

Tho Rejects Nobel Peace Prize

From News Dispatches

Hanoi Politburo member Le Duc Tho rejected the 1973 Nobel Peace Prize yesterday but indicated he might accept it in the future when "peace is really restored" in South Vietnam, a Hanoi broadcast said.

Tho was awarded the prize Oct. 16 jointly with Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger for negotiating the Vietnam cease-fire. The choice of the pair created controversy from the start.

Hanoi's official Vietnam News Agency, in a broadcast monitored in Tokyo, said the rejection was in a message sent by Tho to Mrs. Aase Lionaes, president of the Nobel Prize Committee of the Norwegian Parliament in Oslo.

Tho said: "I feel it impossible to accept the 1973 Nobel Peace Prize" because the United States and South Viet-

nam have continued to commit "very serious violations" of the cease-fire agreement.

"The Saigon administration has, with U.S. support and encouragement, carried on its war activities. Peace has not been really restored in South Vietnam," he said.

"Under such circumstances I feel it impossible to accept the 1973 Nobel Peace Prize that the committee has bestowed on me. When the Paris agreement on Vietnam is respected, guns are silenced, and peace is really restored in South Vietnam, I will consider the acceptance of this prize."

In Oslo, Mrs. Lionaes said the committee had not yet received the letter from Tho. Under the statutes of the peace prize, Tho's share of the 120,000 award would be returned to the Nobel fund.

An Agence France-Presse dispatch from Hanoi said



LE DUC THO

... maybe later

It had been taken for granted that Tho would reject the prize outright, reaffirming the North Vietnamese view that "the aggressor and the victim must not be placed on an equal footing."

When the award was first announced, South Vietnamese government spokesman Bui Bao Truc said that "giving the Nobel Prize to Le Duc Tho is similar to granting the title 'chastity' to a prostitute or a pimp."

Selection of Kissinger also stirred criticism, such as that of law prof. Adam Yarmolinsky, who said "what he did in Vietnam was terrible."

Much of the criticism centered around the fact that the war continues. Indeed, South Vietnam announced yesterday that its losses since the Jan. 28 cease-fire have now topped 10,000 dead.

Tho's indication of a possible later acceptance surprised the city's diplomatic community.