

THE VIETNAM WAR

APRIL 30th 1975

AMERICA'S BITTER END

Presented by: PHANTHANH

Music: If you go away

Please Click on your mouse to advance the slides...Turn the volume on to listen to the music!

Designer: Nguyen Phan Thanh



AMERICA'S BITTER END IN VIETNAM



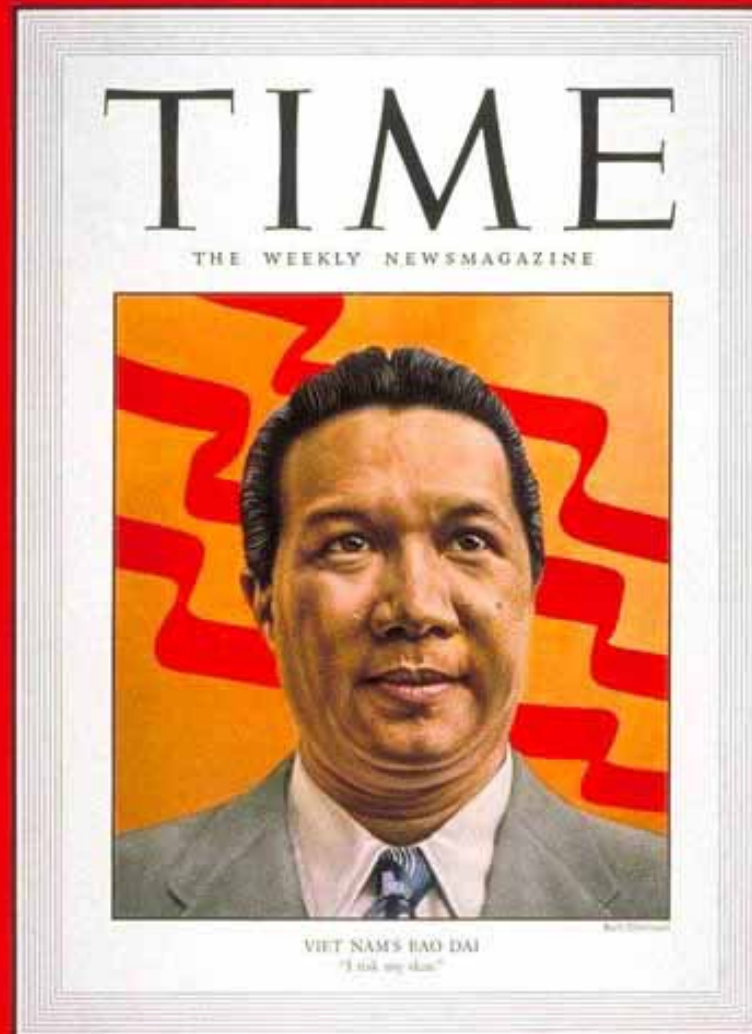
BETRAYED & ABANDONED CIVILIAN REFUGEES DIED ALONG THE DEATH HIGHWAYS UNDER VIET CONG UNDISCRIMINATED ARTILLERY RAIN



Bao Dai

BAO DAI, Vietnam's last emperor, ascended to the throne in 1932 and cooperated with the Japanese occupying Vietnam during World War II.

After the war, he briefly joined ranks with Vietnamese communist leader Ho Chi Minh and the Vietminh, only to flee into exile in Hong Kong and France from 1949-1955.



