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CHRON  
(JAN)

INDEX OF POSSIBLE ACTIONS.

1. Sail USS BANNER with escort. (Reconnaissance).
2. Conduct Airborne reconnaissance.
  - a. Black Shield reconnaissance.
  - b. Drone photo reconnaissance.
  - c. Tactical photo reconnaissance.
  - d. Electronic jamming operations.
3. US tug to Wonsan. FOIA(b)1 OSD
4. Make show of force.
5.
6. Conduct ROKAF air strikes - seven targets.
7. Actions to recover PUEBLO jettisoned material.
8. Raid across DMZ.
9. ROK Army raid north of DMZ.
10. Quarantine/blockade against KORCOM naval units.
11.
12. Information to Soviets.

*NARA  
RG 210  
Recording Gen E Wheeler  
Chick, JCS  
Box 29 Tsb 449  
NDR Refs*

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Declassified
Authority: 23728
By: Alan Lipton      Date: 10-15-2003

RECONNAISSANCE ACTION NO. 1

1. Objective: Sail the USS BANNER with escort into the area where USS PUEBLO was seized.

2. Concept:

a. The BANNER would have the following escort:

(1) Two destroyers,

(2) One cruiser,

(3) Combat air patrol (CAP) during daylight hours for protection against N. K. fighters,

(4) Anti-patrol boat airborne CAP during daylight,

(5) Early warning radar picket aircraft airborne both day and night,

(6) A CAP of light attack aircraft in continuous readiness condition during night hours.

b. The BANNER and escorts will deploy from Task Group 70.6 to the area east of the Korean DMZ (point 1 on chart). This will take approximately 20 hours. At first light on the next day, the BANNER and escorts will proceed northwest along the North Korean coast. (Points 2 and 3 on the attached chart). That night the BANNER will remain at least 30 NM from NK coast until next morning, (point 4 on chart). She will then proceed on a reverse track to points 3, 2, and 1 and remain in the vicinity of point 1 during the hours of darkness (approximately 30 miles east of the DMZ). Beginning at daylight on the third day, she will repeat the above track and will continue this action as desired.

c. The plan provides additional support to the USS BANNER and escorts, in the event of unprovoked communist armed attack, from Task Group 70.6 (USS ENTERPRISE and accompanying forces and USAF forces in Korea).

d. Rules of engagement:

(1) In the event of unprovoked communist armed attack against US military or non-military personnel, aircraft, ships or surface craft outside communist territory, US forces in the area will take immediate

and aggressive measures. When necessary and feasible, immediate pursuit is authorized.



e. Daylight operations will allow visual confirmation of radar contacts as they depart their harbor. Withdrawal beyond thirty miles at night will allow adequate time for radar detection, identification and response to high speed surface contacts.

3. Advantages:

a. To demonstrate to North Korea and the world the right of the United States to move her ships anywhere in the world within international waters of the high seas.

b. To continue the hydrographic and intelligence collection operation prematurely terminated by North Korean seizure of the USS PUEBLO.

4. Disadvantages:

a. The three ships involved would be within range of NK air and surface forces.

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Evaluation of Communist Reactions

The North Koreans would probably not react to this mission.

