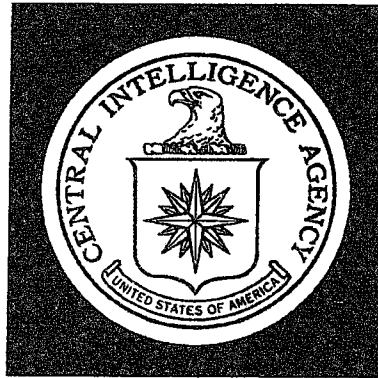


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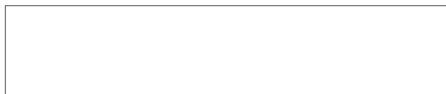
WEEKLY REVIEW

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23 February 1968
SC No. 00758/68



72-228711/2

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C O N T E N T S

(Information as of noon EST, 21 February 1968)

Far East

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VIETNAM	2
The second wave of coordinated attacks against urban centers lacked the scope and intensity of the earlier Tet offensive, but indicates that the Communists intend to keep up the military pressure. Saigon's recovery effort may suffer from Ky's resignation as chairman of the Joint Task Force. [redacted]	(b)(3)
COMMUNIST THREAT PERSISTS IN SOUTHERN LAOS	5
The anticipated Communist military offensive in the Bolovens plateau has not yet developed but the enemy is maintaining a credible threat in the area and could strike with little advanced warning.	
SERIOUS DISORDERS PERSIST IN COMMUNIST CHINA	6
Conflicts between armed civilian factions are still occurring in many provinces and the armed forces appear to be involved on a larger scale than at any time since last summer. [redacted]	(b)(3)
PUEBLO IMPASSE UNBROKEN	9
The North Koreans continue to imply strongly that their handling of the Pueblo crew will be dependent in large part on US actions. They clearly intend to use the crew as hostages to forestall US pressure and induce concessions. [redacted]	(b)(3)

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[redacted]	12

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FAR EAST

The coordinated rocket and mortar attacks on some 40 South Vietnamese cities and military facilities last weekend underscored the Communists' intention to maintain pressure on population centers in an effort to demoralize the Saigon government and army, and to tie down allied forces.

Skirmishes on the outskirts of Saigon and mortar attacks on targets in the center of the city continued and there are indications of preparations for another major ground assault against the capital. North Vietnamese forces also continued sporadic shelling of Khe Sanh and other allied bases in the Demilitarized Zone area but there were no clear indications of the timing of a major ground attack on these positions.

The Saigon government's recovery program has been jeopardized by the resignation of Vice President Ky and General Nguyen Duc Thang from the joint South Vietnamese - US recovery task force. The government also risked further political disarray by arresting three prominent opposition figures.

In Laos, North Vietnamese forces remain poised to attack Saravane in the southern panhandle but action so far has been limited to skirmishing around outlying posts and to harassing fire on the city's airstrip. In view of the low morale of government defense forces, it is doubtful that they could resist a concerted thrust to seize the city. The capture of Saravane, which has been in government hands since the 1962 Laos settlement, would raise the possibility that the Communists intend to upset the fragile status quo in the country.

There has been no change in North Korea's apparent intention to exploit the captured Pueblo crew as hostages to forestall US pressure and to maneuver for US concessions. Panmunjom has warned the US to act discreetly and has strongly implied that treatment of the US crew will be determined in large part by US actions.

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~~TOP SECRET~~ [REDACTED]

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PUEBLO IMPASSE UNBROKEN

The North Koreans continue to imply strongly that their handling of the Pueblo crew will be dependent in large part on US actions. They are clearly intent on using the crew as hostages to forestall US pressure and induce concessions.

General Pak Chung-kuk, the senior North Korean representative at Panmunjom, on 19 February warned that Pyongyang would carefully watch every future US move and cautioned the US to act "discreetly." He pointedly protested the US build-up since the Pueblo seizure and US plans to increase military assistance to South Korea.

In addition, during the past week various North Korean spokesmen have again warned that the crew may be punished in accordance with North Korean law.

In South Korea initial criticism of the Vance mission has given way to an official effort to play down differences with the US. Senior officials in Seoul now are apparently convinced that they must put the best possible face on the recent discussions.

The foreign minister, in contrast to an earlier lukewarm endorsement of the joint communiqué issued at the conclusion of the mission, stated publicly on 17 February that the communiqué signified that there was complete accord between Seoul and Washington on what constituted an attack on South Korea. In line with this more moderate public

posture, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has issued instructions to all major commands to maintain close relations and cooperate with US forces in Korea. The order pointedly observed that to do otherwise would help North Korea to drive a wedge between the South Koreans and the Americans.

There have been widespread press reports in Seoul of an imminent cabinet shake-up growing out of the North Korean attempt on President Pak's life last month and Seoul's unhappiness with US handling of the Pueblo incident. Those most likely to be removed by President Pak are reportedly the minister of defense, the minister of home affairs, and one economic minister. Any changes at this time, however, would be largely a face-saving gesture by Pak and probably would not foreshadow any change in South Korean policies.

During the past week, North Korean military activities returned to normal. [REDACTED]

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Six Soviet combat ships which deployed in reaction to the US naval task force off Korea have returned to Vladivostok. Three other combat ships and five auxiliaries continue to follow the US forces. [REDACTED]

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