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## VIETNAMESE REFUGEES

### Question

Mr. President: How have State and local leaders reacted to your call for humanitarian assistance for the Vietnamese refugees?

### Answer

I have received very positive communications from several Governors and Mayors supporting the thrust of my request for humanitarian assistance and stating a position of readiness and willingness on the part of State and local governments to help in this regard.

This has not been a partisan response, Governor Askew of Florida, Governor Pryor of Arkansas, and Governor Aryoshi of Hawaii are some of the Democrats; Governor Evans of Washington is one of the Republicans and Governor Longley of Maine, who is of course, an independent have all stated in eloquent terms their willingness to help these displaced Vietnamese.

Mayor Alioto of San Francisco, Mayor Lugar of Indianapolis and Mayor Fasi of Honolulu have likewise volunteered.

Federal efforts will be fully coordinated with State and local efforts to assure that our efforts are not in vain.

Note: Samples of correspondence attached.

Mayor Alioto (D) , San Francisco  
Governor Longley (I) Maine

JHF - 5/6/75



STATE OF MAINE  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
AUGUSTA, MAINE  
04330

JAMES B. LONGLEY  
GOVERNOR

April 30, 1975

*Received  
Maine*

Gerald E. Ford, President  
United States of America  
White House  
Washington, D. C.

Dear President Ford:

This is a difficult day in Southeast Asia but the great hope and faith in the world, I feel, is still America and men like President Ford. I simply want you to know that I am not writing as Governor of Maine but as an individual citizen of the United States to tell you that my thoughts and prayers were with you in church this morning as they are with you each and every day to help lighten your load and give you and Betty moments of happiness which you so richly deserve.

Once again, there isn't anything you can ask me to do to help you help this country that I wouldn't try to do.

Very truly yours,

*Jim Longley*  
James B. Longley

JBL:bh



STATE OF MAINE  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
AUGUSTA, MAINE  
04830

JAMES B. LONGLEY  
GOVERNOR

April 30, 1975

*Received  
7/1/75*

Gerald E. Ford, President  
United States of America  
White House  
Washington, D. C.

Dear President Ford:

The State of Maine wants to do whatever it can with summer camp availability to serve as a temporary bed and board situation for any displaced Vietnamese children. As Governor of the State I pledge the resources of the state to help these young orphans.

Very truly yours,

*Jim Longley*  
James B. Longley

JBL:bh

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PHS THE HONORABLE GERALD R FORD

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON DC

MY DEAR MR. PRESIDENT, WHILE IN EUROPE LAST WEEK, I READ  
WITH DISHAY SOME OF THE AMERICAN OBJECTIONS TO THE  
RESETTLEMENT OF THE VIETNAMESE REFUGEES IN THE UNITED STATES.  
I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT YOUR HUMANITARIAN POLICY REPRESENTS  
THE BEST IN OUR CONSTITUTIONAL TRADITION AND WE SUPPORT IT  
VERY STRONGLY. SAN FRANCISCO IS WILLING TO DEMONSTRATE ITS  
SUPPORT BY TAKING AN ACTIVE ROLE IN IMPLEMENTING YOUR  
POLICY. HISTORICALLY WE HAVE HAD THE LONGEST EXPERIENCE

WITH ASIANS AND A SUBSTANTIAL ELEMENT OF THIS COMMUNITY IS,  
IN FACT, A MOSAIC OF MANY ASIAN NATIONALITIES. WE BELIEVE  
THAT THE RESETTLEMENT OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES AS GROUPS IS  
THE MOST DESIRABLE APPROACH. IT WILL ALLOW THEM TO RETAIN  
THEIR CULTURE AND CUSTOMS WITHIN A FRAMEWORK OF LOYALTY TO  
THE UNITED STATES, AS THEY DEAL WITH THE PROBLEMS OF ENTERING  
THE MAINSTREAM OF AMERICAN LIFE. WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT  
THERE ARE FEDERAL PROPERTIES AVAILABLE IN THE AREA WHICH  
MIGHT BE UTILIZED ON AN INTERIM BASIS FOR THIS PURPOSE,  
IN SAN FRANCISCO THE MAYOR'S OFFICE WILL BE PLEASED TO TAKE  
THE LEAD IN DISCUSSING THIS MATTER WITH WHOMEVER YOU  
DESIGNATE. KIN??/XXXXXX KINDEST REGARDS AND ALL BEST WISHES

