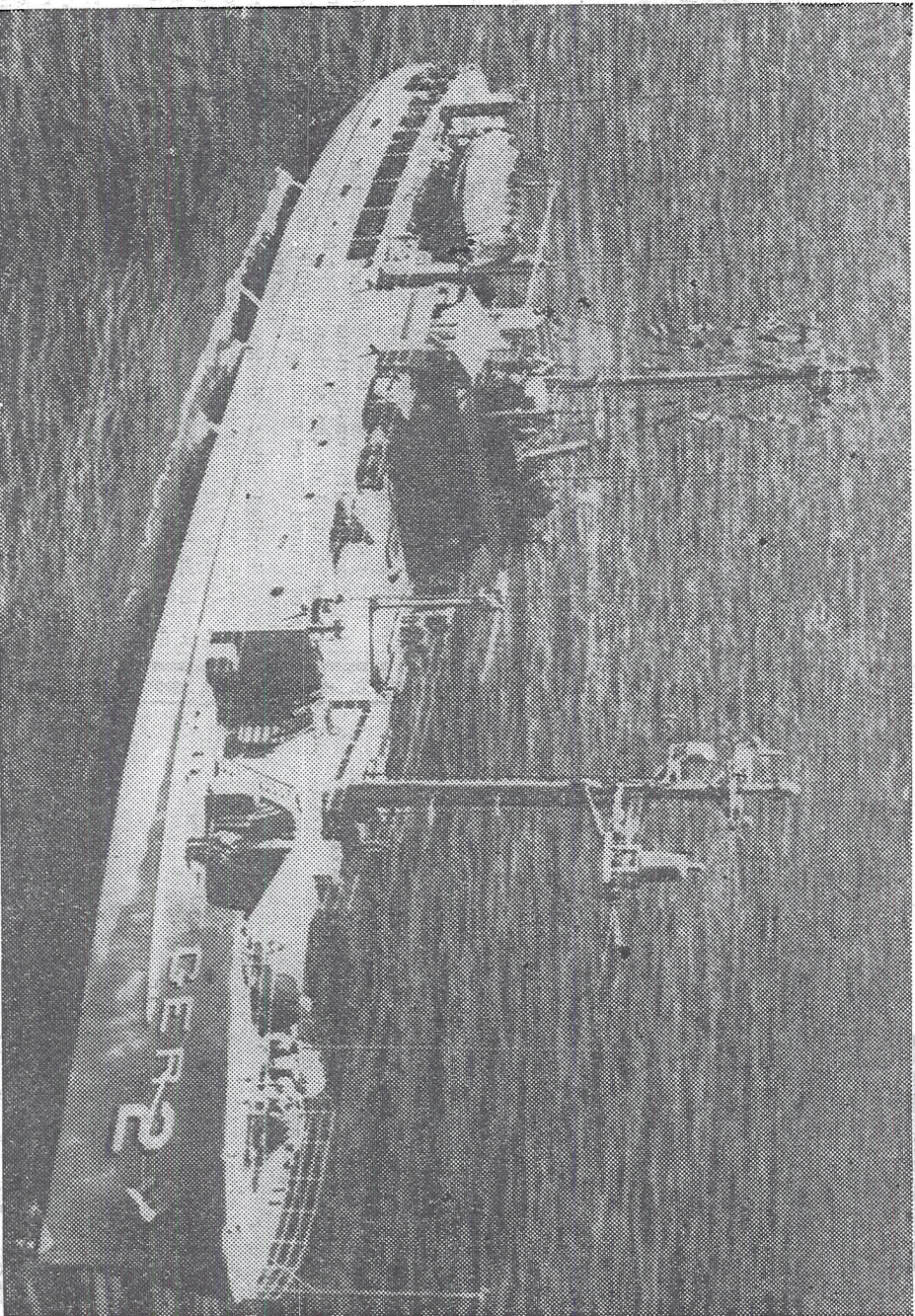


# NORTH KOREANS SEIZE U. S. SHIP WITH 83 ABOARD, CHARGE SPYING; ENTERPRISE IS ORDERED TO AREA



Associated Press

Pueblo, seized off North Korea and taken to Wonsan, is an intelligence collection vessel of the United States Navy

