

U.S. May Speed Shipments Of War Material to Saigon

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 26 — Pentagon sources said today that the Defense Department was considering a significant acceleration of arms shipments to South Vietnam to insure that most of the jets, tanks and artillery previously scheduled for delivery arrive before any cease-fire closes off reinforcement.

Already, these sources disclosed, there has been some step-up in the movement of war material over the last few weeks as the prospects of a cease-fire brightened.

"We had carefully worked out a list of equipment necessary to enable South Vietnam to defend itself," one Defense official said. "Nothing has happened to suggest it can get by with less."

At the same time, officials said, the Pentagon is preparing plans to neutralize the mines blocking North Vietnam's ports and inland waterways and is planning an airlift of remaining American military personnel from South Vietnam once truce arrangements have been completed.

Pentagon officials stressed that the acceleration of shipments would involve only

equipment previously scheduled to be sent to South Vietnam.

"The other side is not stopping its supplies either," one official declared. "They're still moving things through the DMZ every day."

The tentative agreement outlined to newsmen today by Henry A. Kissinger, the President's national security adviser,

A map showing approximate areas of South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia controlled by the opposing sides appears on Page 16.

would permit both sides to replace military equipment inside South Vietnam at the time of agreement with "comparable" equipment, but not additional or significantly better weapons.

But the problem, officials said, is that some key items of equipment, especially jet aircraft, have been approved and funded by Congress but will not come off production lines for some time.

Specifically, this includes a squadron, or 24, Cessna T-37 jet close-support fighters and three squadrons, or 72, Nor-

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*See, this file: AP 22 Oct 72, Keyes Beech, STEx 25 Oct. Also, last two paragraphs, this story.

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throp F-5E advanced air-defense fighters.

Military sources said that 24 T-37's were being rounded up from Air Force reserve units for delivery to South Vietnam, possibly within the next few days. The reserve units have been promised replacements from future production.

The Pentagon is also considering sending as many of the less advanced F-5A fighters as it can locate, primarily from production scheduled for other countries, so that when the F-5E's become available in the 1973-1975 period, they can be sent as replacements, on a one-for-one basis, for the F-5A's.

At present the South Vietnamese Air Force has 10 squadrons of jets and propeller-driven fighters, 18 squadrons of helicopters, 8 squadrons of light observation aircraft, 2 squadrons of gunships, one battlefield reconnaissance squadron, one squadron of training aircraft and one squadron of transports for military

commanders and high ranking officers.

The South Vietnamese have a total of 1,300 military aircraft of all kinds. Squadrons range from 18 to 24 aircraft.

One of the assignments given to Gen. Creighton W. Abrams, the Army Chief of Staff, on his trip to South Vietnam last week, Pentagon sources said, was to determine precisely what equipment was needed on an urgent basis.

Among other things, he is said to have recommended fast replacement of tanks, armored personnel carriers and artillery lost by South Vietnamese units in battles over the last several months.

The United States has been delayed in moving some of this equipment from Japan because of picketing on roads from the maintenance depot at Sagami to the port of Yokohama.

Other equipment under consideration for earlier shipment, sources said, include a squadron of helicopters, a squadron of AC-119 gunships, and a squadron of RC-119 electronic reconnaissance aircraft.

The Hanoi radio, in its description today of the tentative moves toward an end to hostilities, said the United States had agreed to end the bombing and mining of the North on Monday, as the first step toward a military cease-fire.

Timetable Is Upset

That timetable obviously was upset, but the United States, in what Mr. Kissinger today described as a gesture of "goodwill," stopped all bombing of North Vietnam north of the 20th Parallel at about that time.

Pentagon sources said the United States was prepared to neutralize the mines in the North as soon as a new timetable could be arranged as part of the cease-fire.

"First thing we would do is tell Hanoi where all the mines are, approximately," one official said.

Some of the mines, he continued, are programmed to neutralize themselves after a certain time; these will simply not be replaced and will become harmless.

Other mines can be disarmed by a certain radio signal. This would be done by special United States planes.

Still other mines have to be physically removed by mine-sweepers. "We can tell them where these mines are so they can sweep them," the official said. "Or, if they need help, I think we would be willing to provide some directly. But this remains to be worked out."

As for the withdrawal of American forces from South Vietnam, there are about 33,000 men there now. Pentagon sources said that except for "a few helicopters and some electric typewriters," the bulk of their equipment that is not scheduled to be turned over to South Vietnamese forces had already been removed.

Mr. Kissinger said these men would be removed within 60 days of agreement.

Pentagon sources said this could easily be accomplished with Air Force C-141 and C-135 troop transports and planes chartered from commercial airlines.