

U.S. Halts Bombing of Hanoi

Kissinger and Tho To Resume Talks In Paris January 8

DEC 31 1972

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President Nixon has ordered a halt to the bombing of North Vietnam above the 20th parallel and peace negotiations will be resumed in Paris early in the New Year, the White House announced yesterday.

Technical talks between U.S. and North Vietnamese experts are to resume Tuesday in Paris to be followed by negotiations between presidential adviser Henry A. Kissinger and North Vietnamese Politburo member Le Duc Tho on Jan. 8, the announcement said.

"As soon as it was clear that serious negotiations could be resumed at both the technical level and between the principals the President ordered that all bombing be discontinued above the 20th parallel," acting White House press secretary Gerald L. Warren said at a hurriedly called news conference.

The Pentagon later said that the order to stop the bombing of North Vietnam's heartland, which began Dec. 18 and had provoked worldwide criticism of the United States, was sent from Washington late Friday and immediately put into effect.

In Paris, the North Vietnamese delegation, confirming that the bombing halt had gone into effect, said that negotiations would be resumed as the White House said.

The delegation said in a statement that the United States had told Hanoi the raids would stop as of 7 p.m. Friday, Washington time, 7 a.m. Saturday, Hanoi time.

French Foreign Minister Maurice Schumann, who has repeatedly tried to encourage the negotiations and often has predicted success, said "hope is reborn. I am beginning to think that our constant efforts will not have been in vain."

Schumann has met this week both with high North Vietnamese and with American officials in Paris.

A North Vietnamese spokesman in Paris said:

"Our position, frequently repeated, has always been that if the United States wished to solve the problem through serious negotiations, it should cease the acts of escalation and renounce the threat of force."

A Vietcong spokesman in Paris said:

"If today the American side agrees to return to the situation existing before Dec. 18, we are in full accord with the delegation of North Vietnam for the pursuit of negotiations with the American side."

In early October, when there appeared to be a chance for a settlement, a similar order halting the bombing above the 20th parallel went into effect. But the attacks on the Hanoi-Haiphong area had never approached in intensity the attacks of the last 12 days.

Warren's statement made it obvious that the President now believed productive negotiations again may be expected, but Warren would supply no details on the exchanges leading to the decision.

Asked if Hanoi had given a signal that indicated its serious intentions, or if it had made any concessions, Warren said, "I can only let the announcement speak for itself."

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He referred reporters to the statement Kissinger made Dec. 16 following suspension of the talks in Paris that he and Le Duc Tho would remain in contact through messages and that the next meeting would have to be "in an atmosphere that is worthy of the seriousness of the endeavor."

Kissinger said then that the President ordered a halt to the negotiations because "we could not engage in a charade with the American people."

Following the announcement here yesterday, officials in Saigon were quoted as saying that the bombing stopped above the 20th parallel after 7 p.m. EST Friday.

Radio Hanoi, however, reported that air strikes in the Hanoi area, which is above the 20th parallel, continued until midnight Friday. It claimed that another B-52 bomber was shot down just before midnight and that an Air Force Phantom was shot down over Vinphu, northwest of Hanoi.

The United States has acknowledged the loss of 27 planes and 93 airmen killed, captured or missing since the intensified bombardment began Dec. 18.

The United States observed a 36-hour Christmas bombing halt over North Vietnam, and there had been reports that another truce would be observed over New Year's.

Early yesterday, Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker called on South Vietnam's President Nguyen Van Thieu, but remained only 10 minutes.

There was speculation that Bunker delivered a message from Mr. Nixon explaining the new developments, but there was no confirmation at the American Embassy.

Earlier, the South Vietnamese government announced that it would observe a 24-hour New Year's cease-fire beginning at dusk Sunday.

Since suspension of the Paris talks on Dec. 13, Mr. Nixon has declined to make any public statements or to explain his strategy. The only public comment was Kissinger's explanation at a White House news conference Dec. 16.

The next day, the President dispatched Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr. to South Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Thailand. Haig returned on Dec. 22 and reported to the President and Kissinger in Key Biscayne.

The White House maintained almost complete silence on Vietnam developments, but it did clearly suggest that much diplomatic as well as

military pressure was being exerted on Hanoi to make concessions which would lead to a cease-fire agreement.

However, the technical experts Kissinger left behind in Paris made little or no progress, and the North Vietnamese said they could not resume negotiations until the bombing was halted.

The United States, on the other hand, said it could resume negotiations only if it were clear that Hanoi would bargain in a serious manner.

In the last two weeks, White House press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler would never say whether the messages between Kissinger and Tho had begun. Nor would Ziegler say what other governments might be acting for Washington or Hanoi to get the talks started again.

There has been little doubt, however, that other governments were being asked to use their good offices and that there was some communication between Hanoi and Washington.

The climax apparently came Friday with the President at Camp David, and Kissinger in Palm Springs, Calif., where he had been vacationing most of the week.

Warren said that the President and Kissinger maintained telephone contact throughout the week and talked several times Friday.

Haig also is "on leave," but officials would not say where he is. Informed sources discounted suggestions that he was away on a secret mission.

Kissinger will return to Washington "for extensive conversations with the President prior to leaving for Paris," Warren said.

William H. Sullivan, deputy assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, who participated in the December negotiations in Paris and was briefly left behind to participate in the technical discussions after Kissinger departed, is returning to Paris for the Jan. 2 technical talks, Warren said.

Chief of the delegation to the technical talks is Ambassador William Porter, who also has conducted the semi-public negotiations with the Communist delegations.

Sullivan tentatively plans to fly to Paris Monday, a spokesman said.

Defense Department spokesman Jerry W. Friedheim said that minefields will remain in the approaches to North Vietnam's harbors, but he refused to say whether any additional ones would be put in place while the negotiations continue.

Defense Secretary Melvin Laird said his department is "pleased that these negotiations are being resumed. Meanwhile we will continue to meet our responsibilities under the continuing Vietnamization program."

Laird is touring bases in Hawaii.