

THE VIETNAM-CAMBODIA EMERGENCY, 1975
Part III—Vietnam Evacuation: Testimony of Ambassador
Graham A. Martin

COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

THOMAS H. MORROW BUILDING, WASHINGTON, D.C.

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SPECIAL SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATIONS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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These hearings were interrupted by events and soon the Congress was dealing with emergency and reconstruction issues.

Since the events of last spring, the administration has been working for the evacuation of as many as possible of the last days of the former Vietnam and Cambodia regimes and on U.S. evacuees from those countries.

Since June 1975, we have visited the Department of State four times trying to arrange for evacuees from the former regimes and the evacuation of Vietnam and Cambodia.

We are happy to help you in any way we can in this inquiry and hope you will close to closing out our complete interest in it. We are particularly interested in determining the scope of U.S. government activities leading up to the evacuation and any questions you might have concerning it and those involved.

Our witness today is Graham Martin, former U.S. Ambassador to the former state of South Vietnam.

Mr. Ambassador, we welcome you back before the committee.

I believe that the last time you appeared before a subcommittee of this committee was on July 26, 1974, when the situation in Vietnam was very difficult.

Perhaps you would like to make a few brief comments on the events of last spring before we start with questions from members.

You may proceed.

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VIETNAM EVACUATION: TESTIMONY OF AMBASSADOR GRAHAM A. MARTIN

TUESDAY, JANUARY 27, 1976

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SPECIAL SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATIONS
OF THE COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
Washington, D.C.

The special subcommittee met at 2:05 p.m., in room 2200, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Lee H. Hamilton (chairman of the special subcommittee) presiding.

BACKGROUND OF THE HEARINGS

Mr. HAMILTON. The meeting of the subcommittee will come to order. In early 1975, the chairman of the Committee on International Relations mandated the Special Subcommittee on Investigations to follow closely developments in Indochina.

The subcommittee held a series of four hearings in March and April dealing with the deteriorating political and military situations of the Lon Nol and Thieu governments in Vietnam and Cambodia and with 11th hour requests for additional economic and military aid.

These sessions were overtaken by events and soon the Congress was dealing with evacuation and resettlement issues.

Since the events of last spring, the subcommittee has been waiting for the opportunity to hold an inquiry on the final days of the former Vietnam and Cambodia regimes and on U.S. evacuations from those countries.

Since June 1975, we have written the Department of State four times trying to arrange for testimony from the senior American representatives who oversaw the last days of the Lon Nol and Thieu governments and the evacuations of Vietnam and Cambodia.

We are happy finally to be able to conduct this inquiry and hopefully come closer to closing out our committee investigation. Many judgments were involved in determining the course of U.S. policy during the months leading up to the evacuations and many questions remain about those evacuations and those judgments.

Our witness today is Graham Martin, former U.S. Ambassador to the former state of South Vietnam.

Mr. Ambassador, we welcome you back before the committee.

I believe that the last time you appeared before a subcommittee of this committee was on July 31, 1974, when the situation in Vietnam was very different.

Perhaps you would like to make a few brief remarks on the events of last spring before we start with questions from members.

You may proceed.

STATEMENT OF HON. GRAHAM A. MARTIN, U.S. AMBASSADOR TO
THE FORMER REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

Ambassador MARTIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

You are quite right, it was almost a year and a half ago that I had the pleasure of appearing before this committee.

I attempted then to lay before you in complete candor, the current realities of the situation as it actually existed in Vietnam.

Recently, I again read the record of that hearing. It was a completely accurate report of the conditions in Vietnam as they existed in July of 1974.

Since it may contribute to perspective, I hope that record will be reviewed by those who wish to seriously consider and comment upon the remarks I make here today.

FIRST PUBLIC COMMENT

It might be noted that this is the first public comment I have made on Vietnam since I became the guest of the U.S. Navy on May 1 last year.

I have not exactly lacked opportunities, but none of the invitations to appear on major TV news outlets or to write articles for some of this country's major publications were accepted.

FOREIGN POLICY AND CONGRESS

There were two major reasons. The first was personal. It was the deeply held conviction that our constitutional institutions dealing with vital foreign policy considerations would be best served if reports like this were first made to the committees of the Congress dealing with our foreign relations.

It was 41 years ago, in 1932, that I first attended meetings of this committee. My Congressman was a member.

Since I worked for him part time he arranged for me to attend even closed sessions. I was fascinated in those days at the easy and productive interchange between the members of the committee and the Department of State officials.

This was particularly true of the relationships between the committee and the officers of the new Foreign Service—then 8 years old under the 1924 Rogers Act. These officers were to be cherished, I was told, because they provided the essential continuity, because they were the principal executants of policy, because their expertise made an essential contribution to policy formulation, although the responsibility for the policy must remain, as constitutionally prescribed, with the Presidency and the Congress.

Perhaps it was an easy relationship because there was a common objective—the mutual search for courses of action that would best serve the interests of the Nation; perhaps it was an easy relationship because, in that search, the interchange was marked by obvious mutual respect, and by observance of the forms of courtesy which, in those days, governed the relationships between gentlemen. And, perhaps, these were the factors that made the interchange a productive one as well as an easy one.

In the intervening four decades I have watched this relationship vary from time to time. I have remained myself convinced that the national interests are best served by the kind of relationship I first observed so long ago.

I have always governed my own approach to this committee in accordance with that conviction. Accordingly, it was my preference to await an appropriate time to speak publicly first in this forum.

AN END TO RECRIMINATIONS

The second major reason was the concern of the President and Secretary Kissinger that the traumatic shock to the country not be further exacerbated by recriminations that would almost certainly ensue from an immediate prolonged debate. I agreed completely.

A good deal of absolute nonsense was said and written about the final days in Vietnam. The President and the Secretary were among the very limited number who were fully aware of the full gamut of the problems faced by the Saigon Mission.

The President and the Secretary were among the very few really capable of appraising the performance of the Saigon Mission. Both had publicly commended that performance.

I was personally content to leave it at that. I was serenely confident that the President's words of approval would be fully supported by the future verdict of dispassionate historians, a verdict based on documented records—a verdict providing perspective uncolored by the perhaps inevitable hysteria of a traumatic moment.

NO CHANGES NECESSARY

While the guest of the U.S. Navy in the South China Sea, I reviewed the circumstances of April. I concluded that if I could relive that month I would change almost nothing in the way the Saigon Mission reacted to the realities of the unfolding situation. I will come back to this a little further on.

I am a professional foreign affairs officer. I have felt free within the confines of the executive branch to express my views quite candidly on what direction American policy should take.

I rarely submit such views, unless asked to do so, about matters with which I am not officially charged.

VOICING PERSONAL ATTITUDES

In any event, I have never forgotten that in the end the policy is never mine, but that of those individuals charged under the Constitution with the responsibility for the foreign relations of this country.

This self-imposed restriction about voicing my personal attitudes I violate now only because such gross distortions have been spread about my approach to Vietnam.

I participated in World War II, which might have been avoided, it seemed to me, if we had been much less naive about the realities of the decade of the thirties.

In the decade of 1945 to 1955, I was highly privileged to have an unparalleled observer's vantage point, and to be an occasional minor participant, in one of the most creative periods of American diplomatic history.

I watched the cables from Saigon with fascination, and the evolution of French attitudes with great interest. It seemed to me that our own emotional involvement in Vietnam began when we moved a million refugees from the Tonkin Gulf to the south in 1954.

The inconclusive end of the Korean war was frustrating. I well understand the instinctive reaction of those who, regretful for their inaction in Manchuria in the thirty's, perhaps overreacted to a new type of aggression in Southeast Asia in the midfifty's.

INVOLVEMENT IN ASIA

I understand it but doubted the wisdom of becoming too deeply committed anywhere in Asia.

I thought, then and now, that our first priority simply had to be Europe. As far as an overt military commitment on the mainland of Asia was concerned, it made no sense to me, then or now.

If we wished to help the nations of Southeast Asia with materials matching that provided by the allies of Hanoi, that should be the limit. They made it or they did not. It is still my judgment that had we done this, they would have made it just fine—their way.

OPINIONS EXPRESSED

For expressing these opinions within the privacy of proper channels, but with some pungency of expression that was perhaps too tart, I was relieved of my post in Bangkok.

In the record of the 1974 hearings I think I am quoted as saying that in 1967 it would be inaccurate to say that I was losing my head over Southeast Asia since I was already carrying it around in a basket.

I would not want any of the above to be interpreted as any kind of attack on American Armed Forces, for whom I have the utmost respect.

I am proud that Generals Westmoreland and Abrams in Vietnam and Generals Easterbrook and Stillwell in Thailand were my friends. This Nation owes them all a deep debt.

A DRAFT ARMY WITH TV COVERAGE

My point was then, and is now, that when it is obvious that the political limitations will so restrict application of force that a protracted war becomes inevitable; when it is obvious that you cannot use a draft army with unrestricted TV coverage for a protracted war; then it is usually better to stay out of direct military engagement in the first instance.

When I left Asia in 1967, I thought I could, like Mary Martin, wash the South Pacific out of my hair. There were the same sort of press stories we see today. I remember one quote that "Martin's past was brighter than his future."

But after that I spent one of the most satisfying periods of my life in intimate association with the great American family of American Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service, and then the better part of 4 marvelous years in Rome.

TOUGH POSTS AND NICE ONES

Although I love Asia and treasure my friends there, I spent 8 months after the question was first raised in 1972 about my going to Saigon saying, "Hell No! I won't go!"

I had absolutely no illusions about what lay ahead of us. But when the highest officials of your country say "I thought the Foreign Service took the tough posts as well as the nice ones," you respond "Yes, we do," and then wonder how to tell your wife that we were going to Saigon and not to a Tuscan farm. Any surprises I have had since accepting the Saigon assignment have been agreeable ones.

When I arrived, American prisoners had been returned. But none of the other provisions of the 1973 Paris Accords were observed. There was no "cease-fire", there was no "delimitation of areas of control."

Hanoi never agreed to establish the points of entry where introduction of military equipment could be observed by the ICCS.

Charges and countercharges of which side was responsible are now useless, but a simple exercise in logic establishes that it would have been to the great advantage of the South Vietnamese to have had a full implementation of all sections of the accords.

A STRUCTURE OF PEACE

My great concern was to get the United States out of Vietnam as quickly as it could possibly be done, leaving a South Vietnam militarily capable of defending itself with its own manpower, economically viable, and free to choose its leaders and institutions as its own people might freely determine.

By so leaving, I thought we might make a contribution to the formation of institutions that might form a structure of peace that might insure a reasonably tranquil life for my grandchildren rather than a world of increasingly random violence.

If we failed, the cost was going to be very great, and it seemed obvious that the time was short. So, it seemed we had to try. Well, we didn't quite make it. But I venture the guess that future dispassionate historians will record that in June of 1974 we came very close.

MID-1974 AND AFTER

The report I made to this committee in July of 1974 was then described by some as an optimistic one. I can now tell you, as I could not then, that the two Communist members of the ICCS were reporting to their capitals in June of 1974 that the military initiative was clearly in the hands of the South Vietnamese.

Assuming the constancy of American support, their conclusion was that the interests of North Vietnam would be currently best served by curtailing further military pressure and beginning to accept the necessity of implementing the provisions of the January 1973 agreements.

Then in rapid succession the RVN suffered a series of reverses, almost all from causes external to South Vietnam. Any one of them would have been dangerous. Cumulatively, they proved mortal.

