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# Kissinger, Thieu Open New Talks

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## Saigon

White House foreign policy adviser Henry Kissinger began new talks with President Nguyen Van Thieu today amid heightening speculation that some moves toward settlement of the Vietnam war may be imminent.

But the size of the American delegation that called at the presidential palace at 9 a.m. appeared to indicate that the conversation was going to be more general than specific. The pattern of past sessions between Kissinger and Thieu has been to keep the number of participants to a minimum when substantive issues were on the table.

The U.S. Embassy announced that Kissinger was accompanied by Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker, deputy ambassador Charles S. Whitehouse, Assistant Secretary of State William Sullivan, U.S. Army Chief of Staff General Creighton Abrams and two members of Kissinger's national security staff, Winston Lord and David Engle. No further details were disclosed.

Kissinger and Thieu met for 3½ hours and the meeting broke up at 12:30 p.m. There was no official word on what was said. Kissinger went to lunch with Bunker, and officials refused to say whether he would see Thieu again before leaving Saigon.

Kissinger arrived last night after a flight from Paris, where he had again met briefly with members of the North Vietnamese negotiating team. Abrams, former commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam, had arrived about ten hours earlier.

The number of people in Saigon who know the real

significance of Kissinger's visit and Abrams' return could probably be counted on one hand. But taken together, following Kissinger's extended private talks with North Vietnamese Politburo member Le Duc Tho, the arrival of the two Americans added to the popular belief that some serious moves to-

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ward a settlement of the war are imminent.

The evidence to support that view is thin. It consists mostly of the opinion that important men would not be flying around like this if they did not have some significant reason to do so. There is very little hard information to back up the speculation.

Vietnamese newspapers gave front-page display to American wire service accounts of Kissinger's trip, but the government was silent about what it meant, or whom he would talk to.

Thieu dined last night with about eight pro-government members of the National Assembly, capping an unusual four-day period in which he has conferred with almost every high-ranking Vietnamese government official. But the palace provided no information about his expected talks with Kissinger.

## ENVOY

Kissinger was met at the airport by U.S. Ambassador Bunker, deputy ambassador Whitehouse, General Fred C. Weyand, commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam; General John Vogt, commander of the Seventh Air Force, and Abrams.

The South Vietnamese government was represented by ran Kim Phuong, the ambassador to Washington whose recall for "consultations" last weekend

contributed to the peace rumors, and Nguyen Phu Duc, Thieu's adviser on foreign affairs.

According to U.S. military spokesmen, Abrams is to be here for about a week, conferring with Weyand and other members of the U.S. Military Assistance Command. Officers who are in charge of particular aspects of the U.S. advisory program, such as economic affairs, have been canceling their other appointments.

As seen from Saigon, Kissinger's global wanderings and private conversations continue to be the principal indicator that some kind of agreement to end the war is in the works. The willingness of the North Vietnamese to participate in the extended talks, the imminence of the U.S. election and announcements from Washington that peace talks are in a "sensitive stage" have contributed to the rumors circulating in Saigon, as have the current talks between the two sides in Laos.

If diplomatic opinion here could be summed up briefly, it would be something like this:

The current talks are more than just a political maneuver by President Nixon and indicate that something serious is going on. But no settlement will be reached before the U.S. election on November 7. Even if agreement in principle is forthcoming, the details are so difficult that it will take months to work them out.

## STATEMENTS

In their public statements, North and South Vietnam continue to be far apart and show no signs of making any concessions. North Vietnam has renewed its demand that Thieu's ouster be part of any settlement, and continues to oppose any international supervision of a cease-fire. South Vietnam continues to insist that any political settlement be carried out within the framework of the 1967 constitution — which would preclude the three-segment government than Hanoi is seeking — and to demand that any cease-fire be under international control. To suggest a coalition govern-

ment here is tantamount to treason.

The question of international supervision of a cease-fire and subsequent elections was cited by one high-ranking western diplomat as an example of the kind of difficulties that still lie between any agreement in principle and a working settlement.

## GENEVA

"China and Hanoi have very bad memories of the Geneva conference of 1954," he said. But even if they were prepared to yield on this point, to accept international peace-keeping machinery as part of a settlement, "this is a grave complication of a complicated situation," he said. "There doesn't seem to be any movement toward an Indochina-wide settlement and there has been no preparation for an international peace-keeping team. Who will be on it?"

Many Vietnamese are said to believe that something has to happen this year because of the "law of nine." Years whose last two digits add up to nine have been the important years in this war: 1945, with the end of Japanese occupation and a brief independence; 1954, the end of the war with the French; 1963, the overthrow of the Diem regime. This year should fit the pattern, the theory goes.

The prevailing opinion in the diplomatic community seems to be that serious negotiations do not necessarily mean agreement, and that many months of hard bargaining, as well as hard fighting, still remain.



*AP Wirephoto*

**TRAN KIM PHUONG AND HENRY KISSINGER**  
**South Vietnam envoy to Washington met Nixon adviser**