

Kennedy Condemns U.S. Aid to Police In South Vietnam

Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) charged yesterday that the Nixon administration is continuing "discredited policies of the past in South Vietnam" by helping to finance operations of the South Vietnamese national police.

He called for termination of the police-aid program, which has cost the United States nearly \$200 million in the past decade.

In reply, the State Department acknowledged Kennedy's assertion that the Vietnamese cease-fire agreement has not succeeded in bringing about the release of political prisoners.

But the department said reports of the number and abuse of political prisoners have been exaggerated, and estimated that non-communist political prisoners in South Vietnam total from 500 to 1,000.

The department said, in reply to a question from Kennedy, that American expenditure for police and public

safety programs in South Vietnam from 1963 through 1973 totaled \$193,631,000. Kennedy said at least \$15 million more is budgeted this year.

Sen. J. W. Fulbright (D-Ark.), chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, has indicated he will question Henry A. Kissinger about continued aid to the Vietnamese police after hearings resume today on Kissinger's nomination as Secretary of State.

Kennedy wrote June 7 to then-Secretary William P. Rogers with regard to the aid payments. Yesterday he released the text of his letter and of the Aug. 2 reply from Marshall Wright, assistant secretary of state for congressional relations.

Wright acknowledged "there are political prisoners in South Vietnamese jails and incidents of abuse and mistreatment do occur."

"The issue is an important one of concern to us," he wrote, "and we will continue to urge" that the South Vietnamese rectify the matter.

"Nevertheless," he added, "it is our considered judgment that . . . failures in this area . . . are not sufficient to call for the termination of the projects."

The aid to Vietnamese police, Kennedy wrote, "is a shameful waste of our foreign aid funds and violates the spirit, if not the letter, of the cease-fire agreements."

Wright disagreed. "The agreement," he wrote, "provides only that advisers to the national police leave the country within 60 days and that any . . . armaments, munitions and war materiel be limited to replacement items."

"There are no other restrictions on aid to the national police such as training outside of Vietnam . . ."

Wright said the United States has repeatedly made diplomatic representations to the South Vietnamese on behalf of humane treatment of political prisoners.

He said charges concerning political prisoners have presented a "misleading picture of the Thieu administration as . . . a brutal, oppressive and dictatorial one, systematically stamping out every vestige of political opposition."