

The Washington Post *published a story today which states that President Nixon never intended to sign the Vietnam peace agreement by October 31st. Here's David Selvin of the Pacifica Washington bureau with a report.

David Selvin: The Washington Post today claimed that President Nixon never intended to put the drafted Vietnam peace agreement into effect on October 31st, in order to avoid the risk of a - quote - "backfire" on Nixon's re-election.

The story, by Washington Post correspondent Murray Marder, went on to quote Administration sources as saying that if a Vietnam peace plan had gone into effect on the 31st, the President would have been exposed to a - quote - "messy situation" during the weeks before the election. Administration officials have said that any cease-fire in Vietnam would not be 100% secure; therefore, according to Marder, if Nixon had signed the agreement he would have exposed himself to the double charge that not only had he rushed into an insecure end to the war for political purposes, but in the final days of the campaign the cease-fire might already have been breached. According to the Washington Post, as a result the President chose instead to expose himself to what he regarded as a lesser hazard, that of being charged with duplicity by the North Vietnamese. The North Vietnamese did in fact level those charges. On October 26th they charged that the United States had agreed to a sequence of dates to conclude the agreement but backed out, citing - quote - "difficulties in Saigon." This, the North Vietnamese said, was an attempt on the part of the United States to deceive public opinion.

Meanwhile, the current edition of what the Washington Post calls the extremely conservative Washington weekly "Human Events" said that national security adviser Henry Kissinger had tried to - quote - "foist" the final accord on the President, thereby provoking - quote - "a bitter dispute" among top officials involved in the negotiations, and that even the White House has been having serious second thoughts about the tentative provisions.

[Complete.]

*Post story, as carried by SFChronicle 10 Nov 72, filed POWs.