

'Progress' in Peace Talks -- Session Today

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PARIS — Some forward movement is being made in the secret U.S.-North Vietnamese negotiations in Paris to finalize the conclusion of a Vietnam peace agreement.

The sudden cancellation of yesterday's planned meeting between Henry Kissinger and North Vietnamese negotiators was not caused by any new crisis.

It was prompted partly by Kissinger's desire to seek new instructions from President Nixon and partly by the wish of Le Duc Tho, the chief North Vietnamese negotiator, to consult Hanoi on developments that occurred during Monday's two sessions.

If things go well, it is still possible that the U.S. and North Vietnam will meet the plan ned mid-December schedule for concluding the peace agreement.

Final Round?

This was learned today as Kissinger met with Tho and Xuan Thuy, the No. 2 North Vietnamese negotiator, in this week's third session of what is expected to be the final round of the secret negotiations.

Kissinger and Tho had previously agreed on a mid-December schedule for conclusion of the peace agreement.

The new schedule calls for the U.S. to stop all bombing of North Vietnam by mid-December. It also calls for the initialling in Hanoi 24 hours later of the peace agreement and its signing in Paris a week later.

Cease-Fire

Under this schedule, some American war prisoners would be brought home for Christmas and a cease-fire would go into effect in Vietnam in January or later.

Meanwhile, there were indications that one of the dif-

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ficulties to be overcome concerns the question of political prisoners in South Vietnam.

Tho was reported to have maintained in Monday's sessions his demand that the Saigon government agree to release all political prisoners held in South Vietnam within 90 days after a cease-fire is proclaimed.

This was one of the surprise demands made by Tho during the Nov. 20-25 meetings with Kissinger. It was made by Tho in angry retaliation against American support of South Vietnamese President Nguyen N an Thieu's refusal to sign the peace agreement without greater safeguards for South Vietnam's future security.

No definite schedule for the release of the political

prisoners held in South Vietnam was provided for in the draft peace agreement that Kissinger and the North Vietnamese negotiated in October.

The South Vietnamese government has offered to release 40,000 political prisoners at the same time that Hanoi releases 480 American war prisoners it now admits holding.

Apparently this offer does not satisfy Hanoi or the National Liberation Front. Viet Cong sources in Paris claim the number of political prisoners held in the South totals between 200,000 and 300,000.

These are said to include not only Viet Cong supporters but many non-Communist opponents of President Thieu's government.