

The Weather

Today—Sunny, high in the low 80s, low in the low 60s. The chance of rain is 10 per cent today and near zero tonight. Wednesday—Fair, high in mid 80s. Temp. range: Yesterday, 62-78; Today, 62-83. Details, P. C7.

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TUESDAY,

Papers Detail 4-Year Viet Peace Probes Failed as Both Sides Sought Victory

By Murrey Marder
Washington Post Staff Writer

The United States and North Vietnam for eight years have tried to force or negotiate each other out of South Vietnam so that their bitterly conflicting versions of "self-determination" for the people of that nation could prevail.

Although the level of American troops in South Vietnam is steadily diminishing, the critical question of who shall rule in Saigon is as much in dispute as it was in 1964 when the United States began to greatly enlarge its commitment of honor, blood, na-

tional treasure and world prestige to a relatively obscure region of Southeast Asia.

The American half of this dispute is now being carried into a third presidential election. The form of the debate is now different, the international pattern is now significantly changed, but "the gut issue" of the war is still unaltered, still gnawing at the politics of the United States, and, to a recently reduced extent, at its foreign policy.

The disclosures last summer of the Pentagon Papers gave the public its first clear look at government insiders' own perceptions of how the war evolved through the Truman, Eisen-

hower, Kennedy and Johnson administrations. Deleted from those unauthorized disclosures were the four diplomatic volumes of what was originally a 47-volume Defense Department study of the history of the war, "United States-Vietnam Relations, 1945-1967."

That important omission in public knowledge of the war record can now be filled in through unofficial access to the central portions of the undisclosed remainder of the history. The Washington Post requested and obtained copies of these documents from columnist Jack Anderson.

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Washington Post

with Herald

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nam Diplomatic Standoff

Kissinger Played Major Role in '68 Bomb Halt, Talks

By Don Oberdorfer
Washington Post Staff Writer

In early June of 1967, a French microbiologist named Herbert Marcovich and a Harvard University professor named Henry A. Kissinger met over cocktails in Paris to discuss ways to bring about a negotiated settlement of the Vietnam war. Marcovich had a friend, Raymond Aubrac, who 21 years before, had welcomed into his Paris home a rising Vietnamese political leader, Ho Chi Minh. Uncle Ho had been almost a member of the family and the unofficial godfather to one of the children.

If Marcovich and Aubrac could go to Hanoi and speak privately to Ho and his colleagues, perhaps they could provide a channel for progress toward peace. With the secret approval of the U.S. State Department, for which he was a consultant, Kissinger agreed to be their American contact, passing them instructions and receiving their reports.

On the basis of Aubrac's old friendship and with the approval of President Charles de Gaulle, the two Frenchmen flew to Hanoi. There, at 9 a.m. on July 24, 1967—according to a detailed and until now undisclosed re-

port in the Pentagon's secret history of the Vietnam war — they sat down to the first of two lengthy conferences with Premier Pham Van Dong, initiating a series of intents and highly unusual indirect negotiations between the United States and North Vietnam.

The Marcovich-Aubrac-Kissinger channel to Hanoi was given the code name of "Pennsylvania" and made known only to a handful of the most senior officials in the American government.

This and other secret and public maneuvers from mid-1967 to early 1968

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led to President Johnson's decision to stop the bombing of North Vietnam and the convening of the Paris talks.

At the beginning of their five hours of talks with Pham Van Dong, the Frenchmen told him of their arrangement with Kissinger and of his arrangement to report in turn to the government in Washington. At the invitation of Dong, Marcovich outlined—"as a private idea"—a two-part proposal: an end to the U.S. bombing of North Vietnam, provided there be no increase in war supplies from North Vietnam to the South as a result.

The Vietnamese official expressed considerable interest. "We want an unconditional end of the bombing and if that happens, there will be no further obstacle to negotiations," he said. He would prefer a public announcement of the bombing halt but would accept a de facto cessation with no statement.

If that were accomplished, North Vietnam could meet secretly and alone with the United States except on matters concerning the South—on those questions the National Liberation Front would have to be brought in.

But he added that the NLF sought "a broad coalition government" rather than a Communist regime in South Vietnam. The North would not try to impose a Communist government in the South, nor press for an immediate unification of the country.

Pham Van Dong said: "Our view is this: U.S. power is enormous and the U.S. government wants to win the war. President Johnson is suffering from a pain and this pain is called South Vietnam. We agree that the situation on the battlefield is decisive; the game is being played in South Vietnam. From the newspapers we see that some people want to confine the war to the South. However, the White House and Pentagon seem determined to continue the war against the North. Therefore we think that attacks on the North are likely to increase.

"We have made provisions for attacks on our dikes; we are ready to accept war on our soil. Our military potential is growing because of aid from the U.S.S.R. and other Socialist countries . . . We have been fighting for our independence for 4,000 years. We have defeated the Mongols three times. The United States Army, strong as it is, is not as terrifying as Genghis Khan."

Turning to the topic of negotiations, Dong said, "Ending the war for us has two meanings: 1) An end of bombing which is permanent and unconditional; 2) A withdrawal of United States forces."

Under questioning, he was flexible on withdrawal, saying he realized some U.S. troops would have to stay until the end of the process of political settlement. He added: "We do not want to humiliate the U.S. Lenin did not like war but fought when necessary. As Lenin we are Communists."

'A Visit to Ho

On the afternoon of July 24, Dong accompanied Aubrac to see Ho Chi Minh, now 77 years old and in precarious health. He received them in a Chinese dressing gown, walking with the aid of a cane.

Aubrac was struck with how much Ho had aged but noted that his eyes still had their sparkle and that his intelligence seemed unimpaired. The two friends exchanged gifts—Aubrac bringing a little colored stone egg and Ho presenting silk for Aubrac's daughter, some books and a ring which he said was made from the metal of the 2000th American warplane to be shot down over Vietnam.

They spoke of the old days in Paris and of Aubrac's house and family.

After 15 minutes, Aubrac asked, "Mr. President, do you know why I have come?" Ho said that he did, and told Aubrac that the details of negotiations were in the hands of Pham Van Dong. The old man added: "Remember, many people have tried to fool me and have failed. I know you don't want to fool me."

After 50 minutes, Ho terminated the conversation and was escorted from the room by an aide. Dong walked with Aubrac to his car. "We try to spare President Ho as many details as we can. He is an old man; we want him to live to see his country unified," Dong said.

Dong told Aubrac and Marcovich to communicate with him through two North Vietnamese diplomats in Paris. The Frenchmen said they would inform him of the American reaction.

