

U.S. Rebukes India and Questions Her Neutral Role on Indochina Commission

By BERNARD GWERTZMAN

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 7—The State Department rebuked India today for having raised her relations with North Vietnam to the ambassadorial level and said the action casts doubt on New Delhi's neutral role on the International Control Commission in Southeast Asia.

In a statement reflecting the Nixon Administration's continuing pique with India's policies, Charles W. Bray 3d, the department spokesman, in effect questioned India's nonaligned stand and indicated the Administration's willingness to further strain its ties with New Delhi. The relations, which have been badly damaged as the result of the recent Indian-Pakistani war, have been aggravated in the last few days by revelations of secret White House strategy sessions in which Henry A. Kissinger, President Nixon's adviser on National security affairs, underscored Mr. Nixon's determination to "tilt" American policy during the war in favor of Pakistan.

Bray States Position

Mr. Bray, asked about New Delhi's announcement that it would soon exchange ambassa-

dors with Hanoi in place of the present consuls general, said: "We do not think it would be a particularly helpful step and we have in mind especially that India, as chairman of the International Control Commission, would in effect be abandoning a neutral attitude by taking steps to accord a relatively favorable diplomatic status to North Vietnam.

"Considering the very tough line the North Vietnamese are currently taking in Paris, it seems to us that this would be a particularly poor time to raise a consulate-general to an embassy and at the same time leave their mission in Saigon at the level of a consulate-general."

Three-Year Effort

Since 1954, India has been chairman of the International Control Commission, set up following the Geneva conference on Indochina that year. India was designated as the neutral member of the three-nation group, with Canada representing Western interests, and Poland the Communist ones.

The commission, however, which was set up to detect and report violations of the Geneva accord, has been dormant for many years, particularly since

the Vietnam war expanded in the mid-nineteen-sixties.

A ranking State Department official said that the United States had been seeking for nearly three years to persuade India not to exchange ambassadors with North Vietnam, or at least, to do it at the same time she exchanged envoys with South Vietnam.

Mr. Bray said that India had not told the United States of her decision in advance. The viewpoint he expressed was being formally transmitted to the Indian Government here and in New Delhi, he said.

Columnist Reported Meetings

The public questioning of India's neutrality was the first ever made by the State Department, although officials in the Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon administrations have privately complained from time to time that India was more pro-Soviet than pro-American, or that she criticized the United States more freely than she did the Soviet Union.

Administration officials here have raised doubts about India's neutrality following New Delhi's treaty of friendship with Moscow, signed in August, although Prime Minister Indira Gandhi has said that India had never given up her nonalignment.

The secret documents on White House meetings, made public by the syndicated columnist Jack Anderson, have illustrated the Administration's anger with India in the war with Pakistan.

Today, Mr. Anderson made public a summary of the Dec. 4 White House strategy session, compiled by the Defense Department. A somewhat shorter account of that session, compiled by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was released earlier by Mr. Anderson, who said he had received "scores" of secret papers from an unidentified informant.

In the version made public today, Samuel De Palma, the State Department's specialist on the United Nations, questioned the Administration's decision to place full responsibility for the war on India. Mr. Kissinger is quoted as having said, "The President says either the bureaucracy should put out the right statements on this, or the White House will do it."

At another point, Mr. Kissinger is said to have stated that on aid matters, the President wants to proceed against India only. At a later meeting on Dec. 6, Mr. Kissinger reportedly said that the United States officials

should show a "certain coolness" to the Indians in Washington.

L. K. Jha, the Indian Ambassador, was called into the State Department on Dec. 16 by Joseph J. Sisco, the Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs to be given a rebuke for holding a news conference on Dec. 14 in which he criticized the sending of the American aircraft carrier Enterprise into the Indian Ocean.