May. 29, 1950

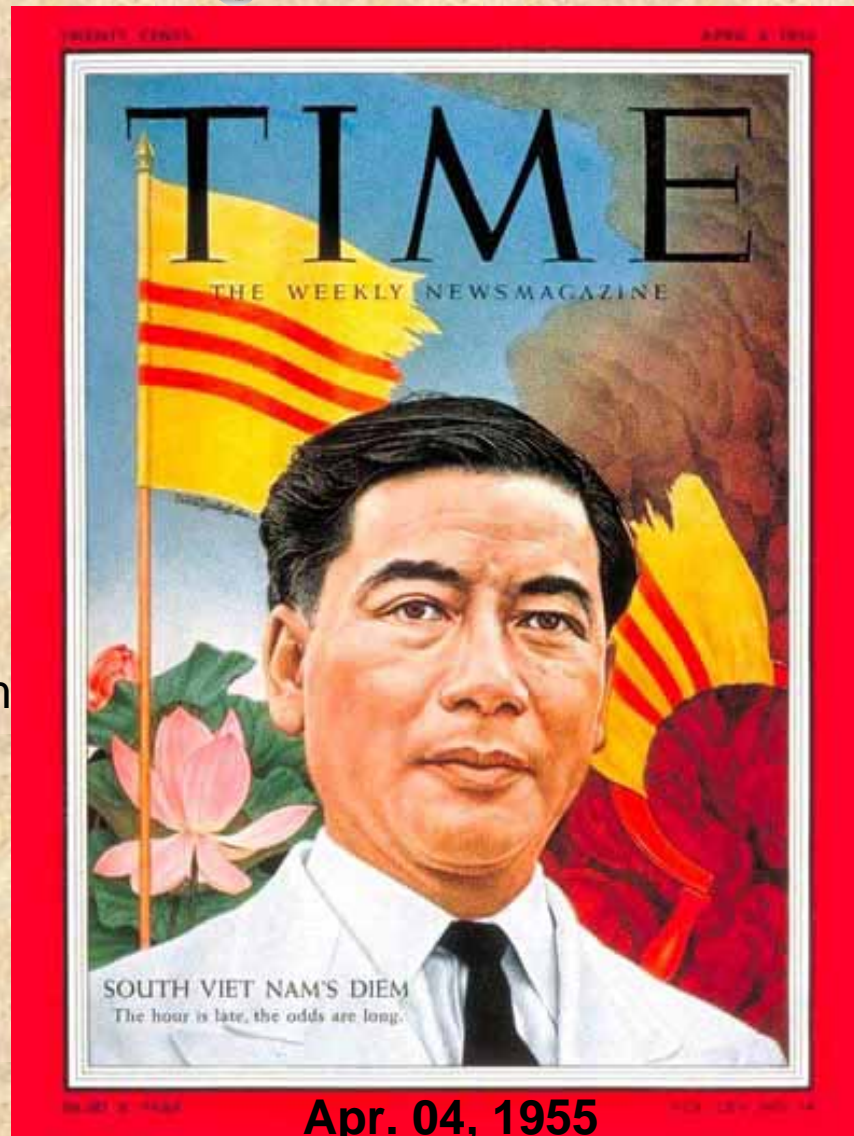
He returned to Vietnam to rule under French control until he was ousted by South Vietnamese leader Ngo Dinh Diem in a rigged election in 1954

One day after his 42nd birthday, Bao Dai found himself overwhelmingly repudiated by the people he had sometimes meant to serve

AMERICA'S BITTER END IN VIETNAM

Ngo Dinh Diem

After refusing Ho Chi Minh's invitation to join the Communist movement, Ngo Dinh Diem 54-year-old bachelor, proclaimed South Viet Nam a Republic and himself its first President. Diem led South Vietnam from 1954 to 1963, when he was killed by his generals in a coup.



Apr. 04, 1955

Diem is proud of his Vietnamese heritage: "We are a country of principles, an old country, a country built village by village."

... but: "Sometimes I think we Asians are too reserved, talk too much by nuance. We ought to learn to be rude in our talk like the Americans, and get things done."

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AMERICA'S BITTER END IN VIETNAM

Nguyen Cao Ky

In his eight months as Premier, South Viet Nam's Nguyen Cao Ky had best been known as an atavistic aviator



Feb. 18, 1966

But under the spotlight of Lyndon Johnson's U.S.-Vietnamese summit in Honolulu, the highflying aviator finally came down to earth.

