

Peace Is at Hand Again! And Again...



Arthur Hoppe

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PRESIDENTIAL ADVISER Henry Kissinger met for three hours and 41 minutes today with Hanoi's Le Duc Tho in the latter's tent two-and-a-half miles south of here.

It was their 1134th secret session.

An Associated Press report that Kissinger was seen to "smile broadly" on leaving the session sent stocks soaring in New York. They tumbled, however, when Reuters called the smile "grim" and the New York Times described it as "wry." An aide explained later that Kissinger merely had a sesame seed stuck in his tooth.

The talks were moved to this arid desert wadi from Paris last year in hopes that "the atmosphere (115 degrees in the shade) would be more conducive to a settlement."

Kissinger flew in for the latest bargaining rounds yesterday morning. En route he stopped in Key Biscayne, Saigon, Peking and Moscow for conferences and in Washington to pick up the laundry.

As his plane was landing it passed that of his assistant, General Haig, who was taking off for Moscow, Peking, Saigon and San Clemente for conferences and Washington to deliver the laundry.

As the two aircraft passed, Kissinger flashed Haig the "V" sign. Some interpreted this as meaning that peace was at hand, some that victory was at hand. But it developed that Kissinger was merely reminding Haig to request two-day service.

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OBSERVERS said this could mean that Kissinger planned to fly home tomorrow to report a settlement or, perhaps, the lack of a settlement. Then again, others cautioned, it maybe couldn't.

A flap developed yesterday when Kis-

singer was photographed eating lunch with a good-looking, brown-haired, brown-eyed, unidentified camel. Kissinger laughingly described the camel as "just a friend." He declined, however, to reveal the camel's name.

Insiders saw the whole incident as simply another subtle plug for Kissinger's newest bestseller, "Sex and the Single Negotiator." This followed his well-known book on the chess-like nature of diplomacy, "Pieces at Hand."

Exactly what transpired in the secret session was, as always, a closely guarded secret. Reports blossomed this afternoon that the two men were now discussing restoring the Bao Dai monarchy instead of installing a tri-partite government.

A reporter who managed to get close to the tent briefly said he clearly heard Le Duc Tho cry out, "Kings over treys!"

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MEANWHILE, rumors continued to circulate that peace was at hand. A source high in the Eiffel Tower predicted a cease-fire within 48 hours. A Marrakech used-dromedary dealer, well informed in this area, set the date at January 3. But the noted columnist, Joe Alsop, said the informant on whom he always relied, had told him confidentially that it would be when the cusp of Aries passes through the House of Ursa Major.

On the other hand, a Yemenite jewelry salesman informed the second maid at the Red Chinese Embassy that the talks were hopelessly deadlocked and it looked as though his wife would never divorce him.

Hints of a deadlock were firmly denied by the White House. "Season's greetings," said a spokesman, "and we'll have our boys home by Christmas."

When pressed, however, he refused, as he has in previous years, to specify which Christmas.