

The original documents are located in Box 14, folder “Mayaguez - General” of the Ron Nessen Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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WAS MILITARY ACTION NECESSARY TO RESCUE MAYAGUEZ ?

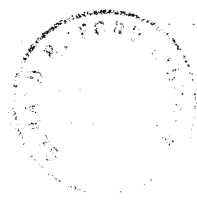
Q: Some argue that the MAYAGUEZ incident could have been solved diplomatically. They say you just wanted to flex your muscles and prove to the world that the United States is still tough.

A: The record clearly shows that we tried the diplomatic approach first. We made statements and messages; we waited 60 hours without any response. Diplomacy did not work in this case. I committed military forces because to delay action any longer would have further imperiled the crew, and it was necessary to act decisively to save them. My main concern throughout this entire exercise was to save our Americans and retrieve our merchant ship.

I am heartened that the vast majority of Americans seem to believe that my decisions were prudent and timely.



"Piracy" as a technical, legal term is limited to acts of force against ships or their passengers which are carried out for private gain. More broadly, however, piracy is commonly understood to cover all illegal attacks on merchant shipping, other than acts of war. We do not yet know the motives for the attack on the U.S. merchant ship Mayaguez, but we have no reason to suspect private gain; therefore, the President was using the term in its broad non-technical sense.



Committee condemns ^{the} ~~an~~ act of armed aggression on an unarmed US merchant vessel in the course of innocent passage on ~~the~~ an established trade route.

The ⁵ ~~second thing that~~ the President has engaged in diplomatic means ^{to secure the release} and we support that.

Third, ~~that~~ we support the President in the exercise of his Constitutional powers within the framework of the War Powers Resolution to secure the release of the ship and its men.

We urge the Cambodian ~~X~~ Government to release the ship and the men forthwith.



May 12, 1975

D.O.S.

Sequence of event.

Time of seizure.

Time of notification of G.F.

Time of U.S. learning.

Wake up G.F.

How did they get radio message.

"Maddox" =

Cambodia claim ship in
Cambodian waters? Don't know.
Said nothing

Any inquiries? - Not as far we know.

Long leaders? - No.

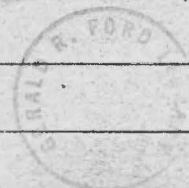
↳ Rhodes in on another matter?

Spy ship? - No.

Why not try to stop them?
Not answer

Leigo? Don't know.

Why long delay on NSC meeting?



May 13, 1975

The merchant ship Mayaguez, at last report, was anchored close to the island of Koh Tang, ~~35~~ 30 miles off the coast of Cambodia. During the night, it was escorted by 2 Cambodian naval vessels from the point where it was originally boarded toward its present location. The ship is being kept ^{under} observation by U.S. ~~air~~ ^{military} aircraft. The President was kept informed of developments during the night.

- ~~Q - Is the ship still in the area?~~
~~Q - What military aircraft are in the area?~~
Q NSC meeting? Nothing scheduled now.
Q U.S. Navy on the way? A. No commitment on ship movements.
Q When was it learned that the ship was not in Kom Pong Som? A - Late last night.

Q - How do we know all this?
A - Reconnaissance aircraft.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 13, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR RON NESSEN

FROM: JOY CHILES

SUBJECT: Questions Left from Today's Briefing

SEIZED SHIP

Will the U. S. land Marines in Thailand despite Thai objections?

Even after the reading of the War Powers Act, will the President consult with the Congress before - if he decides to take military action - he takes military action?

Is the President consulting with Congressional leaders on any contemplated action?

When Congressman Waggoner said the President told him he had a "tough decision to make on the ship" - what decision is the President thinking about?

Is there any information that the American crew might have been taken off the ship?

Are the planes actively patrolling the area?

From what the reports show, the initial intelligence reports indicating that the ship was being taken to the port of Kom Pong Som, and that the ship is not now going to Kom Pong Som, is this an encouraging factor in the developments?

Was the Kom Pong Som destination arrived at through intelligence reports or based on the last radio reports from the seized ship?

Through what international organization are ships warnings given and what is the exact wording of such warnings?

Where is the ship? -- is it docked at a harbor, anchored in the bay.....

There are reports that waters surrounding Koh Tang are very shallow, could it be that the ship has gone aground?

Is the seizing of this American merchant ship viewed as carrying a larger connotation than just seizing "a ship"... that possibly it is a test in light of the recent Indochina developments?

Will the President report to the American people?

Is the President satisfied with the intelligence apparatus in getting information back to the U. S. ?

How and when did the South Koreans give U. S. word about their ship being fired upon?

With such sophisticated monitoring systems, why was the U. S. not aware of the two other ship incidents in the same general waters to warn other U. S. ships not to travel the area?

Why were radio lines not monitored?

Is it possible to get a transcript of the radio transmission?

MOYNIHAN

Anything to announce on Moynihan?

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 13, 1975

Additional Questions from 7:00 a.m. statement:

Q NSC Meeting?

A Nothing scheduled at this time.

Q U.S. Navy on the way?

A No comment on ship movements.

Q When was it learned that the ship was not in Kom Pong Som?

A Late last night, however, we never said that it was in Kom Pong Som.

Q How do we know all this?

A From reconnaissance aircraft.



May 13, 1975

Office of the White House Press Secretary

NOTICE TO THE PRESS

The following information was made available at 3p.m. today at the Pentagon:

MEMORANDUM FOR CORRESPONDENTS:

MAY 13, 1975

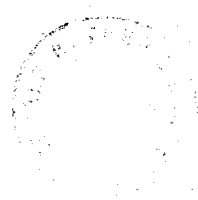
The following Notice to Mariners (#NR45) was issued by the Defense Mapping Agency Hydrographic Center at 7:15 p.m. EDT, May 12:

"Special Warning: Shipping is advised until further notice to remain more than 35 nautical miles off the coast of Cambodia and more than 20 nautical miles off the coast of Vietnam including off lying islands. Recent incidents have been reported of firing on, stopping and detention of ships within waters claimed by Cambodia, particularly in vicinity of Pulo Wai Island. This warning in no way should be construed as United States recognition of Cambodian or Vietnamese territorial sea claims or as derogation of the right of innocent passage for United States flag vessels, or derogation of the freedom of the high seas."

#

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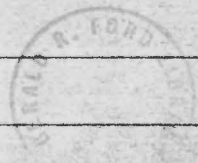
May 14

Pentagon at Noon = Pres ordered no
ships to leave or arrive Island.
Send number of boats.

Copy notification sent at 11 am.

Carl Marsh - Hill re how to
describe "consultation".

NSC 3:30 pm.



Q. Are there any restrictions on the President's ability to act because of Cooper-Church on the War Powers Act?

A. The President, under the Constitution, has the ^{duty} ~~right~~ to defend American life and property from acts of aggression.

Cooper-Church amendment was not designed to limit protection of American life or property. It was aimed at stopping American participation in hostilities which were not principally a threat to American life.

(FYI: Seizure of an American ship and crew on the high seas is considered an Act of War and there are no legal restrictions on the President's ability to act, commensurate with the situation with which he is faced, according to Rod Hills.)

(The last phrase means that any U.S. action would have to be limited to the area of the ship and crew. The President could not order bombing of Phnom Penh, for instance, as a retaliation.)



[5/14/75?]

DISCUSSION PAPER

As a follow-up to our telephone call to you last night concerning the seizure of an American vessel in the Gulf of Thailand, I want to provide you in advance and on a private basis the following information which will be announced by the Department of Defense shortly after.

Beginning at 8:30 p.m. EDT yesterday, there were indications that the Cambodians appeared to be attempting to move U. S. captive crewmen from the ship to the mainland. After giving warning and taking precautions to avoid injury to Americans, U.S. aircraft began efforts to block this movement. Three Cambodian patrol craft were destroyed and four others were damaged and immobilized. One boat succeeded in reaching Kompong Som, possibly with some U.S. captives aboard.

The MAYAGUEZ is still anchored off Koh Tand Island. The first U.S. Navy surface vessel, the destroyer escort HOLT, arrived in the area this morning. In the meantime, a Swedish refrigerator cargo ship, the MS HIRADO, was reportedly attacked by a patrol boat off Panjang Island, which is also claimed by Cambodia. Radio contact has been lost and the fate of this ship is unknown.

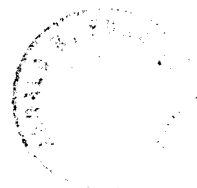
The NSC held a second meeting yesterday at 1:30 p.m. EDT and will meet again today. We will keep you informed.