REDUCTIONS IN U.S. AID

The first was an internal DOD action, which informed the Defense Attaché in Saigon that about \$300 million worth of material in the pipeline, paid for, we thought, out of fiscal year 1974 funds, would now be charged against the fiscal year 1975 appropriations.

Military assistance for fiscal year 1975 had been reduced from the \$1.6 billion original request to \$1 billion in the fiscal year 1975 authorization bill. This amount, although authorized, and appropriation recommended by the Appropriations Committee to the floor, was reduced by House action to \$700 million in the final appropriation act.

It is ironic that, as I have been reliably informed, the authors of the amendment reducing the appropriation by \$300 million were not anti-Vietnam but were irritated by their inability to get information they desired from the Pentagon.

In the climate of the events of August 1974, efforts to have the Senate restore the \$300 million were unsuccessful.

RISING PETROLEUM COSTS

Another blow was the rapid escalation of petroleum costs after the 1973 Arab-Israeli war. The quadrupling of these costs and similar inflationary rises in costs of other items in needed military aid meant that the final \$700 million appropriation, in terms of items that could actually be purchased, was a cut of four-fifths, or 80 percent of the items that had been furnished in the previous fiscal year. These cuts had not been anticipated by the South Vietnamese.

EFFECTS ON SOUTH VIETNAM

In the climate accompanying the departure of President Nixon, it seemed highly unlikely the cuts would be restored.

A rough indicator of their effect is the calculation that the RVNAF could now expend ammunition at one-tenth the rate that would normally have been expended by a comparable American unit on an inactive front, repeat, an inactive front.

Another is the observation by a senior American military officer that "we are now forcing the South Vietnamese to substitute bodies, bones, and blood for bullets."

TRUNCATION OF SOUTH VIETNAM

We later learned that the South Vietnamese began in August to study intensively the practicality of truncating South Vietnam by sloughing off the unproductive—both militarily and economically—military regions I and II and concentrating all their resources in defending the essential heartland, the economically rich area below a line running roughly from the Nha Trang to Tay Ninh. The argument of some senior Vietnamese for such truncation rested on three principal bases:

A. The GVN simply could not defend the whole of the present national territory with the military resources then in hand or realistically in sight;

B. In the event of an allout assault by the North, the GVN simply could not depend on the United States to come to its aid, no matter what had been so clearly promised at the time of the 1973 January accords which permitted the return of the American prisoners;

C. Socioeconomic changes in the South over the past decade had created a new political potential which if adroitly developed would minimize the political dangers of truncation.

In such a study one suspects that a great deal of prayerful consideration and agonizing soul-searching went on about the effects, both on individuals and on the Nation, that might follow implementation of this plan.

LIMITED U.S. INVOLVEMENT

It would take an unusual amount of personal courage and even greater political skill to implement such a daring concept. This would be especially true since the need to do so was not yet, in August of 1974, apparent to the general public or, even more importantly, to the officers and men of the RVNAF.

So the studies went on. The Congress had forbidden U.S. military advisers. We were confined to a wholly logistical role. We were governed by this restriction.

The Vietnamese (in Saigon) did not seek our advice about this plan. The small Vietnamese group involved did utilize the services of a brilliant retired Army officer of another country who strongly urged its early implementation.

I haven't counted it up, but I suspect that I spent about half my time in the fall of 1974 and the first quarter of 1975 in Washington trying to see that our Congress had a better understanding of the actual realities in South Vietnam.

LITTLE TIME TO LEAVE

I had long been convinced that our inability to mount an effective counter to the propaganda campaign being waged within the United States against South Vietnam left us very little time to extricate ourselves from Vietnam as we should leave it.

After I had been in Vietnam for 6 months, I proposed, during a visit in January 1974 of our Under Secretary of State to the President of the RVN, that they jointly consider putting a definite limit on our future aid both as to time and amount.

When a year later we began to seriously explore this possibility with senior congressional leaders, there was considerable sympathy for the concept but the further erosion of public support made congressional acceptance of this concept an impossibility.

In the United States the erosion of public support was a progressive, palpable, almost measurable phenomena in the late summer and fall of 1974.

AN EFFECTIVE PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN

From 1947 to 1955 in France I had watched the marvelously subtle implementation of an increasingly effective propaganda campaign waged by the North Vietnamese and their ideological allies in France and Europe. In 1954 I saw it succeed in France.

In the fall of 1974 we were told that the North Vietnamese had been advised by their Soviet friends that it seemed that American will to continue assistance would be progressively eroded, and perhaps it would be opportune for Hanoi to exert maximum pressure on Saigon before the latter arranged to obtain defensive arms from sources other than the United States.

Through intelligence channels we watched the massive military buildup for such a campaign. The movement in the highlands leading to the fall of Ban Me Thuot in 1975 convinced all the campaign was underway.

ORGANIZED DISTORTION

On the propaganda front, which was really more important, we saw the pilgrimages of Americans to Hanoi and to the North Vietnamese Embassy in Paris. These visitors were followed by the mounting crescendo of organized campaigns of distortion in the United States coming to a focus with the December "pastoral letter" convoking on January 29, 1975, in Washington the celebration of the second anniversary of the 1973 January accords.

When no effective way was found to counter this propaganda extravaganza in January, I personally concluded that the game was up and my thoughts were more directed toward holding actions while we waited for the end in Saigon which, I thought in January, only a miracle could avert, and I further thought miracle makers were in very short supply.

CONGRESSIONAL VISITS

I think we are all familiar with the visit of the congressional study group in the early winter of 1975.

I think the more objective members of that delegation were shaken by the vast difference between the reality they saw and the distorted image they had received from the anti-Saigon lobby in Washington.

Others, unfortunately, simply confirmed the image brought with them by carefully programed itineraries prepared by the "activists" who had preceded them from Washington.

The trip was useful on the whole as I have always felt all congressional visits are. It is still a matter of deep regret to me that we received so few in the period after the 1973 accords.

OTHER SOURCES OF AID

Just before this congressional visit, the president of the Senate of the Republic of Vietnam, Tran Van Lam, had visited Washington. The climate he found here and the incredibly efficient propaganda exercise staged by the anti-Saigon lobby on the second anniversary of the 1973 Paris accords led him to report to the government on his return to Saigon that they would not only not receive the restoration of the \$300 million in military aid, but would receive no more military aid at all—a perceptive and accurate diagnosis, we can now see, of the realities in Washington in the early months of 1975.

Senior GVN leaders concluded that if South Vietnam were to survive in face of the rapid military buildup being prepared by Hanoi, then other sources of military aid would have to be found.

ARRANGEMENTS TO BUY BULLETS

Tentative arrangements were made to transfer the gold reserves to the Bank of International Settlements in Basel, Switzerland, where it might provide a collateral for loans to buy bullets in Europe.

When this leaked, it became impossible to move the gold by commercial air. Arrangements were then made to deposit the gold with the Federal Reserve Bank of New York which acts as the depository for the gold reserves of many foreign nations.

Unfortunately, the delay within the United States in arranging insurance for the transit saw the departure of President Thieu who had authorized the shipment. The Deputy Prime Minister and the Finance Minister could not secure in time from the new President a revalidation of the authority to ship the gold to the Federal Reserve Bank in New York.

An exploration was also undertaken to see if there was any possibility of foreign loans to be secured by future oil revenues. Such loans were to be used to buy the bullets so desperately needed. The Foreign Minister was actually so engaged when the North Vietnamese occupied Saigon.

The fall in January of Phuoc Long province, a rugged, sparsely populated province, gave some clear signals.

NO RESPONSE TO VIOLATIONS

First, there would be no automatic American response to massive North Vietnamese violations. The South Vietnamese felt they had been promised such a response in January of 1973 and again in April of that year.

Both Hanoi and Saigon noted that there would be no attempt to repeal or to evade the U.S. legislative restrictions that made such a response impossible.

EVENTUAL TRUNCATION

The second signal was that in refusing to defend Phuoc Long for "prestige" or "moral" reasons, the South Vietnamese had concluded that they must attempt, sooner or later, to implement the truncation concept.

Obviously, it was a heartbreaking decision for the South Vietnamese leadership. It was postponed until the fall of Ban Me Thuot made it impossible to evade the fact that the North Vietnamese invasion was fully underway.

President Thieu, as we learned later, called his non-American military adviser and asked whether it was too late.

He was told that it probably was but that since the unexpected could always happen, the GVN might be lucky.

The next day the order was issued. The GVN was not lucky.

GENERAL WEYAND'S EVALUATION

President Ford asked Gen. Fred Weyand, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, to make a personal on-the-spot appraisal of the evolving military situation, to see whether effective military resistance to the North Vietnamese invasion was possible, and, if so, what mili-

tary equipment would be necessary. General Weyand and I returned to Saigon on March 26.

On April 5, General Weyand reported to President Ford at Palm Springs, Calif. The general's report recommended that an additional \$722 million in military assistance be provided and concluded that if it could be done immediately, the GVN had a good chance to hold on the shortened military front.

On April 10, President Ford addressed a joint session of the Congress recommending that appropriation, asking that a decision be forthcoming before April 19.

As these events were unfolding, staffs in Washington and in Saigon were preparing for the safe evacuation of Americans and Vietnamese for whom we might have a special responsibility.

EVACUATION OF DANANG AND NHA TRANG

When I returned to Saigon at the end of March, the evacuation from Danang and Nha Trang was approaching the final moment of truth. Although the charge had raised the question of U.S. Navy assets to stand by to assist, he was told that available assets were committed to "Eagle Pull" and were standing off Phnom Penh.

Some commercial shipping under military charter did provide great assistance in moving Vietnamese refugees to the south.

The evacuation of Danang and Nha Trang was completed, using the internal assets available to the Saigon mission. All the Americans who desired to leave were brought out, excepting those captured at Ban Me Thuot and released later.

Most of the senior local employees, and their extensive families, were successfully brought out to the south.

LESSON OF DANANG AND NHA TRANG

One overriding lesson which Danang and Nha Trang emphasized was that the element most to be feared was panic. Panic could be the killer, the destroyer, the paralyzing agent which had to be avoided at all costs.

It was a near miracle that the dedicated, coolly executed, innovative actions taken by our American staffs in both areas under the consul generals' leadership had worked so well.

In 1939, I had studied the reasons for utter chaos of the movement of the refugee streams from Paris to Bordeaux.

In the early fifties, I had a Europeanwide responsibility which required my continuing participation with EUCOM and SHAPE on contingency plans for evacuation of Americans from Europe.

I knew how incredibly complex such an operation could be under completely calm circumstances, and these were certainly unlikely to prevail very long in Saigon unless we took the most extensive precautions to avoid panic.

PLAN FOR EVACUATING AMERICANS

Plans for the evacuation of Americans existed in two essential parts. The greater part of Americans, even as late as early 1975, were in the employ of the Defense Attaché Office.

This Office was the successor to MACV although with a function limited to logistics.

Almost all of the Defense civilians were employees of the Defense contractors. Evacuation plans for the DAO element were periodically updated in consultation with its superior headquarters in USSAG and CINCPAC, as well as a corollary plan developed largely by the Security section of the Embassy for most of the remaining U.S. mission elements.

If time permitted, commercial transportation would be used. If not, assets of the Defense Department would be called on.

Shortly after my return to Saigon, I designated Maj. Gen. Homer Smith, our Defense Attaché and an extraordinarily able logistician, to supervise the planning for the use of DOD assets to move out of Saigon.

Admiral Gayler, Commander-in-Chief Pacific, permitted Admiral Benton of his staff to stay with us to insure the closest possible coordination with USSAG and CINCPAC.

