

27 Sept 72  
**Kissinger**  
 WR Post  
**Confers**  
**With Tho**  
**2-Day Session**  
**Spurs Talk of**  
**Breakthrough**

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Presidential envoy Henry A. Kissinger is engaged in an extended two-day round of private talks with North Vietnamese Politburo member Le Duc Tho in Paris, the White House announced yesterday.

The Kissinger meeting with Tho and Xuan Thuy, chief of North Vietnam's delegation at the formal conference, was disclosed yesterday morning. In mid-afternoon, the White House made the unusual, added announcement that the Kissinger discussions, his 18th set of secret Vietnam talks, will continue for a second day today.

The circumstances under which the second announcement was made, immediately and predictably, heightened speculation that the secret talks may be reaching a decisive stage. The Nixon administration did nothing to diminish—or sustain—that speculation, which is on the rise as the Nov. 7 presidential election date approaches.

White House Press Secretary Ronald L. Ziegler announced continuance of the Kissinger talks to newsmen aboard Air Force One, as President Nixon's party was flying from Washington to New York for campaign appearances. "In accordance with our agreements with the other side," said Ziegler, "I have no further to say." Because of the continuance, Ziegler said, Kissinger extended his stay in Paris one day.

The announcements themselves, while unconfirmed by the claim that talks are near or approaching a breakthrough to an agreement, nevertheless are automatically beneficial to the Nixon administration in the election campaign. The secrecy surrounding them continues to hold out the prospect that the Nixon administration might spring a Vietnam disengagement surprise on the Democratic presidential challenger, Sen. George McGovern.

At the same time, the administration is authoritatively reported to be determined to avoid any public commitment to produce an agreement by election day, in order to avoid a pledge that could rebound against it if unfulfilled.

The White House quickly backed away last month from a forecast by Secretary of State William P. Rogers that a negotiated settlement would be reached "before the end of the year" or "very soon after." It promptly labeled a "hope, not a projection."

Expectations have been aroused privately, however, by others, including a French diplomatic source who last week said he believed a Vietnam agreement was "within reach," but the question was whether the opportunity would be seized on both sides. French Foreign Minister Maurice Schumann, who conferred with Kissinger in Washington last Friday, virtually said as much yesterday in a prepared speech at the United Nations.

Schumann said he would "not hesitate to assert this: the opportunity to bring Indochina a peace whose political and military terms

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... perceived is now at hand. I do not want to believe that this opportunity will again be passed up."

The French, however, with their own war experience in Indochina, have been contending for years that the opportunity for disengagement from the war should be taken by the United States.

North Vietnam was silent yesterday about the Kissinger-Tho talks, although the Vietnamese delegation spokesman in Paris, Ly Van Sau, issued a statement reiterating the Vietcong's Sept. 11 plan for a three-segment coalition government in South Vietnam to replace the Saigon regime of President Nguyen Van Thieu. Sau said "The form of settlement—whether they are private or public, does not matter." He said "our plan is an exceptionally favorable opportunity for President Nixon to disengage himself from Vietnam with honor."

On Monday, North Vietnam provided a clue that the Kissinger-Tho talks might be centered on a compromise combination of the Communist side's Sept. 11 plan and President Nixon's May 8 proposal for an Indochina-wide ceasefire, the release of American prisoners and a total U.S. troop withdrawal.

A statement in the Communist newspaper Nhan Dan, indicated that North Vietnam is seeking a big-power guarantee that it calls a three-segment government that will be "neither a Communist regime nor a U.S. stooge regime" to replace the Thieu government.

This statement asked if the

United States "dares... to gether with the parties concerned to 'put forth and carry out necessary measures to ensure that neither side dominates the political life in South Vietnam' during a 'transitional period' of government.

Meetings in Moscow during the last two days between the North Vietnamese ambassador there, Vo Thuc Dong and Premier Alexei N. Kosygin and Soviet President Nikolai V. Podgorny, aroused further speculation that a big-power guarantee formula might be under exploration.

What is missing, however, from the fragmentary facts that can be pieced together about the secret diplomacy is the way in which President Nixon can be induced to accept a settlement to replace his regime.

There has adamantly opposed any "two-way or one-way coalition" with the Communists, and emphatically insisted last week that no settlement can be made on the political future of South Vietnam by any "foreign power."

President Nixon, in this part, repeatedly has stated that the United States will reject all attempts to "impose" any political solution on South Vietnam. In addition, Mr. Nixon often has scorned the notion of any coalition government for South Vietnam, although his strongest statements were made in 1968 before he took office, when he said "A coalition with the Communists is like putting a cobra and a mongoose together—they try to eat each other."