

protocols. Both the Foreign Minister and the President went on to contrast their record on this issue with that of the other South Vietnamese party. They told me that, of the large number of South Vietnamese civilians captured by the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong, only 200 or so had been included in the list required under the Paris agreement and protocols.

In Laos, I had a long conversation with Prime Minister Prince Souvanna Phouma. He was naturally enough most concerned about what was happening in and to his own country. While he recognized that there was a direct and close relationship between the war in Vietnam and the use of Laotian territory for military purposes, his particular concern was to ensure a degree of international involvement in the future of Laos through the reactivation of the old tripartite ICC in Laos. The two sides in the war in Laos have not yet agreed on the military terms by which the agreement will be implemented. It is this protocol to the agreement which will determine the role of the commission. Until the protocol has been agreed upon, it will not be possible for the Government to determine how it will respond to the request that Canada should take part in a reactivated ICC in Laos.

I should like at this point to report to the Committee...that I raised the question of Mr. Lloyd Oppel with the Pathet Lao leadership in Laos, where Mr. Oppel was taken prisoner, and again in Hanoi.

General Phoun Sipraseuth, in Vientiane, at first told me that Mr. Oppel's release was being delayed pending certain political developments in the situation in Laos. I minced no words in making it clear to him that there could be no possible relationship between continued imprisonment of a non-combatant Canadian citizen and any political developments in that country. I said that Canadian public opinion was very much interested in the fate of Mr. Oppel and that it would react against the Pathet Lao for keeping him imprisoned for reasons such as those he had mentioned. He promised to report my position to his superiors.

In Hanoi, I again enquired after Mr. Oppel -- and I did so because his name was included on a list of prisoners supplied by the DRVN, and that was why I felt justified in raising the question with the authorities there -- and was informed that the DRVN authorities would be in touch with their Pathet Lao allies to see what could be done. I am hopeful that these representations will have the effect of reducing the inexcusable delay in releasing Mr. Oppel.

I also raised the question of the three Canadians who were passengers aboard an ICC aircraft which disappeared on a flight between Vientiane and Hanoi in 1965. On that matter my enquiry was noted, but it elicited no new information.

In Hanoi the leaders of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam replied to all questions by reference to the terms of the agreement. This they regard as sacrosanct and, like the South Vietnamese, the North Vietnamese Foreign Minister and Prime Minister asserted that they intended to abide strictly by the agreement and expected everyone else to do the same. In this context, the Prime Minister asserted that there was no conflict between North