

\*SOME PROGRESS\* SEEN IN VIETNAM SETTLEMENT (430)

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WASHINGTON, OCT. 24 -- THE WHITE HOUSE SAYS "SOME PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT OF THE VIETNAM CONFLICT."

WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY RONALD ZIEGLER MADE THE ASSESSMENT OCTOBER 24 BUT DECLINED TO DISCUSS DR. HENRY KISSINGER'S PRIVATE MEETINGS WITH LEADERS OF NORTH AND SOUTH VIETNAM IN PARIS AND SAIGON. HE WAS REFERRING TO "OVER-ALL EFFORTS" FOR A SETTLEMENT, MR. ZIEGLER SAID.

DR. KISSINGER, PRESIDENT NIXON'S ADVISER ON NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS, REPORTED TO MR. NIXON AND SECRETARY OF STATE ROGERS OCTOBER 24 ON HIS FIVE DAYS OF CONSULTATIONS IN SAIGON WITH SOUTH VIETNAMESE PRESIDENT THIEU AND OTHER SOUTH VIETNAMESE LEADERS. DR. KISSINGER HAD GONE TO SAIGON AFTER FOUR DAYS OF MEETINGS IN PARIS WITH LE DUC THO, A MEMBER OF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE POLITBURO AND ITS SPECIAL ADVISER ON PEACE NEGOTIATIONS.

DR. KISSINGER MET WITH MR. NIXON IMMEDIATELY ON HIS RETURN FROM SAIGON OCTOBER 23, AND AGAIN WITH THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY ROGERS OCTOBER 24.

ALLUDING TO NEWS ACCOUNTS FROM SAIGON SAYING "SOME PROGRESS" HAD BEEN MADE TOWARD AN END TO THE WAR, MR. ZIEGLER SAID HE BELIEVED "YOU KNOW SOME PROGRESS HAS TAKEN PLACE." HE SAID HE WOULD "AGAIN CAUTION YOU AGAINST EXCESSIVE SPECULATION."

"I WILL SAY SOME PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS," MR. ZIEGLER TOLD QUESTIONERS. "I'M REFERRING TO OVERALL EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT" OF THE WAR.

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MR. ZIEGLER DECLINED COMMENT ON PRESIDENT THIEU'S SPEECH ON OCTOBER 24, OR ON AN INTERVIEW WITH PREMIER DONG OF NORTH VIETNAM WHICH WAS PUBLISHED IN NEWSWEEK MAGAZINE.

IN HIS SPEECH ON OCTOBER 24, PRESIDENT THIEU OF SOUTH VIETNAM CHARGED THAT NORTH VIETNAM'S PEACE PROPOSALS WERE ILL-DISGUISED ATTEMPTS TO UNDERMINE THE SAIGON GOVERNMENT. HE ALSO STATED THAT NO ONE HAD A RIGHT TO IMPOSE A PEACE SETTLEMENT ON SOUTH VIETNAM, BUT HE INDICATED A CEASE-FIRE MIGHT BE DECLARED SOON IF IT COVERED ALL OF INDOCHINA AND WAS INTERNATIONALLY SUPERVISED.

THE WHITE HOUSE HAS CONSISTENTLY DECLINED TO DISCUSS THE PRIVATE TALKS, CITING AN AGREEMENT WITH HANOI TO HOLD THEIR SUBSTANCE CONFIDENTIAL.

MR. ZIEGLER DECLINED COMMENT WHEN ASKED IF PREMIER DONG'S NEWSWEEK INTERVIEW CONSTITUTED A BREACH OF THE AGREEMENT.

PRESIDENT NIXON, MEANWHILE, SIGNED LEGISLATION IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL AND MEDICAL BENEFITS FOR AMERICANS WHO SERVED IN THE VIETNAM WAR WITH THE OBSERVATION THAT THE "BEST WAY TO HONOR VETERANS" WHO "FOUGHT FOR THE SURVIVAL OF FREEDOM AND AGAINST AGGRESSION" IS TO "BUILD A LASTING PEACE IN THE WORLD."

GREAT PROGRESS IN THAT DIRECTION WAS MADE IN THE LAST YEAR, HE SAID, CITING HIS TRIPS TO PEKING AND MOSCOW. HE SAID HE WOULD "WORK UNCEASINGLY" TOWARD THE GOAL OF A "GENERATION WITHOUT WAR" AND A WORLD AT PEACE. "THIS IS OUR GOAL," HE SAID, "WE TRUST WE WILL BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE THAT GOAL FOR WHICH YOU (VETERANS) HAVE SACRIFICED SO MUCH." ITEM

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