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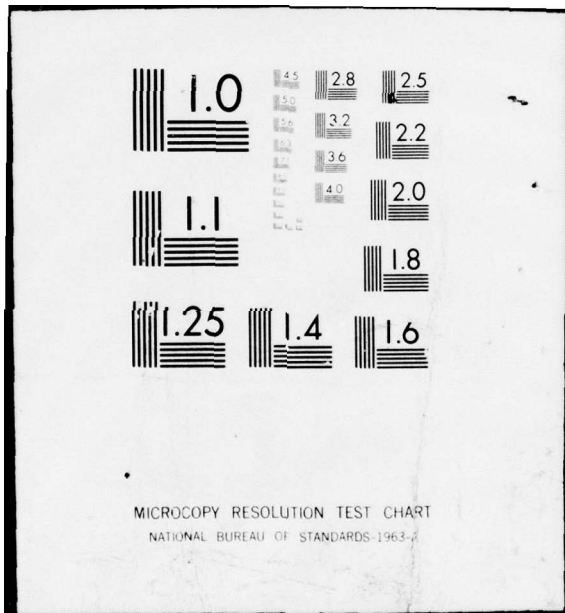
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16 MAY 1977

NEGOTIATING WITH THE NORTH KOREANS:  
THE U.S. EXPERIENCE AT PANMUNJOM

By

MR. REED P. PROBST

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USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER

NEGOTIATING WITH THE NORTH KOREANS:  
THE U.S. EXPERIENCE AT PANMUNJOM  
INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

Mr. Reed R. Probst

US Army War College  
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013  
16 May 1977

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→ This paper addresses the circumstances and negotiating posture surrounding two major confrontations between the United States and North Korea--the Pueblo Incident of 23 January 1968 and the 18 August Incident (1976). During the Pueblo negotiations it became apparent that the US would have to accede to the North Korean conditions--a signed apology document--if it wanted the 82 crewmen back alive. In the negotiations over the 18 August Incident, the North Koreans backed down and made concessions in the Joint Security Area at Panmunjom inasmuch as the UN<sup>1</sup> had photographs showing the North Korean acts of brutality and had responded with a show of military strength immediately after the incident. Negotiations over these two incidents have demonstrated the following principles: the North Koreans will negotiate when threatened or when they hope to gain important concessions not available by other means. North Korea seeks the appearance of legitimacy and respects power and force more than law and international norms of conduct. The US should avoid situations where its officials may be taken hostage by the North Koreans and should at all times provide some means for documenting North Korean violations of international law. ←

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NEGOTIATING WITH THE NORTH KOREANS:  
THE U.S. EXPERIENCE AT PANMUNJOM

The Korean Armistice was signed at Panmunjom on 27 July 1953, and during the intervening years senior US military officers, acting under the aegis of the Military Armistice Commission of the United Nations Command, have been meeting with representatives of the Korean Peoples Army and (to a much lesser extent) the Chinese Peoples Volunteers.

The purpose of this paper is not to recapitulate and comment on all the diverse and intricate experiences of the US side at Panmunjom; only a full length book could do justice to such a task. Instead, this paper has a more modest goal: to examine two incidents involving confrontations between the United States and North Korea--the Pueblo Incident of 1968 and the 18 August Incident of 1976--and to provide an analysis of American successes, frustrations, and failures resulting from the meetings at Panmunjom.

This study has been prepared in the hope that an understanding of the talks at Panmunjom will prove useful to any official of the US government who may be assigned to discuss issues and negotiate with the North Koreans. Specifically, the information presented in this study should help provide a better appreciation of the values, strategy, and tactics employed by the North Koreans at the conference table. With such information in hand, American officials and the public at large may be in a better position to understand and anticipate North Korean initiatives while avoiding the unfavorable consequences predicted by George Santayana who said: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

Channels of contact

As a matter of record, there are several levels of contact between the United Nations Command (UNC) and the North Koreans at Panmunjom. At the highest level are the meetings of the Military Armistice Commission (the MAC) where the senior member--a general officer--serves as spokesman for each side. Next are the meetings of the secretaries of the MAC. The secretaries are again senior officers, generally at the rank of colonel. The secretaries' meetings were originally established to discuss the routine administrative details of the armistice agreement and to follow up on any major initiatives developed by the senior members at the MAC meetings.

