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# Collection: Executive Secretariat, NSC: Country File: Records, 1981-1985 Folder Title: Korea, North Missile Firing at SR-71 (08/26/1981-08/27/1981) Box: RAC Box 9

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#### **Ronald Reagan Library**

Collection Name	EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT, NSC: COUNTRY	FILE	<b>Wit</b> LOJ	<b>hdrawer</b> 8/23/2007
File Folder	KOREA, NORTH - MISSILE FIRING AT SR-71 ( 08/27/1981)	08/26/19		A
Box Number	9		YAI 6	NAGIHARA
ID Doc Type	Document Description	No of Pages	The second day of the second d	Restrictions
40910 CABLE	NORTH KOREAN MISSILE FIRING	5	8/26/1981	B1
40911 MEMO	GREGG TO COLSON, US RESPONSE	1	8/26/1981	B1
40912 CABLE	261525Z AUG 81	2	8/26/1981	B1
40924 REPORT	NORTH KOREA: AIR DEFENSE ACTIVITY	3	8/26/1981	B1
40928 RECEIPT	FOR 40929	1	8/26/1981	B1
40929 MEMO	FOR THE RECORD, RE MISSILE FIRING	2	8/26/1981	B1

The above documents were not referred for declassification review at time of processing

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

B-1 National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]

B-2 Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]

B-3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]

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EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT, NSC: COUNTRY		hdrawer 8/23/2007	
KOREA, NORTH - MISSILE FIRING AT SR-71 08/27/1981)	(08/26/19	981- <b>FO</b>	
9			NAGIHARA
Document Description	No of Pages	the second s	Restrictions
ATTACHMENT FOR 40929	1	8/26/1981	B1
261227Z AUG 81	2	8/26/1981	B1
261745Z AUG 81	2	8/26/1981	B1
261745Z AUG 81	1	8/26/1981	B1
261812Z AUG 81	1	8/26/1981	B1
261620Z AUG 81	1	8/26/1981	B1
	KOREA, NORTH - MISSILE FIRING AT SR-71         08/27/1981)         9         Document Description         ATTACHMENT FOR 40929         261227Z AUG 81         261745Z AUG 81         261745Z AUG 81         261812Z AUG 81	KOREA, NORTH - MISSILE FIRING AT SR-71 (08/26/19         9       Document Description       No of Pages         ATTACHMENT FOR 40929       1         261227Z AUG 81       2         261745Z AUG 81       2         261812Z AUG 81       1	KOREA, NORTH - MISSILE FIRING AT SR-71 (08/26/1981)       FOI         9       YAI         Document Description       No of Pages         ATTACHMENT FOR 40929       1       8/26/1981         261227Z AUG 81       2       8/26/1981         261745Z AUG 81       1       8/26/1981         261812Z AUG 81       1       8/26/1981

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	08/27/1981)		F05-	-023
Box Number	9		YAI 6	NAGIHARA
ID Doc Type	Document Description	No of Pages	the second s	Restrictions
40939 CABLE	261233Z AUG 81	2	8/26/1981	B1
40940 MEMO	ALLEN TO THE PRESIDENT	1	8/26/1981	B1
40941 MAP	KOREA	1	9/1/1967	B1
40942 NOTES	261043Z HANDWRITTEN	1	8/26/1981	B1
40943 CABLE	260925Z AUG 81	2	8/26/1981	B1
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ID Document Type Document Description	No of pages	Doc Date	Restric- tions
40911 MEMO GREGG TO COLSON, US RESPONSE	1	8/26/1981	B1

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TO COLSON	FROM GREGG	1/1/201	ATE 26 AUG 81
KEYWORDS: KOREA NORTH	INTELLIGENCE		
MILITARY POSTURE			
SUBJECT: US RESPONSE TO THE	SR-71 INCIDENT		
ACTION: FOR INFORMATION	DUE:	STATUS 1	X FILES
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COLSON			SCHWEITZER
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40912 CABLE 261525Z AUG 81	2	8/26/1981	B1
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AM-MISSILE 8-26 BULLETIN PRECEDE WASHINGTON (UPI) -- A HIGH-FLYING U.S. SR-71 "BLACKBIRD" RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT WAS APPARENTLY FIRED AT BY A NORTH KOREAN MISSILE WEDNESDAY WHILE FLYING IN INTERNATIONAL AIR SPACE, THE PENTAGON ANNOUNCED. THE U.S. PLANE LANDED SAFELY UNHARMED. UPI 08-26-81 07:34 PED 10

UP124

UP125

UW

AM-MISSILE MULTITAKES 8-26

URGENT

WASHINGTON (UPI) -- A HIGH-FLYING U.S. RECONNAISSANCE PLANE WAS APPARENTLY FIRED AT BY A NORTH KOREAN MISSILE WEDNESDAY WHILE FLYING IN INTERNATIONAL AIR SPACE BUT THE MISSILE MISSED BY SEVERAL MILES, THE PENTAGON SAID.

