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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 1, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: JACK MARSH
FROM: BOB WOLTHUIS *RKW*
SUBJECT: Senate Foreign Relations Exec. Hearings
on Viet Nam

State Department has been asked by the SFRC to send a witness for an Exec. Session on Tuesday, April 8. State indicates their witness will be Assistant Secretary Phil Habib. They are either recommending or have been asked by the committee that the Defense witness be Army Chief of Staff General Weyand. The question they pose is "Do we wish to have this hearing and these witnesses appearing before a Congressional committee prior to the President's foreign policy address on Thursday, April 10, to a joint session of Congress?"

APR 1 1975

(4/75?)

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger ^{AK}

Subject: Presidential Determination and Authorization Under Section 614(a) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended (the "Act"), to Authorize the Use of Indochina Postwar Reconstruction Funds to Finance the Evacuation from South Vietnam, and Related Costs, of Certain South Vietnamese Nationals and the Nationals of Other Countries

I recommend (A) that you determine, under Section 614(a) of the Act, that the use of Indochina Postwar Reconstruction funds for the purpose of financing the evacuation from South Vietnam, and related costs, of certain nationals of South Vietnam and of other foreign countries, without regard to the limitations of the Act, the Foreign Assistance Act of 1974, including Section 38, and Section 113 of the Act Making Appropriations for Foreign Assistance and Related Programs for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1975, and for Other Purposes, is important to the security of the United States, and (B) that you authorize the use of such Indochina Postwar Reconstruction funds for this purpose without regard to the above mentioned limitations.

Section 614(a) of the Act permits the President to authorize the use of funds made available under the Act without regard to restrictions imposed by the Act or any act appropriating funds for use under the Act, whenever the President determines that such authorization is important to the security of the United States. A per country limitation of \$50 million does not apply to any country which "is a victim of active Communist or Communist-supported aggression." The President's authority under Section 614(a) of the Act is applicable to the Indochina Postwar Reconstruction provisions of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1974 pursuant to Section 36(e) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1974.



Without such a determination under Section 614(a) of the Act, it may not be possible to finance the evacuation from South Vietnam of nationals of that country and of other foreign countries. The failure to evacuate these people from South Vietnam would leave them in danger of harm, perhaps even death, in the face of Communist aggression, and would raise serious questions in the eyes of other nations regarding the United States Government's humanitarian concerns toward those with whom it has been closely associated and allied for many years. I therefore believe it to be important to the security of the United States to undertake such an evacuation and to finance this undertaking with Indochina Postwar Reconstruction funds.

Although Section 38(a) (1) (A) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1974 authorizes the use of funds made available under that Act for relief of refugees, the \$70 million authorized for that purpose may not be sufficient to cover this evacuation and related costs when this amount is determined and added to other refugee relief programs already funded. Section 38(b) limits the amount that may be transferred out of the other major categories of assistance authorized under Section 38(a) into the humanitarian category to not more than 20 percent of the amount authorized under each of the other major categories.

Section 113 of the Foreign Assistance Appropriations Act of 1975 requires Congressional notification of the use of funds for new Indochina Postwar Reconstruction activities at least fifteen days in advance of the obligation of such funds. An evacuation project was not presented to the Congress for Foreign Assistance Act financing at the time of the fiscal 1975 Congressional presentation. Funds for such a project have been included in the legislation now before the Congress, but no funds have been appropriated as yet nor can they be in the time available. Insufficient funds are available under the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962, as amended, and there is no time to pursue appropriations thereunder for this immediate need. Accordingly, this urgent requirement, if it is to be met at all in the time available, must be met with Foreign Assistance Act funds. Of course, the use of Indochina Postwar Reconstruction funds will serve only as a stop gap measure pending passage of the legislation presently being considered by the Congress. Ordinarily we would notify Congress of this new activity under Section 113, but to do so now, and wait fifteen days, will prevent the successful evacuation of these people.



The evacuation of Americans from South Vietnam is being funded under other appropriations already available for this purpose.

Section 652 of the Act requires the President to notify in writing the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate of each intended exercise of the authority of Section 614(a) prior to the date of the intended exercise of such authority and to include in such notification the justification for and the extent of the exercise of such authority. The attached justification statements and letters to the Congress fulfill this requirement.

Section 654 of the Act provides that no action shall be taken pursuant to a determination under Section 614(a) of the Act prior to the date that the determination has been reduced to writing and signed by the President. It also requires that such determination be published in the Federal Register unless the President concludes that such publication would be harmful to the national security of the United States, in which case only a statement that a determination has been made, citing the name and section of the Act, is published. I can perceive of no security reason which would require that the determination not be published.

Recommendation:

That you approve and sign the attached letters and Determination, and thereby also approve the attached justification for the Determination.

Approve _____

Disapprove _____



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Presidential Determination

No. _____

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Pursuant to the authority vested in me by Section 614(a) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended (hereinafter, the "Act"), I hereby:

A. Determine that the use of funds made available in fiscal year 1975 for Indochina Postwar Reconstruction in order to finance the evacuation from South Vietnam, and other related costs, of certain nationals of South Vietnam and of other foreign countries, without regard to the limitations of the Act, of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1974, including Section 38, and of the Act Making Appropriations for Foreign Assistance and Related Programs for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1975, and for Other Purposes, is important to the security of the United States; and

B. Authorize such use without regard to the limitations referred to in (A) above.

This determination shall be published in the Federal Register.



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In accordance with the notification requirement set forth in Section 652 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, (hereinafter, the "Act"), please be advised that I intend to exercise my authority under Section 614(a) of the Act to authorize the use of Indochina Postwar Reconstruction funds for the purpose of financing the evacuation from South Vietnam of certain South Vietnamese nationals and nationals of other foreign countries without regard to the requirements of the Act, the Foreign Assistance Act of 1974, including Section 38, and Section 113 of the Act Making Appropriations for Foreign Assistance and Related Programs for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1975, and for Other Purposes. Justification for this action is contained in the enclosed memorandum.

I have determined that such authorization is important to the security of the United States and will be forwarding my formal determination to you within the next few days.

Sincerely,

Enclosure

Honorable John Sparkman
Chairman, Committee on
Foreign Relations
United States Senate
Washington, D. C. 20510



Justification for Presidential Determination to Authorize
the Use of Indochina Postwar Reconstruction Funds to
Finance the Evacuation from South Vietnam, and Related
Costs, of Certain South Vietnamese Nationals and the
Nationals of Other Countries

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Without such a determination under Section 614(a) of the Act, it may not be possible to finance the evacuation from South Vietnam, and related costs, of nationals of that country



and of other foreign countries. The failure to evacuate these people from South Vietnam would leave them in danger of harm, perhaps even death, in the face of Communist aggression, and would raise serious questions in the eyes of other nations regarding the United States Government's humanitarian concerns toward those with whom it has been closely associated and allied for many years. I therefore believe it to be important to the security of the United States to undertake such an evacuation and to finance this undertaking with Indochina Postwar Reconstruction funds.



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----- CONGRESS
----- SESSION

S.

(Note.—Fill in all blank lines except those provided for the date and number of bill.)

[April 1975?]

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

PRELIMINARY WORKING DRAFT

Mr. _____

introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To authorize the President to use the armed forces of the United States to protect citizens of the United States and their dependents and certain other persons being withdrawn from South Vietnam, and for other purposes.

(Insert title of bill here)

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,* That this
Act may be cited as the "Vietnam Contingency Act of 1975."

Sec. 2. There is established a Vietnam contingency fund for the fiscal year 1975 in the amount of \$200 million, and such sum is authorized to be appropriated, to be used for humanitarian and withdrawal programs in South Vietnam in accordance with the provisions of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, as the President determines is in the national interest with respect to dealing with the present emergency in South Vietnam. Such amount shall be available without regard to the provisions of sections 36 and 38 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1974.

Sec. 3. (a) If the President determines that the use of United States Armed Forces is necessary to withdraw citizens of the United States and their dependents from South Vietnam, the President may, in accordance with the provisions of subsection (b), use such armed forces



as are essential to and directly connected with the protection of such United States citizens and their dependents while they are being withdrawn.

(b) If the President uses the United States Armed Forces for the purposes stated in subsection (a) of this section, he shall submit a report on the use of those forces in accordance with section 4 (a) of the War Powers Resolution and shall comply with all other provisions of that resolution.

(c) In addition to the information required under section 4 (a) of the War Powers Resolution, the President shall also certify in writing to the Congress pursuant to section (b) of that section that --

- (1) there existed a direct and imminent threat to the lives of such citizens and their dependents; and
- (2) every effort was made to terminate the threat to such citizens and their dependents by the use of diplomatic and any other means available other than use of the armed forces; and
- (3) such citizens and their dependents are being evacuated as rapidly as possible.

