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6. Do you have anything new on U.S. plans for additional assistance to Indochina? Has the U.S. approached the PRC and the Soviet Union to restrain their flow of weapons to Hanoi? Do you have any comment on the Washington Post Editorial which called on President Thieu to fulfill the Paris accords?

11/10/75
GUIDANCE: I have nothing more to give you today on the subject of U.S. assistance to South Vietnam beyond what I said yesterday.

With regard to approaches to the PRC and the USSR, I am not in a position to comment on the details of our exchanges with other nations, however, I can assure you that the need for peace in Southeast Asia is always high on the agenda in the President's contacts with world leaders.

I would also point out that on several occasions the South Vietnamese government has proposed full implementation of the Paris accords, including elections, I would remind you that on the 21st of November, President Thieu called for a resumption of the talks with the other side to work out the implementation of the political provisions of the agreement. Unfortunately, the Communist side chose to increase its military actions rather than return to the conference tables in Paris and Saigon.

(Refer details on this subject to State).

FYI: If asked about reports the U.S. is making emergency shipments from Thailand to South Vietnam, refer questions to DOD. DOD will say that shipments from Thailand are routine shipments of ammunition destined for Cambodia.

3. News reports from Japan indicate that the U.S. carrier Midway has sailed from Yokosuka possibly towards Vietnam. Do you have any comment on this?

1/13/75

Guidance: Any comment on ship movements would come from the Pentagon.

FYI: Despite the fact that an unguided Duty Officer told AP this morning that the Midway was not going to Vietnam, the Pentagon will return to the official policy of not discussing the destination of U.S. fleet movements. End FYI.

1/15/75
1. Yesterday the State Department released a diplomatic note deploring Hanoi's increased violations of the Vietnam peace agreement. That note said "the DRV must accept the full consequences of its action." What does that sentence mean? What will the U. S. do if Hanoi continues its violations?

GUIDANCE: I have nothing to add from here with regard to the wording of that diplomatic note, or to what Amb. Anderson said about it in his press briefing. I will not speculate from here on what the U. S. would do in the event of continued North Vietnamese violations, or in the event of a massive North Vietnamese offensive against South Vietnam. Any U. S. action would, of course, be fully in accordance with our Constitutional processes.

FYI: Current U. S. law does not forbid U. S. military action in Vietnam, but it does require Congressional approval before any military action can be taken. End FYI.



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115/75
3. Can you confirm the New York Times report that the United States is conducting reconnaissance over North Vietnam in violation of the Paris Peace Accords?

GUIDANCE: We do not comment on the subject of reconnaissance.

FYI: If asked for our interpretation of the Paris Accords regarding reconnaissance, you should refer ~~questioners~~ to State for a definition of this subject. End FYI.

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3. Do you have anything more to tell us concerning U. S. reconnaissance over North Vietnam?

GUIDANCE: I have nothing to say on the subject of reconnaissance. I simply will not discuss reconnaissance activities from here.

FYI: You can point out that Amb. Anderson discussed the subject on Tuesday at the State Department, as did Secretary Schlesinger in his Tuesday press conference. Neither confirmed U.S. reconnaissance, but each pointed out that Hanoi cannot selectively and unilaterally violate the Paris peace agreement.

6. ~~Comment on anniversary of Paris agreement.~~

1/27/75
If asked, for comment on today's anniversary, you should draw from the following in a low-key and informal manner:

TEXT: I have no particular statement or comment to offer. But on this second anniversary, we would note with regret that instead of an atmosphere of peace and political competition in South Vietnam as envisaged by the agreement today is marked by an escalation of North Vietnamese military actions against the South in violation of the 1973 agreement.

I would also reaffirm that the U.S. Government intends to continue to work in support of the purposes and objectives of the agreement and for full compliance by all parties. To this end we will continue to provide South Vietnam with the means to defend itself against aggression from the North. We will also continue to support the calls of South Vietnam for a resumption of negotiations with the Communist side.



2/5/75
3. Do you have any reaction to South Vietnamese Government seizures of opposition newspapers and the jailing of their editors and reporters? How can the U. S. justify aid to Thieu in the face of such dictatorial actions?

GUIDANCE: We do not yet have full details on what prompted this action in Saigon. I would prefer to reserve judgment until we have all the facts.

I think, however, it is important we take into account the wartime circumstances of the South Vietnamese society in which these actions took place. Historically, virtually all countries have imposed some degree of controls during such difficult periods. Nevertheless, I think it is also important to note that in Saigon the Viet Cong is permitted to hold a completely open press conference each week. Not many countries being attacked by foreign forces give their spokesmen for those forces free press platforms.

I think we should also recognize that far more dissent occurs in South Vietnam than would be permitted in any dictatorship. South Vietnam certainly has more freedom of all kind than it would have under Communist rule.

With regard to tying U. S. assistance to South Vietnamese political actions, I would simply point out that American assistance is provided to help the South Vietnamese defend themselves and the freedom they are fighting for today. To stop our aid would guarantee the South Vietnamese people the loss of their freedoms and a victory by Hanoi. I would also point out that when such actions have occurred in the past, we have pointed out that the South Vietnamese Government is fully aware of the importance the U. S. attaches to freedom of the press.

