

U.S. and Hanoi to Open Aid Talks Next Thursday

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WASHINGTON, March 8—The United States and North Vietnam announced today that the first meeting of the new joint commission to discuss future economic relations between the two countries, including possible American aid for reconstruction, would take place in Paris a week from today.

The head of the United States three-man delegation will be Maurice J. Williams, who has been in the foreign aid program for 15 years and is now deputy director of the Agency for International Development. The North Vietnamese will be led by Dang Viet Chau, Hanoi's Finance Minister.

Establishment of the joint economic commission was agreed upon during the visit to Hanoi last month by Henry A. Kissinger, President Nixon's adviser on national security.

Issue Is Controversial

Almost since the day of the Vietnam cease-fire announcement in late January, the subject of possible aid to North Vietnam has been intensely controversial in the United States, with eventual Congressional assent far from certain.

President Nixon has called such aid "an investment in peace" and has pledged that money for it would not be taken from domestic programs, but rather would come from the combined total of the defense and foreign aid budgets already sent to Congress.

Neither the President nor anyone else has discussed specific figures. More than a year ago an "illustrative" figure of up to \$2.5-billion for North Vietnam spread over five years was used officially, but Mr. Kissinger said early this year that that figure was not "current."

The meeting in Paris next Thursday, today's announcement said, will be in the former Hotel Majestic, where the Vietnam cease-fire agreement was signed in January.

Mr. Williams's deputies on

the United States side will be John Mossler, formerly head of the United States aid mission in South Vietnam, and Donald E. Syvrud, Special Assistant to the Secretary of the Treasury for International Affairs.

Mr. Dang will be accompanied by Nguyen Co Thach, deputy foreign minister, and Le Khac, deputy chairman of the State Planning Committee.

North Vietnam has indicated that any aid it receives from the United States or other countries should be worked out directly and should not be part of a "consortium." The United States had hoped, at least originally, that a reconstruction effort might be worked out jointly among a number of possible donors.

Although officials here declined to speculate in advance, a plausible opening topic would be a presentation by North Vietnam of its requests for aid.

The White House announcement said the task of the joint commission was to examine "the full range of economic contacts and relations that might develop between the United States and North Vietnam." Officials acknowledged that trade relations were a possible topic.

Saigon-Vietcong Talks

PARIS, March 8 (AP)—The Saigon Government and the Vietcong agreed today to open political discussions on the future of South Vietnam on March 19 in a chateau on the outskirts of Paris.

Nguyen Phuong Thiep, chief of the Saigon delegation, and Dinh Ba Thi, head of the Vietcong negotiators, agreed to final procedural details during a short meeting in the International Conference Center, the former Hotel Majestic, where the Vietnam peace talks dragged on for four years.

Further meetings will be held in the chateau of La-Celle-St.-Cloud, west of Paris, made available by the French Government.

One of the principal tasks of the political negotiators will be to set up a three-tier National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord, which is to organize elections under the terms of the peace agreement.