



Kissinger with Pham Van Dong: 'Reparations'?



Roger Pic-Gamma

Nixon's Touchy IOU to Hanoi

In pursuance of its traditional policy, the United States will contribute to healing the wounds of war and to post-war reconstruction of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and throughout Indochina.

—Chapter VIII, Article 21 of the Agreement on Ending the War

American economic aid to North Vietnam was first promised by President Lyndon Johnson in 1965, and Richard Nixon has made it one of the building blocks of his own Paris truce. During his three-day stay in Hanoi last week, Presidential adviser Henry Kissinger began redeeming that IOU with an agreement on the formation of a Joint Economic Commission to direct U.S. reconstruction funds. But working out the details with the North Vietnamese and all the other interested parties may be child's play for the Nixon Administration compared with the problem it now faces in getting a balky Congress to follow through. "These senators," said one of them angrily, "just don't like what the North Vietnamese did to our boys."

Kissinger's visit to Hanoi produced a renewed commitment by both sides—at least on paper—to the "full and scrupulous implementation" of the current cease-fire and other elements of the peace agreement. There was also a discussion of steps to "normalize" relations between the U.S. and North Vietnam, a remarkable development so soon after eight years of bitter war, "climaxed by the U.S. bombing of Hanoi. But the most concrete achievement of the nineteen hours of talks that Kissinger held with Premier Pham Van Dong and Paris negotiator Le Duc Tho was clearly the agreement on a joint commission—and its implied expectation of significant U.S.

economic aid. Washington sources said that three representatives from each side would probably be ready to meet in about a month.

Neither side was yet ready to put a price tag on the reconstruction effort, however, and reports conflicted on whether a total expenditure was discussed at all. In Washington, White House spokesman Ronald Ziegler said the talks had not gone that far, but North Vietnam's Xuan Thuy told a Rome newspaper: "This was one of the points Kissinger went to Hanoi to discuss." President Nixon himself has long since backed away from his earlier proposal of a five-year, \$7.5 billion aid program for all of Indochina, with some \$2.5 billion going to Hanoi.

Mutiny: The President's caution was well warranted; judging by the grumbling on Capitol Hill, a nickel for the north would be too much. Locked in a grim battle for power with the President (NEWSWEEK, Feb. 19) and dismayed at the cutbacks in domestic spending outlined by Mr. Nixon, Congress is outright mutinous at the prospect of aid to Indochina. "I just can't see any money voted for Hanoi," one Senate Republican leader told NEWSWEEK chief Congressional correspondent Samuel Shaffer. "It just won't wash. How can a senator support cuts in hospital beds, flood-prevention projects, aid to public schools and the like—and then vote money for the same thing for Hanoi?"

Mail from the grass roots has been almost universally hostile to the proposal. Last week alone, GOP Sen. Dewey Bartlett of Oklahoma received 150 letters from his constituents—and every one condemned the plan. "In a prize fight, you don't give the prize to the loser," wrote a conservative resident of Harbor

City, Calif., to Democratic Sen. Alan Cranston. "Don't rebuild North Vietnam. I won't pay taxes to help Communism." Some liberals, for their part, fear that economic aid to the North would only serve to promote continued U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia—the sort of commitment that originally led to American military intervention—and they are not much happier at the idea of giving South Vietnam approximately \$700 million a year for nonmilitary purposes.

The White House hopes to ride out the current wave of opposition, letting enough time pass to take away the taint of "reparations." Then it will weigh in with a strong pitch for the program as a "very good investment" for future peace, as Secretary of State William Rogers puts it, and a means for maintaining some U.S. control over postwar developments. The strategy calls for private talks with influential congressmen and the creation of a multinational mechanism through which U.S. funds can be mingled with contributions from other sources. Japan, Norway and the World Bank already have signaled their interest in aiding Indochina, and Moscow and Peking might conceivably be persuaded to chip in as well. In the meantime, the Joint Economic Commission will be assessing damage in the north and making plans for reconstruction similar to those being drawn in the south.

Fiat: Ultimately, reports NEWSWEEK White House correspondent Henry Trewitt, the Administration plans to go to Congress with an inflated request that it fully expects to be whittled down to just under the sum that Mr. Nixon intended in the first place. The Pentagon budget was purposely rejigged this year to include large pockets of fat that could be diverted into such aid funds, and some Administration aides maintain that the President could divert them by Executive fiat even if Congress balks. But this would mean a major battle, and

the President is more likely to go to the people with a hard-sell campaign that portrays Congressional opposition as a threat to peace.

