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Nixon: Despite Saigon Protest

By United Press International

President Nixon has told the South Vietnamese that the United States wants to sign a peace treaty with North Vietnam by about Dec. 15 regardless of South Vietnamese objections, government sources in Saigon said today.

The South Vietnamese sources also said the United States expects the first contingent of 100 prisoners of war to be released the day a treaty is signed — definitely before Christmas, according to the sources. There is about 500 American POWs now in North Vietnam.

Nixon conveyed his intentions to Nguyen Phu Duc, special emissary of South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu, in meetings this week, the sources said.

For the first time officially, a South Vietnamese leader declared flatly that Saigon might refuse to sign the cease-fire agreement now being worked out.

South Vietnamese Foreign Minister Tran Van Lam said today his country would refuse to sign any such agreement if North Vietnam failed to withdraw "all their invading troops," the government TV reported.

Lam's statement was also the strongest indication yet that the United States had threatened to sign without South Vietnam's agreement.

Broadcast

The news broadcast on Saigon television said Lam told an Italian newsmen that South Vietnam had urged the United States to refrain from signing any bilateral agreement with Hanoi over the protests of the Saigon administration.

"The foreign minister affirmed that the government of the Republic of (South) Vietnam will not sign the accords in Paris if the North Vietnamese Communists do not withdraw all their invading troops," the broadcast said.

"He also hoped that the U.S. will not sign a treaty

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with the North Vietnamese Communists separately," it added.

Henry Kissinger flies to the Florida White House today to meet with the President a final time before proceeding to Paris tomorrow for what could be the final round of talks to end the war.

Kissinger has scheduled private meetings with the North Vietnamese for Monday.

Duc, in a coded message sent to the South Vietnamese president, reported he was unable to convince Nixon that Thieu's objections to a treaty should be met, Saigon sources said. Thieu has objected to the draft treaty worked out by Kissinger and the North Vietnamese on grounds it does not require the latter publicly to withdraw their forces from South Vietnam.

The sources said the United States is satisfied that Hanoi will withdraw at least some of its estimated 140,000 troops.

The South Vietnamese sources said that on Nov. 30, Le Duc Tho, the chief North Vietnamese negotiator with

Kissinger, had suggested a cease-fire agreement be signed on Dec. 10. However, consultations with Saigon dragged on and this became impractical, the sources said.

Tho then suggested the document be signed on Dec. 19, the eve of the anniversary of the founding of the National Liberation Front (Viet Cong). But the United States wanted an earlier date, around Dec. 15, the sources said.

Nixon told Duc the most important issue was not the troops withdrawal but the survival of South Vietnam as a non-Communist nation, the sources reported. Some observers saw this as a veiled threat that South Vietnamese resistance to a peace accord could endanger continued U.S. military

and economic aid to Saigon. But sources quoted by CBS News said Nixon told Thieu not to worry about "paper matters" because American aid would continue after hostilities end.

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