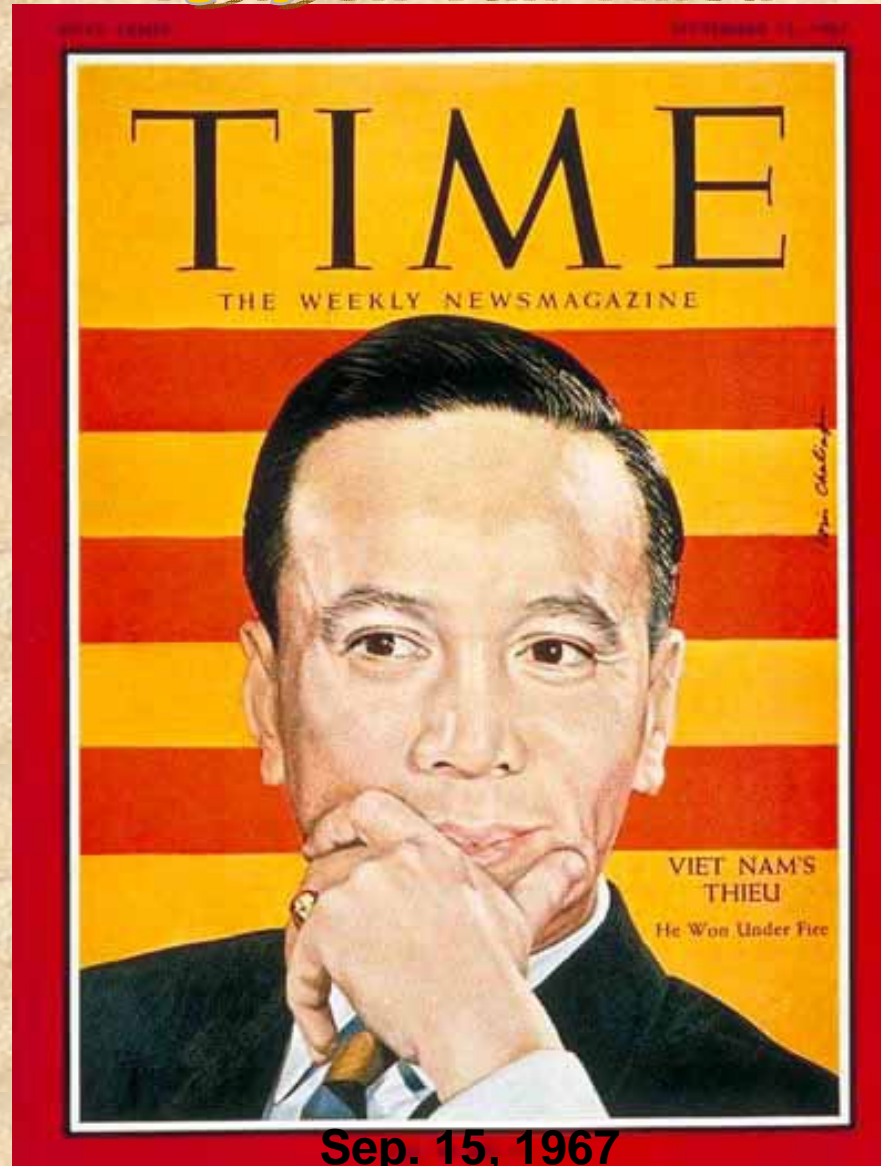
Ky showed himself eloquent and honest, astute and independent, and above all a man who cared passionately about the defense and the welfare of his nation.

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AMERICA'S BITTER END IN VIETNAM

Nguyen Van Thieu

Nguyen Van Thieu served as the South Vietnamese chief of state under Nguyen Cao Ky from 1965-67. In 1967, he ran successfully for president of South Vietnam and held that position until the Fall of Saigon



The people of South Viet Nam chose a President, Nguyen Van Thieu, a Vice President, Nguyen Cao Ky, and 60 Senators in a free election.

As President, Thieu now gives every sign that this time he intends to be No. 1 in fact as well as in title.

Thieu forced Ky to stand aside.

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AMERICA'S BITTER END IN VIETNAM

**Joint statement by Presidents Nguyen Van Thieu and Nixon at Midway Island.
June 8, 1969**

**PRESIDENT
NIXON**, April
1973....

*Mr. President,
we have been
allies in a long
and difficult war.
And now you
can be sure that
we stand with
you as we
continue to work
together to build
a lasting peace.*



Nixon also renewed a secret pledge to Thieu: he would "respond with full force" if the Communists broke the cease-fire. Thieu expected American air power to save him. But Nixon's own power was under attack in Washington

AMERICA'S BITTER END IN VIETNAM

These agreements, said Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt Jr. former chief of naval operations, were never communicated to the Congress.

