

3-Year Phaseout Plan Revived

Kissinger Urges Viet Aid

Washington

Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, in an effort to break an impasse with Congress, yesterday revived a Ford administration proposal for a three-year phaseout of military and economic aid to South Vietnam.

For the United States to withhold aid now, he said at a State Department news conference, would be to "deliberately destroy an ally in its moment of extremity."

Kissinger maintained that the United States has a moral commitment to continue military and economic aid to South Vietnam, which he repeatedly referred to as an ally although it has no specific treaty relationship with the United States.

The commitment, he said, dates to the signing of the 1973 Paris peace agreement. At that time, he said, the United States gave assurances to the Saigon government that military and economic aid would continue as American troops were withdrawn.

"We told the South Vietnamese government," he said, "not as a commitment of the United States that aid would continue but in our judgment, if the South Vietnamese operated in permitting us to withdraw our forces and therefore to reclaim our prisoners, that the Congress would then vote the aid that would be necessary to sustain Vietnam economically and militarily."

"We're not talking here of a legal American commitment," he added. "We're

talking here of a moral commitment."

Noting that for 15 years the United States has "encouraged the people of Vietnam to defend themselves against what we conceive as external dangers," Kissinger foresaw "a very grievous blow to the United

States" if it cuts off aid to the South Vietnamese.

If the United States halts aid to countries unable to defend themselves, he said, "we will have brought about a massive change in the international environment that in time will fundamentally threaten the security of the

United States as well as the security of many friends."

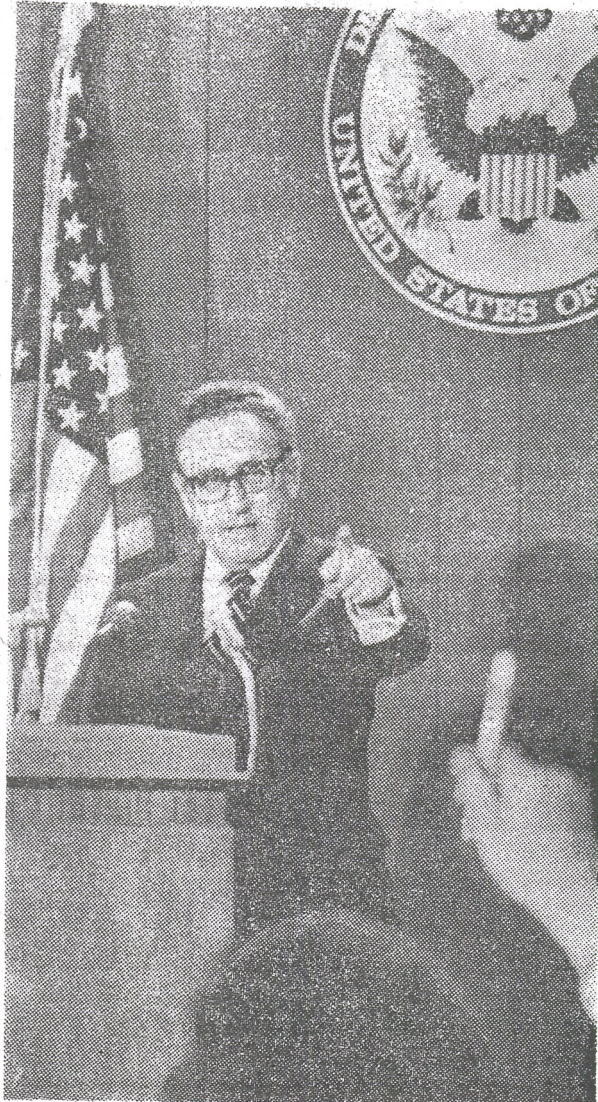
The secretary acknowledged that strong feelings are developing in Congress against the annual appropriation for aid for South Vietnam. To get around this annual battle, he said, the administration would accept the three-year phaseout although it would prefer annual appropriations based on needs.

With adequate aid over the three-year period, he said, there is at least a chance that South Vietnam, through development of its oil resources and other factors, could be put on a more self-sustained basis. Under questioning, he insisted that he was not offering a "new light at the end of the tunnel."

There are some problems in the world that simply have no terminal dates," he said. "In Indochina, as long as the North Vietnamese are determined to attack, it is not responsible to say that there is an absolute date at which an end can be achieved."

Congress is prepared to adjourn for Easter without acting either on \$300 million in aid requested for South Vietnam beyond the \$700 million appropriated or on \$222 million for Cambodia beyond the \$275 million appropriated.

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KISSINGER AT NEWS CONFERENCE
He maintained the U.S. has a moral commitment