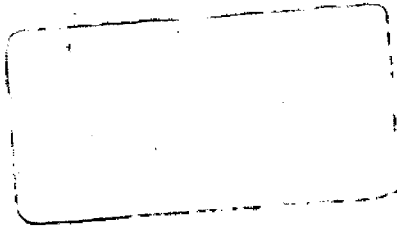


PARIS PEACE NEGOTIATIONS

1968 - 73

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POPDE-2

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P R E F A C E

The study of the Paris Peace Negotiations of 1973 is a chronologically analytical study. The first chapter deals with the historical background of the vietnamese struggle. The attempts at the creation of a favourable atmosphere to the negotiations have also been dealt with in the first chapter. In the second, the positive steps towards making the negotiations fruitful have been recorded. This has also included those procedural wrangles that had arisen out of their respective ideological positions or out of their conflicting national interests. However, these temporary set-backs did not successfully hold up the progress of the negotiations.

In the third chapter, the points of agreement, near agreement, ambiguities, disagreement, as well as, outright rejections have been taken up and analysed. An attempt has been made to divide the gestation period phase-wise. The last phase acquires the most prominent place in the negotiations.

II

The concluding chapter contains a critical assessment of the final agreement.

The author is thankful to Dr. Parimal Kumar Das, under whose supervision the work has been completed. He is also thankful to Prof. Vishal Singh, Head of the Southeast Asian Studies Division and to Prof. Ram Rahul, Head of the Centre for South, Southeast and Central Asian Studies for their constant guidance and kind help in various respects. Thanks are also due to the staff of the Jawaharlal Nehru University Central Library, ~~and~~ Indian Council of World Affairs Library at Sapru House, New Delhi, the U.S.I.S. Library, New Delhi, the British Council Library, New Delhi, the Embassy of North Vietnam at Prithviraj Road, New Delhi, for their help in preparing the work.

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Chapter I

BACKGROUND TO THE PARIS PEACE
NEGOTIATIONS

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND -

The Vietnam problem has been dominating the international scene since about two decades. The Vietnamese have been the victims of unprecedented death and destruction. Throughout the two thousand years of Vietnamese history, mutual distrust and rivalry have mostly governed the relationship between the North and the South Vietnam.¹ Hence war has been a dominant feature in Vietnamese history.

In the year 207 B.C., Vietnam became identifiable as the State of Nam-Viet known in the Chinese history as Nan-yüeh.² The kingdom of Nam-Viet remained autonomous for nearly a century and then was incorporated by force into the Chinese empire in the year 111 B.C. when the Han dynasty in China was strong enough to extend its powers southward.³ Since then for about a thousand years Vietnam remained as a Chinese province upto 939 A.D.⁴ Despite the deep imprint made on them by the Chinese culture, the early Vietnamese possessed a zeal for political autonomy. In fact, they eventually managed to establish their identity as a separate country within the East Asian civilization.⁵

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1. Russell Stetler (ed) The Military Art of People's War (New York) p.11
1970
 2. D.G.E. Hall, A History of South-east Asia
(New York, 1955), pp. 169-70.
 3. G. Coedès, The making of South East Asia
translated by H.M. wright (Berkeley, 1966), p.40.
 4. Jumper, Roy and Weiner Normand, Margorie, "Vietnam, G.M. Kahin (ed),
Government and Politics of South East Asia (New York, 1964) p.375.
 5. Edwin O Reischauer and John K. Fairbank, East Asia:
The Great Tradition (Boston, 1958), p.395.

However, there was an attempt in this period for cultural assimilation between the Chinese and the Vietnamese through intermarriages and imposition of Chinese social, political, ethical, economic as well as bureaucratic institutions. But it could not be fully, though partially, successful due to the fall of Han dynasty in 220 A.D. and Chinese internal political disintegration thereafter.⁶

Anyhow, the Chinese occupation ended in 939 A.D. and an autonomous Vietnamese kingdom was able to defend itself against any Chinese attack.⁷ But this change of government had little impact on the form of social and political organizations inside the country. Hence the Vietnamese target was to oust the foreign invader only and not to change any domestic institutions.⁸

Freedom from Chinese control, however, could not bring political unity and stability into Vietnam. "For the next five centuries internal battles among princes and dynasties for kingdom swept the whole country."⁹

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6. John T. McAlister, Jr. Vietnam: The origins of Revolution (New York, 1969), p.20.
 7. Joseph Buttinger. The smaller Dragon, A Political History of Vietnam (New York, 1958), p.129.
 8. Kahin, no.4, p.317.
 9. Parimal Kumar Das, India and the Vietnam War, (New Delhi, 1972), p.71.

Hence a unified government having authority all over Vietnam would not be brought about.¹⁰ The causes are far too many to account. To begin with, the Ngo dynasty which wrested Vietnamese autonomy from China, was unable to consolidate its power in Vietnam.¹¹ Secondly, less durable regimes followed after Ngo regime. In spite of the stable mandarin system of the Ly dynasty and the political coherence perpetuated during Tran dynasty, internal unity remained a far cry in Vietnam political system.¹² Besides, the kingdom of Champa in the South with a Hindu cultural tradition failed to adjust itself with the main currents of Vietnamese tradition which was mostly influenced by China since its very inception. Rather, a continuous conflict between the two loomed large for quite a long time until Cham territory was conquered later by the Le dynasty.¹³ The Chinese took the advantage of this disunity and occupied Hanoi in 1407 A.D. only to surrender it in 1427 A.D.¹⁴

10. Mc Alister. Jr. no.6, p.22.

11. Ibid, p.23.

12. Coedès, no.3, pp 86-7.

13. Donald Lancaster, The Emancipation of French Indo-China (Oxford University Press, 1961), p.21.

14. Hall, no.2, pp. 173-88.

Until the Tay Son rebellion in the 1770s, the Le emperors were able to hold only a nominal control over Vietnam¹⁵. But by 1600 A.D., two rival dynasties in the North and the South Vietnam such as the Trinh and the Nguyen appeared on the scene.¹⁶ They fought among each other for fifty years and permanently divided the country into the North and the South at the 18th parallel. Thereafter, the country remained divided for nearly a hundred years.¹⁷

No wonder, the peculiar geographical set-up of Vietnam injected disunity into Vietnamese life. To begin with, Vietnam had "no geographical unity whatsoever".¹⁸ Its mountaneous nature and narrow waste complicated communications among the Vietnamese people in the North and the South. Due to the character of the terrain the population settled in a diffused manner.¹⁹ There remained always a dichotomy between the lowland and the upland people reinforced by the ethnic and cultural differences.²⁰ On top of this, the villages in Vietnam enjoyed full autonomy in political affairs. Hence it led to more political diffusion.²¹

15. Das, no.9. p.71.

16. J.L. Mehta, A Political and Cultural History of Vietnam (New Delhi, 1970) p.106.

17. McAlister Jr., no.6. p.28.

18. B. Fall, The Two Vietnams (New York, 1969), p.4.

19. For the geography of Vietnam see Great Britain, Admiralty, Naval Intelligence Division, Geographical Handbook Series, BR 510: Indo-China (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1943)

20. Georges Condominas, "Aspects of a military Problem in Indo-China" Pacific Affairs (Canada) March 1951, p.77.

21. Gerald Cannon Hickey, Village in Vietnam (Yale Univ. Press, '64) p.276.

During the period upto 1770s, the constant threat of Chinese intervention prevented the Tinh dynasty to occupy the Nguyen Kingdom. But in 1773, the Tay Son rebellion compelled the Nguyen rulers to flee and Saigon, their capital, was occupied by the Trinh.²² Later in 1802, a Nguyen prince Nguyen Phuc-Anh under the title of Gia-Long restored his own regime at Saigon and captured Hanoi so as to unite the whole Kingdom under one administration. Thus the unity between two Vietnams was obtained but outwardly.²³

Nineteenth century Vietnam, like any other Asiatic countries, recorded the advent of European powers such as the French and the Portuguese for trade and religious privileges.²⁴ Gia-Long, in order to consolidate his territorial gains, accepted a substantial military aid from foreign countries like France. This military help marked the growth of a dormant French interest in Vietnam.²⁵ All the later rulers such as Minh Mang, Thieu Tri, Tu Duc clashed with the French who raised arms against them in

22. Mehta, no. 16, p.110.

23. Das, no.9, p.71.

24. Ibid, pp. 71-2.

25. John F. Cady, The Roots of French Imperialism in Eastern Asia (Cornell Univ. Press, 1954), pp. 11-2.

order to protect the religious rights of the Christians²⁶. Gradually the French missionary intervention was turned into official military intervention and by 1859, they began to capture various provinces. After the capture of Hanoi, the French signed a treaty with Tu Duc at Hue on August 25, 1883 by which "Vietnam recognized the French protectorate and surrendered control over her external relations to France"²⁷. Thus the anti-western policy of the Nguyen rulers led to the loss of political independence of Vietnam.²⁸ The French, in turn, applied their famous policy of "divide and rule" to administer the kingdom.

Throughout the period of nationalist struggle, there remained two sets of opinion among the Vietnamese nationalists; one group formed the "Constitutionalist Party" which wated Franco-Vietnamese collaboration and the other formed the Communist Party of Indo-China under the leadership of Nguyen-Ai-Quoc, better known as Ho Chi Minh which preferred revolutionary method to achieve independence.²⁹ The Communist Party, however, remained more active in resisting the french. They raised rebellions at various places including a big

26. Lancaster, no. 13, p.32.

27. Hall, No.2, p5635.

28. Bunting, no. 7, p.277.

29. Frank N. Trager, Why Vietnam? (New York, 1966) p. 53.

uprising in 1941 which were suppressed by the mass killings of the Vietnamese. But meantime, the Japanese occupation of Indo-China pressurised on the French. Secondly, the various groups fighting for independence united under one organization called Vietnam Doc Lap Dang Minh (Vietminh).³⁰ Thirdly, the Vichy government in Paris could not send any help to Indo-China during the Second World War. Hence Japan compelled France to sign an agreement in Tokyo which reduced the French sovereignty over Indo-China to a "farce".³¹ The Nationalists, which included Communists i.e. Vietminh, took full advantage of this Franco-Japanese tussle and fought against both. The Japanese puppet Bao Dai installed on March 9, 1945 was overthrown and Vietminh took over Hanoi on 19th August 1945. On 2nd September 1945 the independence of Vietnam was proclaimed and Republic of Vietnam was established.³²

The Potsdam Conference recognized the Chinese sovereignty over the North Vietnam and the British sovereignty on the South. (The France had divided the country into two). The British helped the French to stage a come back to the South but the Chinese in the North were sent back by the Vietminh.³³ The Vietminh then entered an agreement on March 6, 1946

30. Das, no. 9, p.73.

31. Fall, no. 18. p.45.

32. Das, no. 9, p.73.

33. Trager, no. 29, p.59.

with the French (now ruling South Vietnam only) by which French government recognized "The Republic of Vietnam as a free state, having its own government, parliament, army and treasury, belonging to the Indo-Chinese Federation."³⁴ This was in return to Vietminh acceptance of the French troops' entry into the North Vietnam. However, the subsequent period recorded hostilities between the North and the South that ~~had~~ ^{arisen} ~~ended~~ out of the ambiguities involved in the meaning of the "free state" even after two negotiations at Dalat in April and at Fountainbleau in July 1946.³⁵ Meanwhile the Vietminh established the Provisional Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in the North and the French created a nationalist Government in the South under Bao dai in March 1946. The two rival governments in Vietnam thus waged the First Indo-China war on December 19, 1946.³⁶ Before long, the Vietminh Government was recognized by China and Soviet Russia whereas the Bao Dai government was recognized by United States.³⁷

The First Indo-Chinese war ended on May 8, 1954 with the defeat of the French at Dien Bien Phu³⁸. US government in spite of French call, did not intervene in any military

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34. For full text see Allan B. Cole (ed.) Conflict in Indo-China and International Repercussions: A Documentary History 1946-55 (New York; 1946) pp.40-1.
35. Das, no. 6, p.74.
36. Blüfinger, no. 6, p.453.
37. Trager, no. 29, p.87.
38. O Alexandrov, "Anatomy of the U.S. Aggression in Indo-China" International Affairs (Moscow), April 1973, p.98.

action at this stage specially due only to British unwillingness for participation. However, with British initiative, Geneva Conference was convened where U.S.A. helped France to withdraw from Indo-China with "a respectable departure".³⁹ Besides, the U.S. government lent a strong support to Ngo Dinh Diem who was appointed as the Prime Minister of the State of Vietnam by Bao Dai on 16th June 1954. Gradually the political power in South Vietnam shifted dramatically from the anti-Diem forces to those backing the Premier and U.S.A. government more and more helped Diem.⁴⁰ Within a year, Diem sacked Bao Dai after receiving an overwhelming majority support through a plebiscite in October 1955 and thus U.S. presence in South Vietnam was made apparent.⁴¹

Diem's government, in the midst of American involvement, functioned as a better government than Vietnam had ever known previously.⁴² Hence it seized the opportunity to discard the proposals of the Geneva Agreement which provided for holding elections in July 1956. He rejected the fact that South Vietnam under him was the real successor state to French Vietnam which signed the Geneva Agreement.⁴³

39. Sir A. Eden, Full Circle (London, 1960), p.84.

40. Kahin, no. 1, p.401.

41. Alan Watt, Vietnam: An Australian Analysis (Australia, 1968), p.53. also see Yu Y. Mikheyev, Americans in Indo-China: A Critique of the USA's Lawless Doctrines and Policies, (Moscow, 1972), p.19.

42. Bernard Newman, Background to Vietnam (London, 1965), p.104.

43. A.T. Bouscaren, The Last of the Mandarins: Diem of Vietnam (Duquesne Univ., 1965), p.53.

Both the co-Chairmen of the Geneva Conference, Britain and Soviet Russia, failed to do anything. A de facto situation thus continued under which two governments existed side by side in Vietnam. Hanoi got disappointed and never agreed any more to hold similar conferences to bring about peace lest it might result in further disappointment and distrust.⁴⁴ Instead, the DRV began to concentrate more and more on the activities in South Vietnam, such as economic consolidation. But after the National Front for the liberation of South Vietnam (NFLSV) was formed in the South on 20th December 1960, grown out of the unpopularity of Diem regime, the DRV help turned military also.⁴⁵

The NFLSV was regarded by the North Vietnam and other communist countries as the genuine representative of the South Vietnamese people.⁴⁶ It issued a Nine-point programme which established overthrow of the Diem regime and the withdrawal of the U.S. troops from South Vietnam as its two chief aims.⁴⁷ On 15th January 1962, the Peoples' Revolutionary Party (communist) was formed in the South distinctly different from the Communist Party in the North. In February 1962, U.S. set up the United States Military

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44. F.B. Weinstein, Vietnam's Unheld Elections Data Paper No.60 (Cornell Univ. Press, 1966).
45. Das, No.9, p.77.
46. Jean Lacouture, "Vietcong: Who are They, What Do They Want", New Republic, 6 March 1965, p.24.
47. For the text of the Programme see Douglas Pike, Vietcong (Massachusetts, 1966), p.82.

Assistance command which signalled the beginning of direct control over South Vietnam by the United States. In fact, at this period both the communists and the supporters of Diem almost criticized American "imperialist" designs and thought twice to reconsider South Vietnam's relationship with the U.S.⁴⁸ But as ill luck would have it, the opportunities were all in favour of U.S. which took the advantage of the Buddhist coup and sieged power after Diem lost his life in the tussle.⁴⁹ The U.S. government established President Thieu as the puppet head of state and thus completed its full involvement.

THE PERIOD OF DIRECT U.S. INVOLVEMENT: AN UNFAVOURABLE CLIMATE FOR ANY MEANINGFUL NEGOTIATIONS (1963-8).

The installation of President Thieu as the puppet head of state in South Vietnam marked the beginning of an era of direct U.S. involvement in the political, economic, social and military affairs of South Vietnam. The period is largely characterised by unprecedented war and destruction which brutally devastated the population and the economy of South Vietnam.⁵⁰ The main U.S. objective behind such an intervention in a foreign country was the containment of

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48. R. Scigliano, South Vietnam, Nation Under Stress (New York, 1964), p.212.
49. Joseph Buttinger, Vietnam, A Dragon Embattled (New York, 1967), p.1006.
50. Bertrand Russell, War Crimes in Vietnam (London, 1967), pp. 51-2.

communism which arose from the threat of Chinese expansionist policy in the region.⁵¹ It was the policy of the U.S.A. to contain communism and the communist bloc tried to stage "a world wide confrontation with imperialism and achieve important results quickly".⁵² With such objectives in the beginning, both sides fought against each other in Vietnam.

Both China and the Soviet Union were staunch supporters of North Vietnam. Hence the U.S.A. branded China as "the real enemy"⁵³ in Vietnam who organized guerilla warfare and prevented peaceful solution of the question. The Test Ban treaty signed in August 1963 brought China and North Vietnam closer than before and pushed U.S.A. nearer Soviet Union.⁵⁴ Thus, even though China has always regarded Atomic weapons as "paper tigers"⁵⁵, still it played an important role in raising the Vietnam war to its dizzy heights by ~~ob~~orsening the Sino-American relationship. The Chinese atomic explosion in 1964 was meant for strengthening the morale of the Vietnamese people fighting U.S.A. and helping them directly.⁵⁶

The relationship of Hanoi with Soviet Union at this juncture turned sour. The Sino-Soviet rift made it

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51. Ralf N. Clough, "The United States China Policy" Annals (Philadelphia), Vol.321, Jan.1959, p.21.
52. A.M. Halpern, "China in the Post-war World", China Quarterly (Paris) Jan. March 1965, p.36.
53. "Who is the real enemy of Vietnam?" U.S. News and World Report (Washington), Vol.LVI no.22, June 1, 1964, p.33.
54. Das, no.9, p.77.
55. Mao Tse-tung, "Imperialists and All Reactionaries are Paper Tigers", Peking Review, Vol.I, No.37, Nov.4,1958,p.9.
56. Ralph L. Powell, "Great Powers and Atomic Weapons are Paper Tigers", China Quarterly no.23, July-Sept.1965,p.60.

worse. However, with much difficulty, Ho Chi Minh could convince his colleagues of the rightness, of his stand. Within a short while, his stand (not to take any side but follow a middle path and take the help from both Soviet Union and China to combat U.S. forces) was justified when in 1964 Americans bombed the gulf of Tonkin and neither China nor Russia came to his rescue.⁵⁷ Similar incidents occurred in July 1966 when the outskirts of Hanoi and Haiphong were also bombarded by U.S.A. The Sino-Soviet rift thus compelled Hanoi to seek refuge under Chinese protection.

