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DIRECTORATE OF
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WEEKLY SUMMARY

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25 April 1969
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The **WEEKLY SUMMARY**, issued every Friday morning by the Office of Current Intelligence, reports and analyzes significant developments of the week through noon on Thursday. It frequently includes material coordinated with or prepared by the Office of Economic Research, the Office of Strategic Research, and the Directorate of Science and Technology. Topics requiring more comprehensive treatment and therefore published separately as Special Reports are listed in the contents pages.

W A R N I N G

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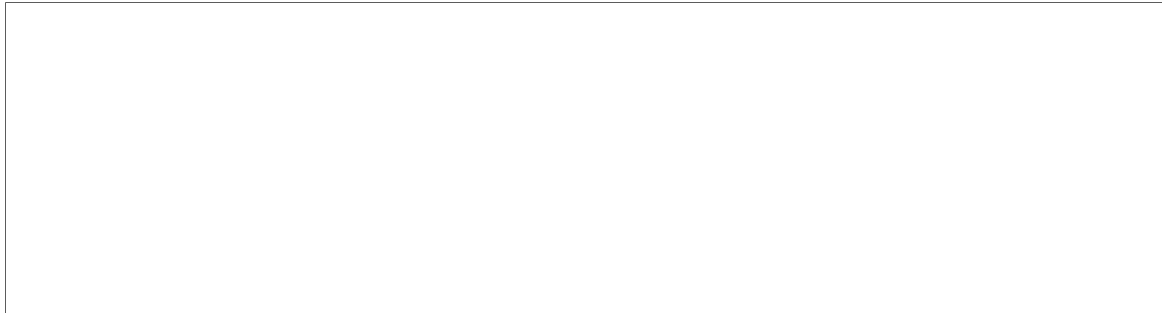
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C O N T E N T S

(Information as of noon EST, 24 April 1969)

Far East

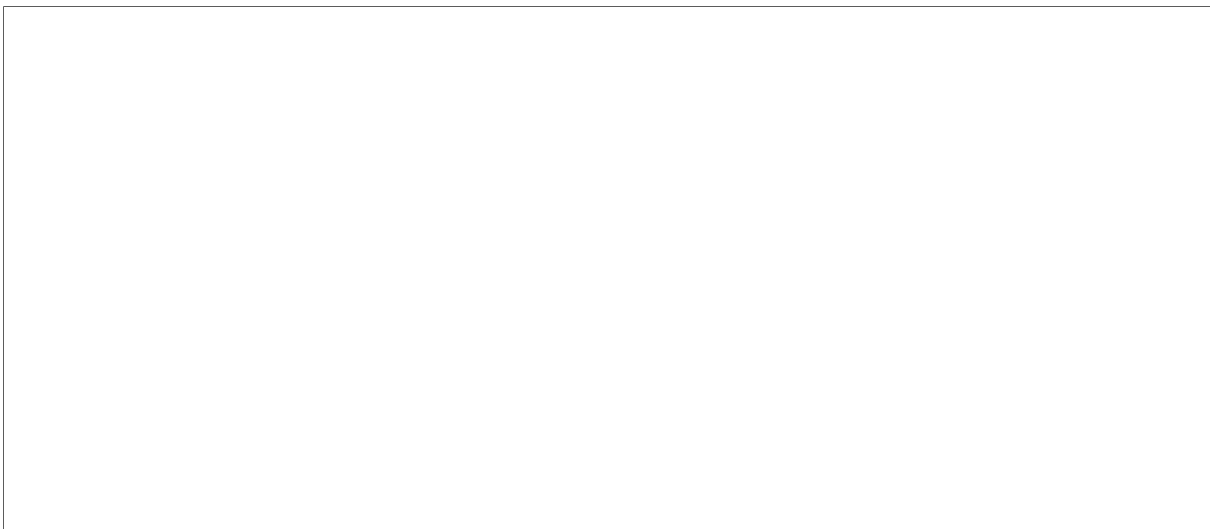
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Since its shootdown of the US reconnaissance plane on 15 April, North Korea has maintained a cautious yet defiant attitude.

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North Korea's foreign trade continues relatively stagnant as Communist economic aid dries up and Pyongyang concentrates on modernizing its military forces.



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FAR EAST

The North Koreans adopted a defensive yet defiant stance in their first formal pronouncement on the shootdown of the US reconnaissance plane last week. Pyongyang appears well aware of its weak international position and fully conscious of the hazards of further provocations against US aircraft or naval units. Although the North Koreans almost certainly will avoid any direct challenge to the US task force in the Sea of Japan, they may initiate some low-risk harassment activity in the DMZ area or guerrilla operations in the South to demonstrate their defiance.

The North Korean statement attempts, however, to offset the weakness of Pyongyang's claim that the US plane intruded into its territory by adopting a defiant stance with regard to any future US intrusions. The North Koreans seek to cast doubt on US intentions by warning that the US will exploit any North Korean defensive reaction to another intrusion as a pretext to "commit full-scale attack" which may lead to another "total war" in Korea.