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.4 (b)

White House Guide Lines, Feb. 24, 1983

By CP NARS, Date 12/18/84



file
[5/14/75?]

ANNOUNCEMENT TO BE MADE BY THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

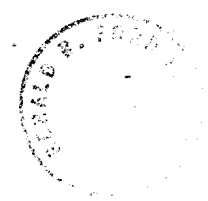
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U.S. aircraft had been receiving small arms fire from such ~~aircraft~~ for several hours prior to this action.

BOATS

The Mayaguez is still anchored off Koh Tang Island. The first U.S. Navy ~~surface~~ vessel, the destroyer escort HOLT, ~~arrived in~~ ^{is} the area ~~this morning.~~

NOW IN



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

5.14.75

TO: Ron Resser

For Your Information ✓

For Appropriate Handling _____

Original to Jim Falk


Robert D. Linder

WHB 411(1605)(1-033120C 134)PD 05/14/75 1631 30

ICS IPMSPB H2G

02135 HARRISBURG PA 237 05-14 436P EDT

PMS PRESIDENT FORD

WHITE HOUSE DC

BEFORE THE LATEST CAMBODIAN ADVENTURE TURNS INTO ANOTHER
TONKIN GULF FIASCO, I URGE YOU TO LAY ALL THE FACTS ON
THE TABLE FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE TO EVALUATE IMMEDIATELY.

AS I EXAMINE THE FRAGMENTARY EVIDENCE AVAILABLE FROM
PRESS REPORTS ON THIS INCIDENT, I CANNOT HELP BUT THINK THAT YOU,
AND YOUR ADMINISTRATION, HAVE FAILED TO LEARN THE SORRY LESSONS
OF OUR PAST INVOLVEMENT IN INDOCHINA.

A GARRIBED NARRATIVE OF EVENTS IS OFFERED BY AN OBSCURE
PENTAGON SPOKESMAN IN PLACE OF A CLEAR STATEMENT OF FACT FROM
THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF.

THIS SPOKESMAN REFUSES TO ANSWER QUESTIONS FROM THE PRESS.

YOUR OWN PRESS SECRETARY REFUSES TO SAY WHETHER FURTHER
ORDERS HAVE BEEN GIVEN TO THE AIR FORCE AND THE NAVY.

YOUR PRESS OFFICE REPORTS THAT YOU RECEIVED A STRONG
CONSENSUS OF SUPPORT FROM CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS.

BUT YOU DID NOT SPEAK TO THE LEADERS YOURSELF.

UNNAMED AND ANONYMOUS MEMBERS OF YOUR CONGRESSIONAL
LIAISON OFFICE MADE THE CONTACTS. NOBODY REALLY KNOWS WHO SAID
WHAT TO WHOM.



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THE MARINES HAVE LANDED IN THAILAND BUT THAILAND WANTS THEM OUT AND THERE IS A VERY REAL QUESTION AS TO YOUR AUTHORITY TO COMMIT THEM.

MR. PRESIDENT, BEFORE WE RETURN TO THE ERA OF CONFRONTATION, DECEPTION AND DISILLUSION, MAKE A FULL PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF WHAT'S GOING ON SO THAT THE PEOPLE AND THE CONGRESS CAN JUDGE THESE ACTIONS ACCORDINGLY.

I URGE YOU TO GO ON TELEVISION IMMEDIATELY AND MEET YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE GOVERNOR MILTON J SHAPP .



May 14

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Laitin says that at 11 A.M. he will announce the sinking of two of the Cambodian boats. He does not plan to announce, but K he believes that some Americans were aboard the sunken boats.

He also said that they were loading B-52's at Utapoa at this time, and if you remember there is a hotel roof that overlooks the base....so this could be reported.

Laitin also said that White House congressional people would be briefing selected Congressional leaders on the sinkings at 11 A.M.



SEIZURE OF THE MAYAGUEZ

I. POLITICAL

In response to all questions on exchanges between Thai Government officials and U. S. on the question of U. S. forces in Thailand respond simply with the following:

"We are in close diplomatic contact with the Thai Government."

The above guidance will be used by the State Department today in its daily briefing. They have been instructed not to go beyond the above.

II. MILITARY

Later today subsequent to consultation with the Congress the Department of Defense will make an announcement to the effect that American aircraft have fired upon Cambodia vessels and several have been sunk. If asked about reports on Cambodian vessels being sunk, you may say that the Defense Department will have information available.

III. DIPLOMATIC

Guidance on questions about diplomatic exchanges or efforts to secure the release of the Mayaguez should be answered, as in the past, with a simple:

"We cannot comment on any diplomatic efforts being undertaken at this time."



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Times of Evening Network Newscasts
May 14, 1975

A. ADMINISTRATION	<u>ABC</u>	<u>NBC</u>	<u>CBS</u>
1. U.S./Mayaguez	2:30 (lead)	4:10 (lead #2,6)	2:05 (lead #2)
2. Ford/Mayaguez	1:20 (#3)	1:45 (#3)	1:05 (#3)
3. HAK/Mayaguez	1:35 (#2)	-	:15 (of #3)
4. Scali/Mayaguez	:20 (#5)	-	-
5. U.S./Thailand	2:50 (#7,8)	2:40 (#7,8)	3:05 (#5,6)
6. State/Laos	-	:05 (#11)	:05 (of #7)
7. Labor/Jobless benefit	-	:05 (#14)	-
8. U.S. Defense Spending	-	-	5:20 (#10)
9. Ford/Swimming Pool	-	-	:20 (#15)
10. U.S./Relations W/Third World -	-	-	2:35 (Sevareid)
B. <u>OTHER MAJOR NEWS</u>			
1. Congress/Mayaguez	2:10 (#4)	2:25 (of lead 4,5)	1:50 (#4)
2. Families/Mayaguez	1:45 (#6)	1:30 (#9)	-
3. Laos/Student Mobs	:25 (#9)	:30 (#10)	:35 (#7)
4. Stans fined \$5000	1:45 (#10)	1:40 (#12)	1:05 (#12)
5. Fla. Land Fraud	:20 (#11)	-	-
6. Apollo/Soyuz	1:40 (#12)	1:45 (#16)	-
7. Nuclear test	:25 (#13)	-	:20 (#9)
8. Israeli raids into Lebanon	:20 (#14)	:10 (#17)	:15 (#8)
9. Sadat/U.S. Aid	:10 (#15)	:15 (#18)	-
10. Auto Sales Down	:20 (#16)	:10 (#15)	:10 (#14)
11. Stocks/11-Month High	:15 (#17)	-	:10 (#15)
12. Congress/Korea	1:45 (Smith)	-	-
13. Kate Smith & the Flyers	1:45 (#18)	-	-
14. Congress/Budget	-	:20 (#13)	:10 (#11)
15. Potts & Election '76	-	1:50 (Brinkley)	-
16. Memorial/2 dead Marines	-	2:30 (#19)	-
17. Arson For Profit/Hard Times -	-	-	2:55 (#13)



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 15, 1975

TO: Jack Hushen

FROM: Phil Buchen *P.W.B.*

It's O.K. to release these letters after
you know the letters have been released
from the Hill.



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 15, 1975

Dear Mr. Speaker:

On 12 May 1975, I was advised that the SS Mayaguez, a merchant vessel of United States registry enroute from Hong Kong to Thailand with a U. S. citizen crew, was fired upon, stopped, boarded, and seized by Cambodian naval patrol boats of the Armed Forces of Cambodia in international waters in the vicinity of Poulo Wai Island. The seized vessel was then forced to proceed to Koh Tang Island where it was required to anchor. This hostile act was in clear violation of international law.

In view of this illegal and dangerous act, I ordered, as you have been previously advised, United States military forces to conduct the necessary reconnaissance and to be ready to respond if diplomatic efforts to secure the return of the vessel and its personnel were not successful. Two United States reconnaissance aircraft in the course of locating the Mayaguez sustained minimal damage from small firearms. Appropriate demands for the return of the Mayaguez and its crew were made, both publicly and privately, without success.

