

23Jan73 Nixon Announces End of War

By Bernard Gwertzman Special to The New York Times

Jan. 24, 1973



WASHINGTON, Jan. 23—President Nixon said tonight that Henry A. Kissinger and North Vietnam's chief negotiator, Le Duc Tho, had initialed an agreement in Paris today, "to end the war and bring peace with honor in Vietnam and Southeast Asia."

In a televised report to the nation, a few hours after Mr. Kissinger returned to Washington, Mr. Nixon said a ceasefire in Vietnam would go into effect on Saturday at 7 P.M., Eastern standard time.

Simultaneous announcements were made in Hanoi and Saigon.

Mr. Nixon said that under the terms of the accord—which will be formally signed on Saturday—all American prisoners of war would be released and the remaining 23,700-man American force in South Vietnam would be withdrawn within 60 days.

Wider Peace Indicated

He referred to "peace" in Southeast Asia, suggesting that the accord extended to Laos and Cambodia, which have also been engaged in the war. But there was no direct mention of those two nations today, and it is not known if the cease-fire extends to them as well.

Obviously pleased by the long-awaited development, ending the longest war in American history, Mr. Nixon said the Hanoi-Washington agreement "meets the goals" and has the "full support" of President Nguyen Van Thieu of South Vietnam.

Earlier Mr. Thieu had expressed strong reservations about the draft agreement worked out by Mr. Kissinger and Mr. Tho in October.

Tonight Mr. Nixon sketched only the outline of the accord. The full text of the agreement and accompanying protocols will, be issued tomorrow by joint agreement with Hanoi, he said.

It was not possible, for instance, to determine from Mr. Nixon's 10-minute address what changes had been made in the agreement since October.

In his brief description of the accord, Mr. Nixon said that the cease-fire would be "internationally supervised," a reference to the projected force Canadians, Hungarians, Indonesians and Poles who will supervise the truce. But he did not say how large the force would be. The United States has wanted a highly mobile force of about 5,000 men. The North Vietnamese have suggested a substantially smaller force.

Mr. Nixon also said nothing about the controversial problem of the demilitarized zone that straddles the border between North and South Vietnam. Saigon has wanted this line reaffirmed to make sure, legally, that there are two Vietnams, and Hanoi had resisted this. All the President said on the subject was that the people of South Vietnam "have been guaranteed the right to determine their own future without outside interference."

Captive Issue Avoided

Nothing was said either about the release of the thousands of prisoners in Saigon's jails, many of whom were jailed on suspicion that they were Vietcong agents. At one point in the negotiations, Hanoi was seeking to make the release of American prisoner's conditional on the release of Saigon's captives.

Some of these questions may be answered tomorrow when Mr. Kissinger holds a news conference at 11 A.M. It will be televised by the major networks.

Last fall, the President insisted that he would agree only to a "peace with honor," and tonight he insisted that the accord met "the goals that we considered essential for peace with honor."

Apparently in an effort to ease possible apprehensions in Saigon, Mr. Nixon pledged that the United States would continue to recognize Mr. Thieu's Government "as the sole legitimate Government of South Vietnam."

He also pledged—"within the terms of the agreement"—to continue to supply assistance to South Vietnam and to "support efforts for the people of South Vietnam to settle their problems peacefully among themselves."

The actual agreement is understood to provide machinery for the eventual reconciliation of the Saigon Government with the Vietcong. But officials here have expressed doubts in recent days that the two rivals for power would be able to resolve their hostility.

Calling on all involved parties to adhere to the agreement “scrupulously,” Mr. Nixon also alluded to the Soviet Union and China, saying, “We shall also expect other interested nations to help ensure that the agreement is carried out and peace is maintained.”

It is expected that Secretary of State William P. Rogers will sign the agreement in Paris on Saturday at the former Hotel Majestic, along with the Foreign Ministers of North Vietnam, South Vietnam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government, or Vietcong.

Mr. Nixon ended his speech with words to the various parties to the accord, their allies, and to the American people.

Cooperation in Future

To the South Vietnamese, who in the end listened to American entreaties and did not balk at the accord, he said, “We look forward to working with you in the future.” He added that the United States and South Vietnam would be “friends in peace as we have been allies in war.”

To the North Vietnamese, he said, “As we have ended the war through negotiations, let us now build a peace of reconciliation.”

He said that the United States would make “a major effort” to help achieve that goal, but he stressed that Hanoi would have to reciprocate. Previously, Mr. Nixon has talked about a \$7.5-billion program to rehabilitate North Vietnam and South Vietnam over a five-year period. Of that total, \$2.5-billion would be earmarked for Hanoi.

Making a firm call for support from Moscow and Peking, Mr. Nixon said: “To the other major powers that have been involved, even indirectly, now is the time for mutual restraint so that the peace we have achieved can last.”