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2. Can you shed any light on a UPI report that U.S. military teams are being shuttled in and out of Saigon in possible violation of the Vietnam peace accords?

2/7/75
Guidance: It is my understanding that teams of technical specialists do go to Saigon from time to time to ensure good management of the U.S. military assistance supply program. There is no violation of the peace accords involved and I suggest you check with DOD for details on these operations.


4. Can you shed any light on reports that the President is sending a delegation of Congressmen to Vietnam? Why is he doing this?

1/13/75
GUIDANCE: In his meeting with the Congressional Leadership last week, the President invited Congress to send a delegation to Indochina to make its own assessment of U. S. responsibilities there and to report to the President and the American people on their findings. We are now working with Congress to form this delegation, which we expect to visit Vietnam sometime in the next two weeks. A number of Congressmen and Senators have already agreed to join the delegation, but I would prefer to wait until the formation of the delegation is completed before announcing the details.

2. ~~We have heard reports that Ban Me Thuat in the highlands of South Vietnam is about to fall or has fallen. What does the U.S. intend to do about these recent North Vietnamese attacks?~~

2/13/75
GUIDANCE: This offensive is simply one more indication of the true nature and intentions of the North Vietnamese; their actions constitute a blatant violation of the Paris Agreement. The President, as you know, has already requested \$300 Million to help the South Vietnamese defend themselves and repel these repeated attacks which threaten their very survival. Naturally, the President is very anxious to have the Congress pass the legislation that will give the South Vietnamese the assistance they urgently need.

FYI ONLY: There is no confirmation, at this time, that the plane that crashed in South Vietnam was actually shot down. We are watching the reports. END FYI.



Sally Kissinger's
Press Conference
2/25/75

PR #103

22

A Well, I think that Israel has to be the judge of what it considers an adequate arrangement. And that is not for me to say at this moment. It stands to reason that a settlement is not possible until both sides are satisfied with it. It is also clear that, Israel being a democracy, any agreement that is made must have visible parts that can be presented to the Israeli domestic opinion and to the Israeli Parliament.

What combination of direct and indirect assurances will be given must be left to the process of negotiation. But it goes without saying that any settlement to have any meaning must be acceptable to both parties.

Q Mr. Secretary, I would like to take you back for a moment to the **Viet-Nam** problem and the grave doubts that you referred to. You seem to be saying that it is more important for the United States to enjoy credibility abroad than to have credibility at home.

A No. I'm saying that the security of the United States and the security of the many countries in the world that depend on the United States is a matter of the gravest importance to the American people as well. And I, therefore, believe that however painful the discussions, however anguished the experiences, that the American people

over a period of time will recognize that this distinction cannot be made.

I am as subject to the correspondence as many of the members of the Congress. It is my belief that those who are responsible for national policy are accountable not only for the moment but for how it will look several years from now. And three to five years from now when the consequences are apparent I believe that there will be no distinction between credibility at home and credibility abroad.

Q Mr. Secretary, in a series of uncomplimentary remarks about you by former associates of President Nixon, how do you account for these comments? Do you think it's a concerted effort? And what's your reaction to what Mr. Safire and Mr. Colson have been saying about you?

A Well, I think the two individuals you mentioned represent different phenomena. I don't believe it is a concerted effort. And in the case of one of them I don't believe that what is being said today is any different from what was being said when we were colleagues.
(Laughter)

Q Mr. Secretary, when in Geneva you talked with Foreign Minister Gromyko. You talked about the European

we being asked to vacate Torrejon? And how do we stand with the U.S. base in the Azores?

A Well, these negotiations are conducted, as you know, by the new Assistant Secretary for Congressional Liaison.* We have not been asked to vacate any of the Spanish bases. And, therefore, this report seems to us at least premature. In fact, it seems to us inaccurate. The discussion has concerned mostly what sort of security assurances the United States might give Spain in return for the continuation of its bases in Spain.

With respect to the Azores, we have not been asked to vacate the base in the Azores. The agreement has not yet been renewed, but under the agreement we can maintain our base there until a new agreement has been made or it is clear that no agreement can be made.

Q Could I just follow that up? The security arrangements that Spain is asking for, is that the sort of thing that you mean other countries will begin to doubt if an American decision lets Viet-Nam and Cambodia go down the tube?

A I was talking about the general ability of other countries to rely on the word of the United States or on the ability of the United States to bring about the

* (Ambassador Robert McCloskey, Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations)

the security of those countries that rely on it. This has serious consequences. I know it is fashionable to sneer at the word "domino theory." I think this is a very grave matter on which serious people have had a divided opinion. And we've been torn apart by the Viet-Nam War long enough. But I do not believe we can escape this problem by assuming the responsibility of condemning those who have dealt with us to a certain destruction.

The answer to your question is, yes, this is one of the things. But I was talking of a more general problem.