Sec. 4. In carrying out the withdrawal of such United States citizens and their dependents, the President is authorized to use the United States armed forces to assist in bringing out endangered foreign nationals if he determines and certifies in writing to the Congress pursuant to section 4(b) of the War Powers Resolution that --

- (a) every effort was made to terminate the threat to such foreign nationals by the use of diplomatic and any other means available other than the use of the armed forces; and
- (b) a direct and imminent threat exists to the lives of such foreign nationals; and



(c) additional United States armed forces are not required beyond those essential to the withdrawal of citizens of the United States and their dependents; and

(d) the duration of the possible exposure of United States armed forces to hostilities is not thereby extended; and

(e) such withdrawal is confined to areas where United States forces are present for the purpose of protecting citizens of the United States and their dependents while they are being withdrawn.

Sec. 5. The authority contained in this Act is intended to constitute specific statutory authorization within the meaning of section 8 (a) of the War Powers Resolution but shall not be considered specific statutory authorization for purposes of section 5 (c) of the War Powers Resolution, and such forces shall be removed by the President if the Congress so directs by concurrent resolution.

Sec. 6. The provisions of section 3 (a) of this Act may be construed to be in derogation of the prohibitions contained in section 839 of Public Law 93-437, section 7741 of Public Law 93-238, section 30 of Public Law 93-189, section 806 of Public Law 93-153, section 13 of Public Law 93-126, section 108 of Public Law 93-52, and section 307 of Public Law 93-50, only to the extent necessary to give effect to the provisions of section 3 (a).



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Jack -
Habib's answer
to the "blame
Congress" question
is on Page 12

JWR



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

APRIL 1, 1975

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
(Palm Springs, California)

THE WHITE HOUSE

PRESS CONFERENCE
OF

PHILIP C. HABIB
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS

PRESS BRIEFING ROOM
THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

12:20 P.M. EDT

9:20 A.M. PDT

MR. HABIB: I have no opening statement. I thought it would be better, to suit your purposes, if we went right to questions.

Q How would the United States regard Mr. Lon Nol when he arrives here? As chief of state? As an important visitor?

MR. HABIB: Marshall Lon Nol, as you know, has gone to Indonesia for a rest. After that, it is presumed he will be stopping in Hawaii for medical treatment. As you will recall, Spencer, some time ago he had been treated there, and after that, he will probably be, as his desire, come on to the United States. It will be treated as not an official visit in that sense. It is at his request, and our people have been instructed to provide all the appropriate facilities, and we will do so. He remains, as you know, chief of state constitutionally in Cambodia.

Q May I ask you about Vietnam? What is the outlook from the American side as to where this North Vietnamese-Vietcong offensive is going to stop. Are they going to roll clear on to Saigon?

MR. HABIB: If you don't mind, that is one of those questions where I will take a little time to answer. Quite obviously, what you are seeing taking place in Vietnam is the massive military violation of the Paris agreements in such a manner that North Vietnamese regular forces have been committed all over the 1st Corps and 2nd Corps and have continued their operations in 3rd and 4th Corps.

MORE

Where they are going to get to and how far they are going to get is a question that remains to be seen.

As of this moment, the 1st and 2nd Corps have been substantially overrun. Your question is how far is it going to go? I don't know. The question is, where will the South Vietnamese be able to stabilize their military lines.

I think you have got to go back a little ways to look at this thing in its proper perspective, and I am going to impose upon you a bit today for doing so.

Let's face it. If you take a look at the situation today in terms of North Vietnamese regular troops in South Vietnam, there are more North Vietnamese regular troops in South Vietnam today than there have ever been before.

There certainly are many more than at the time the Paris agreements were signed.

As best as we can tell, as many as five or six out of the eight North Vietnamese reserve divisions have been committed to the battle in South Vietnam.

If you look at the terms of the agreement that I tried to explain to some of you before, you know very well that the agreement that was signed solemnly -- a solemn agreement -- provided, among other things, not only that there would be a ceasefire, but that the North Vietnamese would not introduce new forces into South Vietnam, that weaponry could only be replaced on a one-for-one basis.

In fact, what has happened is that you have had a gross violation of the agreement from the day it was signed. In the face of that gross violation of the agreement, we, in turn, have not been able since 1973 to be responsive to the breaches of the agreement as signed and endorsed by the other members -- signed by the North Vietnamese and endorsed by the other members -- at the Paris Conference.

Moreover, over a period of time, whereas the North Vietnamese had been able to introduce into South Vietnam greatly enhanced and modernized military equipment -- weaponry, ammunition of new varieties, more sophisticated -- whereas they have been able to do that, in fact, rather than being able to even meet the terms of the agreement for one-to-one, which permitted one-for-one replacement, there has been nothing like that flow of arms and material into South Vietnam for the defense of the Republic of Vietnam.

MORE

So, what you are seeing is not simply something that happened in the last week or so. You are seeing, in effect, the cumulative results of these gross violations of the agreement on the part of the North Vietnamese and the inability to maintain that kind of response over time that would have been necessary to sustain the agreement.

North Vietnam has deliberately chosen to take this path of gross violation of the agreement. The evidence is clear as to what that has involved. In the past, it has been rather popular to say, "Oh well, both sides violated the agreement." That kind of equivalency is irrelevant, if not completely dishonest.

Of course, there were violations on both sides, but when you compare them in terms of their relative degree, the ability of the North to mount the kind of campaign that you are seeing today depend upon both the violations in fact, in spirit, and intent. Anybody who reads anything else into this thing is just blind to circumstances as they have been evolving for several years.

Yes, sir?

Q Are you suggesting that the collapse of the Saigon government is due primarily to these massive North Vietnamese violations and not to any kind of internal collapse in the Saigon government or the army?

MR. HASIB: I am suggesting it is a combination of many factors. As a matter of fact, I am trying to bring about just that perspective in the understanding of it.

I think if you are going to look at the situation, you have to look at it in total. It is true that only some of the South Vietnamese forces did not, as you put it, sort of melt away in front of this onslaught, but in order to understand the circumstances, the situation and the forces at work, you have got to go back to the physical presence of the North Vietnamese in total violation of the agreement.

Unless you are prepared to start from that point and work your way forward, I don't think you will have full comprehension of just what happened. In terms of exactly what did happen, you are just as good an analyst as I am.

I think the Secretary of Defense addressed a good deal of that yesterday in his press remarks. Quite clearly, what the South intended to do was to produce a strategic withdrawal in the face of this overwhelming force that was being put against it and its own judgment of its own capability.

MORE

After all, that was a factor. Now that strategic withdrawal did not succeed, there is no question of it. All you have to do is look at what happened in the 1st and 2nd Corps.

Q What is the United States willing and able to do about this? I wish you would separate the answer into two phases; one, diplomatically, what is the United States willing and able to do about it, and apart from the diplomacy.

MR. HABIB: First, in terms of what the United States is able to do about it. As you know, the President did dispatch General Weyand to take a look at the military situation and to provide him with a careful assessment of the situation. The mission -- General Weyand will be providing that assessment to the President. I understand General Weyand will be returning the latter part of this week, but that you will have to get confirmed over at Defense.

When that assessment is completed and available, the President naturally will then make the decision as to what will be required.

Obviously, it is quite clear that the necessity and the need for resources for the South to defend itself will be greater. There is no question that the losses have been large, but moreover, and beyond that, the human tragedy that has been created with respect to the refugees is of such great dimension that it will require -- and naturally we would expect -- that the United States would contribute to the amelioration of that situation.

There will be consideration given -- careful consideration given -- to both the military and the economic humanitarian requirements of the situation. As far as your further question as to what can be done, I take it you mean on the diplomatic side.

As you recall, we anticipated the nature of the violations of North Vietnam's solemn word, and have for several years. The answer is they have disregarded their diplomatic obligations. They signed a solemn agreement. The Administration called particular attention to the danger in January. The President, the Secretary of State and other responsible authoritative officials have been calling constant attention to these matters over the last several months, as you know.

The Administration is, however, not blind to reality and is not also ignorant of the nature of the North Vietnamese intentions and strategy. Quite obviously, what they decided to do was to go for the military blow that they have inflicted. This is not something that was created in two weeks. This is something that has been planned for some time. You cannot do this sort of thing in just a weekend of meetings and decision-making.

They have positioned their forces. They have positioned their armaments. They have drawn their plans and they have taken the military course, as I said earlier, in gross violation of their solemn obligation. Any other word that one wants to apply to it is just sheer verbage.

Q Mr. Secretary, you have said you anticipated this for several years. It has only been two years since the Paris agreement was signed. Are you implying you never expected them to live up to their agreement in the first place?

