

Kissinger Meets Tho, Sees Pompidou

By Jonathan C. Randal
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PARIS, Dec. 8—U.S. presidential adviser Henry Kissinger this afternoon held his fifth secret negotiating session of the week with Hanoi's Le Duc Tho amid reports from French government sources that a Vietnam cease-fire agreement was "close, but not imminent."

They scheduled another meeting for Saturday.

Speaking shortly after Kissinger paid an unexpected midday visit on French President Georges Pompidou and top aide Pierre Juillet at the Elysee Palace, the sources said conclusion of the accord would doubtless not happen "today or tomorrow."

Both the United States and North Vietnamese delegations here maintained their total news blackout and observers again were reduced to judging progress by visual indications. Smiles, waves and handshakes once again punctuated the 4½ hour private meeting today in the three-story villa of a French-born American jeweler in the fashionable suburb of Neuilly.

But no amount of cordiality

could undo the growing impression that the present round of talks was taking longer than had been expected.

Indeed, in an apparent effort to damp down expectations of imminent success, officials accompanying Secretary of State William Rogers to the NATO ministerial meeting in Brussels warned against over-optimistic interpretations of the progress made so far in the private Paris talks.

Rogers was briefed on the talks by Ambassador William Porter, the head of the American delegation to the public peace talks.

The most optimistic interpretation for the drawn-out negotiations—which have totaled roughly 19 hours since they resumed Monday after a nine-day interruption—was that both sides are painstakingly going over the 4-page cease-fire document point-by-point.

But warnings against expecting an imminent settlement also fed rumors that Kissinger—or his assistant, Gen. Alexander Haig—would soon fly to Saigon to seek South Vietnamese President Thieu's agreement to the cease-fire.

The very possibility of such a trip in turn increased speculation that formal signature of a cease-fire might be delayed until around Christmas at the earliest.

If indeed this scenario is confirmed, Kissinger and Tho may require yet another round of talks to overcome last minute objections by Saigon.

But judging by Communist reactions at yesterday's weekly session of the public peace talks, the United States and North Vietnam were still seeking a compromise on one key point.

The outstanding problem appears to center on Saigon's insistence on some, perhaps only vague, North Vietnamese commitment to withdraw its troops from South Vietnam, and Hanoi's counterproposal that South Vietnam agree to release political detainees held in its jails.

Neither of these points were specifically mentioned in the version of the draft cease-fire accord which Hanoi published Oct. 26.

In keeping with recent past performances, Kissinger was expected to brief the South Vietnamese peace talks delegation on the day's private meeting and Tho was expected to fill in his Vietcong counterpart, Mrs. Nguyen Thi Binh.

In an interview published tonight by the French news service, Agence France-Presse, Mrs. Binh reiterated earlier Vietcong charges that the United States was questioning "matters of principle" in the current round of secret talks.

Nothing in her interview was specifically new. But the very fact that she reiterated well known Vietcong positions on such questions as the release of political detainees and criticism of Indonesia as a member of the cease-fire supervisory commission was a fresh indication that the Vietcong are increasingly worried about last minute compromises.

All week long, the Vietcong have been notably more nervous about the new round of secret negotiations than Hanoi, which at worst has seemed skeptical of American intentions.

B-52s Continue Raids On N. Viet Supplies
SAYGON, Dec. 8 (AP)—U.S. B-52 bombers kept up their

saturation bombing of North Vietnamese supply routes across the Demilitarized Zone Friday, dropping another 2 million pounds of bombs in 18 hours.

It was the second day of concentrated U.S. bombing in and around the DMZ. An estimated 4 million pounds of bombs were dropped between noon Wednesday and noon Thursday within a 10-mile radius of the North Vietnamese town of Benquang, just above the demarcation line.

From noon Thursday until 6 a.m. today, the B-52s blasted supply caches five miles south of Benquang. They also hit targets in the DMZ and others south of the DMZ above Quangtri City.

Two more B-52 missions were flown in the southern part of North Vietnam and 10 in South Vietnam.

Ground fighting was reported in Quangtri Province, where South Vietnamese marines and paratroopers are trying to retake territory captured by the North Vietnamese in their offensive last spring.