

# U.S. Reconstruction Proposal Offers \$2.5 Billion to Hanoi

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The United States outlined to North Vietnam in their secret talks a \$7.5 billion five-year concept of American aid for postwar reconstruction in Indochina, with \$2.5 billion earmarked for North Vietnam, administration officials said.

They described the huge sum yesterday as an "illustrative" figure, based on estimates of what the United States would be prepared to spend if there is a peace settlement.

These figures were supplied to the North Vietnamese by

presidential adviser Henry A. Kissinger in the secret talks he held in Paris. The intended division of projected U.S. aid over the five-year span, officials said, is \$5 billion for South Vietnam, Laos and North Vietnam.

Kissinger referred to the offer in his press conference Wednesday without the specific figures. As he explained it, North Vietnam in its own secret nine-point plan for a peace settlement pressed its "demand for reparations," which is also in the Communist side's public, seven-point proposal.

The United States "could not, in honor," said Kissinger, accept that proposal. That demand, officials noted, amounts to holding the United States solely responsible for the war and its consequences. Instead, said Kissinger, North Vietnam was told that the United States "could give and undertake, a voluntary undertaking by the President, that there would be a massive reconstruction program for all of Indochina in which North Vietnam could share to the extent of several billion dollars."

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# Aid Plan Includes \$2.5 Billion for Hanoi

PLAN, From A1

Nixon administration officials noted yesterday that President Johnson in 1965, made an offer to supply American aid for the postwar reconstruction of Indochina.

The Johnson administration offer was considerably smaller—and vaguer, and was made at the outset of what came to be the massive U.S. involvement in the Indochina war.

Mr. Johnson, speaking at Johns Hopkins University on April 7, 1965, offered to ask Congress "to join in a billion-dollar American investment" for all of Southeast Asia to finance postwar development. He did not specify an amount for North Vietnam, but said, "We would hope that North Vietnam would take its place in the common effort just as soon as peaceful cooperation is possible."

The circumstances of that speech now seem very remote: President Johnson deplored the death, up to that point, of "400 young men" and charged that Communist China was championing "the forces of violence" in Hanoi and throughout the world.

By contrast, a summation yesterday by Secretary of State William P. Rogers of current U.S. policy illustrated how the situation and the American position have changed since 1965.

Speaking to a two-day foreign policy conference of editors and broadcasters, Rogers cited the toll of more than 45,000 Americans killed in the

war (another 10,051 deaths are listed as due to "non-hostile" causes).

The Vietnam war has developed into "the longest and most agonizing war" in American history, said Rogers. Apart from the arguments for becoming involved in it, said Rogers, to walk out of South Vietnam unconditionally and permit "a Communist takeover" would undermine all U.S. world commitments. "If we did that," said Rogers, "our standing in the world, our credibility, would go to zero."

Rogers held out some hope yesterday for the fate of the eight-point Indochina peace plan which President Nixon disclosed Tuesday night after secret negotiations reached a dead end.

He said he had just telephoned Ambassador William J. Porter, chief of the U.S. delegation at the deadlocked Paris peace talks, who was pursuing public advocacy of the plan yesterday with negotiators for North Vietnam and the Vietcong.

"I am somewhat encouraged," said Rogers, "by the fact that they haven't rejected our proposal at Paris this morning."

"There has been a good deal of invective," said Rogers, "but they haven't rejected it." The Communist envoys, he added, "have asked questions—that is a good sign."

Other administration officials privately are considerably less sanguine; formal rejection of any proposal, they noted, is a rarity in such negotiations. In this case, the U.S.

offer contains elements that Hanoi is hardly likely to reject totally, including the American aid proposal.

Rogers conceded that the American and Communist goals are still in total conflict. "They want to put a Communist government in," he said; "we can't accept that."

The secretary said the United States is "prepared to have any government in South Vietnam that the people of South Vietnam want."

But Rogers said it is his judgment that in the election which the United States proposes, "the people of South Vietnam would support a free system. I think they are opposed to a Communist takeover . . ."

In response to questions about the U.S.-proposed cease-fire for Indochina, Rogers said it would "certainly include" the use of American airpower flying from bases in Thailand and elsewhere. However, said Rogers, "we would expect, in the short run, that we would continue to have some Americans in Thailand" after the cease-fire.

When newsmen on Capitol Hill put a similar question to Senate Republican leader Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania, however, he said that once President Nixon's plan is accepted, "there will be a total withdrawal, lock, stock and barrel, of all American forces from Southeast Asia" except for embassy guards.

