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minister 1 (normass/deepe)

SAIGON, ²⁷APRIL ~~26~~—South Vietnam's Foreign Minister said the tangled difficulties of choosing a site for preliminary talks on the Vietnam war was evidence of Hanoi's "stalling for time" ^h until the American Presidential election picture became clearer.

Doctor Tran Van Do, the elder statesman of the South Vietnamese government, refused to predict when preliminary talks would begin. ~~"No~~ "You'd better ask Hanoi that," he smiled. He indicated, however, that he considered the preliminary Washington-Hanoi ~~talks~~ talks as simply the first of a four-stage process of securing peace in South Vietnam and throughout South East Asia. The whole process would be long and drawn-out, he said, and very difficult. He said the American and South Vietnamese governments had placed no ~~time~~ limit on the time they would wait for Hanoi to respond before escalating the bombing ~~raids~~ ^{raids} over North Vietnam.

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minister 2 (normass/deepe)

Regarding the American elections, the ~~fencing mi~~ foreign minister said, "This is just one interpretation. Hanoi might delay until August to wait for the Democratic convention and to see more clearly the (American) Presidential candidates." He said he did not foresee any "substantial negotiations" about the war in South Vietnam "at least before August."

This interpretation ~~seemd~~ seemed partially to ~~p~~ rest on the growing fear among South Vietnamese leaders that Senator Robert Kennedy might succeed in gaining the Democratic Party nomination and be elected as the next President of the United United States, which ~~South Vietnamese~~ leaders see as a major advantage for Hanoi because of the Senator's Vietnam stand. President Nguyen Van Thieu and Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky have voiced publicly [✓]similar fear, though they did not ~~specifically~~ specifically link this with Hanoi's so-called delaying tactics.

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minister 3 (normass/deepe)

The ~~so~~ soft-spoken, mild-mannered diplomat became rather emotionally animated when he began discussing Senator Kennedy. "Yes, the American people want peace---but what sort of peace? You can have peace tomorrow if you give all they (Hanoi) askd for. You can have peace tomorrow if you want to sacrifice South East Asia and South Vietnam. You remember the main objective of Hanoi is to have a coalition---it is the best political way take over the South. Then you will have peace, but that will ~~maximise~~ not fool anyone. That's a camouflaged peace....

"Will Senator Robert Kennedy accept this kind of ~~pe~~ peace and enter history as the first American president to lose a war," the delicately-framed foreign minister asked. "Will he accept to betray the promises of three American presidents, promises to help the government of Vietnam to preserve its independence and protect its people. That's what President John Kennedy wrote in 1961 to South Vietnam. Is it possible for Robert Kennedy to surrender South Vietnam and betray his own brother?"

The foreign minister then quickly walked from the air-conditioned reception room into his inner working office, where he picked up a large volume of official documents to the South Vietnamese government. He leafed through the volume until he found the letter written on December 14, 1961, by President John Kennedy to then South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem. He showed in ~~the letter~~ ^{THE LETTER} the words he had just quoted, "We are prepared to help the Republic of Vietnam to protect its people and to preserve its independence."

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minister 4 (normass/deepe)

The Foreign Minister said he did not think "anything serious" would begin on the ~~negota~~ negotiations front before the American elections. "You think Hanoi wants to negotiate ~~for~~ peace with President Johnson, who has only nine months left?" he asked. "Hanoi may want to ~~negotiate~~ ^{wait for} negotiate with the next Administration to see whom they will negotiate with. They must hope that Senator Kennedy will be ~~elect~~ ^{elect} elected also. But, if the trend swings towards Mister (Richard) Nixon, instead of Kennedy, and the strength of our war effort here is increased, then they might ~~negotiate~~ negotiate before the elections. But, I don't think it is possible to end negotiations before the elections. You will see the ~~diff~~ difficulties--the negotiations will drag on for months and months."

He ~~said~~ said he believed ~~H~~ Hanoi was in a difficult position on negotiations. "Hanoi can not reject completely the preliminary talks without ~~losing world opin~~ the world opinion turning against it," he said, "but it is reluctant to have some productive ~~talk~~ talks at this time, so Hanoi is stalling for time, has reached no decision and the difficulty of the choice of the site is an evidence of this."

