

# A Test of Global Interests

## Detente With Russia, China May Be Affected

DEC 19 1972

By Murrey Marder

Washington Post Staff Writer

Full resumption of the American bombing of North Vietnam yesterday indirectly renewed the challenge that President Nixon laid down to the Soviet Union and China last May to put their global interests above support for their Communist ally in Hanoi.

As a result, not only the question of war or peace for Vietnam is now wide open again. Equally open, it would appear, is the question of whether the new deadlock over Vietnam can now damage the ongoing detente between Washington and Moscow, and between Washington and Peking, which was the Nixon administration's proudest accomplishment in its first four years.

President Nixon evidently is convinced even more so now than he was last May that neither the Soviet Union nor China will jeopardize their expanding relationships with the United States because of the Vietnamese war. After his May 8 bombing-mining order failed to disrupt the Moscow summit conference later that month, Mr. Nixon scoffed at those who feared he had gambled too much by the use of force in Vietnam.

For both the Soviet Union and China, however, their position may be doubly awkward now. They encouraged—or pressured—North Vietnam to complete an early war settlement with the United

See STRATEGY, A19, Col. 1

### STRATEGY, From A1

states, on which Hanoi now angrily charges that the Nixon administration has done an "about-face."

Presidential envoy Henry A. Kissinger has charged that it is North Vietnam which has executed the turnabout. Even Western diplomats, however, expect Moscow and Peking to find Hanoi's version of blame more convincing to Communist leaders than Washington's, that the United States has especially now that the resumed the full bombing of North Vietnam.

One of North Vietnam's most dogmatic leaders, Truong Chinh, was on his way from Peking to Moscow yesterday to argue for fidelity to North Vietnam's cause. Chinh, regarded as a prime advocate of low-level protracted warfare, is chairman of North Vietnam's National Assembly standing committee.

Accompanying Truong Chinh is another North Vietnamese Politburo member, Hoang Van Hoan, who is rated as his major ally.

Their mission is technically to participate in the 50th anniversary celebrations of the Soviet Union. But North Vietnam's compelling interest is to pin down its major allies on the impasse in the bargaining between Kissinger and Politburo member Le Duc Tho.

When Le Duc Tho passed through Moscow on Saturday, the day that Kissinger accused North Vietnam of

renegeing on the negotiation terms, the Soviet Union pledged "unswerving and resolute support" for the "constructive approach" of North Vietnam "at the Paris talks."

Le Duc Tho then went to Peking, where his path crossed with Truong Chinh's, and where Premier Chou En-lai also expressed support for "the correct stand" of North Vietnam in

The large question is what actions these pledges are converted into, if any. The Soviet Union and China recently recommitted themselves to new military-economic aid to North Vietnam, at a point when Kissinger's Oct. 26 phrase, "peace is at hand," was thought deliverable.

For the Soviet Union, what to do next can be a great dilemma. As recently as last week Soviet officials expressed confidence that an agreement was imminent in days—as did American officials. The Soviet Union now has multibillion-dollar expectations built on expanded trade with the United States, and more urgently, it has continuing grain shortages that it seeks to alleviate with American supplies.

It cannot escape Soviet attention that the White House yesterday repeatedly cited President Nixon's speech of May 8 as the present guide for U.S. policy on Vietnam.

All the questions ad-

ressed yesterday to White House press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler focused narrowly on the President's original order for the mining of North Vietnam's harbors and the extended bombing of North Vietnam which was ordered in that speech.

"Our policies," said Ziegler "were outlined on May 8 and this policy will continue until such time as a settlement is arrived at."

The President's opening statement of that order specified that it was directed at blocking "advanced offensive weapons supplied to Hanoi by the Soviet Union and other Communist nations."

President Nixon, both cautioning and reassuring the Soviet Union in that speech, held out a large carrot to accompany the stick.

"We are on the threshold of a new relationship" and Moscow should not "permit Hanoi's intransigence to blot out the prospects we together have so patiently prepared."

The Soviet Union swallowed the affront of the mining, but with difficulty. Now the affront recurs, by reference to the past.

It is likely to be at least several days, American analysts expect, before Hanoi, Peking and Moscow, separately or collectively, will decide on a course of action. Experts regard the present comments coming from all these capitals as "holding statements," while assess-

ments are made about the sudden series of U.S. moves between Saturday and Monday.

American officialdom itself, except for a privileged few with access to the Kissinger-Tho talks, was surprised by the collapse of the cease-fire prospects. Most planning at the State Department and other agencies was pointed in exactly the opposite direction.

### 5 Asian Nations Holding Conference

Agence France-Press

JAKARTA, Dec. 18—A four-day conference of senior Foreign Ministry officials from the five members of the Southeast Asian Nations began here today.

An informed source said that the officials were discussing neutralization of Southeast Asia and preparing the way for the meeting of foreign ministers of Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines, which is to take place early next year.