

'Climate Tends Toward' U.S. Visit**Brezhnev Sees War Ending**

From News Dispatches

MINSK, U.S.S.R., Jan. 11—Soviet party leader Leonid Brezhnev said here today that "the Vietnam affair is drawing slowly to its conclusion."

Speaking at an impromptu airport press conference here while awaiting the arrival of French President Georges Pompidou, Brezhnev added: "From the moment that talks begin, it means the two sides are determined to settle the affair peacefully." He said that "there are negotiations now for the first time in eight years," apparently meaning that they are serious for the first time.

Brezhnev repeated his condemnation of the war. He noted, however, that "we are not at the talks, so it is difficult to discuss them."

Brezhnev also confirmed his intention to visit the United States. He refused, however, to give a date for the visit at President Nixon's invitation. "We shall see when it happens," Brezhnev said.

Asked by reporters if his trip would be linked with peace in Vietnam, Brezhnev refused to establish a direct link between the two questions, but referred to the speech he made on Dec. 21. He said then that the future of Soviet-American relations depends on the way the Vietnam peace talks develop.

"The question of a trip exists, and the climate tends toward it, but nothing is definite," he said. "You should look at my speech of Dec. 21."

Western newsmen, surprised by the easy-going attitude of Soviet security men, pressed around Brezhnev on the runway of a military airport, swept by bitter, snow-laden winds, to pose further questions.

He implicitly confirmed Soviet participation in the pre-

liminary talks opening in Geneva this month on mutual and balanced reduction of forces in Europe.

"We agreed," he said, "that consultations will be held around the end of January and the beginning of February. It will be a question first of matters of procedure."

French officials later said that Brezhnev told Pompidou that the Soviet Union will participate in the force reduction talks scheduled to open in Geneva Jan. 31.

It was the first word after months of silence that the Soviets would attend.

France opposes the reduction of forces and has not been expected to participate.

French sources said the four hours of Pompidou-Brezhnev talks, which extended into a working dinner, were longer than planned and were "extremely friendly and frank."

The Soviet leader emphasized the Soviet Union does not want the military question of force reductions mixed in with a European security conference, except for certain measures concerning the stability of Europe, the sources said. The United States has insisted that the European Security Conference, for which a preparatory conference is being held in Helsinki, should be paralleled by a force reduction meeting.

To the newsmen before Pompidou's arrival, Brezhnev said, "The question of reduction of forces will be discussed concretely later, after the European conference. We and France would like that to take place outside the context of blocs. That is how it will be. As for details, I cannot tell you what will happen."

"Personally, I think and believe that it is right, that armaments should be reduced a little, even if only a little."

The Soviet leader said, "It would be good to reduce forces. That would signify confidence of one country in another. But it is not so simple. One cannot solve everything in an hour and then drink French cognac."

Just as France is cool to the American-sponsored force reduction exercise, Paris has also expressed strong reservations about the Soviet-proposed European security conference, although the French have been participating in the preliminary Helsinki talks. Brezhnev is reportedly seeking assurances that France will not drop out of the security conference.

Today's talks are the third Franco-Soviet summit since Pompidou became president in 1969. The two days of talks are being held at two Soviet government dachas set in a snow-covered pine forest at Zaslavl, about 16 miles from the Byelorussian capital of Minsk.

French sources said that Pompidou's is acting as the principal spokesman for Western Europe while the Continent considers its future in a world dominated by Washington and Moscow. The sources said that the visit was also intended as a show of independence from the United States.

Commenting beforehand, the Gaullist newspaper La Nation said the French president "wished to have the voice of Europe heard so that it should not be drowned by the American-Soviet duet."

Sources in Paris said that Pompidou was expected to express the hope that the trade

agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union will not cut France and other European nations out of the Soviet market.

Pompidou's critics at home have charged the visit is a tactic to woo votes from the left to assure a Gaullist victory in the National Assembly elections two months away. French polls so far give the leftists an edge over Pompidou's Gaullists.