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1978.

The U.S. Refugee Program in Thailand

1 January 1978

IPP-77

The U.S. Attorney General authorized the Indochinese Parole Program (IPP)-1977 on August 11. This program provided for the admission of an additional 15,000 Indochinese refugees into the United States. Under IPP-77, 8000 refugees were to be selected from the 13 inland camps in Thailand, and 7000 others from among refugees who reached the East Asian littoral via the high seas. Of this latter total of 7000, Immigration and Naturalization Service officers approved some 2300 from camps in Thailand.

Resettlement In the United States

Before August 1977, the United States had resettled about 150,000 Indochinese refugees. The majority, some 131,000, were Vietnamese and Cambodians who arrived in America in mid-1975. Since then, the U.S. has initiated a series of programs aimed at resettling a portion of those Indochinese refugees - principally Lao and Hmong - who have continued to flee their homelands, mainly to Thailand but also to other Asian countries. As of the end of 1977, the U.S. had resettled some 21,000 refugees who had originally sought temporary asylum in Thailand.

Resettlement Elsewhere Abroad

Other countries, particularly France, Canada, and Australia, have also resettled significant numbers of Indochinese refugees. Again, the majority of these refugees sought temporary asylum in Thailand, but several thousand first fled to other Asian countries, and have since gone on to resettlement elsewhere abroad.

The significant French program continues at the pace of approximately 1000 a month that it has maintained since May 1975. Australia initiated a program in September 1977 destined to take in approximately 1800 refugees within one year's time. Australia additionally has welcomed over 1000 Indochinese who have made the long sea voyage to Darwin and other points along the northern Australian coast, and completed in December a rush program of accepting an additional 1087 refugees from camps in Malaysia. Canada has announced a program of accepting 450 refugees, but the Canadian program has yet to get substantially underway.

Between September and November of 1977, New Zealand accepted some 420 refugees, and Denmark 52. The Federal Republic of Germany has established a quota for 200 refugees, Belgium 150, and the Netherlands 60. Switzerland offers special programs for Indochinese, or other refugees, who have severe medical or mental problems. While, like Switzerland, Norway has set no quota, it has been particularly generous in accepting refugees that Norwegian ships pick up on the high seas.

The Thai Refugee Dilemma

Because of its common border with Laos and Cambodia, and its relative proximity to Vietnam, Thailand has borne the burden of the majority of Indochinese refugees in Asia. The Royal Thai Government (RTG) followed throughout most of 1977 a liberal policy of granting temporary asylum to refugees. Using funds provided by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and its own resources, the RTG had earlier established 15 camps and two transit centers to accommodate refugees until they found resettlement opportunities elsewhere. Resettlement abroad has unfortunately not been able to keep pace with the influx of refugees into Thailand. More than 11,000 new refugees entered between 1 September and 31 December 1977. There were 97,595 Indochinese refugees in Thai camps as of the end of 1977.

Local Settlement

The RTG has so far been unwilling to locally settle Indochinese refugees in country. The RTG believes not only that absorption of such a large number poses political, economic, and security problems for the Kingdom, but also that countries of traditional immigration should take in a greater share of the refugees. The RTG has announced its willingness, however, to consider local settlement when the number of refugees in Thailand is significantly reduced through departures for resettlement abroad or repatriation to countries of origin.

Program Criteria for IPP-77

When the Attorney General authorized IPP-77 in August, there were over 86,000 refugees located in inland camps throughout Thailand. In view of the expected number of applications for resettlement in the United States, and the availability of only 8000 spaces - less than a tenth of the refugee population - the U.S. established criteria for the selection of refugees under IPP-77. Besides the requirement of continued presence in the camp since at least 11 August 1977, the date the Attorney General authorized the parole, those potentially eligible for selection include refugees (and their immediate families) who: (1) have close relatives living in the United States; (2) were former employees of the United States Government in Indochina; or (3) were closely associated with U.S. policies or programs because of their position in the former

Indochinese governments or armed forces, because of having worked for American firms or organizations, or because of training in or by the U.S.

All 8000 refugees to be selected from inland camps must qualify under the foregoing criteria, with a special exception for Category IV - humanitarian consideration - to avoid, for example, abandoning an isolated collateral relative when the principal applicant leaves for the United States. IPP-77, however, encompassed all boat case refugees who reached Asian shores by August 11, regardless of whether they fit the category requirements. The only provisos were that the refugee not have a resettlement commitment from another country, and not be excludable from the United States under immigration law. Refugees who arrived by boat via the high seas after August 11 had to meet the same category requirements as those in the inland camps.

IPP-77 Organization in Thailand

Several American agencies participate in the selection of refugees from Thailand for resettlement in the United States. The Embassy Refugee Section consists of over 60 persons. Thirteen are U.S. Government personnel, American and Thai. The Americans come from the Department of State, the Agency for International Development, and the U.S. Information Agency. There are 43 Americans and Thai working in this program under the leadership of the Joint Voluntary Agency (JVA) representative in Bangkok. JVA is under contract to the Department of State. The Refugee Section also employs 7 to 8 refugees of Hmong, Khmer, Lao and Vietnamese ethnic origin who are waiting to go to the United States. They serve as interpreters and perform other duties related to their ethnic groups. As they depart for America, others take their place. Officers of the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) operate out of the Refugee Section during their temporary assignments to Thailand.

The Embassy Refugee Section has the responsibility of implementing the U.S. refugee program in Thailand, and keeps Washington informed on the progress of IPP-77, as well as on problems that develop. In carrying out U.S. refugee policy, the Section coordinates with the Royal Thai Government, the local representatives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration, and officers of Bangkok embassies whose countries also have resettlement programs. The Section also briefs the press and other interested parties.

The Joint Voluntary Agency (JVA) in Thailand is a private organization representing the American Council of Voluntary Agen-

cies (ACVA). ACVA is the organization in New York responsible for finding U.S. sponsorship for refugees. JVA teams visit camps to pre-screen refugees who express an interest in resettlement in the United States, maintain dossiers on potentially qualified refugees, and forward biographical information to ACVA on those refugees eventually approved for U.S. resettlement.

Refugee officers, all of whom are language-qualified, evaluate JVA pre-screening results for the particular ethnic group for which they are responsible. They check case files and interview refugees to ensure eligibility under IPP-77 criteria, and place written comments in case files. Because of the extremely high number of potentially eligible Category III refugees in inland camps versus spaces available for them, refugee officers assign a numerical score to each of these Category III principal applicants.

INS officers have sole legal authority to approve refugees for U.S. resettlement. They ensure that refugees are selected according to IPP-77 criteria, and in compliance with U.S. immigration law.

Selection Process

Selection under IPP-77 is a complex procedure requiring the following steps before a refugee can depart for the U.S.

1. Interested refugees register with a JVA pre-screening team. JVA representatives indicate on the registration form whether the refugees appear to qualify under IPP-77 criteria, and under which category they fall.

2. The JVA team sends or brings registration forms to Bangkok where the JVA clerical staff opens dossiers on potential qualifiers. The staff prepares security clearance cables and, for Category I refugees, relative search and verification cables. The staff files documents and correspondence and, when necessary, requests additional documents from the refugee's relatives in the U.S. or from former employers.

3. Refugee officers inspect dossiers to check the validity of documentation. The officers interview as many potentially qualified refugees as possible in order to determine whether they should be presented to INS officers.

4. Refugee officers and JVA personnel accompany INS officers to the camps.

5. INS officers, during personal interviews, approve or disapprove refugees for entry into the United States.

6. JVA representatives send biographical information on all approved refugees to ACVA which then initiates the sponsorship search.

7. After ACVA confirms sponsorship, the Refugee Section contacts the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM) to request the Thai Ministry of Interior to transfer sponsored refugees from the camps to Bangkok.

8. ICEM gives the refugees a medical examination, and makes travel arrangements abroad.

9. After the refugees have received the required medical clearance, they depart for the U.S.

As many have observed, selection of refugees for resettlement in the United States is a slow process. It can take from two to six or more months from original registration with a JVA representative to arrival in the United States. The slowness is attributable to several factors: the scope, particularly of the inland camp program, where justice demanded that virtually all potentially eligible refugees be interviewed before INS approvals could take place; a necessity to insure that refugees selected under IPP-77 meet U.S. legal requirements; and, since the refugee camps in the United States have been closed since December 1975, the time needed to find sponsors who will take responsibility for refugees immediately upon their arrival.

Present Status of IPP-77

A. Boat Camps: All 7000 boat case numbers had been allotted to refugees by November 1977. By the end of the year, 780 of the some 2300 approved from Thailand had already left for the United States: 1019 were awaiting sponsorships; and 497 were pending final medical clearance, airline bookings, or both.

B. Inland Camps: To determine the number of refugees potentially qualified under IPP-77 criteria, JVA pre-screening teams made a comprehensive survey of all 13 inland camps. This pre-screening process began in late August and ended December 18. Some 52,500 persons, over 60% of the inland camp population as of September 1977, applied for U.S. resettlement under IPP-77.

Refugee officers are now evaluating the information that the JVA teams gathered. While this review will undoubtedly result in a considerable reduction in the figure of 32,000 potential eligibles, there will obviously be several thousand more candidates than the 8000 spaces available for them. INS officers in October interviewed refugees in the Sikhui camp, from which the RTG has a special interest in resettlement abroad. They approved 189 for the United States: 23 have already departed; 110 are sponsored and waiting for medical clearances; and 56 are awaiting confirmation of sponsorship.

Future Activity

The arrival of boat case refugees in Asia accelerated from a rate of about 500 a month for approximately the first two thirds of 1977 to an average of over 1500 a month in the last four months of the year. Shortly after the 7000 boat case spaces were filled in November, there were still some 4700 boat case refugees in temporary asylum on Asian shores without prospect of resettlement abroad. Continuing concern over their plight led President Carter December 22 to authorize the State Department to request the Attorney General to parole another 7000 boat case refugees. At the start of the new year, the Attorney General was consulting with Congress about this possibility. The Administration also plans to begin consultations with Congress toward the end of January about the possibilities for longer-range programs for both boat case refugees in Asia and inland camp refugees in Thailand.

