

December 12, 1968

PUEBLO CRISIS

PRESIDENTIAL DECISIONS AND SUPPLEMENTARY CHRONOLOGY

NOTE: The following account is supplementary to the basic study prepared by the Historical Office of the Department of State (Vol. 1, Tab 1). Together, these two accounts will probably be adequate for present purposes -- except for the list of "holes" in the files submitted in my memorandum of November 12 (Vol. 1, Tab 3). However, if further elaboration of any of the far-ranging complexities of this crisis is desired, the two-volume Day-by-Day Chronology (Vols. 1 and 2) provides a facile means of doing so.

An hour-by-hour chronology is pertinent only for the first few days. It is provided below, along with narrative material supplementary to the basic study, emphasizing Presidential decisions to the extent possible from available files.

Friday, January 5

Orders were issued to the PUEBLO to depart Sasebo, Japan, about 8 January. (See Vol. 9, Tab 1 for PUEBLO approval cycle and pertinent telegrams.) It actually departed on January 11 at 6:00 a.m. Korean time. It was under instructions to engage in an intelligence gathering mission in the Sea of Japan, and under orders that the closest point of approach to the North Korean land mass and off-shore islands was to be 13 nautical miles. Vol. 3, Tab 1 contains the Situation Room chronology of the incident. This is the one the President saw and therefore has been placed with the basic day-by-day documents. The chronology at Vol. 9, Tab 2 prepared by the Joint Staff is perhaps the most complete one to be found. Vol. 10, Tab 1 contains a chronological list of messages received and actions taken. Vols. 10 and 11, the Fact Book prepared by the Joint Chiefs, is a convenient "gold mine" on the PUEBLO incident. A concise, factual summary of both the North Korean raid on Seoul and the PUEBLO incident is found in State's telegram 104819 to all diplomatic posts, Vol. 14, Tab 7. A very useful, more detailed description of the USS PUEBLO, its mission, and the incident is contained in Vol. 11, Tab 1.

NOTE: Much of the following chronology of the seizure and aftermath is taken from the Situation Room chronology. It is reproduced here in order to interlard additional events which may help trigger your memory better, when juxtaposed. Entries are in Washington time.

CLASSIFIED
 E.O. 13526, Sec. 3.5
 NL 97-395
 By MO NARA Date 3-9-04

Monday, January 22

- 10:00 p PUEBLO encountered North Korean patrol craft at 39-25.2 N - 127-55 E. Hoisted U. S. ensign and hydrographic flag. Received signal "Heave to or I will open fire." PUEBLO replied, "I am in international waters." (This information not radioed until 52 minutes later at which time the gist of the message was sent to COMNAVFORJAPAN, Headquarters near Yokohama.) North Korean craft passed report on its position which coincided very closely with position reported by PUEBLO.
- 10:10 - North Korean ship-to-shore radio: "Approaching 300 ton American
10:23 p vessel which is used for radar operations and is not armed." This message was received at the Pentagon at 2:22 a. m. and at the White House at 2:44 a. m.
- 10:35 - North Korean subchaser reported it had captured U. S. ship and was
10:37 p escorting it to Wonsan. This report not received in Pentagon until 3:04 a. m. and in the White House at 4:26 a. m.
- 11:00 p PUEBLO reported that North Korean subchaser, joined by three other craft, two MIG's circling over head. Subchaser backed towards PUEBLO's bow with fenders rigged and armed boarding party on bow. PUEBLO turned away with intention to depart area. This message was received in Yokohama at 11:22 p. m., at the Pentagon at 12:08 a. m. and at the White House at 11:45 p. m.
- 11:05 - North Korean subchaser reported that it was going to use a small
11:08 p boat to go aboard U. S. ship, silence her communications and tow the ship into Wonsan. This message was received at the Pentagon at 4:14 a. m. and at the White House at 4:23 a. m.
- 11:20 - Subchaser ordered PT boats to get out of the way because she was
11:50 p going to fire on U. S. vessel. This message was received at Pentagon at 5:51 a. m. The record does not show receipt at the White House.
- 11:28 p PUEBLO reported to Yokohama "They plan to open fire on us."
Received Yokohama 11:32 p. m.
- 11:35 p Yokohama advised Fifth Air Force by telephone of incident and requested immediate assistance.

~~TOP SECRET/CODEWORD~~

- 11:36 p Yokohama sent initial CRITIC, a flash global alert message. It stated, "PUEBLO reports three P-4 MTB and SSO-1 have surrounded her and plan to open fire now at (garbled). CINCUNC 11:40 p.m.; CINCPAC 12:10 a.m.; Fifth AF 11:45 p.m. This message was received at the Pentagon at 11:46 p.m. Wheeler notified 12:03 a.m.; Nitze, 12:20 a.m.; McNamara, 12:36 a.m. It was received at the White House at 11:41 p.m. Between this time and 12:15 a.m. when Mr. Rostow was called, the Situation Room checked with NMCC, State, CIA, and NSA regarding actions being taken to verify messages and initiate a system.
- 11:45 p PUEBLO reported, "We are being boarded. SOS, SOS. Ship holding emergency destruction. Request help. Position 39-24 N 127-54 E!" Yokohama received this message at 11:46 p.m. and sent its second CRITIC which was received at the Pentagon at 11:49 p.m. At the same time the White House received a CRITIC as follows: USS PUEBLO reports "We are being boarded by North Korean personnel."
- 11:47 p NMCC notified White House.
- 11:50 p - PT's ordered to determine whether U.S. personnel were throwing
12:10 a anything into the water.
- 11:55 p NMCC notified State Department.

Tuesday, January 23

- 12:00 - PUEBLO reported, "Have been requested to follow into Wonsan.
12:10 a Have three wounded and one man with leg blown off. Have not used any weapons or uncovered 50 caliber machine guns. Destroying all key lists and as much electronic equipment as possible. How about some help? These guys mean business. Have sustained small wound in rectum. Do not intend to offer any resistance. Do not know how long will be able to keep up circuit and do not know if communications spaces will be entered." Message received at CINCPAC 12:52 a.m.; CINCPACAF 12:55 a.m.; and Fifth AF 12:56 a.m. Received at Pentagon 12:53 a.m., and White House at 12:45 a.m.
- 12:03 a. NMCC notified Chairman, JCS.
- 12:15 a Sit Room notified Mr. Rostow. He requested additional information.

- 12:18 - North Korean subchaser reported crew of PUEBLO throwing
12:28 a articles into water and destroying articles with fire.
- 12:20 a NMCC notified Deputy Secretary of Defense.
- 12:25 - PUEBLO reported, "Have been directed to come to all stop and
12:32 a being boarded at this time. Destruction incomplete. Several pubs
will be compromised." This message received at Yokohama
12:38 a.m.; CINCPAC 5:49 a.m.; CINCPACAF 1:36 a.m. It was
received at the Pentagon at 3:02 a.m. and at the White House at
3:06 a.m.
- 12:30 a CINCUNC (Commander UN Forces, Korea) took following actions:
1. Briefed Korean Ministry of Defense on incident.
 2. U.S. subordinate commanders were directed to bring command posts to operating strength, appropriately staffed. Commanders were directed to be immediately available at their command posts.
 3. Commands were directed to review emergency procedures but not repeat not implement.
- 12:36 a NMCC notified Secretary of Defense of incident.
- 12:31 a Fifth AF (Korea) advised Yokohama by telephone that no aircraft were on strip alert and that "no action on scene could be effective in less than about three hours."
- 12:32 a PUEBLO reported, "Four men injured and one critically. Going off air now. Destroying this gear." Message received at CINCPAC 1:10 a.m.; Fifth AF, 1:10 a.m. Received at Pentagon at 1:19 a.m. and at White House at 2:04 a.m.
- 12:45 a Sit Room called Mr. Rostow with information he had requested. He said he was coming in.
- 12:46 a Air Force Headquarters, Hawaii:
1. Received report from phone from Fifth AF that PUEBLO was under attack and about to be captured by North Koreans.

2. Approved Commander, Fifth AF proposal to deploy 18th fighter wing aircraft (F-105's) from Okinawa to Korea.
3. CINCUNC approved deployment of F-105's from Okinawa to Korea.

12:35 - Subchaser ordered PT boats to report subordination of captured U. S.
12:46 a vessel and confirm and report whether they possess any weapons.

1:00 a Air Force Headquarters, Hawaii, informed CINCPAC by phone of directive to deploy all available F-105's (18th Fighter Wing) from Kadena, Okinawa, to Osan and Kunsan, Korea.

1:06 a Commander Seventh Fleet ordered USS ENTERPRISE and USS TRUXTON to position 180 NM Southeast of Pusan.

Com- CINCPAC, Hawaii, upon receipt of information on PUEBLO incident::
mencing
approx. 1:15 a

1. Issued the following instructions to subordinate forces:
 - a. No public release on PUEBLO incident.
 - b. Be ready to conduct reconnaissance from ENTERPRISE in Wonsan Area. Position RF4C aircraft in Korea.
 - c. Message to JCS has alerted forces to recce Wonsan area if required and authorized.
 - d. Message to Air Force, Pacific: Suspend movement of F-105 aircraft to Itazuke.
2. Consideration to mounting fighters sorties into the Wonsan area. Factors considered were types, location, weather, onset of darkness, alerted enemy forces, and probable enemy reaction. When these factors were assessed against actual times of events associated with PUEBLO incident, time of receipt of information by CINCPAC and force response time, it was readily apparent that the PUEBLO could not be relieved by any action prior to its entering Wonsan. Diversion of ENTERPRISE and repositioning of Okinawa fighter aircraft was implemented not to relieve PUEBLO but to strengthen posture in Korea. Pacific Air Force reconnaissance aircraft were repositioned and ENTERPRISE alerted for possible show of force operations or photo coverage of Wonsan area if required.

Com- Commander, Pacific Fleet, began action concurrently with
mencing CINCPAC's actions, to reposition appropriate naval elements.
approx. Some changes to Task Group assignments were made and many
1:15 a actions were considered as possibilities for follow-up requirements.

