

Agreement Made On Peace Council

SF Examiner

By Kingsbury Smith

NOV 21 1972

European Director and Chief Foreign Writer, The Hearst Newspapers

PARIS — Agreement has been reached on the method of selecting the neutralist members of a proposed three-segment council to promote the implementation of the Vietnam peace pact and organize general elections in South Vietnam.

The agreement on the Council of National Reconciliation and Accord has been accepted by the South Vietnamese government.

This was learned exclusively today as the American and North Vietnamese negotiators entered the second day of what is intended to be the final round of negotiations to conclude the peace agreement.

Optimism concerning the prospect for early conclusion of an accord was rising

in Paris diplomatic circles, partly because both Henry Kissinger, U.S., and Le Duc Tho, Hanoi's chief negotiator, emerged smiling from the first session of the resumed negotiations.

The meeting was held in a walled two-story villa in the village of Gif-sur-Yvette, about 15 miles southwest of Paris.

The first meeting of what is being called the decisive phase of the negotiations lasted about six hours.

Apparently the site of the first meeting was chosen by the North Vietnamese because the villa belongs to the French Communist Party.

This was the first time

—Turn to Page 10, Col. 2

—From Page 1

that the site of a secret meeting between Kissinger and Tho was discovered at the time of the meeting.

The plan to keep the meeting place secret was foiled by French journalists, who were waiting outside the villa and who may have been tipped off by Communist sources.

The two sides are trying to close the gap between Hanoi's insistence that the United States sign without any basic modification the draft peace agreement that was negotiated last month and Kissinger's request for clarification of "six or seven concrete issues."

Another major issue is South Vietnam President Thieu's demand that Hanoi agree to the eventual withdrawal of all its troops from the South before he agrees to the settlement.

The solution of the third segment problem is favorable to South Vietnam and removes one more obstacle in the way of a final settlement.

The draft agreement that Kissinger negotiated with the North Vietnamese envoys provides that the Reconciliation Council shall be composed of three segments, one representing the Saigon government (GVN), one representing the Viet Cong's Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG), and one representing South Vietnamese non-aligned political elements.

Hanoi originally insisted that selection of the neutralist members must be by unanimous accord between the PRG and the GVN. This would have given the Communists veto power over the selection of the neutralist members. It was strongly resisted by Thieu.

Hanoi has now agreed that the PRG and the GVN should each select half the members of the neutralist segment. This means that the Viet Cong will select those who will favor the Communist side while Thieu will select those he can rely on to support him.

This solution will, in effect, neutralize the influence of the third segment and prevent it from wielding

any balance of power in the Reconciliation Council.

It eliminates any danger of the Communist and neutralist segments attempting to impose majority role on Thieu's segment.

It also gives Thieu veto power over the functions of the council, which will be able to make decisions concerning implementation of the political aspects of the peace agreement, such as organizing new elections, only with the president's consent.