JOSEPH L ALIOTO MAYOR OF SAN FRANCISCO

NNNN

AMERICANS IN VIETNAM

Q. Are there not still Americans being held prisoner in Vietnam? What are we doing now to get them released?

A. We know that there are eight Americans who were captured at Ban Me Thuot in early March and are being held prisoner. We *have made frequent efforts* ~~are continuing efforts~~ to obtain their release. We are also aware of private efforts being carried out by missionary organizations for whom some of these people worked. A number of Congressmen have written to representatives of the other side in Paris seeking information on these people. To date, we have received no response to our approaches and we are not aware of any responses to these other efforts.

We, of course, are continuing our efforts to account for our MIA's and recovering the remains of those men we know to have died. We are checking into the possibility of other U.S. citizens who may be unaccounted for and who may be held against their will.

Q. First, do our efforts involve contacts with the PRG? Second, can you tell us exactly who is missing and under what circumstances?

A. For detailed replies to questions on who is missing, you should go to the Department of State. As to diplomatic contacts, you are

aware, of course, that these cannot be discussed, especially  
in this delicate situation where lives are at stake.

ALLEGED BOMBING RAIDS  
DURING SAIGON EVACUATION

Q. The Press has just learned this last weekend that American airplanes conducted massive bombing raids in South Vietnam in connection with the evacuation of American personnel from there. Why did we do that? Wasn't it illegal?

A. I can state categorically that the American forces did not conduct massive air raids in South Vietnam in connection with the evacuation effort. During the evacuation, there was one tactical air strike (two F-4's) against an anti-aircraft position, and one helicopter returned gunfire on an enemy gun position that was firing on it. These reactions were necessary to ensure the safety of American lives and the success of the evacuation. They obviously did not constitute massive air strikes suggested in newspaper reports.

5/9/75



MAY 9, 1975

Q Did Ambassador Dobrynin see the President this morning?

A Yes, he delivered the VE Day Message to the President.

Q Why wasn't it announced?

A It came up at the last minute and he just tagged on to the end of Kissinger's and Scowcroft's regular meeting.

Q Were any other subjects discussed?

A I don't know, I was not in the meeting.

Q Will we answer the message?

A Yes.

Q Will the text be available of both messages?

A I don't know. I will have to check on that.

BACKGROUND: The reason you don't know at this time is because they have to check with the Soviet Embassy before releasing any texts. They usually object, even on ceremonial type messages.

BREZHNEV COMMENTS ON VIETNAM

Q. In view of General Secretary Brezhnev's comments on Vietnam, do you see any cooling or reassessment of detente? Will events in Indochina affect future relations with the Soviet Union?

A. The President mentioned in his news conference and on previous occasions that he was looking forward to a meeting with Secretary Brezhnev and would approach such a meeting with an aim to achieving results. The President stated April 10 that he has no illusions about the process of detente, partly because we are dealing with a nation that reflects different principles and is our competitor in many parts of the globe. But as you are aware, from the outset of his Administration, the President has stressed his commitment to working for improved relations with the Soviet Union in the interests of world peace. He feels such an improved relationship is in our real national interest.

PHU QUOC

These are points to be made in response to questions about a possible evacuation of some 40,000 Vietnamese from Phu Quoc Island:

- 1.) Phu Quoc: is part of Vietnamese territory. An evacuation of Vietnamese on the island would constitute an invasion of Vietnam.
- 2). Our evacuation of Americans and Vietnamese has been carried out. We picked up, in addition, thousands of Vietnamese who sailed out to U.S. ships (or flew out of Vietnam). We are now making every effort to resettle these refugees in the U.S. The President's directives along these lines are well known.
- 3). Even if such an operation were possible, which it is not, the purpose of the operation would not be to rescue Americans, but rather Vietnamese, for which a U.S. military engagement is prohibited by law.