1:20 a Air Force, Headquarters, Hawaii, telephoned Fifth AF and was
informed that:

1. Yokohama had requested Fifth AF assistance.
2. There were no suitably armed aircraft immediately available to provide assistance.
3. F-4 aircraft in Korea [redacted] without air-to-air capability for "show of force."
4. F-105 aircraft from Yokota, Japan, could not reach Wonsan area before dark.

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Instructed Commander, Fifth AF, [redacted] F-4's, attempt to provide them some air-to-air capability (with missiles if all necessary equipment were available) and send them to Wonsan area but not unarmed.

Authorized attack of North Korean escort vessels up to within three miles of coast, subject to CINCPAC concurrence which AF Headquarters, Hawaii, was seeking.

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NOTE: It was decided at 3:30 a.m. that to conduct the strike would endanger the PUEBLO crew, and the strike was cancelled. Also, there was a cover of MIG aircraft over the ships, the F-4's had no air-to-air capability, and the F-105's of Yokota could not arrive there before darkness.

1:30 a Rostow called General Carter of NSA.

1:31 a Rostow called NMCC.

1:37 a William Bundy called NMCC.

- 1:50 a Rostow called CINCPAC for Admiral Sharp. He was out of area on trip. Rostow talked to Duty Officer, General Allison.
- 2:00 a Rostow called Bundy.
- 2:10 a Rostow talked with Bundy.
- 2:11 a Air Force Headquarters, Hawaii, launched six F-105's from Okinawa to South Korea.
- 2:15 a Rostow talked with McNamara.
- 2:20 a Rostow talked with Rusk
- 2:25 a Rostow briefed the President.
- 3:30 a Fifth AF advised Yokohama aircraft would not be launched because they could not arrive in area prior to darkness.

According to George Christian's news conference No. 1104-A, the President slept between Rostow's 2:25 a.m. briefing and the next entry.

- 6:22 a The President phoned Situation Room.
- 7:31 a McNamara phoned the President.
- 8:37 a DOD issued press release.
- 11:58 a George Christian news conference. (Note: Important press conference records are found as the last entries for each day in the day-by-day documents volumes under the relevant date.)
- 12 noon The President phoned Rostow (pl). Rostow had stepped out.
- 12:01 p Rostow phoned the President.
- 12:26 p Press and radio news briefing at State.
- 12:29 p Rostow phoned the President.
- 12:30 p Weekly luncheon. Regular attendees plus Clifford. There is no record of the agenda in the files.

4:07 p George Christian news conference.
6:04 p Secretary Rusk saw the President.
7:40 p The President phoned Rostow (pl).
7:45 p Rostow phoned the President.

(Note: At George Christian's 12:35 p.m. news conference on January 24, he said that "last night" the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy was here to go over the Disarmament letter and also most of the Foreign Affairs Committee members were here. The Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense and General Wheeler were also present. The PUEBLO incident was gone into at some length. Christian added that the President, of course, has been in more or less continuous touch with the senior advisers since the gravity of the situation became apparent "early yesterday.")

11:49 p The President phoned Rostow.

State's 104818 (Vol. 14, Tab 6) indicates the seriousness with which the United States Government viewed the North Korean action.

X An almost unarmed American ship posing no threat to the North Koreans had been seized on the high seas. This was the first time this had happened since 1815, and on that occasion the principals in the incident were not aware of the termination of hostilities.

The North Koreans were in a highly militant and confident mood. This incident had followed closely on an attempted assassination of the South Korean President on January 21. Now the North Koreans had seized our ship and humiliated the captain and crew. The lives of the crew and the prestige of the United States were at stake. A strong reaction by the Congress and the American people could be expected, and the reaction of other nations, particularly in Asia, was a matter of serious concern.

Several steps were taken immediately:

1. To strengthen our armed forces in the Korean area. (CINCPACFLT 231021Z Jan., Vol. 21, Tab 3.)

2. To make a demarche to the Soviet Union. (State 102940, Vol. 19, Tab 3.)
3. To request a meeting of the Military Armistice Commission to protest the PUEBLO seizure (State 103144, Vol. 14, Tab 1a).
4. To authorize Amb. Johnson to inform the GOJ of the incident (State 102942, Vol. 18, Tab 4).
5. To instruct Amb. Porter to advise the ROK in strongest terms against any attempt at action against North Korea in retaliation for the Seoul raid (State 102967, Vol. 14, Tab 1).

(Note: In the unlikely event that more detail is desired for your present purposes, the SitReps at the beginning of each day's entries in the day-by-day documents, Vols. 3-8, may be referred to, in addition to the day-by-day chron of primarily diplomatic actions, Vols. 1 and 2.)

Among the questions which immediately arose were: (Note: you will perhaps know which of these may be ascribed to the President.)

Why was the PUEBLO operation necessary in the first place?

Why was the PUEBLO not escorted?

Why did the PUEBLO delay in requesting assistance?

Why did the Navy not respond faster?

Why did the Fifth Air Force not respond before the ship was towed to Wonsan Harbor?

Why was there no automatic destruction equipment on the PUEBLO?

Why was the ship designed with minimum defensive capabilities?

Why was this system of missions held so close to a hostile area?

Why was there not at least an air alert for the mission?

Intensive study of these questions was to go forward in many parts of the government in the coming days. The Joint Chiefs Fact Book, Vols. 10 and 11, and the answers to the Fulbright letter/and the questions and answers, Vol: 13, Vol. 10, Tab 3,

give detailed answers to these and many other questions. The following observations may be sufficient for your purposes -- subject, of course, to security deletions, some of which may depend upon date of publication and possible intervening revelations if the crew is released.

The basic reason for seaborne surface collection is to acquire short range (low power) signals which would otherwise be impossible to collect from fixed, or shore based installations. The nature of these short range, or low power signals requires that the collection platform be within reasonable proximity of the target emitter. While airborne platforms can collect some of these signals, they are transitory, thus limiting their time-on-target, possess inherent space and weight limitations for equipment and are expensive in terms of coverage hours. Seaborne platforms, on the other hand, can carry a variety of technical sensors such as photographic, hydrographic and acoustical, and are ideally suited for target acquisition and sustained collection -- especially in certain areas of the world such as Korea. Moreover, a ship can bring this variety of sensors to bear on a target simultaneously, and thus greatly enhance effectiveness of coverage. Obviously, the longer period of time that a collection platform can be within the range of its intelligence target, the more information of interest can be obtained.

The collection requirement levied on the PUEBLO were in support of high priority national intelligence and naval intelligence objectives, and had been validated by the DIA. The list of intelligence requirements against which the PUEBLO was working were originated by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Chief of Naval Operations, the Strategic Air Command, CINCPAC, CINCPAC-FLT, CINCUSARPAC, CINCPACAF and other commands and activities.

The information which was to be obtained was essential to our overall knowledge of the state-of-readiness of Korean forces, their disposition and their employment of various weapons systems. Of primary interest was any indication that the North Koreans were preparing to initiate hostilities against South Korea.

Because the PUEBLO's mission was passive and entirely legal, and because she would be operating in international waters, there were no plans required to provide for her protection against acts of piracy.

Past experience of incidents involving U.S. ships and communist country ships would not lead to a conclusion that the North Koreans would resort to any direct military action against a U.S. naval ship operating in international waters. The reasonably expected action against the PUEBLO would be limited to harassing, intimidating or embarrassing tactics which, in fact, has been experienced by other U.S. Navy ships.

It was not reasonable to expect that the North Koreans would board and capture the PUEBLO. There was no precedence in the annals of U.S. Naval history upon which to draw an analogy of this incident. The last capture of a U.S. Navy ship was on 15 January 1815, when the USS PRESIDENT was captured by the British off New York. This incident occurred immediately following the war, and the opposing forces were unaware of the termination of hostilities.

In the case of the PUEBLO, the entire chain of command including the Joint Chiefs of Staff considered the risk to the PUEBLO for this mission to be minimal. There was insufficient reaction time available from the initial notification of the incident until the PUEBLO's capture for the available forces to react.

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The six U.S. aircraft in Korea were on normal alert, [REDACTED] in the time available to reach the PUEBLO prior to darkness or her being towed into North Korean coastal waters. The aircraft, F-4C's, had no armament with which to defend against MIG attack.

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

The United States aircraft in Japan and Okinawa were not used because the scene of action was at such distance that they could only have responded by staging through Korea. Movement to Korea and arming there would not have permitted them to reach the scene of action in time. Twelve F-105 aircraft were sent to Korea but were not sent to help the PUEBLO because they would have been too late.

The situation at the scene of action was unfavorable to the employment of aircraft. The weather was poor: 6000 ft. broken, occasional overcast with lower scattered clouds at 3000 ft., with occasional snow showers and visibility seven miles. MIG aircraft were reported to be above the PUEBLO. The surface action occurred only 25 miles from a major North Korean airfield on which were based 75 MIG aircraft. Lastly, the action occurred well within the North Korean air defense control net so that their radar coverage and ground control of fighters would have been effective even at low altitude.

Were aircraft to have been used in such a situation, they would be required in numerical strength. Aircraft would be needed to "cap" the MIG base at Wonsan to "pin down" the MIG's. Additional fighter aircraft would be needed

to protect the attack aircraft aiding the PUEBLO from MIG's which might be airborne.

From the time (1315 Korean time) the PUEBLO requested assistance, she was under escort by one or more of the North Korean boats. If friendly aircraft had been sent, and if they could have found the PUEBLO, there is reasonable doubt they would have been able to drive off the North Korean boats without sinking one or more, with serious risk of sinking the PUEBLO in the process.

Wednesday, January 24

- 12:12 a The President phoned Secretary Rusk at his office.
- 8:46 a Rusk phoned the President.
- 10:15 a Rostow sent President Seoul 3598 giving Park's strong reaction to our representations that ROK avoid reprisals.
- 12:35 p George Christian news conference.
- 12:44 p Press and radio news briefing at State.
- 1:00 p NSC meeting in the Cabinet Room (Saunders' minutes DDD*)
- 4:35 p George Christian news conference.
- 6:00 p Meeting at State, chaired by Secretary Rusk (DDD).
- 7:30 p Rostow phoned the President.
- 7:30 - The President met in the Cabinet Room with Rusk, McNamara,
8:25 p Clifford, Rostow, Christian and Tom Johnson. Substance unknown.

