

Viets Say U.S. Declined Talks

FEB 1 1972

WASHINGTON (AP) — North Vietnamese documents indicate Hanoi offered to send Minister Xuan Thuy, its chief negotiator, to a secret Paris meeting with Henry A. Kissinger last Nov. 20, but the United States declined, holding out for a higher-ranking Communist representative.

"No point would be served by a meeting," Washington is said to have replied after a scheduled session between Kissinger and Hanoi's special adviser, Le Duc Tho, fell through because Tho was taken ill.

The North Vietnamese account of the canceled session differs markedly from one offered by President Nixon in a nationally broadcast address on the Paris peace talks Jan. 25.

NIXON used the address to unveil an eight-point peace offer made to Hanoi in October, and to disclose that Kissinger, his foreign-affairs adviser, had met in secret 12 times in Paris with Thuy or Tho, or both, in an attempt to breathe some life into the Vietnam war talks.

Nixon said:

"On Oct. 11, I sent a private communication to the North Vietnamese that contained new elements that could move negotiations forward, and urged a meeting on Nov. 1 between Dr. Kissinger and Special Adviser Le Duc Tho or some other appropriate official from Hanoi.

"On Oct. 25, the North Vietnamese agreed to meet and suggested Nov. 20. On Nov. 17, just three days before the scheduled meeting, they said Le Duc Tho was ill. We offered to meet as soon as Le Duc Tho recovered, with him, or immediately with any other authorized leader who could come from Hanoi.

"TWO MONTHS have passed since they called off that meeting. The only reply to our plan has been an increase in troop infiltration from North Vietnam and Communist military offensives in

Laos and Cambodia"

According to the documents released in Paris yesterday, a U.S. message of Nov. 19 said Washington was ready to meet with Tho, who is a member of the Politburo or any other representative of the North Vietnamese political leadership, together with Minister Xuan Thuy, in order to bring a rapid end to the war

It was at this point that the whole secret negotiating process in Paris broke down. The North Vietnamese have yet to name an alternative date for Tho to meet with Kissinger.

SECRETARY of State William P. Rogers was asked last week why North Vietnam failed to respond to the eight-point U.S. peace plan offered last October. Rogers told a foreign-policy conference he thought Hanoi was trying to drive a wedge between Americans and their government.

But Rogers did not explain why the United States would not negotiate with Thuy on Nov. 20. The White House indicated it would be necessary to talk to Tho to get recommendations adopted by the political leadership in Hanoi.

However, Nixon said five of Kissinger's 12 secret meetings had been with Thuy alone.

State Department officials see a possibility that the North Vietnamese action in making public its nine-point counterproposal for a peace settlement could be construed as a continuation of the negotiating dialogue between the two countries.