

In Washington, Questions on What's Next

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 26 — The apparent failure of President Nixon's new peace proposals to break the deadlock in Paris raises the question, What comes next in the Vietnam conflict.

If the negotiations cannot succeed, what alternatives are available to the President and to North Vietnam?

What are the implications for American military activity in Indochina? These and

other morning-after questions were being asked here today in the wake of the President's announcement and his dramatic disclosure of nearly 30 months of secret diplomatic efforts to end the war.

At a news conference today Henry A. Kissinger, the President's adviser on national security, was reluctant to speculate on the future. All he would do was to express the hope — as the officials of two Administrations have done before him — that Hanoi would gradually weary of its strategy and accept a compromise.

Once the North Vietnamese are persuaded that the United States will not overthrow the Saigon Government, he said, "They may settle for a political process which gives them less than a 100 per cent guarantee" that they will defeat the South Vietnamese politically but "a fair crack" at it.

If that does not happen, the President pledged Tuesday night, the alternative is a continuation of the Vietnamization program. The American troop withdrawals will go on, but so,

Mr. Nixon made clear, will the periodic bombing of North Vietnam and air strikes in Laos and Cambodia.

Long Stay for Airmen

Thus the "Vietnamization" alternative means that American air and naval units will have to remain in Indochina indefinitely. It also means that the fighting in Laos and Cambodia can be expected to continue until some negotiating alternative is agreed upon.

Although the President's initiative appears to have failed to break the Paris deadlock, it has put him in a strong position to strike back hard at any enemy offensive in the next few weeks. Having put forward a comprehensive peace proposal, the theory here goes, he has created a climate at home and abroad that will condone stiff retaliatory acts against any North Vietnamese move at the time of the mid-February Tet holiday.

Mr. Kissinger conceded today that the Administration was aware of the possibility of renewed fighting in the next few weeks when it decided on its initiative. The new proposals, he said, constitute an attempt to tell the North Vietnamese: "Another round is not necessary. Let's get the war over with now."

He added the thought that it was "possible," maybe even probable, that the reason they would make the offensive is as a prelude to a subsequent negotiation.

"This at least has been their pattern in 1954 and was their pattern in 1968," he explained.

In addition to increasing the President's options on the battlefield, the new peace pro-

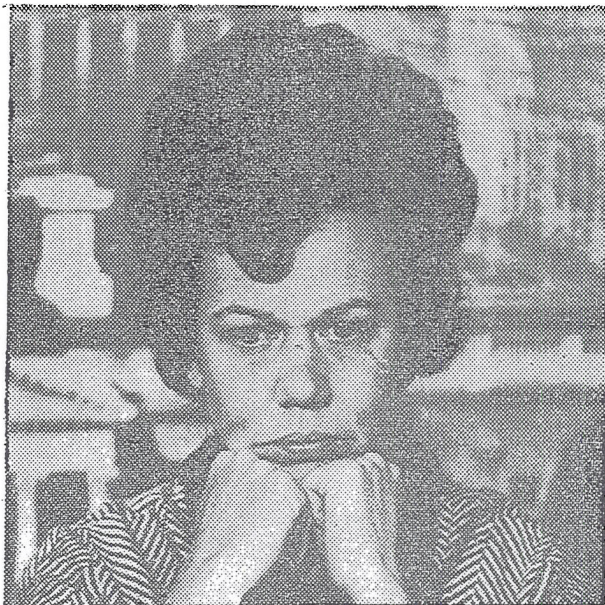
posals have set the stage for his trip to China.

Many diplomats have felt for some time that Mr. Nixon could not expect a warm reception in Peking unless he had made a public offer to withdraw all American troops from Indochina. Regardless of whether such an offer was accepted, it would serve to create the proper atmosphere for successful discussions with the Chinese.

That much he has accomplished with his initiative, the

diplomats feel, and the Chinese can meet with him without fear of being accused of betraying their Indochinese allies.

At the same time, however, Hanoi's prompt denunciation of the President's proposals has underscored the fact that he cannot hope to find the solution to his Vietnam problem in Peking. Mr. Kissinger stressed the point to newsmen today, saying as he has before: "We expect to settle this war with Hanoi, not with Moscow and not with Peking."



Associated Press

PLANS POLITICAL DRIVE TO AID PRISONERS: Mrs. Evelyn Grubb, the national coordinator of the League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia, at a news conference in Washington where she announced the creation of a political action committee to keep prisoner issue before public during the elections.

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