*DDD. Notes in the seven-volume Day-by-Day Documents. Since these documents are easily found under the tab for a given day -- they are in chronological order except for SitReps at beginning and press items at end of each day -- reference will not be further tabbed. References will simply be to "DDD," Day-by-Day Documents. Further tabbing would greatly increase bulk through added division sheets.

Handwritten: 726514 516 526 1816

8:25 - The President was in the Oval Office with McNamara.
8:36 p

8:36 p A message was handed to the President in an envelope marked (Secret and Sensitive.) It was from Dick Helms. The President read it and asked that it be put in the safe to be gotten out for him in the morning.

12:00 m The President retired.

During this period, the President, his chief advisers and their staffs were occupied with consideration of alternative reactions to the North Korean seizure of the PUEBLO. The confrontation created by the North Koreans involved interests of several parties, not only of the U.S. and North Koreans. The attitudes and actions of the USSR, China and the ROK, not to mention pressures and advice from others not so immediately involved, would complicate the further course of events. Judgment as to overall communist intentions, and the degree of coordination among the communist powers, was a basic appraisal facing the President and his advisers.

A CIA assessment (DDD "Confrontation in Korea") stated that we were probably not dealing with a series of coordinated actions among the communist powers, but that all the communist parties had an interest because of Vietnam in bringing diversionary pressures on the United States. It seemed likely that the communists believed that the present military-political situation in Vietnam made the U.S. especially susceptible to such pressures.

The present strained relations between the North Koreans and the Chinese seemed to rule out serious collaboration between them, and it seemed unlikely that the Soviets had had a direct part in preparation either of the raid on the Blue House or the seizure of the PUEBLO. Nevertheless, all of the communist powers would be interested in increasing pressures on the U.S. government at home and abroad in hopes thereby to make it more difficult for the U.S. to sustain its present course in Vietnam.

It did not seem that any of the communist parties would want the new tension in Korea to develop into actual hostilities. The treaty relationships between North Korea and the Soviets and between North Korea and the Chinese had to be taken into account, however. (Vol. 11, Tab 4)

In the event major military steps were taken, the extent of our use of Japanese facilities could also prove to be a sticky issue. (Vol. 11, Tab 3)

At the NSC meeting held at 1:00 p.m. Secretary McNamara stated that the incident did appear to have been preplanned, that the Soviets appeared to have known of Korean plans in advance and that the Koreans seemed to have no intention of returning either the ship or men soon. He promised a fuller reading by the end of the day on what North Korean motives might have been, what they were likely to do now and how we should respond. In response to further questioning by the President, Secretary McNamara explained that the Commander of the Fifth Air Force had decided not to send planes to the ship's rescue because (1) he hesitated to commit a small U.S. force against a larger Korean force in the area where Korean air defense is especially tight, and (2) our force might have arrived in darkness. At this meeting the President was handed a transcript of the North Korean broadcast of a "confession" by the captain of the ship. In response to another question by the President, Secretary McNamara said the ship had radioed that it was destroying its classified equipment. All had not been destroyed, and the Secretary said we were evaluating the problem. (Later meticulous studies depicted the degree of intelligence damage. Vol. 10, Tab 2.) The President asked that the Secretaries make sure that members of Congress were properly informed.

At the 6:00 p.m. meeting with Secretary Rusk at State (DDD), a general assessment of the confrontation in Korea was covered, as well as the legal basis for possible U.S. actions in international waters against North Korea, and the President's emergency powers.

At this meeting diplomatic options and other possible moves were discussed. Among the former were an approach to the United Nations, an approach to Sato, and another approach to the Soviet Union. Among the latter were stationing of the BANNER in the area, deployment of Air and Navy to the Korean area, reconnaissance over North Korea, pickup of North Korean shipping, blockade of selected harbors, selected strikes against North Korea, calling up the Reserves and extension of military service.

At this meeting it was agreed:

1. To wire to the South Koreans for their approval of the text of a possible letter to the Security Council. (State 104283, Vol. 14, Tab 2)
2. To send a circular to, or to call in the members of the "Korea Truce Club." (State 105880, Vol. 14, Tab 9)
3. To send a message to Sato, giving him our preliminary thinking on the incident. (State 104284, Vol. 18, Tab 5)

4. To take up again with the Soviets the PUEBLO incident if Wilson failed to do so with Kosygin (who was in London at the time).

5. To send a short message to President Park from President Johnson, emphasizing solidarity and mentioning the call-up of planes. (State 104293, Vol. 14, Tab 3)

There was also a discussion of having the USS BANNER join the ENTERPRISE in the Sea of Japan with air cover and naval escort.

The Secretary said he favored preliminarily sending the BANNER; making reconnaissance over North Korea, and some call-up of Reserves and extension of military service. He feared that picking up North Korean shipping, blockading of harbors, or making strikes against North Korea, would probably provoke North Korean retaliatory action and he was not prepared to recommend them at this time.

Ambassador Porter was instructed to warn the ROK government against reprisals against North Korea (Seoul 3571, Vol. 15, Tab 6). President Park reacted strongly to these representations which had been made to the Prime Minister. He called in Porter for an hour and a half in the afternoon of January 24, and complained, as he and his government were to do frequently in the coming months, that the United States reacted immediately to the PUEBLO incident but had not reacted comparably to North Korean raids on South Korea and, specifically, to the attack on his life. He said there must also be assurance to the South Korean government that there would be no more forays from the North. Porter commented after this meeting that he thought we had what we wanted from him by way of assurance that retaliation against the North would not now be taken, but he felt that if there were another incident we could not count on this assurance (Seoul 3598, Vol. 15, Tab 7).

Ambassador Porter further reported (Seoul 3600, Vol. 15, Tab 8) that he believed the North Koreans would attempt to exploit their possession of the ship and crew to the maximum, from both the technical and propaganda points of view. Afterward they would probably return the crew but under conditions of considerable humiliation to the United States. He expected North Korea to continue to carry out its basic plan for increased subversive effort against the ROK. He felt North Korea would not permit any action by the United States to go unchallenged. The North Koreans seemed confident and sure of themselves, and appeared to be convinced that we had neither the capability nor the determination to deal with them while so heavily engaged in Vietnam.

Note: The Day-by-Day Documents, Vols. 3 through 8, should be thumbed through in conjunction with this account and the basic historical study, for whatever further fleshing out of specific points may be desired -- if any.

Thursday, January 25

- 4:13 a The President phoned the Sit Room.
- 8:00 a Ambassador Goldberg went to the second floor of the Mansion.
- 8:15 a Rostow sent to the President Moscow 2566 (DDD). In it Thompson reported that Kuznetsov stated that the USSR could not act as an intermediary in the crisis. Thompson commented that if the North Koreans were anything like the Soviets, the presence of our naval force off Wonsan would make it virtually impossible for the North Koreans to return our vessel and crew.
- 8:25 a Rusk, McNamara, Rostow, Christian and Tom Johnson went to second floor.
- 8:30 a The President had breakfast with Goldberg, Rusk, McNamara, Rostow, Christian and Tom Johnson. (TJ notes?)
- 9:30 a Harry McPherson was called by Bromley Smith and was told that the Executive Order calling up the Reserves was coming from DOD. McPherson called Frank Wozencraft at Justice and alerted him. McPherson then visited with Frank Bartimo and Leonard Niederlehner, General Counsel of DOD, with a copy of the Order in hand. He was told that the Order was legally okay, and he then carried the Order to the Cabinet Room (see 11:27 a.m. entry).
- 10:05 a Rostow phoned the President.
- 10:07 a The President asked for Clark Clifford. He had departed five minutes earlier enroute to the Hill for hearings on his appointment.
- 10:10 a The President phoned Rostow (pl).
- 10:16 a Rostow phoned the President.
- 10:35 a Marvin Watson sent a memo to the President, stating that both Senator Mansfield and Senator Fulbright were highly complimentary of the way in which the President was handling the PUEBLO situation (DDD).

- 11:27 - McPherson and Watson went to the Cabinet Room. At 11:27 the
11:30 a President signed the Executive Order ordering certain units of
the Ready Reserve, of the Naval Reserve, Air Force Reserve, and
Air Naval Guard of the United States to active duty (DDD). This
was the first time the Reserves had been called up since the Berlin
Crisis in 1961.
- 12:28 p State press briefing.
- 12:42 p Okamoto came in for photos with the President and the Executive
Order he signed this morning.
- 1:14 p The President went to the Mansion with Goldberg.
- 1:30 - Luncheon with McNamara, Rusk, Goldberg, Katzenbach, Wheeler,
3:15 p Helms, Berger, Rostow, Christian and Tom Johnson (DDD).
- 1:50 - Clark Clifford also present.
3:20 p
- 3:40 p Rostow phoned the President.
- 3:58 p Christian news conference.
- 6:40 - The President went to the Cabinet Room to join Wheeler, McNamara,
7:33 p Nitze, Katzenbach, Berger, Clifford, Helms, Rostow, Christian
and Johnson. (No record available.)
- 8:00 p Rostow sent to the President the draft letter which Goldberg proposed
to file forthwith as a basis for the Security Council meeting the
following morning (DDD).

At the breakfast meeting, decisions were made:

1. To send a message to President Ayub Kahn of Pakistan, outlining
the Security Council situation. (State 104475, Vol. 18, Tab 3.)
2. To get out a circular to all missions, setting forth the facts of the
PUEBLO incident (State 104818 and 104819, Vol. 14, Tabs 6 and 7).
3. To send a message to President Park, dealing with South Korean
sensitivities about permitting North Korea to appear at UN sessions (State 104496,
Vol. 14, Tab 5).

4. To ask the Indonesians to talk to North Korea about the incident (State 104395, Vol. 18, Tab 2).

5. To approve the text of a "pen pal" letter.

Consideration was also given but no decision made on a Presidential statement that day concerning the call-up of Air and Navy Reserves.