The Embassy Special Assistant for Field Operations, Mr. George Jacobson, who had marshaled the Mission's internal assets to successfully complete our evacuation from Danang and Nha Trang, was assigned to oversee the proper coordination of the other major elements of the U.S. mission with General Smith and Admiral Benson. The Deputy Chief of Mission, Mr. W. J. Lehman, exercised a watching brief for me over the whole operation.

AVOIDANCE OF PANIC

Our primary concern was the avoidance of panic. This concern affected all our other actions. Closely allied was the concern that we did not so conduct ourselves that our allies, feeling abandoned, would turn on the American presence in our last days.

A great deal of coolness was imperative if we were to get all our Americans out, if we were to get out the Vietnamese relatives of Americans, and if we were going to get out as many as possible of the Vietnamese to whom it was determined we had a special obligation.

LACK OF AUTHORITY

Another limiting factor at the beginning of April was the total lack of authority to move out Vietnamese, except those who met the most rigorous standards of relationship to American citizens. This lack also seriously interfered with our ability to move out many Americans who had acquired Vietnamese dependents and who would not leave Vietnam without them.

PAROLE AUTHORITY

We might list at this point the actual authorities possessed by Embassy Saigon at the beginning of April and at what dates we received increased authority.

Until April 14 the Embassy had parole authority—that is, authority to waive issuance of U.S. visas—only for the 2,000 orphans being airlifted to the United States.

On April 14 the Embassy received parole authority for alien relatives physically present in Vietnam of U.S. citizens who were physically present in Vietnam.

On April 19 the Embassy received parole authority for alien relatives of U.S. citizens and Vietnamese permanent residents not physically present in Vietnam if the relatives were beneficiaries of visa petitions approved by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service.

On April 25 the Embassy finally received parole authority for additional categories of relatives and up to 50,000 high-risk Vietnamese. This was 4 days before the final departure from Vietnam.

WHERE WOULD THEY GO?

Because the authority was lacking, neither of the plans referred to above contemplated the evacuation of large numbers of Vietnamese. Even if such authority existed, the question arose about their eventual destination. Where would they go? It was obvious that no other country in Southeast Asia could receive them.

A decision, the inevitable one, that they must come to the United States, was arrived at slowly and reluctantly in Washington.

I am not critical of that, I am simply recording an obvious fact. At the same time, there was an equal reluctance on the part of the Republic of Vietnam to issue exit documents permitting the legal departure of these people.

I understand these reasons. Patient work on the part of a dedicated Embassy staff in Saigon solved the Vietnamese end of this problem before the Washington one was solved on April 25, only 4 days before our evacuation began on April 29.

Then we received authority to send out a grand total of 50,000 Vietnamese—a number which was clearly insufficient.

So I interpreted the number to include only heads of families and not the families too. So, using the John Marshall broad construction approach, we stretched the authority to cover the problem.

The final number of Vietnamese nationals brought to the United States will exceed 140,000. I do not criticize the failure of Washington to move earlier. I understood the reasons all too well.

AMERICANS CAN COUNT

While there is some occasional regurgitation of the criticism that we brought out too few, it seems that the American people can count.

In the thousands of letters I received after I came back, it was obvious they understood we had brought out more than had been authorized—almost three times as many.

They also noted that all the Americans had been gotten out who wanted to come. They noted that our departure had been so managed that panic was avoided.

They noted that the transition through three governments in less than 10 days, preserving the constitutional legitimacy until it was finally brushed aside by the North Vietnamese, contributed to the avoidance of panic.

Above all, they noted that the destruction of Saigon had been avoided, that we did not leave under attack by our former allies, and

that our final departure was conducted with as much dignity as was conceivably possible under the circumstances.

One letter commented that many of the stories about the last days seemed to be based on sources who believed that you could fool all of the people some of the time and some of the people all of the time, and that was usually sufficient. Not in this case, he said.

A HELL OF A GOOD JOB

The American people can count. They can see what did and what did not happen. When the whole story gets on the record it will undoubtedly prove what the American people already sensed—that it was a hell of a good job.

Now I can agree with my correspondent because the credit goes to a staff which, with only one or two exceptions, did an unparalleled job.

The more I explored the situation in early April, the more I was convinced General Weyand was right in his estimate of the fighting capability of the Vietnamese Armed Forces if only they could be assured of adequate munitions.

The Vietnamese fought with incredible bravery at Xuan Loc. But the battle here on Jenkins Hill in Washington was being lost. The erosion of public support, so marked in the winter, now accelerated. The retreat from military regions I and II was perceived here, not as a badly executed strategic withdrawal, forced by a shortage of munitions, but as a collapse of South Vietnamese will under North Vietnamese attack.

THE TEMPER OF THE TIMES

It is fashionable in some circles to blame the Congress for the final collapse of South Vietnam. God knows there is enough blame over two decades to spare a bit for everyone, but the easy way out of blaming the Congress, in my opinion, just won't wash.

The President and the Secretary were calling it absolutely right. But, in the temper of the times, this just could not be enough.

The negative decision was made inevitable by one of the best propaganda and pressure organizations the world has ever seen. If any of those who so glibly put the full blame on the Congress had been a member, receiving the full weight of the pressure in Washington and from their home districts—with nothing given to them in the way of information that would help them to combat the propaganda with the truth; if they were given nothing to enable them to understand the real sources of the pressure campaign, they too, would have probably voted negatively.

In the end, the Congress did not finally act on the President's request. Since a clear answer would have been negative, the longer it was delayed, the longer we avoided that possible trigger of a panic decision. However, when we knew the answer would be negative, we had to inform the Vietnamese.

MEETING WITH THIEU

I saw President Thieu on the morning of April 20. I had obtained from the Defense Attaché and the CIA station the latest information

available to us on both the realities of the military situation and the feelings of the senior Vietnamese civilian and military leaders.

I told President Thieu the actual military order of battle and the analysis of the comparative forces each side could bring to bear provided a very grim picture.

The conclusion was inescapable that should Hanoi rapidly move in for the kill it would be difficult for Saigon to last more than a month, even with the most skillful and determined defense, and probably not more than 3 weeks.

I said that while it was my opinion that Hanoi wanted Saigon whole, not a pile of rubble, one could not escape the possibility they might elect the latter, if there was no move toward negotiations.

President Thieu asked about the prospects for additional military aid. I said that even if by some miracle it were now approved, it might preserve the opportunity for a better negotiating position, but it could not arrive in time to change the balance sheet he had just read. As of now the military balance arrayed against him was overwhelming.

THE WHOLE TRUTH

I said that anyone sitting in his chair, whether in Independence Palace, Downing Street, the Elysee, the Kremlin, in Peking, or in the White House had one problem in common. It was difficult to be sure they were getting the whole truth.

Some would shade reports for personal or bureaucratic advantage, others for fear of hurting him, others because they were afraid of him, others because they did not wish to be the conveyors of bad news.

Whatever the reasons, it was difficult at times to perceive things as they really were.

I said I was speaking to him only as an individual, not for the President or the Secretary of State, or even as the American Ambassador.

I said I was speaking only as one who for a very long time had watched events in Southeast Asia and who for the past 2 years had worked very hard at understanding the interweaving of the fabric of Vietnamese affairs.

I said the older I got, the more I knew that I did not know it all, and a reasonable doubt was always present. But it was a difficult time, and perhaps my perceptions were as accurate as those of any other Westerner.

POTENTIAL EFFECT OF THIEU'S RESIGNATION

A few things were very clear to me. The military situation was very bad, and the Vietnamese people held him responsible for it. The political class, both his supporters and his enemies, did not believe he could lead the country out of its present crisis.

I said it was my conclusion that almost all of his generals, although they would continue to fight, believed defense was hopeless unless a respite could be gained through the beginning of the negotiating process.

And they did not believe such a process could begin unless the President left or took steps to see that the process began immediately.

I said it was my feeling that if he did not move soon, his generals would ask him to go.

THE VOTE IN CONGRESS

President Thieu asked whether his leaving would affect the vote in Congress. I said it might have changed some votes some months ago, it could not now change enough to affect the outcome.

In other words, if his thought was to offer to resign if Congress assured a level sufficient for South Vietnamese survival, that was a bargain whose day had passed, if indeed it had ever existed.

After all his opponents would accept just as easily the distortions that would be fed to them about his successor as they had about him. The important thing was perhaps the effect his leaving would have on the other side.

I said I did not know the answer, but it seemed that most South Vietnamese now seemed to think it would facilitate negotiations.

DIM HOPE

I personally thought it would make little difference. Hanoi would be opposed to any strong leader. They would insist on a much weaker man, if indeed they were really interested in negotiating. But his colleagues felt it might buy time which was now the essential commodity for Vietnam.

Some felt if the destruction of Saigon could be avoided, if an independent Vietnam could continue to exist, one might hope, even if reason recognizes the dimness of the hope, that things might improve. The conversation went on for about an hour and a half.

NO AMERICAN INTERFERENCE

It was thoroughly understood that I was not conveying any suggestions, directly or indirectly, but merely attempting to add as much relevant background as possible for decisions which had to be made, and which could only be made by the Vietnamese.

On leaving, President Thieu said he would do what he thought was best for the country. We later learned through other channels that he met the following day with his senior military and civilian advisers. He reviewed the information I had given him and the others agreed that the factual description of the current situation was as I described it.

Thieu repeated that I had given no advice, either on my own behalf or on behalf of the United States. That night he resigned and the Vice President assumed the Presidency. I did not see him again except for a brief moment on his final departure which I had arranged at the specific request of the new President.

Time does not permit the details of the evolution which led to the transition of power to General Minh, again arranged by the Vietnamese in accord with legal and constitutional requirements. My concern was that American actions in no way interfere with whatever arrangements the Vietnamese would work out themselves. I think that on the whole we were successful.

However, this did require the most careful coordination with Washington where pressure for the immediate evacuation of all Americans was being fed partly by wholly legitimate concerns and partly by some who would have welcomed our final departure degenerating into a debacle.

SAFE EVACUATION

I have just said that one of our concerns was to manage our departure in a way which would not destroy whatever small chances the negotiating process might have had.

This was a legitimate concern, but of much lesser importance than the safety of the remaining Americans. Too much detail of what we were doing could not be revealed without risking the turning of Vietnamese anger against the remaining Americans if they felt they were being callously abandoned.

Our intelligence was full of quite accurate reporting of this feeling and threats that if we brought in the marines in large numbers to assure the safe evacuation of the Americans, we would have to fight our way out, and the South Vietnamese Air Force would shoot down our transports as we abandoned our friends to the tender mercies of the North.

In addition to the rather ghastly footnote to our involvement this would provide, quite a few Americans would be killed on the way out.

I was quite aware, fully and painfully aware, of these pressures being brought to bear in Washington.

On April 17, I received a message from the White House which said, in part, that the congressional situation is fast getting out of hand, and that our task was to prevent panic both in Saigon and Washington "and I know that you recognize this more clearly than almost anyone in the U.S. Government."

APRIL 15, 1975 MESSAGE TO THE WHITE HOUSE

In a message to the White House on April 15, I had recognized this pressure and with reference to the press attacks had observed that—

The relatively few people about whose opinions I really care will not change their opinion of me.

Even the sly, anonymous insertion of the perfumed ice-pick into the kidneys in the form of quotes from my colleagues in the Department are only a peculiar form of acupuncture, indigenous to Foggy Bottom, against which I was immunized long ago.

There are only two important considerations I keep in mind, the safety of the people under my charge and the integrity of U.S. policy. Both of these crucial objectives, especially the first, seem to me to demand that we not be diverted by any kind of pressure, press or congressional, from coolly pursuing a course best designed to achieve them.

