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#43a meeting minutes	meeting with Congressional leaders 57 p possible classified info. <i>sanitized 10-1-84</i> <i>NLS 83-109</i>	1/31/68	A

FILE LOCATION

Meeting Notes File, Box 2

10/81 DCH

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

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FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Tom Johnson

Attached are the stenotypists' notes  
of the meeting tonight with members  
of Congress.

Jan 31, 1968

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MEETING OF CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS, JANUARY 31, 1968  
ROUGH DRAFT

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Mandatory Review

Case # NLJ 83-109

Document # 43a

THE PRESIDENT: Ladies and gentlemen of the  
Congress:

We thank you for coming here after a busy day,  
but we are being asked many questions by members of  
the House and Senate. We know that the people are asking  
you many questions.

We have undertaken to try to discharge our  
duties and carry out our obligations as best we could.  
Every spare moment we had to consult with and brief the  
Democratic leaders and Republican leaders, whose cooperation  
we need and whose assistance we respect.

I met last night with the Republican leaders  
of the House and Senate. I met this morning with some  
of the prominent Chairmen. I met earlier yesterday with  
the Democratic leaders of the House and Senate.

Tonight, I am meeting with you particular  
leaders primarily because you are on the committees  
that are the experts in this field; the ones who provide  
the money, the ones who pass upon our Armed Services  
subjects and legislation, the ones who participate in the  
formulation of our Foreign Affairs and relations with  
other nations.

We have asked the members of the House and Senate  
of the appropriations committee from the Majority Party,  
Democratic side, Foreign Relations and Foreign Affairs,  
and Armed Services. We have met with your Chairmen --  
Chairman Fulbright, Morgan, Chairman Rivers, Chairman  
Hayden, and Chairman Mahon. We will try to make this  
as brief as we can.

We have had a rather busy ten days. We are not  
asking for sympathy. But we want to relate to you the  
many problems that come to a major power in a disturbed world.

We started off by some of our boys getting a few  
yards over in the border in Cambodia trying to save their  
life -- where there is a bend in the river and they didn't  
have the exact chart on a map. They were being shot at  
from the other side. That was distressing to us because  
we don't want to violate the sovereignty of any nation.

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We had a B-52 catch on fire in the navigator's department, probably some crossed wires, or what caused it we don't know. Some electrician back through the years or maybe some rubber had worn off. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Those men wanted to save their lives as we want to save ours under similar circumstances or even election year.

So they tried to land that plane. They did save all of their lives but one. There was only one casualty. But it was very unfortunate. It was distressing to us.

We have been watching now for several weeks the buildup at Khesanh. Tonight we find within a 40-mile area of Khesanh the enemy has 40,000 troops. They have built up while he was pleading with us for extra truces and to stop our bombing and making all the pleas in the name of peace.

They have been building up at Khesanh to try to wipe out our five or 6,000 men that we have there.

We have had to bring our men up where we will be equal to the task. The Joint Chiefs, and all the Joint Chiefs, met with me day before yesterday and assured me that they had reviewed the plans and they thought they were adequate.

I told them I thought I almost had to have them sign up in blood because if my poll goes where it has gone, with all the victories, I imagine what it would do if we had a good major defeat.

So General Westmoreland and the Joint Chiefs of Staff are sure and we are now anticipating some major activity there that we have not heard about.

In addition, I think you know about what has happened in Vietnam in the last few hours. We will touch upon that some tonight. Almost simultaneously we had the North Koreans who had 50-odd incidents in '66 across the DMZ. Increase that to 590 incidents this year, '67. Very obvious that they want to put some pressure on us. We think try to divert us from Vietnam and try to divert the Koreans who now have two divisions there from sending



another division which we hope to get from them.

I think they expect that perhaps our people would rise up and say, "Here is a second war. We can't do that. Maybe we ought to come home." And certainly the Koreans would say if we are going to have fighting like here in Washington, if we are going to have fighting here we ought to bring those divisions back to Germany. They say if we are going to have fighting here in North Korea we ought to bring our divisions back from South Vietnam. This all ties in, we think, to one large determined offensive of theirs that is calculated to try to put them back in the ball game.

We think we are equal to it. We think we will meet it. We think we will have to call upon you to help us probably. In what respect, we are not sure.

We are carefully studying everything that any of the best minds the Army, Navy, Air Force, State Department, private individuals that consult with us, can suggest to get the 83 men back and get the ship back.

We don't want to widen the war. We realize that North Korea has a mutual security pact with China and with the Soviet Union. We know it is much easier to get into a war than get out of one.

At the same time we do have our pride and our prestige and our men at stake. So we are pursuing through diplomacy every possibly avenue that is calculated to get us any results.

We are pursuing our military studies so that if there is anything that we can do through strength to get results, get the men back, we will be able to apply that when and if we exhaust the diplomatic resources.

I have asked some men to come here and talk to you about it. The first thing I would like to do is to ask the distinguished Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Wheeler, to review with you what has happened in Vietnam in the last few hours. He has talked out there with General Westmoreland, I think, as late as 5 o'clock.

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We have been having questions answered on our situation room report when I came over here. But I will talk about it before it is over.

Then I want him to tell you what happened on the PUEBLO and we will follow through briefly. We would prefer to postpone questions until we are finished, although if anyone feels compelled to make a contribution in the middle by asking one -- and he is sure it is a contribution -- we will be glad to yield for that purpose.

General Wheeler.



GENERAL WHEELER: Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen:

I believe that the most clear and succinct way in which I can summarize the situation in Vietnam would be to read certain portions of a message which I received from General Westmoreland this morning and give you a brief update as a result of later information.

General Westmoreland said this morning, "During the past 24 hours the enemy has continued his country wide attacks against airfields and key population centers. Since early this morning attacks have been heavy in the Saigon-Bien Hoa area and throughout the 4th Corps tactical zone" -- that is one further south. "First Corps tactical zone and Second Corps tactical zone have continued to receive widespread attacks with only the DMZ and the Khesanh area being comparatively quiet. I emphasize this because it is an important point. By area, the Third Corps tactical zone: commencing about 0300 this morning, the enemy launched heavy attacks at Bien Hoa, Long Bien, Tan ~~Long~~ <sup>Long</sup> ~~Long~~ <sup>Long</sup> and throughout Saigon. You will notice that two of these are airfields.

At Bien Hoa, the attack included the airfield and the Third Corps tactical zone headquarters. This is ARVN senior headquarters in the area.

Damage known at this time: One aircraft destroyed, one F-100 destroyed, one A-137 destroyed, one F-100 destroyed, nine damaged. The attack has been repulsed.

At Long Bien, the Second Field Forces Headquarters, this is the American headquarters, General ~~Westmoreland~~ <sup>Westmoreland</sup> at ammunition dump and the POW camp came under mortar and ground attack. Heavy fighting took place around the POW camp, but it has been held secure.

In the ammo dump an undetermined part of the ammunition was destroyed. The enemy contact has been broken.

In Saigon, the main attack was on the US Embassy. It is now secure with the staff operating. Collective billets were also hit including the (inaudible) hotel and others. This area is still contested of this

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The joint general staff compound -- this is the senior headquarters of the ARVN, the Pentagon of the South Vietnamese -- was penetrated and sporadic fighting continued until noon.

Four ARVN airborne and three Vietnam ARVN marine corps battalions are in the city to continue the counter attacks. At Tan Son ~~Nhut~~ <sup>Nhut</sup>, a series of attacks have been launched by the enemy from West, Southwest, and Northeast. The perimeter is secure at the present but the enemy poses a serious threat.

I should throw in here that the later information is that Tan Son ~~Nhut~~ <sup>Nhut</sup> Air Base is now operational again so the enemy has been driven off.

Westmoreland moved two United States battalions in from the First Division in order to cope with this problem.

In the First Corps tactical zone -- this is in the North -- the (inaudible) this is the old French fort in the center of the town and airfield came under mortar, rocket and ground attack at about 1400 in the morning. No major damage to airfield or facilities.

The enemy has approximately three companies in the ~~Hue Citadel~~ <sup>Hue Citadel</sup> (?) and the Marines have sent a battalion into the area to clear them out.

South of DaNang, the enemy launched attacks on the 7th Marines and the 52nd ARVN regiment and they were repulsed without heavy losses to the enemy.

Marlow Mountain air facility was lost to attack; 17 helicopters were damaged.

~~For~~ <sup>TO</sup> NGHIA  
~~Then~~ Lai (?) air field was shelled by rockets and mortars. Quang ~~Nhi~~ (?) city came under ground and rocket attack. <sup>NGAI</sup>

The Second Corps tactical zone: The most serious situation appeared to be at ~~Can Tho~~ <sup>Kan Tum</sup> (?) where the airfield, the headquarters of the 24th ARVN unit, and the second headquarters, all came under heavy

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attack for the second day.

I would like to throw in parenthetically that later information is that in a period of about 24 hours the enemy launched 19 separate ground attacks against the ~~Con Tum~~ <sup>Kon Tum</sup>(?) perimeter around the city.

The United States 4th Infantry Division and ARVN forces have reinforced the area but fighting continues in the town. As of this afternoon, it is my latest information, they are still fighting in the town itself. Since yesterday an estimated 300 enemy have been killed. Ban ~~Da Thue~~ <sup>Me Li Tuot</sup>(?) was hit again, another of our air bases, with the 98th Compound at the 24th ARVN Division Headquarters being the main targets.

Qui ~~Non~~ <sup>NHON</sup> ~~is quiet~~ <sup>QUIET</sup> ~~(?)~~ is quiet, although the enemy holds a radio station. He has three hostages and the station is surrounded by Republic of Korea forces.

In Pleiku elements of the 22nd ARVN Rangers are in contact just (Inaudible). US forces are also there. The 4th Corps tactical zone: The situation in the 4th Corps tactical zone is not clear, but a series of attacks have been made by fire and ground elements against a series of towns -- I know some of you gentlemen have been at some of them at least -- My Tho(~~th~~), Theu Lai(?), Chu Tee(<sup>U</sup>?), Tru Et(?), ~~Ty-on~~ <sup>TAIAN</sup>(?), and he names a half a dozen more.

