

Moscow, and Hanoi Sign New Aid Pact

By Robert G. Kaiser

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Washington Post Foreign Service

MOSCOW, Dec. 9—The Soviet Union and North Vietnam signed new trade and aid agreements today. The Soviets promised to "give necessary assistance in the strengthening of (North Vietnam's) defense potential."

No details were released by Tass, the government news agency, which reported the signings. Presumably, North Vietnam asked Moscow to counteract the effect of massive shipments of American military equipment to South Vietnam in recent weeks, but it is not known whether the Soviets agreed.

Tass emphasized "aid without compensation." "The Soviet Union will ship large consignments of goods, equipment and other property of great significance for the development of (North Vietnam's) national economy," Tass said.

The agreements were worked out in talks between North Vietnam's deputy premier, Le Thanh Nghi, and Soviet officials. Nghi has been in Moscow since last month.

Deputy Premier Vladimir Novikov signed the agreements for the Soviet side. He and Thanh said the new pacts "are a new, important contribution to the development of relations of fraternal friendship and all-round cooperation linking the . . . Soviet and Vietnamese people."

By comparison with past statements by the two governments, this language was reserved. There was no specific statement of Soviet support for the Vietnamese in the Tass dispatch.

[North Vietnam also has signed a new military and economic aid agreement with China, the official Hanoi newspaper Nhan Dan reported late last month.]

Relations between Moscow and Hanoi have been strained since last May's Soviet-American summit meeting, in the view of diplomatic observers. The Vietnamese were reportedly displeased first that the Soviets went ahead with the summit after U.S. mining of

North Vietnamese Harbors, and second by Soviet pressure on them to negotiate more seriously with the United States.

The last announced aid agreement between Moscow and Hanoi was revealed a year ago, when the Soviets promised to supply "additional aid aimed at further strengthening the defensive capacity" of North Vietnam. That was probably a major arms deal which gave North Vietnam the equipment it needed to conduct its ambitious 1972 offensive.

North Vietnamese soldiers and Communist bloc weapons are again heading down the Ho Chi Minh Trail in significant quantities, the Los Angeles Times reported.

[Photos and other intelligence show that the trail is very much back in business after being virtually closed down by monsoon rains, the paper said.

[Men and supplies already in the pipeline, which begins at the Annamite mountain passes of North Vietnam, will not arrive at southern destinations for one to two months. More is being fed into the northern end of the trail daily.]

B-52s Hit the DMZ;

S. Viet Retake Post

SAIGON, Dec. 9 (AP)—U.S. B-52 bombers hammered away at Communist troop positions within and near the Demilitarized Zone Saturday for the third consecutive day, while government troops in the South recaptured an outpost overrun a day earlier by the North Vietnamese.

The U.S. command reported that the bombers flew seven missions of up to three planes each in an area just above the eastern edge of the DMZ.

The outpost recaptured by government forces is a mile from Binhson district town in the coastal province of Quangnai.

On Friday, North Vietnamese and Vietcong troops rained rockets and mortars on the small outpost, then overran it.