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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN *dy*

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 9, 1975

MC7

MEMORANDUM FOR: JACK MARSH *jm*
THROUGH: MAX FRIEDERSDORF *M.G.*
FROM: BOB WOLTHUIS *RKW*

Attached is a concise summary of Congressional reaction to Viet Nam and Cambodia. It is broken down into four parts.

- I. Notifications to Leadership on Phnom Penh Evacuation.
- II. Congressional Leadership Reaction to Notification on Deploying U.S. Navy Off Coast of Viet Nam.
- III. Congressional Leadership Reaction to Presidential Message to President Pro Tem and Speaker to the House Concerning War Powers Matters.
- IV. General reactions on Viet Nam and Cambodia from a cross section of Congressional members.

CONGRESSIONAL REACTION TO EVENTS IN SOUTH VIET NAM
AND CAMBODIA

I. Notifications to Leadership on Phnom Penh Evacuation

<u>Member</u>	<u>Date/Time</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Senator Mansfield	April 3	Little bit leary of use of marines. Ought to be plenty of time to get out.
Senator Thurmond	April 3	Hopes President does all he can to help save South Viet Nam and Cambodia.
Senator Sparkman	April 3	Certainly a mess. Appears to be a good plan.
Senator Eastland	April 3	Good. Why in the hell don't we drop a bomb on them.
Senator Robert Byrd	April 3	This is something that had to be done.
Senator Griffin	April 3	None
Senator Case	April 3	OK. Believes War Powers Act does not cover rescue operation.
<u>House</u>		
Broomfield	April 3	President doing proper thing under the circumstances.
Michel	April 3	No more than we could expect.
Morgan	April 3	Doesn't sound very good. Thank you.
McFall	April 3	Kind of expected it.
<u>Cabled</u>		
Albert	April 3	China
Rhodes	April 3	China
O'Neill	April 3	Egypt
Price	April 3	Egypt
Wilson	April 3	Egypt
H. Scott	April 3	Spain

II. Congressional Leadership Reaction to Notification on Deploying U.S. Navy off Coast of Viet Nam

<u>Member</u>	<u>Date/Time</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Eastland	March 29	Pleased President has done this.
Mansfield	March 29	Cabled in Mexico. No comment.
Robert Byrd	March 29	Thinks President is doing right thing.
Hugh Scott	March 29	Cabled in Europe. No comment.
Griffin	March 29	Cabled in Mexico. No comment.
Stennis	March 29	Very good move. We have an obligation.
Thurmond	March 29	Agrees with action.
Sparkman	March 29	Thinks this is a good move.
Case	March 29	Said ok
McClellan	March 29	Not available
Young	March 29	Fine
<u>House</u>		
Albert	March 29	Cabled to U.S. Mission in Peking.
Rhodes	March 29	Cabled to U.S. Mission in Peking.
O'Neill/John Anderson	Mar. 29	Cabled to U.S. Embassy, Athens.
McFall	March 29	Telephoned by Loen and he suggested that George Meany, as a result of McFall's discussion with Congressman Murtha, would support limited aid to Viet Nam with cutoff date. Recommended President call Meany.

<u>Member</u>	<u>Date/Time</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Morgan	March 29	Telephoned by Leppert. Saw no problem with President's action.
Broomfield	March 29	Due to father's funeral was not available.
Mel Price Bob Wilson	March 29	Cabled at U.S. Embassy, Athens
Mahon	March 29	Telephoned by Loen. Approved President's action.
Cederberg	March 29	Not available. AA was notified. No comment.
Michel	March 29	Not available. Message left with secretary.
Jack Edwards	March 29	Telephoned by Loen. No comment.

III. Congressional Leadership Reaction to Presidential Message to President Pro Tem and Speaker to the House Concerning War Powers Matters.

<u>Member</u>	<u>Date/Time</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Stennis	April 5	Mr. Cresswell was notified in lieu of Senator Stennis who was travelling in Miss.
Young	April 5	His AA, Mr. Sylvester, was notified. Senator Young was unavailable.
Thurmond	April 5	Approves the action and believes the President should have sent Armed Forces to South Viet Nam.
McClellan	April 5	Approves the action.
Sparkman	April 5	Approves the action.
H. Scott	April 5	Cabled in Europe.
Case	April 5	En route to Europe. No contact.