Q More specifically, the country that's most often discussed in the context of American security is Israel. Do you think Israel perhaps is exempt from this problem because of support in Congress?

A I do not think it is appropriate for me to go around the world asking which countries would be particularly threatened by this attitude. I would say that the questions that are now being asked can be applied to almost any country as far as terminal date is concerned, as far as the end process is concerned. I do not want to apply it to any particular country. And it is, of course, clear that there has been a special relationship between Israel and the United States that can withstand strains

5. ~~Has Sec. Kissinger changed his mind about the US commitment~~
~~to Indochina?~~

3/4/75
GUIDANCE: Sec. Kissinger has stated his position publicly and repeatedly on the gravity of the situation in Cambodia and Vietnam and the responsibilities that America has with regard to those countries. I would refer you to his press conference of February 25. *understand D.O.S.*

4. Q. Last night the President was asked why the U. S. could not develop a policy of detente with Indochina when we are actively pursuing such a policy with the PRC and the USSR, Could you expand upon his statement: for us?

3/7/75

GUIDANCE: The President was making a distinction between our desire to work with other governments whose ideologies and philosophies we do not share from those forces who commit acts of overt aggression against the sovereign right to self determination of other governments, which we deplore.

act.

The situation in Southeast Asia is not one of pursuing detente with Communist regimes there. The issue there is the right of peoples to choose their own form of government and to live in peace free of foreign aggression. We have said we will accept any outcome of the negotiations accepted by the parties.

2. Q. Congressman Aspin has cited an intelligence report that concludes that South Vietnamese forces are in no imminent danger of being decisively defeated during the dry season that runs until this summer. Why is it necessary to provide the emergency \$300 million the President has requested?

3/7/75

GUIDANCE: To begin with, that report also predicts that if annual military aid to Saigon remains at the same level -- \$700 million -- the Communists will have "a position of significant advantage over the South Vietnamese forces in subsequent fighting." To provide the South Vietnamese with military assistance only when their situation is desperate serves neither U. S. nor Vietnamese interests. The additional \$300 million will enable the South Vietnamese to defend themselves without abandoning further positions simply to conserve ammunition and fuel. South Vietnam has the will to defend itself and a viable economy which gives that country the potential to feed its people and purchase its own arms if it can survive in the short run.

9. ~~Does the President intend to take any action in light of the attack in the Vietnamese Highlands on Ban Me Thuot by the North Vietnamese?~~

Guidance: We are watching reports closely and have not heard of any Americans being wounded or killed. Let me just say that this North Vietnamese attack is a clear violation of the ceasefire agreements. The President is very anxious to have Congress pass the supplemental \$300 million in assistance he has requested to help the Vietnamese repel such attacks and to provide them with the security they need to survive.

refer to FYI # 6

3/10/75

3. Is the recent North Vietnamese offensive evidence of a major Communist military campaign in South Vietnam, and if so, what will the United States do about it?

1/12/75

GUIDANCE: This offensive is a blatant violation of the Paris Agreement and is simply more clear evidence of the nature and intentions of the North Vietnamese. The President has requested \$300 million to help South Vietnam defend itself and ensure its survival, and urges that the Congress act quickly to provide the assistance for these purposes.

Schlesinger - It is an extended action, but not country wide. 2nd phase of dry season offensive. Going after relatively unpopulated areas that are lightly defended.



4. Has the President been in touch with Sen. Kennedy to establish details reportedly contained in a letter from the North Vietnamese foreign minister about Americans listed as missing in action in Southeast Asia?

3/14/75

GUIDANCE: This action reportedly taken by the North Vietnamese is an appalling indication of the lack of humanitarian concern for the missing men and their unfortunate families. Unfortunately, it is nothing new. It is a complete violation of the Paris Agreement. We have fully ~~complied~~ *supported* with the terms of the agreement, and we are dismayed by still another example of North Vietnamese intransigence and lack of concern for the humanitarian aspects of this issue.

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*Call on N.V.N. to comply with terms of
Peace agreement that only on MIA --- but we urge
N.V.N. to respond to ~~we urge~~ ~~we urge~~
replied to appeal for negotiation*



begun to move toward more secure government controlled areas to the South and East. The fate of the nine Americans in Bon Me. Thuot is unknown at this time. We have heard, though, that other Americans in Kontum, Pleiku and DarLac have departed safely.

3. Are we replacing supplies one for one and will the \$300 million in military assistance permit us to do so?

GUIDANCE: We are not replacing equipment on a one for one basis, nor will the assistance the President has requested permit us to do so. The purpose of the \$300 million is to purchase ammunition, fuel, and other expendables to help the South Vietnamese defend themselves.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 18, 1975

Jry

MEMORANDUM FOR: RON NESSEN

FROM: MARGARET VANDERHYE

SUBJECT: Guidance Revision and Update

VIETNAM

1. Why are the South Vietnamese abandoning 3 provinces in South Vietnam? Is there any reason to persist in aiding a country that will not defend itself?

