

# Enemy Sets P.O.W. Price: Abandon Thieu and Leave

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By HENRY GINIGER JAN 7 1972

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PARIS, Jan. 6—The Vietnamese Communists told the United States at the Paris talks today that it could not have its prisoners back until it agreed both to withdraw its forces and to abandon the Saigon regime of President Nguyen Van Thieu.

The two conditions were made explicit during the first session of the talks held in a month and during comments afterward to newsmen. They are the most fundamental of the seven points in the standing Communist peace plan, and Nguyen Van Tien, the Vietcong delegate, said they were "closely linked."

He was supported by Xuan Thuy, the chief North Vietnamese delegate.

"If the Nixon Administration really wants to disengage from

the Vietnam war and to rapidly repatriate all American servicemen, in combat or in captivity," Mr. Thuy said, then it should "give up aggression, stop the 'Vietnamization' of the war, pull out from South Vietnam all the troops . . . stop backing the Nguyen Van Thieu bellicose puppet group."

Several Democratic Senators, notably George McGovern of South Dakota, have clashed with President Nixon over the question of whether the prisoners could be recovered simply by setting a deadline for an American troop withdrawal.

In a television interview last Sunday, Mr. Nixon said that the question had been "under discussion at various times" at the Paris talks but that the North Vietnamese had "totally

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rejected" such an approach. Senator McGovern charged next day that the United States negotiators had never discussed the matter and that Mr. Nixon had "deceived the American public."

American press spokesman at Stephen J. Ledogar, the Paris talks, agreed that the question had never been put to the Communist side by United States' delegation. He made it clear that it was still official

United States policy to obtain in any settlement that called for an American pullout, the withdrawal also of North Vietnamese troops from South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia and not simply the recovery of prisoners.

Mr. Ledogar said that the American delegation had consistently sought clarification of the other side's proposals and was still doing so. "We don't know what their position is," he said.

A reporter then asked Lyn

Van Sau, the Vietcong spokesman, what conditions were necessary for the release of American prisoners. Mr. Sau answered, in substance, as follows:

The American aggression in Vietnam has taken two forms: the sending of hundreds of thousands of troops and the setting up of a puppet regime in Saigon. A settlement must include the end of both. The prisoner question cannot be settled until the aggression is ended.