

Kissinger and Abrams In Saigon to Meet Thieu

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SAIGON, South Vietnam, Oct. 18—Henry A. Kissinger and Gen. Creighton W. Abrams, the new Army Chief of Staff, arrived today for consultations with President Nguyen Van Thieu.

Their visits were presumably connected with reported movement in the secret talks between Mr. Kissinger and North Vietnamese negotiators in Paris, but neither the Americans nor the South Vietnamese here offered any enlightenment at all today.

The arrival of Mr. Kissinger, President Nixon's adviser on national security, from a session in Paris, drew Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker and most high-ranking officials of the United States embassy, General Abrams and South Vietnam's Ambassador to the United States, Tran Kim Phuong, as well as a horde of newsmen.

A Brief Appearance

In the Kissinger party were a deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia" and Pacific Affairs, William H. Sullivan, and four aides on the National Security Council Staff—Winston Lord, John Negroponte, Peter Rodman and James Engle.

Mr. Kissinger shook hands with the dignitaries present, waved to the photographers and disappeared into a limousine.

The most American official spokesmen would say about the visits was that Mr. Kissinger was expected to call on Mr. Thieu tomorrow and that General Abrams might accompany him. The general, who spent four years here, most of it as the American commander, is on friendly terms with Mr. Thieu.

General Abrams arrived this morning and spent the day conferring with the man who succeeded him as chief of the Military Assistance Command, Gen. Frederick C. Weyand.

Flood of Speculation

Mr. Kissinger's arrival in Saigon—like his visit Aug. 16 and like that earlier this month by his deputy, Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr.—has unleashed a flood of speculation about the possibility of an early ceasefire.

Since the Communists have insisted that the main obstacle to a settlement is President Thieu, who vigorously opposes their plan for a tripartite coalition government in Saigon, most of the speculation is concerned with talks Mr. Kissinger may have had in Paris with North Vietnam's negotiators, Xuan Thuy and Le Duc Tho, about the political aspects of a solution.

Mr. Tho returned to Hanoi this week after four days of meetings with Mr. Kissinger in Paris.

Meanwhile, Mr. Thieu has put off for three days a request by Mr. Bunker for a meeting. The President recalled Ambassador Phuong from Washington and Pham Dang Lam, his delegate to the peace talks, from Paris and has been consulting with them and with members of his Cabinet.

In recent speeches Mr. Thieu has emphasized his belief that the way to peace lies in killing the Communists to the last man. In part, diplomatic observers believe, he has taken that position because rumors of an imminent cease-fire have had an adverse impact on the fighting spirit of many South Vietnamese Army units.

"This cease-fire propaganda

is really effective," an American major who advises the 15th Regiment of the Ninth Division in the Mekong Delta said. "It's hard to convince them to go out and fight."

Intense speculation in Washington has also contributed to expectations in this war-weary country that the fighting may stop soon. Captured Communist directives have indicated that the enemy has received orders to seize and hold territory in the South in preparation for a possible cease-fire soon.

If a cease-fire was what Mr. Kissinger and General Abrams were here to arrange, there was no hint from them, from American spokesmen or from the war communiqués, which told of air raids over North Vietnam and scattered fighting all over the South.

Ward Kirchwehm, the United States Embassy spokesman, commented: "I am reasonably certain Dr. Kissinger is not going to say anything to anybody [in the press] throughout the duration of his stay, and I can't say how long that is or where he will go after his visit here."

Military spokesmen referred reporters to official statements in Washington for an explanation of General Abrams's visit. The one given by Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird on Monday was that he had sent the general, who left here in July, "to make an on-the-scene evaluation of Vietnamization progress."