Five INS officers are scheduled to arrive in Thailand January 13 to begin interviewing, principally in the inland camps. The Embassy expects that INS will have designated all 8000 inland camp refugees for IPP-77 by early March. Substantial movements to the United States of those selected should take place during the first several months of 1978, and the last should leave Thailand during the summer.

Refugee Section
American Embassy
Bangkok, Thailand

ACVA 73

JAN 17 1978

JOINT VOLUNTARY AGENCY REPRESENTATIVE

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Tel: 28321 Ext. 219, 119

INDOCHINESE RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM

Mailing Address:
c/o American Embassy
P. O. Box 35
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

To: Ms. Eva Kelley, ACVA.

Date: 6 January 1978

Fm: Galen Beery, JVAR, Malaysia. *Galen*

Re: Malaysian Refugee Program: December, 1977

Movement of IPP-77 approved refugees from Malaysia to the United States increased again, from 169 in October and 387 in November, to 412 in December. We could probably have seen over 500 depart except for a week's hiatus for the Christmas/New Year's holidays, and a movement to Australia. This leaves 1,545 persons being scheduled to depart from January 10 on, at about 500+ per month.

December's emphasis, however, was on Australian resettlement. Spurred by the arrival of hundreds of refugees in small boats, the Australian government sent a dozen officials to Malaysia. This delegation accepted 1,087 persons, and around 600 left. The remainder should be in Australia by mid-January. Our move is slower due to governmental requirements for medicals, which require a week's stay in Kuala Lumpur, and considerably more required paperwork.

The Australians expected their program to stem the Vietnamese penchant to attempt the long and hazardous journey to Australia by boat. Population pressures in some camps have been relieved, but on January 3, another boat of some 36 reached Darwin. As a result, they are setting up an office in Kuantan and will take another 400.

An unexpected problem has been the move by many refugees to join the exodus to Australia. Around 135 IPP-77 numbers assigned to refugees have been recouped and we expect more, including a few whose approval was conditional and the required American relative has not been proven.

1977 Statistics:

	<u>Families*</u>	<u>Persons</u>
Conditional Entry Program (May - September)	123	469
Immigrants (August - December)	6	16
Indochinese Parole Program - 1977 (October-December)	262	969
Total movement to U.S., Malaysia, 1977	<u>381</u>	<u>1454</u>

(* "Families" is not a precise figure. Some files were split only due to CE criteria or medical/administrative holds. Refugees who went to the same volag and sponsor at different times show up on records as different 'families'.)

Two lists, of CE/1977 and IPP-77 cases, are attached. Both list all cases: the CE departure list gives those who left under the 1977 CE program. The IPP-77 gives both those who left in 1977 (indicated by volag, date of departure), and those approved who have not yet left.

6 January 1978

Page Two

Immigrant cases pose a special problem. We now have 18 cases, 74 persons, who qualify on the basis of a close family member who is an American citizen or a permanent resident. It would be better to say appear to qualify: they are awaiting the arrival in the American Consulate here of Form I-130, a petition which must be submitted by the relative to INS and approved.

The time INS consumes in routinely approving these petitions takes a minimum of 2 months. Problems of delay, misunderstanding of the process, and mislaid petitions seem to be widespread, e.g., one case filed the I-130 in August and we still haven't received it, and a Vietnamese-American citizen in San Francisco was told that she couldn't file petitions for refugees.

We're researching each case and will try to spell out this week exactly where we are and what needs to be done. I understand that since these cases are immigrants, volag assistance is not quite in the same category as that required for CE and IPP-77 refugees. Perhaps a short roundtable at an ACVA meeting can summarize needed procedures at the U.S. end.

I should mention that we do have IPP-77 numbers for most of these cases, but insofar as possible, cases should move as immigrants so numbers can be recouped for other refugees who wouldn't have a chance.

CE Program for 1978 has not yet begun, although several hundred persons in Thailand were cleared for expected reinitiation. An INS officer has been requested to come to Malaysia early in February to interview cases here. For movement, what this means for volags is that if a refugee's brother arrived in Malaysia in 1977, but was not accepted for IPP, he may be reinterviewed in February or March. If accepted, his earliest possible departure would be in April (some CE departures will begin concurrently with the last of the IPP-77 cases). May or June would be more likely.

New arrivals tapered off in December to only 419. There should be very few in January, February, and March, due to climatic conditions which can lead to ten and fifteen-foot waves in the South China Sea. Presently there are about 3,166 refugees in Malaysia (UNHCR figure), only 2,092 which have not been accepted by INS or third countries. So far, we have about 660 which appear qualified for CE: 449 appear CAT I, 4 as CAT II, and 158 as CAT III.

GB:mtf

Encls:

Conditional Entry Program - 1977 List
IPP-77 List.

INDOCHINESE REFUGEE BOAT CASES -- 1977

Date January 6, 1978

1. THIRD COUNTRY ACCEPTANCE SINCE AUGUST 11, 1977

COUNTRIES OF RESETTLEMENT	Taiwan	Japan	Indonesia	Thailand	Malaysia	Singapore	Hong Kong	Korea	Philippines	TOTALS
France		1	27	118	122	43	7	1	6	325
Canada			12	5	20			4	48	89
Australia			39	499	1087	12	4		2	1643
Germany				1	4	30			4	39
Belgium				7	7				1	15
U.K.				33		49				82
Denmark				26	26					52
Norway				57						57
New Zealand				195	219					414
Netherlands				4	35					39
Switzerland				41	6				2	49
Japan						1				1
Rep. of China	11									11
	11	1	78	986	1526	135	11	5	63	2816
									TOTAL	

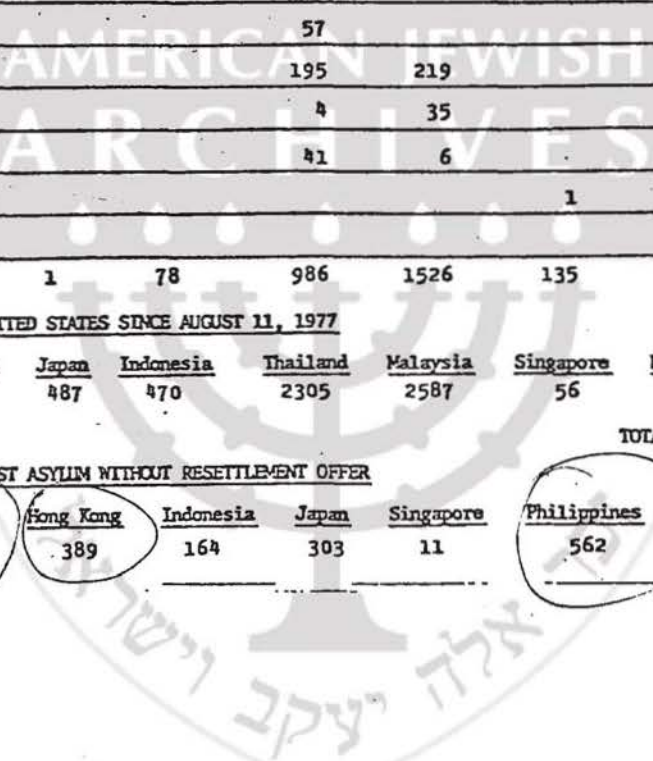
2. ACCEPTANCES BY THE UNITED STATES SINCE AUGUST 11, 1977

Taiwan	Japan	Indonesia	Thailand	Malaysia	Singapore	Hong Kong	Korea	Philippines	TOTALS
52	487	470	2305	2587	56	385	86	587	7015

TOTAL U.S. & THIRD COUNTRIES

3. BOAT CASES NOW IN FIRST ASYLUM WITHOUT RESETTLEMENT OFFER

Thailand	Malaysia	Hong Kong	Indonesia	Japan	Singapore	Philippines	India	Korea	TOTALS
783	2163	389	164	303	11	562	95	1	4471



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JEANNE MacDANIELS
Washington Regional Director

January 13, 1978

Fact-finding Commission on Indochinese Refugees

To: Members of the "Islands Group"

Dear Rabbi Tanenbaum:

You will have received the first letter to all Commission members from Charles Sternberg. This is the first letter specifically addressed to the "Islands Group," of which William J. Casey is Chairman.

Enclosed are copies of our itinerary and of a report prepared by a Study Mission of the Senate Judiciary Committee on Humanitarian Problems of Southeast Asia, 1977. The report is covered by a release of Senator Edward M. Kennedy summarizing its recommendations and findings.

Our schedule is fairly rigorous, but it allows sufficient time in each country to accomplish our mission without exhausting everybody and gets us to Bangkok in time for a wrap-up and joint press conference with the Thailand group (whose schedule is even tighter than ours). As of this writing, the airline reservations are confirmed, the hotel reservations are still on request. I am asking each of you individually about your wishes as to travel to Seattle on February 8 (or 9 for some) and from Bangkok back to the US. I shall make all reservations and procure the tickets.

We have been in touch with the IRC Director in Hong Kong and the Joint Voluntary Agency Representatives in the Philippines, Singapore, and Malaysia, who will help to flesh out the schedule. Leo Cherne has written the Secretary of State about the Commission, asking his help in arranging appointments with the American Ambassadors and host Government officials. We are discussing the details with the State Department officials. As the program develops, we shall keep you informed.

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"Islands Group"
January 13, 1978
Page 2

The Senate Study Mission report is factually accurate and provides useful background information. Even though most of it deals with the situation within Viet-Nam and Laos, refugee problems in Thailand, and resettlement in the United States, rather than the countries we shall visit, I think you will find it useful to read the entire report. Of course, we shall be developing our own conclusions and recommendations as our study proceeds.

Please feel free to call me if you have questions, at 202-659-9447.

We are pleased that you are taking the time from your own important activities to undertake this humanitarian mission.

