

25. Letters dated 23 September 1996 and 3 and 11 October 1996 from the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Letters dated 23 September 1996 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council on 27 September 1996 addressed to the Secretary-General

Initial proceedings

Decision of 15 October 1996 (3704th meeting): statement by the President

By a letter dated 23 September 1996 addressed to the President of the Security Council,¹ the representative of the Republic of Korea referred to the consultations held by the members of the Security Council on 20 September 1996 regarding the infiltration into the Republic of Korea of armed agents of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in a military submarine. On 18 September a military submarine had been found grounded in shallow water near the coastal city of Kangnung, one of the major ports on the eastern coast of the Republic of Korea. On the basis of the accumulation of concrete evidence, including arms and ammunition made in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the team had determined that the submarine belonged to the armed forces of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and that the occupants of the submarine were all officers of the regular army of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It had also been determined that all of them had gone ashore, infiltrating the territory of the Republic of Korea. He stated that his Government believed that the incident posed a serious threat to peace and security on and around the Korean peninsula. The dispatch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of armed agents using a military submarine clearly constituted a grave act of military provocation to the Republic of Korea, as well as a serious violation of the Korean Armistice Agreement. He reaffirmed that his Government reserved the right to raise the issue in the Council, whenever necessary.

¹ S/1996/774.

By a letter dated 3 October 1996 addressed to the President of the Security Council,² the representative of the Republic of Korea informed the Council that two more commandos of the army of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had been killed in an exchange of fire with the army of the Republic of Korea, with three remaining at large. Eight Republic of Korea soldiers and one civilian had been killed. He expressed the belief that appropriate action by the Council was in order. He maintained that the incident reflected a clear pattern of military provocations by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea against the Republic of Korea and formed part of a larger scheme not only to dismantle the Korean Armistice Agreement but also to destabilize the Republic of Korea. It was therefore important for the international community to send a clear and strong signal to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that further provocations on its part would not be tolerated.

By a letter dated 11 October 1996 addressed to the President of the Security Council,³ the representative of the Republic of Korea transmitted the text of the resolution adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea on 23 September 1996 concerning the recent infiltration of armed commandos of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by submarine into the territory of the Republic of Korea.

² S/1996/824.

³ S/1996/847.

By a letter dated 23 September 1996 addressed to the President of the Security Council,⁴ the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea transmitted a statement by the spokesman of the Ministry of the People's Armed Forces of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea dated 23 September 1996. The statement noted that a small training submarine, conducting routine training on the waters of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea side of the East Sea, had run aground on the waters of Kangnung while drifting due to sudden engine trouble. When the ship was stranded, the soldiers had needed to get to land and there had been armed clashes because it was the area under the enemy's control. The spokesman stated that the Republic of Korea needed to send back the small submarine, survivors and the dead unconditionally and immediately.

By a letter dated 27 September 1996 addressed to the Secretary-General,⁵ the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea reiterated that if the "enemies" did not return the small submarine, survivors and the dead unconditionally, while continuing to make "ill use of the incident for the sinister political purpose", the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would be forced to take strong countermeasures.

⁴ S/1996/768.

⁵ S/1996/800.

At its 3704th meeting, held on 15 October 1996 in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations, the Council included the letters in its agenda.

At the same meeting, the President (Honduras) made the following statement on behalf of the Council:⁶

The Security Council has considered the letters from the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations and the letters from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations, regarding the incident of a submarine of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 18 September 1996.

The Council expresses its serious concern over this incident. The Council urges that the Korean Armistice Agreement should be fully observed and that no action should be taken that might increase tension or undermine peace and stability on the Korean peninsula.

The Council stresses that the Armistice Agreement shall remain in force until it is replaced by a new peace mechanism.

The Council encourages both sides of the Korean peninsula to settle their outstanding issues by peaceful means through dialogue, so that peace and security on the peninsula will be strengthened.

⁶ S/PRST/1996/42.