

# Vietnam's Shaky Peace

By Flora Lewis

## Paris

THE Nobel prize committee, announcing its peace award to Henry A. Kissinger of the United States and Le Duc Tho of North Vietnam, said that their efforts had brought "the Vietnamese war, one of the most terrible and bitterest military conflicts in the period following the Second World War . . . to an end with a cease-fire." The committee stressed the "moral responsibility" for all involved to see that the cease-fire negotiated by the two men "will lead to a lasting peace for the war-stricken peoples of Indochina."

But the record shows that very few of the clauses in the accord they initiated in Paris last Jan. 27 have been fully implemented, and many have had no practical effect.

On the day the prize was announced, both South Vietnamese belligerents again accused each other of "systematic violations" and "sabotage" of the pact. The cease-fire called for an immediate end of all fighting, and provided 90 days for withdrawal of United States forces and political agreement among the South Vietnamese.

### Analysis and Opinion

## Three New Rounds

But after a brief period of respite when the world's hopes soared, hostilities began to mount again. Kissinger and Le Duc Tho held three new rounds of negotiations following the solemn signature of their accord by 12 foreign ministers on Feb. 27, and reached a second nearly identical agreement last June 13.

The Vietcong's Provisional Revolutionary Government has now ordered all its forces "to re-double vigilance and to respond with arms and appropriate forces anywhere so long as Saigon continues acts of war and sabotage" of the accord. It accused Saigon of 240,000 violations since the Kissinger-Le Duc Tho pact, and said the Communists "have never fulfilled a single clause except the ones about the allies."

Nguyen Trieu Dan, the spokesman, said there had been 54,850 casualties on Saigon's side since the cease-fire, including 1650 civilians killed and 9700 soldiers killed. He said the Communists had lost 35,000 dead.

The Viet Cong spokesman, Ly Van Sau, gave only civilian casualties on his side since the agreement, listing them as 6000 killed and wounded and 30,000 arrested and tortured.

There was not even full agreement about whether the United States and North Vietnam had completely observed the cease-fire clauses affecting only them.

The one thing the rival spokesmen found to say with unanimity was a ringing "no comment" on the peace prize. (But last week Le Duc Tho announced his rejection of the prize.)

## Talents and Will

The Nobel committee called the two diplomatic opponents who shared the prize "negotiators with talents and will that could remove distrust and create the necessary mutual respect for obtaining an agreement."

There was never any question that each wanted to speed the end of the war, on his own country's terms, and neither allowed himself to be harassed into unwitting concessions. Their intri-

since the cease-fire, but the Viet Cong charges Saigon with 33,000 artillery bombardments and 11,000 air raids.

Saigon says the Viet Cong committed hundreds of violations a day and kidnaped 1600 people.

Each side accuses the other of holding tens of thousands of civilian and military prisoners who were to have been released. Even the occasional release of prisoners has caused protest.

Above all, "not one millimeter of progress" has been made in political talks between the two South Vietnamese sides, according to Saigon's spokesman, and command by the Viet Cong's spokesman. Their talks at La Celle-St. Cloud which were to have produced the basis for a new national agreement within 90 days are currently suspended because of mutual recrimination.

#### Guns Still Speak

Only in Laos has there been actual movement toward reconstituting a national government after the long civil war. In Cambodia,

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cate minuet finally brought them to agreement because that finally became their common aim.

The accord required withdrawal of all United States military forces and return of United States prisoners of war within 90 days. That was accomplished and, in the words of a retired French general with long war experience in Indochina, "It was no mean feat." He added:

"By dint of shoving and sweating, you can get the cork in that bottle. The trick is to get it out without breaking the bottle. In 1965, when the American high command asked me, I told them it probably couldn't be done if you sent more than 70,000 troops. But you did it."

#### Hasn't Ended

The war is no longer the Vietnam war that tormented the United States for seven years, but neither has it ended. There have been no general, large-scale offensives

the war which began with an American incursion in April, 1970, "to shorten the war in Vietnam," continues to rage without decision but at a high toll in lives.

Heavy American bombing of Cambodia was stopped on Aug. 15 by action of Congress.

Thus, 37 weeks after the cease-fire, everyone except the American servicemen and prisoners of war remained approximately where they had been on Jan. 27.

The Vietnamese have been at war intermittently for almost two generations. The level of hostilities has again decreased, as it did after the Japanese occupation, and then after the departure of the French in 1954. But nothing has been settled. The guns still speak.

The U.S.-North Vietnamese agreement, reached after five years of negotiation, stands. So does the conflict.

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