I shall always treasure the Secretary's response the following day:

I know you have been getting a lot of harassment from Washington, especially of late, but I want you to know how much the President and I appreciate what you are doing. You are operating in the best tradition of a field commander and doing a tremendous job of it.

The last 10 days required a most careful walking of the tightrope of judgment of just how the situation was developing and of just how much the traffic would bear without triggering the panic or the resentment of the Vietnamese, either of which would have brought catastrophe.

ESCAPE OF PRESS EMPLOYEES

We were getting out thousands of people each day, most of them quite illegally from both Vietnamese or United States legal requirements. One vignette is illustrative of the problems. The Secretary had

requested that we do what we could to facilitate the escape of the Vietnamese nationals of the American press and TV offices in Saigon.

A committee of the home offices in New York had been working to get chartered aircraft—a solution which was inoperable since there was no way to get Vietnamese exit permits.

Fortunately, they delegated their problem to Mr. Brian Ellis, the CBS bureau chief in Saigon.

Mr. Ellis and the Embassy Attaché, Mr. John Hogan, worked out a system that performed a small miracle. Mr. Ellis refused to inform any of his colleagues of any details.

He had the locals and their families assembled at particular points at times prearranged with me. I had a transport flown in from Clark.

Ellis would pick up the locals in a bus, drive them with Hogan to the Air America terminal, load them immediately and the plane departed for Clark.

The other newsmen, thinking that Ellis had made arrangements with the Vietnamese for charter evacuation, kept a complete lid on the story. Ellis also requested that the details be kept from all other Embassy information people since he regarded one senior officer as unreliable as some of his press colleagues.

GRATEFUL TO CBS

We removed 595 Vietnamese without triggering stories that would have forced Vietnamese interference with our operations. I shall always be grateful to CBS for their smoothness of that operation under the direction of their Mr. Brian Ellis. We were very liberal in our interpretation of "families," although I did draw the line at the inclusion by one Washington reporter of his cook and nursemaid, a decision I now regret in view of the domestic help situation in Washington.

I cite this only as illustrative of the tightrope we were walking. Details of our operations, if published, could have triggered considerable danger to the remaining Americans.

If the price was an unfavorable press, it was a cheap price to pay not to endanger the lives of the Americans for whom I was responsible.

If the impression was given that I was either "serenely ignorant or serenely indifferent" to the events that were unfolding, it might be regarded as the highest of compliments to the sense of theater that must be an essential part of the baggage of any good diplomat.

NIT NOY'S COMPLAINT

I really have only one gripe with the press. When they began to attack a member of my household named "Nit Noy," like Franklin Roosevelt and his "Fala," I resented the attack on the dog.

The fact is that it was not my dog but my daughter's. The fact is that I did not intend to bring it out, but had arranged for Nit Noy to seek asylum with the Ambassador of France.

However, a correspondent of the Los Angeles Times, a journal not noted for its uncritical support of American policy in Vietnam, decided otherwise. He put the dog under his coat and took it out, leaving his typewriter behind as more than compensating weight.

LOSS OF PERSONAL ITEMS

To leave his typewriter behind certainly qualifies George McArthur as a certified dog lover. I shall always be eternally grateful to him because my wife was devoted to that dog, and in my family, my wife suffered most in the evacuation of Vietnam.

Her contribution to stability was an enormous one in those last days. Had we begun to pack our household items, the signal would have been all over Saigon.

So all our small collections of things that were of great sentimental importance to us remained untouched.

On the last day, the marine log shows that I returned to the residence at 11:03 and departed at 11:14.

My wife had 11 minutes to pack one bag and walk away from all those small things we had found comfortable to live with in the places we have served our country.

I have been told that our residence is now occupied by a very senior North Vietnamese official.

One hopes the next time a senior American official visits Saigon, or a Member of Congress, it might be gently indicated that the return of some of her things, particularly her granddaughter's portraits, would be favorably regarded.

HISTORY WILL TREAT YOU KINDLY

When the totally uninformed criticisms began to appear, my wife was furious at first. Then she said:

You know, you have served this country for over one-fifth of its life, and two-thirds of your own. The record is there and clear, and the historians will treat you very kindly.

My wife is, of course, a prejudiced witness, but I rather think she may be right about the historians.

Mr. Chairman, I am ready for your questions.

PRESSURE AND PROPAGANDA

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Ambassador, the subcommittee appreciates very much your very complete statement and we recognize and appreciate your attitude that you express in your statement about the U.S. Congress.

I want to begin with an observation you make on pages 24 and 25 of your statement.

You say that it's fashionable in some circles to blame the Congress for the final collapse of South Vietnam. It's not fashionable to do that up here on the Hill, as you can appreciate, Mr. Ambassador.

The thing that strikes me about those several lines there is that you seem to put the responsibility for the events that transpired in South Vietnam in the spring of last year not upon the Congress, not upon the President, but upon a propaganda and pressure organization the likes of which the world has never seen, to paraphrase your statement.

I am very interested in those observations. I wonder if you could elaborate for us who you are talking about at that point, what the organizations are, and how they could be so remarkably successful.

THEY DESERVE ENORMOUS CREDIT

Ambassador MARTIN. The main organization I think is the Indochina Resources Center, and I really think that another principal element would be the multi-faceted activities of Mr. Don Luce.

I would think that this kind of operation, I must say I have watched these operations over the world for a long period of time, those individuals deserve enormous credit for a very effective performance.

It's the constancy of the drumming in day after day after day after day of certain particular themes.

I describe this in considerable detail in the memorandum of conversations that I sent to Congressman Nix on the visit to Saigon in the early part of 1974 by a group from New York.

I think you perhaps have read that, Mr. Chairman. I outlined in considerable detail the operations as we had watched them unfold. It's the building of the pressure from the constituencies, the use of the concern, the humanitarian concerns, of most American people, good, wholly healthful concerns, but which are twisted and distorted by the flood of propaganda about perfectly awful things which are happening in Vietnam. We must not, therefore, support Vietnam, we cannot give any aid to people like this.

WERE AMERICANS MISLED?

Mr. HAMILTON. Is it your view that the American people then were misled, even duped, by these groups and organizations to which you refer?

Ambassador MARTIN. To a great extent yes, Mr. Chairman, I do believe that to be true. I saw it in France. I saw it before. I saw the public opinion erode until where the Prime Minister of France set a date certain in July of 1954 on which the arrival of an agreement in Geneva would take place.

It's something which I feel very deeply about, not so much about Vietnam. If this is to be a primary factor and influence on the formation of foreign policy, it's a phenomenon which I deeply believe ought to be most carefully examined.

DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT

Mr. HAMILTON. When you look, Mr. Ambassador, at the relative resources available to the contending groups here, the U.S. Government, the power of the Presidency, the power of the resources that America put into this thing, the vast efforts of the Department of State and the Department of Defense, the support of many of the world's governments, and you compare that against the kind of organizations you are talking about, an Indochina Resource Group, you mentioned one man, Mr. Luce.

It's very difficult for me to conceive that that small a group could have that kind of an impact on the American people and the U.S. Congress and cause us to turn around.

Isn't it also possible that the American people just perceived this interest of the United States in South Vietnam in a very different way than the Executive and the Congress, at least for an extended period of time.

Ambassador MARTIN. Yes; I think during the period when our American boys were militarily involved, when there was a danger of death or their being wounded, had a very great influence. No one could quite see why they should be there.

A great many people felt that way. I, myself, never thought American boys should be there, as you know.

I publicly testified before the committee of the other House last July a year ago that I was also opposed to the reintroduction of American forces in Vietnam no matter what the circumstances.

But the removal of our soldiers seemed only to encourage the use of these organizations that had their roots in the constituencies, the constant pressure that was exerted, such as letters about political prisoners. It was day-after-day-after-day.

FAILURE OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

I agree with you that the executive branch had enormous resources. The failure to use them had been a source of friction between some members of the executive branch and myself. But it is true those resources were not utilized in any way near the effective way that they should have been.

I sent a cable in, I think in relation to the January 29 exercise that was held here. After that meeting they all came up and went through the Congress.

People were brought in from all over the country. I sent in a cable, I think, which arrived in the Department on Christmas Day, which stated very fully my views on what the executive branch should have been doing. I think I have it with me.

If you think it would be relevant I would be glad to read it into the record.

Mr. HAMILTON. Why don't we just accept it as part of the record, Mr. Ambassador?

Ambassador MARTIN. All right.

Mr. HAMILTON. Without objection it will be made part of the record at this point.

[The following information was submitted for the record:]

CABLES FROM AMBASSADOR MARTIN TO DEPARTMENT OF STATE REGARDING INTER-FAITH GROUP CHARGES AGAINST THE UNITED STATES

SAIGON 15787

Subject: Interfaith group charges United States with failure to honor Paris agreement.

Ref. (A) Saigon 15729 (B) State 281471.

1. Noting in para. one of ref. B that the Department has been unable so far to obtain a copy of the interfaith group's letter and does not anticipate being able to do so until after the holidays, we are sending the full text from half way around the world, in the next following telegram. It is, perhaps, a desecration of all that this day should mean to the people of the world for this text to be received in the Department on Christmas Day. However, to borrow a word from its text it is such an "abomination" that we believe no time should be lost in the careful consideration of the nature and extent of the Department's responsibility for a response.

2. Ref. A was sent in the increasingly forlorn hope that the Department would come to share our deeply held belief that the American people, and their representatives in Congress, were entitled to the whole truth about the current realities in Vietnam; that distortions so gross that they approach the dimension of

caricature ought not to go without corrective action by the only agency of the executive branch, the Department of State, which is capable of doing so; and that failure to do so is, in fact, not only an abdication of a clear moral responsibility to accurately inform the American people, but also that failure to do so becomes a positive, albeit tacit, contribution to a cleverly orchestrated campaign to deceive the American people, a campaign of which this "pastoral letter" is only a part.

3. We fully share the Department's evident distaste to become "soiled" by the attacks which inevitably will be made on anyone who dares to observe that the interfaith groups statement is a tissue of lies from beginning to end and who points out its obvious connection with the visit to Hanoi in November by Don Luce, Bishop Gumbleton, et al., and that its clear and obvious design is to massively intervene on behalf of North Vietnam. Although we share the distaste, we cannot share the rationalizations that would permit the Department to evade its moral responsibilities to provide the whole truth to the American people. The memories of Pontius Pilate washing his hand are too fresh in our minds this Christmas season.

4. We note also that the statement is only a curtain raiser to the 25-27 January "national assembly to save the peace agreement" in Washington. This meeting is designed to preempt and obscure the attention which would otherwise be given on the second anniversary of the peace agreement to the voluminous and detailed record, not only of Hanoi's massive, systematic and deliberate violations of that agreement, but also its determined effort to destroy the agreements entirely. The preliminary reactions of the Department indicate that their efforts may succeed, even though it is well within the Department's capabilities not only to thwart such efforts, but also to turn the tables and expose this propaganda exercise for what it really is—the cynical manipulation of the decent instincts of certain, obviously ill-informed, American religious leaders and the prostitution of the principal tenets of their faith in an attempt to insure the victory of Hanoi.

5. After all, the Department does have in its possession the one devastating weapon—the ability to marshal all the the pertinent facts and present the whole truth to the American people. We do not believe the Department can escape its clear and present moral responsibility to do exactly that.

6. But just to accept the moral responsibility will not be enough. We again suggest the creation of an independent task force which can concentrate in depth and with precision on the task of providing the whole truth to the Congress and the American people about the actual current realities in Vietnam.

MARTIN.

SAIGON 15794

Ref.: Saigon 15787.