## 4 NAVY MEN HURT

Rusk Says Efforts Are Under Way to Obtain Vessel's Release

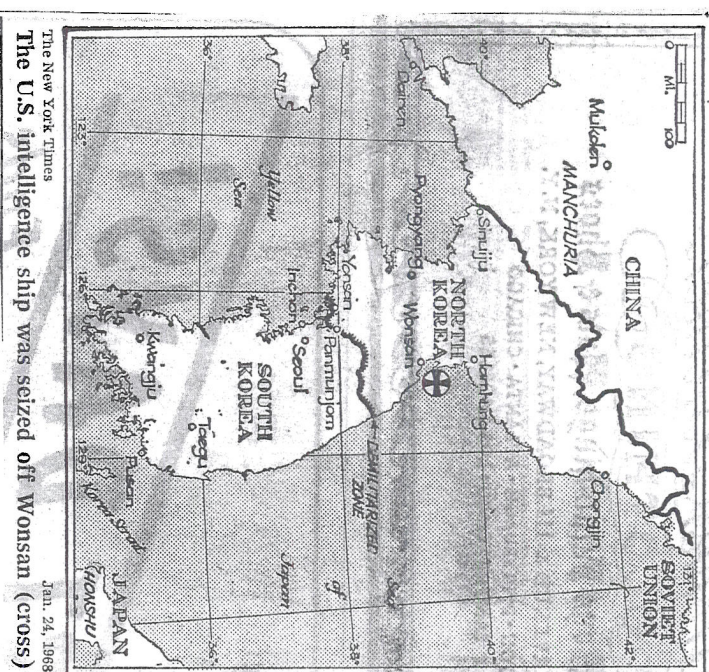
U.S. statement and Pyongyang broadcast are on Page 14.

By NEIL SHEEHAN

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Jan. 23 — North Korean patrol boats seized a United States Navy intelligence ship in Wonsan Bay shortly before last midnight and took the vessel and her 83 crew members into a North Korean port.

The Defense Department, reporting the incident, said today that the vessel had been in international waters. But in a Pyongyang radio broadcast today, North Korea asserted that the Pueblo had "intruded into the territorial waters of the republic and was carrying out



The New York Times  
The U.S. intelligence ship was seized off Wonsan (cross)  
Jan. 24, 1968

hostile activities." The broadcast called the Pueblo "an armed spy boat of the United States imperialist aggressor force."

Secretary of State Dean Rusk called the seizure of the Pueblo "a matter of the utmost gravity." He said the United States was negotiating with North Korea "through the channels that are available to us to obtain the immediate release of the vessel and her crew."

The incident forced a sudden confrontation between the United States and an Asian Communist regime that has long been calling for diversionary assaults against "United States imperialism" to distract American energies from the war in Vietnam.

The Defense Department said four crewmen of the Pueblo had been wounded, one critically. One report said a crew member's leg had been blown off. The Pentagon declined to say how the men had been wounded.

The Pueblo carried 6 officers, 75 enlisted men and 2 civilians, whom the Defense Department identified as Navy civilian hydrographers performing oceanographic research.

#### Carrier Is Sent to Area

Military sources said that the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier Enterprise and two destroyers were diverted toward Korea early in the day in response to the seizure. The Enterprise had just ended a visit in Sasebo, Japan, and was headed south toward the Gulf of Tonkin to join other carriers of the Seventh Fleet in staging air raids against North Vietnam when the carrier and her escorting destroyers received orders to head for Korea.

There were also reports that the United States' Eighth Army in Korea and South Korean mili-

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tary forces had been placed on alert as a result of the Pueblo incident as well as the clash in Seoul on Sunday between South Korean policemen and a group of 31 armed North Korean infiltrators. The 31 were said to have planned to attack the presidential palace.

The Defense Department declined to confirm the alert reports, but alerts by American and South Korean forces are normal in such circumstances.

The State Department spokesman, Robert J. McCloskey, said that an "urgent request" for the release of the Pueblo and her crew had been sent to North Korea through the Soviet Union and that the matter would also be brought up in the evening with the Korean armistice commission at Panmunjom.

The commission, set up at the end of the Korean war, is the sole regular channel of direct communication between the United States and North Korea.

#### Highly Secret Devices Aboard

According to the Defense Department, the Pueblo is a 906-ton vessel that carries highly secret electronics equipment designed to intercept radar and other electronic signals and gather information for intelligence.

The department said the ship had been in international waters about 25 miles off the eastern coast of North Korea when she was boarded by armed North Korean sailors at 11:45 P.M.

The latitude and longitude given by the Pentagon as the ship's position at that time would have put her about 20 miles from the peninsula that forms the northern arm of Monsan Bay and about 30 miles from the Port of Monsan, where the Pueblo was taken.

Defense Department officials did not, however, give the position of the Pueblo when she was first accosted by a North Korean gunboat at 10 P.M., nearly two hours before she was boarded. Some military sources said the ship had been closer than 25 miles to the coast. But they said they believed the Pueblo had been outside the 12-mile limit that North Korea claims for its territorial waters.