In accordance with my desire that the Congress be informed on this matter and taking note of Section 4(a)(1) of the War Powers Resolution, I wish to report to you that at about 6:20 A.M., 13 May, pursuant to my instructions to prevent the movement of the Mayaguez into a mainland port, U. S. aircraft fired warning shots across the bow of the ship and gave visual signals to small craft approaching the ship. Subsequently, in order to stabilize the situation and in an attempt to preclude removal of the American crew of the Mayaguez to the mainland, where their rescue would be more difficult, I directed the United States Armed Forces to isolate the island and interdict any movement between the ship or the island and the mainland, and to prevent movement of the ship itself, while still taking all possible care to prevent loss of life or injury to the U. S. captives. During the evening of 13 May, a Cambodian patrol boat attempting to leave the



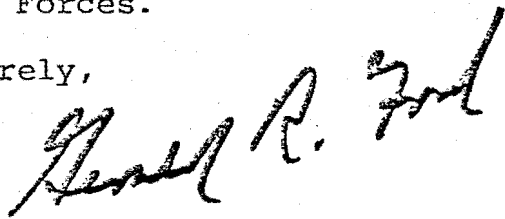
island disregarded aircraft warnings and was sunk. Thereafter, two other Cambodian patrol craft were destroyed and four others were damaged and immobilized. One boat, suspected of having some U. S. captives aboard, succeeded in reaching Kompong Som after efforts to turn it around without injury to the passengers failed.

Our continued objective in this operation was the rescue of the captured American crew along with the retaking of the ship Mayaguez. For that purpose, I ordered late this afternoon an assault by United States Marines on the island of Koh Tang to search out and rescue such Americans as might still be held there, and I ordered retaking of the Mayaguez by other marines boarding from the destroyer escort HOLT. In addition to continued fighter and gunship coverage of the Koh Tang area, these marine activities were supported by tactical aircraft from the CORAL SEA, striking the military airfield at Ream and other military targets in the area of Kompong Som in order to prevent reinforcement or support from the mainland of the Cambodian forces detaining the American vessel and crew.

At approximately 9:00 P.M. EDT on 14 May, the Mayaguez was retaken by United States forces. At approximately 11:30 P.M., the entire crew of the Mayaguez was taken aboard the WILSON. U. S. forces have begun the process of disengagement and withdrawal.

This operation was ordered and conducted pursuant to the President's constitutional Executive power and his authority as Commander-in-Chief of the United States Armed Forces.

Sincerely,



The Honorable
The Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515



(This is not a verbatim transcript)

DoD News Briefing

Thursday, May 15, 1975, 8:20 a.m.

(ASD/PA Laitin)

Let me give you a brief summary of the situation as it stands as of now.

Q: Do you have copies of the summary?

A: No, I do not. The action on the small island of Koh Tang is continuing. There is still a company-sized Marine security force in one location. It is still receiving heavy small arms fire intermittently. At 7:13 a.m. this morning, Washington time, a helicopter rescued about 25 Marines and an Air Force crew that had been hit as it approached the beach last night with the first wave of choppers. The initial report from the rescue helicopter said that many were wounded. They were taken to the carrier CORAL SEA which was about 10 miles offshore. One of the Air Force crewmen who had stayed on top of his helicopter, which was about 100 feet off the beach in the water, and had remained on top of the helicopter to man the radio for several hours, was also rescued about the same time, apparently by a small boat from the destroyer WILSON probably. It is now getting dark out there but operations are continuing. The two destroyers, the WILSON and the HOLT are about 1000 yards offshore, and are deploying small boats, working with helicopters. There are several other large warships -- U.S. warships -- in the area.

Just as a matter of peripheral interest, at 4:40 a.m., Washington time, the MAYAGUEZ was underway under its own power, heading for its original destination when it was interrupted, the port of Satahip, about 170 miles away from the point it was intercepted by the Cambodians, and, at her speed, I understand about one day's travel, which means that she probably would reach port tonight, our time.

Q: Is she being escorted?

A: I do not know whether she is being escorted.

Q: The condition of the crew?

A: She has her own crew aboard and I do not know whether she has an escort or whether any of the Marines who boarded her are still aboard. If any of the Marines are, there are just a few of them, because the 48 Marines who boarded the merchant vessel and found nobody on it, most of them returned to the destroyer HOLT from which they had come.

Q: Are these Marines that are still on this island in trouble?

A: They are waiting there to be extracted; the operations are continuing. They have many options and the most important point is to extract them safely and that is the main objective.

Q: In a company-size group, how many is that now?

A: That could be anywhere from 150 to 200.

Q: Any further word on anybody else who has been KIA or wounded?

A: No, the other figures I have are so tentative and possibly misleading because the counts just change and I don't want to go beyond that for the time being. We're trying to get all the facts as fast as we can.

Q: You say 150 or 200, it means very few are off the island. Are they pinned down?

MORE

A: No, they're not pinned down. I said the important thing is to know the strategy of this, that the 26 Marines were in a different part.

Q: What 26 Marines?

A: The 26 that I just told you were rescued. They were in a different part of the island. This is a small island, it's about two miles by three miles and the highest point is about 40 feet. It's really a little spit of land. The first of the choppers that went down was in a different part of the island from the main ground security force which is still there. This other group was some distance away and was also under fire and they have been extracted.

Q: How many were extracted, just the 26?

A: I told you the 25 by helicopter and the one probably by a small boat.

Q: How many Communist forces on the island?

A: I don't know. It's something that I am not in a position to tell you right now.

Q: Just as a matter of time and precedence, they took off the 26, among whom there were many wounded and now they are moving off the others?

A: No. The operation was going on simultaneously.

Q: If it gets dark out there, is there a chance they will stay there?

A: I just told you that operations are continuing and they have a number of different options.

Q: Will they continue through the night?

A: I said the operation is continuing.

Q: We've extracted what -- 50 total?

A: We've extracted 26.

Q: That's all?

A: That's right.

Q: These were in that helicopter that was downed and separate from the other group?

A: That's correct.

Q: Many of these are wounded?

A: I just told you that.

Q: So we really haven't extracted any of the group that made a successful landing and were fighting? Is that right? In four hours we have not extracted any of that company-sized force?

A: That's right. One of the reasons for that is that they were waiting for the carrier CORAL SEA to come close to the island so that the choppers that were assigned to extract these Marines would have a short haul and go in many cycles to cover just the 10 miles. On a number of occasions some of the choppers were turned back because of fire.

MORE



Q: Earlier the Secretary in answer to question as to whether any Americans had been killed, answered, yes sir. Has that changed in any regard based on reports that you have now received?

A: In the course of this action in the past twenty-four hours, there was only one known KIA.

Q: You do have one known killed in action?

A: Yes, and I don't have any confirmation.

Q: Where were the Americans at the time that they boarded the Thai ship?

A: I don't know.

Q: You say one known KIA, is there a possibility of another death?

A: I told you that any casualty figures are tentative and I don't want to go into it any further because it could be misleading.

Q: Are these small boats going up to the beach and taking off Marines and going back to the WILSON?

A: That is the plan.

Q: Any decision been made to leave there overnight?

A: I said that the operations are continuing through the night, and there are a number of different options.

Q: If you know that a certain number of people were wounded, that figure is not going to be reduced any, it can only increase. Why can't we have the minimum figure?

A: Because I do not have a proper figure to give you. I will give it to you as soon as I can.

Q: What's the proper figure? If you do know that some people are wounded, why can't we learn that that number is wounded?

A: I told you that the report from the helicopter pilot said that many are wounded; that was the word he used.

Q: When you said a number of choppers were turned back, were you talking about choppers that went in trying to extract the main force?

A: Yes.

Q: Have there been any naval gunfire strikes or air support strikes called in to support that chopper operation?

A: Yes.

Q: Are they continuing now?

A: I said operations are continuing through the night and this offers many different options to the men who are in charge.

Q: Even though the choppers were turned back by ground fire, the Marines are not pinned down?

A: I would not say they were pinned down.

Q: How would you describe it?

A: I would say they are there on the beach waiting to be extracted by helicopters and boats.

MORE



Q: Could you give us a more detailed characterization of how heavy the fire is that they are receiving?

A: No, it's impossible for me to characterize it; it's heavy but intermittent and I can't really tell you anything more than I know.

Q: Could you clarify one point on the wounded, you mentioned that the helicopter had been hit going in and on leaving that it was carrying many wounded. Did that imply that these people were wounded as the helicopter was hit as it was coming in, wounded later in combat or wounded during evacuation?

A: I cannot answer that question.

Q: Have any other helicopters been hit or shot down?

