

American 'Responsibility' In Indochina Is Stressed

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 30 — President Nixon said tonight that the United States had to remain involved in Southeast Asia despite the agreement last year that led to the withdrawal of American forces from the area.

In his written State of the Union message, Mr. Nixon said: "We must guard against the tendency to express relief at our military extrication from Southeast Asia by 'washing our hands' of the whole affair."

He said that "men and women are still dying there" and that the United States had "a responsibility" in the area.

It was one of his strongest commitments to maintain an American involvement in Indochina—a year and three days after the signing of the Vietnam cease-fire agreement—but

he limited his specific pledges to economic and military aid with an insistence on "full compliance" by North Vietnam with the accords signed in Paris.

Mr. Nixon devoted only a few of the 51 pages of his message to foreign affairs. He will later submit a State of the World message on international relations. The President made these other points:

¶He hopes this year to "take another giant stride toward lasting peace in the world," not only through negotiations with the Soviet Union and China, but also by helping to bring about "a just and lasting settlement" in the Middle East.

¶Although the improved relations with Moscow were "severely tested" during the Middle East war in October, the United States will seek better ties with Moscow and an agreement at the talks on limiting strategic arms.

¶Stronger ties with Western Europe and Japan and help for the developing nations will be stressed this year. Particular attention will be paid to the World Food Conference in November.

¶With Latin America, the United States will "begin a new and constructive dialogue," which will be underscored when Secretary of State Kissinger attends a Latin-American foreign ministers' meeting in Mexico City on Feb. 21.

Mr. Nixon asked Congress to pass the Administration's trade reform act. But he again urged that he be permitted to extend favorable tariff status — most-favored-nation treat-

Continued on Page 21, Column 4

Continued From Page 1, Col. 7

ment — to the Soviet Union.

He said that linking tariff liberalization with the issue of emigration of Soviet Jews, as the House of Representatives has done, "would only make more difficult the kind of co-operation effort between the United States and other governments which is necessary if we are to work together for peace in the Middle East and throughout the world."

In his discussion of Indochina, Mr. Nixon notes that the United States was "at peace for the first time in more than a decade," but he added: "Peace must be something more than the absence of the active engagement of American forces in conflict."

He said that the United States "must provide those ravaged lands with the economic assistance needed to stabilize the structure of their societies and make future peace more likely."

"We must provide, as well, the continued military-aid grants required to maintain strong, self-reliant defense forces," he said, "and we will continue to insist on full compliance with the terms of the agreements reached in Paris, including a full accounting of all of our men missing in Southeast Asia."

Mr. Nixon seemed to suggest

that he wanted to keep alive the possibility of economic aid to North Vietnam—an idea that ran into strong Congressional opposition when first raised by the Administration last year.

The Administration, which subsequently shelved the idea because of alleged cease-fire violations by Hanoi, has said that such aid might be a useful means to get North Vietnam to abide by the agreement.

Congress last summer stripped the Administration of another means of pressure on Hanoi—