"THE INCIDENT POSED NO THREAT TO THE AIRCRAFT WHICH LANDED SAFELY," A SPOKESMAN SAID.

"ON WEDNESDAY, AUG. 26, THE CREW OF A U.S. AIR FORCE SR-71 FLYING IN SOUTH KOREAN AND INTERNATIONAL RIRSPACE REPORTED SIGHTING A CONTRAIL AND SUBSEQUENT AIR BURST SEVERAL MILES DISTANT," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

ASKED IF THE INCIDENT COULD HAVE BEEN A MISSILE FIRING, THE SPOKESMAN SAID, "YES."

"IF A MISSILE WAS LAUNCHED, IT COULD HAVE ORIGINATED FROM ANY ONE OF A NUMBER OF MISSILE SITES IN NORTH KORER," HE SAID. MORE

UPI 08-26-81 07:43 PED

UP126

UW

AM-MISSILE 1STADD 8-26

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X X X SAID.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THE SR-71, THE WORLD'S MOST ADVANCED STRATEGIC RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT AND WHICH CAN FLY AT THREE TIMES THE SPEED OF SOUND, WAS ON A "ROUTINE MISSION."

ASKED HOW CLOSE THE AIRCRAFT WAS TO THE DEMILITARIZED ZONE SEPARATING NORTH AND SOUTH KOREA WHEN THE INCIDENT OCCURRED, THE SPOKESMAN SAID THE SR-71 WAS IN "SOUTH KOREAN AND INTERNATIONAL AIRSPACE."

"AS A MATTER OF POLICY, WE DO NOT DISCUSS THE SPECIFIC FLIGHT PATHS OF THIS AIRCRAFT," HE SAID.

MORE

UPI 08-26-81 07:44 PED

AP-21ST NEWSWATCH: THE NIGHT CAP

HERE IS THE LATEST NEWS FROM THE ASSOCIATED PRESS:

THE PENTAGON TODAY REPORTED THAT A MISSILE -- APPARENTLY LAUNCHED FROM NORTH KOREA -- WAS FIRED AT A U-S AIR FORCE PLANE AS IT FLEW OVER SOUTH KOREA AND INTERNATIONAL AIR SPACE. OFFICIALS SAY THE MISSILE MISSED THE S-R-71 RECONNAISSANCE JET BY SEVERAL MILES -- AND THAT THE CREW LANDED THE PLANE SAFELY.

THE PENTAGON IS NOT FLATLY ACCUSING NORTH KOREA OF SHOOTING AT THE RECONNAISSANCE JET, WHICH IT SAYS WAS ON A "ROUTINE MISSION" IN INTERNATIONAL AIR SPACE. THE OFFICIAL STATEMENT SAID -- "IF A MISSILE WAS LAUNCHED, IT COULD HAVE ORIGINATED FROM ... A NUMBER OF MISSILE SITES IN NORTH KOREA." THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT RARELY DISCUSSES ITS S-R-71 'BLACKBIRD' MISSIONS. BUT IT IS KNOWN THAT IN PAST YEARS THE PLANE HAS BEEN USED TO SPY ON CHINA AND COMMUNIST VIETNAM.

IN SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA, PRESIDENTIAL COUNSELOR EDWIN MEESE SAID DEFENSE SECRETARY CASPAR WEINBERGER INFORMED THE PRESIDENT OF THE INCIDENT WHEN THE TWO MEN MET TODAY. MEESE SAID THE PRESIDENT WAS "CONCERNED" ABOUT IT. BUT, MEESE SAID, THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT ANALYSTS ARE STILL EVALUATING THE SITUATION. IT WAS JUST A WEEK AGO THAT TWO NAVY JETS WERE FIRED ON BY LIBYAN JETS DURING MANEUVERS OVER THE MEDITERRANEAN, AND TWO LIBYAN JETS WERE SHOT DOWN.

Ab-MX-08-26-81 2059EDT

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#### N141

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NISSILE-PLANE

BY FRED S. HOFFMAN

WASHINGTON (AP) -- A MISSILE APPARENTLY LAUNCHED FROM NORTH KOREA AT A U.S. AIR FORCE SPY PLANE MISSED THE HIGH-ALTITUDE JET BY SEVERAL MILES, THE PENTAGON SAID WEDNESDAY.

"THE CREW OF A U.S. AIR FORCE SR-71 FLYING IN SOUTH KOREAN AND INTERNATIONAL AIR SPACE REPORTED SIGHTING A CONTRAIL AND SUBSEQUENT AIR BURST SEVERAL MILES DISTANT," THE PENTAGON STATEMENT SAID. "THE INCIDENT POSED NO THREAT TO THE AIRCRAFT, WHICH LANDED SAFELY."

