

Moscow Envoy Also Joins Meeting at White House

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By BERNARD GWERTZMAN

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WASHINGTON, May 11—A high-ranking Soviet official conferred with President Nixon about trade matters today and said later that there was no reason to doubt that Mr. Nixon's trip to Moscow would take place as planned, 11 days from now.

Nikolai S. Patolichev, who is Foreign Trade Minister and a full member of the Communist party's Central Committee, met with Mr. Nixon and three aides at the White House for 55 minutes. He was accompanied by Ambassador Anatoly F. Dobrynin, also a member of the Central Committee.

On his way back to the Soviet Embassy, Mr. Patolichev was asked by a newsman whether Mr. Nixon's visit to Russia was "still on."

"We never had any doubts about it," he said through an interpreter. "I don't know why

you asked this question. Have you any doubts?"

The meeting, described by the White House as a "courtesy call" by Mr. Patolichev, was held in what was described as a cordial atmosphere. It centered on prospects for increasing Soviet-American trade. Neither Vietnam nor the Nixon trip scheduled to start on May 22, was discussed.

At the time the meeting was taking place, the Soviet Government was publicly condemning Mr. Nixon's decision to seal off North Vietnam's harbors.

The White House seemed pleased by Mr. Patolichev's visit, set up privately in advance, and sought more than usual publicity for it. Newsmen and photographers were invited into the President's office and allowed to listen to Mr. Nixon

Continued on Page 18, Column 3

Continued From Page 1, Col. 7

and Mr. Patolichev discuss the relative virtues of the Russian, German, Polish and English languages.

At one point, Mr. Nixon said he thought Russian was easier than Polish, and gave the Russian word "Druzhba," for friendship, but stumbled over an attempt to say it in Polish.

The White House and State Department declined to comment either on the significance of Mr. Patolichev's meeting with the President or on his later remarks. But privately, officials attached importance to both.

A Soviet specialist said that "we must assume the Kremlin is signaling us" by having the two senior officials spend a friendly hour with Mr. Nixon at the same time Moscow was making its first authoritative comment on the latest Vietnam developments.

The consensus seemed to be that, at least for the moment, Soviet leaders had decided to keep alive both the Moscow visit and the improved climate in relations with the United States, despite the mining of the North Vietnamese harbors by the United States.

However, Mr. Patolichev's rather unambiguous statement

notwithstanding, Administration officials were less sure of the Nixon trip and cautioned that Moscow had not yet played out its hand.

U. S. Analyst Gives Views

A senior Government analyst said that the Soviet statement was as moderate as could be expected in the circumstances, and "certainly must have been somewhat disappointing to Hanoi."

But he said that Moscow might still take harsher steps, including calling off the Nixon trip—if the United States does not comply with the Soviet demand that a halt the efforts to stop supplies to North Vietnam "without delay."

Many top White House officials have privately expected Moscow to cancel or postpone Mr. Nixon's trip following Monday night's speech. Henry A. Kissinger, the President's national security adviser, left the impression with reporters at his news conference on Tuesday that he thought the trip might be called off.

One top official said on Tuesday that he would wager "10 to 1" that the visit would not take place.

But today, the combination of the moderation from Moscow, the visit by r. Patolichev and Mr. Dobrynin to the White House, and the fact that the numerous talks have continued, led to more optimistic speculation.

'Knock Wood,' an Aide Says

"I think the trip is definitely on, knock wood," one official said, in summing up the attitude.

On Capitol Hill, the Soviet public statement was also well received.

Senator J. W. Fulbright, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, who is a frequent critic of Mr. Nixon's policies, said the Soviet statement "is obviously moderate and restrained."

"It does not allude to considerations of prestige or threaten military action," he said. "Instead, it concentrates on the question of the legality of the measures the President has taken — measures taken, it should be emphasized, single-handedly without any consultation with or authority from the Congress — and on warning that the United States must bear the entire responsibility for the consequences of these actions."

The senate majority leader, Mike Mansfield, said he was "glad to note that there is a possibility still that the Moscow talks will be held."

Mr. Patolichev has been in this country since Sunday night as the guest of Secretary of Commerce Peter G. Peterson. The visit is in return for one by former Commerce Secretary Maurice M. Stans to Moscow last fall.



United Press International

HANOI NEGOTIATOR IN MOSCOW: Xuan Thuy of the delegation to peace talks in Paris with Premier Aleksei N. Kosygin, right, and Konstantin F. Katushev, a Soviet Communist party secretary. Mr. Thuy stopped for a visit on way from Paris to Hanoi.

Soviet Actions Cited

Mr. Peterson, as well as Mr. Kissinger and Peter M. Flanagan, the White House aide in charge of international trade, were present at the meeting with Mr. Patclichev.

Ronald L. Ziegler, the White House press secretary, was asked when and how Mr. Patclichev's visit was arranged. He said that it was a "courtesy visit," in return for the fact that Soviet Premier Alekesi N. Kosygin had received Mr. Stans, and that Leonid I. Brezhnev, the Soviet party leader, had recently received Agriculture Secretary Earl L. Butz.

But privately, officials said that the courtesy visit had been tentatively scheduled for at least a day and that the White House had not made it known ahead of time out of concern that because of the Vietnam situation the Kremlin might decide to cancel it.