The Sino-Soviet rift and the Test Ban Treaty of 1963 as such were mainly responsible for making the Vietnam war quite bitter. The Test Ban Treaty dragged U.S.A. nearer to Soviet Union and China, pinched by the rift with Russia, had to strengthen herself for war not only for her security⁵⁸ and expansion of power but also for keeping her sphere of influence intact in Asia, Africa and Latin America.⁵⁹ In fact, Vietnam provided the only testing ground for China's power, ideology and realisation of her other national objectives while U.S.A. had other alternative grounds. Anyhow, she has to force an embarrassing U.S.

57. Das, No.9, p.77.

58. Jen-min Jih-pao editorial (July 9, 1964), translated in Peking Review, Vol.VII, No.28, July 10, 1964, p.25.

59. Lin Piao quoted in Current History (Philadelphia), Vol.51, No.300, August 1966, p.174.

stalemate in Vietnam and what she fails to achieve through negotiations would only be realised through struggle,⁶⁰ In this way, she would boost the morale of revolutionary forces in Vietnam.⁶¹

United States on the other hand, relied more on the Domino theory. It branded China as counting on Vietnam as a part of her wider pattern of aggressive purposes.⁶² Hence, in order to contain China and to preserve "American influence in South-East Asia" it was necessary to alter Chinese calculations.⁶³ Hanoi's choice between U.S.S.R. and China at this juncture naturally fell on China due to the signing of Test Ban Treaty between Soviet Union and U.S.A. Soviet Russia, however, remained almost neutral in this period. The main drama of the period was confined to China egging Hanoi to fight against her real enemy i.e. the imperialist U.S.A.⁶⁴

Conflicts between both sides were expanded into serious proportions. Out of them, the America's attempt at internationalisation of the Vietnam war⁶⁵, the Tonkin Gulf

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60. Chen Yi's reply to "Akahata" correspondent (Dec.30, 1965) Reprinted in Peking Review, Vol.IX, no.1, Jan.1,1966, p.874.
61. Peking Review, Vol.VIII, no.48, No.26,1965, p.19.
62. Lyndon B. Johnson, "Pattern of Peace in Southeast Asia", Department of State Bulletin, Vol.LIX, no.1348, April 26, 65, p.607.
63. Economist (London) Vol.214, no.6342, March 3,1965, p.1113.
64. Ibid.
65. Jen-men Jih-Pai editorial, (May 18), translated in Peking Review, vol.VII, no.22, May 22, 1964, p.8.

incident on August 4, 1964,⁶⁶ the U.S. attacks on North Vietnamese barracks on February 7, 1965,⁶⁷ and the bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong from June 26, 1966 are worth-mentioning.

In the midst of these conflicts, it was extremely difficult to begin any serious negotiations. Because the U.S.A.'s view was that her containment policy would not be able to curb the aggressiveness of China through negotiations but only through military battles. It was, however, taken as granted that, as long as, China thought that aggression at all paid any sizable dividends, she would never negotiate.⁶⁸ Also any negotiation with China would strengthen her policy of national liberation, it was argued.⁶⁹ Thirdly U.S. felt that if China's policy succeeded in Vietnam, ~~and~~ her efforts to build bridges with U.S.S.R. would experience a serious set-back as that would strengthen the communist contention that "peaceful coexistence" was less successful than "wars of national liberation".⁷⁰ Negotiation was also not feasible as the other party was not prepared for it. Again if a negotiation

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66. Johnson's address on August 4, Department of State Bulletin, Vol.LX, no.1313, Aug.24, 1964, P.259.
67. Department of State Bulletin, Vol.LI, no.1313, Aug.24, 1964, pp. 273-4.
68. Dean Rusk, Department of state Bulletin, Vol.LII, no.1314, Jan.8,1965, p.71.
69. Ibid.
70. Department of State Bulletin, vol.LII, no.1350, ~~March~~ 10, 1965, p.713.

was undertaken but failed, that would, in fact, be still more dangerous.⁷¹ From the U.S. standpoint, therefore, negotiation was neither feasible nor desirable. Rather China and Hanoi both were to be convinced through appropriate steps that using military means was not only futile but also risky and costly.⁷² Thus for the U.S.A. bombing was rather a "necessary part of the surest road to peace" and not negotiations.⁷³

For China, the international climate was not suitable for negotiations. That was precisely due to the alleged U.S.-Soviet conspiracy against her to deprive her of realising her vital national interests. She took exception to bombing and protested that the U.S.A. wanted to coerce the Vietnamese people to peace talks "swindle".⁷⁴ Secondly, she argued that since Vietnamese people had not committed aggression, they could not be asked to negotiate on the terms laid down by the United States.⁷⁵ Hanoi, likewise, followed the directions of her allies and never agreed to negotiate also.⁷⁶

71. Department of State Bulletin, Vol.LII, no.1344, March 29, 1965, p.445.

72. Department of State Bulletin, Vol.LII, no.1344, March 29, 1965, p.450.

73. Department of State Bulletin, Vol.LII, no.1348, April 26, 1965, pp. 607-8.

74. Chinese government statement (July 3, 1966), Peking Review, Vol.IX, no.28, July 8, 1966, p.19.

75. Peking Review, Vol.VIII, no.52, 24 Dec. 1965, p.6.

76. In order to have a systematic chronology of all the proposals for negotiations see Appendix of Donald S. Zagoria, Vietnam Triangle. Moscow/Peking/Hanoi (New York, 1967), pp. 151-9. Here only important proposals have been discussed.

VARIOUS PROPOSALS OF NEGOTIATIONS DURING
THIS PERIOD (1963-68) -

However, throughout the period, there came quite a few proposals from many sides i.e. from both the belligerent sides, as well as from the neutral nations.⁷⁶ To begin with, proposal for the settlement of the conflict had already found place in the Nine-point programme of the NLF issued on 20th December 1960. Point nine of the programme provided for reestablishment of normal relations between the two zones i.e. South and North Vietnam and preparation for the peaceful re-unification of the country by stages on the basis of negotiations.⁷⁷ But this was just a proposal and no concrete step was taken in order to implement this plan.

In the subsequent period, there came many proposals for negotiations. On May 20, 1964, there came a French call for International Conference on Laos and Indo-China.⁷⁸ Close on its heels, on February 12, 1965, U. Thant, Secretary-General of U.N.O., categorically appealed for "shifting the quest for a solution away from the field of battle to the Conference table."⁷⁹

77. Pike, no. 47, p.82.

78. Zagoria, no.76, p.152.

79. Ibid.

On March 15, 1965, the Heads of State and Governments of 17 non-aligned nations met at Belgrade and signed an appeal on April 1, 1965 calling for negotiations on Vietnam. It reaffirmed the "right of the peoples to self-determination" and recognized the "principle of inviolability of and respect for the sovereignty" of Vietnam. Hence, it showed much concern towards "foreign intervention in all forms" and thus called for "a political solution through negotiations," "without any preconditions."⁸⁰ United States welcomed the appeal but took exception to the aggressiveness of Hanoi regime.⁸¹ China was critical of the appeal and complained against absence of any reference to U.S. aggression and intervention in the appeal. Under such a duress, she thought preaching negotiations "without preconditions" was tantamount to legalising U.S. aggression.⁸²

Meanwhile on March 22, 1965, the SVNLF (South Vietnam's National Liberation front) released a five-point programme as the basis for a settlement. The programme basically demanded withdrawal of American troops and

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80. Asian Almanac, Vol.2, no.50, June 6-12, 1965, p.1152.
81. Department of State Bulletin, Vol.LII, no.1348, April 26, 1965, pp. 610-2.
82. Ten-min Jih-pao editorial, reprinted in Peking Review, vol.VIII, no.18, April 30, 1965, p.11.

asked for foreign help from their friendly countries in order to drive out their enemy and attain the unification of their own country.⁸³ China asked the U.S.A. to accept the five points but to no use.⁸⁴

On April 8, 1965 the North Vietnam released her four points for peace talks which emphasized on the recognition of basic national rights of the Vietnamese people, withdrawal of U.S. troops, end of all foreign military alliance by both the zones, and solution of internal problems as well as the reunification of the country by the vietnamese people themselves.⁸⁵ This was also not accepted by the U.S.A. and South Vietnam,

On the contrary, the South Vietnamese government announced her four points on June 23, 1965 which they emphasized as their basis for the settlement. In this programme, they demanded withdrawal of North Vietnamese troops, dissolution of SVNLF, solution of internal problems by South Vietnamese people only, withdrawal of foreign troops and end of hostilities in the South only after the end of North Vietnamese aggression and guarantee of

83. Asian Almanac, Vol.3, no.19, Oct.31-Nov.6, 1965, p.1324.

84. Peking Review, vol.VIII, no.52, 24th Dec. 1965, p.6.

85. Asian Almanac, Vol.6, no.12, March 23, 1968, p.2617.

the independence of South Vietnam.⁸⁶ The same stand was reiterated by President Thieu subsequently on February 19, 1966 and on October 29, 1966 without any mention of withdrawal of foreign troops from the South. The stands taken up by the South Vietnam and North Vietnam stood poles apart and hence there was no chance of any compromise.

Meanwhile, on December 24, 1965, President Johnson halted the bombings for complete 37 days and issued a 14-point programme for peace. It emphasized on reliance on Geneva accords of 1954 and 1962; discussion without preconditions; cessation of hostilities; withdrawal of U.S. bases from Southeast Asia; withdrawal of troops from South Vietnam after peace is restored; free elections and reunification by Vietnamese people themselves; U.S. help for economic reconstruction in the region; representation of Vietcong after cessation of Hanoi's aggression; and bombing halt as a precondition to peace talks.⁸⁷ The agreement assured Hanoi that a peace could be possible. But China rejected it because its first point contradicted all the fourteen points as she wanted negotiations only on condition that Geneva agreements were fulfilled.⁸⁸ In fact, China protested that since the

86. Ibid, pp. 2616-7.

87. Asian Almanac Vol.3, no.29, Jan.9-15, 1966, p.1400.

88. Jen-min Jih-pao editorial (Jan.7). Peking Review, Jan.14 1966, p.5.

United States had not given up her aggressive aims, "any peace talks, initiatives, whatever the subjective wish objectively (was) bound to help the United States prolong her occupation of South Vietnam." 89

On March 6, 1966, U. Thant proposed a three point formula such as a general standstill truce, preliminary talks and reconvening of the Geneva conference. This was reiterated, in October 1966 and in March 1967.⁹⁰ But North Vietnam only accepted the first one and rejected the rest two.⁹¹

Meantime India proposed a 7-point peace plan for ending the Vietnam war. The main emphasis was given on reconvening of a Geneva type conference; bombing halt in North Vietnam; regular functioning of the ICSC; withdrawal of foreign forces from Vietnam; reliance on Geneva accords of 1954; and a rehabilitation plan to repair the ravages of war.⁹² India, however, was not sure of the acceptability of the proposals by the contesting parties.⁹³ Evidently China, as well as, North Vietnam summarily rejected the proposals because anything less than American withdrawal was not acceptable to them. China branded the

89. Ibid., Vol.IX, no.10, March 4, 1966, p.5.

90. Asian Almanac, vol.5, no.15, April 15 1967, p.2025.

91. Ibid.

92. Das, no. 9, pp. 88-9.

93. Times of India, 8 July 1966.

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proposals as designed to sap the fighting will of the Vietnamese and to help the United States.⁹⁴ The proposals thus failed to make any head way especially because neither U.S. nor North Vietnam was interested at that time to turn away from the war. China was happy to see U.S. exchequer being exhausted day by day without a single Chinese life being lost. U.S.A., evidently, was more interested in forcing a military solution and then signing an advantageous agreement with North Vietnam. Hence no progress was recorded.⁹⁵

Within a period of next one year, three proposals from three countries, such as France, Ceylon and Canada, were put forward to solve the Vietnam problem. President de Gaulle on August 30, 1966 proposed to ask U.S.A. to set a definite date for troops withdrawal as a condition for opening negotiations; to China not to pressurize on North Vietnam and the Vietcong; and to the U.N. to condemn U.S. action.⁹⁶ Ceylon, on April 10, 1967 proposed solution of internal problems by two South Vietnamese parties only; and solution of the union of the country by

94. IMI, 10 July 1966.

95. Das, no.9, pp. 69-70.

96. Asian Almanac, vol.4, no.10, Oct.8 1966, pp.1700-1.

the two parties of South Vietnam and North Vietnam as well.⁹⁷ Canada on April 11, 1967 issued a four-point plan which emphasized disengagement in the demilitarized zone; end of military activities; cessation of hostilities; and return to 1954 proposals of cease-fire.⁹⁸ All these three proposals were met with initial approvals from all corners especially U.S.A. and South Vietnam. But North Vietnam rejected all these proposals as they omitted to condemn the aggressive policy of U.S.A.⁹⁹

In order to help the U.S.A. to come to a bombing halt, the NLF on September 1, 1967 revised its previous nine-point plan of December 20, 1960 in a new political programme. It replaced the four-points of North Vietnam and five-points of the NLF issued before. The programme contained four parts with an introduction and conclusion. The introduction reiterated the NLF as the sole genuine representative of the South Vietnamese people. In the part one, overthrow of U.S. and Saigon government; in part two, the basic 14 tasks and objectives; in the third, proposals for reunification; and in the last, foreign policy deliberations were elaborated.¹⁰⁰ The programme, however, fell on the same lines as those of the 1960 agreement.

97. Ibid, Vol.5, no.21, May 27, 1967, p.2102.

98. Ibid, P.2103.

99. Nhan Dan (Hanoi), April 17, 1967.

100. Asian Almanac, Vol.6, no.12, p.2614.
For the full text see pp. 2613-2616.

CHAPTER - II

THE PREPARATORY TALKS

FACTORS LEADING AT LAST TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF NEGOTIATIONS :-

Many factors contributed to both sides (i.e. U.S.A. and Hanoi) being dragged on to the Conference table. Both sides, in the actual sense, involved many a group of interests. The superpowers such as U.S.A., U.S.S.R. and China had their own interests involved in it. The indigenous Vietnamese parties (Hanoi, Saigon, NLF) naturally were directly involved in the tussle. Hence different sets of factors egged these six sides (i.e. USA, USSR, China, Hanoi, Saigon and NLF) to send U.S.A. and Hanoi for negotiations. The world opinion also induced the contenders to negotiate,

As for U.S.A., the failure to achieve her objectives for which she had waged the war, led her to think about trying for peace. She began to realise that an outright victory in Vietnam or any military solution to the problem is far from being possible. For the first time a consensus grew in U.S.A. that a super power had also her limitations. The military reverses of 1967 proved its basis.¹ In the 1967-8 dry season, the NLF after a new offensive smashed the notion that U.S.A. at all would win the war.² On top of this, the Tet offensive of 1968 also

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1. Robert S. McNamara, "Press Conference after a fact-finding mission to Vietnam, Washington, July 12, 1967", Department of State Bulletin, August 7, 1967, p.168.
 2. Wilfred Burchett, "The Vietnam War: Past, Present, Future", New World Review (New York), Spring 1968, p.14.

conformed the fact that the "myth of 'military progress', so sedulously propagated from Saigon and Washington" would be impossible to achieve.³ No wonder, Hanoi's constant victory in the battlefield with strong military support from her allies and strong moral support from the international scene broke down the U.S. morale to win the war.⁴ In fact, this doubly conformed the worldwide notion that U.S.A. had already lost confidence in much of her Asian policy.⁵

Quite a few intellectuals and scholars challenged the premises upon which the U.S. policy of containment was based. They argued that communists had their own national interests which varied and clashed. Hence they had little time to expand.⁶ This is because the policy of containment involved ^{the} risk of an all-out war with China.⁷ It was also thought that winning a guerilla warfare in Vietnam was quite difficult.⁸

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3. Ibid, P.15.
 4. Ross Terrill, "A Report on the Paris Talks" The New Republic, July 13, 1968, p.15.
 5. Ibid, P.16.
 6. Mariner S. Eccles, "Vietnam: Its Effects on the Nation". Vital speeches of the Day (New York). Vol. XXXIII, no. 23, p. 17. also see Morgenthau, "War with China?" New Republic (Washington), vol. 152, no. 14. April 3, 1965, pp. 12-3.
 7. Hans J. Morgenthau, no. 6, pp. 13-2; also see Walter Lippmann in The Age, 13 Feb. 1965.
 8. Dan R. Larson and Arthur Larson, Vietnam and Beyond (Duke University Durham, 1965), p. 40.

Economically, the war causes^s disaster to U.S.A. Heavy U.S. casualties and the annual budget of 30 billion dollars for South Vietnam were much resented in U.S. circles. The unbearable tax burdens on the U.S. citizen due to a war fought in a foreign land were sure to compel U.S. to cry for peace.⁹ Besides, U.S. containment policy failed to key^{up} China isolated in trade relations. Hence the policy needed a revision.¹⁰

The general public opinion in the U.S.A. was exemplified by the mass denunciation of the war. The growing feeling, after the failure to win even after the escalation, was that the war should be abandoned.¹¹ They felt that it was U.S.A. who after isolating China had made her aggressive and intransigent.¹² So a policy of compromise now is to be introduced to the Vietnam problem which staked mostly the Sino-U.S. relations till then. Besides the American economy declined considerably due to a run on gold. The civil rights disturbances occurred in U.S.A. on a large scale just after the death of Dr. Martin Luther King. As a result, the American

9. Jessica Smith, "Vietnam", New World Review, Winter 1968, p.6.

10. Rhoderic MacFarquhar, Sino-American Relations 1949-71 (New York, 1972) ^{ed.} p.239.

11. George McGovern in Commentary (New York) Vol.41, no.5, May 1966, p.239.

12. Progressive, vol.30, no.5, May 1966, pp.4-5.

public opinion called for greater concentration on domestic issues.¹³

More important a role the U.S. election in 1968 played here to convene the Conference. The Democrats, had to fight against the Republicans even in spite of Johnson's withdrawal. When other candidates demanded bombing halt, negotiations with the vietcong and new South Vietnamese elections open to the NLF, the Democrats could not afford to sit idle. So, Johnson administration sought a quick solution to the problem so that it would have some repercussions on the Democratic party campaign.¹⁴

As regards China, the cultural Revolution in 1966 as a result of the sino-Soviet rift compelled her to change her isolationist policy and bring about a rapprochement with U.S.A. as well as the world community of nations.¹⁵ Of course, the cultural Revolution was claimed as supporting the Vietnamese

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13. Alan Watt, Vietnam: An Australian Analysis (Australia, 1968) p.14.
also see Peking Review Vol.XI, no.16, 16 April 1968, p.13.
and Mao Tse-Tung's statement, Ibid, p.5.
and Patrick J. Honey, "Three Critical Years for Hanoi", Pacific Community, Vol.2, no.4, July 1971. p.758.
14. "LBJ and the Paris Talks", The New Republic Aug. 24, 1968, p.6.
15. Lucian Pye, "China in Contest", Foreign Affairs (New York), vol. 45, no.2, Jan.1968, p.243.

people to fight U.S. imperialism.¹⁶ Still, these were only verbal criticisms and China moderated her stand towards U.S.A. in Vietnam affairs.

