

# Text of Ziegler's Briefing at Key Biscayne

Text of another Ziegler press briefing, NYTimes 19 Jan 73.

KEY BISCAYNE, Fla., Jan. 15 (UPI) — Following is a transcript of a briefing today by Ronald L. Ziegler, the White House press secretary, in which he announced a halt in all military operations over North Vietnam:

MR. ZIEGLER: I think everyone is here. Is everybody agreed that we go ahead? I don't see anyone missing.

Q. Are we going home [to Washington] today?

A. I do not know yet, Jack. There is a possibility that we will stay until tomorrow. I should know that this afternoon.

The President this morning is working over at his office at the residence on Key Biscayne. As Neal has already told you, the President and Dr. Kissinger met this morning. That meeting began at 9 o'clock and ended around 10:30.

The President and Dr. Kissinger also, as you have been informed, met last night from 8:15 until 9:30 and continued their discussions and consultations regarding the negotiations that are under way in relation to Vietnam.

Dr. Kissinger, as you know, arrived in Florida from Paris early Sunday morning. Since that time, the President has had extensive consultations and discussions with Dr. Kissinger regarding the negotiations, and also discussions yesterday with General Haig, who is en route to Saigon and Southeast Asia to have discussions with President Thieu and leaders of Laos, Thailand and Cambodia.

As I mentioned to you yesterday at the compounds, General Haig's trip is for the purpose of continuing consultations which we have had and will continue to have with leaders of South Vietnam and other leaders of Southeast Asia, particularly President Thieu, during the course of the negotiations over the past months, or year or so, and as I mentioned yesterday, this is continuing with General Haig's visit to Vietnam.

## Suspension of Bombing

This morning I have the following announcement to make:

Because of the progress made in the negotiations between Dr. Kissinger and special adviser Le Duc Tho, President Nixon has directed that the bombing, shelling and any further mining of North Vietnam be suspended. This order went into effect at 10 A.M. today, Jan. 15, Washington time.

The directive which I have referred to by the President applies to action north of the 17th Parallel, the entire area of North Vietnam.

As I mentioned to you earlier, Dr. Kissinger and the President, as you know, have been involved in extensive consultations and discussions regarding the negotiations that are under way, and [he] has directed that this unilateral action by the United States go into effect as of 10 o'clock this morning, Washington time.

I will take your questions.

Q. When did he make the order, Ron?

A. The order was transmitted last night, following a meeting between the President and Dr. Kissinger, and I should say, as I inferred earlier in the comments I made, that the order was transmitted following a complete assessment of the negotiations, by the President, in his discussions that he had and has been having with Dr. Kissinger.

Q. Ron, when will the mines be deactivated?

A. The reference in my comment, and the reference in the directive by the President, refers to, as I said, any further mining of North Vietnam. The mines that are there remain in place.

## Subject of Negotiation

The question relating to the mines that are in place is a subject of negotiations and is being dealt with in the negotiations. As you know, by mutual agreement with the North Vietnamese, we have agreed not to comment on the substance or the details of the negotiations which are in progress.

Q. Ron, is there any quid pro quo? You said it is a unilateral action, but have the Communists agreed on their part to refrain from any kind of activity in the South?

A. Bob, the action that I am announcing this morning, the directive that the President has issued, is as I have said, a unilateral decision taken by the President because of the progress made in the negotiations between Dr. Kissinger and Le Duc Tho. This action was not an element of the negotiations, and in reference to your question about actions other than those that I have announced this morning, we have no information regarding that, in relation to the South, below the 17th Parallel.

Q. You have no information that the Communists have agreed to refrain from any actions in the South?

A. As I said, this is a unilateral action we are taking which relates to actions that we are taking north of the 17th Parallel. In response to your question about actions south of the 17th Parallel, we have no information on that.

Q. What was the date of the bombing halt above the

20th Parallel? A. Dec. 29, 1972.

