

Text of another Zeigler press briefing,
NYTimes 16 Jan 73.

Briefing by Zeigler On the Peace Talks

KEY BISCAYNE, Fla., Jan. 18 (AP)—Following is a White House transcript of a news briefing today at which Ronald L. Zeigler, White House press secretary, announced plans for resuming private Paris peace talks next Tuesday:

MR. ZIEGLER: The President continues today to work at the office at the residence on his Inaugural Address and the State of the Union Message and other messages that will be sent to Congress in the coming weeks.

The President continues to receive reports from General Haig on his trip to Southeast Asia for the purpose of holding consultations with Southeast Asian leaders.

General Haig, as the reports say out of Southeast Asia, left Saigon Thursday morning, Saigon time—that is Wednesday evening, Eastern time—and flew to Phnom Penh, where he met for about two hours with Marshal Lon Nol. Following that meeting, he went on to Laos, meeting with Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma, and then he flew to Bangkok, where he spent the night. General Haig will meet with Thai officials on Friday.

We, of course, as I said, have been receiving regular reports from General Haig on his consultations, but do not have information to provide you on that.

General Haig's itinerary indicates that he plans to be in Saigon again on Saturday.

The technical talks began at about 10:30 Paris time this morning, and they are still going on at this time. Today's meeting was a meeting of the experts only, and Ambassador Sullivan joined that meeting at about 2:30 Paris time. This is simply to bring you up to date as to what General Haig's schedule is, and the process of negotiations that are taking place on the technical side in Paris.

Kissinger on the Phone

The President and Dr. Kissinger talked by telephone, conferred by telephone this morning again for about 40 or 45 minutes. They have, of course, been holding frequent conversations in addition to their personal conversations that were held here in Florida but since Dr. Kissinger left, they have been holding frequent conversations by telephone regarding the negotiations on Vietnam.

We have the following announcement to make this morning, which is embargoed for 12 noon, E.S.T. This is an agreed joint announcement between the United States and the North Vietnamese.

"Dr. Henry Kissinger will resume private meetings with Special Adviser Le Duc Tho and Minister Xuan Thuy on Jan. 23, 1973, for the purpose of completing the text of an agreement."

That is the end of the agreed statement.

Q. An agreement?

A. For the purpose of completing the text of an agreement.

Q. How long do you expect that to take, Ron?

A. Dr. Kissinger will be departing for Paris sometime on Monday; the 23d is Tuesday. I am not in a position to indicate to you at this time the length of that meeting.

Discussion Is Precluded

Q. Does your agreement that they will be completing the text of an agreement mean the substance of the agreement has been completed?

A. Bob, as you know, the agreement that we have with the North Vietnamese is that we will not discuss the content of the negotiations in any way at all. I can only state to you this morning that we have agreed with the other side to say in relation to the negotiations. So I cannot be responsive to your question.

Q. Are you announcing peace, Ron?

A. I am announcing the fact that Dr. Kissinger is returning to Paris on the 23d to complete the text of an agreement. As you know, we told you that discussions are still continuing. The technical people met this morning. Exchanges have continued between Dr. Kissinger and Le

"an agreement" - see
Carroll Kilpatrick,
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Duc Tho since he returned, as Dr. Kissinger said they would. Dr. Kissinger is going to Paris for the purpose of substantive discussions, and he will do that on the 23d, as we have announced.

Q. Are you indicating that this is the last meeting?

A. I think the announcement will have to speak for itself. I cannot provide you any further indication as to what the developments will be.

Q. Can you tell us when General Haig is going to return to Washington?

A. We do not have a specific return time for General Haig. I told you that he will be in Saigon on Saturday.

Q. Why is he going back to Saigon?

A. For the purpose of continuing discussion with the officials in Saigon.

Q. Can you give us any indication, Ron, of President Thieu's reaction to the message that Haig brought to him?

A. No, I am not prepared to do that.

Q. Ron, will there be a cease-fire before an agreement is completed?

A. There has been an awful lot of speculation along that line. I am not prepared to address that speculation, as I have not been prepared to address any speculation relating to the content of the negotiations, even if it is right or if it is wrong. However, I would tell you that Dr. Kissinger is returning to Paris, as I have said, for the purpose of completing the text of an agreement, and I think that speaks for itself.

Q. Ron, is it possible, or conceivable, that an agreement will not be concluded; that is, is that still an open possibility?

