

Weather: Sunny and mild through tonight. Fair, mild tomorrow. Temp. range: today 74-54; Tuesday 65-50. Full U.S. report on Page 74.

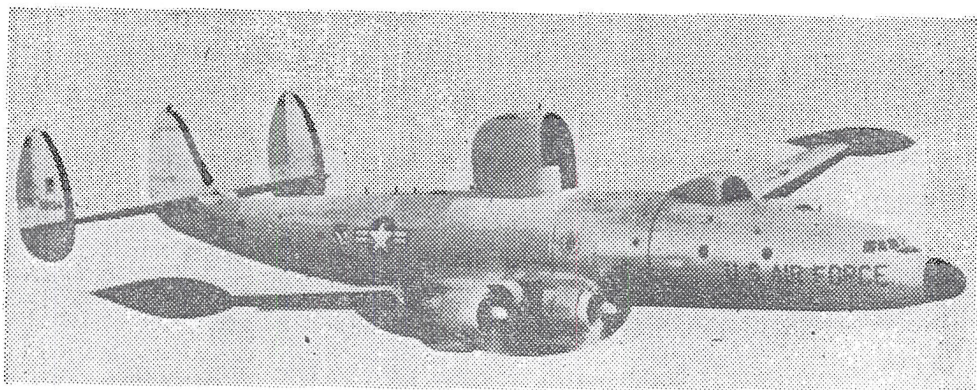
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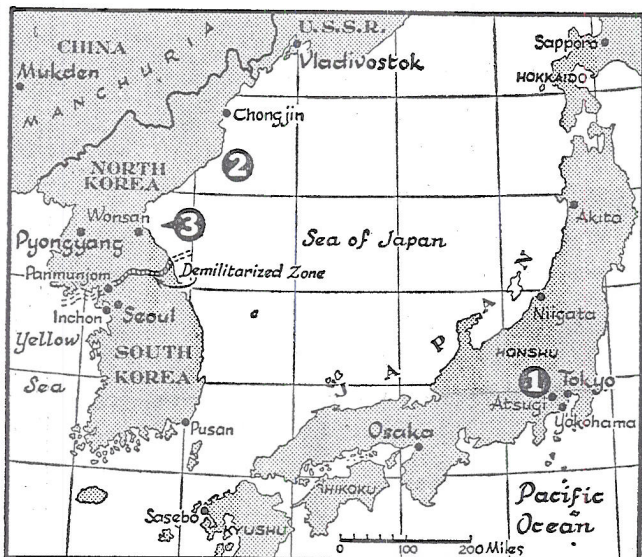
10 CENTS

U.S. SCOUT PLANE WITH 31 IS LOST, REPORTED DOWNED BY 2 NORTH KOREAN MIG'S



Associated Press

AIR FORCE VERSION OF MISSING PLANE: An Air Force reconnaissance plane similar to the Navy EC-121 aircraft that North Korea says was shot down by their air force.



The New York Times April 16, 1969 Search for U.S. reconnaissance plane, which was based at Atsugi, Japan (1), was centered 72 miles off North Korea (2), northeast of the point (3) where Pueblo was seized.

WIDE HUNT BEGINS

Sighting of Debris in Japan Sea Reported By Pentagon

By WILLIAM BEECHER

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 15—North Korea asserted today that it had shot down a United States Navy electronic intelligence plane. The Nixon Administration is said to believe that the plane, with a crew of 31, was attacked by two MIG jets off the Korean coast.

A broadcast by North Korea monitored here said the slow four-engine EC-121 aircraft, based in Japan, had intruded into its airspace and was downed with "one shot." Pentagon spokesmen would say only that an air-sea search had begun in an area 100 miles off Chongjin, North Korea, the Sea of Japan for possible survivors.

The Defense Department reported a sighting of debris that it said "could be associated with the missing aircraft." The debris was sighted by a Navy search plane about four miles from the point where the missing plane is believed to have gone down. The search plane did not report any evidence of survivors near the debris.

[In Prospect Heights, Ill., the head of the Remember the Pueblo Committee, citing "a Government source, announced that possibly seven survivors of the plane had been picked up by North Korean gunboats.]

Mission Termed Routine

Unofficially, a high Administration official said the plane was believed to have been shot down about 100 miles off the Korean coast. Senator Everett McKinley Dirksen, the Republican leader, said two MIG's and 60 miles had been mentioned to him at a White House briefing conducted by Henry A. Kissinger, national security adviser to the President.

