fight with obsolete M-1 rifles and when, after being issued new, lighter and shorter M-6 rifles, with a much higher frequency of effective shooting, their fighting capability increased, exemplified by concrete results in combat against the armed forces of South Vietnam National Liberation Front.

The request for expedient modernization of all South Korean units was accompanied by two warnings addressed directly and indirectly to the U.S.: the South Korean Foreign Affairs Committee deputy talked about a possibility of withdrawal of all South Korean troops (48,000) from South Vietnam even before the commencement of the South Vietnamese NLF offensive, and the parliament expressed a request that South Korean armed forces be removed from the U.S. command (of the UN armed forces in South Korea).

The effectiveness of these two threats was visible almost immediately: modern weaponry for South Korean units that was originally planned for delivery by the end of March was immediately airlifted to South Korea, and the designated units are scheduled to receive these weapons by the end of February. Johnson’s message to Park Chung hee and the trip of his special envoy to Seoul were supposed to explain to the

South Korean government why the U.S. rejected the military approach in cooperation with the South Korean armed forces in the first phase of the Pueblo's detention and why Smith negotiates with Pak Jungguk in Panmunjeom behind closed doors without the presence of a South Korean representative.

Americans also had to explain to the South Korean government why they do not make any connection between the Pueblo and Seoul incidents during negotiations in Panmunjeom. The pressure of South Korea on Johnson had its desired effect. Regardless of the precarious situation Americans faced due to the South Vietnam NLF offensive, the mere thought of Koreans pulling out their troops, which Americans themselves consider to be the best of all the satellite armies and which, after the Americans, are the most numerous, was dangerous, [made?] even more so because of the NLF armed forces offensive.

The effectiveness of the South Korean threats manifested itself not only in Johnson's message and in an expedited shipment of modern weapons to the South Korean army but also in an additional hundred million U.S. dollars after South Korean officials openly said, in connection with their disapproval that the U.S. was negotiating the Pueblo incident with the DPRK in Panmunjeom behind closed doors and without South Korean representatives, that they do not approve of the U.S. approach because first of all, the Pueblo incident cannot be separated from the Seoul incident, and second, the U.S. pledged to discuss all of their measures in South Korea with the South Korean government, and further, that the U.S. cannot expect to stop "North Korean aggressive behavior" with several ships, older weapons, and their own existence.

As it is, after Johnson's message, sending the special envoy, the additional one hundred million dollars, accelerated military aid and a change of the U.S. position on Pueblo (the U.S., through Smith's negotiations with the DPRK, started to honor the South Korean request not to separate the Pueblo incident from the Seoul one), there was no more talk about withdrawing the South Korean units from South Vietnam nor about removing South Korean units from the UN command in South Korea. The objective was reached; the subjective pressure from the South Korean government met with the objective pressure of the South Vietnamese reality – therefore, South Korean government circles could accept with satisfaction the words of Johnson's message that South Korea is one of the U.S.' best allies and could [still?] continue to press the U.S. for further concessions, namely, shipments of modern weapons and military equipment. Reports were proliferating that the Seoul incident showed organizational incompetence of South Korean military and police units and their inadequate equipment. (M-1 rifles have many disadvantages, like they are too heavy and bulky for the

small South Koreans and, thus, are less suitable, for anti-infiltration activity in the mountains and less accessible terrain, than the automatic rifles of the armed infiltrators.) All this led to a South Korean request to arm all anti-infiltration units with modern M-6 rifles, which all South Korean units in South Vietnam already have, and to also arm police units and special anti-infiltration units with these weapons. However, judging from comments of some top South Korean military representatives, South Korea wants to exploit the Seoul and Pueblo incidents to the maximum in the shortest possible time. Additional requests were expressed for the U.S. to help with the replacement of communication equipment for all levels of the South Korean army, with reference to the shortcomings in communication that have appeared over the last few weeks due to old radio relays and telephone switchboxes. Based on experience from the last days of January, South Korean authorities also strongly criticized the food, which was unsuitable for the anti-infiltration units, pointing out that there are already talks going on with the U.S. command in South Korea [agreeing?] that rice cans are not suitable and that they will be replaced with other kinds of food, along with the necessary kitchen material for the preparation of warm meals in field conditions.

The DPRK press is correct in saying that Americans ran into a dead end in South Korea when the last developments in South Vietnam almost coincided with the “revolt” of the South Korean government, who wanted to exploit this extremely advantageous situation to the maximum and is, thus far, succeeding in doing so.

It may sound ironic, but the fact is that the Seoul incident together with the Pueblo incident made it possible for South Korean ruling circles to solve, by pressuring the U.S., some problems of a military nature, which they have always blamed on U.S. dilatoriness. Since South Korea is quickly getting new equipment and arms in exchange for assurances that it will not pull out its troops from South Vietnam, the questions of war and peace are reaching higher levels. For sure, these South Korean political successes will not remain without response from the DPRK, who, as we can judge from more than just the confidential monitor, KCPA, is closely following the South Korean military problems, especially, and can be expected to make further efforts to counter the latest South Korean measures with new requests to socialist countries in order to neutralize the “results” of the Seoul and Pueblo incidents, which were far more beneficial to South Korea than to the DPRK.

We can, therefore, assume that efforts to buildup arms will only increase on both sides of the Demilitarized Zone, and that because of intensified propaganda on both sides, more pointed conflicts could be developing on land and sea or near the Demilitarized Zone, and that these prospects cannot, in any case, mean a decrease

in tensions; on the contrary, the mutual race to modernize the equipment of armed forces can only exacerbate the already strained atmosphere on the Korean Peninsula, and as such is the case, the danger of words becoming reality will continue to grow.

Today, when it is already clear that the DPRK cannot expect to surpass South Korea economically in the near future – and everything shows the DPRK has abandoned these goals for good – the possibility of a peaceful unification of the country is disappearing for more reasons than just South Korean anti-communism [sentiment], which will only grow as a result of the Seoul and Pueblo incidents and which, for a long time, will prevent the founding of Marx-Lenin party in the South as was outlined at the national conference of the KWP last year. On the contrary, the [situational] developments in this part of the world suggests that the DPRK definitively gave up all possibilities except that of a military solution of the Korean issue, even at the expense of extremely lowering the living standard of the [North] Korean people and of taxing the relations with the fraternal socialist parties and the PRC for only one end – intensive preparation for unification with the help of weapons.

We think that a lot will depend on the position of the USSR and the European socialist countries regarding this problem in a complicated situation when we cannot rule out that the Korean Worker's Party is already counting on more active aid of the People's Republic of China, whose arms potential could play a role on the Korean Peninsula in a Korean Worker's Party solution that is, as we believe, unrealistic.

Ambassador:
Holub

* * *

DOCUMENT NO. 18

[Source: PolA AA, MfAA, G-A 320. Obtained for NKIDP by Bernd Schaefer and translated for NKIDP by Karen Riechert.]

GDR Embassy to DPRK
Pyongyang, 20 February 1968

*Memorandum**on a Conversation with the USSR Ambassador, Comrade Sudarikov, on 16 February 1968 between 16:15 and 17:30 hours*

The meeting was held upon my request.

At the beginning, I informed Comrade Sudarikov about the intention of the GDR to send a party and government delegation to the DPRK in the second half of March 1968.
[...]

On the issue of the Pueblo:

It is possible, Comrade Kim Il Sung asserted, to find a peaceful, if not a good solution on the Pueblo issue. One precondition is that the Americans abandon their threats and admit their guilt. If they continue their threats and attack us, we will fight against them.