A: In the first wave of helicopters, three were downed and two were disabled but were able to fly back to their bases -- one flew back to its base with one of its engines shot out. Of the two choppers that were disabled but were able to make it back to their base, one made it back to an island -- I don't know the name -- some distance with its full load of passengers; the other had discharged the Marines at Koh Tang. Both of them made it back safely even though they were damaged.

Q: Beyond those five, have others been damaged or shot down?

A: Not to my knowledge.

Q: The one that we talked about, the 26, is that included in the three?

A: Yes.

Q: (inaudible)

A: We tried to get them out as fast as we can after there was no need for them on the island.

Q: Was that helicopter going to land in a separate place from the main body, was that its mission -- the one that had the many wounded on it -- was that going to a different place than the main body?

A: It was going to extract these Marines; that was its mission.

Q: Back up, earlier, in the first wave we had one that went down with 25 or 26 on it, that got separated from the main body. Was it headed to a different location or was it the fact that it was hit that caused it to deposit its 25 or 26 in a different location?

A: The first one that was hit was downed about 100 feet offshore and that was the one with the crewman who sat on top of the chopper in order to man the radio for quite a few hours.

Q: The others made it to shore?

A: The others made it to shore, apparently. I have to qualify a lot of these because the information coming in sometimes is a little conflicting and it takes time to sort it out.

Q: They made it to shore; are the wounded among this group or it's an entirely different thing?

A: I'm talking about this one group, yes.

MORE



Q: The Secretary indicated that the Thai boat came from Kompong Som; why were the Marines sent to Koh Tang if it was known the crewmen had been in Kompong Som?

A: Because we had some evidence that indicated that they had spent part, at least one night on the island of Koh Tang.

Q: Was it expected that the men were on the island or was it believed that they were in Kompong Som?

A: Obviously we weren't sure; we thought they might be in both places. As I recall it, the Secretary said that the little boat was coming apparently from the mainland.

Q: And he also said apparently from Kompong Som?

A: That's the mainland.

Q: Do you now know where it was coming from? Have you clarified that any since the Secretary spoke?

A: No.

Q: You don't know for sure whether the crew was in Kompong Som at any time?

A: No, I haven't had time to go into that frankly. It was much more important to know that they were safe, alive, back on the ship, manning their ship; the boilers were fixed up and they are on their way back to the port that they were heading for when they were so rudely interrupted.

Q: The Thai boat came from Kompong Som?

A: It seemed to come from that direction. The first we heard or knew about it was when we heard a report saying there's a small boat coming and we can see a white flag. The next report said we can see 30 white flags. Then it pulled aside, and if you recall, many, many hours ago, the minute the skipper of the American destroyer identified them as crewmen of the merchant ship, I came down here and told you there were 30 and as it turned out when they began recounting, it turned out that they were all there.

Q: Can you identify the unit of Marines in this operation?

A: No.

Q: The Secretary said that when the boat came up it was apparently trying to terminate combat action. You don't remember that?

A: I don't recall that phrase and I couldn't explain that.

Q: He seemed to think that it was a Cambodian effort to stop combat action -- terminate it.

A: It might have been because some report we received indicated that he said that the skipper of the merchant ship said that if they let his crew go that he would call the bombing off. It was all garbled. I won't stand behind that and I don't think the Secretary would at this point.

Q: What was the name of this operation?

MORE



A: I assume it was not a serious question and I'll forgive it at this hour. We had no time to give it a name to the best of my knowledge.

Q: It was indicated that the Thai crew of the fishing vessel which brought out the 40 seamen was permitted to go on its way; is that correct and if so, why?

A: Why not?

Q: The point of the question was why wasn't any attempt to interrogate them; find out what they were told; why they were there; where they came from?

A: I don't know. They said they wanted to stay on the boat and head for Thailand and I assume the skipper of the destroyer wished them "God Speed."

Q: It is not verified where the boat came from or how the crewmen happened to be put on that boat; how they happened to be with the Thais?

A: I'm sure when this merchant vessel reaches the port that your local correspondent will interrogate them in full.

Q: What did the Captain tell the --

A: I honestly do not know. The minute the crewmen were all safe and on their way, all my attention turned to the Marines.

MORE



Q: As of 3:30 this morning, you put the CORAL SEA 90 nautical miles off of Koh Tang.

A: I said 95 miles and proceeding at 30 knots.

Q: That would put them off shore about 6:30 this morning. The Mayaguez was underway at 4:40.

A: Don't pinpoint me on the time. I may have gotten the information an hour later, so don't draw any conclusions from that. She was, when I got the information, that distance, proceeding at that speed and she kept closing in and as she was, she was launching planes, etc.

Q: You inferred then that the operation of extracting these Marines is not going as smoothly as it had been anticipated?

A: I can't answer that question because you're asking me to tell you how the Commanding Officer there was anticipating how things would go. You might speculate that maybe they felt that it would add a safety factor if the CORAL SEA was closer to the island because it would shorten the distance for the rescue helicopters.

Q: You were having trouble extracting them, just from the fact that those rescue helicopters were driven off.

A: You can keep asking that question a dozen times and I'll tell you that the operation is continuing; that we would like to get them off in 15 minutes, of course, but we try to do it safely. Sometimes to do things safely requires extra time.

Q: Is it possible that they will have to stay there beyond nightfall?

A: I wouldn't rule it out.

Q: Would it then be possible to extract them at night or would it be much more difficult?

A: I said operations are continuing and among these operations are many options for the people who are conducting the extraction operation.

Q: Are you going to have a full chronologically of this whole incident? We were told last night that you would have it, point-by-point, the timing and everything.

A: I think we can put one together. I can give you something now on it. Let me just go back a little bit. It's one of those you might forgive me for maybe having a lot of holes in the story because as the night wore on so did I.

Let's go back to Wednesday evening. At 5:45 p.m. EDT, Washington time, the JCS ordered the Pacific Command to affect the recovery of the SS MAYAGUEZ and the American crew. This, of course, was done at the direction of the President. This plan called for boarding the MAYAGUEZ with Marines from the Destroyer Escort the USS HAROLD E. HOLT which was the first American warship to reach the area.

Also part of the plan called for Marines to be landed by helicopter at Koh Tang Island to rescue any crew members of the merchant vessel that might be there. To support these operations, Navy tactical aircraft from the Carrier CORAL SEA and Air Force aircraft were utilized, including CORAL SEA air strikes on military targets in the Kompong Som complex. Now to put the Marines aboard

(This is not a verbatim transcript.)

the Destroyer Escort, the HAROLD HOLT, it was necessary to hover over the Destroyer and to debark the Marines by rope ladder because the helo port on the HOLT could not support a CH-53, which is, as you know, a very large helicopter.

Have you all seen pictures of the HOLT? Let me get a copy to show you.

Q: Can you tell us the range of the CH-53?

A: It depends, I understand they can go 200 miles but they like to keep it down to 125-150 and then it also depends on whether it's fully loaded for combat or not, so it's a long range helicopter and a very big one. They were used quite a bit in the evacuation, if you remember.

Q: How many battle dressed Marines do they carry?

A: Call the duty officer after this, he's got all those basic facts. The first helicopter approached the island about 7:20 p.m. and received multiple hits from small arms fire. During the first helicopter insertion -- the first wave -- we landed 135 Marines on the island.

(Shows picture of the HOLT and the helicopter landing port which you can see is only intended for small Navy choppers and not these giant ones.

This is a photograph of the WILSON, which is with the HOLT, a thousand yards off shore right now, at the island of Koh Tang, and this is the VEGA which is also one of the ships in the area.)

At 8:20 p.m. EDT, the Destroyer Escort HOLT came along side the merchant vessel MAYAGUEZ and ten minutes later the Marines boarded the vessel with no resistance. After a complete search of the ship, it was determined that there was no one aboard. Although some sightings made earlier, from quite a distance, had indicated that there were a few people on board, A possible explanation of this is that the Marines found in the kitchen some hot tea and some warm rice, with some plates, which indicated that some people had been dining there. They might have clambered off the ship.

Q: Cambodian guards perhaps, sentries?

A: Who knows.

At any rate, after they made a thorough search of the ship because some thought that they might have been down in the hold, at 9:30 p.m. an hour after they boarded, the Marines ran up the American flag on the MAYAGUEZ and one part of the mission had been accomplished.

At 10:45 p.m. EDT, the guided missile Destroyer USS H. B. WILSON, reported a small boat approaching it, apparently from the mainland, displaying a white flag. You know the rest of that part of the story, of course.

I think as far as the chronology is concerned, that sort of brings you pretty much up to date.

