

Soviet Effort for Vietnam Peace Hinted by Russian

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MOSCOW, June 16—The first suggestions emerged here today that the Soviet leadership might be engaged in a diplomatic effort to persuade North Vietnam to accept President Nixon's proposal for a cease-fire in place.

Victor Louis, a Soviet journalist widely credited with close connections to Soviet intelligence, wrote in a dispatch for The London Evening News that the current mission to Hanoi of President Nikolai V. Podogorny was "aimed at stopping hostilities on all fronts so that new negotiations can get under way."

Mr. Louis suggested that if both the North and South Vietnamese would hold in their present positions, "There could be a cooling-off period which could lead to a referendum or to new elections in South Vietnam."

Both his article and the private comments of other well-placed Soviet sources indicated that the Kremlin was persuaded by Mr. Nixon during his talks here that he was sincere in wanting to end American involvement in Vietnam.

Not in Position

Hitherto, Soviet sources have asserted privately that Moscow was not in a position, given its rivalry with China and its commitment to support Hanoi as a matter of principle, to urge the North Vietnamese to change negotiating or military tactics. Some Western diplomats, nonetheless, suspect that Moscow urged Hanoi not to launch a ground offensive against Hue while President Nixon was in Moscow.

Soviet sources said tonight that they were fearful that pro-Peking elements among the North Vietnamese leadership would probably be inclined to resist efforts by Mr. Podogorny to arrange a renewal of Vietnam negotiations.

The North Vietnamese position is not entirely clear. Earlier this week Xuan Thuy, the titular chief of the North Vietnamese negotiating team, announced that he was leaving Hanoi for Paris with new instructions if talks are resumed there.

But Le Duc Tho, the North Vietnamese Politburo member who has conducted negotiations with Henry A. Kissinger, Mr. Nixon's adviser on national security, passed through Moscow

tonight on the way to Hanoi, presumably to take part in consultations with President Podogorny.

Although there has been previous evidence that Moscow and Hanoi were at odds over policy toward Washington this spring and reports that the Kremlin was piqued at Hanoi for launching the offensive in the South prior to Mr. Nixon's visit, Mr. Louis's article was more explicit than anything published so far by any other Soviet journalist.

"There is suspicion in Moscow that after Hanoi's failure to undermine the Russian-American meeting in Moscow by its new campaign in the South," he said, "the North Vietnamese will try to neutralize President Podogorny's visit."

Hanoi Delay Seen

Soviet sources indicated tonight that Mr. Podogorny had been prepared to go to Hanoi soon after President Nixon's departure from Moscow on May 29 but was delayed by standoffishness in Hanoi.

The final Soviet-American communique suggested that Mr. Nixon and the Kremlin had failed to break the deadlock on Vietnam, though both sides stated their positions fully.

Moscow's initial handling in the press of President Nixon's speech May 8 announcing the

mining of North Vietnamese ports and the proposal for a standstill cease-fire throughout Indochina gave greater prominence to the negotiating portions of the speech.

At the time this was seen as an indication that the Kremlin had noted a shift in Mr. Nixon's negotiating position and was not necessarily going

to react forcefully to the mining.

Subsequently, well-placed Soviet sources acknowledged that they had noticed Mr. Nixon was no longer demanding withdrawal of North Vietnamese units from South Vietnam and had dropped his previous explicit commitments to the Government of President Nguyen Van Thieu.