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Special Series
Crisis Collection
Volume 7

UNITED STATES CRYPTOLOGIC HISTORY

The Capture of the USS Pueblo and Its Effect on SIGINT Operations ~~(S-CCO)~~

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UNITED STATES CRYPTOLOGIC HISTORY

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The Capture of the USS Pueblo and Its Effect on SIGINT Operations ~~(S-CCO)~~

Robert E. Newton

CENTER FOR CRYPTOLOGIC HISTORY

NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY

1992

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Foreword

The story of the *Pueblo* incident of 1968 is inherently a distasteful one for intelligence professionals, but the factors which make it unpleasant at the same time make it imperative reading. The lessons to be learned from failed operations in general and this incident in particular are many and should be widely studied throughout the intelligence community so that we may prevent similar disasters from occurring in the future.

Indeed, as the present monograph makes clear, the components of the intelligence community conducted reviews, postmortems, and "lessons learned" exercises of many types in the aftermath of the *Pueblo* incident and made numerous beneficial changes in the policy and procedure as a result.

What we must recognize, however, is that the lessons to be learned go beyond the mechanical, i.e., that intelligence officers must remain flexible in their thinking and skeptical in their approach to any problem. It is arguable that some of the fundamental problems in the case of the *Pueblo* were the great haste to get the operation under way and an unwillingness to challenge preconceived assumptions about the way operations should be conducted. This was compounded by a failure to communicate fully to all who needed to know about the operation - and by a failure to communicate candidly when problems or doubts appeared.

Mr. Robert Newton's monograph, *The Capture of the USS Pueblo and Its Effect on SIGINT Operations*, presents a thorough discussion of the incident, including the details of the ship's commissioning, its mission, the capture of ship and crew in waters adjacent to North Korea, official reactions in Washington and overseas, and the release of the crew. Mr. Newton also discusses the reaction of the cryptologic community and assesses carefully the serious damage done to the U.S. SIGINT effort by the North Korean capture of equipment, publications, and personnel.

This monograph makes an excellent companion piece to three other publications available from the Center for Cryptologic History. Background on surface collection may be found in George F. Howe, *Technical Research Ships, 1956–1969*. The interested reader is encouraged to refer also to two volumes from the Special Series Crisis Collection: William D. Gerhard and

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Henry W. Millington, *Attack on a SIGINT Collector, the USS* Liberty (S-CCO), and [redacted] *The National Security Agency and the EC-121 Shootdown* (S-CCO). Taken together with this most recent publication, these monographs provide a stimulating discussion of the promises and manifest problems of mobile collection operations.

Henry F. Schorreck
NSA Historian

Acknowledgments

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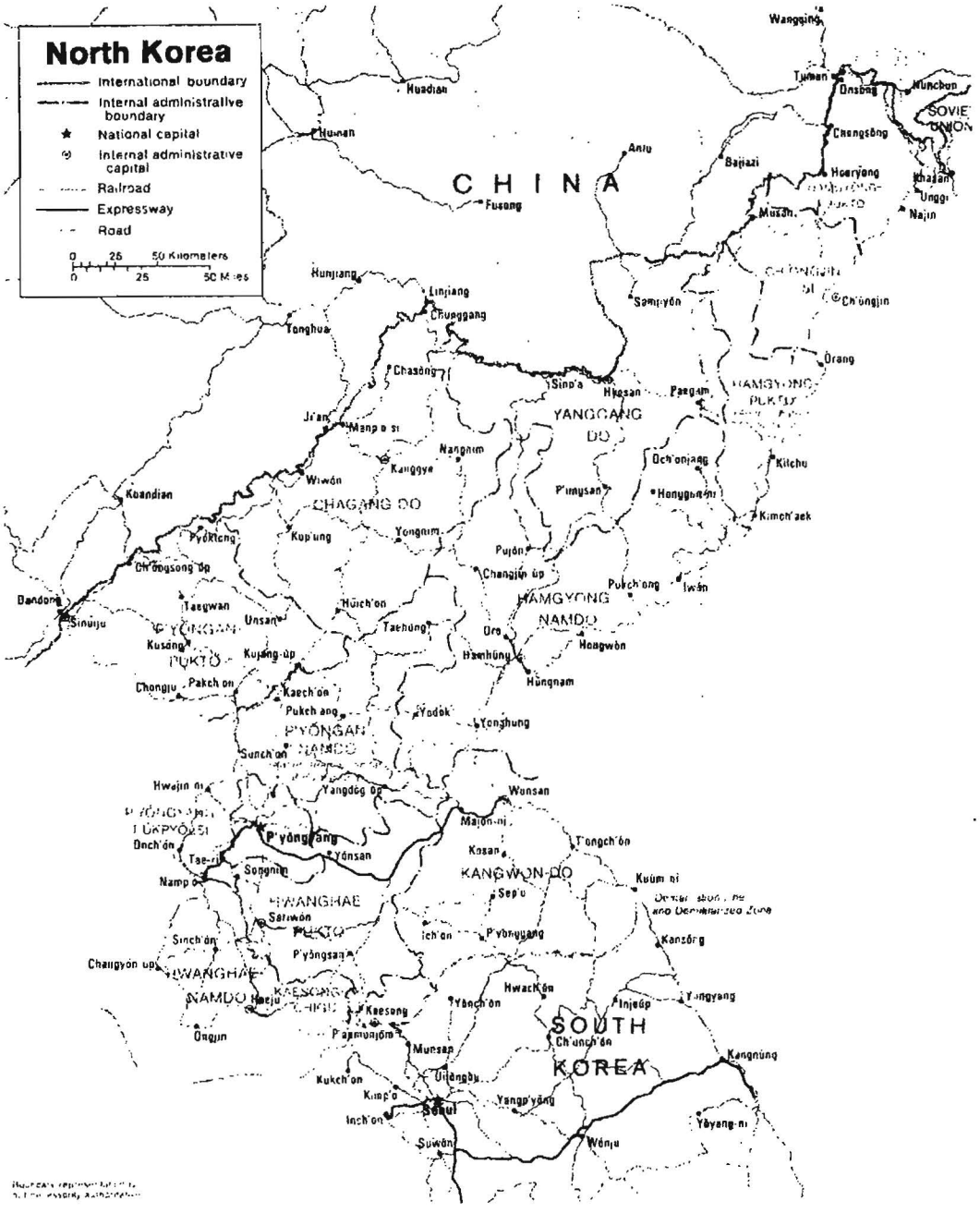
There are a number of NSA people who participated in this work; all made a very substantial contribution to the final form of this history. Responsibility for the analysis, interpretation, and damage assessment, however, to include any errors, are mine.

First, the author wishes to acknowledge with gratitude the efforts of Henry Millington, a former historian here at NSA, who completed the painstaking tasks of initial research and drafting. His was a pioneer effort on this subject. My thanks also go to the members of the staff of the Center for Cryptologic History at NSA: to David Hatch, who reviewed the sequence of redrafts and made so many helpful suggestions during the course of research and writing; to the publications personnel, Barry Carleen, for his invaluable editorial review, and [redacted] for her patience and understanding in handling an "avalanche" of changes in preparing this document for publication; to Henry Schorreck, the NSA Historian, for his encouragement and review of the manuscript; and finally, to David Gaddy, Chief, Center for Cryptologic History, for his critical review of the manuscript and for sharing his insight as chief of the cognizant NSA operations staff at the time of the *Pueblo* incident.

I also extend a sincere note of appreciation to [redacted] an NSA North Korean target analyst at the time of the incident, and to Benjamin Hoover of NSA's communications security office for their very helpful review and comments on the manuscript.

ROBERT E. NEWTON

April 1992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Munsan
Ch'unch'on
Kangnung
Kukch'on
Ullangbu
Kimp'o
Seoul
Yangp'yong
Inch'on
Suwon
Wonju
Yoyang-ni

Introduction

Few events in recent history have plagued the U.S. conscience more than the North Korean attack on and seizure of the United States SIGINT ship *Pueblo* in January 1968. It followed by less than a year a previous savage attack on a SIGINT collector by Israeli air and sea forces in the Mediterranean. Once again, a U.S. naval SIGINT collector had been caught without protection. For the U.S. public, unfamiliar at this time with SIGINT and all of its aspects, it was the seizure of one of its ships and the humiliation and frustration that came with it. For the U.S. Navy in particular, it was the realization that one of its ships had been fired upon and seized on the high seas for the first time in 160 years. Worse, not a shot had been fired in its defense at the time, nor was retaliation ever carried out in its aftermath. More significantly for those involved in the U.S. cryptologic effort, the loss that resulted from the subsequent compromise of classified material aboard the ship would dwarf anything in previous U.S. cryptologic history. It also gave the North Koreans and no doubt the Soviets a rare view of the complex technology behind U.S. cryptographic systems. Over the long term, the compromise would severely affect the U.S. SIGINT capability to exploit several major target areas for years to come.

This study describes the events leading up to the seizure of the ship on 23 January 1968. It relates how the United States was preoccupied with a war to the point wherein it complacently relied on international law to provide the only protection for a SIGINT collector. It describes a U.S. SIGINT ship whose captain and crew, split apart by personal differences, were poorly equipped and trained by the Navy and by the ship's captain in particular to handle the emergency that confronted them that day in the Sea of Japan. From the unique standpoint of SIGINT, this study presents an account of the mission of the ship and its seizure; the massive compromise of classified materials; the damage assessment following the debriefings of its crew members on their return from captivity a year later; and, finally, some of the actions taken by the target nations in the years after 1968 to deny the United States continued access to their communications.

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Chapter I

The Political and Military Setting

The North Korean attack upon and seizure of the USS *Pueblo* in the Sea of Japan in January 1968 shocked U.S. officials. The attention of the United States, both politically and militarily, was focused overwhelmingly on Southeast Asia and the Vietnam War. Since 1964, U.S. military planners and tacticians had committed increasing numbers of U.S. forces to the Vietnam struggle. By January 1968, several hundred thousand U.S. ground troops were fighting in South Vietnam, supported by U.S. Air Force tactical fighter and bomber aircraft. The U.S. Seventh Fleet was patrolling the Gulf of Tonkin to provide close-in naval artillery support, amphibious assaults, and air strikes from carrier-based planes. In brief, the principal goal of the United States was to find a political or military solution to the war in Vietnam.

Similarly, the priority activity at NSA was to support the U.S. military effort in Vietnam by keeping a close watch over indirect support rendered to the North Vietnamese from Soviet and/or Chinese Communist forces. [redacted] Active hostilities in this area were not considered imminent.

Nevertheless, the end of the Korean War and the subsequent Armistice Agreement of 1953 had not resolved the issues that divided North and South Korea and their respective allies. Bound to the Soviet Union (USSR) and the People's Republic of China (PRC) by military assistance treaties, North Korea looked to these countries for support. Although North Korea tried to steer a middle course in the Sino-Soviet dispute, from the mid-1960s it drew closer to the USSR for badly needed political and economic support, particularly after Soviet premier Alexej Kosygin visited Pyongyang in February 1965. South Korea continued to depend on its former Korean War allies, primarily the United States. Those sixteen nations, including the United States, had affirmed in 1953 that they would resist any renewed aggression against South Korea.[1]

Despite the armistice agreement of July 1953, the United States had maintained about 80,000 U.S. troops in South Korea to counter any North Korean threat. These were in addition to several hundred thousand South Korean troops.[2] General Charles H. Bonesteel III was the Commanding General,U.S. Army, Korea. He was also Commander, U.S. Forces, Korea,which included the U.S. Eighth Army, U.S. Naval Forces, Korea, and U.S. Air Forces, Korea. In this capacity, he was under the direct command of the Commander in Chief, Pacific, Admiral U.S.G. Sharp. General Bonesteel also served as Commander in Chief, United Nations Command (UNC). In this latter capacity, Bonesteel also exercised operational control over Republic of Korea (ROK) forces.[3]

TENSIONS BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH KOREA

During the years following the Korean War, North Korean agents periodically infiltrated South Korea for the purpose of setting ambushes, laying mines, conducting raids near the Demilitarized Zone and engaging in other subversive activities. Such incidents increased in number and severity in the year or so before the *Pueblo* seizure. South Korea, the United Nations Command, and the U.S. government had all expressed concern over the increased North Korean violations of the armistice agreement. The United States and the UNC recorded 610 violations by North Korea in the thirteen months before the *Pueblo* incident, with over 200 North Korean infiltrators being killed. In contrast, only fifty such violations had occurred in all of 1966.[4] Two days before the *Pueblo* incident, a band of thirty-one North Korean infiltrators attacked the presidential palace in Seoul in an attempt to assassinate the South Korean president.[5]

From North Korea's viewpoint, the provocations were all coming from South Korea, and North Korean statements before the Military Armistice Commission revealed particular sensitivity to intrusions into North Korean coastal waters. At various times between 1961 and 1967, North Korea complained to the commission about "infiltrating naval craft and armed espionage vessels" entering North Korea's coastal waters as well as "mobilized naval craft" intruding and attacking North Korean fisherman. These charges were often followed by threats of retaliation.[6] On 19 January 1967, for example, a ROK naval patrol craft was controlling ROK fishing boats at a position five and one-half miles off the North Korean coast. North Korean shore batteries opened fire and sank the patrol craft four miles off the North Korean coast. The patrol craft did not violate a three-mile limit, although it was within the twelve-mile territorial limit claimed by North Korea.[7] In general, there were a large number of intrusions by fishing vessels from both North and South Korea.

At a Military Armistice Commission meeting just three days before the *Pueblo* incident, North Korea summed up its grievances against the United Nations Command:

> However, your side, far from stopping such criminal acts, has been running amuck to prepare another war of aggression in Korea, and perpetrating incessantly and continuously provocative acts of dispatching into our coastal waters spy boats disguised as fishing boats and villainous spies together with fleets of South Korean fishing boats.[8]

The North Korean charges and propaganda were so vociferous and in such great amounts that it was difficult to determine what the North Koreans considered important and to what they would react.

Thus, tensions that had existed between North and South Korea since the 1953 armistice were accelerated in the days preceding the *Pueblo* incident.

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NORTH KOREAN COMMUNICATIONS AND ORDER OF BATTLE

As might be expected, the principal communications targets in North Korea were its army, navy, air force, and air defense organizations. The North Korean Army used manual Morse, radiotelephone, and radioprinter communications. All echelons, from the Ministry of National Defense through battalion and sometimes company level, used manual Morse and sometimes radiotelephone for standby communications. They also used these modes for operational messages, especially at the division, regiment, and lower levels.

Naval headquarters at Pyongyang controlled three components on the east coast. These were the First Naval Base at Wonsan , the Third Naval Base at Kimch'aek, and the Naval Academy at Najin. The composition of these components was as follows:

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UNIT	VESSELS	CLASSIFICATION
First Naval Base with four squadrons	65	*Komar*-class missile boats, PT boats, minesweepers, and subchasers
Third Naval Base with squadrons	42	*Whiskey*-class submarines; subchasers
Najin Naval Academy	45	Not positively identified

[redacted] The three east coast units used manual Morse and radiotelephone for ship-shore, shore-ship, and ship-ship communications.[13]

[redacted]

Elements of the North Korean Air Force on the east coast consisted of the Second Fighter Division and the Air Force School. The disposition of these units in January 1968 was as follows:

UNIT	KNOWN AIRCRAFT TYPE	NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT	AIRFIELD LOCATION
Second Division	--	--	So'ndo'k
Twenty-sixth Regiment	MiG 15/17	37	Wonsan
Fifty-eighth Regiment	MiG 15/17	37	Wonsan
Fifty-eighth Regiment	MiG 15/17	37	So'ndo'k
Air Force School	MiG 15/17 Yak 18	63	Ch'o'ngin

[redacted]

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SIGINT RESOURCES AGAINST NORTH KOREAN TARGETS

The cryptologic organizations on which the United States depended for intelligence about North Korea were to a large extent a legacy of the Korean War. With only limited knowledge of North Korean communications at the outset of the war, the United States built a system that provided for collection, field processing, and reporting by the services

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with backup support by the Armed Forces Security Agency, predecessor of the National Security Agency. SIGINT production was also coordinated with that of the [redacted] and other [redacted] In 1968, the primary SIGINT organizations directed against North Korean military communications consisted of NSA, the three service cryptologic organizations of the United States, and associated cryptologic units [redacted]. Critical Intelligence Communications (CRITICOMM) and Operational Communications (OPSCOMM) linked the principals of these organization. [redacted]

[redacted]

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The U.S. intelligence gap against North Korea was in the area of indications and warning information. U.S. intelligence users also lacked complete information on North Korean military and naval targets. It was believed that some of this information could be obtained by targeting those short-range communications that would be more accessible to a mobile platform stationed off the North Korean coast for extended periods.

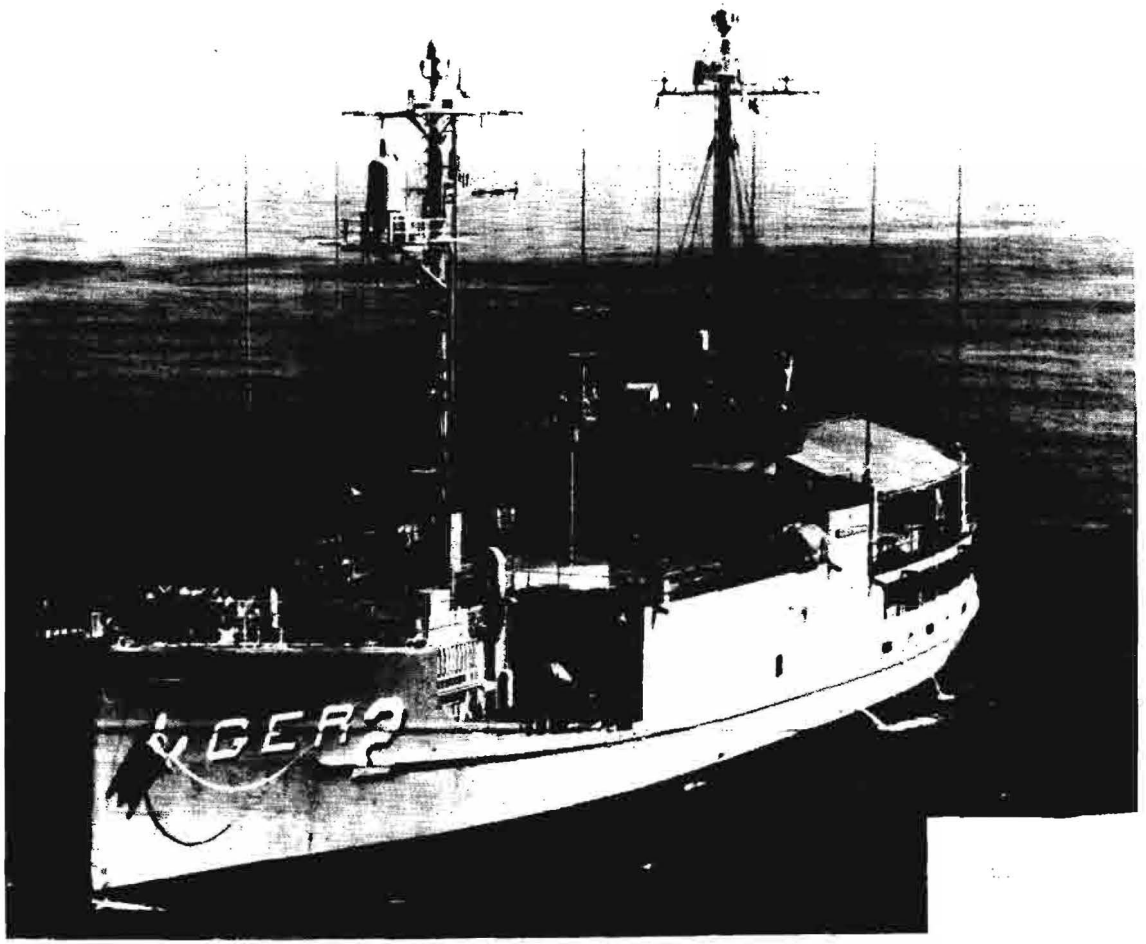
In late 1967, NSA established its own analytic and reporting effort against North Korean communications.

Although there were no plans to coordinate the two efforts in advance, the separate NSA analytic and reporting effort on the North Korean Navy occurred at the same time as the U.S. Navy's desire for an Auxiliary, General Environmental Research (AGER) collection effort against this target.[22]

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE AGER PROGRAM

The U.S. naval collection effort focused on the Technical Research Ship Program. Although the Naval Security Group (NAVSECGRU) and its predecessor organizations had placed communications support detachments aboard Navy ships from the First World War on, it was not until the mid-1950s that NSA and the U.S. Navy began arranging for the use of ships primarily for SIGINT collection. The first of these was a converted *Liberty*-type cargo vessel, the USS *Oxford*, that was readied for operation in September 1961. In the following years, four more *Liberty*-type (Navy designation: Auxiliary General Technical Research or AGTR) and two *Victory*-type (Navy designation: Technical-Auxiliary General or T-AG) cargo vessels underwent the same transformation to dedicated SIGINT platforms. Compared to ships of the *Pueblo* type (900 tons), these were relatively large ships at that time (11,000 to 12,000 tons for the AGTR and 5,000 to 6,000 tons for the T-AG.)[23]

In 1964 the interest of the Department of Defense (DoD) and, in particular, the Director for Defense Research and Engineering (DDR and E), Eugene Fubini, centered on the possibility of acquiring and testing smaller ships for SIGINT collection. He believed that if the Soviets could be so successful with such a program for so many years, the United States could do likewise. The ships would provide greater flexibility and be more responsive to intelligence requirements and, perhaps more importantly, would provide an attractive alternative to the large and expensive AGTRs and T-AGs. DoD and Navy



USS *Pueblo* shown following its conversion to AGER, December 1967.

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interest focused on the use of trawler type hulls as a substitute. In addition to efficiency and economy, the Navy saw the proposed trawler program as a means of counterbalancing the Soviet intelligence collection trawler fleet, which at that time consisted of some forty-eight vessels on missions that provided surveillance of U.S. coastlines, overseas bases, and fleet operations. The U.S. Navy also wanted an inexpensive alternative to the practice of equipping Navy combat and service-type ships for tactical surveillance patrols in areas of intelligence interest. NSA viewed the program as a means of satisfying many intelligence requirements that were inadequately covered by existing [redacted] sites and other mobile collectors.[24]

The difficulty was that the U.S. Navy did not at that time possess any oceangoing ships of the trawler type for purposes of conversion to SIGINT ships. If the United States was to have a SIGINT trawler program, it would mean an entirely new ship construction program. The cost of such a program would be far in excess of the cost of converting an existing ship type. The closest that the United States could come to approximating a ship the size of a trawler hull was that class of light cargo ship (Navy designation AKL) built for the U.S. Army for interisland transport in the Pacific during World War II. A number of these ships had been mothballed after the end of the war and were available for conversion. The first of these ships to undergo conversion was to be renamed the USS *Banner*, and work on the ship began at the Bremerton, Washington, naval shipyard in 1964.

With the problem of selection of a ship hull now solved, NSA and the Navy Department turned their attention to the matter of determining who was to control this SIGINT collection program. Although NSA and the Navy were not always in full agreement on the issue of controlling SIGINT ships' missions, NSA agreed rather reluctantly to a concept of operations by which Navy tasking of the converted AKL for direct support purposes would have priority over national SIGINT tasking by NSA. This agreement was in accordance with NSA's 1953 delegation of operational control of seaborne SIGINT platforms to the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) when missions were of a direct support nature.[25] NAVSECGRU elements would then exercise this control for the naval component commanders and assign SIGINT personnel to the ships. NSA would retain responsibility for the technical direction of the SIGINT functions being performed and ordinarily would discharge this responsibility through the Director, NAVSECGRU. In September 1967 Admiral John J. Hyland, CINCPACFLT, would provide command guidance along these lines to the SIGINT detachment aboard the *Pueblo*. Eventually, NSA and the Navy came to a working arrangement whereby the two alternated primary tasking for AGER operations, namely Mode 1 (Navy direction) and Mode 2 (NSA direction).[26] At the time of the *Pueblo*'s patrol, the ship was in Mode 1.

Intercept relating to a commander's information requirements in direct support of his mission took precedence, therefore, over collection tasks to satisfy information needs established in Washington. CINCPAC could then overrule Washington in such instances.

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Acting as picket ships to provide early warning for U.S. aircraft carriers in transit or for the U.S. fleet during exercises and operations, the direct support intercept activity included the [redacted][7] The provision for direct support tasking of the small AGER ships by the Navy was in sharp contrast to the SIGINT tasking of AGTR and T-AG ships, which operated under the operational and technical control of NSA.

The *Banner*, first of the small cargo ships to complete conversion and bearing the Navy designation AGER-1, was ready for SIGINT operations in October 1965. [redacted][28] In addition to the USS *Banner*, two other AGER vessels, the USS *Pueblo* (AGER-2) and the USS *Palm Beach* (AGER-3), would soon join the U.S. surface ship collection program.

In addition to differences in control and tasking, AGER vessels, because of their considerably smaller size, also differed from AGTR and T-AG ships in their capacity to accommodate SIGINT collection equipment and personnel. The AGERs had only five or six collection positions, i.e., about one-fourth that of the AGTRs, with only limited means for analytic processing tasks and for on-line communications. An AGER accommodated some thirty-three SIGINT specialists, again about one-fourth the detachment personnel strength of AGTR ships. Because of space and resource limitations, NAVSECGRU personnel aboard AGERs were limited in their analytic processing tasks; most intercepted communications were therefore forwarded to NSA for more detailed analysis.[29]

There were, of course, distinct advantages for the employment of these smaller AGER vessels. The cost for converting them for SIGINT use was considerably less than that for the conversion of the larger ships. The AGER speed of 12-13 knots compared favorably with that of AGTR vessels such as the *Oxford* (11 knots), and it was faster than T-AG ships like the USNS *Valdez* (9 knots) and USNS *Muller* (10 knots). The improvement in speed, it was felt, would be especially useful in reacting to the movements of ships under U.S. surveillance during the fleet exercises of other nations.

In view of the potential of the AGERs, the NSA budget staff considered the need to develop some twenty-five AGER platforms, and after much deliberation by NSA and Navy

SIGINT specialists, NSA indicated the need for fifteen such ships in its Combined Cryptologic Program (CCP) submission for fiscal years 1966-72.[30] Even this number was not approved for the DoD budget – there would be only three AGERs, the *Banner*, the *Pueblo*, and the *Palm Beach*.

In brief, the number of SIGINT resources devoted to the Korean peninsula in the late 1960s had been considered inadequate by the United States Intelligence Board (USIB). Additional collection requirements for indications and warning information against North Korean targets were not being satisfied with existing resources. This was one of the reasons for the subsequent deployment of the USS *Pueblo* (and the USS *Banner* before it) to Korea.

Both NSA and the U.S. Navy planned for a modified AGER program. The Department of Defense believed that such platforms would be a suitable response to the Soviet SIGINT trawler collection program. The AGERs could increase surveillance of [redacted] and, as time permitted, would augment United States and [redacted] coverage of North Korean military targets. These platforms would become available at a time of heightened tensions between North and South Korea caused by an increasing number of violations of the Armistice Agreement of 1953. Although North Korea was [redacted] posed a considerable threat. For that reason, intelligence requirements for information on North Korean military installations, equipments, and movements could not be overlooked. AGER collection efforts might help satisfy some of those intelligence needs.

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Chapter II

Ship Mission and Preparation

On 7 October 1965, Secretary of the Navy Paul H. Nitze expressed concern to Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara about acquiring up-to-date intelligence on the operating capabilities, tactical doctrine, procedures, and state of training of the Soviet Navy. In order to accomplish this task, Nitze stated an immediate requirement for additional ship platforms of the AGER type. The USS *Banner* was already being outfitted as such, and Nitze stated, " . . . the urgency of the program warrants two more ships with the minimum delay."[1] The following month, Nitze formally requested funds from the Department of Defense for two additional SIGINT ships to augment the USS *Banner*'s surveillance and collection capability. At the same time, Nitze stated that, contingent upon approval of the funds, he would ask the Secretary of the Army to identify a good FS (Freight and Supply) class hull similar to the *Banner* for transfer to the Navy.[2]

Later in 1965, DoD did approve funding for two ships, the USS *Pueblo* and the USS *Palm Beach*, although not as much as originally requested. By December 1965, the Bureau of Ships was selecting hulls (one of which was being sought from the Army), determining a schedule of reactivation and conversion, and providing for installation of SIGINT gear at the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, Bremerton, Washington.

In response to the Bureau of Ships request, the U.S. Army transferred the small cargo ship that was to become the USS *Pueblo* to the Navy. Subsequently, the ship was brought to the naval shipyard at Bremerton in April 1966. This ship had been built in 1944 by the Kewayne Shipbuilding Company, Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, and, as the FS-44 in the United States Army, transported supplies to islands in the South Pacific. Following ten years of active service, the *Pueblo* had been decommissioned in December 1954 at Clatskanie, Oregon. When it was reactivated and turned over to the Navy in 1966, the *Pueblo* was designated AKL-44, for light cargo ship, to await conversion to an AGER (Auxiliary, General Environmental Research).[3]

Although the *Pueblo* had arrived at Bremerton on 22 April 1966, actual refitting and installation of the SIGINT collection equipment could not begin until the start of the next fiscal year (1967) because of funding arrangements. The ship's conversion began promptly on 5 July 1966. Members of all trades besieged the *Pueblo*, sandblasting its hull, removing cargo winches and boom, testing engines and machinery, and examining every inch of cable.[4]

Rear Admiral Floyd B. Schultz, Commandant of the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, could not understand why Washington was making such a fuss about the *Pueblo*. He had been ordered not to make any announcement of the *Pueblo*'s arrival or say anything that

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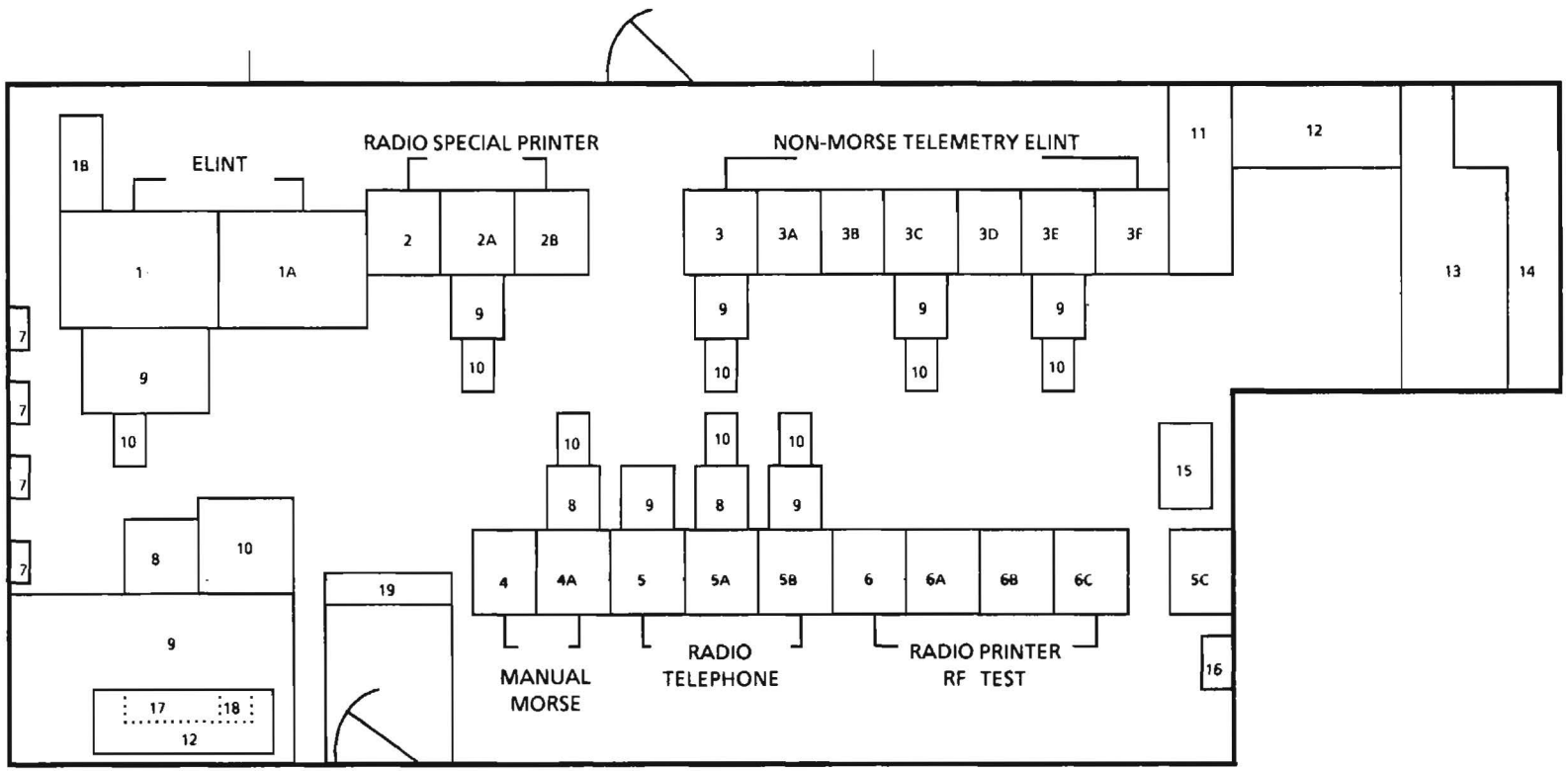
might attract attention to the ship. His job was to convert the ship without question. Yet he still had not received any specific set of plans for installing any new equipment.[5] The sense of urgency for SIGINT ships expressed by Secretary Nitze during their funding approval process did not infect those entrusted with the ship's conversion since they were left with no knowledge of the ultimate mission.

As the *Pueblo* was being towed to Bremerton for conversion, the Director of NSA, Lieutenant General Marshall S. Carter, USA, gave initial concurrence in what was known as the Phase II Trawler program, i.e., the conversion of USS *Pueblo* and the USS *Palm Beach*. (Phase I had been the refitting of the USS *Banner*.) In responding to the Navy's Phase II Trawler proposal, Carter mentioned major equipment for selected position capabilities, although no specific antennas or antenna systems were mentioned. At the working level, there was consensus between the Naval Ships System Command (NAVSHIPSYSCOM), the Director, Naval Security Group, and NSA (K3) that the existing ship, USS *Banner*, would be used as a "model" with certain improvements to overcome deficiencies in ELINT capability [redacted][6]

In August 1966, DoD imposed a limit of 1.5 million dollars for SIGINT equipment to be installed on the *Pueblo*. Because the NAVSHIPSYSCOM was the procurement office for any NAVSECGRU program, it convened a meeting at the Main Navy Building to discuss the development, design, and procurement relevant to the Phase II trawler configuration. Representatives from NAVSECGRU and NSA's collection office (K321) attended this meeting, in addition to the NAVSHIPSYSCOM personnel. Daniel Preece, Systems Command project officer, revealed that the ship's hull work was to be completed by 1 January 1967 so that the SIGINT installation contractor could begin work on that date; this contractor was to be Ling-Tempco-Vought (LTV) of Greenville, Texas. This choice, on a noncompetitive bid, was made because of LTV's assumed capability and experience gained as the installation contractors for the USS *Banner*. Initial cost estimates for installation were approximately $700,000, leaving $800,000 for equipment procurement; all equipment was to be procured by the government, to avoid higher contractor costs in procurement actions. Preece stated that new commercial components or equipment would be obtained by the Navy Shipyard Supply Procurement Office at Bremerton. Any equipment that could be provided by participating agencies was also requested. It was also agreed that special items procurable only from NSA would be handled by Systems Command in the Office of the Chief of Naval Materiel. Antenna systems were discussed, and there was general agreement that the USS *Banner* system would be incorporated, with some additions.[7]

At a meeting on 28 September 1966, representatives of NAVSHIPSYSCOM, NAVSECGRU, and NSA (K321) held further discussions on the antenna system design. The representatives agreed that the *Pueblo* would be configured like the USS *Banner* and



COMPARTMENT ARRANGEMENT AGER-2

that the antennas would be placed toward the bow to minimize possible interference from the transmitting antennas located aft of the main mast. All antennas were to be standard U.S. Navy shipboard types or commercially available ones as specified by the NSA representative. The precise location of specific antennas was left to the Systems Command and contractor personnel. Antenna locations would depend on hull restrictions.[8]

SELECTION OF CREW

Once the conversion of the *Pueblo*'s hull was well under way, the Navy Department turned to the selection of personnel to man the *Pueblo*, both general service and Naval Security Group personnel. The Navy made the first of these selections in December 1966 when Lieutenant Commander Lloyd Mark Bucher was chosen to be the *Pueblo*'s commanding officer. Following his commissioning as a reserve officer in 1953, Bucher had attended the Combat Information Center (CIC) School in Glenview, Illinois, and from there reported aboard the USS *Mount McKinley*, an amphibious force flagship. Early in 1955, Bucher's request to attend the U.S. Naval Submarine School in New London, Connecticut, was approved, and upon graduation in December he was assigned to the submarine USS *Besugo* as the supply, communications, and weapons officer plus a short tour as engineering officer. When the *Besugo* was decommissioned in February 1958, Bucher was assigned to another diesel submarine, the USS *Caiman*, as operations officer and navigator. His tour on the *Caiman* was brief, and in July 1959 he reported to Long Beach, California, as assistant plans officer for logistics on the staff of the Commander, Mine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet. Two years later, in the summer of 1961, Bucher received orders to another submarine, a diesel-powered *Guppy*-2A-class boat named USS *Ronquil* and for the next three years remained aboard, rising from third officer to navigator and executive officer. In July 1964, Bucher joined the staff of Commander, Submarine Flotilla Seven, in Yokosuka, Japan, as assistant operations officer.[9]

Being named captain of the AKL-44 was distasteful to Bucher. According to him such orders "meant that I had been 'surfaced' out of the submarine service, a polite term for submariners who are transferred to other duties because they have reached the limits of usefulness and no longer have good prospects to command a boat of their own. The orders came as a painful turning point in my career. For eleven years my life had been dedicated to seagoing experience aboard submarines, and my goal had been to command one . . . the new orders dashed the last of my hopes to remain in the submarine service . . . . Instead I was to become involved with a mysterious operation about which I had some knowledge through my work at Submarine Flotilla Seven, but without having developed any particular admiration for the way it was being handled. It seemed in no way a happy exchange."[10]

The officer selected to be in charge of *Pueblo*'s NAVSECGRU detachment was Lieutenant Stephen R. Harris. He had received a Naval Reserve Officers' Training Corps

(NROTC) commission upon his graduation from Harvard in 1960. His first assignment was as a communications officer aboard the destroyer tender USS *Grand Canyon* based at Newport. In April 1962, Harris was transferred to the destroyer USS *Forest Sherman*, again as communications officer. After twenty months of such duty, he requested and was granted a transfer to the Defense Language Institute, East Coast Branch; he reported there in January 1964 and studied Russian for the next nine months. Upon graduation, Harris was assigned to the NAVSECGRU staff at Fort George G. Meade, Maryland, and occasionally served as officer in charge (OIC) of various Naval Security Group detachments afloat. In addition to his primary duty as OIC of the *Pueblo*'s detachment (USN-467Y), Harris also served as registered publications custodian and as cryptosecurity officer.[11]

Personality differences and the command arrangement aboard the *Pueblo* were to be the cause of constant friction between the ship's captain and the OIC of the SIGINT detachment.[12] Commander Bucher and Lieutenant Harris had met in early January 1967 when Bucher was visiting NAVSECGRU headquarters in Washington, D.C., for briefings on the *Pueblo*'s mission, tasking, and deployment.[13] It was there that Captain (later Rear Admiral) Ralph E. Cook had assured Bucher that the NAVSECGRU component aboard the *Pueblo* would constitute a department instead of a detachment, i.e., the NAVSECGRU personnel would be under the total command and control of the ship's captain. Later, however, Bucher learned that Admiral John J. Hyland, Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, had convinced Washington that the NAVSECGRU elements should be considered a detachment under his direct operational control with Director, NAVSECGRU, Pacific, responsible to him for the detachment's use, operation, and administration. Such a shipboard command relationship was a constant irritant to Bucher in organizing the ship's activities. To set up damage control teams or fire fighting parties and to establish watch schedules, for example, Bucher had to request assistance from Lieutenant Harris.[14] Bucher was used to giving orders rather than requesting help. In addition, as detachment commander, Harris had the authority to communicate directly with NAVSECGRU, Pacific, concerning his operations without such messages being released by Bucher. This, too, grated against Bucher's concept of command and increased friction between him and Harris.[15]

Lieutenant Edward R. Murphy was selected to be *Pueblo*'s executive officer. Commissioned in March 1961 as a graduate of Naval Officers' School, Newport, Rhode Island, Murphy was assigned to a fleet oiler, the USS *Guadelupe*, as communications officer. In September 1962, he was transferred for one year to the Naval Station, Subic Bay, Philippines, followed by a short period of sea duty aboard the destroyer USS *Twining*, where Murphy served as ship's secretary and qualified as officer-of-the-deck (OOD) (fleet steaming). In April 1964 Murphy was sent to the U.S. Naval Destroyer School, Newport. Upon graduation, he was assigned as head of the navigation department aboard the guided missile destroyer USS *Robinson*. Murphy's next assignment came in June 1965 when he

was ordered to the naval facility, Centerville Beach, Ferndale, California, as assistant operations officer after a six-week training course at Fleet Sonar School, Key West, Florida. From Centerville, Murphy was ordered to the *Pueblo*.[16]

Personality clashes also occurred between Murphy and Bucher from the moment of Murphy's arrival. At the officer's club bar one evening, Bucher recalls "Our little wardroom group kept wondering how a stiffly proper officer [Murphy] who neither smoked tobacco, drank beer or liquor, or even indulged in the stimulant of strong navy coffee, could ever fit into our freewheeling, informal ways of work and play. On such a small ship as the *Pueblo*, with many different personalities and talents forced to live close together, compatibility was as important as competence; pristine perfection was as unwelcome as sloppy dereliction."[17]

From Murphy's point of view, Bucher was far too informal as a commanding officer, both in his dress and personal mannerisms; he did not act as Murphy felt a commanding officer should. He expected Bucher to run a tight ship but noted that he played favorites with men who saw only his point of view. As a result of these differences, communications soon broke down between the commanding officer and his executive officer.[18] In the coming weeks, these personality clashes between Bucher and Murphy would adversely affect the other members of the crew and the operation of the ship. It was not long before Bucher began to ignore his executive officer and went to his operations officer, Schumacher, when something needed to be done.

Commander Bucher's operations officer, Lieutenant Junior Grade Frederick C. Schumacher, Jr., reported aboard during the period of the *Pueblo*'s sea trials off San Diego. Commissioned in March 1967, Schumacher had been sent directly into Communications School, Newport. Following that seven-week course, he was assigned as communications officer aboard a refrigerated stores ship, the USS *Vega*. In September 1967, Schumacher had been detached from the *Vega* and ordered to the *Pueblo* as operations officer and first lieutenant. Like Ensign Harris, Schumacher had no Special Intelligence clearance when he reported aboard and did not receive it until about two weeks before the *Pueblo* departed on its fateful mission.[19] Bucher reported his reaction to Schumacher's arrival: "I could feel that he was going to do a good job for me and immediately began to depend a great deal on him. He was a crackerjack officer and he was ready to go; he was totally prepared mentally and I thought he had a terrific attitude."[20]

Bucher was also pleased to find that a very capable engineering officer, Chief Warrant Officer Gene Howard Lacy, had been selected for his ship. Commissioned as a warrant officer in 1959, Lacy attended engineering officers' school in San Diego and was then assigned as main propulsion assistant on the attack transport USS *Okanogan* until June 1963. His next tour of duty was aboard the icebreaker USS *Burton Island*, again as main propulsion assistant. In December, Lacy was ordered to the *Pueblo* and reported aboard on 4 January 1967. In addition to his normal engineering duties, Lacy also acted as ship's

supply officer until the arrival of Ensign Timothy L. Harris, the last of the *Pueblo*'s complement of six officers.[21]

Commissioned in April 1967, Harris had dropped out of flight school and was then sent to San Diego for crash courses in storekeeping, registered publications, cryptology, and emergency ship handling. He had never had any sea duty and when he reported to the *Pueblo*, he lacked a Special Intelligence clearance; in fact, that clearance was not received until one week before the *Pueblo* set out on its operational mission.

The enlisted crewmen on board the *Pueblo* comprised general service personnel (who would man the ship) and communications technicians (who would conduct the SIGINT operations in the Special Operations Department or SOD hut spaces.) Two of Commander Bucher's key enlisted personnel were Quartermaster First Class Charles Benton Law, operations chief petty officer and assistant navigator, and Chief Engineman Monroe Orel Goldman, who had enlisted in 1950 and was to serve later as the *Pueblo*'s chief master-at-arms. Most of the general service crewmen were assigned to the *Pueblo* prior to the communications technicians (CTs). Approximately forty-four percent of the general service crew had never had sea duty.

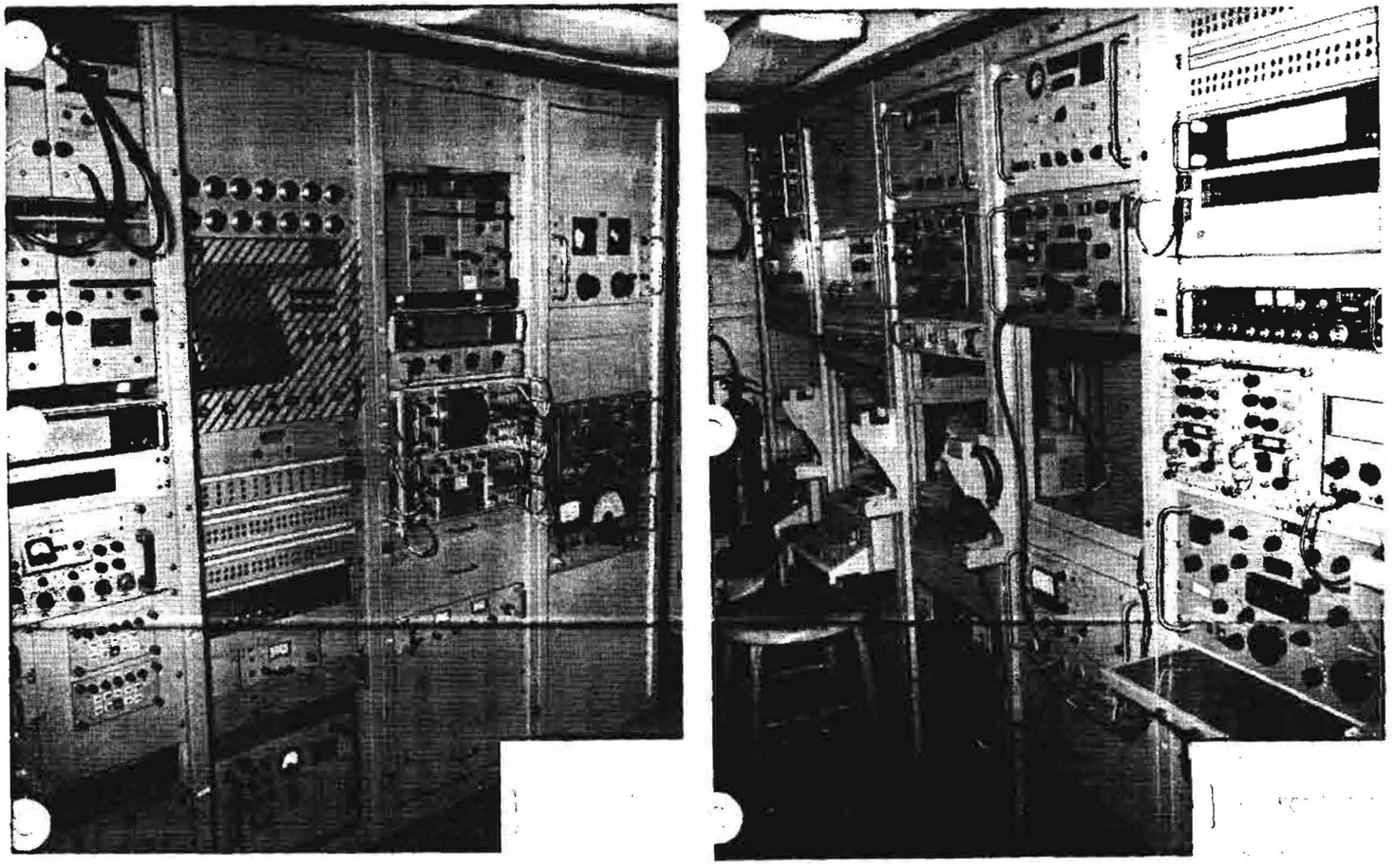
Of the twenty-nine enlisted men assigned to the *Pueblo*'s Naval Security Group detachment, only two had had any sea duty. While the *Pueblo* was being refitted, the communications technicians had little to do and no opportunity to gain any training in their individual specialties.

