

Tho Seems to Ease Hanoi's Terms a Bit

By JOHN L. HESS

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PARIS, April 30—Le Duc Tho, a member of the North Vietnamese Politburo, returned from Hanoi today and said that he was here to negotiate with the United States for "a just and equitable peaceful solution to the Vietnamese problem."

Mr. Tho is widely expected

Excerpts from Tho statement are printed on Page 10.

to resume quickly the secret negotiations with Henry A. Kissinger, President Nixon's national security adviser, which ended last October when Mr. Tho returned to Hanoi and Mr. Kissinger declined to meet his associate, Xuan Thuy.

On his arrival in a Soviet airliner at Orly Airport today, Mr. Tho read a harsh rebuttal to President Nixon's speech of last Wednesday. But he phrased the demands of his own side in a slightly more flexible manner than previously.

Mr. Tho did not mention Hanoi's nine-point peace plan or the seven points of its ally, the Vietcong's provisional revolutionary government. He summarized that plan's essential points, however, in calling for the withdrawal of American troops, the immediate resignation of President Nguyen Van Thieu and the formation of a South Vietnamese "government of national harmony."

Mr. Tho denied that his side sought to impose a "Communist regime" on Saigon.

He also suggested that, as at Geneva in 1954, a settlement should ban any reprisals against individuals or groups for activities during the war.

In contrast to recent Communist declarations, his statement did not call for the immediate resignation of anyone other than Mr. Thieu. It demanded "the abolition of any form of coercion and oppression of the people," but did not specify the dissolution of the

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police and army structures in the South.

In demanding that the United States set a date for the withdrawal of its troops, Mr. Tho did not specifically link this issue with a political settlement. He renewed a declaration that the "liberation" forces would not attack American troops that did not attack them.

The statement could be interpreted as reopening an offer made by the Communist side last June and expanded upon by Mr. Tho in an interview with The New York Times in July. The offer was to negotiate a separate peace with the Americans, including the release of prisoners, while leaving a political solution to the Vietnamese.

That offer drew no public response from American negotiators. Neither did the alternative seven-point and nine-point plans for a coalition regime. But Mr. Kissinger was meeting with Mr. Tho secretly, and it has been indicated that some names of potential members of such a government were brought into their discussions.

But as the summer wore on, legislative elections were held in South Vietnam under controversial conditions, and Mr. Thieu finally headed for reelection without opposition. The Communist stance here hardened, and spokesmen in effect withdrew the "short-form" peace offer by linking the American withdrawal and prisoner issues with a political settlement.

Late in October, Mr. Tho went home. Mr. Kissinger declined to meet instead with Mr. Thuy, the chief of the North Vietnamese delegation here, explaining later that only Mr. Tho appeared to have real authority to bargain.

Last March 23, the United States announced that it would not return to the formal talks until the other side showed it was ready to negotiate seriously. A week later, the North Vietnamese offensive began. On April 7, Mr. Tho told a private French delegation that he would return to Paris if the talks resumed. They did, last Thursday, with no sign of a shift in position by either side.

The North Vietnamese spokesman, announcing Mr. Tho's imminent arrival, said smilingly that there "probably will be secret talks."

Mr. Tho himself appears to have left Hanoi immediately after the United States announcement that the conference would resume. After overnight stops in Peking and Mos-

cow, during which he met top Soviet and Chinese officials, he landed here with a large party early this afternoon.

Address the Press

A tall, elderly man with silver hair, Mr. Tho smiled broadly at members of the press assembled in a V.I.P. salon at the airport and said, "Dear friends, I am very happy to resume negotiations with the Americans."

Then, donning tortoise-rimmed glasses, he began reading a long statement in Vietnamese. A translator soon took over and finished in French.

Mr. Tho described Mr. Nixon's speech as "fine words" aimed at duping public opinion. He said the President had promised in 1968 to end the war in six months, but had in fact widened the war and heightened the bombing.

Mr. Tho denied that there had been any "tacit agreements" with the Americans regarding the end of bombing in the North, and he termed "a pure invention" the American charge that a 1968 "understanding" had been violated.

Turning to the resumption of the Paris conference, Mr. Tho said that he and Mr. Thuy demanded that the United States end the bombing of North Vietnam and set a date for "rapid withdrawal from South Vietnam of the totality of American troops and those

of other countries of the American camp."

"We desire," he went on, "that the American troops and the captured American military men return to their country, and see their families as soon as possible."

Then Mr. Tho turned to the key political question. "We demand," he said, "the immediate resignation of Nguyen Van Thieu, a change of policy of the Saigon administration and the abolition of any form of coercion and oppression of the people to assure the conditions necessary for the realization of the most elementary democratic rights, foreseen by Article 14C of the Geneva agreements of 1954 on Vietnam."

Article 14C of the accord, which ended the French-Indochinese war, pledged the parties "not to engage in any reprisals or discrimination against persons or organizations by reason of their activities during hostilities, and to guarantee their democratic liberties."

Such a settlement, Mr. Tho said, was "the path of honor for the United States."

A refusal to negotiate, and an insistence on continuing the policy of Vietnamization, he declared, would leave his side's forces "no other way but to persevere in combat to win their sacred, fundamental national rights at any cost."

At the close, Mr. Tho said: "Dear friends, at the end of a long voyage I am rather tired," and he added apologetically that he would not reply to questions.

But, he added, "I will be at your disposition in the days to come."

Kissinger Reported in U.S.

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 30—A White House spokesman, after checking with Mr. Kissinger's staff, said that Mr. Kissinger was in Washington today.



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RETURNS TO PARIS TALKS: Le Duc Tho of North Vietnam, right, at news session. With him are Xuan Thuy, an associate, and Mrs. Nguyen Thi Binh, Vietcong representative.