

Oil Firms Deny Bid To Hanoi

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Houston

A Shell Oil Co official yesterday denied a report that the company had made secret contact with Hanoi or the Viet Cong to inquire about future drilling rights in Vietnam.

"We deny any contact with the North Vietnamese by Shell Oil Co., or its wholly owned subsidiary, Pecten Vietnam," said John Bookout, vice president for exploration and production.

Bookout responded to a UPI dispatch from Singapore reporting Western oil companies were negotiating with the Hanoi government concerning offshore leases secured under the existing government in Saigon.

Bookout said all Shell personnel and their families had moved from Saigon to Singapore and set up residence temporarily pending assessment of the situation in the Republic of South Vietnam.

Exxon Co., U.S.A. in a statement from its corporate headquarters also denied any contact with the Hanoi government.

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