



IT'S OVER

Most Yanks Got Out

Compiled From AP and UPI

SAIGON—The United States pulled out of Vietnam Tuesday. All but a handful of Americans fled the country aboard Marine helicopters by early Wednesday and left it up to the Vietnamese to find peace.

The Americans were ordered out Tuesday by new President Duong Van Minh to meet one of the Communists' major conditions for peace talks — an end to the U.S. presence. Political sources said the Communists and the Saigon government had agreed in principle to call a cease-fire.

President Ford then ordered Marines to evacuate the last Americans assigned to the U.S. Defense Attache's Office within 24 hours. Ford promised in his statement that force would be used only to protect lives.

Aboard the USS Blue Ridge, command ship for the evacuation, a correspondent said the Navy announced 4,582 persons, about 900 of them Americans, had been lifted out by the evacuation that began at mid-afternoon Tuesday. Forty ships of the U.S. 7th Fleet were gathered in the South China Sea for the task.

Former Vietnamese Premier, Vice Air Marshal Nguyen Cao Ky, natty in his khaki safari suit with maroon scarf around his neck, stepped aboard the command vessel. He said nothing to reporters.

Naval spokesmen said Mrs. Graham Martin, wife of the U.S. ambassador to South Vietnam, arrived before the first official wave of helicopters left three carriers off Vung Tau for the evacuation run.

The few Americans remaining in Saigon apparently were mostly newsmen.

The departure ended an era that cost the United States 14 years, \$150 billion and more than 50,000 lives — the last of which in combat were two U.S. marines killed in a Communist attack on Saigon's airport early Tuesday that spurred the pullout.

The evacuation came 17 days (Continued on Back Page, Col. 1)

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A U.S. Marine points a rifle at South Vietnamese trying to climb over the wall at the U.S. Embassy Wednesday in desperate attempts to get aboard the evacuation flights. Marines guarding the embassy had a tough time keeping order as the Vietnamese panicked and tried to throw themselves over the walls and wire fences. (UPI)

SAIGON (AP) — The Saigon government surrendered unconditionally to the Viet Cong Wednesday, ending 30 years of bloodshed.

The surrender was announced by President Duong Van "Big" Minh in a five-minute radio address.

As he spoke, the city of Saigon fell quiet and shellfire subsided.

Minh said:

"The republic of Vietnam policy is the policy of peace and reconciliation, aimed at saving the blood of our people. I ask all servicemen to stop firing and stay where you are. I also demand that the soldiers of the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG) stop firing and stay in place.

"We are here waiting for the provisional revolutionary government to hand over the authority in order to stop useless bloodshed."

On the same Saigon radio broadcast, Gen. Nguyen Huu Hanh, deputy chief of staff, called on all South Vietnamese generals, officers and servicemen at all levels to carry out Minh's orders.

"All commanders," Hanh declared, "must be ready to enter into relations with commanders of the Provisional Revolutionary Government (Viet Cong) to carry out the cease-fire without bloodshed."

South Vietnamese officers said they had no other choice.

The surrender came within hours of the evacuation of all Americans except a handful of newsmen from Saigon

Reaching the decision to pull out, Page 3. Other coverage on Pages, 6, 7, 12-13.

and the closing of the U.S. Embassy which was later looted along with the residence of U.S. Ambassador Graham A. Martin.

South Vietnamese officers complained that the U.S. evacuation had panicked the army and that many top officers and most of the air force had pulled out, leaving the armed forces depleted and Saigon an open city, as Communist-led forces closed in.

(A few people appeared to brave the around-the-dock curfew minutes after the announcement, UPI said, but shellfire continued and there was sporadic small arms fire in the heart of the city after the president's brief address.

(Minh spoke as Communist forces fought toward the very center of the city, which by mid-morning had seemed to be in a state of panic and imminent collapse.

(Police were ordered to raise white flags over their stations.

(The U.S. Embassy was burned by looters.

(They carried away desks, chairs and typewriters from the building the Americans had evacuated.

(Vietnamese still waited in the Embassy compound for evacuation. Among them was an American with his Vietnamese wife and children, UPI said.)

Despite the U.S. evacuation, it was certain that the Saigon army would fall anyhow whether the Americans stayed or not.

More than a dozen North Vietnamese divisions were ringing Saigon while the capital was defended by less than a division of green troops.

The Viet Cong had rejected a cease-fire and negotiations proposed earlier by Minh and demanded in effect an unconditional surrender to include these terms:

—The withdrawal of Americans.

(Continued on Back Page, Col. 1)

'Big' Minh Issues Saigon Surrender Order

(Continued From Page 1)

—The abolishment of the Saigon government.

—The disbanding of the Saigon army.

Saigon itself was littered with paper and other debris from looted American buildings, including the U.S. Embassy, the American Ambassador's residence and all the U.S. military billets in the downtown part of the city.

Associated Press special correspondent Peter Arnett touring the city reported that nervous soldiers fired into the air at times but he saw no dead or wounded.

Soldiers near the radio station at the northeastern edge of town

said Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces had moved up to the Saigon River bridge during the night and were poised to enter the city.

