

## NEW U.S. PLEDGES TO SAIGON DENIED

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Administration Contradicts  
Charge by Kennedy Based  
on a Kissinger Letter

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WASHINGTON, April 1—An allegation by Senator Edward M. Kennedy that the Nixon Administration had made "new commitments" of support to South Vietnam was denied today by the State Department.

Referring to a letter to Senator Kennedy from Secretary of State Kissinger, the department spokesman, John F. King, said: "It did not state any new commitment. It simply reaffirmed commitments we already have."

Senator Kennedy, Democrat of Massachusetts, had written Mr. Kissinger March 13 in his capacity as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Refugees. His letter asked about "existing obligations and commitments" by the United States to the governments in Indochina, including Saigon.

In his reply, dated March 25, Mr. Kissinger said that while "the U. S. has no bilateral written commitment to the Government of the Republic of Vietnam," the objective of American policy "continues to be to help strengthen the conditions which made possible the Paris agreement" on a cease-fire and withdrawal of United States forces.

Mr. Kissinger went on to say that as a signatory of the Paris agreement, the United States committed itself to supporting self-determination for the South Vietnamese people.

"With these commitments in mind," he added, "we provide to the Republic of Vietnam the means necessary for its self-defense and for its economic viability."

Mr. Kissinger said that the

United States "derived a certain obligation from our long and deep involvement in Vietnam." Having invested so heavily in human and material resources, he said, "we have thus committed ourselves very substantially, both politically and morally."

### 'Disturbing Clarification'

In releasing the correspondence, Senator Kennedy called Mr. Kissinger's response "a welcome but disturbing clarification."

"I am distressed that the Secretary's statement seems to propound a new rationalization for our continued heavy involvement in Indochina," he added.

Senator Kennedy said that it was now apparent the Administration viewed the year-old Paris agreement "as creating new American commitments to South Vietnam."

The agreement, issued in Paris on Jan. 27, 1973, says that a commitment was made by all the signatories to "the South Vietnamese people's right to self-determination and to contributing to the consolidation of peace in Asia and the World."

In response to questions at a press briefing today about how this should be interpreted, Mr. King said, "A legal commitment, no — a moral-political commitment, yes."

Senator Kennedy observed in a statement that "rather than chart a new beginning, the Administration's interpretation of the Paris agreement is perpetuating old relationships and continuing old policies — as if nothing had changed."

In the light of current United States commitments in Indochina, officially estimated at \$3-billion this year, Mr. Kennedy said that this policy was "contrary to the new directions set by Congress last year."

A Kennedy aide estimated total United States spending in Indochina would be closer to \$4-billion in 1974, with nearly \$3-billion going to South Vietnam. He added that Mr. Kissinger's letter represented "a totally new justification" for the involvement that had never been broached before by Mr. Kissinger or other Administration officials.

The aide said that the Senate would probably hold hearings on the American involvement in Vietnam this spring.