Q. Is Dr. Kissinger going back to Paris?

A. Dr. Kissinger said, when he left Paris on Saturday, that he would remain in close contact with special adviser Le Duc Tho. As the negotiations proceed, Dr. Kissinger will be returning to Paris at some point in the relatively near future. I cannot give you any specific information on that. But as the negotiations proceed, Dr. Kissinger will be returning to Paris at some point in the relatively near future. \*

Q. Ron, there are reports from both Saigon and Hanoi that an agreement has been reached. Is that premature?

A. We have—and let me emphasize again, which we have over the past several weeks—made it clear that we have a mutual agreement with the North Vietnamese that we will in no way discuss the substance of the

negotiations which are taking place in Paris, and we intend to adhere to that agreement by not discussing the details or the substance of the negotiations.

I have made reference to the fact that the negotiations are still in progress, and I will stand on that statement and I will not comment because we do have an agreement with the North Vietnamese not to comment on any of the source stories that you refer to.

## Peace Objective Stressed

We, as I said, intend to adhere to the agreement. We do not want to take any step or make any comment because of this agreement which could, as I said the other day in Washington, deter the objective that we have, and that is to reach a settlement of the Vietnam situation by means of a negotiated settlement.

Q. Ron, would you say negotiations are still in progress? Is there still something that has to be decided?

A. Here, again, Dick, that would go to the content of the negotiations, and I will have no comment in any way whatsoever on that.

Q. Are you referring to the technical talks that are still in progress?

A. I am referring to the negotiations which are in progress. The technical talks are a part of those negotiations. I should tell you that the technical talks, as we announced, would continue today, and they got under way at 10:30, Paris time, it is my understanding.

Q. How about General Haig? Is he in Saigon yet?

A. I do not have information that he has arrived in Saigon at this point.

Q. Can you give us any sort of itinerary for him?

A. No. I am not prepared to do so at this time.

\*John Herbers, NYTimes 17 Jan 73:

He was pressed on what he meant about Mr. Kissinger's returning to Paris "in the relatively near future."

"I define 'relatively near future' to mean that when we are prepared to say something about Dr. Kissinger returning to Paris, we will let you know," Mr. Ziegler said. ["When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said, .... "it means just what I choose it to mean - neither more nor less."]

## The Technical Talks

Q. Ron, do you differentiate between the technical talks and the substantive talks when you say that negotiations are in progress, or are the technical talks also a part of the end process?

A. They are part of the end process. They are part of the over-all negotiating process.

Q. Is the President confident that there will be no build-up of North Vietnamese forces while we have ceased the bombing?

A. I am not going to comment on that, Aldo. The President has decided to take this action for the reason I have given you, and that is: Because of the progress that has been made, he has decided to take the unilateral action to suspend the bombing, shelling and mining in North Vietnam above the 17th Parallel.

Q. Does the President plan to go on the air this week?

A. As I have said consistently here, the President has no plans to do so.

Q. Was President Thieu consulted before the suspension, or was he advised of the suspension before 10 o'clock this morning?

A. Our ongoing consultations and our ongoing contacts with President Thieu, of course, remain in effect. President Thieu was fully appraised and fully aware and fully informed of the action that the President has taken in the process of our ongoing consultations and communications with him.

Q. Did he endorse it?

A. This is a unilateral action which the President has directed following thorough consultations and thorough discussion with President Thieu.

Q. Ron, in the starting of the bombing in December there seems to be some doubt that the President consulted with any military man about the action, and it was primarily a political action on his part. Can you tell us, in stopping all of this activity above the 17th Parallel, if he consulted with any military men other than General Haig?

## 'Consistent' Policy

A. Let's go back to the first part of your question and clear that up first.

The December action taken by the President, as we have said all along, was consistent with the President's May 8th policy, and there was complete discussion within the Government, not only with the people over at the Pentagon, but other members of the Administration. As the President continued to pro-

ceed under that policy, placing the limitations he did, there was full discussion within the Government. There should be no question about that.

