

SFChronicle

Kissinger Back In Paris--New Secret Talks

Washington Post Service

Washington

Presidential adviser Henry Kissinger, accompanied by his chief deputy, Major General Alexander M. Haig Jr., flew to Paris yesterday and held more secret talks with North Vietnamese negotiators, the White House announced.

The presence of Haig, just back from Saigon where he briefed South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu on the progress of the negotiations, prompted speculation that the discussions centered on Thieu's future.

White House press secretary Ronald Ziegler, who announced the Kissinger trip, refused to give any details except that Kissinger would confer with Le Duc Tho of the North Vietnamese politburo and Xuan Thuy, North Vietnam's chief negotiator in Paris.

Ziegler said last night Kissinger had arranged for the talks to continue today and that they might continue "possibly a third day."

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Ziegler said Kissinger had cabled reports to President Nixon, but refused to provide any indication on the substance of the talks.

Meanwhile, in Saigon informants reported that U.S. Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker had an appointment with Thieu tentatively set for today.

In Paris, both sides declined comment.

Kissinger's trip, his 19th since the start of the secret talks in 1969, followed a week of rumors, all denied, of breakthroughs in the peace talks.

Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird said yesterday that while there is nothing to indicate a cease-fire before the November 7 election, the peace talks are at "a very serious, significant and sensitive stage."

CONDITION

Interviewed on the CBS television program "Face the Nation," Laird also said the United States "must have return of our prisoners of war and accountability for our missing in action" as part of any settlement.

The inclusion of Haig for the first time in the talks followed a report in the Times

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of London Friday that the U.S. and North Vietnam had agreed on a plan by which Thieu would resign to make way for a coalition government.

The Communists have demanded that Thieu be replaced by a tripartite provisional government as a prelude to a permanent settlement of the war.

The White House dismissed the Times report as sheer speculation. Some observers, however, have interpreted Thieu's recent reiteration of his rejection of the Communist proposals as an attempt to convey to Washington Saigon's unhappiness with developments in Paris.