Q: You mentioned there're several large warships in the area. Can you tell us what they are aside from the two destroyers?

A: You know about the CORAL SEA.



Q: You mentioned the VEGA, what's that?

A: That's a refrigerator ship or a food supply ship. She just happened to be in the area. She was the second one on the scene, she happened to be in the area and while she is a food supply ship she does carry some deck guns.

Q: Was she involved in any shelling?

A: Not to my knowledge. The other ships there; Destroyer, THE USS GRIDLEY, Destroyer, BAUSELL, Destroyer-Escort LANG, and there are a couple of other ships that are not yet in the area but were approaching it and they may be turned back.

Q: How about giving us the time of that statement that none other than the 26 had left? We've been talking in here for a while.

A: As of 7:13 this morning. It's not an official time, it's my time when I heard it.

Q: Were there any other targets in the KompongSon area besides the airfield that was hit?

A: The runway was cratered and I think some . . . hangars were hit and 17 planes were destroyed.

Q: But other than that in the airfield area?

A: Not to my knowledge.

Q: Were port facilities, etc?

A: I don't believe so.

Q: Where were the Air Force planes based that were participating in these operations?

A: I didn't stop to find out. I was interested mainly in the action in the area of Koh Tang.

Q: Do you know what kind of ordnance they are laying down?

A: All kinds.

Q: Including bombs?

A: You mean at Poh Tang?

Q: Yes.

A: I don't know exactly but I know they changed the type of ordnance they carried depending on what the particular mission, whatever they use for what they call suppressive fire.

Q: Is it true that most of the Air Force planes are based in Utapao?

A: You know probably more about that than I do Frank, and I can say that honestly, can't I?

- E N D -



(This is not a verbatim transcript.)

DoD News Briefing
Thursday, May 15, 1975, 10:20 a.m.
(ASD/PA Laitin)

The extraction by helicopter of the remaining Americans on Koh Tang Island continued after dark. At 9:10 a.m. EDT, Washington time, the last helicopter brought out a number of Marines and helicopter crewmen which it is believed are the last of the security ground force on the Island.

They landed 10 minutes later on the deck of the CORAL SEA which was stationed about 10 miles off shore. Meantime, the USS HOLT and USS WILSON, both destroyers, and less than 1,000 yards off shore will continue to search, close to the Island, until a final muster of personnel aboard the Carrier CORAL SEA and the destroyers WILSON and HOLT confirms that all Marines and helicopter crewmen are accounted for. The muster is expected to be completed before noon today, Washington time.

Q: Do you have any report on casualties?

A: Any accurate report on casualties will have to remain until the muster is completed which should be within an hour or so.

Q: Is there any reason to believe that any people are missing?

A: I don't want to go into any account of casualties until the muster is completed.

Q: Are any helicopter missing or presumed down?

A: I went into that before.

Q: You mentioned the one killed in action, but said it was not fully confirmed.

A: That's right, when we finish the muster we will then be in a position to determine the casualties.

Q: Was this extraction carried out with continuing heavy fire?

A: I don't have that information right now.

Q: Do you have anything on Cambodian losses?

A: No.

Q: Were they all evacuated by helicopter?

A: Yes, they were, I said the extraction continued after dark.

Q: What time was the first successful flight in?

A: All I can tell you now is that the first helicopter that went in, on the basis of information I have, was after dark, on the Island.

Q: Were they all extracted by helicopter or did some go off on boat?

A: Apparently the remaining security ground forces were evacuated entirely by helicopter.

Q: How large was the Cambodian force on the Island?

A: I do not know.

MORE



(This is not a verbatim transcript.)

2.

Q: What kind of arms did they have?

A: Small calibre is the only way I can describe it.

Q: Any mortars?

A: All I'm aware of is small calibre, but lots of it.

Q: Were any Khmer Rouge forces taken prisoner?

A: I have no knowledge of that.

Q: Were any of the choppers hit on this latest series of sorties?

A: Not to my knowledge. There's a lot of detail that I didn't want to wait to get. I thought you might be interested in knowing this.

Q: Are you planning to give us today some coherent, follow-up wrap-up on this?

A: I thought I gave it to you in a reasonably coherent form about three hours ago.

Q: Were the Marines returning fire while they were awaiting the helicopters?

A: I don't know. As I say there are a lot of details involved in this closing evacuation that I did not even stop to inquire about.

Q: Were any of the planes still firing at the Island?

A: I don't know.

Q: Are there any other carriers in the area or proceeding towards that area?

A: There were several hours ago, one or two carriers, that I believe was proceeding in that area but they were considerable distance away. So I could not say that they were even in the area and I don't know where they are now.

Q: Did any of the Forces return to Utapao or any place else in Thailand?

A: I don't have any knowledge on that. I was more concerned with the action around the Island of Koh Tang and concentrated on that.

Q: What is the number that was removed from the Island to the CORAL SEA?

A: I would say about 160.

Q: Was that the total landing party?

A: No, it was not.

Q: When can we expect a further update?

A: As soon as I have anything to give you which should be about noon, I'll give it to you.

Q: From the picture you gave us a couple of hours ago, what happened that turned it around?

A: That's your impression, I'm sorry you did get that impression from my earlier briefing.

Q: You said the initial helicopters going in were driven off by fire.

A: I said the operation was continuing after dark and there were many options open to the men who were handling the extraction and one of their

MORE

(This is a verbatim transcript.)

3.

options turned out to be highly successful, apparently.

Q: That was what?

A: I just finished telling you.

Q: Was it just the helicopters or were there other means?

A: I just said they were taken out by helicopter.

Q: Are there either destroyers shelling the Island or are our planes hitting the Island?

A: They are not now, as far as I know, shelling the Island. Whether they did before, those are the things that I've got to catch up with. They certainly were prepared to do it if necessary.

Q: Was the option to wait until dark to take them off?

A: No, this was a continuing operation.

- E N D -



Wm Simpson - called
at the feed - Albert.
"Agents" at their direction.

[5/15/75]

2 - 2:30 am
copies to office of speaker,
Pres Pro Tem (under door at their
direction.)

The reason why the President will send his report
to Congress, as required under the War Powers Act,
by 6:20 a.m. this morning is that that time

is 48 hours from the time that American forces first
were introduced into a situation where imminent involvement in
~~engaged in a military action.~~ That action

consisted of some of our ~~F-4~~ jet fighters shooting
in front of the Mayaguez in order to dissuade the
Cambodians from moving the ship again. It is my understanding
that the ship had been moved twice previously from the
time it was seized, and we did not want the ship to be
moved into Kompong Som.

The report to Congress will not be released from
the White House.

one notice to speaker and one to the
President pro-tem of the Senate.
Arrangements have been made for
official delivery during the night.

nothing
was
clearly
indicated
by
the
circumstances,

ORIGINAL RETIRED TO
SPECIAL DOCUMENTS FILE



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 15, 1975

The following telegram was sent to the President:

The undersigned Republican Governors of the United States commend you, Mr. President, and the American armed forces for their courage in rescuing the American ship and crew which was seized by the Cambodian pirates.

This example of valor and a strong U. S. foreign policy will promote the safety of American citizens throughout the world. We commend and thank you for your strong action.

Christopher S. Bond of Missouri
Republican Governors' Association Chairman

Arch A. Moore, Jr. of West Virginia
Republican Governors' Association Vice Chairman

Daniel J. Evans of Washington

Robert F. Bennett of Kansas

Mills E. Godwin, Jr. of Virginia

Robert D. Ray of Iowa

James B. Edwards of South Carolina

William G. Milligan of Michigan

James A. Rhodes of Ohio

James E. Holshouser, Jr. of North Carolina

J. S. Hammond of Alaska

Governor Bowen of Indiana is out of the country and his staff would not take responsibility for adding his name. Governor Thomson sent his own congratulatory letter to the President.

J. Anderson

CARROLL HUBBARD
CONGRESSMAN
1st DISTRICT, KENTUCKY

423 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515
(202) 225-3115

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

COMMITTEES:
BANKING, CURRENCY
AND HOUSING
MERCHANT MARINE
AND FISHERIES
MRS. NANCY HIRST
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

TO: News Media
FROM: U. S. Congressman Carroll Hubbard

WASHINGTON, May 15 -- U. S. Rep. Carroll Hubbard, D-Ky., chairman of the 75 House Democratic freshman members, told President Gerald Ford today that he congratulates the President "upon his decisive and courageous action in sending U. S. Marines to recapture the American merchant ship and its 40 crew members."

