

Vietnam Peace Pledge

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Paris

A new protocol pledging "strict respect and scrupulous implementation" of the Vietnam peace agreements was signed here yesterday by the U.S., North Vietnam, South Vietnam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government (Viet Cong).

For the second time in less than five months, a new cease-fire order to be "strictly observed" will be issued to all military commanders in South Vietnam effective at noon tomorrow.

At the same time, U.S. reconnaissance flights over North Vietnam will cease "immediately, completely and indefinitely" and five days from now the U.S. will resume clearance of mines from the harbors and rivers of the North.

Henry Kissinger, who negotiated and signed the 14-point joint communique for the U.S., told a press conference that "we believe we have achieved a satisfactory conclusion which meets all the major concerns we have had over the working of the January agreements."

He then went on to add: "The history of Indochina is replete with agreements and joint declarations, and I am not naive enough to pretend to you that the mere fact of having again agreed to certain words in itself guarantees peace. But I will also say that since all parties here have worked so seriously for the last three weeks, we have fresh hope that there is a new spirit which will match this effort with performance."

Basically, the new document is simply a restatement in more forceful language of the provisions of the original peace agreements which were signed here on January 27.

The new agreement does provide, however, for direct meetings of opposing commanders in the field to regulate the cease-fire, and for

improved operations, communications and movement of the peacekeeping teams of the International Commission of Control and Supervision.

As for Laos and Cambodia, however, the new agreement simply states that Article 20 of the original agreement which deals with these two countries "shall be scrupulously implemented." Replying to a question, Kissinger said flatly that there is nothing in this which commits the U.S. to cease its bombing operations in Cambodia.

Kissinger listed six points which he said are of major concern to the U.S. and which he believes have been met in the new agreement. They were:

Implementation of the
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cease-fire; stopping of infiltration of Communist troops and arms into the South; an adequate accounting of Americans missing in action; violations of the demilitarized zone separating the two Vietnams; inadequate cooperation of the control commission, and removal of foreign troops from Laos and Cambodia.

The whole question of a political agreement and holding of free elections in South Vietnam remains outside the scope of this latest document, although again it was discussed in the course of the negotiations. As an example of how the Vietnam situation keeps turning upside down, the South Vietnamese would have liked, apparently, to get a commitment in the communique to an election date, but the North Vietnam on behalf of the PRG were opposed.

REVERSAL

This is a complete reversal of the situation when the peace accords were negotiated last December and January. At that time, the Communists wanted to fix an election date in the agree-

ment and Saigon was opposed.

Kissinger declined to go into details of the delays and negotiating problems this time around, except to remark wryly that "the art of compromise is not highly developed in Vietnam."

Asked if he thought he would be back in Paris four or five months hence to negotiate all over again to reinforce the cease-fire, Kissinger said:

"It is a prospect I cannot face today."

Signed