July 16, 1975

SOUTH VIETNAM U. N. APPLICATION

Q. What is the U. S. Government's position on South Vietnam's application for UN membership?

A. We are aware of South Vietnam's application for UN membership, but we believe it is premature to comment on it at this time.

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*Have  
State changed  
guidance - - - - -*  
*State will  
simply no comment  
the above question. I  
still think the above  
answer suffices -  
M.*

August 6, 1975

VIETNAM AND MIA's

Background:

Yesterday the two Vietnamese observers to the UN held a press conference in New York. They were asked whether Vietnam was ready to discuss an accounting of MIA's with the United States. The North Vietnamese representative, Nguyen Van Luu indicated that it was prepared to do so. He also made references to the Vietnamese applications for UN membership. It would appear that the Vietnamese are trying to build up support for a favorable vote to admit the Vietnams by extending hope for an accounting of MIA's.

\* \* \*

- Q. What is the Administration's reaction to the Vietnamese' apparent willingness to discuss an accounting of our MIAs?
- A. The Communist side has a clear obligation to provide us with all the information it has on our missing and to permit the remains of identified dead Americans to be repatriated to the U. S. This obligation stems not only from the Paris Agreement, but also from the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and from basic percepts of international law.
- Q. What if they tied such an accounting with a vote to support their admittance into the UN?
- A. These obligations are unconditional.

August 12, 1975

U.S. VETO ON ADMISSION OF TWO VIETNAMS FOR U.N. MEMBERSHIP

- Q. Yesterday, the U.S. vetoed U.N. Membership for the two Vietnams. Under what circumstances would we support membership for them? Is there a possibility that our policy -- or circumstances -- would be changed or reversed when the General Assembly session opens in September?
- A. As we have said before, we are prepared to support the membership of all three of these states; however, we will not be a party to attempt to admit one state while excluding another. To do otherwise would be in direct violation of the principal of universality upon which the U.N. was founded. The United States will continue to support the candidacy of South Korea and will vote against any proposal that does not include them.

PRESIDENTIAL TRAVEL PLANS

- Q. The New York Times quoted Administration sources states that the President will not travel to India this year in part because of his tight schedule and also because of the political situation there. Is it true that the President has delayed indefinitely his plans for a visit to India?
- A. As you know, a Presidential visit to India has been agreed to in principal; however, no date has been set.  
(FYI cleared by NEA and H. A. Kissinger)
- Q. Are you actively discussing possible dates with the Indians for such a visit?
- A. No, not at this time.



September 3, 1975

U. S. - VIETNAM RELATIONS

Q. The Baltimore Sun, (Edward Wu, Hong Kong), reports today that North Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong told a rally in Hanoi that North Vietnam is ready to normalize relations with the United States and looks forward to a favorable U. S. response. Can you comment on the Premier's remarks? Are we prepared to recognize Vietnam now?

A. I have seen the report you mention. Our position has not changed. Our attitude toward Vietnam will depend on its attitude toward its neighbors and its behavior toward us. We would call to your attention the continuing humanitarian obligation of Vietnam to account for our MIA's.

October 17, 1975

VIETNAMESE REFUGEES ON GUAM

Q. Both North and South Vietnam have attacked the President's decision to let the Vietnamese refugees on Guam go back to South Vietnam on the ship Thuong Tin. They claimed this operation is a U. S. plot and a deliberate violation of Vietnam's sovereignty. How do you react to that?

NOTE: We note from North Vietnamese comment that the government is particularly sensitive on this issue. If at all possible, duck the questions, referring them to Julia V. Taft at the Task Force: PH: 254-3040. Comments emanating from the White House will simply exacerbate the situation and could prompt the Vietnamese to refuse to receive the ship. If you must respond at all the following general answer is suggested:

A. These refugees sent the President a signed petition asking that we release the ship to them so they could rejoin their families in Vietnam. The refugees agreed to take full responsibility for the voyage and we acceded to their request. The allegations that we forced them to leave are simply not true.