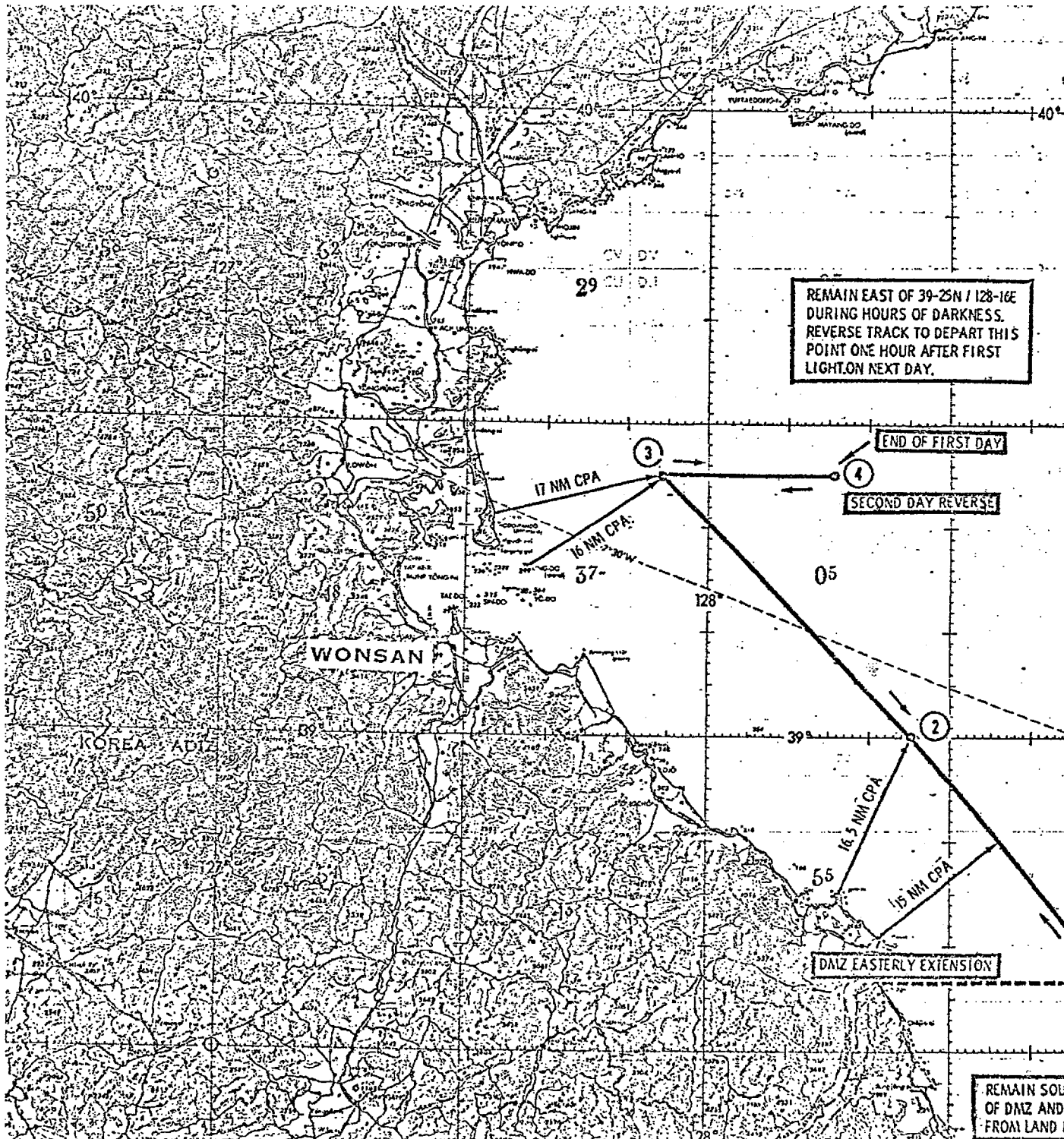
The possibility exists that Soviet shipping in the Sea of Japan would attempt to harass the Task Force.

We consider it unlikely that the North Koreans would attack the BANNER or its air cover unless the BANNER or air cover inadvertently strayed into North Korean territorial waters. Because of the difficulties of determining exact position in the air, however, the actual chances of an encounter would be high.

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# USS BANNER (AGER-1)

**SURFACE ESCORT**  
 USS CANBERRA  
 TWO DESTROYERS

**RULES OF ENGAGEMENT**  
 (1) In the event of unprovoked communist armed against U. S. military or non-military personnel, craft, ships or surface craft outside communist territory, U. S. forces in the area will take immediate aggressive protective measures. When necessary and feasible, immediate pursuit is authorized.  
 (2) The twelve mile limit on North Korea's territorial seas will be observed except in immediate pursuit.  
 (3) Support by other ships and aircraft of CTG 70.6 USAF aircraft in Korea is authorized to protect Banner and escorts if required by N. K. actions.

REMAIN EAST OF 39-25N / 128-16E DURING HOURS OF DARKNESS. REVERSE TRACK TO DEPART THIS POINT ONE HOUR AFTER FIRST LIGHT ON NEXT DAY.

END OF FIRST DAY

SECOND DAY REVERSE

Track and timing to be followed each day for a period of no more than eight days.

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COMMENCE AT FIRST LIGHT ON 1st DAY

RON 2nd NIGHT 3rd DAY REPEAT

REMAIN SOUTH OF EASTERLY EXTENSION OF DMZ AND AT LEAST THIRTY MILES FROM LAND DURING HOURS OF DARKNESS.