In the internal scene, South Vietnam recorded the formation of many new political units such as the "League of National and Peace-loving Forces" in Hue and Saigon,¹⁷ the Buddhist Association, the South Vietnamese Council of Roman Catholic Bishops, the South Vietnamese intellectuals,¹⁸ which demanded immediate end to war and commencement of negotiations. They demanded American withdrawal as well as formation of a coalition government with the NLF, because NLF was controlling four-fifths of the territory and two-thirds of the population. The Thieu-Ky regime was universally hated and mistrusted. In order to keep such a corrupt regime in power, the people had to be kept under coercion and at the cost of their economy, it also created social tension. Hence, they demanded that the war be stopped at any cost.¹⁹

16. Peking Review, Vol.X, no.14, March 31, 1967, p.16.

17. Burchett, no.2, p.16.

18. Smith, no.9, pp. 6-7.

19. Adam Yarmolinsky, "Some lessons of Vietnam: Instruction for students of American government", The Round Table (London), Jan.1972, p.90.

The NLF along with South Vietnam was also seen to be quite anxious to end the war because their country was being devastated by the war.²⁰ Of course, it was Hanoi's concern to see that the NLF anxiety to end the war is being released as U.S. was conscious about South Vietnam. More than the NLF or South Vietnam, it was the responsibility of both Hanoi and U.S. to bring about peace in the region.²¹

Besides, Hanoi could import food stuff from a war-free South Vietnam only when it came back to its normal peaceful situation.²² Hence, peace was desirable. In addition, Hanoi became quite disheartened when a responsible government with Diem at its head was set up in Saigon with mandate from the people in order to bring about stability and order. This shattered the hope of Hanoi that South Vietnam would not liquidate politically so quickly.²³ The economic devastations due to heavy American bombing in North Vietnam also compelled Hanoi to come to the Conference table.²⁴

20. Terrill, no.4, p.17.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid, pp. 17-8.

23. Dean Rusk, "Interview to American Broadcasting Company, September 10, 1967", Department of State Bulletin, (Washington), Oct.2, 1967, p.413.

24. "The Chances for Peace - 'Talk' stage begins" U.S. News & World Report (Washington), April 15, 1968, pp. 50-1.

On top of all these, the international public opinion also played an important role in dragging both sides to negotiations in order to reach a settlement.²⁵ Thus, both sides agreed at last to negotiate a settlement even though they were against any peace talks before.²⁶

OBJECTIVES TO ACHIEVE THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS -

For U.S.A., her main objective in the beginning to achieve through negotiations centred round containment of communism in Indo-China.²⁷ But subsequently her objective in the sixties and the seventies moved over to exploiting the fertile region economically by only maintaining a sphere of influence in the area.²⁸ This would help her in enjoying a prestige in the international sphere and so would morally help capitalism to mushroom all over the world.²⁹ In order to

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25. Chester L. Cooper, "The Complexities of Negotiations" Foreign Affairs, Vol.46, no.3, April 1968, pp.454-5.
26. "Facts about Truce Talks", U.S. News & World Report Jan.22, 1968, p.29.
27. J.L.S. Girling, "Laos: Falling Domino?" Pacific Affairs Vol.XKIII, no.3, Fall.1970, p.370.
28. H.G. Nicholas, "Vietnam and the traditions of American Foreign Policy" International Affairs (London), Vol.44, no.2, April 1968, p.193.
29. Robert E. Hunter and Philip Windsor, "Vietnam and United States Policy in Asia", International Affairs (London), Vol.44, no.2, April 1968, p.208. also see "Notes and Comments", The New Yorker, Dec.25, 1971.

implement these underlying policies, her concrete and piecemeal objectives were to overthrow the North Vietnamese forces from South Vietnam and keep the puppet Diem regime intact in Saigon.³⁰ But outwardly U.S.A. showed her immediate objective as guaranteeing "freedom to South Vietnamese people" to determine their own form of government and international guarantees and supervision to ensure territorial integrity and sovereignty of South Vietnam.³¹ However, Hanoi's pronouncements have all along claimed the Vietnam problem as being an internal issue and China's help, if at all, has been accepted as "fraternal assistance".³²

To the general public, the North Vietnamese objectives have been expressed as the end of American military activities, end of American support to Saigon regime, unconditional cease-fire, political settlement by South Vietnamese people, removal of Thieu and end of American role in the political development of South Vietnam.³³ Hanoi's concern has never been global because they have been xenophobically Vietnamese, as Kissinger puts it.³⁴ These apart,

30. Girling, no.27, p.370.

31. "The Chances for peace - 'Talk' Stage begins", U.S. News and World Report, April 15, 1968, p.49.

32. Girling, no.27, p.370.

33. Vishal Singh, "Balance-sheet of Peace", Weekly Round Table (New Delhi), Nov.12, 1972, p.22.

34. Ibid, pp. 22-3.

Hanoi's demand included recognition of the NLF as the "sole genuine representative of the Vietnamese people" and reunification of North and South Vietnam "without foreign interference".³⁵

The NLF objectives were given expression in their different plans and programmes such as 9-point programme of 20th December 1960, five point plan of March 22, 1965 and political programme of 1st September 1967.³⁶ Similarly South Vietnam propounded her own objectives in its four point programme of June 23, 1965 which was reiterated subsequently on February 19, 1966 and on October 20, 1966 only with the omission of foreign troops withdrawal from the original plan.³⁷ U.S. objectives similarly found expression in her 14-point programme of December 24, 1965.³⁸

GENERAL ELEMENTARY AND PROCEDURAL BOTTLENECKS
BEFORE THE START OF NEGOTIATIONS :-

The commencement of negotiations witnessed some minor problems which stood in the path of its early realization. First of its kind was the question of bombing halt. Right from the beginning Hanoi had been maintaining permanent bombing halt as a precondition to any talks which stood as a bottleneck to the

35. U.S. News & World Report, no.24, p.49.

36. See footnotes, 45, 83 and ¹⁰⁰ of Chapter-I.

37. See footnote 86 of Chapter-I.

38. See footnote 87 of Chapter-I.

commencing of the negotiations.³⁹ It is on 30th December, 1967 in a dinner party that her foreign minister Mr. Nguyen Duy Trinh announced that if U.S.A. stopped the bombing unconditionally, then Hanoi was willing to talk with the U.S. government.⁴⁰ The first hurdle to peace talks was thus removed. This also dispelled the American fear that Hanoi would not take undue advantage of such a bombing halt.⁴¹

Secondly, the U.N. mediation in the talks was never agreeable to Hanoi. The U.N. attempt to mediate through its three point plan of March 14, 1967⁴² and U.S.A. studying the possibilities of U.N. initiative for peace in September 1967 angered the Hanoi government.⁴³ But the step was abruptly abandoned and the way for negotiations was cleared.

The next problem involved prior recognition of the NLF and the participation of both NLF and South Vietnam. At their meeting in Canberra on December 21, 1967 both President Johnson and

39. U.S. News & World Report, no.24, p.49.

40. "The Month in Review", Current History (Philadelphia), vol.55, no.323, July 1968, p.54.

41. Asian Recorder, vol. XIV, no.11, March 11-7, 1968, p. 8221.

42. Asian Almanac, vol.5, no.15, April 15 1967, p.2026.

43. Ibid, no.39, Sept. 30, 1967, p.2319.

President Thieu agreed that "South Vietnam government was willing to discuss relevant matters with any individual now associated with the so-called NLF while making it clear that it did not regard the Front as an independent organization at any case."⁴⁴ They categorically declined to attempt any constructive discussion with any elements in South Vietnam committed to violent methods to obtain their political ends.⁴⁵ Besides, the U.S.A. on January 15, 1968 made it crystal clear that without the South Vietnamese participation, decisions on possible future peace talks would not be made.⁴⁶ President Thieu conformed it in Saigon.⁴⁷ But the NLF recognition and South Vietnamese participation were kept on reserve and were not allowed to disrupt the efforts at peacemaking. Subsequent period gave ample emphasis to these problems.

The next problem which stood on the way to peacemaking was the concept of negotiation through

44. Asian Recorder, no.44, p. 8222.

45. Ibid.

46. Dean Rusk in Department of State Bulletin.

47. "The Month in Review", Current History, vol.54, no.319, March 1968, p.182.

position of strength. For a considerably long period America bombed North Vietnam with the plea that the latter was taking undue advantage of a bombing halt,⁴⁸ And North Vietnam till then remained adamant that unless the U.S.A. unconditionally stops bombing, the chances for talks did not arise at all.⁴⁹ The U.S. Defence Secretary Robert McNamara, however, announced that since January 18, 1968, there has been virtually no bombings near Hanoi or Haiphong in an effort to further peace talks.⁵⁰ In such a tense atmosphere, for reason best known to him, President Johnson announced a unilateral cessation of all air and naval action against North Vietnam on 31st March 1968. Further he nominated Mr. W. Arevell Harriman assisted by Mr. Llewellyn Thompson as his personal representatives for peace talks with North Vietnam at any place.⁵¹ Thereafter, North Vietnam on April 3, 1968 responded immediately with the declaration of its readiness to meet American envoys

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48. Roger Hilsman, "Must we Invade the North?" Foreign Affairs, vol.46, no.3, April 1968, p.436.
Also see "If the Bombing is Stopped" U.S. News and World Report, Jan.22, 1968, p.31.
and "Remember Korean Negotiations?" Ibid, p.33.
49. Burchett, no.2, p.17.
50. Mary Katherine Hammond, "The Month in Review" Current History, vol.54, no.320, April 1968, p. 248.
51. Asian Recorder, vol. XIV, no.38, Sept.16-22, 1968, p. 8531.

to "arrange an unconditional and total U.S. bomb halt so that peace talks could be begun."⁵¹ This was the first time Hanoi agreed to meet American representatives while American bombs were unofficially still falling on North Vietnamese soil.⁵² On April 8, 1968 President Johnson disclosed that the North Vietnam government has sent him a private official message and he promised "to work out promptly a time and place for talks."⁵³ Gradually bombings on areas south of the 19th parallel in North Vietnam were restricted. Cyrus R. Vance was named to assist Harriman in preliminary talks with North Vietnamese officials. And the way to convening the conference for peace talks was smoothed.

On the venue of the peace talks, controversies started. On April 6, 1968 North Vietnam proposed Phnom Penh as the place for talks but on April 8, U.S. government rejected it because Phnom Penh could not handle communications if there were many press representatives covering the talks.⁵⁴ On April 10, 1968 U.S.A. and North Vietnam representatives

52. Ibid.

53. "The Month in Review", Current History, vol. 54, no. 322, June 1968, p. 370.

54. Asian Almanac, vol. 6, no. 24, June 15, 1968, p. 2761.

contacted at Vientiane and U.S.A. suggested five places such as Rangoon, New Delhi, Jakarta, Vientiane and Geneva.⁵⁵ On April 11, 1968, Warsaw was rejected by U.S.A. because she wanted a "neutral" site. On top of that President Johnson announced four requisite conditions for the site such as its accessibility to other governments involved in the war, adequate communication facilities, its opening for press coverage and freeness from psychological or propaganda advantage for either side.⁵⁶ On April 18, 1968, ten additional sites were proposed by U.S.A. to make her choice a little flexible such as Ceylon, Japan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, Malaysia, Italy, Belgium, Finland and Austria. But North Vietnam stuck to her proposal of either Phnom Penh or Warsaw.⁵⁷ Meantime in April 24, South Vietnam proposed Paris as the venue. North Vietnam accepted it formally on April 25 and U.S.A. accepted it on April 26, 1968. The venue controversy ended.⁵⁸

From May 10, 1968 to May 13, the discussions centred round procedural arrangements at the

55. Ibid.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid.

58. Ibid. pp. 2761-2.

International Conference centre, made available by the French foreign ministry. The second-ranking members of both the delegations (U.S.A. and North Vietnam) Mr. Cyrus R. Vance and Col. Ha Van Lau were first engaged in the discussions. By May 11, 1968, the procedural details of the meeting had been set.⁵⁹

But the real theoretical problems of negotiation stood out prominently as the elementary bottleneck to progress of peace. It goes without saying that negotiation itself presupposes a certain amount of toleration from either side; adequate communication between both sides and hence no misunderstanding; mutual trust; adequate understanding of each other's signals and no suspicion; etc.⁶⁰ Incidentally, both sides "never came to negotiations with the prospect of being on the wrong end of a surrender ceremony. So bargaining was expected to be tough and negotiations were expected hard to reach at any agreement."⁶¹ Secondly, the U.S.A. always suspected that Hanoi was being

59. "The Month in Review", Current History, vol. 55, no. 323, July 1968, p.54.

60. Cooper, no. 25, p. 458.

61. Ibid, pp. 455-6.

continuously influenced by Peking and Moscow and
NLF being influenced by Hanoi and Peking.⁶²

All these, suffice it to say that, always
created hurdles in the negotiation process

62. Ibid. pp. 461-2.

CHAPTER - III

NEGOTIATIONS

FIRST PHASE: LIMITED (PUBLIC) TALKS FROM
MAY 13, 1968 TO OCTOBER 30, 1968 :-

The phase of limited talks between the Government of the U.S.A. and the Government of the North Vietnam started from May 13, 1968. It continued for about five and a half months with thirty formal sessions. The site for the conference was the Hotel Majestic in the rio-torn French metropolis.¹ The North Vietnamese government was represented by Mr. Xuan Thuy, an experienced diplomat who attended the Geneva Conference on Laos in 1962. The U.S.A. government was represented by Mr. Averell Harriman, a very senior American negotiator. The representatives of the NLF and Saigon government did not find place in such a setting of negotiations.²

The main point of discussion in this period was the question of a complete bombing halt as a condition to further fruitful talks.³ This ~~xx~~ issue was connected with the problem of restoring the demilitarized zone,⁴ and thus was used to initiating a North Vietnamese

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1. Zubeida Mistafa, "The Paris Peace Talks", Pakistan Horizon, vol. XXII, no.1, First Quarter 1969, p.30.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Radio Hanoi on 3rd April 1968 as quoted in Asia Almanac, vol.6, no.24, June 15, 1968, pp.2760. also see P.J. Honey, "Three Critical Years for Hanoi", Pacific Community, vol.2, no.4, July 1971, p.758. In fact, Hanoi delegation came to Paris only to decide with the U.S. side the unconditional cessation of bombing and all other acts against them so as to arrange that the real talk begins.
 4. The International Herald Tribune (Paris) as quoted in Asian Recorder, vol. XIV, no.38, p.8531.

approval to a permanent division of Vietnam so as to present Saigon government as the authentic representative of South Vietnamese people.⁵ It was also used to compel Hanoi to agree to the inclusion of the Saigon government at the Paris Peace talks.⁶ The end of this phase of limited talks was marked by President Johnson's dramatic call to end all bombings and shelling of North Vietnam. The second major point of discussion was based on the controversies associated with the concept of 'aggression'.⁷

Right since the beginning, there remained a cordial atmosphere at the conference between the two sides. At "recreation" breaks during the talks, Harriman, Thuy and their teams were seen chatting mainly about food and drink, events in Paris and how they amused themselves the previous weekend. But the public sessions recorded only two monologues rather than talks. Thus the civility was only maintained. Both sides - "like lovers who, though unsuccessful, still possess the desire" - had a tacit agreement to stick

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5. Wilfred Burchett, "The Paris Talks", New World Review, Fall-winter 1968, p.11.
 6. "The Month in Review" Current History, vol.55, no. 328, December 1968, p.372.
 7. Burchett, no.5, p.7.

at it despite the apparent barrenness."⁸

Leaving aside this outward civility, there was nothing cordial about the activities of both sides. It goes without saying that there was always a tense atmosphere involving an internal cold war between both sides. The U.S.A., however, was always found anxious for a quick progress in the talks. The reasons, of course, are not quite far to seek.⁹ Hence it was Harriman and not Xuan Thuy who always pressed for more frequent meetings.¹⁰ On the other side, Hanoi was always seen conscious about NLF anxiety towards the progress of Paris talks arisen due to the representation of the whole of Vietnam by the lean warriors of the North. Hence she tried to make NLF satisfied as far as possible by both keeping NLF informed as to what was going on in Paris and trying to get as much NLF demands as possible through the bargain. A similar awareness was found in the U.S. circles about South Vietnam.¹¹

8. Ross Terrill, "A Report on the Paris Talks" The New Republic, July 13, 1968, p.15.

9. For the factors dragging U.S.A. to the peace talks, see Chapter-II.

10. Terrill, no. 8, p.16.

11. Ibid., pp. 17-8.

In such a cold war atmosphere, the major point of discussion i.e. bombing halt, was first introduced. As the issue had already created an impasse before the summoning of the negotiations,¹² it stood as a bottleneck. The Hanoi delegation chief, Mr. Xuan Thuy, after giving a long historical background to the war and the U.S. intervention, called for an immediate halt to the bombings so that the two sides could go on to discuss, a political settlement in South Vietnam.¹³ Harriman, of course, in reply did not refer to the issue directly. Rather he repeated that bombings had been stopped in areas which include "almost 90 percent of North Vietnam's population."¹⁴ As a price for bombing halt he started putting such conditions that gall aid to the NLF should be stopped and that the U.S.A. should be given the right to control South Vietnam's frontiers by both sides respecting the DMZ.¹⁵ To this, however, Mr. Xuan Thuy

12. See Chapter-II.

13. Burchett, no. 5, p.6.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid., pp. 6-7.

retorted that the U.S.A. was "demanding ransom" for her "flagrant aggression".¹⁶ He suggested that for U.S. bombing halt, Hanoi can abstain from bombing in the entire territory of U.S.A. So Harriman, to his repeated questions as to when the bombing would be halted, only replied "under appropriate circumstances and at an appropriate time". Hence, Hanoi reacted to this by making the range of talks in Paris quite limited to "bombing-halt" and "aggression" issue.¹⁷

The controversy on bombing issue, as stated above, arose due to the ^{mutual} suspicion (grew) in both Hanoi ~~and~~ and Washington circles that North Vietnam would take undue advantage of bombing-halt and U.S. would take advantage of bombing itself. North Vietnam condemned the U.S. bombing because U.S. was bargaining from a position of strength.¹⁸ She substantiated it by giving an example of U.S. taking advantage of her good will gesture in December 1966.¹⁹ Hence she was

16. Ibid, p.7.

17. George McT. Kahin, "Impasse At Paris" The New Republic, Oct.12, 1968, p.24.

18. O. Alexandrov, "Anatomy of the U.S. Aggression in Indo-China" International Affairs (Moscow), April 1973, p.100.

19. Wilfred Burchett, "The Vietnam War: Past, Present, Future", New World Review, Spring 1968, p.17.

adamant on a bombing halt before anything is being further discussed. ^{the} U.S.A., on the other hand, because of her earlier experiences during the Korean negotiations,²⁰ was convinced that the communists should be held to a minimum military capability before and during the peace talks.²¹ Hence, she felt that Hanoi should not be allowed to take undue advantage of bombing halt in the form of reduction of human resources to more materials in the border area.²² That is why the U.S.A. was not agreeable to a bombing halt.

