

SENATE AIDES HIT EMBASSY IN SAIGON

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'Selective' Reports Adhere to South Vietnam's Line Too Closely, Study Says

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 6—A staff report issued today by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee criticizes the United States Embassy in Saigon for reports that were described as adhering too closely to the official line of the Saigon Government.

"Over the years, the American Embassy in Saigon has acquired a reputation, among both official and unofficial observers, for close identification with the policies of the South Vietnamese Government and for selective reporting," the study said. "These same tendencies are apparent today."

The 47-page report was prepared by Richard M. Moose and Charles F. Meissner, staff members, after a mission to Indochina from May 12 to June 4.

The report on Vietnam said that unless the big powers apply strong pressure, the South Vietnamese Government and the Communists will fail to reach a political settlement.

"The present military confrontation seems likely to continue," the report said, "with the South Vietnamese unable to expel the North Vietnamese from their country, and the Communists unable to acquire the decisive edge required to defeat the south militarily."

On specific points, the report doubted whether the Adminis-

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Senate Report Criticizes U.S. Embassy In South Vietnam for Pro-Saigon Line

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tration's economic aid request of \$750-million for this fiscal year would accomplish what Ambassador Graham A. Martin has predicted—a "takeoff" by the South Vietnamese economy, and an eventual American extrication from Saigon.

"It is difficult to reach any other conclusion that that the fiscal year 1975 program is, in reality, a continuation of the past aid strategy of supporting the Vietnamese economy with massive flows of outside resources in order to fill fiscal and trade deficits," it said.

Mr. Martin, who has been in Washington urging support of the aid request, said again in an interview the other day that a large appropriation was needed to spur the South Vietnamese economy and thus accelerate an end to American involvement.

Mr. Martin has rejected—as he did when he testified before the Foreign Relations Committee two weeks ago—the allegations that the Embassy had distorted its reporting to Washington on the situation in South Vietnam.

He said he had given the strongest orders that reports should be objective and fair, but he added that sometimes messages to the State Department did not convey what was already included in Pentagon or Central Intelligence Agency cables.

The report said that in comparing reports submitted to Saigon by foreign service officers in the field with reports ultimately sent by the Saigon Embassy to Washington "one consistent pattern emerges." It said the Embassy had a tendency "to play down or to ignore obvious cease-fire violations by the South Vietnamese armed forces."

"The Embassy, both in briefings provided to us and in its reporting to Washington, closely followed the public line of the South Vietnamese Government in justifying the South Vietnamese measures which precipitated the temporary breakdown in May 1974 of the talks in Paris and Saigon" between the South Vietnamese and the Viet Cong, the staff members reported.

The report cited the case of the fall of Tong Le Chan as an example. That small outpost on the Cambodian border had been under siege for more than a year. On April 12, the Saigon Government announced that a "massive" North Vietnamese attack using tanks had overrun the entire garrison.

Within a few days, today's report noted, it was widely



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Graham A. Martin, Ambassador to South Vietnam.

known in Saigon—and reported in the American press—that the government had withdrawn voluntarily without losing a

man. The Communists also said no battle had been fought.

According to the report, the Embassy in Saigon was reporting to Washington as late as April 24 on the "bombardment and fall" of Tong Le Chan.

The report said that many diplomats in Saigon believed that the Tong Le Chan incident and others were "part of a deliberate effort by the Saigon Government, assisted by the United States Embassy, to impress the United States Congress of the necessity to authorize additional military assistance for South Vietnam."

The report said that in the months between October, 1972, and January, 1973, when the Paris accord on Vietnam was signed, the United States supplied Saigon with equipment worth \$753.3-million. This was the first time this figure was made known.

It said most of the equipment has not been well utilized, and one "knowledgeable official" was quoted as saying it was "sitting around rusting."