President Richard M. Nixon promised the Saigon government in 1972 and 1973 that the United States would "take swift and severe retaliatory action" and would "respond with full force" if North Vietnam violated the Paris cease-fire accord.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 17, 1973

Dear President Thieu:

I have received your letter of January 17, 1973, and I have studied it with the greatest care.

I must repeat what I have said to you in my previous communications: The freedom and independence of the Republic of Vietnam remains a paramount objective of American foreign policy. I have been dedicated to this goal all of my political life . . .

. . .

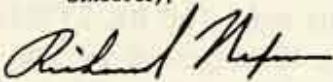
As General Haig has told you, I am prepared to send Vice President Agnew to Saigon in order to plan with you our postwar relationship. He would leave Washington on January 28, the day after the Agreement is signed, and during his visit he would publicly reaffirm the guarantees I have expressed to you. Let me state these assurances once again in this letter:

- First, we recognize your Government as the sole legitimate Government of South Vietnam.
- Secondly, we do not recognize the right of foreign troops to remain on South Vietnamese soil.
- Thirdly, the U.S. will react vigorously to violations to the Agreement.

In addition I remain prepared to meet with you personally three to four weeks later in San Clemente, California, at which time we could publicly reaffirm once again our joint cooperation and U.S. guarantees.

. . .

Sincerely,



"Kissinger and Nixon did not level with the Congress as to the commitments that were made," said the retired four-star-admiral Zumwalt

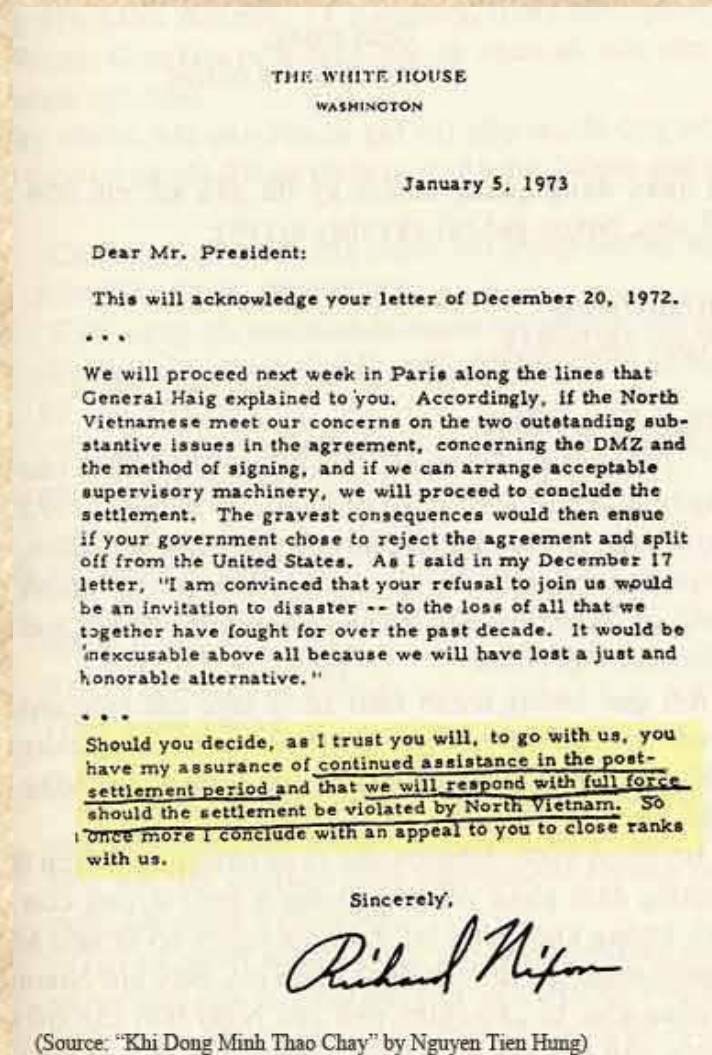
Source: "Khi Dong Minh Thao Chay" by Nguyen Tien Hung

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AMERICA'S BITTER END IN VIETNAM

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President Ford formally refused to give Congress copies of the Nixon - Thieu correspondence on the ground of diplomatic confidentiality.