Following is the text of the "pastoral letter" issued by the so-called inter-faith group:

Begin text:

A pastoral letter to the religious communities of the United States.

Two years ago we spoke in repudiation of unspeakable barbarity, the Christmas bombings of Hanoi, summoning the sensitive of heart to protest that most immoral act of the immoral war. Unprecedented national and international outrage helped to bring those bombings to a halt, and the Paris peace agreements were subsequently signed on January 27, 1973, a war-weary world assumed that the signing of peace agreements would bring peace, but the agreements have not been honored.

And so there is no peace.

We shy away from this hard truth. We have not been seduced by leaders who tell us that peace has come to Southeast Asia. It has not. Echoing our leaders' cry, we have been guilty to echoing their falsehood, as in the day of Jeremiah:

From prophet to priest, everyone deals false . . . saying "peace, peace," when there is no peace. (Jer. 6:13-14.)

There is no peace, the war goes on. American bombs are still dropped from American airplanes on Vietnamese targets.

There is no peace, the war goes on, American funds and American prestige support a dictatorship in South Vietnam that arrests and tortures dissidents.

There is no peace, American aid continues placing higher priority on feeding the war in Indochina than feeding the hungry in Bangladesh, the Sahel and elsewhere.

There is no peace, the war goes on. We supply the dollars, the guns, the tanks, the planes, the bombs, everything but the corpses. The corpses are Vietnamese.

Of those who cried "Peace, peace," when there was no peace, Jahweh asked, "were they ashamed when they committed abomination?" and he answered his own question, "No, they were not at all ashamed; they did not know how to blush." (Jer. 6:15.)

No more are we at all ashamed, no more do we know how to blush, even though we too commit "abomination", and our national life is a lie: "There is no peace."

Why is this so? As we approach the second anniversary of the signing of the Paris peace agreements, the unpalatable truth we choose to ignore is that we have failed to honor the agreements we pleaded to honor, our slogan was "peace with honor." Our reality is "no honor, therefore no peace." This is our "abomination." That is why the war goes on.

Two years ago we pledged "to respect the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Vietnam". (Article 1) We have not done so.

Two years ago we pledged "the United States will not continue its military involvement or interfere in the internal affairs of South Vietnam," (Article 4)

We are still militarily involved and we interfere continuously, providing more than 80 percent of the Saigon government budget.

Two years ago we pledged that our advisors "to all para-military organizations and the police force" would be withdrawn. (Article 5) They are still there.

Two years ago we pledged "the dismantlement of all U.S. military bases in South Vietnam." (Article 6) The military bases are still there, but turned over to the Vietnamese.

Two years ago we pledged that we would "not impose any political tendency or personality on the South Vietnamese people." (Article 9) We do so every day.

Two years ago the South Vietnamese parties pledged to "ensure the democratic liberties of the people: personal freedom, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of meeting, freedom of organization, freedom of political activities, freedom of residence, freedom of work..." (Article 11) The Thieu regime, which we support, denies those freedoms consistently and as a matter of policy. The regime could not survive without our help.

Two years ago we pledged to "put an end to all military activities in Cambodia," and to allow that country to settle its internal affairs "without foreign interference." (Article 20) We have not put an end to such activity; our foreign interference continues.

Two years ago we pledged to "contribute to healing the wounds of war and to postwar reconstruction of the democratic republic of Vietnam and throughout Indochina." (Article 21) We lacerate those wounds and continue the destruction of Indochina, while withholding real aid for reconstruction. The blood that ceaselessly flows there is on our hands. Even in the face of that crimson rebuke, we do "not know how to blush."

It is not only in Vietnam that we frustrate the will to peace. What we do there openly we do elsewhere almost as openly. Vietnam, rather than being an exception to our foreign policy, has become an example of it. We intervene elsewhere, we give financial support to military dictatorships elsewhere, we bribe reactionary government officials elsewhere, we provide planes and bombs to despotic regimes elsewhere, whether the place be Spain or Korea or Chile. Other nations look at such actions with mounting cynicism and distrust. Why should they trust us? Our deeds belie our words.

Having spoken before, we must speak again. We call the nation to action once again. We therefore summon the members of the religious communities of our Nation to a national assembly to save the peace agreement, in Washington, D.C. from January 25 to January 27, 1975, the second anniversary of the signing of the agreement in Paris. We must communicate to our leaders an urgent demand that this Nation live up to its pledged word at Paris both by implementing its unkept promises and by ceasing current actions, such as massive military aid to the oppressive Thieu regime, a living denial of that pledged word.

In the two years since the signing of the peace agreement we have witnessed significant movement in Congress toward the goal of finally ending U.S. intervention in Indochina, in August of 1973 Congress ended U.S. bombing of Cambodia. Congress acknowledged the existence and inhumane treatment of thousands of political prisoners in South Vietnam and voted to prohibit use of U.S. funds for the police and prison system. In spring 1974 Congress refused to support a request for supplemental military aid to Saigon and this summer restricted military aid to less than half the amount requested by the administra-

tion. Persistent and increasing public pressure made these achievements possible. Now is the time to continue pressing for peace.

We must say to our Congress: Seldom if ever has a Congress had such opportunity to give our Nation new direction. You are in office in response to an electoral repudiation of the policies of domestic deception. Seize the opportunity, therefore, to repudiate the politics of international deception as well. Do not cry any longer, "peace, peace, when there is no peace." Insist upon the implementation of the Paris peace accords, so that we can create a peace not an "abomination."

The times are to precarious to speak less pleadingly.

We must also say to our Congress: We intend to hold you accountable in this matter. We call on you to render true the peace our past words promised and our present deeds deny.

We must say to our President: Provide the leadership that can acknowledge that peace has not come in southeast Asia, and will not come until we honor our past agreements, reverse our present policies, and re-think our future military and financial aid to dictatorial regimes. Save yourself, and us, and most of all the Vietnamese people, from further prolongation of the war.

And finally, we must say to ourselves: Our past caution and inaction were factors in the escalation of the war in southeast Asia. We confess this grievous fault and ask forgiveness—forgiveness from God, and also from His children, victimized by our timidity. We dare not, by perpetuating a feeble witness, perpetuate a ruthless war, and so, as we approach this national assembly, we pray for a new insight and fresh courage, so to speak, and so to act that peace may truly come. (End letter.)

Signers

- Dr. Ralph Abernathy, president, S.C.L.C.
 Bishop James Armstrong, Bishop of the Dakotas, United Methodist Church.
 Rev. David W. Augsburg, Northern Baptist Theological Seminary.
 Lloyd Bailey, Chairman, Friends General Conference.
 Howard Bartram, General Secretary, Friends General Conference.
 Dr. Eugene Carson Blake.
 Thomas R. Bodine, presiding clerk, Friends United Meeting.
 Rabbi Balfour Brickner, Union of American Hebrew Congregations.
 Dr. Robert McAfee Brown, professor of religious studies, Stanford University.
 Bishop John H. Burt, Episcopal Diocese of Ohio.
 Rev. William Sloane Coffin, Sr., Chaplain, Yale University.
 Wallace Collett, chairman of the board, American Friends Service Committee.
 The Rt. Rev. William Davidson, Episcopal Diocese of W. Kansas.
 The Rt. Rev. Roger Dewitt, the Episcopal Church Publishing Company.
 Sister Dorothy Donnelly, president, National Coalition of American Nuns.
 Rev. Richard R. Fernandez, United Church of Christ.
 N. Lanar Gible, Peace and Interfaith Affairs, Representative for Europe and Mideast, Church of the Brethren.
 Sister Ann Gillen, National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry.
 Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, Archdiocese of Detroit.
 Joyce Hablin, United Methodist Women.
 Dr. Walter Harrelson, dean Divinity School, Vanderbilt University.
 Lorton Heusel, general secretary, Friends United Meeting.
 Rev. William Holman, Yale Divinity School.
 Bernard Lee, S.C.L.C.
 Bishop James K. Mathews, United Methodist Church.
 Rabbi David A. Mirsky, New York Federation of Reformed Synagogues.
 Rt. Rev. Paul Moore, Episcopal Diocese of New York.
 Dr. Robert Moss, United Church of Christ.
 Rev. Richard Neuhaus, pastor, St. John's Evangelist Church.
 Dr. Claire Randall, general secretary, National Council of Churches.
 Dr. Alexander M. Schindler, president, Union of Hebrew Congregations.
 Rev. Joel Thompson, Church of the Brethren.
 Sister Mary Luke Tobin, Church Women United.
 Sister Margaret Ellen Traxler, director, Institute of Women Today.
 Dr. George Webber, chairman, Clergy and Laity Concerned.
 Dr. Colin Williams, dean, Yale Divinity School, End Text.

MARTIN.

Ambassador MARTIN. The point is you are quite right. The executive branch did have enormous resources. I think it's a part of what ought to be examined in an orderly appraisal of the Vietnamese experiences. Perhaps, what we should not do in the future is something that should be cranked into such an appraisal.

DICH VAN

On the propaganda part of it, Mr. Chairman, the North Vietnamese I believe, have a technique they term "dich van," a technique used both internally and externally. It had been brought to a high level of perfection.

Mr. Douglas Pike, who had been a member of the mission in Vietnam, who is now a member of the Policy Planning Staff of the Department of State, had prepared in Saigon an outline of these kinds of activities.

I think the working title given was "Anatomy of Deceit." It's an extraordinary outline. It's only an outline but even so it's about that thick [indicating].

I said understanding this Vietnamese technique, and its use, is important under any such future campaigns. I do not think foreign policy should really be made from these kinds of pressure campaigns.

I think the only way you can avoid it is to have absolutely certain knowledge of how it's organized, how it was applied, and what activities took place.

I would hope that at some point that this committee might see fit to undertake such an examination.

RESOURCES TO SWAY THE NATION

Mr. HAMILTON. You impressed me with the great compliment you pay these people, they have the resources to sway the whole country, 220 million Americans and the U.S. Congress.

Ambassador MARTIN. There were, of course, other factors at work during a protracted war, a very long war by the nature of the limitations. A war covered by the bringing into American homes for the first time the battle zone, the battle front, the evacuation of the wounded. You simply cannot support a protracted war with a draft army.

But it was not, of course, this small group, wholly alone, but I would fully concur with your statement that I am paying these people an enormous compliment. I mean it to be that. They deserve it.

THE U.S. CONGRESS

Mr. HAMILTON. I am not sure you are paying the U.S. Congress a very high compliment.

Ambassador MARTIN. No; I don't think that is quite—

Mr. HAMILTON. You suggest almost we reduced the battle—

Ambassador MARTIN. This beautifully orchestrated campaign had gone on for a very long time, for a very long time. When Mr. Branfman came out for a visit to Hanoi, I think in the fall of 1974, and told some of our friends in both Vientiane and Bangkok that he now had

a person in each of the 500 congressional offices, that was bragging a little bit.

But I think he probably was correct in that they had worked very hard among the newer congressional staffs to get at least one person in each office on the Hill who was favorable to them, who would receive their material, who would try to see that it got to the member, et cetera.

This is an enormously effective organization and I do think that they deserve the compliment that I have paid them.

I do think, and I seriously recommend that it become a matter of investigation because I do not think policy can safely be made this way in the future.

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Ambassador, we will give you a little recess because of the vote that is now occurring on the floor of the House. The subcommittee stands in recess, and we will take it up as soon as the members return.

[A recess was taken from 3:05 p.m. to 3:25 p.m.]

BLOODBATH IN VIETNAM

Mr. HAMILTON. The subcommittee will come to order, please.

