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## Hanoi Misinterprets U.S. Opinion

If the North Vietnamese believe they are gaining an advantage by rejecting outright President Nixon's peace offer and that he will be compelled, between now and the congressional elections on Nov. 3, to modify his proposals to satisfy his adversaries, they are making a big mistake.

Doubtless Hanoi feels that Nixon cannot do anything but accept unconditionally the various ideas—which amount virtually to complete surrender—heretofore advanced by the Communists at the Paris negotiations.

It is, however, significant that the White House yesterday not only declined to accept as final North Vietnam's rejection of the Nixon proposals but expressed a belief that Hanoi "should and will continue to examine them." Newsmen further were informed that the United States would keep the President's proposals on the bargaining table in Paris and try to use them as a basis for getting discussions moving.

A White House spokesman said the other side is engaged in "the traditional bargaining technique of rejecting our proposals immediately" but that "we feel they will continue to look at it."

This means that between now and Nov. 3 the United States will be talking about the "expectation" of further discussions, while the North Vietnamese will continue balking because of the mistaken theory that a change in the proposals is logical for the administration to make in or-

der to win favor before the elections.

What perhaps isn't recognized in Hanoi is that the American people today are far more united behind the President's plan for peace in Vietnam than they have been for other proposals in the last several years.

American troops continue to be gradually withdrawn, but the South Vietnamese still will be assisted to some extent so that they can maintain a defense of their country. Meantime, prosecution of the war will be an expensive operation for North Vietnam and its allies.

In another year or two South Vietnam will have strengthened its position militarily so that it can withstand incursions from the north even without a substantial number of American troops within its borders.

It could happen, therefore, that immediately after the congressional elections here the North Vietnamese will wake up to find that the United States hasn't budged in its position. They then might come to understand why, if they continue to reject the peace proposals, they will be merely committing themselves to a lengthy war with the South Vietnamese in which the United States will be furnishing support for some time to come.

The United States isn't going to change its stand between now and the elections and certainly there will be no political reason for doing so after Nov. 3. The statement made by the

White House yesterday indicates clearly that the United States will keep on pressing for peace and the necessity for full discussion of the Nixon proposals no matter how often the North Vietnamese say they are "rejecting" everything.

The North Vietnamese may think they are going to force the United States to surrender in Vietnam or to make further concessions before the congressional elections, but they evidently do not know American sentiment. The feeling among the people now is that the administration has made a sincere and constructive attempt to end the war, and the North Vietnamese are hurting their case by refusing to talk about the proposals that have been made. The administration, therefore, will keep on asking at Paris for more discussions of its plan.

Also, since the United Nations is meeting and a number of conferences between major powers will be going on for the next few weeks, the chances are there will be no change in the American plan for peace.

The North Vietnamese will find out after election day that they gained nothing by rejecting the American plan and by refusing to initiate further negotiations.

It may well be said that, for all practical purposes, any important action will be postponed until after the election. The American government might then consider concessions of some kind if it becomes apparent that the North Vietnamese are genuinely interested in doing the same thing.