Using a prearranged code, they signalled Kissinger, who met them in Paris within hours of their return from Hanoi.

Kissinger's 17-page report was sped to Washington, where it immediately became the subject of high-level meetings involving the White House, State Department and Pentagon.

Secret Peace Missions

The mid-1967 discussions in Hanoi by the two Frenchmen came three years almost to the day from the first private contacts by an authorized intermediary probing for a way to settle the war. The hitherto unpublished negotiations sections of the Pentagon's 1968 history of the Vietnam conflict—sometimes called The Pentagon Papers—declares that this lengthy probing process brought forth "a halting but gradual diplomatic movement by both North Vietnam and the United States toward a negotiated settlement."

This section of the Pentagon Papers, which was not obtained by news media along with the rest of the voluminous study a year ago, gives many previously unreported details of more than a dozen secret peace missions from mid-1964 until March 31, 1968—when President Johnson halted the bombing of most of North Vietnam and the two sides moved to face-to-face talks in Paris.

Among many others, the intermediaries included J. Blair Seaborn, a Canadian delegate to the Indochina International Control Commission who made the first probes for the United States in Hanoi in June, 1964; former White House press secretary Pierre Salinger, who during a May, 1966, Moscow visit was approached by two Soviet officials with a peace proposal that quickly evaporated, and Soviet

Premier Alexei N. Kosygin, who told British and American officials in February, 1967, that he had been in direct contact with Hanoi and could confirm that North Vietnam would talk if the U.S. bombing stopped.

The volunteer negotiators or solicited participants in peace probes included officials of the governments of Britain, France, Italy, the Soviet Union, Poland, Romania, Norway, Sweden and Canada. Many of the channels to Hanoi were given code names of flowers (Marigold, Mayflower, Sunflower) or places (Pennsylvania, Ohio Aspen).

Growing Military Involvement

By the time of the Marcovich-Aubrac conversations in Hanoi in Mid-1967, when the most intensive period of private probes began, both sides were heavily committed to a bloody and growing war in Indochina and locked into seemingly uncompromising positions about the first steps toward direct diplomatic negotiations.

Communist military strength in South Vietnam was estimated by the U.S. at 294,000 men, including 50,000 North Vietnamese regulars. Unknown to the United States, planning was under way in Hanoi in July, 1967, for a startling and massive stepup in the war, a battle to "split the sky and shake the earth." It emerged with explosive force early in 1968 as the Tet Offensive.

On Aug. 3, the very day of a top-level meeting in Washington to discuss Kissinger's report of the Marcovitch-Aubrac trip, President Johnson announced that he was again sending more men to the war, up to a new U.S. troop ceiling of 525,000. The American-backed South Vietnamese government had more than 600,000 men under arms and the number was growing. The war was costing the United States \$20 billion per year. Some 13,000 Americans had been killed.

The fundamental question then—as now—was which side would control South Vietnam. But the sticking point in the search for the beginning of a diplomatic settlement was the U.S. bombing of North Vietnam, which was heavy and still growing.

On Aug. 4, the day after the Washington meeting on the Kissinger report, United States aircraft flew 197 bombing missions over North Vietnam, setting a new record for a single day. On Aug. 8, the President—under heavy pressure from some elements of Congress and the Pentagon ordered strikes on 16 new sensitive targets requested by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, some in previously restricted zones near the center of Hanoi and others less than one minute's flying time from the Chinese border.

The official North Vietnamese position was that all bombing and other acts of war against North Vietnam must stop before there could be talks about a diplomatic settlement. The United States position, as explained by the historian of the Pentagon papers, was that "we would stop the bombing in return for some reciprocal act of military restraint but that we would not stop bombing simply in exchange for talks."

The Johnson Message

On Aug. 11, 1967, according to the diplomatic section of the Pentagon Papers now available for the first time, President Johnson approved the following message and asked that Kissinger convey it to Premier Pham Van Dong via Marcovitch and Aubrac:

"The United States is willing to stop the aerial and naval bombardment of North Vietnam if this will lead promptly to productive discussions between representatives of the U.S. and the DRV [Democratic Republic of Vietnam] looking toward a resolution of the issues between them. We would assume that, while discussions proceed either with public knowledge or secretly, the DRV would not take advantage of the bombing cessation or limitation. Any such move on their part would obviously be inconsistent with the movement toward resolution of the issues between the U.S. and the DRV which the negotiations are intended to achieve."

The wording of the message was the compromise result of a pitched battle at high levels of the U.S. government

over terms for a bombing halt, and it was very close to the position that would be publicly announced by President Johnson seven weeks later in a San Antonio, Texas, address (thereby becoming known as "the San Antonio formula.")

For the first time in an official statement, the United States was not asking for a substantial reciprocal act by North Vietnam in return for a bombing halt—only that it "not take advantage" by stepping up the war.

On Aug. 17, Kissinger met with Marcovitch and Aubrac at the Marcovitch home in Paris and handed over the message, which he asked them to take personally to Hanoi. Following instructions from Washington, he told the Frenchmen that the United States was prepared to negotiate either openly or secretly with North Vietnam. He added, also on specific instructions, that a bombing cessation could hardly be kept secret for long and thus a partial cutback rather than a total halt might be desirable while secret talks began.

In five hours of conversation with the Frenchmen, Kissinger explained that the message from Washington reflected the views of the Secretaries of State and Defense and had been approved by President Johnson. And he defined some sticky terms: "take advantage" referred to "any increase in the movement of men and supplies into the South." And the phrase "productive discussions" indicated the determination to avoid extended Korean-type negotiations while military operations proceeded.

Concern Over the Bombing

Even as they met, the press was giving big headlines to the dramatic stepup in the U.S. bombing of North Vietnam, a development which produced gloom and uncertainty in the two Frenchmen. But Kissinger maintained that the decision to add new targets had been made before the report of Marcovitch and Aubrac's Hanoi talks had reached Washington. "In the absence of meaningful negotiations the intensity of violence was likely to continue to rise," he said.

The Frenchmen agreed to return to Hanoi but were concerned about the bombing. They asked whether some restriction could be placed on the bombing of Hanoi for their safety and to show good faith.

After the conference with Kissinger, the Frenchmen immediately asked for an appointment at the North Vietnamese mission in Paris. On 20 minutes notice, they were ushered in to see Mr. Sung, one of the men whose name they had been given by Pham Van Dong. The diplomat told them he had been instructed to transmit their messages to Hanoi but had no instructions concerning new visas. He would have to check.

