

vers,
lay—
7 of
20%
6-77;
B4.

The Washington Post

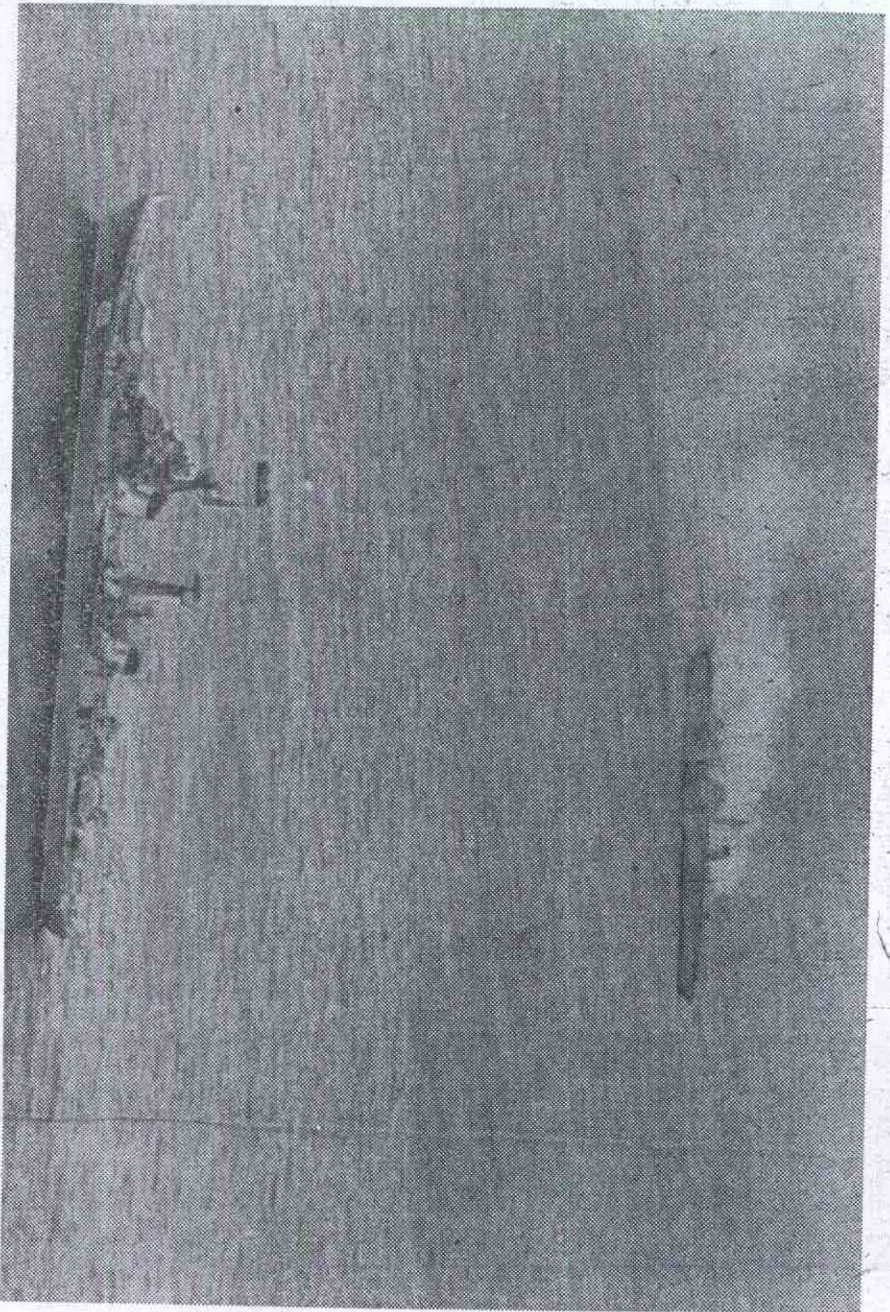
Times Herald

© 1969, The Washington Post Co.

THURSDAY, APRIL 17, 1969

Phone 223-6000

Circle
Classified



Two Soviet Navy destroyers search for American EC-121 reconnaissance plane down in the Sea of Japan.

Associated Press

Hopes Dwindling For Plane Crew; Debris Is Found

President Plans Report On Friday

By Carroll Kilpatrick
Washington Post Staff Writer

President Nixon conferred twice yesterday with his official advisers on the loss of the EC-121 reconnaissance plane off North Korea, but he gave no indication of what response, if any, he will make.