At a lower level are the meetings of the Joint Duty Officers who meet on a daily basis to exchange reports and information. Although the UNC has preferred to use this level of contact to pass reports of armistice violations to the other side, the North Koreans have refused to reciprocate and have consistently presented their protests at the MAC or secretaries' meetings where such action can generate more publicity. There is also a telephonic "hot line" between commanders of the security force detachments serving in the Joint Security Area at Panmunjom.

The armistice agreement also calls for the establishment of Joint Observation Teams, but the North Koreans have rarely accepted the UNC requests for these teams to investigate reported incidents. The only other regular contact between the two sides involves the translators who meet informally about once a month to discuss terminology and problems of rendition into Chinese, English, and Korean--the three official languages used at Panmunjom.

Finally, on a purely unofficial basis, information can sometimes be discreetly "leaked" to the other side by passing it to members of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Pueblo Affair

On 23 January 1968, naval elements of the Korean Peoples Army (KPA) forcibly seized the USS Pueblo (AGER-2) while that ship was engaged in a clandestine electronic surveillance mission off the east coast of North Korea. At the time of capture, both the Pueblo and one of the North Korean ships radioed their positions to their respective headquarters. Plots of these positions showed both ships to be more than 15 miles from the nearest point of land. This calculated act of piracy on the part of the North Koreans--breathtaking in its boldness--contravened the traditional right of innocent passage for warships on the high seas, stunned the entire world, and left the US without a precedent for dealing with a gross violation of international law.<sup>2</sup>

In the first few days following the capture of the Pueblo, a frustrated US administration reviewed, then rejected, various options including military retaliation against North Korea and an expedition to forcibly retrieve the ship and crew.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, some in America still hoped that North Korea would come to repent of its folly and release the crew. Such was not to be the case, however, for within three days of the capture of the Pueblo, the North Koreans published a written "confession" by Commander Lloyd Bucher, the skipper of the ill-fated US ship. Moreover, by 4 February, Pyongyang announced that the government had obtained confessions from the entire crew.<sup>4</sup> It should not be surprising that the confessions of the Pueblo crew members

faithfully echoed the North Korean claim that the Pueblo was an armed spy ship that had committed grave provocations by intruding deeply into North Korean waters. These confession documents also closed by begging the government of the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (DPRK) for leniency.

Inasmuch as the United States does not and did not recognize the DPRK, the only existing mechanism for directly talking with the North Koreans was at Panmunjom where the US, representing the United Nations Command, had been holding frequent meetings with the North Koreans and their Chinese Communist allies.<sup>5</sup> Although the machinery for holding talks with the communists existed at Panmunjom, the US was in somewhat of a dilemma as to how to proceed. The Pueblo incident had occurred only a few days after the abortive North Korean commando raid on the presidential residence in Seoul (the Blue House raid), and the government and people of South Korea were understandably incensed and jittery over that brazen provocation by the North. Indeed, the ROK government undoubtedly would have welcomed and participated in a retaliatory military operation against the North had the US permitted it. Instead, the South Koreans were obliged to stand impatiently on the sidelines while the US delivered eloquent, but impotent, protests against the Blue House raid at the succeeding MAC meetings. In such a charged atmosphere, it would appear inappropriate, if not chauvinistic, for the US to pursue its aims of retrieving the Pueblo and its crew by discussing the issue with the North Koreans at the MAC meetings.

At first the US sought Russian intervention to obtain the release of the Pueblo and its crew while simultaneously raising the issue within the United Nations Security Council. When little seemed to

come of these efforts, the administration became convinced that private talks should be held between the US and North Korea at Panmunjom using the personnel of the MAC as the negotiators but in their capacity as US (rather than UN) officials. Thus, when North Korea made two references to the possibility of holding talks with the US to resolve the Pueblo issue,<sup>6</sup> the US acted swiftly, made arrangements with the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission to use their more private conference room at Panmunjom, and commenced holding a series of closed talks with the North Koreans on 2 February 1968.<sup>7</sup>

