

Tho, in Paris, Tells U.S. to Sign or Fight

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PARIS, Jan. 6—Hanoi's Le Duc Tho arrived here today to resume private peace talks with U.S. negotiator Henry A. Kissinger and warned that the American bombing north of the 20th Parallel, which was halted Dec. 30, had made negotiations even more difficult than before.

In an uncharacteristically tough statement at the airport, the usually mild-spoken Politburo member noted that the secret talks would resume Monday and said, "Now the decisive moment has come."

[President Nixon and Kissinger met privately Saturday at Camp David for a review of the U.S. position on Vietnam.]

Tho explained that now was the time "either to settle rapidly the Vietnam problem peacefully and sign the agreed accord or to continue the war."

Symptomatic of the statement's hard line was his warning that if the United States obstinately keeps demanding "unreasonable modifications in the substance and principle of the accord, then the Vietnamese people, hardened by decades of fighting, are determined not to give way to any pressure or threat."

In such circumstances, he continued, the Vietnamese people would continue "with perseverance their resistance against American aggression and for national salvation, until they conquer their fundamental national rights and real independence and peace."

Much of Le Duc Tho's five-page statement was a reiteration of well-known North Vietnamese condemnation of the United States for allegedly causing the breakdown of the secret talks on Dec. 13 and for the subsequent bombing.

Tho confirmed, however, that at the time of the breakdown there were no more than a few questions still pending.

In the statement he did not identify the remaining problems and declined to answer any questions when he arrived aboard a special Soviet Aeroflot jetliner from Moscow.

In keeping with standard North Vietnamese practice, Tho coupled his condemnation of American policy with assurances that he returned to

make another effort to settle the Vietnamese problem with "a serious attitude and goodwill." Perhaps significantly, the original text said Tho was here for a final effort, but this and other phrases throughout the statement had been corrected by hand.

If the U.S. side had had good will and adopted a serious attitude as did the North

See TALKS, A18, Col. 4

TALKS, From A1

Vietnamese side, the statement said, the Vietnam question would have been settled peacefully and rapidly.

As Tho was speaking at Le Bourget airport, U.S. and North Vietnamese technical experts met for the fifth consecutive day to iron out details of the cease-fire agreement. However, their work is considered secondary to the extent that it does not touch on the still unresolved questions of substance, but rather on problems which would have to be settled in any agreement.

Much of the Tho statement was devoted to a vigorous condemnation of the bombing of Haiphong and Hanoi. He expressed the "limitless indignation of the entire Vietnamese nation in the name of our compatriots who are living

and fighting and of those assassinated during the recent American bombing."

He described the bombing as "the most barbaric, the most inhuman ever known in the history of war." But he insisted that "these demented acts of war" had backfired if the United States thought it could thus "bring the Vietnamese people to their knees and oblige them to accept U.S. conditions in the negotiations."

"The United States was badly mistaken in its calculations and suffered a very heavy defeat," he noted in describing American aircraft losses. "These criminal acts provoked the most energetic condemnation of the world's people, including those of the United States," he said, and they had made the negotiations even more difficult.

He said that the cessation of

bombing north of the 20th Parallel, the resumption of technical experts' talks and the private talks Monday were "a victory for the Vietnamese people in its just fight and a victory of peace loving people in the world in their energetic condemnation of U.S. crimes."

Tho also reiterated earlier North Vietnamese criticism of stepped-up American military shipments to Saigon, the alleged dispatching of thousands of military advisers disguised as civilians and South Vietnam's repression against prisoners.

He also repeated North Vietnamese denunciation of the United States for having revealed the substance of the private talks, an allusion to Kissinger's Dec. 16 news conference which followed the breakdown of the negotiations and preceded the bombing.

SEE ALSO S.F. EXAMINER 7 JAN 73