

Post 10/5/72

Officials in Hanoi Express 'Cautious Hope' for Peace

By Jean Thoraval
Agence France-Presse

HANOI, Oct. 4—There is an atmosphere of "cautious hope" in Hanoi on the chances of a negotiated settlement to the Vietnam conflict, according to official spokesmen.

In their view, the initiative for the choice of peace or continuation of the war belongs to the United States.

"The Provisional Revolutionary Government in South Vietnam and Hanoi have formulated proposals permitting the two parties not to lose face," these sources say. They

are now waiting for the Americans to show which way they want to go.

The feeling of actually being very close to a ceasefire, barring a mishap because of stubbornness or a misstep by one of the parties involved, is shared by numerous observers stationed in Hanoi.

These observers think that if the parties do not seize the opportunity which seems to be in their grasp, it could very well not come again for four years—the duration of an American presidential term.

There are various indications that on both sides there is a desire to reach an agreement which would be "honorable" for each one.

Some importance is apparently attached here to the last series of meetings between U.S. presidential adviser Henry A. Kissinger and Hanoi representative Le Duc Tho, if only because they lasted for two days consecutively.

Nor is it impossible, accord-

ing to reliable sources here, that the negotiators will meet again shortly.

Another factor is that the tone of the North Vietnamese press toward President Nixon has been less virulent. The papers have repeatedly said in the past few days that the conflict could be settled "with the current President of the United States," while it would not necessarily be with the Democratic candidate, George McGovern.

In fact, it seems to have been admitted here that while the South Dakota senator's program for Indochina is attractive, there is little chance of President Nixon leaving the White House.

Observers here also note with interest the recent succession of visitors to Saigon to see President Thieu; the latter's talks with Kissinger's assistant, Gen. Alexander Haig, and Kissinger's recent meeting with French President Georges Pompidou.