



Kissinger Inside Info

F Post 5/2/72

Frederick (Md.) Post

Hanoi Nixes Moscow Orders

By RAY CROMLEY

WASHINGTON (NEA)

It can be said with some certainty that Dr. Henry Kissinger, in his recent fruitless secret meeting with Le Duc Tho, North Vietnam's representative, went through one of the most shocking experiences of his life.

The emotional effects were still apparent two weeks after the event.

According to administration sources, the Soviet Union had in four days of meetings with Kissinger promised, in effect, to deliver Hanoi on a platter if the United States would only once again agree to secret negotiations.

The men in the Kremlin had promised Kissinger they would tell Hanoi that unless the invasion were halted or some reasonable talks begun with the United States, Moscow would gradually cut back on war supplies to North Vietnam.

The Soviet leaders said they did not expect the United States to take their word on what they would do. The United States could continue to bomb until Washington saw results.

The Russians said that even a gradual cutback on supplies would not, of course, have an immediate effect on the fighting. Nor would it be quickly discernable. But the United States should watch, and when Washington was able to discover by its own intelligence methods that in fact the Russia-to-Hanoi supply line was indeed shrinking, then Nixon, they hoped, would begin to cut down on the bombings and other aid to match the Russian cutback.

Moscow told Kissinger they would deliver North Vietnam's Le Duc Tho to Paris ready to talk. The evidence was, and still is, that the Russians meant what they said and believed they could do what they promised. This information comes from men who normally do not trust the Soviet Union.

But North Vietnam bolted. Le Duc Tho appeared in Paris. But in those secret meetings, as Kissinger has put it, the North Vietnamese said nothing that could not have been clipped out of a newspaper.

There was no negotiating or any attempt at negotiating by Tho. There was only a "jubilant" and "arrogant" reading of the old terms—which amount to a United States and South Vietnamese surrender. It was an insulting, take-it-or-leave-it meeting.

Le Duc Tho wouldn't talk. He would only demand. Kissinger was humiliated. He believed the United States and President Nixon had been humiliated as well.

This was Kissinger, the scholar, the reasonable man, who believed longer than almost anyone else high in government that intelligence combined with reasonable negotiations would, in the end, prove fruitful.

For the first time, Kissinger, Mr. Nixon's closest security adviser, saw that neither the Soviet Union nor China had power over the tiny country of North Vietnam. He finally realized that Hanoi was going to go its own way, in its own fashion, regardless of how much pressure Moscow and Peking applied.

(NEWSPAPER ENTERPRISE ASSN.)