

Hawk's Viet Blast Jolts White House

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Senator Henry M. Jackson (Dem-Wash.), the only remaining hawk among the major prospective Democratic presidential candidates, accused the Nixon Administration yesterday of letting the Saigon government "sabotage" its presidential election.

In his first significant break with President Nixon's Vietnam policy, Jackson said the administration has failed to exert sufficient influence to assure a genuine contest in South Vietnam's October 3 presidential election.

The White House refused to comment on the Jackson speech.

It was learned, however, that the administration was jarred by it, particularly since Jackson had been Mr. Nixon's original choice to be Secretary of Defense.

WARNING

Jackson, a consistent and outspoken defender of the Vietnam policies of both Presidents Nixon and Johnson, also had a warning for Mr. Nixon.

Unless a competitive presidential election takes place in South Vietnam, Jackson told the Senate, "I must reserve my position regarding future U.S. military and economic aid to the South Vietnamese government."

In a subsequent interview,

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Jackson confirmed that he may opt to withdraw his support of a continued U.S. presence in South Vietnam.

"It is ironic that the sabotage of this presidential election is not by the Viet Cong — who no longer seems able to do it — but by the Thieu regime itself," Jackson said on the Senate floor.

Jackson contended that the Nixon administration failed to make sufficient use of "our still significant presence in Vietnam" over the past year to assure a genuine presidential contest.

"Instead," he said, "the administration allowed our embassy to convey the impression that Thieu was really 'our man.'"

Among other things, Jackson suggested that the South Vietnamese Supreme Court postpone the election for 30 to 90 days and reopen the ballot to opposition candidates.

Among the Senate's flock of Democratic presidential aspirants, Jackson has been the only one to oppose Congressional efforts to force a withdrawal of all U.S. forces from Indochina.