MR. HABIB: I don't recall that. Did I say several years? I thought I said several months. I am sorry, I mean for several months.

Q That was my question you took off on. Could I ask you a follow-up? You spoke of the Paris accords prohibiting the reintroduction of the North Vietnamese. As I recall, it was worded there would be no foreign troops. The reason for that wording, of course, is diplomatic because they never would admit they ever had any troops down there, but the United States well knew why the wording was that way.

What I am asking is, at what point did you come to the realization that a blow of this size and extent was necessary? Several months ago, or a year ago?

MR. HABIB: Obviously, the present campaign -- let me take your question in two parts. First of all, the North Vietnamese know very well that the agreement provides that where there is nothing said specifically about the immediate withdrawal of the North Vietnamese forces that were then in the South, the agreement was quite specific that there could not be, could not be introduced North Vietnamese forces into South Vietnam. That was clearly understood and clearly stated.

As far as what has happened laterally, I think you have got to go back to this season's campaign. If you want to talk about this season's campaign, you have to go back to about December when, as I said earlier, after having positioned their forces and undoubtedly developed their campaign strategy, they began to probe and push militarily.

You recall at that time we called attention to that. That continued on over into the new year. Then, you have got the further movement. You began to get the movement of the reserve divisions. You began to get the North, for example, making it very clear that it was mobilizing. The signs of mobilization were clear.

MORE

The launching of the latest onslaught was based upon the earlier proba and the earlier build-up. It is not hard to read the tea leaves as to what was happening when this was going on.

Q Can we go back to the question of before that, as to what the United States can do diplomatically. The other side has put forward once again its offer to negotiate without President Thieu and abide by the Paris agreements.

How much worth do you put into this, and what can be done in the way of negotiation?

MR. HABIB: That is someone to talk about abiding by the Paris agreement in the face of what I have characterized as gross violation -- gross violations have been going on for some time. They now have been raised to the highest point since the agreement was signed. To speak about returning, in terms of the Paris agreement, really requires a great deal of credulity on the part of anyone to accept that.

Q Does this mean that we are rejecting --

MR. HABIB: On the contrary. As you know, the United States has always felt the terms of the Paris agreement should be lived up to, that the terms of the Paris agreement are to be lived up to right now.

The North Vietnamese make it very clear that they are not prepared to live up to the terms of the Paris agreement by their actions. They can say things, they can talk about things that do not necessarily have to mean what they say or what they appear to be intended to mean.

When one speaks about the Paris agreement, one has to talk about what has happened to the Paris agreement. Are they prepared, in effect, to abide by the terms of the Paris agreement as it was when they signed it? Are they prepared to abide by the terms of the Paris agreement? There is no question that the Paris agreement does not allow them to do what they are doing. There is no basis within the Paris agreement for either the forces in the South that have been put there in violation of the agreement; the equipment that is in the South, which has been put there in violation of the agreement; and the use of those forces and equipment, which is in violation of the agreement.

There is nothing in the Paris agreement that permits North Vietnam to move its main forces clearly in violation of that agreement.

MORE

Q What about the other part of the question?

MR. HABIB: What was the other part of the question?

Q It was about President Thieu.

MR. HABIB: What about him? Would you rephrase the question?

Q Is the United States continuing its full support to President Thieu?

MR. HABIB: This idea that the United States support this or -- the United States supports the government of the Republic of Vietnam. The President of that government is President Thieu. That is the answer to the question.

Q Mr. Habib, I am curious about the phrase you used earlier that it was clear that the United States would have to provide more -- I think it is fair to say, if I understand you correctly -- in both the military side and on the humanitarian side.

MR. HABIB: That is correct.

Q Are you talking about more than already requested for South Vietnam, more than the \$300 million requested in the supplemental?

MR. HABIB: I think the answer to that, of course, to be technical, will depend on the assessment that is provided by General Weyand on the mission and the President's determination. What I am doing is repeating what the Secretary of Defense said yesterday to the press, that he anticipated the requirements would be, of course, greater.

Q Greater than what?

MR. HABIB: Greater than the amount that was originally requested. That was the \$300 million supplemental.

Q So, you are talking about more than the \$300 million?

MR. HABIB: I am not stating that. I said that one can anticipate that possibility, in terms of the requirement of the situation, but I am not stating that. I am trying to be responsive to the question.

On the economic side, you will recall there was not any request on the economic side in terms of economic assistance for Vietnam beyond that which was appropriated. There undoubtedly will be required substantial funds for the care, feeding, relocation and shelter of the masses of refugees that have been generated by this campaign. Again, I am not stating, I am just anticipating. I am trying to be responsive to your question.

Q Does your answer to those two questions, saying that we are obviously going to need more, is this based on the premise of the belief on your part and on the part of the United States government that South Vietnam can still be saved?

MR. HABIB: That, in the end, is going to be a question that the Vietnamese are going to decide. I want to make that very clear. The decision of the Vietnamese to defend themselves is their decision. It is our decision, or our Congressional and other organizational responsibilities, to determine what we are prepared to do to assist them in that process.

What I am saying to you is, if the situation develops as it appears to be developing, the requirements for resources -- which can only come basically, in large part, from the United States -- are going to probably be greater than had been anticipated.

Q You are talking about more arms for the South Vietnamese government when the question that seems to be posed by what we are seeing is the question of whether it is already collapsing and panic may be setting in in Saigon itself.

MR. HABIB: The answer to that is obviously that what the South Vietnamese are seeking to do, is to stabilize the military situation in Three and Four Corps in that area, which is apparently the next target of the North Vietnamese. The answer is they are already, in effect, in battle in some of those areas.

As you know, there has been considerable activity over in the Tay Ninh area up until this week and there has been some on the Northern and Northeastern edges of MR-3, Military Region 3.

Now, the question that you are posing is the question of a prescience, which I am afraid I cannot give you the answer, the answer is the test is there, whether they will be able to defend themselves.

The question that is being put to us, as I understand it, is are we prepared to provide the resources to permit them to defend themselves.

Q Mr. Habib, following on the relief question, there is a report of a scheduled meeting of relief agencies or relief officials here this afternoon. Can you tell us a little about that, what that is supposed to do?

MR. HABIB: Yes. I think Mr. Parker addressed the group yesterday. It was on the record. Mr. Parker, who is disaster coordinator, is meeting with the volunteer agencies, heads the volunteer agencies, as I understand it, to look into the question of what might be done and what can be done in terms of the humanitarian requirements of the situation.

Q Mr. Secretary, two questions. The first, is there any reasonable estimate at all in any range as to the amount of supplies and equipment that have been lost in the battle, abandoned in the battle?

MR. HABIB: We do not have one as yet, Murray. I expect that will be part of the assessment, which we are receiving. It is information of which we have got scattered bits and pieces. I hesitate to quote figures on that basis. It is quite obvious there have been massive losses.

I have seen some of the figures that have been used in some of the press reports. Those, to my knowledge, are not official figures. We will wait until we get them. When we have some clear idea what has been lost, we will then have a better idea also of what might be required.

Q Let me pursue that a moment, if I may. The estimates you refer to run up to and beyond \$1 billion. Is the Administration in a position now of seeking from Congress assistance in the range that will restore those losses, those massive losses?

MR. HABIB: You are coming back to the question of what is the assessment that General Weyand is going to bring back in terms of the situation and the requirements. I don't think it would be proper to simply assume, as you are trying to get the assumption to follow on that, that it will be a replacement of losses.

What will be looked at, I am sure, are the requirements of the situation. That is not to say that it is the replacement of everything that has been lost.

Q Frankly, for a week now, all the questions we have asked here about the diplomacy, about the military strategy, about the situation in South Vietnam, have produced a single answer: The Administration is waiting for the return of General Weyand.

MR. HABIB: How do you expect the Administration to make a judgment without the assessment which it instituted immediately upon the major campaign that has been mounted, took place?

Q Wasn't Admiral Gaylor in the area?

MR. HABIB: No, he just went through for a couple of days. He was in Cambodia. As you know, the President dispatched General Weyand specifically for this purpose, and this requires careful study. It has been given that careful study and, as I said earlier, I think the President will be receiving General Weyand's report before the end of the week.

MORE

Q At the present time, then, there is no diplomatic activity that the United States has underway?

MR. HABIB: With respect to Indochina?

Q Yes.

MR. HABIB: You know, there you get back into the old business about what is diplomatic activity. There is a record. There is what has gone on previously. There is the agreement, itself, to which we call attention constantly. There are the statements and the positions expressed by the President and the Secretary.

I don't know what you mean by diplomatic. If you mean are we trying somehow or another to turn off the military campaign in favor of a return to agreement, the answer is, of course, we are. The equivalent answer, if you look at the other side of the coin, is what you are dealing with is fundamentally a decision by North Vietnam to take the military option and not the diplomatic option.