BIEN The most serious situation appears to be at ~~Binh~~ Long(?) and at ~~Chu Duc~~ <sup>Chu Duc</sup>(?) province. Enemy actions have been met by ARVN reaction forces.

I am passing (Inaudible) of our river Marine force to the (Inaudible) advisor in the 4th Corps in order to assist in the counter attacks.

An earlier summary indicates that 24 airfields have been hit throughout the country. It is estimated the enemy has lost over 3,000 KIA since, in the 24-hour period. With friendly KIA reported at less than 300 including an estimated 100 Americans.

The enemy situation: Enemy attacks during the Tet holidays reveal an emphasis on dramatic results

in heavy populated areas and damage to friendly area installations. Militarily, these are diversionary efforts while the enemy prepares for his major attack in the Northern First Combat Tactical Zone.

In other words, in the Khesanh area, we think.

His target in the air fields is designed to (inaudible) friendly air support. The enemy also hopes a considerable psychological impact both in South Vietnam and world wide.

At a minimum he probably expects these actions to prevent a repetition of the last year's heavy losses to the ~~Tu-By~~ <sup>THU-By</sup> (?) program during the Tet period.

~~CHIEU HOA~~

He comes down to the final end here and says, the enemy around the Khesanh and the DMZ and at Tri ~~Kien~~ <sup>THIEN</sup> (?) military regions could attack at any time. However, there are no signs at the present that the enemy will not attack in these areas within the next 24 hours. Enemy planes have almost certainly been disrupted to some extent by friendly air and artillery bombardment in the area.

The weather in the DMZ area has been good. General Westmoreland has been able to put in about 40 B-52 sorties a day and on the average of about 500 tactical air forces in addition to artillery and so on.

The enemy attempts have thus far produced no significant military results and it has cost him heavily.

I have already mentioned the losses. In addition there are large numbers of captured, but we have no reliable figures now. The latest update, really, repeats most of what I have said already.

I could say that ~~Can-Thien~~ <sup>KONTUM</sup> (?) still remains a trouble spot with fighting going on. In ~~Can-Thien~~ <sup>Bien-Huy</sup> (?) in the 4th Corps, this is a city north of the small town north of Can-Tho (?) and Saigon. There are VC fighting in the city. They estimate that one VC regiment in the



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(inaudible) field and there are many VC casualties.  
as of 12 noon our time today.

<sup>SON NHUT</sup>  
Both Tan Si ~~Nhut~~(?) and Da Nang Air Bases  
were open for traffic as I left to come over here.

MORE

THE PRESIDENT: Do you want to make one observation of what you think they had in mind, what the purpose was?

GENERAL WHEELER: I think they probably had two or three things in mind, sir. I think they would like to draw forces away from the reinforcements which General Westmoreland has sent to the North in order to weaken his response up there to the attack, which he has anticipated now for about ten days, against the Khesanh area. That is one objective.

A second objective seems to be more political in nature; namely, to demonstrate to the South Vietnamese people, and I assume to the rest of the world, that they still have a considerable communist strength in the country and that they can bring military action to bear against the populated areas of the country.

Thirdly, I think it would be a similar action, similar objective, that is, to shake the confidence of the Vietnamese people in the ability of the government to provide them security, even though they are within areas held by government and US troops.

A significant thing about this attack is that in many areas, particularly in Saigon, and at Bien Hoa, the attackers were dressed in one of three types of clothing: Civilian clothes, military, ARVN military police uniforms, or national police uniforms.

Apparently, they gave no attention at all to whether or not they killed civilians. This is a sort of an unusual action for them because they have posed as the protectors of the civilian populace. Apparently this is the effort to reestablish by terror a degree of control over the population.

THE PRESIDENT: Will you review for us where the ship was and why it was there and why it wasn't armed and why you didn't put your Air Force over it and why you didn't (inaudible)

GENERAL WHEELER: This is a hard map to follow at the distance you are sitting, but I really don't think you need to see too much. I don't think you need to see too much in order to recognize this. In fact, I can talk over



2 this for a time and come back to point out a couple of key points.

The USS PUEBLO with a crew of 83 sailed from Sasebo, Japan on 8 January to patrol along the North Korean Coast in the Sea of Japan. This is a communications collection vessel. Newspaper term: "A spy ship."

The instructions to the Captain: remain 13 miles off shore at all times. North Korea claims 12 miles territorial waters. Maintain radio silence except when she was being observed. Remain at least 500 yards away from any Soviet ships in counter, Keep guns covered or stowed. Employ defensive arms only when threat to survival is obvious.

The times that I am going to cite are North Korean times, because this is important to understanding the sequence of events, the advent of darkness, and therefore is critical to any decision to send aircraft or other units to protect or help try to protect and support the PUEBLO.

At 6:15 in the afternoon on the 22 of January, PUEBLO reported sighting two North Korean ships which made two passes closing to 30 yards. Parenthetically, I should say she reported this contact only three hours after the contact was actually made.

At 12 o'clock noon, on the following day, PUEBLO was challenged by a North Korean sub-chaser who signaled "Heave to or I will open fire." PUEBLO replied, "I am in international waters". And here it is noteworthy that the captain did not transmit this contact until 52 minutes after the event.

[REDACTED] PUEBLO reported her position as being 17 nautical miles off the coast. In other words, both vessels were obviously in international waters at the time.

[REDACTED]

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At 1300 hours, PUEBLO reported the North Korean sub-chaser had been joined by three patrol boats. There were MIGs overhead. The sub-chaser backed toward the PUEBLO with fenders rigged and an armed boarding party in the bow. The PUEBLO turned away and said she was intending to depart the area. This report was radiced 15 minutes after the event.

That is at 1:15.



Here is another critical time.

1:45, PUEBLO reported "We are being boarded, initiating emergency destruction of classified publications and equipment. Request help."

At 2:10, PUEBLO reported, "Have three wounded and one man with leg broken off; have not used weapons or uncovered 50 calibre machine gunes; destroying all key lists and as much electrical equipment as possible. How about some help? These guys mean business."

at 2:25, PUEBLO reported she had been directed to come to all stop, and was being boarded. Other messages just carried on the chatter to the effect that the crew of the PUEBLO was attempting to throw and was throwing various items of gear overboard, its pertinent gear. That sun sets in those waters and those latitudes at 5:09 in the evening. It is also pertinent too, the twilight ends at 5:34, as I recall it.

Why did we not respond with an air effort to protect the PUEBLO?

In the first place, the weather was bad. 6,000 overcast, snow flurries; there were not two MIGs in the air, there were eight. We had six F4Cs in Korea [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] and F4Cs  
do not have any air-to-air armament.

There were no Naval units close enough to give any help to the PUEBLO. The Enterprise at that time had been turned around but she had been steaming south from Japan in route to Vietnamese waters and she was out of effective contact range.

We have aircraft in Japan and also in Okinawa. The time and space factors were such that the aircraft would have had to brief the crews, stage through Japan, attempt to find the PUEBLO, knowing that there were MIGs in the air and knowing further that right here contiguous to the Wonsan Naval base is a MIG fighter base that contains usually some 75 MIG aircraft.

There is a combination of time, weather, and darkness. The conclusion of the commander on the spot was that he could not get there in time to intervene. Moreover, the PUEBLO and the North Korean vessels at this time were clustered together. Had he been able to find PUEBLO, had he been able to keep the MIGs off of his back, had he been able to successfully intervene between the MIGs on the air field only 25 miles away and the PUEBLO and then attempted an attack, I think that the odds are that he would have -- if he sunk a North Korean ship, he probably would have sunk the PUEBLO also.

THE PRESIDENT: Who is the commander? What is his background?

GENERAL WHEELER: The commander is Commander Bucher. The Commander of the 5th Air Force is Lt. General McKee, sir, Air Force. He has extremely fine reputation. I do not know him well personally. But I am assured that he is a careful and prudent officer. It is my judgment -- I had this thing by a group of officers, Navy, Air Force and Marine fliers, and they came to the conclusion that this effort would have been probably worse, could have been worse by taking action than by doing what we did at that time which was nothing, by not intervening.

Q How could it have been worse?



GENERAL WHEELER: If we sunk the PUEBLO ourselves, I think that there would have been questions asked as to whether we valued more the lives of 23 Americans or some gear. Had we sunk a North Korean vessel in international waters, I am sure we would be having questions posed to us as to our undue belligerency and undertaking this kind of an action. So I think it would have been worse.

Q Explaining the time difference (inaudible) approximately 2 o'clock and then you talk about 5 o'clock. I don't quite follow this.

GENERAL WHEELER: The key points are these: The first contact that was made by a North Korean vessel with the PUEBLO was at 12 noon Korean time. This contact apparently did not concern the captain of the PUEBLO. These vessels are harassed all the time. [REDACTED] was in the same waters in May of 1967, was harassed, I think, on half a dozen occasions. That is all. The fact that he was not (Inaudible) I think is indicated by the delay of 52 minutes in making a report. That he had even encountered a North Korean ship.

Q Are you blaming the commander?

GENERAL WHEELER: I am not blaming the commander because, as I say, harassment of these vessels is a normal thing.

Q Do you have plans of advising commanders what to do under those circumstances?

GENERAL WHEELER: The commanders have very explicit instructions on what to do. Of course in case of danger he is supposed when he becomes alarmed to try to move out of the area.

Q Why didn't he immediately notify you?

GENERAL WHEELER: I am sure as I said he did not think that he had encountered anything more than the normal harassing tactics.

Q How long a time was it? I am not a military man, I am a civilian. I expect like most Americans do, I think, if I were a soldier I would get in touch with my commander in case of an attack.



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GENERAL WHEELER: He (Inaudible)

The point I am trying to make, sir, is he didn't think he was under threat of attack. He was being harassed as these vessels are.

THE PRESIDENT: The answer to most of the questions is that you are (inaudible)

I said not to ask questions until we finish unless you had some compelling contribution to make because I think most of them could be, but I think most of your questions will be answered if you just listen (Inaudible)

GENERAL WHEELER: I would like to go back over now what I consider to be the key time elements involved.

One, at 12 noon the North Korean sub-chaser signaled to the PUEBLO "Heave to or I will open fire" PUEBLO made the normal response, "I am in international waters," and went about his business.