A Pentagon spokesman said the plane had been on a routine reconnaissance flight similar to hundreds of missions flown in the area since 1950, when the Korean war started. Particularly because of the

Continued on Page 14, Column 1

recent border incidents between the Soviet Union and Communist China, the plane was believed to have been concerned with intercepting radio messages from those two countries. Its track carried it along the North Korean coast as well because of interest in picking up any information relating to possible sabotage missions against South Korea, the sources said.

The private comments here raised the possibility of another dispute between the United States and North Korea about the location of an attacked intelligence craft. That was the central issue in the seizure of the spy ship Pueblo last year and the detention of her crew of 82 for 11 months.

While the new incident presented the Nixon Administration with a difficult policy decision, one official said the President wanted to play it "low key—at least until we get all the facts."

One reason, the sources said, was an unconfirmed report that two North Korean destroyers were thought to be speeding toward the area. American warships also were racing there from Japan.

There was considerable concern that the Koreans might attempt to capture any survivors and hold them hostage against the possibility of retaliation, as was done in the case of the Pueblo. The United States said the Pueblo was about 25 miles offshore; North Korea says its air and sea space extends 12 miles from shore.

Pentagon planners were known to be preparing a list of possible retaliatory steps, but they conceded that any military action was fraught with risks.

The White House said Mr. Nixon was watching the situation closely since he was awakened early by Mr. Kis-



Associated Press
Senator Everett M. Dirksen, Republican minority leader, discussing the incident. He said diplomacy, not military action, should be first course considered by the President.

singer. It was decided that no immediate Presidential response was required, the sources said.

Mr. Nixon discussed the crisis with Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird and Secretary of State William P. Rogers. The matter was added to the agenda of a meeting of the National Security Council previously scheduled for tomorrow.

Daniel Z. Henkin, chief Pentagon spokesman, said the EC-121, a modified version of the Lockheed Super-Constellation, had been operating under orders from the Commander in Chief, Pacific, with headquarters in Honolulu. The missions are approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The propeller-driven craft was "flying a track which maintained it at a distance of at least 50 nautical miles from the coast of North Korea," he said, adding that it was in

A North Korean broadcast said the plane was shot down at 1:50 P.M. Korean time (11:50 P.M. Monday, Eastern standard time) after having invaded Korean airspace.

The air-sea search was reported to be concentrating in an area 83 miles southeast of Chongjin and 72 miles due east of the North Korean coast.

Deep Intrusion Alleged
By TAKASHI OKA

Special to The New York Times

TOKYO, April 15—In an English-language broadcast from Pyongyang today, North Korea said that "a large-size, modernly equipped reconnaissance plane" of the U.S. imperialist aggressor army had infiltrated "deep into the territorial air" of North Korea and that an air force unit had "scored the brilliant battle success of shooting it down with a single shot at a high altitude."

The broadcast, which did not pinpoint the location of the plane, concluded, "The U.S. imperialist aggressors must bear in mind that the stern warning of the Korean People's Army counters any provocations of the U.S. imperialist aggressors instantly with a hundredfold, a thousandfold retaliatory blow."

In the absence of positive information about the location and circumstances of the incident, American and Japanese officials were reluctant to comment on North Korea's motives or on the possible consequences of the incident.

"As of today, our assessment that North Korea is unlikely to escalate into a major war stands," a Japanese Foreign Ministry official said.

North Korea is on bad terms with Communist China, he added, and must depend almost exclusively on the Soviet Union for modern weapons—and the Soviet Union does not wish to reignite the Korean war.

An American official commented, however, that since the Pueblo incident he would not be surprised by any belligerent action by the North Koreans.

Socialist and other Japanese opposition elements are expected to press their contention that American bases do not protect Japan but bring the threat of war to her shores. They are certain to seize on the plane's having been based at Atsugi, not far from Tokyo, as evidence of the possibility that these bases could embroil the nation in a new conflict.

TEXT OF BROADCAST

The text of the North Korean broadcast follows:

The U.S. imperialist aggressor army, which has been rapidly intensifying the war provocation maneuvers against the northern half of the republic of late, perpetrated on the morning of the 15th the grave provocation of infiltrating deep into the territorial air of the northern half of the republic with a large-size modernly equipped reconnaissance plane to conduct reconnaissance, while perpetrating grave provocations along the military demarcation line.

The air force unit of our people's army instantly spotted the reconnaissance plane of the insolent U.S. imperialist aggressor army, which was reconnoitering after intruding deep into the territorial air of the northern half of the republic and scored the brilliant battle success of shooting it down with a single shot at a high altitude at 1 hour 50 minutes on the afternoon of the 15th by showering fire of revenge upon it.

The U.S. imperialist aggressors must bear in mind that the stern warning of the Korean People's Army counters any provocation of the U.S. imperialist aggressors instantly with a hundredfold thousandfold retaliatory blow.