The diplomatic option was negotiated. The North Vietnamese are taking the military option, and you know and I know that when that military option is being exercised, it is exercised to the full.

What follows if the military situation is stabilized -- until it is stabilized, the North Vietnamese are embarked upon a campaign militarily. If the military situation stabilizes, will the North Vietnamese continue to embark upon a military campaign? That is a decision they will have to make.

Q The military option may run right through the center of Saigon.

MR. HABIB: That is your assessment at this point, Murray.

Q No, I am asking.

MR. HABIB: If one wants to get into hypothetical questions of what happens if it all caves in, it is really not the sort of thing I engage in. You know I wouldn't. Obviously, there is a grave military situation. Obviously, the requirements of the situation are for stabilization of the military situation. There is no question about that.

Q But are you saying the United States must wait until the military option is concluded?

MR. HABIB: No, of course not. I am not saying anything of the sort.

MORE

Q Could I follow up on that?

MR. HABIB: I knew you would. (Laughter)

Q At the time of the Paris agreement there was also an international conference that was convened and a number of major powers, in effect, ratified those agreements. Murray asked you about diplomatic activity.

Why, in light of the North Vietnamese penchant for both diplomatic and military activity taking place at one and the same time, why hasn't the United States moved to reconvene that conference?

MR. HABIB: If you will recall, in January the United States wrote formally to the participants in that conference and pointed out what was going on and called their attention to it. We did not get much of a response.

Q You never asked for a reconvening of the conference.

MR. HABIB: No, we did not at that time.

Q Why?

MR. HABIB: Marvin, North Vietnam has taken a course which is in complete and total violation of anything that can be construed as the diplomatic solution that was solemnly agreed to.

While they are embarked upon that course, they show no signs whatsoever of taking any serious steps to abide by the terms of that solemn agreement. You asked me a direct question, whether we have actually called the reconvening, and the answer to that question is no, not at this time.

Q My follow-up question was why, and you have said the North Vietnamese are now pursuing a military course which is obvious to anybody, and I am asking why the United States is not doing anything?

MR. HABIB: The answer is quite obvious. The feeling is until the military situation is stabilized, they will not be diverted from that course. That is the historical record with this kind of a situation.

In any event, that does not mean in any way that we, ourselves, abrogate, disregard, or ~~lose~~ any desire to see the terms of the agreement reinstituted and re-established. How that comes about and through what course it comes about, I think there again that is one of those things that a little bit of time might demonstrate.

MORE

Q Mr. Habib, you have not blamed Congress at all.

MR. HABIB: No, I have not said a word about anything, about blaming anybody. I tried to describe a situation. I don't know what you mean. Do you want me to put blame? If I am going to put blame, I am going to put the blame one place. I will put the blame on North Vietnam.

Q Almost every ranking American official has blamed the Congress, in part, for what is happening in South Vietnam, including the Secretary of Defense last night. The fact that you are not raises a question in my mind as to whether the Administration is now changing its tactic, or do you continue to place a good part of the blame on the Congress for not appropriating the money?

MR. HABIB: Let me describe the situation. I don't like to use phrases like "blame the Congress." That is your phrase. I described the situation --

Q That is the situation, Mr. Habib, that has developed.

MR. HABIB: I will repeat it to you again. Let me describe it to you. You said I have a right to answer the question. Let me answer it my way.

I stated three elements of the situation and its evolution. I stated, first of all, the gross violations of the agreement on the part of the North Vietnamese. I stated, second of all, that since 1973, we have been unable to respond to those gross violations, and I have said, finally, we have not been able to provide the resources necessary to have over time -- not speaking about last month or last week -- over time we have not provided the resources which we are giving the South Vietnamese every reason to believe they would receive, within our constitutional processes.

You could read that any way you want, but that is the way I describe the situation.

Q Mr. Secretary, if I may follow up. While you have been unable to provide this, the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, for their part, have been supplying North Vietnam rather substantially. What efforts have you made to try to get them to stop that?

MR. HABIB: You know, there was nothing in the agreement that prevented them from supplying. What the agreement provides is that replacements in South Vietnam could only be up to a one-to-one basis. The violation of the agreement resides in North Vietnam sending to South Vietnam military resources beyond the one-to-one replacement.

As to what steps one might or might not take to stop it, one would have hoped that there would have been a degree of prudence with respect to such things, but it is quite obvious that North Vietnam has received all that it has needed to mount this massive campaign.

Moreover, you have got to go back again and think of it over a period of time, that the North Vietnamese in North Vietnam have always had substantial supplies. What the agreement provided was they could not move them to the South. When they move them to the South, then they are in violation of the agreement.

Q Then, are you saying it is all right?

MR. HABIB: I am talking in terms of the legal requirements of the agreement. I just wanted to make it very clear I was not accusing anybody of violating the agreement by the shipment of supplies to North Vietnam. That is not contrary to the agreement.

As I said, one would have hoped it would have been exercised with a greater degree of prudence, but it was not exercised.

Q If it is not a violation of the Paris agreement of 1973, isn't it a violation of the U.S.-Soviet detente in 1972?

MR. HABIB: I don't know whether you would go that far. I don't think we are quite prepared to draw that sweeping a conclusion.

Q Following Jim McCarthy's question -- and picking up the word you used before "prescience" -- I want to ask you what the motivation is for the desire to rush military arms to South Vietnam now? Does it grow out of the conviction the arms will make a critical difference on the part of ARVN to defend whatever is left of South Vietnam?

MR. HABIB: Are you referring to this air shipment? Is that what you are referring to?

Q -- or whatever they will get in the way of additional resources, or is it a symbolic reply to the allegations coming from Vietnam about American betrayal?

MR. HABIB: I don't think it is symbolic in that sense. I think it certainly, in terms of immediate shipment, has a certain psychological significance. It also has a certain practical, material significance. As you know, there has been substantial material loss, ordinance. As I recall, the first air shipment that went in was principally Howitzers, 105's or 155's, I am not sure which. I think it was a little of both, but it is not intended to be that kind of an answer.

Quite obviously, the South Vietnamese are concerned, and that concern is not concealed as to the ability and willingness of the United States to supply the military resources that are necessary in the current circumstance.

The Administration has made clear, as far as the Administration is concerned, they have the will, and hope that the Congress will appropriate the funds that will permit these things to go into works.

We are still operating on those obligational authorities that exist under the original appropriation. As you will remember, that appropriation was spaced out on a quarterly basis so that supplies could continue to roll in. What you are seeing moving in now are supplies that stem from that original obligational authority.

Q Mr. Secretary, may I follow up? What plans does the United States have, if any, for the evacuation of Americans from Saigon? At what point would you start evacuating Americans from Saigon? Is there any emergency plan? That is the first question.

MR. HABIB: Let me answer that first, if I may. In every country of the world where there is evidence of a struggle, we have what is known as an emergency evacuation plan. That is a universal plan. So, the answer to your question is what plans do we have? We always have such plans for all countries in the world, what we call our E&E plan.

Q Have you started consideration of the possibility of evacuation?

MR. HABIB: The only thing that is going on at this point, as you probably have read in the press, is that some of the dependents on a case-by-case basis, by choice, are permitted to leave if they so wish, but there has been no triggering of any evacuation.

While of course, we have taken our people out of the areas along the coast that fell within the last week or so, our people got out of Danang, our people got out of Nha Trang and Dilot and Qui Nhon. Those are all parts of what you might call our local evacuation plan, but beyond that, the E&E plans are there. They are always there. They are there for every country.

You had a second question. Let's take the second part of the question.

MORE

Q Where, specifically, would the United States -- what would the South Vietnamese army have to do to convince the United States that it had, in fact, stabilized the military situation and therefore, would be --

MR. HABIB: The evidence has to be clear on the grounds.. At the present time, the defense of Three or Four Corps are the heart of the matter, and obviously, the heart of the heart of the matter is the area around Saigon. That is the area one has to now watch. We will have to see the capability and we will have to see the results.

Q Mr. Habib, if we could examine a little further your premise that one reason for the present situation is our inability to provide adequate resources to South Vietnam to meet its requirements.

Over the past three years, the United States has given \$6.4 billion in military aid to South Vietnam, and during the same period -- according to the intelligence community -- the Soviet Union and Communist China have given North Vietnam \$1.5 billion in military aid. I am quoting, sir, from the intelligence community report.

I think the question arises out of that, that with four times, five times as much aid from the United States why has this not been sufficient to meet the military requirements of South Vietnam?

MR. HABIB: It has always been true that the requirements of an extended defense line are much greater in terms of the resources necessary than the requirements for an attacking force that could pick or choose its areas.

