

# Bickering Over Indochina Funds

Washington

President Ford's request for more military aid for beleaguered South Vietnam and Cambodia drew increasingly partisan fire yesterday as Democrats denied that the fate of the two nations lay with Congress.

Senator Edward M. Kennedy (Dem-Mass.), accused the administration of employing "threats and scare tactics" to drum up support for Mr. Ford's \$522 million request. Congressional leaders doubt the heavily Democratic Congress will approve the funds.

"Congress and the American people do not hold the fate of Saigon and Phnom Penh in their hands," Kennedy said.

Kennedy responded to statements by Vice President Nelson A. Rockefeller and Senate minority leader Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania.

Rockefeller said Congress will be responsible for the collapse of the South Vietnamese government if it fails to provide the \$300 million Mr. Ford seeks for the Saigon regime.

Scott took a similar position, noting that Mr. Ford asked for \$222 million for Cambodia "to prevent . . . the immediate fall of a country.

"If Congress makes a conscious decision to let that country fall, then the blame will be on the Congress," Scott said.

But Senator Robert C. Byrd (Dem-W. Va.), the assistant Democratic leader said. "No. No. Certainly

not," when asked if rejection of the aid requests would pin responsibility on Congress if the two nations fall to Communist guns.

"The Democratic Congress is trying to exercise some common sense in the matter," Byrd said. "I'd be willing to sell them some equipment and ammunition. I don't think we have to give it to them."

At the same time, a Defense Department official testified South Vietnam is not expected to face an all-out offensive from the north in the next six months.

Lieutenant General Daniel Graham, director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, told the House defense appropriations subcommittee that "we expect South Vietnam to hang on" in the face of North Vietnamese attacks.

Shortages of material will not be critical until early summer, he said.

*Associated Press*