

SFChronicle

A Radio Ban On Saigon Evacuations

APR 15 1975

Washington

The Voice of America has been ordered not to make any mention of possible American evacuations from Vietnam except official government statements or official actions by the administration or Congress.

This policy led to the deletion of at least one report this past weekend in which Senator Henry M. Jackson (Dem-Wash.) mentioned the evacuation issue. A VOA correspondent reported the senator's comments and then reviewed President Ford's statement on the subject in his foreign policy speech Thursday night, but this section of her report was not included.

A VOA official said yesterday that a report on comments by Senate majority leader Mike Mansfield (Dem-Mont.) on the Vietnam evacuation question which was filed for use on Saturday also was "deemed not usable."

"We've got a fluid situation, a situation where we have to be very conscious at all times about adding to the complications already existing — even to the extent of placing American lives in jeopardy," Andrew Falkienicz, a United States Information Agency spokesman, said yesterday.

"Normally, the news coverage of VOA is not limited to congressional actions or official expressions," Falkienicz said. "but the situation in Saigon is not normal."

In situations where statements could be misconstrued, with possible consequences for the lives of Americans and others in South Vietnam, Falkienicz said the VOA has been ordered to place limits on its coverage.

Officials in the news divisions of the VOA have been chafing under the new policy, and many are displeased at being ordered to present only official policy or actions on the evacuation issue.

"A lot of people feel there is an obligation here to reflect all segments of society, not just the policy of the

government," said one official who has been involved in broadcasts dealing with Vietnam.

"At the same time," this official said, "we are also aware of the question of safety of the population. It is a close one to call."

Washington Post
9011
152