

May 7, 1960

Straight wire

The President
White House
Washington D. C.

I HAVE JUST ISSUED THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT TO THE PRESS
UNARMED
IN CONNECTION WITH THE INCIDENT INVOLVING THE ~~THE~~ AIRPLANE
SHOT DOWN IN THE SOVIET UNION.

(statement attached)

Lyndon B. Johnson
Majority Leader
United States Senate

There is no doubt that a serious international crisis may be in the making. It is time for all Americans to keep their heads.

It is also time for Americans to dedicate themselves to the unity of the country.

The significant thing at the moment is that Premier Khrushchev seems determined to exploit the incident in order to inflame the communist world. Communist leadership never acts without clear cut purpose.

We do not know just how far Premier Khrushchev intends to push his saber rattling. But we do know just how far Americans intend to go to preserve their freedoms -- right to the limit.

By that, I mean all Americans -- Republicans and Democrats alike.

We may wear partisan labels at the polling places. But our partisanship does not mean that either party will permit our country to be terrorized.

The President can be certain that he will be backed solidly by both parties when he speaks for this country. And let no one think that this country can be divided with threats.

The important fact is that Premier Khrushchev is trying to seize upon this incident for some ulterior purpose. If he wants to discuss it clearly and rationally, I am sure this country will reply in kind. But if he seeks to use it to split our unity, he will be sadly mistaken.

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