

Rogers Defends Bombing; Warns of Further Steps

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WASHINGTON, April 17—Secretary of State William P. Rogers today forcefully defended the weekend bombing of Haiphong and Hanoi and warned that the Nixon Adminis-

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tration would continue to take "whatever military action is necessary" to stop what he repeatedly called Hanoi's "massive invasion" of South Vietnam.

Testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Mr. Rogers gave the first official Government explanation of the raids on the North Vietnamese heartland. His remarks

were often aggressive in tone and seemed to reflect an Administration decision to mount a show not only of military but also of rhetorical force to counter both the North Vietnamese offensive and domestic criticism here.

President Nixon again remained silent publicly, but at a luncheon on Capitol Hill, he reportedly told a member of Congress—alluding to the weekend raids—that "you have to let them have it when they jump on you."

Mr. Rogers told the Foreign Relations Committee flatly that the United States would not engage in any negotiations with

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the Communist side "while this major invasion is under way." In Paris today, the North Vietnamese, offered a possibility of new secret peace talks if the bombing of the North was halted. [Details on Page 19.]

Asked by Senator Charles H. Percy, Republican of Illinois, about the prospects for Mr. Nixon's Moscow trip next month in light of the weekend raids and the Soviet note complaining that four Soviet ships had been damaged in Haiphong Harbor, Mr. Rogers said that plans were going ahead for the visit. An advance party of White House and State Department officials left Washington for Moscow today to arrange details of the visit. At the State Department, Soviet-American talks on settlement of World War II Lend-Lease debts began as scheduled.

Visit to Warsaw Planned

And the White House announced that Mr. Nixon would stop in Warsaw on his way home from the Soviet Union and Iran.

But Mr. Rogers, when asked about the effect of the bombing raids on the President's trip to Moscow, indicated that he had some doubts whether the visit would materialize. He said that at the moment plans were going ahead and there was "no evidence" that the trip would not take place, but he refused to make any predictions.

Mr. Rogers had made plans to testify before the committee, headed by Senator J. W. Fulbright, Democrat of Arkansas, on behalf of the foreign aid bill well before the present bombing began. Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird goes before the committee tomorrow.

The White House indicated today that Mr. Rogers and Mr. Laird would speak for the Administration, and this led to more than usual interest in the hearings. Television and radio networks broadcast the session live and plan to do so again tomorrow.

Use of Nuclear Arms Barred

Mr. Rogers said that the Administration had ruled out either the use of nuclear weapons or the reintroduction of American ground forces into South Vietnam. But every other military option, he said, is left open to defeat what he called at one point "naked aggression of the most flagrant type."

Alluding to the announced restraint of the Johnson Administration, which publicly promised it would not attack certain targets in North Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, Mr. Rogers said: "We're not going to make any announcements about what we're going to do. We think that there's been altogether too much of that in this war."

Possible military steps open to the Administration include the mining of Haiphong Harbor or some kind of blockade, actions that were ruled out by the Johnson Administration because of the risk of increasing tensions with the Russians and Chinese.

Mr. Rogers, in asserting that the current troop withdrawal would meet the 69,000 level set by the President for May 1, refused to say whether Mr. Nixon would pledge a further cut when he discusses the troop level prior to May 1. The White House has hinted that a further reduction announcement may be delayed because of the current enemy offensive.