For the moment, however, the White House is taking a gingerly, vaguely optimistic stance on the whole program. "It is not going to be easy," Rogers conceded at a news conference. "But we don't think it is going to fail. We think that as in the past Congress, when it finally finds out all the facts and gives full consideration to the problems and the implications of failing to help—I think Congress will react responsibly."

ALABAMA:

Questions About Wallace

For more than a decade, he has been the man-in-motion of American politics—a rebel with a cause who has never enjoyed power nearly as much as the pursuit of it. But now, nine months after a would-be assassin crippled him in a shopping center in Laurel, Md., the chase may be ending for Gov. George Wallace. His health, after six operations, remains chancy. He is tormented by pain and depression. His hold on the day-to-day conduct of the affairs of Alabama has loosened. His prospects for re-election as governor next year are clouded. His permanent Presidential campaign is broke and languishing. And suddenly a few brave souls around Montgomery have begun thinking, and saying, the unthinkable: that the time has come at last for Wallace to quit running.

Wallace, 53, lay in the University of Alabama Medical Center in Birmingham last week recuperating from his latest surgery, for prostate trouble. The bulletins from his press staff were, as usual, optimistic: the staff said the governor had recovered bladder and bowel control, and thus left the impression that his waist-down paralysis might be easing. But his doctors, also as usual, were less bullish. "The return of these body functions does not alter the fact of paralysis," one of them told *Newsweek's* Henry P. Leifermann. Wallace's powers of recovery have slowed—this latest hospital stay far outran the expected week or ten days—and so has his energy for his rigorous course of physical therapy; he has begun letting other people push his wheelchair. Friends fret about his recurring low spirits and his now chronic pain. "They keep George so sedated that half the time he's in a haze," said one Wallace man. "Every 45 minutes they bring him some kind of medication, just like clockwork."

The governor, who has rarely shown great interest in the routine of governing, now displays less than ever. He has never reoccupied his office full-time; instead between hospital stays, he has secluded himself in the governor's mansion with his wife, Cornelia, and run the state by telephone. Operative control has passed largely to state finance director Taylor Hardin and a kitchen Cabinet made up



Wally McNamee—Newsweek

Wallace: The end of the long-distance run?

of Wallace's brother Gerald and two well-heeled backers, Oscar Harper and Frank Long—all of whom purport to speak for Wallace. The arrangement keeps the state going, but not without embarrassments. Less favored officials charge the palace guard with cutting them off from the governor and with favoring their own friends with state contracts, leases and other plums.

Heresy: The result has been some who's-in-charge-here muttering around Montgomery—and the further erosion of Wallace's political standing in his own home state. One old adversary, Harold Martin, editor and publisher of the capital's two dailies, made so bold as to propose in a speech two weeks ago that the legislature pension Wallace and turn the state over to a caretaker committee until the '74 election. The speech set off something less than a ground swell—only one legislator publicly seconded Martin—but that such a heresy was uttered at all was a measure of Wallace's reduced fortunes. His re-election is no longer simply assumed. Some of his handlers are banking on a big sympathy vote—"It never hurt," says one, "to run a little as a martyr"—but neutral spectators give the edge to Wallace's most likely challenger, ex-Gov. Albert Brewer.

To lose in 1974 would be a disaster for 1976; even Wallace's invincibly cheery campaign director, Charles Snider, concedes that "he needs the governorship

Peter L. Gould
Cornelia WallaceAP
Gerald WallaceAP
Taylor Hardin

to continue." His national campaign, \$250,000 in debt, put out a direct-mail solicitation last fall—and raised barely enough to keep its headquarters suite in Montgomery afloat. The staff has been cut down to Snider, one assistant and five secretaries, and the monthly newsletter missed two issues for want of money. In desperation, the management has booked Wallace into one country-music fund-raiser next month in Dallas and possibly several more thereafter—in spite of the fact that the governor has been canceling far more public bookings than he has kept. "He knows," Snider says flatly, "that he's got to participate."

Wallace remains a tough and resilient man despite his wounds, and it is as dangerous now as ever to count him prematurely out of a fight. He insisted last week that he can run the state from his hospital suite as well as anywhere—"They leave me alone up here"—and that he is indeed still in charge. "You know," he said, "when you been shot up like I have, it takes time to recover . . . I've been doing my therapy. I can get well." His doctors insist, moreover, that his current malaise is temporary—that the latest operation particularly "kind of got to him," as one put it, but that he will adjust to his paralysis "in time." They clearly wish they could hurry the process.

The Wallace of 1973 reminds old friends of the Wallace of 1968, when his first wife, Lurleen, died of cancer