The "ransom" which U.S.A. demanded in reciprocation to the bombing halt itself gave rise to a controversy regarding the restoration of the DMZ. To this, Hanoi's reaction was that Harriman was "trying to recover at the conference table what Westmoreland had lost on the battlefield."²³

The "ransom" also generated another important issue out of it and that was the 'aggression' issue.

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20. "Remember Korean Negotiations?" U.S. News & World Report, Jan.22, 1968, p.33.
21. "If the bombing is stopped", U.S. News & World Report, Jan.22, 1968, p.31.
22. Roger Hilsman, "Must we invade the North?", Foreign Affairs, vol.46, no.3, April 1968, p.436.
23. Burchett, n. 5, p.7.

North Vietnam did not agree to accept the reciprocity demanded by U.S.A. simply because U.S. to her was an "alien aggressor".²⁴ But Harriman repeated the Rusk-Rustow version of the origins of the war i.e. the only problem in South Vietnam is "aggression" against the South by the North.²⁵ To this Xuan Thuy replied that they have the right and sacred duty to have troops in the South.²⁶ So it was the U.S.A. who was an alien aggressor and not North Vietnam. The Vietnamese war was only a civil war and the U.S.A. had no right to intervene in the internal affairs of Vietnam. The U.S.A., on the contrary, pleaded that South Vietnam is a separate political entity and as she had been attacked from the North, it was the duty of the U.S.A. as a friend to come to her rescue and prevent aggression.²⁷

✓ The U.S.A. demanded withdrawal of the North Vietnamese forces from South Vietnam. The DRV, on the other hand, demanded withdrawal of U.S. ^{forces.} According to Mr. Mikheyev the U.S.A. did not withdraw because it

24. Kahin, n. 17, p.25.

25. Burchett, n.5, p.7.

26. Ibid, p.8.

27. H.G. Nicholas, "Vietnam and the Traditions of American Foreign Policy", International Affairs (London), vol. 44, n02, April 1968, p.199.

might help in establishing an independent government in South Vietnam which would ultimately end U.S. influence in the sphere.²⁸ Hanoi did not leave because initially there were no North Vietnamese troops in the South. It is only after the arrival of the U.S. marines and ^{the} U.S. combat troops that NLF launched an appeal for troops from the South who had only regrouped to the North under the provisions of the Geneva Agreement to return home.²⁹

Meantime, the meeting between President Johnson and President Thieu at Honolulu on July 19-20, 1968, set certain hard lines on the procedure of U.S. bargaining. President Johnson announced that only any ~~an~~ decrease of activities on the communist side could lead to a bombing halt.³⁰ Both the Presidents agreed on the fact that there would be "no more concessions without reciprocity".³¹ It is here also that both the Presidents devised a plan to present.

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28. Yu Y. Mikheyev, Americans in Indo-China: A Critique of the U.S.A.'s Lawless Doctrines and Policies, (Moscow, 1972), p. 121.
29. Burchett, n. 5, p.9.
30. "President Johnson and President Thieu of Vietnam Hold talks at Honolulu", Department of State Bulletin, vol. LIX, no 1520, ~~Sept. 9, 1968, p.278.~~ Aug. 12, 1968, p.165.
31. Lyndon B. Johnson, "Address before the veterans of foreign wars convention about Vietnam peace, Detroit, Aug.19, 1968", Department of state Bulletin, vol.LIX, no.1524, Sept.9, 1968, p.278.

The Saigon government as the authentic representative of the South Vietnamese people.³²

There are several reasons which resulted into the adoption of the hard line by the U.S.A. at Honolulu. First of all, South Vietnamese political structure had developed several widening cracks, especially after South Vietnam invited Gen. Duong Van Minh back to Saigon.³³ Hence in order to save Saigon from such political disintegration, the bargaining was made tough.³⁴ However, such a hardline was difficult to maintain for a long time. In fact, talks remained suspended for two months. At last the U.S.A. agreed to a bombing halt, as well as, inviting both NLF and Saigon to join the Paris talks.³⁵ The causes are not far to seek. Firstly, Mr. Nixon, the Republican Presidential candidate at the forthcoming election at home, condemned Johnson's use of terror and violence as a means of political change in South Vietnam.³⁶ In order that

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32. ^{CR} "Secretary Rusk's News conference of July 30", Department of State Bulletin, vol. LIX, no 1521, Aug.19, 1968, p. 190. also see Burchett, n. 5, p.11.
33. The New York Times as quoted in Asian Recorder, vol.XIV no49, Dec. 2-8, 1968, p.8656,
34. Burchett, n.5, p.11.
35. Current History, n.6, p.372.
36. "Nixon Replies", The New Republic, Oct.26, 1968, p.11.

a bombing halt might help the democratic candidate Mr. Humphary, there came clamours from the co-party men for a halt also.³⁷ To some like McGeorge Bundy the costs of war were "plainly unacceptable".³⁸ Besides, in South Vietnam, the political situation recorded a complete change and NLF was seen commanding a majority support from the people.³⁹ Hence it was assumed that NLF would be able to compete with Saigon administration so far as control of South Vietnam was concerned.⁴⁰ This is the reason why there arose a widespread notion among all sections of U.S. people ~~xxx~~ that their country has failed in their involvement in Vietnam.⁴¹

The next demand was for the representation of the NLF and the Saigon administration in the Paris Conference. There are several reasons to it. First of all, as mentioned above, the South Vietnamese political structure experienced widening cracks inside

37. T.R.B., "The War and HHH", The New Republic, Oct.26, 1968, p.4.

38. Ibid.

39. See footnote 34.

40. Hans J. Morgenthau, "Bundy's doctrine of War without end", The New Republic, Nov.2, 1968, p.19.

41. Mechtar Lubis, "A Bold New Conception for Southeast Asia", Pacific Community, vol.2, no.1, Oct.1970, p.88.

it.⁴² So, NLF representation was demanded from all quarters. Meantime, a marked difference of opinion was noticed between Hanoi and NLF circles.⁴³ North Vietnam, in fact, since the beginning recognized the NLF as the "sole genuine representative of the people of South Vietnam", but gradually^{she} was seen edging away from this point. Secondly, she was seen demanding in the beginning, The NLF presence in the negotiations; but gradually she started insisting on her political programme only and not on NLF presence in the negotiating table. The future of South Vietnam Hanoi reserved to discuss with the U.S.A. alone. This made the NLF quite dissatisfied.⁴⁴ Hanoi, no doubt, was quite conscious of the NLF dissatisfaction and hence hurried to get the NLF represented in the Conference.⁴⁵ The U.S.A., on the other hand, wanted to take advantage of this difference of opinion between them at the Conference table and suggested that the NLF

42. See footnote 33 above.

43. Terrill, n. 8, p. 18.

44. Ibid.

45. The New York Times, n.33, p.8656.

should be included in the Paris talks along with the Saigon Government so as to make the talks more realistic. To the NLF it was by all means acceptable.⁴⁶

But to the Saigon Government neither the NLF representation nor a bombing halt was acceptable. Saigon complained because both would stand on the same level and thus both would be relegated to a secondary position.⁴⁷ They demanded that the NLF should come as part of the Hanoi delegation whereas Saigon should go as a full-scale delegation.⁴⁸ Again Thieu objected strongly to the U.S. decision of the bombing halt. The U.S. government, pressed more by the circumstances to halt bombing, took strong steps to persuade Thieu to agree. But only after a month Thieu softened his stand.⁴⁹ He came up on October 18, 1968 with a proposal to President Johnson to demand three conditions from Hanoi in reciprocation to a bombing halt which included inclusion of the Saigon government independently at the Paris talks.⁵⁰ This showed that

46. Terrill, n. 8, p.18.

47. Mustafa, n.1, p.35. also see Charles A Joiner, "South Vietnam: The Politics of Peace", Asian Survey (Berkeley) Feb.1969, pp. 140-1.

48. Zalin B. Grant, "The Bombing Halt", The New Republic, Nov.9, 1968, p.14.

49. Ibid. p.15.

50. Current History, n.6, p.372. The other two conditions were enemy respect for the DMZ and cessation of the shelling of South Vietnamese cities.

Thieu indirectly accepted the NLF inclusion, as well as, bombing halt in exchange of South Vietnam's admission as an independent entity to the Paris talks.

On October 29, 1968, reports from Saigon indicated that an agreement had been reached to permit the NLF and the South Vietnamese representatives to participate in the talks without recognising each other.⁵¹ On October 30, informed sources in Paris said that the peace talks were nearing a break-through. At last on 31st October, a complete unconditional halt to bombing in North Vietnam was announced by President Johnson.⁵² He announced that the NLF and the Saigon government would join the talks on November 6, 1968. This gave the NLF an international stature.⁵³ However, the talk was kept suspended for another two months due to petty disagreements on procedural matters.⁵⁴ They include the clashes on the shape of the table, the sitting arrangement round the table etc.

51. Mustafa, n.1, p.31.

52. Charles Wolf Jr., "Vietnam Prospects and Precepts", Asian Survey, March 1969, p.157.

53. Burchett, n.5, p.16.

54. Mustafa, n. 1, p.32.

The period did not achieve anything substantial so far as the progress towards a solution to Vietnam problem was concerned. This was mainly because of the U.S.A. never reconciled to the fact that they could ever lose militarily to a small country like Vietnam. Hence they kept on insisting to record a military victory even up to the end of their apparent defeat.⁵⁵ Besides they had the idea that NLF by then was at "its last gasp". Hence there was no solution to peace talks.⁵⁶ Both militarily, as well as, politically the U.S.A. tried to suppress the NLF through the infamous "Phoenix Plan" and the CIA under the plea of providing "self-determination" to the South Vietnamese people.⁵⁷ This, naturally, detracted them from taking a strong measure to achieve something in the conference table.

At this stage of the Paris talks, there was a clear-cut indication that some agreement could have been reached. In fact, the conditions preceding 1972 negotiations are quite synonymous with the conditions

55. Wilfred Durchett, "Vietnam: One year of the Paris Peace Talks", New World Review, second quarter, 1969, p.2

56. Ibid., pp. 3-4.

57. Ibid., pp. 4-5.

preceding 1968 negotiations such as cessation of bombing, awaiting presidential elections in U.S.A., October 31 as the deadline for signing agreements and the avoidance^a of Thieu by both sides from being informed about negotiation deliberations.⁵⁸ In such a situation, no doubt, the tempo of progress depended on the U.S.A. If U.S.A. really wanted an "honourable withdrawal" then the DRV and the NLF were ready to make it easy. If U.S.A. wanted to hang on, then it was certain that no solution was going to reach at hand.⁵⁹ Incidentally, for reason best known to her, U.S.A. chose the latter thinking probably that her Vietnamization programme born out of the famous Guam Doctrine of setting Asians against Asians would work. Hence the peace prospects in 1968 were few and far between.⁶⁰

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58. Adam Yarmolinsky, "Some lessons of Vietnam - Introductions for students of American government", The Round Table (London), Jan. 1972, p. 90. Records~~ed~~ by Assistant Secretary of Defense John Mc Naughton in Pentagon papers show the helplessness of U.S.A. in winning the war and planning to withdraw. also see Tad Szulc, "How Kissinger did it", Imprint (Bombay), vol. XIV, no 7, Oct. 1974, pp. 63-5.
59. Wilfred Burchett, The Guardian, Nov. 16, 1968.
60. Szulc, no. 58, p. 65. also see Victor Mayovsky, "The war in Indo-China and the Paris talks", Pravda, Jan. 19, 1972.

Anyhow, the utility of the limited talks is not far to seek. The talks remained as a mechanism "that may one day be useful for ratifying an agreement reached elsewhere, but will have to idle along in neutral gear until that day comes."⁶¹ The other net results of the talks included a difference of opinion between Hanoi and NLF, as well as, between U.S.A. and Saigon. Saigon demanded withdrawal of all "communist forces" whereas U.S.A. stood for "simultaneous and mutual withdrawal" of "external forces" in South Vietnam.⁶² Also the period witnessed Hanoi moving away from China and ^{getting} nearer to the Soviet Union because Peking was in favour of military confrontation with the U.S.A. whereas both Hanoi and Moscow were advocates of negotiations with the enemy camp.⁶³ The third net result was world-wide ^{recognition} ~~negotiation~~ of NLF dominance in South Vietnam both militarily and politically. People started suspecting the "volatile political life" of Saigon regime.⁶⁴ The

61. The Economist (London), 20th July 1968, p.17.

62. Grant, n. 48, p.15.

63. Peking review, vol.XI, no27, July 5, 1968, p.33.
also see Mustafa, n.1, p.34.

64. Mustafa, n.1, p.36.
see Honey, n.3, p.758.

last result was that henceforward U.S.A. contemplated on separating the political solution from that of the military and wanted to be involved in the military solution only leaving the political issue to be decided by the Saigon government and the NLF.⁶⁵ This is the first ever stage of U.S.'s planned disengagement in South Vietnam.

Here ended one phase of Paris peace talks which took almost five and a half months. However, with the bombing issue as its focal point, the period worked as an introductory stage to the real phases of negotiations coming on its heels.

SECOND PHASE: ENLARGED (PUBLIC) TALKS FROM
JANUARY 25, 1969 TO JANUARY 27, 1973 :-

The enlarged talks in the Paris Peace Conference started from 25th January, 1969. It continued up to 175 sessions in all. The 175th session, however, was held only for signing the final document.⁶⁶ Four parties such as the U.S.A., North

65. Henry A. Kissinger, "The Vietnam Negotiations", Foreign Affairs (New York), vol.47, no 2, Jan.1969, p.231. also see E.R. Lenart "Widening Distrust", Far Eastern Economic Review, July 10, 1971, p.8.

66. Keesing's Contemporary Archives, March 19-25, 1973, p. 25789.

Vietnam, South Vietnam and the NLF took part in these enlarged talks represented by Mr. Henry Cabot Lodge; Mr. Xuan Thuy and Mr. Le Duc Tho; Marshal Nguyen Cao Ky; and Mrs. Nguyen Thi Binh (sometime replaced by Mr. Tran Buu Kiem) respectively.

Around ten weeks elapsed before all the four sides were seen discussing peace at the conference table. During this gestation period, Saigon government opposed the recognition of NLF as an independent entity. President Thieu asked President Johnson to see that the NLF participates as a constituent of the Hanoi delegation and the Saigon Government as a separate entity. The U.S.A. disagreed.⁶⁷ Hence they reached at the understanding that participation in the debate would not imply the recognition of the NLF or the South Vietnamese government by either party. Under the formula "out side your side" each party was free to organise its delegation as it deemed fit.⁶⁸

The difference of opinion between the U.S.A. and Saigon on the recognition issue was thus resolved.

67. Mustafa, n. 1, pp. 31-2.

68. Ibid, p. 31.

But several other points of difference arose in no time between them. Saigon's interests did not correspond with Washington's. "The American character and the Vietnamese character were not necessarily meant to be compatible" according to Dr. Henry Kissinger.⁶⁹ America's haste to achieve results in the Paris talks had continuously strained Saigon's patience and limited President Thieu's room for manoeuvre.⁷⁰ This difference of opinion led both to many difficulties during the talks. Besides, the wrecked political structure of Saigon also led to their lack of diplomatic success in Paris.⁷¹ These were thus the developments recorded during the gestation period of two and a half months. //

The principal reason behind such a delay in convening the conference was the conflict arose among the delegations over procedural matters. These involved the shape of the table, the seating arrangements, and other protocol items.⁷² This controversy was

69. Edith Rebecca Lenart, "End Game in Paris", Far Eastern Economic Review, Aug.7, 1969, p.370.

70. Ibid.

71. Ibid.

72. E.R. Lenart, "Meanwhile Back at the Paris talks", Far Eastern Economic Review, Nov.6, 1969, p. 311.

fomented by Saigon with the intention of preventing the NLF to join the talks which Saigon feared might help them to eventually share the control of South Vietnam. U.S.A. disagreed on this and hence the U.S.-Saigon differences widened further.⁷³ However, these debates on procedural matters were in no time put down. Then the "negotiations started after a decent time lapse to allow the South Vietnamese to fill the press with propaganda."⁷⁴

The aims of the extended talks were, to explore all avenues to end the communist aggression and to reach a peaceful settlement as against the limited talks deciding only the stopping of bombs.⁷⁵ However, the NLF and Hanoi described the Conference as a four-sided one in which all the delegates enjoyed equal status and U.S.A. and Saigon interpreted it as a bilateral Conference.⁷⁶

The discussion in these meetings started with the same old U.S. demand of the enemy's (North Vietnam's)

73. Mustafa, n.1, p.32.

74. Isnart, n. 72, pp. 311-2.

75. "Statement by the U.S. Government on South Vietnam's Participation in the Paris Peace Talks, November 26, 1968" Current History, vol. 56, no 330, Feb.1969, p.116.