In the private meetings with the North Koreans, the US found that the same North Korean negotiator--General Pak Chung-kuk--who regularly used abusive and vituperative language against the United States in the public MAC meetings now was much more restrained and reasonable.<sup>8</sup> It was apparent, however, that all initiatives offered by the US side had to be cleared through Pyongyang before Pak could accept or reject the US proposals. At the same time, instructions from the US negotiating team came by cable from the State Department in Washington so that the positions of each side participating in the private talks at Panmunjom were accurate reflections of national policy.<sup>9</sup>

Although the original objective of the United States in talking privately with North Korea at Panmunjom was to secure the release of the Pueblo and its crew,<sup>10</sup> by the time of the seventh private meeting (held on 16 February) the North Koreans had made it clear that the ship would not be returned and that Pyongyang would require something from the US in return for releasing the crew. Basically, the requirement consisted of a written statement admitting to the intrusion of the Pueblo into North Korean waters while engaged in an espionage

mission. This statement must also include an apology to the government of North Korea, and an assurance that such acts would not be repeated in the future.

These demands by the North Koreans were most difficult for the US government to accept. In the first place, US officials were generally convinced that the Pueblo had not strayed within the 12 mile limit of territorial waters claimed by North Korea. Hence, admission of illegal penetration was patently untrue. The US therefore countered with the proposal that the crew be immediately released upon the promise that the US would conduct a thorough investigation of the case afterwards and would apologize if warranted by the facts.

North Korea rejected the US counteroffer and remained steadfast in its conditions for the release of the crew. Frequently, when the US continued to show reluctance to comply with Pyongyang's requirements, General Pak Chung-kuk would hint that North Korea might be forced to take additional measures against the Pueblo crew members.

Throughout these negotiations, it was clear that the North Koreans held all the cards that counted. They had in their possession the "spy" ship, the confessions of the crew, and--most important of all--the 82 surviving crew members\* as hostages. For its part, the US could claim the provisions of the law of the sea regarding free passage on the high seas. The US also enjoyed an overwhelming military superiority over the North Koreans. But invoking the provisions of international law proved to be of no value in securing the release of the crewmen, and the option of using military force against North Korea seemed inappropriate and dangerous to a nation already embroiled in a struggle with a patient and wily enemy in Vietnam. In short, under these

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\*One man, Seaman Duane Hodges, was severely wounded during the North Korean bombardment of the Pueblo and later died in captivity.

circumstances, the US was powerless to force the release of the Pueblo crew.

It took several months for US policymakers to see that North Korea would not modify its requirements for the release of the crew and to realize that the US had no other means short of armed violence with which to secure its objective. Thus, the real issue in the final months of negotiations at Panmunjom was how the US could in good conscience sign a document believed to be patently false in order to meet the North Korean demands.

Final details were ironed out at the 28th private meeting held on 22 December, and the following day, exactly 11 months after the capture of the Pueblo, the senior US negotiator, Major General Woodward, signed a confessional statement acknowledging receipt of the crew members. Before he did so, however, he issued an oral denial of that statement and insisted that he was signing the document only to secure the return of the American prisoners.<sup>11</sup> Several minutes later, CDR Lloyd Bucher led his crew across the Sa Chon bridge (the "Bridge of No Return") within the Joint Security Area at Panmunjom, and thus this unhappy chapter of recent American history ended on a bittersweet note with the release of the crewmen in time for Christmas reunions with their families.

#### The 18 August Incident (1976)

This incident, occurring within the Joint Security Area at Panmunjom, resulted from the efforts of UNC personnel to prune a poplar tree which obstructed a view of the Sa Chon bridge from two UN observation posts in the area. After the UNC working party had spent several minutes trimming the tree on that fatal date (from about 1030

to 1050) one of the North Korean officers, who had earlier inquired as to the purpose of the expedition, approached the officer in charge of the UNC work team, US Army Captain Arthur George Bonifas, and told him to stop the work. When Capt. Bonifas and his crew ignored the orders to stop, the North Korean officer sent a runner across the Sa Chon bridge, and within a few minutes about 20 additional North Korean guards crossed the bridge and arrived on the scene.