Sincerely yours,

Louis A. Wiesner

Louis A. Wiesner
Staff Director

LW/sa





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January 16, 1978

SECOND NOTICE

To: Members of the Southeast Asia Commission

From: Charles Sternberg

The two enclosures contain background information that may be useful in connection with the mission to Southeast Asia. The report on IRC activities during 1977 starts off with the Indochinese refugee situation, the remarks from the Congressional Record by Joshua Eilberg, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Immigration of the House of Representatives relate to a basic purpose of the trip.

Please be sure to get the necessary inoculations as far in advance of the trip as possible. The weather will be mostly hot and humid, though somewhat cooler in Hong Kong. One suit, two if you wish, will be adequate for visits to government offices or receptions. An all-purpose travel raincoat and a sweater for air-conditioned hotels is recommended. Clothing should be casual, including sneakers or outdoor shoes for visits to refugee camps. We suggest that you travel light, perhaps with a smallish bag for day-long or overnight trips.

We will send you the tentative itinerary with the next notice. Meanwhile, let me know if you have any questions to which you would like to have immediate answers.



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THE INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE IN 1977

(A Summary of IRC Activities on Five Continents)

The Gulf of Siam and the South China Sea were scenes of human disasters of tragic dimensions in 1977. Thousands of refugees, fleeing Vietnam and Cambodia in fragile boats, drowned in stormy waters. Passing ships frequently ignored their pleas for rescue. Many had reached the shores of Asian countries only to be pushed or towed out to sea to continue their search for a sanctuary. Yet, thousands managed to land in Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan and even Australia in spite of hostile receptions. In Thailand, they were sent to crowded camps to join 100,000 other Indochinese refugees. Laotians crossing the Mekong River were the most numerous of the camp refugees.

Although IRC devoted a large measure of its relief and resettlement effort to the Indochinese, many other refugee groups were helped during 1977, among them Russians, Cubans, Chileans, East Europeans, Haitians, Kurds and Chinese. New relief and medical programs were started for Angolan refugees in Zaire, and for Ugandans and Ethiopians who had fled to Kenya. The basic elements of IRC's refugee work consisted of emergency aid (food, clothing, shelter, medical care), resettlement services, educational support, vocational training, self-help projects, assistance with asylum problems, family counseling and child care.

THE INDOCHINA REFUGEE CRISIS: By October 1977, an estimated 4,000 Vietnamese, Cambodian and Laotian refugees were escaping every month by land and sea to Thailand alone. Hundreds more, the "boat people," were managing to reach other Asian lands. Estimates of those who drowned - many had been pushed back to sea by unfriendly countries - ran from 30% to 50% of those escaping. Reports from Hong Kong told of "death notices," issued in Hanoi, directed at those attempting to flee.

Nevertheless, the desperate attempts to escape continued at the rate of 500 to 1,500 a month for boat people alone. On November 30, an Associated Press dispatch from Khlong Yai, Thailand, reported: "Forty-nine sick and hungry refugees, half children, sat in silence or wept uncontrollably on the deck of the weatherbeaten 30-foot fishing boat that had brought them from Phuquoc, off the west coast of Vietnam, through the dangerous waters off Cambodia. Naked children were crawling about the small cabin, and an infant fed at its mother's breast. A 6-year old boy had pneumonia. A young couple said they wanted to name their daughter Freedom, if the voyage ended in freedom for the family."

But their hopes were not to be realized. "Most of the men, women and the 25 children broke into tears," the Associated Press dispatch stated, "when Thai officials ordered them back to sea."

The plight of the children, to whom IRC devotes special care, was described in a New York Times article: "For the children, the boat trips are frightening and remain alive in their nightmares. For all children questioned, the trips are days and nights of terror, whether they take less than a week or many weeks. The refugees' reception wherever their boats arrive, if they arrive, is incomprehensible. It is hard for parents to explain to children, whom they have told they left their country to find freedom, why all their time is spent under police supervision in crowded and uncomfortable barracks, shacks or unused factories."

In Thailand, IRC teams of doctors, nurses and paramedics were responsible for the medical care of half the refugees in the camps. A program to train Indochinese refugees to serve as paramedics was started, in keeping with IRC's traditional emphasis on self-help. By year's end, the camp population had reached 100,000 and was growing, in spite of a U.S. decision to admit 10,000 of the refugees in Thailand (and 5,000 boat people from other countries). IRC teams also served all other voluntary agencies in the resettlement effort in Thailand.

In the United States, ten IRC offices continued to provide resettlement services for the Indochinese it had sponsored. Since April 1975, IRC has assumed responsibility for more than 20,000 of the refugees. The goal is their absorption into the social and economic fabric of American life, employment at adequate wages, proper housing, educational support, child care, language and vocational training. In Paris, the IRC office helped many of the 1,000 Indochinese being admitted to France every month.

THE SOVIET UNION AND EAST EUROPE: Departures of refugees from the Soviet Union increased substantially during the latter part of 1977. The weekly average of those reaching Vienna climbed to 400 a week, compared to only 275 a week during 1976 and the first months of 1977. About half of the refugees went on to Israel; the others sought asylum in western countries, primarily the United States. Among them were prominent dissidents - scientists, writers, artists, educators - and IRC assumed the resettlement responsibility for many of them.

Financial aid, counseling and resettlement services were provided by IRC for more than a thousand of the Russians in Western Europe, primarily in Rome, Vienna, Munich, Paris and Brussels. Some 400 of the refugees came to the United States under IRC auspices; many were accepted for resettlement by the Jewish Family Service groups. Although the majority of the Russians are Jewish, quite a few belong to other denominations.

A special effort was made by IRC to relieve the plight of the Russians in the ghetto of Ostia, near Rome. An article in Time magazine described their ordeal as follows: "The refugees live huddled in sordid rooms, often ten to a flat, barely subsisting on the sale of old clothes and other belongings brought from Russia. Some have been lucky enough to get occasional jobs as seamstresses and ditchdiggers at substandard pay. Others earn a few lire by doing errands and carrying packages....." Near the end of 1977, the long suffering of the Russian refugees in Italy was eased by a decision of immigration authorities to admit those with relatives in the United States as well as others qualifying on "humanitarian" grounds.

In addition to refugees from the Soviet Union, several hundred Albanian, Bulgarian, Czechoslovak, Hungarian, Rumanian, Polish and Yugoslav refugees were helped by IRC to come to the United States. Many more were assisted in Europe, among them Czechoslovak dissidents who signed the "Charter 77" manifesto appealing to the Communist authorities to show greater respect for human rights. The signers included leading intellectual, scientific and cultural leaders of Czechoslovakia. During the latter part of 1977, ten of the dissidents and their families were given asylum in Austria where, at the request of the Austrian government, IRC provided maintenance and resettlement services.

AFRICAN REFUGEES: The conflict of opposing forces within Angola following its independence from Portugal in 1975 led to a massive refugee exodus. In 1977, there were more than 500,000 Angolan refugees in Zaire alone, including those who had become refugees when Angola was under Portuguese rule. The most deprived among them are those who fled from the northern Angolan enclave of Cabinda, now controlled by Cuban troops. About 36,000 Cabindans, including thousands of children, are barely surviving. Many die from malnutrition, malaria, tuberculosis and intestinal diseases. The pastor of a local church said that the simplest wooden coffins were a luxury that could no longer be afforded, and he had even run out of blankets to wrap the dead for burial.

Early in 1977, IRC initiated a relief program to bring food, nutritional supplements and emergency medical care to the refugees. More than 100,000 pounds of rice, beans, salt, fish, powdered milk and canned meat have been distributed by IRC, in addition to supplies such as blankets, soap and plasma. IRC also sent a doctor to work in the refugee areas. She regularly visits distant refugee sites where clinics are not available.

The exodus of Ugandans fleeing from General Idi Amin's reign of terror increased in 1977. The reason for the flight was documented in a report published in May by the International Commission of Jurists and delivered to the United Nations. "The death total in the first two years of President Amin's regime was at least 80,000 to 90,000," the report stated. "Many sources believe that the figure is now well over 100,000. Arbitrary killings, tortures, disappearances and other gross violations still continue on a substantial scale. There has been a total breakdown in the rule of law."

Thousands of the refugees have fled to Kenya, among them many of Uganda's cultural leaders and professional people. In the fall of 1977, IRC established a medical program in Kenya with a central clinic in Nairobi staffed by Ugandan refugee doctors and nurses. Refugees from Ethiopia were also helped. Medical services were brought to refugees in outlying settlements, and teachers were employed to serve in Kenyan schools which Ugandan children attend. In December, the gravity of the genocidal repression inside Uganda was reflected in a New York Times editorial that included the following passage:

"By the most conservative estimates, Idi Amin's police and army have slaughtered more than 100,000 Ugandans; some responsible observers place the figure at 300,000. Only a few of these victims can in any sense be described as enemies of the regime. By the scale and capriciousness of its official murder, Idi Amin's Uganda is in a class by itself."

LATIN AMERICAN REFUGEES: Three totalitarian countries in Latin America - Cuba, Chile and Haiti - accounted for most of the refugees assisted by IRC during

1977. The majority of refugees leaving Cuba for Spain and the United States were elderly people. In Spain, the IRC office in Madrid continued to provide emergency assistance and resettlement services for the refugees there, and close to 500 of them came to the U.S. under IRC auspices.

Since the exodus from Cuba began in 1959, more than 800,000 refugees have entered the United States alone - about 10% of Cuba's total population. Some 260,000 came by the Havana-to-Miami airlift which was stopped by Castro in 1973. In announcing the airlift in September 1965 President Lyndon Johnson, standing at the foot of the Statue of Liberty, said: "I declare to the people of Cuba that those who seek refuge here will find it. The dedication of America to our traditions as an asylum for the oppressed will be upheld."

Because of its long association with Cuban refugee problems, and growing international concern with human rights issues, IRC intensified its efforts in 1977 to obtain the release of at least some of the thousands of political prisoners in Cuba. Many had been jailed, in solitary confinement, during the 18 years of the Castro rule. In March, IRC issued a public amnesty appeal in behalf of the prisoners. The statement pointed out that their treatment, and the structure of Cuba's penal system, follows Soviet techniques, and said, "What is most appalling in the case of Cuba's prisoners is the unconscionable length of incarceration those opposed to the government have to suffer."