It was not until 1300, an hour later, that this vessel was joined by three other North Korean vessels and MIG aircraft appeared overhead. At that time, the sub-chaser began to move toward PUEBLO with the obvious intent to board her.

The PUEBLO turned away following the instructions that the captain has and said, "I intend to depart the area."

In other words, I deduce from this that he at that time for the first time became alarmed at the prospect of being in a situation unlike normal harassing situations. He could not get away from these people.

At 1345, he reported he was being boarded.

In other words, he had been maneuvering, trying to get away, get back out to open sea. The next critical time in my judgment is 5:09 in the evening, three hours later, approximately, which is sunset in those latitudes. I already have mentioned the fact of the bad weather.

I feel that under these circumstances it would have been impossible to respond with any degree of success. In fact, I think we might have been walking into a very carefully prepared trap and that we would have suffered a minor disaster.

Q Mr. President, you mentioned the sister ship. They had the similar situation a few days before. They fought their way out of it. Why didn't that put us on an alert?

GEN. WHEELER: I said that the sister ship of the PUEBLO in May of 1967. This is eight months before had a similar experience on about four or five different occasions in exactly the same waters. She was harassed but no effort was made by the North Koreans to seize her.

Q I should think, the thing that disturbs me, knowing what happened to that ship that we weren't prepared to move when a similar situation happened.

GEN. WHEELER: I would say this: This is piracy on the high seas, to put it pretty bluntly, or kidnapping of an individual. You can't have, I believe, a contingency plan which will account or take into account an illegal lawless act committed by a small nation on the far side of the world.

Q We can't permit that. That is why we are in a bad situation right now.

THE PRESIDENT: If we could, I would like to put on briefly and then each one can ask any questions you want.

I think we have each one of these men to cover a specific phase of it. I think we may cover some of the things that each one of you have asked about as you go along. I would just conclude what General Wheeler said by saying he has presented to me and the Security Council a statement after examining all that took place in the field, including the commander of the 5th Air Force's decision not to launch the planes. This is a statement that the Joint Chiefs have gone over and signed by General Wheeler. Therefore, I conclude that aircraft would have been of little use in aiding the PUEBLO. Their



3 use could have been more harmful than helpful.

I want to ask Secretary McNamara to explain why the ship was there, why it was not escorted and any other point he may want to comment on.

SECRETARY MCNAMARA: Gentlemen, the President announced that I was to leave the Department in February. I just asked Mr. Clifford if he would be willing to make the shift tomorrow for some unaccountable reason. He didn't find that agreeable.

First, why was the ship there?

It was there for one very clear purpose. We need the information that it can get. There is no other way to get it. Our security depends on it. It is absolutely impossible for us to penetrate close societies today.

I personally was responsible for efforts to try to penetrate two of these. I lost 50 agents in one case and 110 in another. There is no way to obtain this information other than by technical means. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] It is very much in our interest to get it.



9 We have no other way of obtaining information on potential enemies' intentions, force capabilities, tactics and strategy, other than by using vessels such as this kind.

We have five of these in this particular configuration, operating around the world today. We operate literally thousands of air flight information each year for the same purpose. The Soviets have [REDACTED] these vessels operating around the world. One of them, for example, was within stone's throw of the President's bungalow at Guam. We can pick up any one of these. They are all unescorted for exactly the same reasons that ours are unescorted. To do otherwise would be provocative. We would run the risk of compromising the mission. We would run the risk of frequent fire fights and potential military escalation.

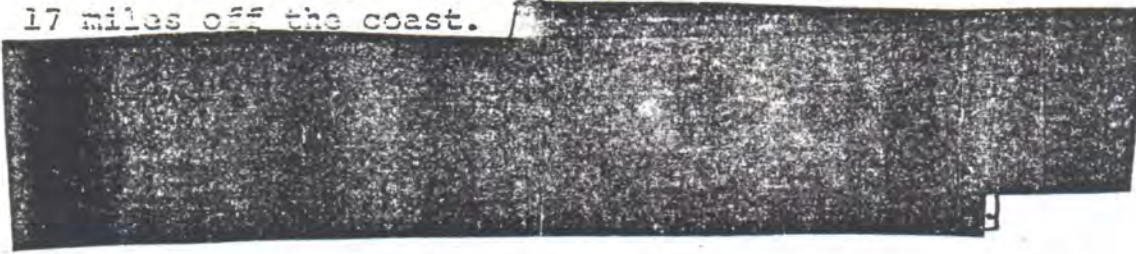
It was our opinion before this ship went on the mission it should not be escorted. It remains my opinion today it should not be escorted. I should tell you that missions such as this are not primarily the responsibility of the local commanders. They are initiated by the local commander and by intelligence operators around the world but each one of these is approved at high level in Washington. I personally assume my responsibility for this particular ship being where it was unescorted as it was.

The commanders instructions: They were to carry out his mission. They were to be firm in harassment, under harassment, as the President and General Wheeler mentioned, [REDACTED] had been harassed seven times during 1967 under exactly similar circumstances and to answer this gentleman's question, the circumstances of [REDACTED] were similar to the PUEBLO up to a point. Nothing happened to [REDACTED] That, of course, is what the PUEBLO commander thought would happen to him; nothing.

We have literally thousands of these harassing incidents every year. Aircraft and ships. [REDACTED] was surrounded by 11 hostile vessels for two and a half hours. They eventually broke off and went on their way. This is part of the game.



10           The commander was instructed under those circumstances to be firm, to maintain his rights. He was on the high seas. He reported to us he was 17 miles off the coast.



This commander was on the high seas. He was experiencing circumstances that his fellow commanders experienced thousands of times. In our opinion with hindsight he acted properly. Perhaps he should have notified us 52 minutes earlier. If he had I don't know how we would have used the 52 minutes. I think it is something we should think about for the future.

In any event, his first objective was to maintain his rights. The second objective, when he was boarded, was to save and avoid compromise of his classified materials. He did that at the risk of his life.

It appears he was wounded in the process. Certainly some of his men were wounded. They were continuing to destroy those materials apparently hours after they had been captured. They locked themselves into the compartments. They went about their destruction as they were instructed to do.

I see no basis for criticizing them. Why didn't they react?

General Wheeler summarized that for you. We had forces in Japan. We had forces in Okinawa. We are not prepared however, we don't have contingency plans to react to every case of piracy on the high seas. Neither do the Soviets. It is impossible for us to do so unless you want to increase the Defense Department Budget by perhaps 25 to 40 percent.

Furthermore, I would submit to you that the Joint Chiefs are wise in their judgments. Their Monday morning quarterbacking in which they believe it is unwise to react in circumstances such as this. Why? Because you first

must know what happened. It takes, if not hours, if not days, at least hours to determine it.

My first reaction to the attack on the liberty was that the Soviets had done it. We had been following Soviet submarines and Soviet naval craft in the Mediterranean for days during the Arab-Israeli crisis. I was absolutely certain the attack on the LIBERTY had been made by Soviet vessels. There was no other reasonable explanation.

Thank God our commanders didn't react against the Soviet vessels. They knew where they were. My next reaction was to check the location at the time. It soon became clear it was Soviet action. My next was Egyptian. Why not? Who else would have done it?

Thank God we didn't react against the Egyptians. It ultimately turned out it had been an Israeli attack.

As I say, it takes literally days in many cases and certainly hours to determine what happened. We didn't know what happened in this instance. We may not know all of the facts today.

The second point is that we were facing an air force of about 500 jet aircraft. The North Koreans -- it is a strong air force. We had ample strength for our normal purposes, Japan, Okinawa, Korea and elsewhere. We didn't have strengths to walk into 500 aircraft. Moreover, we know that those aircraft are on alert and in this particular instance it turned out that although the commander reported two MIG's over the ship, there were eight airborne at the time. There were 75 more on the ground 25 miles away.

There was a radar air alert system that reacted every time our aircraft came within range of their radar. The 5th Air Force Commander, General McKee, examined the situation, moved aircraft into the area, first I think leaned toward sending them into attack, and then decided against it. The chiefs, again Monday-morning quarterbacking, had determined he was wise. I fully support that view.

Mr. President, I could, if you wish, summarize very briefly some of the military actions we have considered in response to this situation.



They fall into three categories: The first category of actions would consist of those that would free the men. That is our objective.

There are 82 Americans there. We want to free them. How to do it? We have no military actions in that category. We know of no way to free these men by military force.

The second category of actions consists of those that would influence the political decision of the North Koreans to free them. I will cover those in a moment.

The third category of actions are those that we would use in the event they would decide not to free them. We would use these to penalize them.

What are these actions? We did have the [REDACTED] up there. It is the sister ship. It is in those waters. It could be moved in a matter of hours. We have tremendous forces there. This likely would lead to a fire fight.

The result is difficult to predict. You can make your own judgement of whether this would be wise.

The second action would be to put salvage ships on the spot. Allegedly for the purpose of recovering the documents and the classified equipment thrown overboard. These, too, would have to be escorted. They would be within range of the Komar class patrol boats in Wonsan Harbor, boats very effective against surface ships at that range, of course within range of the 75 MIG's.

Undoubtedly, there would be a fire fight here. Again you can draw your own conclusions as to what would result. We could mine the area. This could be done with relatively few sorties although the (inaudible) would propose to take out the air field and defenses in the area first.

The obvious action is to seize a North Korean vessel. A reciprocal act. The problem is there are not any. It is a slight exaggeration but not much. There are

four very small coastal craft. Two of them are cannery ships acting as mother vessels. Two others are very small coastal vessels. None of these happen to be at sea at the present time. We could pick up a fishing junk. To do so of course would require a Naval force within the area of activity, the mission, Polmar class boats and air defenses. We could put in a guarantee and blockage. We would immediately be confronting the Soviets.

There are 24 airfields there. The commander Headquarters, division headquarters -- believe the latest intelligence available to us on all of the defenses (inaudible) and valuable targets of North Korea.

Almost as current as yesterday -- we are prepared to do it. I should tell you what you perhaps already know that the President following this event ordered a reinforcement of our forces there.