3/18/75

GUIDANCE: Since the ceasefire the balance of forces has changed markedly. In clear violation of the Paris Agreement, the North Vietnamese now have well over 200,000 troops in South Vietnam and significant amounts of equipment. Due to a critical shortage of supplies occasioned by the expectation that levels of military assistance will be insufficient, the South Vietnamese have been forced to conserve their ammunition and fuel and fall back to maintain their defenses. Clearly the need for U.S. assistance is urgent. The South Vietnamese are strong and they have the desire to defend themselves if only we will assist them. The President has stated his willingness to work with the Congress to ensure that the \$300 million he has requested is provided quickly.

2. Do we have official confirmation that the South Vietnamese have abandoned the provinces? What about the fate of Americans there, especially in Bon Me Thuot?

GUIDANCE: We have received reliable reports, but in fact have no official confirmation that the South Vietnamese have abandoned the provinces. Civilians have reportedly

2. The President has said he would be willing to accept a three-year terminal date for aid to Saigon if Congress would vote enough funds to insure its survival that long. Has he formally proposed such a program?
3/19/75 How much would it cost to secure South Vietnam's survival?

GUIDANCE: The President's comments on this matter represented an attempt to respond constructively to the concerns of Congress about the extent and duration of the American involvement in Indochina. ~~The President~~ Church & Pearson on a 3-year program, working with

As you know, he has met already with Senators Church and Pearson to explore with them responsible strategies for ending that involvement in a way consistent with our commitment to help provide South Vietnam the means to defend itself.

South Vietnam has the will to defend itself and a viable economy which gives that country the potential to feed its people and purchase its own arms if only it can survive in the short run.

paper not to use
The additional \$300 million in assistance that the President has requested will enable the South Vietnamese to defend themselves without abandoning further positions simply to conserve ammunition and fuel. If, however, a terminal date is imposed appropriations would naturally have to be substantial enough to do the job over that 3-year period. The President is ready to work with the Congress to determine the precise amounts and time frame.

3. Does the White House have any information supporting stories that President Thieu struck a deal with the North Vietnamese to exchange the highland provinces for the right of safe passage of the people out of the area?

The GVN officially denies it.

3/19/75 GUIDANCE: According to reports received this morning, the story "has no basis in fact and is completely untrue." The information indicates that the report was perhaps deliberately fabricated, intending to create confusion and dissent. The assertion that the Communists ordered out the population on a guaranteed free passage is described as "ludicrous."



Q. If, in fact, the South Vietnamese are abandoning the highland provinces without attempting to defend them, why should the U. S. provide the \$300 Million in assistance? What good will it do?

A. GUIDANCE: South Vietnamese Ambassador Phuong stated yesterday

" "If we are assured of long-term supplies, we can hold more land...

but if we are not certain, then we must concentrate on the defense

of our heartland." (Refer to guidance of yesterday for additional detail.)

Thieu —

N_V.N. same thing



Joy
March 20, 1975

VIETNAM

SECRETARY KISSINGER ON PARIS AGREEMENT

Q. Is it reported that Henry Kissinger said he would not have negotiated the Paris Agreement if he had known that full U. S. assistance and support would not be forthcoming. Does he regret the U. S. actions and participation in the peace effort?

A. GUIDANCE: The Secretary was negotiating for the United States in good faith and with full confidence that the signatories would adhere to the letter and spirit of the Agreement. There have been numerous and blatant violations of this Agreement by the North Vietnamese. They have ignored the repeated overtures of the South Vietnamese for a return of the negotiating table. Without a promise of negotiations or peace the South Vietnamese have looked to the U. S. for support. They now fear that support is not forthcoming as implied by their attempts to conserve ammunition and fuel and fall back to maintain their defenses. Until the North Vietnamese are willing to return to the negotiating table, the Administration believes we must support the South Vietnamese, and we should begin by providing them with the \$300 Million the President has requested.

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of our heartland." (Refer to guidance of yesterday for additional detail.)

April 7, 1975

QUESTION: How long will you continue the present policy on the evacuation of orphans?

ANSWER: We will continue to rely upon the experience and good judgment of the South Vietnam Ministry of Social Welfare and the U.S. authorized private and Voluntary Agencies to make the determination of whether legal adoption in the U.S. is in the best interests of the child. If conditions should change that will require a re-examination of this policy and a change in the criteria, we will reassess this position on the basis of the facts as they then exist. We are continually monitoring the situation in order to assure that these criteria are applied. *We will take steps to insure that children are not needlessly moved to the United States.*

DTBliss, ES: 4/7/5

April 7, 1975

QUESTION: What is the USG policy on the evacuation of orphans?

ANSWER: The President directed that we help to expedite the final processing and transportation to the U.S. of those orphans who have prospective parents in the U.S. and who are in the legal custody of U.S. Voluntary Agencies authorized by the GVN for intercountry adoption. These children were already on the way to adoption, ^{An important} and we accelerated ^{consideration in our decision was} ~~the process in order to~~ free up facilities to cope with the expanded refugee problem.

