

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

~~SECRET~~/SENSITIVE

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: The President's Meeting with the Republican Congressional Leadership.

DATE AND TIME: Tuesday, May 6, 1975
8:05 - 9:23 a. m.

President: There are two major matters today -- the farm bill veto and refugee aid. Let's do the farm bill first.

Butz: [Discusses farm bill veto.]

President: Dean Brown and Dan Parker are here to discuss the refugee details. There has been some criticism of how the evacuation was handled. Just a week ago we had gone through a most difficult night determining when and how we should conduct the evacuation. We could have ordered it earlier, but we could also have triggered a panic and jeopardized the lives of the 6,000 Americans there. So we chose to draw down the Americans in an orderly way, without triggering a panic. Maybe we were a bit lucky in retrospect, but we got all the Americans out and a larger number of Vietnamese than we expected. We had earlier anticipated we would get about 40,000 of the 200,000 we had figured fell into the jeopardized category. Imagine the difficulty of managing the evacuation at the DAO compound and the Embassy. It was an excellent demonstration of military dedication and competence. There are critics, but they are not those who had the decision to make. These are Monday-morning quarterbacks, but they never had to play the game. It was a damn good operation and I am proud of it. Martin is a difficult guy, but he got them out. It burns me up that these great humanitarians now want to turn their backs on the Vietnamese. We didn't do it with the Hungarians and the Cubans, and we won't do it here.

Bartlett: I think you did a great job and I support you in this.

Turner: Texas is with you.



DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5

NSC Memo, 11/24/98, State Dept. Guidelines
By Ut, NARA, Date 1/24/00

~~SECRET~~/SENSITIVE

~~TOP SECRET~~ - XGDS (3)
CLASSIFIED BY: HENRY A. KISSINGER

Scott: I am with you. I am getting no adverse mail. These people with every last name in the world who scream about immigration make me sick.

Brown: About 20,000 have come to the U.S. so far and there are about 120,000 in the pipeline. But we don't know how many are on the seas now, though it looks like less than we thought a few days ago.

We have a three-phase operation: (1) First we pick them up and move them to Subic, Wake and Guam. (2) They move to three processing centers in the United States. (3) Here is where the U.S. responsibility meshes with the volunteer agencies who resettle them.

We are also working on international settlement with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and ICEM. We are getting good cooperation with ICEM but not at all with the UN. We have approached 100 countries. The result is not very good. The Canadians will take a minimum of 3,000. Some West African countries will take a few.

President: What is the educational level of most of them?

Brown: The educational level is quite high generally. Seventy percent of the males speak good or fair English. These are the people who were involved with us. They are the community leaders and I think they will make good citizens. We are only talking about 50,000 heads of families.

President: I got two special pleas -- one from Pope Paul who wanted us to maximize our effort, and one from George Meany, who had worked for a free labor movement in South Vietnam.

Scott: It would be good if those two could be a little more visible.

President: Can we release the Pope's letter?

Scott: Can't we get something on television? A little humanitarianism.

Tower: The press is saying there is no proof that these people would have been liquidated. Can't we talk more about the atrocities?

Parker: To put the number in perspective, we had already registered 700,000 refugees in South Vietnam and then there were another 650,000 we didn't have time to register. The Asians are good long-term haters -- North Vietnam took four years to liquidate 50,000 people after '54.



Case: Who do you want to introduce the bill?

Scott: I think you and Sparkman should.

Hutchinson: We introduced it in the House yesterday.

Fish: There has been vocal opposition in my subcommittee on this issue -- about lack of cooperation from other nations, and the economic cost (unemployment). I think what you said this morning should be repeated tonight. These people are responding to what they think is public opinion around. I am sure you will get a response.

Bartlett: How many are children? They won't take jobs.

Brown: About 60 percent.

President: I will get a question tonight and I will try to get this word out.

Hutchinson: I hope you will resettle these people in areas which don't have high unemployment.

Devine: There are reports that many of them want to go back to South Vietnam.

Brown: There were 45 picked up by mistake in Thailand.

President: Another question is will any of this money be used to help Cambodia and South Vietnam. The answer is no.