What was happening in Vietnam over the years -- and again it is not a question of what happened last week, John. I am not addressing that in response to your question. I think, over the years, what you have had is that extensive, defensive structure of every line of communication, every province, every province capital, every district capital with a few exceptions, an attempt for a total defensive posture.

When the level of assistance began to decline -- and it did, as you know, substantially in fiscal 1975 and began in 1974 -- then it became a choice as to whether or not they could still sustain that kind of total, overall defensive posture.

It was quite obvious that the strategic decision that was made by the Vietnamese government was to make that withdrawal. The tactical failure of the withdrawal in the 1st and 2nd Corps is another matter, but the strategic decision taken to begin that withdrawal was based upon an inability to provide the mobility and the resources that are necessary to exercise that kind of overall defensive strategy.

That is not surprising. The defense, for example, of an outlying post depends on the ability to re-enforce it. You cannot have total strength in every spot when the other fellow could pick his spot to hit you.

So, the defense of an outlying post depends on the mobility to get there, and it depends upon firepower. If you don't have the mobility and you don't have the firepower, you then have to change your strategy. They tried to do so, and it did not work, at least in 1st and 2nd Corps.

Q : Mr. Habib, to sum up on Doug Kiker's questions, we realize there is an emergency evacuation plan. I understand there are about 650 U.S. Marines on those Navy ships that are lying off the coast of Vietnam. Are they involved in an evacuation plan?

MR. HABIB: Do you mean the ships that just went in for the evacuation of refugees?

Q Yes.

MR. HABIB: I don't know what the figures are for the number of Marines on the ships that went in.

Normally, ships carry a small complement of Marines for ship's duty, but for that, you had better address that to the Defense Department.

Quite obviously, that kind of question, in terms of how many are there and what they are doing, ought to be addressed to the Defense Department. I am not competent to answer that.

MORE

Q Could you tell us if the South Vietnamese have enough divisions remaining in fighting strength to stabilize the military situation?

MR. HABIB: I would rather not go into the order of battle at the moment. I certainly am not going to make any judgments. That is going to be put to the test. I am not going to assume that they can't do it, which I think some of the questions have indicated. I think that that is something that they are going to have to determine out of their own strength and spirit.

Q Mr. Secretary, in view of the resistance of the American public and Congress to the \$300 million already asked, where does that leave you when you talk about anticipating the possibility of needing more than \$300 million?

MR. HABIB: The question is one which will have to be put and addressed -- the circumstances will have to be described, the requirements will have to be justified. It will have to go through the process that we normally go through in these things, and then in its wisdom the Congress will decide. That is the process, and it is one that is going to be gone through.

Q Has the process started?

MR. HABIB: The Congress is adjourned at the moment.

Q No, I mean the process of the Administration.

MR. HABIB: Yes, in terms of assessing the requirements, as I have been accused of as has been going on (Laughter) for a while, and the answer is yes, that is exactly what the assessment -- among the other things, that is one of the things the assessment concludes, among other things, the assessment of the situation as well as the requirement. I think that is what the President charges.

Q In view of what you describe as North Vietnam's gross violation of the Paris agreement, has this country or has South Vietnam any obligation to obey that agreement any further?

MR. HABIB: Under normal international conventions -- I think there was some sort of convention signed in Geneva some years ago -- obviously, when one signatory to an agreement violates the agreement, the other signatory is then free to do what he wishes.

MORE



There is no intention on the part of the United States to abrogate the agreement. On the contrary, as we have tried to make clear, as the President and the Secretary have, the United States look to North Vietnam's gross violation agreement as at the heart of the matter.

We would not take that position if we thought in terms of the nonapplicability to the agreement. How much longer do we want to go?

Q Cambodia, with Lon Nol having left, do you see any possibility of any negotiation?

MR. HABIB: If you ask that of the Cambodian government, the government in Phnom Penh, that is their most profound desire, and their most profound hope, and maybe their most profound prayer. It certainly is ours.

The President has always spoken for some time now -- it is not something that happened last week -- of the desirability of a compromise settlement. Is that possible in the present circumstance. There again, that is one of those things that is going to be put to the test.

There is no lack of desire on the part of the people in Phnom Penh, from everything we know, to seek a resolution of the conflict in which the killing stops and somehow or other Cambodians decide what happens then. It would not be from lack of wanting on their part, but it may be from lack of wanting on the part of the Khmer Rouge.

You obviously have a situation there where the Khmer Rouge have a military bit in their teeth, and they keep pounding away. Indiscriminate rocket bombing of Phnom Penh is not a military -- in the old days, we would call that terror bombing, but those phrases have gone out of fad now.

Q You described the military situation as grave in South Vietnam. Would you describe the political situation as grave, and can you give us your assessment of the political situation?

MR. HABIB: I don't think it would serve any useful purpose for me to comment on the internal situation now, Jerry. After all, I am on the record and I am a government official. I just don't think it would serve any useful purpose for me to comment on the internal political situation in Vietnam.

MORE

Q Mr. Secretary, a two-part question. Is there anything that President Thieu has conveyed to the United States that conveys any feeling on his part that the United States has sold out or betrayed South Vietnam? That is the first question. The second one is, giving the portrait you have just given us of the fidelity of the North Vietnamese to a solemn agreement, did the United States genuinely believe, when it signed that agreement on January 27, 1973, that the North Vietnamese would in fact honor the agreement as it was written?

MR. HABIB: The answer to the first part of your question is President Thieu has not communicated any such feeling. On the contrary, whatever feeling that has been communicated has been the confidence that the United States will not let South Vietnam down.

With respect to our attitude toward the agreement when it was signed, quite obviously the agreement was negotiated in good faith. We signed it in good faith, and we had expected it to be carried out, in the major sense, in good faith.

Obviously, in circumstances in which that agreement was signed, nobody expected perfection with respect to every clause and every cease-fire line and every point within it. In terms of its gross terms, in terms of its gross requirements, in terms of the general thrust that you set the military war aside and you then pursue the continuing controversy through measures other than military, there is no question we had a right to expect that.

After all, it was not only solemnly signed, but it was endorsed by a convocation, including the major powers. As far as we were concerned and as far as the South Vietnamese were concerned, that has always been the basic thrust of the policy.

I am not one of those who will tell you the government in Saigon never violated the agreement in one respect. You know that is not true, and they know it is not true, and I know it is not true, but in terms of the gross requirements of the agreement, the overall purposes of that agreement, there is no question that they had nothing to lose by abiding by it.

But the North Vietnamese, from the beginning, began the build-up in violation. You would have hoped, we went at them in the beginning and said knock it off, in effect, or this is a violation of the agreement.

MORE

You will recall the Secretary met in 1973 twice in respect to the violations of the agreement, but the build-up went on. It took its ultimate evolution in the current campaign.

Q Mr. Habib, back on relief, can you tell us what the niceties of it are in terms of the --

MR. HABIB: Requirements?

Q -- well, in terms of the hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of displaced people in the Southern part of Vietnam, whether the United States and other relief agencies, relief organizations, can somehow get relief supplies to those people in the areas that have already been overrun or whether we have just written them off now?

MR. HABIB: In the first place, we would hope that those people would be permitted to get out, to exercise their rights of freedom of movement. Some of you might recall that Article 13 of the Declaration of Human Rights gives people that right, the right of freedom of movement, so we would certainly support the desire of those people to pick the place in which they would like to be.

Now, we will do what we can to provide the assistance to those to whom we can get it. We are already embarked on that project. I think Mr. Parker explained that to you. We will be seeking additional resources for that purpose, and you have already seen a clear indication that that is something that, in the traditional American experience, not only our people expect of us, but everybody expected of us, and I know we will not disappoint them in that regard.

We have also, of course, supported the South Vietnamese in their appeal to the United Nations and other countries in the world to provide the assistance that will be necessary, and some countries are already coming forward, not only with respect to the evacuation of the refugees, but with respect to their care, their feeding and their relocation.

It is going to take great sums. There are more than just a few hundred thousand people involved. No one knows how many will be able, in any event, to get to that position where you can treat them and care for them.

Spencer?

MORE

Q Mr. Secretary, you spoke of the earnest desire of the United States to see a settlement in Cambodia. The settlement would be between what parties? Who would represent the Khmer Rouge? Would that be Norodom Sihanouk's coalition, or what?

MR. HABIB: The United States has made it clear, and I will refer you back to a conference we had here not long ago, and if you want the precise wording, you really better look at that piece of paper, but as I recall, what we said at that time was something to the effect that it is not a question of personalities that is involved.

The United States is not seized of that problem, nor are the Cambodians in Phnom Penh. They have made it clear again and again that no one is any obstacle to peace. The obstacle to peace in Cambodia, the obstacle to a stopping of the shooting in Cambodia, is the unwillingness of the Khmer Rouge to have anything to do with anything except what they are doing.

