

China Said to Bar Soviet Ships With Arms for North Vietnam

NYTimes

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Special to The New York Times

MAY 26 1972

WASHINGTON, May 25 — The Chinese Government has turned down a Soviet proposal to let 12 freighters carrying military equipment for North Vietnam enter Chinese ports to discharge their cargoes according to diplomatic reports here.

United States Government analysts said today that confirmation of the Chinese response to the Soviet Union had been received via third parties in the last 48 hours. They said that there was no reason to doubt the veracity of the information.

The Chinese response was reported to have been carefully phrased to avoid offense. It pointed out, some sources here said, that it was against China's normal policy to permit "warships" to enter Chinese ports.

12 Soviet Ships Diverted

The term "warships" has caused surprise in Government quarters here although some qualified analysts believe that it may stem from successive translations from Chinese to English.

According to one responsible informant, the Chinese suggested that if the Soviet Government was intent on delivering military materiel to North Vietnam by sea it should "clear

the mines" laid by the United States.

At least 17 merchant vessels bound for Haiphong, North Vietnam's principal port, have been reported diverted since May 8, when President Nixon ordered the mining of North Vietnamese harbors. Twelve of these ships are reputed to be Soviet. One—the Pevak—was in Haiphong and was damaged April 26 during a United States bombing raid. She sailed out before the United States mines became active May 11, and has recently been admitted to Canton for repairs. However, informants here say she has been forbidden to discharge cargo.

Charles W. Bray 3d, the State Department spokesman, declined to comment on reports that approximately 1,000 Chinese railway cars were now backed up in marshaling yards north of the Vietnamese border. Other Government informants, however, said that the reports appeared to be correct.

Mr. Bray said that United States air strikes against North Vietnamese railines, roads and bridges had had a "substantial" effect on China's ability to supply war material to the North Vietnamese. He said that the United States mines had "totally" closed off seaborne supplies to North Vietnam.