~~Beyond this week we~~ will consider carefully any further adoptions and our policy will be based upon two primary criteria: 1) our major and overriding concern will be the welfare of the children in South Vietnam, both those who are legally adoptable and those who are not. 2) consistent with U.S. and GVN law and custom, we will work to assure that no bureaucratic obstacles will prevent taking ^{Every consideration will be given to the view of} action, ~~which is considered by the~~ Vietnamese and the ^{as to} private voluntary organizations ~~to be in the~~ best interests ^{each} of ~~that~~ child.

DTBliss, ES:4/7/75

April 7, 1975

QUESTION: How long will AID continue to finance the transportation of orphans out of Vietnam?

ANSWER: We will continue ^{for the present} ~~during this week~~ to provide transportation for those orphans in South Vietnam who are in the legal custody of Voluntary Agencies authorized by the GVN for intercountry adoption. We will continue transportation ^{as long as} ~~beyond that time is~~ it is needed, if other commercial transportation is not available and if the conditions ~~so~~ require it.

April 7, 1975

QUESTION: Why did the President direct the expediting of the evacuation of Vietnam orphans from Saigon?

ANSWER: The President directed that the U.S. Embassy assist the Government of South Vietnam in the final processing and transportation of orphans who were in the legal custody of the U.S. Voluntary Agencies authorized by the GVN for intercountry adoption and awaited by adopting parents in the U.S. We undertook the expediting of work already in process in order to free up the facilities and staff of these Volags to help with the serious new refugee problem now arising in South Vietnam. These dedicated Volags have some of the finest health care facilities available, and by accelerating the process already underway, we are helping them deal more effectively with the humanitarian assistance requirements of the new refugees.

DTBliss,ES:4/7/75

VIETNAM

April 14

THE PRESIDENT'S PROGRAM

AND AMERICANS IN VIETNAM

Q. In view of the gravity of the situation in Vietnam and the large numbers of people both Vietnamese and American who would have to be evacuated, why doesn't the President simply order the beginning of an evacuation plan now and avoid the possibility of large scale U.S. military support action?

A. There has been some thinning out of Americans whose services are no longer needed in Vietnam. However, the Americans who remain in Vietnam do so because they have jobs, positions and responsibilities for which they are accountable and which they intend to carry out as long as they are needed.

As you know, we always have contingency plans when the lives of Americans are at stake, but the President will be working with the Congress this week in an effort to secure the necessary aid for Vietnam, and hopefully, such contingency plans would not have to be effected. We expect that Sec. Kissinger will be testifying on the Hill this week on the question of the Administration's aid requests.

FYI ONLY: Anything further on evacuation should be referred to the State Department. END FYI.

4/14/75

VIETNAM

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April 14, 1976

LETTER FROM NORTH VIETNAM

Q. Can you confirm that we have received a reply from the North Vietnamese on the Administration's overture for exploratory talks? How would you characterize it?

A. I think the State Department has already confirmed that a response has been received and is being studied.

FYI: See attached Indochina Fact Sheet on Reagan's charges and our response.

4/15/75

VIETNAM FUNDS

Q. An NBC reporter asserted this morning that Congressman Leggett (California) had raised the question of a supposed \$700 million in DOD funds available for Vietnam without additional appropriation by the Congress. Can you comment on this accuracy of that report?

A. I have heard the same reports and I understand that the Pentagon is looking into this matter. I would refer your questions to DOD.

FYI ONLY: Pentagon officials are checking this story out and at this time believe that a computer bookkeeping error is responsible for the confusion. In any case, it appears most likely that there is no additional \$700 million available for Vietnam assistance.

4/17

VIETNAM

Q. The President stated yesterday that he is convinced that if Congress made the \$722 million in military assistance available shortly that the Vietnamese could stabilize the situation. What indications does he have that the \$722 million will accomplish this objective of stabilization?

A. The President believes, based on reports by General Weyand and others that the funds he has requested will enable the South Vietnamese forces to hold and to replace the necessary equipment they would need to stabilize the situation in South Vietnam. He has stated that the aid must be swift and adequate to accomplish this purpose and it is to this end that he is working with the Congress to secure the necessary assistance.

4/17

DEPARTURE OF AMERICANS FROM VIETNAM

Q. What can you tell us about the President's evacuation order? How many Americans will be leaving? Is the President still going to ask the Congress for clarification and additional authority for the purpose of evacuating Americans and Vietnamese should the need arise. Would he even need to now?

A. The President announced the reduction of the number of Americans in Vietnam to a minimum. The President's action will result in the evacuation of those Americans who served in areas now under Communist control and whose presence is no longer necessary as well as non-essential personnel in Saigon. Within the next few days it is expected that most American dependents will have departed Vietnam. ~~U.S. officials pointed out that~~ The departure of these persons will ease the burden of support and protection formerly borne by the South Vietnamese.

~~These officials also stressed that~~ This thinning out process will not affect essential support and services provided by the U.S. mission nor does it alter in any respect U.S. determination to continue all possible support for the people of Vietnam.

