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G.I. RETURN WAITS ON VIETNAM TALK

Kennedy Says Plans Depend
on Honolulu Parley

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 14—

Detailed plans for the initial withdrawal of United States troops from South Vietnam depend upon policy meetings scheduled to be held in Honolulu next week, President Kennedy said today.

The President stressed at his news conference that the United States objective was to bolster the South Vietnamese Government's fight against Communist insurgents and thus permit the return home of American forces. [Question 7, Page 18.]

There are about 16,500 United States officers and men of all services stationed in South Vietnam in support of the Saigon Government's war effort. The official objective, announced on Oct. 2, is to withdraw most of the troops by the end of 1965.

Withdrawal Goal Modified

Mr. Kennedy modified the Oct. 2 White House statement. At that time it was said that enough progress was expected in the anti-Communist struggle in South Vietnam to allow the withdrawal of 1,000 United States troops by the end of 1963.

Mr. Kennedy was asked today whether, in view of the changed situation in Saigon following the military coup that deposed the late President Ngo Dinh Diem, he still expected to bring back 1,000 troops this year.

"No," the President replied, "we are going to bring back several hundred before the end of the year, but I think on the question of the exact number I thought we would wait until the meeting of Nov. 20." [Question 25.]

The President referred to the high-level strategy session in Honolulu at which Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge and Gen. Paul D. Harkins, commander of the United States Military Assistance Command, will brief American officials on developments in South Vietnam.

Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara also are scheduled to take part, as are McGeorge Bundy, the President's

adviser on national security affairs; Gen. Maxwell D. Taylor, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and David E. Bell, director of the Agency for International Development.

Review Is Planned

The President explained that the purpose of the Honolulu meeting was to review the situation because of the establishment of a new Government in Saigon. He expressed the hope that there would be "an increased effort in the war."

The meeting, he continued, "is to attempt to assess the situation—what American policy should be and what our aid policy should be, how we can intensify the struggle, how we can bring Americans out of there."

"Now, that is our objective," he went on, "to bring Americans home, to permit the South Vietnamese to maintain themselves as a free and independent country and permit democratic forces within the country to operate. . . ."

The President explained that Ambassador Lodge would come to Washington at some future time to carry on the policy meetings. State Department officials have explained that the one-day meeting in Honolulu was scheduled to spare Ambassador Lodge the need to make a time-consuming personal report here during a critical

*"No" does not mean
see Pres. press confer.*

period.

In response to a question, the President emphatically expressed confidence in General Harkins. He was asked whether the general had "lost his usefulness in Vietnam because of his identification with the Diem regime and lack of contacts with the new generals running the country."

The President said it was "wholly untrue" that General Harkins had lost his usefulness in Saigon. He said General Harkins had merely done his job in contacts with the late President Ngo Dinh Diem.

"I have great confidence in General Harkins," Mr. Kennedy said. "There may be some who would like to see General Harkins go, since the coup, but I plan to keep him there." [Question 61, Page 18.]