At the luncheon meeting, the following actions were agreed upon:

1. State should call in the ambassadors of the sixteen nations which were members of the Korean Club (State 105880, Vol. 14, Tab 9).

2. State should consider the pros and cons of another MAC meeting (Seoul 3666, Vol. 15, Tab 10; State 105934, Vol. 14, Tab 8).

3. Goldberg would move in the Security Council and an announcement would be made at 4:00 p.m. from the White House to this effect. Before that time, the President would talk to U Thant and the President of the Security Council.

4. The President asked State to provide him with a full account of the Blue House assassination attempt.

5. Thirty-six B-52's should be put on alert to move to the western Pacific (State 106621, Vol. 18, Tab 6).

6. The KITTYHAWK carrier with 170 aircraft should be prepared for movement to the Sea of Japan.

7. State should continue contingency plans on the character of actions needed if diplomacy plus generalized threats failed.

8. Cables should be sent to President Ayub Kahn on the Security Council and to President Park urging relaxation of their traditional view against North Korea being present at the UN. (State 104475, Vol. 18, Tab 3; State 104496, Vol. 14, Tab 5.)

Possible Congressional actions were also discussed but no decisions were taken.

Subsequent to the meeting, Secretaries Rusk and McNamara cleared Commando Royale reconnaissance flights across the DMZ and out into the sea on both sides of the Korean peninsula. Secretary McNamara approved an order permitting augmentation by 12 aircraft of the U.S. air strength in South Korea. He turned down an additional request for 16 tankers, with a comment that they could come back on this request after four days if desired.

Note: SitReps at beginning of each DDD date give additional military movements if greater detail is desired in a later, fuller historical study. Especially see DDD January 25 Fact Sheet, "Actions of a Military Nature Taken Subsequent to . . . PUEBLO Incident."

Porter was instructed to tell President Park that President Johnson felt complete solidarity with the Republic of Korea in this tense situation and wished to be sure that we both were prepared for all contingencies. Porter was also to inform Park that his agreement to exercise restraint while we were sorting things out was greatly appreciated here. Park was also to be asked whether the deployment of aircraft to Korea and immediately adjacent areas would create any problems for him (State 104293, Vol. 14, Tab 3). President Park responded that he greatly appreciated President Johnson's message of solidarity and would be very pleased if the President decided to send a large number of aircraft to Korea and nearby areas (Seoul 3623, Vol. 15, Tab 9).

U.S. military units were alerted to prepare for forceful action (COMSEVENTH-FLT 250332Z Jan., Vol. 21, Tab 4). The President's advisers continued to counsel restraint in this regard, however.

President Ayub assured us that Pakistan shared our concern over the situation and hoped for a consensus in the Security Council on the best means to meet it (Rawalpindi 2969, Vol. 19, Tab 8). Foreign Minister Malik told Ambassador Greene that he would immediately instruct his Ambassador in Pyongyang to urge the North Koreans to release the PUEBLO and its crew immediately (Djarkarta 4270, Vol. 19, Tab 7). Note: The State SitRep in the DDD and the two-volume daily chron give ready reference to the multifarious diplomatic moves carried on during the crisis. In this account emphasizing Presidential actions, reference will be made to the more important of these, but the attempt will be made to avoid unnecessary duplication with the other basic studies.)

A Seventh Fleet surface and air operation under the nickname "Formation Star" was ordered into the Sea of Japan for an indefinite period (COMSEVENTH-FLT 250332Z Jan., Vol. 21, Tab 4).

Ambassador Porter was instructed to approach the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission to ask it to attempt to ascertain from North Korea the identity of the wounded crew members and dead, if any, and the nature of their injuries and present condition (State 104387, Vol. 14, Tab 4).

Ambassador Tubby in Geneva (State 104827, Vol. 19, Tab 1) was instructed to ask the ICRC to make an urgent approach to the North Korean government and Red Cross to inquire about the welfare and physical condition of the captured personnel, to request their prompt release and to offer ICRC assistance and good offices in arrangements for their return to U. S. control. Ambassador Goldberg on January 25 submitted a letter to the President of the UN Security Council, requesting an urgent meeting of the Council to consider threats to the peace brought about by the North Korean military actions (USUN 3506, Vol. 2: Tab 1).

Pyongyang radio today broadcast a "confession" of Commander Bucher (Vol. 13, Tab I-1). Some aspects of the alleged confession raised questions about its authenticity. Although the speaker had an American accent, the language was stilted and contained expressions an American would be unlikely to use. Bucher's age was given incorrectly. The "confession" stated that the PUEBLO "criminally" intruded into North Korean waters and had been ordered to "execute assignments given by the Central Intelligence Agency."

Friday, January 26

12:04 a President phoned Sit Room Duty Officer.

1:00 a President retired.

8:15 a Rostow sent Rawalpindi's 597 to the President giving Ayub's satisfactory response (DDD).

8:39 a McNamara phoned the President.

10:57 a Rostow phoned the President.

11:08 a- The President was in the Cabinet Room for a meeting with Katzenbach,
12:02 p McNamara, Nitze, Wheeler, Berger, Clifford, Helms, Rostow, Christian and Johnson.

2:45 p Memorandum from Rostow to the President giving a rather temperate line that a Soviet diplomat took in Moscow earlier that day with Senator Mondale (DDD).

3:35 p The President phoned Rostow (pl).

3:58 - The President went to the Fish Room for a live televised statement
4:01 p on the PUEBLO incident (DDD).

4:30 p Rostow sent to the President FBIS text of Bucher public interview (DDD).

4:45 p Rostow sent memo to President, concerning Adam Clymer story claiming the Soviet Union may be active in bringing about the return of the PUEBLO. (DDD)

5:00 p The President phoned McNamara.

5:00 p Rostow sent to the President a draft of the Goldberg speech (DDD).

5:06 p President phoned Rostow (pl).

5:20 p President phoned Secretary Rusk.

5:20 p Rostow sent to the President exact text of Clymer's dispatch from New Delhi (DDD).

5:25 p Rostow phoned the President.

5:50 p Rusk phoned the President.

6:15 p Wheeler phoned the President.

6:25 p Rostow sent to the President examples of questions and answers which he had used with news correspondents (DDD). (A group in the Task Force at State worked through the night and until noon of January 27 on a question and answer book for the President. Dick Moose sent it up sometime in the afternoon of January 27 and the President said it was a fine job.)

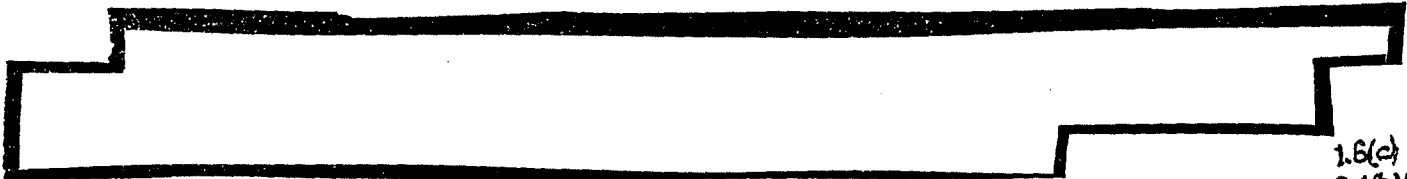
7:02 p The President phoned Rostow (pl).

7:08 p Rostow phoned the President.

7:14 p The President phoned Rostow (pl).

8:30 p Bromley Smith sent a memo to the President, attaching a summary of the reaction of members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to Secretary Rusk's briefing earlier that day on the PUEBLO incident (DDD).

9:45 p Rostow sent to the President a memorandum from Katzenbach describing what was underway concerning the PUEBLO (DDD). (This is a good summary which should be referred to. It is lengthy and will not be repeated here.)



1.6(c)
3.4(b)(1)

A Korean Working Group and a Korean Task Force were set up. Deputy Assistant Secretary Samuel D. Berger was the director of both groups (DDD).

See January 26 DDD papers indicating studies under progress at this time and developments at the UN.

Saturday, January 27

12:20 a President retired.

8:49 a President phoned Goldberg in New York.

9:30 a Rostow sent memorandum to the President giving the aircraft movement schedule to Korea, which the President had put into effect the previous day (DDD).

10:00 a - Rusk meeting at State (DDD).
12:15 p

12:00 n Korean Working Group meeting to consider various courses of action. Minutes DDD include "ship snatch" paper.

12:20 p Hard-nosed reply from Kosygin (DDD) was sent to the President. Blamed U.S. for incident, offered no help, and said military build-up would complicate settlement.

- 1:50 p Rostow memo to the President, giving Gromyko's conversation with Thompson (DDD). Gromyko said we should exercise greater control over our military, and maintained the PUEBLO was not in international waters.
- 2:40 p Memo from Rostow to the President, enclosing evidence that the North Koreans appear to be suggesting they will return the men as prisoners of war (DDD).
- 2:55 p The President phoned Rostow (pl).
- 5:11 p The President went to the Situation Room.
- 5:45 p The President went to George Christian's office to discuss the PUEBLO situation. The President asked Art McCafferty to come up from the Situation Room and explain to him why he was not notified earlier of the PUEBLO incident, and said he did not want that to happen again. The President stepped into the Press Lobby and told the correspondents they should go home.
- 6:46 p Rostow phoned the President.
- 6:47 - Rostow with the President.
- 6:58 p
- 7:50 p President phoned Rostow (pl).
- 8:16 p President departed White House for off-record National Press Club Inauguration Dinner.

K. F. ...
570 612 3014

The Security Council had met in the late afternoon of January 26 and heard Ambassador Goldberg and Soviet Representative Morozov. There was widespread feeling that the Soviet speech was "lackluster boilerplate." Several nations spoke today (brief account in SitRep of 1800 hours, and fuller account in Nat Davis' memo, DDD).

Various alternative U.S. reactions continued to be studied, but considerable Chinese naval activity in the Yellow Sea (SitReps and daily chron) gave added reason not to risk the use of force in connection with the PUEBLO.