4/17

AMERICANS IN VIETNAM

Q. How many Americans are now in Vietnam and by what procedures are we reducing their numbers?

A. As you know, Americans whose services are no longer needed or whose functions have been terminated have been leaving. At present the number of Americans in South Vietnam is somewhat less than 5,000, but I do not think that any useful purpose is served nor do we intend to engage in a daily accounting of departing Americans or to encourage speculation about future departures. We have responsibilities to fulfill in Vietnam which our citizens are carrying out.

4/18/75

DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT'S
AND SECRETARY KISSINGER'S STATEMENTS ON VIETNAM

Q. In recent statements, the President said that he didn't think we can blame the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China "for supplying replacement war material to North Vietnam while unfortunately, the United States did not carry out its commitment" to supply its ally South Vietnam. Secretary Kissinger, in a decidedly more ominous tone said "we shall not forget who supplied the arms which the North Vietnamese used to make a mockery of its signature on the Paris Accords." Can you explain the apparent discrepancies in these statements? Which more adequately portrays the Administration's attitude?

A. The two statements are not at all incompatible, ~~when read in the context of the questions to which they are addressed.~~ The President and the Secretary are both saying that we ~~both~~ hold the Soviets and Chinese responsible for supplying assistance to an area of instability where equipment is likely to be used for involvement in aggressive actions.

Secondly, both the President and the Secretary have ~~talked about~~ ^{discussed} our responsibilities ~~to our allies and said that the cut in~~ ^{in reducing assistance} ~~our~~ aid to our ally while the Soviets and Chinese maintained ^{full} support for theirs. The emphasis of the President's remarks has been on this latter assertion while Secretary Kissinger's responses have focused on the former, but there are no discrepancies in either the content or the philosophies expressed.

R.N.
4/18/75

AMERICANS IN VIETNAM

Q: There are reports out of Saigon that we now have about 6,000 Americans in Vietnam even though we have supposedly been evacuating them for the last two weeks. What is an accurate description of the level of Americans in Vietnam.

A: As Secretary Kissinger said yesterday, the number of Americans in Vietnam before we started reductions did not exceed 6,000 and the current number is somewhat below 4,000. We are attempting to reduce non essential personnel as the President has stated.

Private American citizens abroad often do not register with the Embassy or the Consulate. Therefore, the Embassy does not always know exactly how many there are. Now that there is an increase of military activity, those that had not registered have done so which gives an impression of an increase in numbers although that increase is not real.

Though the reduction in U.S. personnel levels continues we will not engage in a daily accounting of departure.

PRESIDENT'S AID REQUEST

Q. What is the President's reaction to the unfavorable decisions taken on Capitol Hill yesterday with respect to his requests for military and economic assistance to Vietnam?

A. The President is of course very disappointed that the Armed Services Committee failed to vote the additional assistance he requested, but he is hopeful that the Committee will reconsider its decision so that a vote may be taken on the floor. The action of the House International Relations Committee, ^{does} ~~while~~ not precisely providing ^{but} ~~is a constructive effort~~ what the President sought, ~~is a constructive effort~~. He appreciates the conscientious work of Chairman Morgan and Congressman Broomfield who have provided a basis for cooperation between the Executive and the Congress in meeting the humanitarian challenges facing us. It is the President's intent to continue to work with the Congress to see that the assistance so urgently needed is provided, *for both military and humanitarian purposes.*

4/21/75

Q: Do you have any hope at all of getting any South Vietnamese out of Saigon before the Communists attack? Where will all the South Vietnamese go if you get them out of Vietnam?

A: As I indicated in my foreign policy report to the Congress, I believe we have an obligation should the worst come to pass, to assist those Vietnamese whose lives could be endangered because of their association with us. I do not wish to speculate as to where they might go. Some might wish to come to this country; others might wish to go elsewhere. But this is still a contingency and I do not think we should discuss it in great detail.

4/21/75

DEPARTURE OF AMERICANS FROM VIETNAM

Q: What can you tell us about your evacuation order? How many Americans will be leaving? Are you still going to ask the Congress for clarification and additional authority for the purpose of evacuating Americans and Vietnamese should the need arise? Would you even need that now?

A: I have announced the reduction of the number of Americans in Vietnam to a minimum. This will result in the departure of those Americans who served in areas now under Communist control and whose presence is no longer necessary, as well as non-essential personnel in Saigon. Within the next few days it is expected that most American dependents will have departed Vietnam. This will ease the burden of support and protection formerly borne by the South Vietnamese.

This thinning out process will not affect essential support and services provided by the U. S. mission, nor does it alter in any respect our determination to continue all possible support for the people of Vietnam.

4/21/75

VIETNAMESE NEGOTIATIONS

Q: Are there any negotiations going on now with the North Vietnamese to end the war, or at least to allow the Americans to leave Saigon before the Communists take over?

A: As we have indicated, the United States has engaged in some diplomatic efforts regarding Vietnam. But I do not think it useful to air this subject in a public forum.