He ~~said~~ he said he believed that if Hanoi "drags on the preliminary talks and resumes the fight" then Mr. Nixon would have more chance to be elected and that ~~they~~ ^{HANOI} would have "nothing to win with Mr. Nixon, who is generally known as a hawk." But, the ~~Foreign Minister~~ ^{Foreign Minister} ~~smiled~~ smiled, "maybe Hanoi will miscalculate because what Senator Kennedy says is an election platform, but if he's ~~elect~~ elected then as President he might adopt another point of view. The promise of a ~~central~~ candidate is ^{is. T. J.} ~~is. T. J.~~ ^{9.11.68} ~~is. T. J.~~ He did not finish the sentence, but just shrugged his shoulders and ~~smiled~~ ^{smiled}.

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minister 5 (normass/deepe)

The Foreign Minister said he believed negotiations would evolve into a four-stage affair. The first stage of preliminary talks between Hanoi and Washington would not entail political matters, but would be ~~limt~~ limited to the military questions ^{SOUTH} regarding the cessation of the bombing over North Vietnam. He said the South Vietnamese government wanted to send a "person to those talks just to maintain ~~ot~~ contact with the American delegation to know what's going on." He said this person, yet to be ~~appoint~~ ^{NAMED} appointed by the government, would not technically be considered "an observer" at the meeting. Hence, he said the South Vietnamese government was interested in a "neutral" site, for which he expressed no preference for the fifteen proposed by the American side. He believed Warsaw and Phnom Penh were not "fair proposals," he said. *Referring to HANOI'S SUGGESTED SITES.*

The second phase, which might take place at another site, would discuss negotiations to end the Vietnam war in the South, with the participation, on one hand, of South Vietnam and her allies and on the other hand, North Vietnam and her allies. These, he called "substantial negotiations", which he did not envision beginning before August. He said he thought the war in the South would continue until final agreement would be reached, though perhaps the scale of the fighting would diminish. ~~Over~~ Clearly, what South Vietnam wanted from Hanoi ~~on~~ during one of ~~these~~ these two phases appeared to be a guarantee that North Vietnam would stop ~~syppor~~ supporting and fomenting the National Liberation Front in the South.

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minister 6 (normass/deepe)

In what appeared to be a new twist for negotiations on Vietnam, the foreign minister said he has also believed that a ~~big po~~ "big power" many-nation conference be held to discuss the security of all of South East Asia. This conference would have more nations involved, particularly American and the Soviet Union, but he noted the "difficulty on the question of the participation of the Chinese (Communists), not simply because the United States does not recognize China, but also because of "the dissension between the Russians and Chinese in the Communist world."

He said "it's very ~~lg~~ logical that security for South East Asia lies not on only between North and South Vietnam, but it depends on the big powers too....We must see Vietnam in the context of South East Asia and in ~~that~~ context of world competition between the two blocs." Clearly, the foreign minister was advocating some agreement between ~~Russia~~ the Soviet Union and the United States to guarantee security in Asia even after the Chinese Communists could ~~deliver power~~ ^{HAVE THE CAPABILITY OF DELIVERING} nuclear weapons. "This is up to the big powers--American and Russia. It's far beyond the will and capability of South Vietnam. We must depend off more or less--and more rather than less--on the agreement between the big powers. ~~Mark~~ The Chinese Communists even with nuclear weapons would have to take into consideration the position of American and the Russians if they wanted to start an nuclear war."

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minister 7 (normass/deepe)

He said even if peace talks broke down, "no one has agreed on the use of nuclear weapons...because it is too dangerous for everyone, even for the Chinese."

negotiations

He said he viewed the fourth stage of / would deal with the internal South Vietnamese problem of the relationship between the government and the National Liberation Front. "This is an internal question," he said. "The National Liberation Front always says they are an indigenous movement, an autonomous movement in the South, so in other words they are rebels and it's up to us (South Vietnamese government) to deal with them. What is acceptable to us and what's acceptable to them?....We do not want to destroy them. They simply must choose between North and South Vietnam. If the Communists (in the National Liberation Front) want to, they can go to the North. Or if they want to lay down their arms and join us, they'll be offered the rights of other ~~citizens~~ citizens." Asked whether ~~some~~ some of these non-Communist elements who laid down their arms, would be accepted into the ~~govt~~ government, he said it "depends on the competency of the individual." He named several examples of ex-Viet Cong who ~~now~~ have positions in the government's administration, ~~administration~~.

He cautioned about the use of the words "~~coalition~~ coalition" "coalition government." He said "sometimes it isn't the right word. You can have a ~~coalition~~ coalition in a country with political parties—but not with political parties that have an armed force. If they have an ~~arm~~ armed force, can we accept to have a coalition with them? ~~unless they drop their arms~~ No, it's unconstitutional and unlawful, UNLESS they drop their arms.

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