

# U.S. Indicates Flexibility On a Coalition in Saigon

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WASHINGTON, June 30—With President Nixon placing renewed emphasis on diplomatic efforts to end the Vietnam war, the State Department today indicated more flexibility in the United States' approach to the formation of a coalition Government in Saigon.

Carl E. Bartch, a department spokesman, said Washington could agree to the formation of a coalition regime that would include the Vietnamese Communists and would not insist on national elections in South Vietnam, an approach the United States had previously emphasized.

"We think elections would be the best means, but at the same time I can't rule out other means," he said.

Elaborating on Mr. Bartch's statement, State Department officials said the United States would also be willing to hold "preliminary discussions" with North Vietnam on the formation of a coalition Government in Saigon without the participation of the present South Vietnamese Government in the talks.

Officials explained that when the negotiations reached the stage where "decisions" were being made, the South Vietnamese would certainly be included.

## Reiterates U.S. Position

Mr. Bartch reiterates that "it remains U.S. policy that we do not participate in any discussion that would involve the future of South Vietnam without the participation of the South Vietnamese."

Nevertheless officials were saying in effect that in its attempt to achieve a political settlement of the war, the United States was now softening this position into a willingness to exclude its Saigon ally from preliminary negotiations

about the future of the country.

Taken together, Mr. Bartch's statement and the elaboration on it were considered an effort to inject a new nuance into the shadow play of Vietnam diplomacy, to offer Hanoi publicly a more flexible negotiation formula that might lift the Paris talks out of their current stalemate.

Mr. Bartch was replying to a question about a remark yesterday by Secretary of State William P. Rogers at a news conference in San Francisco.

Mr. Rogers said that "at some point we believe it is possible that the Communists decide it is in their best interests to negotiate an agreement which gives them representation proportionate to their numbers."

## Nixon Statement Noted

President Nixon, in his report on the Cambodian operation today, said the United States recognized that a fair political solution in South Vietnam "should reflect the existing relationship of political forces."

The Saigon Government has repeatedly demanded that any form of coalition with the Communists be created through national elections. Saigon has also claimed as a right the participation in all negotiations concerning the political future of the country.

Mr. Bartch declined today to say whether differences now exist between Saigon and Washington on this question.

"If there is I'm not going to talk about it here," he said to reporters in the State Department press briefing room.

There were indications here, however, that while its own position may not have changed, the Saigon Government is aware of the new flexibility in the United States approach to a coalition regime.