

Optimism On Peace Gets Jolt

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Hanoi Balks At Talks, U.S. Is Defensive

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PARIS, Nov. 2—Henry A. Kissinger's optimistic week-old prediction that "peace is at hand" today received a severe jolt as all Vietnamese parties at the Paris peace talks attacked an embarrassed and defensive United States.

The overall impression after a day of set speeches and news conferences was one of total confusion alleviated only by the hope that Hanoi would eventually agree to new secret talks with the United States as Washington has called for.

The 165th plenary session was distinguished by Hanoi's reiterated disinclination to do so, Saigon's tough stands against both North Vietnam and the United States and hints of Communist differences featuring renewed Vietcong demands for President Thieu's immediate resignation.

Confronted by the onslaught from all quarters, U.S. Ambassador William J. Porter sought to maintain a low profile, conceding that North Vietnam "accurately summarized" the draft agreement which it publicized last week.

He reiterated American belief that peace "is near" and that the "remaining issues that require resolution or clarification can, we also believe, be settled quickly by effort and goodwill."

But he aroused North Vietnamese ire by adding that the "few remaining problems of substance—and these do exist, as you know—should not be dismissed as pretexts for delay."

Hanoi press spokesman Nguyen Thanh Le seized on Porter's characterization of the problems as substantive and contrasted it with what he said White House adviser Kissinger last week had described

as outstanding "questions of detail."

In fact, Kissinger had said "six or seven concrete issues" remain unsolved, but Le charged the "Nixon administration is proceeding with an escalation of difficulties (impeding) signature of the (draft) agreement."

Le also charged that in addition to inventing "pretext upon pretext for not 'respecting its promise to sign the agreement' Oct. 31, the United States was guilty of intensifying the war in both Vietnams. He mentioned big B-52 raids on North Vietnam on Tuesday and yesterday, "mopping up" operations in South Vietnam and the arrival in Saigon of "100 airplanes" for U.S. strategic reserves and large numbers of tanks and other war materiel.

South Vietnamese delegate Nguyen Xuan Phong and press spokesman Nguyen Trieu Dan were also critical of the United States and all but ignored the existence of the draft agreement which they maintained concerned only Hanoi and Washington.

They vigorously pushed Saigon's now three-year-old stand-

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ing offer for direct talks with Hanoi and the Vietcong, which President Thieu renewed yesterday. They also suggested that the United States should have no role in such talks, which remain academic since both Hanoi and the Vietcong refuse to deal with Saigon before the cease-fire takes effect.

Phong listed four major South Vietnamese objections to the draft agreement while Dan expressed almost total opposition and warned ominously that "any peace agreement engaging South Vietnam

must have the signature of its government to be in keeping with international law."

The four major problem areas, Phong said, involved necessary guarantees for a cease-fire, withdrawal of North Vietnamese troops from South Vietnam; re-establishing the Demilitarized Zone as a buffer between the two Vietnams according to the 1954 Geneva accords; and for the South Vietnamese people's right to self-determination.

U.S. on Defensive

U.S. press spokesman David Lambertson sought to defend both Porter and Kissinger against the Vietnamese criticism. In mentioning problems of substance, he said, Porter "did not intend to contradict Dr. Kissinger."

As for Saigon's warning that no peace agreement would be valid without its signature, Lambertson referred to Kissinger's news conference and said that the "matter of who is to sign has not yet been finally decided."

The Communist delegations have argued that the accord should be signed first by North Vietnam on behalf of the Vietcong and the United States on behalf of Saigon and then by all four governments.

Lambertson declined comment when asked if the United States would agree not to participate in any hypothetical direct Saigon talks with Hanoi and the Vietcong and when asked if any new date had been set for U.S.-North Vietnamese secret talks.

Asked if the session had brought the possibility of such a meeting closer, he replied, "I think the question of timing will be decided by North Vietnam irrespective of what they said today."