Mr. Ambassador, you are among several other observers and supporters of continued assistance and support for South Vietnam who argued on occasion before the Congress and in other public forums that if the United States withdrew support and left Vietnam and Vietnam then fell that there would likely be a bloodbath as the North Vietnamese came to power.

Why is it that no bloodbath occurred, in your view?

Ambassador MARTIN. I don't think you will find that I said that, Mr. Chairman. The argument has been made. I have seen it, it had been said by others—

Mr. HAMILTON. It was certainly put forward very frequently and forcibly by the executive branch before the Congress.

Ambassador MARTIN. That is right. The North Vietnamese are much more astute than their more rural friends in Cambodia, should we put it. The kind of brutal evacuation of Phnom Penh, with two-thirds of a city of 3 million moved without warning, without caring what happened to the people on the way, would not be a North Vietnamese method of operation.

They have been much more skillful. They simply withdraw certain people for "reeducation" and these people never reappear.

REEDUCATION DEMONSTRATIONS

Now, when you get to the point where you have, as I understand has happened, public demonstrations in Saigon by the wives of the reeducated asking where their members of the family are, one can conclude that the dimensions are rather great.

I have not followed with any precision the bits and pieces that come out. The ones that I have seen and the people who have come, for example, to Bangkok or to other cities and have been interviewed, indicate that personnel are now controlled block by block. The block, I don't know what you call it exactly, block meetings, I think, where you

have the block self-criticism meetings and then people are denounced, then people disappear for reeducation, some come back, most do not. It is all done with the utmost quiet.

A CONTINUING BLOODBATH?

Mr. HAMILTON. Are you suggesting that there might be going on now or in the future some kind of a bloodbath?

Ambassador MARTIN. It depends on what you call a bloodbath.

Mr. HAMILTON. Mass slaughter of people.

Ambassador MARTIN. How much is a mass slaughter? I am sorry, I am not trying in any sense to evade. If we don't have a common definition we are talking apples and oranges. I don't know the extent of it. I think its highly unlikely that any westerner will truly know.

I would think, given the tightness of internal control of any regime like North Vietnam, we will not probably know with precision, as we did in the free and open societies elsewhere.

WERE THE WARNINGS CORRECT?

Mr. HAMILTON. Do you think the executive branch was incorrect in arguing before the Congress that a bloodbath would take place?

Ambassador MARTIN. No; because I think—

Mr. HAMILTON. You did not yourself agree with it?

Ambassador MARTIN. I did not say I disagreed with it. I said I don't think I used it as an argument, the blood—

Mr. HAMILTON. Did you agree with it?

Ambassador MARTIN. I knew there were going to be considerable numbers of people who would be taken away and would never be seen again.

Now, whether that is a bloodbath or not depends again on your definition.

I do know from eye witnesses when Danang was taken that the intelligence officers, for example, of the Vietnamese Air Force were taken out, lined up, and shot.

Other things happened in Danang. I would have been very surprised, given the world publicity about the massacres of Hue during Tet—the Tet uprising—that the North Vietnamese would have been stupid enough to do anything like that again in that kind of open way. They are much too subtle for this. But to say there had been no elimination, progressive elimination of any possible opposition leadership, goes against everything that they did themselves in North Vietnam in 1954 and against everything which they themselves have said they would do.

BLOODBATH AND SURPRISE

Mr. HAMILTON. I take it you do not know whether or not a bloodbath or massive executions have occurred but you wouldn't be surprised if they had.

Ambassador MARTIN. I would be vastly surprised if they had not. I chose my words carefully. Thousands of people who would be potential opponents, even some of the so-called third force are not any longer around and we will not hear from them again.

TIME TO EVACUATE

Mr. HAMILTON. At what point did you conclude, Mr. Ambassador, that evacuation was necessary by the remaining Americans?

Ambassador MARTIN. By the remaining Americans?

Mr. HAMILTON. Yes; we had to get out. You said on page 14 of your statement that you concluded the game was up. This was in January after a propaganda extravaganza.

Did you mean at that time that you felt it was time at that point for Americans to get out of South Vietnam?

Ambassador MARTIN. No; because you didn't know quite how the evaluation would go. No one could. Would there be a negotiation?

Did the other side really mean that they wanted a "third force in power"? I never thought they did. As it turned out obviously they didn't. There was still the possibility.

THE GAME WAS UP

Mr. HAMILTON. What do you mean by the phrase "the game was up"?

Ambassador MARTIN. The game was up in the sense that South Vietnam as an independent regime, as it was constituted under its constitutional forms, could not really survive in 1975, without massive external aid, which to some degree at least approached that being given the other side and used against it.

That aid was not going to be forthcoming—from this Congress—from the United States. I thought the time was too short. Although it was not wholly impossible, it was probably too short to arrange for such military aid elsewhere.

So, I concluded then it was highly unlikely that leaving Vietnam as I thought we should leave it and could have left it, that is, leaving it an economically viable country, militarily capable of defending itself with its own manpower against outside aggression, and free to chose its own institutions as its own people might determine, was now possible.

I mean that was not going to be the case. It would be something short of that.

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. du Pont.

A SERIES OF REVERSES

Mr. DU PONT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Ambassador, on pages 8 and 9 of your testimony you outline for us how South Vietnam went from a very strong position in July of 1974 to a very weak one in April of 1975. You blame this on a series of reverses, and you mentioned two money items, the decline in U.S. aid and the tremendous increase in the price of petroleum products.

Ambassador MARTIN. Yes, sir.

Mr. DU PONT. Surely there must be more reasons than that?

There must be some reasons within the South Vietnamese governmental structure or military structure that contributed to this reversal, as well as two money items.

Ambassador MARTIN. I would like to be able to say that, Mr. du Pont, because it would obviously be a comfort to our conscience if we could determine that we did what we could have done, but from causes that were inherent within the fabric of Vietnamese society, the end was inevitable.

I cannot in good conscience say that. It's not, in my opinion, true. I can only sit here and tell you the facts as they actually are.

I did mention the fact that our Communist friends on the International Commission for Control and Supervision had reached the same conclusion I reported to this committee in July of 1974, that there was no way that North Vietnam was going to make its will felt, and that they would be far better advised to knock it off for another day.

A "LESS-FIRE" ARRANGEMENT

I was hoping even at that time that North Vietnam would agree. I did have discussions with the Vietnamese to try to arrange a sort of de facto "less-fire"—North Vietnamese could stay in the highlands, but they had to cease the pressure in the lowlands. That was unfair to the South Vietnamese any way you want to look at it, but it would have been to their advantage to go along with that. The South Vietnamese saw that and agreed to do that.

That was in the process of being worked out in July of 1974. At that point, if we could have even given them what I had recommended, a one-time over and out kind of support, they could have made it. If we could have said we will give you enough money for military supplies over 3 years and enough money economically to permit the kind of takeoff which was clearly in the making, then you make it or you don't, I believe they would have made it.

They would have had then the opportunity to have faced up to it; they would have known and could have planned, could have worked, could have made another arrangement.

A LACK OF BULLETS

MR. DU PONT. But you really believe then that the overriding factor in the fall of South Vietnam was lack of bullets?

Ambassador MARTIN. Yes, sir.

MR. DU PONT. Mr. Ambassador, I find that certainly one of the factors, but you find no problem within the Saigon Government or no problem within—

Ambassador MARTIN. There are always problems.

MR. DU PONT. Military planning or military execution other than a shortage of bullets?

Ambassador MARTIN. Not at that time. They were fighting aggressively. I think every military expert, which I am not, that you want to consult on that would concur with that.

Now, it depended on whether eight North Vietnamese divisions came barreling down. That is another dimension.

MR. DU PONT. That is the other side of the coin.

Ambassador MARTIN. Given the situation as it existed and the force committed in July 1974, the American, the Polish, the Hungarian appraisals all were that South Vietnam clearly had the military initiative.

Now, when you suddenly reduce ammunition to the point where, if you are attacked by artillery fire, you can only send back two shells before going back to get permission from a higher headquarters, because of the shortage, you then begin drastically to change the total military balance.

When on top of that totally unexpected reductions of that magnitude in military aid and appraisal of the will and the conditions within the United States by the Soviet Union, the temptation to take advantage of these facts becomes irresistible. If this were going to be the case, the Soviets concluded they might as well take the credit for it, with whatever advantage in the long run of a much-improved position in Southeast Asia, perhaps Cam Ranh Bay for the Soviet Navy. If this was going to be what the United States was going to do, the Soviets thought they might as well take maximum advantage by firmer establishing the fact that they assisted the North Vietnamese at the end. They did that. There is no doubt about that.

SOUTH VIETNAMESE MILITARY SITUATION

Mr. DU PONT. We had continuing reports over the time from, let's say, mid-October of 1974 until the beginning of March of 1975, that there were problems within the South Vietnamese fighting structure, and there in fact was a great deal of military material available, including petroleum products and bullets, sufficient to allow the country to fight on at acceptable rates of fire until the end of the fiscal year.

Ambassador MARTIN. What are acceptable rates of fire? This is the problem. You can make an assumption that can fit any sort of preconceived end and say that sufficient munitions exist. You are quite right. I am well aware that some of our people here, I think from the Pentagon, did give you this kind of thing.

Mr. DU PONT. You disagree with that?

Ambassador MARTIN. Yes; I have been out there. I disagreed with it because I knew what the facts were, and this is a fact.

When a Vietnamese division, under intense pressure, has one-tenth of the ammunition to expend which an American division would have had for a similar unit on an inactive front, it's very difficult to maintain morale and the initiative which existed before.

U.S. ESTIMATES

Mr. DU PONT. In short, your estimate of the military situation there, then, was different, and you would disagree with the estimates that we were getting from the military briefings we were receiving?

Ambassador MARTIN. I really don't know what you were getting, so I can't answer that.

Mr. DU PONT. We were getting reports there was ample ammunition to fight an effective war until the end of the fiscal year.

Ambassador MARTIN. Well—

Mr. DU PONT. That is obviously a summary of a great many reports that were received over a long period of time.

CONGRESSMAN MCCLOSKEY

Ambassador MARTIN. It depends on how much is sufficient. We know what happened, and it obviously wasn't enough. It really was not.

Congressman McCloskey, I think, is an objective man, a Marine, a professional, and when he visited an old unit with whom he had served and saw how they were fighting, he came back and said these people are superb. That is the other side of the coin.

Now, I don't know to this day why the \$300 million was taken away at the end of 1974 and suddenly put over into 1975, which had then been terrifically reduced. I have been told that it was because of some of the shortfalls of the equipment that we sent abroad during the Arab-Israeli war. I don't know what the reasons were. But a rationalization process sometimes takes place to allow us to justify actions we feel we must take.

We have all seen it. And if someone doesn't want to admit real facts, they come up with a rationalization which fits the preconceived conclusion. As for me, I can only tell you what the situation was in South Vietnam.

At that point Major General Murray, who was the Defense Attaché, again I don't want to quote him, he made one graphic reference to the fiscal whores in the Pentagon. That may be too unfair, but I somehow doubt it.

I really don't know what the facts were back here, why \$300 million was taken away. I know it was disastrous out there.

THE EVACUATION

Mr. DU PONT. I would like to shift my focus, if I might, to the evacuation.

You were very critical of some of the criticism you received, but before getting to that perhaps you could focus for a moment on how an operation like that works, who has the authority to make the decision, whether you had the authority, whether the President had to make the decision or whether the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, or whoever?

For example, on page 22 of your testimony you talk about a lack of authority, you talk about the Vietnamese getting their immigration machinery in gear before Washington could get its in gear. Who was in charge?