In 1976, about 1,000 Chileans were admitted to the United States as refugees, 276 of them under IRC sponsorship. All had been political prisoners who had been released from jail by the military junta that has ruled Chile for the last four years. In February 1977, IRC established a presence in Buenos Aires to facilitate the emigration of Chileans and some other South American refugees who had obtained temporary asylum in Argentina. Many had undergone torture in Chile and urgently need medical care. The United States offered to admit 200 refugee families from Argentina, but their rate of arrival was exceedingly slow.

Employment has posed problems, stemming mainly from the general economic picture as well as the lack of English on the part of virtually all the Chilean refugees. Valuable help was received from volunteer English teachers, from doctors and dentists who donated their services and from trade unions which obtained jobs, collected clothing and helped place refugees in training programs. Integration is a longer process for the Chileans than, for example, the Cubans, since there is no older Chilean-American community into which they can blend. Many are preoccupied over the fate of families and friends left behind, and IRC is constantly being asked to help in this respect.

While some reports from Haiti indicated a "moderation" of the harsh oppression of the late "Papa Doc" Duvalier and his son and successor, Jean-Claude, many Haitians did not share this optimistic evaluation. Among them were 61 persons who crowded into a leaky boat and endured 30 days at sea before reaching Florida in August 1977. Another boat with 17 escapees arrived later in Florida, and a third pulled into Guantanamo Naval Base in Cuba with more than 100 refugees.

The Haitians, in refugee terms, are among the poorest of the poor. They are afflicted with the problems faced by all refugees in a new and alien culture at a time of high unemployment, especially among the blacks. In addition, they are more often than not denied refugee status because their motivation is deemed inadequate. Many therefore need expert help in deportation and adjustment-of-status proceedings, a service IRC is often called upon to provide. IRC also made available emergency aid, job placement and family reunion assistance for the refugees.

HONG KONG: An estimated 4,000 refugees from China escaped to Hong Kong during 1977, about the same number as in 1976. There are no official figures, as the escapees try to slip in secretly in order to evade deportation to China by the Hong Kong government, which announced its policy of returning refugees in 1974. Most of the Chinese refugees are young "freedom-swimmers," but many consist of family groups escaping in boats and rafts. The swimmers struggle across the wide and turbulent bays separating China from Hong Kong. The fact that hundreds drown in attempting to reach Hong Kong is dramatic evidence of their strong motivation. Still others manage to cross the land border.

In 1977, IRC continued its broad-ranged refugee program started in 1961 in Hong Kong. At five day nurseries, IRC provided food, recreation, hygienic training and pre-school education for 909 refugee children - giving mothers the opportunity to work and thereby bringing in added income for the needy families. Two hostels were maintained to accommodate new refugees until they are able to become self-supporting. General counseling and job placement for the newcomers was a major activity of the hostel staff, who were helped by volunteers from the Junior Red Cross. Cash assistance, clothing, other forms of emergency aid and emigration services were also provided for the refugees.

Hong Kong is a thousand miles from Vietnam. Nevertheless, 977 boat people from Vietnam managed to reach this distant port. Some of them whose boats had foundered had been rescued by passing ships. Most of the refugees were resettled in the United States or awaiting clearance, and some moved on to France. IRC assisted the Vietnamese during their stay in Hong Kong and joined other voluntary agencies in resettling those coming to the United States.

OTHER REFUGEE GROUPS: In early 1977, the United States government decided to permit an additional 300 Kurds stranded in Iran to come to the United States. (About 400 had been admitted in 1976.) IRC again agreed to participate in the resettlement program, and accepted responsibility for 75 of the newcomers. Altogether, refugees from the following countries were helped by IRC during 1977: Afghanistan, Albania, Angola, Bulgaria, Burma, Cambodia, Chile, China, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Haiti, Hungary, Iraq (Kurds), Laos, Lebanon, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Poland, Rumania, Somalia, Soviet Union, Syria, Uganda, Uruguay, Vietnam, Yugoslavia. None of the refugee groups helped by IRC in 1977 were able to return home; on the contrary, all the countries they had come from have continued to produce refugees. Thus the present commitments of IRC continue into 1978.

IRC FREEDOM AWARD: On August 4, 1977, the Freedom Award of the International Rescue Committee was presented to Hubert H. Humphrey. The plaque, signed by Leo Cherne, Chairman of IRC, Angier Biddle Duke, Honorary Chairman and Leonard H. Marks, President, was inscribed: "For Distinguished and Courageous Service in the Cause of Freedom." The acceptance speech of Senator Humphrey included the following passage:

"The International Rescue Committee came into being at a time when rescue was desperately needed, and it still has a vital role to fill. What America means above all is freedom, and that is why the IRC is so relevant to our times. We have maintained fidelity to the hope and pride of one of the greatest symbols of freedom and sanctuary here in America - in the being of this International Rescue Committee."

INDOCHINESE REFUGEES: AN
INTERNATIONAL CONCERN

HON. JOSHUA EILBERG

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 1977

Mr. EILBERG. Mr. Speaker, on two occasions this year I have urged President Carter to convene an international conference to solve the pressing humanitarian problems of refugees from Indochina.

Now, nearly 6 months after I first proposed that the nations of the world be called together to help resettle these refugees, the problem continues. Some 100,000 persons are now in temporary

camps in Thailand, and we read daily of the "boat cases"—in which desperate people are fleeing in unseaworthy ships, floating for weeks on the open sea, being ignored by merchant ships, and in many cases being towed back out to sea when they land in unwelcoming ports.

Mr. Speaker, the Judiciary Subcommittee which I chair has overseen the admission to the United States of more than 165,000 Indochinese refugees since the end of the war in Vietnam. We have authorized more than a half billion dollars in Federal funds to resettle them in this country, and we have approved and reported to the full Judiciary Committee a bill to broaden the definition of "refugee" under U.S. law, and to regularize the entry of refugees into this country under normal circumstance and in emergency situations. Still, the refugee problem continues to grow, presenting increasingly difficult humanitarian needs.

The United States should continue to play a key role in meeting these needs. But, since the problem of assisting Indochinese refugees is not solely an American one, it must be solved on an international basis.

I commend to the attention of my colleagues an editorial in the December 14, 1977, edition of the Washington Post which points to the need for international action to help the Indochinese refugees:

INDOCHINA'S REFUGEE FLOW

The conditions established by the Communist victors in Indochina continue to flush out substantial numbers of refugees, people who find the system so incompatible with their beliefs or standards that they are prepared to abandon homeland ties and possessions and seek haven abroad. This continuing flow is a telling comment on the kinds of societies now being built in Indochina. It is also a heavy burden on the countries of refuge. Many of the so-called boat people, who slip out in small boats, find themselves abandoned by foreign ships on the high seas and pushed away from foreign shores. The even larger numbers who leave by land pile up in wretched camps in Thailand. Their plight is properly an international concern.

Since the collapse of the American-supported regimes in 1975, some 165,000 Indochinese have settled in the United States. Most came in the first surge, but some 15,000 later departees have arrived this year. Now another 4,700 people who have been clinging to beachheads in Asia but cannot be resettled there, are in need of emergency admission. The State Department has begun the process and, at the same time, it is preparing to ask Congress to develop a "long-term policy" to deal with 100,000 more refugees still in Thai camps, plus others expected in the future. Congress, which has supported two administrations in handling the refugees, can be expected to direct the State Department to keep asking other countries to accept their fair share.

Ultimately the answer lies in the setting of policies, by the Indochinese governments, that do not impel helpless citizens to flee. The best place to stanch the flow is at the source. In the meantime, however, people are still trickling out of Indochina, and a disproportionate part of the burden falls on the countries closest by. They should be encouraged to help as many refugees as they can, but countries further from the scene must also do their part. The United States, France, Australia, New Zealand, even Israel have taken in various numbers of refugees, and they and other must continue to assist in this sad, unfinished business of the war.

January 22, 1978

SUMMARY OF THE REFUGEE STATISTICS

Past (1975-77)

163,000 Total U.S. acceptance of Indochinese refugees
58,000 Total International acceptance of Indochinese refugees

1976/1977 Period Only

31,000 ... U.S. acceptance of Indochinese refugees
43,000 ... international acceptance of Indochinese refugees

Present U.S. Program (Indochinese Parole Program for 15,000)

7,000 boat refugees ... 3,500 already in U.S.
8,000 land refugees ... now being processed by INS

Current Situation

95,000 ... land refugees now in Thailand
5,000 ... boat refugees without other offer of resettlement
1,000-1,500 (monthly) ... current rate of exodus from Vietnam by boat
3,000 (monthly) ... current rate of exodus from Laos and Cambodia by land

Future*

about 18,000 ... projected international acceptance of Indochinese over next 12 months
... including 4,000-6,000 boat refugees (about 1/3 of flow)
20-24,000 ... projected as qualified for U.S. programs under previous criteria
... including 8,000 - 12,000 might be boat refugees (2/3 of flow)
12,000 - 12,000 might be land refugees (1/3 of flow)
Total 20,000 - 24,000 projected U.S. intake

*These are straight line projections based on escape rates of the past six months



Department of Justice

STATEMENT

OF

LEONEL CASTILLO
COMMISSIONER
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE

BEFORE
AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES
THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION, CITIZENSHIP
AND INTERNATIONAL LAW
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

CONCERNING

PAROLE OF INDOCHINESE "BOAT CASE" REFUGEES

ON

JANUARY 24, 1978

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, I am appearing before you at your invitation to testify on a very important humanitarian matter -- the parole of an additional 7,000 Indochinese "boat case" refugees.

As you are aware, section 212(d)(5) of the Immigration and Nationality Act states that the Attorney General "may in his discretion parole into the United States . . . for emergent reasons or for reasons deemed strictly in the public interest any alien applying for admission to the United States."

The law expressly requires that the exercise of discretion be based on facts showing the emergent or public interest reasons for parole. Though not statutorily required, the Attorney General concurs in the established practice that the views of members of the Congress be fully considered in connection with the parole of groups of refugees.