At a meeting held in the Under Secretary's conference room on January 27 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. (attendees in DDD) the following items were discussed and/or agreed upon:

1. Goldberg was authorized to consult with other Security Council members about mandating the Security Council President to contact both sides to facilitate a solution.
2. Defense was asked to provide a briefing on the PUEBLO incident.
3. Research and other papers were assigned.
4. Prospect of a US/NK meeting was discussed (and noted in margin as "killed").
5. Japanese tripartite meeting proposal was rejected.
6. Investigation of alleged Bucher "confession" to be pursued.
7. Helpful statements from other countries were to be sought.
8. Data on Soviet intelligence gathering ships was to be provided.
9. It was agreed that Congress was showing little support for military action.
10. Possible U.S. pressure moves were discussed:
 - a. through the USSR;
 - b. additional reconnaissance;
 - c. replacement of the PUEBLO;
 - d. recovery of PUEBLO jettisoned material;
 - e. mining Wonsan harbor;
 - f. forcible retention of North Korean vessels;
 - g. air strike by South Korea or U.S. against one or more North Korean targets;
 - h. raids by South Korean or U.S. forces against North Korea;
 - i. quarantine or blockade of Wonsan;
 - j. Free World trade boycott of North Korea.

One of the most troubling issues continued to be our relations with the ROK, which was insensed that we seemed to be giving so much more attention to the PUEBLO incident than to the Blue House raid (numerous references in the daily two-volume chron, Vols. 1 and 2).

Sunday, January 28

1:00 a President retired.

In a memorandum from Katzenbach to the President (DDD), he stated that Secretaries McNamara and Rusk met with Messrs. Ball, Vance, Lodge and General Taylor for several hours during Sunday morning. They were fully briefed on all of the events to date in connection with the PUEBLO. A long discussion ensued. The consensus of the meeting was that there was a fair possibility of success with respect to the track now being followed by the President. All members of the group were extremely skeptical about the wisdom of taking highly visible and provocative action and about the wisdom of actual military operations in North Korea in the future, but were aware that this would have to be looked at in the light of events over the next few days. At the same time the Korean Working Group met and discussed ten possible actions in the Korean crisis (DDD).

No Rostow memo to the President attached Seoul 3706 giving ROK
time worries re our reaction to North Korean threat and our dealing with North Korea on PUEBLO (DDD).

11:38 a President phoned Goldberg in New York.

2:35 p Rostow phoned the President.

4:00 p Bromley Smith memo to the President, giving reports from 90
ambassadors on their efforts to get support for our position on
the PUEBLO incident (DDD). (Amalgamated responses found
in Vol. 11, Tab 5)

11:40 p President retired.

State 106070 (Vol. 14, Tab 10) gives rundown on Security Council developments and requests Porter to urge Park or Foreign Minister to delay any action for the time being on the question of ROK attendance at Security Council

meetings. Seoul 3706 (Vol. 15, Tab 11) gives Porter's thinking concerning the growing problem of our relations with the ROK at this critical period. The ROK remain convinced that we were emphasizing the PUEBLO incident at the expense of their more immediate concerns and Porter was additionally concerned that we could not keep from the ROK knowledge of our exchange between ourselves and North Korea through NNSC members. (Historical basic study and daily chron deal with this aspect.) We remained fearful that the ROK might initiate retaliatory action against North Korea. Seoul 3708 (Vol. 15, Tab 12) states that the ROK JCS has requested CINCUNC to initiate combined contingency planning for possible return of forces in Vietnam back to the ROK. This did not eventuate, but remained a subject of concern to us.

State 106086 (Vol. 19, Tab 4) observes that the Soviets seemed to regard official contacts on the PUEBLO case as awkward and even annoying, but it was essential that we remain in close communication to stress the gravity of the situation. While we hoped for success in our diplomatic approaches, it was possible that at a later juncture we might wish to warn the Soviets of actions we might be compelled to take in order to obtain release of the men and the vessel. The hot line remained a subject of frequent inquiry, but it was feared that confirmation of its use would escalate public concern and engage Soviet prestige.

For several days during this period the White House received reports of the movements of North Korean shipping, and the possibility of seizing one or more North Korean ships was kept under review. Principal North Korean shipping involved Polish interests, however, which made those ships an unattractive target. The small North Korean Navy stayed close to home as did its fishing vessels, except for the smallest of them.

Meanwhile, Free World media generally emphasized that the United States was to be commended for showing restraint and for carrying this dangerous issue to the United Nations. The unwisdom of placing an unprotected ship in an exposed position where provocation could be expected was also a frequent theme. The seizure of the ship was generally viewed as a calculated provocation linked to the Vietnam situation. Pyongyang was seen as interested in diverting U.S. forces away from Vietnam without going so far as to reopen full-scale hostilities in Korea (DDD).

Studies were also made of North Korean vulnerability to Free World economic pressures. Results were not promising (DDD).

The fact is that we expected our "show of force" to be more effective with the North Koreans than it proved to be. The State Department (curiously!) seems to have expected an early release of the crew and it urged Admiral Smith (State 106085, Vol. 14, Tab 11) to try to obtain the vessel as well. The

Department stated that Admiral Smith was not authorized to sign a statement confessing that the crew was conducting espionage and had violated territorial waters. If, after the crew was released and we found by talking with Bucher and other crew members that the vessel was in territorial waters, we would make this fact public. Park was to be assured that we intended to keep augmented forces in the area, that additional assistance was under consideration, that this would be announced after release of the crew or if release was long delayed. We intended, if necessary, to request further meetings to press for an end of North Korean violations of South Korea. Admiral Smith was authorized to sign a simple receipt for the prisoners provided it did not contain either an apology or an admission of guilt (State 106096, Vol. 14, Tab 12).

On January 28 one interceptor squadron of 12 P-102's moved from Clark Air Force Base and one tactical fighter squadron of 12 F-105's completed the move from Kadena Air Force Base. Significant increases in land and sea-based air power was to occur daily starting January 30 (SitRep 1800 hours DDD).

Monday, January 29

- 8:41 a The President phoned McNamara.
- 10:03 a The President phoned Clark Clifford.
- 10:10 a Rostow memo to President, transmitting working paper "Possible Courses of Action in the Korean Crisis" to be used in preparation for the lunch at 1:30 (DDD).
- 12:00 n The senior group and advisers met at White House (DDD).
- 12:12 p Christian news conference.
- 12:28 p State press briefing.
- 1:04 -
1:40 p The President went to the Cabinet Room for a meeting with Secretary McNamara and other senior advisers. (It is not clear whether the advisers' meeting at noon took place at that time, prior to the President's joining, or whether the meeting was later than originally planned and started at 1:04 p.m.)
- 2:00 -
3:25 p Lunch with Vance, Katzenbach, Clifford, McGeorge Bundy, Taylor, Lodge, McNamara, Rostow, Wheeler, Johnson, Christian, Ball, Berger and Helms. (See DDD news briefing No. 1113-A and latter part of DDD noon entry.)

3:37 p President phoned Rostow (pl).
3:45 p Rostow phoned President.
5:20 p Christian news conference.
10:39 p Rostow phoned President.
11:38 p President went to his office.
11:40 p President went to Situation Room.

At lunch the President and the group examined certain lines of action that might be taken up with Congress at a future time. In particular, the group discussed (1) extension of enlistments, and (2) maintenance in the area of forces sufficient to give the South Koreans a sense of security, and provision of sufficient additional military aid so that they could proceed with their plan to provide an extra division to South Vietnam. It was the universal judgment of the group that the United States should keep its eye on the major objectives of the crisis: (1) get the crew and if possible the ship returned; (2) keep the confidence of the South Koreans and especially their willingness to provide an increment of force in South Vietnam, and (3) avoid a second front in Asia.

An ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs note of January 29 strongly requested the United States not to negotiate directly with North Korea on any matter (Seoul 3833, Vol. 15, Tab 14, and airgram of February 1, Vol. 21, Tab 5). Seoul 3727, Vol. 15, Tab 13, however, had reported President Park's approval of our desire for private or if need be public meetings between principal North Korean and MAC representatives.

The Security Council meeting scheduled for today was postponed indefinitely. Informal consultations were to continue. The North Koreans had shown no disposition to pay any attention to Security Council deliberations. This was consistent with their attitude toward the United Nations of many years standing.

Tuesday, January 30

12:09 a President went to office.
12:25 a President went to apartments.
1:00 a President retired.

- 5:37 a ~~President phoned Sit Room.~~
- 7:18 a President phoned Sit Room.
- 8:30 - Congressional leadership breakfast. Attending were Vice President,
11:00 a Speaker John McCormick, Congressmen Carl Albert, Hale Boggs,
Senators Mike Mansfield, Russell Long, J. W. Fulbright, John
Sparkman, Robert Byrd, Congressman Thomas Morgan, Secretaries
Rusk, McNamara, General Wheeler, Dr. Harold Brown (Secretary
of Air Force), Lawrence O'Brien (Postmaster General), Rostow,
Barefoot Sanders, Joe Califano, Mike Manatos and Tom Johnson.
The PUEBLO was the first item on the agenda (DDD 8:30 a.m. entry).
(This agenda provides a useful series of questions and answers
concerning the PUEBLO's mission, its failure to be escorted, the
delay in asking for assistance, response to the PUEBLO's call for
help or lack of it, and the reasons why we did not have adequate force
in the area to respond in time.)
- 3:20 p McNamara phoned the President.
- 4:20 p President phoned Rostow (pl).
- 5:30 p Rostow memo to President, attaching a historical note of encourage-
ment from Ambassador Lodge (DDD).
- 5:45 p Rostow sent the President State's evaluation of Soviet policy toward
the PUEBLO (public non-involvement, playing down incident) and an
account of Sihanouk's remarks to the Soviet Ambassador to Cambodia
(re Vietnam) (DDD).
- 6:04 - President went to Cabinet Room to join Republic/^{an}leadership briefing.
7:55 p In attendance was Senator Everett Dirksen, Congressman Gerald
Ford, Rusk, McNamara, Wheeler, Helms, Rostow, Taylor, Clifford,
Christian and Johnson.
- 10:19 p President phoned Situation Room.
- 11:40 p President retired.

