

President Seeking a Way To End Cease-Fire Impasse

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To Brief
Thieu

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Washington

President Nixon decided yesterday to send a top emissary to Southeast Asia to brief South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu and other leaders on the deadlocked peace talks.

Mr. Nixon's chief negotiator, Henry A. Kissinger, said a cease-fire agreement was not likely before Christmas.

The White House said General Alexander Haig, Kissinger's deputy, left at 9 p.m. EST for Saigon on a four-day mission to bring allies up to date on the stalled Paris negotiations.

Haig, accompanied by a contingent of diplomatic and military advisers, planned to start with a round of consultations with Thieu, U.S. Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker and General Frederick Weyand, American military commander in South Vietnam. He also was to confer with President Lon Nol in Cambodia; Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma in Laos and Prime Minister Thanom Kittikachorn in Thailand.

Presidential Press Secretary Ronald L. Ziegler said Haig would return to Washington to report to Mr. Nixon on or about next Thursday.

HOPES

Kissinger, following his briefing of newsmen on the negotiations Saturday, said late Saturday night that chances of a peace settlement by Christmas have faded. But he insisted that a cease-fire agreement could

be wrapped up quickly if North Vietnam would make the "one decision" to settle the one or two remaining is-

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sues that have blocked progress.

In Peking, Hanoi's chief negotiator Le Duc Tho conferred with Premier Chou En-Lai, who said the "Vietnam question should be settled at an early date on the basis of respect for the Vietnamese people's basic national rights," according to the New China News Agency. Tho was en route home from Paris.

The Hanoi newspaper Nhan Dan, quoted by NCNA yesterday, labeled Thieu's insistence that North Vietnamese troops withdraw from the South "absurd" and said keeping the demilitarized zone in any settlement was a scheme to keep South Vietnam under U.S. domination. The newspaper also denounced the "Nixon administration for delaying signing of an agreement."

In Saigon observers said Kissinger's latest review of the negotiations, presented to a crowded White House news conference Saturday, was likely to please Thieu in that it placed blame for the deadlock on Hanoi; but Saigon was likely to be less happy, observers added, with Kissinger's public admission that the U.S. is not fighting for the withdrawal of Hanoi's army from the South as part of the settlement.

FAILURE

Kissinger's account of negotiations since November 20 was a bleak one, disclosing he had failed to reach a solution in secret talks with Tho that Mr. Nixon regards as "fair and just."

Ziegler described the Haig mission as a "follow-up to bring the leaders of those countries abreast of the Paris negotiations." Mr. Nixon decided the talks in Paris should be suspended last

Wednesday on grounds they had deteriorated into a "charade" with Hanoi's diplomats reneging on points previously agreed to and raising "frivolous" issues, Ziegler added.

Kissinger was more subdued in his latest public pronouncements on Vietnam than on October 23 when he said "peace is at hand." He blamed Hanoi for the failure to settle on a final accord. Kissinger said he expected there would be further talks with Tho with whom he is in contact through messages.

The presidential adviser also disclosed sharp differences with Hanoi on the size and operation of the proposed international cease-fire supervisory team. Another, probably more fundamental disagreement apparently was over the question of South Vietnam's sovereignty and whether the accord would concede if only in an indirect, elusive way that there are two Vietnams.

Among those accompanying Haig, who will be making his tenth trip to Southeast Asia for Mr. Nixon, will be Laurin B. Askew, head of the Vietnam task force at the State Department; John Negroponte of the NSC staff who has been involved in the technical negotiations in Paris and is fluent in Vietnamese; John Bushnell, another Kissinger aide; Lieutenant Colonel Frederick Brown, military assistant to Haig and Major George Joulwan, Haig's military aide.