"We prevailed upon Vietnamese President Thieu to accept a very bad truce. This truce permitted the enemy to remain in South Vietnam in exchange for something that was good for the United States and that was the total removal of our forces...." said the retired four-star-admiral Zumwalt

AMERICA'S BITTER END IN VIETNAM

Nguyen Van Thieu

The U.S. was clearly looking harder than ever before for an honorable end to the war, and Saigon finally realized that the American commitment was not open-ended, which hastened South Viet Nam's plans for going on its own.



Thieu, still believing that America would not abandon him, again pleaded for help. On April 2nd 1975, he met with Ambassador Martin and President Ford's special envoy. But by now, the Americans were losing faith in Thieu.

Just prior to the Fall of Saigon, Thieu emigrated to Taiwan before taking up residence in England.

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AMERICA'S BITTER END IN VIETNAM

Kissinger - Zhou Enlai meeting in Beijing on June 22, 1972

In Beijing on June 22, 1972, Kissinger told Zhou Enlai that the United States might accept a Communist takeover of South Vietnam if it occurred after a withdrawal of American troops. "...If we can live with a communist government in China we ought to be able to accept it in Indochina..."



He told Zhou Enlai that, for credibility reasons, the United States could not meet Hanoi's demand for the "overthrow" of South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu. But, once US forces had left Indochina, Kissinger declared, the White House would accept the results of historical change.

AMERICA'S BITTER END IN VIETNAM

When Mr. Kissinger showed up at the presidential palace in Saigon, he was famously kept waiting for 15 minutes

After concluding most of a deal with the North Vietnamese 1972, Kissinger finally flew to Saigon "to present what he had done," which was, after all, to sketch a pact that would permit communist soldiers to remain on the soil of free Vietnam.



Thieu realized that Mr. Kissinger was coming to Saigon to demand his approval of a done deal

"Suddenly, I realized that things were being negotiated for us behind my back and without my approval," Mr. Isaacson quotes Mr. Thieu as recalling.

Mr. Walter Isaacson's biography of Mr. Kissinger says, Thieu was actually thinking "I wanted to punch Kissinger in the mouth."

AMERICA'S BITTER END IN VIETNAM

At four o'clock on the afternoon of March 9, 1975. Banmethuot fell, but the government said nothing, and the withdrawal from Pleiku was only learned about from rumors. People stopped believing in the government.



President Thieu made a crucial decision. He ordered his forces to abandon the northern and central provinces and form a new line of defense further south.

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AMERICA'S BITTER END IN VIETNAM

The official silence panicked the population. Within days, thousands of civilians were streaming toward the coastal city of Danang, desperately seeking safety.



On foot and on anything with wheels, refugees evacuated ahead of Communist forces, fleeing in general panic.

AMERICA'S BITTER END IN VIETNAM

Anarchy was beginning to break out everywhere...



**CIVILIAN REFUGEES TRAVELED FROM CENTRAL AND QUANG TRI PROVINCES
ALONG THE HORROR HIGHWAY**

Designer: Nguyen Phan Thanh

AMERICA'S BITTER END IN VIETNAM

As the rumors flew, fear spread. Nobody knew what to believe and nobody wanted to be left behind.



During the withdrawal, the air force, obviously, was using their airplanes to get out any way they could. Mixed in with all of this was the panic-stricken flight of tens of thousands of civilians and dependents.

AMERICA'S BITTER END IN VIETNAM



A World Airways jet with company president Ed Daley aboard made a perilous landing at Danang. He wanted to save women and children first, but desperate soldiers jammed into the airplane. They scrambled into the baggage compartment and clung to the stairway as the plane took off. It was the last American flight out of Danang.

