

Our ship. Their museum.

Our major league baseball teams. Playing on their baseball field in Beijing. Our athletes. Scheduled to compete at their venues throughout China during the 2008 Summer Olympic Games.

Once in awhile, it would be great to have momentarily use of the unlimited power of the United States.

I could pick up the red phone at 3 am and get our new best friend and strongest trading ally, Hu Jintao of China, on the line. It wouldn't be 3 am in Peiking, of course.

"Hu, Dave here. I know you haven't heard much from us since our president decided your crap flooding our markets was more important than little matters like human rights, slave labor and \$90 a year annual incomes, but that's about to change."

"Yes, I'm looking forward to the Olympics in your great and overpopulated country. Well, sort of. Yeh, I know. We've had a pretty good working relationship so long as you don't threaten Taiwan and we tolerate all your poisonous products. Did you ever figure out how toxins got in our toothpaste, dog food and multiple consumable products you shipped us and other free nations around the globe?"

"You know, I was just lying here thinking about what your no-neck North Korean neighbors did to us just over 40 years ago. You may have still been institutionalized in a boarding school somewhere memorizing Mao propaganda or may be too young to remember those days."

"The bums, those international pirates, captured the USS Pueblo in international waters and have made a mockery of the US every since. Unfortunately, most in this country haven't given much a damned about that little act of savagery. For your lackeys to use our still-in-commission ship as a museum and describe it as 'an armed spy ship of the U.S. imperialist aggression forces,' galls me quite a bit."

"Had the Pueblo been armed, or had one of our real armed Navy ships been nearby, or had the dog-ear grabbing, appendix scar showing president of the United States, Lyndon Johnson, not been brought to his knees by protestors in the streets over another battle then raging, do you think those red-starred Elmer Fudd cap wearing buffoons could have boarded a US Navy ship?"

"So, that brings us to today, Hu. Tonight, I guess - it's past 3 am here where I'm at and people have decided I'm the one they want placing and taking this middle-of-the night phone calls. No sissy Democrats."

"I am embarrassed to admit that we allowed those miserable creeps to hijack our ship off the open seas, make a museum of it in Wansong harbor and then disguise the Pueblo a little, raise a North Korean flag, and sail the ship around the southern tip of South Korea, before going up a river to Pyongyang. Nine days in international waters. Hell, we can't even tell when the Pueblo is missing from its moorings in Wansong, it's no wonder we thought Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction."

"What does all this have to do with the Dis-Honorable Empire you are so proud to be Exalted Leader over? I'm glad you asked. Allow me to 'splain something about those Olympic games you so look forward to. Allow me to tell you how few people are going to see those flames. Unless."

"Just a brief aside before I finish my little story about the Pueblo here. We've been allowing those seven and a half foot freaks you somehow breed over there to come into the United States and take away millions of dollars a year in salary. We're seeing now just how unimportant Yao Ming is to the Houston Rockets. 22 wins in a row and counting. Without Yao Ming. What I'm saying, if we don't get this little matter of the Pueblo resolved, no more Mings in the NBA."

"And if you can work out your problems with Tibet, I'll see that no more lousy Richard Gere movies are made and sent to China. Fair enough?"

"Now, about those Olympics. Home to a good chunk of the world's population, you probably expect to do well in the Olympics to be held on your home territory. Without the American athletes and athletes from all other countries of the world we control - it won't be much of an event. Does Great Britain still have Olympic-quality athletes, by the way?"

"Remember 1980 when Jimmy Carter withheld our athletes? Great games, huh? How about 1984 when the Communist Bloc nations boycotted and the talent was so watered down that even Mary Lou Retton won a gold medal in gymnastics? Mary Lou Retton!"

"Here's what I need you to do, Hu. I need you to pick up your lavender phone and get that little nutcase in Pyongyang on the line. I need you to tell Kim Jung Il, or as we call him in America, Mentally Ill, that the Pueblo must be returned to the United States and that it must be done post haste. Like yesterday. You might mention that if the United States Navy, this time in planes, has to come to retrieve it, China will be busy elsewhere."

"What about Russia? No. It's just you and us anymore, Baby. Just you and us."



The USS Pueblo
Pyongyang, North Korea

For more than 30 years, the Pueblo had been docked in Wansong, on the east coast of North Korea. "Then Mr. Kim decided the propaganda would be even better if the ship was moved from the east coast to the capital. So the Korean Navy disguised the Pueblo as a freighter, ran up the North Korean flag and sailed it for nine days through international waters around South Korea to the west coast of North Korea, and then up a river to Pyongyang. In 1999, the Pueblo opened triumphantly to crowds in Pyongyang.



"When this ship left Wansong port [on the east coast], Japanese ships mobilized to check it," said Col. Kim Jung Rok, who as a 28-year-old sailor helped storm the Pueblo and is now in charge of it. "But then they saw it was an ordinary freighter and withdrew."

It's a bad sign that the Western intelligence experts who monitor North Korean ports and examine satellite images didn't notice that the Pueblo had moved.

President Bush's refusal to engage North Korea, as the Clinton administration had done, has already led the North to revive plutonium production. Mr. Bush's backup plan is to stop North Korean nuclear proliferation by intercepting nuclear materials as they leave the country - but that's wishful thinking. If we couldn't detect the transfer of a famous 176-foot ship, it's ludicrous to think we could stop the smuggling of a grapefruit-size chunk of plutonium.

Source: NY Times, July 1, 2005

USS Pueblo

In the next issue, we'll resume the serious story about the treatment of 82 Pueblo officers, crew and civilians taken hostage by North Korea and held for eleven months.

Using the same rationale that we now use to interrogate and detain terrorists, North Korea said because our two nations were not at war and that they had not signed the Geneva Convention anyway, they could torture our sailors for confessions and beat them without reason or limit. Forty years after being hijacked, the Pueblo remains in North Korea.





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