Edwards: I think you shouldn't even get into this tonight. Let's stay out of that aspect.

Devine: If you can say these funds can't be used for Cambodia and South Vietnam, it would help.



May 6, 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

PARTICIPANTS: President Ford
Vice President Rockefeller
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State
and Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs
Earl Butz, Secretary of Agriculture
Republican Congressional Leaders (List attached)

DATE AND TIME: Tuesday, May 6, 1975
8:10 - 9:20 a.m.

PLACE: The Cabinet Room
The White House

SUBJECT: Farm Bill and Refugee Assistance

(The first part of the meeting was taken up with a presentation by Secretary Butz on the Farm Bill and a discussion of the likelihood of sustaining the President's veto. The Farm Bill discussion ended about 8:45 a.m.)

The President: I would like to turn our discussion now to the problem of the Vietnamese refugees. We have with us this morning Ambassador Brown and AID Administrator Parker. I have noted criticism of how the evacuation was handled. Just a week ago, today, we had gone through a very difficult night in which we decided to undertake the full evacuation effort that turned out to be a very complex military operation. We could have ordered the evacuation earlier but our best judgment was that an early attempt at evacuation would have triggered precipitous panic among the South Vietnamese and would have, in fact, jeopardized the very American lives we wanted to save. We did, however, move out in a very calm and orderly fashion some 5,000 Americans without jeopardizing their lives by triggering a panic. I think, overall, we were also lucky. We did get out all Americans who wanted to leave and a much larger number of refugees than anyone had anticipated. At the time of

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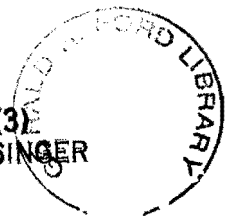
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5

NSC Memo, 11/24/98, State Dept. Guidelines

By uk, NARA, Date 1/24/00

CONFIDENTIAL XGDS

~~TOP SECRET~~ - XGDS (3)
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the evacuation we had moved out about 45,000. Today, the number is over 125,000, a great number of Vietnamese leaving by a variety of means we had not anticipated. Nevertheless, I'm sure there are still a great many South Vietnamese who had worked with, and helped, Americans who were not able to make it out when the country fell.

I can imagine how difficult it must have been to assemble all these people to be evacuated. The problem became especially difficult once a final evacuation by fixed-wing aircraft was precluded. The helicopter evacuation was a superb military operation and an excellent effort on the part of our people in Saigon. We just have to ignore the Monday morning quarterbacks who, as you know, don't win any games. In fact, they don't even play any games. All in all I consider it a very successful operation under the most difficult circumstances, and I think we owe our military forces a sincere vote of thanks for their courage and dedication. I would also include in this gratitude, Ambassador Graham Martin, who did a fine job, although he has a reputation for being a difficult person at times.

Looking at this large number of refugees, I have no doubt that if we distribute them around the country in some equitable fashion, we can handle these numbers. I want you to know that it just burns me up that these great humanitarians all want to turn their backs on these refugees. We didn't do this to the Cubans and to the Hungarians, and damn it, I don't want to see us turn our backs on the Vietnamese.

Senator Scott: We are with you, Mr. President. I see all this criticism as just a media creation. The American people and public opinion are on your side in this matter.

The President: (to Ambassador Brown) Dean, do you have something to give us this morning?

Ambassador Brown: We must see this operation as a flow of people. We now have about 120,000 in the pipeline. We really don't know how many are on the ships which have fled South Vietnam; we only have estimates. U. S. Navy and private cargo ships may have picked up as many as 75,000 people.

We have been working on a three-stage operation. The first stage was to round up the refugees and move them to Subic and Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines, but as you know we received considerable opposition from the Philippines Government. We then started a second



stage of moving the refugees to Wake and Guam, but Wake and Guam can only hold about 58,000 people, so we set up three camps in the United States for a third stage in the relocation process. These camps will act as staging areas for the resettlement activities conducted by voluntary agencies and church groups.

The voluntary agencies receive the refugees only after processing by the Immigration and Naturalization Service and after a health clearance by HEW. The voluntary agencies are receiving large numbers of calls from Americans who are calling in volunteering to take in refugees.

