

ATTACKS ON NORTH VIETNAM HALT TODAY; JOHNSON SAYS WIDER TALKS BEGIN NOV. 6



ANNOUNCING HALT: President Johnson as he was seen on television yesterday

John Soto for The New York Times

PEACE CALLED AIM

Saigon and N.L.F. Can Join in the Enlarged Paris Discussions

Text of the Johnson speech
is printed on Page 10.

By NEIL SHEEHAN
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Oct. 31— President Johnson announced tonight that he was ordering a complete halt to all American air, naval and artillery bombardment of North Vietnam as of 8 A.M. Friday, Eastern standard time (9 P.M., Vietnam time).

"I have reached this decision on the basis of the developments in the Paris talks," the President said, "and I have reached it in the belief that this action can lead to progress toward a peaceful settlement of the Vietnamese war."

"What we now expect—what we have a right to expect," the President said in a television broadcast, "are prompt, productive, serious and intensive negotiations in an atmosphere that is conducive to progress."

Face Shows Fatigue

His face showed fatigue as he made the announcement culminating weeks of secret negotiations.

Mr. Johnson did not announce any reciprocal military commitments from North Vietnam, which he has often said he must have in order to halt the air and naval bombardment that began on Feb. 7, 1965.

[Word of the President's action reached Paris about 2 A.M. Friday, and North Vietnamese negotiators said they might have a statement later in the day. Page 11.]

Washington officials said the bombing of infiltration trails in Laos would continue and that there was no prohibition against reconnaissance flights over North Vietnam.

'Reason to Believe' Foe

Senior Administration sources said the United States had "reason to believe" North Vietnam would not escalate the war in South Vietnam as a result of the bombing cessation.

They said Hanoi "clearly understood" that Mr. Johnson would resume the bombing if it attacked South Vietnamese population centers or took military advantage of the demilitarized zone.

On its side, North Vietnam had apparently not obtained the unconditional bombing halt it has consistently demanded.

Mr. Johnson said that in exchange for the bombing halt Hanoi had agreed to accept participation of the South Vietnamese Government at the Paris talks and the United States had in turn accepted the

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SAIGON AND N.L.F. CAN SEND ENVOYS

President Voices Hope for Progress in Paris for an End to Conflict

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participation of the South Vietnam National Liberation Front, the Vietcong guerrillas.

"A regular session of the Paris talks will take place on Wednesday, Nov. 6, at which the representatives of the Government of South Vietnam are free to participate," Mr. Johnson said, and continued:

"We are informed by the representatives of the Hanoi Government that the representatives of the National Liberation Front will also be present."

Mr. Johnson said of the presence of the fronts' representatives, "I emphasize that their attendance in no way involved recognition of the National Liberation Front in any form."

Administration sources said Hanoi would announce that Washington had agreed to an unconditional halt in the bombing and that the United States would not dispute this.

"We have reached the stage where productive talks can begin," the President said. "We have made clear to the other side that such talks cannot continue if they take military advantage of them. We cannot have productive talks in an atmosphere where the cities are being shelled and where the demilitarized zone is being abused."

Mr. Johnson felt it necessary "to caution you, my fellow Americans, that arrangements of this kind are never fool-proof."

Broadcast Delayed 5 Hours

Prior to the broadcast, recorded at 3 P. M., but delayed for five hours, Mr. Johnson explained his decision to halt the bombardment of nearly three years and nine months duration to a meeting of senior Government officials in the Cabinet Room of the White House.

Virtually the entire top level of the Government was assembled to hear him announce the end of a strategy that had cost the lives of 752 Air Force and Navy airmen, 914 American combat aircraft and had reduced to rubble the budding industrial plant of North Vietnam and much of its laboriously constructed communications network.

The President opened the Cabinet Room meeting at 6:30 P.M.

Mr. Johnson's decision was communicated to a deeply divided nation in the turmoil of the final days of a presidential campaign.

The announcement, just five days before the election, was certain to have serious political effects, although it was too early to estimate the impact accurately.

Many political observers believed the move was sure to help the Democrats, but they were uncertain of how much.

Senior administration sources said all three Presidential candidates had supported the President's action.

Urges 'United Voice'

In his television address, Mr. Johnson asked the candidates not to criticize him. He said that "throughout the campaign we have been able to present a united voice supporting our government and supporting our men in Vietnam."

The President contended that his decision "very closely conforms" to his prior public statements on the subject of a bombing cessation and went to some lengths to assert that he had the full support of Gen. Creighton W. Abrams, the American military commander in South Vietnam, and other leaders.

"Now, as a result of all these developments," he said, "I have now ordered that all air, naval and artillery bombardment of North Vietnam cease as of 8 A.M., Washington time, Friday morning."

Mr. Johnson said he had decided "to take this step now and to really determine the good faith of those who have assured us that progress will result when bombing ceases and to try to ascertain if any early peace is possible."

"The overriding consideration that governs us at this hour is the chance and the opportunity that we might have to save human lives, save human lives on both sides of the conflict," the President said.

North Vietnamese Informed

Senior Administration sources said North Vietnam was informed today of the President's decision. They would not say how the decision was communicated.

The President stopped the bombing, the sources said, as part of an agreement North Vietnam accepted on Sunday.

The agreement contained three elements: the United States would stop all bombing of North Vietnam; South Vietnam and the Front would both participate in the Paris talks, and the enlarged discussions would begin as soon as the delegations from Saigon and the Front arrived in Paris.

The sources asserted that

Hanoi "clearly understood" that the United States would resume bombing if North Vietnam took military advantage of the cessation.

General Abrams is understood to have told the President he could accept the military consequences of a bombing halt if the present state of virtual disengagement between allied and enemy forces in the northernmost provinces of South Vietnam continued.

President Nguyen Van Thieu of South Vietnam met with his advisers in Saigon on Tuesday and yesterday, the sources said, and informed Mr. Johnson this afternoon that he was prepared to go along with the American plan.

Communique Discounted

The South Vietnamese Government said in a communique released in Saigon that the United States had "unilaterally" taken the decision to stop the bombing.

Administration officials were not alarmed by the statement and said they expected remarks that sounded contradictory for local political reasons. They said President Thieu supported the American position.

Secretary of Defense Clark M. Clifford said in a statement

after the broadcast that he had "strongly recommended to the President that he make this further move toward peace in Vietnam."

Mr. Clifford said the success of allied military action in South Vietnam and "the understandings, reached in the course of the protracted negotiations in Paris, give us the requisite reason to believe that North Vietnam will not attempt to take advantage of this bombing halt."

During his long and tiring day today, Mr. Johnson made only one public appearance before his broadcast.

He accepted credentials in the Fish Room of the White House at noon from the new ambassadors from Ethiopia and Argentina.

The President looked extremely tired and his voice was hoarse, but he was otherwise in good spirits. His lined face broke into a smile frequently and he joked with photographers.

The first indication that the announcement would be made tonight came at the White House at 5:45 this afternoon.

George Christian, the press secretary, summoned reporters to his white-paneled office in

the West Wing and said that no one would be permitted to leave the room until he had finished speaking.

In a Texas drawl as calm as he could make it, Mr. Christian announced that the President would go before the television cameras "any time after 8 P.M. tonight for a statement."

Mr. Christian's announcement brought shouts from reporters. Men and women in the milling group pushed and shoved their way through to telephones.

One reporter turned and asked Mr. Christian, who was smiling and watching the tussle at the door, if he was happy.

"I'm not making any comment," he said as his smile broadened.