

Thieu Assails Peace-Plan Terms, Asks Guarantee, Hanoi Pullout; U.S. Limits North Vietnam Raids

SPEECH IN SAIGON

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Cease-Fire Obstacles Seen, but President Expects Agreement

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SAIGON, South Vietnam, Oct. 24 — President Nguyen Van Thieu said tonight that all the peace proposals discussed by Henry A. Kissinger and the North Vietnamese in Paris so far were unacceptable, and, in an ambiguous statement, he asserted that there were great difficulties in the way of a cease-fire.

In a nationwide broadcast, President Thieu said on the other hand that a cease-fire could come "very soon" but

Excerpts from Thieu's speech will be found on Page 17.

emphasized that the South Vietnamese could not agree to the Communist proposal for a cease-fire in place before a political settlement.

A cease-fire would be acceptable, he added, only if it was Indochina-wide, guaranteed and involved the withdrawal from the South of all North Vietnamese troops.

Stand Termed Unshakable

"Whether there is a cease-fire now, before the United States election, or one month, two months, three months, or four or five months after the election, our position will remain the same," he said.

In detailing his objections to several aspects of the current Communist proposals, Mr. Thieu asserted: "I have always said we are not afraid of a cease-fire, but our stance is that if there is a cease-fire it must go along with a political settlement.

"Our position," he added, "has been put forward with the purpose of guaranteeing a just and lasting peace. But, this stance is that if they want U. S. troops to withdraw they must also withdraw their

troops back to the North."

Geneva Accords Recalled

At another point he said: "Today I would like to reaffirm our standpoint in this way: To restore peace we first must use the 1954 Geneva accords as a basis. This means that North Vietnam is North Vietnam and South Vietnam is South Vietnam. For the time being one must accept the two Vietnams, and neither side can invade the other."

"I say that a cease-fire will have a chance to be achieved soon," he added, "if such a cease-fire is guaranteed and internationally supervised as proposed by our Government and our American allies."

Nevertheless, Mr. Thieu told the public that when a cease-fire comes, "it is not the task of international bodies or commissions to prevent the Communists from violating it" but that "it is our task if we want to guarantee a lasting peace."

Mr. Thieu's broadcast was not announced until just after he arrived at the studio at 7:30 P.M. U.S. Embassy officials declined to comment until they had read the speech, much of it extemporaneous and read from notes.

The South Vietnamese leader made it clear in a number of ways that attempts by Mr. Kissinger, President Nixon's adviser on national security, to arrange a settlement of the protracted Indochina war had run up

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against a major stumbling block.

Alluding to speculation that Mr. Kissinger, who was here from last Wednesday until yesterday, was trying to persuade him to step down, President Thieu said at the conclusion of his speech: "I will continue to struggle and make sacrifices for you. You can drop me but I will never forsake you."

What he appeared to do in his speech was to leave the Americans in the position of being able to offer only an undefined cease-fire with no guarantee that they could convince the South Vietnamese to accept a compromise political settlement—something the North Vietnamese, at least in public, have insisted must accompany

the silencing of the guns.

"The Communists could only hope to win if our ally betrays us and sells us out," Mr. Thieu said, "but our main ally will never betray us. He has invested so much blood and money.

With a tense, nervous look, Mr. Thieu disclosed a number of matters that had apparently been brought up in the secret negotiations in Paris between Mr. Kissinger and Le Duc Tho, Hanoi's representative.

The speech disclosed, for the first time in any official statement, that the talks had produced a Communist program for a settlement that would apparently start with a cease-fire in place and the formation of "a government of national concord," with Mr. Thieu allowed to remain on the scene, but only as head of one party in a three-way coalition. That formula would also be applied at the hamlet, village and province levels.

Elections Would Be Held

Six months later general elections would lead to a constituent assembly that would form a new parliamentary regime, which in turn would hold elections. There would be no strong, independent executive, as in the present Government.

"Everything would have to go, not just me," Mr. Thieu explained. He did not speak about American troop withdrawals or the release of prisoners.

According to President, the terms he was proposals by the North Vietnamese. He did not say Mr. Kissinger had agreed to the—"so far no solution has been signed" nothing is definite," explained—but he took pains to emphasize that "nobody can decide for use."

"In any peace solution the final decision should be our," he added, "nobody can sign a cease-fire agreement or a peace settlement without the signature of the Government of the Republic of Vietnam."

President Thieu appeared to be directing his remarks both to the Americans and to his countrymen—many of who feel that Mr. Kissinger's whirlwind visit amid a flood of speculation, mostly damaging to Mr. Thieu's prestige, cost him considerable loss of face.

... And Show It to Us

"We have told the Americans," Mr. Thieu asserted, "that they propose this or that solution. You just receive it and take it back and show it to us. Then we should give our views and you would inform them of our view."

The position of Mr. Thieu at the end of October, 1972, is remarkably similar to what it was at the end of October, 1968, when President Lyndon B. Johnson wanted to get his

agreement to a bombing halt in North Vietnam before the Presidential election. The South Vietnamese leader balked, but the Americans went ahead with the pause anyway.

"The Communists have presented their wicked peace proposals at their secret talks with the Americans in Paris recently," Mr. Thieu said. "The Communists do not talk directly

with us, and also probably believe that at this election time the Americans might be soft."

"We will be ready for a cease-fire," he went on, saying that he had called in province chiefs and other officials and instructed them "to smash all Communist attempts to prepare for and eventually violate a cease-fire." At another point, he said, "To the Communists a cease-fire is only a change in the form of struggle."

Fear of Defeat Voiced

He again expressed the fear, of which he has given implicit evidence many times before, that in any kind of political contest with the Communists he and other factions in the present Government would lose. Referring to the Communists, he said:

"They insist on a parliamentary regime in which the national assembly and the government can be disbanded any time. If the government is constantly reshuffled and the national assembly is disbanded every three or four months, then it will result in political chaos, like the Fourth Republic in France, and the Communists could easily fish in these troubled political waters, in this democratic disorder. They do not want a presidential regime, because they know no one would vote for a Communist president."

But, he continued, "in their proposals the Communists did not mention withdrawal of their troops to North Vietnam because they plan to use what remained of their troops in the South for a military coup after the cease-fire."

"The communists have always seen a cease-fire as only an opportunity to regain their strength," he continued. "After a coalition government has been set up and all American troops have been withdrawn, they would use their invigorated military force to rise up and seize power in a last military coup. So, dear fellow countrymen, you see that the Communists talk about a cease-fire but they will not observe one.

"Let me tell you that the Communists are trying hard to negotiate a cease-fire with the Americans in Paris. They want a bombing halt, they want an end to the blockade, so that

they can continue to receive aid from Russia and Red China to make up for what they have lost." "They are sure to win because it is unlikely that the U.S. could go back to bombing again," he said. President Thieu reiterated that his Government preferred to insist that the 1954 Geneva accords form the basis of any settlement.