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Thieu Bans Pact Until Reds Leave

SAIGON — President Nguyen Van Thieu told an envoy from President Nixon today that all North Vietnamese troops must be withdrawn from South Vietnam before an agreement to end the war can be completed, a newspaper controlled by the president's office reported.

Thieu conferred for nearly two hours with Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr. shortly after he arrived in Saigon to urge Thieu to go along with the cease-fire agreement presidential adviser Henry A. Kissinger worked out with the North Vietnamese in Paris. Haig is Kissinger's chief assistant.

Today there was a spate of pessimism from South Vietnamese officials and optimism — even a prediction of getting American GIs “on their way home as a Christmas present” — from U.S. spokesmen in Saigon.

One thing certain, correspondents in Saigon have reported, is that Thieu's objections to a peace settlement are aimed as much at building up morale of his own supporters as they are at achieving any real changes in the U.S.-Hanoi draft agreement.

The latest developments:

- A top Thieu aide, private secretary Hoang Duc Nha, utilized his newspaper, Tin Song, to demand a full pullout of all North Vietnamese regular troops in northernmost provinces and the Mekong Delta area of South Vietnam. The paper, an unofficial government voice,

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said “tacit agreements” for partial withdrawal of such troops, are not enough.

- Usually uncommunicative South Vietnamese officials opened up in off-the-record interviews with Western correspondents in a growing propaganda campaign in support of Thieu's demands.

- General Haig, according to a report in the New York Times, which was not denied here, delivered a personal letter from President Nixon to Thieu urging him to accept the cease-fire plan as soon as possible.

- After today's Haig-Thieu session, informed American sources said: “They are discussing who is going to give up what part of the farm . . . We want to get the boys on their way as a Christmas present.”

Other sources said one of the points of U.S.-Saigon disagreement is a provision not yet made public in the previously announced Hanoi-Washington draft agreement. That provision would reduce South Vietnam's armed forces from their current level of about one million men to 250,000 within three months and to 175,000 within six months after the agreement is signed.

S. Viet Forces

The final total of 175,000 would mean the South Vietnamese home guard and self-defense forces would have to be disbanded, the sources said.

The report in Tin Song said Thieu had told Haig that he would not accept any private agreements or tacit understandings in connection with the withdrawal of North Vietnamese troops.

Apparently he meant that everything would have to be

spelled out to his satisfaction without face-saving public declarations counteracted by private understandings.

“The Republic of Vietnam has stressed that in South Vietnam there are about 300,000 North Vietnamese troops, not 140,000 as the United States has said,” the officials said, “and the Republic of Vietnam demands that these troops must totally withdraw to the north.

“Any temporary withdrawal of a symbolic number and any under-the-table agreements regarded as tacit understandings will not be considered valid.”

The report said Thieu also told Haig that the demilitarized zone must be restored at the 17th parallel as provided in the 1954 Geneva agreement that divided Vietnam.

Pullout Plans

Meanwhile, the U.S. military command accelerated its planning for a complete American withdrawal from Vietnam in the event of a cease-fire.

Informants said American troop strength in Vietnam would drop below the 27,000 ceiling ordered by Nixon by Dec. 1 and indicated there might be further withdrawals of U.S. troops even if a cease-fire agreement is not signed by next month. Current U.S. military strength in Vietnam is about 32,000.

Informants also confirmed that the United States is sending additional mine-sweeping forces to join five minesweepers already in the Western Pacific.