Ambassador MARTIN. It wasn't getting it in gear, it was just simply closing their eyes to certain things which were illegal, were against the law, and which were against policy.

I mean to permit Vietnamese to leave the country. We did manage to solve that in various ways.

We are talking about the authority to move out Vietnamese nationals. We had only the most restrictive authority until the 24th of April, 5 days before the end.

EVACUATION AUTHORITY

Mr. DU PONT. You did not have any authority?

Ambassador MARTIN. No. There was no legal place for them to go.

Now, we were even getting critical cables from the Department of State in early April about Vietnamese we were flying out on the airlift which was bringing in, in an expedited way, military equipment in the \$700 million pipeline. Some of our people out at DAO were send-

ing out some of the Vietnamese on those planes back to Clark. I had a great sympathy for them.

Mr. DU PONT. You did have the authority?

Ambassador MARTIN. No.

Mr. DU PONT. Who did?

Ambassador MARTIN. The only two ways an alien can come in is for visas to be issued, under very strict conditions, or for the Attorney General of the United States, after consultation with the Congress, to choose to use the parole authority, as he did in the case of the Cubans, as he did in the case of the Hungarians. That was finally done on April 25.

Now, I said before, I am not being critical of that. It was a difficult decision in many ways. I am simply recording the fact that parole authority did not arrive in Saigon until the 25th of April and we had no authority to move any Vietnamese, except the few related to Americans, to the United States before that date.

If you couldn't move them to the United States where did they go?

To the Philippines. At first we were told to send them back to Vietnam because the Philippine Government was raising unalloyed hell. We were told in early April by the Department of State to cut off the use of this reverse airlift.

Mr. DU PONT. My time has unfortunately expired and I hope perhaps on the second round we can explore that.

Ambassador MARTIN. I would be very glad to.

AN INVESTIGATION

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Harrington.

Mr. HARRINGTON. Mr. Ambassador, one brief question, then I would like to get into something somewhat more broadly constructed.

Do I understand that, in response to the rhetorical question you pose to yourself, you are suggesting that if an effort had been undertaken on the part of the Congress or the Government of this country to intensify our involvement in the Vietnamese war—

Ambassador MARTIN. My comment was more narrowly focused, Mr. Harrington. I myself would have no objection. My comment on that would be, I would think, Vietnam has been divisive long enough, its behind us.

Now whether or not the kind of investigation I suggest would carry that divisiveness forward or not I don't know. You would have a far better feel than I. The historians will do this of course.

Now, whether the Congress should do this or not is a question that I leave to the Congress in its own wisdom to decide.

INFLUENCES ON FOREIGN POLICY

My suggestion was that since the foreign policy of the United States must be daily updated, since it is an ongoing thing, today, tomorrow, the next day, then, perhaps we ought to look to at the influences which at times are brought to bear on its formulation—on the perceptions of what actually is true and how that is done.

Now, we have done this in many other cases. We talk about the new efforts to control lobbyists on the domestic scene—to know who they

are, as well as what they do. Sometimes they are criticized, sometimes they are praised as operating for good.

I myself have for years and years and years fought for certain things, as an individual trying to influence the Congress. That is part of our constitutional system.

The right to petition the Congress is one of our basic rights and should be cherished.

But I do think sometimes, we ought to know more about those organizations and their leaders. In other fields, you have to register, for example, if you are representing a foreign government. I think we ought to look with some precision at organizations and their origins, their background and their affiliations, who are trying to influence American foreign policy.

CONGRESS AND FOREIGN POLICY

MR. HARRINGTON. Let me go to the broader question which underlies, I think, my disagreement with the substance of your testimony.

It really isn't in the form of a question. Given, in mid-June of 1973, what you knew of the duplicity of the executive branch in dealing with both the Congress and the American public over prolonged periods of time—concerning our involvement in Cambodia, to take a concrete example—do you feel that the role that the Congress should play in the conduct of foreign policy should be one of deferring to those who know, to those who are in position to make judgments?

When juxtaposed against the events we were becoming aware of in the late sixties and seventies, of how we arrived and what we did as far as the conduct of policy, it is very difficult for me to reconcile the thrust of your testimony as to why should there have been a deference to the Secretary and the President, with what in general a society such as ours, one that claims to be more open in the conduct of foreign policy, should do.

MUTUAL RESPECT

AMBASSADOR MARTIN. I would think we ought to get back, Mr. Harrington, to perhaps the kind of relationship I alluded to at the beginning of my statement.

MR. HARRINGTON. Characterized by the civility of the poor that existed.

AMBASSADOR MARTIN. By the mutual respect, by the common search for courses of action that are in the best interests of the country, a desire which all of us have.

Now, if you interpret the thrust of my testimony that we should have yielded to someone who knew better I didn't intend it that way.

I have always, as I believe I testified in July of 1974, regarded this committee and its publications through the years as my sort of post-graduate university in the field of foreign affairs.

This committee has an enormous and distinguished record of innovative action. It was Christian Herter, and a subcommittee of this committee, which really laid the ground work for the Marshall plan.

The executive branch got the credit for that but the initiative was clearly, I think, in the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Now, these are the kinds of interchanges which I think ought to take place.

TESTIMONY BEFORE CONGRESS

Now, regarding deception, I just find myself in total agreement with you. I get in trouble every time I come on the Hill from the executive branch because I refuse to be less than totally candid.

My opening statement, for example, has not been seen or cleared by anybody in the Department of State.

Mr. RYAN. That is a formidable comment all by itself.

Ambassador MARTIN. I didn't want to get into any silly arguments. I have to say what I have to say and I think you are entitled to have my unvarnished opinion. I have also gotten into trouble with some of my colleagues in the Department who take the view that when the policy is totally decided, they must never deviate from it in testimony before Congress.

THE NEED FOR CANDOR

I have a slightly different view. I cannot understand why on the military side, before the Armed Services Committees, we have the long standing tradition that, when asked, a military officer can give his professional advice, voice his professional concerns, set out his feelings of what the situation is. If he doesn't come out with a wild attack or something of the sort, the Defense Department didn't seem to mind.

But in this kind of interchange, for the good of the country, I think candor must be the rule.

I have always been saved from trouble by my father's advice, who told me that I was too lazy to lie. He said, if you tell the truth you never have to remember what you said. So what I have told you has always conformed to that advice. I don't have to look over my shoulder to make what I say conform to something I said before to fit the facts or any policy. I tell it to you as best I know it.

I think if we had more of that—I will tell you quite frankly, sir, that I would hope that the kind of statements which you have just made about the record of deceit, et cetera, however true they may or may not be, could be again one of those things that, like Vietnam, we put behind us. I would hope that in the future there could be an approach from members of this and other committees of the Congress that would take in good faith, until proven to the contrary, statements from most of the witnesses of the executive branch who, I think, in most cases are doing their absolute best to give you whatever expertise they may have about questions you may have.

THE MEDIUM OF TELEVISION

I think too often, if I may say so—you opened the question, if you will permit me to go perhaps beyond—I think we are too concerned with this new medium of television.

Now, I am not running for anything at all. I seek no further position or posting. I never have. If the President and Secretary want me to do something and I think it's interesting enough—I may or may not do it—44 years is a long time to serve the people of the United States.

But I am not looking for anything. I don't think anyone owes me anything at all. So all I have to say here is not for headlines or attention or anything, it's simply an attempt to make a contribution to how we might approach what I think is going to be a most perilous decade ahead of us.

BURDEN IS ON EXECUTIVE BRANCH

Mr. HARRINGTON. Let me rejoin briefly, because I am presuming on other members' time.

I would like very much to accept the advice you give that we put the prerogative language mutually behind us. But I find that after 6 years here attempting to adjust, the burden is on you to accommodate to what you referred to as a period of accommodation and civility. I think the task of reconciliation rests far more heavily with the administration, and far more heavily with the people who share your role and title and profession in the foreign services.

I have enough direct experience—involving another country in this hemisphere—with the conduct of people in the executive branch to really disagree with you when you state that we have seen or learned the lessons of what that kind of duplicity, that deliberate effort at deceiving the Congress, can do to poison the atmosphere between branches and increase the divisiveness that exists in the country.

I think if there is a need for candor comparatively it rests far more heavily with the executive branch than it does with Congress.

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Winn.

ROLE IN AID REQUEST

Mr. WINN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Ambassador, I just wondered what role you played in President Ford's January 1975 recommendation to Congress for the \$300 million in supplemental military aid to South Vietnam.

Ambassador MARTIN. None other than to strongly recommend it, sir. The \$300 million was a restoration of an amount which had previously been authorized by the Congress. That authorization bill had passed for a \$1 billion appropriation.

Now, when it came before the Appropriation Committee it was out. The Appropriations Committee recommended the bill go to the floor with \$1 billion. It was cut on the floor to \$700 million, and that action was sustained by the Senate.

Now, what I had supported was going back, not for the original \$1.6 billion request, which I thought we should have done, but simply for the restoration of that amount which had already been authorized by the Congress.

POSTPONEMENT OF \$300 MILLION IN AID

Mr. WINN. Have you ever asked or inquired of anyone in the administration why the \$300 million was moved to 1975 from 1974?

Ambassador MARTIN. Yes, sir.

Mr. WINN. What was their response? Were you satisfied with their response?

Ambassador MARTIN. A great and deafening silence to this day.

Mr. WINN. It fell on deaf ears.

Ambassador MARTIN. To this day I do not know.

CHIPPING AWAY

Mr. WINN. I don't usually agree or always agree with my colleague from Massachusetts, Mr. Harrington, but isn't this the type of thing

that a public servant of 44 years should keep chipping away at until we get some answers?

Ambassador MARTIN. I have kept chipping away at it so much, sir, that I have exhausted the patience with a lot of my colleagues in the executive branch.

There is, in my opinion, utterly no excuse why the defense attaché's office and myself should not have been informed of whatever the reasons were. I never was and, to this day, I do not know the precise reasons.

MILITARY REGION ABANDONMENTS

Mr. WINN. Did you in January warn the administration that unless South Vietnam received additional aid it would have to give up the northern provinces of military regions No. 1 and 2?

Ambassador MARTIN. I was not aware of the consideration by the South Vietnamese of that plan. I can understand why we were not aware, but my recommendation was that, my statement was that, going the way we were going, with the limited amount of military ammunition, it would be impossible for South Vietnam to continue to adequately defend itself.

I don't think it occurred to me that, politically, the Vietnamese could have made the decision to abandon the military regions No. 1 and 2. I certainly have no recollection of either being aware of it, or having this as a part of my consideration of any recommendations that I made in January.

LOSS OF U.S. CREDIBILITY

Mr. WINN. I would like to change the subject matter just a little bit, which concerns me, because I have just returned from a six-country, seven-stop, 12-day tour to the Middle East and met with heads of the most of the Middle Eastern countries and our loss of credibility is unbelievable.

South Vietnam in that situation I think was sort of the start of it. Watergate, of course, played a big part in it. But now the price of all that they don't understand and the Shah of Iran, for instance, told us he did not understand this washing our dirty linens in public with our CIA and FBI investigations. He doesn't understand that type of an operation, and he thinks that that is adding to our loss of credibility all around the world, and I would say that he has always been known to be a pretty objective man. This was not just the Shah, it is practically every leader we talk to.

I wonder if you would care to comment on that, how far are we going? The people of the Middle East, basically conservative, are quite sure, feel we have gone too far right now.

