

Allows troops for evacuation

Senate approves mercy aid bill

United Press International

WASHINGTON — The Senate approved \$250 million in mercy aid for South Vietnam including authority for President Ford to use troops to evacuate Americans and some South Vietnamese.

But the House was still working on its \$327 million version of a similar aid bill, grinding through a sometimes angry and partisan debate on the evacuation issue and

the potential dangers of sending U.S. forces back to Vietnam even for limited purposes of assisting evacuation.

Once the House completes its work, the two bills will have to be reconciled by a House-Senate conference.

Before clearing its version of the mercy bill, the Senate beat back several Democratic attempts to restrict or kill completely any funds for evacuation and any authorization for the President to use troops in the effort.

Republicans denounced these proposals as part of a mini-filibuster against mercy and they got scant support.

The Senate legislation puts strict limitations on how Ford can use U.S. troops in any evacuation effort.

The bill provides \$100 million for evacuation purposes and \$150 million in humanitarian aid to South Vietnam and Cambodia.

It would permit the use of American

troops to rescue South Vietnamese only as part of the withdrawal of Americans.

In trying to speed House action on its version of the bill, a House leader disclosed earlier Wednesday that the number of U.S. officials and their dependents in Saigon has been reduced to less than 1,000 by Wednesday.

The Senate bill stressed the importance of getting as many Americans and their dependents out of South Vietnam as possible right now.

Ford would be allowed to use armed forces to assist the evacuation of endangered foreign nationals along with the Americans only after he certifies to Congress that every diplomatic effort had been made to terminate the threat to the foreigners and their lives were still in jeopardy.

During the debate, critics of the bill expressed concern that Ford could use the evacuation contingency fund — \$100 million of the \$200 million total, with the other \$100 earmarked for humanitarian purposes — as a cover for further military aid to Saigon.

Sen. Hubert H. Humphrey, D-Minn., who supported the bill, acknowledged such a diversion in the use of evacuation funds might happen.

He said the evacuation contingency funds "might have to be used 101 ways. It may even have to be used to pay to get people out of there."

But Humphrey opposed all efforts to restrict Ford's evacuation authority beyond those already written into the bill.

First refugees arrive in U.S.

United Press International

TRAVIS AFB, Calif. — The first wave of thousands of fleeing South Vietnamese refugees arrived in the United States Wednesday.

Authorities warned of possible health problems connected with the influx, which

the State Department said would reach 130,000.

Two planes loaded with 354 Vietnamese refugees from beleaguered Saigon landed at Travis AFB, 60 miles northeast of San Francisco, and within an hour, after quick customs and immigration checks, they headed on to connecting flights to other points throughout the nation. Most of those on the first flights were dependents of Americans who have been living in South Vietnam.

Two other flights expected to arrive at Travis within the next 24 hours were delayed in the Philippines, the Air Force said.

In San Francisco, City Health Director Dr. Francis Curry warned that the refugees could bring diseases which could pose a health problem.

"We understand that as many as 100,000 refugees may be coming into this area without health screening," he said. "They could bring polio, tuberculosis, virus dysentery and other communicable diseases."

Curry noted that there was an outbreak of dysentery among those volunteering during the recent arrival of "Operation Babylift" orphans, and said he was making plans to screen new arrivals at San Francisco hospitals.

He said if malaria-carrying refugees went into California's valleys where mosquitoes could transmit the disease, "we could have very serious problems."

Lt. Col. Thomas W. Sturgess, public

information officer at Travis, said there were no restrictions on where unattached Vietnamese could go. He said they were being sent on from Travis, and most of them planned to catch flights to other cities.

"These people can go anywhere they want," Sturgess said. "If they have no cash, the Red Cross is there to help them."

Spokesman at the Presidio of San Francisco, which handled most of the "Operation Babylift" arrivals, said they were surveying facilities in the San Francisco Bay area that could be used to process the huge number of refugees.

Richard L. Williams, district director of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, took a more relaxed view of the giant influx. "We've been through these crises before," he said. "We can handle them."



A Chicago couple shepherd three South Vietnamese children as they arrive at Travis Air Force Base in California. The children were part of what is expected to be the first wave of refugees from the war torn country.

House panel passes utility bill

United Press International

RALEIGH — A House committee Wednesday approved an expansion of the North Carolina Utilities Commission as part of a package of senate-passed legislation sent

to the floor.

The Public Utilities Committee proposed an expansion of the five-member commission to seven members. The Senate measure had called for a nine-member panel. The committee legislation also would have

the Lieutenant Governor and the Speaker of the House appoint the two new members for the first time. The governor would continue all appointments under the Senate Legislation.

If the full House supports the committee changes, a conference committee would have to iron out conflicts in the Senate and House version before the legislation could become law.

Still another House alteration was a change in the amount of time allowed for a commission hearing on fuel adjustment increase requests.

The House bill calls for a hearing within 30 days and a decision within 60 days. The Senate bill sets 60 days for the hearing and 90 days for a decision.

Deleted from the package by the committee was a Senate proposal for repealing the authority of utility firms to use projected as well as past revenues in rate applications.

The House has passed a repeal measure as a separate bill.

The package, introduced with the backing of Lieutenant Governor James B. Hunt Jr. and almost all of the Senate membership, would for the first time require legislative confirmation of appointments to the Utilities Commission.

People ejected from Nixon rally say they planned silent protest

United Press International

CHARLOTTE — Two persons who said they planned to silently protest the policies of Richard Nixon but were ejected from the Charlotte Coliseum testified Wednesday in a \$1.1 million civil trial against former White House aides and others.

The testimony came during the third day of the trial in a suit brought by 19 persons who claim they were illegally barred from the Oct. 15, 1971 Billy Graham Day observance attended by former President Nixon.

C.L. McMahan, a member of the Red Hornets, a group of young persons who organized antiwar protest demonstrations for Nixon's visit, said he was ushered out of the Coliseum on two occasions when he tried to enter, even though he had a ticket.

McMahan said the Red Hornets had met a couple nights before the observance

honoring evangelist Billy Graham, and decided to stage silent protests and hold prayers during the proceedings.

"We decided not to interrupt the proceedings but would hold up banners and silently protest," said McMahan.

John Knox Wilson Jr., 20, a student at Davidson College, said he and his girlfriend were ordered to leave the Coliseum after he put on a black arm band to protest the Vietnam War policies.

Wilson said he went to the Coliseum to participate in a silent vigil and said he thought the joint appearance of Nixon and Graham violated the doctrine of separation of church and state.

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