

MANSFIELD ASKS CAUTION ON SHIP

Fulbright's View Is Similar
—Others Bid U.S. Act

By JOHN W. FINNEY

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 24 — Senators Mike Mansfield and J. W. Fulbright urged today that the Administration react cautiously to the seizure of the intelligence ship Pueblo by North Korea.

The call for restraint by the two leading foreign policy spokesmen in the Senate came amid a chorus of indignation in Congress and demands for military action, if necessary, to force North Korea to release the ship and her crew.

The proposals for military action ranged from a blockade of North Korea to a declaration of war. But throughout all the belligerent demands for "positive action" there ran a note of caution that the United States not take any step that could lead to World War III.

In statements on the House and Senate floor and in mimeographed statements flooding the press galleries, the North Korean seizure of the electronic intelligence ship was branded as "an act of piracy" if not an "act of war."

In contrast, Senator Mansfield, the majority leader, and Senator Fulbright, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, suggested that judgment and action be withheld until the facts were known.

"We ought to keep our shirts

Continued on Page 14, Column 4

Continued From Page 1, Col. 7

on and not go off half-cocked until we know more about the details of the incident," Senator Mansfield said to reporters.

"In the gravity of the situation," he said, "we should not let our emotions take over. The information we have on the incident still is quite sketchy. There will be many questions raised about it.

"We should continue our diplomatic efforts through the Soviet Union to obtain release of the ship. We should not take military action now."

Fulbright Gives View

In a similar vein, Senator Fulbright told reporters after a meeting of the Foreign Relations Committee that "we should be very careful and cautious in our reaction, particularly since some of the precise facts are unknown."

"We should be very careful in this instance not to jump to conclusions until we know all the facts," the Arkansas Democrat said.

The Pueblo incident came at a time when the committee was considering whether to conduct a formal inquiry into the Gulf of Tonkin incidents of 1964, in which two American destroyers were reported to have come under attack by North Vietnamese torpedo boats.

After hearing a staff report that raised questions about the Administration's interpretation and reaction to the Tonkin incidents, the committee deferred a decision on an investigation.

It was apparent, however, that the Tonkin incidents and the question of whether the Administration had conclusive proof of a North Vietnamese attack were influencing the committee members in their generally cautious reaction to the Pueblo incident.

Senator Fulbright said there were "certain physical similarities" in the two incidents, that in both of them United States ships were engaged in "intelligence-gathering."

Mission Is Disclosed

His statement was the first official disclosure that the two United States destroyers Maddox and Turner Joy were engaged in electronic intelligence work in the Gulf of Tonkin. Senator Fulbright declined to elaborate on the activities of the destroyers, apparently uncovered in the staff study, on the ground it would be "premature."

In the Tonkin incidents, Senator Fulbright said, the Administration had acted "precipitately" in ordering reprisal air strikes against North Vietnam and seeking Congressional approval of a resolution antagonizing the President to take "all necessary measures" to prevent further aggression.

In the Pueblo incident, Mr. Fulbright suggested, such facts as the "precise position" of the ship and whether there was "an element of provocation" are not now known.

It was apparent, however, that the prevailing mood in Congress, particularly in the House, was for military action if diplomatic efforts failed.

In the House, Representative L. Mendell Rivers, Democrat of South Carolina, who is chairman of the Armed Services Committee, said he would do anything, "including declaring war if necessary," to get the Pueblo back.

"I wouldn't fool with them," Mr. Rivers told a reporter. "I'd deliver an ultimatum. If they didn't give back the ship, I'd turn loose whatever we had out there on them."

Among conservatives in the Senate, there were also demands for military action if diplomacy failed.

Senator Thomas J. Dodd, Democrat of Connecticut, said North Korea should be told in "the bluntest terms" that if the Pueblo and her crew were not released within 24 hours, United States naval forces would be instructed to seize all North Korean vessels found on the high seas.

Senator Wallace F. Bennett, Republican of Utah, said if diplomacy failed, the United States should consider sending a "naval armada" into the port of Wonsan "at a very early date," tossing a tow line aboard the Pueblo and "bringing it out."

The mixture of anger and caution was illustrated in the comments of Senator John Stennis, Democrat of Mississippi.

The United States, he said, "must take strong and positive action without delay to recover the Pueblo and its crew" and to "let the communist world know beyond any doubt that acts of aggression such as this, will not go unchallenged—that the United States of America is not a paper tiger whose nose can be tweaked with impunity."

He also said: "We must avoid precipitous and rash over-reaction. Above all we must not rush pell-mell towards the disaster of World War III."

"At the same time," he continued, "we must not pull back from the confrontation because of an excess of timidity or caution."

Kennedy Raises Questions

Senator Robert F. Kennedy said yesterday that every step must be taken to obtain the release of the Pueblo and her crew.