

Hanoi Officials Hint War May End Before Election

[Reuter from Peking]

North Vietnam's Morale Unshaken

by Jack Anderson

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***Peking Report Says Hanoi Hints
War's End Near Election Time***

PEKING, Sept. 5 (Reuters)—Senior North Vietnamese officials have hinted that the Indochina war could possibly end before or shortly after the American Presidential election in November, travelers back from Hanoi said here today.

The visitors, who had talks with officials just below the level of North Vietnam's three leaders, said this was the first time they had heard even a cautious note of optimism from Hanoi channels about the possibility of a cease-fire in a limited time.

The reports came 24 hours after the former Cambodian head of state, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, told reporters here that a few days ago Premier Chou En-lai said there was a possibility of President Nixon's stopping the war just before the election or a month or two after.

The returned visitors from

Hanoi indicated that North Vietnamese officials had also said there was an equal possibility that the war could continue indefinitely.

If no agreement is reached by November, the North Vietnamese said they have "surprises ahead" on the battlefield. They conceded, however, that the United States bombing and harbor mining was having an effect.

Reuter story longer and more detailed.