

Hanoi Demands Accord From U.S. by Oct. 31

By Jonathan C. Randal
Washington Post Foreign Service

PARIS, Oct. 26—Hanoi's chief peace negotiator in Paris demanded today that Washington respect an Oct. 31 deadline for signing a cease-fire agreement.

Negotiator Xuan Thuy made no specific threats about what his government would do if that date were not met.

Radio Hanoi released the text of the agreement only hours before Thuy read its most important points at the 164th plenary session of the long-stalelated Paris peace talks.

The agreement was hammered out in secret talks here between presidential adviser Henry A. Kissinger and Hanoi's Le Duc Tho in mid-October.

Addressing a news conference for the first time after a formal negotiating session since the formal talks began in January, 1969, Thuy defended his government's decision to publish the text.

He noted that President Nixon had twice revealed earlier rounds of secret talks despite mutual agreement to remain secret.

The smiling North Vietnamese minister quoted Mr. Nixon, who justified such a disclosure in January by saying that "The best way to serve peace is to render public proposals we advanced in private talks."

Thuy alleged that the Americans "are trying to prolong the negotiations and the war" by invoking "difficulties encountered in Saigon" during Kissinger's visit to the South Vietnamese capital from Oct. 18 to 23.

Thuy argued that South Vietnamese objections to the agreement were not valid since "the United States created the Saigon administration and declared it would represent Saigon in the bilateral [secret] talks."

Thuy's comments nevertheless revealed a series of major compromises. Observers credited North Vietnam and the Vietcong with great concessions compared to their previous, fiercely held public positions.

Perhaps the biggest potential Communist concession

was only hinted at: the rumored existence of a secret clause governing the phased withdrawal of some 145,000 North Vietnamese soldiers from the South during the American military pullout.

Asked if such a secret agreement existed, Thuy did not issue an outright denial. Rather, he reiterated the standard Hanoi line that demands for a mutual withdrawal were "false argument" which had been often rejected.

Politically, instead of obtaining an immediate tripartite transition regime, the Communists settled for sharing power 50-50 with the present regime in determining the country's political future.

The neutralists were assigned a third of the seats on the ill-defined Council of Reconciliation and Concord. Since it must reach decisions unanimously it would be hard put to implement policy if either the Vietcong or Saigon disagrees.

This was a far cry from the Communists' original demands for a three-segment coalition government and for simultaneous solution of all military and political problems.

The Thieu government, which fears that the Vietcong will inevitably absorb the neutralists, also won a major concession on the release of political prisoners.

Thuy said that North Vietnam gave in to American demands, formulated Oct. 17, that the release of U.S. prisoners and detained foreign civilians not be linked to the reciprocal release of detained Vietcong and neutralist civilian prisoners in South Vietnam immediately after the cease-fire.

Thuy said the United States has "tried to avoid and shift responsibility" for these civilian prisoners to the Saigon government, but Hanoi had accepted to show "goodwill" and achieve a "rapid peace settlement."

The fate of interned South Vietnamese civilians, Thuy said, will be decided by the twin Vietcong and Saigon administrations who will "consult promptly to solve this question," hope-

fully within three months of the cease-fire.

In practice, Saigon seemed assured of being able to keep these political prisoners detained during the entire transition period, when their absence will be sorely felt by both the Vietcong and neutralists.

A well-informed neutralist source said this concession "means that a good part of the neutralist leadership and perhaps an even larger percentage of the Vietcong's political cadres will stay in jail, it would seem."

Moreover, Thieu, who would be able to remain at the head of the Saigon government's side of the twin administration setup, should also be comforted by an important military concession.

Nowhere in the long North Vietnamese statement is there any mention of previously stated Communist demands for withdrawal of the U.S. Seventh Fleet from the South China Sea or U.S. air power from its bases in Thailand.

