

VIETCONG OFFER NEW PEACE PLAN;
U.S. IS COOL TO IT

BID FOR A PULLOUT

Move, in Paris, Would Bar Foe's Attacks in a Withdrawal

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Text of Mrs. Binh's statement is printed on Page 3.

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PARIS, Sept. 17—The Vietcong, with the support of North Vietnam, declared today that in exchange for an agreement on the withdrawal of all American and other foreign forces from South Vietnam by June 30 of next year, the Communists would refrain from attacking the withdrawing troops.

The offer was expressed in an eight-point statement by Mrs. Nguyen Thi Binh, foreign minister of the Vietcong's provisional revolutionary government, who returned to the conference table here for the first time in three months.

Later, a spokesman for the Vietcong delegation, asked what the Communists' attitude would be toward South Vietnamese troops, said that it would depend on Saigon's reaction. If the South Vietnamese troops continued hostilities, he said, the Vietcong would fight back. If they ceased all combat, he said, the Vietcong would also refrain.

All Four Heads Present

The new Communist initiative was taken when, for the first time since last December, all four delegations were represented by their regular heads—David K. E. Bruce of the United States, Pham Dang Lam of South Vietnam, Xuan Thuy of North Vietnam and Mrs. Binh. The move represented the first substantive initiative in the public talks in more than 16 months.

The American delegation appeared more guarded than usual in characterizing the Communist move. Mr. Bruce said that his first impression had been that the Communists were offering "old wine in new bottles" but added that their statements would be studied carefully.

Two basic Communist demands, presented as part of an over-all 10-point settlement in May, 1969, appeared to be basically unaltered. One calls for total and rapid withdrawal of American and other non-Vietnamese troops and the other calls for the replacement of the present Government in Saigon by a coalition government.

The two demands had been reiterated week after week since their introduction with virtually no elaboration and with steady denunciations of what were termed American imperialism and South Vietnamese treason. The United States, characterizing the demands as preconditions, had complained constantly that no real negotiation was taking

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place because the Communists refused to discuss not only American and South Vietnamese proposals but also their own.

Today some elaboration came, and the effect was to place pressure on the allied delegations to make some countermove if it were not to leave the diplomatic initiative entirely to the Communist side. The talks that Mr. Bruce will have with President Nixon during his European tour at the end of this month thus took on added importance.

The initiative also provided added reasons for private sessions between Mr. Bruce and Mr. Thuy. The United States has said it will not meet privately with the Vietcong if Saigon's delegates are not present. But the Communist side has said it will not talk with Saigon. This left only the possibility of meetings between Mr. Bruce and Mr. Thuy.

Nguyen Than Le, the spokesman for North Vietnam, said the only meetings thus far between the two men had been on Thursdays in the conference room in the old Hotel Majestic

on the Avenue Kleber—in other words, at the regularly scheduled meetings.

The Communist demand that the United States agree to total withdrawal by next June 30 represented an extension of about three months over previous proposals. The declaration of American intention, Mrs. Binh said, would be followed by immediate discussions about the safety for American and other foreign troops and about the release of war prisoners.

This appeared to be a slight shift. In the 10-point program, settlement of the prisoner question would have been part of an over-all settlement. The North Vietnamese said the prisoner settlement would include those they held, mainly airmen.

The spokesman for Saigon's delegation complained that the Communists had offered no elaboration on what would be done with North Vietnamese forces in the South. A basic allied demand has been that these forces withdraw at the same time as American troops and their allies—South Koreans, Australians, New Zealanders and Thais. Mrs. Binh merely reiterated the original proposal that "the question of the Vietnamese armed forces in South Vietnam shall be resolved by the Vietnamese parties among themselves." The North Vietnamese have never acknowledged that their troops are in South Vietnam.

On the political side, the Communists said that they would enter discussions about the formation of a provisional coalition government only with a new Government in Saigon. They called for the removal of President Nguyen Van Thieu, Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky and Premier Tran Thien Khiem, but said that other members

of the present Government would be acceptable.

Such persons would participate in a coalition with members of the Vietcong's provisional revolutionary government and other leaders in South Vietnam and abroad who favor peace, democracy, neutrality and independence, Mrs. Binh said.

To arrive at a political solution, Mrs. Binh said, her government was ready to make contact "with forces and persons of all political and religious opinions in the country and abroad, including persons participating in the present Saigon Administration with the exception of Thieu, Ky and Khiem."

From discussions between the new government and the provisional revolutionary government, Mrs. Binh said, would emerge a coalition regime that

would hold elections for an assembly to draw up a constitution. Mrs. Binh asserted that free and democratic elections could not be held by a government under the control of the United States and in the presence of bayonets of the "American occupation army." Peace proposals by the Saigon Government have called for elections run by an electoral commission in which the Communists would participate.

Mr. Bruce's reaction in the session was to reiterate President Nixon's pledge that "the United States Government will not impose any government on the people of South Vietnam." He continued to quote Mr. Nixon. "Our essential objective has been and remains to have the people of South Vietnam determine their own future without any outside interference."