On Aug. 18 and 19, Marcovitch and Aubrac met again with Kissinger, who was accompanied for some of the time by Chester L. Cooper, the special assistant for Vietnam negotiations to Ambassador Averell Harriman in the U.S. Department of State. Cooper's presence was intended to leave no doubt that Kissinger was an authorized emissary of the U.S. government.

Meeting at the Pont Royal Hotel on the Left Bank in Paris, Kissinger told his contacts that "effective Aug. 24 there would be a noticeable change in the bombing pattern in the vicinity of Hanoi to guarantee their personal safety and as a token of our good will." There was no mention of exact distances. Kissinger said these orders were "generally good for 10 days."

This word had come to Kissinger from Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara. After further discussion with McNamara, Kissinger told the Frenchmen that the restrictions on bombing in the immediate vicinity of Hanoi would end Sept. 4.

On Aug. 21, Hanoi said no to the visa application of Marcovitch and Aubrac. The two men sent a second visa appeal through the North Vietnamese mission, saying they had an important message to deliver.

On Aug. 21 and 22, U.S. warplanes made heavy raids on Hanoi, some near the center of the city, flattening



Associated Press

Presidential adviser Henry Kissinger shortly before his most recent trip for President Nixon. In 1967 he made several trips to Paris for President Johnson in a vain attempt to set up direct talks with Hanoi.

houses and shops and damaging a medical clinic. North Vietnamese authorities said "numerous lives" had been lost.

On Aug. 22, Richard Nixon, then a private citizen and a prospective candidate for the Presidency, called in a Christian Science Monitor interview for "massive pressure" short of nuclear weapons to shorten the war.

Meanwhile, the jungle headquarters of the South Vietnam People's Liberation Armed Forces (Vietcong) had received orders from Hanoi to begin preparations for the General Offensive and General Uprising—in Vietnamese Communist theory, the final culmination of the war.

Message Sent to Hanoi

Marcovich and Aubrac went to see Mai Van Bo, North Vietnam's senior diplomat in Paris, on Aug. 25 to ask why their visas had not been received. Bo replied it was too dangerous to visit Hanoi due to the bombing. The Frenchmen told him—without saying how they knew—that they had assurances of safety from the Hanoi bombing through Sept. 4.

The two unofficial emissaries then presented a text of the U.S. message, slightly altered and expanded from its original form, for transmission to Hanoi. They also gave Bo a written description of their contacts with Kissinger. They also presented several subsidiary points which had been made by Kissinger—that the U.S. was handling the problem confidentially and requested Hanoi to do likewise; that bombing attacks on the dikes in North Vietnam had been accidental; that the U.S. was ready to send a representative to meet North Vietnamese officials in Vientiane, Laos, in Moscow, in Paris or elsewhere.

On Aug. 31, Mai Van Bo told Aubrac that their second visa request had been rejected. Bo said his government "noted unfavorably" that the second appeal for a visa, on Aug. 21, coincided with the escalation of the bombing of the North with Hanoi as its objective. Under these circumstances "it is impossible" to grant the visas, he said. Bo did not yet have a reply to the message from Kissinger which had been transmitted to Hanoi Aug. 25.

On Sept. 2, as the bombing respite for Hanoi was about to run out, Bo met the Frenchmen again and asked them to make sure that nothing happened to Hanoi "in the next few days." Marcovich and Aubrac contacted Kissinger and it was arranged to extend the bombing restriction for three additional days beyond the planned Sept. 4 termination.

Aubrac returned to Rome, where he was working as an official of the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization, but Marcovich remained in Paris and had almost daily talks with Mai Van Bo. In one of the talks, Bo expressed interest in seeing Kissinger and said he would seek authority from home to do so. In another talk, on Sept. 8, Marcovich said Kissinger planned to be in Paris for about 10 days beginning the next morning. Bo said if there were no bombing of Hanoi during that period "something could well happen."

The American restriction on bombing within 10 miles of Hanoi continued in force.

At 6 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 10, Bo summoned Marcovich to a meeting. There he handed the Frenchman the text of Hanoi's reply and asked that it be given to Kissinger:

"The essence of the American propositions is the stopping of the bombing under conditions. The American bombing of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam is illegal. The United States should put an end to the bombing and cannot pose conditions.

"The American message has been communicated after an escalation of the attacks against Hanoi and under the threat of continuation of the attacks against Hanoi. It is clear that this constitutes an ultimatum to the Vietnamese people.

"The Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam energetically rejects the American propositions . . ."

U.S. warplanes bombed the North Vietnamese port of Campha for the

first time and attacked previously untouched targets in Haiphong on Sept. 11 and 12.

A Rebuff to Kissinger

Kissinger had breakfast with Marcovich in Paris on the morning of Sept. 13 and handed him a sealed letter to be delivered to Mai Van Bo. In the letter, Kissinger promised an official U.S. reply to Hanoi's statement and a commentary on the statement. But because of its importance and confidentiality, Kissinger asked for a personal meeting to deliver it.

The North Vietnamese diplomat in Paris told his French contact that because of the continued threat of air attacks on Hanoi, a direct meeting with Kissinger could not take place.

In another sealed message sent through Marcovich the following day, Kissinger said North Vietnam's attitude was "baffling.

"If we bomb near Hanoi we are accused of bringing pressure. If we voluntarily and without any suggestion from Hanoi impose a restraint on our actions and keep this up without time limit we are accused of an ultimatum. In fact, the American proposal contained neither threats nor conditions and should not be rejected on these grounds."

Both messages from Kissinger were approved in advance in Washington.

Kissinger also passed on an "official" comment from Washington saying that the recent air attacks on Haiphong had not been an escalation of the war because the strikes closest to the center of the city were in an area which had been hit before. Kissinger added the "personal" comment that only a few of the highest officials in Washington were aware of the diplomatic communications through the Paris channel and therefore it was difficult to preserve secrecy while reversing military decisions taken prior to the start of the written exchanges.

Visits and sealed messages continued, for the most part reiterating previously stated positions, but Mai Van Bo steadfastly refused to see Kissinger in person. Bo said the Marcovich-Aubrac channel was "very convenient for us" but that Hanoi was reluctant to talk under duress with any officially connected American. "The Americans are playing a double game—on one hand they are offering us peace; on the other they increase their bombing," he charged.

Through the two Frenchmen, Washington continued to ask for a further reply to the message which had been authorized by the President and handed to Mai Van Bo on Aug. 25. Finally, on Sept. 24, Bo called in Marcovich and read him a lengthy response—but not the one Washington had been seeking.

