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Japan Plans Emergency Aid to Indochina After Truce

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TOKYO, Jan. 17—Foreign Minister Masayoshi Ohira said today that Japan would extend emergency economic aid to Indochina as rapidly as possible after a cease-fire in the Vietnam war.

He said that such emergency aid was a "matter of humanity and I think we should respond to the problem as promptly as possible." He said that Japan would give aid "to its fullest capacity" without waiting for "the establishment" of a multinational reconstruction program.

The Foreign Minister, in a meeting with foreign newsmen here, said the Japanese Government had a \$760-million re-

serve fund in the draft budget for 1973, an increase of 28 per cent over the 1972 budget, from which to draw emergency funds. The 1973 budget year begins on April 1.

The Japanese Government has previously promised to participate in a long-range program of economic assistance to South Vietnam, North Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. But Mr. Ohira's statement today was the first public pledge of emergency aid to the four Indochinese countries.

In addition to the reserve fund to which Mr. Ohira referred, the projected 1973 budget provides \$97.5-million—an increase of 42 per cent from the present budget—in foreign aid funds to be dispensed by the

Foreign Ministry. The remainder of Japan's approximately \$400-million in annual economic and technical aid is handled by other ministries.

Refuge Funds Allocated

Foreign Ministry officials said that \$3.3-million in aid funds had already been earmarked for assistance to refugees in Indochina and that more could be drawn from the ministry's aid fund.

Further, the Economic Planning Agency has a proposed budget of \$521.1-million in yen credits to be extended abroad. Such credits could be made available to the Indochinese nations to enable them to buy imports from Japan.

Mr. Ohira said that the Japa-

nese Government had established the machinery for extending emergency aid to Indochina. Other officials said that this meant coordination among existing economic aid offices rather than the establishment of a new organization.

The Foreign Minister, however, was dubious about an immediate political role for Japan in Indochina. He said that Japan was not connected with the prisoner exchange issue. He also said that Japan had not been asked to participate in the supervision of a cease-fire. But he did not flatly rule out any such role.

On long-term reconstruction aid to Indochina, Mr. Ohira said

that it was "premature to say at the present stage how much aid Japan will give and in what way." He said the question had been studied by the Government but indicated that Japan would wait until an international organization had been set up before deciding how Tokyo would participate.

Total Spending Estimated

The Nomura Research Institute, which has Government connections here, has estimated that "between \$12-billion and \$15-billion worth of reconstruction work will be done in the two Vietnams, and double that amount for the entire Indochina peninsula."

"Out of the sum for Vietnam alone," the institute projected in a study, "\$1.2-billion to \$1.5-billion, or maybe as much as \$2.5-billion to \$3-billion, will be spent in Japan.

Since most aid from advanced nations is tied to purchases in the donor nation, the Nomura study would suggest that Japan's contribution to the reconstruction of Indochina would approximately equal the amount expected to be spent in Japan.

Mr. Ohira, in response to a question on Japan's general position on the Vietnam war, replied only that Japan was not involved but was deeply concerned with the situation.

He continued the restraint that has marked recent Japanese public pronouncements on Vietnam, in contrast to the sharp criticism that has come from other allies of the United States, such as Australia, and from neutrals, such as Sweden.