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Record of a Conversation with Canadian Ambassador to the USSR R. Ford

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Summary:

S.P. Fozyrev and the Canadian Ambassador in Moscow review the causes of and potential resolutions for the Pueblo Incident.

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I received Ford at his request.

Referring to the instructions of his government the Ambassador raised the issue of the detention of the American ship by the DPRK. He said that the Canadians know about the mood and trends in Washington better than anyone. In connection with this incident the Canadian government is seriously concerned that the US Congress and the American public are beginning to put ever-growing pressure on President Johnson for him to make a decision about a retaliatory attack. It is quite evident to the Government of Canada, Ford continued, that the release of the ship and its crew are absolutely necessary for talks to begin to settle this entire issue. Regardless of the statements by both sides, whether the ship was seized in the territorial or international waters, the Ambassador stressed, it is necessary to release the ship's crew if only for humane reasons. Regardless of the legal aspect of the matter, right now it is politically important to do something for the release the ship and its crew. In this event the US will be ready, so they understand in Canada, to agree to the creation of a special international commission to investigate and settle this incident and possibly make compensation for material damages if the commission recognizes this is necessary. Considering the dangerous situation which has been created, the Canadian side would like to discuss this issue with the Soviet side in order to prevent a worsening of the situation in this region of the world. In this connection the Ambassador was interested in possible ideas from the Soviet side about how the tension could be eliminated and whether the Soviet government could make the settlement of the incident easier. To assist in the investigation at the site of the situation associated with this incident the Canadian side has already unofficially already proposed sending an intermediary to Pyongyang who could act as a representative of either the UN Secretary General or the Security Council or in some other capacity.

In expressing these ideas the Ambassador noted that he was not speaking on behalf of the US but, as they understand in Canada, the Americans would be ready to agree to this.

I promised to report to the Minister about the ideas the Ambassador expressed. I said that the USSR could not take on itself the role of an intermediary in settling this incident. The DPRK is an independent and sovereign country and the US should deal directly with the DPRK. The substance of the incident is that the US violated the norms of international law: the American ship was detained in the territorial waters of the DPRK and not in international waters as the Americans are asserting. As regards the concern of the Canadian side about what sort of pressure there is on Johnson then the problem is not that pressure is being put on the President of the United States but that the US itself is using the method of pressure and threats with regard to the DPRK. The Canadian government also ought to know well both Johnson's statement and the measures he has adopted in order to apply such pressure on the DPRK (calling up reservists, sending naval forces to the shores of the DPRK, and others). However it will be impossible to settle the incident with the help of the uproar, threats, and pressure being artificially fanned in the US, on which rests the entire responsibility for the incident, and it should soberly assess the situation which has been created and find an opportunity for a settlement by customary means on the basis of respect for the sovereign rights of the DPRK and an abandonment of the use of the method of pressure. From the ideas described by Ford it follows that Canada essentially supports the position of the Americans when he says that it is first

necessary to release the ship and the crew and then investigate all other issues connected with the incident. A settlement can hardly be achieved on such a basis.

The Ambassador stressed that Canada does not always and does not automatically share the point of view of the Americans, especially regarding their actions in military issues. In accordance with the available information this time the American intelligence ship was actually detained in international waters. One can speculate that it was really in the territorial waters, which is of course inexcusable. But even in this event it is necessary to settle the incident as quickly as possible. According to the assessments of the Canadian side, Ford stressed, a dangerous situation has been created and in Washington pressure is growing sharply in favor of a military solution to the incident. These sentiments are growing stronger inasmuch as in the last six months numerous provocative incidents have taken place in Korea. As regards Canada, it is a peace-loving country and its actions are completely dictated by a concern for maintaining peace and reducing international tension and a desire to prevent the dangerous consequences of developing events.

In connection with this comment by Ford I pointed out that attempts to place the blame on the DPRK for the situation in the area of Korea are directed at deceiving the world public opinion. Everyone knows that provocative acts are being made against the DPRK and that the presence of American troops in South Korea is the reason for the situation in this region.

If they are really inclined in the US to settle this incident by military means then it will be the worse for the US. They would thus again reveal themselves before the entire world as aggressors. The Canadian government would be doing a useful thing if it advised the US not to give in to emotion and not inflame the situation, and realistically assess this issue on the basis of respect for the sovereign rights of the DPRK. Such a decision would meet the interests of peace and it would be in the interests of all countries.

The Ambassador noted that in principle he agrees with this; however, right now it is important to settle the incident as soon as possible. He was interested in whether in this connection if, for example, such a measure as the withdrawal of the aircraft carrier Eisenhower and other American warships from the area of the incident would help. [I] again stressed that it is important right now not to inflame the situation, abandon pressure on the DPRK, and facilitate the establishment of a quiet atmosphere in which it would be easier to settle the incident by the customary ways and means accepted in international practice.

Ye. N. Makeyev, Deputy Chief of the 2nd European Department, and 3rd Secretary of the Department V. I. Dolgov were present at the conversation.

DEPUTY USSR MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

/signature/□□□(S. Kozyrev)

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