I don't think we should talk of this publicly but I want you to know we are moving about 361 aircraft there. Most of them are there at the present time. The Enterprise is on station. There is a second attack carrier on station as well (inaudible).

There are 15 or 16 destroyers there, none of these Naval craft or aircraft have been sent there away from Vietnam. There has been no reduction in our forces there. No reduction in our forces in Western Europe.

I think this is a test to the point that we are not overstretched or overextended worldwide. At the time this happened (Inaudible) for immediate deployment. It was from those that we deployed some 300.

The President also called up Reserve forces as you know. There is a catalogue of additional military reactions from which we can choose an appropriate one if and when the circumstances make that desirable.

THE PRESIDENT: Back following the Bay of Pigs incident, President Kennedy set up a Foreign Intelligence



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Advisory Board and Dr. Killian was the head of it. Mr. Clifford was a member. When Dr. Killian became ill, President Kennedy asked Mr. Clifford to become its chairman. General Taylor is also a member of that Board that serves the President.

I would ask Mr. Clifford to speak to you very briefly on the subject of intelligence. So I think it will give you a little background of some of our operations in that field.

MR. CLIFFORD: I shall confine myself to this one facet of this broad and complex problem. When the incident first occurred, the major reaction of the American people was one of indignation. Then I believe as they began to think it over, the question began to arise, as evidenced in the mail that the White House is receiving and possibly some of the mail that you are receiving, why did we have a ship there? Why was it necessary?

Was it not provocative to have a vessel that close to a country like North Korea? Also, from time to time, the American people asked the question, why is it necessary that we engage in this activity? Why must we have a spie ship? Is this not an undignified posture for a democracy and is there not some element of a program associated with spying upon some other nation? The answer to that question is that we cannot endure as a nation under present circumstances existing in the world without having the information that the President must have to make his decisions.

Two quick illustrations: After the Bay of Pigs incident, President Kennedy called his group together and formed the Intelligence Board. He said, "I made a bad decision. The reason I made a bad decision was that my information was poor and the reason the information was poor was our intelligence was miserable."

There we became involved in what we all would now know was an exceedingly serious matter and could have become even more so.

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On the other hand, there was the reverse of that situation not much more than a year later. In October of 1962, you will recall the Cuban confrontation at which time we learned through intelligence that the Soviets had put offensive missiles into Cuba.

Had we not known that, those missiles would have been placed there. They were directed at the major cities in the United States. That condition could have existed. We could have been under some threat at that time that would have been unanswerable had we not known in advance that those missiles had been placed there.

The reason why this is necessary under these circumstances, President Johnson referred to it very briefly. Let me repeat it.

In 1966, there were some 57 or 58 forays by the North Koreans over the border into South Korea. That was construed to be a manageable number. In 1967, only one year later, that increased to over 500 forays by North Koreans over the border into South Korea. This often is timed as a prelude to something that could be very serious and momentous from the standpoint of the threat directed at the United States.

The President of the United States has to know what is taking place in North Korea. Is there going to be a formation of forces there that might lead to some invasion? We have almost 60,000 troops in South Korea. Those men have to be informed. Those commanders have to know what is taking place across the demilitarized zone.

The old form of intelligence obtaining was done by agents. Secretary McNamara referred briefly to that. In these latter years, in which we are dealing with totalitarian powers, the use of the individual agents is now negligible. [REDACTED]

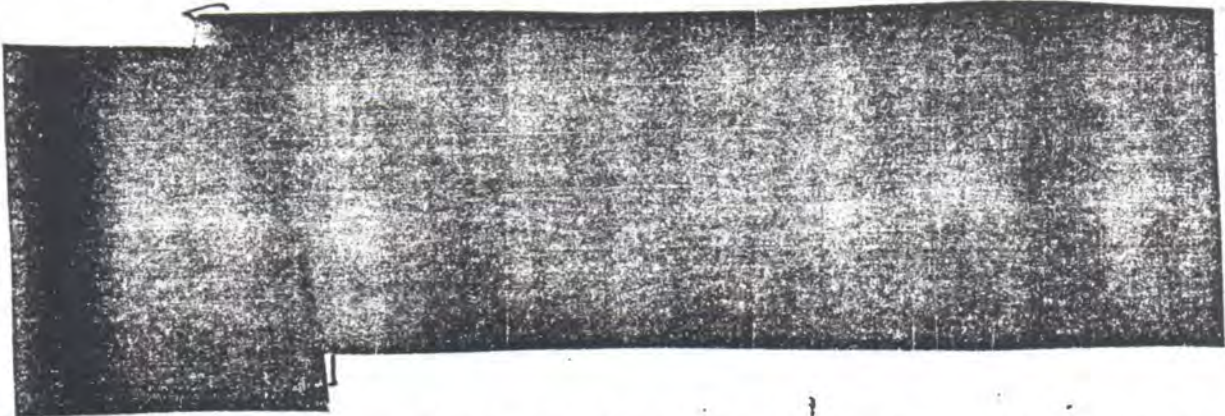


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There will be a head intelligence officer in a town, and he will have under him precinct workers, block workers, and even house workers and any new individual that comes into that community is immediately known and we are not able to keep them there.

That means we must turn if we are to have the information that is absolutely necessary to modern electronic means.

This ship is very valuable to us off of the coast of North Korea.



So let me close on the note of saying that this is absolutely necessary for us. We cannot be defensive about it. We cannot apologize about it. We have to have an intelligence community. We have to have the very best kind of information.

Sometimes there have been those who have attacked our intelligence activity, the CIA and others. Let me say to you after years of working with these groups, these are dedicated men in one of the meanest, cruellest, most dangerous kinds of games there is.

Sometime ago, just a quick dramatic illustration, a [redacted] agent went bad. He defected. Some of our best agents within the period of months that followed that time just disappeared, never heard of again.

When you think about what those men went through before they finally got the very end, it makes you wonder about the dedication that these men have. I say it makes

it more difficult when these men operate under certain areas of hostility and public criticism that they do.

The Soviet Union is doing exactly what we are doing.

[REDACTED] None of them have any cover.

You cannot accompany these intelligence ships with Naval vessels and air cover. In the first place, they lose their value. You cannot send an armada in close to North Korea and expect this ship to do its job. [REDACTED] It will be concluded to be a very provocative act.

If you send cover in over these ships, in order to maintain that cover, you are going to violate Korean airspace. You can't do that. What we do is take a calculated risk when we send these ships out. We have been doing it for years, and this is the first time it has happened. It happened without warning. Perhaps we learned some lessons from it.

I beseech your support for our continued work in the intelligence field. From time to time, when criticism arises, I would hope that you would seek to get the facts so you could learn what is behind these various incidents that take place.

We must stay behind these men. They deserve the best support that we can give them.

Thank you.

MORE



THE PRESIDENT: From time to time, since I have been President, I have called upon some senior citizens of this country who have served in office of Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense, Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and advisors to the Presidents and so forth, Ambassadors.

One of these men is General Maxwell Taylor. He is now a member of the President's Intelligence Board. I have had him since this incident happened, reviewing it, discussing it, going over it with former Undersecretary Ball, some Admirals and Generals, and diplomatic people, to see what we can learn, to see what mistakes we made if any; to see what might have been done; what could have been done that wasn't done.

I want General Taylor to speak to you for a moment or two.

GENERAL TAYLOR: Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I would only give you my overall impressions drawn out of the discussions and studies which I joined in in the last five days.

I must say the evidence now is reasonably complete on what took place. There are still some gaps in it, some gaps that will never be entirely filled until we get our crew and captain back.

But it seems to me in spite of the complexities which we have been discussing tonight, several conclusions come through loud and clear.

The first is that if indeed this ship had to be dispatched into the area, in other words, if the mission was justified, in my mind there is no question about its justification, then indeed we were subjecting it to a risk that had to be run, and a risk that could result in the capture if indeed North Korea decided they would hijack this ship on the high seas and take the consequences. This had never happened before. It happened this time.

Again, in reviewing the evidence, I know of no military way that we could have protected this ship, allow it to accomplish its mission and avoid this hijacking from taking place once that decision had been made in the North.

Having accepted that hard, rather grim fact, and we have sustained a rather serious loss in the equipment which has gone into the hands of the enemy, 83 of our citizens are in the hands of the enemy.

How should we behave?

Again, it seems to me fairly clear we should be guided with cold-blooded consideration of what our national interests are. We can't afford to get mad. We can't afford to loose our national temper.

We have to decide what is the course of action best suited to serve our national interest.

I will just make three or possibly four points. First, at this juncture, we should do nothing that will ~~seter~~ or make more difficult the return of our citizens, the 83 men in the North. Maybe they will come back quickly. ~~The hope was as we all had.~~

Maybe not, I am not sure. But beyond the consideration of the safety of our seamen, here are three points I think we have to bear in mind and adjust our conduct in accordance with them.

The first is that we should view this in the pattern of events taking place in the Far East. I have the feeling, I think, many of you may share it, we are approaching a climatic point in South Vietnam. There is certainly a relationship between many events we are seeing taking place outside of the confines of South Vietnam.

I feel deeply that this PUEBLO incident is linked to South Vietnam. An attempt to divert our attentions to create problems for us here at home in the United States and certainly to create problems for our South Koreans and relations with the South Koreans.



I would say that we must settle this in consideration of these points.

First, we cannot afford in the national interest to open another military front in Korea. We don't need any more military fronts.

Second, we must keep together with our South Korean allies, they are the most valuable people we have in the Far East. They are giving us some 60,000 fighting men in South Vietnam. They are undertaking to send more down, and those men certainly must follow.

Then, finally, on the home front, we must not let this be another decisive factor to add to the joys of our enemies in foreign capitals, particularly Hanoi. Certainly as a long time student of the Vietnamese situation, I am convinced that this situation in Asia is going to be settled here at home.

If we let the PUEBLO be one more way of splitting the American people and encouraging our enemies indeed we are playing into their hands and inflicting a self-inflicted wound.

Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: I want to ask the Director of the CIA, Mr. Helms, to cover the matter briefly with you and show the pictures of some of the Soviet ships and so forth.

MR. HELMS: I simply want to show these photographs of Soviet trawlers which include (inaudible) the kind of mission the PUEBLO has.

