

U.S. Is Said To Agree with Hanoi on Framework of a Cease-Fire; Expects Saigon to Accept Soon

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**THIEU A QUESTION**

**Many Think He Can Be Won Over With New Concessions**

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SAIGON, South Vietnam, Oct. 25 — President Nguyen Van Thieu's vaguely worded rejection last night of a cease-fire in place has left many political figures and diplomats here with the belief that he would still accept a cease-fire soon, but only if Henry A. Kissinger can negotiate further concessions from the North Vietnamese.

The Kissinger negotiations with the North Vietnamese were thrust into an even more delicate and critical stage than usual, they believe, by Mr. Thieu's tough speech last night, in which he said that all the peace proposals discussed in Paris so far were unacceptable.

A breakthrough could be prevented, they feel, by a number of factors, including strong measures that Mr. Thieu's Government plans to take against known Communists in the event of a cease-fire.

**Ambassadors Briefed**

In the war, Communist forces fought a series of small battles with Government troops throughout South Vietnam during the day in what American officers described as an apparent campaign to broaden claims to territory before any cease-fire. [Page 14.]

Foreign Minister Tran Van Lam, after swearing them to secrecy, briefed the ambassadors of six Pacific countries, including the Philippines, Japan, Australia and Thailand, yesterday on the latest peace proposals advanced by the North Vietnamese to Mr. Kissinger in Paris, apparently earlier this month.

From the way some of their

Continued on Page 16, Column 4

Continued From Page 1, Col. 4

associates have described the briefing, the ambassadors were left with an impression that things might possibly still work out if Mr. Kissinger goes back to the North Vietnamese and they make further concessions.

They get this impression from this key phrase in Mr. Thieu's speech, "A cease-fire may come in the near future." The remark was an oasis in a long desert of denunciations of any cease-fire plan that did not lead to the withdrawal of Communist troops from South Vietnam, because of "dark schemes" by them to subvert a cease-fire and use a three-sided coalition government to take over by force later.

This impression was shared by several influential Vietnamese political figures interviewed today.

"What is clear is that there is agreement on the principle of a cease-fire," said retired Gen. Tran Van Don, "but the modalities are still in question. Thieu said in his speech that peace and a cease-fire are 'close' I won't say the contrary."

A well-informed American military source said that it was his impression that a cease-fire soon was not out of the question, but he said, "What we must find out now is what are the political conditions."

The source said he believed that the four corps commanders, Lieut. Gen. Ngo Quang Truong, Maj. Gen. Nguyen Van Toan, Lieut. Gen. Nguyen Van Minh and Maj. Gen. Nguyen Van Nghi, would be able to go along with and implement a cease-fire under any foreseeable conditions, but would also be likely to support Mr. Thieu if he insisted on opposing a cease-fire without guarantees of a North Vietnamese troop withdrawal.

The source also said that the commander of United States military forces in Vietnam, Gen. Frederick C. Weyand, had not been asked by his superiors for comment on the desirability of a bombing halt without a cease-fire and that apparently the disagreements between the United States and the Saigon Government over Mr. Kissinger's peace proposals are not bitter enough, at least not yet, to lead the Americans to try to make a cease-fire over the heads of the South Vietnamese.

In his speech last night, Mr. Thieu said "I ask the foreign

press to stop saying I'm the obstacle to peace," and he went to some lengths to characterize the secret North Vietnamese peace proposals as demanding that not only he as President but the presidency and the current constitutional government in South Vietnam be replaced by a coalition, parliamentary government.

"He's trying to get people to back his stand by telling them, 'It's not just me, it's the whole regime that stands in the way,'" said General Don, who is a Senator.

Most of the Opposition politicians who have expressed opinions on the situation today agree with Mr. Thieu that a three-way coalition government including the Communists means eventual doom for non-Communist nationalists in Vietnam.

One Opposition Buddhist Senator, Vu Van Mau, called in a Senate speech today for Mr. Thieu's resignation, so that a broader-based government could be formed to resist the three-sided formula more effectively than Mr. Thieu can.

A proposal by a pro-Government Senator, Nguyen Van Ngai for a joint House-Senate declaration calling for withdrawal of all North Vietnamese troops, rejection of a three-way government, and insistence that any political solution in South Vietnam be decided by the people of the South will come up for debate on Friday.

The proposal did not get far in the Senate today. Some senators—Pham Dinh Ai of the Op-

position, for instance—said that they were more concerned with President Thieu's speech, which they said did not contain anything new.

Senator Don also observed that what the Communists had reportedly been asking — a cease-fire in place before a political settlement — strongly resembled President Nixon's four-point plan of May 8, the day he announced the mining and bombing of North Vietnam to stave off what appeared to be the imminent collapse of a large part of Saigon's army.

The four points say the bombing and mining will stop when all American prisoners of war are returned and there is "an internationally supervised cease-fire throughout Indochina." After that, the

United States would "stop all acts of force throughout Indochina" and "proceed" with a complete withdrawal of all American forces from Vietnam within four months," leaving the negotiations on a political settlement to the Vietnamese.

President Thieu observed that until now the North Vietnamese had refused to negotiate seriously in public or in private with the Saigon Government and that, therefore, Mr. Kissinger was serving as an intermediary.

Eventually, he said last night, the North Vietnamese would have to negotiate with Saigon and so would the National Liberation Front—the Vietcong—to settle the remaining political questions.