

Hanoi Aide Bars U.S. Plan, But Would Resume Talks

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PARIS, May 12—Le Duc Tho, a leading member of the North Vietnamese politburo, today rejected President Nixon's latest proposal for a settlement in Vietnam, but said that he would stay on in Paris and was ready for serious negotiations.

Mr. Tho, now the chief negotiator for Hanoi, said at a news conference that the military as-

Excerpts from the Le Duc Tho comments on Page 8.

pects of Mr. Nixon's proposal Monday night—the release of American prisoners, a cease-fire, cessation of the use of force by the United States in Indochina and the withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam—could not be separated from the question of the political future of South Vietnam.

"Everyone knows," Mr. Tho said, "that the most arduous problem now existing between the two sides is the problem of power in South Vietnam."

As the news conference began in the North Vietnamese villa in suburban Choisy-le-Roi, the United States delegation in a statement reaffirmed its "readiness to return to the talks on the basis stated during the May 4 meeting."

On May 4, William J. Porter, head of the United States delegation, said the sessions would resume when the other side showed readiness to negotiate seriously, and the first order of business must be the halting of the North Vietnamese invasion of South Vietnam.

Advised of the statement, Mr.

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Associated Press

DISCUSSES PEACE TALKS: Le Duc Tho of Hanoi at news session in Paris. Portrait depicts the late Ho Chi Minh.

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Tho said, "We demand the resumption of the sessions without conditions."

Later, he indicated a readiness to resume his private meetings with Henry A. Kissinger, but said the secret and the plenary sessions were "necessarily linked."

The statement by Mr. Tho was the third reaction by the Vietnamese Communists here to Mr. Nixon's speech Monday. On Wednesday, Mrs. Nguyen Thi Binh, the Vietcong representative here, rejected the settlement proposals. A day earlier, the North Vietnamese attacked as a military "ultimatum" the decision to seal off North Vietnam's supply routes. The rejection today was the first time the North Vietnamese here had commented publicly on the proposals for a settlement in Mr. Nixon's speech.

Declaring that a Communist regime in Saigon today would not "reflect the reality of the situation," Mr. Tho said his side proposed a government in which Communists and their sympathizers would be in the minority.

Explains Plan for Regime

He said the existing regime would name its own segment of a new "government of national harmony of three elements." President Nguyen Van Thieu would be excluded from participating in the new government, as would all other members of the "repressive apparatus" of the Saigon regime, Mr. Tho said. Another element would consist of members of the Communist-led Vietcong.

The third, Mr. Tho said, would represent other groups of South Vietnamese, "including people who don't approve of Government policy but don't approve of P.R.G. policy, either."

Mr. Tho sharply dismissed the proposal of the British Government, as cochairman, with the Soviet Union, to reconvene the Geneva Conference on Indochina.

Because London "falls behind the American Government's policy" and has endorsed the latest escalation of the war, he declared, "the British Government no longer has any qualification to serve as co-chairman of the Geneva Conference."

Mr. Tho sidestepped questions about yesterday's meeting between Mr. Nixon and the Soviet Trade Minister, Nikolai S. Patolichev, and about the scheduled Nixon visit to Moscow, which he said was "an internal affair of the Soviet Union."

"We are firmly confident that the support that the Soviet Union has been giving us will remain unchanged," he declared.

The 61-year-old Mr. Tho weathered with good humor his first confrontation with a Western news conference. He replied in quick Vietnamese to questions from a crowd of more than 100, occasionally smiling broadly. Translations were given in the language of the questioner, in French or English.

Stresses Political Solution

Asked whether Mr. Nixon's four-part proposal Monday offered any progress, Mr. Tho said he had read the speech carefully, and "the newest element" in it was the announcement of the mining of North Vietnamese harbors and the heightened bombing.

The peace offer, he continued, was put as "a counterpart for ceasing his acts." Furthermore, he said, it was limited to military matters.

"For our part," he went on, "We demand the settlement of the Vietnamese problem not only in the military but also in the political aspects. For in any war, the aim is to achieve political objectives, and if political questions are not settled, then the problem persists."

Reiterating the Communist demand for a precise date for American withdrawal, Mr. Tho said with a smile that Mr. Nixon had only "sliced two months off" his earlier offer of a six-month period. The Communists complain that the starting date of such a withdrawal is not specified in the American proposals.

"One may wonder when the settlement would be," he said.

Mr. Tho was asked why, after fighting for 25 years, the Communists did not want to impose a Communist regime on South Vietnam. He laughed, then replied that the war had been against "imperialist aggression," and that if the United States had not violated the Geneva agreements, "our country would have been unified long ago."

"But now," he said, "practically speaking, our country is divided into two parts: the North, socialist, and the people of the South wanting a government of three elements. So your question doesn't reflect the reality of the situation."

In a long opening statement rebutting Mr. Nixon's speech, Mr. Tho accused the President

of inflicting a "bloodbath" on South Vietnam and endangering the lives of the 60,000 American troops there.

After citing the problem of political power in South Vietnam, Mr. Tho said: "Until the last private meeting of May 2, 1972, Mr. Kissinger offered nothing other than the old eight points; instead he tried by every means to maintain the Nguyen Van Thieu Administration, which the Vietnamese people will never accept." He

also indicated that nothing new had been proposed by Mr. Kissinger at last week's meeting.

Mr. Tho said Mr. Nixon had not only passed up several opportunities to end the war honorably, but had also stepped up military actions on those occasions.

He accused the President of having broken a promise of secrecy about the private talks three times. Communist circles had in fact leaked news about the last meeting; on two prior

occasions, it was Mr. Nixon who made the disclosures.

After accusing Mr. Nixon of bad faith, Mr. Tho said, "if he really wants serious negotiations, then, with unchanged goodwill and serious intent, we are ready to find, together with the U. S. side, a logical and reasonable solution."