The first four or five of these were taken of this Soviet trawler called the Arvin off the coast of the Northern part of California.

Despite the fact that the shore line seems very close, the Arvin is at least out beyond the three-mile limit. As you gentlemen know, we only claim three miles for our side where the other claims 12.

You will see from the (inaudible) how close into the coast they come. Let us drop these down. They all show the same ship in this case.

This photograph here of another ship operating this time in the Southern part of California down off Tabini(?) Island.

This one here (inaudible) off the coast of Charleston, South Carolina. There are lots more photographs of this kind which can be produced. This is generally what they are up to.

As was said earlier, when the President was in Guam he got up in the morning and could see the trawler out at sea there listening to all the other nations.

There were no escorts of any kind. These ships sail around. The one following the Enterprise and the Task Force now, you may have seen the photograph in the paper the other day the the Japanese took. There is no question it is a trawler.there.

Q Did we have a method of jamming them?

MR. HELMS: They listen. You couldn't jam everything. It is not physically possible. Astronomically expensive, we could hardly do it. Jamming takes place in radio communications in the Soviet Union, for example, they jam our broadcasts. It costs them really a rather fantastic amount to do this. It is very much of an expense.

There is only one other thing I want to say, Mr. President. That after the PUEBLO was taken, obviously a very serious question as to what the North Koreans were up to. As you know, deceiveng (Inaudible) disruption they are trying to cause by the diversion of this large battle in Vietnam, I want to say the President made a very courageous decision immediately after the PUEBLO was taken and permitted us to ascertain whether the North Koreans were indeed in the state of war-like readiness or not.

We established beyond any question of a doubt



they are certainly on a high alert (inaudible). They obviously don't intend to make a major attack over the demilitarized zone. I thought that might reassure you tonight.

THE PRESIDENT: Our military men are with this matter every moment. They are exploring all possible alternatives. While we are doing that, we are using every means at our disposal with friends and some people not so friendly to try to find some way to get these men released.

I am going to ask the final speaker, Secretary Rusk, to tell you what we are doing through diplomatic means, what our plans are, what our expectations are, what our hopes are. Then I will make a brief statement to conclude the meeting and we will take your questions.

SECRETARY RUSK: Mr. President, I should be very brief.

My present mission in this Korean matter is to get the ship and men back by diplomatic means as quickly as possible.

I would like to point out if we are going to get the men and ship back, it can only be done by diplomacy.

When you move into a military chapter you more or less write off the men and ship. Therefore, we would like very much to get these men back if possible.

When the incident first occurred, we immediately dispatched a message to the Soviet Union. It went out within two hours of the first report of this incident that we had here in Washington. We have continued to follow up on that because we think the Soviet Union has the principal influence in North Korea and because the Soviet Union has a considerable stake in the principals that are involved in this situation.

That is the freedom of the seas and the freedom of international waters.

It should be noted that this ship was in international waters. It was where it had a right to

be and it had a right to be engaged in what it was doing.

It was not interfering in any way with what North Korea was doing. It was there listening and had a right to be there listening. Even if it were not in international waters, even if it were in national waters, under the law of the sea, Convention of 1958, Article 23, the coastal nation has the right to require it to leave. It does not have the right to seize it.

So that it is a very firmly established principle of international law and practice that naval vessels, warships, are clothed with sovereign immunity.

So on any theory of the case, we have a right to have this ship released at the earliest possible moment. We have pressed that very hard with the Soviets. It is the principle in which they have a considerable stake.

We know they are in touch with the North Koreans. If they are in touch sufficiently, we would be getting our ship and men back right away.

But we know that they are seriously involved in this matter with the North Koreans.

Secondly, we are using the United Nations military armistice machinery which was established at the end of the Korean war. It just happens that within 24 hours of the time of this incident we had already scheduled a meeting of that commission in order to take up with the North Koreans this rapidly increasing rate of infiltration by North Korea into the South. So that when we, in fact, met on this pre-determined occasion, we then took up the PUEBLO case along with the infiltration.

I would suppose that this machinery is the most promising. Yesterday North Korea broadcast that they considered this machinery the more suitable machinery. We expect to have another meeting with them shortly.

I would urge you not to make too much public play of this particular machinery because sometimes if things are done quietly they can be done more effectively. But we are in touch with the North Koreans through this particular machinery.



We sit there as the United Nations Command and the North Koreans there in their own capacity.

Third, we have taken this up in the Security Council. We thought it was important that the United Nations, which has had a special history of connection with the Korean matter, should be involved in this immediately. We think that the Security Council is not likely to be able to do very much about it because North Korea has said this is not the business of the Security Council.

Nevertheless it may be that the Security Council will dispatch someone to North Korea in order to try to obtain the release of the ship and the personnel. More or less as Dag Hammarskjold went to Peking to release our fliers ten years ago.

We just can't tell yet. But in any event it is an important matter to be before the Security Council in order to have an effective contact with different elements on the other side.

Fourth, we have been in touch with the President's direction with practically every government in the world. We have had reactions from some 90 of them. There is no question that if a general vote were taken the overwhelming majority would think these men and ship ought to be returned promptly.

I can't at the moment tell you that these men and the ship are on the way out. I would say that the odds are up to 50-50 that we shall get them out by diplomacy within the foreseeable future. I don't mean the seven months that have elapsed after the RB 47 shoot down in the Barin Sea in the 1960. That was an incident which was roughly comparable to this one as far as the basic areas were concerned. An American aircraft [REDACTED] was in the international air space over international waters was shot down 40 to 50 miles at sea. The Soviets picked up two of the surviving crew and kept those crew members until January or early February 1961. That is some seven months.

That is not good enough in this instance where

83 men involved and a ship on the high seas is involved.

Nevertheless, the same procedures were used at that time, taking it to the Security Council and using diplomacy, as are being used now.

I would like to make two concluding remarks. One is that I, Secretary of State, am a principal customer of this intelligence process.

It is extremely vital to me if I am to serve the President that we have this intelligence coming in regularly and as accurately as possible. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Because of the ten-fold increase in North Korean infiltration of South Korea as between 1967 and 1966, and it was very important for us to get all sources of information on what was happening in North Korea and whether, in fact, they were going to open up a second front from presumably in support of the North Vietnamese.

I would strongly urge in conclusion that we not let a poor case make bad law. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] if we should limit such missions solely to those which can be adequately protected from a military point of view, this would reduce to a mere fraction the kind of missions in which we are now engaged.

We would cripple our intelligence if we were to undertake these activities only in those places where they could be given full air support.

There were some decisions that the skipper himself had to make. There were alternative decisions which could have been reasonable under the circumstances. Had he at noon wired back that he was under harassment and asked for help, that would have been a reasonable thing for him to do. But instead he made the judgment that that was harassment of a normal sort and that he was resuming his mission. That too was a reasonable thing to do.

In other words it is not always clear in



prospect that the alternatives are classified between those that are reasonable and those that are unreasonable. It turns on the events.

In retrospect we might hope that he had made one or another different kind of decision. But in the circumstance in which he found himself, I don't think we can say he made an unreasonable decision.

We shall do our best by getting these men back by diplomatic actions. I think the chance runs up to 50-50 at this present point.

THE PRESIDENT: This has been a bad ten days. We have a rather hard season ahead of us for this team. We have a great many domestic problems. We have our primaries coming up. We are having our conventions. We are in an election year.

I worked very long on the State of the Union and spent my Christmas on it, then I tuned in on the television one evening and I heard it discussed for an hour. When they got through I said the thing that amazes me, I had 4,000 words there that 15 men couldn't find one good sentence.

I just don't understand it. Am I that far off? Am I wrong? Has something happened to me?

My wife said, I think so. But she said you don't know what year you are living in. This is '68.

With the primaries and ~~conventions~~ and elections coming up and all of us being interested, I was rather amused in one of our briefings for one man to say after we had all finished, "Well, now, Mr. President, isn't there something that in retrospect you would do differently? Wasn't there something we did wrong?" Well, yes, there were a godd many things we did wrong, I am sure. I don't know what they are. We are studying them now.

I have asked General Clark who was a commander in Korea. I have asked Admiral MacDonald who has just finished his Chief of Naval Operations. I have asked Mr. George Ball who is Undersecretary of State and a great lawyer and very active in World War II, to take everything we have and go

into the closed rooms and analyze them and evaluate them and study every resource the Federal Government has at their disposal and come to me and tell me what not to do and what to tell others not to do and what to do that we haven't done.

I am going to ask them to go before the Armed Services Committee just as soon as we can get this summarized. In the meantime, these men will be available to go before the Appropriations Committees and discuss it. But we are going to be asked tomorrow as you were asked yesterday, and this seemed to be a desirable time to tell you all that we know now.

A coach and his associates in the lockerroom can give all the reasons and explain why the play went this way and why it should go that way. But in the final analysis, the men out on the field, the man that is the halfback that has to carry that ball, and the man that has to pass it, and the man who has to go around the end -- and you are whatever players I have, the President has. You are on the key committees. You can get the information. You can give the answers and you can provide the leadership.

A man's judgment is no better than his information. We want to give you all the information we can.

So I have asked Mr. Rostow to be fully cooperative with you and the Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense and the Intelligence Service to be helpful to you in any way we can.

I asked General Westmoreland and Ambassador Bunker to make available all the information they can as quickly as they can, because our people know these are dangerous times. I had a call from General Westmoreland at 5 o'clock this afternoon. I didn't want to ask him to leave his headquarters and his place where he was and go to another place for a secure phone. So we went out on our back line with certain questions from the President. They have been given to me since we started. These are the answers as of 6 o'clock our time in Saigon.



From the beginning of the planned truce, the following casualties have been suffered by us, planned truce on January 29, the following casualties have been suffered by us or inflicted on the enemy. This is General Westmoreland speaking for General Ginsburg who has relayed the information to me.

Friendly, 421 killed in action, including 189 United States.

Enemy, 4,320 killed in action, 1,811 additional detainees. Many of whom are prisoners of war.

I asked him the casualties to date that they could best estimate.

Two, enemy capacity to sustain the present campaign. He sees a three-phase campaign. The first phase involves a buildup. Sporadic attack and a well orchestrated psychological warfare program against the population of South Vietnam.