76. Ibid, p. 109.

restoration of the DMZ. The talk was more extended to include issues of foreign troops withdrawal and prisoner exchanges unlike limited talks.⁷⁷ Whatever might be the differences at the outset, the extension of the talks was highly commendable as it showed some signs of progress towards peace.//The next sessions witnessed the extension of the talks to bring about a political settlement.⁷⁸ The proposals, of course, stood too wide apart for any compromise. The NLF's suggestion was replacement of Saigon government by "a cabinet for the restoration of peace".⁷⁹

The next period of negotiations in the month of February witnessed heavy bombing of Saigon by Hanoi. Nixon did not retaliate because there had been always a hint by then from Moscow that the NLF would be prepared to talk to Thieu's delegation provided it came up with a worthwhile offer. Also Nixon wanted to prevent an anti-war public opinion at home and abroad.⁸⁰

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77. "Month in Review", Current History, vol. 56, no. 331, March 1969, pp. 182-3.
78. "Chronology", Pakistan Horizon, vol. XXII, no 1, p.77.
79. Ibid.
80. Lenart, n. 69, p. 371.

However, Marshal Ky after fiddling quite sometime with private talks proposals,⁸¹ came back with a concrete six-point plan after almost a month on April 9, 1969. The plan was put before the Conference at its 12th session on April 10.⁸² The plan, in a nut-shell, suggested, halt to the communist aggression; withdrawal of North Vietnamese troops from South Vietnam; end of North Vietnamese bases in Laos and Cambodia; a policy of national reconciliation in South Vietnam; reunification of North and South Vietnam by democratic process and an effective international control and guarantee against resumption of communist aggression. This plan was, no doubt, too unsatisfactory to Hanoi and NLF.⁸³ They never agreed to any North Vietnamese withdrawal of troops which was the main target of emphasis in the plan. Hence the U.S.A. suggested simultaneous withdrawal of U.S. and DRV troops even at the instance of heavy opposition from Mr. Thieu. Still it was rejected by Hanoi and NLF.⁸⁴

81. Asian Almanac, vol.7, no28, July 12, 1969, p.3432.

82. For the text of the six-point plan see, Asian Almanac, p. 3385.

83. Lenart, n. 69, p.371.

84. Asian Almanac, n. 81, p.3432.

They stuck on to their political solution, i.e. formation of a 'peace cabinet' //

^ A marked feature here to note is that while the U.S.A. and the Saigon Government have been trying for a piecemeal military solution, the NLF and Hanoi were hitting at a clear-cut political solution and hence the deadlock. The U.S.A. at that time was contemplating on a two track plan to bring about a compromise negotiation and at the same time, to "Vietnamize" the conflict.⁸⁵ Hence the demand for simultaneous withdrawal. This records the second important step of U.S. disengagement in South Vietnam, the first being Henry Kissinger's theoretical pronouncements to separate both military and political solutions in January 1969.⁸⁶

// In such a situation, NLF held back the whole initiative in its own hands. It announced that with

85. Lenart, n. 69, p.371. also see, Victor Mayevsky, n. 60, and William P. Bundy, "The Nixon policies in Asia and the Pacific" Pacific Community (Tokyo), vol.2, n01, Oct.1970, p.81. Tran Van Tuyen, "Vietnamization, war strategy and Peace incentive", Pacific Community, vol.2, n01, Oct.1970, p. 168. For a discussion on the Nixon Doctrine see Marshall Green "The Nixon Doctrine - A Progress Report", Pacific Community, vol.2, n03, April 1971, p.607. See also Michael Leifer, "The Nixon Doctrine and The Future of Indo-China", Pacific Community, vol.2, n04, July 1971, p. 742.

86. See footnote 65.

the help of its five-point plan,⁸⁷ it was prepared for the "discussions to make the Conference move forward".⁸⁸ The plan, in short, demanded the American withdrawal and suggested a much-elaborated political solution by electing a National Assembly to draw up a new constitution and by establishing a coalition government representing all political factions. Besides, it suggested the same re-unification through negotiations and added an extra clause for a peaceful and neutral foreign policy. //

This plan was too one-sided to be accepted by the other party. Hence, in order that the other party should adjust their demands, the NLF expanded these provisions into a "ten-point Global Solution"⁸⁹ on May 8, 1969. This plan not only contained the political solutions but it embraced military solutions as well. Its objective was to end the war and restore peace. // The military provisions were American withdrawal under "international supervision";

87. For the text of the plan, see, Facts on File, Vol. XXIV, n01489, p.281.

88. Ibid.

89. For the text, see Asian Recorder, vol. XV, no 26, June 25, - July 1, 1969, p. 9001.

90. See Mira Sinha, "Elusive Peace", Weekly Round Table (New Delhi), Nov.12, 1972, p.17.

the solution of Vietnamese armed forces problem by Vietnamese only; end of foreign bases in the country by ending all foreign alliances; exchange of POWs; and post-war reconstruction compensation. The political solutions comprised of the guarantee of Vietnamese fundamental rights; free elections for a coalition government; and ^{no} the imposition of either party's regime on the other during the interim period. The reunification and foreign policy clauses remained in tact.

After the NLF plan was submitted in the Conference, U.S.A. found many elements in this which she thought might offer a possibility for exploration towards peace. So she proposed to study the plan carefully, so that it might show some compromising gestures towards the proposals already put forward by South Vietnam and U.S.A.⁹¹ But South Vietnam, on the other hand, announced that it was prepared to discuss the three segments only from the NLF plan such as exchange of POWs, restoration of neutrality of the DMZ and application of 1962 agreement on Laos.⁹²

91. Facts on File, n. 87, p.281,

92. Ibid.

However, the U.S.A. preferred to produce its own peace plan rather than collecting the agreeable elements from the enemy proposals. Nixon's 8-point plan⁹³ announced on May 14, 1969 brought out prominently the points of similarities such as reunification of Vietnam, release of POWs, elections in Vietnam by the supervision of an international body, restoration of DMZ and a cease-fire supervised by international body, and thus respect for the provisional military demarcation line.⁹⁴ But ~~the~~ the main differentiation arose due to the more emphasis given on military aspects such as the troops withdrawal which formed a complicated system of its own.⁹⁵ The aspect of international supervision of the withdrawal remained unchanged and unaffected as well. But the system of partial withdrawal introduced here is something which faced tremendous opposition from NLF and Hanoi.⁹⁶ This is because it was thought that partial evacuation from Vietnam would be compensated by escalation of war in Laos

93. For the text see Asian Recorder, n.89, pp.8999-9000.

94. Asian Almanac, n. 81, pp. 3434-5.

95. Ibid.

96. Asian Almanac, n. 81, pp. 3434-5.

and Cambodia in future and new bombings of North Vietnamese territory.⁹⁷

The policy of partial withdrawal is a contribution of President Nixon to the settlement for peace in Indo-China. This he resorted to at last for making the anti-war movement in U.S.A. quiet for a considerable period, so that within that period he would be able to reach a settlement to end the war which he has been contemplating since long.⁹⁸

But there were two main hurdles in his way to ending the war. Firstly, North Vietnam was still solidly supported by her allies and getting ample war materials from them for keeping the war alive.

Secondly, the gap between peace proposals of both sides was too wide to be quickly cemented.⁹⁹

Of course, NLF 10-point plan was deliberately made "imprecise", but troops withdrawal and holding of elections remained for long time as the bones of contention.¹⁰⁰ In fact, the possibility of a future

97. V. Mayevsky, "The War in Indo-China and the Paris talks Reprints from the Soviet Press, Feb.11,1972, p.29.

98. "Where the front line is", The Economist, May 17, 1969, p. 18.

99. Ibid., p. 19.

100. Ibid.

solution, if any, to the North Vietnamese troops withdrawal issue remained open through the ~~phrase~~ phrase, "The question of the vietnamese armed forces in South Vietnam could be settled by the Vietnamese parties."¹⁰¹ Secondly, the political solution got an outlet here in this plan through the phrase "free and democratic election".¹⁰² With this ambiguous phrase only the impregnable political solution at last could be reached. Thus, the contributions of these plans to peace-making can, in no way, be underestimated.

Another contribution of this period to the understanding of peace efforts is that it categorically pointed out Thieu as the stumbling block to the peace-making process. On "free election" issue, Saigon's idea of holding elections in 1972 as laid down by its constitution did not tally with Nixon's proposal and hence he had to abandon the idea altogether.¹⁰³

101. Ibid.

102. Ibid. This phrase is found in the Final Agreement as "generally free and democratic general election".

103. E.R. Lenart, "Something Solid At Last", Far Eastern Economic Review, May 22, 1969, p. 439.

Similarly he had to omit the question of South Vietnam's future 'neutrality'.¹⁰⁴ These were not agreeable to Thieu and so Nixon had to avoid them in order to see that Thieu is satisfied. Hence the prospects of peace were left in the lurch.¹⁰⁵ Mr. Nixon, no doubt, was sufficiently buttressed and convinced by Thieu at Midway Islands so as not to be pressurised into giving more ground to Hanoi and NLF demands when both met there on June 8, 1969.¹⁰⁶ But it is here that Mr. Nixon convinced Mr. Thieu to agree to the phased withdrawal programme with the plea that South Vietnamese forces were then reaching the point where they could "assume an increasingly large share of the burden of combat."¹⁰⁷ This is to suggest that the Nixon-Thieu deal here saved Saigon administration from being immediately wrecked but hinted that Saigon one day has to lose the U.S. military support, so it is hightime, she (Saigon Government) should count

104. Ibid.

105. Ibid.

106. E.R. Lenart, "Concession or a coup?" Far Eastern Economic Review, June 5, 1969, p.553.

107. "A Little Way At Midway", The Economist, June 14, 1969, p.43.

on her own indigenous resources for defence (Vietnamization) or would perish ultimately.¹⁰⁸ This is suggestive of the next phase of U.S. disengagement in South Vietnam.¹⁰⁹

Meanwhile, the Hanoi and NLF side, in order to pressurize Nixon, had increased American casualties through heavy military action. Secondly they also announced the formation of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam on June 10, 1969.¹¹⁰ Its Action Programme emphasized the need to liquidate the Saigon regime and to create a genuinely democratic and free republican system through general elections. It wanted to form a provisional coalition government representing the interests of all segments of population.¹¹¹ The U.S.A.'s reaction to this was not at all provocative.¹¹² China also reacted coolly, even though it was felt that Peking might have a hand in the formation of the Provisional Revolutionary Government.¹¹³ However,

108. Ibid.

109. See footnote 97.

110. Asian Recorder, vol. XV, no33, Aug.13-19,1969, p.9082.

111. Ibid.

112. Ibid.

113. Lenart, n. 69, p.371.

the formation of the ERG did not absolutely seal the chances of negotiations. But the problem of creation of an autonomous South Vietnam, that would permit its people to determine their own fate, remained quite alive throughout the month of July when the discussions on arranging free elections were under way.¹¹⁴

At this juncture, Nixon's visit to Saigon on 30th July, 1969 seemed to harden "the determination of the Vietnamese people in their struggle against American aggressors and their agents."¹¹⁵ So Hanoi demanded a written assurance that the Americans would completely withdraw by the specific date. The policy of phased withdrawal was condemned as a "complete sham". It was branded as not a withdrawal but a tactic to mounting massive attacks.¹¹⁶

The death of President Ho Chi Minh on September 3, 1969, complicated the current peace negotiations and a solution to the problem was seen

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114. Asian Recorder, vol.XV, n035, Aug.27-Sept.2,1969, pp. 9100-1, and Asian Recorder, vol.XV, n039, Sept.24-30, 1969, p.9152.
115. Asian Almanac, vol.7, n047, Nov.22, 1969, p.3662.
116. Harold Munthe-Kaas, "Waiting for Hanoi", Far Eastern Economic Review (Hong Kong), Aug.21, 1969, p.441.

postponed due to the mistrust created by the mutually suspicious camps in the Indo-Chinese region, grown after the end of Ho's repewalking between Moscow and Peking.¹¹⁷ Secondly, after his death, Hanoi obviously weakened in her bargaining capability. So they moved away from their demand of total U.S. troops withdrawal to a "rapid large scale withdrawal of American forces", in order to get the peace talks moving.¹¹⁸ Ho's death thus softened the Hanoi stand a little.

When Mr. Lodge resigned as the Head of U.S. delegation on November 20, 1969 and Mr. Philip C. Habib became the acting chief, a peculiar problem brewed up at the Peace Conference. And that was Hanoi's complaint of U.S. "downgrading" the talks by not sending a chief negotiator to the talks.¹¹⁹ This issue featured more prominently than anything else. Hence the third batch of phased troops reduction on December 15, 1969 went unaccounted

117. "Pre-Emptive Strikes", Far Eastern Economic Review, Sept. 11, 1969, p.639.

118. P.H.M. Jones, "The Most Respected Red", Far Eastern Economic Review, Sept.11,1969, p.649.

119. Mayevsky, n. 97, p.30.

in the process.¹²⁰ However, after six months David E. Bruce was appointed as chief delegate on July 1, 1970 who was to take up the assignment on August 1, 1970. Thus the problem was quelled down.¹²¹ This event, however, has never directly affected peace-efforts.

The conflict now was extended both horizontally and vertically. Horizontally it was expanded to embrace Cambodia and Laos so that the problem of peace-making got more complicated.¹²² Vertically, the conflict was expanded from the military field to the political field.¹²³ The political situation in South Vietnam was getting polarised. As a result, both Saigon and NLF tried to win the favour of the South Vietnamese people. Land reforms, and strengthening the local governments were the measures taken by the Thieu government. This was expected to attract the loyalty

120. Facts on File, vol. XXIX, n01518, p.769.

121. Ibid, vol.XXX, n01549, p.481.

122. Ibid, n0 1531, p.120.
and Ibid, n01534, p.177. also see Bundy, n.85, pp. 81-3.
and Max Coiffait, "Laotian Leaders Search for Peace", Pacific Community, vol.2, n01, Oct.1970, p.188.
See Sim Var, "Restoring Peace to Cambodia", Pacific Community, vol.2, n01, Oct.1970, p.161.

123. Allan E. Goodman, "South Vietnam: Neither War Nor Peace", Asian Survey, Feb.1970, pp. 107-8.

of the people towards Thieu government rather than towards the communists.¹²⁴ The emphasis was now put upon three revolutions - in production, in the technical field and in ideological and cultural work.¹²⁵ As it happened in the battlefield, and in the conference table, there started a keen competition in the political sphere between the two sides as to who would outbid the other.¹²⁶ Hence the peace prospects became less bright as all efforts were now concentrated on the countryside and not on the conference table.

At this juncture, on July 1, 1970, President Nixon, for reasons best known to him only, went a further step forward to hint at his long-term plan of disengagement from the area. He announced that he would never fix a date for U.S. complete withdrawal as it would tell upon heavily on the dominoes in the region. However, he asserted that if South Vietnam freely elected a communist government "the domino effect would not be as great".¹²⁷ Thus Nixon suggested that he had to

124. Samuel L. Popkin, "Racification, politics and village", Asian Survey, Aug.1970, pp.662-3.

125. L.F. Goodstadt, "Ho-Le Ghost", Far Eastern Economic Review, Sept.25, 1969, p.765.

126. James R. Burlington & James D. Rosenthal, "The South Vietnam se countryside: Non-Communist political perception", Asian Survey, Aug.1970, p.651.

127. Facts on File, vol.XXX, n01549, p.481. also refer to footnote 109 above.

leave South Vietnam some day but till then would not allow the communists to occupy Saigon forcefully.¹²⁸

Close on its heels, came the Bruce era in the history of enlarged public talks at Paris which recorded another significant development in the process of peace-making. And that is the demand of the NLF and the Hanoi Government for the exclusion of Thieu and Ky from the future coalition government which they always proposed to form.¹²⁹ This point featured prominently in the subsequent peace plans as well.¹³⁰

On September 17, 1970 the NLF submitted its 8-point plan. The new proposal suggested a fixed date i.e. June 30, 1971 for U.S. complete withdrawal in exchange of POWs release; solution of North Vietnamese troops withdrawal problem by "the vietnamese parties themselves", expulsion of Thieu, Ky and Kiem from future Saigon administration; free elections by an interim government; formation

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128. Vishal Singh, "Balance-sheet of Peace", Weekly Round Table, Nov.12, 1972, p.22.
129. Facts on File, vol.XXX, no 1554, pp. 567-8.
130. See footnote 177.

of a provisional government including three segments (FRG, Saigon and neutralists); reunification of two vietnams and at last cease-fire only after aforesaid agreements have been reached.¹³¹ As compared to the earlier 10-point plan, the only significant step towards peace which this plan suggested was that the FRG agreed indirectly on the withdrawal of the North Vietnamese troops (Vietnamese parties themselves have to arrange the withdrawal process).¹³² Secondly, the POWs' release was assured and its procedure was concretized.¹³³ But the NLF demand for the purge of Thieu, Ky and Kiem recorded its more hardening stand and so stood as a barrier to peace-making.¹³⁴ Cease-fire proposal of the NLF plan, however, synchronized with that of Nixon's 8-point plan in May 1969.¹³⁵

131. For the full text, see Facts on File, vol.XXX, n. 1560, p.673.

132. Ibid.

133. Ibid.

134. Sir Robert Thompson, "A successful end to the war in Vietnam", Pacific Community, vol.2, no3, April 1971, p. 455.

135. Facts on file, n. 131, p.674.

Following this, Mr. Nixon proposed a five-point plan on October 7, 1970, calling for a "cease-fire in place" throughout Indo-China; an expanded peace conference to end the war in Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnam; a "time table" to be negotiated for America's total withdrawal, a political settlement suitable to all South Vietnamese and immediate and unconditional release of all POWs.¹³⁶ The plan, by itself, is quite a unique step towards agreed rapprochement. First of all, the fixed date for total withdrawal was indirectly agreed.¹³⁷ Secondly, the political settlement of South Vietnam was left to be decided by the South Vietnamese themselves.¹³⁸ Thirdly, the release of the POWs which had been used as a bait by Hanoi, was much emphasized so as to show the world that America does not lose much in the process.¹³⁹ But the main hurdle to peace was the U.S. demand of cease-fire throughout Indo-China. This is because it would

136. For the text see Facts on File, vol. XXX, nq1563, p. 725.

137. Thompson, n. 134, p.455.

138. Ibid, also see Milton Osborne, "Hanoi's aims: Vietnam or Indo-China?", Pacific Community, vol. 2, nq 2, Jan. 1971, p.332.