Secretary of State William P. Rogers announced at a luncheon meeting of the American Society of Newspaper Editors that the President would discuss the incident at a previously scheduled news conference at 11:30 a.m. Friday.

Rogers himself declined to comment about the plane in the question-and-answer period. But in his prepared speech he appeared to be referring to the attack when he said that in international affairs "the weak can be rash; the powerful must be more restrained."

This generalized comment was in line with previous indications that the Administration was moving cautiously. Officials would give no guidance, however, on what moves, diplomatic or military, the President could or would order.

One informed source said the Administration was exploring possible diplomatic moves



CMDR. J. H. OVERSTREET
... pilot of downed plane

although they offered little hope of achieving much. He suggested that a military response was less likely.

Rogers said that "complexity in world affairs should teach us the need to act responsibly, to substitute cooperation for coercion, and to move from confrontation to negotiation of the issues that divide nations."

"Great power does not mean great freedom of action and decision," the Secretary told the editors. "On the contrary, it often means very narrow choices of action, and what we can do to influence events in a given case well may be marginal."

When asked if the case would be taken to the United Nations, State Department spokesman Robert J. McCloskey replied: "I know of no decisions that have been reached on what the next step is going to be."

McCloskey said there had been no contact with North Korea and no decision on whether to accept a North Korean request to meet at Panmunjom.

One source said the problem of accepting a meeting at Panmunjom was that it might play into the hands of the North Koreans, who could make their charges and then walk out without giving the United States a hearing.

See **DIPLOMACY**, A9, Col. 3

PLANE, From A1

The standing instructions for those flights were to stay at least 40 nautical miles off the North Korean coast. But on the fateful EC-121 flight, the Pentagon said, the crew was ordered to stay at least 50 nautical miles out.

An intensive search was launched in the Sea of Japan at a spot about 95 miles southeast of Chongjin, North Korea, shortly after the reconnaissance plane was reported missing.

The Soviet destroyers were in the search area. One of them picked up a wheel and ladder that could have come from the downed plane.

Americans in search planes out of South Korea talked to the Russians combing the Sea of Japan for survivors. A radio was parachuted to the Soviet ships to facilitate communications. A Russian-speaking American was put aboard one of the planes.

Asked whether there was any precedent for Soviet cooperation in the search operations, officials said they knew of none. But they warned against reading any great political significance into the Soviet response, calling it "perfectly natural and expected" under the circumstances, since Soviet ships were closest to the presumed crash site.

State Department spokesman Robert J. McCloskey said there was no further U.S.-Soviet contact following Rogers' 15-minute meeting with Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin at noon Tuesday.

Other officials said the first hint that the Russians had acceded to the American request for help came when their ships were seen moving toward the site.

One official noted also that Soviet press treatment of the episode had been relatively restrained.

Debri's Picked Up

The Navy frigate Dale and the destroyer Tucker, which steamed out of Sasebo, Japan, Tuesday night, searched by daylight yesterday for survivors. The Dale picked up two pieces of aircraft fuselage with shrapnel holes in them.

The holes could have been made by the exploding warhead of an air-to-air missile or by gunfire. The Dale also picked up a flare and a piece of parachute, indicating that at least one crew member had

time to bail out.

The Pentagon said the EC-121 during its flight had kept in touch with its Navy base at Atsugi, Japan. The flight started there 5 p.m. EST Monday and was to have lasted 8½ hours.

The last voice contact between the plane and its base was at 6:17 P.M. EST on Monday. The last message of any kind—a radio teletype—was transmitted about 11 p.m.

The Pentagon said there was no radio report from the plane of trouble before it was downed.

Two North Korean Migs apparently jumped the American plane and opened fire. There was no indication that the attackers first tried to force the plane to a landing in North Korea.

Sources briefed on the incident said yesterday that Americans tracked the attacking fighters on radar and had time to warn the Navy EC-121. But there was nothing much the unarmed reconnaissance aircraft—with a speed of 300 mph could do to save itself.

There were no American fighters escorting the EC-121.

Reports from Japan said the radar tracking of the attack was under the U. S. 5th Air Force Combat Operations Center at Fuchu in the Tokyo suburbs. The tracking net includes a station at Sokcho on South Korea's east coast, just below the Communist border.

In Washington, officials briefed yesterday on the plane incident were told about the radar tracking in hush-hush terms.