Violence commenced after the senior North Korean officer carefully took off his wristwatch, folded it in a handkerchief, put it in his pocket, and gave the order in Korean to "kill the bastards." The North Koreans, who greatly outnumbered the UNC crew, used axe handles and clubs conveniently available in the back of their truck which was already on the scene. Later they employed much more lethal weapons-- the axes which the tree trimming crew had dropped in their attempt to flee from the scene of the North Korean attack. The period of violent assault was extremely short--perhaps less than a minute in duration. But in that interval Capt. Bonifas was knocked to the ground by the North Korean commander and was bludgeoned to death by at least five North Koreans. His deputy, First Lieutenant Mark Thomas Barrett, who was also savagely beaten, died a few minutes later. Ten other UNC personnel including two guards from a nearby UNC observation post were also wounded.<sup>12</sup>

In contrast to the Pueblo hijacking in 1968, the details of the 18 August Incident were carefully documented by a series of explicit photographs taken by UNC guards from another observation post in the Joint Security Area.<sup>13</sup>

Circumstantial evidence suggests that the 18 August Incident

may have been preplanned by the North Koreans. In the first place, it occurred at the time of the Colombo Conference wherein delegates from 85 "non-aligned" nations of the Third World were discussing their aspirations, policies, and problems. A staged incident involving a clash between North Korean and UNC troops at Panmunjom might well be exploited by Pyongyang to focus Third World attention on the lingering imperialism of the United States with regard to maintaining forces on the Korean Peninsula.<sup>14</sup> This hypothesis is reinforced by the fact that Radio Pyongyang broadcast a highly biased report of the incident within three minutes of its occurrence.<sup>15</sup>

US response to this outrageous violence by the North Koreans was swift and decisive. Leaves for US ground forces stationed in Korea were cancelled and the forces were ordered to DEFCON 3 alert (a condition midway between peacetime status and full wartime alert). At the same time 12,000 ground troops were ordered to Korea, including 1800 marines from Okinawa. In addition, a squadron (18-20 aircraft) of F-4 phantom jets arrived in Korea on the 19th, and a squadron of F-111s was also deployed to Korea from Mountain Home AFB, Idaho. Moreover, the Seventh Fleet was put on alert and the carrier Midway was ordered to leave Yokosuka.<sup>16</sup>

At a MAC meeting convened at US insistence on 19 August, the senior US representative strongly condemned the North Korean actions and passed to his opposite number a personal letter from CINCUNC to the Supreme Commander, Korean Peoples Army (Kim Il-sung), which also stated that the US would not tolerate such actions.

The most dramatic US response to the 18 August Incident occurred three days after the event when US and Korean personnel, adhering to

a plan known as Operation Paul Bunyan, entered the Joint Security Area and, under cover of circling helicopter gunships, F-4s, F-111s, and B-52 bombers, plus a quick-reaction force of 300 US and Korean combat troops on the ground, cut down the offending tree, leaving only an 8-foot stump as a vivid reminder of the violence it had inspired.<sup>17</sup> During the same operation, US troops also pulled down two illegal traffic control drop gates erected by the North Koreans at their guardhouses within the Joint Security Area.<sup>18</sup>

Operation Paul Bunyan was not entirely free of risk. One observation helicopter carrying a US general officer was struck by communist small arms fire when it strayed over the Military Demarcation Line that morning, and some observers have criticized the entire effort as indicative of an iron-fisted, overkill approach to retaliation. Those who understand Oriental values and the importance of "face" in Asian society generally agree, however, that the US action on 21 August did indeed cause the North Koreans to lose a considerable amount of face, and thus was a victory for the US in the minds of all who were aware of the facts.

A few hours after the completion of Operation Paul Bunyan, the senior member of the North Korean MAC team proposed a meeting at the MAC conference room so that he could deliver a reply from Kim Il-sung to CINCUNC's protest message of 19 August. At this historic occasion the UNC senior member received the following oral message:

It was a good thing that no big incident occurred at Panmunjom for a long period. However, it is regretful that an incident occurred in the Joint Security Area, Panmunjom this time. An effort must be made so that such incidents may not recur in the future. For this purpose both sides should make efforts. We urge your side to prevent the provocation. Our side will never provoke first, but take self-defensive measures only when provocation occurs. This is our consistent stand.<sup>19</sup>