Comrade Ponomarev stated that the USSR's position is clear; the Soviet Ambassador has already informed the leading comrades in the DPRK. The situation is such that we need a peaceful resolution and a reasonable solution. It is absolutely evident that the Pueblo incident has dealt a blow to the United States while the reputation of the DPRK has increased.

Note:

On the same topic of a conversation that I had with the First Secretary of the USSR Embassy, Comrade Zvetkov, on 14 February. The content of both talks was mostly identical. There were a few nuances in details that do not change the overall content in any way.

Jarck
Acting Ambassador

CC

1x State Secretary Hegen (Foreign Ministry)
1x Comrade Axen (Central Committee)
1x Embassy/Secretariat

* * *

DOCUMENT NO. 19

[Source: Archive of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Fund 07/15, Folder 24/244. Translated for NKIDP by Adolf Kotlik.]

February 1968

*Letter Relaying Information Shared between USSR Ambassador in Prague
c. S.V. Cervonenko and Minister of Foreign Affairs c. V. David about the
Situation in Korea*

Deputy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs

File No.: 020.874/68-3

c. Trnavsky

complement according to the info from the CPZS CC

or c. (illegible) c. (illegible)

Dear Comrade,

Attached please find information about the situation in Korea as the USSR Ambassador in Prague c. S.V. Cervonenko relayed it to the Minister of Foreign Affairs c. V. David.

With comradely greeting,

(signature illegible)

Attachment: 1

Esteemed Comrade

Alexander Dubcek

First Deputy of the Central Committee

of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia

Prague

[North] Korean comrades agreed with the position of the Soviet representative during the discussion of the U.S. complaint to the UN Security Council. They think it is necessary to stretch the proceedings of the Pueblo issue in the Security Council.

As you know, various ideas about how to mediate the settlement of the incident are being discussed unofficially in the UN Security Council. We informed the [North] Korean comrades about it. Since the [North] Korean comrades are able to deal with Americans directly in Panmunjon, they feel that mediation of third countries is not necessary, in principle. As for the concrete proposals for mediation, friends believe it is possible to determine tactics according to further developments.

In conversations with the Soviet Ambassador from January 28th to January 31st, concerning further possible steps that the DPRK may take in connection with the incident, the [North] Korean comrades were saying only that the DPRK is not going to succumb to provocations and is ready to work towards easing tensions.

On January 29th, Rusk sent a letter to c. A. A. Gromyko. In this letter, Americans reiterate their version that the ship Pueblo was in international waters at the moment of interception. Rusk maintains that Johnson exercises restraint in the matter and believes that settling the issue as quickly as possible would be in the interest of the both parties.

During unofficial consultations among members of the Security Council, U.S. Representative Goldbeg approached the USSR representatives with a declaration that the U.S. is trying to find a diplomatic solution to the conflict in such a way that would include repatriation of the ship and its crew, without damaging positions of either party.

In the response to Rusk, as well as in the conversation between the Soviet and American representatives in the Security Council, we stressed, as the [North] Korean comrades requested, that the incident can be settled if tensions in the area do not increase, the national dignity of the DPRK is not insulted by making it responsible for the incident, and the policy of threats is abandoned; the U.S. must stop pressuring the DPRK and threatening her.

On January 31st, we told the [North] Korean comrades that by adopting tough measures for defense of its sovereignty, the DPRK has politically won. Now it would be desirable to solidify these results and, at the same time, to demonstrate the peaceful character of the DPRK's course in connection with the incident. That could be achieved by expelling the crew of the Pueblo from the territory of the DPRK. We told the [North] Korean comrades that such a step from their side could not be interpreted as weakness; on the contrary, it would be appreciated everywhere as a show of a responsible approach, and it would strengthen even more the international position of the DPRK.

As far as it is up to the Soviet government, it will, of course, even in the future, see to it that events around the incident do not grow out of certain boundaries, and it will make every effort so that they do not escalate into an armed conflict.

We are convinced that our Czechoslovak friends share this position because it follows our common course in international issues.

We would be grateful to the government of Czechoslovakia if it could, if at all possible, share information it has and comments about that matter.

* * *

DOCUMENT NO. 20

[Source: AVPRF. f. 102, op. 28, pap. 55, d. 2. Obtained for NKIDP by Sergey Radchenko and translated for NKIDP by Gary Goldberg.]

26 February 1968

Reception of US Ambassador to the USSR Llewellyn E. Thomson by AAG [A. A. Gromyko]

I received Ambassador Thompson today at his request.

THOMPSON said that more than a month had passed since North Korean patrol boats seized the ship Pueblo by force in international waters. In spite of the undoubtedly illegal nature of the North Korean actions and the indignation of the public in the U.S., the Americans have displayed considerable restraint and have sought a favorable resolution of the issue. Following the advice of the Soviets, the Americans have made some changes in the deployment of its forces.

THOMPSON then said that the eighth meeting of the two sides had already been held in Panmunjeom. Wanting the Soviets to be informed of the talks being held, the minutes of all eight meetings were made available to A. F. Dobrynin, the Soviet ambassador in Washington. During the talks, the Americans promised to conduct a comprehensive investigation of the incident after the return of the crew of the Pueblo and the ship itself and also expressed a readiness to express regret in the event that

the fact of a violation of DPRK territorial waters was established. The North Koreans rejected these proposals made by the Americans.

THOMPSON continued that in spite of attempts by the Americans to find a mutually acceptable solution, the situation has not changed, as a result of which tensions remain in the area of Korea. The present tension is increasing, primarily as a result of the malicious North Korean activity with respect to South Korea, which, in particular, has manifested in the attack on the Blue House, the residence of the president of South Korea and the infiltration of North Korean agents across the Demilitarized Zone. The increase in tension has also been fostered by the irresponsible threats of punishment, retaliation, and war against “American imperialism” and its “henchmen” in South Korea, which were made by the senior North Korean representative at the talks in Panmunjeom and by the North Korean prime minister. An increase in tension was also promoted by the statement of the North Korean chargé in Moscow that members of the Pueblo crew would be punished, Thompson continued.

THOMPSON then said that Cyrus Vance, the special representative of the U.S. president, who had returned from Seoul, confirmed the reports of the American Embassy in South Korea that the patience of the South Koreans is at its limit as a result of the clearly malicious actions of the North Koreans. Captured North Korean prisoners informed South Korean authorities about the increased training of saboteurs to conduct a North Korean program of infiltration, sabotage, and murder in South Korea.

Both our sides ought to pay great attention to an issue which might lead to a continuation of the above actions by the North Koreans, said Thompson. We constantly call for restraint from the South Korean authorities, Thompson continued, and hope that for your part, you will exert the same influence on North Korea.

THOMPSON further noted that, in accordance with his instructions, he characterized this situation which has ensued to be the result of the eight meetings in Panmunjeom. He then reported that, as the next step, the Americans intended to propose to the North Koreans that an investigation of the incident be conducted in order to establish whether the ship Pueblo actually violated the territorial waters of the DPRK. Thompson continued, the Americans will propose that this investigation be conducted “by a completely impartial” group, and in the event that a violation of the 12-mile zone of territorial waters is established, the U.S. will be ready to offer its apologies to North Korea.

AAG asked the ambassador whether he thought that all the meetings held in Panmunjeom (including the latest, the ninth, which was held on 21 February) had brought any progress and was also interested in whether the Americans had given replies to all the questions raised by the North Koreans.

THOMPSON replied that no progress has been achieved by the talks in Panmunjeom. As for the North Koreans' questions, in his opinion, replies had been given to them. Thompson added that he knew the North Koreans demanded that, from the very beginning, the Americans offer apologies in connection with the incident. However, they have been told that an investigation was necessary to do this.

