

U. S. STUDENTS WANT TO STAY IN VIET

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SAIGON.

For perhaps the first time in history, American teenagers were unhappy that it was the last day of school.

At 11 a. m. yesterday the faculty of the American Community School, for 800 children of American service men and officials, announced that the school would be closed two hours later—permanently.

The announcement was made following a decision of President Johnson to withdraw 1,819 American dependents in South Viet Nam after he had ordered retaliatory raids on North Viet Nam. The first group of 91 will leave today via commercial air lines—40 for the United States from Saigon and 51 from Hue for Hong Kong.

As the dependents in Viet Nam's provinces yesterday were hastily rounded up and sent to Saigon, American teenagers told their reactions. Most reactions were against evacuation.

Katherine Stevens Westmoreland, 16-year-old daughter of Gen. and Mrs. William C. Westmoreland, commander of the American Military Assistance Command, shook her chestnut bobbed hair defiantly, pounded her fist and emphasized:

"Tell them we don't want to go. If you are a newspaper reporter tell them we don't want to go. We even cried this morning about leaving. We want to stay in Viet Nam with our friends."

Dozens of her classmates clustered around her on the winding steel stairs of the American Community School and joined in unison: "We don't want to go."

A boy turned to Miss Westmoreland accusingly and said it was her father's fault that they had to leave.

"It is not my father's fault," sharply replied Stevie. "It's the fault of Lynda Bird's father, not mine."

As other classmates came down the stairs from classrooms, she polled them, asking: "Do you want to go?"

A blonde in a blue blouse and skirt chirped condescendingly: "I will not be leaving anyway. I'm Australian."

Most of Stevie's classmates said they did not want to go.

"None of us is scared," Stevie said. "The mothers are crying because they don't want to leave their husbands,

and we are crying because we do not want to leave Viet Nam."

As she scraped her brown loafers across the stairs, she was asked why the families were being sent out.

"Because the President said so," she replied, laughing. "I suppose we will go to Hawaii so we can see daddy once in a while."

"Then you can be a surfer," replied a classmate, who regretted leaving his riding horse.

A woman principal came down the corridor and shouted: "You students should be in the classroom. I cannot understand why you are not studying."

"It's the last day of school," a boy whispered. "They can't do anything to us now."

An American army sergeant looked disgusted as he watched the teenagers, fingering his carbine which he was to use to protect them if necessary. He said, "I'll let you stay here for my job if you'll give me your seat on the plane. I want to get out of here."

"You are supposed to fight the VC (Viet Cong Communist guerrillas)," the boy retorted.

"I have enough trouble fighting my company commander," the sergeant said, sauntering down the corridor, through which an hour later the American school children walked for the last time.