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Agence France-Presse reports today that Gen. Thieu's protestations over the peace accord may only be part of a carefully orchestrated plan. Here's Paul Fisher [of WBAI].

Fisher: According to AFP correspondent Veronique <sup>Decondu</sup> ~~de Codou~~ [phonetic] in Saigon, Henry Kissinger knew perfectly well that President Thieu would reject the Washington-Hanoi peace plan, but in spite of that Kissinger attempted to impose the agreement on Thieu, or perhaps even that was merely a very well staged performance.

According to the AFP correspondent, President Nixon himself has stated that Thieu was fully informed about the secret negotiations and that the South Vietnamese President had been consulted on the negotiating points several times. Also, it's clear that both Kissinger and Nixon were informed of Thieu's objections to the proposal several times privately before he started making those objections in public. Still, for one reason or another Washington continued to ignore Thieu, that is, until now.

According to correspondent de Codou, President Thieu began his campaign late in June when President Nixon announced that the Paris peace talks, which had been suspended since May 4th, were going to be resumed. President Thieu was in Hue that day and he told reporters there that Saigon would never accept a coalition government and would never agree to a cease-fire so long as there was a single North Vietnamese soldier in the south. On August 1st when Kissinger and Le Duc Tho had already held two secret meetings, Thieu, addressing a meeting of military officers, said he had asked the United States not to conclude a partial cease-fire with Hanoi in exchange for the release of American prisoners. Five days later, on August 6th, after receiving details of the secret Paris talks, Thieu publicly denounced the idea of a leopard-spot cease-fire, with the opposing armies staying where they were on a given date and putting down their weapons. Following that there were more meetings between Kissinger and Tho, and more meetings with Thieu in Saigon. On September 20th, after hearing the details of the fourth meeting between Kissinger and Tho, President Thieu announced that there would be no cease-fire before the American elections and he also attacked the French government's attitude on the war. He also said then, for the first time, that "Only the legal and constitutional government of Saigon can decide peace. No one can decide over my head."

In the next 15 days Thieu became even more outspoken in his opposition to the settlement, while in Paris the secret negotiating sessions were continuing, resulting in an agreement drafted on October 8th. President Thieu was kept up to date on all of it by Gen. Alexander Haig and U.S. Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker, who between them held six meetings with Thieu. On October 18th Kissinger and Gen. Creighton Abrams came to Saigon and held five days of meetings with the South Vietnamese President. Thieu again rejected the settlement and it's been a stand-off ever since.

The Americans have requested new meetings with Le Duc Tho to work out what Kissinger

described as minor issues, but these minor issues are the same points that Thieu regards as basic issues that he's still unwilling to compromise.

That from AFP correspondent, Veronique ~~de-Cedou~~ Decondu.