Dismaying Problems

While officials at these briefings came away impressed by American radar capability in Southeast Asia, they were at the same time dismayed by what they heard about the

command and control problems that cropped up on this "flying Pueblo" disaster.

There was a long delay, informed sources said, in getting the word from Japan to Washington. One official who was briefed called the communications gap "intolerable."

A Pentagon spokesman, when asked last night about the communications problem between Japan and Washing-

ton, would say only that the EC-121 incident is still being reconstructed.

The communications delay, according to one source, was "about an hour." This compares with the maximum 30 minutes warning the United States expects to have of a missile attack. The President would have to be informed of the attack and make up his mind what to do about it in that time.

Several lawmakers learned about the communications gap on the EC-121 incident and vowed to look into it.

The Pueblo—hijacked on the high seas off Wonsan by North Korean gunboats Jan. 23, 1968—was plagued with communications problems during its reconnaissance mission.

Rep. Otis G. Pike (D-N.Y.) is chairman of a House Armed Services subcommittee investigating the Pueblo disaster, with special emphasis on command and control problems.

In an interview yesterday, he said there were many parallels between the Pueblo and Navy EC-121 incidents, including:

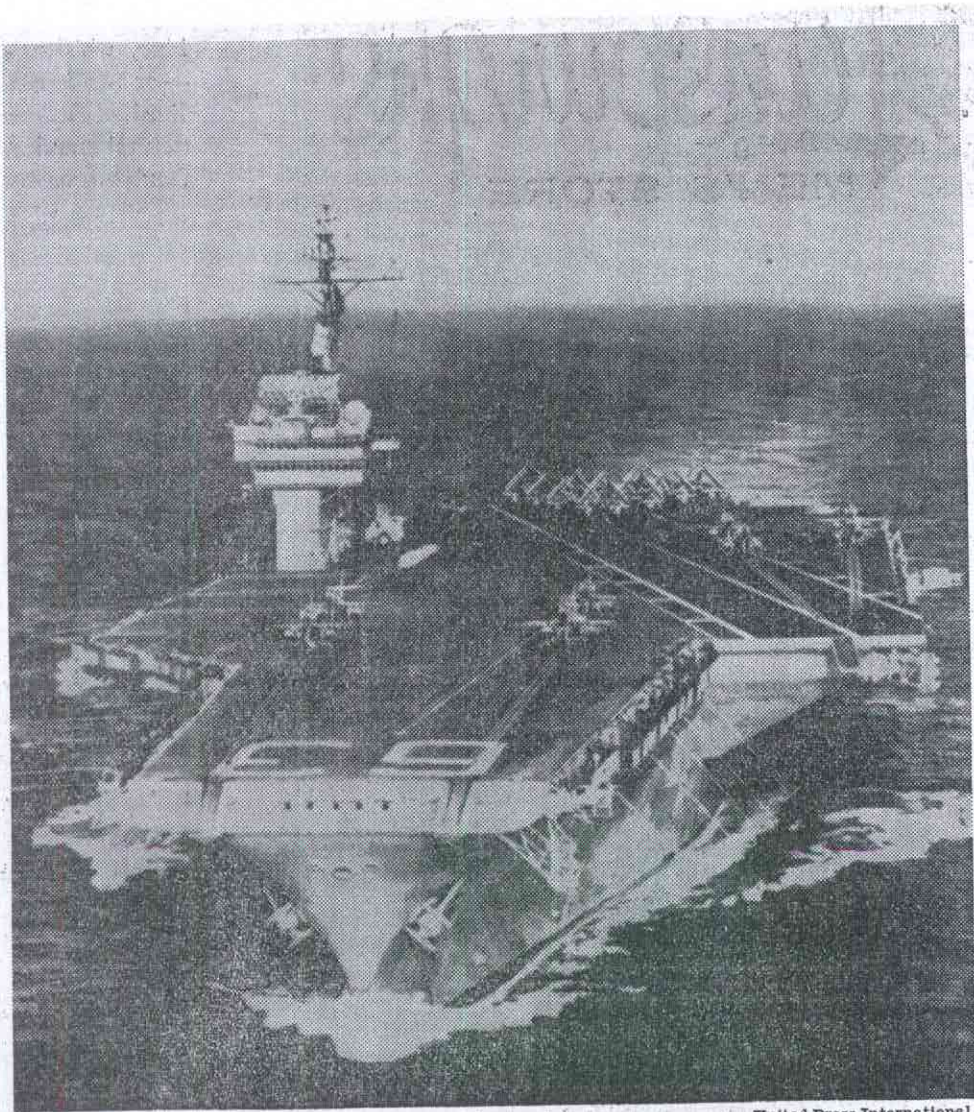
"The manner in which the mission was originated; the manner in which it was reviewed and approved by higher authority; the manner in which the decision was made not to protect it; the fact that it was unprotected; the fact that being unprotected, there was no possible way to help it simply because they were closer than we were."

