

Pentagon Says Vietnam Arms Build-Up Is Mainly Over

WASHINGTON, Nov. 20 (UPI)—The Pentagon said today that it had essentially completed an urgent program to arm South Vietnam with 10,000 tons of new military equipment before the withdrawal of American forces.

A Defense Department spokesman, Jerry W. Friedheim, said in an interview that the build-up, except for "a few things" still on the way, ended over the weekend and that United States military aid would now revert to regular levels.

The completion of the build-up coincided with the beginning of Henry A. Kissinger's latest negotiations in Paris with North Vietnamese representatives. North Vietnam has sharply criticized the United States

for accelerating its military aid to Saigon at a time when the two sides are nearing agreement on a cease-fire. It demanded again today that the shipments be halted.

American officials would make no connection between Mr. Kissinger's new round of talks and the decision to end the arms build-up.

List of Matériel

The new equipment supplied during the three-week build-up included about 600 planes and helicopters, giving Saigon the fourth largest air force in the world.

The supply deliveries, accomplished primarily through a large-scale airlift by the United States Air Force, compressed into three weeks a supply

schedule planned to take until late next year. Mr. Friedheim said that the huge C-5, played a major role in making this possible.

Administration officials ordered the speed-up because the signing of the cease-fire will freeze arms levels in South Vietnam.

So rapidly was the build-up carried out that about 100 United States-built F-5 jet fighters had to be borrowed from South Korea, Nationalist China and Iran because only about 20 were available in the United States.

In addition to the F-5's, Saigon received about 90 A-37 light attack bombers, 30 A-1 propeller-driven bombers, 30 C-130 transport planes, 20 AC-119 gunships and more than

270 helicopters. These built the South Vietnamese Air Force to more than 2,000 craft.

The airlift also included tanks—mostly replacements for those that the South Vietnamese lost during this year's enemy offensive—and armored personnel carriers, artillery, aircraft engines and other spare parts.