

China Scores U.S. Bombing in Formal Text

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The Chinese government yesterday strongly condemned what it called the "barbarous" U.S. bombings of the Hanoi-Haiphong area and said "this is a most serious step taken by U.S. imperialism to prolong and intensify" the Vietnam war.

A foreign ministry statement issued in Peking urged the Nixon administration to halt all acts of war against North Vietnam and to sign the original nine-point draft peace settlement that was negotiated in October.

"Should the U.S. government ... obdurately persist in its war of aggression, the Chinese people will, as always, ... give all-out support and assistance to the Vietnamese people in their war against U.S. aggression and for national salvation till complete victory is won," the statement said.

U.S. officials here termed the Peking statement as "fairly moderate, under the circumstances," although they acknowledged that the language employed by the Chinese was "rougher" than at any time since President Nixon's visit to Peking in February.

In Moscow, the Soviet leadership made public yesterday a statement "strongly condemning the efforts by the American side to create various obstacles in the path of a just political settlement in Vietnam."

The condemnation coupled with pledges of continued Soviet support was contained in a message to the South Vietnamese National Liberation Front on the 12th anniversary of its foundation. It was signed by Soviet party leader Leonid Brezhnev, Premier Alexei Kosygin and President Nikolai Podgorny.

There has been no formal Soviet government statement thus far, although the official news agency Tass issued a statement Tuesday saying that

"governing circles of the Soviet Union are giving the most serious consideration to the situation" created by "brutal bombings" of North Vietnam.

Both the Soviet and Chinese statements were restrained and stopped short of foreshadowing any specific actions in response to the bombing.

Other commentaries made public in Moscow and Peking seem to suggest that Hanoi's two principal allies would continue to emphasize the need for a resumption of the secret talks.

A New China News Agency commentary said the renewed U.S. bombing "has brought the peace, which was already in sight in Vietnam, to the brink of destruction."

The commentary continued, "At a time when the talks are in recess and will enter the final stage, the United States has resorted to the tactic of sudden attack and resumed bombing of all parts of North Vietnam. This has completely exposed that the U.S. government has gone back on its word and broken its promises in the peace negotiations."

If Washington wants peace, the Chinese agency concluded, it "must immediately stop bombing, resume the talks, and sign" the October peace draft.

"If it is war," it added, "the Chinese people will ... give all-out support and assistance to the Vietnamese people' until final victory."

Despite its vehement tone the stress placed on the fact that the resumption of the bombing "has threatened to wreck a peace agreement which is near at hand" indicates that Peking retains hope of an early settlement in Vietnam.

Moscow Radio, in a series of restrained commentaries yesterday, denounced the Nixon administration for having "discarded its mask of peace-maker" and insisted that "the tactics of crude military pres-

sure" against North Vietnam would fail.

But there were no hints in all Soviet statements that a firm course of action has been decided upon in Moscow. The U.S. action comes at a delicate point, as the Soviet leaders began reviewing foreign policy with numerous Communist leaders assembled in Moscow for the 50th anniversary celebration of the formation of the Soviet Union today.

Mark Lane was in Peking during the bombing of North Vietnam. Had just returned a day or so before being interviewed, 4 Jan 73, by Bill Schechter, KPFA. During the 1½ hour interview Lane said he was told by the Vietnamese Ambassador that the DRV government had asked the Chinese and Russian governments "to stay in time the hand of Nixon." Lane stressed that this was an exact quotation.

Chinese use of the term "running dogs" - see Murrey Marder, Washington Post 20 Dec 72.