

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

~~SECRET~~

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.

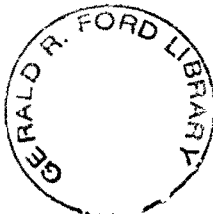
DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5

NSC Memo, 11/24/98, State Dept. Guidelines

By Lck, NARA, Date 11/24/00

~~SECRET~~



CLASSIFIED BY HENRY A. KISSINGER  
EXEMPT FROM GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION  
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652  
EXEMPTION CATEGORY 5 (b) (3)  
AUTOMATICALLY DECLASSIFIED ON Imp. to Det.

SECRET

- 2 -

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?

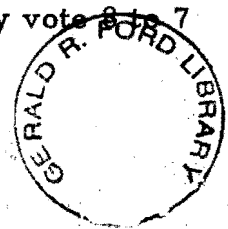
Schlesinger: The options are for in extremis. We are positioning our forces and it will take three days. What we are talking about now is utilizing the available lift. There is one 707, for example, which we can use to shuttle to Clark.

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.

SECRET



SECRET

- 3 -

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.]



SECRET

Presidential Meeting  
on VLS Evacuation  
(Partial transcript) 17 Apr 75

K The USAF consensus was that US assets should be evacuated  
at a rapid rate permitted by our empty seats &  
entire assets given has. W/ report to VN civilians,  
we will meet again Saturday. Plans are not  
advanced far enough now.

Schro How intractable set. Point we will not get a  
sig at cost. The exit place would be Vietnam

K The only problem is getting people there. If you  
announce that anyone wanting to leave should  
go to U.T. you will have a bonanza. Unless  
we can identify how to ~~pick~~<sup>work</sup> a people & get  
them to evacuation is a job. But if we  
go to look of only US, we may trigger a  
set which would prevent getting Amos out.

P Way and mentioned US forces.

Schro There 2 options. Insert US forces to secure  
T.S.N. Other option would be to use ~~the~~<sup>ARVN</sup>  
Marines & other to guard road to U.T. w/a  
promise to get them out.

P What do we stand on total US.

Schro 4100. Went up by two by Amos coming in off street.

P You will have recon for me by Saturday pm.

Schro # of dep'ts increasing rapidly thru rapid evacuations.  
So # of US dep'ts keep climbing

P I still feel we can't talk publicly about evacuation  
wanted to see me w/a petition to get US out w/in  
48 hrs.

May He gave it to me this afternoon.

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



(Start identifying under category 4) - Talk us / them  
Should Penn Gov go to daily flight  
707 standing by - tell him that,  
- we will delay a negative vote over weekend  
our purpose to trigger panic.

Don Wouldn't a resolution from Cong or something  
do a same thing. Shouldn't we have options  
by tomorrow

Schles The options are in extremes. We are partitioning  
our ~~at~~ faces & will take 3 days. What are talking  
about now is utilizing available left, there  
is one 207, for example which we can use  
to shut to Clark

K Lagas. The Saturday restrictions we will discuss  
can't ~~also~~ arise over weekend.

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

Warrth. SASC will pass vote 8-7 for \$40 mil

Don How do we justify that we don't want a vote  
and still get legal authority to reauthorize them. Wasser  
and ~~they~~ will have to be very careful about how  
we position ourselves on this.