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AMERICA'S BITTER END IN VIETNAM



ARVN M-113 passes by the civilian casualties

BETRAYED & ABANDONED CIVILIAN REFUGEES DIED ALONG THE DEATH HIGHWAYS UNDER VIET CONG UNDISCRIMINATED ARTILLERY RAIN

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AMERICA'S BITTER END IN VIETNAM

Among the ribbons of refugees heading away from the fighting were the embittered abandoned ARVN soldiers



Photo © Dirck Halstead

AMERICA'S BITTER END IN VIETNAM



Corbis Bettmann ©

The Abandoned ARVN Soldiers: To avoid being captured by Communists, the ARVN soldiers shedded off their uniforms which were scattered all over on the street.

AMERICA'S BITTER END IN VIETNAM



Corbis Bettmann ©

Two wounded ARVN soldiers while defending Newport bridge in Saigon on April 28, 1975

AMERICA'S BITTER END IN VIETNAM



TAN SON NHAT under attack on the morning of April 29, 1975

vnafmamn.com

The morning of April 29, 1975.
Tan Son Nhut airport was under fire, preventing passenger planes from taking off.

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On April 30th 1975, a long line of people climbing on helicopters on the rooftop of the U.S. embassy to get out of the doomed country.

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AMERICA'S BITTER END IN VIETNAM

