Dear Virginia friends,

A brief note on who in the Virginia Congressional delegation stands where on the Administration's Supplemental requests. Remember, Congress is at home until April 7.

1. None of the following has committed himself to a definite position yet: Senators Byrd (Ind.) and Scott (R), Representatives Downing (D-1) and Wampler (R-9). Focus maximum energy on these crucial votes.

2. Representatives Fisher (D-10) and Harris (D-8) have come out against both Supplementals. Encourage them to stand firm and vote against any compromise amounts.

3. As for Whitehurst (R-2), Satterfield (D-3), R.W. Daniel (R-4), W.C. Daniel (D-5), Butler (R-6) and Robinson (R-7): don't take for granted their bad Indochina voting records. Former "die-hard" hawks in Congress are now defecting to our position (i.e. Mendel Rivers Davis (S.C.) So keep the heat on!

Feel free to write or call if further information is needed. Hoa Binh -- Peace!

Paul Ahrens, Virginia Co-ordinator
CONGRESS STALLS AT INDOCHINA CROSSROADS!

Haven't we been here before? -- The sad scenes of frightened refugees streaming down dusty roads, the same headlines splashed across our front pages, the same old rhetoric of "bloodbath," "moral commitment," and "domino theory."

But now there is one enormous difference. After twenty long years, the futile policy of US intervention in Indochina is now on the verge of being repudiated by the US Congress. Twenty years -- but the lesson has been learned. As CBS commentator Eric Sevareid recently remarked, we are witnessing the "death rattle of a failed foreign policy."

The American people have helped to make it happen. The anti-war activity of the last ten years -- and particularly of the last two years -- is finally coming to fruition. In the past six weeks Congressional offices have literally been flooded with thousands of letters, mailgrams, phone calls, and personal visitations. (Mail in some Congressional offices is reportedly running 200-1 against aid.) Eight out of every ten Americans are opposed to the Administration's policy in Indochina. The message has been loud and "perfectly clear."

In response to this overwhelming public pressure, the Administration has intensified its own pressure campaign on the Congress. A Presidential press conference and almost daily statements by Defense and State Department officials have spotlighted the desperate plight of the Thieu and Lon Nol regimes. It is no secret that they are trying to blame Congress for the failure of their twenty-year-old war in Indochina.

coalition to stop funding the war

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The torrential outpouring of anti-war sentiment and the Administration's pressure tactics have created a serious dilemma for the Congress. The apparent demise of the Administration's Indochina policy has created a "policy vacuum" which can only be filled by a Congressional initiative. The main issue is responsibility for the US role in Indochina -- a responsibility that now clearly belongs to Congress.

That institution, however, has never been noted for strong leadership. In this case the tensions are overwhelming. The Administration is accusing Congress of "abandoning an ally." The American people, on the other hand, are blaming their representatives for squandering money and perpetuating bloodshed. Seldom have the political stakes been so high. The Congressional reaction to this situation has been to flee.

The Thieu and Lon Nol regimes may be falling, but on March 27, the United States Congress recessed for two weeks without taking any decisive action on either the Vietnam or the Cambodian supplementals.

There were, however, several preliminary votes in House and Senate committees and subcommittees. (See chronological chart on opposite page.) As a result of these actions, an $82.5 million emergency military aid package for Cambodia will go to the Senate and possibly the House floor soon after the Congress re-convenes on April 7.

There were probably two factors influencing this development. The first is the misguided fear among many moderates and liberals that a complete cut-off of aid would result in a bloodbath in Phnom Penh. An appropriation of $82.5 million would, they believe, serve to avoid such a scenario.

