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Saigon Paper Says Haig
Is Bringing Truce Draft

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SAIGON, South Vietnam, Jan. 15 — Intense speculation about the imminence of a Vietnam peace agreement swept Saigon today as Gen. Alexander M. Haig, President Nixon's special envoy, flew here to confer with President Nguyen Van Thieu.

The speculation was heightened by a report in the semi-official newspaper Tin Song that said General Haig was bringing a completed draft of a peace settlement and that a cease-fire could come by Tet, the lunar New Year, which falls on Feb. 3 this year. General Haig is expected to be in Indochina for three days, according to United States officials.

Tin Song, which often reflects the thinking of the Thieu Government, published its report on the front page under a modest two-column headline saying: "The National Security Council Has Reviewed the Progress of the Peace Talks."

'Flexible' Attitude Reported

But the article itself, which quoted what it described as "authoritative sources," dealt more with a reported peace settlement than with a meeting of the National Security Council that took place at the presidential palace today.

The newspaper quoted one source as saying that "the North Vietnamese had been moderate and flexible at the talks and had accepted the reality of two governments in Vietnam."

Such a concession, if it was made by Hanoi, would constitute a major breakthrough in the peace negotiations. The Hanoi Government has maintained for years that there is only one Vietnam, artificially divided.

The Saigon Government has argued with equal insistence that there are two Vietnams — North and South — and that there can be no peace until Hanoi recognizes the existence and sovereignty of South Vietnam.

Tin Song quoted another source as saying that the Thieu Government was "neither optimistic nor pessimistic" about the prospects.

'Good Progress' Cited

According to this source, however, General Haig brought with him on his trip to Saigon "a draft accord which has been amended by the recent secret talks" between Henry A. Kissinger, President Nixon's adviser on national security, and Le Duc Tho, North Vietnam's chief

negotiator in the private peace talks in Paris.

"Based on the good progress that has been achieved," Tin Song quoted one source as saying, "a cease-fire might be put into effect on the occasion of Tet this year."

The Tin Song article gave no indication that President Thieu had made any concessions during the latest round of peace talks in Paris. But a report circulated in Saigon today that he had withdrawn his demand for written assurance that North Vietnamese troops would be withdrawn from South Vietnam after a cease-fire and had instead decided to settle for some form of tacit understanding on the question.

The Saigon Government assets that there are 300,000 North Vietnamese soldiers in the South although American estimates place the number closer to 150,000. Washington has made it clear that it will not press Saigon's demand for written guarantees that the troops will be withdrawn.

Sources independent of Tin Song said that if the newspaper's article accurately reflected the current situation, a cease-fire could indeed be close. According to these sources, if General Haig has brought a draft peace agreement to Saigon, President Thieu will have little choice but to accept it.

Veto Ruled Out

They noted that Mr. Kissinger, at his news conference on Dec. 16 announcing the breakdown of the December round of peace talks, declared:

"We want to leave no doubt about the fact that if an agreement is reached that meets the stated conditions of the President — if an agreement is reached that we consider just — that no other party will have a veto over our action."

Mr. Kissinger left no doubt that his remarks were directed at President Thieu.

In preparation for his meeting with General Haig, President Thieu spent the entire day conferring with members of the National Security Council at the presidential palace.

The meeting began at 9 A.M. and lasted until almost 5:30 P.M. There was no word on the substance of the discussions.

Among those who attended the meeting were Premier Tran Thien Khiem; Vice President Tran Van Huong; Foreign Minister Tran Van Lam; Hoang Duc Nha, President Thieu's closest adviser, and Gen. Cao Van Vien, Chief of the General Staff.