

KISSINGER MEETS WITH HANOI AIDES

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17th Session of the Private
Talks Is Held in Paris

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PARIS, Sept. 15—Henry A. Kissinger met with North Vietnam's senior negotiators here today in their 17th secret session aimed at ending the war.

Neither Mr. Kissinger, nor the United States Embassy, nor the North Vietnamese, nor the French released any information on the talks.

Mr. Kissinger flew to Paris from London at dawn, eluding watchers who were expecting him to take off in his official plane at midafternoon. They learned later that he had crossed the Channel in a small United States Air Force plane, leaving his special plane to follow him.

His one public appearance in Paris was when he went to the Elysee Palace with the United States Ambassador, Arthur Watson, late this afternoon to see President Pompidou.

After the meeting, which followed sessions with British leaders in London yesterday and with West German leaders

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in Munich last weekend, Mr. Kissinger took off for Washington. He is to hold a news conference tomorrow after reporting to President Nixon.

The major part of his week-long trip was spent negotiating with leaders in Moscow, which produced a communique announcing "significant progress" toward a comprehensive trade agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union. The communique also said progress has been made on preparations for an East-West security conference and the resumption of talks on the limitation of strategic arms.

Some Westerners in close touch with Moscow and Hanoi see the trade agreement as a key to the next stage of Vietnam bargaining. The trade accord is expected to be a comprehensive package, involving large-scale credits, opening of a United States trade center in Moscow with agreed rules to help American businessmen operate there, a settlement of

World War II Lend-Lease debts, and possibly most-favored-nation status for the Soviet Union.

Experts expect it to represent well over \$10-billion worth of exchanges over a number of years. This has been a prime Soviet goal for some time.

Mr. Kissinger has often said that the way to deal with the Soviet Union is to create vested interests that bring it to desire good relations with the United States wherever other points of friction arise, such as in Vietnam and the Middle East.

Thus, recent private indications that the Russians were tying Vietnam and the trade deal heightened speculation here that the Vietnam issue was being budgeted.

In Paris, Mr. Kissinger met with Le Duc Tho, Hanoi's chief negotiator, who returned here last Monday and the North Vietnamese delegation leader, Xuan Thuy. Mr. Kissinger and Mr. Tho were in Moscow at the same time but they did not meet there, according to American officials.

Saigon Regime an Issue

The Soviet Embassy here could not be reached for comment on whether Mr. Tho had been fully briefed by them on Mr. Kissinger's Moscow talks, but they are normally in close touch.

If, as some Western sources consider likely, Moscow has firmly urged Hanoi to reach a compromise with President Nixon, the direct talks here would have centered on political terms for the reorganization of President Nguyen Van Thieu's government in Saigon.

Unofficial Vietnamese sources here who follow the negotiations closely believe that the latest statement by the National Liberation Front, or Vietcong, reflects some pressure from Hanoi on the front to modify its political demands.

On Monday, the front issued a statement omitting the usual requirement for the "immediate" resignation of Mr. Thieu and referring to the "reality" of two governments, two armies and two administrations in South Vietnam.

Some of these unofficial Vietnamese said they had received hints that Hanoi would not object to the formation of a "transition" government excluding both Mr. Thieu and the Vietcong.

They took the statement to mean that the Vietcong was resisting this kind of compromise, suggesting instead that it would prefer a deal that included Mr. Thieu for the time being to one that left the front out even for a brief period.

The chief United States delegate at the peace talks here, William Porter, rejected the proposal at the 159th session of the talks yesterday. He said it "nothing more than a disguised attempt to put the Vietcong in power without an election."

But the formal talks customarily turn opaque when private meetings between Mr. Kissinger and Mr. Tho are in the offing, and do not necessarily reflect secret negotiations.

After today's meeting, North Vietnamese sources told Reuters news service that Mr. Tho had explained to Mr. Kissinger in detail the meaning of the latest proposals for a government of "national concord" in South Vietnam, but the sources would go no further.