

Pentagon Favors a Delay on Arms Aid

By JOHN W. FINNEY

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 4—In policy discussions in the Ford Administration, the Defense Department is arguing against further large-scale arms shipments to Saigon until the South Vietnamese forces demonstrate a will to fight.

The Pentagon position, which officials say is being advanced by Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger, is that the South Vietnamese already have sufficient arms to establish a defensive perimeter north of Saigon.

The Administration's policy on additional military aid is to be worked out in the next few days in discussions between the President Ford, Gen. Frederick C. Weyand, the Army Chief of Staff, and Secretary of State Kissinger. General Weyand, who returned to California today from a seven-day inspection tour of South Vietnam, is to meet with Mr. Ford and Mr. Kissinger in Palm Springs tomorrow.

General Weyand's appraisal on his departure from Saigon was that the South Vietnamese Army "still has the spirit and the capability to defeat the North Vietnamese." This is not completely shared by high-ranking civilian officials in the Pentagon, who are increasingly pessimistic about the ability of the weakened, demoralized forces to regroup.

The Immediate Question

The immediate issue before the Administration is how to send \$175-million in military aid left from the \$700-million appropriated by Congress for the fiscal year ending June 30.

The \$175-million, most of which would probably go for ammunition and fuel, would be insufficient, according to Pentagon officials, to provide for large-scale replacement of the weapons and equipment lost by the South Vietnamese in their retreat or to arm them for a prolonged defense around Saigon.

President Ford said yesterday that he would press Congress for the additional \$300-million in military aid already requested and he held out the possibility that he would ask for more.

The initial indications were that Congress, which has been reluctant to provide additional funds, is even more reluctant in view of the deteriorating situation.

Senator John L. McClellan, Democrat of Arkansas and chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, said in an interview that he was opposed to more military aid for what he described as a lost cause.

"They Have Lost the War"

"They have lost the war, and we don't need to spend any more money on something that is futile," he said.

While the Administration and Congress weigh policy on military aid, the Pentagon is continuing a limited emergency airlift of weapons and supplies. At this point it consists of a C-5A flight to Saigon every other day.

The purpose, officials acknowledge, is primarily psychological — a demonstration of American support — although the supplies are of limited military value. The hope is to send enough 105-mm. howitzers to re-equip at least one brigade formed out of the 15,000 troops estimated to have escaped from

the northern part of the country.

Conflict of View Denied

Special to The New York Times

SAN FRANCISCO, April 4—

The White House sought today to show that there was no conflict between statements made by President Ford and Gen. Weyand, Army Chief of Staff, on President Nguyen Van Thieu's conduct of the war in South Vietnam.

Mr. Ford told a meeting of editors and broadcasters in San Diego yesterday: "President Thieu made a unilateral decision to withdraw from Military Areas I, II, II, and I am told by experts that a withdrawal is the most difficult military maneuver to undertake. The commanders were unprepared and did not take into consideration the flood of hundreds of thousands of refugees that clogged the highways."

While in South Vietnam Gen. Weyand said the withdrawal was "sound strategic action."

Ron Nessen, the White House Press secretary, asked today about the apparent conflict, said the President was talking about tactics while General Weyand was speaking of strategy. "It was sound strategic decision but the President thinks that tactically it was improperly carried out," Mr. Nessen explained.

Nevertheless, President Ford, in his talk to the editors and in a news conference later, conveyed the impression that he was upset with Mr. Thieu for failing to inform the United States of the withdrawal plans.

Administration officials said it was understood that General Weyand had expressed displeasure privately to Mr. Thieu.