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# Zumwalt Says He Knew Of Nixon Pledge to Thieu

Washington

Retired admiral Elmo Zumwalt said yesterday military leaders knew in late 1972 that President Richard Nixon was giving secret assurances to encourage South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu to sign the Paris peace accords.

The former chief of naval operations said although he was not aware written commitments were being made, he did know in advance of the truce that Mr. Nixon was promising Thieu a "vigorous" U.S. response to any violation of the pending accord by North Vietnam.

Zumwalt said he assumed — incorrectly, it turned out — that the Nixon administration had also been advising key congressional leaders of all aspects of negotiations with the Vietnamese president.

"It was quite clear to me that verbal agreements have been made," Zumwalt told a

Senate subcommittee yesterday.

The existence of commitments — which have become a source of controversy in Congress—was implicit in high level discussions involving military leaders in November and December, 1972, the admiral said.

He said that in November, 1972, members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff were advised of the status of the peace negotiations in a meeting in the President's Oval Office attended also by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, among others.

In a meeting the next month, he said, Admiral Thomas Moorer, then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, reported to other members on a meeting with the President at Camp David concerning "the circumstances under which force would be applied" by the United States if Hanoi violated the pending peace agreement.

In fact, Zumwalt said, the

Joint Chiefs of Staff were told to prepare contingency plans for the use of force.

Admiral Zumwalt said he was "mystified" when in August, 1973, the Nixon administration apparently made a decision to go along with the congressional restriction against any U.S. intervention in Southeast Asia, despite the secret commitments to Thieu.

The admiral said he concluded that the President who had made a political decision based on his problems with the Watergate affair that he lacked support to bring up the commitments for public debate.

"By August, 1973, I believe he felt in such difficulty that he no longer cared to even admit that they (the secret commitments) were made," Zumwalt said.

He testified before a subcommittee considering new way to strengthen congressional monitoring of agreements made by a president with other countries.

Reuters