At the next meeting of the MAC held on 25 August, the UNC senior member, acting under instructions from Washington, declared that the 21 August response of the North Koreans was unsatisfactory but made the following three points:

1. The UNC considered Kim's expression of "regret" and his remarks on joint efforts to preclude future incidents in the Joint Security Area a positive step.
2. Those KPA personnel responsible for the brutal murder of the two UNC officers should be punished.
3. The UNC continues to insist on assurances that the safety of UNC personnel in the Joint Security Area be preserved.<sup>20</sup>

The rapid military response by the United States to the incident, the firm negotiating position by the UNC representatives at the subsequent MAC meetings, coupled with world revulsion to the photographs of North Korean troops committing their atrocities at Panmunjom, apparently worked together to cause the North Koreans to take further positive steps to defuse the situation. At the same meeting wherein the UNC senior member asked for punishment of the guilty and assurances for the safety of UNC personnel, the KPA senior member offered a proposal calling for the separation of security force personnel within the Joint Security Area by adhering to the Military Demarcation Line which bisects the area. This could be accomplished by each side's having guard posts only on their respective sides of the line.<sup>21</sup> Inasmuch as the UNC had no guard posts to the north of the Military Demarcation Line, the North Koreans were in essence calling for the unilateral dismantlement of four of their guard posts lying south of the line within the Joint Security Area.

Negotiations on this matter proceeded smoothly, and on 6 September the MAC secretaries signed a "Supplement" setting forth the new

security arrangements for the Joint Security Area as agreed to by both sides. This was the first substantive supplement approved by both parties since 1958. All provisions to the new agreement were completed by 22 September, just five weeks to the day after the occurrence of the Incident.<sup>22</sup>

Lessons learned

Up to this point we have considered two major crisis situations which were resolved through negotiations at the conference table at Panmunjom. In the case of the Pueblo Incident, the North Koreans would appear to have won a clear cut victory. In the case of the 18 August Incident, the US seems to have carried the day although it did lose two fine army officers. Both cases, however divergent, do have many similarities and point to a consistent negotiating pattern both for the North Koreans and for the Americans.

The record shows that the North Koreans have been quick to go to the conference table with the US when one or more of the following conditions have obtained:

- a. when the North Korean position or recent gains are physically threatened.
- b. when the North Koreans believe that negotiations might help them to consolidate past gains or to facilitate future gains.
- c. when the North Koreans wish to avoid an escalation of tension or a direct military confrontation.

It is more than mere coincidence that a final agreement on the Korean Armistice was reached in 1953 just a few days after it became apparent that a major KPA/CPV offensive against the UNC forces had failed.<sup>23</sup> It is also more than a coincidence that North Korean overtures to the US for direct talks about the Pueblo crew occurred at the very time that three US aircraft carriers had been ordered to

Korean waters. Finally, Kim Il-sung's regrets were tendered on the same day as the US show of force through Operation Paul Bunyan.

In their dealings with Americans at the conference table over the years, the North Koreans have displayed a de facto set of objectives which include the following:

1. Establish documentary confirmation for the legitimacy of the North Korean regime and its activities.
2. Establish and maintain the appearance of parity and equality with its American adversary.
3. Back down and give ground only when necessary to defuse a threat to the security of the state.
4. Exploit advantages to maximum potential; where possible, work for the embarrassment and humiliation of the United States.

The foregoing leave little room for true negotiation in the usual sense of the word, but are predicated upon the existence of an adversary (or more correctly, a predatory) relationship between the two states. Within such a value system the law of the jungle (success is achieved through strength or cunning) is more to be respected than the law of nations.

Both the Pueblo and the 18 August Incidents illustrate how far the Americans and the North Koreans differ in their values. In many cases, divergence comes close to being antithesis. For example, both incidents clearly showed the high premium the US attaches to human life, and both showed a callous disregard for such by the North Koreans. During the Pueblo negotiations, the US agonized over the wording of its confession because of the importance to Americans of the reality of truth. At the same time, however, the North Koreans were concerned only with the appearance of truth. Finally, the US demonstrated throughout both negotiating periods a basic respect for law

while North Korea showed a respect only for force.<sup>24</sup>

Based on the foregoing, the question remains as to what the US might do or attempt to do to improve chances for success and to avoid the pitfalls of the past in dealing with the North Koreans.