AIRBORNE RECONNAISSANCE ACTION No. 2a

1. Objective: To harass and cause the North Korean command authorities concern that reconnaissance activity is being stepped up prior to the initiation of action to recover the USS PUEBLO.

2. Concept: The BLACK SHIELD platform should be flown over North Korea at an intermittent, ever-increasing frequency. The next mission should be flown on 29 January (three days after the last mission); another mission should be flown on 31 January (two days after the last mission); and then if operationally feasible on a frequent basis thereafter. The mission should be launched unless there is total cloud cover.

3. Advantages: In addition to achieving the primary objective, these flights would:

a. Provide intelligence on the massing or southerly movement of troops.

b. Provide frequent updating of other order-of-battle type intelligence such as airfields, SAM sites, etc.

4. Disadvantages:

a. Frequent flights would provide the communist bloc countries with operational characteristics of the BLACK SHIELD system.

b. Increased knowledge of operational characteristics could result in the shoot-down of one of these vehicles.

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Evaluation of Communist Reactions

BLACK SHIELD has already accomplished one mission over North Korea and we believe the North Korean government is aware of this action. We do not anticipate political reaction to BLACK SHIELD. Increasing the tempo of BLACK SHIELD flights, along with other preparedness measures, could increase North Korean apprehension over US intentions and contribute to a decision to release some or all of the crew of the PUEBLO.

The North Koreans will attempt to improve their air defense capability against BLACK SHIELD and frequent overflight may result eventually in their being able to increase the risk factors relative to BLACK SHIELD. A side result might be to degrade BLACK SHIELD's effectiveness over North Vietnam.

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AIRBORNE RECONNAISSANCE ACTION No. 2b

1. Objective: Obtain high priority drone photo coverage of North Korean objectives and harassment.

2. Concept: SAC has the capability to launch a reconnaissance drone against Wonsan with minimum alert time. Sustained operations (approximately 20 sorties per month) can be achieved within four days. Scheduling would provide for an increasing tempo of reconnaissance operations in an attempt to create the impression of an impending overt act by the United States against North Korea. This would be done in conjunction with other reconnaissance activities.

3. Advantages: The action can be accomplished without exposing our personnel to hostile fire.

4. Disadvantages: The expenditure of a limited resource.



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Evaluation of Communist Reactions

The North Korean Air Defense Force will probably deploy both aircraft and SAM elements against any drone activity. The loss of a drone over North Korea would be likely and would provide the Communists with some propaganda benefits. However, employment of drones might also serve to increase North Korean apprehension over US intentions.

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AIRBORNE RECONNAISSANCE ACTION No. 2c

1. Objective: Obtain photographic coverage with tactical reconnaissance aircraft of high priority North Korean objectives and harassment by creating the impression that stepped up reconnaissance may precede an attack along the DMZ or on either coast.

2. Concept: Shallow penetration north of the DMZ and along the coasts. Routes can be planned to utilize high-level high speed penetration in areas defended by guns and/or automatic weapons, or low level high speed penetration in areas defended by missiles. Areas with coordinated missile/guns/AW defenses will be avoided. Full advantage will be taken of undefended areas. The shallow high speed penetrations would minimize the effectiveness of the North Korean air defense aircraft.

3. Advantages:

a. Minimum exposure of reconnaissance aircraft.

b. Detailed information of the military situation in areas from which the North Koreans can react rapidly against UN forces.

c. Minimize the danger of surprise attack by the enemy.

4. Disadvantages:

a. Possibility of loss of high performance aircraft.

b. Operations may be restricted to the hours of darkness if the North Koreans employ their aerial assets to fly continuous air patrols in DMZ and coastal areas.

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Evaluation of Communist Reactions

The North Korean Air Defense Force will probably detect and attempt to intercept any low level penetrations by reconnaissance aircraft. However, these tactics employed elsewhere over hostile territory have enjoyed good survivability and may present excellent diversionary tactics in support of other operations when appropriate.

Low level penetrations by reconnaissance aircraft operating from airfields in South Korea could prompt hot-pursuit on part of North Korean fighters, but we do not believe that these flights alone would prompt such a reaction. Again, these flights might lend credence to a US threat to take punitive military action.

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AIRBORNE RECONNAISSANCE ACTION No. 2d

1. Objective: Degrade and deny use of North Korean SAM/EW/GCI radars and MIG/SAM communications, and provide reconnaissance to update radar and communications order of battle.