U.S. Aid Believed Limited

Under the terms of the accord, it is believed, the United States is limited in the amount of military aid it can supply Saigon. But American officials have warned that if the Russians and the Chinese continue to supply Hanoi with extensive military equipment the balance of power could be upset.

Mr. Nixon said nothing about a key controversial item in the negotiations—the presence of 145,000 North Vietnamese in South Vietnam. But previously, Mr. Kissinger had said that the United States would not ask Hanoi to pull these forces back because they would be needed to protect the Vietcong enclaves permitted under the accord.

To the American people, he explained his silence of recent months about the situation in Vietnam. He said that if he had discussed the efforts to achieve an agreement, “it would have seriously harmed and possibly destroyed the chances for peace.”

He ended his speech with some words about Lyndon B. Johnson, who died yesterday on the eve of the settlement. He said that no one would have welcomed this peace more than he.

Earlier, on Mr. Kissinger's return from Paris, the President set in motion a series of evening conferences before his televised report to the nation.

Mr. Nixon first met with his Cabinet officers to give them a report on the Vietnam situation, then conferred with the top Congressional leaders from both parties.

The White House said that Mr. Nixon had invited to that session the Senate majority leader, Mike Mansfield of Montana; the Senate Republican leader, Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania; the House Speaker, Carl Albert of Oklahoma; the House Republican leader, Gerald R. Ford of Michigan, and the House Democratic leader, Thomas P. O'Neill Jr. of Massachusetts.

Throughout the day, despite the reports from Saigon and Paris about the initialing of the agreement, the White House refrained from any substantive comment.

Ronald L. Ziegler, the White House press secretary, met briefly with newsmen at about 1 P.M., after having spent much of the morning at a meeting with Mr. Nixon and White House aides.

Mr. Ziegler limited himself to announcing that Mr. Nixon would address the nation on the "status of the Vietnam negotiations," and that he would hold meeting with the Cabinet officers and Congressional leaders tonight. In addition, Mr. Ziegler said a larger session with members of Congress would be held tomorrow morning at the White House.

The substantive talks on Vietnam settlement began in January, 1969, in the former Hotel Majestic in Paris, the Same place Mr. Kissinger and Mr. Tho held their session today.

Meetings Around Paris

The negotiations that produced the actual agreement, however, took place in villas in and around Paris between Mr. Kissinger and Mr. Tho, beginning in August, 1969.

The holding of those negotiations remained a closely guarded secret until last Jan. 26 when Mr. Nixon disclosed them in a speech accusing Hanoi of delaying tactics.

After North Vietnam's offensive in South Vietnam last spring, the secret talks resumed.

A decisive breakthrough was achieved early in October when the United States and North Vietnam agreed to nine-point draft agreement whose outline was made public by Hanoi on Oct. 26, and was confirmed by Mr. Kissinger that same day in his "peace is at hand" news conference.

Hanoi had originally insisted that the draft be signed by Oct. 31, but Mr. Nixon asked for further meetings to tighten the terms of the agreement and to meet some of South Vietnam's objections.

The talks resumed in Paris on Nov. 20 and recessed on Nov. 25. When they began again on Dec. 4, Hanoi objected to the proposals made by the United States in the previous round, and made counterproposals that Mr. Kissinger later called "frivolous." Those talks broke down on Dec. 13.

Reportedly angry over Hanoi's tactics, Mr. Nixon ordered the war's heaviest bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong — from Dec. 18 to 29. The raids, which included strikes by B-52 bombers, were called off

north of the 20th Parallel on Dec. 29 with the announcement by the White House that Hanoi had agreed to resume “serious” talks.

Apparent Accord on Jan. 13

The negotiations opened on Jan. 8 and concluded with an apparent agreement on Jan. 13. Two days later all bombing, mining and shelling of North Vietnam ceased, and on Jan. 18 — last Thursday — it was announced that Mr. Kissinger and Mr. Tho would meet again “for the purpose of concluding the text of an agreement.”

Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr., who until this month was Mr. Kissinger's chief deputy, returned to Washington on Sunday after a mission to Saigon to persuade President Thieu to add his agreement to the accord worked out by Hanoi and Washington.

Mr. Haig was with Mr. Nixon early this morning when first reports of the conclusion of Mr. Kissinger's Paris meeting were received here.

Hanoi Announces Accord

HONG KONG, Wednesday, Jan. 24 (Reuters)-North Vietnam today announced a peace agreement with the United, States in a statement issued by the official North Vietnamese News Agency.

It said in part: “The Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the United States express the hope that this agreement will insure stable peace in Vietnam and contribute to the preservation of lasting peace in Indochina and Southeast Asia.”