First of all, the US needs to maintain its position of strength. For all their slander and belittling of the "US imperialist aggressors" in their propaganda, the North Koreans respect power and will back down when confronted with a superior military force.

Secondly, the United States should never put itself in a position where its official personnel are unnecessarily exposed to the risk of being apprehended by the North Koreans. Recognizing the exceptionally high value the American government places on the life and wellbeing of its citizens, the North Koreans transform American prisoners into political pawns and hostages, and exact a very high price for their release.

Thirdly, in those instances when it is necessary to expose US personnel to the possibility of harm at the hands of the North Koreans, the US should be prepared to show irrefutable evidence of the legitimacy of the US position and the illegality of the North Korean action. Through fortuitous circumstances, the US had photographs of the 18 August Incident, but similar proof was lacking in the Pueblo case. If only a U-2 aircraft had been in the vicinity of the Pueblo and had been able to photograph the North Korean hijacking in international waters, the responses of both sides might have been immeasurably different.

Finally, the United States needs to establish well conceived and feasible contingency plans to respond to any potential North Korean

challenge before it develops into an incident. No contingency plans had been developed for the Pueblo mission, and the protective force was too remote from the Joint Security Area on 18 August to thwart the North Korean attack. For all its flaws and excesses, Operation Paul Bunyan on 21 August 1976 showed that even at a time of high tension a potentially dangerous task can be carried out against the North Koreans with minimal risk to US personnel.

FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Four nations--Czechoslovakia, Poland, Sweden, and Switzerland-- provide a token number of personnel (6 or 7 each) to serve on this commission.
- <sup>2</sup> Immediately after the capture of the Pueblo, the question arose in US circles as to why other US forces in the Far East failed to respond to the Pueblo's calls for help. In a word, the answer was that contingency plans had never been fully prepared and that US air and naval assets in the region were not sufficiently ready to intercept the North Koreans before nightfall.
- <sup>3</sup> It was readily--and correctly--agreed that the use of military force probably could not bring about the safe release of the Pueblo crew.
- <sup>4</sup> Nodong sinmun, 26 January and 4 February 1968.
- <sup>5</sup> The Republic of Korea was not a signatory to the Armistice Agreement which was signed by the United States (representing the UN Command) and by representatives of the Korean Peoples Army and Chinese Peoples Volunteers on the other side. After Chinese troops withdrew from the Korean Peninsula in 1953, the Chinese representatives came to play a less prominent role so that in 1968 they had little more than observer status at Panmunjom. South Korea also provides observers at all official MAC talks at Panmunjom.
- <sup>6</sup> On 27 January, Radio Pyongyang voiced strong opposition to debating the Pueblo issue at the UN (No objections were implied for holding direct discussions between the two principal parties, however.). On 31 January, Kim Kwang-hyop, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Korean Workers Party stated that the US had "illegally brought the Pueblo Case to the United Nations, though there is precedent for the treatment of similar cases at the Korean Military Armistice Commission...."
- <sup>7</sup> "Meet the Press" Interview with Secretary of State Dean Rusk, 4 February 1968.
- <sup>8</sup> Conversation with Colonel John P. Lucas, Jr., 22 February 1977. Col. Lucas was Secretary to the MAC at the time of the Pueblo negotiations.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>10</sup> In his "Meet the Press" Interview of 4 February 1968, Mr. Rusk also acknowledged that the Panmunjom talks had caused a postponement of further discussions of the Pueblo issue at the UN.
- <sup>11</sup> It is significant but not surprising that the North Koreans omitted General Woodward's oral denial in their accounts of the release ceremony. Pyongyang also provided the media with an altered version of the US confession signed by General Woodward. In the North Korean version, the last paragraph acknowledging receipt of the crew members has been deleted. (See appendix for photographic reproduction.)

<sup>12</sup> UNC briefing on the 18 August Incident.

<sup>13</sup> Almost in anticipation of trouble, the UNC had arranged in advance that the tree trimming operation should be photographed; moreover a special security force had been established outside the area to provide help in case trouble did develop.