AAG said that Thompson's report added very little to what we already know from other sources. Our assessment of U.S. actions, which led to the incident with their ship *Pueblo*, was described in the messages of A. N. Kosygin, Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, to U.S. President L. Johnson and also in previous conversations with the Ambassador, said AAG. Therefore, there is hardly a need to describe it in detail again. AAG then expressed the hope that this incident would be settled and the sooner the better. AAG noted that we are not confident that the Americans are using all opportunities to solve the problem caused as a result of its own actions. The search for such a solution is in no way helped by the one-sided interpretation to which, as before, the U.S. is subscribing, classifying the detention of the *Pueblo* as "an illegal act."

THOMPSON said that in the opinion of the Americans at the present moment, the main thing in connection with the *Pueblo* incident is the different interpretation of the facts, in view of which they also intend to propose an impartial investigation. Thompson added that the Americans cannot agree with the North Korean interpretation of what happened. AAG said that the position of the Soviets on the issue of the *Pueblo* incident remains the same as was described before. We think that the faster this issue is decided the better. In regards to the Americans, they obviously ought to display greater objectivity in the assessment of the facts, more flexibility in the approach to a solution of the problem, and not proceed from what the Ambassador said at the beginning of his statement, that the action of the DPRK was "illegal" and to repeat this endlessly. In our view, AAG continued, the appropriate U.S. military branches also ought to receive instructions to not create such dangerous situations in the future and to not carry out provocations against

other countries. In regards to the U.S. intention to propose conducting an investigation of the Pueblo incident with some “impartial” group at the talks in Panmunjeom, we cannot say what the attitude of the [North] Koreans will be to this proposal.

A. [Akalovsky], First Secretary of the U.S. Embassy to the USSR, was present at the conversation from the American side. G. M. Korniyenko, Chief of the U.S. Department of the USSR MFA, was present on our side. The conversation was recorded by O. Krokhalev, Third Secretary of the U.S. Department.

* * *

DOCUMENT NO. 21

[Source: PolA AA, MfAA, G-A 344. Obtained for NKIDP by Bernd Schaefer and translated for NKIDP by Karen Riechert.]

GDR Embassy to DPRK
Pyongyang, 3 March 1968

Comrade Jarck

on Current Relations between the DPRK and the PR China

As already outlined in my recent posting, there are a lot of elements indicating a potential improvement in relations between the DPRK and the PRC. However, there is still no reliable and comprehensive information. Thus, all the fraternal embassies [USSR, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Mongolia, Poland], ours included, are working on only a basis of assumptions and a few facts in order to reach certain conclusions. In addition to previously transmitted bits of information, the following indications do exist here on the status of [North] Korean-Chinese relations:

1. I heard from the Hungarian Acting Ambassador how the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party has received information from a European fraternal party. According to that party, Zhou Enlai has allegedly written a letter to Kim Il Sung stating that positions of the Mao Red Guards are not identical with those of the PRC government in many respects. Furthermore, the letter is said to express Chinese willingness to send volunteers to [North] Korea. So far, there is no confirmation of this information's accuracy from any other source.

2. Recently, the PRC has sent some specialists to the DPRK. According to various sources of information, they are said to be experts in repairing equipment and objects that were once built by the PRC. Some hints also mention military specialists are on site in various facilities.

3. On January 29, a delegation of 19 members arrived from Beijing to conclude negotiations for a trade agreement between the DPRK and the PRC. Over the last week, the delegation leader is said to have arrived as well. Negotiations are to be concluded soon.

Just the existence of such negotiations is of major importance. Lee Juyeon, KWP Politburo member and Deputy Prime Minister, told leading Soviet comrades in December 1967 that there were no prospects at all for a trade agreement between the DPRK and the PRC for the year of 1968.

4. On foreign trade between the DPRK and the PRC, the following data exists for 1966 and 1967. (Data is mostly from the Romanian Embassy but has only been partially double-checked. Thus, there is a certain likelihood for accuracy.)

Allegedly, there had been technical-organizational as well as political problems with the Chinese exports in 1967. The result being that some goods were not delivered in full, such as vegetable oil, cotton, coke, and coking coal. Irregular and delayed deliveries have also occurred, but, it is said, they have been fulfilled still by 95 percent. There were also problems with [North] Korean exports when the Chinese complained about the bad quality of machine tools and transformers.

In the field of scientific-technological cooperation, the PRC allegedly handed over about 182 documents to the [North] Koreans in 1966/1967.

5. A few weeks ago, the prohibition to use the sidewalk in front of the Chinese Embassy [in Pyongyang] was lifted, although the large images of Mao are still on public display next to the entrance.

All these details are indications for an improvement of relations in the context of the Pueblo seizure and incidents in Seoul. We cannot evaluate, however, how far-reaching this improvement actually is and whether it is stable and durable. The fact that there is only an acting ambassador and no [PRC] ambassador here demonstrates there still exist unresolved questions in DPRK-PRC bilateral relations. Some [North] Korean actions display the ongoing DPRK interest in normalizing relations with the PRC and to leave this path open. The most important actions are:

Non-participation in the Budapest consultative meeting;

No publications arguing directly against the CCP line, Mao Zedong as a person, or other members of the leading group in the PRC;

(NUMBERS OF MAIN BRANCHES OF ARMED FORCES AND
ARMAMENTS UP TO JANUARY 23RD, 1968)

| 1966 | 1967 | |
|-------------------------------------|----------|----------|
| DPRK EXPORTS | ABOUT 75 | ABOUT 65 |
| DPRK IMPORTS | ABOUT 76 | ABOUT 65 |
| <u>DPRK EXPORTS</u> | | |
| ANTHRACITE | | |
| IRON ORE | | |
| DIFFERENT TYPES OF STEEL | | |
| SOME AMOUNTS OF NON-FERROUS METALS | | |
| MECHANICAL ENGINEERING PRODUCTS | | |
| <u>DPRK IMPORTS</u> | | |
| (VOLUME IN PERCENTAGES) | | |
| FUEL PRODUCTS | 54.7 | |
| + COKE AND COKING COAL | | |
| (ABOUT 2 MILLION TONS) | | |
| CHEMICAL PRODUCTS | 8.5 | |
| VEGETABLE OIL AND OTHERS | 16.2 | |
| TEXTILE AND LIGHT INDUSTRY PRODUCTS | 15.8 | |
| FRUIT, VEGETABLES, MEAT, ETC. | 4.8 | |

Sending an ambassador to Beijing in summer of 1967 in spite of just being an act-
ing PRC ambassador present here in Pyongyang.
Jarck
Acting Ambassador

* * *

DOCUMENT NO. 22

[Source: PolA AA, MfAA, G-A 360. Obtained and translated for NKIDP by Bernd Schaefer.]

GDR Embassy to DPRK
Pyongyang, 4 March 1968

Letter on the Pueblo Question, from Comrade Jarck to Comrade Hegen

State Secretary and First Deputy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs
Comrade H e g e n

102 Berlin
Marx Engels Square 2

Dear Comrade Hegen!

Following your written instructions of 30 January 1968, I, today, attempt to write down a summary of most relevant events and likely tendencies. For reasons of efficiency, I have chosen to do this by way of letter to you. Enclosed is the most important material drafted during recent weeks. I have left a copy of this letter in our embassy to provide our new ambassador, Comrade Henke with the opportunity to state his opinion after his arrival. As one copy will remain here, I have arranged the classification of the most important material as highly confidential or confidential matters.

