

LBJ Terms Dismissed By Hanoi

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North Vietnam yesterday dismissed the terms offered by President Johnson in his State of the Union message for talks to end the war.

A commentary in the official Hanoi newspaper Nhan Dan characterized what the President last Wednesday

referred to as "the San Antonio formula" as a "habitual trick" and declared that it constituted "very insolent conditions."

Mr. Johnson, the commentary said, "only beat about the bush" in the State of the Union speech by "repeating" an earlier version he first made public in San Antonio last September.

The essence of the new statement was to stand firm on Hanoi's refusal to offer any reciprocal military move in exchange for an end of the bombing. Reciprocity was set as a condition by Mr. Johnson in his State of the Union message.

While there was no Administration comment yesterday on the Hanoi statement, American efforts to seek "clarification" of Hanoi's position are expected to continue through diplomatic channels.

A Private Sign

Some, but not many, officials here feel that Hanoi might privately give a sign that there would be some reciprocal act after the bombing ends, but without any advance promise.

The Nhan Dan article, broadcast by Hanoi, restated North Vietnam's basic position in these words:

"It is clear to everybody that since the U.S. is overtly bombing the Democratic Republic of (North) Vietnam, it must definitively and unconditionally put an end to this aggressive act."

To stress its rejection of the San Antonio formula's call for military reciprocity by North Vietnam, the commentary declared:

"The U.S. has no right to put any condition to the Vietnamese people. Neither has it the right to ask 'reciprocity' from the Vietnamese people who have never encroached on the independence and sovereignty of the U.S."

President's Terms

In the State of the Union speech, the President first declared that the American bombing of the north "would stop immediately if talks would take place promptly and with reasonable hopes they would be productive."

The President then stated his demand for reciprocity by saying that "the other side must not take advantage of our restraint as they have in the past."

It is now evident that Hanoi

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is prepared to meet the first but not the second part of the President's formula. On Dec. 29 it stated flatly that there "will" be talks (a statement referred to yesterday) if the bombing is halted. Subsequently it has indicated the talks would take place promptly. As to whether they would be "productive," Hanoi has indicated that is up to the Americans.

Position Restated

But Hanoi has always refused to grant any reciprocity in military terms. Yesterday's article restated the North Vietnamese reasoning in this paragraph:

'American Aggression'

"The so-called San Antonio formula is but a habitual trick of the U.S. to put on the same footing the aggressor and the victim of aggression, and to force the Vietnamese people to give up struggling in face of continued American aggression."

In the Administration's view, North Vietnam is the aggressor against South Vietnam by sending its troops into the south and by its use of terror and assassination against the South Vietnamese government and its troops.

North Vietnam, however, has never admitted that any of its troops are in South Vietnam. It also contends that the war in the South against the Saigon government is the work of southern forces, the Vietcong, under the political leadership of the National Liberation Front. The United States contends the NLF is a creature of Hanoi.

Dark Future

The Nhan Dan article charged that the President's discussion of the war in his State of the Union speech was

a "sheer falsification of truth and an affront to the (American) people at home."

It added that his "empty promises" could not hide the "difficult and dark future" facing the United States. Nhan Dan claimed that 365,000 allied troops had been "wiped out" in 1967, a 30 per cent increase over 1966.

The commentary declared that "the colonialist war being waged by the U.S. ruling circles in Vietnam has caused untold mourning and suffering to the American people."

"The recent words and acts of the U.S. imperialists have pointed out one thing—that despite their heavy defeats in Vietnam, they are obstinately continuing their war of aggression here (against the north) and are making more and more obstinate conditions."

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