The most worrisome thing of all about the Pueblo and EC-121 experiences, Pike said, "is the time which elapses between a crisis of this kind occurring in one part of the world and the time knowledge of it reaches Washington."

This lag in command and control, the lawmaker said, is why he is opposed to building an anti-ballistic missile system.

The record shows, Pike said, that "we have just never been able to get the message through and get a decision and react in the time frame required to react."

As for what to do about future intelligence missions in international hot spots, Pike said it boils down to a choice of protecting them or conducting fewer of them to reduce the risk of disaster.



United Press International
The USS aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk (a file photo) has cut short a holiday visit to Hong Kong and is reported ready to sail for an undisclosed destination.

N. Korean Pressure on U.S. Dates to Kim's '66 War Cry

By Richard Halloran
Washington Post Staff Writer

North Korean Premier Kim Il Sung told the Central Committee of the Korean Workers (Communist) Party in October, 1966, to prepare the country for war.

Kim said that all of divided Korea must be reunited under Communist domination and that this could be accomplished only by armed force.

North Korean hostile acts in the last 2½ years, including the seizure of the Pueblo and the downing of a U.S. Navy reconnaissance plane Tuesday, flowed from that decision.

Pronouncements from Pyongyang since 1966, some by Kim, others by military and political leaders, still others in the Party and government press, have consistently stressed the objective and tactics of the North Korean campaign.

Citing Cuban revolutionary Che Guevara's cry for a "thousand Vietnams," Kim has attempted to take advantage of the U.S. entanglement in Vietnam with moves for the subversion and conquest of South Korea.

The North Koreans have proclaimed that a prerequisite to the "liberation" of South Korea is the withdrawal of the 55,000 American troops there. Analysts see a clear-cut effort to play upon the sentiments of Americans weary of war in Vietnam to hasten a pullout from Korea.

Kim's tactics are further designed to split the U.S. and South Korea. Washington has tried to respond calmly to North Korean provocation. Seoul argues that only retaliation will stop the North Koreans.

Still another tactical aim is to destroy the confidence of the South Korean people in their own government's ability to protect them and in the U.S. commitment to Korean defense.

The first attack after the

killed 131 American and South Korean soldiers and wounded 294 more in assaults along and below the DMZ. There were about 445 firefights along the Zone, plus more in the South Korean interior.

Two American camps were shot up, trains were sabotaged, artillery fire was exchanged, and at least one tank battle was fought. The North Koreans also blew a South Korean patrol boat out of the water south of an imaginary extension of the DMZ.

In an attempt to assassinate South Korean President Chung Hee Park during the night of Jan. 21, 1968, 31 North Korean commandos slipped through the DMZ and got within 800 yards of the presidential mansion in Seoul before being discovered.

Some 36 hours later, the Pueblo was captured off the east coast of North Korea.

During the immediate post-Pueblo period, the North Koreans scaled down their attacks. But last spring, military leaders in Seoul feared that North Korea was preparing a lightning, Israeli-type strike across the DMZ.

That threat passed, however, as the North Koreans apparently took a wait-and-see attitude on the Vietnam peace

talks. They revived, instead, the series of small attacks.

In the first eight months of 1968, the North Koreans engaged in 421 incidents, including firefights and infiltration attempts, killing 62 American and South Korea nsoldiers and wounding 130 more, plus several South Korean police and civilians.

The last major action before the U.S. plane was downed Tuesday was the landing of 125 well-armed and highly trained North Korean commandos on the central east coast last November.

They had been ordered, according to accounts from captives, to recruit South Koreans for subversion and to engage in terror and sabotage. They held at least one village for a short time and conducted Vietcong-style propaganda meetings in others.

It took 40,000 South Korean troops, police and militia, with a loss of 63 military and civilian lives, two months to clean the commandos out.

1966 Party meeting came when North Korean soldiers ambushed and killed one South Korean and six American soldiers in the southern half of the Demilitarized Zone before dawn on Nov. 2 of that year..

