

Saigon Demands Boil Down To One—North Viet Pullout

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PARIS, Nov. 30 — South Vietnam today scaled down its objections to the draft cease-fire agreement by stating that "everything else will follow" if North Vietnam agrees to withdraw its troops from the South.

In apparent response to American refusal to continue backing all of South Vietnam's objections to the accord, Saigon Ambassador

Pham Dang Lam said the North Vietnamese troop withdrawal was "the capital problem for the establishment and maintenance of a real and effective cease-fire in South Vietnam."

Speaking to newsmen after the 168th session of the semipublic peace talks, Saigon press spokesman Nguyen Trieu Dan agreed when asked if the other problems raised by Saigon were relatively less important.

"If the withdrawal prob-

lem is solved satisfactorily, believe me," he replied, "then everything else will follow."

"Withdrawal by North Vietnamese forces would be enough," he said to prove that Hanoi "no longer intends to impose a Communist regime on South Vietnam by force."

In a further hint of Saigon's readiness to drop its past intransigence, Lam also said in his formal confer-

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ence speech that "we would like to have formal assurances on the part of the Hanoi authorities with regard to the principle of withdrawal of regular North Vietnamese troops back to North Vietnam."

Lam's very use of the words "formal assurances" and "principle" of withdrawal — rather than the withdrawal itself as Saigon has demanded in the past — seemed designed to suggest that some compromise might be worked out to allow Saigon to save face before the interrupted secret talks resume here Monday.

Nonetheless, both North Vietnamese and Vietcong delegates and their spokesmen once again rejected any notion of withdrawing Hanoi's troops which Saigon estimates at 300,000 men, twice the U.S. figure.

North Vietnam has never formally admitted the presence of its troops in the South and has argued that any Vietnamese is on home territory whereas American and allied troops are "aggressors" by definition.

There is no easy or airtight explanation why Saigon has abruptly relegated to secondary status its other demands such as an Indochina-wide cease-fire to include Laos and Cambodia,

recognition of the Demilitarized Zone as a border between the two Vietnams or refusal to include neutralists in any transitional government machinery.

But there were signs here that the United States was in the process of stepping back from the Saigon-influenced revisions to the October draft agreement which Henry Kissinger presented here last week in his secret meetings with the North Vietnamese.

Specifically, U.S. Ambassador William J. Porter reiterated to the conference session President Nixon's "firm intention to permit no avoidable delay in ending this war and entering a period of peace and reconstruction."

Moreover, while North Vietnam insisted that its position has not changed since Oct. 26, when Hanoi first divulged its version of the draft accord, Porter was characterized as "optimistic" by U.S. press spokesman David Lambertson.

In keeping with official optimism undiminished by the current nine-day interruption in the secret talks, Porter told reporters upon emerging from the session: "I note that some of your dispatches these days seem to contain unwarranted amounts, in my view, of pessimism. I would caution you to take care less you be caught with your pens down . . . Let me repeat the old saying that those who know right now are not talking and those who are talking don't know."

In his press briefing, North Vietnamese spokesman Nguyen Thanh Lee did nothing to encourage belief

in a report claiming that Hanoi had agreed to reestablish the Demilitarized Zone, extend a cease-fire to

all Indochina and allow both sides to receive any weapons their suppliers could provide.