

A SOVIET WARNING

NYTimes

Wording Is Viewed as
a Veiled Threat to
Nixon's Visit

By HEDRICK SMITH

Special to The New York Times

MOSCOW, Monday, April 16
—The Soviet Union made a formal protest to the United States today in reaction to the bombing of the North Vietnamese port city of Haiphong and warned that the expansion of the air war could aggravate not only the situation in Indochina but "the international situation as a whole."

This was taken as a veiled warning that further pursuit of the heavy-bombing campaign against North Vietnam could put President Nixon's scheduled visit to the Soviet Union next month in jeopardy.

But American officials said that the Soviet Government did not mention Mr. Nixon's visit in making the protest, evidently an indication that the Krem-

Text of Moscow's statement is printed on Page 10.

lin still wanted to go ahead with the meeting and the important round of negotiations.

Beam Receives Protest

Ambassador Jacob D. Beam of the United States was summoned to the Foreign Ministry at 10:30 P.M. to hear an oral protest from Anatoly G. Kovalev, a Deputy Foreign Minister, who also gave the envoy the text of the protest during their 20-minute meeting.

The contents of the protest were not made public. But while Mr. Beam was at the Foreign Ministry, the Soviet press agency Tass issued an authorized statement condemning the bombing raids and demanding that they be halted.

Although the private protest and public statement reportedly had similarities, officials refused to say whether the formal protest was couched in stronger language than the relatively moderate public statement. Such a tactic would be normal if Moscow wanted to convey a serious warning to the Nixon Administration without mounting a major propaganda campaign while it is preparing for Mr. Nixon's visit and engaged in negotiating with Washington on other important issues.

"The port city of Haiphong

Continued on Page 10, Column 3

Moscow Protests Attacks
And Issues Warning to U.S.

Continued From Page 1, Col. 5

and the suburbs of Hanoi were bombed and strafed," the Tass statement asserted. "There are victims among the civilian population and serious material damage has been inflicted."

The public statement did not mention news reports that a Soviet vessel, the Simferopol, had been struck during the raid on Haiphong though there were indications that the matter had been brought up in the private official protest.

American officials declined to say whether the Soviet ship had been mentioned. They would say only that the Soviet protest had been "based on" the bombing of Haiphong and had been made "in connection with" the raids on the area.

Normal diplomatic procedure would require North Vietnam itself to protest the bombing, leaving the Soviet Union to protest injuries suffered by its citizens, or a general aggravation of the international situation.

In spite of the raids, which Nixon Administration officials said were intended to force Moscow to limit its war supplies to Hanoi, the Tass statement asserted that the Soviet Union "has been and will continue to be on the side of heroic Vietnam and all the patriots of Indochina, by giving them the aid and support necessary to rebuff imperialist aggression."

Then, in a passage reportedly repeated almost verbatim to Ambassador Beam, the statement warned the Nixon Administration of the wider consequences of its current tactics in Vietnam:

"The continuing build-up of American air and naval forces in the Indochina region, the renewal of raids over the territory of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and Washington's decision to interrupt the Paris talks indefinitely—all these are in irreconcilable contradiction with official declaration that the United States

is seeking to achieve a peaceful settlement in the region.

"No pretexts can conceal the fact that we are facing in reality a continuation and expansion of the crimes of the American military against the peoples of Indochina. This cannot but further aggravate not only the situation in Indochina, but the international situation as a whole."

Both the last phrase and the point that the Soviet leadership was closely following the situation served to underscore the seriousness with which the Kremlin reacted to President Nixon's move.

Nonetheless American officials said that they had been given no indication by the Soviet authorities of any change in plans to receive an advance party for Mr. Nixon's visit which is due to arrive here Tuesday. Nor was there any indication that the Russians did not plan to go ahead as scheduled with maritime negotiations that are to open here tomorrow.

American officials said that neither matter was brought up tonight by Mr. Kovalev when he met with Ambassador Beam. Officials said that the Ambassador had replied to the oral protest, but they declined to disclose what he had said.

The last time that Moscow and Washington engaged in a direct confrontation over a bombing raid that inflicted damage to a Soviet ship in Vietnamese water was in January, 1968. The Soviet Union then charged that the freighter Pereslavl-Zalesky had been seriously damaged during raids on Haiphong. The United States expressed regret but said it was impossible to eliminate the risk of such incidents.

Evidently to avoid arousing national feelings so close to the Nixon visit without giving Washington a chance to apologize, the Soviet Union made no public mention today that the American planes had reportedly hit a Soviet vessel in Haiphong harbor and wounded an officer.