He said we are now in the second phase which is an all-out military effort throughout South Vietnam except for two Northern provinces. The enemy has achieved some local successes but the initiative is turned against them. We feel that he has the capability of continuing this phase for perhaps several more days at great risk to himself. The third phase will involve a massive attack in Quang-Tri(?) and Quang-Ngai(?) provinces, and Khesanh. We have been following that and anticipating it and expecting it. It is a few days behind schedule.

They have made a great effort to get us to stop our bombing. They have made a great effort to get us to extend the truce. I agreed with Mr. Moliness to give one additional day at Christmas, although our military men had deep concerns about it.

When we went along for the very limited 36-hour truce, the Tet, General Westmoreland found that in the light of the power that they were using to take advantage while they were pleading with us to stop bombings, while they were begging us to tie our hands, while they were asking us to take no action in troops, they were having massive buildups calculated to overrun our 40,000 men that are in 40 miles of Khesanh. They have 40,000 within 40 miles of Khesanh.

The enemy is now poised for this phase, General Westmoreland says, which he considers his decisive campaign.

[REDACTED]

Our air strikes have blunted his attack. But we still give him the capability to strike at any time with large forces supported by an abundance of artillery and rockets.

So much for the enemy capacity.

Three, relationship between North Vietnamese and North Korean actions.

I asked him to analyze that, The experts in the field and what they thought about it.

He said, "It would seem to us that there is a relationship."

Fourth, is there a military impasse in South Vietnam?

We do not think the situation in South Vietnam is an impasse. The initiative is turned in favor of the government. The enemy is suffering unprecedented casualties indeed.

Is the enemy holding any towns now in South Vietnam? That was sent out at 5 and is answered at 6.

~~That was~~

The enemy does not control any single town in South Vietnam. However, he has a degree of control in several towns, specifically he has some forces in Quang-Tri, Hue, Di Yan(?), Kon Tum City, Binh-Tuy(?) and scattered elements in Saigon. I repeat he does not control any single town, in those areas where the enemy has troops they are confronted by Vietnamese troops and the fighting continues.

What political and psychological problems does Ambassador Bunker and General Westmoreland foresee as a result of these wide-spread attacks?

It seems to Ambassador Bunker and me, says General Westmoreland, that initially there will be some adverse impact upon the people and Government. However, if the



government handles the matter carefully, they will use the opportunity to really improve their position with the people. President Thieu has the opportunity to exercise rare leadership. He has already declared martial law. It must be, under the constitution, approved by the congress, and the national assembly within 12 days. The national assembly, says General Westmoreland, has the opportunity to be more constructive.

President Thieu has declared martial law. This will have to be approved by the assembly after 12 days in accordance with the constitution. The situation should not show down major programs for prolonged periods. Military success should give the army of South Vietnam and its leadership self-confidence and should encourage the acceleration of their improvements.

One more word. I have asked President Truman and President Eisenhower to be briefed. President Eisenhower has unusual experience as a soldier and eight years in this job. He has asked us to give some consideration in his judgement to several things: Moving some air reinforcements to Korea. We have done that, and are doing it.

They will be closing very shortly. We will be completing that. We are not giving out the names and numbers. We don't want to appear bellicose in threatening the ultimatums. They are going there as a precautionary measure. The reserves, limited number that have been called up. We have not called up the 140,000 that were called on another occasion. We have called up 14. They will take the place of the men here who will have to go there.

He has suggested we consider strengthening the defense arrangements along the DMZ, possibly including some partolling. He has suggested we give consideration to action to bring the whole command in South Korea to a peaceable high state of readiness. Ground units should be brought up to strength.

He has suggested giving thought to quarantine. He did not think the plan to take these actions should be spelled out to the public in detail at this stage of the leadership. It could be pointed out that some of them could be initiated on the President's own authority

but in a matter of this kind it is important to have the Congress associated with the President that he hopes we could consult with them.

The Congressmen should be asked to keep specific details quite confidential. The general intention, of course, would become generally known.

Finally, General Eisenhower urges we do everything possible to press for action on the diplomatic front and in the United Nations Security Council and if necessary we should even ask for a special session of the General Assembly, if the Secretary thought anything useful was to be achieved.

He concluded by asking me to convey to the President his personal hope for the President's success in the matter.

He says in the conclusion of his letter that this is apolitical year. There will be many people that want to be partisan about it. But that we will not be one of them and that his sole and most cherished hope now is that the President can win the war we are in.

I appreciate that statement very much. I think now I will ask the gentlemen who have been here with me to come over here and sit where you can talk to them. Any of you that have any questions you would like to ask, if you just please rise and give your name and your State, so they can identify you. Direct your question to any one of the individuals concerned and we will stay as long as you are able to stay or desire to stay. Those of you that need to leave will be at liberty to do so quietly at the exit back there.

MORE



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SENATOR LAUSCHE: Mr. President, as a Member of the Foreign Relations Committee, I find myself in this delima: The Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate is engaged in intense activity to prove that we should not have engaged in firing in the Tonkin Bay.

In my opinion, those who are prosecuting this view, and I want to repeat vigorously that the United States Government was completely in the wrong on the Tonkin Bay developments -- in the main, those same persons are now arguing and advocating that we are in the wrong because we did not use adequate military force in repealing the seizure of the Pueblo. The President mentioned hindsight as distinguished from foresight. I felt deeply pained by what is happening.

Post facto judgement is supposedly pertinent and I want to warn Secretary McNamara that he is to be called and to be demonstrated to have mislead the nation into improper use of military forces in the Tonkin Bay.

My question is how is it that in the Tonkin Bay you were wrong by attacking and in the Pueblo you are wrong becuae you didn't attack?

THE PRESIDENT: I said we were right on both times. I think that it is human nature and it is certainly right to all Americans identified (inaudible) that when something goes wrong, we never walk out and (inaudible) I thought President Kennedy, after the Bay of Pigs, was very big as a man when he said that "It is my responsibility (inaudible) at this pdnt the attorney (inaudible) Mr. Dulles to carefully review everything happening and to make his report.

When a man and his wife (inaudible) on a rainy night (inaudible) and she says "why in the hell didn't you put on the brakes earlier?" That is typical. I have been married 30 years. I know what happens when one of these things (Inaudible) -- in Florida on vacation.

But when it came over the radio and I asked Ambassador Harriman (inaudible) Senator Russell said "get up and get your things. We have got to go back. We are going to be asked all of these questions." (Inaudible)

Our judgment is, my judgment, is that the best judgment inside and outside is the one that did the wrongful act, the North Koreans. Some of our people and a good many of our people just kind of get more real satisfaction out of blaming our Navy or our commanders or our Secretaries or our public servants than they do the North Koreans who are the hijackers and the outlaws who went out here in the international waters and took an unarmed ship that was trying to get away from them and all the men.

When you leave here tonight, we have adequate White House police protection, we think. You have spent millions on Secret Service since the assassination of the President. Much more than our Congress (Inaudible) and a great many more around than I want.

But the fact is that we have had thousands of threats to the President, to assassinate the President this year. At least 12 or 14 of them have already gotten over these gates, with all the protection we have.

Some of you may be shot on the way home, notwithstanding all the police we have and all the guards and (inaudible) and when you are, I know you will say, "why did the President keep me so late and why didn't he adjourn early?"

(Inaudible) made the least contribution during the whole period (Inaudible) all the persons were wrong. He did find more (Inaudible) I take that intelligence report and I know the man to be as strong an anti-communist Senator that we have. (Inaudible)

But they were quoting him the other morning as saying the distinguished spokesman for the government, Senator so and so, said that this boat shouldn't have ever been there. (Inaudible) We have a candidate for office of another party that came out and (Inaudible). -- General Wheeler, of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said it ought to have been escorted. It is just like putting a fire engine around a house detective who is trying to listen through the keyhole to see or hear what is happening (Inaudible). Any Third-grade boy ought to know, much less a candidate for President (Inaudible)

Lieutenant General, did you say he was a Lieutenant General, and you have to have a reasonably good record to



be a Lieutenant General. But General Wheeler gave me several reasons here.

I didn't take time to go over them. But in this communication that he and the Joint Chiefs prepared,-- but this closing sentence was the strongest sentence that I have seen and I will just add this to it: That the thing that I am most thankful for, if I am thankful for anything, -- "Mr. President, because sometimes I wish that I would just wake up feeling like" -- Goldwater would have deserved it, if he had won.

[REDACTED]

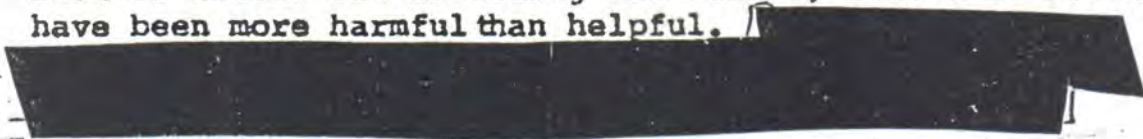
The aircraft in the Okinawa, and Japan were not used because on the scene of the action, the movement in Korea would not permit them. The situation at the scene of the action was very unfavorable, the weather was poor, the clouds were broken, MIG aircraft were reported to be above the Pueblo, two reported although there were eight, the surface action occurred 25 miles from a major North Korean airfield. Were aircraft used in such a situation, they would have been required in numerical strength. The aircraft would be needed to capture the MIG base at Wansong, to pin down the MIGs, the additional fighting aircraft would be needed to protect the aircraft aiding the Pueblo from the MIGs.

From the time the Pueblo requested assistance and while being towed in, one of the Korean boats was always near the Pueblo and the Koreans were aboard the Pueblo itself and had friendly aircraft had been sent, and if they could have found the Pueblo, it was about dark, you know, and in the dark, there is reasonable doubt they could have been able to drive off the North Korean boats without sinking one or more with serious risk of sinking the Pueblo and the men in the process and seeing as how their ability to hit some Russian ships sometimes, I think maybe they might have hit our own ship.

It is unlikely that the mere presence of the aircraft in support of the Pueblo would have caused the North Korean boats to have ever freed the Pueblo since it must be assumed the MIG aircraft would have been quite active in repelling the U. S. aircraft.

