

Tho Rejects Nobel Prize, Citing Vietnam Situation

By FLORA LEWIS

Special to The New York Times

PARIS, Oct. 23—Le Duc Tho has rejected the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to him jointly with Secretary of State Kissinger for the Vietnam agreement they negotiated, Hanoi announced today.

He said that "peace has not yet really been established in South Vietnam." "In these circumstances," he added, "it is impossible for me to accept" the prize.

Hanoi's chief negotiator said, "I will be able to consider" acceptance only when the Paris accord "is respected, the arms are silenced and real peace is established in South Vietnam."

The decision and the explanation were disclosed in a letter from Le Duc Tho to Mrs. Aase Lionaes, president of the Norwegian Parliament's Nobel Prize Committee.

Careful Decision Seen

Two members of the committee have resigned in protest against the award, an extraordinary gesture since custom forbids any disclosure of how the prize decision was reached, how committee members voted and whether the outcome was based on unanimity.

Mr. Tho's reaction clearly reflected a careful decision of the North Vietnamese leadership. There had been no comment on the subject from Hanoi from the time the prize was announced until the publication of his letter, but the rejection was not surprising to observers familiar with North Vietnam's view of the war and of existing conditions.

There was no mention of Mr. Kissinger at any point in the letter, nor that the prize offered to Mr. Tho was to be shared with Hanoi's former enemy.

Hanoi's View of Accord

The North Vietnamese have consistently taken the position that the Paris agreement was not a compromise settlement but a victory over the United States. They could not therefore, have been expected to be pleased at equal honors granted to their representative and that of the belligerent they feel that they defeated Mr. Kissinger.

Further, they maintain that the United States holds responsibility for continuing violation of the cease-fire and failure to implement any of the accord's political clauses. Hanoi has invariably considered the Government of South Vietnam as a puppet of the United States, and therefore insists that the United States should account for Saigon's deeds.

Mr. Tho's letter made these points explicitly:

"During the last 18 years, the United States undertook a war of aggression against Vietnam.

"American imperialism has been defeated. The Paris agreement on Vietnam has been signed. It is a very great historic victory of the Vietnamese people and the peace-loving and just people of the world.

"Since the signing of the Paris agreement, the United States and the Saigon Administration continue in grave violation of a number of key clauses of this agreement. The Saigon Administration, aided and encouraged by the United States, continues its acts of war."

"A not after the letter said coolly that Mr. Tho had also replied to personages at the United Nations, heads of government, politicians, writers and foreign journalists who had congratulated him on the prize. "He thanked them and gave

them his point of view," it said.

It was not at all clear whether Mr. Tho was suggesting that the prize would be acceptable once South Vietnam was actually at peace.

The phrase saying, "I will be able to consider" the prize when that day comes may have represented a compromise between divergent opinions in Hanoi on whether the award should be rejected because there is no peace, or whether in any circumstances it would conflict with Hanoi's assertion of victory over an aggressor.

Hanoi's decision posed a dilemma for the Nobel committee. It could leave Mr. Kissinger as the sole recipient of the 1973 Nobel Peace Prize, but that would violate the balance that had clearly been intended in the joint award.

Or the committee could meet again to reconsider the initial decision. There was no immediate indication of how the Norwegian panel would react.

Followig is the text of Mr. Tho's letter, in unofficial translation from the French version supplied by the Paris office of the Hanoi press agency:

"During the last 18 years the U.S. undertook a war of aggression against Vietnam. The Vietnamese people have waged a tenacious and heroic struggle against the U.S. aggression for independence and freedom. All of progressive humanity approves and supports this just cause.

"American imperialism has been defeated. The Paris agreement on Vietnam has been signed. It is a very great historic victory of the Vietnamese people and peace-loving and just peoples of the world. It is an important contribution by the Vietnamese people to the movement for national independence and to the cause of the peoples of all countries.

"They unvarying position of the Vietnamese people and of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam is to apply the Paris accord on Vietnam resolutely and seriously and at the same time to demand that the other signatory parties do the same in order to maintain a durable peace in Vietnam and to contribute to the safeguarding of peace in Southeast Asia and in the world.

"However, since the signing of the Paris agreement, the United States and the Saigon administration continue in grave violation of a number of key clauses of this agreement. The Saigon administration, aided and encouraged by the United States, continues its acts of war. Peace has not yet really been established in South Vietnam. In these circumstances it is impossible for me to accept the 1973 Nobel Prize for Peace which the committee has bestowed on me. Once the Paris accord on Vietnam is respected, the arms are silenced and a real peace is established in South Vietnam, I will be able to consider accepting this prize. With my thanks to the Nobel Prize Committee please accept, madame, my sincere respects."

Kissinger Still to Accept

WASHINGTON, Oct. 23 (UPI)—Secretary of State Kissinger still intends to go to Oslo on Dec. 12 to accept the Nobel Peace Prize.

State Department officials said that Mr. Kissinger would have no comment at this time on Mr. Tho's rejection of the prize.