

Thieu Said to Approve Truce

Technical Details Still an Issue

By Thomas W. Lippman
Washington Post Foreign Service

SAIGON, Jan. 16—Gen. Alexander Haig brought to Saigon the text of an agreement in principle to end the Vietnam war that President Thieu is expected to approve. But a separate 25-point document on the mechanical details is still being negotiated, a well-informed South Vietnamese source said Tuesday.

The source, an official who has first-hand knowledge of the Thieu government's deliberations over the peace proposals, said Thieu had learned their contents from U.S. Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker in advance of Haig's arrival this morning. He said Thieu "gave us the impression" that he would accept the

proposals, "but he is a very cautious man and wants to see the Vietnamese text."

The official said, and non-Vietnamese diplomatic sources confirmed, that the agreement provides for a recognition of the Demilitarized Zone as a temporary boundary between two separate Vietnamese nations, for the creation of "zones of emplacement" within South Vietnam where the opposing armies would regroup, and for elections to be held in six months.

The acceptance of these principles by all four interested parties—United States, South Vietnam, North Vietnam and the

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Vietnamization Buildup Attained

By Peter Braestrup
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Stepped up U.S. shipments of aircraft and other weaponry to Saigon since October have achieved "Vietnamization" goals almost 18 months ahead of original schedules.

"Vietnamization... is virtually completed," Defense Secretary Melvin Laird told Congress Jan. 8. He did not discuss the stepped-up shipments.

By other Pentagon accounts, however, roughly 600 aircraft (including 300 helicopters), 40 M-48 tanks and roughly a dozen long-range 175-mm. cannon have been given to Saigon since Henry Kissinger, the President's chief negotiator, announced that peace was at hand on Oct. 26.

One major program goal for mid-1974 was 2,100 aircraft (1,300 fixed-wing planes and 800 helicopters) for the South Vietnamese Air Force. Thanks to the ten-week interval since Oct. 26, these numbers have already been reached, according to Pentagon officials, although a "quality" goal remains.

That goal involves shipment of the advanced-model F5E jet interceptor, which is in production but will not be ready to go to Vietnam until autumn, according to Air Force sources.

What the Air Force did last fall was to "borrow" nearly 120 earlier-model F-5

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Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam (Vietcong)—represented the "progress" in the Paris talks to which White House press secretary Ronald Ziegler referred in his announcement Monday of a total halt to U.S. bombing of North Vietnam, the Vietnamese source said.

But he added that the implementation arrangements, or protocols, were still being discussed. He said they were the subject of continuing talks among the technical experts of both sides in Paris, and were the topic of an eight-hour meeting of Thieu's National Security Council and other high-ranking government officials on Monday.

He said they are "small but very serious points" on which "we" were asked to give our views. The 25-point document, he said, is a "working paper, not a final agreement, and there are some points with which we do not agree."

He said they dealt with such matters as the details of the release of prisoners of war and political prisoners, the boundaries of the "zones of emplacement," and the procedures and location of the four-party conference that is to supervise the implementation of some points of the agreement.

The semiofficial newspa-

per Tin Song, which often reflects the views of the Thieu government, said tonight: "According to sources in Paris, the military issues have been almost solved, but there are still some obstacles over the political points."

The paper reported Haig's arrival under banner headlines, one of which said the "signing of the cease-fire could happen this week."

Adopting its favorite technique of attributing its information to "rumor" or "political circles" or the foreign press, Tin Song said "world opinion believed that the agreement could not be signed within this week." It added that "it is believed that Gen. Haig is carrying the draft agreement" of an accord negotiated in Paris.

Haig, chief deputy to White House peace negotiator Henry A. Kissinger went with Bunker to Independence Palace Monday for a meeting with Thieu that lasted two hours and a half, a U.S. Embassy spokesman announced.

After a working lunch with Bunker and other U.S. officials, Haig went to U.S. military headquarters for consultations with Gen. Frederick Weyand, commander of U.S. Forces in Vietnam. As is always the case, no information about the nature of the discussions was released, nor has there been any indication of how

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jets from South Korea, Iran and Taiwan and ship them to South Vietnam, planning to replace them with F-5Es as these later models became available. Such replacements apparently were allowed under the tentative October accords with Hanoi.