They won't talk to anybody. There is no attempt at finding a way out other than at the end of a gun. All you have to do is to read the impassioned appeal of the authorities in Phnom Penh to realize that the war does not go on because they want it to.

Thank you very much, gentlemen.

END (AT 1:10 P.M. EDT)
(AT 10:10 A.M. PDT)

April 2, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: DON RUMSFELD

FROM: JACK MARSH

Attached is a copy of a speech which Senator Griffin gave in the Senate last Wednesday.

I had mentioned to the President that Griffin had given the speech but I did not have a copy at the time.

Attachment

JOM/dl



Remarks by

U. S. SENATOR ROBERT P. GRIFFIN

for delivery in

The United States Senate

March 26, 1975

DROPPING THE TORCH ?

Mr. President: In 1961, when John F. Kennedy took the oath as President, he stirred the hearts of freedom-loving people around the world with these words:

"Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans -- born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage -- and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this Nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today at home and around the world.

"Let every Nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty." (Emphasis supplied)



Our country has been a major factor in holding the world together in modern times because other Nations, friend and foe alike, have believed that the United States means what it says.

Every American President in the last 35 years -- and there have been seven of them -- has been called upon to recognize the dangers of unchecked international aggression.

Each of those Presidents -- from Franklin Roosevelt to Gerald Ford -- has taken the position that America's interests are served by helping other free Nations to defend themselves against aggression.

Indeed, that resolve on the part of the United States was so meaningful that beginning on March 19, 1965 -- ten years ago this month -- the United States even sent its own troops to fight beside the South Vietnamese.

(more)

By 1968, there were 500 thousand Americans in Southeast Asia, and United States expenditures to support the effort there exceeded \$80 million a day.

By comparison, the \$300 million requested now by President Ford for Vietnam is roughly equivalent to 4 days of expenditure support at 1968 levels.

It appears obvious now that Congress will take off for an Easter recess without according the White House even the courtesy of a vote on its urgent request for emergency assistance to Cambodia and South Vietnam.

By default -- and through caucus decisions of the majority party -- it has become painfully obvious to all who watch -- in the United States and around the world -- that Congress is turning its back on allies in Indochina who are struggling to defend themselves.

Such an abandonment by Congress -- not only of allies but of a huge investment that includes 50,000 American lives -- should at least be a conscious and deliberate decision made by the Senate as a whole -- for it is a decision that carries with it into history consequences and responsibility of enormous proportions.

Perhaps it is possible that Congress -- by doing nothing or by taking a vote -- will turn hollow the ring of John Kennedy's inspiring words and will forsake basic principles upon which Presidents of both parties have stood so firmly through the years. But I cannot allow this to happen without at least speaking out.

I know that the people of America are tired of Vietnam. No member of this Senate needs to be reminded of that. Americans are tired of reading about Vietnam, of hearing about Vietnam, of watching Vietnam on television; and they are tired of paying for Vietnam.

I realize also that the dictates of political expediency -- and perhaps of political survival -- press hard for outright termination of all U. S. assistance, once and for all.

I am familiar with the opinion polls. Yet, I cannot help but recall the admonition of Winston Churchill during the last World War:

"Nothing is more dangerous in wartime than to live in the temperamental atmosphere of a Gallup Poll, always feeling one's pulse and taking one's temperature."

Were the task of a Senator nothing more than studying public opinion and casting each vote with the majority, I might more efficiently return home and leave my responsibilities in the care of a computer.

But surely our responsibilities here in the Senate reach beyond the mechanical task of echoing public opinion. That point was made by Edmund Burke in 1774 when he told his constituents:

"Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgment; and he betrays instead of serving you if he sacrifices it to your opinion."

In our understandable frustration with Vietnam, it is tempting to assume that if we just cut off all aid to South Vietnam, the people of that area will settle their own problems and the rest of the world can live in peace again.

As the Washington Star recently observed, some people take the view that:

" . . . cutting off aid to our allies is something like cutting off oxygen to a dying patient, to spare

(more)



these long-suffering people more agony. We have talked ourselves into the idea that, in supplying Vietnam and Cambodia with the means of defending themselves, it is we who have instigated and perpetuated the war and it is our obligation to end it."

Unfortunately, it is not that simple.

There are in South Vietnam today several million people who, in one way or another, have openly opposed the Communists. Many of them took their position after we convinced them that the United States would stand by them. Statements by Vietnamese Communist leaders, as well as the lessons of history, give no assurance that these individuals will not be killed or imprisoned following a North Vietnamese victory.

- In 1946, the Secretary General of the Indochinese Communist Party ominously asserted:

"For a newborn revolutionary power to be lenient with counter-revolutionaries is tantamount to committing suicide."

- When Ho Chi Minh took over North Vietnam in 1954, a massive purge resulted in an estimated 50,000 executions and, indirectly, in the deaths of several hundred thousand more -- and this was after nearly a million potential victims had fled to the South.
- In the 1968 Tet offensive, hundreds of bodies were found in mass graves outside Hue -- and great numbers of others still are not accounted for.
- And public statements by North Vietnamese leaders give a foretaste of events to come. Three years ago, North Vietnam's Minister of Public Security laid down this official policy for dealing with dissidents:

"In our dealings with counter-revolutionary elements in the recent past, we have still . . . not properly used violence."

In and out of Congress, many have salved their consciences with the assumption that South Vietnamese people really prefer Communism anyway. For those Americans, it should be interesting -- and disturbing -- to see on television that the hundreds of thousands of refugees, who flee for their lives from the recently abandoned provinces, are moving South on the clogged highways -- not North.

On the face of the record, it is just unrealistic to suggest that an end to United States aid will end the killing in Vietnam.

The consequences of such a decision would be felt in our own country too. Earlier this month I met with an Ann Arbor constituent, James H. Warner, who for over five years was a prisoner of war in North Vietnam. Like other young men who were held captive, Warner received considerable abuse because he did not "cooperate" with his Communist hosts.

In the course of our conversation, Warner expressed great concern about the fate in Congress of President Ford's request for continued aid to Vietnam and Cambodia. There was deep emotion in his voice as he wondered aloud about the possibility that Congress might deny the request. Why, he wondered, had he endured so much to keep faith with his country -- if America's leaders were going to respond now by abandoning the cause for which he fought.

(more)



If Congress takes the "easy" course, Warner's case is only illustrative of the bitterness that will be felt by thousands of veterans who fought in Vietnam.

Many who advocate ending all U. S. aid to Vietnam assume that Communist North Vietnam would become a peaceful member of the international community once it gained control of Saigon. Unfortunately, that is not likely to be the case.

As we know, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, the deposed Cambodian head of state, is in exile in Peking. In one of the last public statements he made before being ousted in 1970 by a unanimous vote of his National Assembly, he wrote in a Japanese foreign affairs quarterly, Pacific Community, about the importance of the United States maintaining a presence and providing assistance to the victims of Communist aggression in Southeast Asia. He did not expect the Americans -- for whom he had (and has) little affection -- to remain in Asia for altruistic reasons -- but he believed the United States should remain in its own self-interest. He concluded:

" /T/he Communization of Cambodia would be the prelude to a Communization of all Southeast Asia and, finally, (although in a longer run) of Asia. Thus it is permitted to hope that, to defend its world interests (and indeed not for our sake), the United States will not disentangle itself too quickly from our area -- in any case not before having established a more coherent policy which will enable our populations to face the Communist drive with some chance of success."

Already Sihanouk's concerns of 1970 are being borne out in the wake of our apparent abandonment of South Vietnam and Cambodia.

Thailand, for example -- a close ally for decades -- has shown signs of a moving away from its relationship with the United States and toward the Communist powers.

Earlier this month, a respected journalist, Keyes Beech, wrote:

"One by one, the small Nations of Southeast Asia are moving closer to Peking -- not in terms of ideology but on practical grounds.

"Within the past few days, both the Philippines and Singapore have taken conciliatory steps toward their giant Asian neighbor."

A compelling case can be made that these political changes in Southeast Asia are the direct consequence of a decline in American credibility in the area. Small Nations which in years past have relied on the word of the United States are now concluding that, in the long run, America's word is no longer credible. Under such circumstances, it would hardly be healthy for them to resist the expansion of Chinese or North Vietnamese influence in the region.

American abandonment of Indochina would almost certainly have consequences in other parts of the world as well.

In the Middle East, our ability to assist in the search for peace depends largely on our credibility with participants in the dispute. Recent reports from Jerusalem have noted a growing concern about the reliability of the United States -- a concern related by some to the apparent U. S. abandonment of its allies in Indochina. As John Goshko of the Washington Post Foreign Service reported March 12:

"Many Israelis, drawing a comparison between their own situation and events in Southeast Asia, say openly that they fear that the same thing may happen here."



