

Nixon to Issue 'New, Clear Policy' on Accepting Political Refugees

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 2—The White House said today that President Nixon would set forth a "new, clear policy" on political refugees to prevent recurrence of the incident last week in which the United States Coast Guard refused sanctuary to a Lithuanian sailor.

Ronald L. Ziegler, the White House press secretary, said the new policy would be issued after the President studied a final report of the incident. The report was presented to him late today by the State Department and Department of Transportation.

Even before the report arrived, Mr. Ziegler said, the President—after reviewing preliminary reports of the incident off Martha's Vineyard, Mass., on Nov. 23—described "the whole matter as 'outrageous.'"

Other Administration sources characterized the President's reaction to the events even more strongly. One official said that when Mr. Nixon learned of the incident, nearly a week after it happened, he expressed anguish that it would be interpreted outside the United States as a sign that Americans were losing their moral fiber and resolve.

The President's dissatisfaction was echoed by Congress, where a House foreign affairs subcommittee announced it would open hearings on the incident tomorrow.

The Lithuanian sailor leaped



Associated Press

Comdr. Maurice R. Dumas, Coast Guard information officer, telling newsmen in Boston there would be no comment on case of Lithuanian sailor until report was sent to White House.

from the Soviet vessel to the cutter and pleaded for asylum, but after eight hours, it was reported last weekend, the Russians were permitted to come aboard the United States ship and forcibly return the sailor to their own craft.

The Commandant of the Coast Guard, Adm. Chester R. Bender, subsequently said that the decision to return the sailor had been made by Rear Adm. William B. Ellis, Commander of the First Coast Guard District. Admiral Bender also said that the Soviet captain had accused the sailor, identified only as Simas, of having stolen the equivalent of \$2,000 from the ship's funds.

Nixon Is 'Disturbed'

As he had on Monday, Mr. Ziegler said that the President was "extremely disturbed" over the handling of the incident by United States officials and would take "appropriate action." He declined to specify whether the White House would seek to pinpoint blame.

On the basis of the preliminary reports it was clear, Mr. Ziegler said, that "the procedures followed were inadequate and the action taken inadequate and the judgments used were bad."

The State Department indicated earlier that at least part of the difficulty lay in the vagueness of the standing instructions for receiving would-be defectors, particularly at sea. As a general rule, the department's spokesman said, United States officials approached by potential refugees are supposed to check with higher authority.

At the State Department, a spokesman insisted there had been no change in United States policy regarding refugees and expressed pride that

more than a million people had been granted asylum since World War II. Asked what had happened to the seaman, Mr. Ziegler said he did not know but "we had been, to his knowledge, no 'we would be curious' to find out."