Mr. McCloskey said he could state "categorically" that the Pueblo had remained outside the 12-mile limit at all times.

Military sources said that the North Koreans opened fire on the Pueblo at one point before boarding. But other officers said they were not certain the North Koreans had fired upon the Pueblo, and that the injuries of the crewmen might have been wounded on attempts to blow up the ship's secret electronics equipment.

The Defense Department declined to comment on either report.

The Pentagon said the Pueblo had not used any weapons during the incident. The ship carries only two .50-caliber machine guns as well as small arms for the officers and men.

President Johnson was awakened at 2 A.M. and notified of the incident by Walt W. Rostow, special Presidential assistant. Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara and the Joint Chiefs of Staff were also notified.

George Christian, the Presidential press secretary, said Mr. Johnson discussed the seizure at his regular Tuesday strategy luncheon with Secretary Mc-



Associated Press

Comdr. Lloyd M. Bucher

Namara, Secretary Rusk and other senior officials.

The Joint Chiefs also held a special meeting on the incident.

Military sources said the four North Korean patrol craft that surrounded the Pueblo were Soviet-made. Each was armed with four 25-mm, automatic anti-aircraft guns.

The North Korean craft—one conventional patrol boat and three other raft of motor torpedo types—were capable of speeds of 28 to 40 knots, while the Pueblo had a top speed of 12.5 knots.

According to the Defense Department account, a North Korean patrol craft first approached the Pueblo at about 10 P.M. (noon Tuesday Korean time) and, with international flag signals, asked the Pueblo to identify herself.

When the Pueblo replied that she was an American ship, the North Korean ship answered, "Heave to or I will open fire on you," the Defense Department said. The Pueblo replied: "I am in international waters."

#### Accounts of Action Differ

At this point, some military sources said, the Pueblo's captain, Comdr. Lloyd M. Bucher, tried to move farther from the coast and the North Korean vessel opened fire, wounding at least one of the crew. The Pentagon account said only that at this point "the patrol boat circled the Pueblo."

About an hour later, the Pentagon said, three other patrol craft appeared and one ordered in international signals: "Follow in my wake. I have a pilot aboard."

The four patrol boats "closed in" on the Pueblo, the Pentagon said, "taking different positions on her bow, beam and quarter." Two North Korean MIG fighter planes were also sighted by the Pueblo's crew circling off her starboard bow.

One patrol craft then began backing toward the bow of the Pueblo "with fenders rigged" and "an armed boarding party" on her bow, the Pentagon said. Fenders are ropes or rubber bumpers used by ships to avoid damaging each other when they pull alongside.

#### Ship Apparently Halted

Although the Defense Department did not say so, its account gives the impression at this point that the Pueblo was stationary.

At 11:45 P.M., the Pentagon said, the Pueblo radioed that she was being boarded, and at 12:10 she said she had been "requested" to follow the North Korean vessels into Wonsan and that "she had not used any weapons."

The final message from the Pueblo came at 12:32 A.M., the Defense Department said. It came to "all stop" and that her radio was "going off the air."

Military sources said Commander Bucher had radioed earlier that he was destroying his secret electronic equipment, but it is unknown how much he succeeded in destroying. The equipment, if captured, would be valuable to North Korean and Soviet intelligence men.

The Pueblo had been in the area about two weeks on an electronics interception mission, the officials said. They added that other American intelligence-gathering ships had accomplished similar missions in the same area before without

being bothered by the North Koreans.

This, with the manner in which the Pueblo was seized, has suggested to some military officials that the North Koreans had probably planned the seizure as part of a general effort to increase tension.

Last November Arthur J. Goldberg, the United States delegate to the United Nations, reported to the organization that there had been a drastic increase in North Korean violations of the 1953 armistice agreement.

The North Korean broadcast after the Pueblo incident tied it to the clash in Seoul on Sunday and asserted that the United States and South Korea had retaliated by firing "thousands of rounds of small arms and artillery fire into our area" of the demilitarized zone during the night and by sending "an armed spy vessel of the

U.S. forces to intrude into the waters off Wonsan and perpetrate serious provocation."

"What a brazen-faced, desperate, deathbed kick this is!" the broadcast said. "Our naval vessels engaged in patrol duty on the spot captured the armed vessel of the U.S. imperialist aggressor force and the entire crew, resolutely defying the counterattack."

Mr. McCloskey, the State Department spokesman, said American diplomats were using any channels "which might be helpful" in trying to negotiate the release of the ship and her crew. He did not specify the channels. Japan, an ally of the United States, has representation in North Korea.

"I wish to re-emphasize the seriousness with which we view this flagrant North Korean action against the United States naval vessel on the high seas," he said.