SHIPYARD DELAYS AND SECURITY PROBLEMS

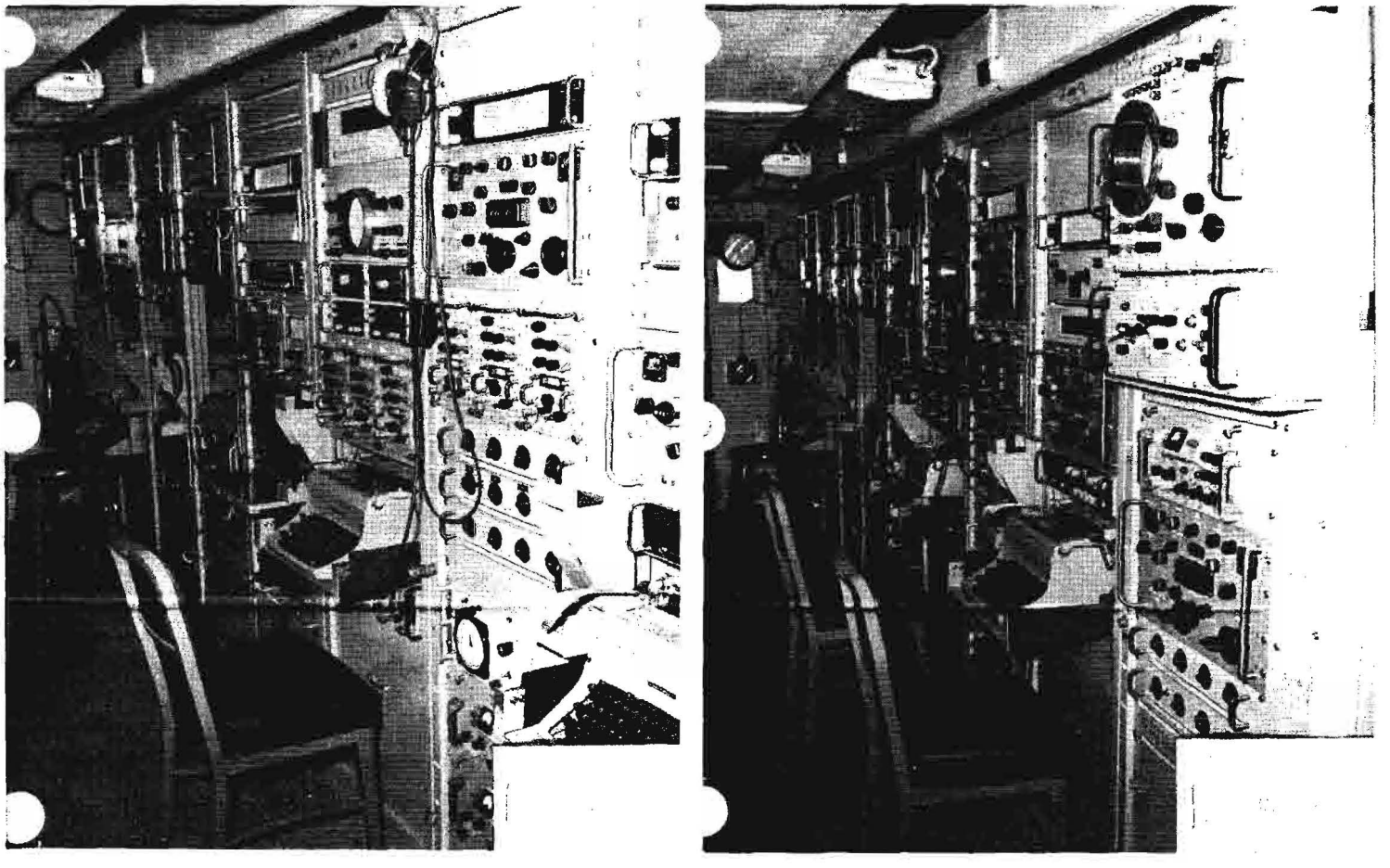
On 29 January 1967, when Bucher took command of USS *Pueblo* at the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, he was dismayed at the slow rate of conversion. Bucher had been led to believe that *Pueblo* would be on its way to Japan in April; now he realized that the conversion task would not be finished until July. To Bucher, it seemed that there should have been "a little closer rapport between the shipyard people, the Bureau of Ships people, the Naval Security Group people, and the OPNAV people."[22]

Meanwhile, the Naval Ship Systems Command was also having problems. Plans for the hull conversion had been drawn up based on the configuration of the USS *Palm Beach* with the assumption that the USS *Pueblo* was an identical ship. Many man-hours were wasted before it was discovered that the two hulls were different.[23]

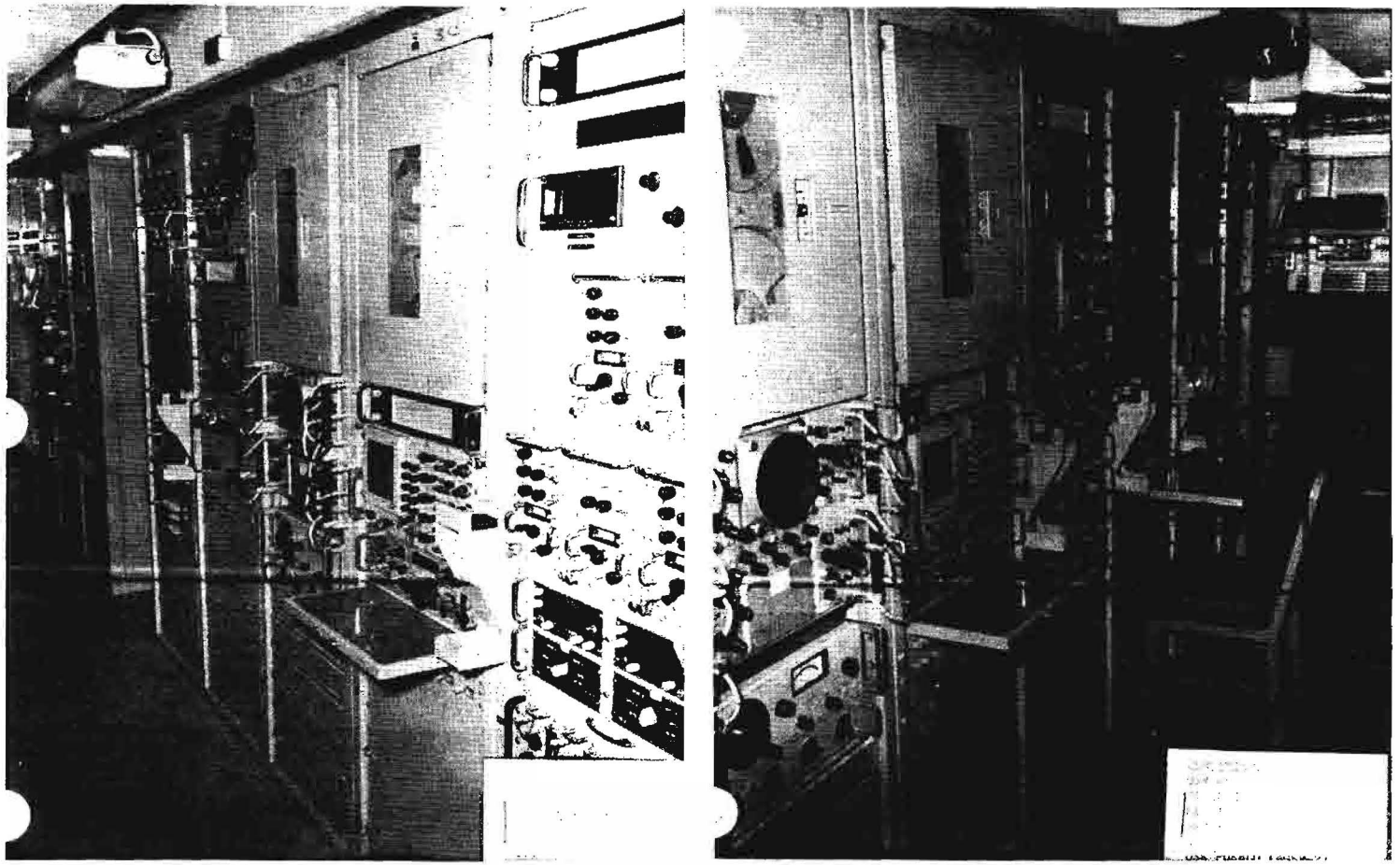
During the *Pueblo*'s conversion, the ship was assigned to the commander, Service Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, and the only person on that staff who was cleared for *Pueblo*'s operations was the admiral himself. Because of this security blanket, the *Pueblo*, as a matter of routine, was continually receiving supplies for a bona fide AKL-type cargo ship. Many of these supplies were inappropriate for an intelligence collection vessel.[24]



Radioprinter collection equipment aboard USS *Pueblo*.



Manual Morse and radiotelephone collection equipment, USS *Pueblo*.



ELINT collection equipment in the SOD hut, USS *Pueblo*.

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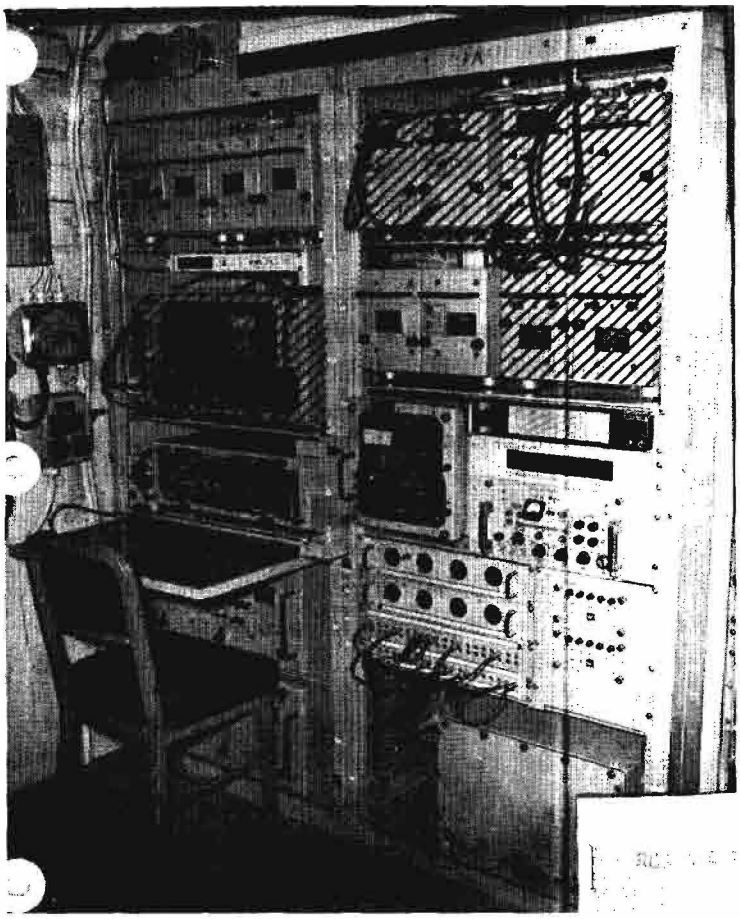


ELINT collection equipment in the SOD hut, USS *Pueblo*.

Within the research spaces, the LTV contractors busily worked away installing the elaborate electronic gear that was to be the heart of the *Pueblo*'s operational body. It included equipment for the intercept and recording of ELINT, manual Morse, radioprinter, radiotelephone [redacted] and telemetry signals. Other equipment fitted into the research spaces included radio direction finding gear, signal

converters, and narrowband and wideband receivers and recorders. In all, the *Pueblo* was well fitted to intercept the signals it would encounter on its voyage.[25]

The principal NAVSECGRU detachment member working with the contractors was Senior Chief Communications Technician Ralph D. Bouden. This was his first sea duty assignment, and he wanted the equipment installed accurately. As the work progressed, however, Chief Bouden realized that gross mistakes were being made; gear that would be seldom used had been accessibly installed at eye level while that which would be used constantly had been put out of reach near the overhead or down on the deck. When the LTV contractors were asked how this had happened, they told Bucher that everything had been installed the way the company drafting department had laid it out, that every sheet of the plans had been approved by the Navy. To correct the situation would require an additional six to ten weeks' work and would delay the *Pueblo*'s sea trials until late July.[26]

To Bucher, the *Pueblo*'s internal communications system was especially frustrating. He had a general announcement system, a loud speaker microphone (LMC) that was adequate except that there was no speaker in the research detachment spaces. The only additional communications facility was a sound-powered secure phone from the research space to either the captain's cabin or the signal bridge; a switch at each station was used to select the called party. In Bucher's words, "We were not prepared to get information back and forth as quickly as I needed to in a battle-type situation . . . I didn't have a ship control system, no sound-powered ship control system of any kind. I relied entirely on a voice tube (which, by the way, I had to fight like hell to get) just to talk to the helmsman . . . I was authorized to put in these extra sound-powered telephones using ship's company [but] . . . I had one Interior Communications Electrician aboard . . . and it would have taken him three years to install the system . . . .[27]

BUCHER'S CONCERN WITH LACK OF DESTRUCTION SYSTEMS

At Bremerton, Bucher was also concerned about the lack of any type of emergency destruction system aboard the *Pueblo*. He was well aware of the vast amount of equipment and documentation located within the Special Operations Department hut and wanted some means of destroying it rapidly should the need ever arise. Bucher voiced his concern both orally and in writing but without success. In his debriefing, he said: "The rationale that was used in refusing my request was that the Army said that it would cost too much money. The Army apparently had done things of this nature; the Navy not so much. And so the Army was approached on this subject."[28]

From having read the operational reports and recommendations of the USS *Banner*, Bucher formed a number of opinions as to how the *Pueblo* should be fitted out. However, in his words, "I did not voice all of these opinions because this was my first command and I was not going to place myself in a position of trying to tell somebody how to run, how to fix

a ship, when this was my first ship. I didn't feel that it was my place at the time, without having any experience at all to strongly criticize things that were being done, although I privately did so to ship superintendents and to one or two of my own officers."[29]

Finally, toward the end of August 1967, the reconfiguration of the *Pueblo* was completed to the point that the ship was readied for tests by the Board of Inspection and Survey. For three days, a team of nine officers from the board's office in San Francisco inspected the ship thoroughly, examining the engine room, machinery, hull structure, habitability, electronics capabilities – even the ship's medical facilities. In a forty-two page report, the inspection team cited 462 separate deficiencies and stated that 77 of them must be corrected before the *Pueblo* left Bremerton.[30] The board's report received prompt action. Shipyard workers corrected most of the critical deficiencies, and on 11 September the *Pueblo* steamed out of Bremerton en route to San Diego for shakedown training.

To break the long trip, Bucher arranged a three-day call in San Francisco, and on 15 September the *Pueblo* tied up at the docks of Treasure Island Naval Base. For Bucher, the stop was especially rewarding. While there, he learned that he had been selected for promotion to full commander, as had the captains of the other AGERs, *Banner* and *Palm Beach*.[31]

Reaching San Diego on 22 September, the *Pueblo* was berthed at the Navy's antisubmarine school's docks and came under the jurisdiction of the Training Command, Pacific, for a period of refresher and predeployment training. Once again, Bucher encountered the frustration resulting from secrecy about the *Pueblo*'s purpose. The Training Command had received information that the *Pueblo* was an AKL and prepared its training plan based on that type of ship. Although portions of this training were completely inappropriate for an intelligence collector, for example, cargo transfer at sea, Bucher believed that other parts of the training did benefit the crew. These were in such areas as familiarity with the operation of the ship at sea, working the ship's equipment, and working out watch sections.[32]

While the underway training was in progress, and because there would be no electronic training for the CTs, Lieutenant Harris, with Bucher's approval, traveled to Washington, D.C., for about two weeks of briefings by NAVSECGRU and NSA about possible missions for the *Pueblo*.[33]

Upon the conclusion of the training program, the *Pueblo* was given another inspection by Commander, Service Group One, also located in San Diego. Lieutenant Junior Grade Schumacher wrote of that inspection: "The inspecting team that came aboard found that many questions on their list did not apply or could not be answered by *Pueblo* officers for security reasons. Frustrated, they gave up and declared us ready – for something."[34]

PUEBLO HEADS FOR THE PACIFIC

On 6 November 1967, the *Pueblo* departed San Diego and headed for Hawaii. Although *Pueblo*'s home port was to be Yokosuka, it had to travel to Hawaii because its fuel capacity was insufficient for a direct nonstop crossing to Japan. Looking back at that time, Bucher believed that the *Pueblo* and its crew were ready to go to sea but did not feel that ship and crew were prepared to go out on a specific mission and perform well.[35]

During the eight-day voyage to Hawaii, the CTs in the SOD hut had little to do except to copy weather broadcasts and to try to familiarize themselves with the new equipment.[36] Some of the equipment broke down, however, and because of the lack of spare parts, could not be repaired until the *Pueblo* reached Hawaii.[37] The *Pueblo*'s most serious mechanical problem continued to be its steering system: sixty malfunctions in the transit.[38] Upon arrival at Pearl Harbor, the ship repair facility immediately began to fix the ship's faulty steering mechanism, a task requiring two days.

While his ship was being repaired, replenished, and refueled, Commander Bucher visited the Pacific Fleet staff. Here Lieutenant Commander Ervin R. Easton apprised him that the *Pueblo* would probably be conducting its first operations off the coast of North Korea in the Sea of Japan. Bucher recalls, "He [Easton] gave me a rundown on what to expect – which he said would probably not be very much. He said that we had been given this assignment first of all to give us a chance to shake ourselves down . . . to let us get our sea legs, so to speak, and work out some of the bugs."[39] When Bucher asked what would happen if he were attacked, Easton referred him to Captain Charles R. Cassel, Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations, Pacific Fleet.[40] According to Bucher, "this captain told me if you are attacked, there's absolutely nothing we can do about it at the time. There is no way that we can react fast enough. All the planes and so forth that our Fifth Air Force, the Thirteenth Air Force, and the people in Korea, the Air Force people are committed . . . and can't be used in a situation like this."[41]

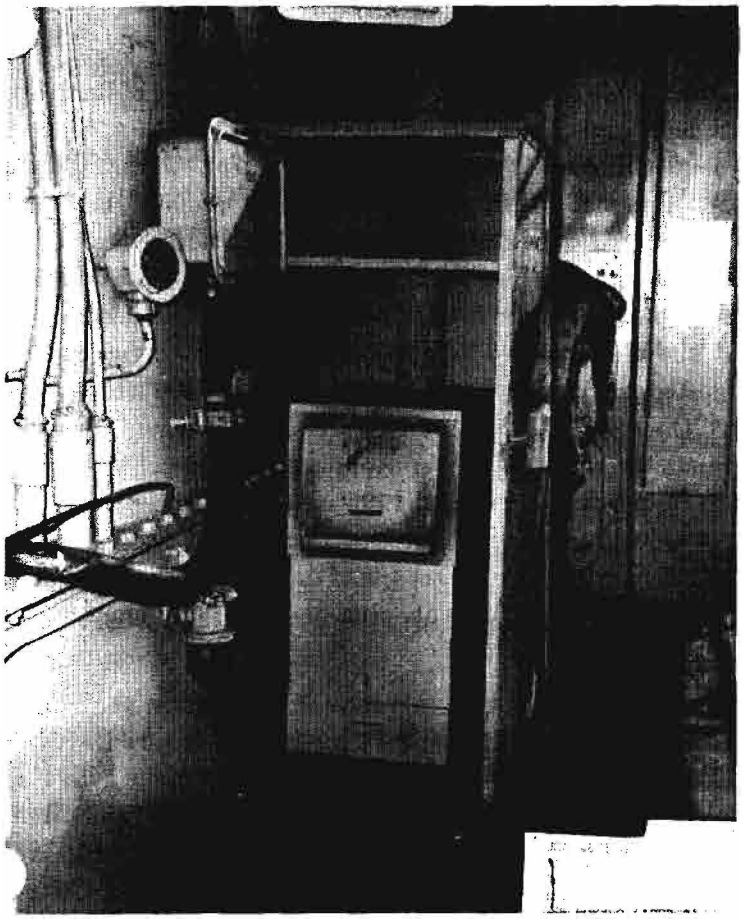
On the afternoon of 18 November 1967, with its steering engine supposedly repaired, the *Pueblo* slipped out of Pearl Harbor to begin the long journey to its home port of Yokosuka, Japan. As the *Pueblo* proceeded northwesterly, the temperature began to fall and the weather turned foul. Conning the ship from the flying bridge was chilling duty as the heavy seas pitched the *Pueblo* about. At times the ship experienced fifty degree rolls. In the research spaces, it was almost impossible to operate with any efficiency. Upright chairs had to be tied down by nylon straps through rings in the deck plates and even then it was not unusual for a man to be thrown over backward when a severe roll hit. Locks on the equipment racks kept breaking and units slid out, yet the *Pueblo* rode out the weather and proved that it could survive, albeit barely.[42]

On 13 December 1967, thirteen days out of Pearl Harbor, the *Pueblo* sailed into the shelter of Tokyo Bay and headed for a berth in Yokosuka. At this point the steering engine, which had performed erratically since leaving Pearl Harbor, failed completely,

and, to avoid damage to the ship while docking, the ship made a somewhat ignominious entrance with assistance from a yard tug.[43] Fortunately, the shipyard turned to and completely rebuilt the steering engine. The yard also installed a tinted, plexiglass windscreen on the flying bridge to provide the officer of the deck (OOD) with protection from wind and salt spray during rough weather.

In Yokosuka, the *Pueblo* came under the operational control of Rear Admiral Frank L. Johnson, Commander, Naval Forces Japan (COMNAVFORJAPAN). Although specific dates had yet to be established for the *Pueblo*'s first patrol, Admiral Johnson wanted the ship readied quickly and made as fit as possible. As he had at Bremerton, Bucher again expressed his concern to Admiral Johnson's staff about the lack of any emergency destruction system and was referred to the OIC of the Azuma Island Naval Ammunition Depot. In turn, an explosives and demolition (EOD) officer was sent to take a look at the *Pueblo*'s SOD hut and make appropriate recommendations. From his examination, the EOD officer suggested to Bucher that thermite canisters be attached directly to the equipment racks. Once set off, the thermite would melt down the gear and continue burning right through the ship. As Bucher remembers, "I thought it over for two days and I discussed it with Skip Schumacher and I discussed it with Steve Harris and I finally decided that . . . I was just too afraid to put it on there. I was afraid that somebody, either intentionally or unintentionally, would set one of those damn things off and just ruin, ruin thousands of dollars worth of equipment, plus perhaps endangering the entire ship." Bucher later regretted his decision.[44]

Although very concerned about the absence of destruction gear for his ship and its highly classified contents, Bucher did not take the time to ensure the training of his crew in emergency destruction procedures nor drill his men in the Navy standard "repel boarders" procedures.[45] He was fully aware, from his reading of the *Banner* reports, that the Soviets, as well as the Chinese Communists, had harassed this ship in the Sea of Japan and in the South China Sea on a number of occasions. He had made it a point to avail himself of the *Banner* reports and talk to its skipper prior to departure of the *Pueblo* on its mission. The *Banner* had encountered Soviet and Chinese Communist harassment during its previous missions in the Sea of Japan and in the East China Sea. Bucher fully expected to encounter the same kind of treatment. The technique used by Soviet and Chinese naval units was to employ a number of naval vessels to surround a U.S. SIGINT ship, even in international waters, thus making it extremely difficult for the U.S. ship to maneuver one way or the other without a collision. On two occasions, the Soviets and Chinese had even signaled the *Banner* to "Heave to or I will open fire." Fortunately for the *Banner* on these occasions, the Soviets and the Chinese had stopped short of opening fire.[46] Bucher's ship was to encounter the same situation a few weeks later off the coast of North Korea. Subsequent events would reveal a significant difference, however: North Korean naval units would not hesitate to open fire.



Low-capacity incinerator aboard the USS *Pueblo*.

At the end of December, about a week before the *Pueblo* was due to begin its first patrol, something new was added to the ship. The Chief of Naval Operations ordered that both the *Pueblo* and the *Banner* be armed with .50-caliber machine guns. With some assistance from Japanese planners on the shipyard repair staff, the installation of two machine guns was finally completed the day before the *Pueblo* left Yokosuka. No one aboard the *Pueblo* had any prior experience with this type of weapon except Seaman Maggard, who had once served a hitch in the Army and knew something about the weapon. Bucher made arrangements for most of the crew to receive orientation firing of the weapon at a nearby firing range.[47]

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Bucher had insisted that the .50-caliber guns be installed in the forward and after sections of the main deck. He did this over the objections of Lieutenant Murphy, his executive officer, who recommended installation on the port and starboard sections of the superstructure where there was better protection. Bucher also regretted this decision later, when he was unable to order members of the crew to man the weapons because of their exposed positions.[48]

In addition to changes in the *Pueblo*'s equipment, there were also changes in the personnel complement as a result of disciplinary, medical, and normal rotational assignments. Some of these changes were critical. Personnel who had just reported aboard had no opportunity to become familiar with their surroundings before departing on the mission. Other personnel were not competent in their assignments and had tried to make this known to NAVSECGRU authorities before sailing but to no avail. Lieutenant Stephen Harris's senior enlisted assistant was transferred to Edzell, Scotland, and replaced at the last moment by Chief Communications Technician James F. Kell from [redacted][49] In response to Harris's request for Korean linguists, [redacted] detailed two Marine sergeants who had completed Korean language instruction at the Defense Language Institute, Monterey, California, two years earlier. One hour before the *Pueblo* sailed, Radioman First Class Lee Roy Hayes hurried aboard to serve as the ship's leading radio operator – having been transferred at the last moment from a combat stores ship.[50]

During December 1967, two oceanographers from the U.S. Naval Oceanographic Office slated to accompany the *Pueblo* arrived in Yokosuka. Their job was to collect oceanographic data in order to develop sound velocity profiles that could be useful for submarine operations. Dunnie R. Tuck, Jr., and Harry Iredale had made previous trips on the USS *Banner*.[51]

PUEBLO COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS

Command and control of the various aspects of the *Pueblo*'s mission, a fairly straightforward matter on most naval ships, was obscure and fragmented, and led to antagonism between Bucher and the OIC of the SIGINT detachment, Harris. In September 1967, CINCPACFLT had prescribed command and control relationships that governed the Naval Security Group detachment aboard the *Pueblo*. Military command of the detachment was to be exercised by Bucher as the ship's commanding officer but operational and management control of the detachment was exercised by the Chief of Naval Operations and delegated to the Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet. The technical direction of the detachment's SIGINT function was vested in the National Security Agency and was exercised through the channels of NAVSECGRU headquarters to the NAVSECGRU, Pacific. CINCPACFLT, when it selected the cryptologic station designator for the *Pueblo*'s NAVSECGRU detachment as USN-467Y, also said that the detachment

personnel should not be employed in non-NAVSECGRU functions except as required on an interim basis.[52] This personnel utilization constraint was observed by Bucher very loosely.

While the *Pueblo* was in Yokosuka, NAVSECGRU, Pacific, issued SIGINT Letter of Instruction (LOI) 1-68 containing specific guidance for the operations of its detachments aboard both the USS *Pueblo* and the USS *Banner* during their deployments in the Pacific area. When applied to the *Pueblo*,this letter prescribed that command of the detachment would be exercised through the detachment's officer in charge, Lieutenant Harris.[53] In turn, Harris was to exercise military and administrative control of detachment personnel and equipment under his cognizance and was responsible directly to Commander Bucher in the execution of his duties.[54]

The mission and functions of the Naval Security Group detachments outlined in LOI 1-68 provided for the dual role of furnishing SIGINT direct support to the ship's commanding officer as a primary function and, as a secondary mission, satisfying specified fleet and national SIGINT collection requirements. The LOI defined five possible modes of operation for the AGERs *Pueblo* and *Banner*. The first of these was that proposed for the *Pueblo*'s first mission – Mode 1: Continuous operation in one of the areas [North Korea Coast]. . . by one ship at a time for an indefinite period of fairly long duration for operational test and evaluation of all sensors, and for utilization as a counterirritant to Soviet trawlers. In summary, the command arrangement aboard the *Pueblo* was fragmented. The ship was given a direct support mission as its primary task and, therefore, the Navy controlled its operations and SIGINT tasking. NSA SIGINT tasking was secondary and on a not-to-interfere basis with the ship's direct support mission. Bucher's command of the SIGINT detachment could only be accomplished through the officer in charge of the detachment.[55]

Bucher, although not in command of the detachment, held a clearance for Special Intelligence and was well aware of the *Pueblo*'s SIGINT mission. Prior to taking command of *Pueblo*, Bucher had had a week of briefings about the AGER program by the NAVSECGRU headquarters in Washington, D.C.; in addition, in Yokosuka, before sailing, he had read the *Banner*'s reports about its operations. When the Korean linguists were assigned to the *Pueblo*, Bucher felt that he could expect good direct support from the detachment's Interpretive Branch.[56]

PUEBLO MISSION RISK ASSESSMENT

The initial planning for *Pueblo*'s patrol began with Admiral Johnson's staff in October 1967, well before the ship arrived in Japan. By the end of November, Admiral Hyland at CINCPACFLT had approved a schedule for the first six months of operation for both the *Banner* and the *Pueblo*.[57] Thereafter, Johnson's operations and intelligence staffs collaborated in preparing a detailed mission proposal message about the *Pueblo*'s January operation. On 16 December 1967, Admiral Johnson approved the message and sent it to Admiral Hyland. Concerning the risk assessment of the *Pueblo*'s mission, Johnson stated

> I personally made the initial determination that risk would be minimal since *Pueblo* would be operating in international waters during the entire operation .... Specifically, in evaluating the risk, three key factors weighed heavily in the final decision: (1) *Pueblo* operations throughout the mission in international waters; (2) low level of North Korean naval activity at sea in January and February; and (3) the complete lack of any North Korean reaction to the USS *Banner*'s presence off North Korean coast on two occasions, one of which it loitered off Wo'nsan for about one and one-half days.[58]

From Admiral Hyland, the mission proposal message was transmitted to Admiral U.S.G. Sharp, CINCPAC, who quickly assented and transmitted the proposal to the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington on 23 December 1967.

Before examining what happened to this message once it reached the JCS, it is appropriate that we look first at what the normal procedures were in Washington for reviewing and approving requests for reconnaissance operations.

In December 1967, all military reconnaissance operations required approval by the JCS. Procedures for obtaining such approval were contained in JCS document SM-676, dated 19 August 1966, which stated that commanders of unified and specified commands and chiefs of military services might submit proposals to the JCS for missions in any area, "including those adjudged to be especially critical or sensitive." JCS approval was to be based upon current considerations of the sensitivity of the area, the possibility of hostile reaction, political factors where applicable, and the importance of the intelligence operations in relation to the risks involved.[59]

Before the JCS would take formal action on a proposed mission, the proposal had to be processed through the Joint Reconnaissance Center (JRC) Staff. This staff included representatives of each of the four military services, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, the Department of State and the Secretary of Defense. It therefore provided the actual working mechanism of the JCS for coordinating the processing of individual missions to determine, among other things, whether the proposal was necessary to meet national service and command intelligence requirements and, at the same time, avoid unnecessary duplication in the national reconnaissance program. Once an individual mission deployment had been coordinated and staffed within the JRC, it received a formal input from each of the four services and DIA, which either concurred in the proposed mission, suggested a modification, or recommended its cancellation.[60] Under

JCS regulations, the Defense Intelligence Agency was specifically charged with the risk assessment evaluation of each mission as well as its intelligence validation. However, these regulations did not seem to require an affirmative statement that responsible DIA authorities had fully discharged their responsibility for risk evaluation on each of the missions submitted for JCS review.[61]

After the staffing of each mission, the JRC would consolidate (usually on the 23d of each month) all reconnaissance proposals into a monthly schedule of reconnaissance operations for action by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This schedule was prepared in the form of a book that set out in broad, general terms the necessity for each mission, its objectives, its area of operations, its duration, and finally, its risk assessment.[62]

Admiral Sharp's formal message to the JCS used this wording: "Risk to *Pueblo* is estimated to be minimal since operations will be conducted in international waters." In spite of the paucity of information about risk evaluation in the proposal messages, JRC representatives supposedly had telephone conversations with their counterparts at CINCPAC headquarters concerning the *Pueblo* mission. However, no record was made of these informal discussions.[63]

Although NSA was also aware of the *Pueblo*'s proposed deployment, none of the NSA officials who regularly communicated informally with the JRC staff had any specific substantive discussions affecting the *Pueblo*'s proposed mission.[64]

Concerning DIA's responsibility to evaluate *Pueblo*'s risk assessment, its then director, Lieutenant General Joseph F. Carroll, later commented,

> On the basis of this message (CINCPAC 230230Z December 1967), and there being no information available to DIA at the time to alter the risk assessment assigned by the operational commander and the theater commander, the JRC entered the proposed mission into the monthly schedule as a risk assessment of Category Four [minimal risk] . . . there were daily considerations of changes in the military or political situation, increased sensitivity and reactions to other reconnaissance missions. There was nothing in these considerations to cause us in DIA or the JRC to alter the risk assessment which had tentatively been assigned to the proposed mission.[65]

General Carroll further stated that he did not recall any instance in which DIA had disagreed with a minimal risk assessment on an individual mission after the monthly reconnaissance schedule had been formally prepared.

The timing of the mission review process at the Washington level should not be overlooked. CINCPAC's mission proposal arrived at JCS on Saturday, 23 December. Sunday was Christmas Eve and Monday, of course, Christmas Day; normal manning levels of many government offices were reduced to minimum staffing. This time of year was not conducive to high levels of official concentration and thoughtful analysis. During the week between Christmas and New Year's, the Chairman, JCS, General Earle G. Wheeler, was out of town on leave; the Army Chief of Staff, General Harold K. Johnson, was visiting Southeast Asia and acting for him was Vice Chief of Staff of the Army

General Ralph E. Haines. Also absent was General Wallace Greene, Jr., Commandant of the Marine Corps, who was retiring, although filling in for him was General Leonard F.Chapman Jr., Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps. Only the Air Force Chief of Staff, General John P. McConnell and the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, respectively, were in Washington.[66]

At 11:00 A.M. on Wednesday, 27 December, the operations deputies of the Joint Chiefs of Staff met to consider all recommendations concerning the monthly reconnaissance schedule for January 1968. In General Wheeler's words, "This is a staff action . . . to resolve any differences of view between the service representatives and representatives of the Defense Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency. In other words, to make sure that everyone understands, everyone is in accord that these are the problem areas and so on . . ."[67] The monthly reconnaissance book was distributed by the JRC that same afternoon to all affected agencies, the armed services, DIA, NSA, CIA, and the Department of State.

The JCS usually would have met on the following Friday afternoon, 29 December, to take final JCS action on the monthly reconnaissance schedule. This time, however, the usual routine was changed. General Wheeler later revealed why: "Now it happens that this January program was released by each Chief telling his Operations deputy that he had no dissatisfaction with the program and therefore gave him permission to release it at the Operations deputies' meeting which was held on Friday morning, the 29th of December." [68]

Thus it was that the monthly reconnaissance schedule, which included the *Pueblo* mission as well as hundreds of others, was granted approval by the JCS without their having convened any formal meeting. After the morning meeting of the JCS operations deputies, the monthly reconnaissance book was presented to Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul H. Nitze, who reviewed the entire schedule and gave his approval the same day.[69]

One more review of the reconnaissance schedule remained, that of the 303 Committee, which gave civilian approval for the monthly schedule on behalf of the executive branch.[70] The existence of the 303 Committee was closely held. It was headed by a senior White House aide and was so named because it had once met in Room 303 of the Executive Office Building. It was composed of Richard Helms, Director of Central Intelligence (DCI); Nicholas de B. Katzenbach, Under Secretary of State; Paul Nitze, Deputy Secretary of Defense; and Walt Rostow, National Security Advisor to the President, as the White House representative. The "book" was forwarded to this committee also on 29 December for a policy review of the planned missions, particularly those that were directed at sensitive areas peripheral to unfriendly territory.

Because Richard Helms was on a ten-day trip outside the country, his deputy, Admiral Rufus Taylor, acted as DCI in reviewing the reconnaissance schedule proposed for January 1968.[71] Helms later described the 303 Committee deliberations in congressional testimony.

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According to Helms, the 303 Committee passed on the January schedule, which contained the *Pueblo* mission. The Committee did not regard this mission as routine. Helms pointed out that there were four missions in the docket – one of them the *Pueblo*'s – that were singled out for Admiral Taylor's special attention in a staff memorandum recommending his concurrence in the proposal.

It was the assessment of the 303 Committee, according to Helms, based on the experience of *Pueblo*'s sister ship *Banner in* the Far East, and on the belligerent North Korean attitude, that this was a risk mission. In this sense it differed from the Navy assessment of minimal risk. The committee felt that there was indeed a possibility that the ship would encounter difficulties and possibly serious harassment but not seizure in international waters. The committee expected the *Pueblo* to be "shadowed, bullied, and bumped, but there was no reason to expect seizure on the high seas."[72] In the face of the committee's assessment of the possibility of serious harassment, it would have been incumbent upon the Navy to have at least a minimum protective force available within a reasonable distance of the *Pueblo* should there have been a need, but . . . .

The 303 Committee approved the reconnaissance schedule on the 29th of December and returned it to the JCS by the end of that same day, Friday. The *Pueblo*'s mission was approved by the JCS, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, and the 303 Committee all on the same day. Such speed suggests that no more than a cursory review could have been made of the reconnaissance schedule. With this final approval, the JCS sent the resulting decision to the responsible area commander in chief for his action.

Meanwhile, NSA was also taking certain actions concerning the *Pueblo*. At mid-afternoon on 29 December 1967, B1, the [redacted] sent a message to [redacted] and to all field sites associated with the Korean target, requesting them to be especially watchful for and to report any SIGINT evidence of North Korean reaction to the scheduled transit of the *Pueblo* off the North Korean east coast in January 1968. This message was the normal advisory to SIGINT sites asking them to report reactions to U.S. operations.[73]

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Within a half hour, the NSA Office of Mobile Collection (K12) released a message to Naval Security Group headquarters that answered the Pacific Fleet's request for secondary SIGINT tasking for the *Pueblo*. This message provided the specific COMINT and ELINT collection requirements for the *Pueblo*.[74]

NSA ADVISORY ON POSSIBLE NORTH KOREAN HOSTILE ACTION

On 29 December, there was much soul-searching and anxiety within NSA over the suggestion that NSA send a message to the JRC/JCS expressing concern over the possibility of a hostile reaction from the North Koreans to the forthcoming *Pueblo* patrol. Action in favor of such a message was most strongly felt at the analytic level in B11. Here, analysts had observed SIGINT data reflecting hostile North Korean reactions to U.S. airborne missions over a period of several years. Based on this precedent and lacking a precedent for naval surface collection, they believed that the chances of such a reaction from the North Koreans toward a surface vessel were high.[75]

More senior levels within NSA believed that the Agency would be overstepping its responsibility by getting involved in a Navy operational matter and thus leaving itself open to criticism. The result of these opposing views was a strongly worded message drafted at the analytic level in NSA and modified as it was coordinated with the senior levels prior to its release. During this coordination process, the statements "But there is no SIGINT evidence of provocative or harassing activities by North Korean vessels beyond twelve n[autical] m[iles] from the coast." and "[This message] is provided to aid in evaluating the requirement for ship protective measures and is not intended to reflect adversely on CINCPACFLT deployment proposal" were added in order to make the message less obtrusive.[76] The Assistant Director, Production, and number-three man in NSA, Oliver R. Kirby, authorized its release in the absence of Marshall S. Carter, the Director of NSA, who was out of town for the Christmas holidays.[77] The Assistant Director for the National Cryptologic Staff (ADN), Admiral Lester R. Schulz, concurred in the message release.

A year later, when justifying this message action to Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird, Carter said: ". . . though this Agency is not directly involved in the approval chain of military reconnaissance missions, we at NSA consider it an appropriate function to review pertinent Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) information and comment on SIGINT reflections where such information will be of assistance to our customers. This was the case with regard to the NSA message concerning the *Pueblo* mission. It was simply a case of NSA people doing their jobs in a normal and competent manner . . . ."[78]

Although NSA, as pointed out by Carter, had no approval role in regard to direct support missions operated by the services, the intent of this message was quite clear: it was an advisory, based on past SIGINT experience, that the North Koreans were unpredictable and might precipitate hostile action at any time. Consequently, the JRC

might, therefore, consider the *Pueblo* a risk mission and assign appropriate protective measures for the ship. It was a most unusual action by NSA. It expressed an after-the-fact reservation by NSA concerning the safety of the *Pueblo* patrol. Unfortunately, the message got "lost in the system," and no change was made in the *Pueblo* mission.

Released at 5:28 P.M. Washington time, this NSA message to JCS/JRC reached the Pentagon later that evening. Unfortunately, because this was the beginning of the New Year's holiday weekend, the NSA message received no attention until the following Tuesday, 2 January 1968, when Brigadier General Ralph D. Steakely, USAF, the Director of JRC, simply retransmitted it to CINCPAC. An information copy was supposed to have been sent via courier to the CNO in the Pentagon, but the forwarding instructions were misinterpreted and no copy reached the CNO. No other action was taken by the Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Nor did anyone take action on the message at DIA.[79]

In Hawaii, at CINCPAC headquarters, the retransmitted NSA message was received at 2026Z on 2 January 1968. The CINCPAC staff, believing that the message contained no new information that would change the risk evaluation of the *Pueblo*'s mission, did not bring it to Admiral Sharp's attention.[80]

On the morning of 2 January, JCS transmitted the approval of the *Pueblo*'s mission to Hawaii. With this message, the events that would lead to the attack and seizure of the ship within a few weeks were set in motion.

This NSA message concerning the *Pueblo* mission was the second advisory message that NSA sent to the JRC/JCS and Navy commands on the subject of the possibility of danger to a U.S. surface collection mission. Early in 1967, the Agency sent a similar message to the JRC/JCS and a large number of Navy commands advising of possible hostile actions by the North Koreans against a forthcoming mission by the USS *Banner* off the North Korean coast.[81] During that mission, the *Banner* paused briefly for a day or two off the North Korean coast. No hostile reaction occurred on that occasion.

In general, the military forces of the USSR, the PRC, and, in more recent years, those of North Korea had a history of hostile reactions to U.S. airborne collection platforms. Since the late 1940s – early 1950s Soviet air forces were involved in the shootdown of about twelve–fifteen U.S. reconnaissance aircraft operating in international airspace in the Atlantic and Pacific areas. The same was true to a lesser extent in regard to Chinese Communist forces in the Far East. North Korean air forces reacted to U.S. airborne collection missions after 1964–65.

Reactions to surface collection platforms by the Soviets dated from at least the 1960s and involved harassment in the form of passing close aboard, bumping, and, in general, creating a serious danger to navigation. Unlike their reactions to airborne missions, none of these Soviet reactions to surface collection missions involved the use of weaponry. The same was true of Chinese Communist naval forces.

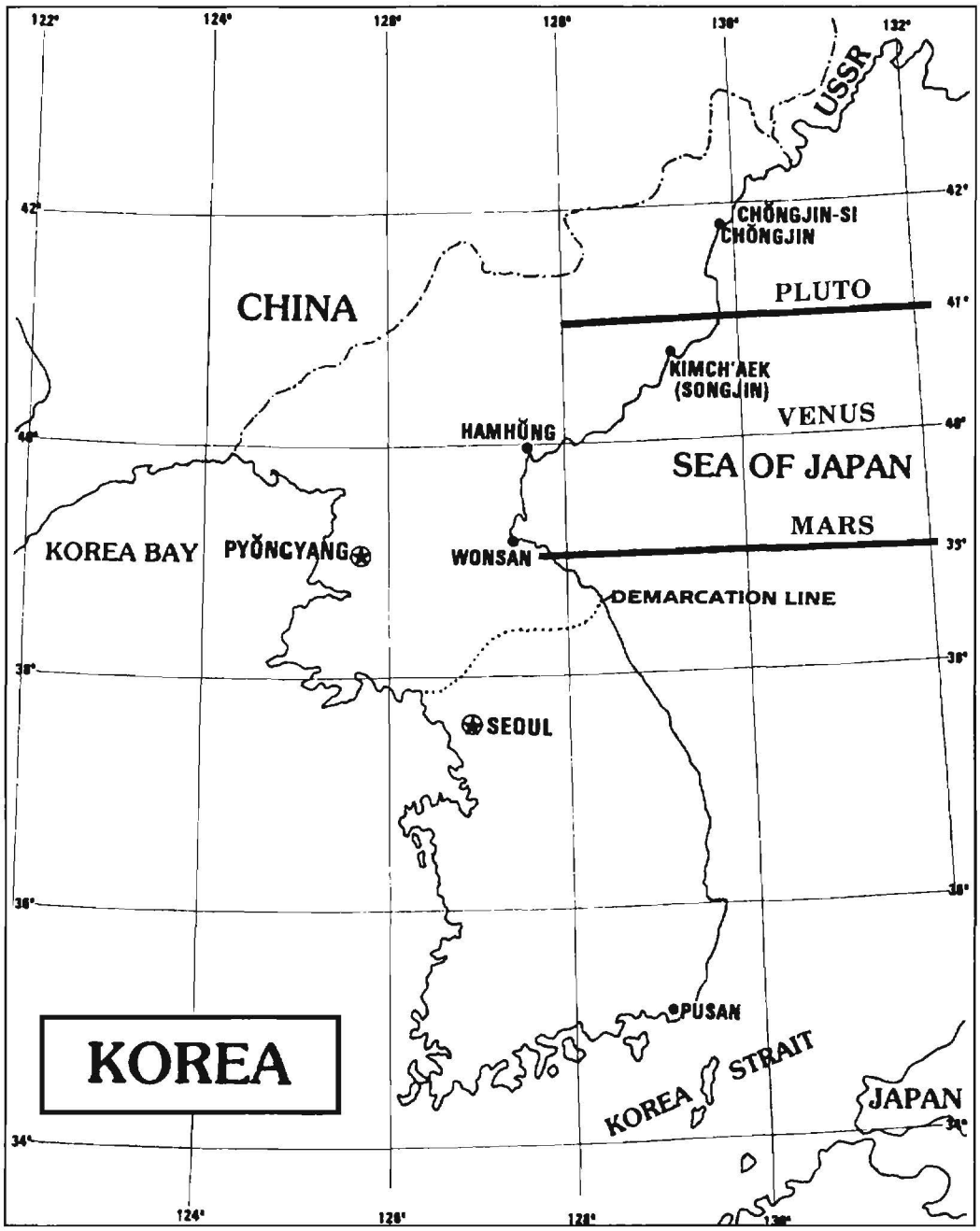
In recommendating a "minimal risk" category for the *Pueblo* mission, U.S. naval commands pointed to the previous single *Banner* patrol off North Korea, albeit brief, as a precedent for the absence of a hostile reaction. Perhaps too, the Navy believed that the North Koreans, as did the Soviets and Chinese Communists, would also maintain the distinction between air and seaborne collection platforms in regard to the form that their reactions would take.

PUEBLO SAILING ORDERS

For administrative purposes, the *Pueblo* was assigned to the Service Force, Pacific Fleet, but for its reconnaissance mission it was assigned to the operational control of Admiral Frank Johnson, Commander, Task Force 96 (CTF 96), who was also Commander, Naval Forces, Japan. On 4 January 1968, Admiral Johnson inspected the *Pueblo* and ordered Bucher to get under way on 5 January for Sasebo, Japan, in order to be in position for the coming mission.[82] The formal plan for the *Pueblo*'s operation was contained in CTF 96 Operation Order No. 301-68, which provided specific guidance and instructions for the assigned mission, including reporting instructions and operating and communications plans. The sailing order issued 5 January augmented the operations order by including the following specific instructions:

> Depart Sasebo about 8 January and proceed via Tsushima Strait to arrive in Operational Area MARS about 10 January.
>
> Conduct collection operations in area designated MARS (4000N to 3900N), VENUS (4100N to 4000N), and PLUTO (4200N to 4100N), concentrating on most productive areas.
>
> Avoid detection and maintain emission control procedures except when establishing contact with Soviet naval units. At this time, break emission control and transmit a daily situation report.
>
> The closest point of approach (CPA) to North Korea, the Soviet landmass, and offshore islands is 13 nm.
>
> Defensive armament (machine guns) should be stowed or covered in such a manner so that it does not cause unusual interest by surveyed units. It should be used only in the event of a threat to survival.
>
> The provisions of CINCPAC Instructions 003120.24A and 003100.3D apply in regard to the rules of engagement and concerning conduct in the event of harassment or intimidation by foreign units.[83]

The sailing order for the *Pueblo* used the codeword ICHTHYIC for the operation. All previous references had cited the codeword PINKROOT, but when the USS *Palm Beach* was assigned to the Atlantic instead of the Pacific Fleet, it became necessary to establish a codeword for worldwide AGER operations. For this purpose, CNO assigned the codeword BREEDER CLICKBEETLE (formerly used for the *Banner*'s operations), and PINKROOT was



Pueblo Operational Areas

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canceled. Henceforth, AGER operations in the [redacted] were to be referred to by the codeword FROSTFISH and those in the [redacted] by ICHTHYIC I.[84]

While the details of the *Pueblo*'s mission were being finalized and the ship made ready, Lieutenant Schumacher, the operations officer, received his Special Intelligence (SI) clearance. He was upset about the delay in receiving it, saying ". . . I think an error was made in ordering me, as appointing me as operations officer without expediting my SI clearance . . . so that I could adequately perform my job as operations officer . . ."[85]

Commander Bucher, following COMNAVFORJAPAN's order of 4 January, made hurried preparations to depart Yokosuka on the 5th. His operation order from CTF 96 arrived at 3:00 A.M. on that day, hardly time to review it prior to an early morning departure. As the *Pueblo* pulled away from its berth in Yokosuka, only a partial sailing order had been received. The *Pueblo* was to get the remainder of its orders while the ship was en route to Sasebo.[86]

NSA, meanwhile, was taking steps to ensure that support to the *Pueblo*'s mission would be complete. It provide[redacted] with the details of the *Pueblo*'s mission as well as the ship's planned locations during the forthcoming patrol so that these intercept sites would be fully aware of the possibility of North Korean reactions. In addition, NSA requested [redacted] to include the *Pueblo* as an addressee for all South Korean-originated spot reports disseminated [redacted] during the period of its mission. Also, NSA requested [redacted] role, to readdress to the *Pueblo* NSA's Korean Communist Naval Summary (KORCOM NAVSUM) to support the patrol.[87]

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Normally, the voyage from Yokosuka to Sasebo on the western coast of Kyushu would have taken three days. However, because of stormy conditions in the Sea of Japan, the *Pueblo* arrived on 9 January, a day later than planned. While en route to Sasebo, the *Pueblo* received from Admiral Johnson a list of cryptographic equipment and publications that it was authorized to hold. All items in excess of those listed were to be removed at Sasebo "due to sensitive nature of operations in relatively shallow waters during upcoming ICHTHYIC I."[88] This instruction was not consistent with the COMNAVFORJAPAN and CINCPACFLT initial "minimal risk" category originally assigned the mission. Also during the trip to Sasebo, the WLR-1 ELINT receiver in the SOD hut had broken down and needed repair.[89] Before reaching port, the *Pueblo* informed COMNAVFORJAPAN of this malfunction, and, in response, a new part was flown to Sasebo [redacted].[90] Off-loading cryptomaterials and repairing the WLR-1 took another day, thus delaying the *Pueblo*'s departure from Sasebo until the predawn hours of 11 January 1968.[91]

Looking back on that occasion, Bucher said, "I was proud of this ship and I was ready to go, wanted to get out there and get this job on the road so that we could get this

experience behind us."[92] Admiral Johnson of COMNAVFORJAPAN also said that he was satisfied that the USS *Pueblo* was in a satisfactory state of readiness and could carry out its assigned mission.[93]

Nearly three and one-half years had passed since the Department of Defense had first mentioned the possibility of an AGER-type program; nineteen months had elapsed for the conversion of a deactivated small cargo ship into the AGER *Pueblo*. Now it was to embark on its first operational mission. In the minds of the *Pueblo*'s captain and its task force commander, the ship was officially deemed ready.

In a number of storms, however, the ship had pitched about violently. At best, the steering machinery was antiquated and its reliability questionable. Small as the ship was, rough seas caused rolling and "unsettled" conditions for operators seated in the research detachment spaces; chairs fell over, equipment worked loose in the racks, and stored paper fell from overhead.

Several of *Pueblo*'s mechanical systems and devices were far from satisfactory. The standard destruction system for classified documents was rudimentary. A small incinerator of twenty-five pounds per hour capacity and two electrical, hand-fed, paper shredders that could handle two reams per hour were barely adequate to dispose of the normal daily burn requirements. These devices were augmented by fire axes, sledges, and chipping hammers for equipment destruction. Any emergency destruction that might become necessary wherein time was a critical factor would require extraordinary measures. Although Bucher would later claim that he was attempting to devise such methods of mass destruction, he did not do so. *Pueblo*'s internal communication system left much to be desired, and it was totally inadequate to meet the needs of any battle or emergency situation. In practice, it was discovered that, because of temperamental adjustments to the firing mechanisms, the .50-caliber machine guns took at least ten minutes to activate.[94] Only one crew member, with former army experience, had ever had any experience with such weapons, although members of the crew had received rudimentary instruction on the weapons immediately prior to the ship's deployment.

In regard to general service crew staffing, it had been on the basis of AKL needs and specialities; forty-four percent had never been to sea when first assigned. Of the NSG detachment, only four had had prior sea duty, and one third were assigned duties in which they had no practical experience apart from that received in Communications Technician (CT) school. In addition, none of the CTs had had live experience in their specialties for approximately nine months. This fact, coupled with the commanding officer's practice of assigning CTs to deck duties when necessary, had markedly lowered the morale of the NSG detachment. The assistant to the detachment's OIC joined the ship when it left Yokosuka, six days before the operation began. This was hardly sufficient time for him to become familiar with the capabilities of the individual CTs in order to use them effectively – or to earn their respect and trust. The Korean linguists, too, boarded the *Pueblo* when it left Yokosuka. These two Marine sergeants made no secret of their Korean language

ineptitude. A similar situation pertained to the ship's ranking radioman. He too had scrambled aboard the *Pueblo* just an hour before its departure from Yokosuka – and, like the linguists, the radioman had little confidence in his own abilities.