THE STATEMENT DID NOT FLATLY ACCUSE THE NORTH KOREANS OF SHOOTING AT THE ''BLACKBIRD'' RECONNAISSANCE PLANE, BUT SAID, ''IF A MISSILE WAS LAUNCHED, IT COULD HAVE ORIGINATED FROM ANY ONE OF A NUMBER OF MISSILE SITES IN NORTH KOREA.''

THE SR-71, WHICH THE AIR FORCE CALLS ONE OF THE FASTEST AND HIGHEST-FLYING AIRCRAFT, TRAVELS MORE THAN 2,000 MPH AT ALTITUDES ABOVE 80,000. A SUCCESSOR TO THE U-2 SPY PLANE, IT CARRIES A CREW OF TWO.

THE PENTAGON SAID THE PLANE INVOLVED IN THE WEDNESDAY INCIDENT WAS ON A ''ROUTINE MISSION.''

THE PENTAGON REFUSED TO SAY HOW NEAR THE PLANE WAS TO THE DEMILITARIZED ZONE BETWEEN SOUTH AND NORTH KOREA OR TO NORTH KOREA ITSELF.

THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT AND THE AIR FORCE RARELY DISCUSS SR-71 OPERATIONS BUT IT IS KNOWN THAT THE PLANE HAS BEEN USED IN PAST YEARS TO SPY ON CHINA AND COMMUNIST VIETNAM. THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN UNCONFIRMED REPORTS IT HAS BEEN USED TO PHOTOGRAPH NORTH KOREA.

THE PENTAGON SAID THERE HAVE BEEN NO SIMILAR INCIDENTS IN THE PAST AND THAT NO OTHER PLANES WERE INVOLVED.

THE INCIDENT COMES A WEEK AFTER TWO U.S. NAVY F-14 JETS WERE FIRED UPON BY A PAIR OF LIBYAN JETS WHILE THE AMERICAN FORCES WERE CONDUCTING TRAINING MANEUVERS OFF THE LIBYAN COASTS. THE U.S. JETS SHOT DOWN THE TWO LIBYAN PLANES. AP-WX-03-26-31 2001EDT

#### **Ronald Reagan Library**

File Folder KOREA, NORTH - MISSILE FIRING AT SR-71 (08/26/1981- 08/27/1981) Box Number 9		FOIA F05-023 YANAGIHL <sup>6</sup> Doc Date	ARA <i>Restric-</i>
9			Restric-
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ID Document Type Document Description			tions
40924 REPORT NORTH KOREA: AIR DEFENSE ACTIVITY	3	8/26/1981	B1
The above documents were not referred for declassification review at time of Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]	f process	ing	

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ID Document Type Document Description	No of pages	Doc Date	Restric- tions
40928 RECEIPT FOR 40929	1	8/26/1981	B1
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40933	3 GRAPH ATTACHMENT FOR 40929	1	8/26/1981	B1	
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40935 CABLE 261745Z	AUG 81	2	8/26	/1981	B1
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ID	Document Type Document Description	No of pages	Doc Date	Restric- tions
4093	7 CABLE 261812Z AUG 81	1	8/26/1981	B1
	pove documents were not referred for declassification review at time o m of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]	f process	ing	
B-1 Na B-2 Ra B-3 Ra B-4 Ra B-6 Ra B-7 Ra B-8 Ra	ational security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA] elease would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b elease would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA] elease would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b elease would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b elease would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b elease would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial insti- elease would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells	b)(4) of the b)(6) of the b)(7) of the tutions [(b	FOIA] FOIA] FOIA] )(8) of the FOIA]	
C. Clo	sed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.			

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	tion Name UTIVE SECRETARIAT, NSC: COUNTRY FILE		Withdrawer LOJ 8/23/	
<i>File F</i> KORE 08/27/	A, NORTH - MISSILE FIRING AT SR-71 (08/26/1981-		<i>FOIA</i> F05-023 YANAGIHL	ARA
Box N 9	umber		6	
ID	Document Type Document Description	No of pages	Doc Date	Restric- tions
40938	CABLE 261620Z AUG 81	1	8/26/1981	B1
The abo	ove documents were not referred for declassification review at time of	fprocess	ing	
B-1 Nat B-2 Rei B-3 Rei B-4 Rei B-6 Rei B-7 Rei B-8 Rei	n of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)] tional security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA] lease would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b) lease would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA] lease would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b lease would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b lease would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b lease would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial instit lease would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells	)(4) of the )(6) of the )(7) of the utions [(b	FOIA] FOIA] FOIA] )(8) of the FOIA]	