139. Facts on file, n. 136, p. 725.

leave the communists in possession of only a small area.¹⁴⁰ But according to Pham Van Dong's speech in September 1970, Hanoi wanted a general settlement of the whole of Indo-China region only after the fear of the U.S. troops' presence is removed from the region.¹⁴¹ Thus both sides agreed that a military solution to the Vietnam problem could be achieved only through a general settlement of the Indo-Chinese region.¹⁴² The point of differentiation in the solution of the political problem centred round the method "to create a situation where the people of South Vietnam get a free choice."¹⁴³

Meanwhile, the public peace conference lost quite a considerable amount of significance it used to enjoy due to its contribution towards peace. This is because by June, 1971, a tendency to submit peace plans in the already-introduced secret meetings had been quite apparent. However, the peace plans after being elaborately discussed

140. Thompson, n. 134, p.455.

141. Osborne, n. 138, p. 337, See also Clark Clifford, "Open peace Covenants, Openly Arrived At", The New York Times, Jan.30, 1972.

142. Osborne, n. 138, p. 337.

143. Thompson, n. 134, p. 457.

in the secret meetings used to come back to the public meetings for further discussions. It is at this stage only that the public conference enjoyed a chance to record its deliberations on them. In this way, the July 1, 1971 ERG seven-point peace plan was introduced here,¹⁴⁴ and widely discussed. Similarly after President Nixon's announcement on January 25, 1972, the 8-point programme went through several criticisms.¹⁴⁵ Similar was the fate of the North Vietnamese 9-point programme after it was announced publicly on January 31, 1972.¹⁴⁶ On February 3, 1972, a revised version of the ERG's 7-point plan was introduced in the public session.¹⁴⁷ These plans were discussed outwardly and did not contribute anything substantial to the negotiations. //

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144. Asian Recorder, vol. XVII, no 36, Sept. 3-9, 1971, p. 10350.
145. Keesing's Contemporary Archives, June 17-24, 1972, p. 25318.
146. Ibid., pp. 25317-8.
147. Ibid., Feb. 5-12, 1972, p. 25079.

The public sessions during the leadership of Bruce and Porter (Mr. William Porter replaced Mr. David E. Bruce on August 1, 1971 as the Chief of U.S. Delegation) witnessed frequent cancellations of their scheduled sittings.¹⁴⁸ Hence the importance of these sessions was relegated to the background. Still, President Nixon's announcement on May 8, 1972 of the same old proposal along with the mining of Hanoi and Haiphong harbours, came under severe criticisms in the public meeting.¹⁴⁹ However, his trips to Peking and Moscow in February and May 1972 respectively were welcomed in the public session. Then Mr. Porter reported that there has been a "slight improvement" in the process.¹⁵⁰

In fact, the very process of neglecting the public sessions also experienced sharp criticism from Vietcong side. The accusations embraced the U.S.A.'s escalation of war, her vietnamization policy, destruction of dykes and dams etc.¹⁵¹ Sometime, certain developments

148. Mayevsky, n. 97, p.30.

149. Facts on File, vol. XXXII, no1645, p.337.

150. Ibid, no 1655, p. 550.

151. Ibid, no 1659, p. 622.

in the secret talks like agreement on three-segmented coalition government were hailed only here in the public sessions.¹⁵² Nixon's reiteration that the secret talks reached a "sensitive stage" where he was not allowing any communist government to be imposed on Vietnam, was also patiently heard and discussed. But the real nature of progress was never disclosed.¹⁵³

Meanwhile, the Hanoi Radio disclosed on October 8, 1972, the 9-point plan and the public session debated this in detail.¹⁵⁴ The deadline for signing the Agreement when passed without being much heeded by U.S.A., became the main point of discussion also.¹⁵⁵ The resumption of bombing on December 18, 1972 was vehemently denounced by Mr. Xuan Thuy.¹⁵⁶ On December 21, 1972 the Hanoi and NLF delegations walked out of the session as a protest against bombing.¹⁵⁷

152. Ibid., n^o 1663, p. 712.

153. Ibid., n^o 1667, p. 798.

154. Kessing's Contemporary Archives, Feb. 19-25, 1973, p. 25744.

155. Ibid., pp. 25745-6.

156. Ibid., p. 25747.

157. Ibid., March 19-25, 1973, p. 25781.

Without the knowledge of the public session incidentally, the final agreement was reached before long on January 24, 1973. The four-party delegates to the Paris peace talks were only asked to witness the ceremony of signing the Agreement. They, however, humbly did it on January 27, 1973, at 11 AM at the same International Conference Centre at Avenue Kleber where they had already met for 174 times.¹⁵⁸ Thus ended the public sessions' deliberations for good. //

THIRD PHASE: PRIVATE TALKS FROM
AUGUST 4, 1969 TO JANUARY 27, 1973 :-

The private talks set the stage where the real success in reaching at an agreed settlement was recorded. Its principal actor was Dr. Henry A Kissinger, the then Principal security Adviser to President Nixon (now U.S. Secretary of state).

The private talks have their genesis in the proposal of President Thieu long back in February 1969 while he was presenting his six-point plan.¹⁵⁹ The idea

158. Ibid, p. 25789.

159. Lenart, n. 69, p. 371.

came to scene when the war was escalated in february 1969 and it became difficult either to check the war or to hold public talks,¹⁶⁰ So both U.S.A. and Saigon suggested holding of private talks between the North and South Vietnamese officials to which Hanoi and NLF delegates were opposed.¹⁶¹ Still U.S. Defense Secretary Melvin Laird announced on April 3, 1969 that private talks have shown "some sign of progress" only to refute it on April 23, 1969.¹⁶² At Midway Islands President Thieu reiterated his willingness on June 8, 1969 to talk directly to the NLF about moves relating to a peaceful settlement.¹⁶³ In fact, the plan to hold private talks possibly had been finally settled after Nixon's visit to Saigon on July 31, 1969.¹⁶⁴ Since then many times the proposal to commence private talks had been reiterated in the public sessions¹⁶⁵ without knowing the fact that private talks had already started since August 4, 1969.¹⁶⁵

160. Ibid.

161. "The Month in Review", Current History, vol. 56, n. 334, June 1969, p. 373.

162. Ibid.

163. Asian Recorder, vol.XV, n033, Aug.13-19, 1969, p.9081.

164. Asian Almanac, vol.7, n047, Nov.22,1969, p.3662.

165. Ibid, p.3664. and Facts on File, vol.XXIX, n01517,p.756. and Ibid, vol.XXX, n01525, p.18. and Ibid, n0 1531, p.120. and Ibid, n0 1554, pp. 567-8.

However, the initial contact was arranged by a retired French diplomat Jean Sainteny who had good American and North Vietnamese contacts. In fact, the first session of the private talks was held in his own apartment on August 4, 1969.¹⁶⁶ The U.S. side was represented by Dr. Henry A. Kissinger and the North Vietnamese side by Mr. Xuan Thuy and Mr. Le Duc Tho.¹⁶⁷ No details were given of the first seven of these meetings.¹⁶⁸

The whole period of secret talks provides an interesting study of the manner in which both sides have gradually conceded their past demands and the reasons leading to such sacrifices. Both sides (more often than not Dr. Kissinger) started throwing their baits and the respective party, for reasons best known to it, ~~either~~ either accepted or rejected them. In this process, the whole edifice of the Final Agreement was built. But the whole construction work was shrouded with secrecy.

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166. Tad Szulc, "How Kissinger did it", Imprints (Bombay), vol. XIV, no 6, Sept. 1974, p. 89.
167. This was revealed by President Nixon in his broadcast to the nation on January 25, 1972.
168. Keesing's Contemporary Archives, June 17-24, 1972, p. 25317.

First of its kind, Dr. Kissinger set his mission to Paris on May 31, 1971 with the first concession i.e. an agreed time limit (9 months) for the American troops withdrawal in exchange of a cease-fire and return of the POWs.¹⁶⁹ In spite of Nixon's recent disagreement to withdraw until Hanoi committed itself to a final settlement,¹⁷⁰ Kissinger took the risk of abandoning the "mutual withdrawal" demand for the first time with a view to encourage Hanoi so as to give up the insistence on Thieu's removal.¹⁷¹ Hanoi, however, failed to understand it.¹⁷² //

Instead, Hanoi came up with its 9-point programme which basically demanded U.S. withdrawal by 1971 in exchange of POWs; a political solution without U.S. intervention; and cease-fire only after the political solution.¹⁷³ On July 1, 1971, the

169. Szulc, n. 166, p.93.

170. Facts on File, vol.XXXII, n^o 1631, p. 67.

171. Szulc, n. 166, p.93.

172. Osborne, n. 138, p. 332.

173. Clark Clifford, "Is There a Sure Way Out of the War?", Current, March, 1972, p. 55, for text see Kissinger's Contemporary Archives, n. 168, pp. 25317-8

FRG submitted its 7-point programme (it was made public also) which covered only the problems of Vietnam as compared to the Hanoi plan covering whole of Indo-China.¹⁷⁴ The fundamental points of demand here were U.S. total troops withdrawal within a fixed time in exchange of POWs; grant of right of self-determination to South Vietnamese people; and solution of Vietnamese armed forces problem by Vietnamese themselves.¹⁷⁵ The difference between both the plans lay in the former asking U.S. forces to vacate by 1971 and the latter asking for a fixed date for withdrawal.¹⁷⁶ But the only important feature about these two ~~important issues about these two~~ programmes was that both insisted no more on overthrow of Saigon regime (but insisted on Thieu-Ky removal) before any type of negotiations get under way.¹⁷⁷ Secondly the deadline for withdrawal was to remain a private affair and should not be publicly announced.¹⁷⁸ This

174. For text see Keessing's Contemporary Archives, Feb. 5-12, 1972, p. 25079.

175. Mayevsky, n. 97, p. 30.

176. Ibid., p.31. and Parimal Kumar Das, India and the Vietnam War (New Delhi, 1972), p.V.

177. E.R. Lenart, "Widening Distrust", Far Eastern Economic Review, July 10, 1971, p.8.

178. Ibid.

also established a clear-cut demarcation between political and military problem with the latter given preference to be solved first. Hence they almost approached Dr. Kissinger's theory.¹⁷⁹

These two plans, even though suggested a little insincerity on the part of Hanoi and PRG towards striving for an agreement were taken sportively by Kissinger.¹⁸⁰ Meantime, he was approached by Le Duc Tho to prefer the Hanoi plan to the PRG one which indicated that a problem was certainly brewing up in Saigon over Thieu's re-election.¹⁸¹ Still, he continued the programme of phased withdrawal of troops and awaited the prospect of a detente with Moscow and Peking. In addition, he came to Paris on August 16, 1971 with another plan. This included an undefined political settlement and a provision for economic help which Hanoi and PRG were demanding.¹⁸² Along with that, the three points of May 31, 1971

179. Clifford, n. 173, p.56.

180. Szulc, n. 166, p.93.

181. Keesing's Contemporary Archives, n. 168, p.25318.

182. Szulc, n. 166, p.95.

remained in tact. This time his intention was to clearly admit of his conceding the demand of the North Vietnamese troops' withdrawal in exchange for Thieu's continuance of office. But Hanoi wanted to trouble Thieu in the coming elections of October 1971 and hence rejected the plan.¹⁸³

At this juncture Thieu's re-election fomented a serious controversy and the way he was re-elected necessarily told upon U.S. prestige. In fact, U.S. objective of implanting democracy in South Vietnam was seriously affected by this.¹⁸⁴ Secondly, two-way pressures from the public as well as from the military squad compelled Nixon to accelerate his peace-making process.¹⁸⁵ Meantime, Hanoi agreed to accept Ky in the proposed coalition Government instead of Thieu as its head. This step of compromise was well-received by Washington and Nixon submitted his October 11, 1971 plan which introduced further compromises.¹⁸⁶

183. Ibid.

184. "The Last Peace Plan", The Economist (London) Jan. 29, 1972, as quoted in Current, March 1972, p. 53.

185. Michael Malley, "Two-way Pressure", Far Eastern Economic Review, July 17, 1971, p. 6.

186. For text see Facts on File, vol. XXXII, no 1630, p. 46.

The Plan lowered the nine months deadline to ^{set} six months now for troops withdrawal and a concrete plan for election in South Vietnam by which Thieu would resign one month before elections. It also provided for an Indo-China-wide cease-fire.¹⁸⁷ The plan for elections faced many objections from all quarters as the NLF and North Vietnamese people were not prepared to agree to the continuance of Thieu in power for five months more than they demanded, because he might get ample time to rig the elections.¹⁸⁸ Secondly, the cease-fire throughout Indo-China was rejected by Hanoi because they would lose a lot of commanding positions territorially. Hence they declined to allow Saigon to win diplomatically while losing in the military front.¹⁸⁹ But, anyhow, NLF was given a place in the political structure of South Vietnam even though it enjoyed an opposition's role.¹⁹⁰

187. The Economist, n. 184, p. 48.
also see, Das, n. 176, pp.V-VI.

188. Das, n. 176, p. VI.
and Mayevsky, n. 97, p.32.

189. Clifford, n. 173, p. 55.

190. The Economist, n. 184, p. 54.

The plan was not revealed to Thieu because it did not carry any clause for North Vietnamese troops' withdrawal. Besides the proposal for Thieu's resignation would puzzle him. So Kissinger wanted to reveal this after he gets the assurance from him that he would resign before elections.¹⁹¹ In addition, the plan kept both the controversial aspects, such as North Vietnamese troops' withdrawal and the structure of a coalition government, most ambiguous. These two clauses acted as baits dangling in front of Hanoi and the FRG. Hanoi failed to take advantage of ^{the ambiguities} and so rejected them.¹⁹²

For a period of three months Hanoi and U.S.A. both kept on postponing the dates of the secret sessions and Hanoi busied in mounting forces on the military front.¹⁹³ So this continued reluctance of Hanoi at last compelled U.S.A. to "go public" on January 25, 1972 with the October plan and disclose that Kissinger had been holding public sessions since August 4, 1969. At least this satisfied the U.S. public.¹⁹⁴ Hanoi then retaliated

191. Szulc, n. 166, p.97.

192. Ibid., p.98.

193. Keesing's Contemporary Archives, n. 168, p.25318.

194. Ibid., p.25317. also see "Nixon tells world about behind scenes offer to Reds", U.S. News & World Report, vol. LXXII, 806, Feb.7, 1972, p.59. and Asian Almanac, vol.10, n97, p.5043.

by publishing its 9-point plan on January 31, 1972.¹⁹⁵

The announcement of the October, 1971
the
plan now brought about/worst verbal tussle
between Thieu and Washington.¹⁹⁶ Close on its
heels, came the foot-dragging in fixing the date
for holding talks. The main reason behind this
was Hanoi's planned offensive scheduled to be
launched on 30th March, 1972.¹⁹⁷ Meantime,
Nixon's trip to Peking on February 17, 1972
also brought no concrete dividends as China declined
to exert pressure on Hanoi and NLF. Rather Peking
asked Nixon to withdraw early.¹⁹⁸ All these
pressures induced Nixon to take strong offensive
against the Vietcong. But he did not want to
spoil the much-awaited trip to Moscow which was
supposed to help him in solving the problem.¹⁹⁹

✓ Dr. Henry Kissinger's trip to Moscow on
April 20, 1972 and subsequently of President Nixon's

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195. Keesing's Contemporary Archives, n.168, p.25317.
196. Szulc, n.166, p.98.
197. Mayevsky, n. 97, p.31. and The Economist, n.184, p.54.
198. A. Doak Barnett, "A Four Power balance unlike anything we have had in the past", U.S. News & World Report, vol.LXXII, no.10, March 6, 1972, p.19.
and Robert R. Bowie "Balk to Reality",
The Christian Science Monitor, March 3, 1972.
199. Szulc, n.166, p.101.

in May 1972 at last broke the ice. It is here that Dr. Kissinger in April 1972 extended the concession regarding North Vietnamese troops withdrawal. He suggested that these North Vietnamese troops coming after March 30, 1972 to South Vietnam only would go back to North Vietnam. Thus the proposal which he had hinted in May 31 and October 11 plans was made clear by him.²⁰⁰ In exchange, Thieu's continuance was demanded in order to avoid seeing that a communist government is being imposed on Saigon.²⁰¹ If a "genuine political solution" results into a red government, he may not have much to complain.²⁰² This Dr. Kissinger asked Mr. Brezhnev to transmit to Hanoi which she had failed so far to grasp. After being informed of this, Hanoi readily responded and sent its delegates to meet Dr. Kissinger

200. Ibid., p. 103. See Sinha, n. 90, p.19.

201. Singh, n.128, p.22. See footnote 128 above also.

202. Facts on file, n.127, p.481. See footnote 127 above. This was the first axiom on which the settlement was built upon, i.e. U.S.A. has to leave Vietnam sooner or later even at the expense of break with Saigon (Tzulc, p.89).

on May 2, 1972 after a long recess of seven and a half months.²⁰³

But the meeting was preceded by heavy fighting and bombing from both sides in spite of doubts that it might affect the coming Moscow summit of Nixon in May 1972. It served as the second axiom on which, the whole settlement was based i.e. a breakthrough in negotiations would come only after a final paroxysm of battle.²⁰⁴ Hence on May 8, 1972 around 2 PM after a long discussion, Nixon ordered the mining of Hanoi and Haiphong harbour in North Vietnam.²⁰⁵ This, however, did not affect the Moscow summit as Kissinger had already extended the concession regarding North Vietnamese troops withdrawal in April last.²⁰⁶

In May 1972, President Nixon showed the first gesture that POWs return was not the pre-condition to bombing halt. Secondly, he agreed that

203. Szulc, n.166, p.105.

204. Ibid, p.89.

205. "The President explains his new course in Indo-China", U.S. News & World Report, vol.LXXII, no.21, May 22, 1972, p.21.

