

# Settling the War on Hanoi's Terms

Box 1119 NOV 19 1972

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**A S. WASHINGTON AND Hanoi** hold further secret peace negotiations in Paris, it is important to examine the extent of "compromise" by each side up to this time. In particular, the current draft agreement should be critically viewed in light of past proposals by the Communist side.

In his Oct. 26 news conference, presidential aide Henry Kissinger said: "This settlement is a compromise settlement in which neither side achieves everything. . . We do not consider this a coalition government, and we believe that President Thieu was speaking about previous versions of a Communist plan and not about this version of a Communist plan. . ."

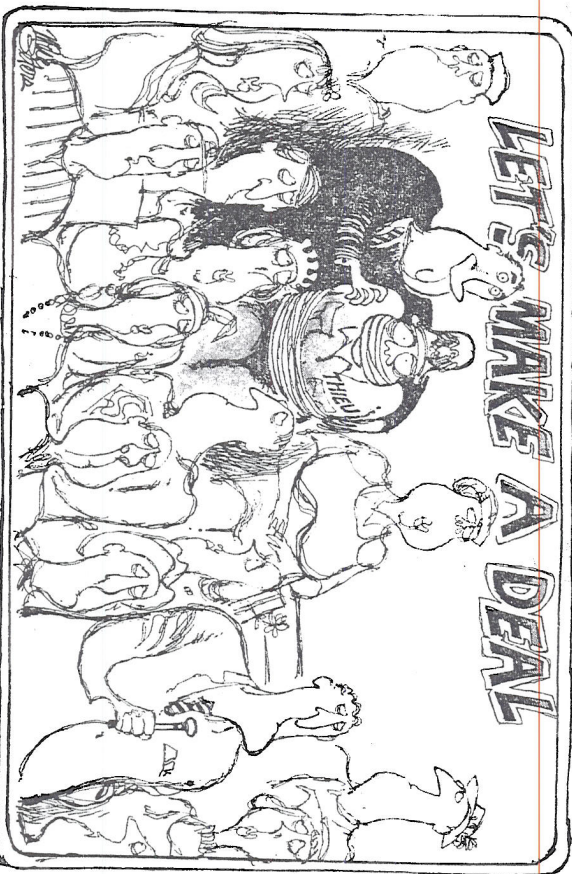
But a careful examination of the Hanoi-Washington draft agreement reveals that, contrary to Kissinger's re-

marks, the Communist side has not only made almost no compromises in their original demands but, as the agreement now stands, they may have scored important gains.

The lack of Communist concessions includes the question of the fate of South Vietnamese President Thieu. In its original 1969 proposal, the Communist side did not demand Thieu's ouster. This demand was made only later, as American forces began withdrawing from South Vietnam. Hanoi was employing the bargaining tactic of raising its price two or three times above what it was really prepared to settle for, a practice as common in Vietnam as elsewhere.

Not only do the contents of the draft agreement bear a striking resemblance to the original version of the Communist plan, but the language does as well, suggesting that the essence of the draft actually was presented to Kissinger by Hanoi, rather than resulting from a step-by-step joint effort.

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Peters in the Dayton Daily News

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TERMS, From Page B1

Although there have been several proposals from the Communist side over the past few years, Hanoi's original and basic position was contained in a 4-point plan proposed on April 8, 1965. The National Liberation Front's basic position was contained in its 10-point plan proposed on May 8, 1969. Since the NLF plan was derived directly from the Hanoi plan, comparison here is made between the 1969 NLF plan and the current Hanoi-Washington draft pact.

The English version of the 1969 NLF ten points cited here was the one provided by the NLF delegation itself in Paris, so there is no possibility of misunderstanding caused by translation difficulties. The text of the Hanoi-Washington draft accord is from Hanoi Radio's broadcast of Oct. 26, 1972.

**NLF POINT 1:** "To respect the Vietnamese people's fundamental national rights, i.e., independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity, as recognized by the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Vietnam."

Article 1 of the Hanoi-Washington (H-W) draft is virtually identical.

**NLF POINT 2:** "The United States must withdraw from South Vietnam all U.S. troops, military personnel, arms and war material, and all troops . . . of the other foreign countries of the U.S. camp without imposing any condition whatsoever."

H-W Article 2 stipulates: "The

United States will stop all its military activities, and end the bombing and mining in North Vietnam. Within 60 days there will be a total withdrawal from South Vietnam of troops and military personnel of the United States and those of the foreign countries allied with the United States and with the Republic of Vietnam." The present draft thus gives the Communist side more than their original demand by specifying the period of withdrawal as 60 days.

