

POLITICAL TALKS ON VIETNAM SET

FEB 24 1973

Saigon and Vietcong Agree
to Parleys in Paris

NYTimes

Special to The New York Times

PARIS, Feb. 23—The Foreign Ministers of the Saigon Government and of the South Vietnamese Communists met alone today for the first time and finally agreed on when and where to start political talks between their regimes.

The talks are to start between March 5 and 10 in Paris, the only site the two sides could agree upon to negotiate their country's future.

There have been six meetings at a lower level during the past month, but they stalled on the question where substantive bargaining should take place.

Talks at Home Sought

However, both sides issued statements today saying that their negotiations should be moved to South Vietnam "as soon as possible." They agreed to meet again next week to clear up further details for the bargaining session, which has been called the "consultative conference."

The cease-fire agreement signed Jan. 27 requires both sides "to do their utmost" to reach a political settlement within 90 days of the signing so that elections can be arranged. It took a month to resolve preliminary technicalities.

The South Vietnamese Foreign Minister, Tran Van Lam, after meeting with Mrs. Nguyen Thi Binh, Foreign Minister of the Vietcong's Provisional Revolutionary Government, said, "We rejoice over this result and hope that the way is now open to a political solution."

It was virtually their last opportunity to reach the agreement before the international conference on Vietnam, which opens here on Monday.

Twelve Foreign Ministers and Secretary General Waldheim of the United Nations will take part in the conference, whose purpose is to endorse the cease-fire agreements and, if possible, set up a framework for receiving reports from the International Commission of Control and supervision.

The four-nation commission has been established in South Vietnam, but four weeks after the cease-fire it has still been unable to begin effective on-the-spot control.

Mrs. Binh said at a press luncheon today that the international conference would produce a declaration on Vietnam.

She said that it should cover three points: Endorsement of the cease-fire agreements, a pledge to respect them and an appeal to all countries not taking part in the conference to respect and contribute to the restoration of peace.

To a question about establishment of some permanent body that could be called to act if the cease-fire broke down, Mrs. Binh said only that there were "many possible forms of contact" among conference members. She excluded the United Nations as a possible base, saying it had "no competence" in the Vietnam dispute.

The conference is scheduled to last only four or five days, but, according to Mrs. Binh, agreement has not been reached on the chairmanship. The United States and North Vietnam, which issued the invitations, may be co-chairmen, since other suggestions have been rejected by one side or the other.

Mr. Lam arrived in Paris this morning. The Hungarian Foreign Minister, Janos Peter, arrived this afternoon, and the Soviet, Chinese and American officials are due tomorrow.

'Third Force' in Question

While both Mrs. Binh and Mr. Lam expressed their Governments' eagerness to move on quickly to talks about a political settlement, both noted with some acerbity that fighting was still going on. "Up to now," Mrs. Binh said, "the Saigon administration has shown no goodwill in applying the political clauses of the Paris agreement and it is continuing to violate the military clauses."

Mr. Lam spoke of his "pleasure and honor" at meeting Mrs. Binh, though he avoided using the title "foreign minister" and said pointedly that he would refrain from "accusing or denouncing" the other side for the "many cease-fire violations." "I do not want to throw oil on the fire," he said.

The two sides are apparently headed for serious difficulty in agreeing on a neutralist delegation to the "three component" National Council of Reconciliation and Concord, which will be charged with developing a political settlement.

Previously the Vietcong had indicated that they and Saigon would each pick half of the "third force" group. Today Mrs. Binh said that could not be done because the middle group would then "not be equal" in authority to the other two. The "third component" will have to emerge from "consultations among the parties," she said.

Vietnamese exiles in Paris who hope to be included in the third force have been active in holding news conferences and issuing communiqués and declarations to advance their own right to name candidates. Some have been quietly meeting with the Communists in search of support, but there is no sign that any of the exiles have won promises from either side.