The political opposition in Japan attempted to exploit popular concern that further incidents might lead to Japanese involvement in some new Korean hostilities. Japanese Government leaders, for their part, condemned the North Korean action and strongly supported the US position.

Communist military activity in South Vietnam has settled into a pattern of sporadic shelling and brief but occasionally fierce ground battles. The trend toward disengagement by Communist main forces, first noted in late March, continues to hold.

Meanwhile, South Vietnamese political groups continue to maneuver in the wake of President Thieu's announced intention to form a new political grouping to compete with the Communists. One problem that seems likely to hamper Thieu's efforts to mold national political unity is the reaction to the government's heavy-handed treatment of the press. Four more Saigon newspapers were suspended in the past week; 25 papers have now been closed since formal press censorship was lifted last May.

Communist China's ninth party congress drew to an end this week with the election of a new and larger central committee. Mao, Lin Piao, and Chou En-lai continue to occupy the top three positions in China's hierarchy. [redacted]

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NORTH KOREA SEEN ISOLATED ON PLANE INCIDENT

Since its shutdown of the US reconnaissance plane on 15 April, North Korea has maintained a cautious yet defiant attitude.

Pyongyang's propaganda on the incident thus far has been sparse. The elapse of five days before North Korea responded to President Nixon's announcement that reconnaissance flights were to be resumed--with protection--reflects the regime's desire fully to assess US intentions. The defensive tone of Pyongyang's statement on 23 April shows that the North Korean leaders are well aware of their weak international position and fully conscious of the hazards in further military provocations at this time.

An incident along the central sector of the Demilitarized Zone on 23 April apparently was not directly related to Pyongyang's reaction to the resumption of US reconnaissance flights. The North Koreans fired on a UN command guard post, probably in order to cover the retreat of reconnaissance personnel who had stumbled into a minefield. The North Koreans presumably were attempting to collect information on South Korean and US force deployments since the shutdown on 15 April. Similar probes and encounters along the Demilitarized Zone occurred in the period immediately following the Pueblo

seizure. The skirmish was cited by a Pyongyang domestic service broadcast as a serious "new provocation" by the US.

The North Koreans have made a feeble attempt to link the plane shutdown with the Pueblo affair, but the weakness of their case is evident in their failure to cite a precise location for the alleged air intrusion. An elaborate attempt was made to "document" the Pueblo's violation of North Korean waters.

Pyongyang appears anxious to offset the weakness of its position by attempting to play upon foreign uneasiness regarding US intentions. Its statement of 23 April sought to cast doubt on US intentions by warning that the US would exploit any North Korean defensive reaction to another intrusion as a pretext to "commit full-scale attack" which could lead to another "total war" in Korea.

North Korea's international isolation is underscored by the fact that only three Communist states--East Germany, North Vietnam, and Cuba--have wholeheartedly supported Pyongyang.

Peking on 21 April broke its week-long silence over the incident with an official news release

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attacking Moscow's "collusion" with the US after the shootdown. The Chinese merely quoted a "news report" stating that the US plane had "intruded" into North Korean airspace but made no mention of who shot down the plane, avoided any expression of direct support for the North Korean action, and dealt only mildly with the US. The statement contrasts with Peking's announcement of "firm support" for Pyongyang following the seizure of the Pueblo.

Peking's cautious handling of the incident--underscored by its silence until President Nixon set forth the US reaction--is consistent with the Chinese record of careful avoidance of being drawn into military conflict with the US in situations where vital national interests are not involved.

Soviet reaction has been restrained. The Russians made oral statements of concern in Moscow and Washington on 21 April about US naval deployments but their low-key reflected a desire not to add to existing tensions. Soviet media have given only mild support to North Korea's position. Moscow may intend this to convey a mild rebuke to Pyongyang.

The South Korean Government, while favoring a stronger response, seems to be making a deliberate effort to stay in step with the US position. Senior defense of-

ficials welcomed the US announcement that the reconnaissance flights would be resumed and given protection, and President Park has indicated that South Korea will not take punitive action on its own against the North. An apparently deliberate effort by the authorities to moderate public reaction, however, has not concealed the widespread concern of many political leaders and private citizens that Pyongyang will be encouraged to undertake more such incidents in the future.

Tokyo has censured Pyongyang's action and given strong support for the US position. Opposition parties, attempting to exploit popular fears that Japan might become involved in Korean hostilities, have shifted the focus of their attacks from the plane incident itself to the US naval deployment in the Sea of Japan. Japanese news media have also reacted strongly against the US naval buildup, charging that the task force is larger than is needed.

The Korean episode has provided an unexpected opportunity for the Sato government to air its views on the importance it attaches to Japan's security treaty with the US, which comes up for review next year. Japanese officials have emphasized the value to Japan of America's defense efforts in Korea, a point largely overlooked by the Japanese public.

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