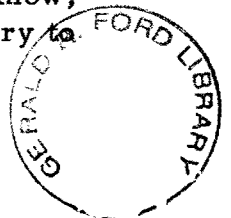
The President: Are we also trying to get other countries to accept some refugees?

Dean Brown: Yes, we are, Mr. President. We are working through ICEM, the International Commission on European Immigration, which is working especially to place refugees in Latin America. We have also received fairly good cooperation through the UN and other international organizations, but quite frankly, we are not doing as well as we would like to. The results of our requests to over 100 nations have not been good, except for Canada which has agreed to take 3,000 refugees and for some of the small West African countries which have agreed to take small numbers, in view of the fact that they already have Vietnamese emigre communities.

The President: What have you found about the educational levels of these people?

Ambassador Brown: We have done a survey; 70 percent of the heads of households already speak English at the excellent or good level. The educational level of all of these people is quite high. We have to remember that the high risk or endangered people were the better educated. I am quite confident they will rapidly make effective tax-paying citizens. I also want to point out that we are talking about 35,000 heads of households, and this figure should be compared to the 400,000 legal immigrants who come into this country every year.

The President: I have received two special appeals--one from Pope Paul, asking us to do everything possible for the refugees, and another from George Meany. As you know the AFL-CIO had developed a strong labor movement in Vietnam. In response to Meany's appeal, we made a special effort to get the top labor leaders out because, as you know, it is the leaders of the mass social movements the Communists try to



eliminate first. What we need now is more public support. I wonder if we can release the Pope's statement?

General Scowcroft: We'll look into it, Mr. President.

Ambassador Brown: Meany plans to make a public statement on this subject. We are also undertaking a survey of job qualifications. We are putting refugee skills on a computer. We are also setting up a telephone clearing house system, with a toll free number for Americans to call in to volunteer to take refugees.

Senator Tower: Some reporters are saying that these refugees would not have been executed if they had not fled. We should get out publicly any atrocity stories for which we have evidence.

The President: That's a good PR aspect we ought to push.

Ambassador Brown: We are doing that but the hard evidence is only coming in slowly.

The President: The treatment given the French in Cambodia was disgraceful. Their evacuation caravan suffered terrible, terrible treatment.

Dan Parker: I'd like to make a few additional points which provide some perspective. We had already on our hands 700,000 who had fled the Communists plus another 650,000 who fled from the Northern Provinces which we had not yet registered when the government fell. I would also point out that in the four years following 1954, Ho Chi Minh executed 55,000 people. To anticipate potential criticism about the lack of selectivity in the evacuation effort, we should point out that a large number fled on their own from off the coasts of South Vietnam, but even within this group, my guess is that these are indeed high risk people who had been earlier refugees from the North. Thus, even the unplanned part of the evacuation probably had a high proportion of high risk people. As you know, AID has had an unfortunately long experience dealing with refugee problems, and we are now involving our experienced refugee affairs people from Cambodia and Vietnam in the current relocation and resettlement effort.

The President: Which committees will this refugee legislation be referred to?

Senator Case: To the Foreign Relations Committee. Senator Sparkman is ready to start work on it.



Congressman Hutchinson: We introduced this legislation in the House yesterday.

Congressman Fish: We had hearings in our subcommittee yesterday. We've had a lot of opposition in the subcommittee, mostly due to concern over the potential impact on the economy. I want to point out that it was the most liberal members of the House who had the most reservations about the refugee effort. Much of this is a residual distrust of the Executive Branch. There is also considerable concern over the failure of other countries to do very much. Ambassador Brown made an excellent presentation yesterday, and he made a good record on the job impact of only 35,000 heads of household. I also agree that we should use the AFL-CIO as much as possible. It will be very important to change public opinion on this issue. Your press conference tonight can help a lot if you repeat the same remarks you made to us. The American people will respond very well if they know the facts.

The President: I will hit this very hard in my press conference tonight and I plan to weave in the comments I have heard around this table.

Ambassador Brown: You should also point out that about 60 percent of the refugees are children.

