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From column by Tom Braden on Kissinger's secret visit to Moscow:

..... What Kissinger asked for, in effect, was that Moscow urge Hanoi to stay its hand.

His argument went somewhat as follows: If the Russians want a liberal U.S. trade policy, a slow-down in the arms race and a relationship with the United States which recognizes the Soviet Union - not China - as spokesman for the Communist world, Russia cannot permit a U.S. rout in South Vietnam.

A major defeat, Kissinger pointed out to Brezhnev, would shock public opinion in this country. In turn, a shocked public opinion would force the President to take "tough stands" and win points. A nation which has suffered a Dunkirk is in no mood to make compromises.

Therefore, so the Kissinger argument went, the Soviet Union should make it clear that Hanoi has had all the help it is going to get and should stop now before it involves major powers in disputes which may get out of control.

..... Mr. Brezhnev was cordial to Dr. Kissinger and said he understood his point of view. But it not so much a question of whether Mr. Brezhev will deliver the message to North Vietnam as whether North Vietnam will pay any attention to it.

..... And what of Dr. Kissinger's oft-recited theory that big powers will hang together to prevent small powers from upsetting the peace? This theory, too, hangs

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in the balance. There is just the faintest suspicion here [Washington] that the Kissinger visit to Moscow, ostensibly a warning, may have been seen in Moscow as a desperate plea.