They had far superior numbers.

Therefore I conclude that aircraft would have been of little use in aiding the Pueblo, that this could have been more harmful than helpful.



They said they would come to their rescue when they need them. And the thankful thing to come out of this was that General McKee, whoever he is, didn't launch an inferior force in the dark to start trying to rescue the Pueblo out there in the snow at night against a superior aircraft because we might be meeting on another subject tonight instead of the one we are meeting on.

We are going to have to have a good many additional things. We are going to have to have your help on it. We are studying what we need to do. We know we need additional planes there. We know our military assistance was materially cut last year. We know that we are going to have to give some additional protection to South Korea and have them give some additional protection to themselves.

That is going to cost money. We are considering the possibility of extending enlistments because every month we have 2500 trained men coming out. We are considering several proposals that will give us the strength we need to avoid a wider war. But we are considering them. We want to be sure of them. We want to be careful that we can all be on board on them. Then we are going to consult with you leaders because I don't want to come up there and ask for something that you don't give me and give me promptly in a situation of this kind. We will be back in touch with you when that happens.

Any other questions?

CONGRESSMAN COHELAN OF CALIFORNIA: Mr. President, I come from Berkely, California and I just got back from home. One of the things that pleased me very much was that the Pueblo incident seemed to reflect great concern in reference to whether or not the ship was able to destruct the facilities. I am not clear as to whether or not they did destroy it?

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THE PRESIDENT: They destroyed some of their facilities. We are afraid that they destroyed ~~man's~~ a man's leg and blew him up. We don't know who he was. They just ~~radioed~~ that one man had lost his leg. We are sure they didn't destroy all of it. We are sure of some of it has been confiscated.

CONGRESSMAN HEBERT OF LOUISIANA: Mr. President, I want to ask General Wheeler and the communications also with General Westmoreland seems to be the casualties involving -- our casualties and the enemies casualties -- I wonder how many aircraft were lost in the most recent attack?

(Inaudible)

GENERAL WHEELER: (Inaudible) 2 A37's, one A-6, one F-100 (Inaudible) five (Inaudible) 40 additional aircraft (Inaudible)

CONGRESSMAN HEBERT: Could you estimate the total on it?

GENERAL WHEELER: About 75 all total.

CONGRESSMAN HERBERT: 75 were damaged, because at the Armed Services Committee this morning at the briefing, I think it was indicated a higher destruction. (Inaudible) Choppers alos.

GENERAL WHEELER: (Inaudible) 

CONGRESSMAN HERBERT: This was this morning at 10 o'clock. So the members before the Armed Services Committee are very interested in finding out exactly what the facts were. A number of choppers were involved. (Inaudible) impressed in our memory exactly the real type -- and this is a very appauling figure you gave out -- and most ~~impressive~~, but it does not exactly fit in with the number that you give us.

THE PRESIDENT: (inaudible)

CONGRESSMAN GEORGE MAHON: Mr. President, I think you and the team have done a great job in giving us the facts. ~~We~~ the situation. It has been very helpful to me. We are in a crucial situation.

President Kennedy said "Think not of what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country."

We don't want to rock the boat, I don't think. We are all in the same boat together as a party and as Americans.

We want to present the right image as members of the Congress, in my opinion. But what in your judgement would you advise what can we best do for the country in our capacity?

You are the President. You are the Commander-in-Chief and I think I can say that we are at your service and we think that the best is being done that could be done under the circumstances.

THE PRESIDENT: We frankly don't know. We are exploring a great many things. The leader of the team ought to study out his plays and be prepared to justify them and support them if the pass is intercepted or something.

We are trying to do that. We are giving some thought to extending tours of duty. We are going some thought to increasing our production rate of ammunition. We are giving some thought to free aircraft required for training by extending some pilot tours.

We are giving some thought to increase available combat pilots by utilization of the reserve pilots for training purposes. We are giving some thought to moving some carriers. We are giving some thought to deploying some additional air strength. Some of it is being deployed.

We are going some thought to increasing the ground alert. We are going to reactivate some Naval Reserve ship, the reserve crews which could be -- could be provided by the President's call, if we have a call.

We would expect to consider extending periods of obligating service to military personnel, officers, enlisted, reserve and regular. That would need legislation. That would be something you could do for your country.



We are considering providing authority to call units and individuals not assigned to units but also provide for calling of individuals from within units. We may have an outstanding expert that we need in this unit. But under legislation as passed, we have to call the whole unit or we can't get that individual.

We would like to consider that. We are considering asking for authority to recall some retired reserve personnel, or as already exists, to call regular to active duty without their consent and most of these things even though we don't have legislation, we would want to talk to the Congress about.

We would consider suspending officer grade limitations. We are seriously considering and very likely are going to expand the military assistance program for the Republic of Korea to cover essential support items now being funded by the military services.

The counter-infiltration package, the replacement with modernization equipment, the funding for aircraft, anti-aircraft equipment, and naval radar and patrol craft and spare parts. We are considering providing authorization for appropriation to include protection from Korean air bases, from ground and air attacks, by (Inaudible) rapid runway repair equipment, base camouflage materials, and more effective infiltration barriers, because we have had 590 incidents and we have 55,000 men out there.

So we are considering more effective infiltration barriers below the Korean DMZ. We are considering asking for increased authority for transfer between appropriations items. That is a good place you could help us right there on that appropriations. Emergency construction transfer authorization, also.

We haven't concluded any of these things. We might call an extra Marine division or a wing team. The night we call the Reserve portion of the crews or the Naval Reserve ships, we might inaugurate a system of priorities under the Defense Production Act particularly for Military aircraft.

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We might take some action in connection with the copper strike to try to get that settled quickly. We might announce the release of some stockpile for copper because the Defense Department is now paying a heavy price for it. We have a stockpile. When it is time to use stockpile is when we need it. We need it and need it bad. We can't have a much worse situation than we have now.

I can visualize what we would be holding it for if we don't use it now. We would consider entering into the third stage of the Civil Reserve Air (Inaudible) program by transferring 200 - 707 type aircraft from the civilian airlines to military airlifts. We don't know any of those things we would recommend tonight -- these matters with the Joint Chiefs have not been gone into in detail.

But they are meeting around the clock. We are trying to fight the war in Vietnam and trying to get the men back in Korea and trying to man the (Inaudible) and at the same time look ahead and study what we might need.

I think I am going to ask the Congress and I will save the money from the budget I have set up -- I will take it out of somebody else's budget -- to give us supplemental for a cabinet-priced stabilization board, not compulsory, because I think by the time I could get you all to pass a WPB and OPA the prices would be up so far it wouldn't do much good anyway.

But I think and we are going to have to have a strengthening cabinet group to sit down with these manufacturers who are raising prices and say to them, "Please, for God's sake, please support those men out there and forego these price increases with your profits at an all-time high until we can get through this emergency period."

I think we are going to have to ask the labor unions to please, in their demands for increases, to try to hold those increases in line with the increased productivity so we don't get this inflation.



We want to ask you to pass the gold bill as early as you can because we have serious international monetary problems. We are of course hoping we can get a tax bill reported and passed because we think if you don't, you are going to cast great reflections on the dollar and it is going to cost us more in confidence and more in taxes, too, by delaying it.

All of these we are going over trying to see how we put them and when we put them and what kind of a package, and of course everything will be determined by events.

But those are some of the things that consideration is being given to.

CONGRESSMAN STRATTON OF NEW YORK: I have two questions, the first one for Mr. Helms, and the second one for any of these gentlemen:

The first question is, in the briefing before our Armed Services Committee, the Navy briefer on the Pueblo incident implied that it was impossible to answer some of our questions because there was a classification that was higher than Top Secret.

My question is, does that refer to the elite functions which all of us at least know about in general or was there some other super-sensitive part of the position of the Pueblo which might have a bearing on questions that we have asked with regard to it?

MAN: (Inaudible)

CONGRESSMAN STRATTON: The other question, Mr. President, is this: I recognize the problem of not diverting strength into the Sea of Japan when we face this situation in Vietnam. But isn't it true that if we don't do something of a non-diplomatic nature with regard to this action, if the policy does not release these men and this ship within a reasonable time, and Secretary Rusk said immediately up in Brooklyn, that we are going to open ourselves to forays against if they believe that we are afraid to react?

THE PRESIDENT: I think we have always had that problem.

I don't want to predict tonight or prophesy tonight that diplomacy will completely fail although I realize that possibility. For that reason, I have some of the wisest men I know working to try to see what other approaches might be taken that would effectively get those men back.

(Inaudible) at a meeting that we had the other day with a group of (Inaudible) he said one question is how do we get our men back?

We are trying this route. When that fails we will go another route. It took seven months to get them back from the last (Inaudible). We hope it won't take anything like that now. But nobody can predict it.

I learned (Inaudible) Secretary McNamara got when he said that if they don't invade and increase their infiltration, if the government doesn't fall in Vietnam and if we don't have any changes, and if all of this doesn't happen, we ought to be able to get our advisors back here by 1965.

They dropped all of this and got down to what they said, that McNamara promised us he would get them here by Christmas '65 and they are not here. He is not helping us.

So I am not going to make a statement because I have got enough credibility problems already.

CONGRESSMAN JAMIE WHITTEN OF MISSISSIPPI:  
Mr. President, I know the proper thing is to keep your seat, but under these circumstances on what I raise here -- I started on appropriations in 1942. I have been listening to witnesses ever since and I am as far from being a military (Inaudible) as I was when I started.

But listening and I hope I have improved as a listener, the thing I get to mind, the thing I got about Korea, the thing I got about Korea, got lots of explanations about whether we can talk about surprise, why they did it and why we didn't do more about it.

I cannot see, having listened about Russian's intentions for years why we have been caught so off guard



Tonight we are referring to the occurrence off North Korea. It is a little bit related to Vietnam. This has been in my judgment based on the witnesses a world-wide thing where we might very well expect six or eight things next week.

I hear it often that we have had 581 incidents with North Korea last year against a few dozen the year before, why that isn't an indication to the people over here that this would happen -- why wasn't that anticipated, to be ready for it? I am talking to you as a witness. I am no expert. I have just talked to about as many experts as most anybody but you.

