

U.S. BIDS SOVIET AID ON INDOCHINA

Wants Moscow to Persuade
the Vietcong and Hanoi to
Accept Nixon Proposal

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 8 —

The United States publicly urged the Soviet Union today to use its "considerable influence" with North Vietnam and the Vietcong to persuade them to accept President Nixon's proposal for a cease-fire in Indochina.

At the same time, Administration officials said they were not discouraged by the negative quality of the initial response in Paris. One official termed the reaction of the North Vietnamese and Vietcong delegations at the peace talks there "as good as we could expect."

In Washington, reaction to the President's new plan was almost universally favorable. Democrats and Republicans, hawks and doves all applauded the proposal and called on the Communist side to give it serious consideration.

Welcomed by Harriman

W. Averell Harriman and Cyrus R. Vance, who headed the United States negotiating team at Paris under former President Lyndon B. Johnson and who have been consistently critical of Mr. Nixon's negotiating strategy, welcomed and supported the new initiative. Both described the initial Communist reaction as predictable and suggested that the proposal could become the basis of serious private discussions in Paris.

Mr. Nixon, heading south for a long weekend at his home in Key Biscayne, Fla., described world reaction to his proposal as "overwhelmingly good."

He told an audience at an Army helicopter base he visited during a tour of Georgia that the bipartisan support for his

Continued From Page 1, Col. 7

offer would "not go unnoticed by the North Vietnamese."

Commenting on the initial Communist response in Paris, the President said: "At first blush it would seem that it had been turned down. But we expect a more serious and formal reply in about a week."

The State Department spokesman, Robert J. McCloskey when asked at a news conference what role the United States hoped the Soviet Union would play, said:

"What we would like, of course, would be for the Soviet Union to use its considerable influence with the North Vietnamese and the so-called provisional revolutionary government of the Vietcong to get an acceptance of the new proposals."

Mr. McCloskey disclosed that Secretary of State William P. Rogers had made a last-minute telephone call to the Soviet Ambassador, Anatoly F. Dobrynin, to advise him of the details of the President's plan just before Mr. Nixon went on television. The spokesman added, however, that no formal request for Soviet intercession had yet been made.

The representatives of 29 other countries had been advised of the substance of the President's proposal earlier in the day — and the delay in informing the Russians — appeared to have been intentional.

Foreign diplomats here speculated that it was designed to convey the Administration's unhappiness over what Washington considers the Soviet Union's connivance with Egypt in violating the Middle Eastern cease-fire agreement.

But Mr. McCloskey made it clear that the Administration would appreciate any assistance the Soviet Union could provide in persuading the North Vietnamese and Vietcong to treat the President's proposal as a serious offer.

He added that any further "meaningful" diplomatic activity on the part of the United States would have to await a "positive response" from the other side. As soon as that occurs, he said, the United States will be ready to begin negotiating the details of the cease-fire and other provisions of the Nixon offer.

Praise on Capitol Hill

On Capitol Hill, the praise for the new initiatives was coupled in many cases with a skepticism over whether the Communist delegations would accept the proposal or even enter into serious negotiation on the basis of it.

Senator Charles H. Percy, Republican of Illinois, expressed doubt, but added that if the Communists did not respond, "the responsibility for continuing the war will be theirs."

Senator Mike Mansfield, the Democratic leader, a frequent critic of the Administration's Indochina policies, gave the Nixon plan his unequivocal support, describing it as "excellent" and predicting that the chance of a breakthrough in the Paris negotiations "will be enhanced in the weeks ahead."

Senator Edmund S. Muskie, Democrat of Maine, said the proposals were "overdue, but nonetheless welcome."

A note of caution was expressed by Representative L. Mendel Rivers, Democrat of South Carolina, who described himself as "one of the original victory people." He said the proposals constituted a "good package" that "could work."