

See also NYTimes 18 Aug 72, filed POWs.

AUG 17 1972

SFXaminer

# 'McG Could Upset Talks'

WASHINGTON — (AP) — The White House said today that contacts by representatives of Democratic presidential candidate George McGovern with the North Vietnamese "could jeopardize" the President's efforts in seeking to negotiate a peaceful settlement of the war.

Presidential press secretary Ronald Ziegler emphasized the word "could" telling reporters "we do not know what was said in these meetings."

The comments from the White House came in response to questions as to whether contacts made in Paris by Pierre Salinger, co-chairman of the Citizens for McGovern Committee, were harmful, helpful, or in any way affected the President's negotiations with the North Vietnamese.

## 'Could Jeopardize'

"When a representative for the opposition candidate is in touch with the North Vietnamese, this could jeopardize the President's efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement in Vietnam," Ziegler said.

When asked how they could jeopardize the situation, Ziegler noted that McGovern has declined to be briefed on the negotiating efforts now under way.

Though not mentioning Salinger by name, he said McGovern's representative could say something to the North Vietnamese "that could jeopardize these efforts," now under way in

—Turn to Page 14, Col. 2

—From Page 1

both public and private talks.

Salinger met with North Vietnamese negotiators in Paris July 18 and Aug. 9 to discuss the prisoner of war situation.

Salinger said yesterday he told the North Vietnamese if there was any chance "to negotiate a peace agreement with President Nixon that they should do so without regard to the American election, that Senator McGovern's desire for peace was greater than his desire for the issue of the Vietnam war to continue as a central issue in this campaign."

Asked about a settlement being reached aside from the presidential election, Ziegler said:

"We assume that would be the view — that no one would want negotiations to be unproductive just because we are in an election year."

## Spokesman

Ziegler did not mention contacts with the North Vietnamese by individuals, such as members of POW families.

Was he speaking for the President?

"These are my remarks," he answered. "I'm the Pres-

ident's spokesman."

Ziegler told reporters he talked to the President about Salinger "but not about the specific response" he made as press secretary.

Nixon was continuing a week-long stay at the presidential retreat at Camp David, Md., where Ziegler said he would get a report from his top foreign policy adviser, Henry Kissinger, on his return from Saigon this weekend.

## Thieu Talks

He said Kissinger had been sending back reports and cables, but had not been in any direct telephone contact with Nixon.

Ziegler said he would have no further comments on Kissinger's meetings in Saigon with South Vietnamese President Thieu.

They have raised considerable speculation as to whether new terms may be under consideration for a peace settlement

He did answer whether the White House considered Kissinger to have received a chilly reception from Thieu, indicated by a delay in getting the talks underway.

"We don't hold that to be a rebuff," he said.