

January 29, 1968

Record of Conversation between Mongolian Deputy Foreign Minister Chimiddorj and the Counselor of the Soviet Embassy Basmanov on the USS Pueblo Crisis

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Summary:

Mongolian Deputy Foreign Minister D. Chimiddorj meets with Counselor of the Soviet Embassy, M.I. Basmanov to discuss North Korea's conflict with the US over the capture of the USS Pueblo. Basmanov describes the Soviet Embassy's involvement acting as a go-between for the United States and North Korea.

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Mongolian

Contents:

Translation - English

FIRST DEPARTMENT OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY

Record of conversation

1968.1.29

Content: on the conflict resulting from the violation of the territorial waters of the DPRK by the spy ship "Pueblo"

On January 29 of this year Deputy Foreign Minister comrade D. Chimiddorj met with the counselor of the Embassy of the USSR here, comrade M.I. Basmanov, on his own wish, and discussed the following issues. After a general exchange:

Cde. Chimiddorj: A conflict has developed in Korea, and the situation is worrisome. Do you comrades have anything to tell us on this?

Cde. Basmanov: I came to talk about this. On January 23 of this year the American Ambassador Thompson came to the Soviet foreign ministry on the instruction of his government, giving the American explanation concerning the captured spy ship, and asking on behalf of his government that the Soviet comrades talk to the Korean side to assist in securing the release of this ship. In our response, we said that we cannot pass messages because the DPRK is an independent sovereign state. But as this matter was the US's fault, we noted that if they quickly withdrew their forces from South Korea and do not station their fleet along the Korean coast, the situation in the area will quickly normalize. When passing this content of this conversation to the Korean comrades, we asked about what happened, and requested that they explain clearly their subsequent steps, but until now we have not received a reply.

Also on January 26 Thompson delivered a letter from Johnson to comrade Kosygin. This communication explained that the American ship was in international waters, and that the American government sees this incident as a serious matter, asking that this information be passed on to the DPRK government. Cde. Kosygin replied that the American spy ship violated territorial waters of the DPRK, and the Korean side took measures to defend its independence, that it is correct to handle this question in a responsible manner so as to avoid intensification of the conflict and avoid war hysteria. Having passed the US message to the Korean side, the Soviet side, while expressing support for the measures taken by the Koreans, invited the Korean side to take appropriate measures to handle the American provocation with patience and flexibility so as to avoid the aggravation of the situation and widening of the conflict.

On the request of the Korean comrades, we opposed the discussion of this question, on the American initiative, at the Security Council. If, by the request of the majority, it comes to the discussion of this question, the Soviet side instructed its representative to blame American aggression.

Cde. Chimiddorj: Thank you for giving us this information. For now we are observing the situation. We are publishing information in the press in support of the Korean side, however, we have not officially expressed our position.

He [Basmanov] said that they were collecting evidence, and he talked about his opinion about the incident, and that the captain of the ship accepted that he was carrying out espionage activities.

Noted by:

N. Sarantuya