Hubbard said, "It's good to win one for a change."

The freshman Congressman added, "Finally our American leaders have shown the world that we still have some guts and determination. Had we shown some fortitude such as this during the past 10 years we could have easily won the war in Vietnam and could have avoided the embarrassment of the Pueblo hijacking by the North Koreans in 1968."



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1975 MAY 15 PM 9 24

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6 5842423892 TDBN NEW ORLEANS LA 58 05-15 8741A EST

7 PMS PRESIDENT GERALD R FORD

8 WHITE HOUSE DC 20500

9
10
11 AS THE WIFE OF ONE OF THE CREWMEN OF THE SS MAYAGUEZ I WANT TO THANK
12 YOU FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART FOR THE SAFETY OF MY HUSBAND YOUR
13 HANDLING OF THE SITUATION WAS MOST ADMIRABLE THE IMAGE OF AMERICA
14 MUST BE STRONG GOD BLESS YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

15
16
17 LORENE ANDERSON (MRS. ERVIN) 4648 MARQUE DR NEW ORLEANS LA

18 78127

19
20 NNNN



[5/15/75]

SHORTLY AFTER 10:30 P.M. THE DESTROYER WILSON REPORTED THAT

THERE WAS A BOAT APPROACHING IT WITH ^(A) WHITE FLAGS ON IT.

AT 11:09 SECRETARY SCHLESINGER TOLD THE PRESIDENT THAT THE DESTROYER

WILSON ^{reported} THAT THE SMALL BOAT WAS ALONG SIDE IT. AND THAT 30 OF THE

CREWMEN OF THE MAYAGUEZ WERE COMING ABOARD. ~~SECRETARY SCHLESINGER~~



[5/13/75?]

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.4 (b)

White House Guide Lines, Feb. 24, 1983

By CP NARS, Date 12/13/84

TALKING POINTS FOR CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION

I am calling to inform you, on a classified basis, of certain developments with regard to the seizure of an American merchant vessel by Cambodian naval vessels off the coast of Cambodia yesterday. The United States has demanded the immediate release of the ship and its crew. There has been no Cambodian response to this demand.

As a precautionary measure, the President has ordered the U. S. military forces to take certain actions:

-- to prevent the American seamen from being transferred from the vessel or the nearby island to the Cambodian mainland, placing their lives in jeopardy and restricting our ability to rescue them.

-- to prevent reinforcement from the Mainland of the Cambodian forces detaining the American vessel and crew.

With these objectives in mind, the President has directed that U. S. aircraft should attempt to stop the movement of Cambodian boats ~~between the island and the ship and~~ between the ship or the island and ~~and to prevent movement of the ship itself~~ the Cambodian mainland / Our military commanders have been directed to use the minimum force required to achieve these objectives.

FYI. You may draw on, but not go beyond, the attached fact sheet in answering questions on this subject.



May 13, 1975

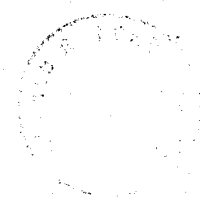
Status of the U. S. Merchant Ship Seized by Cambodians

The S. S. Mayaguez, seized by Cambodian Communist forces, May 12, is now about 20 miles outside the port of Kompong Som, just north of Koh Tang Island. The ship is dead in the water, and there is reason to believe that most or all of its crew has been transferred to the island. The ship is being kept under surveillance by U. S. reconnaissance aircraft.

As a precautionary measure, several U. S. Navy combat vessels have been ordered to proceed to the general area of Koh Tang Island.

The U. S. has requested that Phnom Penh authorities have the ship released immediately. We have, so far, received no reply.

An NSC meeting was convened this morning.



[E 5/15/75]
(Bill
(for my book))

TALKING POINTS

United States

At my direction, ~~American~~ forces tonight boarded the
~~American merchant ship~~ SS Mayaguez and landed at the Island of Koh Tang. They also
conducted supporting strikes against the ~~mainland~~ ^{nearly military installation} ~~base~~

rescuing
the crew &
ship which
had been
illegally seized
by
Cambodian
forces.

~~Kompong Som~~

I have now received information that the vessel has been
recovered intact and that the entire crew has been rescued.

I wish to express my appreciation and that of the entire
nation to the units and men who participated in these operations.

The forces that have successfully
accomplished this mission are still
~~hostile force~~
present and preparing to disengage.

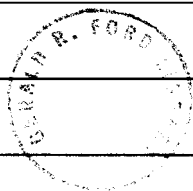
ORIGINAL RETIRED FOR PRESERVATION

[5/15/75?]

Am -

President talked to Scott and Mansfield by phone Monday after the ship seizure. He saw Rhodes later that day. Rep. Anderson was in yesterday as part of the Congressional hour.

You said Tuesday that the discussion with Scott, Mansfield and Rhodes came up indirectly as a result of conversations pertaining to other matters.



Question

In military actions to seize the captured ~~MAYAGUEZ~~ and rescue its crew, did you comply fully with U.S. law?

Answer

I did. Neither the Cooper-Church Amendment in 1971 (which prohibited use of U.S. ground combat troops in Cambodia) nor the prohibitions in later appropriations acts against U.S. combat activities anywhere in Indochina limited my Constitutional authority under the circumstances in this case to protect American lives and vessels from illegal attack and seizure. The War Powers Resolution does not in any way restrict the introduction of U.S. armed forces into hostilities but merely calls for prior consultation with the Congress if possible and subsequent reporting of the fact. These procedural requirements were met.

Question

Some members of Congress have raised the issue that you may have notified ~~but did not~~ "consult" Congress before attacks started to prevent movement of Cambodian boats between the MAYAGUEZ and Koh Tang Island or between the island and the Cambodian mainland. Others have raised the issue that you did not "consult" with the Congress before you had already decided to seize the ship and the island forcefully and to protect the operation by air attacks on military targets. What are your comments on these issues?

Answer

From the very beginning of this operation, as our diplomatic and military actions developed, I kept the leaders of the Congress fully informed. On the decision made under a critical time deadline to use force in order to recover the vessel and the crew, I discussed the contemplated actions fully with the leaders of the Congress and of the appropriate committees as soon as possible.

As a former Congressman, I fully believe that it is important for the Congress and Executive to act together on major issues. That is the philosophy that I have followed since the beginning of my administration, and that I shall continue to follow. Neither one of us can assume the responsibilities of the other, nor should we try, but it is important that we should work together and understand each other's views.

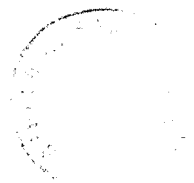
[Oct. 1976]

STATEMENT BY CONGRESSMAN LARRY WINN
WITH REGARD TO THE RELEASE OF THE GAO MAYAGUEZ REPORT

"I think it is a partisan thing at its worst. It is obvious 'rush' was stamped on page proofs he received at the same time the full report was given to the press, along with a news release quoting the sub-committee chairman. Neither I or the Minority staff had any time to go over the report or the news release. It was handled by the Majority without our approval.

"Interestingly, Congress adjourned Saturday morning and the report was hand-delivered to my office on Monday morning and released Tuesday prior to the debates. I am going to call on the full committee chairman to look into the timing and lack of cooperation with the Minority. These had been non-partisan sub-committee hearings, but the timing of the GAO report's release and the accompanying news statement was totally partisan."

#



On the Congressional contacts last night there was a strong concensus of support and no objections.



After the information was given to the Congressmen and Senators, the comments of the Members were written down by the Congressional liaison staff and TRANSMitted to the President. The President coundn't talk to ~~all~~ every one of them, but there feelings were transmitted to him. This is consultation, or discussion.

WAR POWERS

[5/14/75?]

Q Has the President met his responsibilities under the War Powers Act to ~~consult~~ consult with ~~Congress~~ Congress before taking any military action?

A The consultations that occurred last night between members of the President's staff and Congressional leaders would have taken place if there was no War Powers Act, because it is this President's firm desire to keep Congress fully informed of his actions regarding the seizure of the Mayaguez. ~~We consider the~~ We consider the discussions ^{to be} ~~the~~ the appropriate way for the Executive and Legislative branches to meet ^{an} ~~external problems~~ ^(such as we now face.) But it is also fair to say that these calls are consistent with the wishes of Congress as expressed in the War Powers Act.

Q: Were the calls last night for notification, or for consultation?

