

North Vietnam is Scornful;  
In Saigon, Gloom and Joy

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## Peace Hopes Dashed

By SYLVAN FOX

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SAIGON, South Vietnam, Dec. 19.—The United States bombs that fell on Hanoi and Haiphong today brought gloom to many American officials here and jubilation to members of the South Vietnamese Government.

"We won't have peace for months now," said an American civilian official. "It looks like it's all over for months. It's very sad."

Army officers, although they declined to say anything publicly, expressed the same kind of disappointment in private.

"Everybody is down now," a colonel commented. "People were in the clouds, riding high a few days ago, expecting to be leaving soon. Now everybody is down."

But in the Presidential Palace—which is impenetrable to newsmen, who get only second-hand information filtered through South Vietnamese

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"sources,"—the mood was described as jubilant.

According to the sources, the resumption of American bombing north of the 20th Parallel apparently fulfilled President Nguyen Van Thieu's fondest hope that the Paris peace talks would eventually collapse and that the United States would return to a full-scale air war against North Vietnam.

"Resumption of the bombing is a great encouragement to the South Vietnamese people," said Gen. Nguyen Van Thong, secretary of the National Assembly and a supporter of the Thieu Government. "The problem now is whether or not the United States will keep up this intensified bombing for as long as necessary, that is, until the Communists agree to negotiate seriously."

## Opposition Unhappy

Members of the South Vietnamese opposition factions, however, expressed some sadness at the resumption of the bombing.

"It means more killing and more destruction," said Tran Van Tuyen, an opposition member of the National Assembly, "while the result is still unknown. We do not yet know, for example, what Hanoi's reaction will be. They can accept concessions or they can settle for a longer war. Meantime, the prospect for peace has receded."

The differing reactions of American officials and pro-Government South Vietnamese officials point up one of the differences that underlie their positions: Many if not all American military and civilian officials here leave little doubt

that they have had enough of the war and were hoping the Paris peace talks would succeed so the soldiers and prisoners of war could go home.

The Vietnamese officials led by Mr. Thieu, on the other hand, were terrified at the prospect that the peace talks might succeed, despite their strenuous objections to some of its provisions, thereby forcing them to make the difficult decision to accept or reject it.

## Saigon Reported Relieved

Now, according to palace sources, they are relieved that the talks have apparently collapsed and delighted by the resumption of American air strikes on the North.

Some American officials said privately that they were puzzled by the resumption of the bombing so soon after the evident breakdown of the peace talks.

## More Movement Sought

"I don't understand it," said one such official. "It's hard to make sense out of it."

One explanation offered here is that President Nixon regarded the Paris breakthrough in early October, which almost led to a peace agreement, as a direct consequence of his decision in May to mine the Haiphong harbor and intensify the bombing of North Vietnam.

This theory asserts that the President has resumed the bombing in the belief that it will produce still more movement by Hanoi toward peace.

Early in the Paris talks, when hopes for their ultimate success ran high and when Henry A. Kissinger, the President's adviser on national security, had proclaimed that "peace is at hand," State Department officials were suggesting strongly

that the mining of Haiphong and the intensified bombing of North Vietnam had persuaded the Communists to negotiate seriously.

During that period, in late October and early November, these officials could not have been more optimistic about the prospects for a speedy cease-fire. Some said peace was only a matter of days away. Others said it would come no later than Jan. 1.

## Optimism After Mining

All said they were convinced that the logical sequence that led from the May 8 mining of Haiphong to the Oct. 8 peace proposal by North Vietnam meant that peace was clearly within reach.

Today almost no one in the diplomatic community would even hazard a guess as to when a cease-fire formula might be found.

One high-ranking American official was more sanguine than the rest. "I was pretty optimistic about Jan. 3," he said, referring to the date on which Congress reconvenes. "That one has gone down the drain, I guess. But I still haven't given up on Jan. 20—which is the day of President Nixon's second inauguration."