

'Ready to Talk,' Hanoi's Delegate Says

NEW YORK (AP) — The leader of North Vietnam's delegation at the Paris peace talks says his nation is ready to resume negotiations with the United States to conclude a peace agreement if Washington is "serious," the New York Times reports.

"At present, we are demanding that the Americans honor the agreement and sign," the official, Xuan Thuy, was quoted as saying in an interview in Paris. "But we do not have a rigid attitude about another meeting. The question is seriousness."

In the interview published in the newspaper's Sunday editions, Thuy said that another meeting would be a "final" session. He warned that if after the meeting "the U.S. agrees and then proposes more changes, it would be very difficult to settle things."

The North Vietnamese had reported that a final agreement was reached and demanded that it be signed Oct. 31, a date they said had been set by President Nixon.

HENRY KISSINGER, the President's national security adviser and the chief U.S. negotiator, said however, that one more meeting with Thuy's superior, Le Duc Tho, was necessary to clear up details on several points in the draft agreement.

The general terms of the agreement, as already made public, provide for a standstill cease-fire in South Vietnam, withdrawal of U.S. troops and the release of American prisoners. Elections for a new political structure for South Vietnam would be arranged by a coalition assembly.

South Vietnam's President Nguyen Van Thieu has balked at the agreement because it would allow North Vietnamese troops to remain in South Vietnam and has questioned the makeup of the interim coalition.

Thuy said in the Times interview that the issue of North Vietnamese troops in the South had been abandoned by the United States in the secret Kissinger-Tho talks. "The U.S. has agreed to drop the question," he said.

"WE DON'T believe in difficulties raised by Saigon," Thuy said in the Times interview. The draft agreement explicitly provides that "the U.S. side acts with the concurrence of the Saigon administration," he said.

Thuy listed these major changes in the U.S. position in the last four years: "In 1969, Nixon insisted on withdrawal of North Vietnamese troops and refused to withdraw all U.S. troops, advisers and military personnel. He refused to recognize the National Liberation Front and demanded that it submit to the Saigon administration."

If the United States has conceded these point four years ago, "peace could have come in 1969," he said.