But the thing tonight, we haven't talked about the overall situation. What is going to happen next week? ~~581 incidents against a few dozen the year before~~ to me -- I am raising the questions that I have which I think are reflective of the people.

This is a pattern. We are dealing with it tonight.  
(Inaudible) Again

THE PRESIDENT: Again, I don't think I have an answer to that tonight. (Inaudible) it could break out in Birmingham or it could break out here on Pennsylvania Avenue. We have acted the best we could under the circumstances. (Inaudible)

If you want to blame my commanders (Inaudible) and everybody else, I can't change that view. I would rather think in this instance that North Korea is to blame. I think the first time in over a hundred years to go out in international waters on the high sea and provoke (Inaudible) for the purpose of what is just being done here tonight, ~~to take~~ our time explaining, justifying (Inaudible) I think they are going (inaudible)

It could very well be our commander. He was an orphan boy and his mother died when he was three years old. He went to an orphan home. He went to the Navy and was enlisted for several years. (Inaudible)

He wanted to be a submarine commander and he was ordered to this ship. He was pretty rough (inaudible) I have looked at his record from A to Z. I don't question

it. (inaudible) The facts are we just don't any more of what happened (inaudible)

He didn't know how to protect ourselves any better than he told us. If this ship doesn't come back, we are still going to get information. While we are talking we may have an accident out there with a Soviet Ship or we may have one in the Mediterranean with some vessel or (inaudible), that can guard against those and give you absolute policy protection.

CONGRESSMAN WHITTEN: Thank you, Mr. President. I just want to say this, if I may: May I say I am not blaming anyone. I think it would be more comfortable to keep seated. I did think by raising this that maybe we would get a little more comfortable.

(Inaudible) for our ship and crew from North Korea?

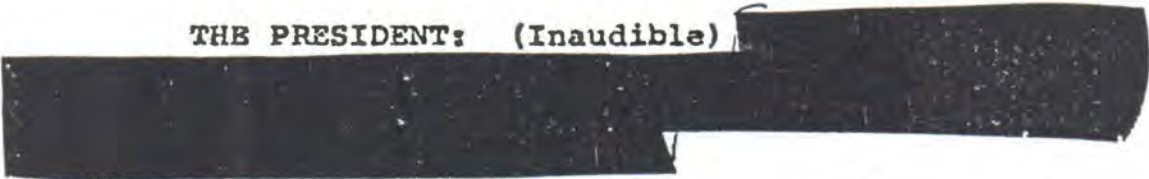
(Inaudible)

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think we ought to be particular encouraged with the developments (Inaudible)

MAN: Mr. President, can we prove that the Pueblo was in international waters? Can we get a fix?

(Inaudible)

THE PRESIDENT: (Inaudible)



MAN: I wonder if there is a possibility of the Pueblo being docked in international waters at some point (Inaudible)

THE PRESIDENT: (Inaudible) We are not in touch with the commander. We don't know. The day we were in touch with the commander, (Inaudible)



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MAN: Have we ever charged (Inaudible) that the Pueblo at any time was not in international waters?

MAN: (Inaudible)

THE PRESIDENT: (Inaudible)

-- at Panmunjom when the North Koreans said that even if they were in international waters, (Inaudible)

MAN: Mr. President, there is a question in my mind -- and I have no question about our right to be where we were (inaudible) I have stated and repeat your observation and your qualification (inaudible) if our diplomacy fails (inaudible)

THE PRESIDENT: (Inaudible)

We are going to pursue every diplomatic move we can and then we are going to look at all the suggestions that anybody can make and evaluate them and then determine our course.

MAN: I didn't want to go out of with the idea that this is a sell to write this off as part of our other (inaudible)

THE PRESIDENT: (Inaudible) We are going to do everything we can, as I have repeated two or three times, to get them back by diplomatic means. Then when all that fails, we are going to put all the suggestions made -- Secretary McNamara outlined a number of them -- we are going (inaudible)

MAN: (inadubile)

THE PRESIDENT: (inaudible)

MAN: I would like to say I give you complete support on your policy on the Pueblo and most feel the way I do. I hope you keep going exactly the way you have today. I think some of our own people are coming around to this view. In support of the United Nations, I wonder if Secretary Rusk would give a thought to the idea (inaudible)

END

QUESTIONS DURING BRIEFING:

Senator Dodd: How could it have been worse?

Congressman Casey: Explain the time difference. First you mentioned one o'clock then you talk about 5 o'clock. I don't quite follow.

Senator Dodd: Are you blaming the Commander?

Senator Dodd: What would you do in case of danger.

Senator Dodd: Why didn't he immediately notify his superiors?

Senator Dodd: How long a time was it before he notified his Commander? If I were a soldier I would get in touch with my superiors right away.

Senator Dodd: I thought you invited us to ask questions.

Senator Dodd: I will be glad to wait, but I am trying to point out....

Congressman Hervey Machen of Maryland: You mentioned an incident with a sister ship, that it was a similar situation, which happened a few days earlier. This had happened once before?

Congressman Machen: What disturbs me is that we weren't prepared to move when a similar situation arose again.

Congressman Herbert of Louisiana: We can't permit such things to happen. The fact that we can't prevent it is why we are in the situation we are in tonight.

Senator Monroney: Do we have a method of jamming from our shores?



AFTER BRIEFING:

Senator Lausche: As a member of the Foreign Relations Committee I find myself and the Committee constantly engaged in intense activity to prove that we should not have engaged in firing in the Tonkin Bay. In my opinion those who are prosecuting this view, and I want to repeat emphatically that they are completely wrong in the Tonkin Bay development. In the main it is the same persons who are now accusing and advocating that we are in the wrong because we did not use military force in repelling the seizure of the Pueblo. The President mentioned hind sight as distinguished from foresight. I feel deeply pained by what is happening, and I want to warn Secretary McNamara that he is to be called to task to defend himself against the charges that he mislead the American public and the nation into ~~xxx~~ improper military forces in the Tonkin Bay. How is it that we can be wrong by attacking in the Tonkin Bay and wrong in the Pueblo incident by not attacking?

Congressman Cohelan of California: I just got back from home. One of the things that pleased me very much was the fact that people seemed most concerned about the information and the equipment that was aboard the Pueblo and whether or not the men were able to destroy the facilities for obtaining information that were aboard. I am not clear as to whether or not they did destroy it?

Congressman Hebert of Louisiana: Mr. President, I want to ask General Wheeler about the conversation with Westmoreland. Have the casualties all been announced, and how many aircraft were lost in the most recent attack.

Wheeler:

Congressman Herbert: Just estimate the total on it.

Wheeler:

Congressman Herbert: Today in the Armed Services committee, we were given a rather higher figure of destruction. Were choppers included. This information was this morning and seemed to be much higher. I was very interested in finding out the number of choppers. The figure we were given was much higher. It does not fit in with the number that you have given us.

Congressman George Mahon: Mr. President, I think you and the team have done a great job. It has been very helpful to me. We are in a crucial situation. It is very significant that President Kennedy said "think not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." We do not want to rock the boat. We are all in the same boat as a country and as a party. We want to present the right view. What can we best do for the country in our capacity.

I think I can say that we are at your service and that the best is being done that can be done under the circumstances.

President:

Congressman Stratton of New York: I have two brief questions, the first one for Mr. Helms. In the briefing before our Armed Services Committee the Naval Briefer implied that it was impossible to answer all questions completely because there was a classification that was higher than Top Secret. In general was there some other mission other than those the Committee is familiar with that might keep the facts from being told?

I recognize the problem of not diverting strength into the Sea of Japan. However, isn't it true that if we don't do something of a non-diplomatic nature in regard to this action, if they fail to release this ship as Secretary Rusk said in Brooklyn immediately, that we are going to open ourselves to other forays in the belief that we are afraid to react?

President:

Congressman Jamie Whitten of Mississippi: I started out on appropriations for Defense in 1942 and have been listening to witnesses ever since. I am far from being an expert tonight as I was then. The thing I get tonight is the same thing I got from Korea, about Cuba and that is lots of explanation of why they did it and why we didn't do more about it. Having listened to Russia's intentions for years, I can't see why we were so off guard in Cuba. North Korea is a little bit related to Vietnam. In my judgment we might well have expected this. We might expect six or seven things next week. Tonight it was offered that we had had 581 incidents last year as opposed to about 12 the year before and it was indicated that this would happen again. Why don't we anticipate this and be ready for it to happen. The thing we haven't discussed tonight is the overall situation of what is going to happen next. 541 incidents in one year as against 12 the year before--- I am raising the questions as a layman.



Congresswoman Edna Kelly of New York: Do we have any information about the price the North Koreans have put on the return of the ship and the men?

Congressman Evins of Tennessee: The Soviets have denied us assistance before. What is encouraging us to believe that they will help us now?

Richard of Missouri

Congressman Ichord: Can you prove where the Pueblo was?

Congressman Lucien Nedzi of Michigan: What is the possibility of the Pueblo being other than in international waters?

Congressman Nedzi: Has there been any charge that the Pueblo was not in international waters?

Congressman Casey of Texas: Mr. President, the question that is in my mind that if diplomacy fails are we going to write these men off as we did the men in Vietnam, etc. I have no question about our right to be where we were. You have stated and I have stated repeatedly your observations about our right to be there. However, the thing in my mind is what do we do about the men.

Congressman Casey: I just didn't want to go out of here with the idea that this was a slow sell to write off these men, and give them up.

Congressman Casey: The alternatives you talked about appear to be no alternatives.

Senator Pell: I agree with the thrust of our policy in Vietnam. I want to say you have my own complete support of your policy on the Pueblo incident, some of my own people are coming around to this view. I wonder if Secretary Rusk has given any thought to declassifying the orders that are given to the ships' commanders. I think this would clarify many things to the public.

Senator Pell: We read the complete set of orders and there didn't seem to be anything damaging in them.

Congressman Gallagher of New Jersey: I would like to say that as one member of the Foreign Affairs Committee we are deeply grateful to you for taking time out to bring us up to date.

Senator Cannon of Nevada: What are the facts about the alleged defection of the Captain?