

February 1968

Information about the Situation in Korea as the USSR Ambassador in Prague c. S.V. Cervonenko relayed it to the Minister of Foreign Affairs c. V. David.

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Summary:

The Czechoslovak Deputy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs outlines Soviet policy towards the USS Pueblo Incident.

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Translation - English

Deputy
of the Minister of Foreign Affairs

File No.: 020.874/68-3
In Prague on February 1968
c. Trnavsky
complement according to the info from the CPZS CC
or c. (illegible) c. (illegible)

Dear Comrade,
Attached please find information about the situation in Korea as the USSR
Ambassador in Prague c. S.V. Cervonenko relayed it to the Minister of Foreign Affairs
c. V. David.

With comradely greeting,
(signature illegible)

Attachment: 1
Esteemed comrade
Alexander D u b c e k
1st Deputy of the Central Committee
of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia

Prague

CONFIDENTIAL!

Korean comrades agree with the position of the Soviet representative during discussion about the USA complaint to the Security Council of the UN. They think it is necessary to stretch the proceedings of the issue "Pueblo" in the Security Council.

As you know, various ideas about mediation to settle the incident are being discussed unofficially in the UN Security Council. We informed Korean comrades about it. Since Korean comrades are able to deal with Americans directly in Panmunjeom, they feel that mediation of third countries is not in principle necessary. As for the concrete proposals for mediation, friends believe it is possible to determine tactics according to the further development.

In conversations with the Soviet Ambassador from January 28th to January 31st, concerning further possible steps the DPRK may take in connection with the incident, Korean comrades were saying only that the DPRK is not going to succumb to provocations and is ready to work towards easing of the tension.

On January 29th, Rusk sent a letter to c. A. A. Gromyko. In this letter, Americans reiterate their version that the ship "Pueblo" was in the international waters at the moment of interception. Rusk maintains that Johnson exercises restraint in the matter and believes that settling the issue as quickly as possible would be in the interest of the both parties.

During unofficial consultations among members of the Security Council, USA representative Goldberg approached the USSR representatives with a declaration that the USA is trying to find a diplomatic solution to the conflict in such a way that would include repatriation of the ship and its crew, without damaging positions of either party.

In the response to Rusk, as well as in the conversation between the Soviet and American representative in the Security Council, we stressed, as Korean comrades requested, that the incident can be settled if tension in the area is not increasing, national dignity of the DPRK is not insulted by making it responsible for the incident, and the policy of threats is abandoned; the USA must stop pressuring the DPRK and threaten her.

On January 31st, we told Korean comrades that by adopting tough measures for defense of its sovereignty, the DPRK has politically won. Now it would be desirable to solidify these results and at the same time to demonstrate the peaceful character of the DPRK course in connection with the incident. That could be achieved by expelling the crew of "Pueblo" from the territory of the DPRK. We told Korean comrades that such a step from their side could not be interpreted as weakness; on the contrary, it would be appreciated everywhere as a show of a responsible approach, and it would strengthen even more the international position of the DPRK.

As far as it is up to the Soviet government, it will of course even in the future see to it that events around the incident do not grow out of certain boundaries, and it will make every effort so that they do not escalate into an armed conflict.

We are convinced that Czechoslovak friends share this position because it follows our common course in international issues.

We would be grateful to the government of Czechoslovakia if it could, if at all possible, share information it has, and comments about that matter.