

## Canada Defending Her Decision To Leave Vietnamese in Saigon

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Special to The New York Times

OTTAWA, May 26—The Secretary of State for External Affairs, Allan J. MacEachen, issued a lengthy statement today defending the controversial manner in which the Canadian Embassy staff departed from Saigon, leaving Vietnamese employees behind, just before the city fell to the Communists.

Canadian news reports from Saigon were strongly critical of the embassy's refusal to take Vietnamese aides on a Canadian Air Force evacuation plane going to Hong Kong.

Nationally televised news film showed two embassy station wagons being loaded onto the aircraft while Vietnamese begging to go were turned away. Crates of souvenirs were also airlifted out.

According to Canadian radio news broadcasts from Saigon, Vietnamese applying for Canadian visas on April 24 had been told to return the following day although the officials knew that the embassy would then be closed.

Canada's explanation that the Vietnamese had been unable to get exit permits from Saigon brought accusations in the House of Commons that the Canadian action had been less humanitarian than the American policy of ignoring red tape in evacuating Vietnamese.

Mr. MacEachen responded in effect that what might be all right for the United States to do, because of a special position in Vietnam, would have been an improper course for Canada.

He said that Canadians had not wished to share over the years the military involvement of the United States in Vietnam, and that consequently Canada did not share "the power of independent action which went with that involvement."

He said that, while Vietnamese who had worked for the Americans might have been thought to be in danger, there were "no valid grounds to assume that having worked for Canada or Canadians in South Vietnam places Vietnamese citizens in jeopardy."

Calling the criticism of the embassy's action "emotional," and also "unjustified and unfounded," Mr. MacEachen said that Canada should beware of subjective spillover, into Canadian perceptions, of concepts or responsibilities that are specifically American.

He did not mention the station wagons or the crates of souvenirs taken on the evacuation plane nor the false information on the closing of the embassy given to Vietnamese.

Canada has agreed to accept 3,000 refugees, of whom a few hundred have arrived.