

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAY 1, 1975

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

TEXT OF A LETTER TO THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

April 30, 1975

Dear Mr. Speaker:

In view of the urgent need for funds to pay for humanitarian assistance and transportation of refugees from South Vietnam, I request that the House of Representatives act quickly to approve the Conference Report on H.R. 6096, the Vietnam Humanitarian Assistance and Evacuation Act of 1975. In making this request, I am aware that sections 4 through 9 of H.R. 6096 have been overtaken by events and have no further utility. Nevertheless, the enactment of the bill as recommended by the Conference Report is the most expeditious method of obtaining funds which are now desperately needed for the care and transportation of homeless refugees.

As I stated yesterday, the evacuation has been completed. The Congress may be assured that I do not intend to send the armed forces of the United States back into Vietnamese territory.

Approximately 70,000 evacuees are now located on various safe haven islands, on U.S. Navy vessels and on civilian vessels. These individuals are being cared for by agencies of the United States Government while being processed through a system established to relocate them in the United States and in other countries.

Although the specific cost of activities related to the evacuation cannot be fixed at this point, it is estimated that direct U.S. expenditures to care for and process these evacuees, and contributions to international organizations and private voluntary agencies to assist in this effort, will exceed \$400,000,000. Available funds already appropriated to provide aid to Vietnam will be reprogrammed and utilized to the maximum extent possible. But the additional authority of \$327,000,000 will be required to fully meet immediate needs.

The authority of this legislation, followed by appropriations as soon as possible, is necessary to continue this operation, to integrate the evacuees into the United States and other countries and to permit consideration of further humanitarian assistance which may be consistent with the provisions of H.R. 6096 and American policy objectives.

I urge the immediate enactment of H.R. 6096.

Sincerely,

GERALD R. FORD

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