4/21/75

AMERICANS IN VIETNAM

Q: How many Americans are now in Vietnam and by what procedures are we reducing their numbers?

A: As you know, Americans whose services are no longer needed or whose functions have been terminated have been leaving. At present the number of Americans in South Vietnam is less than 3,000, but I do not think that any useful purpose is served nor do we intend to engage in a daily accounting of departing Americans or to encourage speculation about future departures. We have responsibilities to fulfill in Vietnam which our citizens are carrying out.

4/21/75

MILITARY AID FOR SOUTH VIETNAM

Q: How long do your military advisors now tell you that Saigon can hold out with no U.S. aid? How do you now rate the prospects for getting Congress to approve additional military aid for South Vietnam?

A: The situation in South Vietnam is grim. The North Vietnamese outnumber the South Vietnamese forces by at least two to one and they have superior fire power. Without any additional U.S. assistance, they have no chance to survive. With our aid they have a chance to create the most controlled condition possible and secure the best chance for a negotiated settlement. Each day that goes by diminishes that chance. For that reason I asked the Congress to move quickly to provide adequate assistance, and I am hopeful that the plight of the Vietnamese and their continuing determination to defend themselves will demonstrate the validity of my aid request.

ASYLUM FOR THIEU

4/21/75

Q: Has Thieu asked for asylum in the United States? Will he be welcome to live in the United States?

A: President Thieu has not asked for asylum in this country.

This is, therefore, a hypothetical question.

4/21/75

DEFEAT OF THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE ARMY

Q: Why has South Vietnam's Army been so easily defeated? Doesn't this indicate a fundamental weakness of our policy? That it was wrong all along? Will you continue to blame Congress for this?

A: It seems to me there are three basic reasons which explain the current situation in South Vietnam and the recent defeats of the South Vietnamese Army.

-- First and foremost, over the past two years the North Vietnamese have greatly augmented their military forces in the South. In direct violation of the Paris Agreement:

- . They infiltrated over 300,000 new troops and brought in all of their strategic reserve divisions.
- . They moved in, after the ceasefire, over 400 tanks, over 250 long range artillery pieces, over 1,000 anti-aircraft weapons, and large numbers of surface-to-air-missiles.

This switched the balance of forces and the balance of fire power in their favor.

-- At the same time our assistance funds to the South Vietnamese were being sharply reduced.

-- The South Vietnamese leadership made some significant errors in carrying out their strategic withdrawal from the northern part of the country, and this withdrawal became hopelessly disorganized by hoards of refugees.

In my estimation, it is a combination of these three factors which have allowed the North Vietnamese to be so successful. My reports indicate that the South Vietnamese soldiers are now fighting hard in the face of the other side's superiority in numbers and fire power.

There is plenty of blame to go around for our policies in Indochina. Everyone has made mistakes. A key point is that if the Congress had voted the funds I requested, there could have been no argument that the current situation was a result of cuts in American assistance, and the North Vietnamese might have been deterred in their offensive.

THIEU RESIGNATION

Q. Did the United States have a role in the resignation of Thieu?

A. The decision to resign was Thieu's in consultation with his advisors and based on the situation in Vietnam. In other words, it was brought about by the Vietnamese themselves in an internal political situation.

THIEU RESIGNATION

FBIS 50 is carrying the report that Vietnamese President Thieu announced his resignation at 12:37 GMT today. Under the Constitution, Vice President Tran Van Huong succeeds to the Presidency. There is some speculation that Huong, who holds no real power or leadership, will resign shortly in favor of President of the Senate Tran Van Lam who would then call for a new Cabinet as a prelude to a "negotiated takeover", i.e. surrender without bloodshed.

Q. What is the President's reaction to the resignation of President Thieu? How will his resignation affect the U.S. position and policy in Vietnam? In light of the current situation, does the President still intend to press for military and economic assistance on the scale he requested?

President Thieu has resigned and
A. ~~At this point we should not and will not speculate about the implications of President Thieu's resignation. Under the Vietnamese Constitution~~

Vice President Tran Van Huong will succeed ^{him} ~~Thieu~~. Without prejudging

At this delicate juncture, it is too early to make any comment or speculation.
~~or attempting to analyze the resignation, some members of the Congress have called for Thieu to step down as a precondition to assistance for~~

~~Vietnam. The President stands by his request for military and~~

economic assistance and urges the Congress to provide aid swiftly

and adequately. An early decision by the Congress may help to stabilize

the political situation and provide an opportunity for a peaceful

resolution of the conflict.

FYI ONLY: In reports that Thieu, in his resignation speech charged the United States with the blame for the current situation in Vietnam and that we were responsible in part for Thieu's resignation, we would have no comment. END FYI.

4/21/75

THIEU RESIGNATION

Q. Did the United States have a role in the resignation of Thieu?

A. The decision to resign was Thieu's in consultation with his advisors and based on the situation in Vietnam. In other words, it was brought about by the Vietnamese themselves in an internal political situation.