The Vice President: Why are we using the term "parole"? It seems to have a bad connotation and it is not understood by the people.

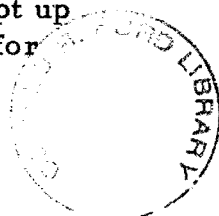
Congressman Fish: The parole authority is merely a provision to expedite the entry of people into the U. S. It is a technicality that lets people in without having legal immigrant status. As you will recall, Congress later passed laws to give the Hungarians and the Cubans full immigrant status.

Congressman Hutchinson: I do hope we will do everything possible to resettle these people in areas not heavily plagued by unemployment. As you know, this is a very sensitive point in Michigan.

Ambassador Brown: We have been addressing this very point, and the voluntary agencies have agreed to avoid the depressed areas.

Question: What about the reports that some of the refugees want to go back?

Ambassador Brown: Yes, we have only 45 on Guam and the UN is arranging for their return to South Vietnam. These were people who were swept up in Thailand when the Thais simply pushed them on the plane heading for Guam. We are asking every refugee if they want to return to South



Vietnam. If any do, we will turn them over to the UN.

The President: We may be asked if any of this money will be used in South Vietnam or Cambodia. I want to make it clear that the answer is an unequivocal no.

Question: What about the private voluntary agencies still working in South Vietnam?

The President: We have no requests for such assistance and we have no plans to provide any. My judgment is to leave that aspect of assistance to other countries.

Dan Parker: Mr. President, I think I should point out for the record that there are a few Americans who chose to remain in Vietnam working with certain volunteer agencies that may still be using funds and material provided by AID.

The President: That's a useful clarification but I want to make it clear that none of this new money will go into South Vietnam or Cambodia.

Question: Another point you might make, Mr. President, is the striking figure that we accept 400,000 immigrants in a normal manner every year. This is especially striking when compared with the 35,000 figure of potential job holders.

Senator Scott: I put all those numbers in the Record yesterday.



PARTICIPANTS

The President
The Vice President

SENATE

Hugh Scott
Bob Griffin
Bob Stafford
John Tower
Cliff Case

HOUSE

John Rhodes
Bob Michel
John Anderson
Sam Devine
Jack Edwards
Barber Conable
Jim Quillen
Guy Vander Jagt
Bill Broomfield
Ed Hutchinson
Ham Fish
Bill Wampler

Al Cederberg

STAFF

Secretary of State Kissinger
Secretary of Agriculture Butz
14 Don Rumsfeld
7 Bob Hartmann
11 Jack Marsh
2 Phil Buchen
3 Jim Cannon
5 Max Friedersdorf
15 Bill Seidman
6 Alan Greenspan
12 Ron Nessen
10 Jim Lynn
13 AID Administrator Parker
16 FEA Administrator Zarb
/ Dean Brown
17 Dick Cheney
9 Vern Loen
8 Bill Kendall

REGRETS

Rep. Lou Frey
Sen. Carl Curtis
Sen. Ted Stevens
Sen. Bob Dole
Sen. Milt Young





MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

ACTION
May 7, 1975

CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR: GENERAL SCOWCROFT
FROM: LES JANKA *lj*
SUBJECT: GOP Leadership Meeting May 6, 1975

Attached for your review is a Memorandum for the Record from my notes of the President's meeting with the GOP leadership yesterday.

Also note on page 4 your agreement to look into public release of the Pope's appeal to the President.

RECOMMENDATION

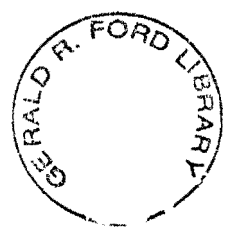
That you review and approve the Memo for the Record at Tab A.

