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Agnew to Visit Seven Nations In SE Asia

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By a Washington Post Staff Writer

Vice President Spiro T. Agnew will leave Sunday for a visit to seven Southeast Asian nations to discuss America's relations with them in the postwar period, the White House announced yesterday.

At the same time, President Nixon designated 7 p.m. today, when the Vietnam cease-fire goes into effect, as a national moment of thanksgiving. The 24-hour period that follows will be a national day of prayer and thanksgiving.

"I urge all men and women of goodwill to join the prayerful hope that this moment marks not only the end of the war in Vietnam, but the beginning of a new era of world peace and understanding for all mankind," the President said in a proclamation.

Both houses of Congress passed without debate a resolution urging the President to proclaim a moment of prayer at the hour the cease-fire takes effect.

Senate Minority Leader Hugh Scott (R-Pa.) proposed that the nation's churches ring their bells at 7 p.m. to mark the start of the cease-fire.

The White House said that the President was sending Agnew to South Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia for "substantive discussions" with the leaders of those nations on postwar issues.

"The purpose of the Vice President's meetings will be to discuss postwar relations between the United States and the nations concerned, to explain the continuing American role in Asia and to reaffirm our desire for peace and self-determination for all countries of Southeast Asia," White House press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler said.

Accompanying the Vice President will be officials from the State Department

and the National Security Council Staff.

One of the issues they are expected to discuss is the administration promise to provide aid for reconstruction of the war-torn economies of the countries involved in the fighting, including North Vietnam.

At his press conference Wednesday, national security adviser Henry A. Kissinger emphasized that details of the reconstruction aid would not be decided until the cease-fire agreement was in effect.

In other words, he was making it plain that no aid would be provided unless the signers of the agreement lived up to its provisions.

Negotiations are still under way for a big power conference on Indochina and also on a settlement in Laos and Cambodia.

Just how these negotiations are being conducted has not been revealed, but Secretary of State William P. Rogers may have some discussions about them when he meets North and South Vietnamese officials in Paris today at the cease-fire signing ceremonies.

A year ago, Kissinger said that the United States would not accede to Hanoi's demand for reparations. But he said that the United States could "give and undertake, a voluntary undertaking by the President, that there would be a massive reconstruction program for all of Indochina, in which North Vietnam could share to the extent of several billion dollars."

A White House spokesman said later that the United States would be prepared to send as much as \$7.5 billion to a peaceful Indochina over five years, with a third going to North Vietnam.

As long ago as 1965, President Johnson held out the hope of a massive Southeast Asian development program

once the fighting ceased.

But Congress has never committed itself to make the necessary appropriations.

In two ceremonies yesterday, Mr. Nixon met with families of prisoners of war and missing in action and applauded their "bravery" in supporting his struggle for an "honorable" peace.

The first was at a White House meeting with board members of the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia.

"The long vigil ends tomorrow night and in 60 days you will have the prisoners back or have information about the missing in action," he told the group.

While some persons wanted peace at any price, the President said, most of the families of missing men "never wavered and said we want our men back but we want peace with honor for what they fought for."

The President said Kissinger "brilliantly" conducted the negotiations leading to a cease-fire agreement.

Later, after flying to Key Biscayne, Fla., for the weekend, Mr. Nixon told another group of POW families he was "sorry we didn't get them back by Christmas."

When the President landed at Homestead Air Force Base he was greeted by overcast skies and a sign that said, "Welcome, Mr. Peacemaker."

A crowd of about 1000 persons was on hand to welcome him, and he shook hands and chatted with those in the crowd.

To the wife of one prisoner of war, the President said: "We've got it now. You're very brave people—the bravest people I know."