

U.S. Calls Quangtri Attack Act of Bad Faith by Hanoi

NYTimes

By TERENCE SMITH APR 28 1972

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 27—The United States accused North Vietnam today of acting in bad faith by renewing attacks in South Vietnam just as the American delegation was returning to the negotiating table in Paris.

Referring specifically to the North Vietnamese assault on the city of Quangtri, Robert J. McCloskey, the State Department spokesman, described Hanoi's actions as "outrageous, particularly in light of their demands that the United States return to the conference forum."

"How can North Vietnam expect discussions to get anywhere under these circumstances, virtually at the point of a gun?" he said.

His remarks bespoke the tough line the Administration has taken with the North Vietnamese in recent days. President Nixon and Henry A. Kissinger, his national security adviser, and other Administration spokesmen have coupled offers of resumption of negotiations with renewed threats that air and naval strikes against North Vietnam will continue unless Hanoi lifts its offensive.

Ziegler Tells of Concern

Mr. McCloskey's charges were echoed by Ronald L. Ziegler, the Presidential press secretary, who said at the Florida White House that the renewed attacks "do not augur well for the intentions of the enemy."

"We cannot help but note it with some concern," he said.

Despite the Administration's angry public denunciations of Hanoi's tactics, senior officials here conceded that the new assaults in South Vietnam, combined with the renewed negotiations in Paris, followed the familiar "fight-talk" strategy that Hanoi has employed for years.

The officials noted that traditionally, Hanoi has followed each offensive on the battlefield with a new negotiating offer. The official expect that Le Duc Tho, a Hanoi politure member, may well present a revised negotiation offer in secret talks in Paris in the near future, but they doubt that it will be at all conciliatory.

"Given their enhanced position on the battlefield," one official observed, "Hanoi is not about to give anything away until the outcome of the fighting is clear."

The Administration's charges of North Vietnamese "bad

faith" came just 12 hours after the President spoke in his televised address to the nation of his "firm expectations" that productive talks would commence in Paris "through all available channels"

Despite several background briefings held for newsmen in recent days, the grounds for these "firm expectations" have yet to be adequately explained. Speaking to reporters last night before Mr. Nixon delivered his speech, Mr. Kissinger said only that the United States was returning to the negotiating table with the belief that there was a "reasonable possibility" of productive talks.

Sees Battle as Decisive

As far as the battlefield is concerned, the Administration's specialists expect heavy fighting to continue for at least a month, perhaps more. Mr. Kissinger expressed the view last night that the offensive would have run its course, one way or the other by July 1. He said he would not rule out an occasional "spasm" of enemy activity after that date, but he said that believed that the Communist attacks would eventually be impeded by a shortage of supplies and manpower.

Mr. Kissinger made it clear that he regarded the current offensive as a decisive battle, one that could determine the outcome of the war.

He noted that if the North Vietnamese failed to achieve their objectives this time, they would probably be unable to launch another comparable assault in less than two years.

He said it was this, plus his conviction that the offensive is as much a political as a military act, that led him to believe that there was a "reasonable possibility" that serious negotiations might be possible in Paris after the present round of fighting subsides.