H-W Article 2 also adds: "The two South Vietnamese parties shall not accept the introduction of troops . . . armaments, munitions and war material into South Vietnam. The two South Vietnamese parties shall be permitted to make periodical replacements of armaments, munitions . . . after the ceasefire, on the basis of piece for piece of similar characteristics and properties . . ." This article leaves North Vietnam completely free to accept new armaments, munitions and war materials within its own borders to rebuild its military strength.

**NLF POINT 3:** "The question of the Vietnamese armed forces in South Vietnam shall be resolved by the Vietnamese parties among themselves."

H-W Article 4 states: "The question of Vietnamese armed forces in South Vietnam shall be settled by the two South Vietnamese parties. . ."

**NLF POINT 4:** "The people of South Vietnam . . . decide themselves the po-

litical regime of South Vietnam through free and democratic general elections. Through free and democratic general elections a constituent assembly will be set up, a constitution worked out, and a coalition government of South Vietnam installed reflecting national concord and the broad union of all social strata."

H-W Article 4 says: "The South Vietnamese people shall decide themselves the future of South Vietnam through genuinely free and democratic general elections under international supervision . . . An administrative structure called the National Council of Reconciliation and Concord of three equal segments will be set up to promote the implementation of the signed agreement by the PRG and GVN and to organize the general elections . . ." Only the term "international supervision" is added to the election provision; however, "international supervision" was already included in NLF Point 10, as will be seen.

The most important change here is from the term "coalition government" to "administrative structure," a change that will also be discussed later. And it is significant to note that H-W Article 4 adds the "formation of the Councils at lower levels" of the government to the NLF's Point 4.

**NLF POINT 5:** ". . . neither party shall impose its political regime on the people of South Vietnam . . ." All factions "that stand for peace, independence and neutrality" are allowed to en-

ter into talks to "set up a provisional coalition government."

The "no imposition" clause is contained in H-W Article 4: "The United States . . . does not seek to impose a pro-American regime in Saigon." The inclusion of the other factions is explicit in provision for the "three equal segments" composition of the Council of Reconciliation.

**NLF POINT 6:** "South Vietnam will carry out a foreign policy of peace and neutrality."

H-W Article 4 commits the United States "not to impose a pro-American regime in Saigon." The neutrality of Laos and Cambodia, also included in the NLF's Point 6, is provided for by H-W Article 7.

**NLF POINT 7:** "The reunification of Vietnam will be achieved step by step, by peaceful means. . ."

H-W Article 5 repeats the same sentence.

**NLF POINT 8:** "As provided for in the 1954 Geneva Agreement . . . the two zones North and South of Vietnam undertake to refrain from joining any military alliance with foreign countries. . ."

Provisions for "no military alliance" and related matters are contained in H-W Articles 2, 4, and 7, as previously noted.

**NLF POINT 9:** "To resolve the aftermath of war: a) The parties will negotiate the release of the armymen captured in the war. b) The U.S. government must bear full responsibility for the losses and devastations it has caused to the Vietnamese people in both zones."

H-W Article 4 provides for the "return of all captured and detained personnel," while H-W Article 8

specifies that "the United States will contribute to healing the wounds of war and to post-war reconstruction in the DRVN and throughout Indochina."

**NLF POINT 10:** "The parties shall reach agreement on an international supervision about the withdrawal . . ."

H-W Article 6, as noted earlier, provides the framework for international supervision of the agreement.

## Two Main Conclusions

**F**ROM ALL THIS, two principal conclusions can be drawn. First, all of the NLF's original 10 points are contained in the current Hanoi-Washington draft pact, either explicitly or implicitly. And, second, the contention that Hanoi has dropped two demands—one on "coalition government" and another on "veto over the personality of the existing government"—is highly questionable.

On the coalition question, it is apparent that the "National Council of Reconciliation" in the Hanoi-Washington draft text is similar to the "Provisional Coalition Government" in Point 5 of the 1969 NLF plan. Granted, the functions of the Provisional Coalition Government are specified in the NLF plan, while they are not explicit in the current draft accord. But North Vietnamese Premier Phan Van Dong, in an interview with Arnaud de Borchgrave of Newsweek, specifically referred to the current plan as a "three-sided coalition of transition."

Regarding Hanoi's supposed concession of its veto over personalities of the present government, the demand for resignation of President Thieu, as previously noted, was not in the original NLF plan and was added later only for bargaining purposes.

It can be concluded, then, that in addition to getting all the NLF's original ten points in the current draft agreement, the Communist side scored new gains, the most significant one being Hanoi's ability to leave inside South Vietnam a large number of North Vietnam's best troops, most of whom came to the South since the invasion which began last Easter. Thus, even if the United States succeeds in the new round of talks to remove most of the Northern troops, South Vietnam would not gain anything new compared to the position that existed prior to April, 1972.



Wetzel—Ben Roth Agency