Many Vietnamese panicked, believing that the Viet Cong were already in the city, but it was apparent that some of Saigon's police and local militia were still at their posts indicating the Communist-led forces were still on the edges of the city.

Within 30 minutes after the surrender announcement was broadcast to the city, the traffic seemed to slow down to normal speed and shooting seemed to stop entirely.

The beginning of the end for South Vietnam was the government's decision in mid-March to abandon provinces in the Central Highlands. Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces swept in and gained momentum that quickly carried them across the northern two-thirds of the country.

At the time of the surrender, Communist forces held three-fourths of South Vietnam, 23 of the country's 44 provinces, and had Saigon itself all but surrounded with an estimated 150,000 troops with tanks, artillery and rockets.

The heaviest Communist attack of the war on Saigon's Tan

Son Nhut air base early Tuesday killed two U.S. Marines and prompted President Ford to decide on "Option 4" — a quick and massive helicopter evacuation of all remaining official Americans from Vietnam.

Minh, who had asked the Americans to leave, addressed his country for 60 seconds Wednesday. He told his troops to lay down their arms and asked the Viet Cong to begin discussions for what he called "turnover ceremonies."

"All soldiers, be calm and remain where you are now," said the president.

"I also call on soldiers not to

open fire so that together we can discuss ways to hand over the reins of government without bloodshed."

Minh proposed the formation of a new military and civilian administration.

Minh's announcement ended 35 years of fighting in South Vietnam that began when the Japanese invaded Indochina in 1940. After World War II, the fighting continued with Communists battling the French and later the American-backed government of South Vietnam.

Saigon's surrender came 12 days after Cambodia fell to the pro-Communist Khmer Rouge rebels.

Tears... as America Leaves the City of Sorrows

(Continued From Page 1)

after the United States abandoned Cambodia, and finished America's bitter, bloody involvement in Indochina.

The 7th Fleet ships were expected to leave quickly, thus fulfilling another Communist demand — that U.S. ships quit Vietnamese waters.

The airlift itself went fairly smoothly. The helicopters were protected by U.S. Navy F4 Phantom jet escorts and helicopter gunships, and the Communists lived up to their promise not to interfere with the American departure.

Some Vietnamese went with the Americans. Others, by the hundreds, gathered outside the U.S. Embassy pleading to be taken along. Marines were flown in by helicopter to guard the compound — and the departing Americans.

AP correspondent George Esper reported that America's 30-year involvement in the Indochina War was ending in tumultuous scenes, with U.S. Marines and civilians using pistol and rifle butts to smash the fingers of Vietnamese clawing at the 10-foot wall of the U.S. Embassy.

Some tried to jump the wall and landed on the barbed wire. A man and a woman lay on the wire, bleeding. People held up their children, asking Americans to take them over the fence.

At the airport, angry Vietnamese guards fired in the air and at evacuees on buses, shouting, "We want to go, too."

Shortly after midnight Tuesday, the city appeared outwardly calm with the streets deserted under the 24-hour curfew. People slept in corridors for fear of rockets, and through the night came the whirling sound of U.S. helicopters and the intermittent thumping of artillery.

Hundreds of Vietnamese were camped out in front of the U.S. Embassy and others at the British Embassy compound next door.

During the airport evacuation, two Viet Cong rockets whistled overhead and exploded behind the U.S. Defense Attache's compound, sending Marines and evacuees diving for the pavement. Two U.S. Marine guards at the compound were the ones killed, in an earlier rocket attack.

Across the street from the embassy, soldiers, police and youths stripped and stole scores of abandoned embassy cars. Thousands of other Vietnamese stripped apartment buildings in which Americans had lived, collecting bathroom fixtures, books, furniture and food. They sat on sidewalks with their

booty, waiting for friends in cars to pick them up.

Yet other Vietnamese found their own way out. A Pentagon spokesman said in Washington about 10 Vietnamese helicopters ditched near the Blue Ridge, but that all crewmen were rescued.

Pentagon officials said the United States lost three aircraft in the evacuation Tuesday, which may have cost the lives of two servicemen.

The helicopter lift was a punishing ordeal for Marine chopper pilots, who were given a break after 12 hours of flying.

But Pentagon sources said Marine Lt. Gen. Louis H. Wilson, widely touted to become the next commandant of the Marine Corps, fired off an angry message: "No Marine is ever too tired to fly." The helicopter flights quickly resumed, the sources said.

At least three American aircraft were fired at but a Pentagon spokesman said only one was hit. The damage was minor and the helicopter was able to keep flying.

No aircraft were shot down but the three crashed at sea. None of them carried any refugees. A Marine CH46 had four men aboard, two of whom were rescued after it crashed. The others were missing; rescuers did not know whether they had survived and were due to make

an intensive search at dawn, officials said.

Another helicopter was lost when it approached a helicopter landing pad on shipboard and discovered an Air America chopper had come in first. Sources said the military helicopter ran out of fuel and fell into the sea before the pad could be cleared. The pilot was rescued.