III. Congressional Leadership Reaction to Presidential Message to President Pro Tem and Speaker to the House Concerning War Powers Matters.

<u>Member</u>	<u>Date/Time</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Mansfield	April 5	OK. Appreciates being informed. Asked Kendall to inform the President he would call Dem. policy meeting on Mon., Apr. 7 to discuss IndoChina situation.
Griffin	April 5	No problem. Asked to be informed if there is any flack.
Bob Byrd	April 5	This is proper role for the President. Thinks President is handling terribly difficult situation very well.
<u>House</u>		
Michel	April 5	No comment.
Speaker Albert	April 5	Cabled in Peking.
McFall	April 5	Cabled in California and copy of President's message delivered to his AA.
Rhodes	April 5	Cabled in Peking.
O'Neill	April 5	Cabled in Tel Aviv.
Mahon	April 5	Contacted by Defense. No comment on action per se. Indicated he would soon make speech on floor regarding history of aid to Viet Nam. Indicated he felt withholding \$300 million would not have made much difference in outcome.
Jack Edwards	April 5	Not available.
Cederberg	April 5	No comment
Mel Price Bob Wilson	April 5	Cabled in Tel Aviv.

IV. General reactions on Viet Nam and Cambodia from a cross section of Congressional members.

Mar 28, 1975

James Buckley

Requests that the President make an urgent appeal to the American people on national television to support the upcoming military assistance legislation for the Republic of Vietnam and Cambodia; this would do more than any effort by individual Members of the Congress to provide the American people with the facts they need to support the aid requested.

April 2, 1975

Jennings Randolph

Asks that the President urge all countries to act immediately through the United Nations to lessen the massive problems connected with the movement of refugees, relief personnel and supplies in Indochina.

April 3, 1975

Warren Magnuson

Telegram -- Urges Presidential action to ensure that the American government does everything humanly possible to bring the Vietnamese orphans to the United States. States not only orphans whose adoption has been arranged but also many others who are homeless should be included.

April 4, 1975

Walter Mondale

Telegram - Urges that a special task force be appointed, using Presidential contingency funds, with responsibility of aiding Vietnamese children. Is confident that the Congress will cooperate fully in efforts to assist these innocent victims of the conflict.

Apr 7, 1975

Paul Fannin

Urges the United Nations to take all possible actions to relieve the suffering and misery of refugees in South Vietnam.

April 3, 1975

Joseph Fisher

Telegram -- Urges action with respect to waiving visa and evacuation procedures to enable relatives of South Vietnamese living in the United States to leave South Vietnam.

Robert Leggett

Cites news reports of private American ships and aircraft, under U. S. government contract, carrying Republic of Vietnam troops with weapons from Communist overrun areas. States such support service constitutes a violation of legal prohibitions against participation in Indochina hostilities and in his view the present Congress would consider such activities as an impeachable offense.

Edward Boland

Urges suspension of immigration procedures to expedite evacuation of Vietnamese orphans.

April 4, 1975

Andrew Maguire

Telegram - Urges immediate action to provide humanitarian assistance to Vietnamese refugees. Also, cooperative effort should be made with other nations to provide asylum.

Bella Abzug

"The human suffering and chaos in South Vietnam require prompt humanitarian and constructive action by the U. S. government, whose wrong policies and illegal military intervention for the past decade are largely responsible for the current tragic plight of the South Vietnamese." Calls for cessation of all military aid, and the United States make a demand for the resignation of President Thieu.

April 7, 1975

Gilbert Gude

Asks that arrangements be made to provide free medical care -- at Walter Reed and Bethesda Naval Hospital -- for the orphans coming into the area from Southeast Asia.

J. Kenneth Robinson

Urges the President to do everything possible to clear the Vietnam flights for which planes are now available, including the one sponsored in part by U. S. Jaycees.

