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# Americans Have Been

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Although there is no official evacuation of Americans from South Vietnam, according to U.S. officials, Americans from the U.S. embassy staff in Saigon for two weeks have been flying to the United States.

A reduction of 218 in the staff of 768 civilians and military personnel attached to the embassy in the defense attache's office was ordered into effect April 1, a Defense Department spokesman said.

Some of them were among the 84 civilians who stepped off an Air Force jet transport at Travis Air Force Base, near San Francisco, Tuesday night, according to the base spokesman.

The reduction in the large attache office which handles U.S. military aid to South

Vietnam, had been on the books since late last year, according to the Department of Defense, but only came into effect last week.

A spokesman said that it was a coincidence that the reduction started as the South Vietnamese military collapse took place.

"In addition, the defense attache has been given authority to further reduce his staff by permitting the voluntary departure of personnel whose functions are non-essential to the office's operation," the spokesman added.

"There is not an evacuation," said an official at the State Department, which has argued in recent days that any large-scale departure of Americans would panic Saigon's defenders. "There are dependents who are leaving at their own

choice and there may be some non-essential people leaving."

U.S. officials have said recently that the number of Americans in Vietnam had dropped from 6,000 to 5,400 at the beginning of this week.

Whether dependents or non-essential embassy staffers or people whose jobs ended when the provincial cities where they worked fell, Americans are leaving Vietnam. Some fly as orphan escorts, some on military transports and some leave on commercial flights.

There have even been indications that some of the 44 civilians flying as orphan escorts on the C-5 Air Force transport that crashed near Saigon last Friday were embassy staffers being allowed

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to catch a ride home. Thirty-seven of those escorts died in the crash.

Jo-An K. Pray, who had been in Saigon for two years as an embassy secretary and had one more year to serve there, wrote to friends in the Washington area April 4 that they were not to worry, she would be safe.

That day, Miss Pray was manifested onto the C-5 flight carrying 243 Vietnamese children. She is listed as missing and presumed dead.

The U.S. embassy said Miss Pray and the 43 others were volunteer escorts and denied a report made at the crash site by an embassy employee that they were secretaries being evacuated.

State Department officials here were told that the casualties were "mostly military dependents."

Then the Navy Department, handling casualty reporting and the notification of families for the U.S. government here, refused to release the casualty list for one day after well informed sources said that the notification of relatives had been completed.

Navy spokesmen made no explanation of the delay when asked why the normal government rule of releasing a casualty list after notification of next of kin was not being observed. The list was made public under pressure from the Defense Department, which had listed Air Force casualties in the same crash two days earlier.

The only apparent difference between the victims on the two lists was their jobs. The Air Force men were as-

signed to the plane. The civilians, all but two of them women, were almost all assigned to the U.S. embassy at a time when its officials were maintaining that no abnormal number of official Americans were leaving Vietnam.

There were only five dependents on the list of the dead and the missing. The rest were 31 women and one man employed by the Navy Department and three women employed by the Defense Intelligence Agency. All 35 worked in the Saigon defense attache's office.

Four had listed their homes in the Washington area. They were Barbara E. Adams of Alexandria, Ann Bortorff of Washington, Celeste Brown of Frostburg, Md., and Jo-An K. Pray of Arlington.