

11

Thieu Sees a Need For 50,000 Troops From U.S. After '73

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SAIGON, South Vietnam, July 30 — President Nguyen Van Thieu said tonight that a "residual force" of about 50,000 American troops would be required in South Vietnam after 1973 to "guarantee the peace."

In an informal dinner conversation with 11 Western correspondents, Mr. Thieu said that by the end of 1971 some United States combat troops would be required, but only to protect American logistical and support troops. South Vietnamese forces, he said, would fully fill the combat burden by that time.

In the meantime, Mr. Thieu said, South Vietnam must have increased aid. He declined to discuss specific amounts, saying, "everything has to go up." He did say that money was needed now to help pay the South Vietnamese Army and to provide food and housing for soldiers and their dependents.

Says Army Is at Peak

Mr. Thieu said the regular army had reached a ceiling of 1,100,000 men, but that unpaid local self-defense forces needed to be increased from their present strength of 500,000 to 1.5 million. Americans must help provide these forces with automatic weapons, grenade launchers and carbines, he said.

Mr. Thieu would not go into details of his recent discussion with David K. E. Bruce, the new head of the American delegation to the Paris peace talks, but he said Mr. Bruce was "very discreet, very careful." He said he did not think Mr. Bruce would have any "sensational" proposals at Paris.

Mr. Thieu speculated that the Communists would probably make their next big military moves in Cambodia, to attempt to put President Nixon in the difficult position of either substantially increasing American aid or letting the Cambodian Government fall—both of which would have repercussions on American public opinion.

"The Communists don't fight for a military advantage, but for a psychological advance," he said.