

Text of Talks by U.S. General on Leaving Vietnam

By The Associated Press
 SAIGON, March 29 (AP)—General William Westmoreland, commander of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, and his staff addressed to the South Vietnamese, was made known to the country.

Address to Command

Today we officially retire the colors of one of the most unique and significant military-civilian organizations in our military history. Unique, because it was activated to assist an ally in a manner and to a degree never previously attempted by United States military forces. Its mission was to prevent an all-out attempt by an aggressor to impose its will through raw military force. That mission has been accomplished and the rights of the people of the Republic of Vietnam to shape their own destiny and to provide for their self-defense have been upheld.

With the assistance of the Vietnamization program the armed forces of this republic have grown in strength to more than a million men and women and have become a modern structure of regular and territorial forces

armed and equipped to defend their nation. Improvement and modernization has been dramatic. The armed forces of the Republic of Vietnam have assumed responsibility for their self-defense, enabling their free-world allies to be withdrawn. Their all-out performance against the enemy's invasion of 1972 proved beyond doubt their readiness, determination and capability to defend their ideals.

'The Price of Freedom'

All of this has been at the expense of great sacrifice but we know that the price of freedom has always been high, just as we know that the alternative of domination by force is intolerable.

I am confident that the right of this republic to determine its future and to live in peace with its neighbors will continue to be upheld.

And so we, the men and women of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, have witnessed the survival and growth of a brave nation. We have the satisfaction that comes with having responded to the aid of our ally at a time of dire need and having achieved peace with honor.

You can hold your heads high for having been a part of this selfless effort. And it has been my great privilege to have served with you.

Good luck and Godspeed.

Address to South Vietnamese

Today, my command terminates its presence on Vietnamese soil. We came here to assist a nation whose independence was endangered by military aggression. Our mission was to aid this republic in attaining a capability that would enable the South Vietnamese people to determine their own destiny free of the threat of force. That mission has been accomplished.

Your armed forces have clearly proven their ability on the battlefield. The best the enemy could employ was defeated. The eyes of the world saw this heroic performance, witnessed your determination, and observed your success.

On the ground, your army and Marines denied the enemy his stronghold, destroyed his equipment, and demoralized his strength.

Ahead, your navy protected your coasts and waterways and blocked enemy access to these critical routes of supply and support.

Your air force interrupted enemy movement and destroyed his formations. Also, your air force provided the mobility needed by your army.

Meanwhile, your territorial forces provided security for our hamlets and villages. Your armed forces have grown to a modern fighting force of more than a million men and women. Their sacrifices have secured your rights

of self-determination and their movements have given hope to freedom-loving people everywhere.

The strength of our air, ground, and naval forces now in being serve eminently to notice that the Republic of Vietnam can shape its own future. The determination and ability of the South Vietnamese people to defend their homeland was demonstrated at An Loc, at Kontum, at Quang Tri, and on our less-known battlegrounds. Your sacrifice was extensive, but the price of freedom is always high. The peace which I am confident will emerge from this long and

costly war is of great importance to all free nations.

I am confident that the right of this republic to determine its future and to live in peace with its neighbors will continue to be upheld.

So today we have reached a milestone. Our mission has been accomplished. It is a part with a strong sense of pride in what we have achieved—and in what our American men and women who have served in the struggle join me today in wishing you well. It is our sincere hope that the peace with honor that has been our goal will last forever.