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Kissinger Asserts That 'Peace Is At Hand'; Though Further Truce Session Is Needed

## TALKS DISCUSSED

### U.S. Breaks Silence on Weeks of Intense Secret Sessions

NYTimes

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 26—Henry A. Kissinger said today that "peace is at hand" in Indochina and that a final agreement on a cease-fire and political arrangement could be reached in one more negotiating session with the North Vietnamese "lasting not more than three or four days."

The remaining details, he said, would not halt the rapid

*The text of Kissinger news conference, Pages 18-19; statement by Hanoi, Page 19; Saigon statement, Page 17.*

movement toward an end to the war.

"We must remember that, having come this far, we cannot fail and we will not fail over what still remains to be accomplished," he said during an hour-long briefing for newsmen.

These remaining problems include last-minute American desires to strengthen the machinery for international inspection, a wish to make sure that South Vietnam can sign the draft agreement, along with Hanoi and Washington, and a number of questions arising from linguistic differences in the English-language and Vietnamese versions. *LCOL-4*

Some of these, although minor on the surface, could lead to some delay in reaching a final agreement, despite Mr. Kissinger's definite effort to present a hopeful picture.

Difference Over Date

Breaking the Administra-

\* See Flora Lewis, NYTimes 28 Oct '72.

tion's silence on the intensive secret peace efforts of the past few weeks, Mr. Kissinger confirmed North Vietnam's announcement broadcast by the Hanoi radio this morning that a breakthrough had occurred at the Paris talks on Oct. 8 and that the two sides had reached over-all agreement on a nine-point plan to end the fighting and establish a new political order in South Vietnam.

But Mr. Kissinger, who has conducted the negotiations for President Nixon for nearly four years, disputed Hanoi's contention in that broadcast that the United States had consented, as a condition of the agreement, to sign the accord by Oct. 31. He acknowledged, however, that the Administration had made "a major effort" to sign by that date. *COL-1*

Mr. Kissinger, President Nixon's adviser on national security, sought to convey, in the jammed White House news-briefing room, a sense of optimism for the settlement of the war. He tended to minimize the differences that remained with Hanoi and the problems that had arisen last week in his talks in Saigon.

#### Summary by Kissinger

He seemed eager to assure the American people and the North Vietnamese Government that the Administration was seeking a settlement along the tentative lines already reached. He also seemed intent on keeping relations with Saigon steady in this stormy period.

"We will not be stampeded into an agreement until its provisions are right," he said, aiming his remarks at Hanoi; "we will not be deflected from an agreement when its provisions are right," in an allusion to Saigon's efforts to hold up an agreement.

Crucial to Mr. Kissinger's **Continued on Page 16, Column 1**  
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presentation was his desire to persuade Hanoi not to make a major issue over the failure to achieve an agreement by Oct. 31—as seems likely—but to accept Mr. Nixon's offer to hold one more negotiating session in Paris.

He said that Hanoi had been told that Mr. Kissinger would meet with Le Duc Tho, the Hanoi Politburo representative, in Paris or elsewhere—but not in Hanoi—whenever North Vietnam wanted. At present, Mr. Tho is in Hanoi, and Mr. Kissinger refused to guess when such a meeting could take place. But it was clear that he hoped it would occur soon.

Mr. Kissinger, after asserting

that Hanoi had given "a very fair account" of the draft agreement in its broadcast, offered his own summary of the accord, as it is shaping up. It was clear from his remarks that he believed, and wanted to convince the newsmen, that the agreement represented a considerable achievement for the United States.

He said that the Oct. 8 proposal by Hanoi for the first time made it possible to negotiate concretely.

"It proposed," he said, "that the United States and Hanoi, in the first instance, concentrate on bringing an end to the military aspects of the war; that they agree on some very general principles within which the South Vietnamese parties could then determine the political evolution of South Vietnam, which was exactly the position which we had always taken."

Outlining the apparent concessions made by the North Vietnamese, Mr. Kissinger said that on Oct. 8, "They dropped their demand for a coalition government which would absorb all existing authority. They dropped their demand for a veto over the personalities and the structure of the existing government." The latter was an allusion to Hanoi's allowing Nguyen Van Thieu to remain as South Vietnam's President in the transitional period.

Discussing the role of South Vietnam in the negotiations, Mr. Kissinger stressed that although Saigon did not necessarily have a veto on American actions, Mr. Nixon would not deal with Hanoi without consulting South Vietnam.

Discussing his five days of talks in Saigon last week, Mr. Kissinger said:

"Saigon, as is obvious from the public record, has expressed its views with its customary forcefulness both publicly and privately. We agreed with some of their views. We didn't agree with all of them and we made clear which we accepted and which we could not join."

Mr. Kissinger said the North Vietnamese included agreement for the first time to a formula permitting a simultaneous discussion about Laos and Cambodia.

The principal provisions of the agreement, as summarized by Mr. Kissinger, called for a cease-fire in place in South Vietnam, the withdrawal of American forces within 60 days, and a total prohibition of reinforcement of troops—thus preventing North Vietnam from infiltrating more men into South Vietnam than the 145,000 reported there now.

Existing military equipment—including aircraft—would be replaced on a one-to-one basis by equipment of similar type and characteristics, under international supervision, he said.

He said that all captured military personnel and foreign civilians would be repatriated within the same time period as the withdrawal—60 days—and that

North Vietnam said it would account for all prisoners and men the United States has listed as missing in action not only in Vietnam but throughout Indochina.

On a possibly controversial point, Mr. Kissinger said that south Vietnamese civilians—Vietcong agents—held prisoner in South Vietnam would be released through negotiations between Saigon and the Vietcong. This removed a potential problem because it meant that American prisoners would not be held captive until all Vietcong were released.