2. Concept:

a. Conduct standoff jamming against SAM/EW/GCI radars.

b. Conduct standoff jamming against VHF communications utilized to command and control MIG and SAM activities.

c. A4 aircraft (ENTERPRISE) equipped with ALQ-71 jamming pods conduct jamming against SAM radars. Aircraft in flights of four establish racetrack pattern toward SAM site, turning outbound prior to entering SAM missile range (25-30 NM)

d. EC121 (BIG LOOK) aircraft, shorebased (Atsugi), conduct electronic reconnaissance to intercept, locate, and record radar and communications emissions in reaction to US actions.

3. Advantages:

a. The jamming actions could be conducted as ECM actions in harassment only, or as support protection and/or diversion during scheduled recce/strike flights in the same or adjacent geographic areas.

b. Electronic reconnaissance conducted simultaneously with ECM actions will provide US forces with update on radar or communications order of battle.

c. Specific threats to be sought are:

(1) SAM Missile Sites

(2) KOMAR boats with STYX missile system

(3) SAMLET surface to surface missile sites

(4) Locations/types of EW/GCI radars

(5) Command/control communications modus operandi

d. Electronic reconnaissance should be accomplished even if ECM are not conducted.

e. ECM actions normally support US strikes in NVN. KORCOMs could believe that US strikes are about to take place and commence active defense measures to include MIG/SAM reactions. Intensity of ECM activity would probably determine degree of KORCOM reaction.

4. Disadvantages: Subject to North Korean air defense reaction.

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Evaluation of Communist Reactions

Communist reaction to standoff jamming will largely depend on:

- a. Ability of North Koreans to detect source of jamming.
- b. Distance of jamming source from North Korean border or offshore territorial limits.
- c. Nature of jamming source if detected and identified.

Hostile Communist reaction will probably occur against shipboard or airborne emitter vehicles which are near or inside their borders or territorial waters. In those instances where fighter cover is provided and the jamming vehicle is not close in to North Korean territory there is little likelihood of hostile reaction.

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ACTION No. 3

Diplomatic demand coupled with unarmed US presence (tug) at Wonsan.

Objective.

To add meaning and force to the diplomatic demand.

Concept of Operations.

Presence of another US flag ship arriving peacefully and unarmed at Wonsan would show to the world our determination and emphasize our insistence on prompt return. Public statements to that effect would be required. US Navy sea-going tug would steam to Wonsan to accept the return of the captured ship and crew. It would be strongly implied for all the world to see that we were ready to back up our diplomatic demands and were not afraid of having this ship captured. Protection would be available over the horizon in a carrier task force. Although the PUEBLO is apparently able to proceed under her own power, the tug would be available to accept custody and tow if needed. Use of a tug rather than a war ship displays determination, confidence and peaceful intent. If tug met hostile action, quick word to task force would provide support.

This action would not be initiated without decision to use force if necessary and authority for use delegated to Task Force Commander.

Advantages.

Adds emphasis to the diplomatic demand.

Displays the determination of the United States -- could prevent a recurrence.

Strongly implies that unless this ship is safe, force will be used.

Can be effective in gaining worldwide public approval.

If successful, insures prompt return of PUEBLO and crew.

Has a minimal effect on worldwide military operations.

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Disadvantages.

Risks possible capture of tug.

If this course were not promptly successful, it would be necessary to follow up with other stronger demands.

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Evaluation of Communist Intentions

The presence of a tug and a US show of force immediately available would place Pyongyang on the horns of a dilemma. On the one hand, they could capture the tug and risk immediate retaliation by the US Naval Task Force.

On the other hand, Pyongyang could ignore the tug or refuse "permission" for it to enter the harbor. If the tug proceeded to enter the harbor without permission and sailed in prepared to take custody of the PUEBLO, it is likely that North Korea would block its passage, reassert its intention not to return the PUEBLO and her crew, and demand that the tug leave the harbor. In this eventuality, the US might view such actions as hostile actions and follow-up with stronger actions. Thus, short of giving in and peacefully returning the ship and crew, Pyong yang risks retaliation by the US Task Force. On balance, we believe that North Korea will initially ignore the tug, follow up with attempts to force the departure of the tug, and if these actions fail, will prepare to board and capture the tug.

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ACTION No. 4

Show of Force.

Objective.

The prompt and safe return of ship and crew.

Concept of Operations.

Air and naval show of force at Wonsan to add emphasis to diplomatic demands and to be used only when diplomatic means are failing.

