

KISSINGER PUBLIC STATEMENTS OF POLICY

ON U. S. AID TO SOUTH VIETNAM AND ENFORCEMENT OF

THE AGREEMENT

Dr. Kissinger's Press Conference

January 24, 1973:

Question: "If a peace treaty is violated and if the ICC proves ineffective, will the United States ever again send troops into Vietnam?"

Dr. Kissinger: "I don't want to speculate on hypothetical situations that we don't expect to arise."

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"The United States, as the President said, will continue economic aid to South Viet-Nam. It will continue that military aid which is permitted by the agreement. The United States is prepared to gear that military aid to the actions of other countries and not to treat it as an end in itself."

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"What is permitted by the agreement is that military equipment that, as you said, is destroyed, worn out, used up, or damaged can be replaced.

"The reason for that provision is that if for any reason the war should start at any level, it would be an unfair restriction on our South Vietnamese allies to prohibit them from replacing their weapons if their enemies are able to do so."

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"We believe that it would be unfair and wrong for one country to be armed by its allies while the other one has no right to do so. This is what will govern our actions."

Dr. Kissinger, Interview with Marvin Kalb

February 1, 1973:

Mr. Kalb: "Dr. Kissinger, shifting south for a moment, to South Vietnam, now that the peace agreement has been signed, how would you define the nature and depth of the American commitment to Saigon?"

Dr. Kissinger: "We have been allies in a bitter and difficult war and we have a responsibility to give those with whom we have been associated an opportunity to shape their own future. Therefore, we have a responsibility to continue a program of economic assistance along the lines that have been developed.

- "We also will, as the President pointed out in his speech announcing the peace, continue that degree of military assistance that the agreement permits and which is made necessary by the military situation.

"Now, the agreement permits us to replace weapons that are used up, destroyed, damaged or worn out. Needless to say, if there is no conflict, the amount of replacement of military equipment that is needed will be much less than it was during the war. In the longer term, it has always been our intention to enable the South Vietnamese to take over the burden of their own military defense and we believe we have left them in a position where they can handle most of the challenges that we can now foresee."

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Mr. Kalb: "Dr. Kissinger, I think what I was trying to get at is what happens -- and I suppose this question must be asked. In the best of all possible worlds the cease-fire is going to hold. In the world that we live in it may not. President Thieu said in an interview tonight on CBS that he would never call upon American airpower to go back. And Ambassador Sullivan said only last Sunday that there are no inhibitions -- I believe were his words -- on the use of this airpower. Is that correct? "

Dr. Kissinger: "That is legally correct."

- Mr. Kalb: "Politically and diplomatically? "

Dr. Kissinger: "We have the right to do this. The question is very difficult to answer in the abstract. It depends on the extent of the challenge, on the nature of the threat, on the circumstances in which it arises; and it would be extremely unwise for a responsible American official at this stage, when the peace is in the process of being established, to give a checklist about what the United States will or will not do in every circumstance that is likely to arise.

"For the future that we can foresee, the North Vietnamese are not in a position to launch an overwhelming attack on the South, even if they violate the agreement. What happens after a year or two has to be seen in the circumstances which then exist.

"Most of the violations that one can now foresee should be handled by the South Vietnamese."

Mr. Kalb: "So that for the next year or two, if I understand you right, there would be no need for a reinvolvement of American military power?"

Dr. Kissinger: "Marvin, we did not end this war in order to look for an excuse to reenter it, but it would be irresponsible for us at this moment to give a precise checklist to potential aggressors as to what they can or cannot safely do."

Dr. Kissinger, Interview with Barbara Walters
February 23, 1973:

Dr. Kissinger: "In the present circumstance, when you have a peace that has many precarious aspects, after ten years of war, of a war that annually cost ten times as much as one could conceive spending, not to consider what may be psychologically, politically, and humanely necessary, is simply a wrong allocation of priorities."

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Miss Walters: "In all the talk about rebuilding North Vietnam, there has been little discussion of rebuilding the South. What are the plans there?"

Dr. Kissinger: " I think that we have an on-going program in South Vietnam and therefore there has been less need to justify continuing what we have been doing and we would expect to continue our economic assistance to South Vietnam."

"In South Vietnam the situation is somewhat different in the sense that the economy is already beginning to take hold and that one can visualize, over a period of years, a declining rate of American participation. But in the next few years we have to maintain our economic assistance to South Vietnam at roughly the level that we have been doing in recent years. And we will talk to other nations about aid to Indochina in general."

Dr. Kissinger's Press Conference

May 2, 1973:

Question: "You say if North Vietnam does not obey the call for an honorable cease-fire, it would risk revived confrontation with us. Could you spell out a little bit more clearly what you mean there? "

Dr. Kissinger: "... Now, on the confrontation, we have made clear that we mean to have the agreement observed. We are now engaged in an effort to discuss with the North Vietnamese what is required to bring about the strict implementation of the agreement. We have every intention and every incentive to make certain that our side of the agreement is maintained, and to use our influence wherever we can to bring about the strict implementation of the agreement.

"But the United States cannot sign a solemn agreement and within weeks have major provisions violated without our making an attempt to indicate it. Now, the particular measures: Some of them are, of course, obvious, and we would prefer, as we state in the report and as we have stated publicly many times, to move our relationship with the North Vietnamese toward normalization, and to start a process which would accelerate, such as other processes normally have.

"So the general thrust of this paragraph is that the tension existing between us certainly cannot ease as rapidly as we want if the agreement is not observed."

Dr. Kissinger's Press Conference

June 13, 1973:

Question: "Do you feel now that with the signing of the document you have more or less ended your work in the Indochina area or that you will still have a lot of difficulties, especially concerning Cambodia? "

Dr. Kissinger: "The remaining issues in Indochina will still require significant diplomatic efforts, and we expect to continue them. Of course, we remain committed to the strict implementation of the agreement, and we will maintain our interest in it."

Secretary Kissinger's Letter to Senator Kennedy
March 25, 1974:

"As a signator of the Paris Agreement, the United States committed itself to strengthening the conditions which made the cease-fire possible and to the goal of the South Vietnamese people's right to self-determination. With these commitments in mind, we continue to provide to the Republic of Viet-Nam the means necessary for its self-defense and for its economic viability."

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"We have... committed ourselves very substantially, both politically and morally."