As you know, on December 23, 1977, the Attorney General received a letter from the Secretary of State requesting him to authorize the additional parole of 7,000 Indochinese "boat case" refugees. The President has authorized Secretary Vance to make this request. Under our established procedures for handling such requests, the Attorney General requested my recommendation, and on December 28, 1977 I recommended to the Attorney General that the parole be authorized. Copies of this

correspondence were furnished to you by the Attorney General in his January 4, 1978 letter to you concerning the parole request. The same information was also sent to other concerned members of Congress.

The issue of admitting large numbers of Indochinese refugees is not an easy one for this country. As long as people continue to flee Indochina and their lives are endangered, there will be continued pressure on the United States to permit their entry in some fashion. The only short-term alternative to the additional parole of Indochinese boat cases would be the use of conditional entry numbers under section 203(a)(7) of the Immigration and Nationality Act. However, since the availability of these numbers is quite limited, I do not believe that this is a realistic or acceptable means of solving the short-term problem.

The interagency task force formed in August at the instruction of the President to identify and recommend long-range solutions to the Indochinese refugee problem has made its report, and the National Security Council has instructed the State Department to take the lead in congressional consultations on the long-term proposals. That direction was repeated recently by the President in authorizing the Secretary of State to go forward with this parole request.

Even if such long-term solutions are pursued earnestly, which the Administration intends, that process will take time.

As described in Secretary Vance's letter, there is presently a growing and serious crisis involving Indochinese boat case refugees.

For instance, I will share with you a recent experience of one of our officers in Thailand underlining the seriousness of the situation. On January 14, at Songhkla, Thailand, Mr. Harpold, one of our officers, observed a Vietnamese fishing boat with 34 refugees on board being forced back out to sea. It had three family groups including 13 men, 5 women, and 16 children on board. The boat was out of provisions and fresh water. The people on board had been drinking salt water and a number of children were ill.

Mr. Harpold was accompanied by the American Vice Counsel, Mr. Hayashida. While Mr. Harpold stayed on board the Vietnamese vessel, the Vice Counsel went to get the Governor of the province. When Mr. Hayashida returned with the Vice Governor, Mr. Harpold gave him a written promise to parole the group of refugees into the United States if they were permitted to land and stay in the camp at Songhkla.

I have assured Mr. Harpold that we will back him in his parole commitment and that arrangements would be made for these refugees to come to the United States either as conditional entrants or as parolees if they are not accepted by other countries. I believe, however, that we can expect more of

this type of incident in the future. I am sure that the State Department can provide you with additional examples showing the emergency nature of this situation.

For humanitarian reasons and our nation's own special responsibility to Indochinese "boat case" refugees, it is the Attorney General's present judgment that the situation of "boat case" refugees is an emergent one and our favorable response under the circumstances is in the public interest and warranted. We request that you concur in this proposed parole action. In making the request we are mindful of the intensified diplomatic activity outlined in Secretary Vance's letter to solicit resettlement offers from other nations and of the President's direction to the Secretary of State to continue these diplomatic encouragements.

I would also like to add that the August 11, 1977 program approved for 15,000 Indochinese refugees is progressing well. The 7,000 boat case refugees have been identified and approved by INS officers. Four INS officers are presently in Thailand, having arrived there this month, to select and clear the 8,000 camp cases. The selection process will be completed in about 60 days. The time factor for movement of the approved camp cases will depend for the most part on availability of sponsorship arrangements by the voluntary agencies. We are advised by the Department of State that this will not be a problem.

I will now answer any questions you may have.

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HA/ORM:SCLOWMAN

EA/RA:FBENNETT

AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES

PRIORITY BANGKOK, KUALA LUMPUR PRIORITY, HONG KONG PRIORITY
TAIPEI PRIORITY, SINGAPORE PRIORITY, MANILA PRIORITY
ROUTINE JAKARTA, TOKYO ROUTINE, USUN NEW YORK ROUTINE,
GENEVA ROUTINE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF

SUBJECT: INDOCHINESE REFUGEES - VISIT TO AREA BY INTER-
NATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE (IRC) COMMISSION

REF: (A) BANGKOK 2313(NOTAL); (B) STATE 17446

1. LEO CHERNE, CHAIRMAN OF IRC, AND SEVERAL OTHER PRO-
MINENT AMERICANS WILL BE TRAVELING IN FEBRUARY TO SEA
INVESTIGATING IC REFUGEE PROBLEM. UPON CONCLUSION OF VISIT
COMMISSION WILL MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADMINISTRATION,
CONGRESS AND POSSIBLY OTHER PUBLIC AND PRIVATE GROUPS.
DEPT. BELIEVES THIS A VERY IMPORTANT VISIT AND REQUESTS
AMBASSADORS, AND PRINCIPAL OFFICERS LEND ALL APPROPRIATE
ASSISTANCE TO THE COMMISSION.

2. MEMBERS OF COMMISSION IN ADDITION TO CHERNE AS FOLLOWS:

WILLIAM J. CASEY, FORMER UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR
ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, FORMER CHAIRMAN SEC, AND FORMER CHAIRMAN
EX-IM BANK;

PROF. KENNETH CAUTHEN, COLGATE ROCHESTER DIVINITY SCHOOL;

ELIZABETH COPLEY THAM, V.P. OF IRC;

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CECIL B. LYON, FORMER AMBASSADOR TO CHILE AND CEYLON;

ROBERT DEVECCHI, INDOCHINA PROGRAM COORDINATOR, IRC;

WARREN C. MEEKER, BOARD CH. RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF AMERICA;

JAMES MICHENER, AUTHOR;

JOHN RICHARDSON, FORMER ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR ED. AND CU, NOW EXEC. DIR. FOR SOCIAL POLICY, GEORGETOWN UNIV. CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES, AND PRES. OF FREEDOM HOUSE (ACCOMPANIED BY MRS. RICHARDSON);

BAYARD RUSTIN, PRES. OF A. PHILIP RANDOLPH INSTITUTE, CH. OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATS, USA;

RABBI HENRY SIEGMAN, EXEC. V.P. SYNAGOGUE COUNCIL OF AMERICA;

ALBERT SHANKER, PRES. AMER. FEDERATION OF TEACHERS AND UNITED FEDERATION OF TEACHERS, AND V.P. AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. MEMBER AFL-CIO;

RABBI MARC TANENBAUM, DIR., INTER-RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS OF AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE, NATIONAL VICE CHAIRMAN, ARC;

LOUIS WIESNER, FORMER FSO AND DIRECTOR OFFICE OF REFUGEE AND MIGRATION AFFAIRS, NOW IRC COUNSELOR;

STEVEN YOUNG, COMMITTEE ON HR, NYC BAR ASSOCIATION, FORMERLY SERVED IN CORDS, AND VIETNAMESE LANGUAGE QUALIFIED;

UNNAMED REPRESENTATIVE OF CARDINAL COOKE, ARCHDIOCESE OF N.Y.C.

3. ITINERARY AND REQUESTS FOR POSTSS ASSISTANCE AS FOLLOWS:

{A} MICHENER AND DEVECCHI ARRIVE BANGKOK 1300 HRS FEB 6, STAYING AT ERAHAN. REQUEST TO MEET WITH AMBASSADOR AND BARNES MORNING OF FEB 7 AND THEREAFTER WILL BUS TO ARANYA PHRATET, VISIT CAMP, THEN MOVE ON TO CHANTABURI FOR OVERNIGHT. FEB 8 WILL VISIT KAMPUT AND LAEN SING CAMPS. REMAIN OVERNIGHT CHANTABURI AND RETURN FEB 9 TO BANGKOK. MICHENER DEPARTS FOR HONG KONG TO JOIN OTHER IRC TEAM FEB 10. DEVECCHI REMAINS BANGKOK.

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{B} ALL COMMISSION MEMBERS OTHER THAN NICHENER AND DEVECCHI ARRIVE HONG KONG FROM U.S. FEB 10 AT 2245 HRS. STAYING AT HILTON. GROUP REQUESTS TO MEET FEB 11 WITH CG AND INS DIDIR FELDMAN IN LATE A.M. FOR BRIEFING AND IN EARLY AFTERNOON TO CALL ON GOVERNOR IF CG CAN ARRANGE. CHERNE, RICHARDSONS, RUSTIN, SIEGMAN, SHANKER DEPART HONG KONG 1545 HRS FEB 11 ARRIVE BANGKOK 1830 P.M., STAYING ERAMAN.

{C} CASEY, LYON, CAUTHEN, TANENBAUM, NEEKER, NICHENER, THAJ, YOUNG AND WIESNER, REQUEST TO VISIT REFUGEE HOTEL IN KOJLOON IN COMPANY WITH ICEN HONG KONG REPS STEWART AND YOUNG. WILL RON HONG KONG. NICHENER THEN RETURNS TO U.S.

{D} CHERNE AND GROUP WITH DEVECCHI WILL TRAVEL BY BUS TO ARANYA PHRATAT FEB 12 AND ON TO RON CHANTABURI. FEB 13 VISIT KAMPUT AND LAEM SING CAMPS, RON CHANTABURI.

RETURN TO BANGKOK FEB 14.

FOR FEB 15, CHERNE GROUP REQUESTS MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR AND BARNES, THEN WITH RTG OFFICIALS (AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL IF POSSIBLE) CONCERNED WITH REFUGEES, UNHCR CHIEF, AND VISIT TRANSIT CENTER.

ON FEB 16, ONE ELEMENT OF GROUP WILL TRAVEL BY THAI AIR TO SONGKHLA WHERE THEY HOPE TO MEET WITH RTG PROVINCIAL GOVERNOR IF POSSIBLE AND VISIT BOAT CAMPS, RON SANILA HOTEL; OTHER ELEMENT OF CHERNE GROUP WILL DEPART BY AIR FOR UDORN WHERE THEY REQUEST TO MEET CONSUL AND RTG OFFICIALS AND VISIT HONG KHAI.