On the Pueblo Question

So far, negotiations in Panmunjeom are inconclusive with regard to the return of the crew and the ship. Yet, currently, it is very difficult to obtain exact information on the substance of the negotiations. Apparently, both participating sides have agreed to make nothing, or next to nothing, available to the public. Even the Polish and Czechoslovak comrades, who have their representatives on site in Panmunjeom, and have so far briefed me on a regular basis, now encounter problems in following the course of the negotiations. In recent days, attention is, apparently, mainly focused on General Pak Jungguk's proposal to exchange the Pueblo crew against patriots imprisoned in South Korea. This proposal forwarded by

members of the Neutral Commission is said to have met the interest of the United States. There are doubts, however, whether the South Korean side is willing to hand over prisoners to the U.S. for a swap with the DPRK. According to the Cuban Embassy here, the DPRK demanded, among other things, the extradition of the deputy editor-in-chief of the DPRK news agency [KCNA], who defected in spring of 1967, and the return of the lieutenant from the Korean People's Army, who was arrested during the Seoul events in January 1968. So far, there is no confirmation of this information from any other side. Yet, if the DPRK is really insisting on the extradition of these two, the U.S. will be in an uncomfortable position with South Korea. The latter will be hardly willing to extradite the two, as their return to the DPRK would certainly lead to their retraction of everything they divulged in South Korea to possibly save their heads. It is noteworthy that General Pak Jungguk indicated that a swap of the Pueblo crew for Korean patriots would not necessarily require a U.S. apology for the intrusion into DPRK territorial waters. This element increases the attractiveness of the proposal to the United States. It seems that the DPRK will leave it to the U.S. to launch such a proposal by itself during an official meeting.

Judging from the course of negotiations so far, there is only a very slight probability left that the Pueblo affair might lead to a heightening of tensions and actually cause a military conflict.

[...]

Jarck

Acting Ambassador

Appendices [not included]

- 1 – On Current State of USSR-DPRK relations (cosmic top secret)
- 2 - On Current State of USSR-PRC relations (top secret)
- 3 – Note on Economic Development in the DPRK 1967 (secret)
- 4 – Information on Vance Visit to South Korea (secret)
- 5 – Information on Editorial “Nodong Sinmun” 27 February 1968
- 6 – Assessment of National Defense (Cosmic Top Secret) (including translation of South Korean news report)
- 7 – Some remarks on Speech by Defense Minister, Army General Kim Jangbong, at the 20th Anniversary of the Korean People's Army (Secret)
- 8 – On National Policy (Secret)

* * *

DOCUMENT NO. 23

[Source: Summary of document, MOL. Translated for NKIDP by Balazs Szalontai.]

Report Prepared by the Hungarian Embassy in Moscow, Summarizing the Views of the Soviet Leadership with regard to the Korean Situation, 27 March 1968

In the view of the Soviets, the North Koreans interpreted the Korean situation quite incorrectly. It was obviously a dangerous miscalculation to believe that the U.S., being bogged down in Vietnam, was incapable of preventing a North Korean attack on South Korea. No matter which interpretation was accepted with regard to the commando raid on the Blue House, this action, and the other commando raids, “could not be taken seriously.” It was quite clear that the South Korean peasantry, which constituted the largest South Korean social group, was loyal to the Park regime. Thus, one should carry out slow, measured activities in South Korea in order to create the basis for a progressive movement, rather than insisting on armed struggle, which, without a solid base, was sheer adventurism. These actions, such as the capture of the Pueblo, actually reinforced the position of the South Korean dictatorship, providing it with a pretext to resort to repressive measures and ask for military aid from the U.S.. In fact, thanks to the Pueblo incident, Seoul quickly received another \$100 million in military aid. In addition, the Soviets thought that the North Koreans were exaggerating their conflicts with China in order to impress Moscow. For instance, Pyongyang claimed that it did not get any coal from China. However, the Soviets knew that in 1967 the Chinese had sold as much as 1.6 million metric tons of coal to the DPRK, which was not much less than the 2 million tons the North Koreans had asked for.

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DOCUMENT NO. 24

[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Prague, SM-023846/68, Translated by Vojtech Mastny.]

To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Prague
 Military-Political Situation in the DPRK
 Pyongyang 04.06.68

Political Report No. 21

Re: No. 21 of the Work Plan Prepared by M. Holub

Following the temporary, relative relaxation of tensions on the Korean peninsula, which became particularly evident in March, a renewed deterioration of the situation was generally expected during the spring months. It was assumed that the political activity of South Korea abroad, which was aimed, above all, at obtaining guarantees by the United States for immediate support in case of a conflict with the DPRK and which accelerated the importation of modern armaments and the arming of the territorial defense forces in the South, would result, in the DPRK as well, in an escalation of military preparations for the unification of the country, which remains the main goal of the leadership here [North Korea?]. This would naturally lead to an overall deterioration of the situation in Korea.

Developments in the second half of April conformed to these expectations. From the 14th to the 28th of April, several incidents took place in the area south of the demarcation line, which reportedly made the so-called 'United Nations forces' suffer casualties of 9 dead and 11 wounded. The North Korean side did not report its own casualties. Most incidents took place in the sector held by the 2nd U.S. Infantry Division in the western part of the Demilitarized Zone. The most serious incident was an attack on a vehicle of the United Nations forces that was accompanying a patrol to Panmunjeom and the Swedish-Swiss camp. The incident took place in the immediate vicinity of the camp of the Western members of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission, —at a spot that cannot be reached from the South.

In April, there was also a grenade explosion in the building of the International Telecommunications Exchange in Seoul [...] Soviet friends have been showing impatience in regard to this question [the continued holding of the Pueblo]. All friends

realize that the DPRK's handling of the Pueblo affair has been reverberating against the DPRK's own interest. Soviet representatives have reportedly expressed openly their position along these lines to the [North] Koreans. [...]

In the course of April and at the beginning of May, all means of DPRK propaganda continued to strive to generate the conviction that the Americans were going to provoke war at any time. As part of this propaganda, reports about incidents, even ones involving human casualties, were published that never occurred, and the propaganda did not even try to prove them. During briefings about the April incidents, even the Minister of Foreign Affairs tried to convince the diplomatic corps of the acute danger of war. The country continues to be kept in a state of combat readiness and the people are being systematically persuaded of the necessity of liberating South Korea. [...]

In May, however, all those who have been following developments in the DPRK noticed an extraordinary calming of the situation, something without parallel in the last years. Although demobilization down to the level of January of this year was not carried out, according to friends, specialists are being released for civilian assignments. [...]

[...] We have been trying to find the causes that have led to and, particularly, forced the DPRK leadership's adoption of new tactics. It is a difficult task in the conditions here, but after thorough discussions with friends and our own reflections, we are convinced that the changes have been prompted by a whole complex of the following causes.

An important cause of the changes is an unfavorable economic situation [...] In a country of such a profound and developed cult of personality, differences of opinion are usually accompanied by sharp intra-party struggle and personnel changes. In connection with the problems mentioned above, rumors have been circulated within the diplomatic corps about the removal of the following Politburo members of the Central Committee of the Korean Workers' Party: Kim Gwanghyeop, who is concurrently Secretary of the Central Committee of the KWP and Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the DPRK, Lee Juyeon (also Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers), and Kim Jangbong, who is also Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers as well as Minister of National Defense. It is a fact that these officials have not appeared in public recently. On the occasion of the visit by Deputy Chairman of the [Soviet] Council of Ministers Novikov, however, Lee Juyeon accompanied the Soviet guest; of course, it cannot be excluded that this was a tactic. Kim Gwanghyeop and Kim Jangbong, reportedly blamed for the failure of the January attempt to assassinate the South Korean president Park Chung-hee, are still missing. In the first half of May, the Minister of Defense was to take a trip to [illegible] at the head of a military delegation. Simultaneously, an extensive

reshuffling of intermediate cadres has been taking place in the areas of the economy, ideology, and national unification. On the other hand, Minister of Foreign Affairs Pak Seongcheol has been showing [signs] that he is on the rise and has become, in effect, the third highest-ranking person in the regime.

