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Moscow 2588, January 26, 1968

1. At a luncheon I gave for Senator Mondale today the Senator had a private conversation with Mr. Zinchuk, of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, concerning the North Korean seizure of the USS PUEBLO. He indicated that he was personally familiar with the matter and made the following points:

- a. The USSR did not know about or prompt the event;
- b. They regretted it;
- c. The vessel was apprehended within the Bay which had been declared territorial waters by North Korea;
- d. That the vessel had been approached by North Korean craft and told of the North Korean's version and asked to leave, but refused to do so;
- e. While he was not personally sure of the facts, he thought the wounded on the PUEBLO were wounded not by gunfire but probably as a result of an accident while destroying secret documents or something of that character.

2. He strongly counseled that the U. S. remain calm and strongly indicated that the Soviet Union wanted this matter to be amicably settled and indicated some optimism that this was possible through diplomatic channels. He indicated that the use of the aircraft carrier as a direct show of force would detract from a diplomatic resolution of the problem.

3. Zinchuk was present during my meeting with Gromyko today.

Thompson

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