

## Standoff at Paris Talks -- But New Offers Made

## U.S. Criticizes Red Peace Plan -- Then Asks Secret Session

N.Y. Times Service

Paris

The United States sharply criticized the new peace plan of the Vietnamese Communists yesterday, but offered to explore it in an off-the-record conference next Thursday.

The Communists rejected the suggestion as "a perfidious maneuver" to avoid setting a date for an American withdrawal from Vietnam and a simultaneous exchange of prisoners—the first item of their seven-point proposal.

The 120th session of the Paris peace conference thus ended, like the others, in recriminations. There was wide speculation, however, that something else might be brewing under the surface.

## INVITATION

At a news conference, the North Vietnamese delegation renewed its elliptical invitation to President Nixon's adviser on national security affairs, Henry Kissinger, to meet either of its two most important members, Xuan Thuy and Le Duc Tho.

Kissinger is due here tomorrow night en route home from Saigon. If Kissinger asks for a meeting, "we are disposed to consider it," said Nguyen Thanh Le, the North Vietnamese press spokesman.

Kissinger has been reported to have no plan to request such a meeting. But observers were struck by the response of Le to a question of whether there had been any secret contacts between the North Vietnamese and the Americans here.

## REPLY

"We have no information on the subject," he replied. At previous briefings, he had answered the same question with a flat negative.

The four-party conference yesterday was dominated by the seven-point proposal put forward last week by Mrs. Nguyen Thi Binh, delegate of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam — the Viet Cong.

In his prepared opening statement, Ambassador

## From Page 1

them "without any discussion or negotiation."

Bruce objected to the fact that the plan referred only to the release of prisoners taken in North and South Vietnam, but was silent about those captured in Laos and Cambodia.

He said the Communists again are demanding a regime in Saigon "which fulfills your own criteria." "We will not impose any government on the people of South Vietnam," he declared.

## PROPOSAL

But he proposed that the next session be a restricted one, "at which we could explore further your proposals as well as discuss our own . . . free from the glare of publicity and without the need to make public statements . . ."

The chief difference between a regular plenary meeting and a restricted session is that the latter would be off the record, except for an agreed communique. The 120 sessions of the present conference have been held under semi-public conditions, with each side distributing full texts of its opening statements to newsmen and delegation spokesmen later briefing the press on the ensuing discussions.

The Communists have refused restricted sessions, while posing no objections to "private" meetings — presumably because the latter can be held in the absence of representatives of the Saigon government.

Mrs. Binh challenged Bruce to reply to four questions:

"First, do you agree to consider our seven points as a basis of negotiation for a settlement of the South Vietnamese problem?"

"Second, among the seven points, with which do you agree and with which do you disagree — which are the points you consider positive and which do you consider negative?"

"Third, are you disposed to set immediately a final date for the withdrawal from Vietnam in 1971 of all the troops of the United States and the other foreign countries of the American camp, so that the captured American troops can return to their homes as soon as possible in 1971?"

"Fourth, is the American government disposed to stop supporting the bellicist and corrupt group now in power in Saigon and led by Nguyen Van Thieu—or not?"

## FUNDAMENTAL

Mrs. Binh said the third question, the setting of a withdrawal date, is the fundamental one. "When we have the answer to that," she said, "we will take up the discussion of the form of the meeting."

Her press spokesman, Nguyen Trieu Dan, said Mrs. Binh had several times offered to meet Bruce privately, and did not regard the question of meeting procedure as important. She accused Bruce, however, of raising the question as a device to avoid an immediate reply.



AP Wirephoto

MRS. BINH  
She had four questions

Dan said that if Bruce had been able to name a withdrawal date, a cease-fire could have been declared immediately between American and Communist troops.

## SEPARATION

The Communists repeated that the first clause of the plan, covering the withdrawal, cease-fire and release of prisoners, could be separated from the other six, covering the future of South Vietnam.

Some prominent non-Communist Vietnamese here, who have continuing contracts with Saigon, report that the Binh proposals have contributed to the widespread feeling that a historic turning point is at hand.

One of these men observed privately that President Nixon is reduced to only two practical alternatives, on either of which he must act quickly unless he means to continue the war.

The first would be to accept Point 1 and withdraw, with the American prisoners of war, leaving Saigon to work out its own destiny.

The other, he said, would be to persuade President Thieu to resign and let another non-Communist negotiate a long-range, compromise settlement with the Communists.

The latter would have been broadly suggesting that nearly anybody other than Thieu would be acceptable.