In the course of the January events and immediately afterwards, during the mobilization and evacuation [periods], serious deficiencies and difficulties became apparent, such as the lack of air defense weapons and limited railroad capacity connecting the DPRK with the USSR.

The developments in South Korea resulting from the attempted assassination of Park Chung-hee and the Pueblo affair have been a serious warning for our [North] Korean friends. The situation before January proved that the United States, as well as its partner, South Korea, underestimated, to some extent, the developments within the DPRK. The Americans considered the tenfold increase of incidents in the demilitarized zone in the last year compared to 1966 to be a temporary phenomenon, which could be contained by the installation of electronic detection equipment along the whole demilitarized zone. [...]

Some political events abroad have inevitably influenced the situation in this area. The DPRK is undoubtedly concerned about China's efforts to improve relations with Japan, but [it is] especially concerned by the ongoing U.S./Vietnamese negotiations in Paris, which contradict the thesis that the forces of imperialism should be tied down anywhere in the world, as well as the thesis regarding the unification of the country by military force. Forcible unification can only be realized in conditions of international tension and escalation of war anywhere in the world.

Finally, in view of the above-mentioned factors, the influence of the USSR has been increasing, which has been made possible by, among others, the high level of economic and military assistance. The content of this assistance can be, and in fact is, manipulated (only defensive military technology is being supplied), [which is] quite apart from the fact that Soviet comrades have recently been looking more critically at the developments in the DPRK than was the case during the January events, undoubtedly leading to direct, albeit extremely cautious, interventions.

Among diplomats, there has also been the view that the present situation is the calm before the storm, this being justified by the fact that the high military preparedness has been continuing as has the propaganda campaign aimed at the population and that the changes have concerned phenomena that have, visually, most impressed the observers here. The embassy is nevertheless convinced that the "postponement" of the deadlines for the unification of the country has been imposed upon the [North]

Korean leadership by the objective situation and that a removal of the objective causes of the tactical changes will require a longer period of time. The calming is also confirmed by the fact that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs here, which in March urgently demanded that foreign missions build air raid shelters, currently shows no initiative whatsoever on this issue. [...] It is also not to be neglected that the question of national unification or “liberation of the South” has been recently posed more conditionally, emphasizing the necessity of action by patriots in the South.

[...]

Ambassador Holub

* * *

DOCUMENT NO. 25

[Source: Russian State Archive of Recent History (RGANI), fond 2, opis 3, delo 95, listy 50-58. Obtained and translated for NKIDP by Sergey Radchenko]

9 April 1968

Excerpt from Leonid Brezhnev's Speech at the April (1968) CC CPSU Plenum. "On the Current Problems of the International Situation and on the Struggle of the CPSU for the Unity of the International Communist Movement"

[...]On the international scene during the last several months, events in the Far East have drawn [particular] attention to the incursion of an American military vessel, the Pueblo, into [North] Korean [territorial] waters. Despite the limited scale of these events, they had an important principle, both from the point of view of rebuffing the aggressive actions of the U.S. and in terms of our attitude towards certain policy peculiarities of our [North] Korean friends. The Politburo has reported many times to the CC Plenum regarding our policy towards relations with the KWP and the DPRK. The essence of this policy is to consistently strengthen friendly relations with the KWP and the DPRK despite the existence of different approaches between us and the [North] Korean comrades on a series of questions of the international communist movement and other [problems].

On the whole, throughout the course of the entire preceding period, the situation developed precisely along these lines. We developed contacts with the [North]

Koreans in various spheres, most importantly in the economic [sphere]. Trade developed; we concluded a series of agreements on cooperative timber clearing, construction of an oil refinery, etc. We continued to provide aid in defending the DPRK. The [North] Korean press stopped publishing unfriendly statements about the CPSU and the Soviet Union.

One should remark, in particular, that during his meetings with us, Comrade Kim Il Sung assured [us] that the [[North] Koreans] do not intend to use military means to solve the problem of uniting North and South Korea and, in this regard, [do not intend] to unleash a war with the Americans, whose forces, as one knows, are stationed in South Korea.

However, several indications, which seem to suggest that the leaders of the DPRK have begun to take a more militant road, have recently appeared. This became particularly noticeable at the time of the incident with the American vessel *Pueblo*.

You know, comrades, the factual side of things. I am talking about the incursion of the American military vessel *Pueblo* into [North] Korean territorial waters. On 23 January of this year, this vessel was detained by DPRK naval forces (as our friends assert, detained in their territorial waters) and, after a firefight, taken to a port, where its [crew] was placed under arrest. One should note that the government of the DPRK's response to this incident appears to be unusually harsh: as a rule, in the practice of international relations, in case of an incursion by a foreign military vessel in the territorial waters of any state, it is simply advised [that the foreign military vessel] leave those waters or be forced to do so.

Washington's reaction was fierce, rude, and aggressive. The U.S. government made accusations and threats towards the DPRK; considerable naval forces and air forces were deployed near North Korea's shores, including the flag carrier of the 7th fleet, the atomic aircraft carrier *Enterprise*. Calls for the mining of Korean ports, the forced return of *Pueblo*, etc. were heard in the U.S.. The Americans clearly counted on the cannon barrels of their ships to force the DPRK's retreat. Besides this, President Johnson used this incident to further increase military preparations and stir up military hysteria on an international scale. New categories of reserves were mobilized within the U.S. army; demonstrative measures were taken to increase military preparedness in Europe.

Under these circumstances, the CC CPSU and the Soviet government found it necessary to voice public support for the DPRK, a socialist country, with which, moreover, we are tied to by a treaty of friendship and mutual assistance. We did as such, supporting the right of the DPRK to defend its security and censuring the aggressive behavior of the U.S.

In addition, the Politburo and the Soviet government considered it worthwhile to exert direct pressure on the U.S. leadership in order to lessen its [the Americans'] urge and desire to inflame provocations in the immediate proximity of the borders of the USSR and with our allied countries. In this regard, a decision was made to send a communication to President Johnson on behalf of the Soviet government.

The 3 February [1968] letter to Johnson drew attention to the fact that the U.S. was concentrating its naval and aerial fleets on an unprecedented scale in the immediate proximity of the Far Eastern regions of the Soviet Union. The American President was told, "in our actions we must take into consideration what is happening near our borders that touches on the security interests of the Soviet Union." At the same time, it was stressed that efforts to threaten and pressure the DPRK can only lead to a dead end and further complications, fraught with far reaching consequences.

Simultaneously, we took certain measures to increase the preparedness of Soviet military forces in the Far East in order to protect the country in case of complications and to let the Americans know that we are not joking but in fact, approach this matter seriously. The adopted measures worked. On 6 February [1968], Johnson sent a reply in which he tried to explain the amassing of U.S. military forces in the Sea of Japan by referencing militant statements and actions of the DPRK, and assured us that a "prompt settlement [of the crisis] serves our common interests." The President's message ended by saying that he "gave an order to stop any further amassing of our naval and air forces at the present time" and decreed that they will pull out one of the aircraft carriers with accompanying vessels from the region of the incident. Indeed, the aircraft carrier Enterprise was pulled out from the DPRK's shores.