"The whole world knows that the U.S. has pursued a constant policy of escalation against North Vietnam," the message stated. It noted that the bombing of Hanoi had stopped but air attacks had intensified on Campha, Haiphong and Vinh Linh province "where the bombing has the character of extermination and systematic destruction."

"I accept your expression of confidence in Kissinger, but at the moment when the U.S. is increasing its escalation, it was not possible for me to see him . . . As far as you and Aubrac are concerned, I have received you any time you have requested. I listen to you. I accept messages from you. I transmit them. I report fully to Hanoi. I call you when I have something to say. I believe that this demonstrates our good will sufficiently. However, as I have pointed out earlier, we have no illusions about American policy."

Marcovich passed along the message and at 8:30 the following morning called on Bo to read him Kissinger's reply. The American said there was no point in trading charges and countercharges about "past activities" and insisted that the bombing pattern reflected "in part" the extreme secrecy of the discussions through the Paris channel. "The USG (U.S. Government) has considered it unwise to change decisions made prior to the report of M and A's trip to Hanoi, except in regard to bombing Hanoi itself, because it wanted to keep the circle of awareness of this exchange as small as possible to avoid premature public debate."

Direct Contacts Asked

In a note of frustration, Kissinger added that "the exchange indicates that Washington and Hanoi have great difficulty understanding each other's thought processes. This makes direct US/DRV contact essential. Intermediaries, no matter how trustworthy, are not satisfactory substitutes."

Kissinger maintained that Washington required only assurance that a bombing halt would lead to "prompt" and "productive" discussions on Hanoi's part. He made no mention of the Washington "assumption" that Hanoi would take "no advantage" of a bombing halt—though this was still part of the package.

On his part, Mai Van Bo continued to view the words "prompt" and "productive" as veiled indications of conditions. Hanoi refused to submit to conditions or pay any price for a halt to bombing which it considered "illegal."

The dialogue which had begun in June was approaching an end. The hopes of the two Frenchmen and their American contact were waning. Marcovich telephoned Kissinger in Cambridge Oct. 10 and pleaded with him to return to Paris over the weekend. Kissinger refused, saying previous U.S. messages were clear and that Washington had nothing further to say.

A week later Marcovich saw Mai Van Bo and expressed hope that the channel would remain open. Bo passed him a written message rooted in concrete and seeming to close off further discussion:

"Actually the U.S. has been following a policy of escalation of an extremely serious nature. In these conditions the U.S. proposals of peace are double-faced. At a time when the U.S. is pursuing a policy of escalation we cannot receive Kissinger nor comment

on the American proposals transmitted through this channel.

"The position of the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam is perfectly clear: it is only when the U.S. has ended without condition the bombardment that discussions can take place."

Across the Atlantic, Kissinger prepared to fly to Paris one last time to see Marcovich and Aubrac. He was given guidance for his talk by officials in Washington. The instructions began:

"1. From the time of your opening discussions with M. tonight, you should make it entirely clear to him that Washington considers that the DRV has rejected the forthcoming USG proposals to bring about an end to the bombing and prompt and productive US/DRV discussions with no advantage being taken by the DRV on the ground. You should indicate that we base this conclusion not only upon Hanoi's negative public statements, and, most importantly, upon renewed DRV hostile actions in the vicinity of the DMZ (U.S. Marines were under siege at Con Thien) . . . it should be your objective from the start to indicate that the patience of your Washington friends is running out and that they feel that Hanoi has been unwilling to respond on any significant point."

Kissinger flew to Paris Oct. 20 and met his friends, who told him they felt it was urgent that they see Bo as soon as possible. Aubrac expressed willingness to put his 21-year-old friendship with Ho Chi Minh on the line to clarify the situation in the interest of peace. Kissinger did not object, so long as it was clear that the United States had nothing to say. At 8:30 p.m. he left the two Frenchmen at Marcovich's house and returned to his hotel to await developments.

'Nothing New to Say'

With Marcovich listening on an extension, Aubrac telephoned Mai Van Bo. "We would like to see you urgently," he said.

Bo repeated, "There is nothing new say. The situation is worsening. There is no reason to talk again."

Aubrac insisted, "There is something new and very important."

Bo repeated, "There is nothing new to say. The situation is worsening. There is no reason to talk again."

Aubrac persisted, "There is something very important—perhaps the most important juncture of our exchanges."

Bo repeated his earlier answer but added, "What is the important matter?"

Aubrac said it had to do with the final sentence of the last message he had from Bo and the sequence in which steps have to be taken to stop the bombing.

Bo repeated, "There is nothing new factly clear." He repeated that there was nothing to say and no reason to talk.

The two Frenchmen hung up the telephone. Then, in great distress, they called Kissinger and told him that Mai Van Bo had refused to see them.

In Washington, Assistant Secretary of State William P. Bundy cabled Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker in Saigon that the Pennsylvania track "came to a negative conclusion on Friday, with opposing party refusing even to accept further contact with intermediaries."

In the Family Dining Room of the White House, President Johnson sat with his advisers over a Tuesday lunch and ordered the temporary resumption of U.S. bombing within 10 miles of the center of Hanoi. The restriction had originated as part of the "Pennsylvania" dialogue in late August.

Four days after Mai Van Bo's final telephone conversation with the Frenchmen, Hanoi was bombed by U.S. warplanes, and they kept it up for five days straight. The government of North Vietnam appealed to world opinion to "stay the hand" of what it called continuous bombing of the city of Hanoi.

Diplomatic probes continued. Secretary of State Rusk saw Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister V. V. Kuznetsov; Ambassador Averell Harriman saw Soviet Ambassador Anatoliy Dobrynin; in the "Aspen" track a Swedish diplomat saw a North Vietnamese diplomat in Stockholm; in the "Ohio" track, the Norwegian Ambassador to Peking and a little later the Norwegian flew to Hanoi for further discussions; in the "Packers" track Romanian Deputy Foreign Minister Georghé Macovescu flew to Hanoi with questions he had been given by Harriman; in the "Killy" track an Italian diplomat saw a North Vietnamese diplomat in Prague, Czechoslovakia.

In the end, it was events which counted most. Under great U.S. public and political pressure after the Tet Offensive, President Johnson halted the bombing of most of North Vietnam on March 31, 1968, without the private assurances that the talks would be "productive" or that Hanoi would take "no advantage." On its side, North Vietnam agreed to preliminary face-to-face discussions with U.S. diplomats despite the fact that bombs were still falling over part of its territory.