Under negotiation early last October was a South Vietnamese request for four-engine C-130 Hercules transports to replace smaller C-123 twin-engine aircraft as troop carriers for South Vietnamese "fire brigade" reserve forces. Finally, some 32 of the C-130s went to South Vietnam.

The overall U.S. shipment included roughly 90 A-37 light jet attack planes, 30 A-1 propeller-driven fighters, 20 C-119 and C-47 gunships and lesser numbers of EC-47 electronic warfare planes and spotter aircraft. The helicopters were mostly small UH-1 Hueys, but some 50 heavier cargo-carrying CH-47s were also added. The South Vietnamese did not receive that 1968-72 mainstay of U.S. forces, the shark-nosed Cobra helicopter gunship.

In essence, an Air Force source said, the South Vietnamese Air Force, aided by U.S. civilian maintenance technicians, is now equipped—if not fully trained—to handle "low intensity" combat. But its firepower does

the 145,000-man North Vietnamese forces in the south now possess. But with the dry season on the Ho Chi Minh trail through Laos, the North Vietnamese were reported again moving supplies struck down to their forces.

South Vietnamese forces, overall, still totalled 1.1 million on paper—of which 482,000 were regular army and marine troops, with front-line forces in 190 infantry or armored battalions.

Sizeable South Vietnamese equipment losses last spring were largely made up prior to last October's peace talk.

not match that of the U.S. B-52 bombers and F-4 jets deployed last spring to help stop Hanoi's 15-division Easter offensive. Saigon's helicopter strength equaled 25 per cent of the force mustered by U.S. forces at 1968-69 peak of American strength in Vietnam.

To offset the enemy air threat in northern South Vietnam—pending the arrival of F-5E jets—the Pentagon shipped a small number of light anti-aircraft weapons notably dual-mounted 40-mm. guns and quadruple .50 cal. machine guns. Ground to air missiles were ruled out as too fancy.

To boost South Vietnamese anti-tank strength, the Pentagon added more TOW wire-guided anti-tank missiles—used effectively last spring by U.S. forces—and the 40 M-48 medium tanks, equipped with 90-mm. cannon.

Military sources yesterday would make no guesses as to how many Soviet-built tanks

long Haig will remain in Saigon.

After Haig left the palace, Thieu convened another meeting of his National Security Council, which lasted more than three hours. Thieu also met separately with the chief

justice of the Supreme Court and legislative leaders, the official radio announced Tuesday night.

It was learned from informed Vietnamese sources that a South Vietnamese military delegation, headed by Gen. Vinh Loc, the head of the National War College, would leave for Paris in the next day or two for consultations about the peace negotiations.

Gen. Loc attended Monday's meeting of the National Security Council, the first time he was invited to participate, Vietnamese sources said.

The official who described the progress of the negotiations said Monday's session dealt with the 25-point protocols and Tuesday's with the text of the agreement in principle delivered by Gen. Haig.

The provision that the Demilitarized Zone be re-established at the 17th parallel as a dividing line between the two Vietnams, at least temporarily, has been sought with increasing intensity by South Vietnam in recent weeks. Analogies to Korea and Germany have appeared regularly in government-sponsored commentaries.

At the same time Saigon has almost dropped from its public pronouncements the inflexible demand that all North Vietnamese forces, which it estimated at 300,000, be required to withdraw. Several diplomatic sources here confirmed that no such provision is in the proposed agreement. Kissinger said last month there would not be.

"We always knew there weren't anything like 300,000," the South Vietnamese official who commented today said. "But we had to insist on it as a major issue so we would have something to negotiate in exchange for the DMZ. If we hadn't had the troop issue we couldn't have won on either point."

Whether that was a forthright look at the bargaining process or after the fact face saving, the agreement leaves South Vietnam forced to cope with the presence of North Vietnamese troops in the country.

The official said one of the problems confronting the drafters of the protocols with regard to North Vietnamese troops is to determine "who they are, where they are and how many they are" so that the "zones of emplacement" could be agreed upon. The source also said the North Vietnamese wanted to call these areas "zones of control" but "we don't accept that because it implies political control."

He refused to predict how long it might take to settle all these issues and come to a final agreement on all points. He said the Communists had sought on previous occasions to use a point in the protocols to alter something in the agreement on principles, and "it could happen again."

"That was what brought about the Dec. 18 bombing," he said, referring to the resumption of U.S. bombing of the Hanoi area. Kissinger had given a similar explanation of what then seemed to be a breakdown in the talks.