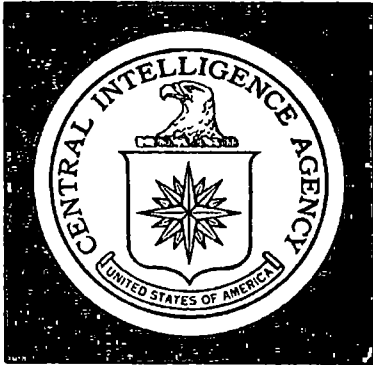


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DIRECTORATE OF  
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North Korea: Yesterday's shootdown appears to have been deliberate. (Page 2)

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North Korea: Yesterday's shootdown of a US reconnaissance aircraft over the Sea of Japan has all the earmarks of a deliberate action.

Pyongyang radio linked this incident with an allegedly simultaneous US "provocation" along the military demarcation line and enjoined the US "aggressors" to bear in mind that North Korean warnings of retaliation are "not empty words." The North Koreans probably believe that, in the aftermath of the Pueblo affair, a considerable body of world opinion is likely to be receptive to their claim that the aircraft had violated North Korean airspace.

Pyongyang's prompt move to call for a Military Armistice Commission meeting on 18 April apparently is designed to portray North Korea as the aggrieved party and to provide an effective propaganda forum for elaborating charges of US "aggression."

In taking the calculated risk of shooting down the US aircraft, the North Koreans probably were motivated in part by a desire to offset the failure of their attempts over the past year to generate an "armed guerrilla struggle" in South Korea and to undermine and demoralize the Seoul government.

Since the crushing of their ambitious infiltration operation on South Korea's east coast last November, North Korean harassment and pressures along the Demilitarized Zone have declined to the low level that usually characterizes the winter months. This latest act of defiance against the US may be intended as a forerunner of another round of aggressive pressure in the Demilitarized Zone area as the weather improves.

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The Kim Il-sung regime may also have intended this move as a forceful demonstration to the new US administration that North Korea has no intention of retreating from its unconventional warfare campaign against South Korea.)

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