In short, the upcoming voyage of the *Pueblo* had all the earmarks of a training cruise rather than an operational intelligence collection mission. A more experienced crew would have gone a long way toward relieving some of the confusion aboard the *Pueblo* when it was accosted by the North Koreans. It was clear the voyage would be a troubled one, danger from the North Koreans aside.

We have seen how the review and approval of the *Pueblo*'s proposed mission was handled in Washington. Arriving as it did at the beginning of the 1967 Christmas and New Year holiday season, the proposal was buried under several hundred other missions in the January 1968 reconnaissance schedule. Absenteeism at the JCS level precluded the JCS from following their normal pattern of meeting personally to review the schedule; instead, approval was given by their several staffs. In fact, the JCS, DoD, and 303 Committee reviews and approvals were all accomplished within the space of a single day. Although something of a record for speedy efficiency, such procedural achievement suggested only cursory or token examination of the total reconnaissance schedule – not to mention a detailed look at the *Pueblo*'s operational mission. The NSA message to JCS, summarizing SIGINT information on North Korean aggressiveness, was intended to serve as an advisory to those personnel looking at such things as risk assessment and back-up ship protection measures for the *Pueblo*. Instead, the message was virtually ignored by DIA, JCS, and CINCPAC. The *Pueblo* sailed into the Sea of Japan for operations off the North Korean east coast poorly prepared for its mission and subsequent actions by the North Koreans.

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Chapter III

The Patrol

The *Pueblo*'s sailing orders specified that upon leaving Sasebo, it was to check out of the U.S. Navy's ship movements reporting system and maintain radio silence, i.e., emission control (EMCON). Only if detected was the ship to transmit and give its position. Before departing port, Bucher discussed with Admiral Johnson's staff just what constituted "detection." It was agreed that this meant visual observation by a ship or aircraft that would most likely report the *Pueblo*'s presence to either the Soviets or North Koreans; this definition excluded radar detection.[1]

To help avoid detection, Bucher relied on both SIGINT and collateral intelligence sources. The day before the *Pueblo* departed Sasebo, [redacted] This information was transmitted to the *Pueblo* via the U.S. Navy's operational intelligence broadcast.

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Daily reconnaissance flights out of [redacted] kept track of the location of Soviet naval units, and thus Bucher knew, when leaving Sasebo, that a Soviet destroyer and tanker were plying the Tsushima Strait.[4] To avoid detection, Bucher decided to hug the coast of the Japanese island of Honshu and give the Soviet ships a wide berth. His intention was to proceed northward through the Sea of Japan, keeping forty to fifty miles from the coast of North Korea until the *Pueblo* reached its northernmost operating area, PLUTO (see Operational Map, page 40).[5]

Weather forecasts monitored by the *Pueblo* on its first day out were not favorable. The prognosis from Guam, [redacted] was for rough weather immediately ahead. This was confirmed by the English language weather broadcas [redacted] Bucher found that these reports were very reliable.[6]

On 12 January 1968, at a point approximately 35 degrees, 15 minutes north, the *Pueblo* headed into the Sea of Japan on a track toward the Demilitarized Zone[7] so as to pass roughly twenty miles south of the South Korean island of Ullung-do.[8] Shortly beyond that point, as it entered operational area MARS (see Operational Map, page 40), the *Pueblo* ran into a severe winter storm. The ship reacted violently and forced Bucher to go some

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seventy miles out to sea in order to maintain a safe condition. Many of the crew were sick, including all of the officers except Warrant Officer Lacy and Bucher himself. This alteration of course delayed the *Pueblo* in keeping to its planned itinerary.

By Sunday, 14 January, the worst of the storm was over. The *Pueblo* turned back toward the North Korean east coast through heavy swells and proceeded north following the contour of the coast but well out to sea. The weather now was overcast with six miles visibility and westerly winds at fourteen to twenty knots. Although the storm was over, the *Pueblo* faced still another problem. As the ship worked its way northward, the temperature turned bitterly cold, and the *Pueblo* began to ice up. Sometimes as much as two inches of ice would form during the night over the entire deck, and Bucher would have the crew, including CTs, chipping away at it.[9]

On Tuesday, 16 January, the *Pueblo* arrived at the 42d parallel, the northernmost limit of its operating area, just south of Vladivostok and the boundary separating North Korea and the USSR. The ship was still approximately twenty-five to thirty miles from the coast, but that same day it cruised to a point off Ch'ongjin and came within fifteen miles of shore, closer than at any previous time. By using the "Big Eyes" (twenty-two-inch binoculars), Bucher could see smoke coming from chimneys.[10]

At this time, to make certain that the *Pueblo* did not approach the shore closer than thirteen nautical miles, navigation became critical. Bucher ordered navigational fixes every half-hour during the day and every twenty minutes at night. He also ordered all officers-of-the-deck to head the ship out to sea whenever they had any doubts about where the ship was and to call Bucher immediately. Once they were positive they were a good fifteen miles from land, they were to come to "all stop" so that the exact position could be determined. Apart from Lieutenant Murphy and Quartermaster First Class Law, Bucher's crew had marginal navigational experience. In his words: "I had only one other quartermaster on board, Plucker, who is a third class and he did not have much experience. My other two people standing quartermaster watches were Electronics Technician Second Class Nolte, who never had any experience along this line, and Crandell, Radioman Third Class, who never had any experience . . . . I did not have a highly professional group of seamen to do my navigational chores for me."[11]

Having arrived at the patrol's northern limit, and before beginning the transit down the North Korean east coast, Bucher called together all his general service chiefs, first class, and leading petty officers to brief them on the general operations of the ship. Nothing about the SIGINT mission was disclosed. He advised them that they were on a classified intelligence operation, that they were not to get any closer to the coast than

thirteen miles, that the coast and shipping were to be surveyed, and to perform correctly because they might not get a chance to do it twice. Photographer's Mate First Class Mack remembered thinking that navigation shouldn't be a problem because Quartermaster First Class Charles Law was such a good navigator.[13]

Commander Bucher was sure that he hadn't been detected while traveling northward to operational area PLUTO. He had taken particular pains to avoid observation. When debriefed, he said, "If I saw a mast on the horizon in the direction I was going, if necessary I would turn and run in the other direction in order to avoid coming into real good view.[14]

Operating closer to shore, however, the *Pueblo* saw occasional merchant ships going in or out of ports such as Ch'ongjin. None of these evidenced any interest in the *Pueblo*; in fact, the closest passed one evening at about five to eight thousand yards. Photographer's Mate First Class Mack would photograph the vessels and then prepare slides for Commander Bucher's use in identifying the ships by comparing them with photographs contained in on-board publications about merchant ships of the world.[15] In total, Mack estimated that he photographed about eight different ships while the *Pueblo* was on patrol.[16]

As sundown approached each evening, Bucher ordered his officer of the deck (OOD) to take the *Pueblo* farther out to sea,usually to a distance of eighteen to twenty miles. Then on the morning watch (4:00 to 8:00 A.M.), the OOD would turn the *Pueblo* around so that the ship would again be fourteen to fifteen miles from shore by dawn.[17]

On the way to the PLUTO area, one of the *Pueblo*'s three generators blew up. Fireman Bandera completely tore it down but realized that its repair would have to wait until the ship returned to Yokosuka. Later, one of the auxiliary generators also broke down and remained inoperable for lack of spare parts.[18]

The frigid weather encountered in the PLUTO operational area required constant chipping of ice. Not only were the crew's quarters cold because the heating system wasn't working well, but according to Communications Technician Third Class Ralph McClintock, there were other discomforts as well: ". . . we had trouble with the water all the time...the bilge pump was backing up or something and I'd wake up in the morning sometimes and find everything floating around the deck."[19]

In the research detachment spaces, SIGINT collection was at a low level. Since the *Pueblo* had stayed some forty miles from the coast on the way northward, about the only activity which occurred at that range was the taking of bearings on some HF signals.[20]

Although there was little intercept, the crew established a routine for burning classified material, particularly incoming traffic collected by the "O" Branch (Communications) that was not needed by the *Pueblo*. Every day at about 8:00 A.M., two or three CTs from the SOD hut would use the incinerator. Usually eight or nine burn bags required destruction. Using the on-board shredders was so time consuming that most

often paper was balled up instead and fed into the incinerator, which had a capacity of one or two "burn bags" at a time. After burning, the incinerator was stoked to shake down the ashes that, when cooled, were loaded into buckets and thrown over the side. During this operation, no general service crewmen were allowed in the incinerator area.[21]

After spending about two days off Ch'ongjin, the *Pueblo* deployed farther south under cover of darkness on the night of 17 January. By the next morning, it had entered the VENUS operational area and was stationed off So'ngjin (now Kimch'aek), some sixteen miles out at about parallel 41 degrees and 14 minutes north longitude.[22] In this location as well as at Ch'ongjin, SIGINT activity was very slight, but at least the weather had improved. Skies were clear and, although the temperature was cold, the ship was no longer icing up.[23]

On 19 January, Lieutenant Harris recommended that the *Pueblo* depart the So'ngjin area and head south toward the next coastal target, the port of Mayang-do. This area was thought to be the major base for North Korea's small submarine fleet. The *Pueblo* arrived opposite Mayang-do during the night of 19 January and was operating some fourteen to fifteen miles offshore on the morning of 20 January.[24] The *Pueblo* was now in area MARS, the southernmost of the three operational areas.

PUEBLO SIGINT DETACHMENT AND ITS MISSION

The SIGINT detachment aboard was organized similarly to other NAVSECGRU units ashore and afloat. Any differences were primarily of size rather than basic function. For example, the Administrative Branch (A) consisted of one CT1, and the Maintenance Branch (M) was staffed by a CTCS and two CT3s. Four men manned the Communications Branch (O), just barely enough to cover a three-shift operation responsible for operating the teletypewriters and cryptographic equipment, handling message routing and cryptographic procedures, and assuring proper use of circuits. Aboard the *Pueblo*, the NAVSECGRU crew carried out intercept and processing operations as follows:

> The Collection Branch (R), with four people, was responsible for Morse intercept, high frequency direction finding, and radiotelephone intercept that did not require linguistic skills.
>
> The Technical Branch (T), with a personnel strength of twelve men, did the intercepting, recording, processing, and analyzing of all types of non-Morse systems.
>
> The Intercept Branch (I) CTs, five in number, performed all tasks requiring foreign language proficiency and served as radiotelephone operators and transcribers.[25]

The U.S. Navy had provided the primary operational tasking for the *Pueblo*'s patrol: in particular, CINCPAC wanted the *Pueblo* to sample the electronic environment of the east

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coast of North Korea with emphasis on the intercept and fixing of coastal radars.[26] NSA provided secondary tasking that was more specific.[27] NSA expressed special interest in the searching and recording of any signals emanating from North Korea that might be [redacted] In addition, NSA requested that special efforts be made to intercept communications signals in the [redacted] and, if intercepted, to fix accurately the location of the emitters. Other COMINT tasking on North Korean targets included the collection of a North Korean Air Force voice net; all Army single channel voice communications in the range [redacted] to include coastal artillery communications; all Navy single-channel voice communications between [redacted] to include ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore communications; and the intercept of [redacted]

In addition to the COMINT signals described above, NSA gave the *Pueblo* secondary tasking for the following signals in which it had a particular interest: [redacted] radar signals associated with [redacted] radar signals associated with *Komar*-class guided missile boats berthed at Wonsan; cruise missile emitters emanating from within a ten-nautical-mile radius of 38 degrees, 42 minutes north latitude and 128 degrees, 17 minutes east longitude. NSA also gave the *Pueblo* secondary tasking for ELINT search operations. This tasking covered new, unusual, and unidentified signals, and land-based, shipborne, and airborne radar emissions. NSA tasked the *Pueblo* NAVSECGRU detachment with visually correlating airborne and shipborne signals with emitter platforms and, for land-based emitters, to obtain direction finding bearings to determine their locations.[28]

Although the *Pueblo*'s operational SIGINT tasking was clear, the ship's performance in pursuit of such requirements was poor and plagued with problems. The Technical Branch discovered that its technical support documentation with listings of North Korean manual Morse callsigns and frequencies was outdated. As a result, the branch could not determine whether it was copying [redacted][29] As for radioprinter traffic, the branch found nothing.[30] In the Technical Branch, several operators were either poorly trained or had never used the signal detection equipment, AN/WLR-1.[31] In fact, there were no qualified non-Morse search and development operators aboard.[32] Nevertheless, the branch did log about 135 signals, including a number of Soviet-developed North Korean navigational, surveillance, and target acquisition radars.[33] The linguists in the Intercept Branch, because of their limited knowledge of Korean, were unable to transcribe what they had recorded, which was very little. At the time of capture, they had intercepted no more than twenty tapes, including some Russian.[34] Marine Sergeants Chicca and Hammond did not have any experience on the North Korean target.[35] Maintenance Branch personnel echoed the fact that many operators in the other branches were so inexperienced that they could not make full use of their equipment.[36]

Just prior to the *Pueblo*'s capture, Lieutenant Harris released two technical reports that gave details about the patrol's SIGINT collection activities between 12 and 13

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January.[37] The reports showed that the amount of intercept collected at each of the major ports off which the *Pueblo* stationed itself during its southward transit of the North Korean coast [redacted] This result was far below expectations. The ELINT collection was much the same. The *Pueblo*'s first technical report message stated that only unidentified signals had been intercepted and gave the technical characteristics of each.

As the *Pueblo* neared the Wonsan area, some of the senior people aboard had some thoughts about the *Pueblo*'s attempt to remain undetected. Communications Technician First Class James A. Shepard, the ship's senior ELINT analyst, firmly believed that the North Koreans were always aware of the *Pueblo*'s presence. At his intelligence debriefing on his return to the United States, he stated, "During the whole course of the operation, the transit up and the transit back, [redacted]

In preparing his daily reports about patrol operations, Commander Bucher made some strong comments about the desirability of not conducting a mission at that particular time of year because of the lack of activity. Lieutenant Schumacher, *Pueblo*'s operations officer, said of the SIGINT effort, "The opinion I'd got from Lieutenant Harris every time I went through the SOD hut was [redacted] . . We could have come up with some positive recommendations for not going back up there. Because of, primarily the time of year, mid-winter, everybody was staying home, while we were out there trying to chip off the deck."[40]

The *Pueblo* continued to operate off Mayang-do. The *Pueblo* crew did not realize that North Korean guerrillas were at that moment preparing to infiltrate South Korea in an attempt to assassinate President Pak Chung Hee in his residence, the Blue House, on the following day. The weather was overcast with unlimited visibility and light southwesterly winds. There was no hint of the difficult times in store for the *Pueblo*.

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Chapter IV

North Korean Attack and Seizure

On Saturday, 20 January, the *Pueblo* was dead in the water in the MARS Operational Area about 15.4 miles southwest of Mayang-do. At 5:30 P.M.,[1] while located at position 39 degrees, 47 minutes north, and 128 degrees, 25.5 minutes east, a North Korean modified SO-1-class subchaser passed the *Pueblo* at a range of about 4,000 yards. In the twilight, the subchaser appeared only as a silhouette, and no identification could be made. This ship was apparently headed for Wonsan. The *Pueblo* reported that the subchaser showed no apparent interest in the *Pueblo*. In the light of subsequent events, it may only be guessed that this ship conducted an initial North Korean reconnaissance of the *Pueblo*.[2]

That night the *Pueblo* headed south toward Wonsan, the last area of interest in the MARS Operational Area. Commander Bucher intended to arrive at a point fifteen miles east of Wonsan at 7:00 A.M. on 22 January.[3]

NORTH KOREAN VISUAL SURVEILLANCE

Arriving on station as planned, the *Pueblo* remained dead in the water for most of the day. It was a bright, brisk day with a temperature of 36 degrees and a slight breeze. At 12:25 P.M., two North Korean ships were sighted at a range of about 10,000 yards, bearing 170 degrees and an estimated speed of eight knots. When the ships were within 1,500 yards, one changed course and passed close aboard the *Pueblo*'s starboard beam at about 100 yards. The two North Korean ships then hove to about 9,000 yards apart.[4] This was a more identifiable North Korean reconnaissance effort.

Noting some Korean writing on the ships' sterns, Bucher called for the Korean linguists in the research spaces to come to the bridge and translate the Korean characters. Marine Sergeants Chicca and Hammond could not translate the names immediately but, after obtaining a dictionary in the SOD hut, identified the ships as *Rice Paddy 1* and *Rice Paddy 2*. Bucher also called Lieutenant Harris to the bridge to ask if the detachment was intercepting any communications between the two ships. When none was indicated, Bucher expressed dismay at the linguists' lack of proficiency. Until now he had been unaware of the sergeants' limited capability.[5]

Both ships were identically painted navy gray and closely resembled the Soviet *Lentra*-class intelligence collection trawler. Each had stack markings of black, red, and black bands with a red star in a white circle in the center of the red band. No radar or ELINT equipment was observed, but each had a triple long wire antenna between the

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masts. Neither ship carried an ensign nor flew any flag. Both appeared heavily laden and fishing nets and lines were stowed neatly on each. At 3:00 P.M. both ships began another approach. The *Pueblo* remained dead in the water at 39 degrees, 14.8 minutes north and 128 degrees, 7.33 minutes east. This time, the trawlers closed to about thirty yards and proceeded aft along the *Pueblo*'s port side, cutting closely across the stern and down the starboard side. During their passage, it appeared that all hands (about nineteen people on each) observed the *Pueblo*. No flag signal or oral exchange was initiated and following this surveillance, both ships retired on course 340 degrees and disappeared by 4 P.M. Throughout this incident the *Pueblo* was showing the international signal flag for hydrographic operations.[6]

Convinced that the two trawlers would notify North Korean authorities of the *Pueblo*'s presence, Bucher ordered his operations officer, Lieutenant Schumacher, to draft a message notifying Admiral Johnson, COMNAVFORJAPAN, of the *Pueblo*'s detection. This message would mark the first time that *Pueblo* had broken radio silence since departing Sasebo. Schumacher notified the CTs in the research area to bring up a circuit to Kami Seya and then began to prepare the message.[7]

Bucher's assumption that he had been detected was valid. NSA's subsequent reevaluation of all U.S. [redacted] at that time revealed SIGINT reflections (unknown to the *Pueblo*) of this encounter in North Korean naval communications that showed the radar tracking of two fishing vessels in a corresponding area from 4 to 7:30 P.M. An unidentified vessel, probably the *Pueblo*, was tracked by two different North Korean radar facilities. This ship was reported dead in the water at 39 degrees, 19 minutes north, 128 degrees, 10 minutes east through approximately 9:30 P.M. on 22 January. The *Pueblo* was also possibly under surveillance by North Korean Air Force MiG-17s during this period, since tracking reports from about 9:30 P.M. reflected aircraft activity over Tongjoson Bay, which encompassed the area in which the *Pueblo* was located.[8] During this period, no U.S. official knew where the *Pueblo* was located because of the ship's radio silence.

After completing his draft, Schumacher gave the message to Bucher who, with the executive officer, Lieutenant Murphy, continued to work on the exact wording. Finally, at about 2200, the message was returned to Schumacher for transmission. Knowing that he was scheduled for the 4 A.M. to 8 A.M. watch, Schumacher left the message in the cryptoroom and went to bed.[9]

Following Schumacher's instructions, Communications Technician First Class Donald E. Bailey, in the NAVSECGRU Communications Branch, started to make contact with Kami Seya. Attempts to use the circuit were frustrating; when transmission seemed good, the *Pueblo* reception was nil and vice versa. At about midnight, the circuit was activated for a short time but not long enough to pass any traffic.[10] Poor atmospheric conditions were working to the *Pueblo*'s disadvantage. Bailey kept trying to set up communications all night long with no success. At 8 A.M. on the 23d he went off watch and was relieved by

Communications Technician Third Class Sidney J. Karnes; the circuit to Kami Seya was still out.[11]

During the night, the midwatch had detected eighteen different vessels in the *Pueblo*'s vicinity, the closest contact being 3,000 yards. At 1:45 A.M. one of these vessels lit a large orange flare that glowed for about thirty seconds. The purpose of the illumination was unclear. There were, however, no further attempts at close surveillance or harassment throughout the remainder of the night. Thereupon, another message was drafted to notify COMNAVFORJAPAN that the *Pueblo* no longer considered itself under surveillance and was reverting to radio silence but intended to remain in the Wonsan area.[12] Unfortunately, the earlier message reporting the initial detection had yet to be transmitted.

On the 23d of January, after having breakfast in the wardroom with Commander Bucher, Schumacher dropped by the cryptoroom to see if the CTs had transmitted the message he had left with them the previous night. In Schumacher's words: "I went in there and it was 'all stop,' nobody was doing anything . . ." He discovered that Kami Seya had given the ship a choice of about four frequencies to try. Schumacher himself cut a transmission tape and started sending it on one of the given frequencies. He then switched to the cryptosetting for the new radio day and could hear Kami Seya trying to answer. Reception wasn't clear, and Schumacher could not spend any more time on the problem so he left it with the CTs to keep trying.[13] Cipher communications were finally established with Kami Seya at 1054 on 23 January, and Schumacher transmitted his entire backlog of three messages. The first announced that the *Pueblo* had been sighted and that it intended to institute at least daily situation reports. Bucher gave the position of his vessel and a detailed description of the North Korean vessels and their reaction to the *Pueblo*. The second was a detailed list of activity since the *Pueblo* entered the operational area, and it was addressed only to a SIGINT audience. In the third, written to fulfill the daily reporting schedule already proposed, Bucher gave an operational summary of the *Pueblo*'s activity, stated that he felt that they were no longer under surveillance, and announced his intention to discontinue reporting. In the last of these messages, the *Pueblo* reported its position as 39 degrees, 24 minutes north and 127 degrees, 59 seconds east (18.2 nautical miles from Ung-do).[14]

Thus, Admiral Johnson's command, COMNAVFORJAPAN, finally learned around noon on 23 January of the *Pueblo*'s position and that, although it had been detected by the North Korean vessels, the *Pueblo* was no longer under surveillance.

It should be noted in the ensuing discussion of the seizure of the *Pueblo* that most of the SIGINT data intercepted by U.S. [redacted] sites were not available for NSA reporting until after the event occurred, a period covering several hours to several days.

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The intercepted voice communications referred to below concerning the involvement of the North Korean Ministry of National Defense in the seizure were not available for NSA reporting until about a month after the event. [redacted]

Although the *Pueblo* reported that it was not under visual observation, subsequent SIGINT revealed that it had probably been tracked by the North Korean radar station at Kukchi-bong during the late night of the 22d and early morning of the 23d. This station reported an unidentified vessel, moving very slowly from a position dead in the water at 39 degrees, 14 minutes north and 128 degrees, 17 minutes east at 4:15 A.M. to 39 degrees, 12 minutes north and 128 degrees, 12 minutes east. SIGINT also indicated that the *Pueblo* may also have come under the surveillance of MiGs of the Second Fighter Division during the period from 1000 to 1100 hours, when exercises involving these aircraft were noted over Tongjoson Bay. It was during this time that the North Koreans referred to the *Pueblo* as an "enemy ship" in North Korean naval communications, and the Kukchi-bong radar station was noted directing the activity of two North Korean Navy (NKN) vessels toward it.[15] These SIGINT data clearly indicated that the North Koreans at this time held some information on the identity of the *Pueblo*.

Of particular importance prior to the approach of the North Korean subchaser and torpedo boats to the *Pueblo* operating area was the intercept of North Korean voice communications from the Kukchi-bong naval radar station. While directing the naval units toward the *Pueblo*, Kukchi-bong made reference to an unidentified element of the North Korean Ministry of National Defense (MND).[16] It became clear that the MND was at least cognizant of, and probably directing, an event of major significance, in this instance, an attack upon and seizure of an American ship in international waters.

When Schumacher joined Bucher for breakfast on the 23d, he found Bucher slightly upset that the *Pueblo* had gotten about twenty-five miles off the coast during the night. Bucher immediately ordered the OOD to steam back in.[17] At about 0800, Lieutenant Harris reported to Bucher that SIGINT activity was definitely picking up and that this was going to be the most fruitful area in which the *Pueblo* had operated. The SIGINT detachment was detecting quite a number of radars, but there were no indications of any hostile intent.[18]

As noon approached, the *Pueblo* was lying to, dead in the water. The temperature was near freezing, and there was a breeze of four knots from the northwest. At 11:40 A.M., Quartermaster First Class Charles B. Law relieved Chief Warrant Officer Lacy as OOD. Shortly thereafter, Law spotted a vessel coming up fairly fast off the *Pueblo*'s port quarter at a distance estimated at six miles. Law notified Bucher immediately and was told to notify him again when the ship had closed to about three miles.[19] As Bucher was finishing lunch in the wardroom, he got word from the bridge that the ship, identified as an SO-1-

class subchaser, was still closing and had not swung toward the coast. Arriving topside, Bucher summoned Harris from the SOD hut, Schumacher, and his signalman, Wendell G. Leach. After verifying that the approaching ship was an SO-1 subchaser and noting that it carried a SKINHEAD fire control radar, Harris returned to the research spaces.[20]

As the subchaser drew closer, approaching from the south, Bucher had Dunnie Tuck, one of the two oceanographers aboard, make a Nansen cast (to collect water samples) and simultaneously ordered Leach to display the flag signals indicating hydrographic work in progress.[21] Traveling at about 15 knots, the subchaser closed to 500 yards from the *Pueblo*, circled it, and then laid to toward the shore. Again the SO-1 (bearing hull number 35, i.e., SC-35) circled the *Pueblo* and this time hoisted a flag signal querying the *Pueblo*'s nationality. Bucher immediately told his signalman to show it and Leach broke out a brand new American flag and hoisted it up the mast.[22]

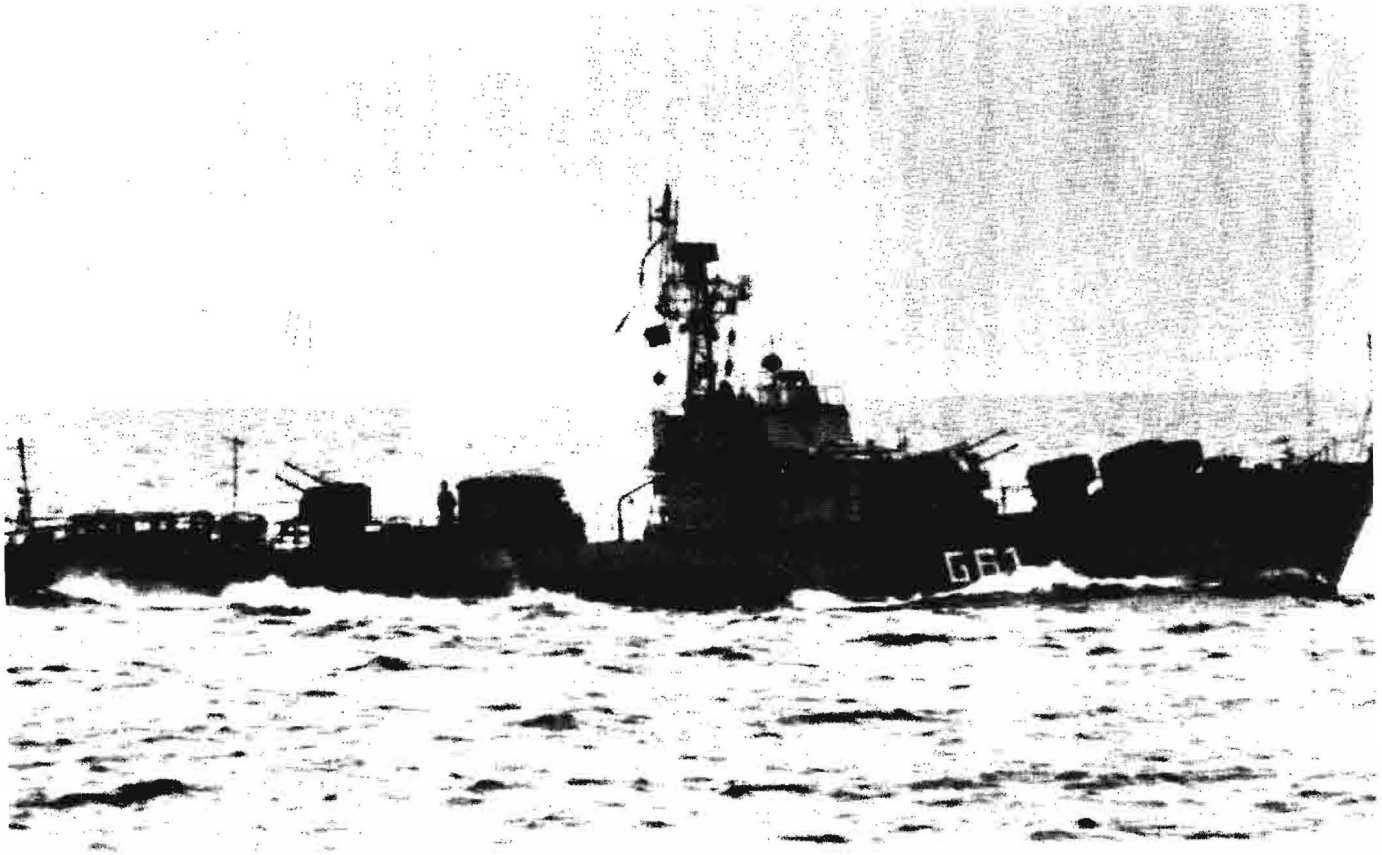
Meanwhile (according to later SIGINT analysis that was not available until after the attack and seizure), the subchaser was reporting back to shore that ". . . the name of the target is GER 2 . . . judge it to be a reconnaissance search ship" and, after the U.S. flag was displayed, "it is American, guys . . . a hydrographic mapping ship . . . weapons are not visible." Ten minutes later the subchaser reported, ". . . the ship has a lot of antennas on it; radar-type antennas and radio antennas . . . think it is a ship for detecting something."[23]

The research detachment aboard the *Pueblo* was receiving a lot of this Korean voice traffic on VHF nets; however, the very limited language ability of the Korean linguists aboard the *Pueblo* precluded any direct support intelligence being derived from it for use by the *Pueblo*.[24] Moreover, even if the linguists aboard the *Pueblo* had been able to interpret this voice intercept, none of this intelligence would have been of any use to the *Pueblo* crewmen in preparing them for what happened in the next instant.

By this time, the subchaser was more certain of its target, i.e., it knew the nationality of the *Pueblo*, it knew its hull number, i.e., GER-2, and, according to SIGINT, it also knew that its mission was electronic surveillance. This information was apparently sufficient for the North Koreans, and it soon became apparent that the *Pueblo* would receive special attention. For the *Pueblo*, it would not be a simple matter of being chased out of the area similar to what the North Korean subchaser, SC-34, had done to the South Korean fishing vessels on 10 January when a number of them came across the Northern Limit Line (see Chapter III, page 1). It would also not be a case of simple harassment such as that previously received by the USS *Banner* while in waters off the coasts of the USSR and the PRC.

NORTH KOREAN WARNING SIGNAL

For a third time, the subchaser circled the *Pueblo* and this time hoisted the flag signal "Heave to or I will open fire." This signal had been seen before by U.S. surface collection



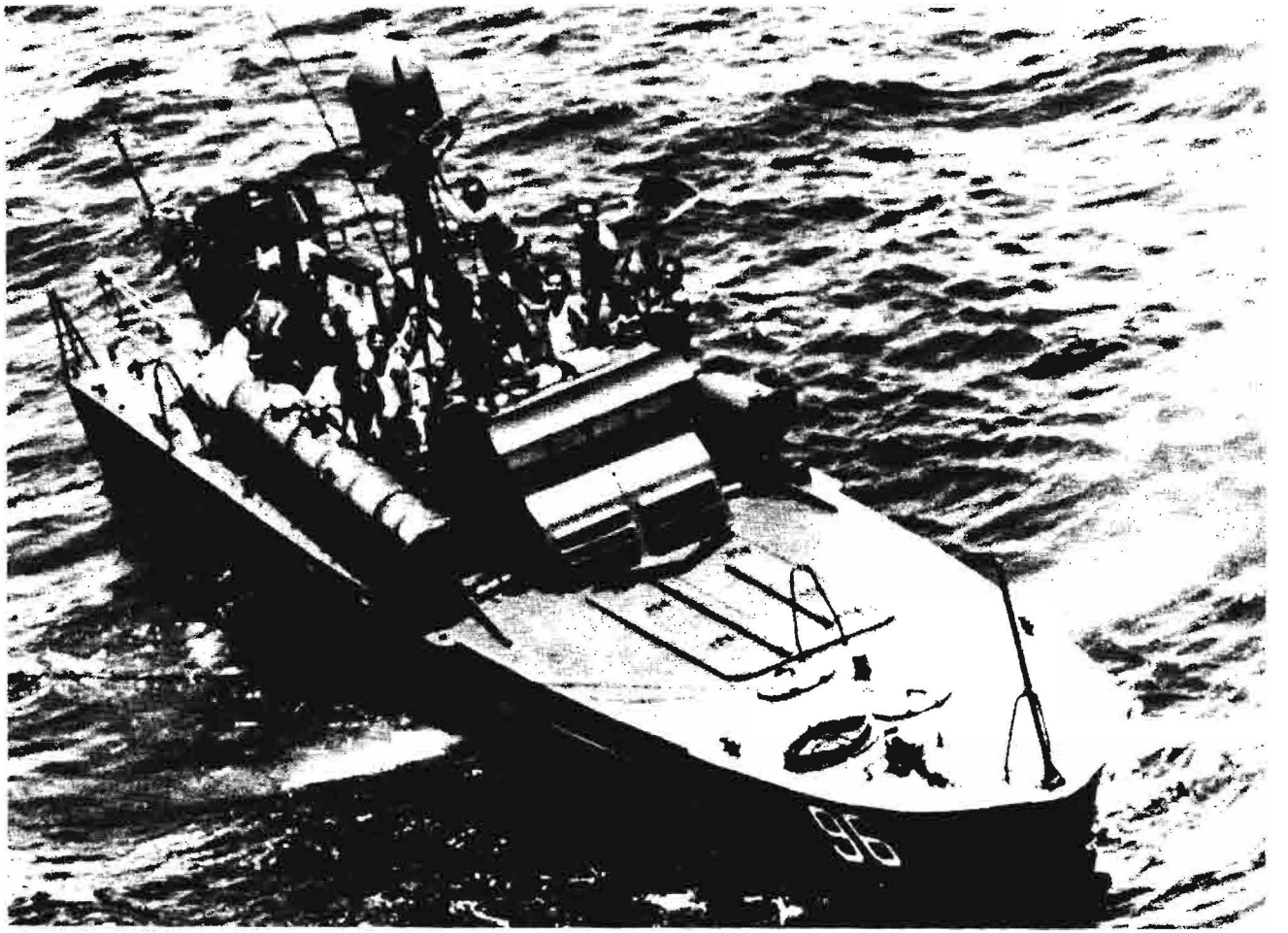
North Korean subchaser, SO-1, which fired on the USS *Pueblo*.

platforms. The USS *Banner* had received this signal from Soviet ships while in the Sea of Japan off Vladivostok in 1965–66. The *Banner* had encountered it again at the hands of the Chinese Communists in the East China Sea off Shanghai in 1967.[25] The Chinese had known what the *Banner* was from the moment the ship first appeared off Shanghai on its first mission to that area in November 1966. Harassment had begun almost immediately. It had been met by armed Chinese trawlers that were probably vectored to the *Banner* by Chinese shore authorities. To the captain of the *Banner*, it had appeared that the trawlers were waiting for the *Banner*.[26] This suggests that the Soviets may have given the Chinese an advance tip-off of the identity of the *Banner* and its mission. The *Banner* had first operated off the coast of the USSR in 1965–66, and Soviet officials were familiar with the ship.

On the *Pueblo*'s flying bridge, Bucher reacted to the North Korean signal. He turned and ordered Schumacher to send out a flash precedence message to report the *Pueblo*'s harassment and the *Pueblo*'s intention to remain in the area if at all possible. Schumacher returned to the radio shack to draft the message, getting the *Pueblo*'s position from the executive officer and other instructions by voice tube from the pilot house.[27]

Schumacher had already called down to the cryptoroom and told them to keep open the teletype circuit to Kami Seya.[28] Communications Technician Don Bailey had just finished transmitting all the traffic the *Pueblo* had for Kami Seya when someone came by the cryptoroom and told him that there were some more ships coming out toward the *Pueblo*. The North Koreans could not have had this quick a reaction to the *Pueblo* without some suspicion beforehand of what the *Pueblo* was and not without some degree of preplanning on what their actions would be if their suspicions had proved correct. Bailey quickly informed the Kami Seya operator that the *Pueblo* was getting "some more company."[29]

A few seconds before, Bucher had spotted three torpedo boats headed for the *Pueblo* at a high rate of speed. Overhead, two MiGs flew past the *Pueblo* at an altitude of about 4,000 feet in a north to south direction. Intercepted communications among the North Korean Navy vessels at this time confirmed that the North Korean fighter aircraft were on the scene and standing by in case of need.[30] Bucher personally verified the radar readings that showed the *Pueblo* to be 15.6 miles from land. A fourth torpedo boat soon joined the others, and they surrounded the *Pueblo*, that is, two forward and two aft. It soon became apparent just what the North Koreans had in mind; Bucher had read about this deployment when reviewing the *Banner* reports prior to the *Pueblo*'s departure from Japan. The Soviets had used it against the *Banner* in the Sea of Japan off Vladivostok. It had also been used by the Chinese Communists in 1967 in the East China Sea off Shanghai. The pattern was designed to cut off any possible escape attempt by a vessel caught in its center. It was a good pattern with which to intimidate a ship's crew, especially when the intended victim was outgunned.



North Korean torpedo boat involved in the attack and seizure of the USS *Pueblo*.

Bucher told the OOD not to go to General Quarters because he did not want people coming on deck with helmets on, nor did he want the .50-caliber guns uncovered. He wanted to avoid any hostile appearance and did not want to give the Koreans any excuse to open fire on him. Bucher wanted to appear as nothing more than an innocent hydrographic ship for as long as possible.[31] However, if the NAVSECGRU detachment aboard the *Pueblo* had been able to read the Korean voice material intercepted by the *Pueblo*, Bucher would have known that any further hope he had of disguising his ship as a hydrographic vessel was no longer a possibility. The North Koreans knew by this time that the *Pueblo* was an electronic surveillance ship.

In response to the subchaser's flag signal, "Heave to or I will open fire," Bucher ordered Signalman Leach to hoist a signal flag to indicate that the North Koreans were interfering with the *Pueblo*'s free passage of international waters. Leach, however, was unable to find the exact flag signal for this in the International Code of Signals (H. O. No. 103), and so he tried to get the attention of SC-35 by flashing signal light. The subchaser did not answer or acknowledge Leach's light call, probably because it was interested only in having its order carried out. The *Pueblo* did not send its message.[32]

Finishing the initial flash message, Schumacher took it to the cryptoroom for transmission. The message advised Air Intelligence Group 7623, the United States National Military Command Center in Washington, D.C., and the USS *Banner* of the encounter with the subchaser and that it had ordered the *Pueblo* to heave to or it would open fire.[33] Bailey, alerted to the message preparation, had already told Kami Seya "Got a flash coming for you . . . Stand by." Bailey transmitted the message (date/time group 230352Z January 1968) twice, and Kami Seya acknowledged receipt. The *Pueblo*'s position was reported as 39 degrees, 25.2 minutes north and 127 degrees, 55 minutes east at 1200 hours. The message was immediately followed by Bailey's chatter to the Kami Seya operator: "It is worse out here now. Got more company and not doing good with them so will have to keep this circuit up." [34]

Returning to the bridge, Schumacher arrived in time to see one of the torpedo boats approaching the *Pueblo*'s starboard quarter with about eight to ten armed men positioned and ready to attempt to board the *Pueblo*. This was a clear indication that the North Koreans had something far more serious in mind than mere intimidation. Bucher, too, saw this maneuver and immediately signalled his engine room "all ahead full" while ordering the helmsman to course 080 that would take him directly toward the open sea.[35] At the same time he ordered Signalman Leach to make up the signal that the *Pueblo* was departing the area. Not being able to compose this signal by international flag signal, Leach tried again to call by flashing light but got no reply from the subchaser. Bucher next told Leach to thank them for their hospitality. Since the signal light had proved ineffective, Leach attempted to send this message by semaphore; again he got no response.[36] Once again, the North Koreans proved that they were only interested in having their orders obeyed and in getting aboard the *Pueblo*.

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(b)(3)-50 USC 403
(b)(3)-18 USC 798
(b)(3)-P.L. 86-36

Schumacher, in the meantime, had retired to the radio shack to prepare another flash message to update the *Pueblo*'s situation. Desiring to make this follow-up message as accurate and as complete as possible, Schumacher scampered back to the bridge to see what signals were flying and to identify the torpedo boats so that he could include these details in the message text. This done, he typed a smooth copy and raced down to the cryptoroom to have it transmitted.[37] This message advised the same addressees as the first message that SC-35 had been joined by three North Korean fast patrol boats and that these vessels had surrounded the *Pueblo* at close range. Further, the message stated that SC-35 had signalled the *Pueblo*, "Follow in my wake. I have a pilot aboard." This instruction to the *Pueblo* again indicated that the North Koreans, with a pilot aboard one of their ships, had planned to take the ship in tow prior to departing base. The second flash message from the *Pueblo* also advised that two MiG fighter aircraft were circling overhead; that one of the patrol boats had come alongside the *Pueblo*'s bow with fenders rigged; that there was an armed party of North Koreans on the bow of the patrol boat ready to board; and, finally, that it was *Pueblo*'s intention to depart the area. This second message, date/time group 230415Z January, was also sent twice and receipted for by Kami Seya.[38]

It was now approaching 1320 hours, about eighty minutes since the *Pueblo* was first challenged by the subchaser. The North Koreans had been frustrated in their boarding attempt when Bucher had suddenly ordered his ship to proceed immediately toward the open sea. The *Pueblo* had left the intended boarding party on the bow of the PT boat with the space between the two vessels increasing as the *Pueblo* moved away. SIGINT analysis by NSA after the fact revealed that, having raised the flag signal "Heave to or I will open fire," the subchaser ordered one of the torpedo boats to "get a decision quickly." From 1245 to 1300, more ships were brought up to support SC-35. SIGINT revealed that the plan was to transfer troops (a boarding party of five men and a unit commander) from SC-35 to one of the torpedo boats and from the torpedo boat to the *Pueblo*. Initially, the North Koreans had planned for SC-35 to tow the target back to Wonsan. By about 1320, the transfer of the boarding party to the PT was completed, but conversations between this boat and SC-35 indicated a reluctance to board the *Pueblo* because "the distance was too great."[39] The North Koreans probably did not wish to get caught aboard the U.S. ship in international waters if there were a possible U.S. rescue attempt. They desired to get as close to North Korean territorial waters as possible before going aboard the *Pueblo*.

Down in the research spaces, these intercepted communications were unintelligible. The only information gained by Lieutenant Harris was that the Korean voice nets were active; the excellent signal strength indicated the closeness of the transmitters and the shouting back and forth between the North Koreans was evidence of their excitement about something – something that the *Pueblo*'s on-board linguists could not translate. At

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[redacted]' In his debriefing later in the United States, Lieutenant Harris of the SIGINT detachment reported that this information was passed to the bridge.[40] Bucher, however, later told U.S. debriefers that he had never been informed about the volume of communications among the surrounding North Korean ships.[41] Even if he had received it, this information would have been of little use to him because these voice communications could not be translated by the NAVSECGRU detachment.

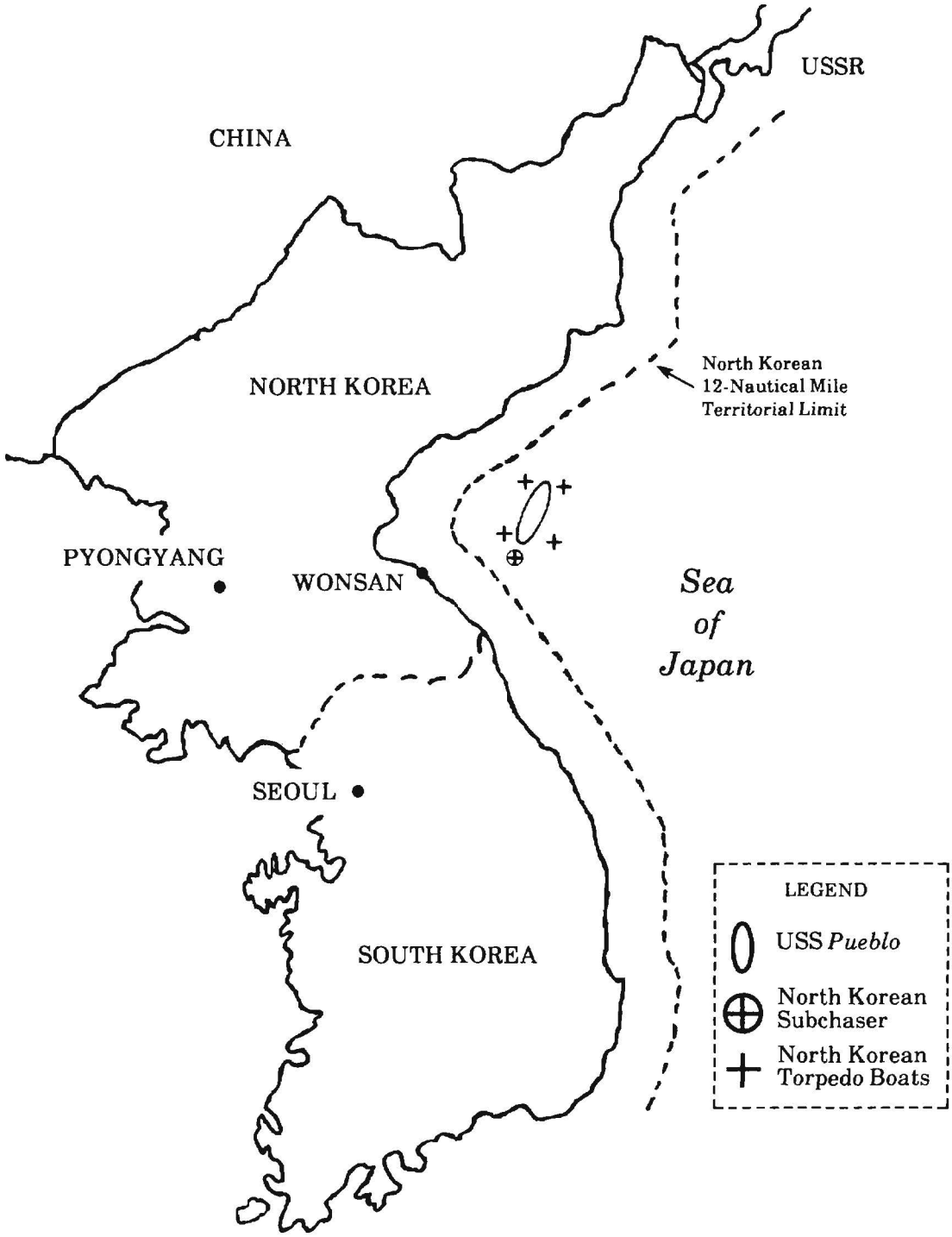
Topside, Bucher was totally engaged in conning the *Pueblo* as he attempted to maneuver it toward the open sea and away from the North Korean subchaser. As the *Pueblo* began to pick up speed, the PT boats tried to force it in a more southerly direction. Running somewhere in the neighborhood of 25 to 35 knots, the PTs on the *Pueblo*'s bow criss-crossed in front of the ship, often cutting as close as 10 yards. Bucher saw that all PT boats had their machine guns trained on him, and one on his starboard quarter had uncovered one of its torpedo tubes to aim it in the *Pueblo*'s general direction. SC-35 remained lying to as the *Pueblo* opened up 2,000–3,000 yards between them. Bucher saw SC-35 lower its flag signal "Heave to or I will open fire," and shortly thereafter watched a second North Korean vessel pull alongside SC-35, and the two seemed to exchange personnel. A few minutes later, SC-35 again raised the flag signal "Oscar Lima," meaning "Heave to or I will open fire." At this time, Bucher thought, "The guy may be bluffing and I may get out of this yet."[42]

In the research detachment, Chief Communications Technician James F. Kell, assistant to Lieutenant Harris, was convinced that the situation was deteriorating dangerously and asked Harris to request permission from the bridge to begin emergency destruction. When Harris was refused permission, Kell took it upon himself to order the detachment to commence emergency destruction immediately – he was convinced that they simply could not wait any longer.[43]

NORTH KOREAN SHIPS OPEN FIRE

DOS

Had the *Pueblo*'s Korean linguists been proficient, they would have heard SC-35, at this time, asking permission to fire since the target was attempting to escape.[44] Bucher's hopes of escaping were about to be dashed. On the flying bridge, Bucher observed the PT boats preserve their positions all around the *Pueblo* but open up a range of about 300 yards from his ship in all directions. Then he saw SC-35 begin closing at a high rate of speed. Bucher had an inkling of what was coming. In Bucher's words, "He had a large bone in his teeth and was closing rapidly." Bucher immediately ordered a course change of twenty degrees to starboard in order to keep the subchaser dead astern and thus give the Korean ship the smallest possible target should it open fire. It was obvious, however, that this was going to be very difficult to maintain in view of the subchaser's vastly superior speed and maneuverability. The *Pueblo* was being forced farther and farther south and eventually would be headed for land. SC-35 kept coming, and when it reached a position just forward



(TSC) Disposition of North Korean naval units and *Pueblo* during attack and seizure, 23 January 1968.

of the *Pueblo*'s stern off the port quarter, it fired its first salvo from its 57mm batteries. Almost simultaneously, a number of the surrounding PT boats raked the *Pueblo* with machine gun fire.[45]

These first rounds struck the *Pueblo*'s forward mast, knocking out one of the antennas, and shrapnel exploded all about the flying bridge. Signalman Leach was struck in his left calf and upper right side. Bucher, too, received slight shrapnel wounds, but they were not incapacitating. Immediately, Bucher passed the word to begin emergency destruction with the exception of the communication equipment then in use and turning to Chief Warrant Officer Lacy, his engineering officer, he asked if the ship could be scuttled. Lacy replied that it would take hours to do so. Bucher promptly dismissed this action. Lacy then asked, "Shall we go to General Quarters?" and Bucher replied, "Not yet" – because the ship had not been hit hard, and there was no damage along the water line.[46]

Within seconds, the subchaser fired additional 57mm salvos that made a shambles of the plexiglass screen on the flying bridge. To Bucher, it was obvious that the Koreans were deliberately trying to knock out the *Pueblo*'s command and control. None of the North Korean gunfire from the 57mm mount hit the *Pueblo* near the waterline; all of it was directed at the superstructure. It indicated that the North Koreans did not want to sink the ship but, rather, to get aboard and seize it. According to one crew member, the North Koreans had raked the ship with machine gun fire to keep the *Pueblo* crew from destroying or disposing of material.[47]

When the firing continued, Bucher immediately ordered everyone on the flying bridge into the pilot house where there was more cover. Simultaneously, he ordered General Quarters but modified it by ordering no one to come topside. In doing so, Bucher's purpose was only to man General Quarters in order to combat flooding and fire. He did not want a large number of crewmen in helmets running about on the deck in full view of the North Koreans. He still wished to prevent any display of a hostile attitude.[48]

Bucher's order to begin emergency destruction triggered a frenzy of activity throughout the ship. The incinerator installed just aft of the pilot house was put into use at once, but it was quickly apparent that this device could not keep up with the volume of materials to be burned. The destruction activity was, of course, hampered by Bucher's GQ order not to go on deck.

