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Congress OKs Limited Troop Use

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Amid sometimes harsh debate, the senate and house approved separate plans yesterday and early today to provide up to \$327 million for refugee relief and for limited use of troops to evacuate Americans and South Vietnamese from Saigon.

Congress still must reconcile the differences in the two measures and take final votes in each chamber before a bill can be sent to the White House.

Under the senate bill, approved 75-17, \$100 million would be provided for evacuation operations and \$150 million for refugee relief. Carefully prescribed terms would permit use of U.S. troops to evacuate Americans and South Vietnamese who accompanied them, but only until the last of the Americans was rescued.

Under the house bill, approved 230 to 187, \$77 million would be provided for evacuation and \$300 million for humanitarian aid. It would not restrict evacuation procedures but simply require that the minimum number of troops and degree of force be used.

Both House and Senate bills would also authorize emergency humanitarian aid for South Vietnam.

California's senators, Democrats Alan Cranston and John Tunney, voted against the bill.

President Ford, in a speech before a joint session of Congress on April 10, had asked for \$250 million in humanitarian aid and \$722 million in emergency military assistance as well as broad authority to use troops to

protect the evacuation of Americans and South Vietnamese.

With the rapidly deteriorating military situation in South Vietnam, there was overwhelming opposition in Congress to providing any additional military aid to the Saigon government, and it seemed unlikely that Congress would act upon the President's request.

There was little disagreement in Congress over providing the requested humanitarian aid, but considerable controversy developed in the Senate and House over giving the President authority to use American troops for the evacuation of South Vietnamese citizens whose lives might be endangered.

The administration has talked in terms of evacuating as many as 175,000 South Vietnamese — an objective.

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that officials privately are conceding no longer seems attainable.

A concern expressed in the House and Senate was that a large-scale evacuation of South Vietnamese, such as proposed by the administration, could lead to a military reinvolvement by American forces in the final stages of the Vietnam war.

Mr. Ford has contended that he has inherent powers as commander-in-chief to use troops to protect the evacuation of Americans, although he asked that this authority be "clarified" by Congress. At the same time, Mr. Ford said he needed Congressional authority to use American troops for the evacuation of foreign nationals from South Vietnam.

The administration has asked for broad authority to use American troops in an evacuation of Americans and South Vietnamese. But the legislation, as it was emerging from Congress, would give the President circumscribed authority to use the troops for evacuation of

South Vietnamese.

In the Senate bill, the President could not use any more troops than were essential for evacuating Americans, and the use of the troops would be restricted to areas where Americans were being evacuated, and the use of the troops could not be extended to evacuate South Vietnamese.

The effect of these limitations, as explained by senators on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, who drafted the legislation, was to restrict, both by geography and time, the number of South Vietnamese who could be evacuated under American military protection. In effect, the use of troops to evacuate South Vietnamese would become incidental to the evacuation of Americans.

The House bill would authorize evacuation of South Vietnamese "to whose lives a direct and imminent threat exists"—but only to the extent that U.S. forces were already being used to evacuate Americans, their dependents and relatives.

New York Times