The previous few days had been well filled with specific diplomatic actions and military movements, and with consideration of a whole range of possible alternative actions. By January 30, the attention of the President and his top

leaders was turning increasingly toward detailed investigation of the series of questions concerning the incident itself which had immediately come to mind at the time of the incident. General Wheeler sent a memorandum to the President on January 30 explaining why aircraft were not sent to help the PUEBLO. In the coming days, a group of senior advisers under George Ball and later the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board examined in minute detail the many questions which arose in connection with the PUEBLO's mission, the absence of protection for the ship, why the ship was not scuttled, etc., etc. An extensive briefing book was prepared for the Ball Committee and is in Rostow's files. That committee, however, was soon allowed to die out with, so it seems, an oral report to the President; and the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board took over the study. The results of its study are in volumes 9 and 10.

Wednesday, January 31

- 8:40 a The President breakfasted with Congressional members (leaders from the appropriate Armed Services and Appropriations fields in both houses). Christian's news briefing No. 116-A announced that the Congressional leaders were fully briefed by the President, Secretaries Rusk and McNamara and General Wheeler on the developments in Vietnam and Asia. The President called on General Wheeler for a detailed report on all the facts surrounding the PUEBLO incident.
- 11:45 a President phoned McNamara.
- 12:12 p Christian news conference.
- 12:27 p Cabinet meeting. Agenda included Korean developments.
- 3:20 p Memo from Califano to the President concerning what actions might be taken in terms of an emergency message (DDD).
- 3:30 - The President went to the Mansion for lunch with George Christian,
4:35 p Hugh Sidey of Time-Life, Carroll Kilpatrick of the Washington Post, Frank Cormier of AP, Merriman Smith of UP, and Lynda. Christian's notes to DT mentioned Papal visit, Vietnam situation and Korea. The President was the only one who ate; the others had coffee.
- 5:41 p The President went to the Cabinet Room, joining Rusk, McNamara, Wheeler, McPherson and Rostow.

- 5:57 p The group was joined by the Vice President, Helms, Clifford and Taylor.
- 6:05 p Congressional briefing in the East Room with the Vice President and others from the Cabinet Room.

At this point our main effort to get the men and the vessel released was concentrated on arranging a meeting between the senior UN/US and senior North Korean members at Panmunjom. Apart from indication conveyed to us through the NNSC in an oral message from the North Korean senior member that this was the forum in which they wished to talk, the Pyongyang radio on January 31 made this explicit, saying that this channel had been used before and the Security Council had no competence to handle the matter.

The Soviets, too, had stressed that we had means of communicating directly and that we should not expect them to serve as intermediaries.

Our air and naval forces continued to move to the area on schedule. We said nothing specific about this publicly, but the Soviets and the North Koreans were, of course, aware of the redeployments.

We (principally State) continued, however, to be overly optimistic. At this point we believed that the Soviet Union and possibly the North Koreans had realized that a very serious situation had been created and that it was important that tension be reduced by releasing the men. We thought that signals to us that Panmunjom was the place where the matter was to be dealt with was an encouraging sign.

Meanwhile at New York we were "stonewalling" while we made our effort to get a meeting going at Panmunjom.

Embassy Seoul reported that the communists had proposed a meeting for 11:00 a.m. February 2, Korean time. (The narrative study and the two-volume chron document the negotiations at Panmunjom. No attempt will be made to do so fully in this paper -- only where it appears the President may have approved a new departure.)

Thursday, February 1

- 11:55 a Christian news conference.
- 12:38 p State press briefing.

- 2:30 p Califano memo to the President concerning a possible Presidential statement to the people and to the Congress (DDD).
- 7:30 p Rostow memo to the President concerning a public statement on the minor collision of a U.S. vessel with a Soviet vessel (DDD).
- 9:15 p - Dinner with Judge and Mrs. Thornberry and other house guests.
1:00 a At one point the President said "We might be getting our boys back -- they are meeting now" -- and he looked at his watch.

Secretary Rusk received a letter from Senator Fulbright asking that the Secretary provide the Committee on Foreign Relations certain information and material relating to the PUEBLO incident. Letter and answer in Vol. 10, Tab 3. (The substance of the appendices appears in other portions of these volumes. Some redundancy is purposeful in this set of volumes in order to keep a useful package intact. Most duplication, however, has been weeded out in the interest of reducing tonnage.)

The decision not to use force was strengthened by intelligence reports of North Korean and Soviet vigilance [REDACTED]

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3.4(b)(1)

The President considered four proposals for an impartial fact-finding or legal settlement of the PUEBLO case:

1. A U.S. statement that we would welcome an impartial fact-finding or adjudication of the legal issues raised by the PUEBLO seizure.
2. An arbitral tribunal.
3. The Security Council itself to undertake an investigation under Article 34 of the Charter.
4. The Security Council to ask the International Court of Justice for an advisory opinion.

In a memorandum from Katzenbach to the President (DDD) the Under Secretary stated that he doubted that the North Koreans would accept any of these proposals, nor would the Soviets permit the Security Council to act affirmatively on them. He thought there might be some advantage to demonstrating confidence in our own case, however, while challenging the North Koreans to put up or shut up. Katzenbach stated that if we decided to make one of these proposals, it should be made clear that U.S. willingness to proceed was "dependent on the prior release of the crew and ship."

USUN 3597 (Vol. 21, Tab 2) gives a good summary at this point of the status of our use of the NNSC as a channel.

McCloskey's press briefing of this date said that the Department had noted in a press report of a high official of the North Korean Communist Party that North Korea would not use the United Nations to deal with the PUEBLO problem, but was prepared to use MAC machinery in Panmunjom. McCloskey stated "The United States is prepared to deal with this matter through this channel."

Our MAC senior member: was authorized to say that as soon as the U.S. had access to the crew it would make an investigation, but our negotiator was cautioned against "bargaining gambits" such as an exchange of prisoners of war or a reduction of U.S. forces in South Korea (State 108281, Vol. 14, Tab 13).

The first formal meeting was scheduled for 11:00 a.m., Korean time, February 2 at Panmunjom.

The Department informed Embassy Tokyo that it had received a letter from Prime Minister Sato to President Johnson dated January 30, in which Sato promised the President "to cooperate in the satisfactory settlement of the PUEBLO problem." (State 108777, Vol. 18, Tab 7.)

Friday, February 2

12:05 - The President went to the Cabinet Room for a press conference. He
12:38 p took questions on Vietnam, Korea and domestic problems. (DDD last item Feb. 2.)

4:30 - The President lunched with public media representatives, Rostow
6:02 p and Tom Johnson. Johnson's notes to DT mention Vietnam and PUEBLO.

6:30 p Rostow memo to the President concerning a 9:30 a.m. meeting scheduled the following morning in the Situation Room, to go over military planning papers on which the Pentagon had been working at the President's instruction, and an 11:00 a.m. meeting with Secretary Rusk to go over diplomatic options, including those the President instructed be staffed out (DDD).

(No time) McCafferty memo to the President giving results of meeting with North Korea (DDD).

Terms of reference were stated for the Ball Committee (DDD).

McNamara and Wheeler on TV explained why the PUEBLO was unarmed (DDD).

The Korean Ambassador raised with Berger the idea of a special Presidential envoy to Seoul. We feared that at this critical period it would arouse widespread speculation as to why he was sent and why normal channels were to be reinforced. It might even provide rumors that we were contemplating military action. In any event, we wanted to postpone decision on this until after the results of the MAC meeting. (State 109068, Vol. 14, Tab 14.)

Csatorday (Hungary) told Buffum at the UN that a quiet move of the ENTERPRISE from its present location would probably be very helpful (USUN 3597, Vol. 21, Tab 2). Dobrynin said he thought the PUEBLO affair would be settled provided we took no further action to increase tension. He said our threat of force made Soviet intervention difficult and if force were actually used the Soviet Union would have to react (Moscow 2672, Vol. 20, Tab 2a).

Meanwhile ROK restiveness and resentment gave impetus to the idea of sending a special envoy. On February 2, the ROK Prime Minister told the National Assembly that the ROK had entered one of its most critical phases. He said he was thinking of giving "without delay, the communists a lesson . . . if circumstances allow, and international cooperation can be realized." (Seoul 3895, Vol. 16, Tab 1.)

A list of the dates of each Panmunjom meeting is found in Vol. 11, Tab 2.

President Park told Porter that if the ROK government did not receive a guarantee that the North Koreans would desist from aggressive activities and if there was another incident the ROK would take retaliatory measures. Porter commented that Park's remarks reflected the hard line of many of his Ministers, Party elements and the Generals. Porter expected, however, that U.S. views would continue to prevail unless there was another severe raid (Seoul 3901, Vol. 16, Tab 2).

Saturday, February 3

1:30 a President phoned Sit Room.
1:36 a President phoned Berger.

- 1:40 a President phoned Rostow.
- 1:55 a Rostow phoned President.
- 6:51 a President phoned Sit Room.
- 8:59 a President phoned McNamara.
- 9:30 a Rostow memo to President concerning Berger's appreciation of the prospects for the next Korean meeting (North Koreans aiming for signed confession). (DDD)
- 9:45 a President phoned Rostow (pl).
- 11:14 a George Ball phoned the President from the State Department.
- 11:20 a President phoned McNamara.
- 12:45 p Rostow memo to the President, "Rounding out Nick's Scenario" (DDD)
- 1:50 p Lunch with usual weekly group (sketchy notes in Doherty to Berger memo, DDD). (TJ probably has better account.)
- 3:45 p Bromley Smith sent to the President Thompson's report on a message to the President from Kosygin containing a relatively mild complaint about the concentration of our naval forces off Korea (DDD).
- 7:05 p Smith memo to President transmits text of Kosygin message (DDD).
- (No time) A Berger situation report on the second meeting at Panmunjom was passed to the President, DDD. (North Korean objection to our military build-up and desire for government-to-government level negotiations.)
- 9:18 p President phoned Helms.

Sunday, February 4

- (No time) Memo from Rostow to the President, attaching Kosygin message and draft response revised as the President had directed (DDD).

