

# Tho Calls The Accord A Victory

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In a high-spirited, almost triumphant mood, North Vietnam negotiator Le Duc Tho hailed the peace agreements yesterday as "a great victory for the Vietnamese people," and made it clear that the political struggle in his tortured country is far from over.

At a lengthy news conference, Tho disclosed the Viet Cong's Provisional Revolutionary government will announce soon after the cease-fire takes effect the establishment of a "capital" in South Vietnam.

He added with a grin: "The reason we cannot tell you now where it is because the United States would bomb it."

## PLEDGE

Tho pledged that the Communist side will follow a policy of "strict and serious execution of the agreement," but he also sent up an ideological smoke signal when he declared that the Vietnamese people will be alert to "dark designs of reactionary forces in the country and abroad to impede the application of the agreement or to sabotage it."

Shortly after Tho appeared before 400 newsmen, photographers and television cameramen, South Vietnam's foreign minister, Tran Van Lam, met the press in a much more sober and pessimistic mood.

The agreement can be regarded as a cease-fire only,

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he said, with the political problems still unresolved. Although both sides are pledged to work out a political agreement through the machinery of the Council of National Reconciliation, Lam said, there is not yet even an agreement on what subjects are to be discussed when the Saigon and Viet Cong representatives sit down to begin their search for an understanding.

## ELECTIONS

For example, there is no agreement on whether the elections which are to be held in South Vietnam will be national elections at the presidential level, provincial elections or local elections in the towns and villages.

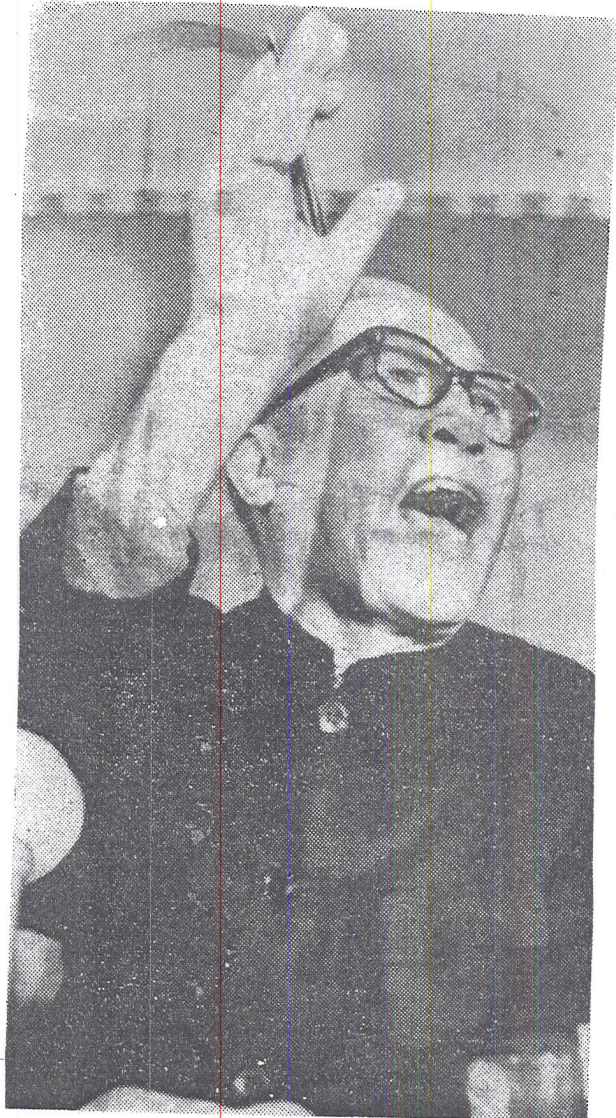
Only the goodwill of both sides can ensure a peaceful settlement of the political issues still remaining, Lam said. Otherwise, he said, it would take a cease-fire peace-keeping force of a million men to police South Vietnam.

The foreign minister of the Provisional Revolutionary Government, Nguyen Thi Binh, who will be signing the agreements on Saturday with Lam, also underscored the political problems still to be resolved. He commented: "We are ready to observe the agreements strictly, but the statements of President Nguyen Van Thieu (of South Vietnam) do not disclose a similar intention."

## SATISFACTORY

But as far as Le Duc Tho was concerned, the agreements with their loopholes and vagueness as well as their hard specific conditions seem to be not only completely satisfactory but everything North Vietnam could wish for. Tho was particularly vigorous in responding to a question about the North Vietnamese troops in South Vietnam.

"The Americans have raised this question continuously for almost five years, and we have completely rejected the allegation concerning so-called North Vietnamese forces in South Vietnam because politically and legally this allegation is pointless. Finally, the American side completely



UPI Telephoto

HANOI NEGOTIATOR LE DUC THO  
'A great victory for the Vietnamese people'

dropped this proposal, and you will not find a single word in the agreement concerning the presence of so-called North Vietnamese troops," Lho said in a triumphant tone.

Tho also vigorously denied that the December bombing offensive against North Vietnam had in any way affected the outcome of the negotiations. The bombing "failed completely," he said, and its only result was to delay a successful conclusion of the peace accords.

## OCTOBER

He roundly declared that what will be signed here on Saturday has not changed in substance from the draft

which the North Vietnamese were ready to sign in October.

It will take a close analysis and a great deal of cross-examination of the principals, who are familiar with the ups-and-downs of the last four months to establish exactly what has been achieved fundamentally since the December talks.

Certain changes are apparent but they do not seem to go as far as the objectives which Kissinger outlined just before the bombing offensive, and at the same time neither are they substantial enough to refute Tho's claim that the agreement basically is what was offered last October.