Our intent in assisting the refugees' departure was to help unite them with their families.

FYI: The Thuong Tin departed Guam shortly after midnight (EDT) October 16 with 1,546 refugees on board. Sailing time to Vietnam is about 12 days.

October 28, 1975

REPATRIATION SHIP: UPDATE

Saigon, Oct. 27 (AFP) -- The ship bringing home 1,500 South Vietnamese refugees from the American island of Guam has entered Vietnamese territorial waters, an authoritative source disclosed here today.

The Thuong Tin I started homw the night of October 15, despite a complaint by the South Vietnamese government that repatriating the refugees was an "irresponsible maneuver" by the United States.

The Government has now announced that it will let the refugees return "this time," but the cases of Vietnamese abroad wishing to come home must be examined case by case, officials have insisted.

Those aboard the Thuong Tin I (Commercial Credit I) apparently intended to disembark in Saigon, but it was rumored here that the ship might be taken to an island offshore, either in the South China Sea or Gulf of Thailand.

Those who left Guam said they had been frightened into fleeing by unfounded predictions that a bloodbath would take place when revolutionary forces captured Saigon.

NOTE: If you are asked any questions about the South Vietnamese decision to accept the Thuong Tin I, refer to the Interagency Task Force: Julia Taft, 254-3040. We should refrain from making any comment about the ship, since the repatriates have yet to disembark.

MIA'S AND U. S. POLICY TOWARD VIETNAM

Q. For the past few days, news broadcasts (ABC) and articles or editorials (Washington Post) have covered our policy toward Vietnam and the fate of our MIA's. What is the U. S. policy now regarding the MIA's from the Vietnam war?


A. We believe that Vietnam has a ~~unilateral~~ obligation based on the Geneva accords and the Paris Agreement to provide a full accounting of all of our MIA's. We will continue to make all necessary efforts to achieve as full an accounting of our missing men as possible.

Q. What is our attitude toward Vietnam at this time?

A. Our relations with Vietnam have been and will be based on Vietnam's own attitude toward us and toward its neighbors.

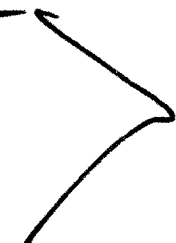
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TIES WITH HANOI LIKELY SOON?

Q. Henry Trewitt speculates today that relations between the U.S. and Hanoi may be slowly improving and cites specific overtures by the Vietnamese as indicators of that government's desire to facilitate the improvement. Are these Vietnamese gestures an indication that Hanoi wants an improvement in relations, and if so, will we reciprocate in kind?

A. I would refer you to the President's Pacific Doctrine of December 7 on the issue of relations between the U.S. and the Vietnamese. In that speech he remarked:

"In Indochina, the healing effects of time are required.

Our policies toward the new regimes of the Peninsula

will be determined by their conduct toward us. We

are prepared to reciprocate gestures of good will --

particularly the return of remains of Americans

killed or missing in action or information about them.

If they exhibit restraint toward their neighbors

and constructive approaches to international problems

we will look to the future rather than to the past."

U.S. - VIETNAMESE TALKS

If asked about the U.S. position on talks with North Vietnam, you may want to refer to Secretary Kissinger's remarks at the State Department March 26.

Q. Can you tell us anything about the letter to Hanoi? Can you put that in some perspective for us? Can you, Mr. Secretary, tell us about the message to Hanoi with a view toward normalizing relations?

A. I stated in November and the President in December that we were in principle prepared to normalize our relations with Hanoi. We have now indicated this to Hanoi and asked them what issues they wanted to discuss in connection with that, and now we will await their reply. Of course, for us, one of the key problems is that of the missing in action, and accounting for them. And that will be one of our principle concerns together with restrained behavior in Southeast Asia

Q. Mr. Secretary, what about Hanoi's publicized position about their feelings that the U.S. should contribute to reconstruction aid to the North?