206. Szulc, n.166, p.107.

a three-part electoral commission can also escape U.S. censure.²⁰⁷ Thus, excepting on the question of Thieu's removal both the stands of U.S. and Hanoi were almost similar. This shows that the U.S. private negotiating position was more flexible than its public posture. // The major pronouncement made by Dr. Kissinger in Peking after this was that American disengagement should take place first and then it is up to history to decide as to what would follow in South Vietnam.²⁰⁸

~~These~~ concessions were granted by the U.S.A. within two months only. Hence this also showed her willingness to get away from the Vietnam tangle. // In fact, Washington long since had been raising a diplomatic tussle against Saigon to end the war.²⁰⁹ Besides, the military devastations led to ecological destructions in Vietnam. The economy of Vietnam almost crumbled. So there were demands from all quarters to end the war.²¹⁰ The U.S.

207. Ibid, p.109.

208. Ibid, p.111.

209. Ibid, p.113.

210. Paul R. Ehrlich and John P. Holdren, in Saturday Review, Dec.4,1971, as quoted in the Current, Jan.1972, p.63.

Congress adopted a strong resolution to end it.²¹¹ The student revolt thickened due to their protests against war in Vietnam,²¹² Besides the several conditions in 1972 in world politics compelled U.S. to change her policy. Moreover, the U.S. morale was also pinched and conscience pricked after such destructions in Vietnam.²¹³ On top of revolt within top military officials this, the bureaucratic (the difference of opinion among U.S. military generals in pursuing the war at Vietnam and their varied calculations regarding its outcomes) at last led U.S.A. to suffer defeat in the hands of small countries like Vietnam.²¹⁴ The prospects of a detente in the world politics persuaded U.S.A. to count on her last days in the area,²¹⁵ The U.S. hope that economic needs would compel the communists to slowly change their stand, had to be ultimately abandoned.²¹⁶ In fact, the two topmost U.S. objectives behind her presence

211. Arthur Schlesinger Jr., "Not this war-power Bills", The New Republic, Feb.5,1972, as quoted in Current, ~~Marx1972xxxxp62x~~ March 1972, p.61.

212. David L. Warren, "A State of quiet Calamity", Commonweal, March 3, 1972, as quoted in Current, April 1972, p.3.

213. Yarmolinsky, n.58, p.90.

214. The Economist, n.184, p.50. and Yarmolinsky, n. 58, p.91.

215. Robert R. Bowie, "Back to Reality", Christian Science Monitor,/quoted in Current, April 1972, p.57. and Yarmolinsky, n.58, p.91.

216. Mochtar Lubis, "A Bold New Conception For Southeast Asia", Pacific Community, vol.2, no.1, Oct.1970, p.93.

/March 3, 1972

in Vietnam i.e. to stop the expansion of communism and implant democracy seemed to be defeated after October 1971 elections in South Vietnam and March 1972 offensive.²¹⁷ The unproductive negotiations themselves irritated Washington and she was compelled to bring about a solution at last through conceding her previous stands in the negotiations.²¹⁸

After thus the U.S.A. decided to grant substantial concessions, the other side was now persuaded to bend a little. In this respect, China's contributions are worth-mentioning. China, in fact, advised Madam Binh (IRG delegation chief) in July 1972 to desist from making demands for Thieu's resignation as a pre-condition to any negotiations.²¹⁹ Hence the negotiations by July 19, 1972 got a clear tinge of optimism.

Mr. Thieu was now persuaded to reconcile to granting such concessions as U.S.A. had conceded. He was not informed

217. The Economist, n.184, pp. 51-3.

218. Clark Clifford, "Is There A Sure Way out of the War?" Current, March 1972, p.55. and Mayevsky, n. 97, p.28.

219. Szulc, n.166, p.113.

about U.S. agreement on tripartite electoral commission. Only North Vietnamese troops continuance in exchange for his stay in office was informed to him for seeking his approval.²²⁰ The pressures laid on him were Nixon's need for peace for his forth-coming re-election and the U.S. military attacks on North Vietnam to "reduce Hanoi to its knees".²²¹ Gen. Alexander Haig was sent to Saigon to persuade Thieu but Thieu rejected all these agreements outright as unacceptable. Hence Gen. Haig had to come back empty-handed.²²²

At this juncture, Henry Kissinger's duty increased three-fold. He had to keep persuading Hanoi and ask ~~her~~ not to mind for the delay. Secondly, he had to convince Nixon to concede these "agreed bargaining chips" and ask him to pressurize Thieu to accept these terms. Thirdly, he himself had to persuade and convince Thieu to

220. Tad Szulc, "How Kissinger did it", Imprint, vol. XIV, no. 7, p. 41.

221. Ibid.

222. Kissinger's Contemporary Archives, Feb. 19-25, 1973, p. 25745.

agreeing on these negotiated terms.²²³ Through his contacts in Moscow, he persuaded Hanoi to wait. Ambassador Bunker was sent to Saigon to persuade Thieu. And he himself was able to persuade President Nixon. As Nixon agreed, Kissinger took a historic decision to go ahead without Thieu's concurrence.²²⁴ The plea was that they could not risk the collapse of the peace efforts with elections only seven weeks away.

Meantime, on September 11, 1972 Vietcong had submitted a peace plan for ceasefire without any reference to the removal of Thieu. On September 15, 1972 U.S.A. submitted its own proposal with a tripartite electoral commission and without any demand for North Vietnamese troops withdrawal.²²⁵ Out of the mixture of these two came out the famous October 8, 1972 plan for peace²²⁶ which was submitted by Mr. Tho at the secret talks in Paris. The highlights of the plan were a ceasefire in place,

223. Szulc, n.58, p.43.

224. Ibid. p.45.

225. Ibid.

226. See Appendix-I for the summarised text.

release of the POWs within sixty days, withdrawal of U.S. troops within sixty days, re-unification of Vietnam, four-party and two-party Joint Military Commissions, formation of International Commission for Control and Supervision, International Conference within thirty days, recognition of Cambodian and Laotian integrity, post war reconstruction programme and "an administrative structure" to solve the political issue.²²⁷ Dr. Kissinger accepted this document as the basis for subsequent negotiations as it separated the political problem from the military.²²⁸ But he coined his own words like "National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord"²²⁹ instead of "administrative structure" and hammered out the language of the agreement.²³⁰ Excepting on two issues such as release of aviation prisoners from South Vietnam and cessation of

227. Facts on file, Vol. XXXII, no.1669, p.838. also see "Peace Soon?" Frontier, Nov.4, 1972, p.1. also "Vietnam: Weekly Round Table (New Delhi), Nov. 12, 1972, p.14.

228. Szulc, n.58, p.47. also see Mira Sinha, "Elusive Peace" Weekly Round Table, Nov.12, 1972, p.17.

229. Szulc, n.58, p.47.

230. Ibid.

foreign military aid to both South Vietnam and NLF, the agreement was made ready by October 26, 1972.²³¹

But the delay in signing the Agreement started another set of controversy at this stage.²³²

The official version of the reason behind U.S. delay putting

in signature was that Washington wanted sometime

to persuade Thieu.²³³ But Thieu disagreed to this

in spite of Kissinger's fruitless efforts at Saigon

for complete four days since he was ignored right

from the beginning and was never informed about

such developments happening in secrecy.²³⁴ However,

due to this delay, U.S.A. was charged of having the

objective of wresting more concessions from Hanoi,

rushing arms to South Vietnam, impressing upon

the public before forthcoming Presidential elections,

etc.²³⁵ Some said that U.S.A. had totally no

desire to reach any settlement, and the prospect

of a final agreement from this seemed remote.²³⁶

231. Facts on File, n.227, p.837.

232. V.K. Krishna Menon, "American Duplicity", Weekly Round Table, Nov.12, 1972, p.20.

233. Facts on File, n.227, pp.839-40.

234. Dayabhai Vallabhbai Patel, "Prospects of a Ceasefire" Weekly Round Table, Nov.12,1972, p.15.

235. Frontier, n.227, p.1. and Singh, n.128, p.24.

236. Menon, n.232, p.20.

To them, it proved the "face-saving" nature of the agreement.²³⁷ U.S.A. was also accused of giving more importance to her puppets. She was asked by the world public not to wait to pacify Thieu.²³⁸

(On the other hand, North Vietnam demanded the signing of the Agreement to take place as quickly as possible even though they conceded some important bargaining chips here like the removal of Thieu and end of U.S. aid to Saigon.²³⁹ This is because this prospect of peace would strengthen Nixon at home and he would get ample finances to wage the war again.²⁴⁰ Besides, with the prospect of a super power detente hanging over its head, Hanoi could not sit idle but hurried up for an early settlement.²⁴¹ The plan, however, remained without being signed till October 31, 1972.

The October agreement according to Nixon, fulfilled all three fundamental objectives pronounced

237. Ibid. p.21.

238. Ibid.

239. "Vietnam's Prospect of Peace", The Economist, Nov.4,1972 and Singh, n.128, p.23. p.16.

240. The Economist, n.239, p.16.

241. Ibid.

by him on May 8, 1972 such as, cease-fire, return of the POWs and the right of self-determination to the South Vietnamese people.²⁴² In the process, U.S.A. also conceded many points. Hence the agreement was hailed as "highly favourable" to Hanoi and NLF.²⁴³ The Agreement prescribed non-intervention by the U.S.A. in elections in South Vietnam. But both military and political stalemate was implicit in other provisions according as one would interpret them.²⁴⁴ The U.S.A., it seems, deliberately accepted such an ambiguous agreement, so that its own involvement would be ended in Vietnam but the ^{U.S.} stronghold would strengthen in Thailand.²⁴⁵ So Hanoi would not by force, but by vote, would remove the Saigon Government. Thus, U.S. had to give in at last as events had already overtaken Thieu.²⁴⁶ U.S. disengagement in South Vietnam was thus a product of time. It was

242. Department of State Bulletin, vol.LXVI, May 29, 1972, pp. 747-50.

243. ~~Ibid, p.16~~ Patel, n.234, p.16.

244. Sinha, n.228, pp. 17-8. and Singh, n.128, p.23.

245. Sinha, n.228, p.18.

246. Ibid, p.19.

badly needed by the people of the region for their mutual co-existence.²⁴⁷

/Kissinger's efforts at peace-making was thus abandoned here with the October agreement still suffering from some important textual differences and still incomplete without provisions for civilian prisoners' release and cessation of helping military equipments.²⁴⁸ to Saigon. However, it was made public first by Hanoi on October 25, 1972 and Kissinger conformed it on October 26 that "peace is within reach in a matter of weeks or less".²⁴⁹ This served the benefit of warning Saigon, assuring Hanoi and soothing the U.S. public that a final agreement, anyhow, would be signed.²⁵⁰

Two tasks remained for Kissinger. First, Thieu was to be further persuaded and Nixon to be convinced not to change this stand after his elections.²⁵¹ Gen. Haig helped him in persuading

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247. Singh, n.128, p.24. It was clear that the U.S.A. had also the objective of abandoning both Cambodia and Laos in mind as Kissinger induced them at this stage to agree to this October plan since Hanoi has promised to leave these two countries after final Agreement. (Szulc, n.58, p.53).
248. Szulc, n.59, p.51.
249. "After a cease-fire stumbling blocks to Vietnam Peace" U.S. News & World Report, vol. LXXIII, no.19, Nov.6, 1972, p.14.
250. Szulc, n.58, p.53.
251. Ibid, p.56.

Thieu.²⁵² But another development in the meantime puzzled him more and that was North Vietnam's "perfidy" in showing on-and-off attitude and presenting the texts of the protocol on December 14, 1972 which were quite unsatisfactory to U.S.A.²⁵³ The differences gradually widened on the POWs issue, the Demilitarized Zone issue, the truce supervision mechanics and replacement of the term "administrative structure".²⁵⁴ Hence, bombing was resumed on December 18, 1972 and continued upto the final agreement was at last planned to be worked out. The bombing was essentially to enlighten Thieu that such brutalizations on North Vietnam could no longer continue at the face of heavy internal and domestic odds.²⁵⁵ On December 21, Thieu showed his helplessness to Nixon in a letter which said he never believed that President of U.S.A. would deal in such a manner with an ally.²⁵⁶ So it seemed Nixon gave an assurance

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252. Keesing's Contemporary Archives, n.222, p.25745.
253. "Why Vietnam war drags on", U.S. News and World Report, vol.LXXIV, no.1, Jan.1, 1973, p.9.
254. Szulc, n.58, p.59.
255. Ibid.
256. Ibid.

to Thieu that the U.S. would "react immediately and vigorously" to any large-scale North Vietnamese offensive. Thus he persuaded Thieu to reconcile to the final Agreement which was then going under keen scrutinization.²⁵⁷ This assurance was also repeated in Paris one week before the final agreement was signed on January 27, 1973. There was nothing secret about it.²⁵⁸ Kissinger, however, on January 24, 1974 denied that there has been any such secret understandings with Saigon.²⁵⁹

Meanwhile, Hanoi, after the heavy bombardment, proposed to meet in the first week of January 1973. On January 7, 1973 both sides met and by January 13 the agreement was reached based mostly on American terms. The agreement ~~on~~^{on} the POWs, the DMZ, the National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord etc. ran on the U.S. lines. The reference to military help to Saigon

257. "Saigon leader denies secret pact with U.S.", Hindustan Times (New Delhi), April 15, 1975.

258. Ibid.

259. Newsday (Long Island) April 16, 1975 as quoted in "Kissinger's resignation demanded", Hindustan Times, April 18, 1975.

was skillfully avoided.²⁶⁰ A truce on Laos was scheduled to be reached by twenty days and not by thirty days as scheduled before. Nothing was mentioned on Cambodia.²⁶¹ By January 23, 1973 the agreement was ready and Mr. Tho and Dr. Kissinger signed on it. The text of the agreement was published in Washington on January 24, 1973. But on January 27, 1973 only the four parties (U.S.A., Hanoi, South Vietnam and NLF) signed at 11.00 A.M. and the two parties (U.S.A. and Hanoi) at 3.45 P.M. The Agreement came into force from the midnight of January 27, 1973.²⁶²

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260. Szulc, n.58, p.59.

261. Ibid.

262. Keessing's Contemporary Archives, March 19-25, 1973, For the text see pp. 25782-4, signature ceremony p. 25789.

C H A P T E R - I V

C O N C L U S I O N

The signing of the Paris Peace Agreement of January 1973 was well-judged and well-timed. Some say it should have come a little earlier and others are of the opinion that it should have come a little later. The opinions likewise vary. But one thing is certain that there could never have been a better agreement for both the sides, than this, whether signed a little earlier or a little later. //

There were varied reasons leading to making this agreement a reality. Kissinger's concealment strategy stood head and shoulders above anything in this respect. The prospect of strengthening the detente injected seriousness in their efforts. Besides, the immeasurable losses on both sides at a time when global economic crisis was at its peak, undoubtedly accelerated the process of peace-making in the region. On the whole, a change in the balance of power among world nations led to the signing of the Agreement at last. The establishment of China as a super power and the widening of the cleavage between China and the Soviet Union

prompted the U.S.A. to visualise the balance of power conflict in a three-cornered perspective. Similarly, the U.S.S.R. and China were engrossed in the problems of their respective areas of influence. Their national interests figured prominently in the agenda which did not always converge ~~coverage~~. As such the spread of friendly relationship and promotion of detente thrived in the international sphere. In fact, this may be rightly taken as the beginning of a new era where national interests would surpass all other supranational interests hitherto held important.

A critical assessment of the final agreement, per se, would lead us to conclude that it has in all its respects pronounced the victory of the vietnamese people. Politically, it provides for a solid political and legal foundations for a democratic and peaceable development of South Vietnam, for the establishment of genuine independence and opens up opportunities for pursuing a policy of national reconciliation and concord. It establishes the will of the people to attaining one's own

rights. Article 1 of the Agreement, at the outset clearly establishes the "independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity" of Vietnam. This is what the North Vietnamese, as well as, the South Vietnamese people were fighting for all through the ages. They were fighting for the re-unification of Vietnam and such a provision (the Article 15) finds a place in the Agreement. Besides, the setting up of a National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord consisting of the "three" segments of South Vietnamese political life, is a significant step towards equal representation. The guarantee of "genuinely free and democratic general elections" (Article 9 (b)) is another triumph of the people of Vietnam.

As regards military solutions, the North Vietnamese objective to keep the country away from American intervention came to ^{fruition} ~~fruition~~ when the U.S. and the allied forces were withdrawn from the country within sixty days of the signing of the Agreement (Article 5). The U.S.A., as well as, the Saigon Governments'

complaint that the North Vietnamese troops were also foreign interventionists' in South Vietnam, has not been given much weightage. This suggests that the U.S.A. has reconciled to the fact ~~of~~ that the NLF and the Vietcong were as ^{much} part of the South Vietnamese political life. They were by no means infiltrators from the North. Peaceful co-existence of both the communists and the non-communists has been visualised. Similar is the situation with all the rest of the Indo-Chinese countries. They have been by any external power assured of non interference in their internal affairs.

It goes without saying, that ever since ^{of October 8, 1972} the non-acceptance of the peace proposals, North Vietnam has ~~of October 8, 1972~~ lost many of its bargaining chips. Still the loss seems to be quite minimal and the balance of advantage ~~tilts decidedly~~ in favour of North Vietnam. The North Vietnamese did not insist on the implementation of the NLF political programme; They have not asked for Thieu's removal and they have accepted South Vietnam, though temporarily, as

a separate political entity. But on the other hand, nowhere has the legitimacy of the Government of South Vietnam been accepted in the Agreement. Their claim that in South Vietnam there was only one constitutional and popularly elected government recognized by a number of countries, did not, in any way, affect the functioning of another government claiming to be popular. This could only be decided by a countrywide "genuinely free and democratic general election". Thus, the Saigon regime was accepted, though indirectly, as a provisional make-shift government, till the elections took place. Similarly, some say that the withdrawal of the U.S. and allied forces recorded a triumph of the communists. Some others are of the opinion that Thieu's continuance in power and the clean prospects of calling the U.S. forces back again were the gains on the part of the Saigon regime. But these petty scrambles, notwithstanding, the world-wide realisation of the basic truth as evidenced in this Agreement that Vietnam belongs to the Vietnamese, marked the triumph of the Vietnamese people as a whole.

