

Red Buildup Poses New Nixon Hurdle

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WASHINGTON — A new buildup of Communist forces in South Vietnam may present another obstacle to President Nixon's efforts to achieve a Vietnam cease-fire.

The increase of North Vietnamese troops over the weekend occurred in an area where Administration officials were hoping to achieve a token withdrawal of Communist troops that might satisfy President Nguyen Van Thieu of the Saigon government.

According to U.S. officials, one stumbling block to the agreement between Washington and Hanoi has been Thieu's opposition to a proposed cease-fire that would permit more than 145,000 North Vietnamese forces to remain in South Vietnam.

U.S. officials said efforts were being made to achieve an "unwritten" agreement with Hanoi that it remove at least 35,000 troops from northern South Vietnam.

Northern Area

During the weekend, however, defense officials reported a buildup of Communist forces in the northern section, under control of Hanoi forces since last spring's offensive.

Moving into Quang Tri Province were 100 tanks and 100 armored personnel carriers of a North Vietnamese armored regiment. Two other rifle regiments were deployed just west of Saigon by Hanoi, defense officials said.

Also being moved into South Vietnam were Com-

munist artillery and anti-aircraft units.

Meanwhile, Communist ground troops continued assaults in Laos, which is also scheduled to achieve a cease-fire under the proposed U.S.-North Vietnamese accord.

Fighter Jets

At the same time, defense officials said they could see no provocation by the United States in the rapid buildup of Saigon's jet fighter force. More than 120 F5 fighters have been "borrowed" from U.S. allies to be rushed to South Vietnam.

According to Defense Secretary Melvin Laird, the buildup would enhance the chances of a negotiated settlement rather than hinder it.

Radio Hanoi, however, has attacked Washington's effort to increase the South Vietnamese air force.

Pentagon officials have denied reports that the emergency buildup was required because Laird was caught by surprise on the cease-fire proposal. The planned accord would prohibit introduction of new weapons, but would permit replacements.

Administration officials contend the extra planes were needed to persuade Thieu to support the proposed cease-fire. The additional planes, however, would be of little immediate help to Thieu. South Vietnam lacks the trained pilots and mechanics needed to operate what is already one of the largest air forces in the world.