

HOPES FOR PEACE BEGAN IN OCTOBER

Kissinger Announced Then Settlement Was 'at Hand'

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 16 — Peace was "at hand," Henry A. Kissinger told a group of newsmen crowded into the White House briefing room on Oct. 26. Following is a chronology of events surrounding the Paris peace talks since then.

Nov. 9—The Washington Star-News, telling of an interview that President Nixon had granted its White House correspondent the Sunday before Election Day, quoted the President as saying: "Let me tell you this on Vietnam—when I tell you I am completely confident that we are going to have a settlement, you can bank on it."

Nov. 16—Three weeks after he had said that peace was near, Mr. Kissinger and his team of supporting aides arrived in Paris for the next round of negotiations. At that time, he said that President Nixon hoped that those sessions "would be the final phase of negotiation to end the war in Indochina."

Nov. 26—Six negotiating sessions later, Mr. Kissinger was on his way back across the Atlantic to New York City where President Nixon was weekending with his family. He and Mr. Nixon conferred that night and again the next day in the President's suite at the Waldorf Towers. It was announced that the talks would be renewed Dec. 4 in Paris, and that a high South Vietnamese official would meet in

Washington during the next few days with the President and, as it turned out, with Mr. Kissinger.

Dec. 1—In Washington, a high official said that the Administration remained confident that a final agreement could be achieved within weeks and that if all went according to plan, Mr. Kissinger and Le Duc Tho, the chief Hanoi negotiator, would finish negotiations some time in the next week.

Dec. 2-3—In Key Biscayne, Fla., President Nixon gave his "final instructions" to Mr. Kissinger and, as they had done in New York, posed for photographs with his national security adviser. In New York, the expressions of the two men had seemed guarded; in Florida, they seemed somewhat more relaxed. Then the chief United States negotiator flew back to Paris.

Dec. 10—Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr., Mr. Kissinger's deputy, returned from Paris, giving rise to speculation that he was in Washington in readiness to fly to Saigon when the United

States and Hanoi did reach a final agreement.

Dec. 13—James Reston, columnist for The New York Times, reported from Paris that one difficult question remained unresolved — the insistence of President Nguyen Van Thieu of South Vietnam that the Saigon Government had the sole sovereign right to control all the territory it held before the Vietnam war began. The same day, Mr. Kissinger returned here from Paris. No one would say that the talks had been broken off. It said only that the talks would, in effect, continue by means of "messages," the diplomatic term for communication that is not face-to-face.

Dec. 16—Mr. Kissinger told newsmen in the White House briefing room that the United States and North Vietnam had failed to reach what President Nixon regarded as "a just and fair agreement." He said that Mr. Nixon had decided to break an agreement with Mr. Tho not to discuss the negotiations because it was important not to maintain a "charade" before the American people.