Finally the bombing was ordered completely stopped (on Oct. 31, 1968) and full-scale talks began in Paris. So far these discussions as well as numerous secret discussions by Kissinger, now President Nixon's foreign policy assistant, have been unable to produce peace. In recent weeks, heavy bombing of North Vietnam has resumed along with mining of North Vietnam's rivers and harbors. A major North Vietnamese offensive continues in the South.

Returning from talks with Chinese leaders in Peking last week, Kissinger said "we expect that when the war is finally settled it will be through direct negotiations between the North Vietnamese and American negotiators." He had no progress to report but expressed the hope that North Vietnamese diplomats would soon return to the conference table in Paris ready to get down to the "substantive" issues which the war is all about.

DIPLOMACY, From A1

This newly acquired record reveals that at no time during the frustrating years of struggle to end the war by diplomacy was the key issue any of the subjects that have inflamed public debate, with one exception. The underlying problem never has been the speed or the rate of U.S. troop withdrawals, or the terms of a cease-fire, or international supervision, or the release of American prisoners.

Calls on the Communist side for a "coalition government" in South Vietnam, and the offsetting allied calls for "free elections," did, and do, symbolize what the war is really about.

The core issue was, and is, what dominated the most recent American-Soviet and American-Chinese discussions about the war in Moscow and in Peking: Who shall rule in Saigon after American troops withdraw and what will be that regime's relations with Washington, with Hanoi, with Moscow and with Peking.

This is no momentous revelation to specialists on the subject. But what even specialists could not know, except for the rare few who had access to the extremely secreted maze of private exchanges throughout these years, was that the United States and North Vietnam at their highest official levels did clearly recognize what was required to produce a settlement.

Each side came to know rather quickly which offers were substantive and which were grandstand plays to sway world opinion; which proposal was likely to be construed as an "ultimatum" and which a serious concession; when the adversary was too weak to bargain seriously or when he was too strong to be induced to compromise.

Many experts regard this tortuous diplomatic history, nevertheless, as "a tragedy of missed opportunities" to end the war.

Fear on Both Sides

The United States and North Vietnam, alternately, and sometimes even simultaneously, were fearful that any initiative to negotiate seriously would be construed as "weakness." The suspicions, the differences in negotiating style, and the misinterpretations of tactics, even language, were immense.

There were potential chances for face-saving settlements, this newly available record indicates, if there had been a mutual desire to end the war with a standoff on the totally divergent goals for the control of power in South Vietnam. There is evidence that miscalculations, and misperceptions, did cause the abortion of opportunities to narrow differences. But there is no evidence in this record that any near-agreement on peace was thwarted by misunderstanding. The two sides never got that close.

Instead, each side was, and is, fighting militarily and diplomatically to try to fulfill its original political objective in South Vietnam. Some strategists, in earlier sections of the Pentagon Papers, have defined the primary U.S. objective as the avoidance of "humiliation." President Nixon himself often has used the same terminology. But "humiliation" is an extremely rubbery characterization; at its maximum it can be defined as "victory"; at its minimum, a veneer on "defeat."

Easy Terms, Complex Meaning

There are no essentially new formulas in official circulation for ending the war or even ending the American involvement in it. Virtually every phrase in the current "peace offers" of the United States and of North Vietnam has a twisting tail that snakes back through the years of futile, labyrinthine negotiating. What is more, or worse, each side knows the complexity of each phrase of diplomatic art—with-

drawal, cease-fire, coalition government, free elections, international guarantees, self-determination—even though they may seem concise and straightforward to the public eye.

Diplomats often were sent on futile missions—sometimes by nations other than the United States, for what American officials assessed in this account as "an ulterior (national) motive," to enhance their own nation's interests.

Retired Canadian diplomat Chester Ronning, a China specialist who is described in the Pentagon study as "known to hold a critical view of U.S. policies toward China and Vietnam," went to Hanoi March 7-11, 1966, to try to convince the North Vietnamese they should accept U.S. terms for a halt in the American bombing. Ronning, unable to arouse any interest in Washington's terms, ruefully said he had "traveled 10,000 miles to present a feather."

Many diplomats, on both sides, circled the globe with "feathers." Officially, everyone was searching for "peace"; but even on the American side there were a half-dozen contradictory versions of the ingredients necessary to produce it.

Throughout the diplomatic record now available, the overriding North Vietnamese concern was—and is—that "the United States intends to stay permanently in (South) Vietnam." Not necessarily with its troops, or forces, but with material support for the anti-Communist, pro-western government in Saigon. None of the withdrawal pledges of multiple American communiques, declarations, or troop reduction commitments have removed the North Vietnamese belief that the United States seeks to "stay" in South Vietnam, meaning to preserve it as an anti-Communist nation.

Even before the disputed Gulf of Tonkin incidents of early August, 1964, Canadian diplomat J. Blair Seaborn conveyed to Hanoi's leaders the U.S. determination "to contain the DRV (Democratic Republic of Vietnam, meaning North Vietnam) to the territory allocated it" at Geneva in 1954 "and to see the GVN's (Government of Vietnam, or South Vietnam) writ run throughout SVN. U.S. patience was running thin. If the conflict should es-

calate, 'the greatest devastation would of course result for the DRV itself.'"

Seaborn "underlined the seriousness of U.S. intentions by reminding his principal contact, (Premier) Pham Van Dong, that the U.S. commitment to SVN had implications extending far beyond SE Asia."

"Pham Van Dong laughed and said he did indeed appreciate the problem. A U.S. defeat in SVN would in all probability start a chain reaction extending much further. But the stakes were just as high for the NLF (National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, the Vietcong) and its supporters, hence their determination to continue the struggle regardless of sacrifice.

"He (the Premier) did not specifically deny that there was DRV intervention in the South and said of the war in SVN, 'We shall win.' But he also said 'the DRV will not enter the war . . . we shall not provoke the U.S.'"