A second factor is simply the reluctance of a handful of committee and subcommittee members to assume complete responsibility for such a monumental decision. Compromises within these small committees permit the issue to go to the House and Senate floors --
### ACTIONS ON CAMBODIA SUPPLEMENTAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>SIGNIFICANCE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3/4</td>
<td>House Foreign Operations Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee defers action until Supplemental goes through normal authorization process.</td>
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<td>Desperate Administration hopes of short-cutting legislative process fails, creating at least a two month delay before final passage.</td>
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<td>3/11</td>
<td>Humphreys Subcommittee of Senate Foreign Relations Committee passes $125 million military Supplemental Amendment by a 4-3 vote.</td>
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<td>Close surprise vote keeps open the prospects for an Administration compromise. Moderate and liberal Republicans (Javits, Percy) receive high-level pressure from Ford, and are greatly influenced by McCloskey's &quot;Bloodbath&quot; testimony. Clearly indicates that liberal votes can no longer be taken for granted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/12</td>
<td>House Democratic Caucus passes resolution calling for no further military aid to Cambodia and Vietnam for Fiscal Year 1975 (189-49)</td>
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<td>Resolution drawn up by 50 new Members of Congress. Resolution is NOT binding, but it shored up support against Congressional-initiated compromises. Administration sees that original request for $222 million is doomed, and begins compromise offers of its own to entice support.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/12</td>
<td>Subcommittee of House International Relations Committee accepts 4-3 the $82.5 million military aid compromise with a June 30, 1975 termination of all aid to Cambodia.</td>
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<td>Again, McCloskey report induces offer of compromise to Administration. Moderates balk at zero-aid proposals.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/13</td>
<td>Senate Democratic Caucus duplicates House resolution by overwhelming majority.</td>
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<td>Compromise drift has another setback; lines are drawn more clearly against Administration position.</td>
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<td>3/13</td>
<td>House International Relations Committee rejects zero-aid proposal 24-6, but defers final action on Administration request.</td>
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<td>State Dept. adamantly rejects cut-off date idea, and angers liberals/moderates. Delay is obvious tactic to shift decision to Senate. Caucus Resolutions' impact become visible.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/17</td>
<td>Senate Foreign Relations Committee passes $82.5 million military aid compromise. (9-7)</td>
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<td>Administration reluctantly accepts this compromise in order to force the issue to full Senate debate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/25</td>
<td>Congress recesses, taking no definitive action in either House or Senate.</td>
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<td>The Big Stall...</td>
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*formerly Foreign Affairs Committee*
where all 535 members of Congress will have the opportunity to debate and take a stand on war or peace in Cambodia.

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It is extremely difficult to keep pace with events in South Vietnam and even more difficult to predict the exact course of their development. Nonetheless, it would probably not be too far-fetched to say that the situation which exists in Phnom Penh today may exist in Saigon several months or even weeks from now. It is no longer so much a question of what will happen in South Vietnam but rather how and when. How many people will have to die? How much suffering will have to be endured?

Once again, those questions can only be answered by the US Congress. It will have its next opportunity to do so late April when it acts on the Vietnam supplemental request.

The Thieu regime's latest setbacks will undoubtedly have an impact on Congressional attitudes toward further aid. The question that each legislator must now ask is "How are we to avoid another Phnom Penh?" The answer to that question is clear -- through the implementation of the Paris Agreement. But the only way to implement the Agreement is to end all war aid now.

Strong bipartisan support for this position is now developing within the Congress. Senators Charles Mathias (Rep., Maryland) and Adlai Stevenson (Dem., Illinois) have announced that they will offer an amendment to the FY 1976 Department of Defense Authorization Bill which would terminate all military aid to South Vietnam on July 1, 1975 -- with the proviso that the President could suspend the aid cut-off for 120 days if he felt that progress was being made toward a political settlement.

Many legislators, however, are impatient with this 120 day grace period. Senator James Abourezk has indicated that he may introduce legislation which would terminate military aid July 1 -- with no conditional clause.

Floor votes on aid cut-off legislation will probably come in late May or possibly June. Passage depends on widespread public support.

Here's how you can help to build it --
action agenda:

"Peace Through Zero War Aid"

In one month, we must make "Zero War Aid in 1975" a household term. In one month, we must mount a nationwide campaign with such a magnitude of public support that Congress has no choice but to vote for Zero War Aid to Viet-Nam in 1975.

National Campaign May 4-12:

Preparation must begin now and it must begin with us. A three-step strategy is proposed:

1.) MOUNT BROAD, VISIBLE, PUBLIC SUPPORT. Urge community, business, labor, religious and academic leaders and organizations to publically support an end to Viet-Nam War Aid in 1975.

2.) PUBLICIZE THESE ENDORSEMENTS THROUGH LOCAL MEDIA. Organize press conferences and interviews, issue press releases, meet with local editors.

