

Viet Aid Offer Came After the Peace Pact

Washington

State Department officials acknowledged yesterday that former President Nixon sent a memorandum to North Vietnamese leaders promising his administration would consider massive postwar rehabilitation assistance.

But these officials said the memorandum was sent after the signing of the Jan. 27, 1973, agreement in Paris to end the war in Vietnam and that the aid was not held out as an inducement to end the fighting.

This account supports Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger's public statements at the time that there was only a general discussion of possible economic help with the North Vietnamese prior to the Paris agreement. The latest account was given to reporters after consultation with Kissinger, who is on the West Coast on a speaking trip.

The officials, who declined use of their names, said the possibility of aid was taken up by a joint U.S. and North Vietnamese economic commission from March, 1973, until July of that year. The idea was dropped because of repeated violations by Hanoi of the Paris accord, the officials said.

At the White House, press secretary Ron Nessen said, "The whole issue became moot" because Hanoi violated the peace agreement "by starting the war up again and failing to give full accounting of Americans killed and missing in action in North Vietnam."

The subject arose when a group of congressmen who returned from Hanoi quoted North Vietnamese leaders as saying they were promised \$3.25 billion in aid by Nixon in early January, 1973 — before the Paris agreement was signed.

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