

Little by Little, Life in Hanoi Is Beginning to Get
Back to Normal

HANOI, North Vietnam, Jan. 2 (Agence France-Presse) —The city of Hanoi, though still two-third empty, timidly began getting back to normal today after 12 days of heavy American bombing raids.

The North Vietnamese capital was clearly still a bit groggy and far from presenting its usual face to the world with its clogged and teeming streets. But little by little, since the weekend, the

people who fled to the country at the height of the bombing are beginning to return.

Of Hanoi's population of one million, only about 300,000 were still in the city when the White House announcement Saturday that it was halting the bombing north of the 20th Parallel.

For the moment, only a few groups of people, mostly youths and tradesmen, have ventured back to the center of the city. In the suburbs,

many houses still are shuttered and many streets are still practically deserted.

According to the official North Vietnamese press, the evacuation and other security measures continue in effect. This reflected the fairly widespread feeling among the people of Hanoi at present that it could start all over again.

In the normally busy thoroughfares of central Hanoi, such as Dao Street and

Bong Street. There are more bicycles and trishaws crowding roadways and pavements than last week. People form knots in front of shops and stalls, some of which have reopened since the bombing halt.

In Gai Street, a portrait artist has again set up his easel, and the tailors on Trong Street are back at work behind their shop windows where their wares are laid out on dummies with European faces. The street merchants are again hawking their soups and their boiled chicken, the smell announcing their presence from a distance.

But there is another smell, of disinfectant, when you walk past the turn into Kham Thien Street, which was devastated by American

Bombs on Dec. 26 and 27.

Amid the ruins, where a few families are camping out, teams of workers with bulldozers are still busy extricating corpses trapped under tons of debris.

Throughout Hanoi today, groups of children played and shouted happily at passers-by, climbed trees and laughed as though nothing had happened.
