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On Jan. 13 Kissinger flew back to the U.S. to present a draft of the proposed settlement to Nixon. Technical teams from both sides remained in Paris to work on the "protocols," the detailed arrangements for carrying out the general principles. Before leaving Paris, Kissinger told Tho that if Nixon approved of the draft there would be a clear military signal from the U.S.

Kissinger stopped off in Washington to pick up his former aide, General Alexander M. Haig Jr., now the Army's Vice Chief of Staff, before flying to Florida. At Key Biscayne, Nixon stayed up well past midnight to go over the draft, then discussed it for another four hours with Kissinger and Haig on Sunday morning. Convinced that the deal would give the Saigon government "a reasonable chance" to survive, Nixon dispatched Haig to talk it over with Thieu, then settled back to watch the Super Bowl game.

Without even waiting to hear Thieu's reaction, Nixon on Monday [15 Jan] morning ordered a suspension of all U.S. "bombing, shelling and any further mining of North Viet Nam." A unilateral action unlinked to any Communist response, this was the signal to Hanoi that Nixon was satisfied with the Paris pact. It was also a sure sign to Thieu that the U.S. would make peace with or without his cooperation.

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