

Kissinger, Tho Resume Talks; Triple Meeting Set for Today

By Jonathan C. Randal
Washington Post Foreign Service

PARIS, Dec. 11—Henry A. Kissinger and Hanoi's Le Duc Tho today resumed their private negotiations on a Vietnam cease-fire as unprecedented three meetings were announced for Tuesday.

Two morning meetings of experts were scheduled for Tuesday morning before Kissinger and Tho confer in the afternoon for their eighth private session since they resumed their search for peace just one week ago.

In keeping with the total news blackout observed by both the U.S. and North Vietnamese delegations, there was no official explanation for the speeded-up pace of the meetings.

But observers optimistically suggested that there may have been a major breakthrough in the negotiations in the wake of Gen. Alexander M. Haig's surprise return to Washington Saturday night to consult with President Nixon.

In what American sources said was the more important of the experts session scheduled for Tuesday, the United States will be represented by William Sullivan, deputy assistant secretary of state for Southeast Asian affairs, and William J. Porter, the ambassador to the formal peace conference who recently was named under secretary of state for political affairs.

Their North Vietnamese opposite numbers will be Nguyen Co Thach, vice foreign minister, and Xuan Thuy, Porter's counterpart in the formal peace talks.

For the first time, Porter participated in the secret talks when he accompanied Kissinger today for a session lasting just over four hours in the suburban Neuilly home which has become the American site for the negotiations.

Porter's presence was interpreted in some quarters as an effort to give him equal status with Thuy, who has participated in almost all the secret meetings with Kissinger since 1969.

While the higher level experts meeting is taking in the Neuilly setting, the other group of specialists will meet on North Vietnamese home ground in Choisy-le-Roi, south of Paris.

Observers were also intrigued by the presence here of North Vietnamese Vice Premier Le Thanh Nghi, who arrived Saturday after completing his major task of renegotiating aid deals with China and the Soviet Union.

There were suggestions that Nghi, who conferred with Tho Sunday while he and Kissinger took a day off from their secret meetings and experts from both sides worked on technical problems, was also interested in the question of postwar American aid to Indochina.

The experts were said to be grappling with wording which would avoid outright suggestions of formal American reparations and would also make the aid conditional on Hanoi's strict observance of any eventual cease-fire agreement.

Nghi, here ostensibly to participate in the French Communist Party's 20th congress starting Wednesday, was joined today by Vo Dong Giang.

A member of the Vietcong central committee, Giang was also said to have arrived from Moscow for the same purpose, although there were suggestions that both newcomers wanted to be present at this crucial stage of the negotiations.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Nguyen Thi Binh, foreign minister of the Vietcong's Provisional Revolutionary Government, issued a statement backing off earlier remarks attributed to her in an interview Friday with Agence France-Presse, the French news service.

Objecting to "more or less inexact interpretations" of her interview, she reiterated longstanding Communist insistence that any withdrawal of troops would have to be negotiated following a cease-fire between the Vietcong and the

South Vietnamese government.

The AFP dispatch had seemed to suggest a possible compromise solution for the key problem still believed holding up final agreement on the cease-fire: the withdrawal of North Vietnamese troops in South Vietnam which Saigon demands and Hanoi rejects.

In the interview she was said to have suggested that after a cease-fire "soldiers originating in the North, (and) demobilized in the South, could go home."

But her clarifying statement, issued after a meeting with Tho Sunday, appeared designed to put an end to such suggestions.

Adding to the growing tension around the talks was a fire bomb attack against the North Vietnamese general delegation, just off the Boulevard du Montparnasse on the left bank. Four young men threw the two bombs near the mission. But the explosives went off without causing injuries or damage.

French news media received a telephone call later in the day from a little known right-wing organization claiming credit for the attack, which was designed to "teach the Communist torturers a lesson."

Meanwhile, Jean-Claude Pomonti, the usually well-informed Saigon correspondent of the newspaper Le Monde, quoted informed Saigon sources as predicting a cease-fire by Dec. 20.

The sources suggested that the usual Christmas truce might be advanced a few days and turned into an informal armistice "probably through New Year's Day and then indefinitely."

Exchange of POWs Seen as Key Issue

By Peter Jenkins
Manchester Guardian

Negotiations on the Vietnam cease-fire are stuck on a single problem—the American prisoners of war and Vietcong and

other political prisoners held in President Thieu's jails.

This, according to a well placed source here, is the news which Gen. Alexander Haig, Henry Kissinger's deputy, reported to President Nixon Sunday on his return from Paris, where Kissinger has been locked in negotiations with Hanoi's Le Duc Tho.

Hanoi is reported to be demanding that Thieu release his political prisoners as a quid pro quo for the release of the American prisoners of war. This gives Thieu a powerful lever on the negotiations for Kissinger reportedly has been unable to obtain a commitment from North Vietnam on the withdrawal of its regular forces deployed below the Demilitarized Zone.

Thieu has been demanding that Hanoi agree formally to withdraw its forces. It had been widely speculated here that the United States would, if necessary, enter into a cease-fire agreement with North Vietnam without Thieu's concurrence. But if Thieu now holds the key to the American prisoners, this becomes a much more agonizing proposition.

Saigon Troops Hit Enemy Near Border

SAIGON, Dec. 11 (AP)—Alerted by a defector, South Vietnamese forces Monday attacked a North Vietnamese battalion infiltrating from Cambodia northwest of Saigon, military sources reported. During five hours of fighting, 87 enemy troops were killed while three South Vietnamese were reported wounded.

In an apparent response to a possible enemy offensive on Saigon, the U.S. command reported sending 13 B-52 missions into an arc 23 to 48 miles northeast and northwest of here. Officials said they were the heaviest raids by the big bombers in the area in more than two months.