

U.S. SPY SHIP SUNK, PYONGYANG SAYS

Pentagon Denies It as Seoul Reports It Has Lost Craft
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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 5— North Korea reported having sunk a "heavily armed spy ship" of the United States within its territorial waters today, but the claim was immediately denied by the Defense Department here.

North Korea has repeatedly accused the United States of violations of its sea and air space by intelligence ships and planes and with overland infiltrations by spies.

In January, 1968, the North Koreans captured the intelligence ship *Pueblo*, keeping her crew imprisoned for nearly a year. And in April, 1969, North Koreans shot down an EC-121 Navy reconnaissance aircraft. In both cases the United States denied that these operations were conducted in North Korean sea or air space. Last August, a United States Army light helicopter was shot down after it apparently strayed over North Korean territory.

North Korea's radio alleged that a ship of the "United States imperialist aggressor army" had entered North Korean waters on a reconnaissance mission supported by warships and fighter aircraft. Within an hour of the broadcast a Penta-

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gon spokesman here said that "we have no indication that there has been any United States involvement."

The spokesman said that the United States Navy had no ships in the area, described by the North Korean radio as the Sea of Haeju, which is off the western coast of North Korea, 50 miles south of Pyongyang.

There appeared to be confusion between the North Korean claim and a report this morning by the South Korean Defense Ministry in Seoul that two North Korean patrol ships have attacked and seized a South Korean craft guiding fishermen in South Korean waters.*

The North Korean broadcast made no reference to the action reported by Seoul. But the Defense Department spokesman said that "we understand that there has been an encounter between some North and South Korean vessels." Other officials said that according to information reaching here the South Korean craft was beached on the North Korean coast after her capture.

Seoul reported that its navy vessel, equipped with a public address system to guide fishermen away from the North Korean waters, was taken near Yuntung Do Island. This is in the area of the Sea of Haeju, which is adjacent to the Yellow Sea, where Pyongyang said the American vessel was sunk.

The South Korean ship was a 120-ton patrol vessel armed with one machine gun and carrying 20 crewmen, according to the Seoul announcement. She was said to have been hit by several shells.

Seoul said jet aircraft and navy ships were sent to the vessel's rescue but arrived too late.

United States officials said they believed Pyongyang was trying to make "propaganda" in deliberately confusing a South Korean vessel with a United States intelligence ship. They said in the past, North Korea frequently applied the term "United States imperialist aggressor army" to both United States and South Korean forces.

Although there have been several recent instances of small-arms exchanges between North Korean and South Korean troops over the demarcation line at the 38th Parallel—the latest was reported yester-



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No. 1 indicates the area where North Korea said a vessel was sunk, and No. 2 where *Pueblo* was seized.

day — United States officials said they thus far detected no pattern of rising military activity in or around Korea.

While today's capture of the South Korean vessel may have been an act of harassment, they said, there seemed to be no convincing evidence that it may be a prelude to wider hostile actions.

Officials were puzzled, however, by the North Koreans' effort to present the incident, which apparently involved only Korean craft, as a large-scale incursion by the United States with air and warship escort.

Pyongyang said that the United States "has recently been infiltrating many armed bandits and stepping up grave armed provocations against our republic along the military demarcation line in the skies and on the seas."

"And today it sent a heavily armed spy-boat deep into the territorial waters of our republic under the escort of fighter planes and warships to perpetrate an espionage act," it said. "Navy officers and men of the Korean people's army, in firm defense of the territorial waters of the fatherland, promptly sank the enemy armed spy boat which intruded deeply into our territorial waters."

Seoul Talks of Incident

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SEOUL, South Korea, June 5 — Two North Korean gunboats attacked and captured a South Korean naval craft with 20 crewmen aboard today near the seaward extension of the armistice demarcation line in the Yellow Sea, the Defense Ministry announced.

*See CIA/*Pueblo*,
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