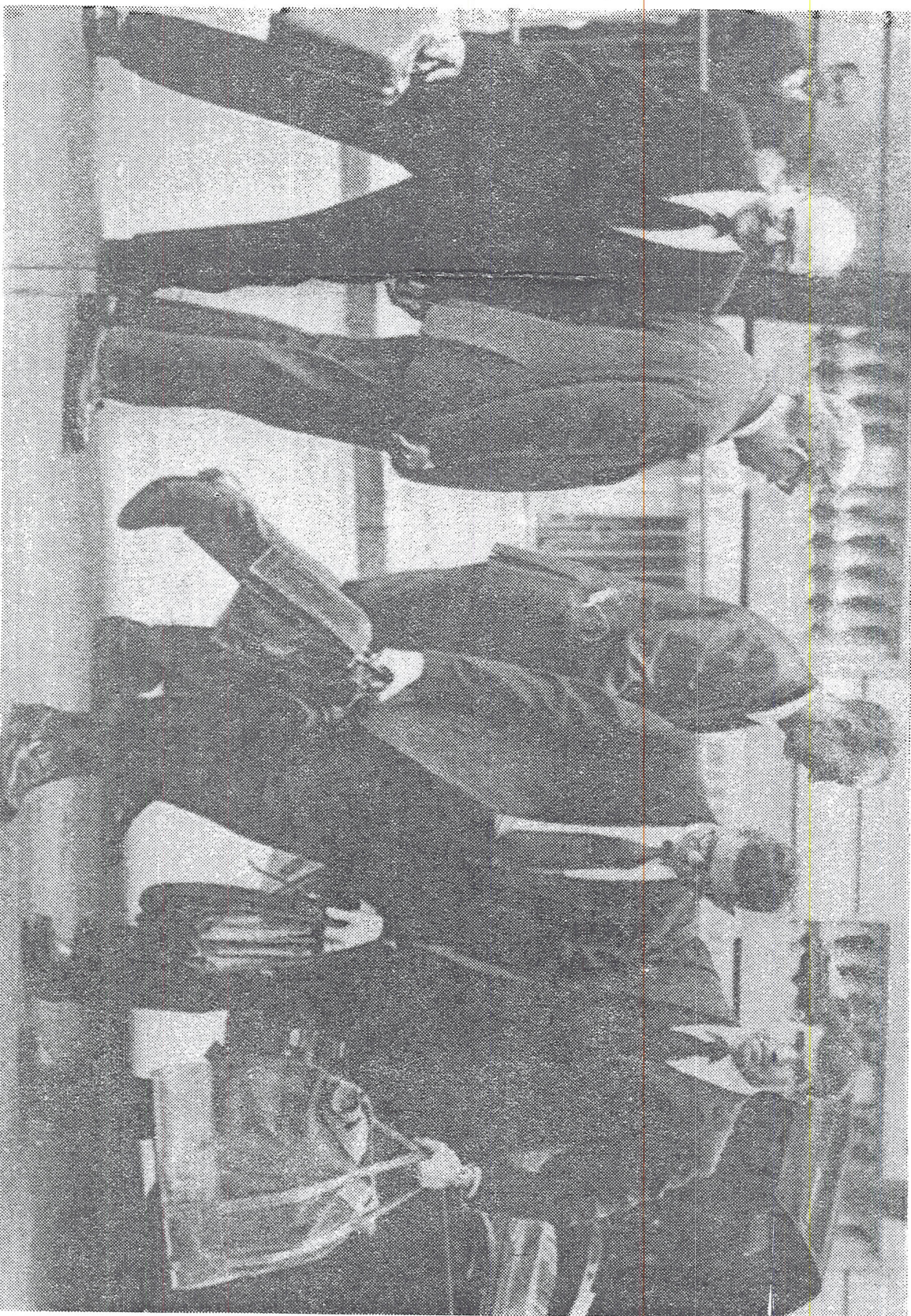
On the other hand, the Communists extracted a promise that the United States would not continue to arm Thieu's regime during the cease-fire.

Thuy said that the second Oct. 17 Communist concession concerned the replacement of armaments for both the sides. They would be denied manpower replacements and have armament resupply limited to items "used or damaged" after the cease-fire on a one-for-one basis.

Thuy added, apparently as a concession to the United States, that this part of the agreement would be policed by both South Vietnamese parties on one joint four-power military commission and by a beefed-up International Control Commission.

Although Mrs. Nguyen Thi Binh, the Vietcong chief delegate, called Thieu a "dictator, warmonger and fascist," there was a significant change in Communist vocabulary.

For the first time since the peace talks began, both Communist delegations referred repeatedly to the Saigon regime as the "Government of the Republic of



U.S. officials carry records covering more than three years of the Vietnam peace talks into yesterday's formal session in Paris. United Press International

Vietnam." In the past, the Communists have refused to deal directly with Saigon and tended to describe Thieu's government as "puppets," "lackeys," or "creatures in the pay of the United States."

South Vietnamese delegate Nguyen Xuan Phong clearly underlined his government's distress with the agreement. He pointedly asked for specifics under the cease-fire about the future role of the "North Vietnamese divisions currently operating in South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia." He expressed worry about guarantees for self-determination for South Vietnamese citizens under the proposed transitional arrangements.

U.S. Ambassador William J. Porter declined to present his prepared speech because of the Radio Hanoi state-

ment, and instead expressed his "surprise in the light of your own assessment of the significant progress that had been achieved" in the private talks.

Leaving the brunt of the American rebuttal to Kissinger in Washington, Porter insisted, however, that "We consider that negotiations have not ended."

He remained silent when Thuy noted that Nixon himself had set the precedent for divulging the contents of secret negotiations. U.S. spokesman David Lambert-

son suggested, however, that circumstances had changed greatly since January, when there had been no progress and the private talks had broken down.