

Tho Briefs Soviet Officials, Gets a Pledge of Support

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MOSCOW, Dec. 16—High Soviet officials today assured Le Duc Tho of unswerving support for North Vietnam's aims after he had briefed them on the latest round in the Paris peace talks with Henry A. Kissinger.

Mr. Tho's meeting with the Soviet officials took place before Mr. Kissinger's news conference in Washington.

A statement issued after the meeting between Mr. Tho, Hanoi's chief negotiator, and two members of the top Soviet leadership insisted that a Vietnam truce agreement be based on the draft reached by the two sides in October.

"The Soviet side voiced unswerving and resolute support for the goodwill and the constructive approach demonstrated by the Democratic Republic of [North] Vietnam and by the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam [Vietcong] at the Paris talks," the statement said.

However, unlike Nhan Dan, the Hanoi newspaper, earlier this week, the Soviet statement did not explicitly rule out possible revisions of the October text.

The United States refused to sign the draft, presumably because of objections by President Nguyen Van Thieu of South Vietnam, and has been seeking adjustments designed to obtain Saigon's approval.

Thieu's Stand Alluded To

Alluding to President Thieu's fight against the original terms of the proposed North Vietnamese-United States accord, the Soviet statement expressed confidence that "forces opposing a peaceful settlement of the Vietnam conflict will not be permitted to reduce to naught the results achieved on the way to restoring peace in Vietnam."

Saigon is understood, in particular, to have asked for a

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pledge by Hanoi to reduce its troop levels in South Vietnam. Hanoi's official stand has been that there are no regular North Vietnamese forces fighting in the South.

Mr. Tho, who arrived here yesterday on his way home from Paris, met at the Communist party's Central Committee headquarters with Andrei P. Kirilenko, a national party secretary and member of the ruling Politburo, and with Konstantin F. Katushev, another secretary. Mr. Tho later left by air for Hanoi.

Mr. Katushev, who is charged with overseeing relations between the Soviet party and other ruling Communist parties, has played a prominent role in relations between Moscow and Hanoi.

A week ago Moscow announced the signing of a new aid pact with North Vietnam, pointedly mentioning both economic and military assistance at a time when a settlement in Paris appeared near.