Early operations to enhance surprise, shock and probability of North Korean backdown.

Must be prepared to use force if show unsuccessful.

Carrier Task Force at sea.

Additional carrier task force and USAF aircraft in South Korea available as support.

Prepared for enemy reactions elsewhere.

Advantages.

Force available in Sea of Japan to initiate.

Early initiation signifies US determination.

Direct, to the point and honorable.

Probability of early success.

Disadvantages.

Future credibility depends on using force if required.

Crew may not be in North Korea.

Committed to sustain action if show fails.

Additional forces required to sustain.

May generate communist reaction elsewhere.

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Evaluation of Communist Reactions

It is doubtful that an air and naval show of force will cause the North Koreans to return the ship and crew promptly, unless Pyongyang were convinced that the US meant to take punitive action. In this circumstance, Peiping and Moscow will have little or no influence.

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ACTION No. 5

[REDACTED]

Objective.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] to disrupt military posture and to impose penalty on communist leadership for act of aggression against United States.

Concept of Operations.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] employing USAF forces based in South Korea and USN forces launched from aircraft carriers in Sea of Japan.

[REDACTED] to obviate necessity for penetration of SAM defenses without adequate ECM support and to enhance recovery of crews of downed aircraft.

Advantages.

[REDACTED] will indicate to Communist Bloc that United States will not tolerate acts of aggression.

Deliberate response by United States to act of aggression will indicate resolve of United States to take measured punitive action.

Targets are of a military nature and would reduce military capabilities of North Korea.

Sudden and sharp impact of [REDACTED] permits measured response without prolonged engagement and emphasizes punitive nature.

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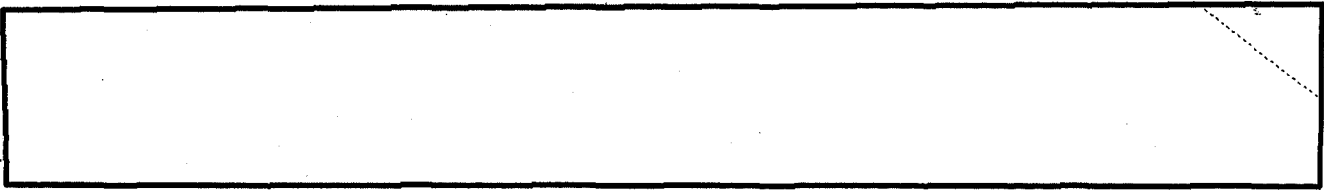
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Disadvantages and Risk Assessment.



Approximately entire MIG force of 500 aircraft may be concentrated against US attacks. Other airfields but minutes away and radar might provide adequate warning.

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Evaluation of Communist Reactions

[REDACTED]

will cause North Korea to take immediate actions, within its capability. These responses could range from vigorous defense measures against US attack, air and guided missile boat attacks against US surface vessels, attacks against South Korean airfields and intensified actions along the DMZ and beyond.

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ACTION No. 6

Attacks by Republic of Korea Air Force (ROKAF) on North Korean insurgency training centers.

Objective.

Conduct ROKAF air strikes against seven insurgency training center targets in North Korea.

Concept of Operations.

Coordinated air strike program by ROKAF would be executed concurrently with US air strikes to attain maximum disruption and saturation of air defense control facilities with forces committed.

Advantages.

Can be executed with present forces.

Air strikes by ROKAF will indicate to communist bloc that Republic of Korea will not continue to tolerate acts of aggression.

Deliberate response for attack on BLUE HOUSE will indicate resolve of Republic of Korea to take measured punitive action.

Targets are of military nature.

Sudden and sharp impact of air strikes permits measured response without prolonged engagement and emphasizes punitive nature.

Simultaneous air strikes by ROKAF and US forces will increase saturation of air defense control and reduce losses.

Disadvantages.

Targets not worthy of air strike except for psychological impact. Facilities have only approximately six small dispersed buildings of significance.

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Evaluation of Communist Reactions

ROKAF strikes against insurgency training centers might appear more closely related to the Seoul incident and Moscow and Peiping might view this as a somewhat less ominous interpretation of US intentions.

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ACTION No. 7

Actions to recover Crypto material jettisoned from PUEBLO.

Objectives.

- To recover jettisoned PUEBLO equipment.
- To demonstrate that we were in international waters and that we intend to continue to use international waters.

Concept of Operations.

