

AFP
10.24.72

PS
file subj.
date sub-cat.
10/72

AFP: HANOI SOURCE SAYS BASIS OF PEACE AGREEMENTS SETTLED

Paris AFP in English 1718 GMT 24 Oct 72 C--FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

[By Jean Thoraval]

[Text] Hanoi, Oct. 24 (AFP)--Hanoi apparently does not share the optimism of other world capitals concerning the imminence of peace in Vietnam. While officials maintain a prudent silence, generally well-informed sources said the United States appears to be encouraging this optimism while giving the impression that last-minute difficulties are coming from its allies. This impression is seen as a manoeuvre, because, in the words of one source, "we have already more than settled the basis of an agreement between Washington and Hanoi."

This agreement is so detailed, the source said, that it even includes the amount of war reparations the U.S. will pay to the north, under the official terminology of reconstruction aid. According to the (?source), the agreement stipulated that U.S. bombing above the 20th parallel in North Vietnam was to have ended at zero hours GMT yesterday (Monday). However, the bombings did not stop, and there were three pre-alerts in Hanoi on Tuesday.

Observers believe that these last moments in the negotiations are extremely difficult. The indications here are that President Nixon's advisor Henry Kissinger and Hanoi's representative Le Duc Tho seriously laid the groundwork, but that the discussions have now bogged down.

Officials, in refusing any public commentary on the situation, explain that their silence is for the cause of peace. But many observers think this silence may be broken (?in the) next few days if the talks do not progress. They believe that the North Vietnamese, in the light of their experiences in 1945, 1954 and 1968, might publicly reveal the results of the Kissinger-Le Duc Tho negotiations, stressing the (?concessions) made by the north.

The North Vietnamese also comment frequently that the best way to obtain peace is to prepare for a long war. If the other side does not want peace, we shall prove that we can continue the war, they often state. For the moment, the war continues. The Foreign Ministry said today that American aircraft yesterday bombed nine provinces of North Vietnam as well as two cities, Son La and Bac Giang.

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