

# Hanoi Hints That Saigon Could Keep U.S. Arms

Washington Post Service

Paris

North Vietnam hinted yesterday that the South Vietnamese armed forces would be allowed to retain their American arms and equipment in a peace settlement which would, nonetheless, bar further supplies in the future.

An oblique suggestion to this effect highlighted a North Vietnamese news conference apparently called to offset favorable world reaction to President Nixon's revelations last week on secret peace negotiations.

Replying to a newsman's question, Nguyen Thanh Le, the Hanoi peace talk delegation's press spokesman, demanded the withdrawal of troops, advisers, bases and equipment "of the United States and all foreign countries of the American camp."

By stressing the word "foreign" he apparently was suggesting that the South Vietnamese armed forces could keep their U.S. equipment. However, Le added the now ritual demand that the Nixon administration "must cease supporting" the Saigon regime, which in this context suggested that agreement on a settlement would preclude further arms and equipment deliveries.

## INTENT

Although North Vietnam has played on similar ambiguities to its own advantage in the past, Le's answer was apparently aimed at rebutting a recent statement by Henry Kissinger, the White House foreign affairs specialist.

In explaining his secret meetings with North Vietnamese officials, Kissinger last week told a news conference that he believed Hanoi held that "we would have to withdraw all American equipment, even that which the South Vietnamese army has."

The rest of the North Vietnamese news conference was given over to releasing the text of Hanoi's nine point

See Back Page

From Page 1

peace initiative, handed Kissinger last June 26, to prevent the United States from "misleading public opinion."

As Kissinger himself pointed out last week, that plan differed from a Viet Cong initiative of July 1 chiefly in its explicit demand for U.S. reparations for both Vietnams and extension of its provisions to Laos and Cambodia as well as South Vietnam.

## DIFFERENCES

In elaborating on the previous criticism of President Nixon's eight point plan, Le said that despite the secret talks, the differences between Washington and Hanoi remain "as different as day and night."

But as he and other Communist officials did last week, Le stopped short of outright rejection of the new American plan and of a new round of secret negotiations.

However, he reiterated the standard — and so far unacceptable — demands that the United States fix a specific U.S. troop withdrawal date now and for overthrow of the Saigon regime.

The North Vietnamese also charged that the Nixon administration has attempted for some time to delay a settlement.

"In the private meetings we had the very clear im-

pression that the Nixon administration is clinging to its positions—and has not budged an inch—"on our demands for total troop withdrawal and cessation of support for the Saigon regime," Le said.

## CAMBODIA

Le said that following Mr. Nixon's revelation in December, 1969, of a first series of secret talks the United States had invaded Cambodia and failed to name a permanent delegation chief to the Paris talks for eight months.

The United States, he said,

## Text of North Vietnam plan on Page 14

is continuing to "torpedo the Paris conference and aggravate the stalemate." He noted that the breakdown of the latest secret negotiations had been followed by American cancellation of three plenary sessions here and intensified bombing of all Indochina.

"Nixon talks peace, but makes war," Le said. "The Nixon administration is in no way disposed to start serious negotiations."

Le suggested that if North Vietnam was not necessarily opposed to further secret negotiations it was doubtful whether Hanoi would be represented by Le Duc Tho, the Politburo member who in the past has played a key role in major policy decisions.