In relation to the second part of your question, the President, as I said in the announcement, took the step that he has directed this morning based upon his assessment of the negotiations as they stand now. He took the unilateral action due to the progress that has been made in the negotiations between Dr. Kissinger and Le Duc Tho.

Q. Ron, did I understand you to say the question of stopping the bombing did not come up last week during the talks?

A. I said in relation to the decision itself, I made clear that this was a unilateral action taken by the United States and was not an element of the negotiations.

I can tell you, or I should tell you, I suppose, that the North Vietnamese knew and were aware that once progress in the negotiations was being made, that the United States would be prepared to take unilateral steps, make a unilateral gesture such as we have announced today, in relation to the entire situation, so my comment was that the action that the President has announced today was not an element of the negotiations. However, they were aware that the United States was prepared, once progress was being made, to take such a unilateral step.

## General Haig's Role

Q. Ron, officials in Saigon seem to think General Haig is carrying a revised draft of the peace agreement. Is he?

A. I was asked that question yesterday, Gaylord, and I will give you the same answer here today. General Haig, as we announced yesterday is going to Saigon for consultations with President Thieu. This is an ongoing process that we have followed and will continue to follow. I am not prepared, and we have never before been prepared, to get into a discussion of the content of what General Haig will be talking to President Thieu about. Obviously, they will be talking about the negotiations which are in progress. We will not be responsive and cannot be responsive, because of the mutual agreement with the other side not to talk about the content, to any question along the line that you have just asked.

Q. Can I follow an earlier question? When you say the President, in his announcement, took the step based upon his assessment of negotiations as they stand now, does that assessment include information and appraisal from the Joint Chiefs at the Pentagon?

A. I think I have been pretty clear on this, in all due respect to your question. The action that the President announced relates to the negotiations and the progress in the negotiations that have taken place. In making this decision and issuing the directive, of course, the people at the Pentagon were fully apprised of the President's decision.

## French News Report Cited

Q. A French news agency is reporting, based on stories from Hanoi, that a peace settlement may be announced in foreign capitals—that is the only way they identify it—as early as Tuesday.

A. Let me take this final question and I will come back if you have other routine subjects.

Let me address, Tom, this particular type of report. This morning, as you look at the wires and as you look at the news, there are reports coming from capitals all over the world speculating on the negotiations, and I will again state that we will have no comment on these stories.

We have an agreement with the North Vietnamese and we intend to adhere to it. Our objective and the objective of the President, as we have said from the outset, is to achieve a settlement by means of negotiations. That is our objective. That remains to be our objective and, therefore, we will have no comment on such stories.

Q. Ron, can I ask one more thing? A. On this subject, yes.

Q. Is the Administration hopeful that there will be an announced settlement by Inauguration Day?

## No 'Artificial Timetable'

A. As I said in Washington, the President has proceeded all along in the negotiations in such a way that he has not established any artificial timetable. The only timetable that we have is that of reaching a negotiated settlement at the earliest possible date, and that is the objective that we are pursuing as the negotiations continue.

Incidentally, one final thing in relation to Dr. Kissinger. I was asked if Dr. Kissinger would hold a briefing down here. No, that would not be consistent with the statement I have made here this morning in terms of discussing the content or details of the negotiations.

I should tell you Dr. Kissinger plans as of now to return to Washington sometime later today, probably this evening, for meetings, and so forth, which he will be having in Washington as part of his ongoing schedule.

For example, tomorrow, I think he has a meeting with Sir Burke Trend [Secretary of the British Cabinet]. It is a longstanding appointment that he has had and one of the ongoing appointments he has had with Sir Burke Trend. But I believe Dr. Kissinger will return to Washington this evening.

Q. The President's travel plans?

A. In terms of the President's travel plans, I do not have anything to give you. I will provide that to you at a [bulletin board] posting this afternoon. We will post at 4 o'clock.

Q. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.