

## Communists at Paris Talks Say 10 U.S. Battalions Fight in Laos

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PARIS, Feb. 11—Communist United States strongly rejected representatives at the Vietnam peace talks said today that 10 American battalions were engaged in ground combat in Laos and named the divisions the units came from—the Fifth Mechanized, the 101st Airborne and the Americal. But the American spokesman, Stephen Ledogar, accusing the Communists of “heaping exaggerations upon lies,” said, “That’s all nonsense.”

The 102d session of the Paris talks went into complete deadlock as the Communists accused the United States of widening the war and the

the charge.

“When Hanoi tries to condemn our side’s action in regard to Laos and Cambodia without even mentioning the massive, long-standing North Vietnamese presence there, it is engaging in pure hypocrisy,” the chief American negotiator, David K. E. Bruce, told newsmen.

The chief of Hanoi’s delegation, Xuan Thuy, while he did not say so flatly, indicated that North Vietnamese troops were in both Laos and Cambodia.

He told the conference that the Vietnamese people were determined to “stand shoulder to shoulder” with the Laotian and Cambodian peoples “to pursue and to step up the fight against the common enemy, the United States imperialist aggressors and their agents.”

Both Xuan Thuy and Mrs. Nguyen Thi Binh, chief of the Vietcong delegation, referred to 10 American battalions of infantry, artillery and armor fighting in Laos.

The Vietcong’s press spokesman, Duong Dinh Thao, went further by citing the division names. Asked the source of his information, he replied: “We have fought against the Americans for 10 years and we are in the process of winning. We are in the position of gathering certain types of information.”

Ambassador Bruce renewed President Nixon’s call for an all-Indochina peace conference, declaring that Washington continued to favor neutrality of Laos and restoration of the situation contemplated by the 1962 Geneva accords, in which all foreign forces would be withdrawn from Laotian territory.

The Communist representatives said there was no point to such a conference as long as the United States retained its forces in Vietnam and did not end the war.