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Collection Name EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT, NSC: COUNTRY FILE		Withdrawer LOJ 8/23/	
<i>File Folder</i> KOREA, NORTH - MISSILE FIRING AT SR-71 (08/26/1981- 08/27/1981)		<i>FOIA</i> F05-023 YANAGIH	ARA
Box Number 9		6	
ID Document Type Document Description	No of pages	Doc Date	Restric- tions
40939 CABLE 261233Z AUG 81	2	8/26/1981	B1
The above documents were not referred for declassification review at time of Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]	f process	ing	
<ul> <li>B-1 National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]</li> <li>B-2 Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)</li> <li>B-3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]</li> <li>B-4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b</li> <li>B-6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b</li> <li>B-7 Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b</li> <li>B-8 Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial instit</li> <li>B-9 Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells</li> <li>C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.</li> </ul>	)(4) of the )(6) of the )(7) of the utions [(b	FOIA] FOIA] FOIA] )(8) of the FOIA]	

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Collection Name EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT, NSC: COUNTRY FILE			Withdrawer LOJ 8/23/		
08/27	Folder EA, NORTH - MISSILE FIRING AT SR-71 (08/26/1981- /1981) Number		<i>FOIA</i> F05-023 YANAGIH 6	ARA	
ID	Document Type Document Description	No of pages	Doc Date	Restric- tions	
4094(	) MEMO ALLEN TO THE PRESIDENT	1	8/26/1981	B1	
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The above documents were not referred for declassification review at time of processing Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

B-1 National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]

B-2 Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]

B-3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]

B-4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA]

B-6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]

B-7 Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]

B-8 Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]

B-9 Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

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			ARA	
Box Ni 9	umber		6	
ID	Document Type Document Description	No of pages	Doc Date	Restric- tions
40941	MAP KOREA	1	9/1/1967	B1
	KUKEA			
The abo	ove documents were not referred for declassification review at time o	f process	ing	11
Freedom	n of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]			
B-2 Rel B-3 Rel B-4 Rel B-6 Rel B-7 Rel B-8 Rel	tional security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA] ease would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b) ease would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA] ease would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b ease would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b ease would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b ease would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial instit ease would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells	b)(4) of the b)(6) of the b)(7) of the tutions [(b)	FOIA] FOIA] FOIA] FOIA] )(8) of the FOIA]	
C. Clos	ed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.			

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KOR	<i>File Folder</i> KOREA, NORTH - MISSILE FIRING AT SR-71 (08/26/1981- 08/27/1981)		<i>FOIA</i> F05-023 YANAGIHARA			
Box Number 9			6			
ID	Document Type Document Description	No of pages	Doc Date	Restric- tions		
40942	2 NOTES	1	8/26/1981	<b>B</b> 1		
	261043Z HANDWRITTEN					

The above documents were not referred for declassification review at time of processing Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

B-1 National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]

B-2 Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]

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B-9 Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

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	tion Name UTIVE SECRETARIAT, NSC: COUNTRY FILE		Withdrawer LOJ 8/23/2	
<i>File F</i> KORE 08/27/	A, NORTH - MISSILE FIRING AT SR-71 (08/26/1981-		<i>FOIA</i> F05-023 YANAGIHA	ARA
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ID	Document Type Document Description	No of pages	Doc Date	Restric- tions
40943	CABLE 260925Z AUG 81	2	8/26/1981	B1
	ove documents were not referred for declassification review at time of n of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]	f process	ing	
B-2 Rel B-3 Rel B-4 Rel B-6 Rel B-7 Rel B-8 Rel	ional security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA] ease would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b) ease would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA] ease would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b ease would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b ease would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b ease would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial instit ease would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells	)(4) of the )(6) of the )(7) of the utions [(b]	FOIA] FOIA] FOIA] )(8) of the FOIA]	

#### August 27, 1981

#### APPROVED PUBLIC AFFAIRS STATEMENT AND QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

On Wodnesday, August 26, the crew of a U.S. Air Force SR-71 flying in South Korean and international airspace reported sighting a contrail and subsequent air burst several miles distant. The incident posed no threat to the aircraft, which landed safely. As a matter of policy, we do not discuss the specific activities of this aircraft.

QI: What kind of mission was it on?

Al: Routine mission.

Q2: Now close was it to the DM2 or North Korea?

A2: As a matter of policy, we do not discuss the specific flight paths of this aircr

Q3: Is there any relationship to the recent Libyan incident?

A3: Any ensuer would be sheer speculation.

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Q4: Could the incident have been a missile firing?

A4: Yes.

Q5: Where could the missile have come from?

A5: 'If a missile was launched, it could have originated from any one of a number of missile sites in North Kores.

Q6: Was this a new or unusual mission?

A6: No. Similar missions are flown periodically.

Q7: Have there been any similar incidents in the past?

A7: No.

Q8: Were there any other sircraft involved?

AS: No.

A9: What action has the United States Government taken?

A9: The matter is currently being evoluated.

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