

Ellsberg

THE WASHINGTON POST Monday, June 26, 1972 B 11

The Washington Merry-Go-Round

3 Hanoi Lessons Still Unlearned

By Jack Anderson

The history of our secret negotiations with Hanoi contains some painful lessons, which still seem to be disregarded in the quest for a Vietnam peace.

The agonizing details appear in the unpublished portions of the Pentagon Papers, which Daniel Ellsberg carefully withheld from the press.

President Nixon, however, has made public even more sensitive negotiations than are described in the suppressed papers. The Justice Department is also preparing to use these papers in its prosecution of Ellsberg. There appears to be no legitimate reason, therefore, for continuing the secrecy.

We have a copy of the unpublished Pentagon Papers, which give chronological account of our diplomatic frustrations in seeking an end to the Vietnam War. Here are the lessons, which seemed to us to be the most compelling:

Lesson No. 1—Ex-President Lyndon Johnson orchestrated the bombing of North Vietnam in careful synchronization

with the peace negotiations. He alternately suspended and escalated the bombing in an effort to influence the negotiations. Invariably, this seemed to produce the opposite effect in Hanoi than Mr. Johnson had intended. Yet President Nixon is now using the same strategy.

Lesson No. 2—The North Vietnamese, whether on the battlefield or at the peace table, never lost sight of their ultimate goal: control of all Vietnam. As the unpublished papers put it: "Who shall govern SVN is what the war is all about."

Lesson No. 3—With a patience unknown in the West, the Hanoi leaders are prepared to outwait and outlast all enemies. "We have been fighting for our independence for 4,000 years," Premier Pham Van Dong told intermediaries who approached him in 1967 with a peace offer. "We have defeated the Mongols three times. The United States Army, strong as it is, is not as terrifying as Genghis Khan."

Lyndon Johnson's game of now-we-bomb-now-we-don't, ac-

cording to the peace papers, repeatedly backfired.

An exchange of peace messages through the Poles, for example, ended abruptly with the bombing of Hanoi on Dec. 13-14, 1966. Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin later reviewed with Secretary of State Dean Rusk why the contact had been broken off. "The bombing was just before that date," Dobrynin explained Hanoi's response, "meaning the U.S. thought it could pressure Hanoi to talk."

The papers quote a Soviet diplomat as saying the North Vietnamese regarded bombing of their homeland as an effort "to get Hanoi to talk." The refusal to talk while the bombs were dropping, he said, "was a direct response" to the U.S. position.

Nevertheless, President Nixon has now stepped up the bombing again as a means of wringing concessions out of the Hanoi leadership. But he, too, is finding the North Vietnamese fiercely stubborn. Their attitude is expressed in a secret quotation from Premier Pham Van Dong.

"President Johnson is suffering from a pain, and this pain is called South Vietnam," the North Vietnamese Premier told peace emissaries in 1967. "We agree that the situation on the battlefield is decisive; the game is being played in South Vietnam."

"From the newspapers we see that some people want to confine the war to the South. However, the White House and the Pentagon seem determined to continue the war against the North. Therefore, we think that attacks on the North are likely to increase."

"We have made provisions for attacks on our dikes; we are ready to accept war on our soil. Our military potential is growing because of aid from the USSR and other Socialist countries."

"We fight only when we choose; we economize on our resources; we fight only for political purposes."

The lessons outlined in the unpublished Pentagon Papers should be studied carefully by those who still are seeking peace in Vietnam.

© 1972, United Feature Syndicate