ON FEB 17, BOTH ELEMENTS OF CHERNE GROUP RETURN TO BANGKOK.

{E} CASEY AND GROUP WHICH REMAINED IN HONG KONG OVERNIGHT FEB 11 DEPART FOR MANILA FEB 12, ARRIVE 1045 HRS. DESIRE TO VISIT JOSE FABELLA CENTER THAT AFTERNOON. FEB 13 REQUEST CALL ON AMBASSADOR IN MORNING AND THEREAFTER MEET WITH GOP OFFICIALS (AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL IF POSSIBLE), UNHCR REP. BLATTER, AND JVR SR. THELMA PENA. GROUP DEPARTS 1415 HRS FEB 13 FOR SINGAPORE, ARRIVES 1700 HRS, STAYING RAFFLES. FEB 14 CASEY GROUP REQUESTS TO CALL ON AMBASSADOR AND THEREAFTER MEET WITH GOP OFFICIALS CONCERNED WITH REFUGEES (AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL IF POSSIBLE) TO DISCUSS POSSIBILITY OF SINGAPORE TEMPORARY ASYLUM CENTER AND RELATED MATTERS. THEREAFTER REQUEST TO VISIT ANY REFUGEES IN SINGAPORE AND MEET JVR CHEJ.

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FEB 15 CASEY GROUP DEPARTS FOR KUALA LUMPUR, ARRIVE 0730 HRS, STAYING HILTON. REQUEST TO MEET WITH AMBASSADOR THAT DAY AND WITH GOM OFFICIALS CONCERNED WITH REFUGEE MATTERS (AT HIGHEST POSSIBLE LEVEL); UNHCR REP AND VISIT TRANSIT CENTER. UNDERSTAND JVR BEERY ARRANGING AIR TRANSPORT TO TRENGGANU FEB 16 TO VISIT CAMPL OVERNIGHT TRENGGANU; RETURN FEB 17 BY AIR. GROUP WILL DEPART KUALA LUMPUR FOR BANGKOK 1300 HRS FEB 17 ARRIVE BANGKOK 1420 HRS. (NOTE: POST AND JVR MAY HAVE DIFFICULTY SCHEDULING EVENTS IN ABOVE ORDER. EXCEPT FOR ARRIVAL TIME KUALA LUMPUR SEQUENCE IS FLEXIBLE AND GROUP WILL ADJUST ACCORDING TO POST RECOMMENDATIONS. DEPARTURE TO BANGKOK CAN BE DELAYED TO LATER HOUR ON FEB 17 OR VERY EARLY FEB 18 IF NECESSARY AND POSSIBLE.)

{F} ENTIRE COMMISSION (LESS RICHARDSONS AND SHANKER, WHO DEPART FEB 16 FOR U.S., AND MICHEMER) WILL BE IN BANGKOK FEB 16 WHERE THEY WILL HOLD PRESS CONFERENCE WHICH CONCLUDES COMMISSION TRIP.

{G} CASEY, LYON AND WIESNER WILL BE IN TAIPEI LATE FEB 20 AND REMAIN UNTIL NOON FEB 22. REQUEST TO SEE AMBASSADOR AND GRC OFFICIALS (AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL IF POSSIBLE) TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE ACCEPTANCE BY TAIWAN OF ETHNIC CHINESE AMONG IC REFUGEES.

4. REQUEST POSTS INVOLVED IN COMMISSION VISIT COMMENT AS RELEVANT. 44

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An on-the-spot refugee study

NEW YORK (AP) — A citizens committee sponsored by the International Rescue Committee, Inc., will visit Southeast Asia next month to study the problems of Indochinese refugees, especially Vietnamese "boat people."

The trip was announced by IRC Chairman Leo Cherne as he released the group's annual report. The IRC, founded in 1933 to help anti-Nazis fleeing Germany, said it aided thousands of refugees from 39 countries during 1977.

Cherne said he and William J. Casey, former undersecretary of state for economic affairs, will lead the 12-member commission.

"Since last October, the flow of boat people alone fleeing from Vietnam has averaged 1500 a month," he said. "In addition, between 2000 and 3000 Laotians have been crossing the Mekong River into Thailand every month."

Medical teams sponsored by the IRC have responsibility for 60,000 to 100,000 Laotian, Cambodian and Vietnamese refugees in Thailand camps, he said.

He said the commission will visit the camps and meet with government officials in Thailand, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia and the Philippines.

The major 1977 effort of the nonsectarian organization, supported by contributions, was directed

toward Indochinese refugees, Cherne said, but there were projects around the world.

IRC aided more than 1000 Soviet refugees in Western Europe. The numbers reaching Vienna climbed from an average of 275 a week in 1976 to 400 a week by the end of 1977. About half went to Israel and others to Western nations; 400 emigrated to the United States under IRC sponsorship.

In 1977, there were 500,000 Angolan refugees in Zaire alone and IRC instituted a relief program to take them food and medical services. Because of growing numbers of refugees from Uganda, IRC

established a medical program in Kenya to serve them.

In Argentina, IRC has offices to aid Chilean refugees who obtain temporary asylum there. IRC sponsored 276 Chileans who came to the United States in 1977. The group also aided nearly 80 Haitians who escaped by boat to Florida during 1977.

About 4000 Chinese refugees escaped to Hong Kong during 1977, about the same number as in 1976, despite Hong Kong's policy of returning refugees to China. IRC has a broad-ranged program there, including job aid, food and medical services.

January 29, 1978

"VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE"

WINS RELIGION COMMENTARY

RABBI MARC H. TANENBAUM* OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

"And a stranger shall you not oppress, for you know the heart of a stranger, seeing you were strangers in the land of Egypt." The Biblical experience of the Exodus has stamped an indelible consciousness that all of us have a moral responsibility for the fate and welfare of the alien and the stranger. That consciousness has become a significant force in leading the International Rescue Committee to organize a fact-finding commission to study the plight of tens of

thousands of Vietnamese boat people and other Indo-Chinese refugees. ^{Dec 1st} ~~On February~~ ^{This past Friday}
I joined a DELEGATION who left ~~the delegation of fourteen~~ American leaders ~~will leave~~ on a ten-day mission ~~to Thailand, the Philippines, Singapore, and Malaysia.~~ ^{MAKALASIA, THAILAND AND HONG KONG.} Led by Leo Cherne, chair-
LAST WEEK, SOME 200 BOAT PEOPLE WERE DROWNED OFF THE ~~man of the International Rescue Committee, the delegation will include author~~
SHORE OF MALAYSIA, THIS REVEALING THE MAGNITUDE OF THIS ~~James Michener, John Richardson, president of Freedom House, Bayard Rustin, Albert~~
HUMANITARIAN CRISIS, MORE THAN 10,000 REFUGEES ARE ESCAPING ~~Shanker, former State Department official William Casey, Ambassador Cecil Lyon,~~
FROM VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA ~~and this commentator.)~~ ^{LAST MONTH}
AND THE WORLD ~~According to Dr. Cherne, the delegation will visit the~~
HUMAN TRAGEDIES SINCE WORLD WAR II, ~~countries where the boat people have been seeking sanctuary only to be pushed~~ ^{OF THE BOAT PEOPLE}
~~out to sea where thousands have drowned in stormy waters.~~ Their plight, which

recalls the tragedy of Jewish refugees in the ^{BATTERED} ~~leaky~~ boats St. Louis and Exodus, has been rightly called an abomination that has human rights urgency of the starkest proportions. Hopefully, this mission will be able to dramatize the facts of this human tragedy and start positive action, ^{OF RESSETLEMENT} in Southeast Asia, and ^{AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY} the United States for these latest strangers whom you shall not oppress.

*Rabbi Tanenbaum, who is National Director of Interreligious Affairs of the American Jewish Committee, presents a weekly religion commentary over WINS-Westinghouse Broadcasting System.

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CABLE: INTERESCUE, WASHDC

JEANNE MacDANIELS
Washington Regional Director

January 31, 1978

Southeast Asia Commission

To: Members of the "Islands Group"

Dear Rabbi Tanenbaum:

This is the third letter concerning our mission to various Southeast Asian countries to inquire into the situation of Indochinese refugees.

Enclosed are statements by Assistant Secretary of State Patricia Derian and Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization Leonel Castillo before the Eilberg Subcommittee of the House on January 24. Also enclosed are a report by Galen Beery, Joint Voluntary Agency Representative in Malaysia and two maps.

I have sent to each of you (except Lee Thaw) by certified mail your airline ticket, copies of your itinerary, and reservation confirmations for the Hilton Hotels in Hong Kong and Kuala Lumpur. Please send back the return receipts promptly. I shall distribute the other hotel confirmations when I meet you in Seattle.

Now, a few practical details:

When you get to the Seattle/Takoma airport, take the bus to the downtown terminal, which is in the Olympic Hotel, where we are staying February 8-9. Your reservations are confirmed. We have reserved a private dining room at the Olympic for breakfast at 0830 on February 9, where Leo Cherne and William Casey will brief us on a meeting they, Bob DeVecchi, and I will have with Patt Derian on February 2, and we can discuss the objectives and modus operandi of the mission. In addition to Leo, other members of the Thailand Group, including Mr. and Mrs. John Richardson and Rabbi Henry Siegman, will be present.

NEW YORK ADDRESS: 386 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10016 TEL. (212) 679-0010

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Islands Group
January 31, 1978
Page 2

Thereafter, Bob Johnson, IRC's Seattle Regional Director, will explain how refugees who are admitted to the US from the countries we shall visit are received and integrated into American life. Depending on time, those who wish may visit Bob's office.

I shall pay for our hotel rooms throughout the trip. You may of course charge to your rooms meals and cocktails you consume, laundry, etc. but please don't charge items of purely personal nature such as cigarettes. At the end of our trip IRC will let each of you know how much it cost, and we would be appreciative if those who can would make tax-deductible contributions to IRC.