And Marilyn Berger, also of the Washington Post, reported from the Middle East on March 20:

"The imminent fall of Cambodia and even South Vietnam . . . are said to be raising new obstacles in the current negotiations.

"Israelis are questioning the value of assurances . . . Arabs are said to be questioning the need to make concessions when American aid to Israel might soon be diminished, just as it has been in Cambodia and South Vietnam."

These are deeply disturbing developments. They pose tough, hard questions which deserve answers before we pull the rug from under our allies in Indochina.

Mr. President, if and when the Senate moves toward a vote on supplemental aid to Cambodia and South Vietnam, each member will have to wrestle with his own conscience in deciding whether a vote against it will best serve American interests and the cause of world peace.

For one, I do not believe that such a move would serve those high purposes. Furthermore, it would signal a new turn toward isolationism -- and the world of 1975 is too small, too interdependent for that.

A great statesman of the past from my State, Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg, appreciated the role we must play in the world, when on July 6, 1949, he said:

"Much as we might crave the easier way of lesser responsibility, we are denied this privilege. We cannot sail by the old and easier charts. That has been determined for us by the march of events. We have no choice as to whether we shall play a great part in the world. We have to play it in sheer defense of our own self-interest. All that we can decide is whether we shall play it well or ill."

America will play a decisive role in world affairs -- whatever we do -- whether we stick to our word and maintain our credibility -- or whether we turn our back on friends and betray their hope for freedom. What we do will have consequences, for good or ill -- consequences which we dare not ignore.

Although the hour is late -- very late -- the question of U.S. aid to Cambodia and South Vietnam is still open.

Our action -- or inaction -- will send a message, loud and clear, to the rest of the world -- a message to friend and foe alike that will ring through history as resoundingly as did President John Kennedy's stirring words of January 20, 1961.

Shall the word go forth, from this time and place -- that the torch has been dropped?

Or, shall the message from this Congress be that America -- sadder, perhaps -- but wiser, we hope -- and tempered with a clearer sense of the limits of our power -- still stands proud and true to herself, to her friends, and to the cause of liberty!

###



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 25, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

THROUGH: JOHN MARSH
MAX L. FRIEDERSDORF *mb.*

FROM: WILLIAM T. KENDALL *WTK*

SUBJECT: Speech to be delivered by Senator Robert Griffin
Wednesday, March 26, 1975

Senator Griffin has asked that I transmit the attached speech to you. He will deliver it on the Senate floor tomorrow morning. The speech is a defense of Administration policy in Southeast Asia.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

VN

general

met with

Imm

PRECEDENCE

Unclass

CLASSIFICATION

FOR COMMCENTER USE ONLY

FROM: Jack Marsh
TO: Dick Cheney

INFO:

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DAC 082

LDX _____

TTY _____

GPS _____

PAGES 3

CITE _____

DTG:

030200Z

RELEASED BY:

DN

TOR:

030215Z

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

WHITE HOUSE
SITUATION ROOM

75 APR 2 PM 10:31

1975 MAR 3 02 00

4/3/75

Copies of telegram given to
General Scowcroft and Bill Roberts.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

April 2, 1975

TO: DICK CHENEY
FROM: JACK MARSH

A representative of Senator Helms staff delivered this to the White House at 9:00 p.m. for transmission to the President. You can expect press inquiry on the attached tomorrow.

Please call to Nesson's attention.

①



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STREET ADDRESS The White House <≡											
CITY, STATE, ZIP OR COUNTRY Washington, D. C. 20500										(EOA) <≡	
<p>R U E A D W W</p> <p>The on-going tragedy in Vietnam demands action without delay.</p> <p>I believe that you should immediately assign to the Commander of the U.S. 7th Fleet, Vice Admiral George Steele, the mission of utilizing the Fleet for the purpose of evacuating every refugee who wants to leave Vietnam.</p> <p>Our facilities at Con Son Island off the Vietnamese coast, on Okinawa, at Clarke Air Force Base and Subic Bay in the Phillipines, and American bases in Guam, Taiwan and Thailand, should be utilized for emergency refugee processing centers. The United States should immediately dispatch emergency military medical teams from Hawaii.</p> <p>The whole operation can be carried out by the U.S. Navy and CINCPAC. My personal inquiries ascertain without question that the 7th Fleet can perform the task of total evacuation of two million refugees or more within seven days. I am informed that the availability of emergency refugee centers and of military medical teams is beyond any doubt. Furthermore,</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><≡ (SP) (SP)</p>											
SIGNATURE <≡≡ COL <≡											
SENDER'S NAME: Senator Jesse Helms STREET ADDRESS: 5107 Dirksen Building CITY, STATE, ZIP: Washington, D.C. 20510 <≡											
(EOM) () TEL. OR ACCT. NO.: GDC 8082949 OPER. SIGN.: OTC MPU TEL OTR FAX TLX RATING CODE: AGENCY I.D.: <≡											

ALL MESSAGES TAKEN BY THIS COMPANY ARE SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING TERMS:

To guard against mistakes or delays, the sender of a message should order it repeated, that is, telegraphed back to the originating office for comparison. For this, one-half the unrepeated message rate is charged in addition. Unless otherwise indicated on its face, this is an unrepeated message and paid for as such, in consideration whereof it is agreed between the sender of the message and the Telegraph Company as follows:

1. The Telegraph Company shall not be liable for mistakes or delays in the transmission or delivery, or for non-delivery, of any message received for transmission at the unrepeated-message rate beyond the sum of five hundred dollars; nor for mistakes or delays in the transmission or delivery, or for non-delivery, of any message received for transmission at the repeated-message rate beyond the sum of five thousand dollars, unless specially valued; nor in any case for delays arising from unavoidable interruption in the working of its lines.

2. In any event the Telegraph Company shall not be liable for damages for mistakes or delays in the transmission or delivery, or for the non-delivery, of any message, whether caused by the negligence of its servants or otherwise, beyond the actual loss, not exceeding in any event the sum of five thousand dollars, at which amount the sender of each message represents that the message is valued, unless a greater value is stated in writing by the sender thereof at the time the message is tendered for transmission, and unless the repeated-message rate is paid or agreed to be paid and an additional charge equal to one-tenth of one percent of the amount by which such valuation shall exceed five thousand dollars.

3. The Telegraph Company is hereby made the agent of the sender, without liability, to forward this message over the lines of any other company when necessary to reach its destination.

4. The applicable tariff charges on a message destined to any point in the continental United States listed in the Telegraph Company's Directory of Stations cover its delivery within the established city or community limits of the destination point. Beyond such limits and to points not listed in the Telegraph Company's Directory of Stations, the Telegraph Company does not undertake to make delivery but will endeavor to arrange for delivery by any available means as the agent of the sender, with the understanding that the sender authorizes the collection of any additional charge from the addressee and agrees to pay such additional charge if it is not collected from the addressee.

5. No responsibility attaches to the Telegraph Company concerning messages until the same are accepted at one of its transmitting offices; and if a message is sent to such office by one of the Telegraph Company's messengers, he acts for that purpose as the agent of the sender; except that when the Telegraph Company sends a messenger to pick up a message, the messenger in that instance acts as the agent of the Telegraph Company in accepting the message, the Telegraph Company assuming responsibility from the time of acceptance.

6. The Telegraph Company will not be liable for damages or statutory penalties when the claim is not presented in writing to the Telegraph Company, (a) within ninety days after the message is filed with the Telegraph Company for transmission in the case of a message between points within the United States (except in the case of an intrastate message in Texas) or between a point in the United States on the one hand and a point in Alaska, Canada, Mexico, or St. Pierre-Miquelon Islands on the other hand, or between a point in the United States and a ship at sea or in the air, (b) within 95 days after the cause of action, if any, shall have accrued in the case of an intrastate message in Texas, and (c) within 180 days after the message is filed with the Telegraph Company for transmission in the case of a message between a point in the United States and a foreign or overseas point other than the points specified above in this paragraph; provided, however, that this condition shall not apply to claims for damages or overcharges within the purview of Section 415 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended.

7. It is agreed that in any action by the Telegraph Company to recover the tolls for any message or messages the prompt and correct transmission and delivery thereof shall be presumed, subject to rebuttal by competent evidence.

8. Special terms governing the transmission of messages according to their classes, as enumerated below, shall apply to messages in each of such respective classes in addition to all the foregoing terms.

9. No employee of the Telegraph Company is authorized to vary the foregoing.

10-71

DOMESTIC SERVICES

TELEGRAM

The fastest domestic service. Accepted for immediate transmission. (Refund will be made upon written application when delivery or delivery attempt is not made within 4 hours for teline or telephone delivery and 6 hours for physical delivery. Specific conditions and certain exceptions are posted in all public offices.)