(No Memo from Rostow to President concerning a possible message via
time) "hot line" (DDD).

State's 109853 (Vol. 18, Tab 8) indicated consideration of establishing a black list for Free World merchant ships calling at North Korean ports.

President Johnson sent a message to President Park, saying the USG was considering how North Korean infiltration could best be met and how to strengthen the equipment of the ROK forces to meet the increased campaign from the North (State 109821, Vol. 14, Tab 15).

Seoul 3935 (Vol. 16, Tab 3) reported that President Park was clearly moved by the President's message of solicitude for him and his family, of the lengthy discussion of mutual problems and, finally, the warm reference to him as a trusted friend and ally.

In response to a proposed message from Kosygin to President Johnson (State 110351, Vol. 19, Tab 6), Thompson said that the Soviets would not bring strong pressure on the North Koreans unless the President told them the U. S. was withdrawing its recently added naval forces from the area (State 109851, Vol. 19, Tab 5, and Moscow 2684, Vol. 20, Tab 3).

Monday, February 5

- 10:37 a The President in the Oval Office joined by Rusk, Katzenbach, Clifford, Rostow, Christian and Johnson. (TJ notes?)
- 12:15 p Christian news conference.
- 12:52 p State press briefing.
- 6:43 - Goldberg appointment with President to discuss "certain aspects of
7:22 p the PUEBLO incident." (Briefing memo DDD.)
- 9:50 p Sit Room memo to President informing him that reports of return
of the body of the U. S. crewman that was killed are false (DDD).
- 9:50 p Rostow memo to the President transmits two papers on military aid to Korea (DDD).

A storm was raised in the public media as a result of a UPI story on a Rusk-McNamara "Meet the Press" interview, which stated erroneously that the PUEBLO might have been seized in North Korean territorial waters. This

was probably a subject of the 6:43 p.m. discussion between Goldberg and the President. Also see Seoul 3973, Vol. 16, Tab 5.

Seoul 3976 (Vol. 16, Tab 6) transmitted the text of President Park's letter to President Johnson in which the former expressed gratitude for President Johnson's perseverance in seeking a diplomatic solution. He added, however, that the only way to deal with communists was to teach them that any aggressive act could not escape punishment.

State 110350 (Vol. 14, Tab 16) instructed Ambassador Porter to inform Park that President Johnson had been in communication with Kosygin to attempt to get the USSR to bring to bear moderating influence on Pyongyang.

Embassy Moscow was instructed to deliver a message from President Johnson to Kosygin concerning why additional U.S. military forces are in the area of South Korea and the Sea of Japan. The President concluded by saying that he had directed that there be no further buildup of our air and naval forces at this time and that he was directing one of our aircraft carriers and accompanying vessels to move somewhat southward. (State 109851, Vol. 19, Tab 5; Moscow 2684, Vol. 20, Tab 3; State 110351, Vol. 19, Tab 6.)

Seoul 3971 (Vol. 16, Tab 4) reported strong conviction among some of the ROK military that now is the time for them to take matters in their own hands and force the issue with respect to North Korea.

Tuesday, February 6

?

3:30 a Rostow and Sit Room in conference call with President.

5:17 a Rostow phoned the President.

6:16 a Rostow phoned the President.

7:17 a Rostow phoned the President.

7:48 a Rostow phoned the President.

8:30 a Congressional leadership breakfast -- TJ notes to DT.

9:05 a Rostow memo to the President concerning the next MAC meeting (DDD)

- 10:31 a President to Cabinet Room to meet with advisers on proposed speech to be given by President on PUEBLO and Vietnam. TJ notes to DT.
- 12:20 p Christian news conference.
- 12:38 p State press briefing.
- 1:14 - Weekly luncheon re Korea and Vietnam.. TJ notes to DT.
2:35 p
- 3:05 p Rostow memo to President transmitting Kosygin's response to the President's latest message -- "calm but committing himself to nothing" (DDD).
- 3:20 p Wheeler phoned the President.
- 4:45 p President phoned Rusk.
- 5:30 p President phoned McNamara.
- 5:55 p Rostow memo to President transmitting President Park's very courteous reply to his last letter. Park makes a strong plea for retaliatory action against North Korean incursions (DDD).
- 8:25 p Smith memo to President transmitting cables for clearance concerning message from the President to President Park re separation PUEBLO and incursion issues, and instruction to Porter and Bone-steel on how to present our position and aid package to Park. (See note by Brom Smith at bottom of memo, DDD.)
- 11:24 p President phoned Brom Smith in Sit Room.
- 11:32 p President phoned Brom Smith in Sit Room.

State 110828 (Vol. 14, Tab 17) is a splendid message from the Secretary to Porter, pointing out reciprocal obligations between the United States and South Korea.

Wednesday, February 7

- 12:47 a President phoned Sit Room.

- 4:35 a Defense news release concerning dead and wounded.
- 6:30 a Memo from Sit Room to President giving the dead and wounded as given to us by the North Koreans (DDD).
- 6:47 a President phoned Sit Room.
- 7:44 a President phoned Rusk.
- 9:42 a President phoned Clifford.
- 9:59 a George Ball phoned President.
- 11:40 a DOD news release, giving names of PUEBLO crew casualties.
- 12:17 p Clifford, Ball and Taylor saw the President.
- 12:29 - President to Cabinet Room for NSC meeting. (Korea not on agenda
1:55 p but may have been mentioned. (TJ notes.)
- 12:33 p Christian news conference.
- 1:40 p State press briefing.
- 1:55 p President in Cabinet Room with McNamara, Rusk, Clifford and the Vice President.

It is likely that in the 12:17 p.m. meeting it was agreed that Ball would try to get agreement from his colleagues on his committee that he alone would make an oral report to the President.

Rostow sent to the President (time unknown) a copy of Prime Minister Holyoake's supporting statement on the PUEBLO and a message asking our Ambassador to thank him in the President's name (DDD).

Moscow 2719 (Vol. 20, Tab 4) gives Thompson's view that in the absence of any supplementary information he would not attach great significance to the movement of Soviet ships.

Thursday, February 8

- 7:30 p Rostow sent to the President a memo concerning measures beyond
: diplomacy (DDD).

Other documents furnished under this date in Vol. 6 cover Congressional interest in the PUEBLO incident, an excerpt from President Johnson's message to the Congress of February 8 and a text of the letter from President Park of February 5.

Porter was instructed to inform Park that President Johnson had appointed Cyrus R. Vance as his personal representative for talks with Park and other high officials. The announcement in Washington would underline the link between the Vance Mission and the President's proposal to Congress for an increase in military aid to Korea (State 112641, Vol. 14, Tab 19). (No attempt will be made in this account to cover the ins and outs of the Vance Mission since there is a full documentation in Rostow's files. For convenience, however, and since it was sent to the President, Vance's highly sensitive first person report is included in DDD, February 21. The two-volume day-by-day chron gives ready references to the important messages.)

Friday, February 9

- 8:49 a Rostow phoned the President.
- 10:15 - President in Cabinet Room with McNamara, Rusk, Clifford,
11:01 a McPherson, Christian and Johnson, concerning Senator Fulbright's letter suggesting that Rusk appear before televised hearings of his committee on Asian questions. No record available.
- 11:02 a Meeting in Cabinet Room. No record available.
- 4:15 p Rostow memo to President concerning Carl Rowan's report that the Soviet Government had told North Koreans they should now deliver over PUEBLO and its crew (DDD).
- 4:45 p Rostow memo to the President attaching special instructions for Vance, approved by Rusk, and an account from General Bonesteel of the state of mind of President Park (DDD).
- 6:00 p White House release concerning Vance Mission (DDD).

The President was informed of the next MAC meeting.

Saturday, February 10

- 3.4
(b)(1)
- 9:05 a Rostow memo to President [REDACTED] showing how Soviet Foreign Office circularized its missions on the PUEBLO (DDD).
- 12:40 p Rostow memo to President attaching letter from Park (Seoul 4131) urging higher U.S. priority for handling North Korean incursion and showing penchant for punitive action; and Seoul 4142 re ROK plans for Vance mission (DDD).
- 3:17 p The President had lunch with Rusk, McNamara, Clifford, Rostow, Christian and Johnson present. No record available.
- 6:15 - Rostow with the President.
7:30 p

Porter advised Park not to transmit a draft letter to President Johnson demanding retaliatory action (State 111264, Vol. 14, Tab 18; Seoul 4129, Vol. 16, Tab 7; and Seoul 4131, Vol. 16, Tab 8). Park's draft letter was sent to CINCPAC by State 113572 (Vol. 14, Tab 20).

Sunday, February 11

- 4:25 p President in his office with Rusk, McNamara, et al. Vance was Item No. 1. TJ present.

Monday, February 12

- 9:50 a Note from Rostow to the President informing him of next meeting with the North Koreans (DDD).
- 12:00 n Rostow memo to President giving Vance's proposed communique and an account of his first discussion with Park (DDD).
- 1:45 p Lunch with advisers. Agenda included Vance items. TJ notes to DT.
- 8:05 p Rostow memo to President transmitting telegram from Seoul indicating some small progress with Park (DDD).

Tuesday, February 13

- 1:12 p Weekly luncheon. The President was prepared for this meeting by a memo listing questions related to the call-up of Reserve units and individuals. Agenda (returned to Rostow) included (1) Vance, (2) PUEBLO, and other items.
- 3:45 p Rostow memo to President concerning Wernke discussion with Senator Curtis on the international waters theme (DDD).

A second Bucher "confession" was broadcast (Vol. 13, Tab I-2).

Wednesday, February 14

- 12:15 p Cabinet meeting. (No indication whether Korea on agenda.)

See DDD for an excellent highlights memo on the PUEBLO incident, prepared by Pat Coyne for the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board.