In order that everything may go as smoothly as possible, I ask that everybody check out of rooms well before we have to go to airports so that I can pay for them, and be ready to depart in time to avoid a last-minute rush at the airports. In Seattle, for example, we should be at the airport by 1230 hours on February 9, since NW 007, a 747, on that day is fully booked, including a Seattle tour group, which means that a big crowd will be checking in. Our seats are already reserved - in rows 29-32H and J of the so-called quiet zone, on the dividing line between non-smoking and smoking - but we shall all be more comfortable when we and our luggage are checked in.

In Hong Kong IRC Director Harry Allen has reserved a private dining room at the Hilton, where we shall meet at 1100 hours February 11 with him, U.S. District Immigration Director Sam Feldman, and people from the U.S. Consulate General. James Michener of the Thailand Group will have come up from Bangkok to join us. At 1230 additional guests will arrive for lunch, including the Hong Kong Government's Immigration Chief. After lunch the Thailand Group, except for Michener, will leave for the airport, and we shall visit refugees. (Harry Allen informs us that the Governor will not be able to receive us.)

In Malaysia we shall fly to Trengganu on the East Coast on February 16, visit the refugee camp, and overnight in a new beach hotel, and return in time to go to Bangkok.

The State Department has sent a telegram to the American Embassies in all the countries we and the Thailand Group will visit, asking for appointments with Ambassadors, host Government officials at a high level, and others.

So, as you can see, things are shaping up. It's going to be a busy trip, with tight scheduling, but we'll not march from event to event behind a leader with a little flag, as certain tour groups do. Above all, we want to have enough time to have solid discussions with the people who make or guide decisions and those who are knowledgeable and to meet with refugees. I shall send a few additional materials before our trip begins.

Islands Group
January 31, 1978
Page 3

Those who wish should bring their cameras.

With best regards,

Sincerely yours,

Louis A. Wiesner

Louis A. Wiesner
Staff Director

cc: Al. Kastner

Rabbi Tanenbaum: Enclosed is a copy of the Singapore Background Notes,
which was omitted from your original packet.



Last.

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JEANNE MacDANIELS
Washington Regional Director

February 1, 1978

SOUTHEAST ASIA COMMISSION

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE "ISLANDS GROUP"

Letter No. 4

Dear Rabbi Tanenbaum:

This Commission grew out of our shared concern for the many thousands of Indochinese refugees in Southeast Asian countries and on the high seas, a concern which was well expressed in Leo Cherne's mailgram of December 14 to us. As the Chairman of our group, Mr. Casey, and I see it, we have three objectives:

- To ascertain the facts.
- To encourage the countries in the area to be generous in receiving refugees for temporary asylum and, where possible, for permanent resettlement.
- Jointly with the Thailand Group to draw conclusions and make recommendations to our own Government and the American people.

In each of the countries we shall want to explore:

1. The present and prospective flow of refugees:
 - a. Numbers coming in; factors governing this.
 - b. Outflow - to what countries.
 - c. Any permanent resettlement within the country, present or prospective.
2. Policy of the host government:
 - a. Permission to land - under what conditions.
 - b. Treatment of the refugees.

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- c. Possible permanent resettlement, e.g., Cambodian Moslems in Malaysia, ethnic Chinese in Taiwan. Would external aid be necessary?
3. Views of indigenous opinion makers, e.g., press, political leaders and voluntary agencies.
4. Need for further or continuing U.S. intake.

The background material which I have sent you contains information about some of these questions, and we shall obtain more information before we go. But we shall want to question the American Ambassadors, host government officials, refugees, private opinion makers, and others on the spot about these matters.

The policies of the Crown Colony and the countries which we shall visit vary greatly. (Please keep this information confidential.)

Hong Kong, after initially taking a very stiff-necked attitude, now permits Indochinese boat people to land, as long as the U.S. and other countries take a sufficient number for permanent resettlement to avoid a build-up. IRC plays a major role in documenting and assisting the refugees to prepare for onward movement.

The Philippine Government is quite supportive, and a Catholic agency receives, cares for, and documents boat people with efficiency and compassion. In 1975 the Philippines admitted for permanent resettlement the Vietnamese wives of Philippine service men who had served in the Civil Affairs Group in Tay Ninh Province, but has not resettled any Indochinese since then.

Singapore takes the stiffest position; its authorities have callously pushed refugee boats out to sea, excepting only those whose occupants are granted resettlement abroad. Very recently Assistant Secretary of State Patricia Derian negotiated with Prime Minister Lee Quan Yew but succeeded only in obtaining agreement that Singapore would allow refugees ashore number-for-number in the amount which other countries guaranteed permanent resettlement. The State Department would welcome anything we can do to persuade the Singapore authorities to relax their stand.

Malaysia has accepted about 1,400 Cambodian Moslems for permanent resettlement. It has three temporary camps on the East Coast for boat people, plus a transit center in Kuala Lumpur. Galen Beery of Church World Service efficiently represents all the American voluntary resettlement agencies in processing boat people for parole into the U.S. In December Australia accepted over 1,000 boat people from Malaysia, but over 2,000 still remained in Malaysian camps without resettlement offers at the end of 1977.

Islands Group
February 1, 1978
Page 3

Taiwan, which Mr. Casey, Ambassador Lyon, and I shall visit after our trip officially concludes in Bangkok, took a number of ethnic Chinese for permanent resettlement in 1975 and has taken a few subsequently. Indochinese have not generally been eager to resettle in Taiwan, but we shall explore the possibility of further integration there. Broadening internationalization of refugee resettlement is necessary in order to maintain Congressional support for additional intake into the U.S., and the State Department is grateful for our help.

In our discussions with officials of these countries we can point with pride to the absorption of almost 165,000 Indochinese refugees into the United States since 1975. Their unemployment rate is now below the U.S. national average.

With regard to U.S. policy, it seems clear that something beyond the succession of belated, inadequate responses to the periodic pile-ups of Indochinese refugees in East Asia is needed. The Kennedy Subcommittee report which was distributed to you contains one set of recommendations. Chairman Eilberg of the counterpart House Subcommittee also wants a long range policy and, as you know, convened hearings on January 24. I expect that our Commission will come up with sound proposals and I hope that we shall be able to mobilize wide public support for them.

Enclosed is a charming letter from Sister Thelma Peña of the Philippines.

Sincerely yours,



Louis A. Wiesner

Louis A. Wiesner
Staff Director

Enclosure

cc: Carel
Al Kastner

CBCP - Center for Assistance to Displaced Persons

210 Taft Avenue, Manila

Philippines

Tel. ~~50-09-13~~ 50-09-13

23 January 1978

Mr. Louis A. Wiesner
Counselor
International Rescue Committee
386 Park Avenue South
New York, N.Y. 10016 U.S.A.

Dear Mr. Wiesner:

Many thanks for your telegram and letter of January 10. I shall be very willing to accompany you to the Jose Fabella Center refugee camp on Sunday afternoon. I shall be at the airport to meet your group. I will be very visible to you - a heavyweight champion dressed in a white nun's habit with a blue coif. No problem, I will find you. My office is three minutes ride from Manila Hotel where I understand you will stay.

Mr. Werner Blatter, UNHCR Representative, also received a cable from Geneva regarding your arrival. We shall try to keep you busy during your stay so that it will be fruitful. Vice-Consul William Barkell of the US Embassy who handles the refugee work is still waiting for the Department of State communications regarding your coming. He has also expressed his desire to sit down with me and plan your itinerary.

You are most welcome. We are waiting for you.

Sincerely yours,

Sr. Thelma, DC
Sister Thelma Peña, D.C.
Director/JVAR

INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE

386 PARK AVENUE SOUTH • NEW YORK, N. Y. 10016 • (212) 679-0010

To: Members of Citizens Commission Date: February 3, 1978
From: Alton Kastner Subject: Enclosures

I am enclosing photocopies of a letter from The Secretary of State to Leo Cherne and a State Department cable sent to overseas posts regarding the Commission. Also enclosed is the Associated Press story on the Commission.

A breakfast meeting for Commission members will be held at the Olympic Hotel in Seattle at 8:30 a.m. on Thursday. Lou Wiesner, the staff representative for Bill Casey's group, is flying to Seattle from Washington, D.C. and will arrive there on Wednesday afternoon.

AK:jc

AK

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

February 1, 1978

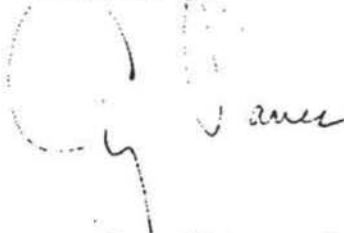
Dear Mr. Cherne:

Thank you for your letter of January 11 informing me of the citizens' commission which the International Rescue Committee has organized to look into the Indochinese refugee situation. I am most grateful for this effort that you and your colleagues are making. I hope that you may be successful in encouraging the governments of Southeast Asia to receive these refugees at least on a temporary basis and in any case, your views following your return will be most welcome.

As you know, the emergency parole of an additional 7,000 boat refugees was authorized by the Attorney General on January 25. However, we all recognize that over the long run we must develop ways to deal with this situation on a continuing basis. We estimate that we have only about three months before these 7,000 parolee spaces are exhausted. Thus, it is vital to proceed promptly towards the development of a longer term policy.

The thoughts of your distinguished commission members will be very helpful as we look toward more lasting approaches to dealing with the Indochinese refugee situation and I look forward to meeting with you upon the commission's return. Meanwhile, Assistant Secretary for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, Patricia Derian, will insure that our Embassies in Southeast Asia provide all possible assistance.

Sincerely,



Mr. Leo Cherne,
Chairman,

International Rescue Committee, Inc.,
386 Park Avenue South,
New York, New York.

