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Say Kissinger, Thieu Agreed 'In Principle'

Examiner News Services

SAIGON—A U.S. embassy spokesman said today presidential adviser Henry Kissinger and President Nguyen Van Thieu "made progress" toward settling the war in Vietnam but they have not finished talking.

There were indications Thieu remained firmly opposed to a coalition with the Communists.

Informed Saigon government sources said Thieu and Kissinger had reached an agreement "in principle" for an Indochina cease-fire during their five days of talks and that it would be announced before the U.S. presidential elections 15 days away. Neither Kissinger nor the U.S. embassy would comment on this report.

Kissinger flew home to report to President Nixon. Asked at the airport if his visit had been productive, Kissinger replied, "It always is when I'm here."

The newspaper Tin Song (Live News), partially financed by Hoang Duc Nha, Thieu's nephew and personal secretary who was present at all of the talks with Kissinger, reported today "there cannot be a cease-fire before the U.S. election.

"Common feeling among

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observers in Saigon was that the meetings (between Thieu and Kissinger) took place with heated debate in the face of a solid stand by the Republic of Vietnam," said the Tin Song report.

"People who have been meeting with President

Thieu predicted that a cease-fire will take place at the latest in March 1973. The presence of the U.S. troops is not the main difficulty. On the contrary, it will be part of a political solution after a cease-fire."

Coalition Opposed

Tin Song also reported Thieu still is firmly opposed to any plan that calls for a three-part coalition government with the Communists in South Vietnam.

Other sources said the fact Thieu even discussed a coalition with Kissinger could be considered as progress in the negotiations. However, Thieu did not agree to discuss the coalition with the Communists.

"Anything that includes three parts with the Communists receiving an equal share will be rejected by the Republic of Vietnam," said Tin Song.

Made Progress

There have been reports Kissinger and Thieu discussed alternatives to the three-part coalition that would give the present Saigon government unquestioned control of some type of "committee" that would

include Communist representation.

For the third consecutive day, the walls of buildings throughout Saigon were plastered with government posters denouncing a coalition. For several days Saigon radio and TV have broadcast speeches made earlier by Thieu opposing a coalition with the Communists.

The statement issued by the U.S. Embassy spokesman after Kissinger left for Washington said: "We have made progress. Talks will continue between us and the government of Vietnam. It is not in the interests of the negotiations to be more specific at this time."

Three hours after Kissinger left, the U.S. Army Chief of Staff, Gen. Creighton Abrams, left for Washington. He had spent six days in Saigon assessing the military situation and the Vietnamization program, and he sat in one of Kissinger's meetings with Thieu.

The spokesman for the North Vietnamese delegation to the Paris peace talks told newsmen today that "the Vietnam problem is still not settled; the war happens to be prolonged and intensified."

He added that the North Vietnamese "position is correct, logical and reasonable," and asked: "Does the Nixon administration really want serious negotiations or does it still engage in maneuvers aimed at deceiving public opinion?"

Settlement

Newsweek and Time magazine reported the United States and North Vietnam have agreed to a settlement that would include a cease-fire.

South Vietnamese sources said, however, Thieu had issued orders that junior military officers — lieutenants and captains — should be prepared to take over the functions of civilian village chiefs in the event of a cease-fire.

This was intended to insure the Saigon government had a firm hold on the population and the government machinery should a settlement come, the sources said.

On the crucial issue of Thieu's future, both Time and Newsweek reported the United States and North Vietnam have agreed to a peace plan leaving him in office until replaced by a caretaker government.

Both said a cease-fire would be in effect while political negotiations went on, and Time said Hanoi "has agreed to negotiate directly with the Thieu government."

Interim Move

Newsweek said an interim government would be set up to arrange elections in South Vietnam that France would supervise as neutral party.

The report said it was still not resolved whether the interim government would include a neutralist faction, as demanded by Hanoi and the Viet Cong, in addition to Thieu supporters and the Viet Cong.

Time said a committee representing the Thieu government, the Viet Cong and South Vietnamese neutralists would create the caretaker government.

Both Thieu and Nixon have said any cease-fire must apply throughout Indochina. Negotiations have already begun between the Laotian government and the Communist Pathet Lao, and the Cambodian government has announced agreement in principle to negotiate with the Communist-led Khmer Rouge. Kissinger made a side trip to Phnom Penh yesterday to confer for three hours with Cambodian President Lon Nol.