

# U.S. Weighed Use of B-52's in Crisis

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 OF B-52'S IN CRISIS**

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Official on Kissinger Jet Says  
 Bombing Cambodia Was  
 Option in Mayaguez Affair

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VIENNA, May 18—The United States was considering using V-52 bombers against the Cambodian mainland after the seizure of the freighter Mayaguez last week if the carrier Coral Sea had not arrived in the area by Wednesday, a top United States official said today.

Reporters aboard the plane that brought Secretary of State Kissinger here from Washington for two days of talks with Foreign Minister Andrei A. Gromyko of the Soviet Union were told that the National Security Council had decided early last week that firm military action had to be taken by Wednesday in the seizure of the ship.

To wait longer, the senior official aboard the plane said, would have been to run a high risk of the new Communist Cambodian Govern-

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ment making public ransom demands and thereby freezing its position.

The option of using B-52's became academic only after strong headwinds assured that the Coral Sea would be in a position to begin a rescue operation for the crew of the detained merchant vessel and related actions against the mainland.

Mr. Kissinger arrived in Vienna late tonight to confer with Mr. Gromyko about nuclear arms, the conference on European security and the Middle East.

On the nuclear arms talks with Moscow, reporters were informed that the United States is considering a key compromise on distinguishing different kinds of missiles that could lead to substantial progress in the talks, which are now stalled in technical details.

But no breakthrough is expected in Vienna for as officials in Washington explained earlier, Mr. Gromyko is not the man who speaks for Moscow on nuclear arms.

On the Middle East, it was made plain to reporters that Mr. Kissinger is not about to commit the Ford Administration to any particular approaches to a resumed Geneva conference. Decisions by the United States on the timing and direction of a renewed conference being sought by Moscow will have to wait for the meetings President Ford will hold in the next weeks with President Anwar el-Sadat of Egypt and Premier Yitzhak Rabin of Israel.

The American stance on the 35-nation conference on European security seems relaxed. The message being conveyed

was that Moscow wanted a summit meeting in July to legitimize present national boundaries, that allies of the United States wanted to finally conclude the 3-year-old conference and that Washington was prepared to go along with that aim.

### Talks Seen as Stock-Taking

The main purpose of the Kissinger-Gromyko parley was described as a stock-taking of Soviet-American relations and another step toward the visit of the Soviet Communist party Chairman, Leonid I. Brezhnev, to Washington sometime in the fall.

The Kissinger-Gromyko meeting comes at a time when Administration officials have been hinting publicly at a shift in public priorities—at least in the short run.

Privately, these officials have said in Washington that American alliances will be given a greater relative emphasis, while the Administration avoids appearing too lenient in a range of negotiations going on with Moscow.

One important Kissinger aide explained yesterday that this should be viewed as a practical shift to compensate for "the Indochina failure" and not as a strategic change due to a souring of Soviet-American relations.

The impression being conveyed by a wide range of Administration officials is that Moscow is acting cautiously in the wake of United States policy defeats in Indochina and is still firmly committed to détente.

Reporters traveling with Mr. Kissinger today were told that in the seizure of the Mayaguez, the Secretary of State had been casually informed about the event during his regularly

scheduled staff meeting at 8 A.M. Monday, at least six hours after the ship was captured. Mr. Kissinger then asked one of his aides to check on the story, according to officials.

When the aide returned with the confirmation, Mr. Kissinger set the wheels in motion for a National Security Council meeting. The senior members of the council quickly agreed that the main effort should be to avoid a repetition of a situation like the North Korean seizure of the Pueblo in 1969, officials said.

Bombing by B-52's, the account continued, appeared to be the only option available by Wednesday — if the Coral Sea was delayed — to frighten the Cambodian Government away from making humiliating demands on Washington.

On the nuclear arms talks now in recess in Geneva, a main stumbling block has been the problem of how to verify whether a missile that has been deployed does or does not contain multiple independently targetable warheads.

The United States position, reiterated aboard the Secretary's aircraft today, is that if a missile is tested in flight with such warheads all missiles of that kind subsequently deployed will be considered as having multiple warheads.

At Vladivostok last November, Moscow and Washington made a preliminary agreement to last until 1985 that would limit each side to 1,320 missiles with multiple warheads.

Now, however, reporters were given to understand that Washington is considering a plan that would allow some of the giant Soviet SS-18's to be deployed with the understanding that they do not contain multiple warheads as long as they are distinguished from the SS-18's with such warheads.