

SIGNING OF THE CEASE-FIRE  
GETS UNDER WAY IN PARIS

# A Historic Agreement To Disengage the U.S. Military From Vietnam

Washington Post Service

Paris

The historic cease-fire agreement ending American military involvement in Vietnam was being made official here today.

The process was a lengthy signing ceremony by representatives of the United States, South Vietnam, North Vietnam and the Viet Cong's Provisional Revolutionary government.

The intricate, two-step signing was taking place at the same table at the former Hotel Majestic where the formal peace talks produced four years of stalemate.

Worked out by Henry A. Kissinger and Hanoi's Le Duc Tho in secret talks held in suburban villas, the agreement and protocols were initialed Tuesday at the same 26-foot diameter table in the ornate mirror and chandelier-decorated former hotel ballroom.

Neither Kissinger nor Tho will be present at the ceremony, at which four copies of the agreement will be signed.

## FIRST

In the first signing ceremony, this morning, the signatories were U.S. Secretary of State William Rogers, North Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh, South Vietnamese Foreign Minister Tran Van Lam and Nguyen Thi Binh, foreign minister of the Viet Cong's Provisional Revolutionary Government.

In the afternoon, Rogers and Trinh will return to sign the same documents they signed in the morning, plus an additional bilateral protocol dealing with demining North Vietnamese ports.

In all, Rogers and Trinh will sign their names 32 times in the morning and 40 times in the afternoon in the four copies of the documents. The two rival South Vietnamese ministers will

sign only 32 times.

Immediately following both ceremonies, the participants will drink a peace toast of Heidsieck champagne in a small room nearby.

The signing ceremony involves a triumph of diplomatic protocol designed to get around the mutual refusal of the Saigon government and the Viet Cong to recognize each other's legitimacy.

The morning ceremony concerns the signature of

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the agreement and protocols by all four foreign ministers representing "the parties participating in the Paris Conference on Vietnam," thus overcoming the problem.

The protocols concern the release of prisoners of war, the joint military cease-fire commissions and the functions of the international cease-fire commissions and the functions of the international cease-fire supervisory commissions made up of Canadian, Indonesian, Polish and Hungarian troops. Ambassadors from the four countries also will be present, as well as a French protocol official and the director of the conference center.

The afternoon ceremony involving only the United States and North Vietnam formally gives the official names each government

uses: the United States of America, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam for Hanoi, the Government of the Republic of Vietnam for Saigon, and the Viet Cong's PRG.

French protocol officials said that no speeches are expected at either the morning or afternoon signing ceremonies which were not expected to last more than 15 minutes.

As soon as the second ceremony is completed, there will be an exchange of lists of POWs held by the United States and North Vietnam. The prisoners are to be released in batches every two weeks, as the last American troops are withdrawn from South Vietnam over a two-month period.

Involved on the American side are some 450 POWs shot down over North Vietnam since 1965 and more than 100 American troops believed held by the Viet Cong in South Vietnam.