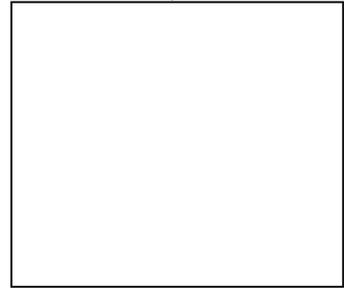


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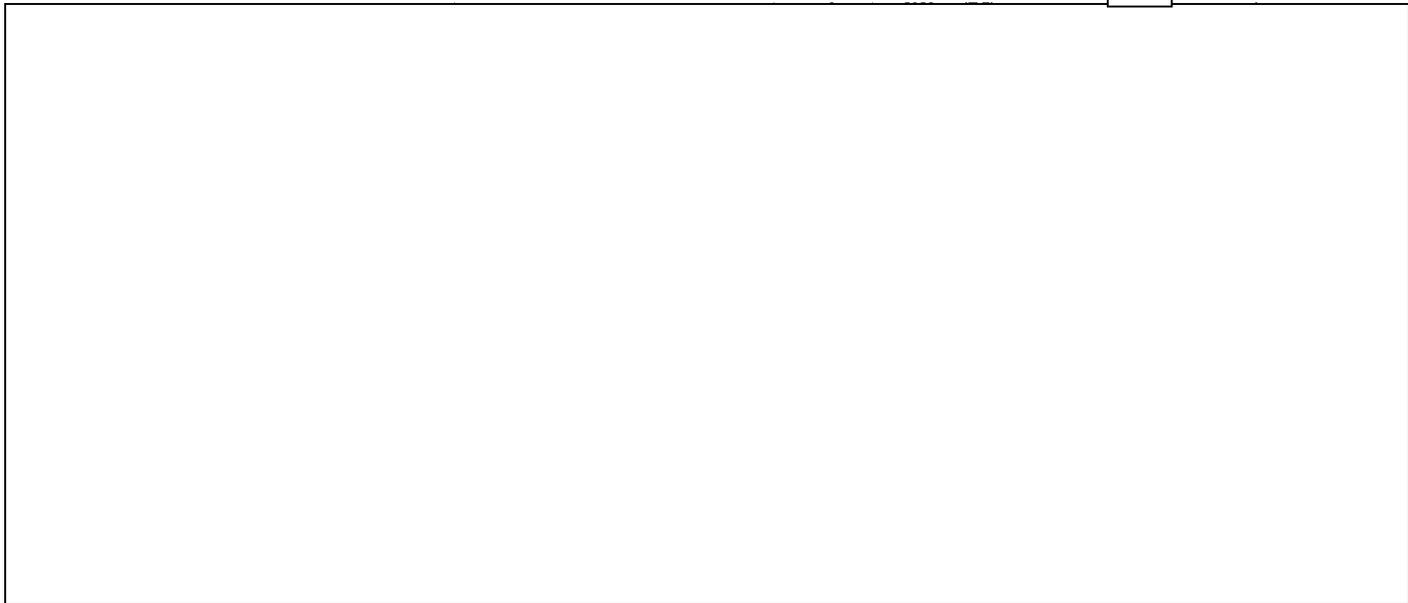
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NORTH KOREA: Demanding Return of Submarine and Crew



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NORTH KOREA: Demanding Return of Submarine and Crew 

The Ministry of People's Armed Forces yesterday claimed the "small training submarine" that ran aground off South Korea's east coast last Tuesday had engine trouble after leaving port on 13 September and drifted toward Kangnung. P'yongyang said the crew had no choice but to abandon ship for the "enemy side's land," even though it "might cause an armed conflict."

— The single captured crewman said the 34-meter Sango submarine encountered mechanical problems after it arrived in the Kangnung area, according to press reports. 

P'yongyang's statement probably is driven by its lack of knowledge of what documents and equipment the crew failed to destroy and what information the captured crewman has provided. It will want to be positioned to discount as fabricated any evidence the South eventually releases.

— A South Korean Defense Ministry spokesman said the statement was "nonsense" and part of P'yongyang's "habitually deceitful policy" to defuse criticism. Lawmakers yesterday adopted a resolution demanding tighter security and international cooperation to deter North Korean aggression. 

Meanwhile, South Korean forces are closing in on as many as five agents still at large, according to press reports. The death toll includes 20 North Korean crewmen and agents, three South Korean soldiers, and one civilian mistaken for an infiltrator.  