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Saigon Sees 'Final Phase' Of Talks

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SAIGON, Jan. 21—South Vietnamese Foreign Minister Tran Van Lam flew to Paris tonight for what he described as the "final phase" of negotiations to end the war.

His statement is the first official confirmation from the Saigon government that it too believes that the long search for a Vietnam settlement is about to be successfully concluded.

[United Press International reported from Washington Sunday night that White House sources had said that South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu had agreed to the proposed peace settlement and that President Nixon had authorized his representative, Henry A. Kissinger, to initial it in Paris Thursday.]

The foreign minister declined to say exactly what role he will be playing when the top-level talks resume in the French capital, but there is considerable speculation in diplomatic circles here that he will initial the accord on behalf of the Saigon government once the remaining details are settled.

Another Cabinet minister, who is not, however, directly involved in the talks, said today that "the agreement will be signed" in Paris on Jan. 29. He said that is the date on which government planning for the coming cease-fire is based.

Lam would not say when the agreement might be ready for initialing or formal signing, but he did not rule out completion this week. His airport statement, read by a spokesman, said the foreign minister was going to Paris to "follow more closely and more actively the final phase of the negotiations."

The United States and North Vietnam have already said that this week's meeting between presidential adviser Kissinger and North Vietnamese politburo member Le Duc Tho would be for the purpose "for the purpose of completing the text of an agreement."

Just two days ago, Lam told reporters that he was "neither

optimistic nor pessimistic" about the prospects for a cease-fire, and he spoke of "many points to be clarified."

The Saigon government now has formally and publicly acknowledged what South Vietnamese sources said privately all last week: Whatever is left to be done is incidental to the fact that an accord has been reached and accepted by President Thieu.

Saigon radio has also stopped talking about a settlement as an indefinite possibility. The radio said in a commentary broadcast today, that Hanoi has "undertaken to ob-

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serve the principle" of non-interference in the affairs of South Vietnam—the basic assurance President Thieu has sought since he so vehemently objected to the draft agreement presented to him in October.

It is also clear from the broadcast that Thieu does not believe North Vietnam will honor the principle it has accepted. "The North Vietnamese commitment is only of value as long as the United States is still in a strong position.

Therefore, it is time for the Republic of Vietnam's people to close their ranks and promote confidence in order to isolate the Communists," the radio said.

The commentary said that the Vietcong's National Liberation Front will now have to try to survive in South Vietnam itself.

"The South Vietnamese people and army," the radio said, "are determined to neutralize the National Liberation Front and lead it to the free flag of South Vietnam."

The talk of neutralizing and isolating the Communists reflects the uncompromisingly hard line Saigon is pursuing in portraying its future relationship with the Vietcong.

One of the questions that must still be answered in Paris, sources here say, is how the communists will be able to move about and participate actively in the political process envisioned in the accord if the Thieu government is determined to regard them as enemies who are intent, as Saigon radio put it today, "on subversion and sabotage."

It is thought possible here

that Lam and a Vietcong representative will be included in the Kissinger-Tho sessions for discussion of such question as routine Communist movement in the cities and countryside. A Saigon military team went to Paris last week to take part in technical discussions on those aspects of the cease-fire arrangements.

Lam is being accompanied to Paris by a Foreign Ministry spokesman and his own private secretary. United States Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker went to the airport to see Lam off, the only American or ranking South Vietnamese official to do so. He and Lam met for a few minutes privately, before the minister's departure.