

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

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WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS:

The President

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State  
and Assistant to the President for National  
Security Affairs

James R. Schlesinger, Secretary of Defense  
Donald Rumsfeld

John O. Marsh

Lt. General Brent Scowcroft, Deputy  
Assistant to the President for National  
Security Affairs

Max L. Friedersdorf

DATE & TIME:

Thursday - April 17, 1975  
4:30 p.m.

PLACE:

The Cabinet Room  
The White House

SUBJECT:

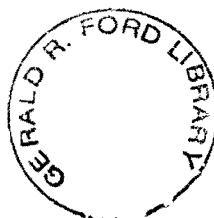
Vietnam Evacuation Transcript

Kissinger: The consensus of the WSAG, Mr. President, was that U.S. personnel would be evacuated at a rapid rate limited only by the number of empty seats and certain assets Jim has. With respect to Vietnamese civilians, we will meet again on Saturday. The plans are not advanced far enough now.

Schlesinger: It is an intractable situation. Probably we will not get a significant amount. The exit place would be Vung Tau.

Kissinger: The only problem is getting people through. If you announce that anyone wanting to evacuate should go to Vung Tau, you will have a Danang. Unless we can identify how to notify the people and get them to the embarkation point -- that is the problem. But if we go to evacuation of only Americans, we may trigger a situation which would prevent getting the Americans out.

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The President: Weyand mentioned sending in U.S. forces.

Schlesinger: There are two options. One is to insert U.S. forces to secure Tan Son Nhut. The other option would be to use ARVN Marines and airborne to guard the road to Vung Tau, with a promise to get them out.

The President: Where do we stand on the total of Americans?

Schlesinger: 4,100. It went up by 300 by Americans coming in off the street.

The President: You will have a recommendation for me by Saturday evening.

Schlesinger: The number of dependents is increasing rapidly through rapid marriages. So the number of U.S. dependents keeps climbing.

The President: I still feel we can't talk publicly about the evacuation. Burton wanted to see me with a petition to get the Americans out within 48 hours.

Friedersdorf: He gave it to me this afternoon.

The President: They are positioning themselves, but it doesn't serve our purpose to trigger panic.

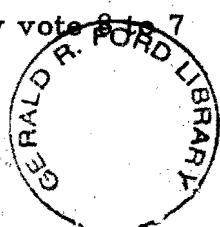
Rumsfeld: Wouldn't a resolution from Congress or something do the same thing? Shouldn't we have the options by tomorrow?

Schlesinger: The options are for in extremis. We are positioning our forces and it will take three days. What we are talking about now is utilizing the available lift. There is one 707, for example, which we can use to shuttle to Clark.

Kissinger: I agree. The Saturday situations we will discuss can't arise over the weekend.

Rumsfeld: The Congressmen are trying to position themselves and to do that they must go public.

Marsh: The Senate Armed Services Committee will probably vote 8 to 7 for \$401 million.



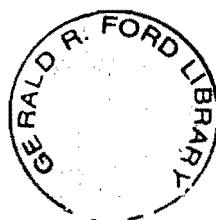
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Rumsfeld: How do we signal we don't want a vote and still get the legal authority to evacuate them? Nessen and Max will have to be very careful about how we position ourselves on this.

[The meeting ended.]



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✓ Presidential Meeting  
on V.A. Escalation  
(Partial transcript) 17 Apr 75

K The WSA's concern was that US tanks should be removed at a rapid rate permitted by an empty seat & certain actions Jim has. W/ respect to UN civilians, we will meet again Saturday. Plans are not determined far enough now.

Sabu It is an inhabitable set. Plot we will not get a big effect. The exit place would be Kunming. Unless

K The only problem is getting people there. If you announce that anyone wanting to leave should go to U.T. upon work under Demos. Unless we can identify how to <sup>work</sup> ~~protect~~ people & get them to understand this is a p.r. But if we go to live of only US, we may trigger a set which would prevent getting them out.

P We may need overthrust US forces.

Sabu There 2 options. Insert US forces to secure T.S.N. Other option would be to use the ARVN Marines & able to guard road to U.T. w/a promise to get them out.

P What do we stand on total US.

Sabu 4100. Went up by two day Chos during the off-shoot.

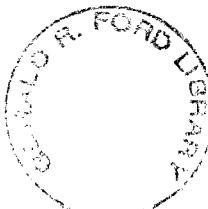
P You will have reason for me by Saturday pm.

Sabu # of choppers increasing rapidly thru rapid movements.  
So # of US choppers keep climbing.

P I still feel we can't talk feasibility about down-Benton wanted to see me w/a pattern to get US out w/in 48 hrs.

Mary He gave it to me this afternoon.

P They are positioning themselves, but it doesn't seem



{ Start & Identify my main category 4) - Talk w/ them  
Should Penn Gm go to charity flight

707 standing by - tell him that,  
we will take a negative vote & withdraw  
our proposal to trigger power.

Don Wouldn't a resolution from Cory do something  
else & same thing. Shouldn't we have options  
by tomorrow

Sabris The options are in extenso. We are partitioning  
on st faces & will take 3 days. What we talking  
about now is utilizing available left, there  
is one 707, for example which we can use  
to switch to Clark

K 3 days. The Saturday activities are still choices  
can't arise over & over and

Don Congressmen are trying to position themselves  
and to do that they must go public.

Murphy SASC will pass vote 8-2 for 401 mid

Don How do we trigger this is we don't want a vote  
and still get legal authority to execute them. Rosen  
and I work will have to be very careful about how  
we position ourselves on this.