A: It was certainly more than notification! There was discussion with the Congressmen and Senators and their comments were passed on to the President. Our action was not limited to just notification. *(Stay away from using the word "notification".)*

(FYI ONLY: Rod Hills and Jack Marsh don't think you should get into a discussion of the legal technicalities of the War Powers Act. Leave that to the lawyers.)



The White House
Washington

1975 MAY 15 AM 11 07

VN16 41 VIA RCA

SS MAYAGUEZ/SFZK VIA SAN FRANCISCO RADIO 12000HT MAY 15, 1975

THE PRESIDENT

THE WHITE HOUSE

DEAR MR PRESIDENT THE CAPTAIN AND OFFICERS AND CREW OF THE
SS MAYAGUEZ THANK YOU AND ALL THE BRAVE MILITARY FORCES WHO
ARE FIGHTING AND DYING TO SAVE OUR LIVES

CAPTAIN MILLER.



PHOTO COPY PROVIDED BY A PERSONAL SERVICE DIVISION OF THE U.S. AIR FORCE

ORIGINAL TO: BILL GILLEY

copy COPY FYI TO: RON NESSEN

White House
Washington

16 AM 10 47
MAIL ROOM

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ICS IPNWIRA WSL

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PMS PRESIDENT GERALD FORD

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHDC

WE ARE VERY GRATEFUL FOR YOUR ACTION IN RECOVERING THE CREW OF
OUR SHIP, NYAGUEZ, AND WE MOURN THE LOSS OF THE MEN IN OUR ARMED
FORCES WHO SACRIFICED THEIR LIVES IN THIS OPERATION. WE ARE SEEKING
THE NAMES OF THOSE FAMILIES. WE ARE ALSO ATTEMPTING THROUGH THE
DEFENSE DEPARTMENT TO FLY A NEW CREW AT OUR EXPENSE TO THE SHIP
AND RETURN THE SHIP'S CREW TO THEIR FAMILIES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
FOR THE PERSONNEL OF OUR SEA-LANE SUBSIDIARY AND OURSELVES,

WE ARE VERY GRATEFUL TO YOU AND OUR GOVERNMENT.

SINCERELY,

COLIN STOKES, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

PAUL STICHT, PRESIDENT
R. J. REYNOLDS INDUSTRIES, INC.

NNNN

FORM 0808 PRINTED BY THE STANDARD REGISTER COMPANY, U. S. A.

FORM 0808 PRINTED BY THE STANDARD REGISTER COMPANY, U. S. A.

May 16, 1975

U. S. RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE PONCE (SEALAND)

FYI The following Notice to Mariners was issued by the Defense Mapping Agency Hydrographic Center at 7:15 p. m. EDT, May 12:

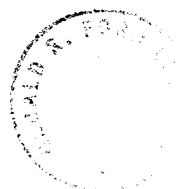
"Special Warning: Shipping is advised until further notice to remain more than 35 nautical miles off the coast of Cambodia and more than 20 nautical miles off the coast of Vietnam including off lying islands. Recent incidents have been reported by firing on, stopping and detention of ships within waters claimed by Cambodia, particularly in the vicinity of Poulo Wai Island. This warning in no way should be construed as United States recognition of Cambodian or Vietnamese territorial sea claims or as derogation of the right of innocent passage for United States flag vessels, or derogation of the freedom of the high seas."

BACKGROUND: It is reported that the sister ship of the Mayaguez the Ponce, is on the same course to Sattahip that the Mayaguez was following when it was seized. The Mariners' warning is still in effect.

Sealand Corp. has told the (State) Office of Maritime Affairs that it plans to continue its regular commercial traffic from Hong Kong to Thailand, but will skirt the area mentioned in the Mariners' warning.

Q. Is the Ponce following the same course as the Mayaguez and if so, isn't that rather foolish? What is the U. S. responsibility for the safety of the Ponce?

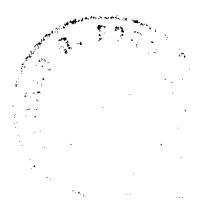
A. The warning to Mariners issued Monday is a standard means of alerting ships to possible dangers in an area. The final course of the ship Ponce is set by Sealand Corporation in accordance with established rules of international maritime passage. We have been informed that Sealand has directed the Ponce to skirt the area mentioned in the warning, but that it does not intend to alter its plans to continue commercial shipping from Hong Kong to Thailand.



The United States recognizes the right of innocent passage and of the freedom of the high seas and will act in accordance with those principles.

Q. But what if the Ponce is fired upon?

A. We do not expect that to occur, and as I said, the Ponce will be skirting the area. We have, by our actions, made our position and our beliefs very clear.



bcc: James Falk, Associate Director
of the Domestic Council

Robert Witt ✓
Republican Governor's Association

Hayaguez

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46204

May 19, 1975

President Gerald Ford
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Ford:

C
O
P
Y
Periodically throughout the course of American history, our Presidents have had to confront momentous decisions involving the deployment of American forces. In these turbulent hours of decision, the quality of the man in the office of President of the United States is tested more strenuously than by any other potential human situation, for the fate of mankind lies literally suspended in the balance.

A few days ago you were confronted by such a test. The piracy of the Hayaguez in the waters of tense South East Asia constituted an act of hostile provocation that could not be overlooked. At such times both the Constitution of the United States and the weight of American public opinion focus sharply upon the leadership of our President. These are truly decisions which can in no way be shared by another. There can be only one President . . . one Commander in Chief.

Your decision was not only the right one to be made at that time, but it also has been proven to have been the right one after the fact.

I most enthusiastically join the vast majority of all Americans in support of your decision to re-affirm the principles of freedom of the seas, in a manner devoid of equivocation or potential misinterpretation by other nations of the world.

Kindest personal regard,

Otis R. Bowen, M.D.
Governor

ORB:ml



MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 12, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: RON NESSEN
FROM: MARGI VANDERHYE *MVH*
SUBJECT: Follow-up Question on Mayaguez Report

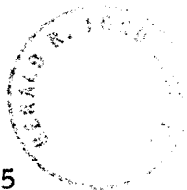
In response to questions on the President's request for a report following the Mayaguez incident you may say that the report is being prepared by various departments, and will be presented to the President shortly.

FYI: The report is now with the NSC Staff and may be ready as early as next week. There are no plans at this time to make the report public, since it is a report for the President.

In response to questions along that line, you can say that the issue of whether the report is made public has not been discussed, which is, in fact, true.



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON



October 24, 1975

Ron Nessen -

As discussed, the attached letter was sent to all members of the MAYAGUEZ crew with the exception of Guillerno Reyes and Willfredo Reyes.

One member of the Reyes family was killed in an automobile accident - when it is determined whether it was father or son - both were on the MAYAGUEZ - an appropriate Presidential letter will be sent.

Trudy Fry

WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

October 22, 1975

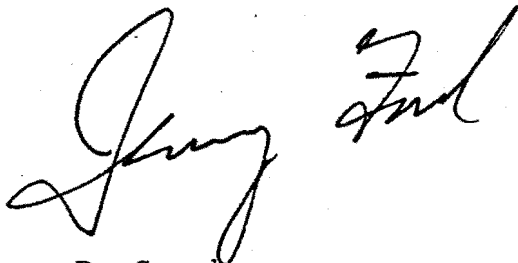
Dear Mr. Sanchez:

Before any more time passes, I want to express my admiration for the courage and steadfastness that you and all the members of the MAYAGUEZ crew displayed during the seizure of your ship.

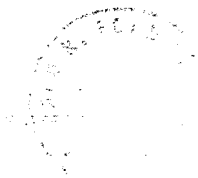
The accounts of this incident which Captain Miller and others have related to me leave no doubt in my mind that you all performed magnificently.

I wish you good fortune and smooth sailing in your future endeavors, and I hope that we will have an opportunity to meet personally some time in the future.

With personal best wishes,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jimmy Carter". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the recipient's address.

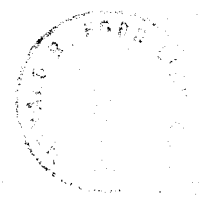
Mr. Juan P. Sanchez
546 Ellington Avenue
San Francisco, California 94112



KISSINGER AND THE B-52's

Q. A Parade Magazine article of Sunday, June 22, asserts that Secretary Kissinger was in favor of carpet bombing of Cambodia during the Mayaguez incident, but that the President decided against so extreme an action. Can you comment on the veracity of the report?