- Mount a salvage ship operation to recover jettisoned equipment. Provide a surface covering force initially of a missile cruiser and at least two DD types. Their operations in and around salvage operations would be backed up by a carrier task force within 100 miles. US recovery offers the only assured means of preventing North Korean acquisition.

Advantages.

- Salvage operations will enable possible recovery of extremely valuable material which is the only sure method of preventing North Korean recovery.
- Units can remain on station for extended period.
- Would show positively our determination to maintain our rights on the high seas.

Disadvantages.

- Vulnerability to air attack close inshore unless air cover provided.
- Possibility of triggering further belligerent activity by North Koreans.
- Salvage operations, if commenced immediately, will be conducted under very severe diving conditions.  
(Water temperature: 33 to 35 degrees F; depth of water: 125 - 200 feet).

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Evaluation of Communist Reactions

This course of action would probably entail clashes with North Korean naval or air forces and possibly Soviet naval forces. Further, this course probably would not have any appreciable effect on the release of PUEBLO and its crew.

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Raid Across DMZ.

Objective.

[Redacted]

Concept of Operation.

[Redacted]

Advantages.

- The US force is familiar with the area.
- Confusion would be created in North Korean front lines and rear area.
- North Korean communication would be disrupted.
- The raid would be a positive retaliation against North Korea actions.
- Could provide valuable intelligence and an opportunity to capture key personnel.
- Would inflict casualties on the North Koreans and require deployment of their forces.
- ROK Government would support US raid.
- Would indicate US resolve.
- Unilateral raid would not require UN sanction.
- Frozen ground in Jan-Feb would assist tank mobility.

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Disadvantages.

Would be an overt violation of the armistice agreement and used against US and UN.

Could result in a wider war.

Strict security measures are enforced in North Korea.

North Korean forces are well trained, disciplined and occupy fortified positions.

Would offer little guarantee of return of ship and safety of crew.

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Evaluation of Communist Reactions.

The North Koreans are probably alert to the possibility of ground raids, and such an operation might prove to be a costly and unsuccessful venture. A successful raid of any considerable size would probably be regarded by the North Koreans as a strong indication that the US and ROK were prepared to reopen the war. While this might impel the communists to dampen the crisis, it would also carry risks of a prolonged inconclusive involvement unless it was clear to the communists that this was a one time retaliatory action.

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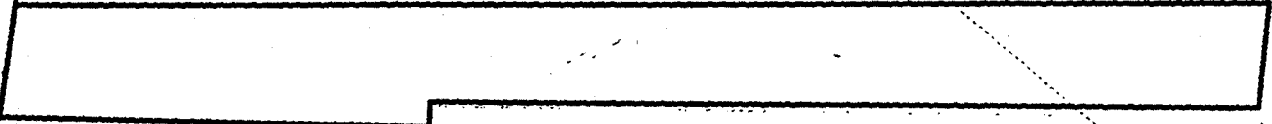
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ACTION No. 9

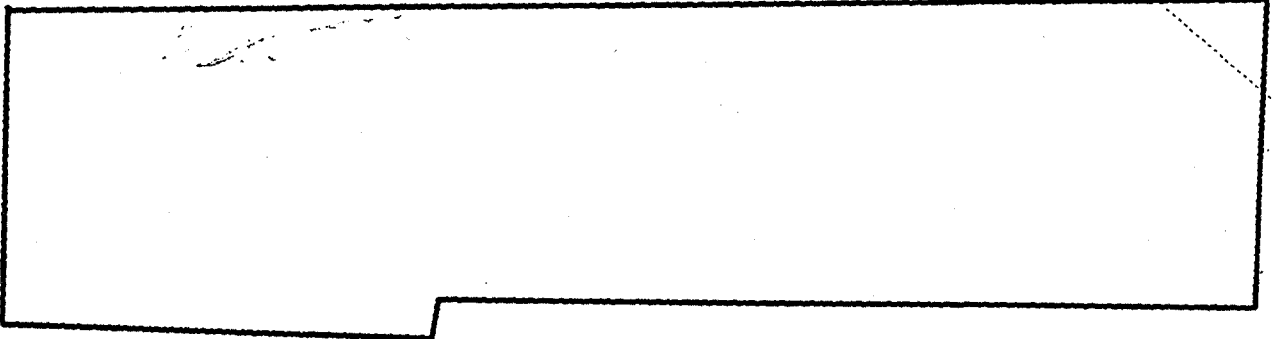
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ROK coastal raid.

