

North, South Share Hope Pact Is Near

Saigon Waits

By Thomas W. Lippmann
Washington Post Foreign Service

SAIGON, Jan. 20—After a last brief meeting with President Thieu, White House emissary Gen. Alexander M. Haig flew out of South Vietnam this evening, leaving behind the expectation that the war is at last coming to an end.

Haig's destination was Seoul, where he is to have talks with South Korean President Park Chung Hee before returning to Washington.

Among those who saw him off at Tansonnhut airport here were Lt. Gen. Lee Sae Ho, commander of the 37,000 South Korean combat troops still serving here, and Yoo Yang Soo, Seoul's ambassador to South Vietnam.

This unusual display of Korean involvement in the continuing discussions over an end to the war was taken as yet another sign that a ceasefire is coming, since Korea's troops, like those of the United States, would go home shortly after an accord was signed.

Haig, who had two crucial sessions with Thieu earlier

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this week at which the Vietnamese leader gave his general assent to the agreement worked out in Paris, returned this morning from consultations with the leaders of Cambodia, Laos and Thailand.

Stay brief

It was clear that his stay here would be brief, because the buses provided by the U.S. embassy to take reporters to the airport to watch his departure were in place shortly after his arrival.

However, Thieu had just begun a meeting of his National Security Council when Haig arrived, and it was six hours before the two held their final meetings, which lasted only 30 minutes.

Haig, following his invariable custom, ignored the throng of reporters at the airport; and as always neither the Americans nor the South Vietnamese would say anything for the record about the nature of the discussions.

But there were no signs that

any last-minute snags had developed here that would impede a peace agreement, and expectation of an imminent ceasefire remained high.

The semi-official newspaper Tin Song, which for a week had confined itself to what passes here for news reporting and refrained from editorials, tonight published a commentary saying that "The negotiations indicate there are some moves, the light of peace is appearing at the end of the tunnel."

'Fought for Years'

The editorial said: "We fought for years to gain victory in the field. However, this is only part of the total victory, and the rest is a political struggle with the Communists when the cease-fire comes."

Calling on the people to "unite into a single bloc," the editorial reflected the current position of the Thieu government: A cease-fire may be coming, but that does not mean the end of the struggle

to ensure South Vietnam's survival.

Tin Song gave prominent display to a CBS report that Vice President Spiro T. Agnew is to visit South Vietnam in a week or so. There was no official comment from the U.S. embassy, but Vietnamese sources said they believed that the story was true and that Agnew's visit would be intended as a show of U.S. solidarity with South Vietnam at the time a truce agreement was to be signed.

While South Vietnam has made it clear that it no longer has any "objections" to the terms of the agreement, some analysts here are detecting what may be new hints of friction on the other side, between North Vietnam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government, of South Vietnam, the political arm of the Vietcong.

Hardline Taken

Over the past three days, the Vietcong's Liberation Radio has repeatedly broadcast an uncompromising hardline declaration by Huynh Tan Phat, president of the PRG, calling in no uncertain terms for continuation of the struggle to overthrow Thieu and reunify the two parts of Vietnam.

In the view of some observers, this could be a further indication of a possible split that seemed to be developing in November between the PRG, whose members wanted to continue the war, and the North Vietnamese, who were ready to accept a cease-fire agreement.

While South and North Vietnam have cooled the rhetoric that marked their verbal blasts at each other last autumn, Phat was saying yesterday that the Vietcong "start the new year with a new determination to fight and new determination to win," over

the "U.S. imperialists" and the "U.S. lackeys."

Since the PRG is believed to have gotten much less than it wanted in the agreement, "the background is there" for a split in the Communist ranks, one Western analyst said.

Experts Meet in Paris To Discuss Accord

Reuter

PARIS, Jan. 20—Work on a Vietnam cease-fire accord went ahead here today as the tempo of diplomatic movement surrounding it stepped up.

Technical experts of both sides met at St. NoM-laBreteche, west of Paris, to mesh their views on protocols implementing the accord.

On other fronts, a five-man Saigon military mission headed by Maj. Gen. Vinh Loc arrived here today to assist the American side at the technical talks.

It is believed that they will present final South Vietnamese suggestions or additions on the precise way a cease-fire would be carried out in separate meetings with the American technical team, headed by deputy Assistant Secretary of State William Sullivan.

French foreign minister Maurice Schumann, who called in top Hanoi diplomatic representative Vo Van Sung last night, today spent 45 minutes discussing Vietnam with U.S. ENVOY Jack Kubish.

The Vietcong delegation today confirmed that Mrs. Nguyen Thi Binh, head of its delegation, was in Moscow on her way back to Paris.

Mrs. Binh, who is also foreign minister of the Vietcong-backed Provisional Revolutionary Government, would be expected to sign for her side when the foreign ministers of all four parties to the war put their signatures to an eventual accord.