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N. Viets Soften Peace Talk Aims

PARIS — (AP) — The North Vietnamese chief delegate hinted today that his side is ready to resume the Paris peace talks even before bombing of North Vietnam is ordered stopped.

Xuan Thuy's stand appeared to be a softening of demands he made earlier this week when he said talks should begin and the bombing should cease simultaneously.

Answering a question at a news conference, Xuan Thuy said:

"If the United States answers positively to our proposal to hold a meeting on April 27, we will come to the conference. But we will con-

tinue to demand the cessation of the bombing."

Earlier in the day, the North Vietnamese delegation formally asked the United States and South Vietnam resume the peace talks April 27.

"The total and unconditional cessation of the bombing over the Democratic Republic of Vietnam is a principle and we still demand that the United States respect this principle," Xuan Thuy said.

In Washington, White House press secretary Ronald Ziegler said:

"We see nothing new in

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Fuller version (Miami), and text of statement by North Vietnam on 1968 talk, filed Mar. 31 Apr 72.

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the proposal to resume the Paris peace talks."

He said it is hard to conceive the North Vietnamese are ready to proceed with serious negotiations at the same time they are continuing their offensive in South Vietnam.

Ziegler reiterated the U.S. position that the Communists are using the Paris peace talks as "a propaganda pedestal while trying to accomplish the military overrun of South Vietnamese territory."

The North Vietnamese delegate summoned reporters to make public the gist of an unwritten secret pledge by the United States in October, 1968, in which he said the Americans committed themselves to stop the bombing of the North without conditions.

This agreement, Xuan Thuy said, opened the way for the peace talks.

"But now," he went on,

"the Nixon Administration invents the story North Vietnam's violation of an understanding, but there was no understanding whatsoever."

"This is similar to the case of the so-called Tonkin Gulf incidents which the United States fabricated in August, 1964, to have a pretext for its bombardments against" North Vietnam.

According to the North Vietnamese version of the 1968 agreement, W. Averell Harriman, then chief U.S. negotiator, first attempted to apply the conditions which the United States contends still exist.

But the Hanoi document disclosed today said:

"At the private meeting on Oct. 24, 1968, Ambassador Harriman said 'we recognize your statement about 'no condition.' Therefore, we are quite ready to assure you that, in any statement on cessation of the bombing, the U.S. government will not refer to any word such as the word 'conditional.'"