

Like World War II**'Guerrillas' Use
Tanks, Missiles**

WASHINGTON — (UPI) — North Vietnamese forces armed with Soviet-made tanks and anti-aircraft missiles have been able to abandon their usual guerrilla tactics in favor of conventional military operations in their Vietnam offensive, U.S. officials said today.

A State Department spokesman, Robert J. McCloskey, told newsmen that the tanks and other heavy equipment supplied by the Russians were playing a big role in the thrust into northern South Vietnam.

McCloskey said Soviet-made SAM 2's — high-level anti-aircraft missiles — had been installed by Hanoi in the Demilitarized Zone, making operations by U.S. B-52 bombers more hazardous.

Conventional Battle

At the Pentagon, spokesman Jerry W. Friedheim commented: "It appears that we have in progress a conventional, combined arms battle."

Friedheim described the battle as shaping up as a World War II style operation which has seldom been the rule in Vietnam.

McCloskey told a questioner he did not know whether the United States planned to raise the question of the Russian arms supplies with

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the Soviet Union. He pointed out that Moscow had been contributing military equipment to the North Vietnamese for years but that there appeared to have been more Russian materiel going in recently.

In London diplomats said the Soviet Union's high-ranking military mission was in Hanoi the day before North Vietnamese started their major offensive across the Demilitarized Zone. The timing appears to have been more than coincidence.

Marshal Pavel F. Batitsky, deputy defense minister and commander in chief of the Soviet air defense forces, led the mission, which included ranking Soviet air and naval experts.

The officers conferred with North Vietnamese leaders and with Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap, the defense minister who masterminded past Communist offensives including the Tet offensive of 1968.

Matter for Speculation

The Soviets were said to have been made aware of at least some of the latest offensive moves against the South. To what extent they were actively involved in some of the planning remains a matter for speculation, the sources said.

There is reason to believe the Russians offered "advice," they said. Hanoi is known to be too secretive to confide even in allies very closely.

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