

Minh Asks U.S. to Leave

Washington

The final evacuation of Americans from beleaguered Saigon began today, several hours after President Ford met in emergency session with the National Security Council.

Government sources said the evacuees were taken to pre-arranged evacuation points where they were flown by helicopter to U.S. Navy ships stationed off the South Vietnamese coast.

At about 11:30 p.m. EDT, Mr. Ford went to his Oval Office and stayed about a half hour. A reporter who saw him remarked on his working late, and the President replied: "With good reason."

The decision to start the final evacuation apparently came after General Duong Van Minh, the new South Vietnamese president, asked U.S. Ambassador Graham Martin in Saigon to close down the U.S. Embassy there by tonight.

(The request was conveyed by letter last night, according to the French news agency, Agence France-Presse, which quote a government source as saying that Martin replied that he would do as Minh asked.)

(In his letter, Minh requested the departure in particular of all military personnel attached to the embassy, the source said.)

Minh announced his order in a brief radio address. He gave no explanation, but it appeared he was trying to meet demands the Viet Cong laid down for peace negotiations.

The sources in Washington said the remaining Americans in Saigon — there are believed to be about 900 — would be picked up at specified locations in the city by helicopters flown in from

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U.S. Navy carriers off the South Vietnamese coast.

(At Clark Air Base in the Philippines, meanwhile, many U.S. Air Force C-130 transports took off for Saigon today, and reliable sources said they will attempt to land and pick up thousands of Vietnamese still awaiting evacuation.)

Earlier yesterday the De-



South Vietnamese women and children fled the fighting around Tan Son Nhut

fense Department announced that large numbers of South Vietnamese refugees will be flown to three military bases in California, Arkansas and Florida for temporary housing.

The Pentagon said the movement of the refugees is expected to begin within the next two days to Fort Chaffee in Arkansas, Elgin Air Force Base in Florida and the Marine Corps' Camp Pendleton in California. Each base, according to the Pentagon, can handle as many as 20,000 refugees.

The decision to temporarily house the refugees on military bases in the United States was made at the direction of Ambassador L. Dean Brown, the director of the Vietnamese refugee program, in order to reduce the large buildup of South Vietnamese at U.S. bases in the Pacific, such as on Guam and Clark Air Base in the Philippines.

According to the Pentagon announcement, the three U.S. bases will serve as "reception centers" for the refugees, providing temporary housing for "up to 90 days or more."

The South Vietnamese, according to officials, will be processed at the center for eventual permission to enter the United States, either as immigrants or refugees.

The selection of the three bases — one from each of the armed services — was reported by administration officials to have run into some objections from members of Congress representing the districts in which the bases are located.

The Congressional concern focused on the possible adverse economical impact resulting from the influx of a large number of South Vietnamese into areas in which there already was high unemployment.

Senator John McClellan (Dem-Ark.) said the number of South Vietnamese "planned for evacuation to the United States is exces-

sive and is probably more than we should undertake to accommodate."

As chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, McClellan said he intends to raise questions about the administration's request for \$327 million for humanitarian assistance in South Vietnam and evacuation of refugees.

In a statement on the Senate floor, Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia, the assistant Democratic leader, said he had "serious reservations" about the administration's plans to bring as many as 130,000 South Vietnamese refugees to the United States.

"Some very practical considerations," such as cultural differences and unemployment, he said, "raise grave doubts about the wisdom of bringing any sizable number of evacuees here."

Meanwhile, there was rising Congressional criticism — privately shared by high-ranking Pentagon officials — that the airlift out of Saigon was being used almost entirely to evacuate South Vietnamese and not to

remove the American citizens and dependents still there.

Senate Democratic leader Mike Mansfield and Republican leader Hugh Scott both urged that all remaining Americans be removed at once and that the American embassy in Saigon be closed.

According to Scott, 20,000 South Vietnamese were evacuated from Friday through Sunday. A State Department spokesman reported that some 39,000 South Vietnamese have been evacuated, largely by air, as of yesterday morning.

On the basis of information supplied by the State Department, Senator Dick Clark (Dem - Iowa) said 140 Americans were evacuated on Saturday and Sunday.

The State Department, meantime, said that as of Sunday there were 954 Americans still in South Vietnam, of whom all but 116 were U.S. government employees.

Clark said, "One can't help but speculate that Americans are being held

there to bring out more Vietnamese."

At a hearing of the House Rules Committee, Representative Joe Moakley (Dem-Mass.) said, "It seems to me these Americans are being held hostage to get out the Vietnamese. I don't see why we can't get out 954 Americans when we can get out 20,000 Vietnamese."

The Rules Committee cleared the way for a House vote today on legislation that would authorize \$327 million in humanitarian aid and give the President restricted authority to use American troops to protect the withdrawal of American and South Vietnamese citizens. The legislation was approved last week by the Senate.

Under the legislation, the evacuation of South Vietnamese would be secondary to the withdrawal of American citizens.

Thus, once all Americans were withdrawn, the President would have no authority to use troops to protect the evacuation of South Vietnamese.