

# U.S. Firms Talking Oil With Hanoi

Paris

U.S. oil companies reportedly have made informal contact with Hanoi to determine under what type of arrangements they might resume exploring for oil in the South China Sea off the coast of South Vietnam.

Oil industry informants said that the Exxon Oil Co. and a consortium of U.S. independents were among the enterprises that had been in touch with Vietnamese representatives.

The soundings were said to have been taken at meetings arranged with the knowledge of the U.S. Treasury and State Departments in such places as Paris and Hong Kong. There were unconfirmed reports that representatives of U.S. companies had traveled to Vietnam.

Any dealings would have to be cleared first by the State Department. An embargo on Vietnamese travel and business was imposed by the United States during the building of hostilities with North Vietnam in the 1960s. Last May it was extended to cover South Vietnam as well, after the Saigon regime fell.

Before U.S. companies returned, the embargo would have to be lifted. Identical House and Senate bills, designed to end the embargo, have been introduced by Representatives Jonathan Bingham of New York and by Senator Mark Hatfield of Oregon and Senator Adlai Stevenson Jr. of Illinois.

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