The effects of the Paris Agreement are varied. It has shown that it is not only necessary but also possible to solve the most disputed and the knottiest problems through negotiations. It has also created new possibilities for strengthening detente and further limiting the arms race. // Peace would thus be strengthened among its own participants in the region. (This would also encourage those engaged in peace talks in the middle east to bring about the solution there). Besides, the talks have revealed both the North Vietnamese and the NLF representatives firmly and consistently defending their vital national interests with a constructive and realistic approach. Certainly, it is a tribute to their healthy nationalist feeling and the credits are all due to them. On the other hand, the United States henceforth would be quite cautious before getting involved in the conflicts abroad. (Lastly, the Agreement has proved that International Communist movement has undoubtedly failed to attain its purpose of making all countries 'red'. //

A P P E N D I C E S

A P P E N D I X - I

The America-North Vietnam negotiated peace proposals agreed to by both sides on October 22 (as claimed by Hanoi), provide, inter alia :-

- (i) The USA respects the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Vietnam, as recognized by the 1954 Geneva Agreements;
- (ii) Twenty-four hours after the signing of the Agreement will come the cease-fire throughout South Vietnam. The USA will stop all its military activities and end the bombing and mining of North Vietnam. Within 60 days, there will be a total withdrawal from South Vietnam of troops and military personnel of the United States and its allies;
- (iii) the two South Vietnamese parties shall not accept the introduction of troops, military advisers and military personnel, armaments, munitions and war materials into South Vietnam, but will be permitted to make periodical replacements of the same. The United States will not continue its military involvement, or intervene in the internal affairs of South Vietnam;
- (iv) the return of all captured and detained persons belonging to the parties will take

place in parallel with the withdrawal of the American troops;

- (v) The South Vietnamese shall decide for themselves their political future through genuinely free and democratic elections under international supervision. The United States is not committed to any political tendency or to any personality in South Vietnam and does not seek to impose a pro-American regime in Saigon;
- (vi) the reunification of Vietnam shall be carried out step by step through peaceful means;
- (vii) a four-party joint military commission and a joint military commission of the two South Vietnamese parties will be formed. An international commission of control and supervision will be established. An international guarantee conference will be convened within 30 days of the signing of the Agreement.
- (viii) North Vietnam, PRG, South Vietnam and the United States shall strictly respect the Cambodian and Laos peoples' independence, sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity and neutrality; and
- (ix) the ending of the war in Vietnam and the restoration of peace will create conditions for establishing a new, equal and mutually beneficial

relationship between the DRVN and the USA, and the United States will contribute towards healing the wounds of war and to post-war reconstruction in DRVN and throughout Indo-China.

A P P E N D I X - II

AGREEMENT ON ENDING THE VIETNAM WAR

- 27 January 1973

The Government of the United States of America,
with the concurrence of the Government of the Republic
of Vietnam,

The Government of the Democratic Republic of
Vietnam, with the concurrence of the Provisional
Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South
Vietnam,

With a view to ending the war and restoring
peace in Vietnam on the basis of respect for the
Vietnamese people's fundamental rights and the South
Vietnamese people's right to self-determination, and
to contributing to the consolidation of peace in Asia
and the World,

Have agreed on the following provisions and
undertake to respect and to implement them:

Chapter - 1

THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE'S FUNDAMENTAL NATIONAL RIGHTS

Article 1

The United States and all other countries respect
the independence, sovereignty, unity, and territorial
integrity of Vietnam as recognized by the 1954 Geneva
Agreements on Vietnam.

Chapter - II

CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES - WITHDRAWAL
OF TROOPS

Article 2

A cease-fire shall be observed throughout South Vietnam as of 2400 hours GMT, on 27 January, 1973.

At the same hour, the United States will stop all its military activities against the territory of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam by ground, air and naval forces, wherever they may be based, and end the mining of the territorial waters, ports, harbors, and waterways of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The United States will remove, permanently deactivate or destroy all the mines in the territorial waters, ports, harbors, and waterways of North Vietnam as soon as agreement goes into effect.

The complete cessation of hostilities mentioned in this article shall be durable and without limit of time.

Article 3

The parties undertake to maintain the cease-fire and to ensure a lasting and stable peace.

As soon as the cease-fire goes into effect:

(a) The United States and those of the other foreign countries allied with the United States and the Republic of Vietnam shall remain in-place pending the

implementation of the plan of troop withdrawal. The four-party Joint Military Commission described in Article 16 shall determine the modalities.

(b) The armed forces of the two South Vietnamese parties shall remain in-place. The two-party Joint Military Commission described in Article 17 shall determine the areas controlled by each party and the modalities of stationing.

(c) The regular forces of all services and the irregular forces of the parties in South Vietnam shall stop all offensive activities against each other and shall strictly abide by the following stipulations:

- All acts of force on the ground, in the air, and on the sea shall be prohibited;

- All hostile acts, terrorism and reprisals by both sides will be banned.

Article 4

The United States will not continue its military involvement or intervene in the internal affairs of South Vietnam.

Article 5

Within sixty days of the signing of this agreement, there will be a total withdrawal from South Vietnam of troops, military advisers, and military

personnel, including technical military personnel and military personnel associated with the pacification program, armaments, munitions, and war materials of the United States and those of the other foreign countries mentioned in Article 3 (a). Advisers from the above-mentioned countries to all paramilitary organizations and the police force will also be withdrawn within the same period of time.

Article 6

The dismantlement of all military basis in South Vietnam of the United States and of the other foreign countries mentioned in Article 3 (a) shall be completed within sixty days of the signing of this agreement.

Article 7

From the enforcement of the cease-fire to the formation of the government provided for in Article 9 (b) and 14 of this agreement, the two South Vietnamese parties shall not accept the introduction of troops, military advisers, and military personnel including technical military personnel, armaments, munitions, and war materials into South Vietnam.

The two South Vietnamese parties shall be permitted to make periodic replacement of armaments, munitions and war material which have been destroyed,

damaged, worn out or used up after the cease-fire, on the basis of piece-for piece, of the same characteristics and properties, under the supervision of the Joint Military Commission of the two south Vietnamese parties and of the International Commission of Control and supervision.

C h a p t e r - I I I

THE RETURN OF CAPTURED MILITARY PERSONNEL AND FOREIGN CIVILIANS, AND CAPTURED AND DETAINED VIETNAMESE CIVILIAN PERSONNEL

Article 8

(a) The return of captured military personnel and foreign civilians of the parties shall be carried out simultaneously with and completed not later than the same day as the troop withdrawal mentioned in Article 5. The parties shall exchange complete lists of the above-mentioned captured military personnel and foreign civilians on the day of the signing of this agreement.

(b) The parties shall help each other to get information about those military personnel and foreign civilians of the parties missing in action, to determine the location and take care of the graves of the dead so as to facilitate the exhumation and repatriation of the remains, and to take any such other measures as

may be required to get information about those still considered missing in action.

(c) The question of the return of Vietnamese civilian personnel captured and detained in South Vietnam will be resolved by the two South Vietnamese parties on the basis of the principles of Article 21 (b) of the agreement on the cessation of hostilities in Vietnam of July 20, 1954. The two South Vietnamese parties will do so in a spirit of national reconciliation and concord, with a view to ending hatred and enmity, in order to ease suffering and to reunite families. The two South Vietnamese parties will do their utmost to resolve this question within ninety days after the cease-fire comes into effect.

Chapter - IV

THE EXERCISE OF THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE PEOPLE'S RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION

Article 9

The Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam undertake to respect the following principles for the exercise of the South Vietnamese people's right to self-determination:

(a) The South Vietnamese people's right to self-determination is sacred, inalienable, and shall be

respected by all countries.

(b) The South Vietnamese people shall decide themselves the political future of South Vietnam through genuinely free and democratic general elections under international supervision.

(c) Foreign countries shall not impose any political tendency or personality on the Vietnamese people.

Article 10

The two South Vietnamese parties undertake to respect the cease-fire and maintain peace in South Vietnam, settle all matters of contention through negotiations, and avoid all armed conflict.

Article 11

Immediately after the cease-fire, the two South Vietnamese parties will:

- Achieve national ~~xx~~ reconciliation and concord, end hatred and enmity, prohibit all acts of reprisal and discrimination against individuals or organizations that have collaborated with one side or the other;
- Ensure the democratic liberties of the people: personal freedom, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of meeting, freedom of organization, freedom of political activities, freedom of belief, freedom of movement, freedom of residence, freedom of work, right to property ownership, and right to free enterprise.

Article 12

(a) Immediately after the cease-fire, the two South Vietnamese parties shall hold consultations in a spirit of national reconciliation and concord, mutual respect, and mutual non-elimination to set up a National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord of three segments. The Council shall operate on the principle of unanimity. After the National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord has assumed its functions, the two South Vietnamese parties will consult about the formation of Councils at lower levels. The two South Vietnamese parties shall sign an agreement on the internal matters of South Vietnam as soon as possible and do their utmost to accomplish this within ninety days after the cease-fire comes into effect, in keeping with South Vietnamese people's aspirations for peace, independence and democracy.

(b) The National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord shall have the task of promoting the two South Vietnamese parties' implementation of this agreement, achievement of National Reconciliation and Concord and ensurance of democratic liberties.

The National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord will organize the free and democratic general elections provided for in Article 9 (b) and decide the procedures and modalities of these general elections. The institutions for which the general elections are to be held will be agreed upon through consultations between the two South Vietnamese parties. The National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord will also decide the procedures and modalities of such local elections as the two South Vietnamese parties agree upon.

Article 13

The question of vietnamese Armed forces in South Vietnam shall be settled by two South Vietnamese parties in a spirit of National Reconciliation and Concord, equality and mutual respect, without foreign interference, in accordance with the postwar situation. Among the questions to be discussed by the two South Vietnamese parties are steps to reduce their military effectives and to demobilize the troops being reduced. The two South Vietnamese parties will accomplish this as soon as possible.

Article 14

South Vietnam will pursue a foreign policy of peace and independence. It will be prepared to establish relations with all countries irrespective

of their political and social systems on the basis of mutual respect for independence and sovereignty and accept economic and technical aid from any country with no political conditions attached. The acceptance of military aid by South Vietnam in the future shall come under the authority of the Government set up after the general elections in South Vietnam provided for in Article 9 (b).

Chapter - V

THE REUNIFICATION OF VIETNAM RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH VIETNAM

Article 15

The reunification of Vietnam shall be carried out step by step through peaceful means on the basis of discussions and agreements between North and South Vietnam, without coercion or annexation by either party, and without foreign interference. The time for reunification will be agreed upon by North and South Vietnam pending reunification:

(a) The military demarcation line between the two zones at the 17th parallel is only provisional and not a political or territorial boundary, as provided for in paragraph 6 of the final declaration of the 1954 Geneva Conference.

(b) North and South Vietnam shall respect the demilitarized zone on either side on the provisional military demarcation line.

(c) North and South Vietnam shall promptly start negotiations with a view to re-establishing normal relations in various fields. Among the questions to be negotiated are the modalities of civilian movement across the provisional military demarcation line.

(d) North and South Vietnam shall not join any military alliance or military bloc and shall not allow foreign powers to maintain military bases, troops, military advisers, and military personnel on their respective territories, as stipulated in the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Vietnam.

Chapter - VI

THE JOINT MILITARY COMMISSIONS, THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF CONTROL AND SUPERVISION, THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Article 16

(a) The parties participating in the Paris Conference on Vietnam shall immediately designate representatives to form a four-party Joint Military Commission with the task of ensuring joint action by the parties in implementing the following provisions of this agreement 2 para 1 and 3 (a) & (c), 5, 6 and 8(a) & (b).

(b) The four-party Joint Military Commission shall operate in accordance with the principle of consultations and unanimity. Disagreements shall be referred to the International Commission of Control and Supervision.

(c) The four-party Joint Military Commission shall begin operating immediately after the signing of this agreement and end its activities in sixty days, after the completion of the withdrawal of U.S. troops and those of the other foreign countries mentioned in Article 3 (a) and completion of the return of captured military personnel and foreign civilians of the parties.

(d) The four parties shall agree immediately on the organization, the working procedure, means of activity, and expenditures of the four-party Joint Military Commission.

Article 17

(a) The two South Vietnamese parties shall immediately designate representatives to form a two-party Joint Military Commission with the task of ensuring joint action by the two South Vietnamese parties in implementing the following provisions of this agreement: 2 para 1 and 3 (b) & (c), 7, 8(d) and 13.

(b) Disagreements shall be referred to the International Commission of Control and Supervision.

(c) After the signing of this agreement, the two-party Joint Military Commission shall agree immediately on the measures and organization aimed at enforcing the cease-fire and preserving Peace in South Vietnam.

Article 18

(a) After the signing of this agreement, an International Commission of Control and Supervision shall be established immediately.

(b) Until the International Conference provided for in Article 19 makes definitive arrangements, the International Commission of Control and Supervision shall report to the four parties on matters concerning the control and supervision of the implementation of the following provisions of this agreement: 2 para 1, 3 (a) & (c), 5 and 6. Regarding the return of captured military personnel and foreign civilians of the parties, the International Commission of Control and Supervision shall form control teams for carrying out its tasks. The four parties shall agree immediately on the location and operation of these teams. The parties will facilitate their operation.

(c) Until the International Conference makes definitive agreements, the International Commission of Control and Supervision will report to the two South Vietnamese parties on matters concerning the control and supervision of the implementation of the following provisions of this agreement: 2 para 1 when the four-party Joint Military Commission has ended its activities, 3(b) & (c), 7, 8(c), 9(b) and 13.

The International Commission of Control and Supervision shall form control teams for carrying out its tasks. The two South Vietnamese parties shall agree immediately on the location and operation of these teams. The two South Vietnamese parties will facilitate their operation.

(d) The International Commission of Control and Supervision shall be composed of representatives of four countries: Canada, Hungary, Indonesia and Poland. The chairmanship of this commission will rotate among the members for specific periods to be determined by the commission.

(e) The International Commission of Control and Supervision shall carry out its tasks in accordance with the principle of respect for the sovereignty of South Vietnam.

(f) The International Commission of Control and Supervision shall carry out its tasks in accordance with the principle of consultations and unanimity.

(g) The International Commission of Control and Supervision shall begin operating when a cease-fire comes into force in Vietnam. As regards the provision in Article 18 (b) concerning the four parties, the International Commission of Control and Supervision shall end its activities when the Commission's tasks of control and supervision regarding these provisions have been fulfilled. As regards the provisions in Article 18 (c) concerning the two South Vietnamese parties, the International Commission of Control and Supervision shall end its activities on the request of the government formed after the general elections in South Vietnam provided for in Article 9 (b).

(h) The four parties shall agree immediately on the organization, means of activity, and expenditure of the International Commission of Control and Supervision. The relationship between the International Commission and the International Conference will be agreed upon by the International Commission and the International Conference.

Article 19

The parties agree on the convening of an International Conference within thirty days of the

signing of this agreement to acknowledge the signed agreements; to guarantee the ending of the war, the maintenance of peace in Vietnam, the respect of the Vietnamese people's fundamental national rights, and the South Vietnamese people's right to self-determination; and to contribute to and guarantee peace in Indochina.

The United States and Democratic Republic of Vietnam, on behalf of the parties participating in the Paris conference on Vietnam, will propose to the following parties that they participate in this International Conference: The People's Republic of China, the Republic of France, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom, the four countries of the International Commission of Control and Supervision, and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, together with the parties participating in the Paris Conference on Vietnam.

Chapter - VII

REGARDING CAMBODIA AND LAOS

Article 20

(a) The parties participating in the Paris Conference on Vietnam shall strictly respect the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Cambodia and the 1962 Geneva Agreement on Laos, which recognized the Cambodian and the Lao

peoples' fundamental national rights, i.e., the independence, sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity of these countries. The parties shall respect the neutrality of Cambodia and Laos.

The parties participating in the Paris Conference on Vietnam undertake to refrain from using the territory of Cambodia and the territory of Laos to encroach on the sovereignty and security of one another and of other countries.

(b) Foreign countries shall put an end to all military activities in Cambodia and Laos, totally withdraw from and refrain from reintroducing into these two countries troops, military advisers and military personnel, armaments, munitions and war material.

(c) The internal affairs of Cambodia and Laos shall be settled by the people of these countries without foreign interference.

(d) The problems existing between the Indochinese countries ~~are~~ shall be settled by the Indochinese parties on the basis of respect for each other's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity, and non-interference in each other's internal affairs.

Chapter - VIII

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

Article 21

The United States anticipates that this agreement will usher in an era of reconciliation with the

Democratic Republic of Vietnam as with all the peoples of Indo-china. In pursuance of its traditional policy, the United States will contribute to healing the wounds of war and to postwar reconstruction of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and throughout Indochina.

Article 22

The ending of the war, the restoration of peace in Vietnam, and the strict implementation will create conditions for establishing a new, equal and mutually beneficial relationship between the United States and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on the basis of respect for each other's independence and sovereignty, and non-interference in each other's internal affairs. At the same time this will ensure stable peace in Vietnam and contribute to the preservation of lasting peace in Indochina and Southeast Asia.

Chapter - IX

OTHER PROVISIONS

Article 23

The Paris Agreement on ending the war and restoring peace in Vietnam shall enter into force

upon signature of this document by the Secretary of the Government of the United States of America and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and upon signature of a document in the same terms by the Secretary of State of the Government of the United States of America, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Government of the Republic of Vietnam, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam. The agreement and the protocols to it shall be strictly implemented by all the parties concerned.

Done in Paris this twenty-seventh day of January, one thousand nine hundred and seventy-three, in Vietnamese and English. The Vietnamese and English texts are official and equally authentic.

For the Government of the
United States of America

William P. Rogers
Secretary of State

For the Government of the
Republic of Vietnam

Tran Van Lam
Minister for Foreign Affairs

For the Government of the
Democratic Republic of
Vietnam

Nguyen Duy Trinh
Minister for Foreign
Affairs

For the Provisional Revolutionary
Government of the Republic of
South Vietnam

Nguyen Thi Binh
Minister for Foreign Affairs

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