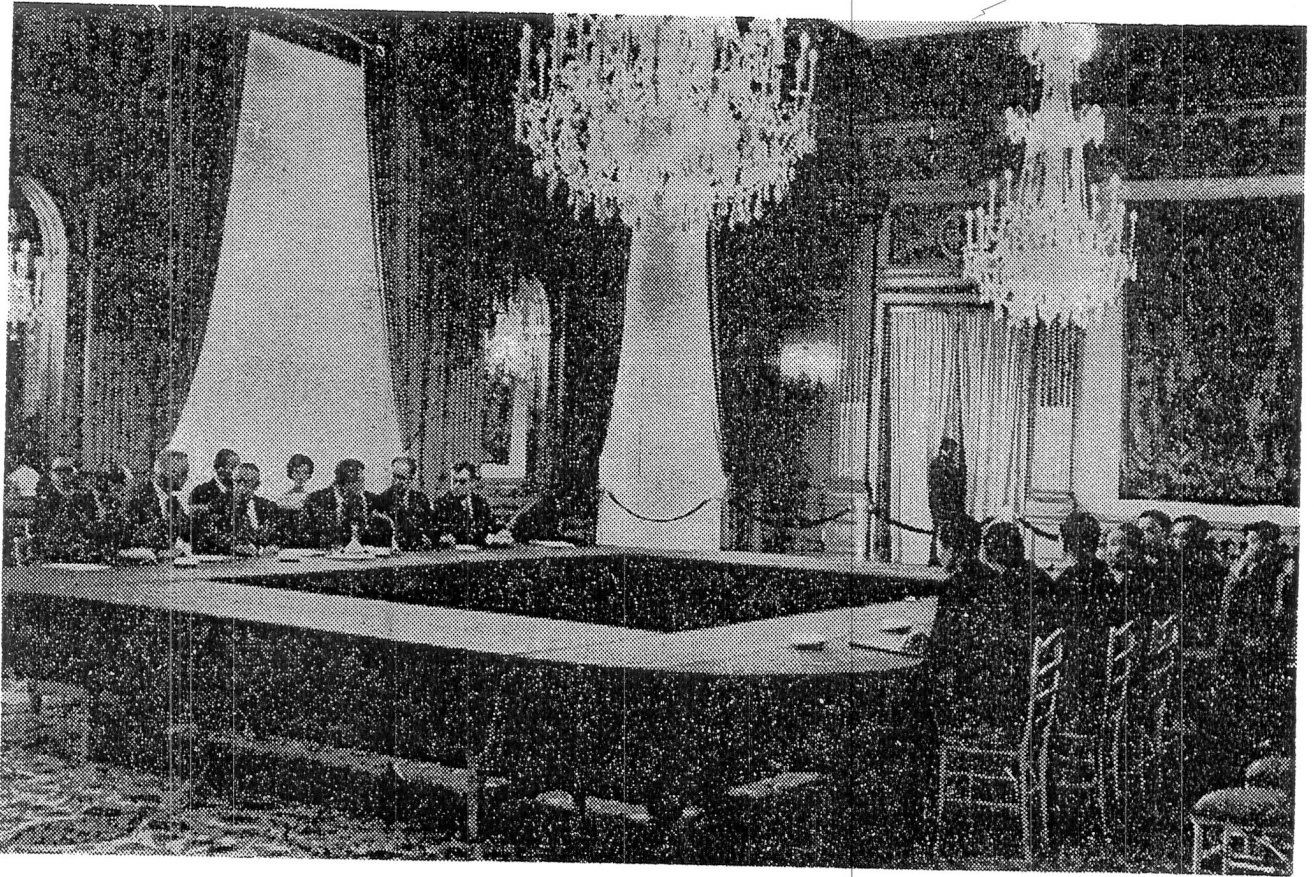
"Perhaps," the Pentagon analysts added, "he drew a distinction between existing levels of DRV intervention and 'entering the war.'"

Seaborn saw Pham Van Dong again, on Aug. 13, 1964, after what the United States claimed were "unprovoked attacks" on U.S. destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin on Aug. 2 and Aug. 4 for which it "retaliated" by the first American bombing of North Vietnam. The North Vietnamese premier was indignant.

Hanoi Denies Provocation

"Pham Van Dong," the record continues, "answered angrily that there had been no DRV provocation. Rather, the U.S. had found 'it is necessary to carry the war to the North in order to find a way out of the impasse . . . in the South.' He anticipated more attacks in the future and warned, 'Up to now we have tried to avoid serious trouble; but it becomes more difficult now because the war has been carried to our territory . . . If war comes to North Vietnam, it will come to the whole of SE Asia . . .'"

The U.S. analysis adds, "As indicated in another study . . . it is now believed that the first organized NVA (North Vietnamese Army) units infiltrated



First formal meeting between U.S. and Hanoi negotiators gets under way in Paris May 13, 1968. President Johnson

cleared the way by ordering partial halt in bombing. Efforts in previous four years to start talks ended in failure.

Associated Press

he was instructed "to leave the initiative" to North Vietnam's leaders.

This time, Premier Pham Van Dong was "too busy" to see Seaborn. But from Col. Ha Van Lau (later an envoy at the Paris talks), the Pentagon study shows, Seaborn "gathered that Hanoi was not seriously concerned by the U.S. air strikes, considering them an attempt to improve U.S. bargaining power at a conference the U.S. strenuously desired."

"Hanoi's interpretation, he (Seaborn) believed, was that the U.S. realized it had lost the war and wanted to extricate itself; hence it was in Hanoi's interest to hold back—a conference then might, as in 1954, deprive it of total victory."

Avoiding a Conference

On the contrary, earlier portions of the Pentagon study show, the United States at that point was seeking to avoid a conference, because of the weakness of South Vietnam's position. Negotiations were to be sidestepped until the bombing helped to produce the intended effect of forcing North Vietnam to call off the insurgency in South Vietnam.

"Should pressures for negotiation become too formidable to resist and discussion begin before a Communist agreement to comply" with that objective was achieved, a Pentagon analyst wrote, "it was stressed that the United States should define its negotiating position 'in a way which makes Communist acceptance unlikely.'"

When the American bombing of North Vietnam was in full force, Hanoi's Ambassador to China, Ngo Loan, told Norwegian Ambassador Ole Algard in Peking in June, 1967, that:

"The Geneva agreement stipulated that Vietnam should be unified within two years. 'Our objective today,' he said, 'is considerably lower. The question of unification is postponed to an indefinite point of time in the future. North Vietnam is today ready to accept a separate South Vietnamese state which is neutral and based on a coalition government. Such a government could have connections both with East and West and accept assistance from countries that might wish to give such assistance.'

"The Amb stated that the time of the withdrawal of the American troops was not RPT not a decisive question. In this connection he pointed to the (1954) agreement on the withdrawal of the French troops. However, the question of representation was of great importance. On this point the Americans would have to accept the political situation in South Vietnam as it is, as de Gaulle did in Algeria . . ."

" 'We are,' said Ambassador Loan, 'ready for very far reaching compromises to get an end to the war.'

"Ambassador Algard noted that recently one had impression that North Vietnamese side was cooler toward negotiations. Ambassador Loan denied this strongly. He said that formerly when North Vietnam showed an interest in negotiations Americans had taken such interest as a sign of weakness and with results of stronger escalation."

