

## Both Sides Cancel Session of Paris Peace Talks

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PARIS, Dec. 28—The step-up in the air war over North Vietnam led to a further breakdown in the Paris peace talks today as both sides rushed to cancel the session scheduled for Thursday.

There has been no meeting since Dec. 9 and none is scheduled. North Vietnam said it was putting off the session until Jan. 6, but agreement by the United States and South Vietnam is necessary. This was not immediately forthcoming.

The four-party talks, which next month will end their third year, are not only completely deadlocked but going through the longest break since they began. On the basis of today's exchange of recriminations, prospects do not seem bright for early improvement.

Following the raids on North Vietnam Sunday and yesterday, the Hanoi delegation announced yesterday that it would hold a news conference this morning. In the past such calls to newsmen following heavy American bombardment have usually meant a cancellation of the next scheduled meeting as a protest.

The Vietnamese move was countered by William J. Porter, the chief American delegate, whose aggressive tactics since his arrival in October have included a refusal to allow the Communists to monopolize the field of invective. The American delegation called the North Vietnamese at 8 A.M. to announce the arrival of its liaison officer with a communication. The officer, who drove through the cold fog to North Vietnamese headquarters at Choisy-le-Roi, in the southern suburbs, arrived shortly after 9 to be confronted with a note from the North Vietnamese officer. Both this note and the American one announced cancellation of the session. Technically, the North Vietnamese got theirs in first.

The American note said the cancellation "does not imply any intention on the part of our side to discontinue the Paris talks." The Communists nonetheless accused the allies of an attempt to "torpedo" them.

The United States and South Vietnam said they would not attend the meeting because of "very heavy North Vietnamese attacks" on unarmed American

reconnaissance craft, the use of North Vietnam as a sanctuary for attacks by MIG fighter jets against American planes operating in Laos, recent "indiscriminate" rocket attacks on Saigon, North Vietnamese construction of a road through the demilitarized zone "for the purpose of continued aggression" and failure of the Communist side "to negotiate seriously in Paris."

Implicit in the five reasons was what the United States alleges to be a violation of the understandings behind the American decision to halt the bombing of North Vietnam in 1968. Denying that any understanding existed, Hanoi's statement declared that the current attacks "constitute a violation of the U.S. engagement to cease completely and unconditionally all bombardment against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam."

Nguyen Than Le, the North Vietnamese spokesman, declared that the raids had hit civilian installations. Eight patients in a hospital in the city of Thanhhoa were killed, he said. A school in Donghe, in Quangbinh Province, was also hit the spokesman said.