During 1967, North Koreans

Hill Dubious About Initial U.S. Accounts

By William Chapman
Washington Post Staff Writer

A new skepticism about the initial accounts of U.S. misadventures abroad is partly responsible for the restrained Congressional response to the downing of a U.S. reconnaissance aircraft.

Senators who shouted "piracy" and demanded action a year ago when the USS Pueblo was captured have remained silent so far about the latest incident with North Korea.

Even the most hawkish Senators such as Armed Services Committee Chairman John Stennis (D-Miss) and Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.) have kept uncharacteristically quiet about the spy plane. Both have said they are awaiting more detailed information.

In the case of at least two Senators of diverse views, a hesitancy to accept the Government's immediate account of the circumstances has caused them to follow a cautious path.

See REACT, A9, Col. 4

REACT, From A1

Sen. Everett M. Dirksen (R-Ill.) told reporters Tuesday after a White House briefing that the Navy's EC-121 "supposedly" did not get closer than 60 miles from the North Korean coast. North Korea claims it intruded into its air space.

But, said Dirksen, "I am a little hesitant about those figures after the Pueblo." He was referring to the Johnson Administration's initial differing accounts of where the Pueblo had been operating when seized.

"I have no advice at the moment," Dirksen said. "I'd just like to know what the hard facts are."

The other doubting Senator is J. W. Fulbright (D-

Ark.), chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, who yesterday said he had become "very skeptical" about military accounts of past incidents, such as those in the Gulf of Tonkin in August, 1964. Initial reports of that encounter said the attacked U. S. destroyer was on a routine mission off the North Vietnamese coast. It later developed that the destroyer was agitating enemy radar while South Vietnamese patrol boats assaulted coastal bases.

Fulbright yesterday told reporters that if the Navy plane actually never was closer than 50 miles to the North Korean coast the attack was "very provocative." But in the light of the Tonkin incident, he said, "I am hesitant to get burned twice."

There was also renewed questioning yesterday about whether such unarmed spy missions are really worth the risks. "Why are relatively unarmed ships, like the Pueblo, and unarmed planes like this one, sent into areas where the risk of incidents of this kind is very high?" Senate Democratic Leader Mike Mansfield (Mont.) asked.

Mansfield commended President Nixon for a "cool and deliberate approach" to the crisis. He said that the plane's mission "was carried on without the personal knowledge of President Nixon even as the incident of the USS Pueblo was carried on without the personal knowledge of President Johnson."

The mission may have resulted from intelligence-gathering plans continued

automatically "in the absence of orders to the contrary from the new Administration," Mansfield said.

He suggested a new intelligence headquarters in the White House to assure that the President knows what is going on in such missions.

Among Congressional leaders, only Rep. L. Mendel Rivers (D-S.C.) urged immediate retaliation against the North Koreans. And Rep. William L. Dickinson (R-Ala.) pointedly recalled Mr. Nixon's campaign promise that he would not tolerate abuse from a "fourth-rate naval power. We are waiting for you, Mr. President, on your promise."

Rep. Otis G. Pike (D-N.Y.), chairman of a subcommittee investigating the Pueblo incident, said the downing of the plane showed that the Pentagon had learned little from the Pueblo experience.

U.S. Denies Reds' Charge Of Intrusion

By George C. Wilson
Washington Post Staff Writer

The Defense Department yesterday virtually confirmed that North Korean fighters had shot down an unarmed American reconnaissance plane with 31 men aboard.

The same statement held out little hope for finding any survivors in the Sea of Japan.

"All evidence now available to us," the Pentagon said in its statement, "including North Korean claims and debris sightings, leads us to believe that the aircraft was shot down by North Korean aircraft.

"Regretfully," the statement continued, "there has been no report of survivors."

The downed plane—a Navy EC-121—was a military version of the old propeller-driven Lockheed Super Constellation. Its mission was to listen to North Korean radio and radar as it lumbered along offshore.

The Pentagon, after limiting itself on Tuesday to saying the pilot was under orders to stay at least 50 nautical miles off the North Korean coast, went further yesterday.

"From a variety of sources, some of them sensitive," the Pentagon said, "we are able to confirm that at all time during its mission the aircraft was far outside any claimed territorial air space of North Korea."

North Korea claims air and sea limits of 12 miles.

The Defense Department also portrayed the ELINT, or electronic intelligence, mission as a "routine reconnaissance track over international waters."

"During the first three months of 1969," the Department added, "there were 190 flights similar in nature flown in this general area."