

## Farewell to Paris?

The United States walkout from the Paris peace talks is primarily a symbolic token of the Nixon Administration's turn from negotiations to Vietnamization as a means of ending the Indochina war.

Indefinite suspension of the Paris meetings merely confirms the deadlock over a political settlement that has persisted since the talks began three years ago and was reaffirmed when both sides published widely divergent secret proposals last January. For many months, the public sessions have been reduced to exchanges of vitriol and propaganda. The American side has cynically exploited the prisoner-of-war issue, which has strong humanitarian appeal but remains secondary to the political and military agreements that are prerequisites to the safe return of American prisoners.

The possibility of peace through negotiations is not entirely foreclosed. Ambassador William J. Porter has left the door open to the resumption of public meetings, but on terms that are not likely to be readily accepted. Secret talks, like those undertaken by Presidential assistant Henry Kissinger last year, are conceivable, perhaps in the broader framework arising out of President Nixon's recent China trip and his forthcoming visit to Moscow.

Administration policy, however, does not appear to be directed toward a negotiated settlement. On the day of Ambassador Porter's walkout in Paris, Assistant Secretary of State Marshall Green told a House committee that he thought there was "a very good chance" that the Vietnam war might not end by negotiations, but would "fade away" as Hanoi realizes it cannot win through elections or through a military victory in South Vietnam. This revival of a theory first espoused years ago by Henry Cabot Lodge suggests a persisting faith in victory through Vietnamization, a naive hope that is hardly enhanced by the current military-political situation throughout Indochina.

Redemption of President Nixon's pre-election pledge to bring the war in Vietnam to a speedy end seems nowhere in sight.