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Nixon Says The Bombing To Continue

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The White House said yesterday that the United States will continue its heavy bombing of North Vietnam and that the next step to end the Vietnam war is "totally" up to the North Vietnamese.

At Key Biscayne, Fla., where President Nixon has gone to spend the Christmas holiday, White House press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler said Mr. Nixon is "determined" to continue his current policy until North Vietnam decides to resume negotiations "in a spirit of good will and in a constructive attitude."

"If they do that, we can have a very rapid settlement of the situation," Ziegler said.

State department officials said privately that numerous protests and criticism of the American bombing have been received from foreign officials and governments. But the department has acknowledged only a few of them. It said apologies have been made to the Polish government for damage to a Polish ship in Haiphong harbor, and to the Egyptian government for damage to its embassy in Hanoi.

The Australian government, which had combat troops in Vietnam until last year, was reported to have sent a message to Mr. Nixon

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Thursday saying that Australia is opposed to the resumption of the bombing of the North.

The White House refused to comment on a criticism made by Pope Paul VI who mentioned the "painful delay" in ending the war, in his annual message on the State of the Church and the World.

Ziegler and administration spokesmen in Washington were asked dozens of questions about the daily bombing raids of B-52s over the Hanoi and Haiphong areas, which were ordered by Mr. Nixon after Henry A. Kissinger charged Hanoi with backtracking on a negotiated settlement in Paris.

PAUSE

None of the spokesman would say if the bombing pattern over North Vietnam would be altered. But Ziegler, asked if there might be at least a Christmas day pause, said that he had no comment on such a halt "at this time."

The administration has contended that Hanoi, for reasons unknown, decided to stall at the Paris negotiations, raising one objection after another to forestall an accord even though the two sides were close to agreeing on a final text. Hanoi insists that the delay was caused by unacceptable new American demands to change the October draft agreement.

Yesterday, Mr. Nixon conferred with Henry A. Kissinger, who is his national security adviser, and General Alexander M. Haig, Jr., Kissinger's deputy, who had flown directly to Florida from Southeast Asia, where he had discussions with the leaders of South Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Thailand.

Ziegler confirmed that Haig had carried a message from Mr. Nixon to President Nguyen Van Thieu of South Vietnam and brought a return letter to Mr. Nixon from Saigon.

The details were not made known, but apparently Mr. Nixon stressed to Thieu what Kissinger said publicly last Saturday: That once Hanoi agrees to a solution the United States feels it "just and fair," Saigon would be expected to sign it also.

Although the current American policy is aimed primarily at getting Hanoi to agree to the American terms, Ziegler repeated the administration's view that Saigon should not stand in the way of a settlement either.

"Neither side, North Vietnam or South Vietnam, and this is the point we of course have made throughout our discussions — neither side benefits by prolonging the negotiation or prolonging the war itself," Ziegler said.

CAMP

Jerry W. Friedheim, a Defense Department spokesman, said that all information received by the Pentagon said Hanoi was making an "incorrect" allegation when it charged Thursday that the B-52s had damaged a prison camp holding captured American pilots. He said Hanoi had made similar "incorrect" charges in the past.

Congressional Quarterly, a Washington publication, reported that a poll taken this week of 73 senators showed that 45 opposed the latest bombing, 19 in favor, and 9 with no opinion. The 27 other members could not be reached. Moreover, 45 of the 73 senators said they would support legislation ending the war, 25 were opposed, and 3 undecided.