

U.S. IS CONCERNED OVER TIES IN ASIA

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Indochina Situation Leads
to Plans to Strengthen
Relations With Allies

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WASHINGTON, April 25—
The Ford Administration, concerned about the possible impact of the Indochina situation on other Asian countries, hopes to bolster relations with Japan, South Korea, the Philippines and other Asian countries in coming weeks and months.

High Administration officials said in separate interviews today and yesterday that no formal reassessment of American policy toward Asia had been ordered similar to the current review of Middle East policy. But a number of key officials have already begun giving increased attention to ways of preventing a breakdown in stability in the area.

The courses of action taken or contemplated include the following:

Secretary of State Kissinger gave a public pledge to Foreign Minister Kiichi Miyazawa two weeks ago that the United States would abide by its defense commitment to Japan "in the event of armed attack against Japan, whether by nuclear or conventional force."

The United States, aware that South Korea feels threatened by renewed militancy in North Korea, has repeatedly affirmed its defense commitment to Seoul in recent weeks, including a statement by President Ford that the mutual security treaty with South Korea was of "fundamental importance" to the United States.

In a two-day conference

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that ended today the United States, along with Australia and New Zealand, reaffirmed "the great value" placed on the ANZUS alliance of the three nations.

Mr. Ford will meet early next month with the Prime Ministers of Australia, New Zealand and Singapore separately to affirm American commitments in the area. Premier Takeo Miki of Japan is to visit Washington in August.

The Administration is ready to reassure the Philippines on its ties there and to discuss any changes in the status of American bases sought by the Philippines, which has begun its own reassessment of the world situation.

Focus on South Vietnam

The attention of top officials has been focused so closely on the situation in South Vietnam that little time has been left for the longer-range studies that most aides feel are needed for the Pacific and Asian areas.

The State Department spokesman, Robert Anderson, said today that Mr. Kissinger was engaged in an "intensive" effort to arrange a cease-fire and a negotiated settlement of the situation in South Vietnam to avoid a military battle for Saigon.

The Associated Press reported from Saigon today that the new President, Tran Van Huong, had initiated talks with North Vietnam on a negotiated settlement and was trying to send a minister of cabinet rank to Hanoi aboard an American Air Force plane.

But Mr. Kissinger, speaking briefly with newsmen in the lobby of the State Department, said he had "no information to confirm the report."

'Understanding' Reported

On Capitol Hill, Representative William S. Broomfield, Republican of Michigan, the senior Republican on the House International Relations Committee, said he had learned that there was a "tacit understanding" by which the North Vietnamese would not attack Saigon until at least Monday to permit evacuation of Americans. *

But Mr. Kissinger told newsmen at the White House that the Broomfield statement "was not accurate." He said that he had asked Mr. Broomfield, "for myself," where he had got the information.

Later the Congressman said that he had learned of it from press reports.

Other senior Administration officials also denied that any deal had been made, but at the same time several said it was interesting that there was a lull in fighting around Saigon for the fifth straight day.

This suggested to them that the Communists were waiting to see if a new Government would emerge in Saigon that would be more acceptable to them.

Minh Is Acceptable

The Vietcong have indicated that they would like Gen. Duong Van Minh to take over as head of the Saigon Government. He would also be acceptable to American officials, who now seem interested only in arranging an orderly change in Saigon and in avoiding a bloody battle.

Because the North Vietnamese have not opened an attack on Saigon, there has been renewed discussion within the Administration on whether the Communists were willing to accept a political victory rather than a purely military one.

Although the intelligence community has reported a huge Communist build-up around Saigon, many officials believe that the Communists may decide to press for a political settlement to avoid unnecessary damage to Saigon and to enhance their world image.

State Department officials said that the Communist victory in Cambodia and their gains in South Vietnam have had the greatest impact on

* If Broomfield used the term North Vietnamese, this may not have been "accurate." OVER

See story by Malcolm Brown today, ... on PRG conditions, and another reference to Monday, 23 Apr.

South Korea, where the Government of President Park Chung Hee has instituted even tighter control because of concern over North Korean intentions.

The Seoul Government's concern has been magnified by the surprise visit to China in the last week by the North Korean leader, Kim Il-Sung, who gave a very militant speech there.

Analysts here noted that the Chinese had been more restrained than the North Koreans in their public statements, but they concluded that it was impossible to tell whether the North Koreans were thinking of stepped-up military action against the South.

There are 42,000 American troops in South Korea, and in case of war they would be immediately involved. Under the security treaty with South Korea, the United States is obligated to take steps within the Constitutional authority to come to Seoul aid.

One senior official said that Seoul "obviously is worried whether the Congress, given the Saigon example, would support military action in Korea."

Mr. Park's acts of political repression have cost him considerable goodwill on Capitol Hill, and some leaders have called for an end to aid to South Korea.

Diplomats Shift Allegiance

Nevertheless, because Japan views developments in Korea as directly affecting her security, the United States Government is determined to do nothing to weaken the South Koreans, officials said unanimously. The South Koreans have been reassured that the American forces will not be cut, they said.

The Ford Administration perceives the main problem in Asia at the moment as psychological, with various non-Communist nations alarmed that

the United States might lose interest in the area, leading to a growth of either Soviet or Chinese influence.

The Chinese have expressed concern to the Japanese that the Russians would try to take advantage of a lessened American role in the area.

It is difficult for American officials to estimate accurately what the growth of North Vietnamese influence will mean to the Asian area and, in particular, how Thailand will react.

AP, STChronicle today, uses the term "Communist forces" in paraphrasing Broomfield's remarks. "Broomfield ... said there is a 'tacit understanding' between the Ford administration and Hanoi that Communist forces will not attack Saigon until at least Monday to permit evacuation of 'non-essential' Americans."

WXP today ("Panic at Airport") says Broomfield "told reporters that contacts through a third country have produced 'a tacit deal' to 'get Americans evacuated without trouble at least until Monday.' Reporters said they overheard a State Department official ask Broomfield not to use the phrase 'tacit deal.'"

WXP also says that "what Kissinger was disclaiming was that the United States is a party to a deal or that it knows how long the 'lull' will last."