In the research spaces, just after the Korean subchaser first appeared, Harris removed his emergency destruction bill from a backlog file and posted it for possible reference. The bill had been routed to all detachment personnel to read several weeks earlier so that each man would know his individual destruction responsibilities.[49] However, actual simulation of emergency destruction procedures aboard the *Pueblo* had never been carried out.

Emergency destruction related both to classified equipment (particularly the cryptographic gear) and to classified cryptologic and cryptographic documents of all shapes, sizes, and bindings. The primary tools for equipment destruction were three fire axes, three sledges, and some small chipping hammers.[50] Two electric shredders which

were stored outside the research spaces up near the incinerator, although used under normal conditions for pre-incinerator preparation of materials, were never broken out. These devices could accept only six or seven sheets of paper at one time, and through use, the cutters dulled quickly; for mass destruction, they were worthless. It was clear that this effort would require an extraordinary measure, one that would destroy a large amount of paper in the very minimum of time.

Within two or three minutes after Chief Kell ordered his men to begin emergency destruction, the official order to do so was passed from the bridge. By then, destruction had begun with sledges and axes.[51] Upon getting the official word, Harris asked Murphy, the executive officer, what the water's depth was in their location. He was told it was about thirty-five fathoms.[52] This meant it would be risky to jettison material overboard where it might be recovered from such relatively shallow water. Nevertheless, since it was obvious that it would be impossible to burn everything, many documents and publications were tossed into lead-weighted, canvas bags that had been specially made for the *Pueblo* while it was being outfitted at the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard.[53] Mattress covers and laundry bags, too, were used to hold classified materials that would have to be jettisoned if necessary.

Realizing the inadequacy of the incinerator, Communications Technician First Class James A. Shepard went to the crew's head and grabbed several metal waste cans and distributed them in the passageway just outside of the research area for use in burning publications.[54] Soon after these fires were started, however, the smoke build-up inside was too great to endure, and the cans were moved up to the starboard weather deck. With the *Pueblo* in a General Quarters condition, its internal ventilation system was shut down and this, of course, made the smoky conditions in the research detachment passageway worse.[55] When burning was slowed down because of the smoke, crewmen attempted to keep up with the bulk of material to be destroyed by tearing up publications into small pieces and scattering these about to make it difficult to piece them together.[56]

The frantic burning efforts by the *Pueblo* crew did not escape the eyes of the North Koreans aboard the vessels near the *Pueblo*.[57] This burning activity and the fact that the North Koreans knew that the *Pueblo* was still transmitting were probably additional reasons for the North Korean urgency in getting aboard and stopping these activities by the crew.

In the cryptoroom, Senior Chief Communications Technician Ralph W. Bouden began smashing equipment not then in use. He found the fire axe to be effective for destroying chassis; the sledge, however, just seemed to bounce off open drawers. Although this was testimony to the solid durability of the equipment, it was also a deterrent to rapid destruction. In the cramped cryptospaces too, there was virtually no room to swing either an axe or sledge. Bouden used a chipping hammer to destroy cryptoboards, rotors, and key cards by pounding them on the metal deck.[58]

Outside, Bucher, having abandoned the damaged flying bridge, scrambled into the pilot house for additional protection. Once inside, Bucher called Harris by telephone to find out how the destruction was progressing and was told that things were going all right. It is difficult to understand why Harris, in the SOD hut, gave Bucher such a response in view of the mass of material yet to be destroyed at that point in time and the large amount of material eventually compromised. It is a clear indication that Harris did not have control of the destruction operations in the SOD area.

Bucher reported later that all he could think of at this time was how he could augment the destruction process. In the mass of confusion caused by the North Korean firing, no one thought of using one of the *Pueblo*'s small compartments, opening the porthole, sealing off the room, and using this space as a large incinerator with flammable liquid that was available aboard the *Pueblo*. After his return from captivity, Bucher admitted that this was one solution he had not thought of at the time.[59]

Bucher also believed that his reasoning in not having crewmen come topside in a full General Quarters alarm was a valid one. He did not want to give the North Koreans another excuse to continue their firing by having a large number of his crew on deck with helmets on and thinking that the *Pueblo* was about to do battle. A limited number of crewmen on deck would keep down the number of casualties. Those crewmembers not topside would also be available to help in destroying equipment and documents.[60]

It was a forlorn hope. Although there was a destruction bill made up prior to the arrival of the ship in the Sea of Japan, the crew was never drilled in its application. Consequently, many members of the crew did not know where they were assigned during the destruction activity; relatively few crewmembers, including CTs, during their debrief in the United States, said that they had a duty station during the emergency destruction activity while others said that they had never seen the destruction bill. It was truly a chaotic emergency destruction effort, and the result was that a massive amount of classified material was left untouched.

By now, the subchaser was only 800 yards from the *Pueblo*, and it began pumping 57-mm shells into the *Pueblo*'s superstructure at point-blank range. One salvo ripped through the pilot house. Fortunately, no one was seriously wounded, but Bucher could see that his executive officer, Lieutenant Murphy, was hugging the deck of the pilot house and not reacting. Bucher lashed out with his foot and ordered Murphy to get off the deck.[61] When the next salvo struck the *Pueblo* seconds later, Chief Warrant Officer Gene Lacy, Bucher's engineering officer, turned to his commanding officer and said, "Are you going to stop this goddam ship before we're all killed?" Thereupon, in Bucher's words, "I looked at him and Gene looked at me and I lowered my eyes and I was trying to think how the hell to answer him because I didn't want to panic the rest of the people in the pilot house 'cause the shells were coming pretty hot and furious and I didn't have a ready made answer for

him . . . and without any further ado, Gene goes over to the annunciator and rings up 'all stop'. "[62] Bucher, for the moment, had lost control of his ship.

As the ship stopped, so did the firing. At this point, Bucher decided not to do anything about Lacy but rather to leave the ship at "all stop" for a few minutes and go below to get rid of the classified materials in his stateroom. Returning to the bridge in about two minutes, Bucher saw the subchaser flying the flag signal "Follow me, I have a pilot aboard." Deciding to heed the message and follow SC-35 while checking the progress of destruction of classified materials, Bucher rang up "all ahead one-third" and turned in a wide circle to starboard behind the subchaser.[63]

North Korean firing on the *Pueblo* occurred at two intervals between 1:32 and 1:51 P.M. At 1:36 P.M., NSA reported from intercepted communications that SC-35 stated that it had brought the target to a stop by firing "warning shots." (No warning shots were fired by the subchaser; from the moment it opened fire, the rounds were directed at the *Pueblo*.) At 1:40 P.M., SC-35 said that it intended to fire a few more rounds to make the target "come in,"[64] i.e., turn around and come in closer toward the Korean coast. From the beginning of this situation, Bucher had been depending on Schumacher to report developments to U.S. naval authorities by means of the circuit to Kami Seya. As soon as the North Koreans began firing on the *Pueblo*, Bucher ordered a CRITIC message transmitted. In the cryptoroom, Lieutenant Harris and Communications Technician First Class Bailey were frantically searching for a prepoked tape that contained all the formal CRITIC message heading prescribed by pertinent instructions. Upon stepping into the room and seeing this frenzy, Communications Technician First Class James D. Layton shoved Bailey out of his chair and took over the circuit. Layton phased the KW-7 cryptodevice and immediately started sending the "zebra" and "bell" flash indicators. He reported the *Pueblo*'s position as 39 degrees, 25 minutes north and 127 degrees, 54.3 minutes east followed by a string of SOS's; he notified Kami Seya that the *Pueblo* was holding emergency destruction, was being boarded, and asked for assistance. At 1:52 P.M., Layton sent word that the *Pueblo* was probably being escorted into Wonsan. Seeing that Bailey had gotten over his nervousness, Layton returned the circuit to him.[65] Kami Seya, in reply, said that "word has gone to all authorities and Admiral Johnson is requesting assistance."[66] (In regard to Admiral Johnson, the Kami Seya operator may have been trying to give the *Pueblo* crew some encouragement. Johnson could not have known about the *Pueblo*'s difficulty until some time afterward, since he was on temporary duty in Tokyo at the time and did not have access to secure communications to his command. He did, nevertheless, leave Tokyo immediately after notification and returned to his command.)

With the *Pueblo* now following the subchaser, Bucher decided to check on the destruction being done at the incinerator. From the bridge, he could see people working furiously to burn his own communications publications piled up by the incinerator. Realizing that there was still quite a bit to destroy, Bucher ordered "all stop."[67]

The subchaser, at this time, was about 800 yards ahead of *Pueblo* off its starboard bow. When the North Korean ship saw that the *Pueblo* had come to a stop, its reaction was swift and deadly. It fired two salvos of 57mm shells, which struck the *Pueblo* aft of the bridge on the starboard side. One of the shells exploded in the passageway outside the wardroom, virtually severing the right leg of Fireman Duane Hodges at the thigh and seriously wounding Fireman Steven Woelk, both of whom had been helping to destroy publications. A second shell struck nearby and both Sergeant Robert Chicca (one of the Korean linguists) and Radioman Third Class Charles Crandell sustained shrapnel wounds.

Following this shelling, Bucher ordered the *Pueblo* "all ahead one-third" and then departed the bridge on the port side through the interior passageway to assess the damage. He could see that Hodges was mortally wounded and went immediately to the research spaces to make a personal report of the *Pueblo*'s situation. Arriving there he saw a great quantity of paper and publications lying around on the deck and the banks of equipment being attacked with fire axes and sledges. He ordered Harris to get rid of all the material on the deck and then stepped into the cryptoroom. Bucher told the teletype operator to notify COMNAVFORJAPAN that he had several wounded and was surrendering the ship.[68] Thereupon, at 2:03 P.M., Bailey typed the following: "Have been requested (sic) to follow into Wonsan. Have three wounded and one man with leg blown off. Have not used any weapons nor uncovered 50 cal MG [machine gun]. Destroying all key lists and as much elec equip 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 hold u ckt [to maintain communications with you on this circuit]. And do not know if comms spaces will be entered." Bucher waited for a few moments to be sure the message was received and for any reply. The Kami Seya operator came back with: "We still with you and doing all we can, old man. Everyone really turning to and figure by now Air Force got some bird winging ur way." [69] In his attempt to encourage the *Pueblo* crew, however, the Kami Seya operator was holding out a false hope of assistance. With this word from COMNAVFORJAPAN, Bucher returned to the bridge.

The senior chief petty officers on watch had responsibility for the supervision of destruction activities in the research detachment spaces. As soon as Bucher gave the order for destruction, Harris left the area to destroy registered publications and then went to the cryptoroom to oversee what was being reported to Kami Seya. Harris later reported during his debrief in the United States: "I spent most of my time overseeing the circuit, making sure that nothing went out, that wasn't fully approved . . . so I didn't pay any attention to the emergency destruction, but I would like to have, but I felt that there should be no unauthorized information transmitted because this was being watched very closely by high-ranking people."[70] It was another example of misdirection by the *Pueblo* crew in not recognizing what the priorities should have been, i.e., destruction of classified material.

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There was an extremely large mass of material to destroy. In his debriefing, Harris recalled, ". . . we had retained on board the obsolete publications and had all good intentions of getting rid of these things but had not done so at the time we had started the mission. I wanted to get the place organized eventually and we had excessive numbers of copies on board. . ."[71] Harris believed that, considering the size of the task confronting them and the fact that there had been no formal shipboard training sessions on either the methods or priorities of destruction, it was surprising how much the research detachment CTs accomplished.[72] It was wishful thinking on Harris's part. Only a small percentage of the total classified material aboard the ship was destroyed.

Harris himself characterized the situation as one of panic and admitted, when debriefed, that he was "a little bit scared" and "pretty confused."[73] It was at this same time too that Bucher realized the magnitude of the detachment's store of publications. In his words, "There was a just fantastic amount of paper, almost I would say ten times what I would have expected that we would have had on board. I just had no idea of how damn much of this stuff there was on board . . . no concept that there was this much documentation on board; no concept whatsoever."[74] The desperation of this destruction situation finally became clear to Bucher as he returned to the bridge.

Arriving in the wheelhouse, Bucher ordered Signalman Leach to raise the signal for "Medical Assistance Required."[75] Lieutenant Murphy was ordered to go below and break out the morphine for Baldridge to use in treating Hodges and Woelk.

When he had left the bridge earlier, Bucher had ordered "all ahead one-third." Now he noticed that the ship was making "two thirds" speed. Gene Lacy, OOD at the time, told Bucher that he had increased the speed because the PT boats had urged him to go faster.[76] Bucher dropped the speed back to "one third" and ordered Lacy to leave it there, reminding him that he was giving the orders and not the North Koreans.

Once the *Pueblo* had resumed its westerly track, SC-35 and the torpedo boats arranged themselves preparatory to boarding. At about 2:08 P.M., according to later SIGINT, SC-35 was told that orders "from the top" were to go farther in before boarding.[77] This order suggests two possibilities. One is that the North Koreans were also mindful of international waters and wanted to get as close to this boundary as possible before boarding so that there would be fewer questions about the seizure of the ship. It was also possible that the North Koreans did not want to get caught aboard the *Pueblo* in international waters in the event a U.S. military rescue force appeared on the scene. Throughout the time that the North Koreans were forcing the *Pueblo* toward Wonsan, they continually tried to get the *Pueblo* to increase its speed.[78]

In the cryptoroom, Bailey was frantically destroying as much equipment as possible and Communications Technician Second Class Donald McClarren had relieved him on the circuit to [redacted] Kami Seya requested information about the status of classified

material remaining to be destroyed and McClarren reported on the *Pueblo*'s helplessness and the fact that several publications would be compromised.[79]

PUEBLO IS BOARDED

After following in the wake of SC-35 for about twenty-five minutes, the North Koreans signalled Bucher to come to "all stop" and he complied. It was apparent that the North Koreans now intended to board, the *Pueblo* having reached a more satisfactory position, probably immediately inside the claimed twelve-mile territorial waters limit. Realizing this, Bucher hurried below to get his commander's cap, change his bloodied socks and put on a pair of heavy navy boots. Quickly returning to the bridge, he ordered Boatswain's Mate First Class N. J. Klepac to prepare to receive boarders.[80]

The teletype operator in the cryptoroom began typing the *Pueblo*'s last words to Kami Seya: "Have been directed to come to all stop and being boarded. Four men injured and one critically. Going off the air now and destroying this gear." Kami Seya's repeated reply to "please transmit in the clear" went unheeded. The time was 1:45 P.M., 23 January 1968.[81]

Senior Chief Communications Technician Bouden and Communications Technician First Class Bailey began smashing the KW-7 cryptogear to render it useless. Their efforts were only partially successful.[82] With this act, the *Pueblo*'s link with U.S. authorities was severed.

From the bridge, while watching the approaching PT boat with the boarding party, Bucher accepted Chief Warrant Officer Lacy's recommendation and advised the crew over the *Pueblo*'s intercom to give only their name, rank, and serial number.[83]

On the port side of the main deck, Klepac and another crewman secured a line passed from the PT boat as it worked itself alongside the *Pueblo*. Two North Korean officers with pistols drawn stepped aboard the *Pueblo*. They were followed by eight enlisted men, each carrying a bayonet-tipped AK-47 automatic weapon. Bucher presented himself to the first officer as the *Pueblo*'s captain.[84] None of the boarders spoke English, but by sign language, one officer indicated that he wanted to know how many men were on board and for all to assemble on the well deck.[85] Another officer and an enlisted man went to the pilot house and ordered Helmsman Berens off the bridge and back to the fantail. The Korean guard stationed there fired a short burst from his AK-47 over the heads of crewmen standing on the fantail to demonstrate his authority and readiness to use his weapon.[86] The North Koreans ordered Bucher up to the bridge and, shortly thereafter, Berens was returned to the bridge to take the helm again. They ordered Bucher to increase the speed from "one third," but when he said he couldn't go faster, the Koreans didn't insist.[87]

Meanwhile, some of the North Korean enlisted men went below and brought back sheets which they tore up in strips. They then ordered the *Pueblo* crewmen to blindfold

each other. For almost an hour, the crew shivered on the open deck before being ordered into the forward berthing compartment.[88] In the engine room, Chief Engineman M.O. Goldman and Engineman First Class R. S. Blansett were permitted to remain to tend the engines as the *Pueblo* followed the subchaser toward Wonsan.[89] Corpsman Baldridge, although guarded by a North Korean enlisted man, was also permitted to continue treating Hodges and Woelk.[90]

About an hour after the initial boarding, the North Korean officer on the bridge ordered the *Pueblo* "all stop" to receive another group of officers who had boarded from one of the PT boats. In this party was a senior colonel (later referred to as "Colonel Scar"), who was the officer in command of the North Korean force, and an interpreter.[91] As senior officer, he probably did not think it prudent to board the *Pueblo* until it had been brought closer to shore and the initial North Korean boarding party had gotten complete control of the ship. The senior colonel immediately ordered Bucher to take him on a complete tour of the ship, including the research detachment spaces.

The door to the research spaces was open, and Bucher was surprised to see the same bags that were lying on the deck an hour before still lying in the same position with nothing done to them. There was a deep layer of loose codeword papers scattered about the passageway.[92] Upon entering the crypto-area, the North Koreans noticed that a few of the teletype machines were still clattering away and immediately began jerking out patch panel wiring and hitting power switches, but even then they could not completely shut down the equipment. According to Bucher, "the Koreans' eyes really bugged open when they saw that shack in there. They just didn't know what the hell they had . . ."[93]

Another member of the second boarding party was a civilian pilot who went directly to the bridge and sent Berens down below to join the rest of the *Pueblo* crew. The pilot rang up "all ahead flank," and the engine room responded promptly so that the *Pueblo* began making about 12.5 knots.[94]

Later analysis of SIGINT revealed that the radar station at Kalgoch'iri was tracking the vessels as they proceeded back to Wonsan. The initial track showed six vessels, five at 39 degrees, 24 minutes north and 127 degrees, 58 minutes east, and one ship at 39 degrees, 19 minutes north and 128 degrees, 04 minutes east. For an hour, the boarding party was conducting searches of the *Pueblo* spaces in accordance with instructions from SC-35. The party reported that there were sixty-four people on board (actual total was eighty-three) and no women or children. SC-35 instructed the party to "question them and determine their units." The party reported that they had been collecting all weapons and interrogating the crew one at a time.[95]

Following the tour of the ship, Bucher's captors returned him to the passageway just forward of his stateroom and ordered him to sit there on the deck beside the blanket-covered body of Fireman Hodges. Corpsman Baldridge told Bucher that Hodges had died a

short time before and remembers that the commander "seemed to be rather emotionally upset and more or less just had a shocked look on his face."[96]

Probably because of the variety of clothing worn by the *Pueblo*'s crew, it was difficult for the North Koreans to readily identify the other *Pueblo* officers. In any case, none of the other officers were singled out and given special attention. In Bucher's words ". . . none of us looked very Navy . . . the crew were in dungarees with either blue or leather jackets . . . some of them had on foul weather gear . . . we were not a really military looking group." [97] Thus subdued and subject to North Korean military control, the *Pueblo* plowed on toward Wonsan. Sometime after sunset at about 7:00 P.M., the ship was brought to "full stop" and moored to a concrete pier in Wonsan. Its crew was about to begin its harrowing ordeal of detention. There was still no relief in sight from U.S. military forces.

In summary, the maiden voyage of the newly recommissioned USS *Pueblo* in January 1968 was not a well-planned operation. The ship's preparation was hurried, and the crew was not adequately trained to meet the emergency that confronted them. The SIGINT detachment did not know how to conduct aspects of its mission and, more importantly, did not train in emergency destruction measures. There were numerous highly classified documents aboard the ship that were outdated, some were not needed to carry out the mission, and still others were in unnecessary duplicate copies. When the destruction order finally came, the *Pueblo* crew was thrown into complete disorder.

By at least 20 January, North Korean military authorities were aware of the *Pueblo*'s presence off North Korea. Visual reconnaissance of the *Pueblo* began shortly thereafter. Once the *Pueblo* was confirmed by the North Koreans as an American vessel and as an intelligence collector, the North Korean purpose was to force the ship into submission and to seize it.

On the basis of a striking similarity in the manner of treatment, it would appear that the Soviets, Chinese, and the North Koreans had coordinated their efforts and procedures against U.S. SIGINT ships in international waters. This conclusion is drawn from the fact that all used the same tactics and signals against U.S. AGERs. In the Sea of Japan off Vladivostok in 1965-66, and in the East China Sea off Shanghai in 1967, and finally off Korea in 1968, the objective of such tactics may have been to get aboard the U.S. ships either by force or intimidation and to seize what was available of classified material; this purpose was carried out by the North Koreans. They avoided sinking the ship in contrast to their treatment of a number of South Korean fishing vessels; they carefully directed their fire in order to knock out the command and control of the *Pueblo*, thus making it easier to seize control of the ship; none of the North Korean gunfire hit the *Pueblo* near the waterline – all of it was directed at the superstructure.

Whatever their intentions, the North Koreans had now captured an American SIGINT collector – giving them unfettered access to equipment, documentation, and the crew's knowledge.

Chapter V

Indecision in Washington and the Pacific

U.S. PREOCCUPATION WITH SOUTHEAST ASIA

On 23 January 1968, the United States government was preoccupied with events in Southeast Asia. Now in early January 1968, there was evidence that the North Vietnamese were planning an assault on the Khe Sanh Combat Base in the far northwest corner of South Vietnam. This brought forth memories of the French debacle at Dien Bien Phu (1954). In Washington, the White House Situation Room was dominated by a large aerial photographic mosaic of the Khe Sanh area showing details of the U.S. Marine trench line and the latest-reported communist positions; a large terrain model of the Khe Sanh area had also been acquired for the president's use.

U.S. Air Force operations also reflected the sharp increase in hostilities in Southeast Asia. Because of the increased movement of North Vietnamese troops and truck convoys along the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos during January 1968, the USAF temporarily shifted most of its attention from targets in North and South Vietnam in order to concentrate on this major infiltration route to South Vietnam. An estimated 250 planes a day, more than triple the average daily rate, carried out these air strikes.[1] If there were to be serious trouble for the United States in the immediate future, it was expected to come in South Vietnam.

U. S. MILITARY CHAIN OF COMMAND IN THE PACIFIC

It was against this background that the *Pueblo* incident took place. To appreciate the U.S. military reaction to news of the attack on the *Pueblo*, one should be aware of the geographic location of the headquarters of the command echelons that could respond to the *Pueblo*'s plight. These commands and their locations were as follows: Commander, Naval Forces, Japan, Yokosuka, Japan; Commander, Seventh Fleet, aboard the cruiser USS *Providence*, deployed in the Gulf of Tonkin off Vietnam; Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, Honolulu; Commander in Chief, Pacific, Honolulu; Commander, Fifth Air Force, Fuchu, Japan; Commander in Chief, Pacific Air Force, Honolulu; Commander in Chief, United Nations Command, Seoul, South Korea; National Military Command Center, Pentagon, Washington, D.C.; and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Pentagon, Washington. Although all of these commands were linked by communications facilities, the physical distances restricted easy and rapid military response to the *Pueblo*'s needs. In effect, the *Pueblo*'s chain of command threaded itself from a point approximately sixteen miles off the port of Wonsan, North Korea, through Japan, down to the Gulf of Tonkin, then eastward

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across the Pacific to Hawaii and from there to Washington. It stretched almost halfway around the globe. This would prove to be a major problem.

PACIFIC COMMAND RESPONSE TO *PUEBLO* EMERGENCY

Shortly after noon on Tuesday, 23 January, Lieutenant Commander Carl L. Hokenson Jr., the duty officer at Commander, Naval Forces, Japan, received Situation Report (SITREP) #1 message of the previous evening in which the *Pueblo* reported being observed and circled by two North Korean trawlers. Within ten minutes, Hokenson received SITREP#2. This message reported that no surveillance attempt had been made during the night and that this message would be the last SITREP on this incident. The *Pueblo* would return to radio silence. After reading both messages, the duty officer took no action other than to post them on the intelligence interest board at headquarters.[2]

In less than an hour, at 12:52 P.M., [redacted] Kami Seya, (twenty-nine miles from Yokosuka) received *Pueblo*'s message labeled JOPREP Pinnacle #1, which reported that the *Pueblo* had been ordered to heave to or be fired upon. The label designated the message as a Joint Operational Report (JOPREP) of special interest to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the National Military Command Center, and the White House. This was quickly relayed to Lieutenant Commander Hokenson, who immediately took the message to the Chief of Staff, Captain Forest A. Pease, USN. Upon reading it, Pease said, "Looks like we might have some trouble . . . let me know what develops."[3] Thereafter, at 1:25 P.M., Lieutenant Commander Hokenson directed that the Pinnacle #1 message plus the SITREP messages be delivered to the Operations Staff (N3), Captain William H. Everett, USN, located in Building C-39 several hundred yards away. Looking at the messages, Everett interpreted the North Korean action as only harassment and intimidation.[4] After all, the Soviets had issued a similar threat to the *Banner* while in the Sea of Japan a short time earlier.

This assessment of the situation changed quickly. The Intelligence Staff offices at COMNAVFORJAPAN received the *Pueblo*'s Pinnacle Number 2 message at 1:39 P.M. and delivered it to Captain Pease. This report of attempted boarding prompted Pease to direct Hokenson to notify Captain Everett to "relay this info to Fifth Air Force and push the button for contingency action." This action indicated that Pease also believed that contingency back-up protective forces for the *Pueblo* were in place and that they could be called upon in case of need. The Intelligence Staff (N2) was ordered to be ready to issue a CRITIC message, and almost simultaneously [redacted] began relaying to N2 the on-line point-to-point operator chatter between it and the *Pueblo*.[5] COMNAVFORJAPAN's initial CRITIC was released at 1:36 P.M. (230436Z) based upon the *Pueblo*'s Pinnacle #2 message; [redacted] also relayed the *Pueblo*'s message in CRITICOMM channels.

At about the same time, Lieutenant Commander Ager L. Wilson on the N3 Staff, COMNAVFORJAPAN, placed a secure telephone call to the Fifth Air Force Command

Center at Fuchu. At that headquarters, knowledge of the *Pueblo*'s operation was minimal. Although the Fifth Air Force had been an information addressee on Pacific Fleet and Naval Forces, Japan, planning messages in December 1967, it was included as an addressee of the execution message of 5 January 1968 only in an address indicator group distribution. As a result, only a limited number of officers in the Fifth Air Force Intelligence and Operations saw the execution message. Because the message did not request air cover or strip alert by the Fifth Air Force, and since the planning message had estimated risk to be "minimal," the execution message was not brought to the attention of the Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations, Fifth Air Force, or anyone in the command section. As a result, none of these officers knew that the *Pueblo* operation was under way.[6]

When the Fifth Air Force Command Center received Wilson's telephone call for Lieutenant Colonel James F. Duggan, the call was considered routine since Wilson did not give any precedence indicator. Because Duggan (assigned to Operations and Training) was not assigned to the Command Center, the operator telephoned Duggan's secretary only to learn that he was on temporary detached duty. Duggan's assistant, Major Raymond A. Priest, Jr., was present, however, and was asked to come to the command center to take a secure telephone call. It was 1:45 P.M. when Priest arrived at the secure phone in the Fifth Air Force Command Center. Wilson advised him of the codeword "ICHTHYIC," gave the *Pueblo*'s position, stated that it was being circled by two MiG aircraft and North Korean boats and was under attack. He requested Air Force assistance. This word from Wilson meant nothing to Priest as he had never heard of the *Pueblo*. He asked Wilson to repeat the message to ensure that he, Priest, had the correct information. Wilson did so, and this time he added that the codeword was formerly "CLICKBEETLE." This was a term that Wilson recognized, but since the telephone call had no precedence, he believed it to be an exercise and started for an office he knew was familiar with CLICKBEETLE operations. On his way, Priest encountered Commander Thomas E. McDonald, Seventh Fleet liaison officer to Fifth Air Force, and asked if Wilson's message meant anything to him. McDonald said "yes" and that he would take care of it. The time was 1:50 P.M. Thereafter, Commander McDonald notified the Fifth Air Force cognizant officer and the Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations, and briefed them. They plotted the *Pueblo*'s position and requested information on the status of Fifth Air Force aircraft.[7]

Back at Yokosuka, COMNAVFORJAPAN issued a second CRITIC at 1:46 P.M. based on the *Pueblo*'s operator chatter indicating that the ship was being boarded. A few minutes later Captain Pease placed a call to Rear Admiral Frank L. Johnson, COMNAVFORJAPAN, at the Sanno Hotel in Tokyo where Johnson was attending the annual Pacific Command TROPICAL CYCLONE Conference at which he delivered the welcoming address. The unclassified telephone circuit permitted Pease to report on the *Pueblo* incident only sketchily. He indicated that the *Pueblo* was in trouble and stated, "She is probably gone." Admiral Johnson asked if the Fifth Air Force had been alerted and whether search and rescue operations had been requested since he had drawn the

inference that the *Pueblo* had been sunk. In reply to Pease's information, Johnson said that he would return to Yokosuka immediately. A United States Army helicopter was obtained from Camp Zama to take Johnson to Hardy Barracks in Tokyo. From there, he transferred to another helicopter and arrived at Fleet Activities, Yokosuka heliport, at 3:05 P.M. Five minutes later he was in his headquarters where he received a briefing on the *Pueblo* situation.[8]

NO U.S. FORCES AVAILABLE TO ASSIST *PUEBLO*

At 1408, Wilson again telephoned the Fifth Air Force to find out what action had been taken in response to his earlier call for assistance. McDonald told Wilson that no action on the scene could be expected in less than three hours, and he further asked Wilson to confirm his request by message. COMNAVFORJAPAN sent this confirming message to the Fifth Air Force at 1420. It had now been an hour and a half since the *Pueblo*'s first distress message. About ten minutes later the Fifth Air Force telephoned Yokosuka and reported that there were no aircraft on strip alert; in fact, the policy for Sea of Japan missions did not call for specific alerts by the Fifth Air Force as had been previously requested for East China Sea operations. The Fifth Air Force estimated that there would be a two- to three-hour delay in launching aircraft. Soon after this telephone call, Admiral Johnson received word that the *Pueblo* was being taken to Wonsan and, in view of this development, made no further requests for assistance from any other command.[9] Later in the evening, Admiral Johnson, as Commander, Task Force 96, instructed the USS *Banner* (AGER 1), just beginning a patrol, to return to Yokosuka because of the *Pueblo* incident and the probable compromise of its on-board key lists. The *Banner* returned to port at approximately 0700 the following day.

At Fuchu, Lieutenant General Seth J. McKee, Commander, Fifth Air Force, was informed of the *Pueblo* matter at 2:15 P.M. by his Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations; the Chief, Reconnaissance Division; and Commander McDonald. Immediately, General McKee went to his command center and placed a secure telephone call to headquarters, Pacific Air Force, in Hawaii. While waiting for this call to be completed, McKee called the commander, 18th Tactical Fighter Wing in Okinawa and directed him to prepare for immediate deployment of F-105 fighter bombers to Osan Air Force Base, South Korea. In order to expedite their deployment, these aircraft were to be launched on an incremental basis with only the first six available configured with loaded guns. By 1446, General John D. Ryan, CINCPACAF, had arrived at his secure telephone in Hawaii and was advised of the situation and actions taken. His staff also informed him of General McKee's attempt to launch strikes in support of the *Pueblo*, provided the aircraft could get to the scene before darkness and prior to the time that the ship arrived inside the three-mile limit of North Korea. General Ryan agreed with the actions taken and those proposed.[10]

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About 510 miles south of the *Pueblo*, the nuclear-powered USS *Enterprise*, America's largest aircraft carrier, was steaming southward in the Sea of Japan toward Subic Bay, Philippine Islands. The *Enterprise* had recently departed the United States for Southeast Asia, had made a brief stop in Sasebo, Japan, and was to proceed south to the Philippines area as rapidly as possible to engage in several days of refresher air operations in order to prepare for action in the Gulf of Tonkin. The ship had encountered a severe storm in crossing the Pacific, and many of the aircraft were under repair because of corrosion and water damage. Aboard the *Enterprise* were four F-4B Phantom fighter bombers on alert with pilots standing by, but these aircraft were armed with air-to-air ordnance only. The planes were not equipped for an air-to-surface engagement.[11]

At 2:30 P.M., [redacted] aboard the *Enterprise* received a copy of the *Pueblo*'s Number 1 message relayed by [redacted] in CRITICOMM channels. This was delivered at once to Rear Admiral Horace H. Epes, Jr., Commander, Carrier Division One and Task Force 71, with his flag on board the *Enterprise*. Admiral Epes had never heard of the *Pueblo* but assumed that, if he were to have responsibility for it, he would have been so informed. Not being familiar with the *Pueblo*'s mission, Epes sent for naval publications that might contain a description of the *Pueblo*. At the same time, he sent for a chart and had the *Pueblo*'s position plotted. The ship appeared to be close to Wonsan Harbor. He got the distance from the *Enterprise* to Wonsan and obtained from the *Enterprise*'s captain the status of his aircraft and the amount of time it would take the carrier to get some aircraft in the air. The time given was one and one half hours. Epes's staff got out all the intelligence material on board regarding North Korea – charts, air order of battle, missile and antiaircraft order of battle, an estimate of weather conditions at Wonsan, and the time of darkness. The pilots of the four ready aircraft, however, were not briefed, and no one had officially requested help from the *Enterprise*.[12]

By 3:00 P.M., Admiral Epes had received additional messages about the shooting incident and reached the judgment that it would be futile to launch aircraft to assist the *Pueblo*. He concluded that by the time he could get any aircraft there, it would be well inside the North Korean three-mile limit. In Epes's opinion, to fuel and suitably arm a group of aircraft and to ready the carrier deck for a launching would have taken an hour and a half, even if the flight crew had known what they were going to do and had all the materials on hand for that purpose.[13] Probably, the naval task force commander believed that he had done all that he could in regard to the *Pueblo's* situation.

In the Gulf of Tonkin, the guided missile cruiser USS *Providence*, flagship of the Seventh Fleet, was steaming toward the South China Sea. For the past several weeks, it had been stationed off the coast of Vietnam, and it was now headed for a few days of liberty in Hong Kong.[14] It was 2:10 P.M. Korean time when the *Providence* received the *Pueblo*'s Pinnacle #2 message that an armed North Korean party was attempting to board the ship. This information had been passed by [redacted] via torn tape relay at Naval

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Communications Station, Philippines. Shortly thereafter, the relayed, fragmentary, operator chatter revealed that four men had been injured and that the *Pueblo* was being ordered into Wonsan Harbor.[15] With this news, the Seventh Fleet staff immediately notified its commander, Vice Admiral William A. Bringle. The admiral unfortunately was not personally aware of the specifics of the *Pueblo* mission and did not know that it was operating off Wonsan. Naval Forces, Japan, had failed to send a copy of the *Pueblo*'s sailing orders to Seventh Fleet by electrical means. Instead, it forwarded a copy of the orders via the Armed Forces Courier Service, and this copy would not reach the flagship until 27 January.[16]

After assessing the status and location of the *Pueblo* and the nearest Seventh Fleet units, Admiral Bringle ordered the aircraft carrier USS *Enterprise* to proceed together with the nuclear-powered guided missile frigate USS *Truxton* at best possible speed to a holding area at 32 degrees, 30 minutes north and 127 degrees, 30 minutes east, a location about four hundred miles from Wonsan and there to await further developments.[17] The *Pueblo*'s time was 3:06 P.M. Admiral Bringle's message also directed the destroyers *Higbee* (in Sasebo), *Collett* (located 120 miles south of Yokosuka), and the *O'Bannon* (in Yokosuka) to rendezvous with the *Enterprise* and *Truxton*.

In Honolulu, it was 7:15 P.M. local time, 22 January, when the War Room at Pacific Headquarters received a telephone call from the National Military Command Center in Washington notifying it of the *Pueblo* incident. Almost immediately, the same information in fragmented form began arriving on the War Room teletype followed by receipt of the *Pueblo*'s Pinnacle #1 message as relayed by [redacted] Appropriate Pacific Fleet staff personnel were notified immediately, including the Chief of Staff for Plans and Operations, Major General Royal B. Allison, USAF.[18] Admiral Ulysses S. G. Sharp, CINCPAC, was in Danang, South Vietnam, conferring with General Westmoreland and Lieutenant General Cushman concerning the threat of a serious enemy offensive.

Five minutes later, the Pacific Fleet Intelligence Center received simultaneous telephone calls from the Pacific Indications Center and from Lieutenant Commander Wilson in Yokosuka to alert it to the *Pueblo* incident. Wilson reported that the Fifth Air Force had been requested to provide air support. The Intelligence Center quickly took action to augment existing watch personnel and notified Admiral John J. Hyland, CINCPACFLT.

Staff officers established telephone communications with CINCPAC, COMNAVFORJAPAN, the Fleet Activities at Yokosuka and Sasebo, and the Fifth Air Force to determine the availability of forces that might assist the *Pueblo*. At 7:41 P.M. Hawaii time, the Intelligence Center received the *Pueblo's* Pinnacle #2 message confirming the attempted boarding. Although the situation was tense, it was not interpreted as being out of control. Within the next forty-five minutes, Pacific Fleet headquarters had received all follow-ups to Yokosuka's original CRITIC message. The

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Pueblo's deteriorating situation, personnel injuries, equipment destruction, and final circuit deactivation were all now known.[19]

Meanwhile, at Fuchu, Lieutenant General McKee was trying to determine what his Fifth Air Force could do to support the *Pueblo*. The outlook was bleak. At Osan Air Force Base there were four F-4 aircraft on strategic alert, [redacted] Although McKee doubted that the F-4s could reach Wonsan before darkness, he nevertheless ordered the F-4s [redacted] and configured with 3,000-pound bombs, the only ordnance they could carry with equipment available. Racks for smaller bombs were located at main support bases in Japan. Further,there were no air-to-air rockets nor launching rails and pylons in Korea with which to arm the F-4s. The F-105s stationed at Yokota, Japan, could not reach Wonsan before darkness. Flying time was about an hour and forty-five minutes, but darkness would occur in an hour and a half. At 3:20 P.M., PACAF headquarters telephoned General McKee and, when advised of the situation, General Ryan authorized McKee to attack the North Korean ships in the vicinity of the *Pueblo* but only if they were outside the three-mile limit. Further, Ryan instructed McKee not to send in the F-4s unless they were armed against the threat of the MiG cover over the *Pueblo*.[20]

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NSA RESPONSE TO THE *PUEBLO* INCIDENT

NSA representatives in the Far East responded promptly to CRITIC reporting of the *Pueblo*'s plight. At 2:40 P.M., James Harris, [redacted] (and [redacted]), advised [redacted] of the *Pueblo* capture and requested they report any SIGINT reflection of that activity.[21] Ten minutes later, Henry DeCourt, [redacted], sent a similar message to SIGINT sites [redacted] requesting prompt reporting.

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In Washington, it was almost midnight (local time on 22 January, 1:45 P.M. *Pueblo* time on 23 January) when the initial CRITIC message from [redacted] and Naval Forces, Japan, arrived at both the National Military Command Center (NMCC) and at the National Security Agency SIGINT Command Center (NSASCC), Fort Meade, Maryland. In the next twenty minutes, the NMCC notified the White House Situation Room, the State Department Watch Office, and the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff. At NSA, [redacted] the NSA Senior Operations Officer (SNOO) in the SIGINT Command Center, first notified the B Group Operations Center, which, in turn, began calling key personnel from the cognizant office at NSA, B1 [redacted] Thereafter, [redacted] informed General Carter, Director, NSA; Brigadier General John E. Morrison, USAF, Assistant Director, NSA, for Production (ADP); Rear Admiral Lester R. Schulz, USN, Head, National Cryptologic Staff (D3); Captain Barr, USN, Assistant Director, Naval

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Security Group, (ADNSG); and [redacted] and Nona Sohn of the Information and Reporting element (P2), NSA.

At twenty minutes past midnight, General Morrison arrived at the Command Center followed very shortly by Captain Barr; [redacted] P2; Leonard Bienvenu, Chief, Office of Security (M5); Richard Harvey of Mobile Collection (K12); Milton Zaslow, Deputy Chief, B Group; Francis Smead and John Apollony from B05; and [redacted] from B11. As the *Pueblo* operator chatter being relayed via CRITIC circuits reflected the worsening situation, General Morrison notified the Deputy Director, NSA, Dr. Louis Tordella. The NSA Communications Security Watch Officer was also called to report to work.

Apart from the natural concern for the physical safety of the *Pueblo* and its crew, NSA's immediate concern about the *Pueblo*'s seizure and whereabouts was centered on the damage that would result from compromise of the cryptologic materials and cryptographic equipment aboard the ship. The B Group Watch Office and [redacted] in Japan held informal teletype discussions, as did Milton Zaslow, with James Harris [redacted] in order to determine what assistance from NSA was needed; to ensure that all SIGINT collectors had been alerted; to request a summary of technical reporting; and to advise them of NSA's intent to request continuous [redacted] coverage of the Korean east coast.[22]

Elsewhere in Washington, others were also scrambling to find out information about the *Pueblo*. Having been advised by the White House Situation Room, Special Assistant to the President Walt W. Rostow arrived at the White House and telephoned General Carter at NSA to ask what command and control procedures were applicable to instances such as the *Pueblo*. The Director replied that there was a clear division of responsibility between NSA and the JCS concerning such reconnaissance patrols. General Carter also informed Rostow that NSA provided technical guidance and support for the SIGINT collection mission but that the JCS/JRC retained full responsibility for deployment of the ship including evaluation of physical risk factors. Carter indicated that any action taken regarding the *Pueblo* was a matter under JCS cognizance.[23] The time in Washington, D.C., was 1:30 A.M. (3:30 P.M. *Pueblo* time), 23 January 1968.

After talking with General Carter, Rostow telephoned Hawaii asking for information on the *Enterprise*'s distance from Wonsan and the status of efforts to assist the *Pueblo*. General Allison told him that it was estimated that no aircraft could reach the *Pueblo* in time to help the ship.[24] Following further telephone conversations with Secretaries Rusk and McNamara, Rostow notified President Lyndon Johnson of the situation at 2:25 A.M.

At the Pentagon, too, activity was brisk. The National Military Command Center notified both Robert McNamara, Secretary of Defense, and his deputy, Paul Nitze. In turn, McNamara discussed the situation with Secretary of State Dean Rusk and then huddled with his assistant for public affairs, Phillip G. Goulding, to discuss the *Pueblo*'s status and

the preparation of a press release. In the interim, at 2:31 A.M. EST, the NMCC telephoned CINCPAC to notify all forces not to make any public release concerning the *Pueblo* incident. Nearby, the JCS/JRC was hurriedly trying to find information about the *Pueblo*'s patrol. At 3:20 A.M., General Morrison at NSA told Captain Vineyard, USN (JCS/JRC), that because the *Pueblo* had been operating under radio silence during its patrol, NSA had not received any messages from the ship prior to the incident. Thereupon, Captain Vineyard requested that NSA query all appropriate stations for any SIGINT reflections of the *Pueblo*'s location since 8 January 1968. NSA released this message query at 3:55 A.M.[25]

U.S. PREPARES PRESS RELEASE ON *PUEBLO*

At NSA, Robert X. Boucher, the Public Information Officer, telephoned Phillip Goulding, the Secretary of State's Assistant for Public Affairs, at 8:30 A.M. and learned that the White House, the Department of State, and the Secretary of Defense had approved a press release about the *Pueblo* incident. Goulding's secretary dictated the approved release to one of Boucher's staff, and copies were distributed to the NSA Directorate.[26] At 9:15 A.M., the Department of Defense formally issued the release which identified the *Pueblo* as a "Navy intelligence collection auxiliary ship . . . designated the AGER-2." The release gave the bare details of the seizure in international waters, the size of the ship's personnel complement, and its physical dimensions.

In less than an hour, Captain Pickett Lumpkin, Deputy Chief of Information of the Navy Department, called Boucher and asked if the *Pueblo* might be likened to the USS *Liberty*. Boucher referred him to the Department of Defense press release. When Lumpkin asked for a photograph of the *Pueblo*, Boucher said he would call him back. Boucher discussed the request with Gerard P. Burke and Lieutenant Commander Koczak from the executive office of the Director (D1). Both agreed that because the ship was a naval vessel, Lumpkin should be referred to the NAVSECGRU.[27]

Soon thereafter, both the Department of State and the Defense Intelligence Agency realized that inquiries would now be made concerning the risk assessment that was assigned to the *Pueblo*'s mission prior to its departure for the Sea of Japan. They therefore requested copies of NSA's message of 29 December 1967 to the JCS concerning North Korean aggressiveness. Both were denied because NSA believed that JCS should provide such information, if at all. General Carter instructed his staff that no historical information about the ship was to be released to any outside agency. This policy had been discussed with Brigadier General Ralph D. Steakely, USAF, JCS/JRC, and he agreed with General Carter's decision.[28] Based on this instruction, Boucher called Lumpkin at the Navy Office of Information to advise him to check with JCS/JRC for all background information on the *Pueblo*.[29]

By mid-morning at NSA, General Carter had briefed Patrick Coyne, secretary to the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (PFIAB) and explained that the *Pueblo* was a Navy responsibility and that NSA was only peripherally involved. In addition, General Carter briefed Admiral Rufus Taylor, Deputy Director, CIA; Lieutenant General Joseph F. Carroll, USAF, Director, DIA; and Bromley Smith from the White House staff. Meanwhile, Louis Tordella, Deputy Director of NSA, talked with Coyne about the cryptographic equipment aboard the *Pueblo*.[30]

Whatever course of action that the U.S. government decision makers might choose, NSA wanted to be prepared to assist. At 2:30 P.M., David McManis, the NSA representative to the White House Situation Room, telephoned Arthur J. McCafferty, an aide at the Situation Room, to learn of any decisions. McCafferty said that he had heard nothing from either the JCS or from the outcome of the White House luncheon discussions. An hour later, General Carter talked to Patrick Coyne to be sure he was receiving all the information he needed. Coyne replied that the White House Situation Room was taking care of him. Coyne then asked if NSA had any additional information on the incident, including any contemplated action by the United States. In reply, Carter said that he had not learned of any planned actions but assumed that discussions were taking place, and that he was not about to get involved in the White House and Department of State decisions.[31]

PACIFIC COMMAND PREPARES MILITARY OPTIONS

While Washington officials hastily sought to get information about the *Pueblo* attack and seizure, U.S. military commands in the Pacific prepared to take some action against North Korea if requested. From Hawaii, Admiral Hyland, at approximately 5:00 P.M. *Pueblo* time, directed the Seventh Fleet to take steps as soon as possible to place and support a destroyer off Wonsan immediately outside the twelve-mile limit. This ship was to be prepared to engage in operations that might include towing the *Pueblo* and/or retrieving its crew. The Seventh Fleet was also to provide air cover for the ship.[32] Admiral Bringle of the Seventh Fleet recommended to Hyland that the presence of a naval task group in the Sea of Japan be made known to the North Koreans, and that this warning be accompanied by U.S. government demands for immediate release of the *Pueblo* and its crew. He also recommended compensation for material damage and personnel injuries, action against guilty parties and guarantees against any recurrence. Failing such response from North Korea, Bringle recommended naval air strikes against a suitable military target.[33] CINCPACFLT was also considering other options, such as strikes by land-based aircraft; sending the *Enterprise*, *Truxton* and several other destroyers into the Sea of Japan to begin photoreconnaissance at first light; locating and seizing any North Korean ship on the high seas; sailing the USS *Banner* to the Wonsan area under heavy

escort as a show of resolve and to provide possible assistance to the *Pueblo*; and blockading the port of Wonsan.[34]

In Fuchu, at about 4:00 P.M. local time, General McKee, from his Fifth Air Force headquarters, telephoned General Ryan to give him a readiness report. Six F-105s armed only with guns were already airborne from Kadena Air Force Base, Okinawa. The first flight of these was due at Osan within the hour and would be reconfigured, if necessary, but would not be able to strike before dark. The remaining F-105s from Kadena, equipped with pylons only, would continue to be deployed and reconfigured upon arrival at Osan. General McKee had instructed the Eighteenth Tactical Fighter Wing to commandeer three C-130 aircraft in Okinawa to support the F-105 squadron's deployment to South Korea. General Ryan readily approved. The F-4s, downloading at Osan, could probably launch within a half hour, but General McKee did not recommend such a launch because of the MiG screen over Wonsan. He pointed out that there were over 100 MiGs stationed within the Wonsan area. General Ryan again concurred. All aircraft in Japan (four F-105s and six F-4s at Yokota and seven F-4s at Misawa) were being readied for deployment to Itazuke Air Force Base on 24 January if needed.[35]

To give additional armament support to the Fifth Air Force aircraft being readied in Japan, General Ryan directed the Thirteenth Air Force at Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines to fly thirty-eight Sparrow air-to-air missiles to Itazuke, Japan, as quickly as possible, together with their loading crews. Delivery would take about twelve hours. General Ryan advised the Fifth Air Force of this action and directed that the RF-4s (reconnaissance version of the F4) be positioned to reach Wonsan on the 24th and to consider the possibility of using an RB-57 for oblique offshore photography.[36]

In South Korea, meanwhile, U.S./UN commander General Bonesteel had received word from Yokosuka at 2:25 P.M. local time about the *Pueblo* situation. He immediately passed this information to his component commanders with instruction to increase their alert status. [redacted] DOS (b)(1) OGA

Admiral Sharp, having completed his meeting in Danang, flew to the aircraft carrier USS *Kitty Hawk*, flagship of the Commander, Task Force 77. Vice Admiral Bringle and Rear Admiral Cousins, Commander, Task Force 77, met Sharp and briefed him immediately on the *Pueblo* situation at about 6:00 P.M. Korean time.[40] During the night, Admiral Sharp developed action recommendations and sent these to JCS at approximately

7:00 A.M., 24 January, Korean time. He recommended that the North Korean action be met with a stern protest and demand for immediate release of the *Pueblo* and crew, full explanation of this act of piracy, and indemnity for all damages.[41] Sharp did not direct nor explicitly approve of the order to position a destroyer off Wonsan outside the twelve-mile limit to be prepared to engage in operations including towing *Pueblo* and/or retrieving the crew. Admiral Hyland, CINCPACFLT, had issued this order. Sharp did believe, however, that the presence of a U.S. ship off Wonsan would provide one means whereby custody of the *Pueblo* and crew could be returned to the United States expeditiously even though the ship might be disabled. In order to minimize tension in any such act, the decision to carry out this plan should be preceded by an announcement to the North Korean government concerning the purpose of such a mission.

In this light, Admiral Sharp recommended that authority be granted to carry out the plan to station a destroyer off Wonsan in international waters for a prescribed and pre-announced purpose and duration. He also recommended that the *Enterprise* and escorting destroyers proceed to a point about 100 miles south of Wonsan in the Sea of Japan and be prepared to come to the assistance of the destroyer in the event of any hostile action. In addition, Sharp stated that the Fifth Air Force should have aircraft, preferably F-4s, on strip alert ready to assist.[42]

While the military commands in the Pacific assumed a readiness posture, senior officials at the Pentagon considered the possibility of taking direct military action. General Earle Wheeler, Chairman of the JCS, telephoned Admiral Hyland at about 1030 hours Washington time to direct that there be "no repeat no show of force in incident area."[43] Specifically, Wheeler ordered that no air or surface forces were to reconnoiter or approach the subject area and no destroyer was to be positioned off Wonsan. Fleet units that had been repositioned as a result of the *Pueblo* incident were directed to proceed no farther north than their current positions.[44] At least for the moment, there would be no U.S. military response to the seizure of the *Pueblo*.