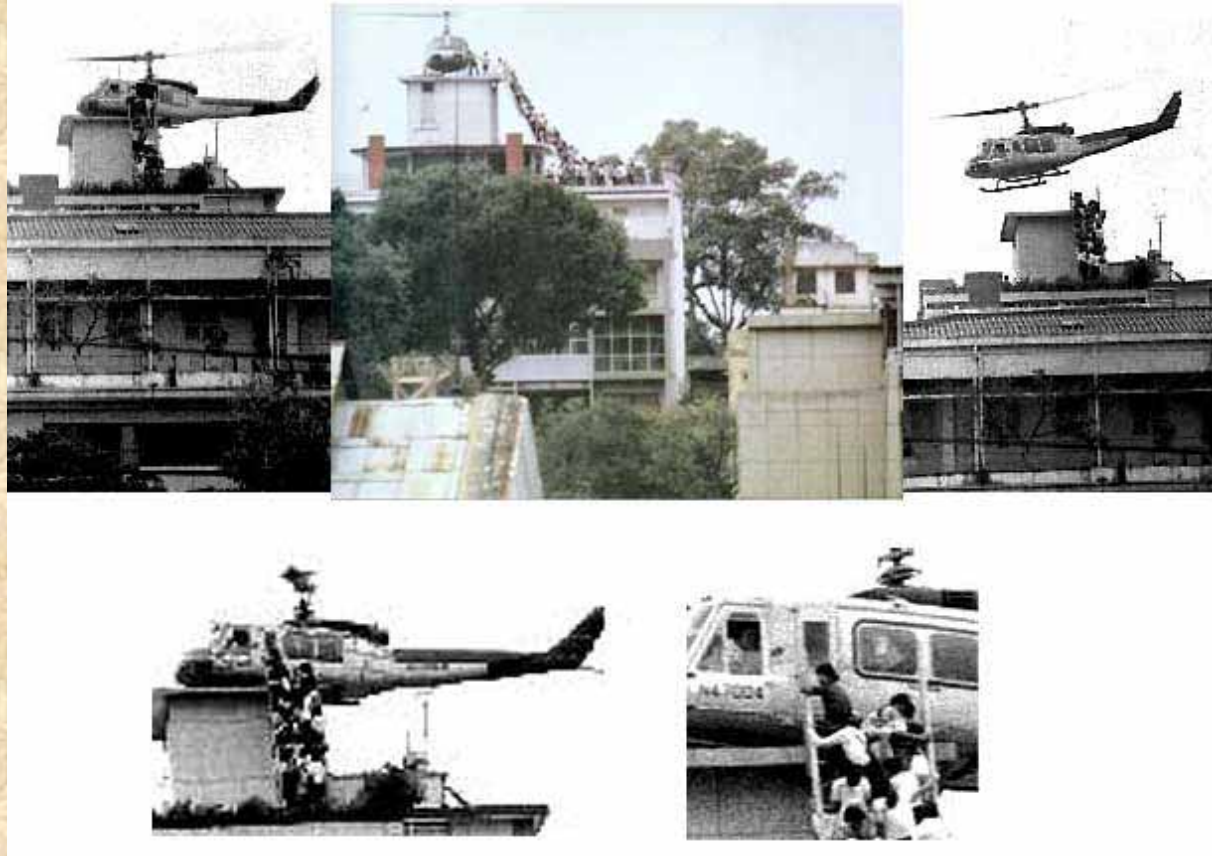


More than 600 US military flights airlifted evacuees from Saigon to ships offshore.

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AMERICA'S BITTER END IN VIETNAM

WHEN THE ALLY CUTS AND RUNS



At the airport, the U.S. embassy, and elsewhere in the capital , all Americans and Vietnamese at risk were taken out by helicopter to U.S. aircraft carriers.

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AMERICA'S BITTER END IN VIETNAM

By March 21, 1975, 100,000 refugees, many of them, troops and their families, had crowded into Danang.



Some soldiers put their wives and children aboard ships headed for safer areas in the South. Offshore, refugees were packed aboard rescue ships. Thousands drowned trying to flee, or were suffocated in the crush

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AMERICA'S BILLET END IN VIETNAM



Nick Wheeler / Sipa Press

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AMERICA'S BITTER END IN VIETNAM



During the last two days, more than 600 US military flights airlifted evacuees from Saigon to ships offshore. Air America also joined the effort.

Above, civilians head for a helicopter at Tan Son Nhut. Designer: Nguyen Phan Thanh

AMERICA'S BITTER END IN VIETNAM



At the airport, the U.S. embassy, and elsewhere in the capital , all Americans and Vietnamese at risk were taken out by helicopter to U.S. aircraft carriers.

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AMERICA'S BITTER END IN VIETNAM



Newsmen Interviewing Graham Martin

Original caption: Aboard USS Blue Ridge: U.S. Ambassador to South Vietnam Graham Martin, answers newsmen's questions during his brief visit of the temporary press center aboard the Blue Ridge in the South China Sea. The 61 year old diplomat in a news conference said that, "If we had done as a nation the things I think we said we should do -- if we had kept our commitments -- we wouldn't have had to evacuate." Martin was the one of the last to evacuate from the embassy in Saigon.

AMERICA'S BITTER END IN VIETNAM



Photo of refugees being assisted by assigned personnel aboard the USS Midway. Taken by official ship's photographer. 29 April 1975.

By late afternoon April 29th 1975, most Americans and thousands of Vietnamese had reached the U.S. carriers offshore. Thousands more Vietnamese were waiting in Saigon.

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AMERICA'S BITTER END IN VIETNAM

Inside the palace, Duong Van Minh, president for 44 hours, was waiting.
Colonel Bui Tin took the surrender.

COL. LEGRO: I felt that the United States had betrayed a trust that the United States had given South Vietnam. I also felt that I was personally betrayed; I had also made, implied promises, that the United States would honor the agreements we had made at the time of the cease-fire and then when things got really tough we really just cut and run.



COL. BUI TIN: When I saw fear on the faces of Minh and the others present, I said: "The war has ended today, and all Vietnamese are victors. Only the American imperialists are the vanquished. If you still have any feelings for the nation and the people, consider today a happy day."

AMERICA'S BITTER END IN VIETNAM

They had planned a two-year campaign to capture the capital. It took 55 days.



COL. BUI TIN (Army of North Vietnam): After reaching the other side of the bridge, we went straight to the Independence Palace.

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AMERICA'S BITTER END IN VIETNAM



NGUYEN CONG THANH (Army of North Vietnam): We entered the city from six different directions. None of us knew how to get to the Independence Palace.

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AMERICA'S BITTER END IN VIETNAM



BETRAYED & ABANDONED

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AMERICA'S BITTER END IN VIETNAM

The fall of Saigon drove many people to commit suicide on and after April 30, 1975, estimated at several hundreds. Some famous cases were fully recorded as follows.