A. The State Department denied the charges made in the story on Friday, June 20. I would have nothing further to add to their statement. As you know, we never discuss what transpires in NSC meetings, including what decisions were reached or how they were formulated.



RM
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Council Praises Ford for Saving Mayaquez Crew

BY ERWIN BAKER
Times City Bureau Chief

An international incident more than 8,000 miles from Los Angeles generated far more interest in the City Council Monday than the status of local women.

Over the strenuous opposition of Councilmen Zev Yaroslavsky and Dave Cunningham, the council commended President Ford for his "decisive action" in the Mayaquez episode in May.

By a vote of 8 to 2, the lawmakers, acting on a motion by Councilman Louis R. Nowell and the recommendation of the State, County and Federal Affairs Committee, lauded the President for his action with respect to:

"The safe recovery of the crew of the Mayaquez and the vessel and his efforts to let the world know that the United States of America will no longer be intimidated by acts of piracy."

A few minutes earlier, the council, without discussion, gave final approval and sent to Mayor Tom Bradley an ordinance establishing a Los Angeles City Status of Woman Commission.

Bradley said he would sign the ordinance today.

Although mainly advisory to the council and mayor, the seven-member commission is empowered to subpoena witnesses, with council approval, for public hearings that could have a significant influence on the role of women in the city government.

In contrast to its perfunctory action on the women's issue, the council argued vigorously over whether it should praise the President on his action on the Mayaquez incident in May off the Cambodian coast.

On May 12, following the seizure of the U.S. freighter by Cambodian forces, Mr. Ford denounced the act as "piracy" and demanded they release the vessel and its crew or "face the most serious consequences."

Please Turn to Page 6, Col. 2



L.A. Times

7-15-75

COUNCIL LAUDS ACTION BY FORD

Continued from First Page

Two days later, the President announced that military action had been taken to recapture the ship and rescue the crew.

Subsequently the Pentagon announced that 14 marines were killed, three were missing and 50 were wounded in the rescue operation.

Yaroslavsky said he did not think the Mayaguez incident "was anything to be proud of," there was "considerable controversy over whether it was necessary" and he doubted that "we should relegate ourselves to the 1975 version of jingoism."

Yaroslavsky contended that the episode had "peripheral if any relationship to city business."

"It's just a question of do we want to wave the flag and commend the President for bombing the hell out of a country. The bombing is questionable and certainly the success of the American military is questionable," he said.

Cunningham, while agreeing with Yaroslavsky in opposing the motion, asserted it did concern city business

because of the possibility that the incident could have led to war.

That would have resulted, he noted, in drafting men from this area, probably would have caused an oil crisis and placed a "tremendous demand on our resources."

But supporting Yaroslavsky, Cunningham said, "Nobody has indicated the number of lives that might have been lost unnecessarily" in the rescue operation.

"It was indicated," he said, "that the Cambodian government already was on the way to returning the men" when military action was authorized by Mr. Ford.

"I think it would be bad for the council to commend the President for warlike actions, particularly at a time when we are trying to achieve some sense and true understanding of peace," he added.

Bernardi, committee chairman, replying to his colleagues' criticism, said it is "fine to stand up and make speeches accusing the United States of being aggressive in this case, of being militant and being war mongers."

"But," he observed sarcastically, "I guess it's all right for another country to kidnap our ship. That was not a hostile act, maybe it was some kind of protection."

Bernardi was referring to the capture of the U.S. intelligence ship, Pueblo, off the North Korean coast in 1968.

Taking up that line, Council President Pro Tem John Ferraro chided Yaroslavsky, 26, for "probably" being "too young" to remember the Pueblo incident.

"The fear and danger (this time) could have been the same," Ferraro said. "When you make a decision, you look at history."

Ferraro also reminded Yaroslavsky that "time and time again actions are brought in (to the council) commending Israel for its valiant stand against overwhelming odds in the Middle East."



MAYAGUEZ

HONG KONG (UPI) -- THE AUTHOR OF A BOOK DEALING WITH THE MAYAGUEZ INCIDENT SAID SUNDAY PRESIDENT FORD USED ALL DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS OPEN TO HIM IN TRYING TO SECURE THE RELEASE OF THE AMERICAN CARGO SHIP AND ITS CREW.

ROY ROWAN, TIME MAGAZINE BUREAU CHIEF IN HONG KONG WHO WROTE "THE FOUR DAYS OF MAYAGUEZ," DESCRIBED AS "HARDLY FAIR" A CONGRESSIONAL REPORT THAT FORD GAVE "LITTLE WEIGHT TO INDICATIONS THAT THE CAMBODIANS MIGHT BE WORKING OUT A POLITICAL SOLUTION."

"WHAT INDICATIONS?" ASKED ROWAN. "THE PRESIDENT USED EVERY CHANNEL OPEN TO HIM, MAINLY THE CHINESE. THE NOTES WERE RETURNED UNANSWERED."

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WASHINGTON (UPI) -- JIMMY CARTER WON THE ENDORSEMENT OF THREE PRESTIGIOUS NEWSPAPERS SUNDAY, JUST DAYS AFTER PRESIDENT FORD WAS BACKED BY TWO OTHER MAJOR PUBLICATIONS.

THE ARKANSAS GAZETTE, THE DAYTON (OHIO) DAILY NEWS, AND THE LONG ISLAND (N.Y.) PRESS CAME OUT FOR THE DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE IN EDITORIALS SUNDAY.

LAST WEEK, FORD WAS ENDORSED BY THE JACKSON (MISS.) DAILY NEWS AND THE NASHVILLE BANNER.

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ATLANTA (UPI) -- JIMMY CARTER CAMPAIGN OFFICIALS ARE DEPENDING ON GRASS ROOTS ORGANIZATION AND GOOD MANAGEMENT TO OFFSET AN EXPECTED FINANCIAL DISADVANTAGE IN THE CLOSING WEEKS OF THE PRESIDENTIAL RACE.

CARTER'S CAMPAIGN HAS OUTSPENT PRESIDENT FORD'S BY 3-TO-1 AND THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE IS NOT EXPECTED TO RAISE AS MUCH MONEY AS ITS REPUBLICAN COUNTERPART.

"WE FOUND OUT IN THE PRIMARIES THAT THE GUY THAT SPENDS THE MOST MONEY DOESN'T NECESSARILY WIN," CARTER TREASURER ROBERT LIPSHUTZ SAID.

AS OF SEPT. 30, THE CARTER CAMPAIGN HAD SPENT ABOUT \$12.6 MILLION OF ITS \$21.8 MILLION FEDERAL SUBSIDY. ALMOST HALF HAD GONE TO ADVERTISING -- MUCH FOR ADS THAT WERE NOT TO APPEAR FOR SOME TIME.

THE FORD CAMPAIGN, AS OF SEPT. 30, HAD SPENT ABOUT \$3.5 MILLION OF ITS \$21.8 MILLION FEDERAL ALLOTMENT. ITS \$7 MILLION TO \$9 MILLION MEDIA CAMPAIGN IS JUST STARTING.

-0-

WATERTOWN, N.Y. (UPI) -- AN ELDERLY NEW YORK WOMAN HAS DIED OF INJURIES SHE SUFFERED WHEN SHE WAS HIT LAST WEEK BY A CAR IN A POLITICAL MOTORCADE FOR THE WIFE OF SEN. WALTER MONDALE.

POLICE SAID 68-YEAR-OLD DORIS KINGSLEY DIED SATURDAY OF INJURIES SHE SUFFERED WEDNESDAY WHEN STRUCK BY THE LEAD CAR IN A MOTORCADE CARRYING JOAN MONDALE.

SHE WAS CROSSING AN INTERSECTION WITH THE GREEN LIGHT WHEN THE MOTORCADE ROUNDED A CORNER, ALSO PROCEEDING WITH THE LIGHT, AT A FIVE-WAY INTERSECTION IN WATERTOWN N.Y.

THE DRIVER OF THE CAR WAS UNABLE TO STOP IN TIME, OFFICERS SAID.

UPI 10-11 10:46 AED

[1976]



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7BULLETIN

7SHIP SEIZURE A069 2ND LEAD

WASHINGTON (AP) - THE UNITED STATES WILL FLY ABOUT 1,000 MARINES TO THAILAND IN THE CRISIS OVER CAMBODIA'S SEIZURE OF A U.S. CARGO SHIP; PENTAGON SOURCES REPORTED TODAY.

7LT906AED MAY 13