Later in the evening, JCS amplified its instructions to the Pacific commands. U.S. naval and air forces were to remain outside the area within eighty nautical miles of the coast of North Korea north of a line extending east of the DMZ. The JCS also ordered the USS *Enterprise* task group to operate in the southern part of the Sea of Japan south of latitude 38 degrees north. Following these instructions, JCS informed CINCPAC that U.S. forces in Korea would be maintained at present levels unless otherwise authorized by JCS.[45]

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U.S. MILITARY GIRDS FOR QUESTIONS ON LACK OF RESPONSE

Earlier in the day, the USAF command post in the Pentagon forwarded a request from Secretary of Defense McNamara to General Ryan asking for the number and type of USAF aircraft that could have responded to the *Pueblo* within an hour and forty-five minutes of the request for help and within three hours. The Fifth Air Force provided these answers: at one hour and forty-five minutes, zero aircraft; after three hours, four F-4s that had been reconfigured to carry conventional bombs but with no air-to-air combat capability.[46] From these and other facts, General Wheeler realized that there would be questions from many sources as to why the U.S. armed services failed to prevent the *Pueblo's* capture. Accordingly, he sent a Flash precedence message to CINCPAC, with information copies to CINCPACFLT, Pacific Air Force, U.S. Army Pacific, and U.S. Forces Korea. The message requested these commands to provide as soon as possible a complete and detailed chronology of events that had occurred up to the time of reporting, and also the identity of combat forces by location, type, quantity, and readiness that could have come to the assistance of the *Pueblo* during the time the incident was taking place. Commanders were also asked to report all actions they considered taking and subsequently ruled out. Later instructions specified that replies to JCS were due no later than 8:00 A.M. Washington time on 24 January.[47]

The JCS also tasked the Defense Intelligence Agency to gather some information. At 2100 hours local time, the DIA Alert Center in the Pentagon sent a facsimile transmission to the NSA SIGINT Command Center asking the following questions about the *Pueblo* incident:

[redacted]

[redacted] Was the *Pueblo* fired on by the North Korean vessels? Were any U.S. personnel wounded through enemy action?

Colonel Robert E. Duvall, DIA team chief, indicated that the questions had been asked originally by the chairman, JCS, and that a reply was desired by 8:00 A.M., 24 January. The NSA Command Center passed this query to [redacted] in the Navy branch of the North Korean analytic division (B11) for action. (b)(3)-P.L. 86-36

At 2:45 A.M. on the 24th, the NSA Command Center telephoned Colonel Duvall at DIA [redacted] There was also no clear evidence that the USS *Pueblo* was actually fired on by North Korea; and SIGINT revealed no information on U.S. personnel wounded through North Korean action.[48]

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U.S. BEGINS ASSESSMENT OF SIGINT COMPROMISE

DIA notified the NSA SIGINT Command Center about midnight on 23 January that the JCS had directed DIA, in coordination with NSA, to assess the impact and potential compromise resulting from the seizure of the *Pueblo*. DIA had sent a similar message to Headquarters, Naval Security Group Command. The NSA Command Center made certain that the NSA S13 Compromise Watch was aware of the DIA request and then notified Howard C. Barlow, the NSA Assistant Director for Communications Security. The Command Center then telephoned Madison E. Mitchell, Executive to the Assistant Director for Production at NSA, and requested that he report to work to take action on the JCS task. About three hours later, Mitchell sent an interim reply to DIA stating that an assessment of the security impact would be made as soon as NSA acquired a complete list of all COMINT-cleared personnel aboard the *Pueblo* and a compilation of SIGINT materials aboard the ship.[49] The Assistant Director, Naval Security Group, had already advised NSA that NSG Headquarters was sending a message to Commander, Naval Forces Japan, at Yokosuka requesting the names of the *Pueblo* crew and a list of cryptologic documents held aboard the ship.[50] At 5:00 A.M. on 24 January, NSG forwarded to NSA [redacted] listing of all classified material that the station had provided to the *Pueblo*. In addition, the NSA Operations Group, colocated with Pacific Command headquarters in Hawaii, had telephoned to the Command Center a partial list of the *Pueblo* crew. The Command Center gave the list to M5, NSA's Office of Security,which was compiling a list of COMINT-cleared personnel aboard the *Pueblo* for the Director, NSA.[51]

General Carter's concern about communications security compromises had prompted him to telephone the NSA Command Center at 6:00 P.M. to ask if the COMSEC organization at NSA had sent out any information on probable cryptographic compromises. Carter learned that these messages were then being drafted. By 7:45 P.M. Washington time, NSA had released messages to its British and Canadian counterparts as well as the COMSEC components of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and CIA concerning the possible compromise of keying materials for specific cryptographic systems and what follow-on actions would be required.[52]

NSA concentrated its efforts in two areas. Of first importance was the need to collect and analyze all available North Korean signals that occurred prior to and during the attack on the *Pueblo*. Such signals might reveal the *Pueblo*'s exact location at the time of the assault and indicate if there had been prior planning to capture the ship. Second, there was an immediate need to expand the continuous coverage of North Korean military communications in order to detect offensive preparations, defensive postures, and any information about the whereabouts of the *Pueblo* and its crew. Both of these requirements necessitated close cooperation and liaison between continental U.S. headquarters such as NSA, JCS, USAFSS, NSG, and the field activities involved, for example, NSG and

USAFSS intercept sites, NSA field representatives [redacted]

NSA WASHINGTON ESTABLISHES SIGINT READINESS

Back in Washington, NSA, at 4:35 A.M. on 24 January, established SIGINT Readiness ALPHA. (This was a stand-by condition requiring an increased degree of watchfulness during a serious situation, and it sometimes included a modification in operating procedures.) The ALPHA was in effect for the following stations: [redacted]

USM-81 had already established a SIGINT Readiness BRAVO for all subordinate stations because of the North Korean naval reaction to a U.S. ship off the east coast. (A SIGINT Readiness BRAVO was an alert condition declared by NSA requiring a high degree of vigilance, cancellation of leave, adjustments to collection posture, and reporting periodicity of four to six hours.) Within twenty-five minutes, [redacted] changed its readiness condition to ALPHA to conform with NSA instructions.[55]

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At Fort Meade, [redacted] (B Group) at NSA, while assessing the impact of the *Pueblo* seizure, reacted to events as it became aware of them.

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When the Korean Division (B11) learned of the movement of the USS *Enterprise* task group toward Wonsan, it requested [redacted] to report any SIGINT reflections of North Korean reactions to this naval movement.[59]

Similarly, when the Seventh Fleet acted to place a destroyer outside the twelve-mile limit off Wonsan, the B Group Watch Office directed those intercept sites as well as the [redacted] to report all SIGINT reflections of possible rescue operations by that destroyer.[60] At 7:30 A.M. Washington time, the U.S. Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) monitored Radio Pyongyang's report that the USS *Pueblo* had been captured in North Korean territorial waters. NSA (B11) then directed an immediate message to [redacted] emphasizing the critical need for the immediate reporting of SIGINT reflections (especially from North Korean communications) of the *Pueblo*'s position prior to and at the time of capture.[61] A half hour later, Harris advised NSA that [redacted] had searched its files and had not uncovered any information on the *Pueblo*'s movements between 11 January and the time of the attack.[62]

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Subsequently, Harris reported that, while intercepted voice communications (from the [redacted] indicated that the reported capture by the North Korean SO-1 class subchaser took place between 3:10 and 3:35 A.M., it did not reflect the location of the U.S. vessel. [redacted] Morse tracking of this activity by Kalgoch'i-ri did not begin until 5:40 A.M.,over two hours later.[63] Working with the information at hand, B11 released a summary report that gave SIGINT reflections of the North Korean capture of the USS *Pueblo*.[64] This report, however, contained no SIGINT information about the *Pueblo*'s location at the time of seizure.

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U.S. ADVISES ROK OF *PUEBLO* INCIDENT

As mentioned earlier, concern over cryptologic damage resulting from the *Pueblo*'s capture was intense. The Korean Division at NSA, at 6:40 A.M. Washington time, sent a message to [redacted] requesting that he alert [redacted] to the possible compromise of the technical support package aboard the *Pueblo*. NSA's intention was to provide [redacted] with a warning in the event that the compromise precipitated an extensive North Korean communications change. The Korean Division instructed [redacted] to accomplish this task without divulging any details of what may have been compromised.[65] To add his own personal concern about such a compromise, General Carter also sent an Exclusive message to Harris asking him to advise [redacted] of the probable compromise. In addition, Carter told Harris to impress upon [redacted] the extreme sensitivity of this information and requested that it be retained within [redacted]. Harris was also to inform General Bonesteel and appropriate U.S. embassy officials of this potential intelligence compromise.[66] In reply to Carter, Harris reported that he had discussed the situation privately with [redacted] who appreciated being informed and who shared the

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concern over the actions of the North Koreans. [redacted] gave his assurance that his lips would remain closed as he fully understood the extreme sensitivity of the information. [redacted] reporting on the *Pueblo* incident.[67]

[redacted] be made aware of what had happened to the *Pueblo*. Thus, the deputy commander, United Nations Command, in the late afternoon of 23 January, briefed the South Korean minister of defense and several other ROK officials concerning the incident. [redacted] Recognizing this delicate diplomatic position and wanting to preserve good ROK-U.S. relations, General Bonesteel felt that he needed more timely information and asked JCS to advise him, in advance, of the estimated time of arrival of any U.S. Navy craft off Wonsan in international waters. He also voiced his concern about not being informed of actions occurring at the national level and of not receiving messages that his command should have been aware of. He justified these needs on the basis of a requirement to brief President Pak of South Korea and for operational requirements.[70]

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In addition to U.S. fighter aircraft arriving in Japan from Okinawa, there was increased activity at [redacted] Air Base from which Airborne Communications Reconnaissance Platform (ACRP) aircraft were staged. Upon learning of the *Pueblo* incident, the NSA Representative, [redacted] requested the [redacted] Security Squadron [redacted] to provide maximum coverage of North Korean ship-to-

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ship and ship-to-shore communications concerning the *Pueblo*.[72] In response, [redacted] launched a C-130 ACRP [redacted] with instructions to remain south of the 39th parallel.[73] U.S. Pacific Headquarters supported this action and requested the Pacific Air Force to maintain [redacted] coverage on as near continuous basis as possible while canceling other reconnaissance missions as necessary (see ACRP Orbit map, p. 91). The reconnaissance aircraft were also given authorization for the use of [redacted] Air Base as needed.[74] Because there was [redacted] capability within the U.S. SIGINT forces [redacted] the approval for ACRP flights to use [redacted] the location of [redacted] was vital to speedy translation.

At NSA headquarters, B11, the North Korean division, also recognized the critical need for airborne SIGINT collection. At 5:05 A.M. Washington time, B11 requested JCS/JRC to authorize immediate and continuous ACRP flights off the east coast of Korea. North Korean service communications were the targets with primary attention to the intercept of North Korean naval [redacted] B11 also requested that the aircraft deliver intercept materials to [redacted] and that the first priority be given to its processing.[75]

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At Kelly Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas, the United States Air Force Security Service (USAFSS), whose personnel manned the SIGINT collection positions aboard the ACRP aircraft, was concerned about the safety of airborne collection platforms off the coast of North Korea. From discussions with JCS/JRC, USAFSS learned that consideration was being given to providing fighter cover for the [redacted] flights. Having received an information copy of NSA's message to JCS requesting additional ACRP flights and their recovery at [redacted] USAFSS sent a Flash message to NSA advising that there was an ACRP aircraft in orbit at that time (3:45 P.M. on the 23d). It stated that according to NSA Representative to JCS/JRC [redacted] the mission then being conducted was only in the orbit area during the hours of darkness and therefore did not require fighter cover. USAFSS was still concerned because of the *Pueblo* incident, nevertheless, and queried NSA and JCS/JRC whether the aircraft should be recalled. The message also instructed [redacted] not to launch any additional ACRP aircraft, other than those previously scheduled and approved, without the authority of the JCS. The message also advised NSA that [redacted] did not have adequate airborne portable transcriber positions, and therefore it would be preferable to have recovery of the aircraft at [redacted] for processing purposes.[76]

Fifteen minutes after receiving the USAFSS message, NSA received one from [redacted] advising that General Bonesteel had approved continuous ACRP coverage and necessary flight clearances. The message also advised [redacted] that the ACRP flights would recover at [redacted] and provided instructions to both [redacted] for handling and processing the intercept tapes.[77]

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The USAFSS instructions were confusing and conflicting. Pacific headquarters had earlier directed the Pacific Air Force to maintain continuous ACRP coverage and approved recovery at [redacted] The NSA elements in the Pacific were arranging and coordinating the details incident to tape handling and transcription. Now, USAFSS was issuing directives to [redacted] that were contrary to the earlier plans. At this point, the JCS still had not responded to NSA's request for ACRP coverage.

At NSA the *Pueblo* incident had caused the Office of Mobile Collection (K12) to set up a twenty-four-hour watch to keep abreast of and guide changes in SIGINT collection resources and tasking; the ACRP effort was of prime concern. At 12:50 P.M., Harold Welch from USAFSS called the NSA K12 watch officer, [redacted] and wanted to know if USAFSS or JCS should recall the [redacted] ACRP that was airborne at that time. Welch further stated that seventy fighters would be needed to provide air cover for round-the-clock ACRP flights. Sheck then had a series of telephone conversations with [redacted] the NSA representative to JCS/JRC at the Pentagon. [redacted] reported that General Steakley, JCS/JRC, authorized the ACRP flight in progress and its recovery at [redacted] [redacted] added, however, that Steakley wanted the aircraft out of the area before sun-up in Korea and would take action to recall it accordingly. At 1:24 P.M., [redacted] called Welch to pass along this information and requested that Welch take no further action until he heard from NSA.[78]

Acting for General Steakley, Colonel Joseph Cutrona, in the JCS Joint Reconnaissance Center, telephoned the CINCPAC Joint Reconnaissance Center at 2:00 P.M. (Washington time) and directed the recall of the aircraft. Cutrona also ordered that no other reconnaissance aircraft be launched against Korea pending a decision by the JCS whether such flights should be escorted by fighter aircraft.[79]

The JCS and DIA were deliberating on how to respond to NSA's request for extended ACRP coverage. Earlier in the day, [redacted] had given NSA Representative to the JCS/JRC [redacted] the following information about the proposed flights: the ACRP aircraft would [redacted]

DIA also requested information about NSA's ACRP proposal. At three o'clock in the afternoon, [redacted] Chief of B1 at NSA, informed Edward Dakin, DIA, that NSA [redacted]

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hours with take-off [redacted] at approximately 6:00 A.M. local time. Acknowledging USAFSS's request, NSA also asked for recovery [redacted] as previously recommended.[82] On the heels of this message, NSA sent one to USAFSS and [redacted] advising them of the revised ACRP requirement and askin[redacted]o send copies to [redacted] of any [redacted] NSA also asked [redacted], to provide [redacted] any linguistic or transcription assistance it might need.[83]

Although the JCS had restrained all military operations, the Joint Reconnaissance Center was still considering NSA's request for ACRP coverage. At 4:30 P.M. the JRC interpreted the proposed ten-hour coverage as a minimum, and it decided to increase this to twenty-four-hour coverage with a fighter combat air patrol of four aircraft at all times. [redacted]t the JCS/JRC telephoned K12 to advise of this development but added that the schedule should be considered tentative because it still required approval by Secretary of State Dean Rusk, who was busily engaged at the White House and wouldn't see the proposal until the 24th. Under the circumstances, it was decided not to call USAFSS until there was a definite and final plan for ACRP coverage.[84]

OTHER CONCERNS

The ripple effect of the *Pueblo* seizure extended to the operations of other U.S. SIGINT collection ships. NSA advised the SIGINT collector USNS *Muller* and other sites targeting

[redacted]

In Washington, in addition to the high level of activity in military circles, there was also diplomatic activity concerning the *Pueblo*. The Department of State had asked the Soviet Union to convey to the North Koreans the U.S. urgent request for the immediate release of the *Pueblo* and its crew, but the initial Soviet response was completely negative. In the United Nations, U.S. ambassador Arthur Goldberg expressed the concern of the United States to the Secretary General.[87] If Goldberg were to bring the *Pueblo* matter before the United Nations Security Council, he would have to be completely briefed beforehand. Therefore, at 4:45 P.M., General John Morrison, Assistant Director, NSA, for Production, talked with [redacted] at the JCS/JRC about such a briefing. Immediately

thereafter, Morrison telephoned Admiral Jackson, Goldberg's senior military advisor, to brief him on the impact of the *Pueblo*'s seizure as it related to collection equipment, cryptologic documents, cryptographic gear, and the SIGINT personnel aboard the ship.[88]

Twenty-four hours had passed since U.S. authorities first became aware of the USS *Pueblo*'s emergency situation. The unprepared posture of the U.S. armed forces in the area had precluded prevention of the *Pueblo*'s capture, and any immediate counterblow had been ruled out. The *Pueblo*'s exact current position was unknown as was the disposition of its crew. Information concerning the vessel's precise location at the time of boarding was also tenuous. Photographic and SIGINT reconnaissance flights that might collect intelligence information about the ship were ordered to stand down. Concerned about enlarging the incident, the Joint Chiefs of Staff had taken precautions to prevent any military action that might aggravate the situation. Prior to the departure of the *Pueblo*, one U.S. naval authority in Japan told Commander Bucher not to expect any help if he got into trouble – and, indeed, none was forthcoming.

The Department of Defense had released to the public a statement giving the barest of facts about the ship and its seizure. For a few days, the *Pueblo* replaced the war in Vietnam in press headlines. One fact, however, was certain. Compromise of the intelligence materials aboard the *Pueblo* and the SIGINT information held by its crewmen posed a potentially crippling blow not only to the U.S. intelligence community but to the whole of U.S. naval communications. Cognizant of this, the JCS requested an assessment of the loss. The SIGINT community began to tally the damage. The United States also continued deliberations at the policy level to determine its response to North Korean aggression.

Chapter VI
Reaction
The Next Week

U. S. ASSESSMENTS OF NORTH KOREAN ACTIONS

At the request of the Secretary of Defense, Richard Helms – the Director of Central Intelligence – submitted a preliminary assessment of North Korean intentions to the other decision makers at the White House, the Departments of Defense and State, and the directors of DIA and NSA. This report of 23 January 1968 stated that the circumstances of the *Pueblo*'s capture indicated that this was a deliberate act and not the result of a local North Korean commander exceeding his instructions. It further stated that the North Koreans were prepared to face a period of sharply heightened tensions. This report also estimated that the North Koreans would probably not release the crew or the ship promptly unless they judged that the United States would resort to retaliatory action, such as an air attack against the patrol craft involved in seizing the *Pueblo*. Should tensions rise sharply, the assessment concluded that the Soviets would be bound to take a hand at least privately and would almost certainly advise the North Koreans to terminate the episode at an early date.[1]

On the morning of 24 January, Arthur McCafferty at the White House informed General Carter at NSA that a "kitchen cabinet," composed of Walter Rostow, National Security Council (NSC), Earle Wheeler, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Richard Helms, Director of Central Intelligence, and Nicholas de B. Katzenbach, Undersecretary of State, was meeting in the Situation Room to discuss the *Pueblo* incident. The NSC discussed only the Cyprus situation, not the *Pueblo* matter.[2]

Later in the day, a larger group of individuals met at the Department of State to consider North Korea's objective in seizing the *Pueblo*, its future plans, and how the United States should respond. Attending this meeting were Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, Katzenbach, Wheeler, Helms, Rostow, Paul Nitze, Clark Clifford, Samuel Berger, Paul Warnke, Bromley Smith, and George Christian. Rostow believed that the Soviets were really the ones behind this action and suggested that "we might take the unusual move of getting the South Koreans to pick up the Soviet ship that has been shadowing the *Enterprise*." The others opposed this proposal. General Wheeler suggested a number of military actions but stated that "before we do anything we need reconnaissance." McNamara recommended a build-up of forces including the call-up of Air Force Reserve units and extension of terms of service. The meeting finally resulted in the group listing possible pressure actions, to include a blockade of North Korean ports; seizure of North Korean ships; air or ground strikes against North Korea; and replacing

the *Pueblo* with the *Banner*. Although the group proposed a number of retaliatory measures, it could not decide on a final course of action.[3]

Helms's preliminary assessment prepared for Secretary McNamara had included the belief that the North Koreans would "undertake a heavy propaganda exploitation of the affair for some days at least." At about 11:30 A.M. (Washington time) on the 24th, that prediction was fulfilled. The Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), Pyongyang, broadcast a "confession" statement, in English, ascribed to Commander Bucher following an introduction in Korean. The broadcast did not state that the "confession" was given by Bucher himself. The Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) monitored this transmission and immediately relayed it to Washington. Subsequent KCNA transmissions, both in English and Korean, repeated the "confession" statement.

In Washington, questions were raised about the broadcast's authenticity. Although the speaker had an American accent, the language was stilted and contained awkward constructions and expressions an American was unlikely to use. It appeared that the statement was prepared by someone not very familiar with the English language.[4] There was some doubt that the male voice speaking English on the "confession" broadcast was indeed that of Commander Bucher. At NSA, the Speech Research Division (R44) made a comparison of voices on the FBIS tapes with that of Bucher's recorded at the *Pueblo*'s commissioning ceremony in May 1967. From this effort, R44 informed Deputy Director Louis Tordella that the comparison of the two tapes indicated that the voices were the same.[5] Mrs. Rose Bucher, however, upon hearing the broadcast, adamantly denied that it was her husband's voice. Subsequently, after the return of the crew, government officials learned that Mrs. Bucher was right. Commander Bucher had never recorded this "confession" before it was first broadcast by KCNA on 24 January 1968. He had signed a "confession" statement prepared by the North Koreans after being kicked unconscious, personally threatened with being shot, and being told that unless he signed, his crew would be executed one-by-one right before his eyes.[6]

Apart from its questionable authenticity, the "confession's" content concerning "criminal" intrusions into North Korean waters and orders to "execute assignments given by the Central Intelligence Agency" demanded an immediate rebuttal. At once, the Pentagon began assembling a response, and at about 4:30 P.M. it was released to the press. The text of the news release included the following paragraphs:

> The *Pueblo*'s position as determined by the radar track of the North Koreans themselves was 39 degrees, 25 minutes north and 127 degrees, 56 minutes east. The *Pueblo* was under orders from the beginning of its mission to stay at least thirteen miles from North Korean territory. There is no evidence to suggest that these orders were disobeyed. There is much evidence, both from [the *Pueblo*'s] own radio transmission and from the information broadcast from North Koreans themselves in their own internal reports, that the orders were obeyed.

This release marked the first official revelation that the United States had intercepted North Korean communications containing their radar tracking of the *Pueblo* at the time of the attack and seizure.

The circumstances surrounding the preparation and clearance of the press release were disjointed and perhaps reflected the haste accompanying the desire to rebut Bucher's "confession." According to Lieutenant Colonel Bruce Brown, executive officer to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, the press release had been cleared with Ambassador Berger at the Department of State, George Christian,White House Press Secretary, and Secretary of Defense McNamara. The paragraphs concerning North Korean radar tracking were inserted about 3:00 P.M., after Brown had collected this information from Brigadier General Steakely at the JCS Joint Reconnaissance Center. Brown assumed that General Carter knew of this SIGINT revelation because he had overheard General Steakely telephoning General Carter and saying, "Pat, they're getting ready to release it."[7] The unilateral action of the Department of Defense became clear to General Carter later in the day when he telephoned both Helms and Bromley Smith regarding the release of SIGINT information. Carter learned that neither Helms nor Smith had seen the text of the press statement prior to its release.[8]

While Carter wrestled with the problem of the release of SIGINT data to the media, the Military Armistice Commission met in Korea on 24 January. Rear Admiral John Smith, the senior U.S. negotiator, demanded that Pyongyang return the *Pueblo* and its crew, apologize for the incident, and be aware that the United States reserved the right to demand compensation. The North Koreans laughed at such demands and the senior communist delegate, Major General Pak Chung Kuk, flatly rejected the U.S. request.[9]

As for the *Pueblo* itself, SIGINT revealed that the North Koreans had begun to examine the ship and they believed that most of the newer equipment may have been destroyed or thrown overboard before capture. The North Koreans planned to remove the remaining equipment for storage, presumably for closer examination. North Korean communications also suggested that divers would be sent to the scene of the capture to salvage some of the equipment that had been jettisoned. SIGINT also revealed that antiaircraft units in the Wonsan area were on alert for a possible U.S. response.[10]

Recognizing the gravity of the *Pueblo* incident and its far-reaching implications, General Carter established a task team at NSA on 25 January to prepare a complete study of the incident insofar as it pertained to U.S. SIGINT and COMSEC activities. This study was to be the basis for reports the Director would be required to make to the Secretary of Defense, the United States Intelligence Board, and the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, and for responses to such inquiries that may have been made by other authorities. Preparation of this study was to take priority over all administrative activities of the Agency. Benjamin Price, NSA's Assistant Director for Personnel Management, was designated head of a task team that was to have at least one representative from NSA's Offices of Production, Communications Security,

Telecommunications, and Planning and Programming. At his staff meeting the following day, Carter expanded on his rationale for establishing this *Pueblo* task team and stated that he had a number of questions. One of the most important of these was how his national responsibilities for the protection of SIGINT encroached upon direct support and mobile SIGINT operations, at least those over which he, as Director of NSA, exercised limited SIGINT control.

U.S. ACTIONS AT THE UNITED NATIONS

In other actions taken by U.S. authorities, President Johnson also requested UN ambassador Arthur Goldberg to seek an "urgent session" of the UN Security Council. Although Johnson did not expect the United Nations to accomplish anything, he perhaps reasoned that it would be wise to establish a strong U.S. case at the international forum. For the emergency session presentation, Goldberg, a former intelligence officer with experience with the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) during World War II, got Johnson's approval to use SIGINT evidence because it contained the unique information that the *Pueblo* had remained in international waters throughout the incident.[11] Goldberg's request to address the U.N. Security Council was placed on that body's agenda for Friday, 26 January.

In the interim, the Special Security Office (SSO) in New York handled a steady stream of messages that flowed between NSA and the U.S. Mission to the United Nations (USUN). Although B1 and B1104 were usually the action offices at NSA responsible for preparing replies to inquiries from Goldberg's staff, Chief B, ADP, ADN, D/DIR, or DIR reviewed these responses before release.

NSA was especially sensitive to the needs of its USUN customer and wanted to make sure that the information provided to it was scrupulously accurate and without ambiguity. To realize this objective, NSA sent a group of personnel from B Group to the SSO office in New York to work with Goldberg's staff in precisely wording the SIGINT portions of the U.S. statement to the United Nations. The NSA group, led by

NSA group was a primary participant in advising Goldberg throughout the proceedings. [redacted] contribution was particularly noteworthy. He provided excellent linguistic support to the USUN delegation and to NSA analytic elements throughout the crisis. This type of NSA support to a major SIGINT user was a new experience for the Agency in 1968.[12]

With this assistance from NSA, Goldberg's staff prepared a memorandum on the *Pueblo*'s location throughout the incident, thus reinforceing the claim of the *Pueblo*'s innocence.[13] Goldberg's staff forwarded the completed draft statement to NSA for coordination. On 4 March, B1 gave its approval to the memorandum with only slight changes to the text.[14] White House interest in the precise nature of Goldberg's revelations was equally intense; Johnson directed that he too see the final statement well in advance of its delivery before the Security Council.[15]

At this time, North Korean radar tracking stations did not report ship positions by latitude and longitude. They used a "cardinal point" system as a point of reference to report azimuth and range tracking. [redacted] B Group personnel prepared a large detailed map depicting the movements of the *Pueblo*. The map was later given to Ambassador Goldberg to accompany the text that was prepared for his U.N. presentation.[16]

On the afternoon of the 26th, Goldberg addressed the Security Council with NSA official [redacted] present in the Security Council chamber.[17] Goldberg revealed that the United States had intercepted the attacking North Korean subchaser's manual Morse communications as well as voice communications between the North Korean ships involved in the incident. In fact, several of the exact conversations were included in Goldberg's text as proof that the North Koreans knew that the *Pueblo* was a U.S. ship, that it was virtually unarmed, and that it was in international waters when attacked and captured.

USSR representative to the U.N. Platon Morosov immediately discounted Goldberg's presentation and refuted it by quoting from Commander Bucher's "confession" in which it was stated that the *Pueblo* had ". . . reached a point 7.6 miles from Nodo." This, according to Morosov, was the truth of the matter.[18] In rebuttal, Goldberg noted that under ". . . the old rule of law . . . it is the contemporary account at the time which is entitled to weight, not a subsequent one which may be invented to suit the needs of the party involved."[19]

NSA analysts learned about a week later that the position reports given for the *Pueblo* [redacted] were not entirely accurate. North Korea had changed its cardinal point equations and [redacted][20] Fortunately, it did not change the basic U.S. view that the *Pueblo* was in international waters when it was accosted by North Korean naval units. For NSA's B Group (as well as for other analytic areas in NSA), it was another example of the difficulties involved in relying on a [redacted] effort during a crisis situation.[21]

U.S. MILITARY REACTIONS

Simultaneous with these diplomatic initiatives, the United States was reviewing its military options. Prior to any military actions to recover the *Pueblo*, however, U.S. forces required precise information about the ship's location, and thus the Strategic Air Command (SAC) was tasked to photograph the *Pueblo* in Wonsan Harbor. Altough NSA had not been an addressee on the SAC message of instructions concerning this planned photographic reconnaissance mission, the NSAPAC Operations Group (NOG) staff at Pacific Headquarters alerted NSA of SAC's intentions by OPSCOMM message. The NSA representative at SAC Headquarters in Omaha, Nebraska, also advised NSA of SAC's plans and arranged for SAC to notify NSA of the time and execution details of the mission. In turn, NSA notified James Harris [redacted] and [redacted] f the plans for photographing the Wonsan area.[22] The mission, a SR-71 aircraft, was flown at high altitude on 26 January. Photographic analysis showed the *Pueblo* anchored offshore in Changjahwan Bay, a few miles east-northeast of Munch'on Naval Base, Wonsan. A P-6 motor torpedo boat was moored alongside, and a miscellaneous service craft (YAG) was off the port beam. Imagery quality precluded detailed interpretation to determine if the ship had been damaged or if any dismantling had taken place. In addition, there was no evidence of salvage operations in the vicinity of the position where the *Pueblo* crewmen had jettisoned some of the special equipment.[23]

Additional contingency actions taken by the president included the acceptance of the recommendation by Secretary of Defense McNamara and the JCS to call certain reserve and National Guard units to active duty. These units included eight Air Force Reserve, six Naval Reserve, and fourteen Air National Guard units totaling 14,600 personnel and 372 aircraft including fighter, attack, reconnaissance, transport, and rescue. All personnel were to report to their respective units by 26 January. According to Department of Defense officials, this step was taken as a "precautionary measure to strengthen our forces" because of the *Pueblo* incident.[24]

The JCS were also formulating plans to increase USAF strength in South Korea by deploying additional tactical fighters and reconnaissance aircraft to Korean and Japanese bases. The JCS directed the deployment of 112 aircraft from the United States, 63 from Okinawa, 13 from the Philippines, and 4 from Japan.[25]

In the Sea of Japan, a task group comprising the USS *Enterprise* and accompanying destroyers was ordered to an area 120 nm south of South Korea. The JCS ordered Pacific Headquarters to augment the *Enterprise* group with a second attack carrier.[26] The task group's offensive/defensive operations in the Sea of Japan were assigned the unclassified nickname FORMATION STAR.[27]

The JCS decided to have the USS *Banner* (AGER-1) join the *Enterprise* formation and thereafter position it, with suitable escort, in the same area where the *Pueblo* incident had

occurred. The JCS had discussed this proposal with General Carter at NSA on the afternoon of 24 January, and he stated that such action should pose no problem to NSA although the SIGINT configuration was a bit different from that of the *Pueblo*. According to Carter, however, the type of escort was a JCS problem and not within his purview.[28] The JCS order to Pacific headquarters directed that the *Banner* rendezvous with units of FORMATION STAR as soon as possible.[29]

The *Banner* was now under Seventh Fleet command, but any movement of the ship to a position off Wonsan similar to the *Pueblo*'s location was to be directed only by the JCS. Unlike the *Pueblo*, plans for the *Banner*'s protection during such possible deployment were intense. It was estimated that, after reaching the *Enterprise* and other FORMATION STAR units, it would take an additional twenty-one hours of steaming for the *Banner* to assume a station off Wonsan. The Seventh Fleet commander ordered the destroyers *Ozbourn* and *Higbee* as well as the guided missile heavy cruiser *Canberra* to provide gun,missile, and surface helicopter support in the immediate vicinity of the *Banner*. These units would also provide air cover and antisubmarine protection. CINCPAC further established a minimum posture for land-based air support before beginning the *Banner* operation: twenty-four F-105's and eighteen F-4's were to be available at South Korean air bases, on alert and fully loaded for conventional operations with both air-to-air and air-to-ground ordnance. CINCPAC also recommended that ROK forces, particularly ROKAF, should be in a high state of alert and informed of the U.S. planned course of action and planned response in the event of a North Korean attack on the U.S. vessel. CINCPAC also arranged for the alerting of the U.S. Eighth Army.[30] In addition to these elaborate defensive plans, COMSEVENTHFLT directed the *Banner*, if attacked, to "use all means at her disposal, including all weapons as necessary, to insure aggressive self-protection."[31] In this instance, the Navy chose to issue an order giving a clear indication of just what it expected of its SIGINT ships in an emergency situation.

While the *Banner* was en route to its rendezvous with the FORMATION STAR force, Pacific Fleet headquarters requested it to provide information about its emergency destruction procedures and about any discussions held with the *Pueblo* concerning destruction plans. In response, the *Banner* stated that it had reduced its publication inventory to an operational minimum; in the past week, it had destroyed 300 burn bags of excess material, and almost 200 pounds of classified material had been transferred to Headquarters, Naval Forces, Japan, for storage.[32] PACFLT headquarters also asked the *Banner* to compare the *Pueblo*'s instructions with its own. In its reply, the *Banner* cited extracts of the implementation portion of its on-board instructions. The *Banner* also noted that its personnel had never seen the *Pueblo*'s emergency destruction procedures, although personnel of the *Pueblo* had reviewed those of the *Banner*. From discussions between the commanders of the *Banner* and the *Pueblo*, they had learned that the shredding machine on the *Pueblo* was considered adequate for key lists only; incinerators were inadequate for publications; thermite bombs would result in probable loss of the ship even if the attack

were aborted. The general consensus reached by the two commanders had been that their destruction capability was inadequate.[33]

SOVIET REACTIONS

On the evening of the *Banner*'s third day out of Yokosuka,while in the Tsushima Strait, a Soviet *Riga*-class escort vessel approached to within 450 yards and illuminated the *Banner* with flares for ten minutes. It seemed an unusual procedure for the Soviets at the time and suggests that they may have been confused by the sudden appearance of another ship with a silhouette similar to the *Pueblo*. The Soviet ship continued to follow the *Banner* at a distance of 5,000 yards for about two hours before reversing course to resume its patrol.[34] At 6:30 P.M. on 30 January, the *Banner* joined the *Enterprise* and other FORMATION STAR units and took station in an area about 125 miles off P'ohang, South Korea.[35]

While the JCS increased U.S. air and naval strength in South Korea and Japan as a result of the crisis, the USSR took measures to increase its information on the U.S. build-up in the area. In the southern Sea of Japan, the *Enterprise* task group attracted the attention of several Soviet naval units. By 26 January, the intelligence collector *Gidrolog*, which had been trailing the *Enterprise*, was joined by a *Kil'din*-class rocket destroyer, the *Riga*-class escort, and a tanker. The destroyer had departed the Vladivostok area on 24 January and made a rapid southerly transit of the Sea of Japan while the escort and a tanker had been patrolling north of the Tsushima Strait. [redacted]

The Soviet air forces also participated in the surveillance effort. On the morning of 24 January, two TU-16 (Badger) aircraft flew a reconnaissance mission over the Sea of Japan [redacted] During this interval, they probably conducted a reconnaissance of the U.S. ships operating in the Sea of Japan.[37] In addition, [redacted]

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EFFECTS OF *PUEBLO* ON OTHER COLLECTORS

At the same time, the ripple effect of the *Pueblo* incident began to reach the waters of the [redacted] where the technical research ship USS *Georgetown* (designated [redacted] was conducting operations. On 24 January, the *Georgetown* returned to [redacted] since the beginning of the month.[39] In view of the *Pueblo* capture and the Israeli attack on the USS *Liberty* seven months earlier, General Lyman L. Lemnitzer, Commander in Chief, Europe, requested that the U.S. Navy provide protection for the *Georgetown* by air and sea forces during its planned February operations [redacted][40] The Department of State took a more cautious stance and requested JCS to direct the *Georgetown* "to remain [redacted] until such time as reduction in repercussions from the USS *Pueblo* incident make it possible to resume February operations." NSA concurred in the State Department recommendations.[41] U.S. naval authorities also took the precaution of ordering the USNS *Valdez* [redacted] operating off the east coast of [redacted] at the time, to remain at least five miles instead of two miles outside of all claimed territorial waters.[42] As a further precaution, CNO directed all technical research ships to off-load all classified material not considered absolutely essential to the technical mission of their next deployment even though such action would restrict their cryptographic flexibility and generate problems in timely cryptologic technical support.[43]

Shipborne SIGINT operations [redacted] were also called into question. The USNS *Muller* was directed to remain at Port Everglades, Florida, until further notice. The Joint Reconnaissance Center queried General Morrison at NSA on 31 January to see how strongly NSA felt about the situation. Morrison replied that the *Muller*'s operation (particularly against its [redacted] target) was essential if NSA was to satisfy its current SIGINT requirements involving the [redacted] problems. Morrison also stated that the ultimate decision to deploy the ship and any protective measures were beyond NSA's purview. An hour later, [redacted] the NSA representative to the JRC, telephoned Morrison to inform him that, although the JCS had decided to deploy the *Muller* with an armed escort, the final decision was being coordinated with other concerned agencies at the national level.[44] Commander in Chief, [redacted], indicated that the *Muller* would be back on station [redacted] in time for its February operations.[45]

ENHANCEMENT OF SIGINT RESOURCES

The reinforcement of U.S. naval forces in the Sea of Japan required increased SIGINT technical support to the additional Naval Security Group detachments embarked in the [redacted] namely, [redacted], and, of course, [redacted] (USS *Banner*), whose original mission had been targeted against Chinese Communist and

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Soviet communications. [redacted] compiled technical support kits applicable to Korean Communist naval air and air defense targets and forwarded these to [redacted] as the cognizant shore station (COGSTA) supporting units afloat. [redacted] then forwarded the kits to the [redacted] In addition, NSA directed [redacted] and [redacted] to update their technical support kits by electrically transmitting appropriate technical supplements to the detachments.[46] At the same time, the detachments were added to the distribution of related [redacted] product. In a very short time, the *Banner* reported that "the volume of high precedence end product has smothered operational and technical support traffic required by the ship and its detachment."[47] To alleviate this communications problem, NSA then tasked [redacted] with screening all Korean Communist technical support material destined for the SIGINT detachments [redacted] Originators of end product and technical material immediately suspended direct distribution to SIGINT shipboard detachments.[48]

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[redacted] however, was hard-pressed to fulfill its new responsibilities. The station did not have analysts familiar with the North Korean naval problem who could adequately review incoming material and assess which should be forwarded to the detachments. [redacted] requested Henry DeCourt to assist it in acquiring four intelligence/traffic analysts from other sources. In response, [redacted] directed originators of North Korean naval technical support messages to restrict them to those technical facts required for day-to-day collection, processing, and identification. Such action was intended to reduce the volume of technical material to a manageable size. Further, DeCourt worked closely with [redacted] personnel in screening technical support traffic.[49]

As military planners were engaged in the build-up of U.S. air forces in South Korea and Japan, they were also formulating plans for the use of U.S. armed forces in that area. NSA was also revising contingency plans to provide the requisite SIGINT support. NSA hastily prepared a tentative change in the cryptologic annex to its SIGINT support plan-Pacific that supported the CINCPAC operational plan for the defense of Korea.[50] In commenting on the proposed change, Major General Charles H. Denholm, USA, Commanding General, United States Army Security Agency, (CGUSASA) informed NSA that the availability of Korean linguists was a critical problem that could be solved only by either transferring USASA linguists assigned to NSA and [redacted] or hiring linguists as authorized by NSA. Denholm added that the resources of his continental U.S. units had been depleted in order to meet Southeast Asia needs and that USASA reserve elements were neither manned, equipped, nor trained to meet deployment needs. Further, USASA would be unable to assume a posture for tactical operations rapidly because its tactical equipment required considerable maintenance brought about by a lack of periodic exercise and shortage of spare parts. For example, of four tactical ELINT positions, only one was operational; the other three were set aside for cannibalization.[51]

On 27 January Brigadier General James informed NSA headquarters that his Korean linguistic capability throughout the Pacific area was at a minimum and that the Pacific

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Air Force was preparing a request to USAF for immediate deployment of a AFSS Emergency Reaction Unit (ERU) to Korea, contingent on approval from USAFSS to provide cryptologic support for the tactical operational build-up. The next day, USAFSS advised NSA that eight Korean linguists were en route [redacted] to assist in ACRP processing and that ERU resources, including two intercept vans, two communications vans and operators, linguists, analysts, and support personnel, were in full readiness and waiting approval to be airlifted to Korea.[52]

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NSA took a number of additional steps. First, it took the precaution of extending SIGINT Readiness ALPHA [redacted] entities so that reactions to the *Pueblo* situation could be monitored and carefully evaluated.[53]

To consolidate SIGINT reporting on the *Pueblo* incident, the B11 division at NSA decided on 29 January to publish a summary report that would be issued at least daily and more frequently if developments warranted. This report, entitled Korean Situation Summary (KORSITSUM), was designed to provide complete and comprehensive coverage of current developments related to the *Pueblo* situation and its aftermath and was intended to reduce redundant reporting. In addition, the report was to incorporate pertinent SIGINT material from A and G Groups. The first report in this series was issued on 29 January 1968.[54]

INTERNATIONAL REACTIONS

Increased reporting on the *Pueblo* incident was not NSA's only concern. In addition to NSA's responsibility to advise appropriate U.S. agencies of the potential compromise of SIGINT resources or communications security methods and equipments, it also had the obligation to keep collaborating centers abreast of developments such as the *Pueblo* affair. For example, although there was no evidence that any Second Party materials were aboard the *Pueblo*, Carter reported the assumed compromise to the directors of the collaborating SIGINT centers on the day after the incident.[55] On 25 January, Britain's Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) responded to Carter with a message of sympathy and regret, and it expressed gratitude for being advised.[56] The Australian authorities expressed their appreciation for notification of the loss and stated that further dissemination of such information would be on a reasonably discreet basis.[57] [redacted]

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[redacted] other South Korean government circles expressed widespread and serious irritation over the priority the United States accorded the *Pueblo* incident in contrast with the mild U.S. reaction to the North Korean attempt to assassinate the president of South Korea. When General Bonesteel met with ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff on 27 January, the chiefs stressed this point and asked that the United States make a firm commitment to deliver more military and naval equipment to the ROK. The ROK JCS also expressed the importance of taking clear, punitive action to teach Pyongyang a lesson, and gave voice to their concern that, when the *Pueblo* incident was settled, the U.S. air and naval forces used for the build-up would be removed from Korea and vicinity. Such action, they said, would have a grave effect on ROK/U.S. relations and would only encourage the Communists.[61]

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The United States was not the only country concerned about the incident spreading. In Japan, Foreign Minister Miki called U.S. ambassador Johnson to the Foreign Office and read a prepared statement (unusual for him) that expressed his government's concern over the situation in North Korea. Miki also expressed the hope that the United States would adopt a careful and well-thought-out attitude toward the problem. To satisfy his desire to keep the Diet and people of Japan well informed, the foreign minister then asked Ambassador Johnson to apprise him of new developments and of U.S. plans in the United Nations and elsewhere bearing on the matter. Miki also told Johnson that he had expressed similar views to the Soviet ambassador, noting that it should be in the Soviet interest to keep the crisis from spreading. The Soviet ambassador had placed responsibility for the incident entirely on the United States but agreed to transmit the Japanese government's views to Moscow.[64]

In New Delhi, Soviet premier Aleksej Kosygin played down the *Pueblo* incident and told reporters that it was an issue over the violation of territorial waters and must be settled as such by the two countries involved.[65] In Washington, the Soviet view was further detailed. At a social gathering on 26 January, General Major Ivan Valentin Meshcheryakov, the Soviet military attaché, discussed the Soviet views on the *Pueblo* with Colonel Fitzgerald of the U.S. Army War College and a former U.S. Army attaché in Moscow. Meshcheryakov opened the discussion, and the tone of his remarks was low-key and without threats. He stated that the easiest way out of the situation was for the United States to meet the North Korean demands for acknowledgement of its guilt and apologize. He pointed out that those in the United States who threatened to use force must remember that a mutual assistance treaty with North Korea obligated the Soviets to provide direct assistance with troops. Meshcheryakov offered his personal opinion that the United States might be able to execute one bombing raid on North Korea and possibly get away with it, but any use of force beyond this would have disastrous consequences for all. He concluded that the situation could be resolved only by seeking to obtain the release of the crew first (and this would take time) and thereafter concentrating on the return of the ship. Further, because the North Koreans possessed solid evidence of the *Pueblo*'s territorial violations, Moscow was in no position to act as a third party despite its desire to see no further complications to the problem.[66]

The United States awaited Beijing's reaction to the *Pueblo* incident with obvious concern. On 26 January, the New China News Agency released the North Korean official communique without comment. Two days later, the Chinese issued a statement quoting North Korea's charges against the United States for violating North Korean territorial

waters. Beijing's only reference to the Chinese position, however, was the affirmation that the "Chinese government and people firmly support the just stand of the Korean government and people in countering U.S. imperialism's flagrant provocations." There was no mention of possible aid to Pyongyang. Beijing was undoubtedly gratified at the turn of events whereby some U.S. forces were diverted from Vietnam to Korea without direct Communist Chinese responsibility for solution of the *Pueblo* incident.[67]

Following up on the JCS-NSA exchange of 24 January about modifications to ACRP coverage and SIGINT collection, the JCS increased flights [redacted] with a fighter combat air patrol at all times. This decision was delayed until the Department of State approved the plan. At 1:35 p.m. (Washington time) on 25 January, JCS finally sent a flash precedence message to Hawaii requesting initiation of [redacted] All flights were to have fighter escort and were to follow a modified track.[68] Within five hours, however, JCS revised its plan and sent a second message to Pacific headquarters stating that, because of operational considerations, ACRP missions against North Korean targets [redacted] This message also authorized CINCPAC to increase fighter strength in South Korea by twelve aircraft for fighter escort duty.[69]

THE RECONNAISSANCE QUESTION

Upon receipt of these two JCS messages, Admiral Sharp sent implementing instructions to General Ryan and requested that he begin [redacted] ACRP flights on as nearly a continuous basis as possible. This was done in order to cover North Korea [redacted]

At this point, USAFSS requested guidance from NSA as to which ACRP missions targeted against either [redacted] should be canceled in order to provide the increased coverage that had been ordered against North Korea. The number of flights available for areas other than North Korea was contingent upon the JCS final decision on staging bases for ACRP missions. [redacted]

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Within NSA there were differing views about this situation. On ACRP flights, B Group preferred that, other than those targeted against North Korea, two missions against [redacted] targets be flown for each mission against [redacted] targets. A

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Group, on the other hand, desired an equal split of available flights because of the [redacted] activity in the Sea of Japan. Madison Mitchell, NSA's Executive Officer for P, concurred in the A Group position, and USAFSS was so advised on 26 January.[72]

[redacted]

NSA sent two messages to JCS supporting the USAFSS proposal, and CINCPAC also supported USAFSS.[75] As Saturday evening slipped into Sunday morning, the JCS position had not officially changed, and it proved impossible to get a new message coordinated.[76]

JCS at last concurred with the [redacted] proposal on Monday morning; however, the missions still required fighter escort. The deployment of aircraft was delayed until the State Department obtained country clearance.[77] The Department of State sent the country clearance request to the U.S. embassy in Seoul at about 4:00 P.M. Washington time on Monday. In another three hours, a message of approval was on its way back from Seoul.[78] On Tuesday, 30 January, JCS was able to inform all concerned that the ACRP operations could begin [redacted] and that the necessary aircraft and equipment could be deployed to [redacted][79] Implementing instructions were relayed to the Fifth Air Force that afternoon.[80] It had taken four days to get approval for the increased flights.

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As NSA was attempting to improve its processing and reporting posture at field units, North Korea continued its propaganda exploitation of the *Pueblo*. At noon (Washington time) on 26 January, the Pyongyang KCNA International Service broadcast, in English, the text of an alleged interview with Commander Bucher by the North Korean press. Four hours later, the Korean Domestic Service also made a similar broadcast in Korea. The Foreign Broadcast Information Service monitored and reported both broadcasts.

Commander Bucher allegedly stated that the *Pueblo*'s intelligence mission against North Korea was in preparation for "a new war of aggression in Asia" and added that the United States considered Korea and Vietnam as two fronts of the same war. In a reference to the *Pueblo* crew, the names of the two civilians aboard were announced. In addition, Bucher stated that "when the patrol craft of the People's Army appeared . . . we fired at them." The interview revealed no details about either the *Pueblo*'s SIGINT mission or on-board equipment and ended with Bucher's plea for leniency and the expression of hope that the *Pueblo*'s crew would soon be released.

Eventually, NSA learned that this contrived "interview" of Commander Bucher had been carefully staged by his captors. Five minutes before the press conference, Bucher was given a typed script of questions with the answers he was to read verbatim. He was told that failure to do so would result in mistreatment of his crew and the abandonment of care for the wounded. At that time, Bucher had had no sleep nor had he been able to eat.[88]

In Washington, General Carter at NSA established a special task force to study the *Pueblo* and all of its SIGINT and COMSEC ramifications. At the Pentagon, the Joint Chiefs of Staff formed a study group to examine all aspects of the seaborne intelligence collection program.[89]

For a week, the *Pueblo* had overshadowed the war in Vietnam. This was to be short-lived. Late on 30 January and in the early hours of 31 January 1968, Vietnamese Communist troops launched their Tet offensive. Once again, news headlines focused on the major war in Southeast Asia as did the concern of military commanders and government leaders. Although not forgotten, the *Pueblo* had become of secondary importance in terms of U.S. military priorities. Resolution of the situation, it was realized, would not come quickly. Gaining the release of the crew was the paramount objective of U.S. officials, but it was evident that a long period of negotiations lay ahead.

In summary, the North Korean seizure of the USS *Pueblo* threw the U.S. government decision-making process into disarray. It could not decide whether to make a military response to North Korea. When the decision was finally made, the United States opted for a build-up of its forces in the Sea of Japan area in preparation for what it perceived as the possibility of further North Korean aggression.

U.S. government officials were looking closely at the reactions of other nations, both friendly and hostile, in the Far East. The U.S. intelligence community was also monitoring the reactions of other countries from the standpoint of the threat posed.

In New York, Ambassador Goldberg initiated efforts in the U.N. Security Council to condemn North Korea's action and to support the U.S. request for recovery of the ship and return of the crew. While these diplomatic moves were taking place, the only word from the *Pueblo*'s crew during this first week consisted of the North Korean propaganda broadcasts of Commander Bucher's "confession" and press interview in which he had admitted to the espionage mission of the *Pueblo*.

During the week, the United States realigned its SIGINT resources to provide both necessary tactical support to increased U.S. naval and air forces in the region and greater coverage of North Korean communications targets. The U.S. SIGINT System also took steps

to curtail the dissemination of cryptologic materials to mobile units to prevent another compromise similar to the *Pueblo*.