A. Here, again, I will just not have a comment on the content of the discussions that Dr. Kissinger will hold in Paris on the 23d. As we have said, we have made progress in the talks. We said that to you the other day. And we also have an agreement with the other side not to comment until the discussions are concluded and until a final agreement is reached. So I would say that your question falls under that framework, under the framework of the existing agreement we have with the North Vietnamese not to comment on the substance of the negotiations.

Breakoff of Public Talks

Q. Can you say how much work remains to be done on completing the text?

A. I cannot.

Q. Ron, can you tell us why the so-called public talks were broken off, or at least were not scheduled for next Thursday, as they had been?

A. They spoke to that question in Paris today, Bob, and I have nothing to add to what they said.

Q. Does that mean Dr. Kissinger will not have anything publicly to say before he leaves for Paris?

A. Yes, it does. Dr. Kissinger plans no comment on the Paris meetings prior to his return on the 23d. Indeed, because Dr. Kissinger understands fully that we have an agreement with the other side not to discuss it, since he was a participant in reaching that agreement.

Q. Ron, is there any indication how long Dr. Kissinger will be in Paris this time?

A. I am not prepared to provide you with that information.

Q. Ron, I don't understand your response to the question about whether a cease-fire could come before the agreement. Can you respond to that once more?

A. As I was trying to say to Tom when he asked me earlier, there is a lot of speculation along that line. I do not know what the source of that speculation is. I can only speak to you from the basis of information that I have, and that is that Dr. Kissinger is returning to Paris on the 23d to complete the text of an agreement.

We are interested in ending this war as soon as possible, and ending it through negotiations. I feel that my response to a question such as that would fall under the framework of the agreement not to comment on speculation or on the negotiations themselves.

Objective of the Talks

Q. Is a cease-fire a part of the agreement? Would you consider that one of the points in the agreement, as it was in the nine-point accord?

A. The objective of the negotiations is restoring peace in Vietnam, and bringing about an end to the war in Vietnam. That is the objective of the Paris talks. It has been an objective of the negotiations to stop the fighting, to restore peace, and to end the war. That is the objective of the negotiations.

As I said, Dr. Kissinger is returning to Paris on the 23d to complete the text of an agreement that has the objective of stopping the fighting, ending the war and restoring peace.

Q. Ron, with reference to General Haig's schedule, Prime Minister Lee Kuan



Associated Press
Ronald L. Ziegler, White House press secretary, at news conference in Key Biscayne, Fla.

Yew of Singapore is in Thailand currently. Is there any expectation that he will see him there? He is discussing the whole Southeast Asian situation there.

A. Adam, I do not have any word that General Haig plans to meet with him in Bangkok.

Q. Ron, will General Haig return to Washington before Dr. Kissinger leaves?

A. I do not know at this point, Jack, because we do not have a return itinerary for General Haig at this point.

Q. Ron, General Haig originally planned to return to Washington from Bangkok. Why was this changed?

A. I do not believe we ever said he planned to return to Washington from Bangkok.

Q. There are reports out of Saigon that just stated it flatly.

A. I think you should obtain your information on General Haig's travel plans from the White House.

Q. Could General Haig return to Paris?

A. That is not anticipated, Helen.

Q. Will he get back in time to see Kissinger before Kissinger leaves?

A. I just do not know, Gene.

Q. Will he confer specifically with President Thieu on Saturday?

A. He will be back in Saigon, and it is my understanding there will be further discussion between General Haig and President Thieu at that time.

Q. Ron, Dr. Kissinger, in one of his press conferences—I think it was October—gave a rough schedule of what timetable would be followed in reaching a formal agreement; that is, an initialing process followed by a formal signing by the Secretary of State. Does that still obtain?

A. I have nothing to add to what Dr. Kissinger said at that time.

Q. Travel plans?

A. We will have a baggage call here today at 5 P.M. The buses will depart at approxi-

mately 6 P.M. The President will depart this evening around 7:30 or 8. And we have that firm for you at 5 when we post [on the bulletin board].

T.W.A.'s press charter will be departing Homestead following the President's departure, about 15 or 20 minutes behind his departure. Baggage deadline is in the lobby of the Four Ambassa-

dors at 5 P.M.

Q. There is not a wire embargo on this announcement?

A. There is a wire embargo until 12 noon.

Q. That is different from a wire embargo. Do you mean we can't move it on the wire?

A. Until 12 noon. Just move it on the wire at about one minute of 12.

The press: Thank you, Mr. Secretary.