Thursday, February 15

- 11:30 a Rostow memo to President attaching reports of last private meeting indicating the North Koreans were tough, presented a carefully prepared legal case on our guilt and demanded apology for the return of the men (DDD).
- 3:55 p Rostow memo to President concerning the crew's public apology (DDD)
- 6:07 p The President went to the South Grounds to meet the helicopter carrying Vance who had just returned from Korea. Rostow had said it was important to show the Koreans that Vance reported promptly and privately to the President and possibly to the President's senior advisers.
- 6:10 p President to Cabinet Room with Vance and party, plus Vice President Rusk, McNamara, Clifford, Rostow, Taylor, Wheeler, Katzenbach. TJ notes to DT.
- 7:06 - Vance briefed press in Press Office.
7:12 p

1:05 - Weekly luncheon. Agenda included PUEBLO. TJ notes to DT.
2:50 p

Wednesday, February 21

12:37 p NSC meeting. (Agenda unknown.)

1:30 p Rostow memo to President attaching Vance's sensitive first person report to the President (DDD).

2:50 p Memo from Rostow to President attaching draft instruction for the 9th meeting and asking the President whether he wished to move in the direction of para 4 (conditional regrets) (DDD). President asked Rostow to call him.

Moscow 2853 (Vol. 20, Tab 5) reports Kosygin speech stating that the Soviet Government is taking necessary steps to prevent Korea from becoming a hot-bed of war. Embassy Moscow believes this supports previous indications that the Soviets are trying to lower the temperature and at the same time avoid irritating Pyongyang.

Thursday, February 22

Communication with Ranch concerning President's approval of reply to Mrs. Bucher (DDD).

Rostow telegram to Ranch concerning a four-prong effort to find a solution and requesting the President's comments (DDD). Presumably State 119560 (Vol. 14, Tab 22) transmitting this contemplated four-prong effort to Seoul and other posts indicated. Presidential approval.

Friday, February 23

Telegram from Sit Room to President sending a memo from Katzenbach recommending oral approach to Soviets, and two cables for Presidential clearance -- re oral demarche and instructions for ninth meeting (DDD).

Rostow memo to President concerning first and third person reports from Vance. Third person report attached (DDD).

Monday, February 26

Telegram from Rostow to the President reporting on latest meeting (DDD).

Telegram from Rostow to the President on Kosygin's statement to Wilson concerning the PUEBLO (DDD). Not very helpful. In sum he recommends that the USA act sensibly and recognize its responsibility for the further development of events.

Wednesday, February 28

During the morning the President saw and later breakfasted with a series of top State, DOD and CIA advisers, but probably concerning Vietnam. General Wheeler had just returned from a mission to Vietnam. TJ has notes.

12:32 - Cabinet meeting. (No indication whether Korea discussed.)
1:14 p

Thursday, February 29

State 122198 (Vol. 15, Tab 1) transmitted letter to President Park from President dated February 28. It expressed appreciation for the way Vance was received.

Sunday, March 3

Telegram from Rostow to President concerning calling of next meeting (DDD).

Monday, March 4

Seoul 4653 (Vol. 17, Tab 1) gives text of letter addressed to President Johnson by PUEBLO crew members. Handed to U.S. senior MAC member at 10th meeting.

Thursday, March 7

Rostow transmitted to the President Nitze-Katzenbach specific recommendations in the wake of the Vance report (DDD).

Saturday, March 9

State 127707 (Vol. 15, Tab 2) discussed likelihood of necessity to move carriers from Korean area and requested consultation with ROKG fully. Also see Seoul 4832 (Vol. 17, Tab 2) and State 130936 (Vol. 15, Tab 3) and Seoul 4989 (Vol. 17, Tab 3).

Thursday, March 14

Rostow memo (7:55 p.m.) to the President (DDD) transmitting a memo from Secretary Rusk. The President approved draft instruction to Admiral Smith, enabling him to say at the 12th meeting: ". . . at the time of the release of the officers and men of the PUEBLO, we are prepared to:

1. Acknowledge that the PUEBLO was on an intelligence gathering mission when the ship was seized by North Korean armed forces.
2. Provide assurance that ships of the U.S. Navy will continue to be ordered to remain more than 12 nautical miles from North Korea.
3. Express regret for any violation of orders by the USS PUEBLO which may have resulted in the ship's approach closer than 12 nautical miles to North Korea."

Rusk stated that he firmly believed we should not admit incursions which we were reasonably certain did not occur. He thought we should then stonewall for a bit longer to see if the North Koreans move at all in our direction.

The President also approved Rusk's recommendation that we have a reliable newsman talk to the Russian Embassy, pointing out that continuing

to hold the crew was not necessarily helpful to the North Koreans (notably our aid buildup in South Korea).

Tuesday, April 9

On June 28 we received a report on the April Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union which, among other things, discussed the PUEBLO. It is found under April 9 in the DDD because this was the date of the Plenum. This is a sensitive document and is not briefed here.

Wednesday, April 10

Rostow sent President instruction to Admiral Smith covering contingency of crew member's being brought to closed meeting and reiteration of our three-point proposal for release of crew (DDD).

Friday, April 12

State 145761 (Vol. 15, Tab 4) invites Park to Honolulu. Seoul 5662 (Vol. 18, Tab 1) gives Park's acceptance and suggests meeting for April 17.

Wednesday, April 17

Memcons of Presidents' meetings (DDD). Mostly on Vietnam, but peripherally related to present study. Highly sensitive.

Joint communique of Honolulu meeting (DDD).

Thursday, May 2

Rostow sent to President Seoul 6043 reporting positive effects of Honolulu meeting as seen from Seoul (DDD).

Saturday, May 18

Please note in EA insertion in the Historical Division's narrative (behind original submission) that "On May 18 President Johnson agreed that the foregoing device should be attempted." I find no other reference in the files.

Asst. Sec.

Katzenbach memo to President, "Next Steps on PUEBLO" (DDD) concerning the abortive "back channel" try -- presumably not a subject for the present write-up.

Monday, May 20

Rostow memo to President concerning statements made by the Vice President which triggered stories on Vietnam and the PUEBLO (DDD).

Wednesday, May 22

Rostow cleared instructions for 17th meeting. No new departure -- further elaboration of three-point proposal.

Thursday, June 13

Telegram from Rostow to President concerning a Japanese report that Commander Bucher had committed suicide (DDD).

Friday, June 21

State 188127 (Vol. 19, Tab 2) expressed interest in ships being built by a Belgium concern for North Korea. Also see The Hague 5871 (Vol. 20, Tab 1); The Hague 6992 (Vol. 20, Tab 2) -- and others filed with these.

Thursday, July 25

Rostow sent a talking paper to the President concerning his appointment with Robert Taft, Jr., with regard to the PUEBLO (DDD).

Tuesday, August 13

PUEBLO crew "press conference," broadcast following day (Vol. 13, Tab I-3).

Wednesday, September 4

Note from Jenkins to Rostow attaches a memorandum from Brown to the Secretary giving the status of the PUEBLO talks (DDD).

Thursday, September 12

Second PUEBLO crew "press conference" (Vol. 13, Tab I-4).

Monday, September 16

Memo to the President concerning McNaught Syndicate public opinion poll concerning handling of the PUEBLO (DDD).

DCI briefing for Defense Appropriations Subcommittee (Chairman Russell) of the Senate Appropriations Committee (DDD). This gives current status of the PUEBLO case.

Tuesday, September 17

Understand that General Wheeler attended a meeting at the White House on this date, possibly on PUEBLO. There may be Tom Johnson notes.

Wednesday, September 25

DCI briefing for CIA Subcommittee (Chairman Rivers) of House Armed Services Committee (DDD).

PUEBLO crew news conference as presented on CBS and NBC news on September 24 (DDD).

Monday, September 30

Rostow sent President Seoul report on 22nd meeting (DDD). At this point we were encouraged re our device of "acknowledging receipt of the crew." Woodward made this "trick" so clearly advertised as such, however, that it should have been obvious to the North Koreans -- and if surfaced later, to anyone -- that we meant it as hopefully a face-saving formula, and not a genuine ruse.

Saturday, October 5

Rostow sent to the President an important Katzenbach action memorandum (DDD) reviewing progress to date and outlining four possible courses of action for the immediate future:

1. Attempt to negotiate a satisfactory receipt.
2. Sign, with an explanatory statement.
3. Try a last minute overwrite.
4. Clarify the overwrite.

Katzenbach recommended the fourth course and Rostow notified him on October 7 that his recommendation was approved.

Monday, October 7

Rostow note to the President (DDD) tells of next meeting arranged for the following day and points out that a decision is required on Katzenbach's statement of alternatives sent up on Saturday. Later in day Katzenbach informed of decision (see Oct. 5 entry).

Tuesday, October 8

Alleged "petition for leniency" from crew (Vol. 13, Tab I-5).

Thursday, October 10

Rostow sent to the President report of 23rd meeting, wherein North Koreans indicated that they had not understood our "overwrite" ploy -- or else pretended that they did not (DDD).

Tuesday, October 22

General Wheeler understood to have attended a White House meeting, possibly on PUEBLO.

Wednesday, October 30

Rostow action memo to President (DDD) recommending postponement of FOCUS RETINA, out of consideration for PUEBLO negotiations. At that point the negotiations were neither clearly encouraging nor discouraging, and the exercise did not seem worth placing the negotiations in Jeopardy. The President approved postponement on October 1.

NW?

Tuesday, December 10

Jenkins memo to Rostow (DDD) prior to Tuesday lunch re consideration of next steps in PUEBLO negotiations -- transmits lengthy, well-presented Katzenbach resume and recommendations, offering possibilities of:

1. The familiar "overwrite" ploy.
2. Signature of the North Korean document with prior repudiation.
3. A reformulated "conditional apology."

I understand the President bought 1 and 2, but rejected 3.

State 285426, Vol. 15, Tab 5, gave instructions for the pending 26th meeting accordingly.

This is where the matter stood as of December 12. If the North Koreans did not see fit to give us a Christmas present, the negotiations would become a matter for the next administration.

Some leverage might yet be gained from attempts to thwart delivery of the fish factory ships, but Porter had reservations on psychological grounds and both State and DOD legal experts were unenthusiastic about a "snatch." The ships could well sail under non-North Korean flag and with non-North Korean crew. Methods of tying up the ships in situ through legal proceedings were being studied.