Hamilton Fish

Is pleased that the Attorney General has taken action to admit the Vietnam orphans who are being adopted by our citizens; urges the President to direct the appropriate officials to establish a schedule of priorities for the removal of other refugees from Vietnam; once we have evacuated the American citizens and their dependents, feels that serious consideration should be given to others who have strong ties to the U. S. ; says that the the Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship and International Law will hold hearings on April 9 on Migration and Refugee Assistance; hopes that refugee assistance will be a close cooperative effort.

April 2, 1975

SUBJECT:

Reaction of Member Contacts on
Situation in Southeast Asia.

George Mahon Not in his district. American people are disturbed about the situation in South Vietnam. But there does not seem to be a change in the American people's sentiment that the South Vietnam Army will not fight. Americans do not feel they should stay in there until the end of the century. The U.S. has expended tens of billions of dollars to help these people defend themselves from the Communists. The fault lies not with the lack of American aid but the unwillingness of the South Vietnam army to fight. People here feel more military aid is money down the drain and eventually there will be a blood bath in South Vietnam. The patience of the American people has been worn down on this issue. President ought to avoid criticism of the Congress on this. The \$300 million requested for aid would not have changed the situation in South Vietnam or brought about sweetness and light there.

Al Cederberg His own assessment is that it's a sad situation but don't know what we can do about it. American people are sad about it but they are frankly disillusioned and do not know what to think about the situation there. Most people now are concerned about the South Vietnam Army and need an assessment of their abilities especially in light of the abandonment of equipment, etc. Looks as though Thieu's withdrawal was premature and ill-advised.

John McFall Feel strongly about aid to South Vietnam. People in California want people of South Vietnam to have a chance but Thieu made decision to withdraw and retreat leaving millions of people to die or be stranded with the Communists. President should take a stand and not run from the press on this issue. He cited John Murtha's talk with George Meany and support of AFL-CIO for aid. Feels President should talk to Meany. Questioned Phil Burton's position and stated "he's probably saying my people were right and we are winning."

April 2, 1975

John McFall (continued)

Most Members of Congress are not aware of the offers made by South Vietnam government to bring about settlement. People now are asking if there is anything that can be done to help these people? Is it possible to help them now?

Feels President should talk to American people and tell them the status and situation in Southeast Asia and what's possible and not possible for us to do and why it's important for us to do anything. Always been the policy of the U.S. that if 20 million people want to fight for their freedom we as a nation could support them. My people in California want to help save these people. Joe Addabbo and a substantial group in the Congress want to help but don't know what will happen now under present circumstances.

Bob Michel Reaction to Southeast Asia is mixed. American people are uncertain and unsettled about the situation there. They are looking to Congress for answers and asking if the U.S. is throwing in the sponge? On Cambodia he says yes but on South Vietnam it's different he says and would vote for more money and aid. But then raises the question that the South Vietnam Army not holding up so it looks like we can only provide humanitarian assistance. It's too hard to call. People want answers but the sentiment in Congress is no military aid. The way the army has folded up makes military aid unconscionable. He doesn't know specific military situation but it doesn't look like they can regroup to amount to any kind of offensive without some kind of leadership and discipline.

Sam Stratton Strongly favors aid to Southeast Asia if it can be effective aid and not too late to be helpful. Catching Hell for taking that position but some people that listen are also in favor while most are against that position. Still feels this is a case where the U.S. should stick its neck out and make a real fight for aid for these people. Most in Congress against that position and the 75 freshmen are a real problem on this.

If President laid the facts on the line and stated the need to give these people a real chance to defend against the Communists and it would take X amount of dollars for ammo and equipment to do it then ask us to get on with it, I'd support the President - only problem is the recent situation of abandonment of equipment, etc. -- but we ought to go ahead and make a fight for aid to these people.

April 2

Sam Devine Called to ask if anything is being formulated on helping Vietnam refugees. Stated that he was anticipating a lot of calls in the next 48 hours on what the U. S. is doing to help the refugees to take them to Australia, or the West Coast. Who will make that decision and what department will carry it out? Told him that in any situation like this there are plans developed to get Americans out but nothing definite yet on that. Of course, President has ordered ships to assist in refugee evacuation. All these contingent plans are being updated according to the situation there.