DEPARTURE OF AMERICANS FROM VIETNAM

BACKGROUND:

There are now about 3,000 American citizens in South Vietnam and an estimated 200,000 potential evacuees.

Q. Where do we stand on the evacuation of Americans, and what are our goals in terms of reduction of U.S. and Vietnamese personnel?

A. As I have stated, I don't think any useful purpose is served, nor do we intend to engage in a daily accounting of departing Americans or engage in speculation about future departures. Per the President's order, Americans whose services are no longer needed or whose functions have been terminated have been leaving.

SVW
April 22, 1975

PROSPECT OF THIEU VISIT TO THE U. S.

FYI ONLY: In response to questions about the possibility of President Thieu coming to the United States, State Department issued the following guidance yesterday:

Q. Would President Thieu be welcome in the United States if he asked to come here?

A. This questions has not arisen, as I said earlier. I think obviously if such a request were made, we would look upon it with sympathy. But this is a hypothetical situation.

Q. Look upon it with sympathy?

A. Yes.

Q. Why obviously?

A. Well, I think this is a man with whom we have been associated for a great number of years. I would like to just leave it there and not make any further comment now because the question, I emphasize again, has not arisen.

CONGRESSIONAL ACTION

Q. What is the President's reaction to the decisions of the House and Senate on his request for military and economic assistance for Vietnam?

A. The President is glad that the House and Senate have acted on his requests for assistance and hopes that the urgently needed funds and authorities will be approved today.

Q. Does the legislation provide for military assistance to Indochina?

A. I am not going to get into a point by point discussion of legislation which is still in conference.

FYI ONLY: The Senate version of the legislation does contain a provision for some military assistance.

MILITARY ASSISTANCE FOR VIETNAM

Q. Is the President still asking for \$722 million in military assistance for Vietnam? Does he have any belief at all that he will get it?

A. The President's request for military assistance to the Republic of Vietnam is still on the Hill, and he has not withdrawn that request.

Of course, if political arrangements are worked out in South Vietnam under which our aid could or should be terminated, the President would reconsider the request.

We will not try to make any judgment as to whether or not the Congress will provide the money. The President makes his recommendations on the basis of what he feels is right, and not on the basis of what may or may not be supported.

SHELLING AT TON SON HUT

Q. There has been considerable shelling in and around Ton Son Hut air base; is this a prelude to an all-out attack on Saigon?

A. Our reports are both sketchy and uncertain at this point.

In the absence of exact information, it is not appropriate for me to speculate about the reports, but the State Department may be able to give you more information as they receive it from Saigon.

April 28, 1975

INSTALLATION OF GENERAL DUONG VAN MINH
AS PRESIDENT OF SOUTH VIETNAM

Q. What is the President's reaction to recent political developments in Saigon? Is he hopeful that General Minh can work with the Communists to bring about a peaceful political solution to the situation in Vietnam?

A. Our frequently stated position is that we accept whatever constitutionally designated leaders the Vietnamese themselves accept. Secondly, as we have stated, we would welcome a negotiated political settlement to the conflict; whether or not President Minh can be instrumental in bringing about such a settlement is an internal Vietnamese matter we would not wish to comment on.

FYI: General Minh named former Senate President Nguyen Van Huyen as his Vice President, and one Senator Vu Van Mau, Head of a Buddhist-backed political group, as Prime Minister.

PRESIDENT'S AID REQUEST

Q. What is the status of the legislation providing \$327 million in assistance to Vietnam?

A. We are now assessing the situation to determine the needs of the refugees which we understand to be between 50 and 60 thousand. The President hopes the Congress will proceed to pass the Conference Report on Humanitarian Assistance. While he recognizes that the evacuation authorities are no longer needed, the President feels that passage of the bill now before the House would be the most expeditious way to provide urgently needed funding for refugee transportation, care and resettlement.

VIETNAM

Q. Now that the American involvement in Vietnam has finally ended what lessons does the President hope that we have learned, and what course does he intend to follow in the future with relation to our policies and commitments abroad? future with

A. Yesterday the President asked all Americans to avoid recriminations about the past, to look ahead to the many goals we share and to work together on the great tasks that remain to be accomplished. I do not wish to go beyond the President's and Secretary Kissinger's statements of yesterday. I would like to point out that it is apparent now that the North Vietnamese objective was clearly the total collapse of the South Vietnamese government. Their constantly escalating demands in response to repeated offers for negotiation are clear evidence that in the end a negotiated settlement was not possible.

PRG REPRESENTATION IN THE UNITED STATES

On May 7 the Algerians brought us a note stating that they had been requested to take charge of PRG interests in the United States. If

IF ASKED about our reaction to the note and the request say simply we are reviewing the situation.

There are several reasons why we must be very careful on this issue. Acknowledgment of acceptance of the request raises several questions:

Is the PRG a separate government? Acceptance of the Algerians is tantamount to recognition of the PRG.

Is the PRG a legitimate successor government? Are they, in fact, a government at all? There is some ambiguity between what constitutes the democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) and the government in the South, the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG), which is recognized by some governments, though not all, as a temporary government structure.