

Excerpts From Panmunjom Exchange

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 25—Following are excerpts from an exchange yesterday between Rear Adm. John V. Smith and Maj. Gen. Pak Chung Kook, North Korean delegate to the Military Armistice Commission in Panmunjon, Korea, regarding the seizure of the Pueblo:

By Admiral Smith

I now have one more subject to raise which is also of an extremely serious nature. This concerns the criminal boarding and seizure of the U.S. naval vessel Pueblo in international waters on 23 January 1968 at approximately 1330 local time by North Korean forces.

This matter is appropriate for discussion because it is part of new pattern of North Korea belligerence and aggressive actions which dangerously increase tensions in this area. If they are persisted in, they will have most serious consequences to maintenance of armistice and to preservation of peace in Korea. These hostile acts cannot be perpetrated with impunity.

It is important that you understand difference between international and territorial waters and rights accorded ships of all nations, especially public vessels, in international waters.

You must surely realize that any public vessel has complete immunity from jurisdiction of any state other than the flag state. This immunity to interference has long been recognized in customary international law, and specifically in the convention on high seas.

The Pueblo was in international waters at the time of the incident, its exact location being latitude 39 degrees 25 minutes North, Longitude 127 degrees 54 minutes East. It was over 16 nautical miles from land. Its location was exact, as the ship was equipped with modern navigational equipment.

Apology Demanded

In the interest of complying with the laws and customs of nations, it is necessary that your regime do the following:

1. Return the vessel and crew intact, immediately.
2. Apologize to the United States Government for this illegal action.

You are also advised that the United States reserves the right to ask for compensation under international law.

Further, I have been requested by the United States Government to say the following directly to you.

Events of the last year, and especially the last few days, have put a new complexion on the situation in Korea. The North Korean regime has embarked on a campaign of provocation, sabotage and assassination in violation of the armistice agreement and international law.

The Republic of Korea and the United States threaten no one. If the North Korean regime persists in this campaign, which can only endanger the peace of this area, the responsibility for the con-

sequences will rest with the North Korean regime.

By General Pak

At the 260th meeting of this commission held four days ago, I again registered a strong protest with your side against having infiltrated into our coastal waters a number of armed spy boats, espionage bandits together with a group of South Korean fishing boats, and repeatedly demanded that you immediately stop such criminal acts.

However, between the 0700 and 1730 hours, Jan. 21, the day after the 260th meeting of this commission, your side again dispatched armed spy boats together with 100-odd South Korean fishing boats into our coastal waters in the vicinity of 38 degrees 40 minutes North, 128 degrees 29 minutes East and on Jan. 22 dispatched armed spy boats together with 100-odd South Korean fishing boats into our coastal waters in the eastern sea in the vicinity of 38 degrees 42 minutes North, 128 degrees 32 minutes East to commit provocative acts.

On Jan. 23, too, your side again dispatched armed spy boats together with 100-odd South Korean fishing boats into our coastal waters of the eastern sea in the vicinity of 38 degrees 41 minutes North, 128 degrees 26 minutes East, and today, too, is infiltrating the armed spy boats together with 100-odd South Korean fishing boats in our coastal waters of the eastern sea.

Your side has continuously dispatched naval vessels in our coastal waters to conduct naval bombardment upon our coastal area and used even the South Korean fisherman as a shield for its aggressive acts, as you turned out the South Korean youths as bullet shields to the battlefield in Vietnam.

'Crude Aggressive Act'

In the most overt and serious aggressive act of infiltrating an armed spy ship of the United States imperialist aggressive army into our coastal waters on Jan. 23, that is, around 1215 hours on Jan. 23, your side committed a crude aggressive act of illegally infiltrating an armed spy ship of the United States imperialist aggressive navy equipped with various weapons and all kinds of equipment necessary for espionage activities into our coastal waters off Wonsan in the vicinity of 39 degrees 17 minutes North, 127 degrees 46 minutes East.

The armed spy ship of the United States imperialist aggressive navy intruded further east into our coastal waters and committed intolerable provocations against our side. Our naval vessels, which were carrying out their routine patrol duty in our coastal waters, returned the fire upon the piratical group that intruded deep into our coastal waters and insolently made resistance, thus killing and wounding several soldiers of the United States imperialist aggressive army, capturing 80-odd of them alive.

Thus, now in our hands are the armed spy ship, 1,000-odd tons of the United States imperialist aggressive navy which your side deliberately dispatched into our coastal waters for reconnaissance upon our side and scores of small arms, including anti-aircraft machine guns and other large quantities of weapons and equipment necessary for espionage purposes, including tens of thousands of ammunition of various kinds and hand grenades equipped on the ship.

Notwithstanding that you have committed overt aggressive acts, you have indulged in making charges in an attempt to cover up the truth of your piratical act by distorting the facts as if your armed ship had been in international waters.

Charge Is 'Preposterous'

Your preposterous charge only graphically reveals the barbarous and shameless nature of the United States imperialist aggressors.

The recent vicious hostile act by your side is a link in the chain of the United States imperialist aggressive policy for provoking a new war of aggression after further aggravating tension in Korea. It is the most overt aggressive act, an open challenge to the Korean people.

I strongly demand you to frankly admit the violations, provocations and aggressive acts committed by your side in the DMZ and in our coastal waters, to apologize to our side for them, to severely punish as required by the armistice agreement the mad culprits who organized and commanded the incidents and all the criminals involved in them.

Reply by Admiral Smith

Your last wild statement and distorted version of your piracy off Wonsan were obviously intended to divert attention from your regime's attempt to assassinate the President of the Republic of Korea and your actual capture of a United States naval vessel in international waters. I will investigate any reasonable allegations but I will not be diverted by your tactic. I have nothing further.

Reply By General Pak

Don't wag your tongue at random at this table after proof of a most overt and vicious provocation and the aggressive acts committed by your side in the DMZ and in our coastal waters has been exposed to the whole world.

If your side has any slightest intention to preserve the Korean armistice, don't ride roughshod but draw due lessons from . . . the doom of a large armed spy ship which was captured recently by our side while sneaking into our coastal waters. When the real state of your serious crime has been exposed to the world, all you have to do is to admit military provocations and aggressive acts committed by your side, apologize for them, and assure this table that you will not recommit such criminal acts.