<sup>14</sup> Initially, the North Korean delegates at Colombo were able to point to the 18 August Incident (before the photographs were published by the UNC) to gain endorsement by the delegates of a strongly worded statement concerning the US as follows: "(T)he imperialists have turned South Korea into a military base for aggression and a base for nuclear attack by extensively introducing more and more armed forces and mass-destruction weapons, including nuclear weapons." Facts on File, 21 Aug. 76, p. 621.

<sup>15</sup> The report, of course, blamed the UNC for initiating the clash, and made no mention of the UNC fatalities or casualties.

<sup>16</sup> Stars and Stripes, 21 Aug. 76. The Korea Herald, 21-22 Aug. 76.

<sup>17</sup> Stars and Stripes, 23 Aug. 76.

<sup>18</sup> UNC briefing on the 18 August Incident.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. Those who are knowledgeable in the history of Korean Armistice negotiations indicate that this response is more remarkable than it appears on the surface. This is the first time that Kim Il-sung has responded to a personal message from the UNC commander although seven such messages have been sent him since 1953. Moreover, Kim's expression of regret is the closest he has ever come to apologizing for any incident between the two opposing sides since the signing of the armistice in 1953.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> General Matthew B. Ridgway, who was transferred from Korea to Europe shortly before the commencement of this offensive, called it "the mightiest blow to fall upon our forces since the spring offensive in 1951." Ridgway, The Korean War, p. 223.

<sup>24</sup> This is by no means a complete list. Another divergence between North Korea and the US is illustrated in the way each side handles charges by the other of armistice violations. For its part, the US usually agrees to investigate the North Korean allegations. (Most

prove to be groundless, however.) In those cases where North Korea has committed a major violation, the northern representatives attempt to speak first at the Panmunjom meetings in order to charge the UNC with the very incident being protested by the UNC. Then, when the UNC does present its charges, the North Koreans generally dismiss them as mere fabrications.

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미합중국 정부를 대표하여

이륙군 소장 길버트 에이치, 우드워드

1968년 12월 23일

*Gilbert H. Woodward*  
23 Dec 1968

TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA

The Government of the United States of America, Acknowledging the validity of the confessions of the crew of the USS "Pueblo" and of the documents of evidence produced by the representative of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the effect that the ship, which was seized by the self-defence measures of the naval vessels of the Korean People's Army in the territorial waters of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on January 23, 1968, had illegally intruded into the territorial waters of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on many occasions and conducted espionage activities of spying out important military and state secrets of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Shoulders full responsibility and solemnly apologizes for the grave acts of espionage committed by the U.S. ship against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea after having intruded into the territorial waters of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

And gives firm assurance that no U.S. ships will intrude again in future into the territorial waters of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Meanwhile, the Government of the United States of America earnestly requests the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to deal leniently with the former crew members of the USS "Pueblo" confiscated by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea side, taking into consideration the fact that these crew members have confessed honestly to their crimes and petitioned the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for leniency.

On behalf of the Government of the United States of America

*Gilbert H. Woodward*  
Gilbert H. Woodward,  
Major General, United States Army

23 Dec 1968

APPENDIX: U.S. version of the Pueblo Apology Letter

**TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE DEMOCRATIC  
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA**

The Government of the United States of America,

Acknowledging the validity of the confessions of the crew of the USS "Pueblo" and of the documents of evidence produced by the representative of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the effect that the ship, which was seized by the self-defence measures of the naval vessels of the Korean People's Army in the territorial waters of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on January 23, 1968, had illegally intruded into the territorial waters of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on many occasions and conducted espionage activities of spying out important military and state secrets of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea,

Shoulders full responsibility and solemnly apologizes for the grave acts of espionage committed by the U.S. ship against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea after having intruded into the territorial waters of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea,

And gives firm assurance that no U.S. ships will intrude again in future into the territorial waters of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Meanwhile, the Government of the United States of America earnestly requests the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to deal leniently with the former crew members of the USS "Pueblo" confiscated by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea side, taking into consideration the fact that these crew members have confessed honestly to their crimes and petitioned the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for leniency.

Simultaneously with the signing of this document, the undersigned acknowledges receipt of 82 former crew members of the "Pueblo" and one corpse.

On behalf of the Government of  
the United States of America

Gilbert H. Woodward,  
Major General, United States Army

, 1968.