 AD Approve

 Disapprove

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DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5
NSC Memo, 11/24/98, State Dept. Guidelines
By *WJ* , NARA, Date 1/31/2000



NSC CORRESPONDENCE PROFILE

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SOURCE/CLASS/DESCRIPTION

TO: PRES _____ FROM: KISSINGER, H *Hanka* _____

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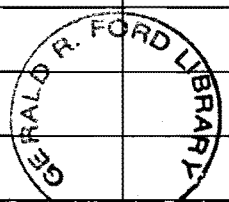
SUBJECT: *60p Leadership mtg on May 6 1975 - LA*
Apparently memo for record

DISTRIBUTION/INITIAL ACTION ASGMT

INTERNAL ROUTING AND DISTRIBUTION			REC CY FOP	ACTION REQUIRED	
	ACTION	INFO			
ADVANCE CYS TO HAK/SCOWCROFT				MEMO FOR HAK	(_____)
STAFF SECRETARY				MEMO FOR PRES	(_____)
FAR EAST				REPLY FOR _____	(_____)
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA				APPROPRIATE ACTION	(_____)
MID EAST / NO. AFRICA / SO. ASIA				MEMO _____ TO _____	(_____)
EUROPE / CANADA				RECOMMENDATIONS	(_____)
LATIN AMERICA				JOINT MEMO	(_____)
UNITED NATIONS				REFER TO _____ FOR: _____	(_____)
ECONOMIC				ANY ACTION NECESSARY?	(_____)
SCIENTIFIC				CONCURRENCE	(_____)
PROGRAM ANALYSIS				DUE DATE:	
NSC PLANNING				COMMENTS: (INCLUDING SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS)	
CONGRESSIONAL					
OCEANS POLICY					
INTELLIGENCE					

SUBSEQUENT ROUTING/ACTIONS

DATE	FROM	TO	S	SUBSEQUENT ACTION REQUIRED (OR TAKEN):	CY TO
<i>5/8</i>		<i>Scowcroft</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>Approve memo for record</i>	
<i>5/12</i>		<i>DAVIS</i>		<i>Scowcroft approved recom</i>	



NSC/S DISP INSTR

DISPATCH _____

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NOTIFY _____ & DATE _____ BY _____

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Bipartisan Leadership Mtg
May 6-75 ✓

P 2 major matters today: farm bill veto & refugee aid.
lets do the farm bill first.

mtg - (Discuss farm bill veto)

P Brown & Leach are here to discuss refugee details. There
has been some criticism of how & when we handled
just a week ago we had gone through a short
dip might determine when & how & we could
have ordered it earlier, but we could have triggered
a panic & jeopardized the 600,000. So we have
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triggering a panic. Maybe we were a bit lucky
in retrospect, but we got all the arms out &
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earlier anticipated we would get about 40,000 of
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category. Imagine a dip of managing the war at
a DAO compound & the Embassy. It was an excellent
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but they never had to play a game. It was
a damn good job & I am proud of it. Munster
is a big guy, but he got them out. It turns
me up that three great humanitarians who
now want to turn their backs on the issue. We
didn't do it w/ a Hange & Carlson & we arrived at
it here.

Bantist I think you did a great job and I support
you in this.



Can we Release letter from Pope?

T. M. Texas is w/you

Scott I w/you - I getting no advice mail. These people w/ every last name in a world who scream about immigration make me sick.

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Result not very good. Candidates will take minimum of 3000. Some West African countries will take a few.

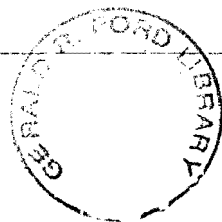
P What is a educational level.

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Parsons To put a # in perspective, we had already registered 200,000 refugees in S.V.M. & there were another 650,000 we didn't have time to register. Asians are good long term hatters - NOK took 4 yrs to liquidate 50,000 after '54.

Cox Who do you want to introduce a bill

(?) Scott I think you & Sparkman should.

Dutchman We introduced it in a House yesterday.

Fish There has been vocal opposition in my subcommittee on this issue - lack of cooperation from other nations, & economic unemployment. I think what you said this morning should be repeated tonight. These people are responding to what they think is public opinion - which I think can be turned around. Besides a moral issue, we are party to a # of intl. refugee protocols which bind us on these matters. If you turn pub opinion around, I am sure you will get a response.

Barthel How many are children? They would take jobs.

Brown About 60%.

P I will get a question tonight and I will try to get this word out.

Hartman I hope you will settle these in areas which don't have high unemployment.

Devine There are reports that many would go back to S.V.M.



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