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TREATED AS HANDWRITING NO BLUE CARD MADE

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

April 18, 1975

MR. PRESIDENT:

Attached is the most recent Reagan
column.

Don

DMC

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN *A.S.*
APR 18 1975

THE RONALD REAGAN COLUMN
(For Release In Papers Of Friday, April 18, And Thereafter)

By RONALD REAGAN

Copley News Service

LONDON -- While U.S. congressmen are reporting "overwhelming" voter opposition to further military aid to South Vietnam and Cambodia, British political leaders and press are expressing mounting concern that the United States has created a serious credibility gap for itself among its Western allies.

American voter reaction to the rapid collapse of our Southeast Asian allies is not surprising, considering the deep war weariness throughout the country and the aggravated, breathless and often distorted reports from the battle zone itself.

The Ronald Reagan Column -- 2

The American people have been given a steady diet of misinformation with very few actual facts for a decade or more. Now, Congress, being by nature more eager to follow than to lead, is probably happy to have at least what appears to be definitive voter response to the issue, whatever it is. Congressmen tend not to like to cast votes on the floor when they are uncertain about their constituents.

But there is no mistaking the fact that here America's Southeast Asia policy is viewed as a failure and the American visitor is asked constantly if the Asian debacle means that America might not continue to honor its commitments in Europe.

The undercurrent is one of questioning American leadership which has been taken for granted for so long by the British and the Western Europeans.

The Ronald Reagan Column -- 3

Our failure to provide the South Vietnamese with the replacement arms, ammunition and fuel they have needed and now need amounts to a bad case of American myopia and a cause of celebration in Moscow and Peking.

Considering past patterns of behavior, the Soviets are likely to put pressure on the United States and its allies elsewhere now, since they are determined to nudge their perimeter of influence ever further away from their home territory. Our mettle having been tested and found wanting in Indochina, the Soviets may be encouraged to try us again soon.

The Ronald Reagan Column -- 4

Although it's probably fair to say that the British have no specific interest in South Vietnam and Cambodia per se, they are very worried about the possibility of one of their oldest allies, Portugal, drifting into the Soviet orbit, and American failure to aid the Southeast Asian allies has symbolic importance here that cannot yet be fully measured.

Our abandonment of our allies and our failure to honor the assurances we gave them in signing the Paris accords already have influenced the collapse of the recent Israeli-Egyptian talks, and yet may prove to be the most haunting mistake the United States has made in nearly 200 years.

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4/14/75
mc