

# Hanoi's Cable to Times Cites Peace Aim

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Jan. 20 — North Vietnam has reiterated, in a message to The New York Times, its apparent position that American prisoners will not be released until the Nixon Administration agrees both to withdraw all its forces from South Vietnam and to end its support of the Government of President Nguyen Van Thieu. The statement was virtually identical to comments made by spokesmen for Hanoi in recent weeks and to declarations in the news media. It was sent last Sunday to A. M. Rosenthal, managing editor of The Times, in reply to eight questions cabled by Mr. Rosenthal to Premier Pham Van Dong of North Vietnam on Jan. 4.

The Times had sought clarification of Hanoi's negotiating position, specifically whether the prisoners would be released in return for a firm withdrawal date. Critics of the Administration's policy believe the setting of such a date would result in the release of the prisoners. The Administration has maintained that Hanoi also wants Washington to end its support of the Saigon Government as part of a seven-point "all or nothing" negotiating position.

### Nixon's Statement

In a television interview on Jan. 2, Mr. Nixon said that the possibility of a total troop withdrawal in exchange for the release of the prisoners had been discussed with the North Vietnamese at the Paris peace talks but that Hanoi had "totally rejected" such an approach.

Senator George McGovern, Democrat of South Dakota, charged next day that Mr. Nixon had deceived the public. Mr. McGovern, who met with North Vietnamese officials in Paris last summer, has insisted that Hanoi will recognize an announcement of firm withdrawal date as representing an end of support for Saigon and will release the nearly 400 prisoners.

The Times in its cable asked, "in view of the conflicting accounts" about Hanoi's position, "if the United States set a firm troop withdrawal date, would you agree to the release of American prisoners in your control?"

Mr. Dong was also asked: "Would you negotiate on military withdrawals and the release of prisoners completely separate from questions pertaining to the political future of Vietnam?"

There were also such questions as what constituted an American withdrawal and what constituted the end of political support of Saigon.

On Jan. 6, before The Times had received a reply to its questions, the North Vietnamese spokesman in Paris, Xuan Thuy, said publicly that if the United States wanted to disengage from the war and to repatriate its prisoners, 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."

Mr. Thuy's remarks were printed on the front page of The Times on Jan. 7.

Hanoi's answer, signed by Ngo Dien, director of the Press and Information Department, was sent to The Times through the North Vietnamese mission in Paris on Jan. 15. Without answering any of Mr. Rosenthal's questions directly, Mr. Dien repeated Hanoi's attack on the Nixon Administration.

"At the present time, placed in the obligation of carrying out a gradual withdrawal of United States troops, President Nixon has nonetheless not resigned himself to putting an end to his war of aggression," he said. "Putting into effect his policy of Vietnamization, he means to continue it through the intermediary of the clique of Nguyen Van Thieu."

Mr. Dien added that "by raising at the same time the prisoners' question and the withdrawal of United States troops without renouncing all engagement and support in favor of the Nguyen Van Thieu puppet clique, President Nixon aims not to bring a solution to the aforementioned fundamental problem, but simply to allay the legitimate demands of the American people."

### U. S. Summarizes Exchange

On Monday Mr. Rosenthal thanked Mr. Dien by cable for his reply but said that The Times, after much consideration, had decided not to publish the material "since its content is identical to previous statements made by your Government and subsequently printed by The New York Times."

The Times decided to report on the exchange after it learned that the United States Government had obtained Hanoi's reply to the paper as well as the paper's questions and that a brief summary of the exchange was included in a weekly report distributed for Government use by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, a bureau of the Central Intelligence Agency. The report is made available to newsmen covering the State Department.

The report said that the Vietnamese Communist media had so far not mentioned Mr. Rosenthal's communication to Mr. Dong.

The Government summary said:

"The Vietnamese news agency's service channel to Paris on the 15th carried Rosenthal's questions along with a message from Ngo Dien. Ignoring Rosenthal's specific questions, Dien implied that Point I, on United States withdrawal and prisoner release, could not be separated from Point II, on a political settlement in South Vietnam."

### U.S. Lists Missing Men

PARIS, Jan. 20 (Reuters)—The United States today presented to the Hanoi delegation to the Vietnam peace talks a list of 14 American pilots shot down over North Vietnam and asked why they were not on the North Vietnamese list of United States prisoners of war.

Heyward Isham, the deputy American delegate, told the North Vietnamese that all 14 airmen were "known to have been alive on the ground in North Vietnam, or were at one time actually identified by you as having been captured."

Just over a year ago the North Vietnamese published a list of 339 captured American servicemen, saying the list was "complete and final." The United States delegation has frequently challenged that statement and said that many more United States military men were missing.