

The Final Peace Talks May Start Next Week

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Paris

High U.S. officials said here yesterday that they expect the final secret Vietnam peace negotiations to begin in Paris about the middle of next week.

According to these sources, the North Vietnamese politburo representative who has been conducting the secret talks, Le Duc Tho, will return to Paris from Hanoi

next Monday or Tuesday.

Presidential adviser Henry A. Kissinger is then expected to fly here from Washington by next Wednesday. After his negotiating sessions here are concluded, he will probably continue on to Saigon for final talks with South Vietnam President Nguyen Van Thieu.

If a previous understand-

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ing with the North Vietnamese government still applies, Kissinger will then go to Hanoi from Saigon, and the initialing of the cease-fire agreement will take place in the North Vietnamese capital.

A signing ceremony would then be held in Paris a few days or a week later. The cease-fire timetable and other provisions of the document would go into force with the signatures of the foreign ministers of South and North Vietnam, the Viet Cong Provisional Revolutionary Government and the U.S. secretary of state.

The 166th plenary session of the peace talks took place at the Hotel Majestic yesterday as scheduled, and was a markedly low-key affair.

Even though the Communist side threw an expected barrage of denunciations against the U.S. for rushing additional military supplies and equipment to Saigon in advance of the cease-fire, nothing was said or done to impede expectations of final negotiations which the U.S. insists are necessary.

The American delegation spokesman, David Lambertson, told his press briefing after the meeting: "We are optimistic that an additional private meeting is going to take place relatively soon, and during that meeting the remaining difficulties will be cleared away and agreement will be reached."

He added that the private meeting "will take place when the other side fixes the date," and it is "more likely to be Le Duc Tho" who conducts the final session rather than Vice Foreign Minister Xuan Thuy, the head of the Hanoi delegation of the peace talks with whom Kissinger has also dealt in the past.

Xuan Thuy was absent from yesterday's Paris session for the second week in a row, adding to the impression that he is probably more concerned right now with a great deal of cable traffic between Hanoi and Paris and Washington and Paris.