

U.S. involvement criticized

Vets speak out on Vietnam

By Robin McNabb

The United States has made a mess of South Vietnam with its involvement there, according to several SJSU Vietnam veterans interviewed recently by the Spartan Daily.

"The United States has made a sham of the whole works in Vietnam," said Larry Klepinger, political science graduate student and former Special Forces soldier.

"We were duped in Vietnam," said the veteran of the '68 Tet offensive.

"Now U.S. foreign policy is in jeopardy because President Ford has really written off Indochina," added Klepinger, who was wounded in action.

Vietnamese not at heart

"Though the basic premise of being in Vietnam was to defend the Vietnamese against Communism, I don't believe we really had the prospects of the Vietnamese at heart," he said.

Furthermore, he said, "The United States is only making a token gesture with Operation Babylift."

"The United States is supposed to be protecting South Vietnam from communism," said Terrance Spoon,

another disgruntled former Special Forces soldier and economics senior.

"When we left Vietnam," said Spoon, who was in Vietnam in '69, "the South Vietnamese were supposed to be able to fight for themselves.

Bloodbath predicted

"Now there will be a bloodbath and the government leaders in Vietnam will be subject to the Peoples' Revolutionary Government."

As to U.S. foreign policy, Spoon said he felt there had been a loss of "credibility" throughout the world.

"It's the same thing as the Oriental philosophy of losing face," he said.

Perhaps the most outspoken of those interviewed was Rich Crisfield, a Navy veteran and advertising senior.

"The whole policy in Vietnam has been confused in that there were never any long term guidelines," Crisfield said.

"It seems to be the only thing the United States was trying to do in Vietnam was to maintain an unstable situation."

Rationale absurd

Crisfield said the much quoted

rationale of "stemming the tide of communism in Vietnam was absurd.

"Communism is not one of the big things this country has to worry about," said Crisfield, who spent 1966 off the coast of South Vietnam.

"Vietnam is a political thing and could never be reconciled by the United States militarily," he said.

Concerning foreign policy, Crisfield said "Secretary of State Kissinger was not defining U.S. goals throughout the world.

"As spokesman for the United States, Kissinger should clearly indicate to the world a foreign policy that has been decided by the people through the democratic process," he explained.

"Operation Babylift is a great publicity stunt," Crisfield said.

Crisfield said that a "bloodbath in Vietnam would probably not occur since it would be poor public relations.

"It doesn't seem feasible the People's Revolutionary Government will conduct a wholesale slaughter because as a new government they will need the support of the people," he explained.

Continued on back page