

SENATE UNIT BARS TROOPS AS GUARD FOR VIETNAMESE

APR 15 1975

Foreign Relations Committee
Meets With President on
the Evacuation Issue

NYTimes

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 14—The Senate Foreign Relations Committee balked today at the Ford Administration's request for broad Presidential authority to use American troops to protect the evacuation of both American and South Vietnamese citizens from South Vietnam.

After an executive session in the morning, the committee, at its request, met with President Ford in the afternoon at the White House and presented its objections to the use of American troops in the evacuation of anyone other than American citizens.

Democratic leaders in the House and Senate, meanwhile promised "expeditious consideration" of Mr. Ford's requests, made last Thursday in a speech before a joint session of Congress, for additional military and humanitarian aid for South Vietnam as well as the authority to use American forces in an evacuation effort.

Case Confident on Aid

Senator Clifford P. Case of New Jersey, the ranking Republican on the Foreign Relations Committee, predicted after the White House meeting that Congress "would allow a degree of discretion for the President" by providing limited additional military aid for South Vietnam.

"There is not a disposition to be stiff-backed on the part of the Congress or over-insistence on the part of the President," Senator Case said.

Congress appeared prepared to give the President authority to use troops for the evacuation of Americans still in South Vietnam. But there was growing Congressional concern, as reflected by the discussions within the Foreign Relations Committee, that the Administration's proposal for evacuation of tens of thousands of South Vietnamese could lead to new military involvement.

Scope Wasn't Detailed

In legislation sent to Capitol Hill over the weekend, the Administration asked for broad authority for Mr. Ford to carry out an evacuation effort but did not detail the extent of the operation.

The proposed legislation would specify simply that none of the Congressional restrictions on military operations in Indochina would be "construed as limiting the availability of funds for the use of the armed forces of the United States to aid, assist and carry out humanitarian evacuation, if ordered by the President."

The request for presidential

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authority ran into immediate objections in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Some members compared it privately to the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin resolution, which was used by President Lyndon B. Johnson as Congressional sanction for military intervention in the Vietnam war.

The trip to the White House, Senator John J. Sparkman of Alabama, the committee chairman, said, marked the first time that a full Foreign Relations Committee had met with a President in more than 25 years. Five years ago the Foreign Relations Committee arranged to meet with President Richard M. Nixon, but the White House turned the session into a much larger meeting.

Kissinger, Schlesinger Present

On hand for the 90-minute meeting this afternoon were Secretary of State Kissinger, Defense Secretary James R. Schlesinger and Gen. Frederick C. Weyand, the Army Chief of Staff, who has just made a trip to South Vietnam.

According to Senator Dick Clark, Democrat of Iowa, the committee told the President that its members had reached a consensus on two points: That humanitarian aid should be approved as rapidly as possible and that the use of American troops should be restricted to the evacuation of American citizens.

Disagreement Over Speed

The President was said to have taken the position that he had inherent powers as Commander in Chief to use the troops to protect Americans and that no legislation was necessary if only American citizens—there are nearly 6,000 left in South Vietnam—were to be evacuated. But Mr. Ford and Mr. Kissinger, according to Senator Clark, said they would appreciate an expression of agreement from Congress on that legal point.

Disagreement was reported between the committee members and the President over the speed with which Americans should be evacuated. Mr. Ford, according to Senators, did not reply directly to sharp

questions on the issue of speed, but did give assurances that evacuation of Americans was receiving "very high priority." Reflecting the committee's field, the Majority leader, who is a member of the committee, told reporters on Capitol Hill that there should be "a gradual, stepped-up withdrawal" of Americans from South Vietnam while "there is still some time."

There were indications from Administration officials that the withdrawal of Americans was being accelerated, but with a deliberate attempt not to call attention to the fact. At the White House meeting, both the President and members of the Senate panel were said to have expressed concern that the United States take no public action that might give the impression, as one member put it, that "we are quitting and running for the boats."

Senate Report Is Anxious

The committee also took the occasion to present a pessimistic report on the situation in South Vietnam from two staff members—Richard M. Moose and Charles F. Meissner—who had just returned from a trip to Saigon. Their report concluded generally that time was running out for the Saigon Government as well as for the safe evacuation of the Americans.

Without waiting for the Foreign Relations Committee to draft its recommendations, Senator Robert C. Byrd of West Virginia, the assistant Majority leader, introduced a resolution that would limit the use of American troops to evacuation

of Americans from South Vietnam.

On the issue of the South Vietnamese citizens, Senator Byrd said "the dangers are too great to risk the possibility of the reinvolvement of the United States in Vietnam."

Speaking before a caucus of Democratic senators, Senator Mansfield also expressed concern that the use of troops to evacuate South Vietnamese could "become the basis for a re-involvement in the military conflict in Vietnam."

'Specter of Watergate'

"Legally," he went on, "the war cannot and must not be resumed without the express consent of the American people speaking through the Congress and President jointly. To find any pretext to the contrary is to race once again the specter of Watergate—the specter of gross illegal behavior on the part of officials of the United States."

While Democratic leaders promised "expeditious consideration" of Mr. Ford's requests, Senator Mansfield said it would be "extremely difficult" for Congress to complete action on all the legislation by April 19, a deadline set by the President.

The Senate Armed Services Committee, with Defense Secretary Schlesinger as a witness, is due to begin consideration tomorrow of the Administration's request for an additional \$722-million in military aid for South Vietnam. Mr. Kissinger was to press the Administration's case before the Senate Committee on Appropriations.