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

SAIGON'S ANSWER

Broadcast Says U.S. Cannot Decide for the Vietnamese

NYTimes

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Special to The New York Times

SAIGON, South Vietnam, Oct. 26—The South Vietnamese Government today answered North Vietnam's assertion in a broadcast that Washington and Hanoi had agreed on a peace package by saying that "the Americans cannot decide anything for the Vietnamese."

The statement came in a broadcast on the South Vietnamese Government radio.

The American Ambassador, Ellesworth Bunker, met with President Nguyen Van Thieu, the man who, Hanoi implied, stands in the way of a settlement, for an hour at noon and for half an hour in the early evening. The embassy was silent on what was discussed, but it is an open secret here that President Thieu and Henry A. Kissinger had basic differences of opinion when they met to discuss the peace negotiations.

There was no word either from the Presidential Palace, except that one official said, "We are keeping cool."

U.S. Friendship Cited

The Government radio commentary said: "Self-determination for the people cannot result from secret agreements. The American and the South Vietnamese people are friends, so the Americans cannot decide anything for the Vietnamese. The Vietnamese problem must be solved by the Vietnamese."

Foreign Minister Tran Van Lam was quoted by the official Vietnam Press Agency today as saying, "Up to now a cease-fire has not been agreed by all the parties involved."

"I do not believe a cease-fire will come before the United States presidential election," he was reported as saying. "The key condition is the complete withdrawal of North Vietnamese troops to

Sale of Flags Pushed

Even though Hanoi put in doubt the possibility of a cease-fire by the end of this month because of what it called "sabotage" by President Thieu, the purpose of the broadcast was seen here as an attempt to get the United States to exert pressure on Mr. Thieu to accept a settlement, not as a negation of the terms that had been agreed upon.

Mr. Thieu's objections to the Communist proposals in his speech Tuesday night were neither categorical nor bitter enough to indicate that an eventual agreement was not possible.

The South Vietnamese have been urged to buy the yellow and red national flag and to display it prominently. Flags are on sale in various sizes

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Saigon Says Decision Is Not for U.S. to Make

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costing 50 cents to \$1.25. The Government has also issued a reminder that it is a crime punishable by death to be a Communist, to work for the Communists, or to store or display Communist flags.

In a speech on television and radio Tuesday night, Mr. Thieu was vague enough on the question of whether there would be a cease-fire soon to lead many political figures here to believe he is preparing to accept one, even without the immediate withdrawal of North Vietnamese troops from the South that he has so far insisted on.

Sources here confirmed that an agreement in principle had been worked out by Mr. Kissinger and the North Vietnamese and that it involved allowing 145,000 Communist troops to remain in the South in the areas they control.

Thieu Seeks Support

Meanwhile, Mr. Thieu is seeking — and apparently having some success in obtaining — support from legislators and others in Saigon for his stand against any form of coalition government involving the Communists.

According to reports from Paris and Washington and according to the Hanoi radio broadcast today, Mr. Thieu would remain at the head of his Government while working out a political compromise with

the Vietcong under a three-way "Council of National Reconciliation and National Concord," as the Communists called it.

But Mr. Thieu has said that the Communists want a cease-fire because they are weak, and he is known to believe therefore that the South Vietnamese Government can best bring them to accept terms by hammering away at them on the battlefield until they are beaten.

He believes that if North Vietnamese troops are allowed to remain in the South they will subvert a cease-fire and regroup for an eventual "final blow" after a less rigidly controlled government succeeds the present regime as part of a settlement.

Further Talks Expected

No one here has yet given a reliable indication of the tenor or substance of Mr. Thieu's five days of intensive discussions with Mr. Kissinger, but one United States embassy source said last night, "They didn't part the best of friends." However, Mr. Thieu did not attack Mr. Kissinger personally in his speech on Tuesday.

The expectation here is that the Americans and the North Vietnamese will not come to a separate agreement on a cease-fire or bombing halt but rather that Mr. Kissinger will have further consultations with the North Vietnamese in Paris and with Mr. Thieu in Saigon before a settlement is reached.