Objective.



Concept of Operations.



Advantages.

Minimum risk to US forces.

ROK teams are trained and ready to go.

It might also slow down North Korean infiltration.

Disadvantages.

ROKs might be encouraged to conduct raids thereafter without consulting US authorities.

Calls on another nation to respond to actions against the United States.

Return of ship or crew not likely.

If team is captured, the operation would be an armistice violation and cause adverse UN reaction.

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Evaluation of Communist Reactions

It is likely that North Korean forces are on the alert for ROK coastal raids. Such punitive action is not likely to lead to Chinese or Soviet intervention, but it could provoke Pyongyang into a similar action. Pyongyang, moreover, would probably consider the raid more of a retaliatory measure by the ROK for the Pak assassination attempt rather than a clear US punitive action.

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ACTION No. 10

Establish blockade against North Korean Navy ships at [redacted]

FOIA(b)1 OSD

Objective.

To exert pressure on North Korea by denying her naval vessels the right of ingress and egress to [redacted]

Concept of Operations.

Establish a surface ship blockade, utilizing destroyers, of the North Korean ports of [redacted]. Provide fighter cover and patrol aircraft assistance for the blockading ships. Utilize such measures as are necessary to prevent ingress or egress by North Korean naval ships. Blockade of these two ports would immobilize the bulk of the North Korean Navy, [redacted]

[redacted] A surveillance flight on 26 January 1968, though questionable because of poor photography, provided evidence that the entire KOMAR fleet of seven units is in [redacted]

Advantages.

- Is a legal step short of war in self defense under the definition of pacific blockade.
- Demonstrates US determination to cause release of PUEBLO.
- Can be mounted initially with units readily available.

Disadvantages.

- Exposes blockading force to risk of retaliatory air strikes unless North Korean air bases are hit prior to, or simultaneously with, imposition of the blockade.
- Involves risk of war through hostile action applied against blockading units.
- Does not exert enough pressure on North Korea to give reason for return of PUEBLO in exchange for lifting of blockade.

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Blockade of these two ports would not apply any serious pressure on Pyongyang. Access to [ ] is not vital to the economy or to limited naval operations. Additionally, a blockade would permit time for the Soviets to marshal world opinion and could be rendered ineffective by land routes from the USSR. The blockade could conceivably cause the Chinese to offer the use of Chinese ports as safe havens and for off-loading for North Korean, or even Soviet ships. Sino-NK contingency planning might be initiated to increase the level of Chinese logistic support in order to compensate for restrictions imposed by blockade of the port.

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FOIA (b) 1 OSD

ACTION No. 11

[REDACTED]

Objective.

[REDACTED]

Concept of Operations.

[REDACTED]

Forces:

Required - air - 17 sorties by minelaying aircraft.  
Available - 12 A6A aircraft on Enterprise  
Adequate supply of mines available.  
Schedule - Commence in 3 days - plus 1 night to complete.  
Able to maintain - indefinite.

Advantages.

Deny free use of harbor.  
Bottle up North Korean Navy at [REDACTED]  
Rapid implementation possible.  
North Korea has limited minesweeping capability.

Disadvantages.

Without concurrent air strikes on adjacent airfields and air defense sites our aircraft losses are expected to be high.  
Small effect on North Korean economy.  
Presupposes a state of war.  
Could sink third country ship.  
Provide excuse for not returning Pueblo.

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## ACTION 12

Leak to the USSR "firm" information indicating the US plans retaliatory attacks against North Korea.

### Objective.

To convince the USSR and, in turn North Korea, that US retaliation is certain if the PUEBLO and the crew are not promptly released.

### Concept of Operations.

US intentions to retaliate would be leaked to the USSR in such a manner as to give full credence to the information. This could be done overtly by direct contact between US and Soviet officials, at the semi-official level, or through third countries. It could also be done through clandestine means such as black (fabricated) documents or by technical means.

### Advantages.

To the extent that such actions served to impress Pyongyang with US intent, the chances of securing the early release of the PUEBLO and the crew would be increased. Overt means would be the simplest and quickest means of effecting a leak; other means might be more credible.

### Disadvantages.

Possible discrediting of channel used if the information passed was proven false.

~~Downgraded to CONFIDENTIAL~~

GROUP 3  
DOWNGRADED AT 12 YEAR INTERVALS;  
NOT AUTOMATICALLY DECLASSIFIED

~~TOP SECRET~~