A. Of course they are free to raise any issue that they wish, and I don't want to prejudge their raising any issue, but I would not hold out much prospect for that.



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TRADE RESTRICTIONS APPLICABLE TO  
THE SOVIET UNION AND CHINA

Q. Yesterday on 'Face the Nation' former Defense Secretary Schlesinger said that U. S. officials have discussed giving military assistance to the PRC. Aren't there restrictions that apply to trade with, and aid for, Communist countries, especially where military equipment is concerned?

A. Although there have been casual discussions since 1971 on how our trade relationship with the PRC might evolve, these discussions did not focus on specific military assistance, nor did they ever reach the stage of formalized proposals.

As for our trade restrictions with the PRC, they are roughly the same as those that apply to the Soviet Union. We do not have MFN with either country, and <sup>E Euro, China, USSR,</sup> the COCOM restrictions on military-related equipment apply equally to the Soviet Union and China. Restrictions on the two countries are virtually the same.

UN STUDY ON AID TO VIETNAM

Qs and As for State Department Briefing at noon, June 3, 1976  
(As approved by Mr. Habib, EA)

Q: Does the Department have any comment on the UN report recommending large scale aid for Vietnam?

A: We have only just received the report and have no comment on it.

Q: Do we plan to provide any of the aid recommended?

A: Our policy on reconstruction aid to Vietnam has been stated clearly on several occasions. Moreover, Congress has passed legislation expressly prohibiting US aid to the Indochina countries.

Q: Well, what about UN agencies which already have or may establish special programs of aid to Indochina? What is the United States position on such programs?

A: The United States does not plan to participate in any such programs.

FYI: The above is State Department guidance for use today. We should follow the same line referring more questions to them.

*detailed*

July 22, 1976

U.S. WEAPONS CAPTURED IN VIETNAM

Weapons Captured In Vietnam: George Vest (State-PM) has been approached by the Washington Star for comment on our policy on weapons that were captured in Vietnam. We have not made the policy public, but have provided guidance, from State, to each embassy. In short, the U.S. will not condone the purchase of arms captured in Vietnam to other nations, and will not permit U.S. citizens to become involved in any such arms transactions.

Q: What is the U.S. policy regarding sale of arms captured in Southeast Asia by the North Vietnamese?

A: It is our policy to generally disfavor any purchase of these captured arms from communist regimes and we especially desire to keep these weapons out of the hands of terrorists. We strongly discourage any involvement in such arms transfers by U.S. citizens or firms, and will use existing statutory and regulatory controls in this regard.

VIETNAM TO RELEASE AMERICANS

Q: There are reports that Senators Kennedy, McGovern, and Representative Montgomery have received cables from the Vietnamese government stating it will release 29 American citizens from Saigon on August 1. What is your reaction to this action?

A: We would certainly welcome Hanoi's releasing these American citizens. We have previously expressed concern over their fate and we will be pleased if Vietnamese government finally allows them to depart.

Q: What actions will the Administration take to reciprocate Hanoi's release of these people?

A: I think that any discussion of that matter is premature.

Q: Does this release have any direct relationship to the exchange of notes we have had with Vietnam?

A: I am now aware that this does.

Q: What did the Administration do to achieve this release?

A: We have made Vietnam aware directly and through contacts with various international organizations and agencies the importance we put on the release of American citizens held in Vietnam and a full accounting of our MIA's.

Q: Are there any American officials in this group?

A: No. They are all private American citizens.

August 2, 1976

AMERICANS RELEASED FROM VIETNAM

Q: What is the department's reaction to the return of American citizens and their dependents from Saigon to Bangkok?

A: We welcome the departure of these Americans from Vietnam. We also want to express our appreciation for the efforts of the House Select Committee on missing persons in southeast Asia, the United Nations high commissioner for refugees, The Red Cross, and others who have contributed to this effort.