By the end of the week, the initial shock of the *Pueblo*'s seizure had given way to a mood of depression and anger sparked by the futility of the situation. There was to be no immediate challenge or confrontation with North Korea, but air and sea combat strength was raised to counter possible further aggressive action by North Korea.

Chapter VII

North Korean Interrogation

While military commanders in the Far East prepared for a possible escalation of events and confrontation with North Korea, in Washington the Congress focused on the past and began a series of investigations to explore why the *Pueblo* incident had occurred, who was responsible, and what could be done to prevent such incidents.

On 1 February Secretary of Defense McNamara and the JCS chairman, General Earle Wheeler, testified for over three hours before the Senate Armed Services Committee. During this hearing, NSA was never mentioned. Secretary McNamara said that, at that time, it was not possible to determine conclusively what equipment had been lost, and he revealed no details of how the North Korean intercepted communications had been obtained. Both McNamara and Wheeler testified that this type of intelligence operation had not been suspended and that the primary objective now was to obtain the release of the crew. The committee members took a constructive attitude toward the *Pueblo* incident and appeared more concerned with preventing future incidents than with how this one had happened.[1]

On the same date, General Carter gave testimony before the House Armed Services Policy Subcommittee, chaired by Representative L. Mendel Rivers of South Carolina, on the possible damage resulting from the compromise of equipment and personnel on board the *Pueblo*.[2] Even as the Director spoke to the subcommittee, additional indications of the security compromises arising from the *Pueblo*'s seizure originated from the Far East with the Pyongyang KCNA International Service broadcasting in English the "confession" of Lieutenant Stephen Harris, officer in charge of the SIGINT detachment aboard the *Pueblo*. Harris gave information about his naval career, the *Pueblo*'s assigned mission, the chronology of the voyage, and stated that he received his instructions "from the U.S. National Security Agency through the U.S. Pacific Command, Electronics Intelligence Center in Japan."

Reuters news service commented that the "confession" was spoken slowly for about thirteen minutes as if from a prepared text.[3] When debriefed on his return, Harris stated that although he knew that such a "confession" was a violation of the code of conduct, he felt that it would be known that it was done under duress. The North Koreans told him that unless he complied, something would happen to his men. The North Koreans prepared a "confession" statement for Harris, which he copied by hand and signed.[4]

Thereafter, on each of the following four days, the North Koreans broadcast a new "confession" from one of the *Pueblo* crew. This orchestrated propaganda effort featured "confessions" from Lieutenant Frederick C. Schumacher, Jr., the operations officer;

Lieutenant Edward R. Murphy, the executive officer and navigator; Dunnie R. Tuck Jr., oceanographer; and Marine Sergeant Robert J. Hammond, Korean linguist and intercept operator. In every case, after extensive interrogation of the crewmen, a "confession" statement was prepared by the North Korean captors, who then demanded that it be copied and signed by the prisoner.

Schumacher later stated that he had been threatened with starvation and execution.[5] Murphy told of being beaten and tortured before giving in; he wasn't allowed to sleep and lost consciousness at least six times.[6] Hammond, too, reported being interrogated for nineteen hours during which he said "they beat the hell out of me for six hours because I wouldn't admit that I spoke Korean." According to Hammond, his "confession" was brought to him two days after the interrogation and, when he had completed copying it, he was photographed and directed to read portions aloud.[7] The common theme to all these "confessions" was that the *Pueblo* had deliberately penetrated deep into North Korean coastal waters for espionage purposes.

NSA-USAFSS STRUGGLE OVER RESOURCES

The capture of the *Pueblo* focused attention on the SIGINT resources [redacted] Everyone associated with the decision-making process, from Washington, D.C., down to the tactical units in the Far East, wanted the best intelligence available on North Korea. The wide variety of interested parties produced a struggle for the control of assets and resulted in precedent-setting decisions.

An early decision grew out of differences over the control of Air Force collection resources. The U.S. SIGINT System began to build up its collection resources at [redacted] These resources soon included an Emergency Reaction Unit (ERU), designated [redacted] from the USAFSS and augmented linguistic support. In General Carter's view, the resources could best function in a "direct service" role. He believed that this would permit SIGINT to flow directly and rapidly to tactical commanders, with NSA directing the mission.[8] General Stapleton at USAFSS headquarters in San Antonio disagreed. He believed that the situation was made to order for the delegation of operational control of these resources to the theater commander. In his view, the USAFSS resources could mean conflicts between NSA national tasking priorities and tactical collection priorities of the theater commander. Further, he felt that failure to delegate operational control could result in Fifth Air Force resources relocating to Taegu without the NSA resources; if this happened, the effectiveness of support would be greatly diminished.[9]

General Carter attempted to defuse the situation by authorizing a direct line of tasking from the Pacific area commander to [redacted][10] He insisted that this would provide the required responsiveness.[11] General Stapleton was just as insistent that delegation of operational control was the best way to handle the problem. The main

difficulty, one which was to reappear again and again in such situations, was a lack of SIGINT expertise on the staff of the supported commander, in this case, Fifth Air Force. To remedy this, Stapleton sent one of his own SIGINT-trained officers and a staff of noncommissioned officers to [redacted] to help translate Air Force intelligence needs into instructions for [redacted][2]

The Joint Chiefs of Staff supported the USAFSS argument, and in early February the issue boiled down to a decision about who was to decide. Carter believed that the comparatively recent and untested directive on SIGINT support to tactical commanders (MJCS 506-67) left him with the decision as to how best to do this;[13] in the JCS view, the deployment of an ERU made the process of delegation of operational control an automatic one.[14] The dispute hinged on ambiguous wording in the memorandum that had never been completely resolved. Since it was a JCS memorandum in the first place, the JCS view finally prevailed, and on 19 February NSA delegated operational control of [redacted] to the Fifth Air Force.[15]

With the question of the control of the unit settled, the ERU concentrated on its assigned tasks. One of its contributions was [redacted] (b)(1) OGA

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There was also a struggle over the number of ACRP resources to dedicate to the North Korean problem. Although [redacted] flights out of [redacted] began on 2 February (see Chapter VI), the Fifth Air Force desired to [redacted] airborne coverage. This position was eventually supported by PACAF.[17] NSA and USAFSS both felt that this was unacceptable because of an inadequate number of linguists and because it would also require an additional aircraft, which would strip the SIGINT System of badly needed [redacted] coverage.[18] However, it was later discovered that what the Fifth Air Force really wanted was airborne coverage to begin two hours before dawn and continue until two hours after dusk. With careful juggling of orbit times, this could be managed by the aircraft and linguists at [redacted] at the time.[19] This arrangement satisfied everyone and the issue did not lead to the confrontation that had occurred over the ERU.

Regarding the processing of airborne intercept, initial instructions required that [redacted] prepare duplicate tapes [redacted] for transmittal to [redacted] This time-consuming process, however, was later changed so that [redacted] was given copies of all transcripts, with selected tapes being furnished on request.[20] Still later, the forwarding of transcripts of KORCOM air activity was terminated when it was determined that [redacted] requirements could be satisfied from data contained in Special Intelligence Reports (SIRS) and technical supplements to product reports produced by [redacted][21] (b)(1) OGA DOS

The *Pueblo* incident continued to generate requests for specialized SIGINT support from different commands. The Fifth Air Force requested more collection [redacted] ground forces, while the Eighth Army asked for authority to downgrade plaintext voice transcripts to Category I COMINT so that they could be used at lower command echelons. The only request of this nature approved by NSA was to downgrade to Category I that surface tracking data intercepted by naval direct support units (DSUs) and provided for fleet support. [redacted]

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On a personal level, General Carter sent a message to General Bonesteel to inform him of the actions taken to improve the [redacted] in support of his command. Carter stated: "I would emphasize that I intend to see that you receive first-rate SIGINT support tailored to your exact needs, and will continue to direct all efforts to that end."[23] Bonesteel replied with thanks for support in this "very hairy situation here," and noted, "Never a dull moment in the Land of the Morning Calm . . . ."[24]

NSA AND NAVY AGER ACTIONS

As NSA was arranging for enhanced SIGINT support to Far East commands, the Navy was taking steps to make technical research ships less vulnerable. The Chief of Naval Operations had earlier directed all technical research ships to off-load all classified materials not absolutely required for their immediate mission. It was an order that was known and understood from the time that the first U.S. SIGINT collection ship had conducted its first voyage on the high seas but had been loosely interpreted.

In many instances in the past, U.S. naval SIGINT ships had carried more than what was essential for the performance of their mission. It was a case of overkill. If doubts arose as to whether a document was needed by a SIGINT detachment, it had usually been resolved in favor of providing it to the ship. In some instances, as we have seen, there were a number of different SIGINT organizations, including NSA, that provided copies of SIGINT documents to detachments aboard naval ships.[25] The *Pueblo* detachment had received SIGINT publications from NSA, NSGPAC and NSAPAC in Hawaii, the [redacted] In some instances, multiple copies of the same documents were provided, compounding the destruction problems aboard the *Pueblo*.

Following the seizure of the *Pueblo*, NSA examined with a critical eye the document inventory of these ships. Representatives from each of the analytical elements, as well as the collection and production staffs, screened every item. This review resulted in messages sent to the USNS *Georgetown* [redacted] USS *Jamestown* [redacted] and USNS *Muller* [redacted] which cited hundreds of specific documents that were to be removed from the ships.[26]

While the CNO and NSA took action to reduce the potential loss of classified material aboard technical research ships in the event of another seizure, the Commander, Military Sea Transport Service, Atlantic (COMSTSLANT) issued revised instructions to the USNS *Muller* concerning harassment by ships of the Soviet Union and its satellites. These instructions specified that attempts to board the ship were to be resisted by operating the ship at full speed on a serpentine course, or in such other fashion as to make boarding as difficult and hazardous as possible and that the commander of the research detachment was to actively resist the boarding with his armed party. The instructions further stated that COMSTSLANT expected a consistently firm response to harassing tactics, with strong and vigorous action, including the use of available weapons in the event of an attempt to board.[27] Once again, the Navy had spelled out what it expected of its SIGINT ships during harassment and in the event of boarding attempts (see Chapter VI, p. 101).

In addition to spelling out what it expected of naval personnel on board U.S. SIGINT ships, the Navy also took other measures to protect its ships, crews, and classified materials. [redacted] the technical research ship USS *Georgetown* was sent back on station on 12 February from [redacted] but now it was to have not only a destroyer escort but also continuous air support provided by aircraft from the base at [redacted]

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SOVIET SURVEILLANCE

In the Sea of Japan, Soviet ships continued to shadow the U.S. naval task force, FORMATION STAR.[29] On the third of February, two Soviet TU-16 (Badger) aircraft, flying generally southward, overflew the ships of FORMATION STAR and then, when out of radar range, turned and made a second pass over the task force on their homeward leg. [redacted]

Two days later, the JCS ordered the *Enterprise* with necessary supporting ships to move southwest through the Tsushima Strait to an operating area that would permit their return to their original operating area within twelve hours.[31] At the same time, five additional Soviet naval ships deployed from Vladivostok to the southern Sea of Japan. In addition, the Soviet intelligence collector *Protraktor* returned to the FORMATION STAR surveillance area.[32] By 7 February, the considerable Soviet naval presence in the Sea of Japan-Tsushima Strait area numbered thirteen surface ships and a possible submarine. An additional *Kynda*-class cruiser had joined the group mentioned above.[33]

As the U.S. armed forces in the Korea-Japan area positioned and prepared themselves for possible military operations in the wake of the *Pueblo* incident, the State Department searched for some type of diplomatic solution to the crisis. In Tokyo, influential Japanese and foreign military and diplomatic officials, who were sympathetic to U.S. aims and policies in the Pacific, believed that the United States had suffered a loss in prestige, and

that the lack of a quick response by the United States to the *Pueblo*'s seizure had raised questions concerning U.S. capabilities in the Pacific. To these persons, U.S. intentions with respect to diplomatic and/or military actions were unclear.[34]

SOUTH KOREAN SUSPICIONS OF U.S.

In Seoul, the South Korean government was suspicious of and sensitive to any indication that the United States might deal unilaterally with North Korea or fail to treat North Korean infiltration of South Korea as seriously as the *Pueblo* seizure.[35] When a North Korean party leader hinted that the Military Armistice Commission at Panmunjom would be an acceptable site for negotiations on the *Pueblo* issue, South Korea's initial reaction was one of grudging approval. A foreign ministry official was quoted as saying, "It is more favorable to have the seizure discussed at Panmunjom than at the UN or in a third country; however, it is doubtful that productive results will emerge." The South Korean independent newspaper *Chungang Ilbo* echoed this line, saying that military action was the solution, the Military Armistice Commission had been historically ineffective, and the abortive attack on President Pak's residence was being played down as a result.[36]

When talks actually began at Panmunjom between U.S. and North Korean negotiators, the ROK reaction became more strident. The ROK foreign ministry became upset because they were not notified of the meetings and because no South Korean representatives were present. These protestations occurred even though South Korea was not a signatory to the Korean War armistice agreement and thus had no legal status at Panmunjom. They contended that the United States was putting much emphasis on the release of the ship and not enough on the infiltration of North Korean raiders. The chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of South Korea's National Assembly criticized the United States for conducting the talks and said that the ROK should withdraw its troops from Vietnam to defend the homeland.[37] The U.S. ambassador in Seoul reported that the ROK foreign minister had even proposed that a special U.S. envoy be sent to South Korea to facilitate closer U.S./ROK responses to and mutual agreements on North Korean belligerency.[38]

U.S. MEDIA FOCUS ON *PUEBLO*

The Tet offensive in Vietnam together with the *Pueblo* incident drew the special attention of the U.S. news media to events in the Far East. Secretary of State Dean Rusk

and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara appeared as guests on the NBC television program "Meet the Press" on Sunday, 4 February 1968. Although most of the program dealt with the Vietnam situation, several questions were posed about the *Pueblo* affair. Max Frankel, *New York Times* correspondent, asked Secretary McNamara if the Navy knew whether the *Pueblo* at any time had entered North Korean waters. McNamara replied

> No, I think we can't say beyond a shadow of a doubt, at no time during its voyage it entered North Korean waters. . . . at the time of seizure, we are quite positive it was in international waters. . . . there was a period of radio silence appropriate to its mission from the period of roughly January 10 to January 21, and it is in that period that we lack knowledge and we will not be able to obtain knowledge of that until the crew and the commander are released.[40]

It seemed a strange admission for the Secretary of Defense to make in the absence of any information to the contrary and in view of the Navy's explicit orders to the captain of the *Pueblo*. The statement later provoked the anger of Japan, South Korea, and some NATO countries.[41] It appeared to them that the United States was beginning to hedge on its previous statements concerning the location of the *Pueblo*. The United States, in response, attempted to reassure its allies that there was no attempt to admit to the possibility of a *Pueblo* violation of North Korean teritorial waters in exchange for obtaining the release of the crew and ship.[42] (The U.S. government, however, would be forced to do exactly that by the end of the year.)

Later, the program moderator, Lawrence Spivak, asked McNamara: "Why wasn't it [the *Pueblo*] better protected?" McNamara replied

> I think that is a good question and the answer is threefold. First, to have protected it would have been a provocative act. Secondly, it would have compromised the mission. This ship went undetected by the North Koreans for ten to twelve days. During that time it carried out its mission. Not only would it have been subject to capture during that period had it been detected, but also their reaction, a reaction it was sent there to determine, would have been quite different. And finally, the protection itself always runs the risk of leading to a military escalation.[43]

NSA became involved as South Korean displeasure with U.S. policy toward North Korea seemed to be mounting along with a feeling that the ROK should take some retaliatory military action. After South Korean President Pak, in an emotionally charged meeting with U.S. ambassador Porter, emphasized that the solution to the Korean problem was "to get Kim Il Sung now," General Bonesteel requested the urgent

Because the Rusk-McNamara "Meet the Press" interview had sparked speculation about U.S. initial versions of the *Pueblo*'s location at the time of seizure, pressure mounted within NSA to verify the SIGINT evidence that reflected the ship's position in international

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waters. NSA tasked its Korean Division (B11) with reanalyzing all available data. B11 subjected the original tapes of intercepted voice material to intensive retranscription and retranslation. On 7 February B11 issued a report giving the most authoritative view of North Korean naval voice communications related to the capture.[45] This report confirmed that, according to intercepted North Korean communications, the North Koreans themselves had located the *Pueblo* in international waters at the time that they seized the ship.

The next day, the U.S. air attaché in Tokyo reported that he had learned from a reliable senior officer in the Japanese Defense Force that the captain of a Japanese merchant ship that had departed the North Korean port of Konan on the afternoon of 23 January, had observed the *Pueblo* at 1500 hours surrounded by North Korean escort vessels at a position about fourteen miles from the nearest land.[46] Realizing the value of such a third party confirmation of the *Pueblo*'s location, U.S. ambassador Johnson in Tokyo appealed to Japanese prime minister Sato to surface the report of this sighting. After considering the question, Sato regretfully concluded that to do so would be counterproductive. The prime minister reasoned that the captain of the merchant ship, under press questioning, would almost certainly deny the sighting because of fear of North Korean retaliation. Further, because the owner of the merchant ship conducted most of his trade with North Korea, there was no way of forcing the captain to substantiate his report. Finally, without the captain's substantiation, the Japanese press would make it appear that the prime minister, with U.S. backing, had attempted to "manufacture" the story.[47]

NSA SENSITIVITY TO NORTH KOREAN COMSEC

Naturally, the lack of hard information about the *Pueblo*'s course when it was running under radio silence before its seizure (the question posed by McNamara), coupled with the critical unknowns regarding the extent of destruction of classified information and equipment aboard the ship, created apprehension throughout the intelligence community. NSA, however, was especially sensitive to overreactions to the situation. [redacted]

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Although no positive indicators of an impending North Korean communications change or other extraordinary COMSEC measures had been identified, NSA was sensitive to the fact that the capture of the *Pueblo* had potentially provided North Korea with data on which to base increased COMSEC measures. [redacted]

The *Pueblo* incident produced a large number of investigations, boards, and inquiries. Following the lead of congressional investigations that began almost immediately after the *Pueblo* incident, other government components soon started asking questions. When Dr. Gardiner Tucker, Deputy Director (Electronics and Information Systems), Defense Research and Engineering, DoD, asked for a damage assessment, Dr. Tordella provided him with a four-page paper that described the impact of the compromise on Soviet, Communist China, and Korean Communist SIGINT targets and concluded by saying

> it is reasonable to postulate that Soviet, KORCOM, and CHICOM efforts to strengthen the communications security practices throughout the entire communist bloc will be undertaken. Should this in fact occur, the general level of SIGINT information now available to the U.S. intelligence community will be reduced. Exactly how much and in what areas we cannot say at this time.[52]

Within the Navy, Vice Admiral Bernard F. Roeder was appointed the investigating officer. Although he began his investigation in late January, NSA was not consulted and learned of it only by accident on 5 February.[53] Poor coordination and parochialism was to mark the Navy-NSA relationship during the entire ordeal of the *Pueblo*; this was just one example.

On 12 February General Carter learned [redacted] reported that the *Pueblo* had been moved from its mooring in Changjahwan Bay, Wonsan to Munp'yong-no Naval Base in Wonsan. [redacted] the relocation was

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[redacted] Commander, U.S. Naval Forces, Korea, stated that the *Pueblo*'s original location was a logical one at which to inspect the ship for booby traps without risk of extensive damage to port facilities. Once this threat was resolved, relocation at a naval dockside would facilitate examination of equipment and wiring while diminishing the possibility of attack by frogmen.[55]

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NORTH KOREAN *PUEBLO* REVELATIONS

While there was speculation about the *Pueblo*'s current location, the North Koreans began to disclose some of the documentation they had recovered from the ship. On 13 February, the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) released photographs allegedly of the *Pueblo*'s navigational plot and log book as evidential records of the ship's violation of North Korean territorial waters. In Yokosuka, Navy elements were unable to make a definitive statement regarding the authenticity of the photographs. They said that, although the log book and handwriting used in making the entries looked authentic, anyone could have forged the entries on blank pages.[56] DIA commented that the track on the navigational chart was probably laid down after the capture of the *Pueblo* because a chart of the scale shown was not normally used for local area navigation.[57]

Later, on his return from captivity, Lieutenant Murphy, executive officer and navigator aboard the *Pueblo*, reported that the ship had never intruded into North Korean territorial waters and that the navigational logs displayed by the North Koreans were forgeries.[58] Murphy's statements were confirmed by SIGINT evidence of the ship's movements. At the time of attack and seizure, the *Pueblo* was well beyond North Korean territorial waters.[59]

North Korean revelations on the following day impacted more directly on the SIGINT community. At 10:30 A.M. (Washington time) on 14 February, KCNA broadcast an additional report about evidence seized aboard the *Pueblo* that told of its "espionage targets." This broadcast included the verbatim text of CINCPACFLT's message to DIRNSA that outlined the proposed operational schedules for both the *Pueblo* and the *Banner* as well as their primary collection tasks.[60] Accompanying the KCNA broadcast was [redacted] pictures of U.S. documents taken from the *Pueblo*. [redacted] intercepted the KCNA transmission [redacted] Two photographs, both of poor quality, were intercepted. The first photograph contained SIGINT report cover sheets used by NSA; classifications of "SECRET SAVIN" and "TOP SECRET TRINE" along with source attribution to "National Security Agency, Ft. Meade, MD" were clearly readable. In the second photograph, there appeared to be either Top Secret codeword documents or pages from a single document spread out on a table; page contents were unreadable. NSAPAC

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photographs; three specific SIGINT report serials were identified and some contained the markings "F41" [redacted] Another photograph showed parts of a large assortment of Specific Intelligence Collection Requirements (SICRs) documents carried by the *Pueblo*.[61] (SICRs were especially revealing documents. They contained listings of intelligence gaps within the U.S. intelligence community. They also contained extensive background information from all-source intelligence concerning the target area on which information was sought by the U.S. customer.)

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For the first time since the seizure of the ship on 23 January, it was now quite clear that a considerable portion of the extensive COMINT holdings aboard the *Pueblo* had not been destroyed but was in the hands of the North Koreans.

From Pyongyang, North Korea continued its well-planned propaganda campaign. On 15 February 1968, KCNA broadcast the recording of a press conference with the officers of the *Pueblo* for the purpose of confirming once again the espionage mission of the ship and its violations of North Korean waters. The press conference served to reveal the function of the *Pueblo*'s "Special Research Detachment" and its association with NSA, Pacific Electronic Intelligence Center, and Naval Security Group, Pacific. The alleged interview not only associated the *Pueblo* with the USS *Banner*, the USS *Palm Beach*, and operation PINKROOT, but exposed details of the *Pueblo*'s operations, chain of command, and activities of all personnel in command.[62] Later, Commander Bucher described how, during the press conference, ". . . the answers were printed out and we [the officers] were asked to memorize the answers and to stand up and give them as the questions were asked."[63]

On 16 February, KCNA broadcast a joint letter of apology to the government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) by the entire *Pueblo* crew. The text of the letter recapped the ship's positions during the alleged intrusion of the DPRK's territorial waters; named the three operational areas ("MARS," "VENUS," and "PLUTO"); referenced U.S. naval bases, naval patrols, the chain of command, naval commands, and stated that oceanographic sound measurements were carried out to gather information necessary for U.S. submarine operations.[64] Later, it was learned from Bucher's intelligence debriefing that the "apology" was initially drafted by Bucher and his operations officer, Lieutenant Schumacher. According to Bucher, "eventually what happened was that all the things that were in there were written by them [the North Koreans] and we were forced to use their ideas; they wanted us to put it into better English and in many cases we did but in many cases we did not."[65]

Although North Korea's propaganda exploitation of the *Pueblo* incident heated up during mid-February, there was evidence that the threat of imminent hostilities was cooling off. On 12 February, DIA discontinued its special daily report, *Situation in North Korea*, and on the 13th, [redacted]

[redacted] Both [redacted] abandoned their twenty-four-hour manning schedules on 18 February.[67]

At NSA, meantime, elements were noting a marked decrease in SIGINT reflections of [redacted] atmosphere was beginning to subside.

As the crisis dimension of the *Pueblo* situation diminished, it was ironic that in early March, NSA, along with CNO, received a request from the Deputy Secretary of Defense to comment on a letter (dated prior to the *Pueblo* incident) from Dr. Eugene Fubini recommending that "we build and equip a significant number (between nine and thirty) of trawlers for SIGINT collection.[69] In reply, General Carter at NSA mostly deferred to CNO; however, he did forward to CNO a copy of *NSA SIGINT Trawler (AGER) Study* with the comment that it might be useful in responding to the Deputy Secretary albeit with the understanding that it might be partially overtaken by events. Carter also commented in the response that changes in NSA views might become necessary.[70] NSA's collection office, K04, had developed this study in October 1967 based on the possible use of trawlers in lieu of larger ships for improved SIGINT collection [redacted] The letter to CNO that forwarded the study was intended to stress the use of the study as a coordinated, informative document.[71]

CODEWORD CHANGE CONSIDERED

Following the *Pueblo* seizure and the subsequent public disclosure of codewords by the North Koreans, DIRNSA requested D32, the Policy Division, to look into the advisability of changing the existing COMINT codewords. This evaluation produced solid arguments both pro and con, and there was sufficient precedent to justify either position. General Carter and Dr. Tordella were inclined to believe that a change of codewords at that time would be more trouble, more expense, and cause more confusion than would be worthwhile from a security standpoint. [redacted]

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By 13 May, the Director's staff at NSA had compiled an impact assessment of the loss of the *Pueblo* and the possible damage resulting from the compromise of SIGINT technical support material and collection equipment aboard the ship. This assessment was sent to USIB for the information of its principals.[78] A slightly sanitized version (COMSEC portion deleted) of this assessment was also provided to each of the collaborating centers through the appropriate SUSLO.[79]

Upon receiving the NSA impact assessment, the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, Vice Admiral Rufus Taylor, requested that the matter of the *Pueblo* be considered by USIB, and it was taken up at the 6 June meeting.[80] In brief, Carter explained to USIB the steps taken to hold shipboard classified material to an absolute minimum for specific SIGINT missions of TRS and AGER platforms and said that some of the platforms were being provided escorts. Carter noted, however, that the NSA policy to limit classified material holdings aboard ship might result in a less effective scheduled operation and would undoubtedly hamper SIGINT operations if a ship were diverted to a nonscheduled contingency mission.[81]

On the same date (12 September 1968) that North Korea was publicizing yet another *Pueblo* press conference, DIRNSA terminated SIGINT Readiness ALPHA which was established for Korea in January when the *Pueblo* was seized. A week earlier, JCS had advised NSA that the services of [redacted], the USAFSS Emergency Reaction Unit [redacted] had been terminated because the threatened hostilities after the seizure of the *Pueblo* had failed to materialize. Based on this evaluation of the Korean situation, General Carter decided to terminate the alert.[82]

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(b)(3)-50 USC 403
(b)(3)-18 USC 798
(b)(3)-P.L. 86-36

PUEBLO CREW CAPTIVITY AND INTERROGATIONS

Thus far, reactions to the *Pueblo* seizure have been described, its impact on the U.S. intelligence community examined, and the significance of the event in the spectrum of U.S. foreign relations and domestic turmoil during the troubled year of 1968 reviewed. But what had happened to the *Pueblo*'s crew? How were they being treated and how were they coping with the ordeal of interrogation and detention?

Upon reaching Wonsan in the evening of 23 January, the *Pueblo*'s crew had been taken by train to a detention center outside Pyongyang. Early the next morning, the North Koreans assigned the crew to rooms on the third floor of a building in a military compound. The rooms were filled with no attempt to segregate the enlisted men by rating, specialty, or any other criteria with the exception of the three wounded men: Woelk, Chicca, and Crandell were placed in the same room with Fireman Rigby to attend them. Each officer was given a separate room.

Initial interrogation of the *Pueblo* crew began immediately after its arrival at the first detention center in Pyongyang. The North Koreans called crewmen in groups according to NAVSECGRU specialty (e.g., intercept operator, translator, cryptogear operator, technician, etc.) Each crewmen was required to complete personal history forms that included background data from birth to present. The Koreans then checked answers against crew members' service jackets that they recovered from the *Pueblo* and the captives were required to correct any discrepancies. The North Koreans then centered their interest on navigation and communications personnel as well as officers. The interrogations that took place at this first detention center took on a personal nature (crew background, experience, and assignment.) Many of these interrogations were for the purpose of gathering data for the more intensive interrogations and the extensive propaganda campaign that followed.[83]

On the night of 4 March 1968, without any prior notice, the entire crew was moved to another building located about a twenty-minute drive from the first. At this second site, the men were housed in eight-man rooms on the second and third floors. Again, room assignments were made at random with no attempt to segregate men in any way. As was the case at the first site, each officer had his own room.

At the second site, the North Koreans established a chain of command structure for the enlisted men. Noting that Commander Bucher selected Quartermaster First Class Charles Law to lead exercises for the crew, the North Koreans designated Law as the second floor leader and overall leader of the enlisted men with Staff Sergeant Hammond named third floor leader. The senior man by rank in each room was named room supervisor. Later, because of his "insincerity," the North Koreans replaced Hammond with Communications Technician First Class Ginther. The door to each room was kept shut but never locked. Guards, armed with submachine guns, patrolled the passageways

constantly. The North Koreans made unscheduled informal head counts, and occasionally they thoroughly searched the crew's rooms.

During confinement at the second site, a North Korean Army doctor and nurse were available twenty-four hours a day to provide medical care and treatment for the *Pueblo*'s crew. The doctor performed physical examinations on all the crew at one time or another and treated colds, sore throats, ear infections, sprains, athlete's foot, and skin disease. On occasion, the physician used local anesthesia by injection but on most occasions, he used no anesthesia. All of the *Pueblo* crew members who had eye problems were examined and eye glasses were made for those who needed them. No dentist was available but the North Korean doctor fashioned a few temporary fillings as necessary. The doctor also dispensed medicine twice a week to each man to prevent malaria.[84] Occasionally, the doctor, through an interpreter, asked Hospital Corpsman First Class Herman Baldridge of the *Pueblo* crew for medical advice, especially on crew member complaints and on medical methods of treatment known to Baldridge. At no time, however, was Baldridge permitted to assist in treating his fellow crewmen.[85]

At the second site, the North Koreans gave the crew the following orders, which they termed "Rules of Life":

1. Obey all orders.
2. Show respect to all people in charge.
3. Do not sing in room.
4. Do not lie on floors.
5. Do not lie on bed with clothes on.
6. Do not resist interrogation.
7. Do not encourage others to resist interrogation.
8. No communication between rooms.
9. Do not write anything except what is authorized.
10. Keep clean.
11. Take good care of public property.
12. Observe public morality.[86]

Orders 6 and 7 made it clear that the North Koreans would not tolerate any interference with their interrogations. Orders 3 and 9 are also curious. Crew members reported during their later debriefings in the United States that they had checked and found no listening devices in their confinement spaces. In spite of these crew assurances, U.S. authorities, in keeping with a "worst case" scenario, assumed that the quarters were electronically monitored for purposes of drawing up the damage assessment. The North

Korean orders, however, suggest that the crew's quarters at the second site were electronically monitored. Orders 3 and 9 could have been intended to prevent the crewmen from circumventing conversation in their spaces and preventing interference with North Korean monitoring.

Interrogation teams usually consisted of at least three people, one of whom was an interpreter, with some teams having as many as two officers and two enlisted personnel. Interrogation techniques consisted of the following:

Making crew members walk around the floor on their knees.

Making crew members hold chairs over their heads for long periods of time.

Forcing the crew to sit in straight chairs at attention for lengthy periods.

Requiring crew members to get down on their knees with their backs straight and lean backward for hours with a 2×4 piece of wood placed between their thighs and calves.

Exploiting the element of fear by creating noises in an adjoining room which sounded as though other crew members were being killed.

Slapping and punching crewmen or hitting them with gun butts.

Holding a gun to crewmen's heads with threats to kill.

Telling crew members that they might as well confess because the North Koreans had captured everything anyway and that the U.S. government had tricked the crew.

Informing the crew that they would be shot as spies if they did not confess.

During the interrogation sessions, the North Koreans attempted to convince the crew that it had been abandoned by the U.S. government and that its only hope was the U.S. people. The North Koreans also told the crew that the United States was crumbling on three fronts: Vietnam, social unrest, and the effects of the worldwide money crisis.[87]

The North Koreans singled out NSG crew members for intensive interrogation. Each was interrogated on an average of from three to twelve times with a few as many as twenty times. Each interrogation session lasted from a few minutes up to several hours.[88] It was no surprise to anyone that the general service crewmen were never interrogated in depth beyond the point of filling out background data forms. The interrogations were accompanied by severe beatings to some members of the NSG detachment and a few of the general line officers.

Several months after the initial phase of interrogations, the North Koreans took a special interest in members of the SIGINT detachment who spoke the Russian language and who were assigned, in the past, to the intercept and exploitation of Soviet communications targets. A North Korean colonel, who spoke fluent Russian and tested the language

ability of the NSG personnel, led these interrogations. This team obtained details of the U.S. intercept and exploitation status of Soviet communications.[89] It directed its questioning toward the U.S. intercept of Soviet [redacted] communications and links covered, Soviet [redacted] and information on the [redacted] who, because of his terrified condition, admitted during his debriefing that he voluntarily provided the North Koreans entirely too much detail. He provided information on the organization of NSG and its intercept tasking at [redacted] as well as that of NSG activities [redacted] He also identified to the North Koreans those NSG members of the crew who were Russian linguists, intercept operators, and cryptographic personnel.[90] At least some of this information was already available to the North Koreans from personnel "jackets" captured when the ship was seized.

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From other members of the detachment, the North Koreans obtained details of the [redacted] substance of these interrogations was in contradiction to the statements made by a number of detachment crew members during their U.S. debriefings, namely, that the North Koreans were not interested in the U.S. SIGINT effort against the USSR. NSA believed that this was a deliberate North Korean attempt to mislead the crew.[92]

Statements given to U.S. debriefers were that the North Koreans were "stupid" and of "low mentality," unable to grasp the significance of much of the information provided to them.[93] Other NSG crewmembers, however, told their U.S. debriefers that some of the North Korean interrogators were very knowledgeable and could not be deceived.[94] In spite of these conflicting points of view, the North Koreans obtained a significant amount of highly classified information from the interrogation of *Pueblo* crew members. [redacted] a staff chief of NSA's Office of Production, directed the Agency's participation in the debriefing of the *Pueblo*'s crew in San Diego in early 1969. On his return, he notified General Carter of NSA that ". . . the *Pueblo* crew were more talkative and cooperative than originally imagined. These facts certainly compound and strengthen our [NSA's] original assessment [worst case circumstance], not weaken it.")[95]

One disturbing aspect that came to light during the U.S. debriefings of the crew was the belief by some debriefers that some members of the crew withheld information pertaining to classified data that they had given to the North Koreans. This may have been prompted by shame or fear of the upcoming court of inquiry proceedings. One crew member told U.S. debriefers initially that "he was not really interrogated in detail" but later admitted that he had given the North Koreans details of his assignment as an intercept operator at [redacted] There were several other instances in which crewmen downplayed classified information revealed by them to the North Koreans or were suspected of revealing SIGINT data that they did not admit.[97] If such information were in fact withheld from U.S. debriefers, there was an additional body of information compromised to the North Koreans and probably to the Soviets for which no damage assessment could be made.

All of this information was in addition to the bulk of documents seized from the *Pueblo*. The interest of the North Koreans in obtaining intelligence information on the U.S. SIGINT effort against the USSR through interrogation also brought NSA to conclude that the special intelligence interests of the USSR were covered, albeit indirectly, by the North Koreans. It also prompted NSA to conclude at the time that the captured SIGINT documents had been or would in the future be provided to the USSR.[98]

Press coverage accorded the *Pueblo* was of short duration. Although this factor and the period of relative U.S. inaction seemed to indicate that the *Pueblo*'s crew had been forgotten, such was not the case. Plans for the crew's return had begun shortly after its seizure, and negotiations with the North Koreans for the crew's release had continued quietly throughout the year. U.S. planning was beset by clashes between the military and intelligence services, and negotiations were dominated by attempts to find diplomatic, face-saving solutions. We will look next at how planning actions and negotiations developed.

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Chapter VIII

Return and Debriefing of the *Pueblo* Crew

On 26 January 1968, the Director, NSA, informed JCS of his "extreme" concern about the exposure and potential compromise of the cryptographic equipment, systems, and SIGINT materials aboard the USS *Pueblo*. He requested that arrangements be made to permit NSA personnel to make a technical survey of the ship at its first port of call, whenever it was returned. Further, NSA made it clear that it considered it "essential that qualified NSA technicians be afforded the earliest opportunity to interrogate all repatriated *Pueblo* SIGINT personnel and any other members of the crew as necessary in order to gain as much insight as possible regarding the actual disposition of the classified equipment and material held aboard the ship at the time of the incident."[1]

The Navy, however, had plans of its own. This was, after all, the first such surrender of a U.S. Navy ship since the War of 1812. It was forming these plans simultaneous with and independent of NSA's planning. From the very first, Navy commands involved envisioned an all-Navy operation, with personnel from NSG doing the special intelligence debriefs. Late in January, the Navy placed CINCPACFLT in charge of the debrief plans and operations. NSA learned of this planning only accidentally. In early February, JCS directed NSA's participation in the debriefings. CINCPACFLT viewed this as only "technical" assistance and opposed any detailed interrogation of the crew until a later date, but the CNO office decided in favor of a complete debrief at an early date.[2] This arrangement appeared to guarantee NSA a place on the debriefing team. The various commands involved in the planning continued their disagreements over the precise composition of the debriefing team and interview methodology. General Carter recognized the need to obtain a complete assessment as quickly as possible. He opposed the superficial initial intelligence debrief, saying, "I cannot accept the philosophy of quick return to families prior to complete debriefing . . ."[3]

The location of the debriefing operation took a meandering course. The first candidate was Yokosuka, recommended by CINCPACFLT because of excellent medical and special intelligence facilities.[4] By 10 February it had been changed to Hawaii because of possible leftist demonstrations in Japan.[5] In late June it was again changed, this time to San Diego so that crew morale and welfare needs (i.e., reuniting with their families) could be attended to. The processing would be in three phases: (1) medical screening and intelligence debriefing; (2) leave period; and (3) an investigation or court of inquiry, if appropriate, to determine if there were any negligence in the loss of the *Pueblo*.[6] The selection of San Diego resolved the dispute over quick versus complete initial debrief. Once reunited with their families in San Diego, morale and welfare considerations would

be taken care of, and the Navy could proceed with a fairly exhaustive initial debriefing. A second intelligence interview session would not be necessary.

NSA and the Navy continued to wrangle over procedure. There were disputes over the number of debriefers to be used, over essential elements of information (EEI), and over whose ultimate responsibility it was to assess cryptologic compromise. Many of these disputes were ironed out at a meeting in the Pentagon on 9 and 10 July (see below).[7] Other issues were decided during an NSA trip to San Diego to see the debrief site, designated Building 24 at the Naval Hospital, San Diego.[8] This post-capture conflict between NSA and the Navy closely paralleled the problems that bedeviled the collection program prior to the *Pueblo* incident, demonstrating that catastrophe does not inevitably bring compromise or cooperation.

In Washington, specific personnel assignments were being made. To complement Captain C.O. Everhart of CINCPACFLT as project coordinator, William Abbott of the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) was designated debrief analysis coordinator. Captain T.P. Saylor of NSG became head of the Cryptologic Compromise Damage Assessment (CCDA) team, and the NSA coordinator, Richmond D. "Don" Snow, was named Abbott's assistant. Saylor was also named "Assistant Interview Coordinator for Special Intelligence Matters."[9] NSA, meanwhile, proposed a team of thirty-nine for the debriefing sessions, including ten interviewers, nine administrative and secretarial people, and twenty transcribers.[10] All of these personnel were accepted as part of the debriefing team. At a meeting at Nebraska Avenue, the participants agreed on a three-day interview period.[11]

NEGOTIATIONS AT PANMUNJOM

It was almost Thanksgiving Day 1968. Planning for handling the release of *Pueblo*'s crew had been going on for ten months. Although actual release seemed no closer than it had immediately following the crew's capture, the time was fast approaching when these plans would be implemented.

Negotiations for the release of the crew had been going on for months at Panmunjom, Korea, between the U.S. senior member of the Military Armistice Commission and his North Korean counterpart. Throughout this period, the United States had also tried approaches through many other diplomatic and private channels but with no knowledge of what effect, if any, these approaches may have had. The U.S. State Department had kept the Soviets informed of developments concerning the *Pueblo* and, while the role they played during the negotiations was not clear, it was known that in some instances the Soviets acted as a channel of communications to the North Koreans.[12] In the early stages of negotiations, the United States made a number of proposals involving the submission of the *Pueblo* case to an impartial third party. The United States said that it would apologize if such action were warranted by the results of an impartial investigation. This offer had

been made in the conviction that the *Pueblo* had not intruded into territorial waters as claimed by the North Koreans since the ship's orders expressly forbade such intrusion. Moreover, the United States had proof that the North Korean "evidence" had been "faked," but fearing further danger to the crew, it could not make public the proof that it held.

The North Koreans flatly rejected all U.S. initial proposals, insisting upon an unqualified, unconditional admission by the United States of their charges coupled with an apology for these "crimes." In May 1968, they presented a draft apology for U.S. signature. The United States responded in June with an alternative: the Korean draft apology would be made the basis for solution, and the U.S. senior representative would be authorized to sign his name on that document provided that he wrote above his name the sentence: "I hereby acknowledge the receipt of the *Pueblo* crew." In so doing, he would sign a receipt on the document but not sign the document itself – a distinction that had been made clear to the North Koreans. The North Koreans gave no answer to this proposal. For a long time, moreover, they refused to say what would happen if the United States met their demands, merely hinting that in due course the crew would probably be released. Not until 30 September did they state clearly that the entire crew would be released simultaneously with a U.S. signature on an apology.

By late November 1968, because of the months of fruitless negotiations at Panmunjom, U.S. negotiators were convinced that the North Koreans would not moderate their demands in the near future. It was therefore decided to use the approach of Christmas combined with the change of administration shortly thereafter, to press the North Koreans for release of the crew, while avoiding any serious risk of a break in negotiations if they rejected the U.S. offer. The United States therefore presented to the North Koreans what it said (and meant) was the administration's last offer, warning them that unless they accepted promptly so that the men could be home by Christmas, the U.S. offer would be withdrawn and the incoming administration would be given a free hand for any subsequent dealings. A new alternative was offered: the U.S. senior representative at Panmunjom would be authorized simply to sign his name to the document drafted by the North Koreans. At the same time, he would declare, in a formal statement, that the document was false. The North Koreans were given a copy of the statement which the United States proposed to make. The North Korean document was not modified at any time by negotiation and did not contain any U.S. input whatsoever. On 17 December 1968, the North Koreans accepted this new alternative in principle.[13] It was the only means that the United States could employ to break the diplomatic stalemate and to obtain the release of the crew.

By flash precedence message on 22 December, the Commander, U.S. Forces Korea, advised all interested U.S. commands that release of the *Pueblo* crew had been scheduled for the following day at 11:00 A.M. local time.[14] Don Snow, the NSA project officer for BREECHES BUOY (the Navy code name for the debriefing), left Washington for San Diego

the same day, and his contingent departed for the West Coast the day after Christmas. CINCPACFLT set 28 December as the date on which the BREECHES BUOY debriefings would begin.[15] CNO later changed the date to 27 December.[16]

In Panmunjom, at about 9:00 A.M. on 23 December 1968, Major General Gilbert H. Woodward, USA, chief U.S. negotiator, prepared to sign a document drafted by the North Koreans. Just before signing, however, Woodward made the following formal statement for the record:

> The position of the United States Government with regard to the *Pueblo*, as consistently expressed in the negotiations at Panmunjom and in public, has been that the ship was not engaged in illegal activity, that there is no convincing evidence that the ship at any time intruded into the territorial waters claimed by North Korea, and that we could not apologize for actions which we did not believe took place. The document which I am going to sign was prepared by the North Koreans and is at variance with the above position, but my signature will not and cannot alter the facts. I will sign the document to free the crew and only to free the crew.[17]

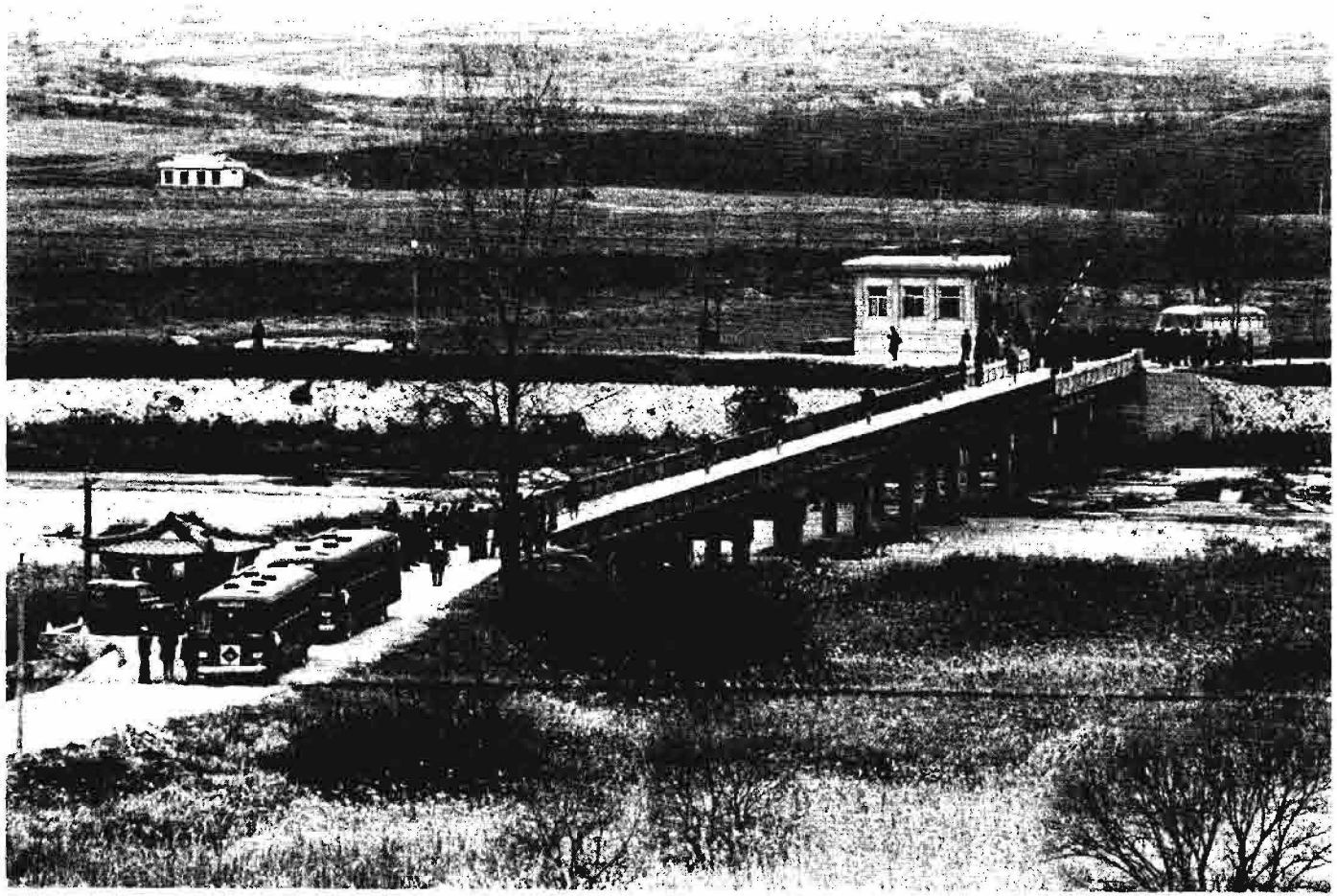
Woodward then signed the North Korean document. At 1130 the crew was released to U.S. custody.

A light snow was falling over the truce village at Panmunjom as the *Pueblo* crew, led by Commander Bucher, walked single file across the short concrete bridge into the southern half of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) dividing North and South Korea. The eighty-two crewmen carried with them the body of Fireman Duane D. Hodges, killed on the day of capture. After initial identification procedures at a makeshift reception, the crewmen boarded three U.S. Army buses that took them to the advance U.S. Army camp south of the DMZ. From there the crew boarded helicopters and flew to the 121st Evacuation Hospital at a U.S. Army base west of Seoul for a medical check-up.

In Korea on the day following their release, *Pueblo* crew members were ready for return to the United States. At the 121st Evacuation Hospital, the commanding officer briefed the press, stating that the men evidenced beatings and malnutrition, but there was no medical evidence that the men needed psychiatric treatment. Admiral Rosenburg announced the planned departure times and tactfully stated that a court of inquiry would be held as an official fact-finding process.[18]

This was the first public indication that the Navy would seek to discover if there were any culpability in the loss of the *Pueblo* and the compromise of its extensive cryptologic and cryptographic contents. This court would be convened at a later date after the arrival of the crew in the United States and after the debriefing process was completed.

On the afternoon of 24 December, U.S. authorities transferred the *Pueblo* crew to Kimpo Air Base, near Seoul, where they boarded two transport aircraft for the flight home.[19] The *Pueblo*'s crew left South Korea the afternoon of 24 December, but the long flight to San Diego still terminated on Christmas eve because it crossed the international



Pueblo Crew crossing the bridge at the truce village, Demilitarized Zone, following their release on 23 December 1968.

date line. At 2:00 P.M., both aircraft landed at Miramar Naval Air Station, San Diego. The crew then departed for the naval hospital and the debriefing site.[20]

As the CCDA team arrived, thorough medical and psychological examinations of each crew member began. Commander Bucher was plagued with a respiratory infection and was physically and emotionally exhausted. On doctor's orders, he was transferred to a private room at the senior officers' quarters, Naval Hospital, Balboa, for a period of rest. Although Bucher, of course, retained his status as captain of the *Pueblo*, as a practical matter, his executive officer, Lieutenant Murphy, acted as commanding officer of the crew.[21]

DEBRIEFING BEGINS

On 26 December Rear Admiral Horace D. Warden, commanding officer of the U.S. Naval Base Hospital, San Diego, declared fourteen *Pueblo* returnees to be medically fit to undergo intelligence debriefing. On the advice of doctors, however, Captain Everhart of CINCPACFLT, BREECHES BUOY project coordinator, stipulated that debriefings should end by 1800 daily.[22] These crewmen were then interviewed for several hours on the essential elements of information concerning cryptologic and cryptographic subjects; a total of 17.7 hours of debriefing was achieved. The first step in the cycle toward making a national damage assessment had been taken.[23]

The NSA team decided to issue a daily intelligence situation report (SITREP) that would summarize the day's activities. Generally, it included major intelligence items of interest; information learned from the crew debriefings concerning the status of U.S. cryptographic and cryptologic equipments and documents; COMSEC items of interest; and the status of the debriefing process, to include the number of returnees debriefed.[24]

A limited debriefing schedule on 26 and 27 December was followed by the onset of a full schedule on the 28th and 29th. As things progressed on the 28th, improvements and adjustments were made in the flow and handling of debrief material; also, it was found that a large number of questions generated by the technicians could be used during the next interview of a particular crew member to explore in greater detail points that were not covered sufficiently in the initial interview. As the number of interviews grew, NSA and NSG technicians as well as Naval Intelligence Command (NAVINTCOM) and Naval Intelligence Service (NAVINSERV) analysts organized into specialty teams that concentrated, for example, on cryptologic, COMSEC, or cryptographic aspects of the debriefing process. The team approach facilitated optimum use of time in studying transcripts and improved the selection of items for the SITREP. By the end of the day on 28 December, the teams had interviewed fifty returnees, and 149 hours of interview tape had been produced for transcription.[25]

Disagreement between NSA and the Navy continued into the debriefing phase. At one point, Captain Everhart attempted to restrict communication between NSA and the

Agency damage assessment team to Navy channels.[26] [redacted] the head of the NSA team, was forced to resort to privacy channels to communicate with General Carter and outlined his difficulties with the Navy chain of command.[27] Carter understood that the Navy resented what it regarded as Washington-level intrusions with no good purpose, and knew how to deal with it. Rather than voicing a complaint, Carter sent a laudatory message to Admiral Thomas Moorer, Chief of Naval Operations, in which he praised the efforts of the combined team, whose efforts, he stated, would be well appreciated by NSA and the United States Intelligence Board.[28] The message had the desired effect in San Diego. [redacted] described the Navy officials there as "bubbling over with kind words for the Agency," and confirmed that NSA team morale had improved several notches as a result of the better atmosphere.[29] If General Carter believed in the old axiom that you can catch more flies with honey, it worked; the damage assessment team rapidly acquired more work than it could handle. NSA people were working extremely long hours and could not hold up indefinitely. [redacted] asked for an additional eleven people and got them in twenty-four hours. The Naval Security Group added twenty transcribers, and with these additions, the BREECHES BUOY group had enough people to finish their task.[30]

Throughout these high-level exchanges of information and position, the working level contingent continued a vigorous program of intelligence debriefing in spite of interruptions necessitated by public affairs matters, medical appointments, legal counseling and other activities of the crew, particularly during the Christmas and New Year holidays. For the most part, one interviewer conducted the initial session in a private room, and these sessions were recorded by mutual consent. Exceptions to the one interviewer procedure occurred in those instances when it was necessary to have technical personnel present to clarify specific points. Interview sessions ranged from a minimum of twenty minutes (due to scheduling problems) to a (predetermined) maximum of four hours. The interview approach was low-key and emphasized the rapport between interviewers and crew members.[31] By the close of business on 3 January, the interview teams had completed 953 interview tapes.