April 7, 1975

SUBJECT: Home District sentiment

AL QUIE - (R-Minn) - - -

Vietnam - Down the drain, along with Cambodia, Limit aid to humanitarian. No guilt feelings, blame it on Vietnamese army performance. Tremendous interest in rescuing Vietnamese children.

CARROLL HUBBARD - (D-Ky) - - - (President of Freshmen Democrats)

Vietnam - No further involvement except humanitarian assistance; dismay at South Vietnam army performance.

L. H. FOUNTAIN - On NATO trip in Germany - however, offered the following comments:

(1) With respect to Southeast Asia, his staff reported to him that the general attitude of the public is that they couldn't care less. Resented the capture of South Vietnamese weapons and ammunition by North Vietnamese, while they're sorry for the tragedy. The sentiment is against any form of military aid but probable support for humanitarian aid.

(2) With respect to Southeast Asia, he suggested that the President not place the blame on the Congress.

J. WILLIAM STANTON (R-Ohio)

Vietnam - People expressed great deal of compassion for Vietnam orphans but no desire for the U. S. to provide military aid. People were shocked, surprised and bitterly disappointed at Thieu's remarks that the U. S. let the Vietnam people down by not providing more military assistance.

April 7, 1975

BOB MICHEL (R-III)

Vietnam - Cambodia - Reaction of the people is a mixed reaction. Those who have always opposed U. S. involvement in Vietnam now argue that not one more dime be spent by the U. S. for military aid or assistance in Indochina. Those people who were on the fence over U. S. involvement are now more confused than ever. These people feel there is no hope for Cambodia and feel that what the American people need is to be convinced that the South Vietnamese will fight and want to fight before more military aid is given. The hawks, the hard-liners and military people who have been involved argue that U. S. should go in or provide the assistance required. Michel responded to the question of whether the loss of American lives in Vietnam and Cambodia was in vain by stating that the American lives lost in Indochina were not lost in vain because at that point in time it was the United States policy to fight a war in Indochina and those Americans were carrying out the policy of their country in a patriotic manner.

Tell the President that the Democrats as they get ready to go into the '76 convention cannot malign Ford for Vietnam and Cambodia. The Democrats are not in a position to criticize Ford for what has happened in Vietnam and Cambodia. If the President is going to propose a change in our foreign policy, the timing for such a speech could not be better. If that change in policy involves Vietnam, then this decision must be President Ford's and if its to be a clean break with Vietnam then its Ford's clean break. But the President should point out in his speech that in today's open society, when dealing in foreign affairs we cannot say that up to this point we will not fight, but beyond this point we will fight. The President should make the point to the American people that notwithstanding today's open society and all the public talk about foreign affairs, when dealing on the international scene, there are many things that by the nature of international relations must remain uncertain and can not be tied down to a degree of certainty. This President does not have to feel any sense of guilt over Vietnam and Cambodia during his stewardship because he is in an altogether new ballgame since Nixon and Watergate.

April 2, 1975

SUBJECT:

Comments on Vietnam situation

Senator Griffin

(Not much comment) Feels he might need briefing on Saturday. I agree, if it can be arranged since he made speech on subject backing Administration last week. Seemed stunned by march of events.

Senator Mansfield

(He called to give me his vacation telephone number starting tomorrow.) Feels Congress will resist military aid money but give all needed for humanitarian relief. Mentioned loss of \$600 to \$1 billion in equipment. Told me aid package was scheduled to come up but issue now in grave doubt.

Senator Packwood

(A strong supporter of aid in the past) "We have given all we can, more than North Vietnam has received. We can't give them the will to fight." Working on orphan evacuation. For humanitarian aid.

Senator Case

This is human tragedy no one could have prevented. Stop trying to blame others (and Congress). President should take the high road.

Bill Simpson (Eastland)

Everyone heartsick and dismayed. "What can anybody do now?"