

HANOI AGAIN ASKS RESTART OF TALKS

Bombing Halt Appears Not a
Precondition—Data on '68

'Understanding' Given
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PARIS, April 20—North Vietnam and the Vietcong today formally proposed resuming the stalled peace conference next Thursday and indicated that they would agree to meet whether the United States halted its bombing attacks or not.

In his second news conference this week, Xuan Thuy,

*Text of Hanoi's statement
appears on Page 17.*

Hanoi's chief negotiator, continued to insist that the air attacks on the North be halted. But he made it clear that this was not a condition for resuming negotiations.

[In Washington, the State Department said a decision had been made not to make the American version public for the moment. It said there might be a change of mind Friday.]

"If the United States responds positively to our proposal and participates in the Paris conference April 27, then

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we are prepared to attend." There was no immediate American answer but informed sources indicated it would be negative.

At the same time, Mr. Thuy released his side's version of the private talks that led to the halting of the American bombing in 1968 and to the agreement to hold a four-sided conference beginning in January, 1969. According to the document—a statement apparently written in recent days to describe the 1968 events — A. Averell Harriman, the American negotiator, agreed to drop American conditions for a bombing halt. Mr. Thuy said that his side's version was released to show that the tacit understanding often referred to by the United States was "a totally invented fable."

Hanoi's version was described by American sources here as truncated, with her words and paragraphs left out.

Reciprocity Rejected

In describing the private talks, Mr. Thuy said that Hanoi "rejected any idea of reciprocity." He indicated that this was still Hanoi's attitude.

But up to now, the United States, which indefinitely suspended the current Paris meetings on March 23, has refused to halt the present bombing of the North or to attend the meetings so long as North Vietnam carried on its new offensive against the South.

There have been indications of continued behind-the-scenes exchanges of messages in which the United States has attempted to get North Vietnam to drop its military pressure on the South preparatory to resumption of talks, either public or private.

But Mr. Thuy, when asked if his side would halt its ground attacks in response to a halt in American air attacks, answered only that "the Vietnamese people is exercising its right of self-defense against American aggression."

So far as the Paris forum is concerned, the United States would prefer private talks. Mr. Thuy continued to hold out the possibility of private talks, but said, "there must first be public meetings to examine the possibility of private meetings."

On Monday Mr. Thuy said that Le Duc Tho, a high-ranking North Vietnamese negotiator who engaged in secret talks with Henry H. Kissinger, President Nixon's adviser on national security, up to October of last year, would return to the Paris talks if the United States halted its bombing and agreed to attend the regular sessions.

The bombing that the

United States has carried out against the North despite the agreement to halt it has been officially explained. The United States has charged that the understanding was nullified when Hanoi penetrated the demilitarized zone and attacked cities in the South.

The Hanoi version of the 1968 diplomacy said that the United States at first insisted on the following "circumstances":

- ¶ Restoration of the demilitarized zone.
- ¶ No military build-up by the two sides.

¶ The start of substantive talks in which each side could be free to raise any question. The American side would include Saigon representatives, while Hanoi could invite whatever representatives it chose.

¶ No major attacks against Saigon, Hue and Danang.

Mr. Tho, in effect, rejected these "circumstances" by demanding an unconditional halt to the bombing and all other acts of war. In answer, Mr. Harriman was quoted as having said: "You have called for an unconditional stop of the bombing. We accept that."

But the Hanoi version added that the American diplomat went on to reiterate military conditions as "very important elements relating to the cessation of the bombing."

Demand on Talks Cited

In subsequent meetings, however, according to Hanoi, Mr. Harriman insisted only on the participation of the Saigon Government in future negotiations before the United States would halt the bombing.

Asked on Sept. 20, 1968, by Hanoi whether this was the only condition, Mr. Harriman reportedly answered: "We think our Government will not come to an agreement to stop the bombing unless we agree on this point."

Mr. Harriman added, the Hanoi version said that "We also

take note of your views on stopping the bombing without conditions."

At the following meeting on Oct. 15, Mr. Harriman reportedly announced that the United States was prepared to stop bombing and all other acts of force if the other side agreed to begin "serious talks" the day after the bombing halt. Mr. Thuy reportedly replied that after an unconditional bombing halt North Vietnam would accept a four-sided conference.

Hanoi reportedly asked that the unconditional agreement to halt bombing be placed in the minutes. Its version said: "The United States side reiterated that the United States cessation of the bombing was unconditional."

On Oct. 24, Mr. Harriman was quoted as saying: "We recognize your statement about 'no condition.' Therefore we are quite ready to assure you that, in any statement on the cessation of the bombing, the United States Government will not refer to any word such as the word 'conditional.'"

Hanoi added that the United States refused, however, to put this in the minutes. After some objections, Hanoi said it finally agreed to leave it out. At the last meeting on the night of Oct. 30-31, Mr. Thuy said, "We understand that this is an unconditional cessation of the bombing."

Mr. Thuy explained that although the agreement was kept out of the minutes, both sides had kept records of what had been said.

Despite its objections to Hanoi's version, the American side made no offer today to release its own version.

The conference did not begin immediately after the bombing halt of Nov. 1 because of wrangling over the kind of table the four delegations would sit at in January, 1969, and to date has gone through 147 sessions. Paris. It finally got under way

no continuation