

SFE Examiner  
**Kissinger Linked**  
**To Hoffa Puzzle**

SEP 8 1972

Examiner News Services

WASHINGTON — The strange aborted odyssey of former Teamsters Union President James Hoffa to North Vietnam took another turn today — his attorney said the trip had the approval of none other than President Nixon's chief adviser, Henry Kissinger.

The trip ended just as it was about to begin yesterday when another top Nixon Administration official, Secretary of State William Rogers, disapproved it.

The attorney, William L. Taub of New York, said Kissinger was informed July 5 at the Western White House in San Clemente that Hoffa had been invited by North Vietnamese trade unions to visit Hanoi.

Hoffa says his intention was to attempt to negotiate the release of some U.S. prisoners of war.

"Kissinger approved the plans," Taub said, "but asked that the trip be postponed until after July 20," because of the peace talks.

Kissinger also, Taub claimed, "said he was going to make arrangements" with the U.S. Parole Board for Hoffa, who is on parole after a 4½ year prison term for jury tampering. The Parole Board approved the journey.

The White House said today that Taub and another

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Hoffa representative had seen Kissinger at San Clemente in June and again the next month talked with Kissinger's chief deputy, Maj. Gen. Alexander M. Haig, Jr.

However, White House Press Secretary Ronald Ziegler said the two were told that the Nixon Administration opposed the kind of private mission that Hoffa envisioned.

Ziegler said the other Hoffa envoy was Teamster Vice president Harold Gibbons, who has been to North Vietnam and who now is a leader in a group of labor offi-

cials supporting George McGovern.

#### Doubtful

"Kissinger made it clear at that time that we did not support the trip and we did not favor Hoffa as an emissary," Ziegler said. He said Gibbons and Taub were given the same response when they contacted Haig in July.

In Paris, a North Vietnamese delegate to the peace talks said today that to his knowledge Hoffa never received an invitation nor a visa from Hanoi to visit U.S. war prisoners.

"It is very clear we would never have received such a delegation," said the official.

The White House's firm statement today that it opposed Hoffa's mission contrasted starkly with the position it took yesterday when Ziegler announced the trip shortly before a report of it was to appear in a Detroit newspaper.

Then, Ziegler pointedly refused to criticize the trip.

#### Noncommittal

Even when reporters contrasted the administration's attitude toward the Hoffa visit with the angry attacks it rained on trips by former Attorney General Ramsey Clark and actress Jane Fonda, Ziegler stood firm, calling the Hoffa journey "a strictly private effort."

Similar noncommittal attitudes were expressed at the State Department, whose spokesman announced that it had validated Hoffa's passport for travel to North Vietnam.

But, according to the Washington Post, alarm was spreading at the top layer of government about the implications of a new roaring

controversy over prisoners of war in the midst of the election campaign.

So, in the afternoon, Hoffa himself announced that the trip was off.

#### Conditions

But he did not even hint that the State Department was responsible.

Hoffa said there were "certain conditions" about the trip that caused him to cancel — for the time being at least.

"If we get these certain problems resolved, then we can go," he said. "I don't care to discuss it any further."

Later, a State Department spokesman, Charles Bray, who earlier had announced that Hoffa's passport had been validated, called reporters back into his office and said it had been revoked.

He said Rogers had ordered this after he "had satisfied himself that there were irregularities, including irregularities in the procedures, by which the validation had been approved."

The spokesman wouldn't give all the details but volunteered that regulations give only the director of the State Department's Office of Security and Consular Affairs, Barbara Watson, and her deputy authorization to validate passports to visit North Vietnam.

Neither Miss Watson nor her chief assistant was involved, Bray said, adding only that an unauthorized department official he refused to name had issued the validation.

Taub, however, said Robert Johnson, counsel for the passport office, had approved the validation.

The Justice Department also approved Hoffa's travel plans, Taub said, including Deputy Attorney General Ralph Erickson.

#### Jackass

Erickson, Taub said, told him as late as 10 p.m. yesterday that Hoffa had the legal right to still make the trip.

"Hoffa is being made to look like a jackass," Taub said, "when it should be one of those blunderers in the State Department."

#### Validations

Under current U.S. law and regulations, travel by Americans to North Vietnam and a handful of other countries can be undertaken only if approved by authorized State Department officials.

Validations generally are limited to journalists, doctors, scientists, scholars and others who have compelling humanitarian reasons for making the trip.

Hoffa, officials said, does not meet any of the requirements.