

Unofficial 'Diplomats' Not Rare

WASHINGTON — (AP) — James R. Hoffa's plan is not the first and doubtless will not be the last effort by private U.S. citizens to deal with foreign governments.

The string of self-appointed citizen diplomats goes back to the founding days of the republic. And so does official ire against such attempts.

Hoffa ran into a veto by Secretary of State William Rogers Thursday in his bid for official permission to travel to North Vietnam. Nevertheless, Hoffa's lawyer indicated yesterday that the former Teamsters Union official still intends to go.

'Ought Not'

A State Department spokesman says Rogers believes strongly "that individuals or groups of individuals ought not to inject themselves into negotiations with other governments and particularly when the U.S. government is engaged in negotiations of its own."

His predecessors, too, have been unhappy with any maneuverings by outsiders who they figure might undercut official diplomatic efforts.

One of America's most famous episodes involving private diplomacy occurred soon after the republic's birth and led an angry Congress to outlaw such acts in 1799. The law has yet to be enforced.

Free Sailors

The key figure in the affair was George Logan, a Philadelphia Quaker who sailed to Europe and persuaded French foreign minister Talleyrand to free

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some American merchant ships and sailors seized by the French.

Congress quickly passed the Logan Act, which sets criminal penalties for private persons engaging in diplomatic negotiations without official sanction.

Every season since, and particularly during campaign time, someone is accused of negotiating or planning to negotiate with a foreign government. This presidential year is no exception.

Recent Targets

Ramsey Clark, a former Democratic Attorney General who visited North Vietnam, and Pierre Salinger, who reported to Democratic presidential nominee George McGovern on his talks with Vietnamese Communist envoys in Paris, were recent targets of GOP critics who suggested they flouted the Logan Act.

Available records show that the only indictment ever obtained under the law was in 1803 against a Kentucky farmer, Francis Flournoy, who angered Washington by asking that a separate nation, allied with France, be set up in the American West. The case was dropped after the issue faded.

More recently, Democrat Henry Wallace stirred a flurry of allegations of Logan Act violations with his trip to Europe and visits with Socialist and Communist leaders in 1947.

Greek Trade

Later, Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy (D-Wis.) tangled with the State Department for trying to negotiate a private agreement with Greek ship owners to keep their vessels out of trade with Red China and other Communist countries.

Since the Vietnam war, an array of antiwar activists has been attacked by critics for their visits to North Vietnam. But the State Department under Rogers has not made any strenuous attempts to block the trips.

A State Department spokesman drew a distinction yesterday between efforts by private citizens to "negotiate" and other trips for fact-finding or humanitarian purposes.

He gave this response when asked why Rogers intervened against Hoffa's proposed journey while not acting similarly against Clark.

The spokesman said that Clark's avowed mission was part of a fact-finding group on alleged U.S. bombing of dikes in North Vietnam.

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