Q: Does this leave any American citizens in Vietnam?

A: We understand that there may still be some Americans in Vietnam. We hope that any Americans remaining in will also be allowed to depart soon.

Q: Do you interpret this as being a gesture of goodwill on the part of the Vietnamese perhaps leading to a start of the normalization process.

A: I wouldn't want to speculate on what this might mean.

Q: In the past, you have acknowledged that you have been carrying on a continuing exchange with the Vietnamese. Does this return of Americans result from those contacts?

A: No.

Q: If not, how has the USG sought the release of these Americans?

A: We have had active and continuing contacts on the welfare and departure of Americans in Vietnam with various international organizations and others.

Q: Does the US plan to make a reciprocal gesture toward Vietnam?

~~I am not in a position to comment on that.~~  
A: ~~I could not speculate on that either at this point.~~

*I am not in a position to comment on that*



COMMENT ON NORTH VIETNAMESE MIA RELEASE

Q. Do you have any comment on Hanoi's release of 12 MIA names?

Guidance:

We said yesterday that while we are encouraged by this step, we continue to insist upon a full accounting of all U. S. servicemen lost in Southeast Asia.

Q. Will this step effect U. S. relations with Hanoi, and particularly Vietnam's admission to the United Nations?

Guidance:

The President has said on a number of occasions that U. S. relations with Vietnam will depend upon a full accounting of all U. S. servicemen lost in Southeast Asia.

The U. S. position on Vietnam's admission to the United Nations will be made known at the appropriate time.

FYI:

We are seeking information on a total of 2,505 servicemen lost in Southeast Asia. Of this total, 795 are listed as MIA and 1,710 as killed, but no body recovered.

FURTHER FYI:

Hanoi merely released 12 names. We do not know if they have or plan to turn over any remains of these 12 servicemen.

U. S. VETO OF VIETNAM IN UN?

Q. Ambassador Scranton told the press yesterday that the U. S. could not approve UN membership for a nation defied the UN charters provisions humanitarianism by its failure to provide a full accounting for our MIA's. Does this mean the U. S. will definitely veto UN membership for Vietnam?

A. As I have said on a number of occasions, the United States will makes its position known at the appropriate time.

FYI:

We would have "no comment" to Hanoi's labeling as "arrogant" our response to its release of 12 MIA names last weekend.

US VETO OF UN MEMBERSHIP FOR HANOI

Q: In his meeting with Ambassador Scranton today, did the President instruct the Ambassador to veto UN membership for Vietnam?

A: In the meeting this morning with Ambassador Scranton, the President reiterated his policy, which Secretary Kissinger stated on Saturday, that the United States would not support the admission of Vietnam to the UN until Vietnam had fulfilled its obligation of a full accounting for U.S. servicemen missing in Southeast Asia.

FYI Only:

We have indications this morning that Hanoi plans to release the recent exchange of correspondence between the United States and Vietnam looking towards discussions on improving U.S./Vietnamese relations.

Heuser

VIETNAMESE RELEASE OF EXCHANGES WITH U.S.

Q: Does the White House have any comment on Vietnam's release of the recent exchange of communications between the State Department and Hanoi?

A: The State Department has responded to questions on this matter and I would prefer they continue to address this subject.

FYI: State has played this issue in a low key way pointing out that we are indeed prepared to meet with Vietnam to discuss an accounting of the MIAs and steps towards improving our relations consistent with President Ford's policy of looking toward the future in our relations with that country once they have met their obligation to provide a full accounting of our MIAs.

U.S. VETO OF HANOI IN UNITED NATIONS

Q: Did the United States arrange with France to have the vote postponed until after the U.S. election? If you made this arrangement, why did you go through the charade of announcing how the United States would vote on Vietnam's membership application? How will you vote the next time it comes up?

A: There was no United States participation whatsoever in the negotiations leading to the postponement of the vote on Vietnam's membership in the United Nations.