Nine days had now passed since the interview process began on 26 December, and eighty-one crewmen had been made available for debriefing. Although the operation had been proceeding extremely well, pressure was beginning to build to complete Phase I so that the Navy could begin its court of inquiry.[32] The pressure to complete the debriefings increased because the enlistments of twenty-seven crew members had expired while they were prisoners of North Korea. In such circumstances, these men could be retained on active duty no longer than thirty days following their return to the United States and they were scheduled for discharge on 23 January 1969.[33] Once these twenty-seven men left the Navy they could be subpoenaed to appear before a court of inquiry, but it would be under different ground rules.

By 2 January [redacted] had talked with William Abbott, the debrief analysis coordinator, about the composition of the Debrief Termination Board that was prescribed by the CINCPACFLT BREECHES BUOY procedural guide and the next day, Captain Everhart activated the board. Don Snow (NSA) was named executive secretary and [redacted] (NSA) was designated one of five members of the board. Other board members represented NAVINTCOM, NSG, NIS, and OP-92C (Director of Naval Intelligence). Abbott (ACNO) chaired the board. Captain Everhart also convened two working boards to analyze and augment the documentation produced during the intelligence debrief in order to prepare recommendations which the Debrief Termination Board could submit to the CINCPACFLT Debrief Project Officer. One board was made up of the NSA and NSG representatives, and the second consisted of NIS, NIC, and OP-92C personnel.[34] The Debrief Termination Review Board was both a management tool for internal procedures and a means of formally deciding when to terminate the debriefing of a particular individual.

NSA and NSG personnel were paired into teams to provide, whenever possible, complementary expertise, for example, one cryptologic/general operations man with one cryptologic/equipment man. Each returnee was assigned as the responsibility of one of these teams. [redacted] of NSA also established an ad hoc NSA-NSG analytic review group to survey the analysis of the teams.

In a message to CINCPACFLT on 4 January 1969, CINCPACFLTREP, San Diego, summarized the status of the intelligence debriefing effort and stated that, although there were many variables in estimating its completion, it was tentatively expected to conclude on 10 January. This schedule would make the crew available for the court of inquiry on 14 January following a brief interval of rest and rehabilitation.[35]

All of the crew except Bucher had been interviewed. Finally, on the afternoon of Saturday, 4 January, he was released from medical and psychological evaluation and granted weekend liberty with his family. Although still requiring extensive dental treatment, Bucher became available for initial debriefing on 6 January.[36] Medical authorities gave permission for two three-hour sessions to be held the next day with an evening session if desired.[37]

With a decrease in the number of daily debriefs, the analysis effort accelerated rapidly as pressure mounted to complete Phase I of the BREECHES BUOY operations. While the debriefing teams were preparing case studies on each crew member, [redacted] assigned technical subjects to be analyzed by other specific personnel.[38] By the afternoon of 7 January, the ad hoc NSA-NSG analytic review group had arrived at its initial findings on debrief releasability for each of the thirty-three SI-cleared crew members. Although twenty-seven of the thirty-three crewmen were considered eligible for release, the group cautioned that its findings could not be considered final because, in several cases, the analysis of a considerable number of debriefings was still incomplete. In addition, debriefs of the general service crew members were revealing data that might require further

debriefs of SI-cleared personnel or, at a minimum, modification to the category until certain EEI were resolved.[39] Releasability criteria were discussed at the second meeting of the Debrief Termination Board on 7 January.

Members at this board meeting noted some resistance of the crew to the interview process. This had become evident while cross-checking the statements on one transcript with those on another. It was apparent that the crew was apprehensive about the official court of inquiry and consequently were reluctant to say anything they considered incriminating. There were indications that the presence of a tape recorder and the "question/answer" method of interviewing also raised the suspicions of some crew members and prevented them from relating all that they might otherwise say.[40] The board was determined that, with the exception of Commander Bucher (whose interview began on 6 January) and perhaps two other cases, all debriefings could be completed by 10 January.[41]

The Debrief Termination Board met again for the third and last time in the late afternoon of 8 January 1969 to complete the substance of a message to CINCPACFLT on the status of Phase I. The message stated that formal interviews had been terminated with all but eighteen crew members and that the available database was virtually complete. The completion of debrief interviews and informal discussion sessions with all crew members was anticipated by close of business on 10 January with a possible overlap in Phase II for Bucher and Harris.[42]

Close-out of the debriefing process continued on schedule; by 9 January the debrief team eliminated the tape transcription backlog, and on 10 January it completed the interview sessions except for those of Bucher. The initial damage assessment phase concluded, the team members were directed to gather again at Naval Security Group headquarters in Washington on 20 January to prepare a final assessment.[43] The BREECHES BUOY files, consisting of audiotapes, memoranda, messages, and intelligence card files were flown to Washington where they were transferred to NSG headquarters.[44]

The United States did not have a similar situation from the past that it could use as a model to aid in planning for the repatriation and debriefing of personnel detained by a hostile power. With the termination of BREECHES BUOY, there now existed a body of experience that could serve as a guide for future such incidents involving captured U.S. personnel. The final administrative report prepared from the BREECHES BUOY intelligence debriefings recognized that there were lessons to be learned from this experience and devoted a section of the report to that topic.

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DEBRIEFING ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT

From San Diego, the scene shifted to Washington, D.C., where the CNO directed that the CCDA team convene at 9:00 A.M. on Tuesday, 21 January 1969, at the Naval Security Station (NSS) on Nebraska Avenue, N.W.[45] Twenty-two NSA personnel assembled on that date to begin their task. NSG augmented the NSA team with additional analysts integrated under the direction of the NSA team chief, [redacted].[46]

Early in the week, [redacted] learned that the Navy, still attempting to bypass NSA, had already forwarded draft terms of reference for the Special *Pueblo* Intelligence Damage Assessment Team (SPIDAT) to CNO for signature before he had an opportunity to review them. [redacted] discussed this aspect with Captain Holschuh, the ACNO representative at the Naval Security Station, who accepted some modification in wording. In substance, the terms of reference stated that the reconstituted CCDA team would comprise representatives of the Naval Intelligence Command, Naval Investigative Service, Naval Security Group Command, and National Security Agency, plus other intelligence commands or agencies as might from time to time be necessary. The team was to operate under the coordination of a representative of the Assistant Chief of Naval Operations (Intelligence). Among its tasks were the review of all intelligence material developed during the Phase I intelligence debrief of the *Pueblo* crew; preparation of a report of the intelligence damage resulting from the capture of the *Pueblo* and subsequent internment of its crew; [redacted] and submission of recommendations for follow-up interviews with individual *Pueblo* crewmen for further exploitation.

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In addition to the intelligence collected from the debriefs, the team realized that it would also have to assess the damage resulting from the compromise of messages transmitted by the Western Pacific Operational Intelligence Broadcast (as relayed by Guam and designated GOPI). These messages were on board the *Pueblo* at the time it was seized. NSA and NSG team members began a message-by-message analysis of all GOPI traffic for the period 5–23 January 1968 to assess the cryptologic techniques or operations revealed in this traffic, as opposed to the hard intelligence content of message texts.[47]

During the first week of SPIDAT operations at NSS, [redacted] met with Rear Admiral Donald Showers and Commander Paul Keast of DIA to discuss the relationship between the damage assessment team and the USIB Intelligence Damage Assessment Review Group being formed under Admiral Showers. Members of the Review Group were expected to move into Naval Security Group spaces but, according to Showers, would do no analysis of raw transcripts; rather, they would only monitor SPIDAT operations. Showers requested an interim report on damage assessment by 1 March 1969.[48]

On 24 February [redacted] informed Carter at NSA that SPIDAT was still on schedule and would have the final draft of the damage assessment readied for him by 1 March. He also reported that, when the question was raised of making a damage assessment based on the court of inquiry transcripts, he voiced his opposition to anyone on the CCDA team having access to the court's transcripts at that time. He reasoned that the team's work should be based solely on information obtained from the privileged debrief of the *Pueblo* crew and that to mix privileged information with semilegal testimony from the court of inquiry would give the appearance of prejudicing CCDA conclusions.[49]

Finally, on 3 March the CCDA final damage assessment report was forwarded to General Carter. In his covering memorandum, [redacted] explained that paramount considerations in drawing up the report's format were protection of the information contained therein and a rigorous "need to know." Each volume of the report was designed to be read and understood independent of the total report (see Chapter IX for a description of the report's contents).

The entire report was based on those recommendations that were a result of the factual, technical, damage assessment drawn from pre-*Pueblo* records and data accumulated during the privileged debrief of the crew conducted in San Diego.[50] The document numbered some 1,200 pages and was made up of three categories of information. The first category described the complete cryptologic and cryptographic damage. (These sections served as DIRNSA's assessment of COMINT and COMSEC damage for the USIB.) The second category consisted of technical volumes containing all the pertinent details on SIGINT/COMSEC materials compromised. The third category consisted of crew debrief summaries. Supplement I to the cryptologic damage assessment covered individual target nations. A separately bound special supplement assessed the damage accruing to cryptologically related compartmented activities.[51]

Upon completion of the final damage assessment report, the NSA members of the Special *Pueblo* Intelligence Damage Assessment Team were released to return to their parent NSA organizations. Their detail to this assignment, first in San Diego and then at the Naval Security Station in Washington, D.C., had extended to almost two months, and many were worried over the status of their regular jobs at NSA.[52]

In brief, U.S. planning for the release of the *Pueblo* crew began shortly after the ship was seized on 23 January 1968. There followed ten months of difficult negotiation with the North Koreans at Panmunjom. With the release of the crew on 23 December 1968, the United States began the painful task of debriefing the crew and assessing the cryptologic and cryptographic damage.

NSA, as the responsible U.S. governmental agency for SIGINT matters, was anxious to come to grips with the total compromise resulting from the seizure and maintained that it should be done as soon as possible. The Navy, on the other hand, fought hard to keep the whole investigative process within Navy channels and did not recognize any overriding national authority of NSA in the SIGINT arena. Disagreements arose over the timing and location of the debriefings, the composition of the debriefing teams, debriefing methodology, and even dissemination of information on the status of debriefings. Finally, JCS resolved many of these questions when it defined NSA's responsibility for SIGINT compromises. The debriefing process continued over a period of about ten days. Each member of the crew, and especially the Navy communications intelligence personnel, underwent debriefing by a team of Navy and NSA analysts and technicians. The team completed its damage assessment report based on these privileged debriefings on 3 March 1969 and submitted it to General Carter at NSA. The report also served as NSA's damage assessment report to the United States Intelligence Board.

The following chapter will discuss the cryptologic and cryptographic damage to the United States as described in this report and some of the implications it had for NSA's future exploitation of target communications.

Chapter IX

Post-Incident Reviews, Damage Assessment, and Damage Control

Following the return of the *Pueblo*'s crew, a number of inquiries into the incident began. The first of these was a congressional investigation by a subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee. Other investigations included the Navy's promised board of inquiry, one of whose purposes was to determine if any members of the *Pueblo*'s crew or anyone in the chain of command was culpable of misconduct. Finally, NBC prepared a documentary news program that gave the background of the *Pueblo*'s mission and the events surrounding the seizure.

Admiral John G. Hyland, CINCPACFLT, designated five admirals, all of whom were Annapolis graduates, to form the court to examine whether the *Pueblo* had intruded at any time into North Korean territorial waters. The court also was to examine the matter of the boarding of the ship and the subsequent detention of the ship and crew. Hyland charged the court with giving an opinion as to whether any member of the crew or anyone in the chain of command was culpable of misconduct and also recommending any administrative or disciplinary action.[1]

The Navy court of inquiry planned to convene on 20 January following the intelligence debriefing of the crew. Early in January, the Commander, Naval Air Command, Pacific, attempted to declassify or downgrade certain NSA documentation for probable use by the court of inquiry. NSA reviewed the classification and categorization of the documentation and decided that declassification was not justified because of the need for protection of COMINT commensurate with the codeword assigned.

Because of concern about inadvertent disclosure of cryptologic information, NSA General Counsel Roy Banner, accompanied by Assistant General Counsel for the Department of Defense (DoD) Frank Bartimo, met with acting Navy Judge Advocate General Rear Admiral Donald D. Chapman on 16 January 1969. The purpose of this meeting was to offer the Navy the support and assistance, if needed, of NSA and the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) in preventing the unauthorized disclosure of signals intelligence sources and methods during the conduct of the Navy court of inquiry concerning the *Pueblo*.

Admiral Chapman advised his visitors that counsel for the court, attorneys for the parties involved, and the president of the court had all been cleared. Further, he stated that if, to be responsive, a witness had to disclose classified information, the court would operate in closed session to hear such testimony. NSA and OSD recommended that the Navy consider appointing a SIGINT advisor to the court as a precautionary measure to prevent the inadvertent disclosure of sensitive information. Admiral Chapman said that

he would pass this on to the president of the court, noting that the president had an intelligence background.[2] A SIGINT advisor was never appointed.

On 20 January the Navy court of inquiry began its deliberations. The Navy took particular pains to point out that the court was a fact-finding body only; it had no punitive power and its proceedings were not to be construed as a trial in any sense. The president of the court compared it to a grand jury as the closest civilian legal proceeding.[3]

During the first days of February 1969, the office of the Director of Defense Research and Engineering (DDR&E) made two inquiries of NSA. Howard C. Barlow, Assistant Director, NSA, for Communications Security, was asked if NSA planned any acceleration of COMSEC research and development as a result of the *Pueblo* loss. Barlow replied that NSA's standard planning documents emphasized that tactical COMSEC equipment should be expected to be physically compromised occasionally, and the security of communications should be maintained by the daily changing variables. He said that the NSA standard assessment always concluded no emergency change of the basic COMSEC hardware was required or desired, even though the loss of the technology was greatly regretted.[4] *Barlow, NSA, and other U.S. government officials, however, were unaware at this time that the John Walker espionage ring had begun providing the Soviets with U.S. cryptovariable data on U.S. encryption systems and would continue to do so over a period of eighteen years (1967-1985).*

On 7 February 1969, NSA Deputy Director Tordella sent a memorandum to DDR&E in response to that office's request for information concerning NSA's actions taken as a result of the *Pueblo*'s capture. Tordella's reply explained that NSA had taken the precautionary steps of suspending the use of some COMSEC items and curtailing the use of others. These precautionary steps, however, did not include the permanent suspension of the use of the COMSEC hardware systems that were aboard the *Pueblo* at the time of seizure. There was no reason to do so at this time since it was believed that U.S. communications were still protected by the use of key cards. Tordella's memorandum also told of NSA's actions in reviewing the inventories of all SIGINT documents for all mobile platforms in order to limit technical material carried on board ships to that considered absolutely essential to the accomplishment of a SIGINT mission.[5]

Standing instructions for the distribution of cryptologic materials to mobile collection platforms had always been on the basis of that which was required to accomplish the mission and the need to know. In the case of the *Pueblo* and other platforms, there was a liberal interpretation of these instructions, and much more than what was needed found its way on board. On occasion, several different cryptologic organizations supplied a single mobile platform with classified documents, oftentimes providing duplicate and even triplicate copies of the same documents, as in the *Pueblo* case. The *Pueblo* seizure caused the U.S. Navy and the cryptologic community to reduce the volume of classified materials aboard SIGINT collection ships to more manageable proportions. Within a week of the *Pueblo* seizure, CNO ordered the technical research ships to off-load all extraneous

material as soon as possible. At almost the same time, NSA (P04) requested the service cryptologic agencies to initiate inventories of all SIGINT documents for all mobile platforms and forward them to NSA by 1 March 1968.[6] After reviewing the individual inventories and determining which documents were not required for the platforms' missions, NSA advised the service cryptologic agencies.

In about one year, CNO issued an instruction concerning the control of classified material aboard AGERs, AGTRs, and T-AGs. The purpose of this instruction was to ensure that these ships carried only what was absolutely required for the successful accomplishment of the mission to which they were currently assigned; an exact inventory of the classified material on board was known by the controlling authority; and all classified material required for a specific mission could be rapidly destroyed beyond recognition.

Later, USIB extended the policy of limited document dissemination to units operating in medium- or high-risk areas as well as mobile platforms – and, in fact, broadened its concern to cover the entire conduct of COMINT activities in exposed areas. In October, USIB directed that all USIB departments and agencies, including the military departments, be guided in accordance with a new statement of policy.[7] This policy statement covered the dissemination of COMINT to exposed areas, levying requirements, tasking, emergency destruction, and enduring enemy detention. It called for a very restricted distribution of COMINT materials to such high risk areas. When the cryptologic community sent classified materials to high-risk areas, it had to ensure that those areas were equipped with adequate destruction facilities.

The NSA role in physical destruction procedures related to cryptomaterial and cryptoequipment. The destruction of these items was considered a part of physical security and an aspect of COMSEC that NSA carried out in conjunction with the military departments. NSA prescribed standards or criteria for destruction, but the approval of specific devices was the prerogative of the appropriate department or agency COMSEC authority who would ensure that the NSA criteria would be met.[8]

Navy Department efforts to develop systems to destroy classified materials began in February 1968, one month after the seizure of the *Pueblo*. CNO requested that the chief of the Navy Materiel Command conduct research into techniques in emergency destruction to meet the following objective without endangering the safety of the ship: to provide AGERs, AGTRs, and other naval ships (including submarines) with the capability to conduct emergency destruction of classified matter within thirty minutes. The ultimate goal of CNO was to give such ships a destruction capability within five minutes.[9]

In March 1969 some type of destruction system for documents and electronic gear had been installed in a number of AGER- and AGTR-type ships, and the remainder were scheduled to be completed by June 1969. The systems were incendiary devices activated from a firing panel on the ship's bridge. At this point, no certain method had been developed for the destruction of hardware and software. The incendiary devices were suspected to be marginally satisfactory in the destruction of classified material in thirty minutes.[10] The destruction systems were only interim solutions, and a research effort was under way to improve destruction of paper products in bulk; destruction of information on magnetic tape and photographic film material; destruction of classified information that may be recovered from equipment; reduction of documents to microfilm and microfiche with provisions for readout without a requirement to reproduce the documents; and reproduction of printed material on water-soluble paper.[11]

In the years since 1969, NSA has made a number of improvements in the destruction and handling of classified materials. Examples of these changes include such measures as a reduction in the amount of materials allowed in exposed locations; cryptographic maintenance manuals no longer contain details of a system's logic; more sensitive pages in cryptographic manuals are formatted so that they can be easily recognized and destroyed; other sensitive material is put on microfilm so that it can be quickly dissolved; and the capacity of paper shredders has been considerably improved. In addition to these measures, NSA now requires the destruction of cryptomaterials within a few hours after use rather than once a month. These and other improvements have taken place in NSA even though no one agency or individual has been given responsibility for this type of research and development within the U.S. government.[12]

Another area for corrective action was the matter of crew training. Following the *Pueblo* incident, more attention was given to proficiency. Requirements for linguistic skills, in particular, became more stringent. In general, the experience level of a SIGINT group became a major consideration before a mission was dispatched.

In 1969, Deputy Secretary of Defense David Packard sent a memorandum to SECNAV, JCS, and CNO expressing his concern over the adequacy of corrective measures taken in the operation of the AGERs.[13] Among Packard's interests were the adequacy of written guidance for AGER crews concerning contingency planning and interpretation of existing rules of engagement as well as the criteria and procedures for tasking AGERs.[14]

The Chief of Naval Operations, after reviewing all directives covering AGER, AGTR, and T-AG operations, directed CINCLANTFLT, CINCPACFLT, and CINCUSNAVEUR to issue an operations order concerning ships of these types. Because the Navy would tailor these operations orders to meet the needs of intelligence collection ships, the orders would be much more specific than the existing general written guidance concerning contingencies. They would require less interpretation by the ship's commanding officer.[15]

At the time the Navy scheduled the *Pueblo* mission, the document that spelled out the procedures for such sensitive, peacetime reconnaissance operations was JCS SM-676 of 19 August 1966. This document stated that, although the Navy made known certain limitations for reconnaissance and data collection in sensitive areas, normally the JCS did not consider any area to be prohibited. Therefore, commanders of unified and specified commands and chiefs of military services might submit reconnaissance proposals to the JCS for missions in any areas, "including those adjudged to be especially critical or sensitive." Approval was based upon consideration of the sensitivity of the area, the possibility of hostile action, political factors where applicable, and the importance of the intelligence operations in relation to the risks involved.[16]

These JCS procedures were revised and republished in October 1968 as JCS SM-701-68, "Peacetime Reconnaissance and Sensitive Operations." The revisions to the document, in essence, greatly tightened up the accountability factor for such missions. The old system was replaced by one that forced a judgment at each successive level of command on the military and operational risks, the adequacy of command, control, and protection, and the continued validity and priority of the requirement for each proposed mission.[17]

Two specific improvements in this area occurred at the Washington level. First, the Department of State began working with the Joint Reconnaissance Center to review, coordinate, and evaluate proposed missions prior to the time the schedule was approved. Thus, the Department of State had an opportunity to make an early judgment on the political risk for every mission proposed. The JCS and the OSD then considered the Department of State judgment prior to recommending approval/disapproval of each mission. Secondly, DIA began a continuous analytical assessment of all indicators of levels of risk in peripheral mission areas, and DIA continually put these assessments before the JRC staff.[18] The Assistant Secretary of Defense tasked NSA with providing DIA with SIGINT information that might bear on risk.[19]

Another positive result of the peripheral reconnaissancce program since 1968 has been the protection of missions. Those missions judged to be in exposed areas did not depart without some contingency plan. If there were no U.S. armed forces available to defend the mission in the event of need, the mission was aborted. In this respect, the community learned from the experience of the *Pueblo*.

When the *Pueblo* began its mission, the embarked Naval Security Group detachment was, by authority of the Chief of Naval Operations, under the control of CINCPACFLT, which had delegated its authority, in turn, to DIRNAVSECGRUPAC. DIRNSA had delegated this authority to the respective fleet commanders in the Atlantic, Pacific, and European areas as early as 1959. This delegation of authority was in accordance with the direct support provisions of National Security Council Intelligence Directive (NSCID) 6 and appropriate Department of Defense implementing directives.[20]

Although DIRNAVSECGRU, on behalf of CINCPACFLT, exercised operational control of mobile missions in the Far East, NSA could still provide SIGINT tasking for such missions. NSA, however, would do so only through the Naval Security Group and then only as secondary tasking for use when the primary resources of the ship were not engaged in the task of supporting the commanding officer and satisfying specified fleet collection requirements.[21] The *Pueblo*'s mode of operation had been consistent with the JCS concept of SIGINT support to a military commander. The following statement from the JCS paper reflected the JCS philosophy on multisensor units:

> This military commander exercising operational control over DSUs (Direct Support Units) will direct the tasking, allocation of effort, deployment, and product reporting formats to be employed in satisfaction of tactical mission requirements. The Director, NSA, exercises technical control of, and provides technical support to, DSUs. DSUs, which may be single or multisensor units or platforms, perform a variety of sustained tactical direct support missions in peacetime, including missions to satisfy peacetime training requirements, and provide continuity of SIGINT support during hostilities. DSUs must be configured with signals intercept and communications systems specifically tailored to meet the intelligence requirements of the supported commander. As such, these systems must be sufficiently flexible to meet rapidly changing environments and they must be capable of interfacing with the military command and control systems.[22]

The *Pueblo* incident prompted changes in the authority and responsibility for SIGINT operational control of AGER ships and this came fifteen months after the event. In April 1969, DIRNSA delegated SIGINT operational control of the two remaining AGERs (USS *Banner* and USS *Palm Beach*) to the senior naval component commander responsible for the area in which the ships were operating. At the same time, it was agreed that Navy and NSA representatives should meet semiannually to coordinate the SIGINT objectives for AGER operations. This method of delegating SIGINT operational control was more direct than the previous procedure, which required going through the Chief of Naval Operations. In addition, the semiannual conference did assure an NSA voice in the SIGINT tasking.

More worrisome for General Carter at NSA were the several governmental investigations prompted by the *Pueblo* incident. At an NSA staff meeting on 7 February, General Carter expressed his concern over these investigations and their apparent lack of direction and coordination, but he desired that NSA respond whenever necessary. Carter informed his staff that he was appointing Lieutenant Commander Edward J. Koczak, Jr., at that time assigned to the Director's secretariat, as his "chief of staff" on all matters relating to the *Pueblo*. Carter stressed that it was imperative that the Agency speak with one voice about the *Pueblo*. Carter noted frankly that for obvious reasons people were looking for a scapegoat and that NSA was not an unlikely target; hence, it was imperative that all answers be approved by the Director through Koczak. He stated that as of then the Agency was "doing all right" in the testimony and documentation areas but that NSA would be "dead" if it ever engaged in concealing information or providing misinformation.

Carter said that he habitually made it a practice, when in his view it was necessary, to provide sensitive and accurate information to representatives of the Appropriations and Armed Services Committees – and he said that no member of either committee had ever let him down.[23]

Knowing that a task force had been established to brief the new Deputy Secretary of Defense, David Packard, about the *Pueblo*, Carter wrote to him about the damage assessment. Carter described the damage as most serious and that it probably would reach the "worst case circumstance" as predicted in the initial assessment provided to USIB in May 1968.[24]

On 14 February 1969, the Navy briefed Packard on the *Pueblo* incident. Also present at the briefing were Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird and Vice Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Clarey. Subsequently, both Laird and Packard stated that it was NSA's job and not the Navy's to give the damage assessment.[25] Approximately two weeks after the Navy briefing, Deputy Secretary Packard visited NSA and heard from Carter that the damage to the cryptologic effort might be even greater than Carter's earlier statement to Packard in his letter of 13 February.

Tuesday, 18 February, saw Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee Mendel Rivers appoint a special subcommittee to conduct a thorough inquiry into the capture and internment of the *Pueblo* and its crew by North Korean forces. Rivers charged the subcommittee with the responsibility of reviewing the national security implications resulting from the loss of the ship and determining whether deficiencies existed in the command responses to emergencies of that kind. Representative Otis G. Pike was named chairman of the special subcommittee.[26] The subcommittee was directed to proceed as soon as practicable to begin its inquiry and, ultimately, the formal hearings began on 4 March in open session.

On 10 March, General Carter was called to testify. During the first hour and a half, Carter briefed the subcommittee on the mission of NSA. He first outlined NSA's role in the control and production of COMINT and ELINT, described the CRITICOMM system and NSA's operation of it as the executive agent, and discussed NSA's role in COMSEC. Carter then pointed out that, in the operation of the COMSEC equipment, the United States assumed that such equipment was subject to compromise. NSA's design effort was based on that premise, and the security of U.S. communications was guaranteed by the daily changing variables that NSA supplied to all users of cryptographic equipment. These variables produced a completely different cryptographic cipher for each period of use, and these periods never extended beyond twenty-four hours.[27]

Carter discussed the respective roles and missions of NSA and the armed services in operations such as that of the *Pueblo*, drawing a careful distinction between "operational" and "technical" control. He then got specific about the *Pueblo*. He pointed out that the patrol was conducted in response to U.S. Navy direct support requirements and that the platform was under the operational control of CINCPACFLT. NSA's general role, he explained, was to provide SIGINT technical guidance and assistance upon the request of the Navy. He reported that NSA was advised of the scheduled patrol by the Navy at the time of the Navy's proposal to the JCS in early December 1967, and that CINCPACFLT had solicited from NSA secondary tasking assignments for the mission. In late December 1967, he said, NSA supplied the Navy with secondary tasking collection requirements and separately commented to JCS on SIGINT reflections of actions taken by the North Koreans in response to past reconnaissance efforts. Carter stated that the SIGINT collected at the time of the capture indicated clearly that the *Pueblo* was in international waters, adding that there was no SIGINT evidence to indicate that the ship had ever penetrated North Korean territorial waters.[28]

The subcommittee members questioned Carter on the nature of the messages transmitted by NSA to the Navy in which it supplied the secondary tasking requirements for the *Pueblo*. Among other matters, he was asked to read into the record the message that NSA sent to the JCS on the North Korean reactions to past reconnaissance efforts.[29]

General Carter was then questioned about his assessment of the SIGINT/COMSEC damage resulting from the capture of the men and material of the *Pueblo*. He pointed out that the North Koreans obtained extensive information on U.S. SIGINT efforts against North Korea, the Soviet Union, the Chinese People's Republic, and North Vietnam. It was reasonable to assume, he said, that some of the documents and material captured from the *Pueblo* had been turned over to the Soviets and possibly to the Chinese and that the great danger was that the Soviets and the Chinese could also improve their communications security as a result of obtaining direct knowledge of the extent of U.S. penetration of their respective communications.

In regard to the cryptographic damage assessment, General Carter said that the *Pueblo* carried four types of cryptographic equipment, associated keying materials, maintenance manuals, operating instructions, and the general COMSEC publications necessary to support a cryptographic operation. Carter stated that while communications security depended essentially on keying variables, the compromise of cryptographic logic could be of benefit to communist cryptologists in forecasting future U.S. developments. Moreover, he noted, some of the engineering technology incorporated into U.S. cryptoequipments could well be appropriated to increase the overall communications security of the communist bloc's next generation of cryptographic hardware. No doubt, he said, the North Koreans had acquired some advanced technological data.[30]

On Friday, 14 March, Representative Pike, chairman of the special subcommittee, made public certain portions of Carter's testimony that had been given in executive session. Carter set forth his objections to this in a letter to Melvin Laird, Secretary of Defense, "to set the record straight." What clearly bothered Carter more than some misstatements (which involved some rather technical points about message releasing authorities, who was allowed to do what at NSA, and questions concerning the *Pueblo* damage assessment) was the purveying of information about NSA to the press. He felt that his statements, which had all been made in executive session, should have been kept in confidence. It was the cause of friction between the U.S. Congress and a very circumspect General Carter, who felt that the cryptologic business was getting too much exposure through the *Pueblo* affair.[31]

In San Diego, the Navy court of inquiry finally concluded its sessions on 13 March. Thereafter, the court members would deliberate over the testimony presented and prepare the recommendations of the court for submission to CINCPACFLT. Toward the end of March 1969, the NSA team finished its assessment of the cryptologic and cryptographic damage resulting from the capture of the ship and the interrogation of its crew. Carter provided this information to USIB. In a very detailed study of some one thousand pages, the task group set forth the SIGINT documents and equipment aboard the vessel, analyzed the crew debriefings, and published a set of findings that would mark the *Pueblo* incident for a special place in the annals of the U.S. cryptologic profession. The store of classified materials aboard the *Pueblo* consisted of 539 documents and pieces of equipment.[32] These included the following:

- Fifty-eight NSA publications designated TECHINS and TECHDOCS (technical SIGINT instructions now designated USSIDs).
- One hundred and twenty-six user intelligence requirements.
- Thirty-seven technical manuals.
- Thirty-three COMINT Technical Reports.
- Fifteen SIGINT Working Aids.
- Nine hard copy SIGINT reports.
- About eight thousand messages containing SIGINT data that were transmitted on the Western Pacific Operational Intelligence Broadcast and copied by the *Pueblo* during its voyage.
- U.S. Navy and NATO callsign books for ships and aircraft.
- Cryptographic materials, including four different types of crypto-equipment and their operating and maintenance manuals, key lists and key cards, authentication tables and instructions, and registered publications materials.[33]

The NSA report concluded that ". . . the compromise, to at least the North Koreans, of information concerning the cryptologic community collection, processing, and reporting operations and techniques on a worldwide basis is without precedent in U.S. cryptologic history."[34]

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The North Korean target was more [redacted] in the sense that the *Pueblo* was tasked with Korean radio transmissions, and, hence, the ship carried extensive working aids on this target. A catalog of these revealed everything one would want to know about the American attack on North Korean communications, including callsign system recoveries, net and communications system reconstruction and diagrams, and the association of communications systems with platforms and transmission systems. The task team concluded that the documents assumed to have been captured "reveal the full extent of U.S. information on North Korean armed forces communications activities and U.S. successes in the techniques of collection, analysis, exploitation, and reporting applied to this target." [42]

This was not the only concern of the United States. It now had to look to the possibility of disclosure of very sensitive compartmented information. The information concerning these compartmented areas was considered so sensitive at the time that all intelligence end product reporting on them was accomplished at NSA; there was no product reporting on these compartmented problems from field sites. Neither were any of the NSA intelligence reports disseminated to the field – only a few major intelligence consumers in the United States were recipients. The irony is that there were documents concerning these sensitive areas on board the *Pueblo* – located twelve to thirteen miles from North Korean shores.

In addition to the possibility of the compromise of documents, members of the *Pueblo* crew were or had been cleared at one time for sensitive compartmented information and special projects, both in the collection and cryptanalytic areas. Certain members of the crew had extensive background knowledge of these compartmented areas. Captured *Pueblo* personnel knew that the North Koreans had recovered personnel "jackets" of the crew when the ship was seized and that these "jackets" indicated what clearances each crewman held. The United States had good reason to fear what might have been divulged during the North Korean interrogations of these personnel.

There was another aspect to oral disclosure than through interrogation. Crewmen cleared for compartmented information were themselves especially nervous about revealing these projects during interrogation, so much so that they discussed details of the projects among themselves in what they believed to be the safety of their confinement areas. One of the purposes of these conversations by the crew was to coordinate their responses to North Korean interrogators so that the response of one was consistant with that of another. The North Koreans used whatever information they obtained from one prisoner against another. They used this tactic to confirm data, to confuse their prisoners, and oftentimes as an excuse to administer beatings when they believed that they were not getting the right answers. Although crewmembers, on their return from captivity,

informed U.S. debriefing personnel that they had checked their spaces for the presence of North Korean listening devices and had found none, United States authorities insisted that this had to be considered a possibility.[43]

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administration office on the *Pueblo*. These documents were almost forgotten in the confusion once the destruct order was issued. Crew members stuffed these documents into jettison bags and mattress covers in the last moments before the North Koreans seized command of the ship and put them on the deck with the intention of throwing them overboard once the ship reached the 100 fathom depth. (The crew erroneously believed this to be the minimum depth required by 1968 U.S. naval regulations for dumping classified material over the side.) Since the ship, in its attempt to reach the open sea, did not reach water deeper than thirty-five fathoms, the crew never jettisoned the bags, and

the documents were recovered by the North Koreans. The crew did manage to throw one bag over the side, but it was recovered by the North Koreans.[53] According to one crew member in his debriefing statement in the United States in January 1969, this appeared to be a valid statement; he commented that a number of the documents put on display by the North Koreans and shown to the crew during their internment in North Korea appeared to have been water stained.

There were no personnel aboard the *Pueblo* cleared for this compartmented area. The U.S. debriefing team included it along with other compartmented areas because there were a number of crew members aboard the ship who had acquired knowledge through their association with personnel who had been officially cleared for other compartmented information. Although there were no personnel aboard the *Pueblo* cleared for this compartmented area and there was no tasking given to the ship, there were a number of documents aboard that concerned

The U.S. debriefing team established that no crewmen were knowledgeable of this area, nor were they interrogated by the North Koreans. All information compromised on was contained in publications recovered by the North Koreans.

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Following the realization that the *Pueblo* had been seized with a massive number of documents and equipment on board, the United States had taken immediate countermeasures to protect the security of its communications worldwide. All users of those cryptographic systems that were seized from the *Pueblo*, the KL-47, KW-7, KG-14, and KWR-37, were instructed to temporarily cease communications on these systems until NSA could provide new key lists and key cards. This measure, so believed NSA authorities, would ensure the continued security of the nation's communications. NSA could take some measure of comfort in the realization that the Soviets would need another essential element in order to decrypt U.S. communications. It was one thing to obtain the actual encryption devices and operating and maintenance manuals from on board the *Pueblo* but quite something else to get one's hands on the keying material for these same machines.

What NSA did not know at that time was that John Walker and Jerry Whitworth from the Walker espionage ring were providing the Soviets with keying materials and other highly classifed documents the Soviets could use to decrypt and read U.S. communications. This espionage group, led by U.S. Navy radioman John Walker, included his son Michael (a seaman aboard the aircraft carrier USS *Nimitz* with access to classified documents), his brother Arthur (an antisubmarine warfare officer and instructor in the U.S. Navy and

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later a civilian contractor, also with access to classified information), and his friend, Jerry Whitworth, also a navy radioman. Collectively, they passed the Soviets a mass of highly classified material over eighteen years, from 1967 until the time of their apprehension in mid-1985. As one would expect, the usual high priority on the Soviet shopping list was for key lists Walker and Whitworth provided for the KL-47, KW-7, and KG-14, as well as key cards for the KWR-37. In addition to the key lists and key cards, John Walker and Whitworth also provided the Soviets a host of cryptographic machine operating and maintenance manuals.

The cryptomachines and manuals the North Koreans seized from the *Pueblo* and passed to the Soviets were identical to those heavily used by U.S. naval commands worldwide. The sudden Soviet acquisition of U.S. cryptographic equipment from the *Pueblo* in late January 1968, as well as the acquisition of U.S. keying material for the same machines from John Walker beginning in late December 1967 and later from Jerry Whitworth, gave the Soviets all they needed to read selected U.S. strategic and tactical encrypted communications. It must have created an urgent requirement within the Soviet SIGINT organization for a more intensive intercept effort against U.S. naval communications, [redacted] were scarce.

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During this time, the Soviets obtained a steady flow of keying material from Walker, who was stationed at U.S. Submarine Force Headquarters at Norfolk, Virginia. His duties as radioman at Norfolk gave him access to KW-37, KG-14 and KW-7 equipments. He had access to the keying material that was used for U.S. naval satellite broadcasts being intercepted by the Cuban SIGINT organization. Cuba forwarded this intercepted material to Moscow.

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The *Pueblo* seizure also occasioned an extensive cryptologic compromise of United States SIGINT holdings on the North Korean target. Of the 397 SIGINT documents on board the *Pueblo*, 55 concerned the SIGINT exploitation of North Korean targets. Many of these documents were known to have been compromised on the basis of their identification in propaganda film, photographs, or press releases originated by the North Koreans after the seizure. Other documents were identified on the basis of their recognition by crew members who were shown these documents by the North Koreans during detention. Still others were identified by crew members to U.S. debriefers as not having been destroyed at the time of the seizure. These documents were in addition to some forty North Korean-related items contained in the U.S. naval operational intelligence broadcast that were also recovered from the ship by the North Koreans. Crew member disclosures made during interrogations by North Koreans also contributed to the compromise of cryptologic information. The totality of the compromise revealed "the full extent of U.S. SIGINT information on North Korean armed forces communications activities and U.S. successes in the techniques of collection, analysis, exploitation, and reporting applied to this target."[66]

The NSA assessment stated that this compromise revealed the U.S. capability to and it predicted that it would result in a change in North Korean use of existing systems or a decision to use more secure systems. The assessment said that total knowledge of the types and amounts of SIGINT obtained and the techniques involved in the exploitation of North Korean military communications was compromised and the U.S. SIGINT community should anticipate a significant loss of this source of intelligence as a result.[67]

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The NSA report concluded that several factors contributed to the extensive loss of information. One was the possession of a complete set of working aids and technical manuals, once again many of them in duplicate or triplicate because of the eagerness of several different cryptologic organizations to insure that the *Pueblo* had all it would need. Some of the extra copies were stored in the administrative compartment, which was largely overlooked in the frantic destruction efforts before capture.[71]

The OPINTEL Broadcast, through which the Navy supplied the *Pueblo* with intelligence support during such missions, presented another special problem. It was prudent to have the *Pueblo* included on the broadcast to keep the crew informed of developments in its area. Unfortunately, the broadcast carried large amounts of gratuitous information on Southeast Asia and the People's Republic of China that collectively revealed the status of the U.S. attack on their communications.

In addition to the absence of adequate destruction facilities aboard the *Pueblo*, the loss can be attributed to the lack of training of the crew in destruction measures. Bucher, despite his stated concern about the possibility of an attack and inadequate destruction means before the ship got under way from Japan, also was lulled into believing that there was safety for his ship as long as it was in international waters. Most of the NSG personnel aboard the *Pueblo* never saw a destruction bill, and none had ever had a destruction drill.[73] In regard to equipment destruction, the NSA report concluded that "it is estimated that only about five percent of the total equipment was destroyed beyond repair or usefulness.[74] Even this five percent estimate cannot be viewed with optimism in view of the number of related maintenance manuals and spare parts captured intact as well as the knowledge gained from interrogations of the *Pueblo* crew. In some cases, the extra attention paid to the destruction of certain pieces of equipment aroused North Korean suspicions and resulted in more intensive interrogations regarding their use. This was the case with the

NSA characterized the destruction procedures as "highly disorganized" and "accomplished in almost total confusion.[72] Estimates of the amount of material compromised ranged up to 80 percent of what was on board. Because of the uncertainty of

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exactly what material was destroyed and what was compromised, NSA correctly had to assume total loss.

Damage in the cryptographic area, if it had not been for the later operations of the Walker espionage ring, would have been much less extensive. This was because of the principle, in use for many years in the communications security business, that one must assume capture of a piece of equipment, and the state of the art must be that this will not result in the compromise of U.S. communications without attendant keying material. NSA concluded that equipment destruction had been "ineffective" and assumed that North Korea had been able to examine the cryptographic logic employed, even if their state of the art did not permit duplication. More serious was the loss of maintenance and operating manuals, which permitted even more detailed knowledge of our techniques. The North Koreans immediately focused on these equipments and manuals. Following the USS *Pueblo*'s capture, highly competent North Korean electronic experts conducted intensive interrogations of selected qualified cryptographic technicians among the *Pueblo* crew. The interrogations homed in on the technical principles of the cryptographic equipment, the equipment operating procedures, and the relationship of the associated keying material to the cryptographic equipment.[76]

During the briefings in San Diego, the debriefing team discovered that the *Pueblo* had on board superseded keying material for November and December 1967 that was not destroyed. If the North Koreans had intercepted U.S. communications for that period of time, it would have been possible to read the encrypted traffic. The conclusion of NSA at the time was that, for the Koreans, this level of technological and operational sophistication was too great, but that the Soviets, as we have seen, might possess this level of expertise and sophistication. Thus, concluded NSA, it was conceivable that a great deal of U.S. naval communications for those months was an open book.[77] We have also seen that there was far more than a few months involved in the loss of U.S. encrypted traffic – in terms of what the Walker spy ring provided, the Soviets were able to read U.S. naval traffic over a period of eighteen years.

The other category of information compromised from the *Pueblo* consisted of especially revealing documents. Included in the hoard of documents recovered by the North Koreans were 126 Specific Intelligence Collection Requirements (SICRs). These documents contained detailed background data concerning signals and activity desired by intelligence user organizations of the U.S. intelligence community. They described the status of U.S. knowledge of the target area and identified the intelligence gaps on these topics that existed within the community. One example was a requirement on the Soviet

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While official, governmental investigations were taking place, the NBC television network began preparing a documentary news program on the background of the *Pueblo* mission, the circumstances of the seizure, and subsequent events. Walter Sheridan of NBC called NSA to set up an interview with General Carter, but received a peremptory "no" from the general. Carter said that he would submit to an interview only if directed by the Secretary of Defense.[78] He was never interviewed, upholding a long-standing NSA policy of not commenting publicly on cryptologic matters.

In Hawaii, Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, Admiral Hyland, finished reviewing the recommendations of the Navy's court of inquiry. The court recommended that both Commander Bucher and Lieutenant Stephen Harris be brought to trial by general court martial. The charges against Bucher were permitting his ship to be searched while he still had the power to resist; failing to take immediate and aggressive protective measures when his ship was attacked by the North Koreans; complying with the orders of the North Korean forces to follow them into port; negligently failing to destroy all classified material aboard the USS *Pueblo* and permitting such material to fall into the hands of the North Koreans; and negligently failing to insure before departure for sea that his officers and crew were properly organized, stationed, and trained for emergency destruction of classified material.[79]

The charges against Lieutenant Harris as the officer in charge of the NSG detachment numbered three counts: failure to inform the commanding officer of a certain deficiency in the classsified support facilities of the research detachment; failure to train and drill the research detachment properly in emergency destruction procedures; and failure to take effective action to complete emergency destruction after having been ordered by the commanding officer to dispose of all remaining classified materials. The court also recommended that Edward R. Murphy, executive officer of the *Pueblo*, receive a letter of admonition for "alleged dereliction in the performance of his duties as executive officer in that he negligently failed to organize the crew on the day of seizure, especially in the ship's major internal task of emergency destruction of classified materials."[80]

Other recommendations by the court of inquiry concerned charges against Rear Admiral Frank Johnson, Commander, Naval Forces, Japan, and Captain Everett Gladding, Director, Naval Security Group, Pacific. The court recommended a letter of reprimand for Johnson, charging him with failure to provide effective emergency support forces for the *Pueblo* and failing to verify the existence of adequate destruction facilities aboard the ship. Finally, the court charged Captain Gladding with negligence in failing to ensure the readiness of the *Pueblo*'s NSG detachment for its mission and in failing to provide adequate intelligence support to the *Pueblo*.[81]

CINCPACFLT concurred with the findings of the court of inquiry concerning the charges but did not accept the court martial recommendation for Bucher and Harris; instead it recommended a letter of reprimand to both for dereliction of duty. It also concurred with the findings of the court in that Admiral Frank Johnson, Commander, Naval Forces Japan, be given a letter of reprimand and that Lieutenant Murphy be given a letter of admonition. Finally, CINCPACFLT recommended against issuing a letter of reprimand to the Director, Naval Security Group, Pacific, Captain Everett Gladding.

The Chief of Naval Operations accepted the findings of the court of inquiry as amended by CINCPACFLT, but Secretary of the Navy John Chaffee overruled him and halted all punitive actions. In justifying his actions, Chaffee stated

> I have reviewed the record of the court of inquiry and the recommendations of the convening authority and the Chief of Naval Operations. I make no judgment regarding the guilt or innocence of any of the officers of the offenses alleged against them. Such judgment could legitimately be reached by duly constituted authority only after further legal proceedings, such as trial by court martial or the hearing required prior to issuance of a letter of reprimand or admonition.
>
> I am convinced, however, that neither individual discipline nor the state of discipline or morale in the Navy, nor any other interest requires further legal proceedings with respect to any personnel involved in the Pueblo incident.
>
> In reviewing the court's recommendations with respect to Commander Bucher, Lieutenant Murphy, and Lieutenant Harris, it is my opinion that . . . they have suffered enough, and further punishment would not be justified . . .
>
> The charges against Rear Admiral Johnson and Captain Gladding relate to the failure to anticipate the emergency that subsequently developed. This basic, general accusation, however, could be leveled in various degrees at responsible superior authorities in the chain of command and control and in the collateral support structure.
>
> The major factor which led to the *Pueblo*'s lonely confrontation by unanticipatedly bold and hostile forces was the sudden collapse of a premise which had been assumed at every level of responsibility and upon which every other aspect of the mission had been based – freedom of the high seas, at that particular point in history, the common confidence in the historic inviolability of a sovereign ship on the high seas in peacetime was shown to have been misplaced. The consequences must in fairness be borne by all, rather than by one or two individuals whom circumstances had placed closer to the crucial event.
>
> In light of the considerations set out above, I have determined that the charges against all of the officers concerned will be dismissed and I have directed the Chief of Naval Operations to take appropriate action to that end.[82]

With this pronouncement, the Navy Department concluded its official investigation of the *Pueblo* incident.

The congressional investigation ended in June 1969, and the report was published a month later. The special subcommittee concluded that, while warning information was

available, the complex military and political structure was simply not able to respond in time. A key conclusion of the report was as follows:

> The reluctant but inescapable conclusion finally reached by the subcommittee is that because of the vastness of the military structure, with its complex division into multiple layers of command, and the failure of responsible authorities at the seat of government to either delegate responsibility or in the alternative provide clear and unequivocal guidelines governing policy in emergency situations – our military command structure is now simply unable to meet the emergency criterion as suggested by the president himself. The subcommittee inquiry was not of sufficient scope to permit it to offer a proposed solution to the problem. It is evident, however, that the problem exists and it has frightful implications.[83]

By mid-August 1969, NBC had completed its preparation of the television production "*Pueblo*: A Question of Intelligence," and the Department of Defense arranged a review-screening limited to changes that might be necessary for security and accuracy in those portions of the documentary made possible by DoD assistance. NSA was among the DoD components that viewed the screening on Friday, 15 August 1969, at the Pentagon.[84] NSA's General Counsel made no comment, and the documentary proceeded without any Agency changes.[85]

At the USIB level, the Intelligence Damage Assessment Group rendered its report recommending that procedures, criteria, and appropriate regulations be developed to minimize the intelligence losses that might occur as a result of possible future incidents like the *Pueblo*. Several areas of concern were minimizing the amount of sensitive intelligence materials held by activities in exposed areas; insuring that procedures for destruction of those materials were adequate; and training intelligence personnel assigned to exposed areas on how to endure enemy detention.[86] By 8 September, the USIB Special Ad Hoc Group had concluded that, from the standpoint of general guidance, no change was needed in that portion of DCID 6/3 dealing with exposed areas. The Group was unanimous, however, in its belief that the provisions of the directive had not been strictly followed and that it was necessary to tighten implementation controls.[87]

In brief, the return of the *Pueblo*'s crew in December 1968 initiated congressional, naval, and media inquiries into the incident. Pressure also mounted for a definitive national damage assessment based on crew debriefings. NSA's preliminary "worst case" assessment given shortly after the seizure of the ship was confirmed when the results of the crew debriefings became known to the intelligence community a year later. In addition to extensive cryptologic damage in the Soviet, North Korean, and Chinese target areas, several compartmented areas were also believed to have been compromised. These compromises resulted from the loss of documents aboard the *Pueblo* as well as from North

Korean interrogations of the crew. All of the information obtained by the North Koreans was assumed to have been turned over to the Soviets.

