

# U.S. Considers Corridor To Evacuate Vietnamese

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WASHINGTON, April 16—Gen. Frederick C. Weyand, the Army Chief of Staff, told a Senate committee today that the Pentagon was considering establishing a corridor from Saigon to the sea to evacuate tens of thousands of Vietnamese.

Creation of such a corridor, one of several evacuation plans being considered, could involve a major commitment of American forces.

Pentagon officials said that, under hostile conditions, at least one Marine division—about 20,000 men—plus air power from Navy carriers would be required to protect the corridor.

At the same time, State Department officials said that the United States was expected to announce tomorrow that 980 Cambodian refugees would be

admitted as temporary residents. [Page 18.]

Meanwhile, the rift between President Ford and Congress over aid to South Vietnam and the evacuation of Americans widened.

The President rejected as inadequate a Congressional plan that would give him \$200-million for emergency assistance and restricted authority to use troops for evacuation purposes.

Members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee said they had been misled about the rate at which Americans were being evacuated and put off, at least until tomorrow, further action on legislation.

An accommodation over the amount of money to be made available still appeared pos-

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sible, but there was a sharp philosophical difference on the question of evacuation.

The members of Congress want a rapid removal of Americans and would permit the use of troops to carry out the evacuation. But they do not want to allow troops to evacuate Vietnamese.

The Government seems prepared to leave a sizable contingent of Americans in Saigon for the foreseeable future and wants to evacuate a substantial number of Vietnamese.

President Ford told the American Society of Newspaper Editors today that he had "ordered the evacuation of all nonessential United States personnel in Vietnam."

He said that the Government was "phasing down on a daily basis" the number of Americans and that "the present plan is to keep those there who have positions of responsibility."

The President refused to disclose the rate of withdrawal or the number of Americans still in Saigon.

Senators said that the Pentagon telephoned today to correct the statement of Defense Secretary James R. Schlesinger that 3,850 Americans remained in South Vietnam. The number, the Senators said, was significantly higher.

Moreover, Senators of both parties complained that the White House had provided them with no plan for the evacuation.

"To know what we are legislating about, we need to have more information," said Senator Jacob K. Javits, Republican of New York.

Senator Dick Clark, Democrat of Iowa, said it was clear that Graham Martin, the United States ambassador in Saigon, was "dragging his feet" on the question of evacuation.

## Plan Is Rejected

The legislation tentatively approved by the Foreign Relations Committee yesterday and rejected by the White House today would have allowed American troops to protect Vietnamese only as they were incidental to an American evacuation.

In large measure, these restrictions reflected concern that a major evacuation of Vietnamese could result in a resumption of military involvement in Vietnam.

That concern was underscored by General Weyand's closed-door testimony today before the Senate Appropriations Committee defending the request for \$722-million in military aid for the Saigon Government.

General Weyand, who returned last week from a fact-finding mission to South Vietnam, reportedly told the Senators that, without additional aid, the Government of President Nguyen Van Thieu would collapse within a month.

## Vung Tau Is Chosen

Although no final evacuation plan has been formulated, General Weyand, according to committee members, said that one proposal would be the establishment by United States troops of a 40-mile corridor

from Saigon to Vung Tau on the coast.

From Vung Tau, the Vietnamese would be evacuated to an unspecified point by American ships.

Mr. Ford told Senators on Monday that he hoped to evacuate 175,000 Vietnamese.

One potential program, General Weyand reportedly said, is that Vung Tau is overflowing with refugees who fled from the north.

On the aid question, the Senate Armed Services Committee will begin consideration tomorrow the request for military assistance to Saigon. The International Relations Committee of the House of Representatives plans to take up the request for \$250-million in humanitarian and economic assistance and au-

thority to use troops for an evacuation.

Philip C. Habib, an Assistant Secretary of State, told the House committee today that the \$150-million the panel is considering for humanitarian relief would be inadequate.

Monroe Leigh, the State Department's legal adviser, told the committee that it would be difficult to fashion restraints against the use of troops since it was "virtually impossible to foresee all contingencies."

One group of committee members prefers leaving existing laws intact, in effect preventing the use of troops to evacuate Vietnamese. Another segment believes that the use of troops should be permitted with few, if any, restrictions.