Algard reported that the North Vietnamese "were deeply mistrustful of Americans' intentions in Vietnam. Steady escalation and sending of new troops indicated Americans had intention of staying permanently in Vietnam."

"Amb. Ngo (Loan) said he hoped developments would not RPT not take such form that North Vietnam must ask for foreign, and in first instance Chinese, help. That was one thing they would do their utmost to avoid."

Throughout the bombing campaign of the Johnson administration years, and now once again in the resumption

of intensive bombing by the Nixon administration plus the May 8, 1972, order to mine North Vietnam's harbors, North Vietnam repeatedly has charged that escalation of the air war has been used to damage or destroy negotiating opportunities.

Bombing pauses were initiated for several purposes during the Johnson years. As the previous Pentagon Papers showed, the late John McNaughton, then an Assistant Secretary of Defense, described the purpose of carefully timed bombing pauses as a "ratchet": backing off tension, and then increasing it if desired. But this implied closely coordinated military and diplomatic strategy to put pressure on the enemy, or relax it, to achieve a planned objective.

The American bombing pauses began with that objective, but it was soon evident there was no, or little, coordination.

President Johnson ordered the first five-day bombing pause, in May, 1965, when he found they would not hinder the targeting operations of Rolling Thunder and there was "excellent opportunity for a pause in air attacks . . . which I could use to good effect with world opinion." The President said, privately, "my purpose . . . is to begin to clear a path either toward restoration of peace or toward increased military action, depending upon the reaction of the Communists."

No Change In U.S. Position

This pause became code-named Operation Mayflower. When Secretary of State Dean Rusk called Soviet Ambassador Anatoly F. Dobrynin to the State Department to inform him about the bombing suspension, the newly available record shows, as Rusk related the encounter to the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, Dobrynin "Asked basically whether action represented any change in fundamental U.S. position.

"I (Rusk) replied that it did not and that this should be no surprise."

Rusk told Dobrynin that the United States was "very hopeful" that this first pause, for a "limited trial period," would meet with reciprocal response that would produce progress in reduction of military action on both sides. But the pause should not be "misunderstood as an indication of weakness," said Rusk, because if it was, "it would be necessary to demonstrate more clearly than ever, after the pause ended, that the United States is determined not to accept aggression without reply in Vietnam.

The account states: "Dobrynin noted we were merely informing Soviets and was clearly relieved we were not asking them to act as intermediary."

On this occasion the U.S. Ambassador in Moscow, Foy Kohler, unsuccessfully tried to get first the North Vietnamese Embassy in Moscow, and then the Soviet foreign ministry, to accept official U.S. notification of the bombing pause, ending with a refusal by Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Firubin, who said, "I am not a postman."

Kohler cabled Washington that he was "annoyed at the apparent Soviet rebuff of an attempt to take heat out of admittedly dangerous situation in SEA (Southeast Asia) . . ."

"On the other hand, I could understand, if not sympathize with, Soviet sensitivity, given Chicoms eagerness to adduce proof of their charges of collusion against Soviets and, frankly, given rather strenuous nature of document they were being asked to transmit to DRV (North Vietnam)."

To no one's great surprise, that five-day bombing pause produced no effect.

into SVN were dispatched from the DRV in August, 1964. (These units were being readied as early as April, 1964. The date of the decision to dispatch them is, of course, unknown.)"

In the analysis of the diplomatic portions of the Pentagon Papers, it should be noted, the assessments are more cautious, less-sweeping, and indeed more supportive of official U.S. rationales than previously disclosed portions of the war study. One reason may be that the study was completed at a high point of diplomatic sensitivity, after President Johnson ordered a total halt in the bombing of North Vietnam on Oct. 31, 1968, and while the United States and North Vietnam were in the early stages of the Paris peace talks.

A fundamental point that Seaborn and successor intermediaries tried to make to North Vietnam was that it is the U.S. objective to restore the Geneva accords of 1954, which is also a priority goal for Hanoi. But while the United States contends that those accords limited North Vietnam to Vietnam above the 17th Parallel, and therefore the war in the South is "aggression from the North," Hanoi charges that this was only a "temporary" boundary and if the United States had not "violated" the Geneva accords, the 1956 election proposed in them would have produced a unified Vietnamese state with the late Ho Chi Minh as its leader. Many western specialists agree with that premise.

Chinese Premier Chou En-lai emotionally told a group of Americans before presidential adviser Henry A. Kissinger's latest visit to Peking this month that Chou's agreement to the 1954 accords was "a mistake . . . because we were not experienced." He said it became evident later that John Foster Dulles, then U.S. Secretary of State, was preparing to violate the accords before they were signed by converting the temporary division of Vietnam into a permanent division.

When the United States began heavy bombing of North Vietnam, with "Rolling Thunder" on March 2, 1965, Seaborn was back in Hanoi on another mission for the United States in which

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tive response. U.S. strategists in Saigon advised a more "rigorous application of air attacks . . . accompanied by pressure on the ground" to get North Vietnam "to cease directing and supporting the VC (Vietcong) and to get VC units to cease their military activities in the South. In this approach, a downward trend in VC activities would be 'rewarded' in a similar manner by decreasing U.S. bombing."

Cohesive Policy Sought

Henry Kissinger, just before he became President Nixon's national security adviser, criticized previous U.S. strategy for lacking any "conceptual" cohesiveness. In a survey article published in the January, 1969, issue of *Foreign Affairs*, Kissinger wrote that "our diplomacy and our strategy were conducted in isolation from each other."

One of the most glaring examples of uncoordination previously has been described in part in the most "leaked" of the secret negotiations, Operation Marigold, conducted principally between the United States and Poland in 1966. The collapse of that sequence has been attributed by critics to American bombing of Hanoi just at the time North Vietnam was reportedly planning to send a negotiator to Warsaw to bargain directly with the United States.

Former President Johnson, in his account of Marigold, in "The Vantage Point," published last year, said "we never received through the Marigold exchanges anything that could be considered an authoritative statement direct from the North Vietnamese." He added, "I realized this channel was a dry creek when the North Vietnamese failed to show up for the critical meeting the Poles had promised to arrange in Warsaw on Dec. 6, 1966."

"The Poles," Mr. Johnson continued, "claimed that the North Vietnamese had failed to appear because we had bombed targets near Hanoi two days before the suggested meeting date."

"That made little sense," said the former President, because it was agreed that what was to be discussed with Hanoi's emissary "was a mutual deescalation formula, including a bombing halt."

