

Top Pentagon Officials Pessimistic About Broad or Lasting Viet Peace

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WASHINGTON — Pentagon officials are frankly pessimistic that the peace that now seems to be "at hand" in Vietnam will prove to be a broad or lasting one.

They expect an agreement in the near future that will provide for the return of all American prisoners of war, an accounting of those missing in action and a withdrawal of U.S. military forces from Vietnam within 60 days following the signing and a cease-fire.

But, despite the cease-fire, they do not expect the South Vietnamese and the North Vietnamese to stop fighting for long and they do not expect the contest for control of the southern portion of South Vietnam to end.

This assessment of the chances for lasting peace in Indochina is given by officials who say they are not fully familiar with the terms of agreement under consideration. But there is every reason to believe that top Pentagon officials fully familiar with the proposed agreement share this view.