An A7 attack plane suffered a malfunction and the pilot was forced to eject. He too was rescued without injury.

Some Vietnamese, mostly military officers and families, made it to the Philippines, Taiwan and Singapore, and at least 70 plane loads landed in Thailand. Some of the planes, according to reports reaching Washington, apparently were stolen.

The deaths of Marine Cpl. Charles McMahon Jr. of Woburn, Mass., and Lance Cpl. Darwin L. Judge of Marshalltown, Iowa, apparently helped prompt the American evacuation. They died in a barrage of Communist rocket and 130mm artillery fire that pounded Saigon's Tan Son Nhut air base in the predawn hours of Tuesday.

Within hours, President Ford decided to go with "Option 4" — a final helicopter evacuation similar to that carried out April 12 in Phnom Penh.

Ford Calls Vietnam a 'Closed Chapter'

Compiled From AP and UPI

WASHINGTON — The United States completed evacuation of about 6,500 Americans and South Vietnamese late Tuesday as President Ford called on the nation "to close ranks, to avoid recrimination about the past."

When word was flashed to the White House that Ambassador Graham Martin and the last evacuees had been airlifted out, Ford said, "This action closes a chapter in the American experience."

A helicopter lifted off the last 11 of the Marine Security Force from the American Embassy in Saigon Wednesday morning, the Pentagon said.

"The Pentagon received word at 7:52 p.m. EDT that the last helicopter with 11 Marine security personnel aboard has safely departed the embassy in Saigon," a spokesman said.

Earlier, it was reported that some 30 U.S. Marine guards were still at the embassy and that there was small arms fire in the vicinity.

The spokesman said when asked about the removal of the final group of Marines, after President Ford announced the evacuation had already been completed: "Evidently it was just a matter of making an

orderly withdrawal instead of a run."

He said this meant the embassy's security gradually proceeded back from the outside of the compound, then floor by floor through the building and finally onto the roof.

Delays blamed on bad weather, pilot fatigue, and difficult helicopter landings stretched out the withdrawal which marked the end of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam war.

White House Press Secretary Ron Nessen said the operation was extended several hours because "a lot more Vietnamese were taken out than had been planned."

He said other reasons were occasional bad weather and pilot weariness. In addition, only two helicopters could go in at one time to make pickups from the embassy roof and the parking lot, he said.

In a briefing, Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger rejected suggestions that Ambassador Martin resisted this last withdrawal. "He was in a very difficult position," Kissinger said, "he felt a moral obligation to the people with whom he was associated."

"He attempted to save as many people as possible. That's

not the worst fault a man can have."

Kissinger said the United States moved deliberately over the last few weeks to avoid panic among the local population and to save many of the 5,000 to 8,000 South Vietnamese thought to be in a "high risk" category because of their known opposition to Hanoi and the Viet Cong.

At the same time, Kissinger credited the Soviet Union with providing "some help" in the evacuation effort. He was not specific, saying the degree would have to be assessed later.

Kissinger, fielding questions from about 150 reporters in an auditorium next door to the White House, said "obviously this has been a very painful experience" and that it would be a long time before Americans could write about the war dispassionately.

"It is clear the war did not achieve the objectives of those who started the original involvement," Kissinger said, "or those who sought to end it on terms compatible with the investments made."

Until Sunday night, Kissinger said, "there was some hope the Communists would not seize

withdrawal of U.S. naval forces from Vietnamese waters and disarming of Saigon's army and police.

There was an unconfirmed report from a political source late Tuesday that the government would agree if necessary to disarm most of its forces.

Within hours, signs of the American presence already were disappearing.

A youthful mob looted the Brinks Hotel, a U.S. landmark in downtown Saigon. The hotel had housed American officers for more than 10 years and was twice bombed by the Viet Cong.

Abandoned American homes were looted and property stolen. The UPI bureau car was destroyed by the crowd at the U.S. Embassy.

At least one of the U.S. telephone circuits was out of order.

Most of the government's generals were gone, including the Saigon city defense commander, Lt. Gen. Nguyen Van Minh. He went out on one of the U.S. Marine helicopters.

President Minh called a meeting of all his Saigon command generals.

The automatic FM radio station run by Americans in Saigon continued its Muzak-like broadcasting long after it was abandoned. But by midnight, the tapes had run out and the station had ceased broadcasting.

power by military means" and that a negotiated solution to the war was possible.

But the rocketing of Tan Son Nhut airport impelled Ford to order a final evacuation. "The North Vietnamese changed signals and we don't know why," he said.

At the same news briefing, Nessen read Ford's statement, in which the President said he had ordered "the reduction of American personnel in the United States mission in Saigon to levels that could be quickly evacuated during an emergency, while enabling that mission to continue to fulfill its duties ..."

"The evacuation has been completed. I commend the personnel of the armed forces who accomplished it, as well as Ambassador Graham Martin and the staff of his mission who served so well under difficult conditions."

"This action closes a chapter in the American experience. I ask all Americans to close ranks, to avoid recrimination about the past, to look ahead to the many goals we share and to work together on the great tasks that remain to be accomplished," the statement said.