The North Korean acquisition of U.S. cryptologic and cryptographic information did not cease with the seizure of the *Pueblo* and its documents, equipment, and crew. Cryptographic data supplied to the Soviets by the Walker espionage ring together with cryptographic equipment seized aboard the *Pueblo* would enable the Soviets to read U.S. naval communications for years.

More difficult to identify were countermeasures that might have been implemented by the targets of the U.S. SIGINT effort following their realization that the United States was exploiting their communications. Because of the nature of certain COMSEC changes and the timing of their implementation, the PRC, the USSR, and North Korea may have begun such measures in the months following the compromise.

At the USIB level, within NSA, and in the Navy, authorities began to implement restrictions designed to minimize the loss of classified data in the event of any further incidents such as the *Pueblo*.

Chapter X

Conclusion

In 1964, the Director for Defense Research and Engineering, Department of Defense, proposed that the United States begin a program of seaborne surface collection using trawler-type vessels. U.S. surface collection platforms up until that time included large World War II *Liberty*- and *Victory*-class ships that were expensive to operate and maintain. Lacking sufficient funds to build a completely new trawler-type hull, the U.S. Navy converted several small cargo ships that were then in the reserve fleet. This was the beginning of the AGER program.

The first of these ships to be converted, the USS *Banner*, conducted its first operational patrol [redacted] The Soviets, perhaps recognizing the configuration of the ship and the reason for its presence, immediately began a series of harassing maneuvers and signals. The *Banner* later encountered the same type of harassment from PRC naval units during a deployment off Shanghai in 1967. Communist harassment of U.S. AGER units culminated in the seizure of the USS *Pueblo* by North Korean naval forces in January 1968.

When the U.S. Navy deployed the USS *Pueblo* to the coast of North Korea in January 1968, it set in motion a series of events over which it eventually lost control. The cost of this deployment to the nation in terms of the amount of cryptologic material compromised was enormous. The gravest error by the Navy was in not ensuring that protective forces for the ship were in place in case of need. There was considerable confusion on this point at the time of the seizure. There were no U.S. naval combat forces on standby in the Sea of Japan at the time. U.S. naval commands in the area believed that the U.S. Fifth Air Force would provide the necessary forces and were convinced that they would not be needed at all; hence, they did not notify this command. Naval authorities did not ensure the availability of Air Force assistance prior to deploying the *Pueblo*. Such was the confidence that the Navy placed on the sanctity of rights of passage through international waters for the ship's protection. In that event, the Navy at least should have so advised the Air Force prior to the ship's deployment. When the *Pueblo* got into trouble, the Navy went immediately to the Fifth Air Force for assistance. Fifth Air Force authorities, however, had no knowledge of the *Pueblo*. In reality, there were no forces of any kind available in the area with the appropriate weapons to handle the situation.

The Navy left the ship in North Korean waters virtually defenseless in spite of the experience seven months previously when Israeli air and naval units attacked the SIGINT ship USS *Liberty* resulting in the loss of thirty-seven of its crew. Following that attack on the *Liberty*, it was discovered that at least four of the *Liberty*-class SIGINT platforms held SIGINT documents in their inventories far in excess of what was actually needed for their

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missions. One of the recommendations that came out of the *Liberty* incident pertained to a reduction and better control of classified documents aboard technical research ships.[1] The situation did not improve by January 1968 when the *Pueblo* positioned itself off North Korea.

The crew of the *Pueblo* was not trained, nor was there any apparent thought given to adequate training – the Navy seemed to put on board whoever happened to be available. [redacted] and AGER vessels could and did satisfy many of these requirements. However, according to a former commanding officer of a SIGINT detachment, the real urgency in getting AGER ships deployed as soon as possible seemed to be as a visible response to the Soviet's SIGINT trawler program.[2]

The problem of assigning more qualified personnel to the naval cryptologic service was not a new problem in 1968.[3] Lieutenant Harris of the *Pueblo*'s SIGINT detachment was the only officer on board assigned to the Naval Security Group. The situation in the SOD hut, with its multiple copies of SIGINT documents, haphazard method of storage, and the presence of documents for which there was no SIGINT tasking, were not conducive to good security practices; they compounded the destruction problem. Harris did not drill the crew in emergency destruction procedures. Neither did he take charge of the emergency destruction effort when time became the critical factor. He admitted spending some of this time in the *Pueblo*'s radio room because he believed it more important to oversee what was being transmitted to [redacted] The result of this lack of direction was confusion by the crew during the emergency destruction process and a consequent large amount of material compromised to the North Koreans.

The remaining general service officers aboard the *Pueblo* did not have an adequate appreciation for the need to protect classified materials. The executive and operations officers of the ship received their SIGINT clearances in the last weeks before the ship sailed. Neither officer probably had any concept of the destruction problem in the research spaces. Although Bucher raised the issue of inadequate emergency destruction equipment on the *Pueblo* prior to departure from the shipyard, he did not follow through with his concerns by ensuring that his crew knew what to do in an emergency.

The two Korean linguists of the *Pueblo*'s SIGINT detachment were not qualified for their assignments. Had they been qualified, they would have understood a full twenty minutes before the first shots were fired that the North Koreans were in the process of maneuvering to fire. It would not, however, have enabled Commander Bucher to extricate his ship – he was already caught and surrounded by the North Koreans, who had an overwhelming advantage in numbers of ships, ship speed, and most importantly, weapons. At most, it might have provided a totally disorganized crew a few more minutes to destroy classified materials.

The destruction of such a large volume of materials called for the use of extraordinary measures by the crew. It was incumbent upon Bucher and the officer in charge of the

SIGINT detachment to train the crew in those measures. For example, when it became apparent to the crew that the ship was not going to reach the 100 fathom curve in its aborted attempt to escape, the classified material already stuffed into sacks and lying on the deck should have been dumped over the side regardless of depth and what Bucher believed at the time to be existing naval regulations. In the absence of any means to destroy publications in bulk, one of the compartments aboard the ship should have been designated as an emergency destruction area wherein it could be sealed off and classified publications dumped for mass burning with a flammable material. Adequate destruction facilities aboard the *Pueblo* were clearly lacking. This situation left it to the crew to determine methods of getting rid of a large volume of classified documents as quickly as possible. Training in destruction procedures was nil; the evidence for this was the crew's floundering and completely ineffective attempts to destroy material. Bucher also admitted, during the court of inquiry in the United States in January 1969, that no destruction drills were ever held aboard the *Pueblo*.[4]

The Navy belief that international waters would provide adequate protection for the *Pueblo* was questionable at best. The North Koreans already had a history of ignoring international agreements by sending their forces south across the DMZ prior to the seizure of the *Pueblo* in 1968. In the opinion of this author, the NSA advisory message of 29 December 1967 that was sent to the JCS/JRC and readdressed to U.S. naval commands in the Pacific should have been sufficient to give U.S. naval authorities an appreciation for North Korean sensitivity to foreign air and sea units operating off the North Korean east coast since 1965. The very first sentence of the message cited the previous assessment of minimal risk assigned by the Navy, which was approved later as the mission proposal made its way up the chain of command. The message then went on to point out vividly a listing of North Korean violations in this area and requested that the Navy look at these violations in assessing the need for protective measures. NSA could not have done anything more beyond this message and remain within the parameters of its mission, i.e., without running the risk of being accused of meddling in Navy affairs. It was intended to make the Navy aware of what NSA perceived as a need for the presence of protective forces for the *Pueblo* and so mentioned this need, at the same time being very careful not to intrude on Navy prerogatives for direct support missions.

The *Pueblo* was hopelessly outgunned. In addition, Bucher was emphatic in his instructions to his crew that they were not to give the North Koreans an excuse to fire on his ship, even after the North Koreans opened fire. One example of this was his reluctance to order general quarters and, finally, his order for a modified general quarters, i.e., a minimum number of crewmen above decks. He badly misjudged North Korean determination and their disregard for international law. Bucher did not realize that the North Koreans did not need an excuse; they were determined to seize the ship and were prepared to do anything required to bring that about.

At least since the Korean War, there had been a pattern of North Korean incidents staged to generate propaganda. In the late 1960s there was a heightened sense of tension on the Korean peninsula, partly because of the Blue House attack and numerous other North Korean violations of the DMZ. The North Koreans had shown great sensitivity to South Korean fishing vessels above the Northern Limit Line (an extension of the DMZ into the Sea of Japan) in early and mid-January.

They had tracked the *Pueblo* throughout most of the southern leg of its journey beginning on 20 January and had to be aware that it displayed characteristics similar to the USS *Banner*, which had been there before. In addition, they had closely reconnoitered the *Pueblo* the day before they attacked and seized it. In fact, during the interrogations of the *Pueblo* crew, one North Korean officer stated that he was familiar with the *Banner* and that North Korea was waiting for the chance to seize it.[5]

Voice transcripts intercepted during the capture of the *Pueblo* portray some confusion on the part of the North Koreans over identification of the *Pueblo*. The North Koreans seemed reassured when the *Pueblo* ran up the American ensign; however, once its nationality was established, it did not deter the North Koreans. Apparently, there was still some confusion in the minds of the North Koreans about the ship's hull designator. Voice communications between SC-35 and a command authority aboard one of the torpedo boats indicated that the North Koreans continually attempted to establish the identity of the *Pueblo* as GER 2. Perhaps the appearance of the hull number GER 2 (USS *Pueblo*) instead of hull number GER 1 (USS *Banner*) confused them.

There is evidence that the North Koreans planned to attack and seize the *Pueblo/Banner*. The air and sea forces that challenged the *Pueblo* certainly required some degree of coordination. The presence of a pilot aboard one of the North Korean vessels when it departed its base and when it confronted the *Pueblo* would indicate a prior intention to seize the ship and bring it back to a North Korean base. More significantly, the involvement of the North Korean Ministry of National Defense just prior to the attack and seizure was a necessary requirement as far as the North Korean government was concerned because its target was a U. S. ship.

When the North Koreans did open fire on the *Pueblo*, it was directed at the upper superstructure of the ship, indicating a concentrated attempt to knock out the command and control of the vessel rather than to sink the ship. Not one round struck the *Pueblo* near the waterline.[6] This again suggests seizure as the North Korean objective. There is certainly conclusive evidence that it was not a North Korean spontaneous attack and seizure of an unarmed American ship. North Korean surprise at what they had captured certainly was reflected by the boarding party that came aboard the *Pueblo* – they probably had never seen a sophisticated SIGINT ship before. This did not signify that the North Koreans were totally unaware that their target was in fact a SIGINT ship. North Korean

communications intercepted prior to time of seizure indicated that their naval personnel knew that the *Pueblo* was an American electronic surveillance ship.

The SIGINT evidence pointing to the involvement of the North Korean Ministry of National Defense confirmed that the seizure of the Pueblo was not a spontaneous action as first believed. On the contrary, it showed that a senior authority of the North Korean government was at least cognizant of, and probably directed, the forces involved in the seizure.

Intelligence information supports the view that the Soviets benefited from the North Korean seizure. [redacted] Collateral sources likewise reported that the North Koreans provided the Soviets with *Pueblo* material immediately after the seizure and arranged for the exchange of technicians to examine the captured material. Other collateral sources reported that a group of Soviet military intelligence officers from the Sixth Directorate (responsible for Soviet SIGINT matters) of the Chief Intelligence Directorate (GRU) visited North Korea shortly after the seizure of the ship and inspected the vessel. Later, the North Koreans were reported to have turned over some of the captured equipment to the GRU.[9] Apparently, some of this equipment was taken to Soviet radio plants in Kharkov, Voronezh, and Gorkij for examination by technicians.[10] As we have seen, the North Koreans made adequate provision for Soviet intelligence information requirements during the *Pueblo* crew interrogations by having North Korean Russian language military personnel conduct some of the interrogations.

In this way, any Soviet involvement in the incident could still be concealed. If Soviet involvement were to became known to the United States, the Soviets would be concerned about U.S. retaliation against their own intelligence trawler fleet. At the time of the *Pueblo* seizure, some of these units were operating immediately beyond U.S. territorial waters and in proximity to U.S. naval installations overseas.

But what was the extent of Soviet involvement? The Soviets established the precedent for the treatment of U.S. SIGINT ships on the high seas during the initial voyages of the *Banner* [redacted] The Soviets had possessed a large SIGINT trawler fleet of their own for many years, and they were well acquainted with the configuration and "electronic signature" of SIGINT ships. They knew that the *Banner* was a SIGINT vessel. From the time that the *Banner* first appeared [redacted] the Soviets harassed the American counterpart in order to discourage further missions and to make collection as difficult as possible. Soviet tactics included approaching a U.S. SIGINT ship at high speed and passing close aboard, bumping incidents, and on one occasion, surrounding an American vessel and hoisting the international signal, "Heave to or I will open fire." Even the Chinese Communists used similar tactics and the same signal. For example, in December 1967, about a month before

the *Pueblo* incident, the *Banner* was operating off Shanghai in the East China Sea against Chinese Communist targets. On 12 December the *Banner* was approached by six armed Chinese trawlers, one of which signaled, "Heave to or I will open fire." The six surrounded the *Banner* so that it had great difficulty in attempting to maneuver. The *Banner* was able to escape only because the Chinese, like the Soviets, were unwilling to open fire to prevent the ship's escape. At the time, the captain of the *Banner* reported that the Chinese reaction appeared to be a "premeditated, coordinated effort."[11]

The tactics used by the Soviets, Chinese, and finally the North Koreans in the 1965-68 period suggest a combined, coordinated effort against the operations of U.S. AGER SIGINT ships. The Soviets had the most to gain from the seizure of a U.S. SIGINT ship. A seizure would and did provide them with an unprecedented view of the U.S. SIGINT success against their communications as well as U.S. cryptographic details. The Soviets, in late December 1967, began to obtain possession of U.S. cryptographic keying material for a number of U.S. cryptographic machines from the John Walker espionage ring. Moreover, for the Soviets, the Walker ring held the promise of a continuous supply of such material over the long term. With the key lists from the Walker espionage ring, four different types of U.S. cryptographic machines with spare parts from the *Pueblo*, and collection assistance from the Cubans and North Koreans, the Soviets had everything they needed to read certain U.S. naval strategic and tactical communications.

The Soviets would have a general idea, from their own intercept operations against the United States and from their extensive experience with their own SIGINT trawler fleet, what materials were aboard the *Pueblo* before it was seized. The Soviets fully realized that they could probably harass U.S. SIGINT ships but could never go to the limit of carrying out the threat to open fire on one. The North Koreans, however, would have no such inhibitions, and they demonstrated this in any number of attacks against the South Koreans off the east coast of Korea and against U.S. and South Korean forces in the DMZ. They might solve the Soviet dilemma.

While the capture of the *Pueblo* was beneficial to the Soviets – and evidence suggests a degree of Soviet complicity – the exact nature and extent of Soviet involvement in the planning and execution of the capture cannot be established with certainty.

The North Korean success in capturing a U.S. SIGINT collector was not to be repeated. A Republican administration had come to power in Washington, and budget cutting became an an important goal. By August 1969, Deputy Secretary of Defense David Packard had accepted a recommendation that two T-AGs (the *Muller* and *Valdez*), one AGTR (the *Georgetown*), and the two remaining AGERs (the *Banner* and *Palm Beach*) be taken out of service as a cost-saving measure. The Navy Department, subject to further budget cuts, was inclined to drop the *Oxford* and *Jamestown* too if the JCS would agree.[12]

The Navy was forced to choose between combatant and intelligence ships for retention on the active list. The Navy now came up with a number of reasons why it should not

retain the intelligence collectors, factors that were certainly valid for the Navy when it first planned the AGER deployment. The reasons were that the AGTRs and AGERs were aging, slow, vulnerable to attack, and they occasionally needed escorts. In addition, they were costly in proportion to their effectiveness. Limitations on their approach to foreign coasts rendered their collection far less valuable than when they could move in close enough to intercept [redacted] signals. In the Navy's view, these ships were considered marginally useful in an era of budget cutting. In reality, the USS *Pueblo* incident probably sounded the death knell for the AGER dedicated maritime collection program.[13]

NSA quickly protested the loss of the shipborne platforms and set forth in its objection that the minimum requirement for national SIGINT production was for three operating TRSs – one each fo[redacted] active in this area) [redacted] (where a second ship would be needed).[14] NSA believed that AGER collection would help ease a chronic collection situation wherein there were always too many collection priorities and never enough collectors. The NSA objection, however, was in vain.

The final blow came on 1 October 1969 when Packard informed the secretaries of the military services, the Chairman, JCS, and the Director, NSA, that he had accepted the recommendation of the Secretary of the Navy to eliminate all shipboard collectors. He had concluded that no SIGINT ships would be needed in order to satisfy national intelligence or military requirements.

On 14 November and 2 December 1969, respectively, the USS *Banner* and the USS *Palm Beach* were deactivated, and the AGER program came to an end.[15]

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Appendix

The NSA Advisory Message of 29 December 1967 Concerning the Risk Assessment of the *Pueblo* Mission

SECRET SAVIN

FROM: DIRNSA 29 DEC 67

TO: JCS/JRC

S E C R E T SAVIN LIMDIS NOFORN

ADP-541

PINKROOT OPERATION I (C)

CINCPAC 2302309Z NOTAL

1. REF STATES "RISK TO PUEBLO IS ESTIMATED TO BE MINIMAL, SINCE OPERATIONS WILL BE CONDUCTED IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS."

2. FOLLOWING INFO IS FORWARDED TO AID IN YOUR ASSESSMENT OF CINCPAC ESTIMATE OF RISK. SIGINT INDICATES: (1) THE NKAF HAS BEEN EXTREMELY SENSITIVE TO PERIPHERAL RECON FLIGHTS IN THIS AREA SINCE EARLY 1965 (THIS SENSITIVITY WAS EMPHASIZED ON 28 APRIL 1965 WHEN A USAF RB-47 WAS FIRED ON AND SEVERELY DAMAGED 35-40 NM FROM THE COAST), (2) THE NKAF HAS ASSUMED AN ADDITIONAL ROLE OF NAVAL SUPPORT SINCE LATE 1966, (3) THE NKN REACTS TO ANY ROKN VESSEL OR ROK FISHING VESSEL NEAR THE NK COASTLINE (THIS WAS EMPHASIZED ON 19 JAN 67 WHEN A ROKN VESSEL WAS SUNK BY COASTAL ARTILLERY), AND (4) INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED BOUNDARIES AS THEY RELATE TO AIRBORNE ACTIVITIES ARE GENERALLY NOT HONORED BY NK ON THE EAST COAST OF KOREA. BUT THERE IS NO SIGINT EVIDENCE OF PROVOCATIVE/HARASSING ACTIVITIES BY NORTH KOREAN VESSELS BEYOND 12 NM FROM THE COAST.

3. THE ABOVE IS PROVIDED TO AID IN EVALUATING THE REQUIREMENT FOR SHIP PROTECTIVE MEASURES, AND IS NOT INTENDED TO REFLECT ADVERSELY ON CINCPACFLT DEPLOYMENT PROPOSAL.

(b)(3)-P.L. 86-36

~~TOP SECRET UMBRA~~

CONCUR:

ADM Schulz, ADN Mr. Harvey, K12

M/R: Ref is CINCPAC's notification of PINKROOT I areas of operation, and their estimate of the risk factor quoted in para 1 of the above message. Above message is to insure that all SIGINT factors have been considered relative to the *Pueblo*'s mission against North Korea. Additionally, in B1-082, 291940Z, field stations associated with the KORCOM target were advised of *Pueblo*'s operation off the east coast of NK (13NM-60NM) from 10 to 27 Jan 68 and were instructed to be especially alert for any NK reaction to the trawler. This will be *Pueblo*'s initial operation. The SIGINT collection is to be conducted in MODE I (basically Navy Direct Support) on a schedule which was proposed by CINCPAC.

DRAFTER: B. K. BUFFHAM/CHIEF, B

RELEASING OFFICER: OLIVER R. KIRBY/ADP

SECRET SAVIN

Notes

Chapter I

1. *Pueblo* Incident, Question and Answer Briefing Book, Tabs A2, A5, A6, ca. 29 January 1968 (U). CCH, NSA.

2. Harry J. Middleton, *The Compact History of the Korean War* (New York: Hawthorne Books, Inc., 1965), 231.

3. CINCPAC message, 292242Z January 1968 (S-NF). CCH, NSA.

4. *Pueblo* Incident, Question and Answer Briefing Book, Tabs A9, A16. Letter to UN Security Council from U.S. Ambassador Arthur Goldberg, serial S/8217, 2 November 1968 (U). CCH,NSA.

5. DIA Special Intelligence Summary (DIASIS 26-68), 26 January 1968 (TSC). CCH, NSA.

6. NSA staff paper, *Representative North Korean Statements on Sea Incursions*, compiled from Military Armistice Commission reports, 1968 (U). Hereafter cited as *Representative North Korean Statements* (U). CCH, NSA.

7. Ibid., 737.

8. NSA staff paper, *Representative North Korean Statements*. CCH, NSA.

9. NSA task team report to the director, *The Seizure of the USS* Pueblo *and Crew by the North Koreans on 23 January 1968: A Record and Review of Its Major Cryptologic Ramifications*,12 February 1968, Part 5, Tab J, 15 and 20. Hereafter referred to as the "Price Report" (named for Benjamin J.Price, head of the task team) (TSC-NF). CCH, NSA.

10. NSA staff paper, "An Assessment of the SIGINT Capability to Detect a Military Attack on the ROK," 1968 (SC). CCH, NSA.

11. 3/O/TEL/R26-67, 1 May 1967 (TSC). DIRNSA message 042050Z February 1968 (SC). CCH, NSA.

12. NSA staff paper, "An Assessment of the SIGINT Capability."

13. 3/O/TEL/R28-66, 28 July 1966 (TSC-ISHTAR).

14. 3/O/KCN-E/R01-66, 15 August 1966 (TSC-ISHTAR). *NSA, The Voyage and Capture of the USS Pueblo: A SIGINT Overview*, March-April 1968,37 (TSC). Hereafter cited as *Voyage and Capture*. CCH, NSA.

15. NSA staff paper, "An Assessment of the SIGINT Capability."

16. 3/O/KCA-E/R01-66 (Change 4), 10 May 1967 (TSC). Voyage and Capture, 36.

17. DIA Special Intelligence Summary, (DIASIS 26-68), 26 January 1968 (TSC). CCH, NSA. Voyage and Capture, 36 and 37.

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18. "An Assessment of the SIGINT Capability."

19. [redacted] message, 110009Z December 1968 (SC). CCH, NSA.

20. Price Report, Section 6 D, Attachment A1 (SC).

21. NSA, Question and Answer File regarding USS *Pueblo*, February 1969, ADP Question 61 (TSC).

22. Personal communication from [redacted] NSA B7, to author, 14 April 1992 (TS[C]-NOFORN). CCH, NSA.

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23.George Howe, T54 NSA, United States Cryptologic History, Special Series No. 2, *Technical Research Ships* 1956-1969,1974 (TSC-NF). CCH, NSA.

24. NSA, shipboard SIGINT collection study, *Sigint Trawler AGER* (S), March 1968, (TSC). Navy Department memorandum to Secretary of Defense, serial 00224, 7 October 1965 (S). CCH,NSA. NSA memorandum to Deputy Director, Defense Research and Engineering, serial N1337, 2 November 1965 (TS-CCO). CCH,NSA.

25. NSA letter to Chief of Naval Operations, serial 000232S, subject: "Communications Intelligence Close Support Requirements," 13 April 1953 (TS-CCO). CCH, NSA.

26. CINCPACFLT message 290111Z September 1967 (S-NF). CCH,NSA. CINCPACFLT message to DIRNSA, 130406Z December 1967 (S-CCO). CCH, NSA. DIRNSA message to NSAPAC ,Office, Japan, 202028Z December 1967 (S-CCO). CCH, NSA.

27. Director Naval Security Group message, 162302Z December 1965 (TS-CCO). CCH, NSA. NSG staff study, "Optimum Organization for Personnel Performing SIGINT Tasks on Integrated Intelligence Collection Ships," 27 July 1966 (S-CCO). CCH, NSA.

28. NSA staff paper, "The Mission of USS *Banner* in Far East Operations," ca. 1967. (TSC) CCH, NSA. NSA, shipboard SIGINT collection study, "SIGINT Trawler AGER (S)," March 1968, 3-3, 5-1 (TSC). CCH, NSA.

29. NSA, DIRNSA Question and Answer File regarding *Pueblo*, February 1969, assistant director, Production, questions 65,66, 69 (TSC). CCH, NSA.

30. Price Report, Section 6, Tab F (SC). NSA Question and Answer File regarding *Pueblo*, February 1969, Assistant Director, National Cryptologic Staff, question 30 (TSC). NSA shipboard SIGINT collection study, "SIGINT Trawler AGER (S)" March 1968, 1-1 (TSC). CCH, NSA.

Chapter II

1. SECNAV memorandum to SECDEF, serial 00224, 7 October 1965 (S). CCH, NSA.

2. SECNAV memorandum to deputy SECDEF, serial 0001726-65, 12 November 1965. (S) CCH, NSA. The FS-class ships, of about 900 tons and a maximum speed of 13 knots, were operated by the U.S. Army in the Pacific as inter-island transports toward the end of World War II and in the late 1940s and early 1950s. When these ships were transferred to the Navy in the mid-1960s, they were given the designation AKL and, eventually, AGER.

3. *Program of Commissioning Ceremonies for United States Ships* Pueblo *and* Palm Beach, *Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, Bremerton, Washington, 13 May 1967*. Hereafter cited as Program of Commissioning Ceremonies for *Pueblo* and *Palm Beach*. CCH, NSA.

4. Trevor Armbrister, *A Matter of Accountability: The Full Story of the* Pueblo *Affair* (New York: Coward-McCann Inc., 1970), 89. Hereafter cited as *A Matter of Accountability*.

5. Ibid.

6. NSA (K3) memorandum, "DIRNSA (K3) Participation in the SIGINT Equipment Facilities and System Design for the USS *Pueblo* (AGER-2)," 25 January 1968 (S-CCO). CCH, NSA.

7. Ibid., 2–4.

8. Ibid., 5–6.

9. *Program of Commissioning Ceremonies for* Pueblo *and* Palm Beach.

10. CDR Lloyd M. Bucher with Mark Rascovich, *Bucher: My Story* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1970), 2–3.

11. Commander, Naval Air Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet,transcripts of the cryptologic/cryptographic intelligence debrief of the *Pueblo* crew subsequent to their return to San Diego. Each crewman was interviewed at least one or more times and a transcript prepared for every interview. The nickname for the debrief was "BREECHES BUOY." Hereafter, references to this source are cited thus: interviewee's name, BREECHES BUOY, date of transcript, and security classification. This one is LT Stephen R. Harris, BREECHES BUOY 2 January 1969 (TSC). Accession Number 24103, CBOJ17, NSA Archives.

12. NSA oral interview OH-7-91, Richard Fine, former officer in charge, SIGINT Detachment, USS *Palm Beach* (Ager-3), 30 September 1991 (S-CCO). CCH, NSA.

13. Armbrister, *A Matter of Accountability*, 107.

14. CDR Lloyd M. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 6 January 1969 (TSC). Accession Number 24103, CBOJ14, NSA Archives.

15. Ibid.

16. LT Edward R. Murphy Jr., BREECHES BUOY, 30 December 1968 (TSC). Accession Number 24103, CBOJ24. Edward R. Murphy Jr., with Curt Gentry, *Second in Command: The Uncensored Account of the Capture of the Spy Ship* Pueblo (N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1970), 14. Hereafter cited as *Second In Command,*

17. Bucher and Rascovich , *Bucher: My Story*, 34–35.

18. Ibid., 131. Murphy and Gentry, *Second in Command*, 56–57.

19. Frederick Carl Schumacher, Jr., and George C. Wilson, *Bridge of No Return: The Ordeal of the USS Pueblo* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971), 49. Hereafter cited as *Bridge of No Return.*

20. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 6 January 1969 (TSC).

21. CWO Gene H. Lacy, BREECHES BUOY, 27 December 1968. (TSC) Accession Number 24103, CBOJ31, NSA Archives.

22. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 6 January 1969 (TSC).

23. Murphy, BREECHES BUOY, 7 January 1969 (TSC).

24. Ibid.

25. NSA listing, "SIGINT Configuration," USN-467Y, undated (S-CCO). CCH, NSA.

26. Bucher and Rascovich, *Bucher: My Story*, 60–61.

27. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 6 January 1969 (TSC).

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid.

30. Armbrister, *A Matter of Accountability*, 148–149.

31. Bucher and Rascovich, *Bucher: My Story*, 91–93.

32. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 6 January 1969 (TSC).

33. Bucher and Rascovich, *Bucher: My Story*, 97.

34. Schumacher and Wilson, *Bridge of No Return*, 50.

35. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY 6 January 1969 (TSC).

36. Anthony A. Lamantia, BREECHES BUOY, 28 December 1968 (TSC). Accession Number 24103, CBOJ28, NSA Archives.

37. CT3 Angelo S. Strano, BREECHES BUOY, 28 December 1968 (TSC). Accession Number 24103, CBOJ28, NSA Archives.

38. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 6 January 1969 (TSC).

39. Ibid.

40. Bucher, *Bucher: My Story*, 108.

41. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 6 January 1969 (TSC).

42. Strano, BREECHES BUOY, 28 December 1968 (TSC). Accession Number 24103, CBOJ28, NSA Archives.

43. Bucher, *Bucher: My Story*, 116–117.

44. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 6 January 1969 (TSC).

45. Murphy and Gentry, *Second in Command*, 436.

46. Bucher, *Bucher: My Story*, 125–126. Oral interview, 12 July 1990, Anthony W. White, former officer in charge, SIGINT detachment, USS *Banner*, 1967 (TSC-NF). CCH, NSA.

47. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 6 January 1969 (TSC).

48. Trevor Armbrister, *A Matter of Accountability*, 401.

49. LT Stephen R. Harris, BREECHES BUOY, 2 January 1969 (TSC).

50. RM2 Lee Roy Hayes, BREECHES BUOY, 31 December 1968 (TSC). Accession Number 24103, CBOJ16, NSA Archives.

51. Dunnie R. Tuck, BREECHES BUOY, 28 December 1968 (TSC). Accession Number 24103, CBOJ31, NSA Archives. Harry Iredale, BREECHES BUOY, 29 December 1968 (TSC). Accession Number 24103, CBOJ31, NSA Archives.

52. CINCPACFLT messages, 290111Z September 1967 (S-NF/LIMDIS) and 290226Z September 1968 (S-NF-LIMDIS). CCH, NSA.

53. DIRNAVSECGRUPAC Letter of Instruction 1-68, 2 January 1968, 4 (S-CCO). CCH, NSA.

54. Ibid., A1.

55. Ibid., Appendix 1 to Annex A (S-NF).

56. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 6 January 1969 (TSC).

57. U.S. Congress, House Committee on Armed Services, Special Subcommittee on the USS *Pueblo*, *Hearings on the Inquiry into the USS* Pueblo *and* EC-121 *Plane Incidents*, 91st Congress, 1st Session, 1969, 736. Hereafter cited as Hearings. CCH, NSA.

58. Ibid., 737.

59. Price Report, Pt. 7, Tab A (S-CCO/LIMDIS).

60. U.S. Congress, House Committee on Armed Services, Special Subcommittee on the USS *Pueblo*, *Report of the Inquiry into the USS* Pueblo *and* EC-121 *Plane Incidents*, 91st Congress, 1st Session, 1969, 1635-36. Hereafter cited as Congressional Report. CCH, NSA.

61. Ibid., 1643 and 1652.

62. Ibid., 1643 and 1645.

63. Ibid., 1643.

64. NSA, General Counsel memorandum to Frank M. Slatinshek, counsel for Special Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee on the USS *Pueblo*, 21 March 1969, 2 (S). CCH, NSA.

65. *Congressional Report*, 1653.

66. *Hearings*, 893.

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid., 888.

69. *Congressional Report*, 1645.

70. Ibid., 1636.

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73. DIRNSA message, 291940Z December 1967 (S-NF/LIMDIS). CCH, NSA.

74. DIRNSA message, 292017Z December 1967 (SC). CCH, NSA.

75. Interview 13-92, [redacted] NSA B7, 13 May 1992 (TSC /NOFORN/LIMDIS). CCH, NSA.

76. Interview, 13-92 [redacted] NSA B7. DIRNSA message 292228Z December 1967 (S-NF- LIMDIS). CCH, NSA.

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77. DIRNSA letter to SECDEF, 18 March 1969 (S). CCH, NSA.

78. Ibid. Carter's instruction to NSA personnel during the period of investigative review following the seizure of the *Pueblo* was to downplay this message and not draw it to the attention of any review committee investigating the loss of the ship. He felt that it would be far better, if it were pointed out by non-NSA people. Carter believed that the message was certain to receive its due attention and that NSA could come out of the whole matter relatively unscathed. Carter's instructions were carried out to the letter. As he had predicted, the message caught the attention of the House Armed Services Committee during its investigation of the *Pueblo* incident in 1969 and it received much attention when U.S. authorities decided to release it to the media (Congressional Report, 1654).

79. Congressional Report, 1655.

80. Ibid.

81. Interview 13-92, [redacted] NSA B7, 13 May 1992 (TSC-NF-LIMDIS). CCH, NSA.

82. Hearings, 818.

83. Ibid., 738–739.

84. CTF96 message, 050512Z January 1968. (S-NF/LIMDIS) CCH, NSA. CNO messages, 151410Z December 1967 (S), and 172126Z December 1967 (C). CCH, NSA. CINCPAC messages 230332Z December 1967 (S) and 292111Z December 1967 (S). CCH, NSA. CINCLANTFLT message, 191710Z December 1967 (C). CCH, NSA.

85. LT (JG) Frederick C. Schumacher Jr., BREECHES BUOY, 6 January 1969 (TSC). Accession Number 24103, CBOJ26, NSA Archives.

86. Bucher, *Bucher: My Story*, 137–138.

87. DIRNSA messages, 031944Z January 1968 (S-CCO/LIMDIS) and 032226Z January 1968 (SC-NF/LIMDIS). CCH, NSA.

88. COMNAVFORJAPAN messages, 042304Z January 1968, (S-NF/LIMDIS), and 050640Z January 1968 (C). CCH, NSA.

89. Strano, BREECHES BUOY, 28 December 1968 (TSC).

90. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 6 January 1969 (TSC).

91. CTF 96 message, 110042Z January 1968 (S/-NF/LIMDIS). CCH, NSA.

92. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 6 January 1969 (TSC).

93. Hearings, 739–740.

94. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 6 January 1969 (TSC).

Chapter III

1. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 7 January 1969 (TSC).

2. The Northern Limit Line was an extension of the DMZ into the Sea of Japan and was used by the North Koreans to demarcate the southern edge of their maritime control.

3. Voyage and Capture, 9–10.

4. QM1 Charles M. Law, BREECHES BUOY, 27 December 1968 (TSC). Accession Number 24103, CBOJ31, NSA Archives.

5. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 7 January 1969 (TSC).

6. Ibid.

7. The Demilitarized Zone was established by the armistice agreement of 27 July 1953 between the United Nations Command and North Korean and Chinese Communist forces. The Zone is a two-kilometer buffer area on either side of the Military Demarcation Line that separates North from South Korea.(Hermes, Walter G., *United States Army in the Korean War: Truce Tent and Fighting Front.* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, United States Army, 1966, appendix C, 516.)

8. Murphy, BREECHES BUOY, 9 January 1969 (TSC).

9. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 7 January 1969 (TSC).

10. Murphy and Gentry, *Second in Command*, 113–114.

11. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 7 January 1969 (TSC).

12. Voyage and Capture, 17. (TSC)

13. PH1 Lawrence W. Mack, BREECHES BUOY, 2 January 1969. (TSC) Accession Number 24103, CBOJ31, NSA Archives. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY 8 January 1969 (TSC).

14. Bucher, BREECHES B,UOY, 7 January 1969 (TSC).

15. Ibid.

16. Mack, BREECHES BUOY, 2 January 1969 (TSC).

17. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY,7 January 1969 (TSC).

18. Fireman Peter M. Bandera, BREECHES BUOY, 27 December 1968 and 8 January 1969 (TSC). Accession Number 24103, CBOJ31, NSA Archives.

19. CT3 Ralph McClintock, BREECHES BUOY, 28 December 1968. (TSC) Accession Number 24103, CBOJ23, NSA Archives. Strano, BREECHES BUOY, 5 January 1969 (TSC).

20. Schumacher, BREECHES BUOY, 6 January 1969 (TSC).

21. McClintock, BREECHES BUOY, 28 December 1968 (TSC). CT3 Steven J. Robin, BREECHES BUOY, 31 December 1968 (TSC). Accession Number 24103, CBOJ23, NSA Archives.

22. Murphy and Gentry, *Second in Command*, 115.

23. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 7 January 1969 (TSC).

24. Murphy and Gentry, *Second in Command*, 115. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 7 January 1969 (TSC).

25. NSA, "Cryptologic/Cryptographic Damage Assessment, USS *Pueblo*, AGER-2, 23 January–23 December 1968," Section VI, "Personnel Background and Debrief Summaries," 29 February 1969 (TSC). Accession Number 24103, CBOJ37, NSA Archives.

26. CINCPAC message, 230230Z December 1967 (S-NF/LIMDIS).

27. DIRNSA message, 292017Z December 1967 (SC).

28. Ibid.

29. CT3 Bradley Reed Crowe, BREECHES BUOY, 31 December 1968 (TSC). Accession Number 24103, CBOJ15, NSA Archives.

30. CT1 James Dewar Layton, BREECHES BUOY, 29 December 1968 (TSC). Accession Number 24103, CBOJ22, NSA Archives.

31. CT1 Francis John Ginther, BREECHES BUOY, 31 December 1968 (TSC). Accession Number 24103, CBOJ26, NSA Archives. CTSN Steven Ray Robin, BREECHES BUOY, 31 December1968 (TSC). Accession Number 24103, CBOJ25, NSA Archives.

32. CT1 James Francis Kell, BREECHES BUOY 5 January 1969 (TSC). Accession Number 24103, CBOJ32, NSA Archives.

33. CT1 James Antwyne Shepard, BREECHES BUOY, 1 January 1969 (TSC). Accession Number 24103, CBOJ27, NSA Archives.

34. SGT Robert Joseph Chicca, USMC, BREECHES BUOY, 26 December 1968 (TSC). Accession Number 24103, CBOJ15, NSA Archives.

35. Personal communication from [redacted] NSA B7, to author, 14 April 1992, 5 (TS[C]-NOFORN). CCH, NSA.

36. Strano,BREECHES BUOY , 4 January 1969 (TSC).

37. USN-467Y messages 220820Z and 230206Z January 1968 (SC). CT1 James A. Shepard, BREECHES BUOY, 1 and 4 January 1969 (TSC).

38. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 7 January 1969 (TSC).

39. Schumacher, BREECHES BUOY, 6 January 1969 (TSC).

40. LT Stephen R. Harris, BREECHES BUOY, 2 January 1969 (TSC).

Chapter IV

1. Throughout this chapter, unless stated otherwise, the time of day is given in Korean local time so that the reader can obtain an accurate picture of events under the daytime or nighttime conditions that prevailed when they occurred. For reference purposes, Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) and Eastern Standard Time (EST) are, respectively, nine and fourteen hours behind Korean time. In some cases, therefore, events recorded in Korean time may fall on different days than the same events recorded in Greenwich and/or Eastern Standard Time.

2. USS *Pueblo* message, 220915Z January 1968 (S-NF/[redacted] CCH, NSA.

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3. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 7 January 1969 (TSC).

4. USS *Pueblo* message, 220915Z January 1968 (S-NF[redacted]

5. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 7 January 1969 (TSC).

6. USS *Pueblo* message, 220915Z January 1968 (S-NF/[redacted]

7. Schumacher, BREECHES BUOY, 29 December 1968 (TSC).

8. Voyage and Capture, 3 (TSC).

9. Schumacher, BREECHES BUOY, 29 December 968 (TSC).

10. DIRNSA message, 042331Z March 1968 (TSC). CCH, NSA

11. CT1 Donald E. Bailey, BREECHES BUOY, 28 December 1968 (TSC). Accession Number 24103, CBOJ22, NSA Archives.

12. USS *Pueblo* message, 230150Z January 1968 (S). CCH, NSA

13. Schumacher, BREECHES BUOY, 29 December 1968 (TSC). This account differs from that given on page 166 of *Bucher: My Story* by Bucher and Rascovich wherein Bucher reports: "The night dragged on and I plagued the responsible CTs every hour and sometimes more often . . . Let me know the minute we have a solid signal . . ." In Bucher's BREECHES BUOY debriefing of 7 January 1969, he recounts: "Now let's see, I'm wondering now whether or not we didn't have some difficulty making radio contact that night [22 January 1968] . . . It seems to me it [the message] went out late at night . . . it took us several hours to effect the receipt." The debriefs of the CTs

involved, plus those of LTJG Frederick Schumacher and LT Stephen Harris reveal no personal intervention by Bucher in the communications activities as he reports in his book.

14. USS *Pueblo* messages, 220915Z, 220820Z and 230150Z January 1968, all received at Kami Seya between 231100 and 231150 Korean time. CCH, NSA.

15. Voyage and Capture, 3 (TSC).

16. NSA, *The Voyage and Capture of the USS Pueblo: A SIGINT Review*, March-April 1968, 31 (TSC). CCH, NSA.

17. Schumacher, BREECHES BUOY, 29 December 1968 (TSC).

18. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 7 January 1969 (TSC).

19. Law, BREECHES BUOY, 27 December 1968 (TSC).

20. LT Stephen R. Harris, BREECHES BUOY, 26 December 1968 (TSC).

21. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 7 January 1969 (TSC).

22. SM2 Wendell G. Leach, BREECHES BUOY, 29 December 1968 (TSC). Accession Number 24103, CBOJ31, NSA Archives.

23. 3/OO/KCJ/R13-68, 072040Z February 1968 (TSC-ISHTAR).

24. LT Stephen R. Harris, BREECHES BUOY, 26 December 1968 (TSC).

25. Oral interview OH-09-90, 12 July 1990, Anthony W. White, former officer in charge, SIGINT detachment, USS *Banner*, 1967 (TSC-VRK19/NF). CCH, NSA. Bucher and Rascovich, *Bucher: My Story*, 126.

26. COMNAVFORJAPAN message to CNO, 160753Z January 1968. (SC) Informal listing, *Cruises by Technical Research Ships*, 1969. (S-CCO) CCH, NSA. *Development of TRS Program, 1968*, background papers, NSA Archives, ACC 24104, CBOJ 35. S-CCO)

27. Schumacher, BREECHES BUOY, 28 December 1968 (TSC).

28. Ibid. 29 December 1968 (TSC).

29. Bailey, BREECHES BUOY, 28 December 1968 (TSC).

30. 3/KCJ/R/13-68, 072040Z February 1968.

31. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 9 January 1969 (TSC).

32. Leach, BREECHES BUOY, 7 January 1969 (TSC). It should be noted that this information from the signalman himself is at variance with information in *Pueblo*'s message 230352Z January 1968 and with that given by Bucher and other officers on the bridge who also heard Bucher's order.

33. Hearings, 842. Bucher and Rascovich, *Bucher: My Story*, 174.

34. Copy of transmissions sent and received from USS *Pueblo*, 23 January 1968, at NAVSECGRUDET, Kami Seya, Japan (S-NF/LIMDIS).

35. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 7 January 1969 (TSC).

36. Leach, BREECHES BUOY , 30 December 1968 (TSC).

37. Schumacher, BREECHES BUOY, 31 December 1968 (TSC).

38. Copy of transmissions sent and received from USS *Pueblo*, at NAVSECGRUDET, Kami Seya, Japan (S-NF/LIMDIS).

39. Voyage and Capture, 4 (TSC).

40. LT Stephen R. Harris, BREECHES BUOY, 26 December 1968 (TSC).

41. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 7 January 1969 (TSC).

42. Ibid.

43. CTC James F. Kell, BREECHES BUOY, 29 December 1968 (TSC). Accession Number 24103, CBOJ18, NSA Archives.

44. Voyage and Capture, 4 (TSC).

45. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 7 January 1969 (TSC).

46. Ibid.

47. Informal note, Code Entry Subject Code #15, 1. "North Korean Capture, Planned or Unplanned," 1969 (TSC). NSA, Archives.

48. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 9 January 1969 (TSC).

49. LT Stephen R. Harris, BREECHES BUOY, 2 January 1969 (TSC).

50. Ibid., 3 January 1969 (TSC).

51. Kell, BREECHES BUOY, 29 December 1968 (TSC).

52. Lacy, BREECHES BUOY, 27 December 1968 (TSC).

53. LT Stephen R.Harris, BREECHES BUOY, 3 January 1969 (TSC).

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55. LT Stephen R. Harris, BREECHES BUOY, 3 January 1969 (TSC).

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57. 3/O/KCJ/R13-68, 072040Z February 1968.

58. CTCS Ralph D. Bouden, BREECHES BUOY, 5 January 1969 (TSC). Accession Number 24103, CBOJ14, NSA Archives.

59. Bucher and Rascovich, *Bucher: My Story*, 394.

60. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 7 January 1969 (TSC).

61. Ibid. Bucher and Rascovich, *Bucher: My Story*, 185.

62. Bucher and Rascovich, *Bucher: My Story*, 183.

63. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 9 January 1969 (TSC).

64. Voyage and Capture, 4 (TSC).

65. Layton, BREECHES BUOY, 31 December 1968 (TSC).

66. Copy of transmissions sent and received from USS *Pueblo*, 23 January 1968, at NAVSECGRUDET, Kami Seya, Japan (S-NF/LIMDIS).

67. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 9 January 1969 (TSC).

68. Ibid.

69. Copy of transmissions sent and received from USS *Pueblo*, 23 January 1968, at NAVSECGRUDET, Kami Seya, Japan (S-NF/LIMDIS).

70. LT Stephen R. Harris, BREECHES BUOY, 3 January 1969 (TSC).

71. Ibid., 31 December 1968 (TSC).

72. Ibid., 4 January 1969 (TSC).

73. Ibid., 2 and 4 January 1969 (TSC).

74. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY , 7 January 1969 (TSC).

75. Leach, BREECHES BUOY, 7 January 1969 (TSC).

76. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 7 January 1969 (TSC).

77. 3/O/KCJ/R13-68, 072040Z February 1968.

78. Voyage and Capture, 5 (TSC).

79. Copy of transmissions sent and received from USS *Pueblo*, 23 January 1968, at NAVSECGRUDET, Kami Seya, Japan (S-NF/LIMDIS).

80. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 7 January 1969 (TSC).

81. Copy of transmissions sent and received from USS *Pueblo*, 23 January 1968, at NAVSECGRUDET, Kami Seya, Japan (S-NF/LIMDIS).

82. Bouden, BREECHES BUOY, 29 December 1968 (TSC).

83. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 9 Janauary 1969 (TSC).

84. BM1 Norbert J. Klepac, BREECHES BUOY, 29 December 1968 (TSC). Accession Number 24103, CBOJ31, NSA Archives.

85. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 7 January 1969 (TSC).

86. BM2 Ronald L. Berens, BREECHES BUOY, 9 January 1969 (TSC). Accession Number 24103, CBOJ31, NSA Archives.

87. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 9 January 1969 (TSC).

88. Law, BREECHES BUOY, 27 December 1968 (TSC).

89. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 7 January 1969 (TSC).

90. HM1 Herman P. Baldridge, BREECHES BUOY, 29 December 1968 (TSC). Accession Number 24103, CBOJ31, NSA Archives.

91. Bucher, BREECHES BUOY, 7 January 1969 (TSC).

92. Ibid.

93. Ibid.

94. Ibid.

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3. Hearings, 172.

4. COMNAVFORJAPAN message, 231610Z January 1968 (S). C CH,NSA.

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6. Fifth Air Force message, 251012Z January 1968 (S). CCH, NSA.

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9. COMNAVFORJAPAN message, 231610Z January 1968 (S).

10. Fifth Air Force message, 251012Z January 1968 (S).

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(b)(3)-18 USC 798
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11. Hearings, 894–896.

12. Hearings, 897–899.

13. Ibid., 896–917.

14. Armbrister, *A Matter of Accountability*, 217.

15. COMSEVENTHFLT message, 231456Z January 1968 (S). CCH,NSA.

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17. COMSEVENTHFLT message, 230606Z January 1968 (S). CCH,NSA.

18. ADMINO CINCPACFLT message, 240435Z January 1968 (S). CCH, NSA

19. CINCPACFLT message 282152Z January 1968 (S). CCH, NSA.

20. Fifth Air Force message, 251012Z January 1968 (S). CINCPACAF message, 240600Z January 1968 (S). CCH, NSA.

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27. Ibid.

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31. Ibid.

32. CINCPACFLT message, 231021Z January 1968 (S). CCH, NSA.

33. COMSEVENTHFLT message, 231456Z January 1968 (S). CCH,NSA.

34. CINCPACFLT message, 240008Z January 1968 (S). CCH, NSA.

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36. Ibid.

37. CINCUNC message, 240555Z January 1968 (S). CCH, NSA.

38. Armbrister, *A Matter of Accountability*, 239.

39. ADMINO CINCPAC message, 240435Z January 1968 (S).

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41. CINCPAC message, 231352Z January 1968 (S). CCH, NSA.

42. CINCPAC message, 232210Z January 1968 (S). CCH, NSA.

43. Armbrister, *A Matter of Accountability*, 239.

44 ADMINO CINCPAC message, 232227Z January 1968 (S). CCH,NSA.

45. JCS message, 232309Z January 1968. (S) CCH, NSA. JCS message 232310Z January 1968 (TS). CCH, NSA.

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51. NSA SIGINT Command Center, logs for period 0730, 23 January–0800, 24 January 1968 (TSC). CCH, NSA.

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57. [redacted] message 240823Z January 1968 (C-CCO). CCH, NSA.

58. NSAPAC OFF JAPAN message, 240705Z January 1968 (S-CCO). CCH, NSA.

59. DIRNSA message, 231010Z January 1968 (S-CCO). CCH, NSA.

60. DIRNSA message, 231155Z January 1968 (TS-CCO). CCH, NSA.

61 DIRNSA message, 231227Z January 1968 (SC). CCH, NSA.

62 [redacted] message, 231225Z January 1968 (S-CCO). CCH, NSA.

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65. DIRNSA message, 231140Z January 1968 (S-CCO). CCH, NSA.

66. DIRNSA message, 231658Z January 1968 (TS-CCO). CCH, NSA.

67. [redacted] message, 240418Z January 1968 (TS-CCO). CCH, NSA.

68. [redacted] message, 230920Z January 1968 (SC).

69. CINCUNC message, 231403Z January 1968 (S-NF). CCH, NSA.

70. CINCUNC message, 232255Z January 1968 (S). CCH, NSA.

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72. NSAPAC OFF Japan message, 230653Z January 1968 (S-CCO). CCH, NSA.

73. ADMINO CINCPAC message, 240318Z January 1968 (S). CCH, NSA.

74. ADMINO CINCPAC message, 231058Z January 1968 (S-CCO). CCH, NSA.

75. DIRNSA message, 231005Z January 1968 (SC-NF/LIMDIS). CCH, NSA.

76. USAFSS message, 231545Z January 1968 (SC-NF/LIMDIS). CCH, NSA.

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78. NSA, K12 log of watch office actions during period: 1225,23 January–2230, 31 January 1968 (S-CCO). CCH, NSA.

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85. DIRNSA message, 232227Z January 1968 (SC). CCH, NSA.

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88. NSA list of major events at director's level for period 1035, 23 January–1130, 27 January 1968 (TSC).

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10. 3/O/KCJ/R06-68, 241307Z January 1968.

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