

WORLD IS ASSURED BY U.S. ON ASYLUM

Policy Same, 'Voice' Says,
Despite Bungling on Sailor

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 1 —

The United States employed the full range of its foreign broadcast and information services today to assure the world that the denial of asylum last week to a Lithuanian sailor resulted from a bureaucratic bungle and not a change in United States policy on political refugees.

A commentary describing the incident as "abhorrent to Americans" that had caused "an explosion of feeling" in the United States was broadcast by the Voice of America.

In addition, detailed reports of the incident, including President Nixon's demand for an immediate investigation, have been sent to United States embassies abroad for distribution to local corporation organs via the press service of the United States Information Agency.

The accounts of the incident and the furor it has caused were broadcast on the Voice of America's English service and in 22 other languages, including Russian, Lithuanian and all the languages of Eastern European countries.

Eastern Agencies Silent

The Soviet and East European press agencies have made no mention of the defection case. This follows a their practice of ignoring most defections to the West.

The thrust of the American commentary and reports of the incident has been to assure listeners that the denial of asylum represents what one official described as an "aberration."

In its main commentary, the Voice of America concluded: "It is safe to assume that the United States will be on guard against any repetition of such an incident, and that the coming investigations will clarify the rules to be followed in cases like this."

The commentary recounts the incident, in which the sailor leaped from a Soviet vessel onto the deck of a Coast Guard cutter and asked for asylum.

"The Russians were permitted to board the cutter, beat up the seaman and take him back to the Soviet vessel," the commentary notes.

"The incident has caused an explosion of feeling here. The idea of refusing political asylum is abhorrent to Americans. The idea of the Coast Guard cutter's captain and crew allowing the Soviet sailors to board an American ship on such a brutal mission is equally repulsive."

The commentary notes that in addition to the President's demand for an inquiry there is also a possibility of a Congressional investigation.

It also observes that the "argument has already begun about whose fault it was," but it assigns no blame other than to repeat the White House conclusion that the matter was poorly handled.