At the same time, we insistently advised the [North] Korean comrades, with whom we maintained systematic contact throughout this period, to show reserve, not to give the Americans an excuse to widen provocations and to settle the incident by political means. When it became clear to the entire world that the U.S. attempts to make the DPRK retreat through blackmail and military threats had failed and when the U.S. government was forced to conduct talks with DPRK representatives in Panmunjeom regarding Pueblo, we expressed our opinion to the [North] Korean leadership that now, without any harm and even with political advantage for the DPRK, they could finish this affair by disgracefully deporting the crew of the U.S. spy vessel from the territory of North Korea.

But the [North] Korean comrades maintained a fairly extreme position and did not show any inclination towards settling the incident. DPRK propaganda took on a fairly militant characteristic; the population was told that a war could begin any day

and that the military forces of the DPRK were “ready to smash American imperialism.” In effect, a full mobilization was declared in the country; life, especially in the cities, became more militaristic. Evacuation of the population, administrative institutions, industries, and factories of Pyongyang began.

At the same time, the leadership of the DPRK took one more step that alarmed us. On 31 January [1968], Kim Il Sung addressed an official letter to Comrade Kosygin, the head of the USSR Council of Ministers. This letter said that “Johnson’s clique could at any time engage in a military adventure in [North] Korea,” that the policy of the American imperialists “is a rude challenge to the DPRK and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, who are bound together by allied relations according to the treaty of friendship, co-operation and mutual assistance; [it is] a serious threat to the security of all socialist countries and to peace in the entire world”.

This message further officially informed the Soviet government on behalf of the government of the DPRK that they were “forced to conduct preparations to give the aggression an appropriate rebuff” and [the letter] expressed confidence that “in case of the creation of a state of war in [North] Korea as a result of a military attack by the American imperialists, the Soviet government and the fraternal Soviet people will fight together with us against the aggressors...”

Kim Il Sung’s letter ended with a proposal: in case such a situation materialized, “[you should] provide us, without delay, military and other aid and support, to mobilize all means available.”

Matters took a serious turn.

An official communication along government lines, bypassing comradely consultations along party lines, which are usual in such cases, spoke to the intention [of the [North] Korean leadership] to bind the Soviet Union somehow, using the existence of the treaty between the USSR and the DPRK [as a pretext to] involve us in supporting such plans of the [North] Korean friends about which we knew nothing. The CC Politburo believed that the time had come to state our attitude clearly to the [North] Korean comrades regarding these questions and certain peculiarities of their policies that concern our country.

Without giving an official reply to Kim Il Sung’s message, we addressed a communication to him, [asking him] to come to Moscow for a comprehensive exchange of opinions regarding this situation which has emerged. Comrade Kim Il Sung replied that, at the present time, circumstances did not permit him to leave the country. Member of the KWP CC Politburo, Deputy Premier and Minister of Defense Kim Jangbong was [instead] dispatched to Moscow for the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the Soviet army.

On the Politburo's instructions, I received Kim Jangbong on 26 February [1968] and had a long discussion with him, in the course of which [I] expressed in all earnestness our position on a series of important questions.

He was told that we still depart from the assumption that the Korean comrades maintain a course for the peaceful unification of Korea, for we are not aware of [any] changes [to this course]. In any case, under the current circumstances, we are against taking the matter towards unleashing a war, though we fully understand the desire of the DPRK to strengthen its own defense, and we actively support this. We do not understand the meaning of the information that reached us regarding the evacuation of Pyongyang. We have no information from [our [North] Korean] friends regarding their talks with the Americans and the aims of these talks.

As far as the question of the Soviet-[North] Korean treaty and Kim Il Sung's letter regarding this question are concerned, Kim Jangbong was told literally the following: "We indeed have a treaty. Its essence is known both to you and to us. We would like to stress that it has a defensive character and is an instrument of defending the peace-loving position of North Korea. Since Comrade Kim Il Sung did not put the circumstances and the details of the current situation into a concrete form, we consider it very important to conduct serious consultations with him on this question. The question of military actions is a very difficult one, especially under the current circumstances, when the entire world struggles against war. It is impossible to talk about a military situation, much less about some kind of military action, by means of short letters. This is a very serious question, and it demands serious consultations."

At the same time, an opinion was expressed again that the question of the Pueblo crew, the whole incident, should be settled by political means without much delay, otherwise the DPRK could lose the serious political gain obtained at the early stage of this incident.

There are reasons to think that the measures taken by the Politburo have born fruit. In any case, one could note the following facts:

1. Soon after the conversation with Kim Jangbong, the DPRK Foreign Ministry published a statement that emphasized "the government of the DPRK, both now and in the past, has not changed its policy directed at the preservation of peace in Korea and the peaceful solution of the question of the unification of Korea."
2. The [North] Koreans informed our ambassador regarding the progress of talks with the Americans. One should say that these talks have taken on a fairly protracted character. The [North] Koreans are demanding official apologies from the U.S., the Americans are offering various compromises, but an agreement has not yet been reached.

3. The [North] Korean comrades made it known to the United States through neutral countries that they are prepared to exchange the Pueblo crew for patriots arrested in South Korea, and that in this case, they will not demand apologies from the U.S.
4. On 1 March [1968], Kim Il Sung invited the ambassador of the USSR and asked him to pass onto Moscow his gratitude for the conversation with Kim Jangbong and for the sincere exposition of the opinion of the CC CPSU. At the same time, Kim Il Sung assured him that the evacuation activities conducted in Pyongyang were not out of any emergency, that measures have been taken to stop panicky rumors, and corrections are being made to the statements of the DPRK press. In conclusion, Kim Il Sung said: "we have no intention of raising military hysteria." Indeed, the tone of the [North] Korean press has recently become calmer.
5. There is also information that the local authorities in the DPRK have been instructed not to overdo various kinds of mobilization-related activities: evacuation of people, industries, and factories. "War is not a question of tomorrow," Kim Il Sung declared at one of the closed meetings in Pyongyang in the beginning of March.

This is how the incident with the vessel Pueblo is developing. It [the incident], as one knows, is not yet finished, and the situation might deteriorate yet again. However, the atmosphere has relaxed somewhat, the passions on the [North] Korean and American sides have calmed down. On the whole, one might say that by pursuing in this affair our consistent [and] principled line, we managed, first of all, to chip away at the American arrogance [sbit spes], to rebuff their blackmail and threats and, secondly, to exert considerable dissuading influence on the leadership of the DPRK, especially in connection with the question of the treaty, which holds important meaning for the state interests of the Soviet Union. [...]

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DOCUMENT NO. 26

[Source: PolA AA, MfAA, G-A 360. Obtained for NKIDP by Bernd Schaefer and translated for NKIDP by Karen Riechert]

GDR Embassy to DPRK
Pyongyang, 29 July 1968

Memorandum

on the Farewell Visit of the Polish Ambassador to the DPRK, Comrade Naperei, with Comrade Jarck on 26 July 1968 between 11:00 and 12:30 hours

The visit was arranged on Polish initiative. Despite my attempt to persuade Comrade Naperei to allow me to visit him in the Polish Embassy, he insisted on coming to the GDR Ambassador's residence. Comrade Naperei thanked us for our cooperation, which made his work during his stay in the DPRK easier. He is convinced that it [Polish-GDR cooperation] will thrive also in the future and be of mutual benefit to both sides given the situation here [in Pyongyang].

[...]