*Row: Don't get dragged into HAKIS conversations with the French, etc. f09*

FYI: We do not know when the vote will be rescheduled. Our overall position with regard to Vietnam remains as the President, Secretary Kissinger and Ambassador Scranton have stated it and we have nothing to add at this time nor will we speculate about the future.

Further FYI: The International Monetary Fund is scheduled to vote today on replacing South Vietnam with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (Hanoi) in the Fund's membership. The United States will vote no on this membership question. but we do not have a veto and Vietnam's membership is expected to be approved.

Credit for Ending the War

Q. Mr. President, do you take credit for ending the Viet Nam war, as one of your T.V. commercials implies? (Questions in Nessen briefing)

A. Of course, the hostilities of Viet Nam, and the American military involvement there, ended during my Administration; that's an historic fact.

What I would like to take credit for is this:

1. Assuring both our allies and adversaries that the end of the war in Viet Nam meant no lessening of American commitment to stand by its friends and resist communist aggression wherever it might occur.

2. Healing the deep divisions which had occurred in America because of the Viet Nam war. There has been no outburst of public recriminations; there have been no demonstrations; I have offered a plan of gaining re-entry into society for those young men who avoided the draft or deserted their military units. I am proud that I have presided over the orderly end to this divisive chapter in American history.

Nessen  
10/19/76



November 5, 1976

TALKS WITH THE VIETNAMESE

Will the outcome of the election have any impact on the pending talks with the Vietnamese in Paris? When will they begin?

We intend to proceed with discussions with the Vietnamese as originally contemplated. Preparations for these talks, which will begin in Paris in the near future, are currently under way and I can give you no further details at this time. We regard the agreement to begin the talks, which we have been in the process of arranging for some months, as a positive development which we hope will lead to progress in obtaining an accounting of American MIAs.

The Vietnamese are fully aware of the President's position that normalization of our relations with Vietnam will not be possible until we are satisfied on the question of our MIAs.

[FYI: The talks will begin on November 12; however this is not releaseable to the press.]

John Carlson

November 10, 1976

This was LDX to Scowcroft, Ron - you. However,  
if you didn't get it, here it is again.

VIETNAM'S MEMBERSHIP IN THE U. N.

Q: The United Nations Security Council will again be considering Vietnam's application for membership. Will the United States continue to veto any recommendation that Vietnam be granted UN membership?

A: The United States' policy towards Vietnam's membership in the United Nations has not changed. That is, we would not support the admission of Vietnam to the UN until Vietnam has fulfilled its obligation to provide a full accounting of U. S. service-men missing in Southeast Asia. As you are aware, we will be holding bilateral discussions with the Vietnamese in Paris in the near future. We regard these talks as a potentially positive development which we hope will lead to progress in obtaining such an accounting of American MIAs.

U. S. VETO OF VIETNAM'S U. N. MEMBERSHIP

Q. Why did the United States again veto Vietnam's application for membership in the United Nations yesterday?

A. The United States position towards Vietnam's membership in the United Nations was clear from the outset of the most recent effort to obtain membership. That is, we would not support the admission of Vietnam until it has fulfilled its obligation to provide a full accounting of U. S. servicemen missing in Southeast Asia. Ambassador Scranton made this clear in his statement in conjunction with the vote yesterday. However, he also indicated the United States would be ready to reconsider its position in the event the Vietnamese provide the information we seek.

Q. Is it true that some members of the USUN Delegation, and perhaps others in the Administration, were opposed to the United States' veto?

A. The Administration's position is clear from the vote we cast and Ambassador Scranton's statements in conjunction with it. I will not comment on internal Administration discussions or positions.

Q. Was there any progress made in the bilateral discussions with the Vietnamese in Paris last week on the MIA issue?

A. I understand that at the conclusion of the meetings both sides agreed that they would study the positions taken at the meeting and be back in touch with each other.

Q. Is another meeting scheduled?

A. Not that I am aware of.

Q. Is there any truth to reports that some 250 American MIAs are known to be in Saigon, some of whom do not want to return home?

A. We have no evidence to substantiate such reports.