

That Hanoi Trip--

Hoffa's Aim a Union Deal?

By William J. Eaton

WASHINGTON — (CDN) — Jimmy Hoffa apparently hoped to regain control of the giant Teamsters Union by negotiating the release of prisoners of war with North Vietnam.

Hoffa's possible motive for an on-again, off-again trip to Hanoi was revealed in a letter from Atty. Gen. Richard Kleindienst to William L. Taub, Hoffa's lawyer.

The disclosure came after the White House acknowledged that Henry Kissinger mentioned Hoffa's planned visit to Le Duc Tho, the chief negotiator for Hanoi at the Paris peace talks, on July 20.

Private Citizen

A spokesman said Kissinger told the North Vietnamese that Hoffa would be acting as a private citizen, not as an administration envoy, on the journey. Kissinger also mentioned Hoffa's plans to President Nixon.

Earlier, Taub and Teamsters' vice president Harold Gibbons had told Kissinger of Hoffa's interest in the POW discussions.

Hoffa, who was released from federal prison last December under a special commutation order signed by President Nixon, is barred by its terms from exercising control, directly or indirectly, over the 2-million-member teamsters Union.

Ban Lift

Kleindienst said that Taub, acting for Hoffa, proposed that the union ban be lifted if Hoffa visited Hanoi and obtained the release of some U.S. POWs.

The proposal was made in Taub's meeting with Ralph Erickson, deputy attorney

general, according to the Kleindienst letter.

"Mr. Erickson advised you he had no authority to consider any such proposal and that if Mr. Hoffa were to undertake any such venture he would have to do so on his own initiative," the Attorney General said.

Kleindienst was not charitable in blasting Taub, for telling Secretary of State Rogers about "negotiations" with the Attorney General.

"That statement is a gross misrepresentation," Kleindienst said. "Indeed, I have never even discussed with you any proposed visit to Hanoi by Mr. Hoffa. I am appalled at the inaccuracies in your letter."