

Secret Study SFE Examiner

Russia Helped In Peace Talks

WASHINGTON — (AP)— The Soviet Union helped at "several critical points" in starting the 1968-69 Paris peace talks while, at the same time, providing Hanoi with large amounts of sophisticated weapons, the Washington Post reported today.

The newspaper's reports were based on secret documents prepared for the National Security Council as a general review of the war during the period that included the start of the Paris talks and the 1968 halt of U.S. bombing of North Vietnam.

Post reporter Murrey Marder said the report, obtained independently by the Post, listed Soviet Ambassador to the United States Valerian Zorin and the Russian minister to Paris, Valentin

Oberemko, as intermediaries in the negotiations.

The result of all this activity was the halt to the bombing and the start of the Paris talks, although Moscow and Hanoi denied the Soviet role at the time.

Although the study said Hanoi gave Moscow no veto over the efforts at opening peace talks, the Post said, Secretary of State William Rogers credited the Soviets with playing a major role.

"We attribute more significance than does the embassy (the U.S. embassy in Saigon) to Soviet efforts to be helpful in moving the negotiations ahead, and we think the evidence that they did so is quite clear," Rogers is quoted as saying.

Rogers' assessment in the NSC study, dated Dec. 21,

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1969, added that while Hanoi may have used the Soviets to convey its own policy in order to save face, the Russians "employed their influence over Hanoi in generally constructive direction both as to timing and substance."

'Secret Report'

The NSC study was prepared by the State Department, Pentagon, Central Intelligence Agency and high military officials.

It remains officially classified as secret although the Post, New York Times, Newsweek magazine and syndicated columnist Jack Anderson have published large sections of the study.

The newspaper said the study gave credit to the Soviets starting in May 1968 with beginning "a new and decidedly more assertive phase of their diplomacy."

"Thus it was Zorin who elaborated on the two-phase concept for stopping the bombing without any ostensible reciprocal action by Hanoi, and indicated Hanoi might be receptive to such an approach," the NSC study is quoted as saying.

Seating Deadlock

The Russians are also described as suggesting the solution to the deadlock over seating arrangements that had kept the Paris talks from getting underway by bringing in South Vietnam and the Viet Cong to the talks.

Today's New York Times said Ellsworth Bunker, U.S. ambassador in Saigon, predicted at the outset of the Nixon Administration that North Vietnam's military prospects were so bleak that Hanoi would "make significant concessions" at the Paris peace talks, according to a study known as National Security Memorandum No. 1.

In the same study, the Joint Chiefs of Staff urged the President to resume bombing in North Vietnam, saying it would "assure almost total interdiction of truck and water-borne movement of supplies into the Demilitarized Zone and Laos."

The Times said that while the Joint Chiefs urged renewed bombing, earlier air operations were criticized by the Central Intelligence Agency, the State Department and the civilian office of the Secretary of Defense.