

Hanoi Icy to Kissinger as Talks Start

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PARIS, Jan. 8—North Vietnamese negotiators today gave U.S. negotiator Henry A. Kissinger an icy lesson in oriental protocol when he resumed his search for a Vietnam cease-fire agreement with Hanoi's Le Duc Tho.

In marked contrast to the smiles, handshakes and laughter which marked the November and December negotiations, the North Vietnamese did not even send a subaltern to the gate this morning to greet Kissinger and his team at the session at suburban Gif-sur-Yvette.

After hesitating a moment, Kissinger pushed open the door of the villa where he remained for four and a half hours.

Nor did the North Vietnamese accompany the grim-faced Kissinger and his group back to their car when the meeting ended—unlike the treatment they gave the Americans before Washington resumed bombing north of the 20th parallel.

The only surface note of optimism was a North Vietnamese announcement that Kissinger and Tho would meet again on Tuesday.

Both sides maintained their now standard undertaking not to discuss the substance of the secret meetings, a practice that has been honored at least while the negotiating rounds are in progress.

The icy North Vietnamese behavior did not come as a surprise in light of the 12-day American bombing of Hanoi

and Haiphong which North Vietnamese officials claimed cost more than a thousand lives.

Moreover, Tho's friendly behavior in November and December has come under fire especially since North Vietnamese officials have said that Kissinger had threatened almost daily that the United States would bomb north of the 20th parallel during those unsuccessful negotiations which ended Dec. 13.

Observers reasoned that even if the surface atmosphere of the secret meetings were to improve, it is doubtful that any quick settlement will be forthcoming—if only to prevent charges that North Vietnam caved in to the recent American bombing.

Diplomats following the ne-

gotiations are convinced—perhaps optimistically—that theoretically a settlement would not be difficult to achieve.

But the bombing and the long-drawn-out series of negotiations since Kissinger first announced on Oct. 26 that a peace is at hand—have built up an aura of gloom in both the American and North Vietnamese camps. It appears to be more than traditional diplomatic posturing.

In the most optimistic comment by a source close to the Communist delegations, a source suggested that Hanoi would trade minor changes in the original draft agreement as long as its substance was not modified.

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L'Humanite, the French Communist Party newspaper, published a long article today reiterating charges that the United States seeks to perpetuate the division of the two Vietnams.

Such is the state of contradictory rumors in Paris at this point that no one—except the principals—is at all sure that the sovereignty issue remains the principal obstacle.

Despite the Hanoi-Washington exchange of messages which continued even during

the December bombing, it is simply impossible to know what either side really wants.

Much of the confusion is believed to be the result of the rival demands and counter-demands which first the United States, then North Vietnam, presented in the November-December negotiations.

As one diplomat put it, "It might be a great deal easier to simply wipe out those sessions and return to the basic October draft if only to see clearly what the respective positions really are."

Meanwhile, North Vietnamese and American technical

experts, who resumed their work last week, continued their discussions today. They spent 33 hours in meetings last week.

Traditionally, negotiators do not clean up details until matters of substance have been settled, and there is no reason to believe that the very length of these technical sessions indicates that these negotiations are an exception to that rule.

Saigon Suggests Talks Will Not Be 'Decisive'

Reuter

SAIGON, Jan. 8—A semi-official South Vietnamese news-

paper today cast doubt on the prospects for the resumed peace talks in Paris.

The Saigon daily Tin Song said that "the resumption of negotiations is only a new play in the game after the first play ran into deadlock. It is not a decisive game."

The editorial in the newspaper, often used to project Saigon government thinking, blamed this on North Vietnam which it said was "still looking for a victory and trying to get it at the conference table, having failed to win it in battle."