ARVN Colonel HO NGOC CAN (1940-1975)

He fell into the hands of the Communist force after he failed an attempt to kill himself. He told the enemy that he wouldn't surrender, and asked them to let him salute the ARVN colors with his uniform on before the execution.

Colonel Can was publicly executed by the Communist firing squad after a quick summary trial at a Communist kangaroo court.



ARVN Major General NGUYEN KHOA NAM (1927-1975)

At 11:30 PM, 30 April 1975, General Nam killed himself after saying farewell to his staff and talking by telephone with General Le Van Hung, who had ended his life earlier.

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ARVN Brigadier General LE VAN HUNG (1933-1975)

Said farewell to his men, his wife and children before he killed himself by a .45 pistol. It was 8:45 PM, 30 April 1975.



ARVN General PHAM VAN PHU (1927-1975)

His troops suffered heavy losses on the way of withdrawal to the coastal areas in April 1975. General Phu committed suicide on 30 April 1975 in Saigon.



ARVN Brigadier General LE NGUYEN VY (1933-1975)

General Vy commander of the 5th Infantry Division at Lai Khe. committed suicide by a pistol at 11:00 AM, 30 April 1975 at the division headquarters in Lai Khe.



ARVN Brigadier General TRAN VAN HAI (1927-1975)

At midnight, 30 April 1975, he committed suicide at the Division Headquarters, Dong Tam Army Base.

AMERICA'S BITTER END IN VIETNAM



"Why don't these people die fast"

Henri Kissinger (referring to South Vietnam's struggle against Hanoi military attack after Da Nang retreat)

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VIETNAM: THE REAL STORY

April 30th 1975

IT'S OVER

Most Yanks Got Out

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 peace was declared.

American officials and military advisers were ordered to leave the city by President Duong Van "Big" Minh in a five-minute radio address Tuesday. The president's order came as Communist forces moved toward the city.

U.S. officials said they had no time to pack. They only to grab their personal belongings and get out. Some officials were assigned to evacuate the city's military assets. First priority was to get out the military equipment.

The evacuation began at mid-afternoon Tuesday. Forty ships of the U.S. 7th Fleet were ordered to the South China Sea for the task.

Former Vietnamese Premier, Vice Air Marshal Nguyen Cao Ky, party in his black safari suit with yellow sash, was seen stepping aboard the command ship. He was holding to reporters.

Naval spokesman said Mr. Graham Martin, son of the U.S. ambassador to South Vietnam, arrived before the first official wave of helicopters left. Some carried all 1000 tons for the evacuation run.

The few Americans remaining in Saigon apparently were mostly women.

The departure could be one that sent the United States 18 years. It had been more than 10,000 lives—the last of which in combat were two U.S. Marines killed in a Communist attack on Saigon's airport early Tuesday that stopped the flight.

The evacuation came 17 days after the city was surrounded.

(Continued on Back Page, Col. 1)



AN AUTHORIZED UNOFFICIAL PUBLICATION FOR THE U.S. ARMY FORCES OF THE PACIFIC COMMAND 15c
Vol. 31, No. 120 Thursday, May 1, 1975



A U.S. Marine passes a gift of South Vietnamese bring in climb over the wall at the U.S. Embassy Wednesday in Saigon. The gift was a small statue of the Virgin Mary, guardian of the pathway had a rough time keeping order as the Vietnamese pushed and tried to throw themselves over the walls and into the street. (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 Americans 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 needless bloodshed."

On the same day, Gen. Nguyen Huu Chanh, chief of staff of the 7th Fleet, said that all South Vietnamese military units were to be demobilized. He said that the U.S. military would be withdrawing from the city. He said that the U.S. military would be withdrawing from the city. He said that the U.S. military would be withdrawing from the city.

(A few people appeared to leave the around-the-clock curfew minutes after the announcement, UPI said, but shellfire continued and there was sporadic small area 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 bombed 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 anyway whether the Americans stayed or not.

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

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

(Continued on Back Page, Col. 1)

