

Saigon Violated Pact With U.S.

Examiner Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — The U.S. has evidence that the South Vietnamese have transferred some U.S. military supplies to the Cambodians without first getting U.S. permission, administration officials disclosed today.

Congressional critics fear the action may permit the South Vietnamese unilaterally to broaden and escalate the war in Indochina.

The transfer of supplies — mostly small arms to date — has caused concern here that South Vietnam may similarly seek to circumvent the U.S. in providing Cambodia with more sophisticated American equipment, such as jet aircraft and tanks.

Pact Cited

Under the U.S.-South Vietnamese military assistance pact, South Vietnam is obligated, the officials said, to get the approval of the President of the United States before transferring any American weapons to a third country.

Technically, U.S. officials said that there is no limit to the number or type of weapons that South Vietnam could transfer to the Cambodians as long as the President approved.

The administration has repeatedly stressed the limited nature of its actions in Cambodia, emphasizing that the U.S. incursions were designed to clean out Communist sanctuaries that were a threat to U.S. troops in Vietnam, to defend the current Cambodian government, although this may have been a side result.

What has concerned some congressmen and senators, including Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman J. William Fulbright, is that, by agreeing to provide air and logistical support for South Vietnamese troops after June 30 — the U.S. withdrawal deadline — the U.S. could get involved in another prolonged war to "save" the anti-Communist Cambodian government.

'Silly Men'

The danger of this is increased, the critics argue, if South Vietnam is allowed to transfer large-scale American weapons to the Cambodian army. Without effective presidential control, South Vietnam could unilaterally escalate the war, provoking a similar Communist response.

This in turn could seriously jeopardize the administration's plans to bring U.S. troops home.

There already is evidence that South Vietnamese officials may have misled the administration into believing that Saigon would withdraw its troops from Cambodia at "about the same time," as Nixon put it at his last news conference, as American troops.

This week, the Thieu-Ky government in South Vietnam issued a statement referring to those "silly men" in Washington trying to set a date for South Vietnamese withdrawals from Cambodia.