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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

(F)

April 23, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: MAX L. FRIEDERSDORF

m.l.f.

PRF

SUBJECT: Congressman John Rhodes

Congressman Rhodes has sent along a confidential memorandum from one of his former employees containing an eyewitness assessment and appraisal of the situation in Viet Nam.

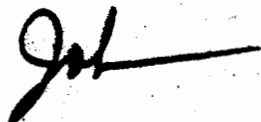
The Minority Leader requested I bring it to your personal attention at the earliest possible moment.

From the desk of
JOHN J. RHODES

Max -

I would appreciate it if you
would get this to The President
at the earliest possible moment.

Thanks.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "John", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20515

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
2310 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

ALMA A. ALKIRE
RICHARD ROBERTS

DISTRICT OFFICE:
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ROBERT J. SCANLAN

Office of the Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

H-232, THE CAPITOL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

J. P. WILLIAMS
DENNIS J. TAYLOR
J. BRIAN SMITH
CLARA POSEY

April 22, 1975

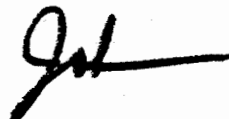
Mr. Max L. Friedersdorf
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Max:

The enclosed memorandum was dictated by J. Patrick Donohoe, a former employee of mine several years ago. Pat is completely reliable, and I thought his appraisal of the situation in Vietnam is so valuable that the President should have it immediately.

I bring it to your attention that Pat has reported as a private individual and not as a member of the State Department. He only said it to me because he knew me, and felt strongly that someone should have this information. I agree with him.

Yours sincerely,



JJR:C

Enclosure

Patrick Donohoe

4/22

from Hong Kong (3:20 a.m. Hong Kong time) 2:20 p.m. D.C. time

~~off~~ The following is written in a personal capacity a few hours after leaving Saigon. This represents distillation of my thoughts on South Vietnam respectfully submitted for your consideration. Like everyone, I am most concerned about evacuation of American citizens and foreign nationals from South Vietnam. The military situation and the South Vietnamese domestic mood makes completely successful evacuation of American citizens unlikely. The effort is made more complex with massive evacuation of South Vietnamese linked with the evacuation of American citizens. The combined evacuation proposal weakens the South Vietnamese resolve further and indirectly admits total defeat likely.

Any list of evacuees, no matter how comprehensive and compassionate, will be selective. Those who are omitted will react, and react violently. The exodus of refugees from Danang and Nha Trang illustrates the point clearly. Believe the U.S. has dual objectives in evacuation that should be carefully separated. It is imperative that both the North and South Vietnamese know that the United States attached highest priority to orderly evacuation of American citizens and foreign nationals. Evacuation of South Vietnamese should be effected afterwards. It is politically impracticable in the United States to propose sufficient military presence to assure complete evacuation. Even if it were possible to secure Saigon with U.S. troops, the North Vietnamese can encircle the city, increase sapper activities, and create havoc. This can be done without the North Vietnamese using main force units against U.S. troops

or Saigon itself. However, I believe the North Vietnamese will probably strongly resist any attempt of unilateral use of U.S. forces to provide security for a successful evacuation. A possible solution would be for Saigon to be declared an open city, with order maintained by a multi-national U.N. task force for the purposes of evacuation. Negotiations for the evacuation of South Vietnamese after the orderly withdrawal of American citizens places the onus of humanitarian evacuation squarely upon the North Vietnamese. As the situation stands, the North Vietnamese can destroy at will civil order in Saigon, thereby making successful and complete evacuation of American citizens and foreign nationals impossible. The South Vietnamese disarray will be used by the North Vietnamese as the reason why the evacuation failed. I firmly believe we must shift a portion of the responsibility on North Vietnam for the success of a two-step evacuation.

If the above proposal has merit, action must be started within the next few days.

Best wishes,

/s/ J Patrick Donohoe

PROCESS from Pat following conversation --

Notes from Pat in conversation following above dictation

He stresses that he is writing this strictly as a private citizen -- and not in his official position (or he won't be long with the State Dept.)

He stresses that action must be taken immediately, or we could lose a lot of good Americans still in Vietnam. He just left last evening and very distressed about situation, and lack of action in Washington.

He will be at Hotel Miramar in Hong Kong (Tel # HK 3-681111 until Sat. (Best way to reach him in Hong Kong would be to call the Washington office of American Express and have them telex message to Mr. Michael Shelley, American Express, Hong Kong, for delivery to Pat.

Sat., he arrives Manila and will be there for 4 Or 5 days - with Patti and 2 children
telephone Manila Embassy 877659, for Mrs. William Askins
Then goes to Maui for 2 weeks