If the Polish envoy involved, Janusz Lewandowski, "had reported accurately to Hanoi," Mr. Johnson continued, "the North Vietnamese knew perfectly well that the bombing would not end before the talks began. Knowing that, they could hardly give our bombing as the excuse for not entering negotiations. Nevertheless, when the Poles advanced this argument we stopped all bombing in the vicinity of Hanoi. But North Vietnam's position did not change . . ."

The Pentagon Papers now reveal an additional factor, although they also say that "the Poles were, intentionally,

ambiguous in distinguishing between their own thoughts and Hanoi's."

This new record shows that the bombing of Hanoi in December, 1966, was not merely a continuance of a pattern, but a greatly intensified series of attacks which had been prearranged and permitted to go ahead with no coordination with the diplomatic track.

The study reports the following, with items in parenthesis included in the analysis:

"The most sensitive area of all, that within five miles of the center of Hanoi, was struck (with about 25 tons of ordnance) for the first time in the war during the last week of June, as part of a general attack on POL facilities—petroleum, oil, lubricants. "About three tons more were expended in this area in mid-August. It was not hit again until the first week in December (the 2nd and 4th) when almost 50 tons were expended, then hit yet again during the second week in December (the 13th and 14th) with over 100 tons. . . ."

"In particular, during the Dec. 13-14 attacks, the Chinese and Romanian Embassies seem to have been hit, along with some residential structures in central Hanoi. From the ground, then, there might appear to have been an increase in the intensity of attack, measured both in tons of ordnance expended and type of target, commencing Dec. 2, i.e., immediately following Hanoi's assent to some form of U.S.-DRV meeting in Warsaw."

"The Poles expressed alarm about the 'intensification of the bombing' on Dec. 2, 7, 8, and 9, arguing that 'such attacks could only threaten or destroy the possibility of contact in Warsaw.'" Lewandowski, who had been in Hanoi Nov. 16-30, had said he believed the reduction of bombing during that period was regarded in Hanoi as "a tacit signal of U.S. support for his mission."

Raids Delayed by Weather . . .

In fact, targets hit near Hanoi in December had been authorized as "Rolling Thunder 52" on Nov. 10, the study reported, but bad weather had intervened. But the bombing, when it came, evidently was interpreted in Hanoi as new escalation, and Hanoi "instructed the Poles on Dec. 14 to terminate all conversations."

On Dec. 24, the United States informed the Communists that "bombing within 10 miles of the center of Hanoi had been suspended as an act of goodwill in the hopes of reviving the Warsaw contact."

It was too late. The study notes that the bombing may have caused Hanoi "in turn to stiffen the conditions it imposed in exchange for talks"—which it did on Jan. 28, 1967, "demanding an end to all bombing" as a condition for any talks.

It was to take more than another year of diplomatic probing, along with other ventures code-named Packers,

Aspen, Sunflower, Ohio, and Pennsylvania—in which Kissinger was the major intermediary with French emissaries to Hanoi—to produce even direct preliminary talks between the United States and North Vietnam. To accomplish that, President Johnson on March 31, 1968, unilaterally halted part of the bombing and on Oct. 31, 1968, he stopped all of it—and took himself out of the race for reelection.

In the end, the United States settled for "understandings" about limited reciprocity on the Communist side, which have been in continual dispute ever since.

North Vietnam, although it officially denies it, signalled directly, and also through the Russians, that it "understood" that the United States bombing halt was dependent on respecting the Demilitarized Zone dividing North and South Vietnam; no attacks on South Vietnam's major cities, such as Saigon, Hue and Danang; and on the participation of South Vietnam's government (and the NLF) in widened Paris talks that began in January, 1969.

In addition, the United States in the private talks served notice that it would continue air reconnaissance over North Vietnam to assure that the other conditions were being met. North Vietnam never directly agreed to that, but it did agree to change its demand for a stoppage of all "acts of war" to all "acts of force" against its territory, which the United States construed as grudging acquiescence to continued U.S. reconnaissance.

The Nixon administration subsequently charged that North Vietnam was firing on U.S. reconnaissance planes and it began bombing selected targets in North Vietnam, under the semantic guise of "protective reaction."

In the latest furor over "protective reaction," ousted Gen. John D. Lavelle, former commander of the U.S. Air Force in Vietnam, has acknowledged that he ordered his own additional, unprovoked bombing raids on North Vietnam without authorization, reporting them under the rubric "protective reaction."

The portion of the 1968 "understandings" applying to the Demilitarized Zone has also collapsed, in the Communist offensive launched last March 30 directly through it, which the United States denounced as "gross violation" of the 1963 prohibition.

In the formal Paris peace talks which began in May, 1968, and more importantly, in the private Paris talks between Kissinger and Hanoi Politburo member Le Duc Tho that began in 1969, each side has had exhaustively ample opportunity to explore the other's viewpoints and terms for peace.

The records on the history of Vietnam diplomacy now available end in March, 1968, before the Vietnamization program launched by the Nixon administration to withdraw American troops



United Press International

BACK TO FREEDOM—David Edmunds, 88, a Welshman held by Chinese authorities since 1967, crosses into Hong Kong with his Chinese wife, Bernadette, right, and their

two daughters. He was arrested in Shanghai during the Cultural Revolution. Despite five years of detention, Edmunds appeared to be in fine spirits and good health.

and equip Saigon's forces to replace them, and before the allied pursuit of the war into Communist "sanctuaries" in Cambodia and Laos.

But the essential ingredients of tomorrow's diplomatic disputes, including recurring accusations on both sides, are all here:

- U.S. troop withdrawal—North Vietnam often said in private this "was not a decisive question" in spite of what it often said officially to the contrary.

- Free elections—the Pentagon analysis says, "Everyone no doubt suspects

that the outcome of elections will be determined by who runs them."

- The legitimate representative of South Vietnam—"Who shall govern SVN" is what the war is all about."

- Cease fire—In the early years of the war, "Neither side wished an early cease-fire. Both feared it would permit the other side to consolidate its position prior to the final settlement." Each side has proposed a cease-fire under different formulations, depending on who is being advantaged or disadvantaged by it.

- International supervision or guarantees—"As long as the DRV (North Vietnam) feels assured that their control in the South is becoming a reality or is a reality, they are not likely to quarrel seriously over inspection and guarantee machinery."

From the earliest periods of diplomatic probing, the Pentagon study shows conclusively, North Vietnam has been prepared to show flexibility on issues "of secondary importance, compared to the crunch point on who governs in the South."