

Peace Talks Suspended Until Dec. 4

NOV 26 1972

By Jonathan C. Randal
Washington Post Foreign Service

PARIS, Nov. 25—Faced with serious obstacles, the United States and North Vietnam today broke off their hoped for final series of private cease-fire negotiations, but the two sides agreed to meet again here Dec. 4.

Presidential adviser Henry Kissinger flew to New York to confer tonight with President Nixon who is spending a private weekend there.

North Vietnamese officials, who announced the nine-day interruption through their official news agency, said Le Duc Tho, the Hanoi Politburo member who is Kissinger's major negotiating partner, will remain here.

A North Vietnamese spokesman said Kissinger had suggested the recess.

(In New York, White House press secretary Ronald Ziegler said that Kissinger would meet with the President but that neither he, nor his assistant, Gen. Alexander Haig, planned to go to Saigon. Haig was the only American to accompany Kissinger at yesterday's meeting with the North Vietnamese negotiators in Paris, Ziegler said.)

(Ziegler cautioned against any speculation that the talks had reached an impasse, saying twice that "both sides are negotiating seriously." He stressed that the two sides agreed to meet again Dec. 4.)

(Ziegler also said Mr. Nixon has agreed to meet in Washington during the break in talks with Nguyen Phu Duc, special assistant to South Vietnamese President Thieu.)

The announcement of the postponement was made only hours after a smiling Kissinger and a grim-faced Tho conferred for one hour and 40 minutes in a villa near the North Vietnamese headquarters in suburban Cholsy-le-Roi, 10 miles south of Paris.

The very fact that both principal negotiators were accompanied only by their top aides—as was the case Friday—indicated that the last two of their six meetings this week were devoted less to substance than ways of avoiding an out-

and-out breakdown.

Neither American nor North Vietnamese official spokesmen here would comment on the interruption or on a report published today by the Washington Post which predicted that the talks had reached a crisis and might be postponed.

Sources close to both the North and South Vietnamese delegations indicated privately that the report, which said the United States had revised its position to support Saigon objections to the draft agreement, was correct in all essential details.

Nhan Dan, the official North Vietnamese newspaper, today accused the United States of "trying a 180 degree turn in demanding reconsideration of the entire problem, trying to start all over from the begin-

See TALKS, A17, Col. 3

Recessing, rather than breaking off, talks is seen as an encouraging sign. Story on Page A17.

TALKS, From A1

ning." The paper said that in deference to Saigon's opposition the United States had presented counter-proposals considerably less generous than those contained in the draft accord.

Kissinger's own earlier words of optimism were on record to underscore his evident desire to complete rapidly the

draft cease-fire accord which were worked out here last month.

Kissinger said on Oct. 26 that only one more negotiating session of "three to four days" was required to work out six or seven questions considered unsatisfactory to the United States.

And upon arriving here last Sunday to resume the talks, Kissinger said "my instruc-

tions are to stay for as long as is useful and to conduct discussions in a spirit of conciliation, moderation and goodwill." He said then that the President "sent me here for what he hopes will be the final stage of negotiations to end the war in Indochina."

Although the interruption in the talks did not come as a complete surprise, observers here were at a loss to explain

why the United States apparently had adopted almost all of Saigon's counter-demands during the resumed discussions.

One theory suggested that the U.S. had done so in order to placate Saigon one last time, knowing full well that North Vietnam would not accept such extensive revisions. The United States, the theory continued, gambled that Hanoi would then agree to further negotiations after an interruption.

In the next few days, the United States was expected to exert growing pressure on Saigon to moderate its demands or face the brutal effect of such forceful tactics as cutting off financial and military supplies.

Meanwhile, nine neutralist Vietnamese leaders in exile, most of them known for their

sympathies for the Vietcong, sent a letter to the American and North Vietnamese delegations here decrying a reported United States effort to eliminate neutralists from the post-cessation government machinery in South Vietnam.

The most optimistic note of the day here was sounded by French Foreign Minister Maurice Schumann, who reiterated the official French optimism that was noticeable immediately after Kissinger conferred with him Friday.

Schumann Saturday told a television news program he was "much less pessimistic than your fellow journalists seem to be for the moment" about the course of the talks.

Talking only hours before the announcement of the nine-day interruption was made, he said: "Don't ask me to go into any details."

25 NOV