

Brezhnev, Nixon and The Vietnam War



Jack Anderson

KREMLIN CZAR Leonid Brezhnev used tough language to impress upon Henry Kissinger in Moscow that Russia will continue to support North Vietnam.

But Brezhnev assured the President's foreign policy adviser that the Vietnam War need not stand in the way of better Soviet-American relations.

The conversations continued, off and on, for four days. Sources privy to the secret details tell us Brezhnev was furious over U.S. suggestions that the Russians had equipped Hanoi for an invasion of South Vietnam.

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PRESIDENT NIXON himself served an oblique warning upon the Kremlin that "great powers cannot avoid the responsibility for the use of arms by those to whom they give them."

Brezhnev offered no apologies for furnishing Hanoi with the T-54 tanks, heavy artillery and other sophisticated weapons that have shown up on the fighting fronts. The North Vietnamese have used these heavy arms to spearhead their new offensive.

Brezhnev not only acknowledged that Soviet military shipments to Hanoi have been increased, but he made it plain he would risk alienating the United States before abandoning North Vietnam.

He suggested that a Vietnam settle-

ment can still be negotiated. However, there was no Soviet offer to soften Hanoi's terms. Brezhnev and Kissinger merely agreed that the two superpowers shouldn't let the Vietnam War disrupt their efforts to seek a Soviet-American detente.

Back at the White House, Kissinger apparently has persuaded the President not to let the Vietnam fighting jeopardize relations with the Russians. Mr. Nixon's first reaction after the new North Vietnamese offensive was to hit back. He said privately that he wasn't going to permit the United States to be pushed around.

But the original hard U.S. line, at least so far as Russia is concerned, has now been softened.

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THE GOVERNMENT of Thailand has accused me of "slanderous accusations" for reporting how prominent Thais help to hustle heroin to U.S. markets.

Through its Embassy in Washington, Thailand angrily charged that my recent column on the Thai drug trade was based "merely on hearsay."

In fact, my report was based upon a thorough field investigation by American narcotics and intelligence agents. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has published five reports dealing wholly or in part with the Thai dope trade. These reports, classified "confidential" and "secret," substantiate my charges.