

TOP SECRET [REDACTED]

APPROVED FOR RELEASE

22 SEPT 99

THE PUEBLO CASE HANGS FIRE

No progress is visible in the Pueblo case although bilateral talks at Panmunjom are continuing.

During the celebration of the "Korean People's Army" 20th

Anniversary in Pyongyang, Premier Kim Il-song accused the Pueblo of a "gangster-like, piratic act" which proved that "US maneuverings" for a new Korean war had reached a "grave stage." He insisted that the North Koreans do

TOP SECRET [REDACTED]

~~TOP SECRET~~ [REDACTED]

not want war, but warned the US. would get "only corpses" if it tried to solve the case through "threat and blackmail."

Pyongyang publicized a second, more detailed "confession" by Pueblo captain Bucher and published four photos of alleged US documents which place the vessel in North Korean territorial waters on six occasions.

Despite Pyongyang's charges of an armed incursion this week, the level of incidents along the DMZ has been low.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Soviet Party Secretary Ponomarev visited Pyongyang on 9 and 10 February following his visit to Tokyo where he and politburo member Suslov had held talks with the Japanese Communist Party.

[REDACTED]

Ponomarev's visit, though offering a gesture of Moscow's "fraternal" solidarity with North Korea, provided no indication that the Soviets had departed from their policy of minimal involvement in the Pueblo issue.

Fifteen Soviet ships, five of them armed with missiles are deployed off Korea. Although most have remained in the Sea of Japan north of the 38th parallel, a few have moved south of the line and are trailing the American task force.

[REDACTED]

~~TOP SECRET~~ [REDACTED]