

U.S. DISCOURAGING HINTS OF SUCCESS AT PEACE PARLEY

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Some Officials Embarrassed
by Optimistic View Given
in Rogers Interview

STATEMENT EXPLAINED

Spokesmen Say He Was Not
Making a Flat Prediction
of When War Will End

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By BERNARD GWERTZMAN

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 21—

The Nixon Administration sought today to discourage speculation that a breakthrough in the Vietnam negotiations had been achieved or was imminent.

Some officials were clearly embarrassed by the attention given in the last two days to a published interview with Secretary of State William P. Rogers, in which he said he was "convinced" that a negotiated settlement of the Vietnam war would be achieved either before or shortly after the November elections.

Both White House and State Department spokesmen were instructed to say that Mr. Rogers had not intended to make a "flat prediction" on when the war might end. The White House said that Mr. Rogers was giving "a general assessment based on his personal appraisal of the situation."

Hope, Not Prediction

"He was expressing the hope of the Administration for an early settlement," said Gerald L. Warren, the deputy White House press secretary. "He was not making a prediction based on any event or any exchange that may or may not have occurred."

Mr. Warren was apparently seeking to make sure that newsmen understood that Mr. Rogers's comments were not directly related to the recent private conversations held by

Henry A. Kissinger, the President's adviser on national security, in Paris with North Vietnamese negotiators and in Saigon with President Nguyen Van Thieu of South Vietnam.

In fact, from remarks made by Administration officials, it seemed possible that when Mr. Rogers gave his interview to the Knight newspapers last Wednesday, he had not yet been informed of the results of Mr. Kissinger's meeting with Le Duc Tho, the chief Hanoi negotiator, in Paris last Monday.

Briefing at Camp David

After returning to Washington, Mr. Kissinger briefed President Nixon and Mr. Rogers at dinner Saturday night at Camp David, Md. Mr. Kissinger met privately with Mr. Nixon last night.

Robert J. McCloskey, the State Department spokesman, said, "I have no authority to establish connections between the inter-

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view and the Kissinger briefing on Saturday night, or to disclose any conclusions the Administration may have reached."

Mr. Rogers's interview — published yesterday in the Miami Herald and other Knight newspapers — has caused some irritation at the White House because it went further than either Mr. Nixon or Mr. Kissinger has been willing to go in predicting when the war would end.

Both Are Optimistic

Both Mr. Nixon and Mr. Kissinger have expressed optimism that the war would end through negotiations. At his most recent news conference July 27, the President said that the chance for a settlement was better than it had even been. But they have avoided predicting a firm date because of Hanoi's refusal up to now to compromise its stand at the negotiations.

The Administration apparently does not want to be accused of creating false expectations for political purposes during the campaign.

Reacting to speculation in some newspapers that a breakthrough had either been achieved or was imminent, the White House also advised newsmen not to expect any major disclosures about Vietnam in Mr. Nixon's acceptance speech at the Republican Convention on Wednesday night.

Since North Vietnam, in its published commentaries, has

denied that any changes in the Vietnam situation have resulted from the Paris talks, the impression was left that as of today, the situation had not changed markedly on the diplomatic front.

Confidence of Accord

Despite the apparent stalemate, the White House and Mr. Rogers apparently remain confident that there will eventually be a negotiated settlement. Mr. McCloskey said that Mr. Rogers still stood on the substance of his remarks.

Another official, in seeking to explain the apparent contradictions between Mr. Rogers's comments and those of others, said: "Rogers was predicting on the basis of the Vietnam trends; he was not predicting on the basis of the actual negotiations."

In his interview, Mr. Rogers began by saying that the North Vietnamese were being intractable at the negotiating table.

"If you analyze the position of the other side," he said, "it is simply this—a military takeover of South Vietnam. They want us to leave and stop giving any economic or military assistance to the South Vietnamese, and impose a government of their choosing on the people of South Vietnam."

"Now, that is unacceptable," Mr. Rogers said.

He said if the United States followed that course, "We would be renegeing on everything we have represented and everything we have stood for."

More Optimistic Approach

When the interviewer interpreted his remarks as indicating that the prospects for peace were slim, Mr. Rogers moved toward a more optimistic approach.

He said that if the North Vietnamese pledged to continue fighting indefinitely, "There is no way to predict with certainty how long it might last." But he added, "I don't believe that question is going to be a live question."

"I think that either we will have a negotiated settlement before the election, which I think is a possibility, or we will have one very soon after President Nixon's re-election, because I think that the North Vietnamese are having serious military, economic and psychological difficulties.

"The role of several of their allies indicated that in the international field most nations feel that the war should be ended by negotiation, and so I think that will be the inevitable result of these pressures."

He Gives Four Reasons

Questioned further, Mr. Rogers gave four reasons why he thought the North Vietnamese would "want to work out a settlement."

The first was his belief that Hanoi's invasion of South Vietnam "has not been successful." Second, the American bombing of North Vietnam and the mining of harbors "have been successful." Third, "I think the word is beginning to get back to the North Vietnamese people that this is a hopeless endeavor for them to be engaged in, that they realize that the South Vietnamese are fighting very well." Fourth, Mr. Rogers said, "You find that the international community is largely supporting President Nixon in the proposal that he has made to bring about a peaceful settlement."

"Now, whether that happens before the election or shortly thereafter, I don't know, but I am convinced it will happen," he said.

Mr. McCloskey said today that he was present at Mr. Rogers's interview and had the impression that when Mr. Rogers said "shortly" after the elections, "he thought in terms of months, rather than days or weeks."

Mon 14 Aug - Kissinger holds ~~second~~ meeting with Le Duc Tho,
Paris; flies to Switzerland

Tues 15 Aug - Kissinger leaves Switzerland

Wed 16 Aug - Rogers gives intv to Knight newspapers,
published 20 Aug
- Kissinger arrives Saigon

Fri 18 Aug - Kissinger leaves Saigon

Sat 19 Aug - Kissinger briefs Nixon and Rogers, Camp David

Sun 20 Aug - Rogers intv published

- * Is it likely that Rogers was not informed of results of Tho-Kissinger meetings, by Wednesday, when the talks were ended on Monday?
- * * How can there be any connection between the Rogers intv, given on Wednesday, the the Kissinger briefing on Saturday?