OVERNIGHT TELEGRAM

Economical overnight service. Accepted up to midnight for delivery as early as possible the following day at rates lower than telegrams. (Refund will be made on written application when delivery or attempt not made by 2:00 P.M. the following day. Specific conditions are posted in all public offices.)

INTERNATIONAL SERVICES

FULL RATE (FR)

The fastest overseas service. May be written in code, cipher, or in any language expressed in Roman letters.

LETTER TELEGRAM (LT)

For overnight plain language messages, at half-rate. Minimum charge for 22 words applies.

SHIP RADIOGRAM

For messages to and from ships at sea.

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STREET ADDRESS	
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CITY, STATE, ZIP OR COUNTRY	(EOA)
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Page 2

the Vietnamese Navy has 90 blue water ships and 2,000 smaller crafts which also can be used for this mission.

Today, my office has received reports from Saigon by telephone.

These reports may be summarized as follows:

"There is total chaos in Saigon, panic that cannot be described, chaos that borders on anarchy. People are committing suicide. This morning over the loudspeakers and megaphones the people of Saigon were advised to get on any kind of boat or sampan and get out to the South China Sea where they will be picked up by American ships. In the countryside, civilians by the thousands are being slaughtered by the Communists while attempting

SIGNATURE	COL	
Senator Jesse Helms		

(EOM)	SENDER'S NAME	STREET ADDRESS	CITY, STATE, ZIP

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The Honorable Gerald R. Ford											
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CITY, STATE, ZIP OR COUNTRY											

Page 3

to flee. Other thousands are floating helplessly on small craft and logs off the coast of Vietnam."

Mr. President, these are not soldiers of war I am talking about. These refugees are war's tragic victims, helpless in the face of the onslaught before them.

In the name of God and humanity, Mr. President, we must act now.



(SP) (SP)

SIGNATURE		COL	
Senator Jesse Helms			
(EOM)	SENDER'S NAME	STREET ADDRESS	CITY, STATE, ZIP
	Senator Jesse Helms	5107 Dirksen Building	Washington, D.C. 20510
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Imm
PRECEDENCE

Confidential
CLASSIFICATION

FOR COMMCENTER USE ONLY

FROM: Jack Marsh
TO: Dick Cheney
(Palm Springs)
INFO: Dave Hoopes for
Rumsfeld

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PAGES 4

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CITE _____

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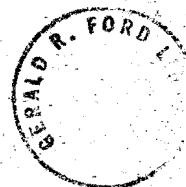
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SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Determined to be an administrative marking
Cancelled per E.O. 12958, Sec. 1.3 and
Archivist's memo of March 16, 1983

By DAE NARA date 6/19/82

April 2, 1975

TO: DICK CHENEY
PALM SPRINGS

FROM: JACK MARSH

The following summaries are a result of inquiries on the Vietnam situation directed to the members:

5



Confidential
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

April 2, 1975

JACK MARSH

MAX FRIEDERSDORF

CHARLES LEPPERT, JR. *CLJ*

Reaction of Member Contacts on
Situation in Southeast Asia.

MEMORANDUM FOR:

THRU:

FROM:

SUBJECT:

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."



Determined to be an administrative marking
Cancelled per E.O. 12355, Sec. 1.3 and
Archivist's memo of March 16, 1983
NARA date 6/19/84

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.

Ralph Preston Not available - away on vacation.

(Staff)
App.



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 2, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: JACK MARSH

FROM: WILLIAM T. KENDALL *WTK*

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

Jim Callaway - App. (Staff) Away on vacation

Pete Bonner - App. (Staff) Away on vacation



follow up
Leppert

1
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Russ



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 2, 1975

MR. MARSH:

Congressman McCollister called (from Omaha) re the likelihood of Saigon's being invaded. A church in his District, which has missionaries over there, has contacted him about any provisions for evacuating people from Saigon (via boat). Congressman McCollister would like to know your thoughts on this, and whether, in fact, the Navy might be sending boats.

PH: (402) 334-8077

Connie

NOTE: He seemed to feel that Saigon would "go under" somewhere within the time frame of "48 hours". McCollister would like to hear from you at your earliest convenience.



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Max -

Could one of your
people advise
McClellan of this.

Note Classification

James



MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

SECRET

March 17, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: RUSSELL A. ROURKE

FROM: WILLIAM L. STEARMAN *WLS*

SUBJECT: Status of Follow-up on Swain Group's
Efforts on Missing-in-Action in Vietnam

Mr. Marsh told me that Representative McCollister wants to know what the Executive Branch is doing to follow up efforts of Ken Swain's group to locate U.S. missing-in-action in Vietnam. (Ted Marrs discussed this matter with Swain last October.) You or Mr. Marsh can tell McCollister the following:

Dr. Roger Shields, Defense's Chief POW-MIA representative, will be meeting again with Swain's group on March 18. Larry Ward of this group has just returned from Vietnam and should be able to report on any progress he made in getting new information on MIA identification. Dr. Shields is following up on the group's findings and, principally for this purpose, he will be going to Vietnam within the next few weeks. Progress in this endeavor largely depends on the group's personal contacts in Vietnam, most of which appear to be with Montagnards (mountain tribesmen) of the Western Highlands. It should be noted that recent intense fighting in this area may well impede further progress in developing the contacts or operations needed to further this mission.

For Mr. Marsh's and your information, Shields says the group is falling off from its original story about identifying living missing-in-action. They now seem to be concentrating on the recovery of remains; although they claim their Montagnard contacts have offered to check out stories of U.S. prisoners in Communist hands. Shields personally feels some remains may be recovered, but there is little chance of getting anything on living POW's. Shields also believes the Montagnards may be working

SECRET

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, 12/23/92

MR 92-7, #4, NSC 14, 10/29/92
By KBH NARA, Date 12/23/92



on behalf of FULRD (an old anti-GVN Montagnard independence organization) and may insist on a U.S. guarantee for Montagnard autonomy in return for their cooperation on MIA's. While Swain and Highlands' missionaries in general probably favor such a move, it is obviously out of the question. In any case, the capture of Ban Me Thuot and the probable GVN abandonment of most of the Western Highlands almost guarantee the futility of the whole operation.



Imm

PRECEDENCE

Confidential

CLASSIFICATION

FOR COMMCENTER USE ONLY

FROM:

Jack Marsh

TO:

Dick Cheney

(Palm Springs)

INFO:

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PAGES 2

CITE _____

DTG:

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SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

1975 MAR 3 02 08

WHITE HOUSE
SITUATION ROOM

75 APR 2 PM 10:31



MEMORANDUM

~~Confidential~~
THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 2, 1975

TO: **DICK CHENEY**

MEMORANDUM TO:

JACK MARSH

FROM:

RUSS ROURKE

SUBJECT:

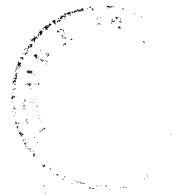
TELEPHONE CALL FROM DAVE
LOVENHEIM (REP. FRANK HORTON'S A.A.)

Dave indicated that Frank Horton and he were extremely concerned over the deteriorating humanitarian aspects of the situation in Vietnam and that they were concerned that the President will be roundly accused of "fiddling while Rome burns." Horton makes the following plea:

- 1) President Ford should return to Washington immediately and undertake a coordinated program of humanitarian aid to Vietnam, which would include a call for an emergency session of Congress and a request to the United Nations to provide an umbrella of productive support in Indochina to permit the safe withdrawal of civilian refugees.

In any event, Horton believes the President's presence at Palm Springs at this time could be disastrous.

3



Determined to be an administrative mark
Cancelled per E.O. 12356, Sec. 1.3 and
Archivist's memo of March 16, 1983
By DAO NARS date 6/1/83

MEMORANDUM

~~CLASSIFIED / Confidential~~
THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 2, 1975

Determined to be an administrative marking
Cancelled per E.O. 12356, Sec. 1.3 and
Archivist's memo of March 16, 1983
By DDO NARS date 6/19/82

MEMORANDUM TO: DICK CHENEY

FROM: JACK MARSH

The following have been in touch with the White House today on the Vietnam situation:

- (1) 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.
- (2) McCollister - Called twice expressing concern about safety of U.S. missionaries. Indicated a number of constituents calls about S/V, particularly in support of assistance to the refugees.

4



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 2, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR:

JACK MARSH

THRU:

MAX FRIEDERSDORF

FROM:

CHARLES LEPPERT, JR. *CLJ*

SUBJECT:

Reaction of Member Contacts on
Situation in Southeast Asia.

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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."



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.

Ralph Preston Not available - away on vacation.



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.

