

SFE Examiner

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Cease-Fire Could Be

By Peter Lisagor

WASHINGTON — (CDN) — The prospect of hard bargaining with both Hanoi and Saigon could delay a Vietnam peace settlement for weeks, according to informed sources here.

President Nixon and his top aides remain confident the North Vietnamese, despite their harsh language in Paris, eventually will agree to new secret talks with Presidential adviser

and chief negotiator Henry Kissinger.

Those talks are not expected to occur until well after next Tuesday's election. But if they occur soon, these informants believe, an agreement could be finally reached by the end of November.

Hanoi's suspicions that Nixon may be escalating his demands are described here as real. But although no one will discuss secret contacts between Washington and Ha-

noi since the breakthrough was announced last week, there are indications the North Vietnamese are being told the United States is not seeking to reopen the draft agreement to new demands but only wishes to clear up ambiguities in language and understandings.

Kissinger said at the time the agreement became public that a session lasting three or four days would be sufficient to complete a cease fire agreement. But in

his televised address Tuesday night Nixon appeared to have hardened the U.S. position. Informants insist, however, that Nixon did not make any major departures from Kissinger's account.

Sources here concede South Vietnam President Nguyen Van Thieu still has the capacity to throw a monkey wrench into the negotiations, but insist he hasn't yet gone beyond the limits in recalcitrance. They believe Thieu is consolidating his

Delayed for Weeks

political position by attacking elements of the draft agreement, but that in the end he will realize he can't torpedo an agreement Washington is prepared to accept.

There is no certainty, however, that Thieu will be placated. From the Washington point of view, he has fared well in the draft agreement. If he continues to resist it beyond a reasonable point, as one informant said, "things are going to get sticky."

What troubles officials here is that the momentum gained in the talks could be lost in the public posturing now taking place in Paris, Hanoi and Saigon. In fact, some sources fear it has already been lost and Hanoi may heat up the war again in its own paranoiac concern with being duped.

But the general belief is that the North Vietnamese made a deliberate, calculated decision on Oct. 8 to end

the U.S. involvement in Indochina by agreement, and that it would be difficult for them to reverse that decision, given the inflexible nature of the Hanoi regime.

However, there is no certainty, even among the most hopeful authorities here, that the Communists will not decide to chuck the whole complex draft and blame the United States for destroying the chance for an early peace.