

# A Vietcong Office at U.N. Considered by Waldheim

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PARIS, March 1—Secretary General Waldheim said today that he had discussed the possibility of a Vietcong liaison office at United Nations Headquarters and that Mrs. Nguyen Thi Binh had said her Provisional Revolutionary Government favored opening one.

Mr. Waldheim's surprise disclosure at a press luncheon here was the first that American officials traveling with Secretary of State William P. Rogers had learned about the proposal. It added another chapter to the strange and controversial week that Mr. Waldheim has spent in Paris as an official participant in the international conference on Vietnam.

His presence has been a cause of sharp debate behind the scenes, with the North Vietnamese, who were largely responsible for his being here

in the first place, now declaring that he should not have been invited.

"It's like inviting a man to dinner and telling him to wash the plates," an American said.

In fact, the Secretary General was almost eliminated from the official document that was initiated today by the 12 participating parties, including the P.R.G.

Originally, the conference, which has now endorsed the month-old Vietnam cease-fire agreement, was billed as a "13-party conference," with Mr. Waldheim, a man without a government, as the 13th.

During the week of discussions North Vietnam—backed by the Chinese and other Communist delegates—insisted that the United Nations have no role in Vietnam. Hanoi suc-

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ceeded in getting the conference to agree that the final document should be signed without Mr. Waldheim.

But Mitchell W. Sharp, Canadian Minister of External Affairs, complained about the "shabby" treatment accorded Mr. Waldheim and was able to get the final document to assert that the conference was held "in the presence of the Secretary General.

Mr. Waldheim was described by some of his aides as crushed by the way his role was downgraded by Hanoi. But he told newsmen today: "I think the participation of the Secretary General in the conference is a very positive event for the United Nations."

"Do not forget that the United Nations was not previously involved in this affair," he said. "It is a sign of confidence in the Secretary General and the United Nations."

In reporting at the press luncheon that he had talked with Mrs. Binh about opening a Vietcong liaison office, he noted that it was within his power to grant liaison status to any group requesting it. That is a legal point, and some of his aides were not sure whether he had gone too far or not.

Privately they said that Mrs. Binh, who is Foreign Minister,



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Secretary General Waldheim of the U.N.

informed Mr. Waldheim last night of her side's desire to have an office in New York to balance the observer status accorded to the Saigon Government.

Mr. Waldheim, who arrived in Paris last weekend with a large staff and 10 other official delegates, suffered his greatest embarrassment on Thursday, when his legal adviser, F. Blaine Sloan, an American, was forced off the conference's drafting committee after the

North Vietnamese objected to his presence.

American officials recalled that Mr. Waldheim was invited to the conference as a result of the negotiations between Henry A. Kissinger, President Nixon's national security adviser, and Le Duc Tho, the Hanoi Politburo member.

They said that in early October, when Mr. Kissinger and Mr. Tho made a "breakthrough" toward agreement, the North Vietnamese representative proposed Mr. Waldheim as a participant in the international conference to endorse the agreement. The United States accepted without objection, they said.

One official noted that at the time Washington was surprised at North Vietnam's unexpected interest in the Secretary General. Previously, it had objected to any effort to introduce the United Nations into the Vietnam conflict.

At first the United States believed that Hanoi had nominated Mr. Waldheim so he might become neutral chairman of the conference. Then Hanoi indicated privately that it would block any effort to give him the post.

United States officials believe that China, which has also opposed a United Nations role in Vietnam, strongly objected to Mr. Waldheim's presence.