

Absence of U.S. Envoy  
Said to Be of No Import

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WASHINGTON, March 23 —State Department officials said today that Ambassador Graham A. Martin's continued absence from Saigon was solely due to health reasons and absolutely did not portend any change in American policy toward President Nguyen Van Thieu.

One department official said that Ambassador Martin was now in North Carolina recovering from oral surgery, and that his physician has ordered him not to fly for another week. Another official said that as soon as the Ambassador was well enough, "We want him right back in Saigon." They expected that he would return to South Vietnam next week.

The Ambassador's prolonged absence from Saigon had given rise to speculation that the Administration had decided to dissociate itself from President Thieu. Mr. Thieu and Mr. Martin are known to be on very friendly terms.