

# Paris Speeches Indicate DMZ Is Issue

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PARIS, Jan. 11—U.S. negotiator Henry A. Kissinger and Hanoi's Le Duc Tho continued to negotiate here on a cease-fire agreement today as conflicting statements at the parallel semi-public peace talks pointed to the future of the Demilitarized Zone as a central issue.

Kissinger and Tho conferred for more than six hours and scheduled another morning meeting Friday.

Both sides maintained a news blackout on their secret talks which resumed here Monday.

But at the 173d session of the formal peace conference, Communist and Saigon interpretations over the Demilitarized Zone showed that the buffer zone separating the two Vietnams is a focus of the Kissinger-Tho talks.

The surface atmosphere at the secret talks, held today at an American-owned villa at suburban Saint-Nom-la-Bretteche, appeared to improve. Tho and other Hanoi diplomats were seen shaking hands inside the house with an American official.

Both Kissinger and Tho waved and smiled broadly as they left separately after the session, in marked contrast to the grim expressions both men wore earlier in the week.

U.S. press spokesman David Lambertson said the tone of the semi-public session was "somewhat improved" and "relatively less vituperative" than last week's session, the first since the United States suspended bombing north of the 20th parallel. But the Communist delegations were apparently as tough and unbending as ever in what has become little more than a propaganda forum.

Reiterating a line enunciated by Tho upon his return to Paris on Saturday, acting North Vietnamese delegate Nguyen Minh Vy said: "The negotiations have now come to a decisive stage.

"It is either good progress towards signing an agreement," he said, "or continuation of the war."

The Communist delegates denounced as "absurd and erroneous" South Vietnamese claims to total sovereignty in the South and that the DMZ should continue to separate two sovereign Vietnamese states. They claimed that Saigon, with U.S. support, is planning major air, ground and naval offenses to win back the Communist-controlled territory to "perpetuate the division of Vietnam."

They specifically mentioned Quangtri Province, just below the DMZ, as a prime objective for this alleged offensive.

Implicit in the wrangling over the DMZ were Saigon's fear that failure to reestablish a firm buffer zone would justify North Vietnamese intervention on behalf of the Vietcong after a cease-fire.

Hanoi insists the DMZ was only meant as a "temporary military demarcation line" in the 1954 Geneva accords ending the French Indochina war. Vietnam is divided into "zones," not two sovereign nations, the Communist spokesman told newsmen after the formal conference session.

This underlined Communist fears that Saigon's larger army could crush the Vietcong after a cease-fire unless the DMZ is left "porous" enough to allow North Vietnam at least to threaten to provide aid to their friends if they should be beleaguered.

Vietcong spokesman Ly Van

Sau, Hammering away at the Communist interpretation of the DMZ and the necessity for the United States to sign the October draft agreement without major changes, said: "Any attempt to settle the [Vietnam] problem contrary to this principle will end up with nothing."

Hanoi press spokesman Nguyen Thanh Le also told newsmen that North Vietnam had shot down 732 American warplanes in 1972, including 54 B-52s, and captured hundreds of airmen during the new-suspended bombing north of the 20th parallel in December. Four B-52s were shot down during the first three days this week while the giant bombers were carpet-bombing between the 17th and 20th parallels, he added.

Although there was no ex-

planation of what had—or had not—been accomplished in the more than 21 hours of secret talks between Tho and Kissinger this week, it was noted that the technical experts who joined their discussions, today will meet separately on Friday.

The technical talks, which resumed here Jan. 2 after the suspension of the bombing, are believed to be working on aspects of the cease-fire accord which do not involve with major substantive obstacles.



North Vietnamese negotiator Le Duc Tho waves as he leaves yesterday's peace session with a reinue of aides.