

Delegates in Paris at Odds Over Lack of Final Accord

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'Technical Session' Today

By FLORA LEWIS

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PARIS, Dec. 14—All four delegations to the regular formal Vietnam negotiations publicly recorded their explanations today of why almost a month of private talks had failed to result in agreement.

They made the point with varying degrees of firmness, but the speeches at the 170th session of the conference all said that major questions remain unsettled.

North Vietnam's spokesman announced that Le Duc Tho, who led Hanoi's negotiating team, was going home tomorrow "to report to our Government." The spokesman said nothing was decided yet about when or whether he would return to Paris.

Henry A. Kissinger, President Nixon's national security adviser, returned to Washington last night after 15 bargaining sessions with Mr. Tho.

The talks were not broken off, however. The two sides are to meet tomorrow, with William J. Porter, chief of the reg-

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ular United States delegation, heading the American group and Xuan Thuy, the head of Hanoi's delegation, leading the North Vietnamese in what has been described as continuing the negotiations on the "technical level."

Many technical details of a cease-fire agreement have been agreed on and a much proposed language has been put on paper and approved by both Hanoi and Washington, largely in sessions before Oct. 17. But it is now clear that the real problem obstructing agreement is not technical drafting, which is going ahead, but the question of who is to control South Vietnam politically.

Formal Session Set

Almost all participants here believe that until that central issue is resolved no actual draft of the agreement will be either signed or carried out.

Another session of the formal conference has been scheduled for next Thursday. During private talks, the formal meetings are usually routine time-marking exercises, although they

sometimes do give a veiled glint of the tenor of negotiation.

But when a round of private talks has ended, the Communists and Saigon tend to use the fully reported sessions to record what they consider the basics of their conflicting positions.

Both the United States and South Vietnam sent their deputy delegation leaders to the formal conference today since their chiefs were preparing for tomorrow's technical session. But the speeches are prepared beforehand.

The American spokesman, David F. Lambertson, said today that the frequency of the "expert sessions" had not yet been decided upon. Presumably they are intended to continue. Both American and North Vietnamese spokesman said that Mr. Kissinger and Mr. Tho had agreed to exchange messages through "usual channels," which has normally meant Paris.

Central Issues Unresolved

But the delegations also made clear that the outstanding problems are the central issues of the war and require political decision far above the technical level.

Heyward Isham, deputy head of the United States delegation, presented the mildest picture of the continuing disagreement. Rejecting Communist charges that the United States was using "pretexts" to prolong negotiations, Mr. Isham said the talks had concentrated on "issues of central importance."

He chided the Communists for their repeated insistence that the United States sign the cease-fire agreement essentially as negotiated last October.

"In our country the high pressure salesman who tries to obtain immediate signature of an incomplete contract only succeeds in arousing suspicion about the transaction," he said.

The reference to an "incomplete contract" in the prepared text of Mr. Isham's speech was also a way of demonstrating that the United States still seeks changes.

Mr. Isham denied, however, that the United States "made an about-face" during the secret talks and said that the "vilifications" in the formal conference room "bore little relationship to the actual state of affairs."

He said he could no longer

speak of "optimism or pessimism," but would confine himself to expressing American determination and belief that a cease-fire could be negotiated.

It was a sharp contrast to the hearty grin with which Mr. Kissinger began the round of talks on Nov. 20.

Neither the South Vietnamese nor the two Communist delegations made any such effort to sustain an atmosphere of hope. They made tough restatements of their basic positions, exchanged sharp charges, and defined once more the chasm that divides them.

Saigon's chief delegate, Pham Dang Lam, put it concisely when he gave his Government's view of the war as "the conflict opposing North and South" in which he said Hanoi was trying to "impose its own solution on South Vietnam."

For the South Vietnamese, that is the essential meaning of their demands for withdrawal of North Vietnamese troops, recognition of South Vietnam's sovereignty and rejection of Vietcong claims to equal legal status in the south.

Mr. Lam reiterated these points, saying that Hanoi refused "to tackle the crucial problem for peace."

In negotiations, he said to the Communists, "You seek not

a just and honorable peace for everybody, but a peace to your own liking."

He presented President Nguyen Van Thieu's new offer of a prolonged holiday truce to be followed by release of prisoners and new negotiations among the Vietnamese themselves.

The Communist side has emphatically rejected this proposal, sticking to its insistence that the United States must accept at least the principles of their political demands in any military cease-fire package.

Mr. Isham, in his prepared speech, urged the conference to begin "serious discussion" of President Thieu's cease-fire plan. The South Vietnamese spokesman was pressed afterward to say whether that meant that the United States was supporting the plan. He avoided the question, as did the American spokesman. *

U.S. Effort Called 'Absurd'

Nguyen Minh Vy, Hanoi's deputy delegate, said that the United States was demanding "revision of the basic principles" of the agreement negotiated in October.

He said the United States was trying "to modify the substance of the agreement."

Later his spokesman, Nguyen Thanh Le, referred to "United

States demands for fundamental changes in the principles of the agreement."

"All U.S. pretexts for changing the agreement," he said, "are unreasonable and absurd."

Mr. Le punctuated his remarks with sharp gestures. There was an unusual emotion in his normally flat voice. The words came like little explosions and he repeated over and over Hanoi's determination to keep on fighting if the United States maintained its insistence on more concessions.

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