On the political aspects of the settlement, Mr. Kissinger noted that the Vietcong and Saigon would negotiate on the timing of elections, the nature of elections, and the offices to be set up.

An institution called the National Council of Reconciliation and Concord with representatives from the Vietcong, the Saigon administration and neutrals would be set up to help promote the maintenance of the cease-fire and to supervise the elections that would be agreed upon, he said.

Mr. Kissinger stressed that this council was not a coalition government but rather "an administrative structure." The terms of the agreement would be guaranteed by joint commissions of the four sides—the United States, North Vietnam, South Vietnam, and the Vietcong, and an international commission to which disagreements could be referred.

#### Complexities of Supervision

The portions dealing with supervision were so long and complex that Mr. Kissinger, a former Harvard professor, said they "will no doubt occupy graduate students for many years to come, and which, as far as I can tell, only my colleague Ambassador Sullivan understands completely." William H. Sullivan is a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs. He accompanied Mr. Kissinger on his trip to Saigon.

Secretary of State William P. Rogers had already begun consulting nations on belonging to an international commission that will be set up at a conference, presumably in Paris, some 30 days after the agreement is signed. France, Poland, Canada and Japan, are among the nations mentioned for the commission.

The agreement, Mr. Kissinger said, "will usher in a new period of reconciliation" between the United States and North Vietnam. The United States, by the accord, is pledged to help reconstruct the countries of Indochina. One report, earlier this year, said the administration was thinking in terms of \$7.5-billion in grants in aid.

"Now, ladies and gentlemen, in the light of where we are," he said, "it is obvious that most of the most difficult problems have been dealt with. If you consider what many of you might have thought possible



some months ago compared to where we are, we have to say that both sides have approached this problem with a long-term point of view, with the attitude that we want to have not an armistice but peace."

He asked these questions: "Now, what is it, then, that prevents the completion of the agreement? Why is it that we have asked for one more meeting with the North Vietnamese to work out a final text?" and he answered them by saying the chief reason was that after five years of negotiated stalemate, it was difficult to get a perfect agreement in the short period following Oct. 8.

#### 4 Days of Negotiation

He was in Paris on Oct. 8, together with his deputy, Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr., and instead of flying back to Washington to discuss the new Hanoi plan, he said they stayed in Paris for four days to negotiate—sometimes for 16 hours a day.

The specific problems that have arisen, he said, consisted of "six or seven very concrete issues that with anything like the goodwill that has already been shown, can easily be settled."

For example, he said, it has become obvious that there will be a temptation by both Saigon and the Vietcong to mount offensives in the first days of a cease-fire to establish political control over a given area.

"We would like to avoid the dangers of the loss of life, perhaps in some areas even of the massacre that may be inherent in this, and we, therefore, want to discuss methods by which the international supervisory body can be put in place at the same time that the cease-fire is promulgated," he said.

Because of the different situations in Laos and Cambodia, he said, the United States wanted to discuss ways of speeding the talks going on in those countries so that cease-fires there would occur at about the same time as in Vietnam.

In addition, certain "linguistic problems" have arisen between the English and Vietnamese texts, he said. This was particularly important insofar as the national council was concerned—to insure that it did not appear as a coalition government, a term that is anathema to President Thieu, who refuses to share power with the Communists.

Referring to Hanoi's disappointment with the delay on final agreement, he said:

"But they know or they should know and they certainly must know now that peace is within reach in a matter of weeks or less, dependent on when the meeting takes place, and that once peace is achieved we will move from hostility to normalcy and from normalcy to cooperation with the same seriousness with which we have



Associated Press

Henry A. Kissinger discussing peace plans yesterday. Speaking of provisions for supervision of elections in Vietnam, he said they were so complex it seemed "only my colleague, Ambassador [William H.] Sullivan, [left] understands [them] completely."

conducted our previous less fortunate relationships with them."

Mr. Kissinger said that the United States wanted to make it clear that the North Vietnamese allow the South Vietnamese Government to sign the peace document, which Hanoi originally conceived as a Hanoi-Washington signing, to be signed in Hanoi first, and then by foreign ministers in Paris.

He said at first it was not clear whether Saigon wanted to participate in the signing, and "it seems to us not an unreasonable proposal that a country on whose territory a war has been fought and whose population has been uprooted and has suffered so greatly, that it should have the right to sign its own peace treaty."

#### More Time Needed

This is not an insuperable problem, he said, but it will require redrafting of the document, and more time.

Despite these problems, he said that "What stands in the way of an agreement now are issues that are relatively less important than those that have already been settled."

Mr. Thieu, in a speech on Tuesday, sharply attacked the idea of a coalition government. But Mr. Kissinger said that Mr. Thieu was not talking about

the current peace plan in that speech. "I think we all recognize the fact that political leaders speak to many audiences at the same time," he said.

Although from his remarks, Mr. Kissinger left the impression that he thought Hanoi had made the major concessions toward an accord, did not gloat.

He called the arrangement "a compromise settlement in which neither side achieves everything, and in which both parties have the necessity of posturing themselves for their constituency."

Asked about the problems that arose in Saigon, Mr. Kissinger said, "We are confident that we will reach agreement within the time frame that I have described to you." He would not discuss what the United States would do if Mr. Thieu refused to agree to a settlement, but he implied that the United States might sign anyway, since the cease-fire was an objective "strongly" held by Washington.

Mr. Kissinger was asked whether the same agreement could have been achieved four years ago—a charge often made by Mr. Nixon's critics. He said it could not, because until Oct. 8, Hanoi had refused to divorce military from political issues, or to agree to a cease-fire first.