There are still ongoing attempts to infiltrate armed units in the South. It is, however, getting ever more difficult to actually accomplish this, as the entire land border is, basically, hermetically sealed. Yet, it is said that recently four small units were still able to infiltrate the border. In response, there was a large search effort launched by the South in the areas north of Seoul. Allegedly, some members of these groups were captured when they had to surrender due to lack of food.

Comrade N. continued that the Polish comrades, given their local expertise, do not exclude the possibility that, in light of the complications of infiltrating groups [in the South?], the DMZ might be breached through a much larger [DPRK] armed unit. This breach could be utilized to infiltrate South Korea, and the larger unit could then withdraw behind the DMZ. However, Comrade N. added so far there is no evidence whatsoever of such intentions.

As far as South Korean-American activities are concerned, there is no evasion of the fact that there are apparently frequent provocations of the North from South Korean forces along the DMZ. Primarily, those provocations are perpetrated with handguns but are also sometimes perpetrated with heavier weaponry and by direct attacks on individual border guards or the like. Those parts of the DMZ manned by Americans, basically, do not see these types of incidents. There is no doubt that the South Koreans are interested in increasing tensions in order to make further demands of the U.S. for more financial and military support.

With regard to the Pueblo negotiations, Comrade N. does not see any new movement. The DPRK still insists that the U.S. make an unconditional apology. In this context, Comrade N. referred to a talk he had with DPRK Foreign Minister Pak Seongcheol during a reception for a Polish national holiday. At this reception,

Comrade Pak Seongcheol stated that all of the Pueblo crew will have to take responsibility if those who are in fact responsible [for the incident?] are still unwilling to admit their guilt. Comrade N. followed up by asking Comrade Pak Seongcheol the meaning of the phrase: 'Are you possibly thinking of staging a trial against the Pueblo crew in the near future?' Comrade Pak Seongcheol evaded a straight response but indicated that it was not acceptable that the Americans think further procrastination of an apology will be completely risk-free for them. Given this context, Comrade N. nevertheless stated to me his current opinion that the Pueblo problem will not lead to the rise of serious tensions. However, he added that obviously a trial of the crew may change this and lead to heightened conflict.

[...]

In conclusion, I informed Comrade Naperei of my own meeting with Comrade Pak Seongcheol on 20 July 1968.

Jarck

Acting Ambassador

CC

1x State Secretary Hegen (Foreign Ministry)

1x Central Committee, Department IV, Markowski

1x Foreign Ministry, Information Department, Comrade Pfützner

1x Embassy/Secretariat

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DOCUMENT NO. 27

[Source: PolA AA, MfAA, G-A 320. Obtained for NKIDP by Bernd Schaefer and translated for NKIDP by Karen Riechert.]

GDR Embassy to DPRK

Pyongyang, 8 August 1968

Memorandum on a Conversation between the First Secretary in the USSR Embassy, Comrade Zvetkov and Comrade Jarck on 7 August 1968 between 17:00 and 19:00 hours

The conversation had been scheduled during our last meeting. Its purpose was to inform the undersigned about South Korean military activities. Comrade Zvetkov provided the following information on this subject.

After the events in Seoul in January 1968 and the seizure of the American spy ship *Pueblo*, the South Korean government used these events, following consultations and talks with the U.S., for the preparation of a so-called 'three-year-plan' to defend South Korea's security. This plan has either been already approved, or will be approved shortly, by the South Korean National Assembly.

The most important elements of this plan, according to information received by a representative socialist country in Panmunjeom [Poland or, less likely, Czechoslovakia], are as follows:

Training and arming 2.5 million South Korean reservists for the fight against the so-called 'infiltration' from the North.

Training of South Korean pilots in the United States to enable them to fly the "Phantom" aircraft scheduled to arrive in South Korea by the end of 1968.

Equipping the South Korean army with modern speed boats, radar stations, signal stations, electrical and electronic means of communication, the M-16 gun, and special vehicles for roads and tracks in order to speed up troop transports. This equipment is scheduled for delivery from the United States. Probably, these deliveries will be funded by the additional \$100 million military credit that was agreed to during the visit of U.S. Presidential Envoy [Cyrus] Vance to South Korea, i.e. it will not be part of the \$230 million the U.S. annually spends on its forces deployed in South Korea.

Creating a staged defense system, south of the DMZ, that reaches to the capital of Seoul. This system should consist of five defense lines. Each line will have a system of trenches with bunkers and stationary gun points. Bunkers and gun points are designed to weather 150 millimeter artillery fire. Costs for the five defensive lines should be shouldered by the U.S. Apparently, the United States has already agreed to this.

By the end of 1968, construction of border security equipment on South Korean territory along the DMZ will be finalized. It includes bunkers to be built at certain segments of the DMZ.

Bolstering South Korean air defense through the deployment of launching pads for "Hawk" missiles (surface-to-air). Altogether approximately 30 launching pads are to be built, 7 of those surrounding Seoul.

Establishing security zones around important industrial and military objects and introducing special permits for movements, prohibition on taking photos, etc.

Expanding and constructing important roads, in particular, between Seoul and Busan and Seoul and Incheon. At the same time, bridges will be expanded or built anew.

Construction permits for industrial objects or residential living are only to be granted by the South Korean bureaucracy if the project can prove it has integrated air defense capacities.

Call to the entire population to prepare with all means available for potential air attacks.

The justification outlined for this 'three-year-plan' stipulates that all elements are considered to be preventative measures against potential attacks from the DPRK.

NOTES

1 This plan is said to have been discussed in principle during the April 1968 meeting in Honolulu between Park Chung-hee and [Lyndon] Johnson. In May 1968, there were detailed negotiations in Washington over this complex [plan?] between then South Korean Defense Minister Choi Yeonghee and U.S. Secretary of Defense Clifford. The U.S. is said to have agreed to the plan. This means that the United States has signed up for shouldering the additional costs.

Jarck
Acting Ambassador

CC

1x State Secretary Hegen (Foreign Ministry)

1x Comrade Axen (Central Committee)

1x Embassy/Secretariat

* * *

DOCUMENT NO. 28

[Source: National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1967-69, POL 33-6 KOR N-US. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Brown on December 2.]

Action Memorandum From the Under Secretary of State (Katzenbach) to President Johnson

Washington, December 3, 1968.

SUBJECT *USS Pueblo*

The Problem

The North Koreans have continued to insist that we sign their document admitting espionage and repeated intrusions, apologizing for these “crimes,” and promising not to intrude again. They have denounced us for proposing an “overwrite” solution in which General Woodward would add in his own hand a phrase acknowledging receipt of the crew. They have not categorically rejected our proposal; rather they have refused to accept it, they have attacked us for putting it forward, and they have shown no sign of moderating their demand.

Recent Developments

The meetings in September made it clear to us that the North Koreans are willing to give us back the crew at the moment (or almost the moment) we sign their document. There would still be some procedural problems but they seem manageable.

The meetings in October made clear to the North Koreans what they may not have understood: that we are not prepared to sign their document but only to acknowledge receipt on it. We have not explained to them in so many words that we intend, after the release, to denounce the document, hanging our repudiation on this distinction between “signing” and “acknowledging receipt on,” and saying that we had signed only what Woodward had himself written. But there is no doubt that they now understand this intent. They have denounced our proposal as a “petty stratagem” designed to “evade your responsibilities,” and at present they appear determined not to leave this loophole open.

We called the last meeting (October 31) very quickly on the heels of the preceding one in order to appear firm in our stand. They hesitated for three days before agreeing to meet, but their position at the meeting was unyielding and they may merely have been taken a bit off balance by the unusual speed of our move. It is now their turn to call and they have made no move since October 31 to convene a session.

