

Palme Says Envoy Decision Won't Stop Swedish Protest

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(UPI)—Prime Minister Olof Palme said today that President Nixon's decision not to accept a new Swedish ambassador to Washington would not stop him from criticizing the Indochina war.

"This type of reaction does not prevent us from continuing to express our opinion," Palme said. "By now we are accustomed to this sort of thing."

Palme, in fact, personally collected signatures among shoppers in a department store in Flen today for a nationwide appeal to President Nixon to halt the bombing of North Vietnam.

Palme and his wife Lisbeth gathered 1,100 signatures in less than an hour for the appeal. The petition urges the U.S. government to stop the bombing immediately.

Palme said the decision to halt the U.S. bombing for the New Year, however, represented a "satisfactory step in the right direction."

"I am persuaded," he said, "that the vast demonstration of world opinion against the bombing had a great importance in this decision."

The government also announced that Palme had sent a personal message to President Nixon on Christmas Eve appealing for an immediate halt to the bombings of Hanoi.

Palme's statement came after the State Department in Washington and the Swedish Foreign Ministry

had confirmed that the Nixon administration had asked Sweden to delay the arrival in Washington of a new Swedish ambassador.

The State Department said this request as well as the recall earlier this week of the U. S. charge d'affaires in Stockholm were in protest against Palme's outspoken criticism of the renewed bombings of North Vietnam.

Sweden's Foreign Minister Krister Wickman said he was astonished by the American request.

Commenting on the Nixon administration's action, Wickman said, "My government does not use these methods,

We believe in the principle of universality when it comes to cause of pressure from Washington.

Only moderate Conservative Party leader Goesta Bohman expressed concern over the worsening relations, which he said were caused by most of the other major party leaders, who said that Sweden should not change its mind be-

moves. Sweden is not an enemy country." "Palme's one-sided statement on Indochina in the course of many years."