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Ford Urged to Bare Any Vietnam Pledges

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WASHINGTON, May 1—The publication of two letters from President Richard M. Nixon to President Nguyen Van Thieu of South Vietnam in 1972 and 1973 spurred new demands in the Senate today for a full disclosure by the Ford Administration of all private documents relating to possible American commitments to Saigon.

In remarks on the Senate floor, Senator Henry M. Jackson, who started the controversy last month, said it was "grotesque and dangerous" when Congress and the American public had to rely on foreign officials to reveal vital communications.

He was referring to Nguyen Tien Hung, former South Vietnamese Minister of Planning, who made public in Washington yesterday the full texts of letters by Mr. Nixon on Nov. 14, 1972, and Jan. 5, 1973. In those letters Mr. Nixon assured Mr. Thieu that the United States would take "severe retaliatory action" and respond

with full force" if North Vietnam violated the Paris cease-fire accords.

These assurances seemed more specific about the possible use of American military force than the White House and indicated earlier this month had been made to Mr. Thieu.

White House's Response

On April 9, the White House, in response to allegations by Mr. Jackson of "secret agreements" between Mr. Nixon and Mr. Thieu, had said only that the United States had pledged to "react vigorously" to major violations of the accord.

Today, Mr. Jackson, the Democratic presidential contender from Washington, said that "by failing to disclose the precise nature and texts of secret understandings reached with South Vietnam, the Administration misled a foreign government and the Congress as to the nature and extent of the United States commitment to that government."

He renewed an earlier request that the Armed Services Com-

mittee, of which he is a member, hold hearings and press for the release of relevant documents.

The Senate majority leader, Mike Mansfield, joined Mr. Jackson in his appeal on the Senate floor for the release of material.

"It looks like the jacks are coming of the box and I think the sooner this thing is cleared up the better off we shall all be," he said.

Senate Request Rejected

Mr. Mansfield said that there should be a differentiation between the Ford Administration and the Nixon Administration. Mr. Jackson agreed that President Ford was not involved but added, "He is in a beautiful position to make a full and complete disclosure."

Yesterday Mr. Ford formally rejected a request from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for copies of the confidential Nixon-Thieu correspondence.

In a letter to Senator John J. Sparkman, the committee chairman, Mr. Ford cited executive privilege, the need to keep diplomatic correspondence secret, and a desire to "leave the divisive debates over Vietnam behind us."

The Foreign Relations Committee was expected to renew its request for the documents.

At the State Department, he spokesman, Robert Anderson, said that by the Administration's contention that there was nothing substantially different from what was included in Mr. Nixon's letters and what was said publicly at the time.

Administration spokesmen have insisted that the assurances of American support, including military help, made privately to Mr. Thieu were included in public statements by Mr. Nixon and others after the signing of the Paris cease-

fire accords on Jan. 27, 1973.

Newsmen today kept returning to the point that there was a difference between Mr. Nixon and others warning Hanoi publicly—as Mr. Nixon did on March 15, 1973—that the United States might retaliate, and the private promises made to Saigon to get Mr. Thieu to support the cease-fire agreement.

Mr. Anderson also denied that what Mr. Nixon promised Mr. Thieu amounted to an American "commitment."

He said that "if we had had any so-called secret commitment we would have used it in the Congressional debate" over the cutoff of American combat activity in Indochina that went into effect on Aug. 15, 1973, thereby nullifying any promises made by Mr. Nixon.

The reluctance of the Administration to tell Congress about the promises to Mr. Thieu during that Congressional debate in late June, 1973, remains a mystery.

Presumably Mr. Nixon, already deeply in trouble over Watergate revelations, was not anxious to get involved in another contentious issue.

Secretary of State Kissinger hinted at this in his news conference on Tuesday when he said that in the spring of 1973 various options were put to Mr. Nixon on what could be done in response to violations by Hanoi, but Mr. Nixon never made a decision.

"To what extent it was influenced by Watergate is a psychological assessment that one can only speculate about," Mr. Kissinger said.

Administration officials have said that the promises made to Mr. Thieu were essential to getting his support for the accord, but to have made them public as "commitments" might have led North Vietnam to abrogate the accord.