

NY Times MAR 14 1974  
U.S. Gives Saigon Air Force  
New F-5E Fighter-Bombers

SAIGON, South Vietnam, March 13 (UPI)—The United States today turned over to South Vietnam four new F-5E fighter-bombers, South Vietnamese Air Force sources said. The planes are the first of 150 the United States is expected to provide.

The sources said four of the supersonic planes were flown to the Bien Hoa Air Base 14 miles northeast of Saigon and were immediately turned over to the South Vietnamese.

The planes have already caused a bitter controversy between the Vietcong and the Saigon Government. The Paris cease-fire agreement of Jan. 28, 1973, permits replacement of existing war material with goods "of the same characteristics and properties."

South Vietnamese and American officials contend that the F-5E's are similar to the F-5 they are replacing, although the new planes are faster, more maneuverable and more sophisticated. Vietcong and North Vietnamese officials maintain that the F-5E's are so superior to the older models of the Northrop jets that they are new weapons.