

Promise to Hanoi
Is Denied by U.S.

But Secret Paper
Confirms Intention
to Withdraw All
Civilians From South

Washington, June

3 - The State Department denied today that the United States had made secret commitments to North Vietnam as part of the Vietnam settlement.

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The department spokesman, Robert Anderson, was asked about an article in the current issue of Foreign Policy magazine that said that commitments had been made, but not carried out.

Mr. Anderson said: "We did not make any secret agreements. There are no secret commitments." He added: "But there are statements on both sides of intentions. None involve added obligations on the part of the United States, but some interpreted formal agreements that is, put these agreements into specific time frames."

The article, by Ted Szulc, a freelance writer, said that the United States had committed itself to the "removal within a year of all American civilians in South Vietnam engaged in supporting South Vietnamese armed forces."

Contradiction Is Apparent

Later today, The New York Times obtained a document, identified as a production of the legal division of the State Department, that seemed to indicate the contrary of what Mr. Anderson had said. One paragraph, marked "secret," said: "The United States has assured the D.R.V. [Democratic Republic of Vietnam] that we shall withdraw from South Vietnam within 12 months from the signature of the agreement all our civilian personnel working in the armed forces of the Republic of Vietnam. We have also assured the D.R.V. that the majority of them will be withdrawn within 10 months. These assurances clearly cover all United States Government employes whose principal duties are with G.V.N. [Government of Vietnam] armed forces. It is unclear whether it applies to United States nationals employed by contractors of either the United States or the G.V.N."

Puts Civilians at 900

When this paragraph was later read to Mr. Anderson, he said that he was "not asked any question about American civilians, but only about secret commitments."

"Had I been asked about the civilians," he went on, "I would have answered that most civilians working with the GVN are contract employes. The number of U.S. Government employes whose duties require them to work closely with the GVN are 900. All American civilians total 4,500."

Mr. Szulc said in his article that the number of civilians was 9,000.

Mr. Anderson then said that if he had been asked "why the 900 had not been withdrawn," he would have answered: "Our intention to do so was in the context of substantial compliance by the North Vietnamese with the agreement. Unfortunately, that did not prove to be the case."

Some Facts Distorted

At a press briefing this morning, Mr. Anderson stated: "I don't think any useful purpose is served by raising questions about whether confidential statements will be kept confidential." He continued: "Some of the facts in the Szulc article are true, some are distorted and some are untrue."

A State Department official familiar with the document in question said that the "drafter, while he used the word 'assurances,' meant intentions and not legal commitments."

The paragraph quoted from the document was meant, this official explained, to interpret the "clearly ambiguous" definition of "military advisers" as it appears in Articles 5 and 7 of the Vietnam agreement.