THE MOST RELIABLE ALLY

Ambassador MARTIN. It is rather difficult for me to comment on other than the effects of Vietnam. It was quite clear that if we were to, for whatever the reasons, without warning, remove the capability of the Vietnamese to defend themselves, that others would draw a comparative conclusion. Having observed the Egyptian army defeated three times running and hearing all of the criticisms of the lack of efficiency or military ability, and yet having those supplies completely re-

furnished by their ally, the Soviet Union, the question arises who is the most reliable ally, the Soviets or the United States.

Now, thank God, we do not have the Soviet system. Our decisions are more difficult to arrive at. But when one considers the problem of a current visitor, and his own problems in his parliament, it is difficult to see that their current perceptions of the constancy of the American commitment would not have a seriously restrictive effect on whatever negotiating tactics might lead to a Middle East solution.

Mr. WINN. They have a hard time understanding why we can't make a commitment for more than 1 year at a time.

Ambassador MARTIN. Yes; they do, sir.

Mr. WINN. It is kind of hard to explain sometimes?

Ambassador MARTIN. It is very difficult to explain.

AID TO ANGOLA

Mr. WINN. As far as the loss of credibility, I don't know that this would exactly fall in the same category. A little while ago when we went over to vote, the House voted about 3 to 1 not to give any aid, financial or certainly military or soldiers or anything else, to Angola.

I just wonder how far down the line, as Ambassador for many, many year, how many more times are we going to be faced with this, would you guess?

Ambassador MARTIN. I don't know, sir.

OTHER WEAK SPOTS

Mr. WINN. Looking at a map can you see some other weak spots that will be coming up next week or next month or next year?

Ambassador MARTIN. I have been rather fully preoccupied for the last 2 years, sir, with the problems in Southeast Asia and I would hesitate, without having had the opportunity to know with more precision the evolving situation elsewhere, to comment on that.

I do thoroughly agree with the thrust of your comment that one of the enormous strengths in the past has been a faith in the constancy of the American commitment, and my concern in Vietnam was, however we left Vietnam, it not be in a way which would destroy or seriously degrade the effectiveness of that trust in American commitments, which is essential to the attempts to form a structure of peace in the world.

Mr. WINN. Just one last question, Mr. Chairman.

THE EVACUATION TRIGGER

Mr. Ambassador, in your opinion, in your estimation, what kind of situation was required to trigger the evacuation plans in South Vietnam?

Ambassador MARTIN. You mean the final evacuation?

Mr. WINN. Yes.

Ambassador MARTIN. The inability to be able to foresee that the situation would not degrade into the kind of panic that we saw in Danang and Nha Trang and that the safety of the Americans demanded that we delay no longer. That was my primary concern on

the morning of the 29th when I notified the President that we should immediately proceed with the rapid evacuation of the remaining Americans.

TIMING

Mr. WINN. You think that request or that recommendation should have been made earlier?

Ambassador MARTIN. No, because to the best of my judgment, to have been made earlier risked a panic situation which could have resulted in the death of a great many Americans. It could have resulted in the most ghastly of all ends, that is, the requirement to introduce so much American force that we would be fighting the South Vietnamese on the way out.

Now, we managed that, I think, in a way in which we kept that delicate balance all the way through bringing out a combination of Americans and Vietnamese. We had other problems about getting the Americans out which was the unwillingness of some to go.

Our primary problem was about a thousand former defense contractor employees who had acquired Vietnamese dependants, who had no intention of leaving unless those dependants could come. We had no authority until the last few days in Vietnam, I mean to move those dependants. As a matter of fact, I moved a great many of them without authority.

THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE ARMY

Mr. WINN. Mr. du Pont said in the question part many of us felt we could hold on for about a year from January, February or whatever the time was, clear on through June. Then he brought up the part about the shortage of bullets. You said that was the basic reason.

Many television shows, we were led to believe, and it may have been this propaganda machine that you referred to, I don't know that, saying that the Vietnamese soldiers were taking weekend vacations and that they were not up in the front, they would leave one or two men manning the guns, admittedly there were shortages of bullets, but the rest of them would go home.

Ambassador MARTIN. The Vietnamese have a habit, most Southeast Asian armies do, of their dependants basically accompanying them not to the battlefield but to the camps where they are, and when you talk about them going home, they were going there. Otherwise you would have some draftees who would take off on weekends but it was not that much of a serious problem, I mean as of July of 1974. It did not become one in that sense.

Now, the difficulty I think—I didn't make it clear perhaps in answer to Mr. du Pont's question—part of the assumptions that I think you were getting was an assumption that the North Vietnamese pressures would be constant. They would be no more than they had been in the past.

Now, when it became evident to them that the American will was eroding here, that pressure was enormously increased. We have evidence of enormous shipments of whole truck convoys of division level numbers of people moving down what was the old Ho Chi Minh Trail which had been converted really into a dual lane superhighway.

That was a change in the whole military equation that the South Vietnamese were facing.

Mr. WINN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Ambassador, I want to ask you a number of specific questions with regard to the evacuation. Before I do that, I want to welcome to the subcommittee two members of the full committee, whom we are delighted to have join us this afternoon, Mr. Ryan and Mr. Solarz, and I will turn to them for questions.

MR. RYAN'S TRIP TO VIETNAM

Mr. RYAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to preface the remarks I make by saying publicly that Ambassador Martin was very kind and very cooperative in my own trip there. I think you may remember, it was a year ago this month as a matter of fact.

Ambassador MARTIN. I was very worried about you.

Mr. RYAN. I am not sure what you mean by that.

Ambassador MARTIN. I was very worried about your health, sir.

Mr. RYAN. Oh. I do recall that [laughter] I insisted on going to some areas that were perhaps more touchy than they should have been. The shrapnel was splashing in the water in front of me and there was concern expressed about me. I saw what I came to see and I formed no conclusion from it. If I do get back there sometime and can obtain the kind of rapprochement with them regarding your personal effects, I would be very happy to do so.

Ambassador MARTIN. My wife and I will be extremely grateful.

NORTH VIETNAMESE PROPAGANDA

Mr. RYAN. Having said that, I want to question you rather closely on a couple of matters. You say on page 14 of your testimony that there was no effective way to counter the propaganda extravaganza in January.

Are you saying then the propaganda effort by Hanoi had a significant effect on the decision regarding the \$300 million in aid?

Ambassador MARTIN. Well, on the \$300 million, even more than that. I said also in my testimony, sir, that it was the opinion when the former Foreign Minister who in the last stages, was the President of the Senate of Vietnam, whom I think you met when you were there, came back here and was not received on the Hill, although the critics of Vietnam were flooding the Hill, he came back to Saigon with the appraisal that the temper of the Congress was it was not going to get the \$300 million and would, probably, not get any further appropriations for the next fiscal year for military assistance. There might be some humanitarian assistance but no military assistance at all. That was his appraisal and I am inclined to share it. The temper of the Congress was extraordinarily opposed to reason a year ago.

I do think that that great gathering of people from all over the country in response to the pastoral letter that had been issued by a number of clergymen, was very effective. (The chairman suggested that I put that and my comments on it in the record, which I shall be glad to do.) Yes, I do think it had an effect.

EFFECT OF PRESSURE ON CONGRESS

Mr. RYAN. You say you think it had an effect directly on the Congress or indirectly through popular pressure on the Congress?

Ambassador MARTIN. Both, sir. As I recall, after the meetings they visited in an organized way their own Representatives in Congress and Congressman in districts in which they come from other parts of the country. They went back home and, again I know this, started in again on the letter writing campaign and the rest of it.

You see, Mr. Ryan, as I have testified before, in four decades of public life, I have been very intimately connected with many of what people now term liberal causes. I don't like the pegs liberal or conservative. I believe in the things I believe in and stand for. But in the 1967-69 period I was Special Assistant to the Secretary for Refugee and Migration Affairs and dealt with the great American community of voluntary agencies. Many of them knew me very well, and I had many friends who were totally opposed to the United States being in Vietnam but who were, nevertheless, confident enough of my own integrity, distressed enough on what was going on, to keep me rather fully informed of what was going on within those circles. It is on the basis of such reports that I became much more concerned. What does concern me now is the question that was raised by the chairman whether small groups like this can be effective. Such question tends to sort of push this effort under the rug.

ENORMOUSLY EFFECTIVE

I, myself, think it was enormously effective. I recall, though I do not have a copy of it, that there was a question and answer, as the Evening Star in Washington runs from time to time, on an interview with Mr. Branfman. At that time, I think that he clearly indicated that the next target would be Korea. That is his right to do that. But I think it ought to be sort of clearly understood, perhaps better than it is, I mean the effect that this does have.

I said that if I knew no more than the normal member, perhaps not of this committee which has a reason to delve much more deeply into these problems, but just a normal member with interest in Agriculture or the Mining or Interstate Commerce Committees, and all I got was the pressure that I got from my district from these groups, I would be inclined to vote against.

The greatest duty of a statesman is to be reelected. If all the pressure in my district is against, if I had no great feelings about it, I would be inclined to vote against. I think this is important and Mr. Branfman, I understand, is now sort of on a leave of absence from his duties. He is assisting Mr. Thomas Hayden in defeating that great conservative Senator from your State, Mr. Tunney, but I imagine when that job is done one way or another he will be back. I have enormous respect for the capabilities of Mr. Branfman and Mr. Luce.

TOO LITTLE INFORMATION

Mr. RYAN. The reason I asked the question, Mr. Chairman, if you will indulge me a chance to make a comment of my own in response to some of the things that the Ambassador said—if it is true, and it may

be true that the congressional decision to withhold the additional funds was a direct cause and effect which caused the reversal that led to the defeat and destruction of the South Vietnamese Government. I think it is important to point out in behalf of some Members of Congress, not the least of whom is myself, that if we deal with information which is too sparse to make decisions, such as the decision made this afternoon regarding whether or not we should be involved in Angola, there is a direct cause and effect relationship that goes back to 1954, or to 1964, where we lost the respect and the amicable feeling that existed with the Congress and the Executive because we lost the capacity here on the Hill to believe the experts who were out there in the field and the quality of the information they gave us. I think that is exactly what happened here. And the relationship has got to be one of mutual respect, as Mr. Harrington pointed out, going in both directions.

Ambassador MARTIN. I couldn't agree with you more.

SUFFERANCE OF CONGRESS

Mr. RYAN. There was and is a notable kind of sufferance, perhaps is the best word, on the part of the executive branch toward this House.

If, when the administration made the decision to keep the Angola matter discrete and told me as a member of the Oversight Subcommittee last July, if they had told the entire Congress and come over here and explained their reasons, I am certain that the vote that was cast today would have been different in its total results. The members would have voted on the basis of more and better information. Policy is still made in this House and the body at the other end of the hall, and I think some of the comments you make here indicate we made the wrong decision.

Ambassador MARTIN. Mr. Ryan—

DISAPPOINTMENT AND DISILLUSIONMENT

Mr. RYAN. There is an inability on the part of the Executive and your people and General Westmoreland, to understanding the disappointment and later disillusionment of not seeing the light at the end of the tunnel that was supposed to have been there in 1964.

Ambassador MARTIN. I do understand it and I think, based on your own experience when you were there, you will agree there was no question that you asked on which I did not try to be as totally forthcoming as I conceivably could.

Mr. RYAN. I can't quarrel with that.

Ambassador MARTIN. I think the members of this committee have a right to that kind of information, I think that you should never be ignored. I think sometimes even things you don't want to hear, that are really relevant to the situation, ought to be displayed and laid out on the table because they are important to all of the people of the United States. I couldn't agree with you more.

IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Solarz.

Mr. SOLARZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Ambassador, I want to express my own appreciation for your willingness to take the time to share with us this afternoon your own impressions of what happened in the final days of the war.