3.) PRESS REPRESENTATIVES AND SENATORS TO SIGN BEFORE OR DURING THE WEEK OF MAY 4 - 12:

THE PLEDGE TO END VIET NAM WAR AID
I pledge to vote for all legislative efforts (i.e. Mathias-Stevenson Amendment, Abourezk Amendment) to end all U.S. military aid to south Viet Nam in 1975.

Congress is at home...

Take the opportunity to press your representatives on the pending Cambodia and Viet-Nam Supplementals by:

ARRANGING VISITS or statewide conference calls between community leaders and members of Congress. Bring along the local press.

WRITING LETTERS-TO-THE-EDITORS quoting the positions taken by your representatives. This could provide an incentive for others. The already committed should be commended, the uncommitted urged to make a firm, public decision now on the Supplementals.

ENCOURAGING EDITORIALS -- sure to be read by Congress during recess.

ATTENDING REPRESENTATIVES' PUBLIC ENGAGEMENTS. Speak out. Leaflet.
Torrent of Refugees in South Vietnam, Laid to Fear of War, Not of Communism

Panic is Believed to Dominate Flow

People Seem Afraid Mostly of Being Left Behind as 'Everyone Else' Goes

Special to The New York Times

SAIGON, South Vietnam, March 25 — The hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese streaming from their homes to the rapidly shrinking Government-controlled areas appear to be fleeing in panic rather than for political reasons.

Some Western observers are comparing the movement with that of 1954, when the division of Vietnam into a Communist north and a non-Communist south resulted in the flow of a million or so people. Now, as then, it is being said that "they are voting with their feet."

In the last few weeks, New York Times correspondents in South Vietnam have interviewed hundreds of refugees from different parts of the country. Each refugee has been asked why he or she chose to join the human tide, abandoning home, possessions and livelihood.

"Because everyone else is going," was a typical reply. Not one said it was because he or she feared or hated Communism.

Minority Stay Behind

Many are afraid that to stay behind would mean exposure to killing and destruction. Some — including probably almost one-third the population of Hue — chose to stay, but most have been fleeing.

"My people stayed back at Quang Tri last time, in 1972," a woman said as she nursed a baby. "There was bombing and shelling all the time, many killed. It's better to go to the Saigon side, because the Communists have no airplanes."

But fear of the unknown appalls at the moment to be a greater driving force than fear of any specific physical danger.

The evacuation of Hue seemed to typify this.

"We began to realize that government offices were moving away and that the army was moving out," an elderly woman said. "So the people just started to move, too — government and soldier's families first, and then many others. People just didn't want to be left behind, with everyone else going."

"We don't know what will happen, but there are rumors that the former Vietnamese Emperor is returning to the throne in Hue. Maybe that's good, maybe it's bad. Who knows. But whenever things change, poor people suffer."

The former Emperor, Bao Dai, lives in exile in France.

"No Good to Be Caught"

"I think the Communists maybe will be all right," a fleeing taxi driver said. "But it's no good to be caught in the war zone between one side and the other. That's where you can be killed."

Some are afraid that if they stay behind they may starve or run out of water. Some cannot see the prospect if they stay behind, of never being able to see relatives and friends in the government zone.

For the rich and the middle class, for storekeepers and businessmen, and especially for those who appreciate the Western-style urban luxury, there has been a special incentive to flee the Communists.

Said a businessman from Da Lat after he arrived in Saigon:

"Life in Hanoi and in Communist Vietnam generally may efficiently protect the poorest people from disaster. But it is brutally controlled, it is as closed-in as a vacuum flask and it is drab, drab, drab."

Communist Permisson

In some areas, Communist authorities have been permitting some residents to leave. Such has apparently been the case at Ban Me Thuot, which fell two weeks ago, and at northern towns in South Vietnam this week.

"I don't think people would care very much about leaving if they knew they could move from one side to the other," a farmer said. "In fact it would be better to stay, to take care of my house and fields. But right now nobody knows whether we could continue to move."

People do not talk much about why they are moving, unless asked by outsiders. They seem caught up in the chaotic momentum of escape, in which families are divided, children are lost and life is changed forever.

"Since I left my village I have been putting one foot in front of the other for four days," a man said as he dragged his cart into Da Nung. "Why do we go? We go because it is time to go, that's all."

By Auth for the Philadelphia Inquirer