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'Hanoi Rewriting History'

Washington

The United States charged yesterday that Hanoi was trying to rewrite history in denying that there was a 1968 understanding calling for its military restraints in return for an end to American bombing of North Vietnam.

Emphatically asserting that such an understanding did exist, the State Department said the document on the 1968 talks released Thursday by Hanoi in Paris was heavily edited and "designed obviously to support arguments made from time to time by North Vietnam."

Department spokesman Robert J. McCloskey reiterated this American contention that, as the result of the secret 1968 talks, in return for the bombing halt, North Vietnam agreed tacitly not to abuse the demilitarized zone between the two Vietnams, not to shell populated

areas in South Vietnam and not to interfere with American reconnaissance flights over North Vietnam.

The U.S. has accused Hanoi of violating this understanding by launching its current offensive across the DMZ.

Despite pressure from newsmen, McCloskey refused to make public a documented American version of the diplomatic exchange that preceded the announcement by President Johnson on Oct. 31, 1968, making known the terms of the "understanding."

N.Y. Times Service
