

Deadlock Reported In Talks

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Neither Side Seen Wanting To Break Off

By Jonathan C. Randal

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PARIS, Dec. 10 — The secret peace talks between Henry A. Kissinger and Hanoi's Le Duc Tho have made no substantive progress since their resumption here last Monday, prominent sources close to the negotiations said today.

But neither the United States nor North Vietnam shows at this time any sign of wanting

to break off what one of the sources termed "purely academic discussions" on major matters.

He described the situation as a "war of attrition at the negotiating table instead of on the battlefield . . . It's really a question of who has the solidest nerves.

However, despite the substantive deadlock, experts working on separate military and political commissions are slowly tackling technical problems, the sources added.

Typical of such problems, the sources said, is the drawing of maps to determine the emplacement of Communist and South Vietnamese units after the standstill cease-fire takes effect.

The map-drawing is designed to reach agreement on the exact locations of zones under Communist or South Vietnamese control as well as contested areas and, it is hoped, to prevent any post-cease-fire troop movements.

William Sullivan, deputy assistant secretary of state and former American ambassador to Laos, led the U.S. group in this effort. Other members of the American side in these meetings include John Negroponte,

a staff member of the National Security Council and its Southeast Asia expert; Winston Lord, senior staff member of the council; Peter Rodman, another council staff member; and David Engel, a translator.

The sources stressed that such work did not constitute any meaningful breakthrough in the main talks, since these details would have to be worked out no matter what form an eventual agreement took.

The sources' interpretation contrasted with a wave of optimism Saturday night. After a three-and-one-half hour secret negotiating session, it was announced that Kissinger's deputy Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr., was flying back to Washington to report to President Nixon.

The President returned to Washington from Camp David, where he had spent the past six days, for his meeting with Gen. Haig. The two men conferred at the White House for an hour and a quarter.

Meanwhile, Le Thanh Nghi, the No. 2 man in the Hanoi government, arrived unannounced in Paris and was met

See TALKS, A15, Col. 1

TALKS, From A1

by Xuan Thuy, head of the North Vietnamese delegation; Mrs. Nguyen Thi Binh, head of the Vietcong delegation; and Piotr Abrassimov, Soviet ambassador to France.

Communist sources refused to say why Nghi was in Paris. In Moscow, he signed an agreement covering next year's Soviet military and economic aid to North Vietnam.

The fact that both sides' experts met today while Kissinger and Tho postponed a new meeting until Monday was designed to mask the deadlock, the sources said.

Barring a major move by President Nixon or Hanoi, the sources doubted that there would be any rapid cease-fire agreement in the secret talks.

[A Communist source close to the North Vietnamese was quoted by UPI as saying of the meetings that have gone on since last Monday: "The bargaining is extremely tough."]

On substantive problems, the sources said, nothing has changed since Nov. 20. At that time Kissinger presented radi-

cally revised demands to the North Vietnamese when the talks resumed after a five-week hiatus in which Hanoi accused the United States of reneging on its earlier agreement to sign the cease-fire accord Oct. 31.

Since then, North Vietnam has charged that in essence the United States radically rewrote the original draft accord to meet South Vietnamese President Thieu's violent objections.

The key revisions, which the sources said remain on the table, include demands for withdrawal of North Vietnamese troops from South Vietnam and elimination of the so-called neutralists from the "National Council of Reconciliation and Concord."

The Oct. 26 version of the draft accord released by Hanoi made no mention of North Vietnamese troop withdrawals and stipulated that the neutralists should share responsibility with the Vietcong and South Vietnamese government for carrying out the cease-fire and organizing elections.

The tougher American position was designed to meet Sai-

gon's publicity expressed fears that any such three-segment organization was simply a disguised form of a coalition government which Thieu has consistently rejected.

In retaliation, North Vietnamese reintroduced the demand for Thieu's immediate ouster, again rejected withdrawal of its troops, demanded the immediate release of all political prisoners and detainees held by Saigon and insisted on having all three groups on the reconciliation council.

That round of talks ended in deadlock Nov. 25, and subsequently Thieu's foreign-policy expert, Nguyen Phu Duc, flew to Washington where he conferred once with President Nixon and four times with Kissinger.

Until today, it had been assumed that the Nixon administration had made it clear to Duc that the United States could no longer lend its support to Saigon's more extreme demands. However, the sources

said that the continuing deadlock showed that the administration has not yet done any such thing.

There is no single problem blocking a negotiating breakthrough they said. Rather, they said, the opposing positions remain as far apart as they were two weeks ago.

Tho's willingness to shake hands with Kissinger in public Wednesday, the sources added, seemed designed to put pressure on Saigon. But the sources also confirmed that there had been serious differences between North Vietnam and the Vietcong before Hanoi imposed major concessions, which led to the October draft agreement.

For North Vietnam to accept any further concessions would risk further serious disagreements in the Communist camp, according to these sources. The American dilemma in bringing President Thieu to accept any cease-fire is similar, they said.