Our Choices

We can (1) stand on the overwrite proposal, perhaps with minor variations; or (2) sign their document, prefacing our signature with an explanatory statement and repudiating the document as soon as the crew are free.

Time for a Squeeze Play

The fact that Christmas is approaching and that the Administration will soon change offers us an opportunity to give the North Koreans an ultimatum without grave risk of breaking off the talks. We can call a meeting, give them a package of proposals, and say: "Take your choice; these offers are good only if you accept one of them in time to get the men home for Christmas. This Administration will then withdraw them and will make no further proposals." If this ploy failed, the new Administration would be free to resume the negotiations on whatever lines it chose.

Variations on Standing Pat

We can simply offer to the North Koreans our present overwrite proposal, giving them the Christmas deadline to take it or leave it.

We can also revive the alternative of a conditional apology ("if we intruded, we are sorry") which we made last Spring and which was bluntly rejected then. We would dress it up in new language so that it might on the surface seem a new element but we would not include the unacceptable North Korean demands: the flat admission of "espionage" and of repeated intrusions. If the North Koreans are minded to settle the issue, this might satisfy their need for a piece of paper with General Woodward's name at the bottom.

A Repudiated Apology

It is reasonably clear that if we simply sign their document we will promptly get the men back. The pros and cons of this course make an intricate argument which is summarized at Tab A. We do not recommend an outright apology, since it would be costly in foreign policy terms, but we recognize that the argument for an apology appeals to many reasonable men.

We could mitigate some, though not all, of the evil in an outright apology by coupling our signature with a simultaneous or perhaps even prior repudiation of the content of the North Korean document. We could, for example, have General Woodward say into the cameras and tape recorders just before he signs that, as has been made clear in the negotiations, the United States Government does not believe the Pueblo committed espionage or intruded, and that he is signing for the purely humanitarian reasons of getting the crew back. We are far from certain that the North Koreans would accept this procedure if warned about it in advance, and if not warned, they might

at the last minute refuse to transfer the crew. And even such a “repudiated apology” would have demeaning elements from our viewpoint. Nevertheless, some variation on this ploy deserves serious consideration for inclusion in our take-it-or-leave-it package.

We would tell the North Koreans that we are now prepared to sign their document but will have to make a statement, before we actually sign, that their document contains statements which we consider false, and that our signature does not alter these facts. Release of the crew and publication of the signed North Korean document would follow. Our repudiation would be released to the press simultaneously with their document. We would have settled the problem through mutual acceptance of two wholly inconsistent statements.

We doubt that the North Koreans would accept this alternative, but they might. If they did, we would have paid a substantial but not exorbitant price to close out the problem.

The most dangerous aspect of such a proposal is that it places on the negotiating record an offer by us to sign their document. The North Koreans are certain to regard this as an indication that we are gradually knuckling under and they will simply press us to remove our attached condition--the repudiation. The “squeeze play” described above does much to meet this danger, but perhaps not enough. The North Koreans may well feel that if they disregard our ultimatum we will come back after Christmas or after January 20 with an unconditional offer to apologize.

We believe that this additional offer of a “repudiated apology” has a better chance of success than the others, but the costs to us in foreign policy terms would still be serious. We therefore are inclined to adopt the following more limited package, despite its relatively small chance of success, i.e., to say to the North Koreans that we are prepared to accept either of the following alternatives provided that it will result in the release of the crew before Christmas. If neither of these offers is accepted, they will both be withdrawn after Christmas and the North Koreans will then have to deal with the new Administration. The proposals would be:

- a. Our present overwrite proposal
- b. A conditional apology similar to that offered last May, but in new language.

You may wish to discuss this problem with Secretaries Rusk and Clifford.

Tab A

SHOULD WE APOLOGIZE?

Nature of the Case

The arguments in favor of signing the North Korean document come down to two propositions:

- a. It is the only humane thing to do since it is clear that unless we sign the North Koreans will not release the crew--certainly not for a long time.
- b. It is disadvantageous politically for us to let the affair drag on.

The argument against signing comes down to the single proposition that this Government should not solemnly place its authorized signature on a document it knows to be false, particularly if acting under blackmail and duress.

Apart from these, there are many secondary arguments--about the credibility gap, about the effects in South Korea and on our commitments in general, etc. In our judgment, these arguments tend to balance each other off or to fall in the category "an apology wouldn't really be so bad because . . ." They thus should not be decisive in determining whether we apologize or not.

The Argument for Apologizing

Only when we sign their document will we get the crew back. If only because the North Korean charges are lies, they will insist on a piece of paper from us validating their lies. They have been and will remain wholly inflexible on this point. We have no means of pressure which look promising. All reasonable people know the North Korean charges are false and that we would be signing purely from humanitarian considerations. We would not be seriously damaged by a signature and we owe it to the crew and their families to pay this price for their release.

Moreover, there are political problems in allowing the matter to stagnate. It reminds people of our impotence and generates pressure for unwise actions, such as seizing North Korean ships. Better to cut the knot, even at some cost.

Assessing the case. It is probably true that the North Koreans will not soon accept any compromise, such as our overwrite proposal. And we do not seem to have any effective pressures against them. The humanitarian argument is the most valid argument for signature.

We do not believe the political argument is valid. If we resolve neither to apologize nor to do anything that might risk war or violate our basic principles, the political pressures can be contained.

The Argument Against Apologizing

The evil effects of signing a false document under pressure would be widespread, insidious, and long-lasting. Most foreign governments and even many Americans are puzzled by our reluctance to utter untruths but they respect us for this eccentricity. The Communist doctrine that truth is relative and can legitimately be manipulated is a major difference between them and us. If we sign we will have seriously damaged our good name.

Assessing the case. Many reasonable people find this argument vague and idealistic. We find it profoundly true. If we were to apologize, the price paid for freeing the men would be substantial, though hard to define. It would not be costly in the short run since the general relief and gratification that they were free would combine with their own revelations to override the negative elements. Nor would it impair faith in our security commitments which are on quite another level of solemnity and gravity. But over the long run the fact that in this case we had bent our principles for tactical, even though humanitarian, considerations would have to be counted, a serious cost. Whether we owe it to the men to pay this price, or should look on them as on other prisoners of war, is a question to which individual consciences and political philosophies will give varying answers. The price in international political terms would be considerable.

NOTES

1 “Towards an International History of the War in Afghanistan, 1979-89: A Critical Oral History Conference” (Washington, D.C., April 2002); “Towards an International History of the Iran-Iraq War, 1980-1988: A Critical Oral History Conference” (Washington, D.C., July 2004); “The 1960-1961 Congo Crisis and the Cold War: Towards an International History, A Critical Oral History Conference” (Washington, D.C., September 2004); “The Carter Administration and the “Arc of Crisis”: Iran, Afghanistan, and the Cold War in Southwest Asia, 1977-1981: A Critical Oral History Conference” (Washington, D.C., July 2005).

2 McNamara was still alive at the time of the conference.

3 Editor’s Note: On 16 December 1967 Kim Il Sung delivered the speech “Let Us Embody the Revolutionary Spirit of Independence, Self-Sustenance and Self-Defense More Thoroughly in all Fields of State Activity,” a political program of the DPRK government announced at the first session of the Fourth Supreme People’s Assembly.

4 Don Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History* (New York: Basic Books, 2002).

5 American container ship seized by Khmer Rouge naval forces operating former U.S. Navy “Swift Boats” on May 12, 1975 in recognized international sea lanes claimed as territorial waters by Cambodia.

6 Kim Hyung-wook and Chief Secretary Lee Hurak were dismissed in October 1969.

7 This transcript was not read by A.A. Gromyko.

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