

President Johnson announced that he had ordered a suspension of the bombing of the greater part of North Vietnam, and, in so doing, renewed his earlier appeals for prompt and serious talks on the substance of peace. The Canadian Government welcomed this decision as "an act of courage" and "a gamble for peace", and appealed to Hanoi to respond positively.

After some delay in reaching agreement on a mutually-acceptable site for the talks, the first formal contacts were made by U.S. and North Vietnamese representatives in Paris in mid-May. A basis had thus been found for the two sides to enter into direct negotiating contact, and under the circumstances there appeared to be little that third parties could, or indeed should, do to be of immediate assistance.

Although the Canadian Government held no illusions that once this stage was reached results would follow swiftly, progress at the Paris talks was disappointingly slow. The hostilities continued, but by mid-year at an apparently reduced pace. It was not until October 31, with the decision of President Johnson to suspend the remaining bombing of North Vietnam, and the widening of the Paris group to include representatives of the South Vietnamese Government and the National Liberation Front (Viet Cong), that the negotiations seemed to be moving towards a more significant and substantive phase.

While not directly involved, Canada continued to follow developments in Vietnam itself and, in relation to the Paris talks, with close attention. Special interest attached to the prospects for broadly-based development assistance programmes once a stable peace had been secured, and to the possibility that a new settlement might require some form of international control machinery.

Throughout the year the International Commission in Vietnam, with representation in both Saigon and Hanoi, continued in operation, but in reduced form.

The Vietnam situation continued to affect neighbouring Cambodia and Laos. During the year, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RKG) requested the International Commission in Phnom Penh to investigate an increasing number of incidents on its borders with South Vietnam. With few exceptions, such requests were met promptly by the Commission. In view of persistent allegations regarding the use of Cambodian territory as a sanctuary, base and supply route by Vietnamese Communist forces, the RKG addressed notes to the Commission indicating its desire that the Commission undertake investigations to detect any foreign infiltration. It also asked the Commission to search not only the areas concerned in certain allegations that had been made but, if necessary, the whole territory of Cambodia in order to check these accusations. In its replies, the Commission assured the RKG that it would continue to undertake the investigation functions which it had been carrying out in the past and would co-operate with the RKG when provided with specific details and necessary assistance.

For some years, the Cambodian Head of State, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, has sought to have the International Commission in Cambodia strengthened