

that there was no hope of having the policy waived generally for Vietnamese citizens who wished to leave. Events after our departure have borne out that judgment, and it is worth noting that embassies that remained after our departure had no more success than we did in having the policy changed. It must also be stressed that, until the last minute, the Vietnamese authorities remained able to prevent departures they had not authorized. Indeed, on the day our chargé d'affaires left, the authorities did, in fact, prevent the departure of persons who were in his automobile and whom he was trying to bring with him.

American operations

There was only one real exception to this general situation. It is that the U.S. Embassy, especially on the last day of its evacuation, brought out large numbers of Vietnamese who, as far as we know, were not authorized to leave. The Americans could do so for reasons that are unique to themselves; they are certainly circumstances that did not apply to Canada. Rightly or wrongly, the U.S.A. had been present and active in Viet-Nam for years, as a major military power engaged in major military operations. Canada never shared their involvement, never had the physical means and resources that went with it, and never had the status that the U.S.A. enjoyed and that conferred upon it the ability to act independently of the South Vietnamese authorities. The Canadian people, over the years, did not wish that Canada share the military involvement and status of the U.S.A. in Viet-Nam; we did not, therefore, share the power of independent action that went with that involvement.

What the U.S.A. could do in South Viet-Nam, at the very end, Canada could not do. But there is more -- what the U.S.A. may have needed to do Canada did not automatically need to do. For example, it could be thought that Vietnamese who had been closely involved with the Americans were in danger from the new South Vietnamese régime and had to be evacuated for that reason. The same is not true of Vietnamese who were associated with Canadians. There are, for instance, no valid grounds to assume that having worked for Canada or for Canadians in South Viet-Nam places Vietnamese citizens in jeopardy. There was, therefore, not the same need to assure their evacuation from their own country.

We should, I suggest, beware of subjective spill-over, into Canadian perceptions, of concepts or responsibilities that are specifically American. To say that we have humanitarian reasons to take into Canada some of the Vietnamese refugees, including those evacuated by the U.S.A., is one thing; to suggest that in the last days of American presence in South Viet-Nam we had the need, the ability or