SCHEDULE OF IRC COMMISSION

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12

- 10:45 A.M. Arrive MIA aboard Cathay Pacific flight 901 from Hong Kong.
Will be driven to Manila Hotel to rest and freshen up.
- 12:40 P.M. Pick up in Manila Hotel lobby for working lunch at Seafront Restaurant.
- 1:00 P.M. Working lunch at Seafront Restaurant hosted by Consul General Lois M. Day, to include officials concerned with Indochinese refugees.
- 2:30 P.M. Visit to the Jose Fabella Refugee Center.
Return to Manila Hotel upon completion of visit.
- 6:30 P.M. Pick-up in Manila Hotel lobby for Ambassador Newsom's dinner.
- 7:00 P.M. Dinner hosted by Ambassador and Mrs. Newsom.
Return to Manila Hotel upon completion of dinner.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13

- ~~8:30~~ **9:00** A.M. Pick up at Manila Hotel lobby for appointment with Foreign Secretary Romulo.
- ~~9:00~~ **9:30** A.M. Appointment with Foreign Secretary Carlos P. Romulo at the Department of Foreign Affairs
Following the meeting with Foreign Secretary Romulo the schedule is open for further consultations, shopping or relaxation until 11:45 A.M.
- 10:30 A.M. For William J. Casey only, an appointment with Secretary of Finance Cesar Virata.
- 12:00 P.M. Pick up in Manila Hotel lobby for departure to airport.
- 2:15 P.M. Group will depart Manila for Singapore aboard Singapore Airlines flight 65.

CO (Control Officer): William H. Barkell

DRAFT

Talking Points for the Prime Minister

- Express appreciation for Thai policy.
- Express hope that boat refugees will continue to be allowed to land in Thailand.
- Explain Commission's goals of increasing land refugee acceptance in U.S. and elsewhere.
- Sikkhieu and Cambodian trade-offs.



DRAFT

Citizens Commission Objectives: USA

Those in U.S. insure that Cat III^{be} maintain^{as} as part of the program and that numbers available under it are increased to take the backlog of Hmong refugees.

- We estimate that we would require a continuing land program of about _____ as opposed to present program of 12500 land refugees per year.
- We would hope, as there is a now boat emergency allocation of 17500, land refugees will also be included.
- Beyond that, we see a need for a continuing need of a land program of about _____ refugees per annum as opposed to the 12500 land refugee program.
- Galvanized search for new mass resettlement offers in less developed countries.
- Focus international attention on the plight of the Hmong where land refugee in general, and the Hmong in particularly.
- Urge immediate creation of a holding center for boat refugees.

Don't limit to US parole?

^{overall}
2. Need Land program of 75,000 per year to reduce camp population over a 4-year period to a number possibly acceptable to Thailand for local resettlement. Thereafter, 50,000 per year. Thusly,

25,000/yr current third-country programs
(of which U.S. is 12,500)
25,000 additional required to balance new arrivals against departures; to stop net population growth.
25,000 to reduce current camp population over 4 years to a manageable level.

Propose:

1. 75,000 numbers per year *for land "pool"*
2. The top 25,000 to be cases of "special interest" to each accepting country by whatever criteria is established by that country.
3. The balance of 50,000 per year for 4 years to be used for the refugees who have been in camp the longest period of time. TIME would be the prime criterion.
4. *The U.S. would contribute 12,500 numbers to the "special interest" pool, and 25,000 to the general pool, total 37,500.*

DRAFT

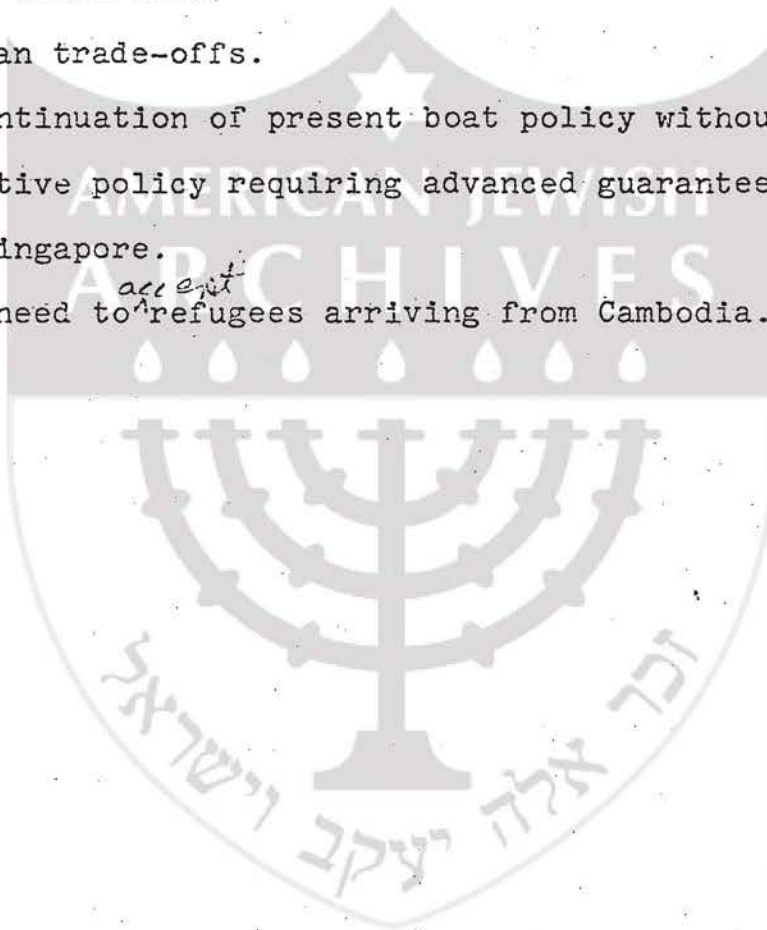
Hmong Paper

- About _____ Hmong^s remain in the Phu Bia in ^{Phu BU} ~~Puna~~ Thao areas of Laos
- They are apparently under heavy pressure from SRV/LPDR forces to include air, artillery, ^{art.} ~~attacks~~ large background units^{at} and interdiction along routes of escape to Thailand.
- The present Hmong arrivals rate is about _____ monthly.
- ~~We~~ We would expect that this _____ would rise about _____ monthly ^{over} ~~the~~ next months reflecting the steadily increasing military pressure against them.
- About _____ Hmong have been accepted by the U.S.. About _____ additional Hmong are registered and appeared qualified, mostly under Cat. III, of the LRP, ^{of} these we would only be able to accommodate about _____ under the remaining 2800 LRP.
- Because of the limitation of the numbers which requires 5 years of service for the Hmong S.U. soldier, we estimate about _____ are denied acceptance on the ground of insufficient service even though ^{many} they served from ⁰⁻⁰ ~~about~~ 14 - 19 years as U.S. paid soldier. This is because of ~~a~~ an insufficient land allocation.
- Some have suggested that Hmong soldiers all be made Cat. II. This however would only _____ the problem of a scarcity of Cat. III numbers.

DRAFT

Citizens Commission Objectives: Thailand

- Reassure the Thai that the U.S. will have a continuing -
if not increased - program for land refugees.
- Sikkhieu trade-offs.
- Cambodian trade-offs.
- Urge continuation of present boat policy without a more
restrictive policy requiring advanced guarantees such
as in Singapore.
- Urgent need to ^{accept} refugees arriving from Cambodia.



Southeast Asia Commission

Joint Itinerary and Itinerary of the Islands Group

Fri., Feb. 10 10:45 p.m. Arrive Hong Kong. Met by IRC Director Harry Allen. Stay at Hilton Hotel.

Sat., Feb. 11 10:00 a.m. Cherne and Casey meet with Fox Butterfield, NEW YORK TIMES correspondent.
11:00 Commission meeting at Hilton, private dining room, with Harry Allen; Sam Feldman, District Director of the US Immigration and Naturalization Service; Charles Anderson, Chief of the Visa Unit of the US Consulate General; James Stewart of the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM). James Michener will have returned from Thailand and will be with us.
12:30 p.m. Luncheon. In addition to the above persons, Martin Rowlands, Hong Kong Director of Immigration, and members of the IRC Advisory Committee have been invited.
2:45 p.m. Thailand Group checks in at airport. Islands Group visits hotels where Indochinese refugees live.
6:00 p.m. Cocktails at the residence of Consul General Shoesmith.
Rest of evening free.

Sun., Feb. 12 7:30 a.m. Leave hotel for airport.
9:00 Depart Hong Kong via Cathay Pacific 901 for Manila.
10:45 Arrive Manila. Sister Thelma Pexa will meet us. Stay at Manila Hotel.
Group lunch at hotel.
Afternoon visit to refugee center with Sister Thelma.
Dinner given by Ambassador Newsom.

Mon., Feb. 13 Morning meeting with the Ambassador,
Foreign Minister Romulo, and others as
arranged by the Embassy and Sister Thelma.
2:15 p.m. Leave Manila airport on Singapore Airline
065.
5:00 p.m. Arrive Singapore. Stay at Raffles Hotel.

Evening free.

Tues. Feb. 14 Morning meeting with Ambassador Holdridge.
Meeting with Home Affairs Minister requested.
Joint Voluntary Agency Representative
Cyril Chew will meet with us.

Luncheon at Ambassador's residence.

Afternoon visit to YMCA refugee hostel.

Wed., Feb. 15 8:45 a.m. Depart for Kuala Lumpur via Malaysian
Airline 682A.
9:30 Arrive Kuala Lumpur. Stay at Hilton
Hotel.
12:30 Lunch/meeting with Ambassador Miller at
residence.
2:00--6:00 p.m. Meet with United Nations High Commiss-
ioner for Refugees (UNHCR) representative
Sampatkumar, Red Crescent officials, the
Malaysian Foreign Minister or other officials.

Visit transit centers

7:00 p.m. Return to hotel.

Evening free.

Thur. Feb. 16 9:00 a.m. Visit Joint Voluntary Agency Representative
Galen Beery and his staff, Embassy refugee
office, and ICEM officer.
12:00 Depart airport for Trengganu.
2:00 p.m. Check in at Pantal Hotel, Trengganu.
2:30 Depart by rented cars for Pulau Besar
Refugee Camp.
6:00 p.m. Depart camp for Trengganu
8:00 Dinner with UNHCR representative Francois
Fouinat.

Fri., Feb. 17 11:30
12:35

Depart Trengganu for Kuala Lumpur.
Arrive.

Afternoon, further meetings with Malaysian
Government, UNHCR, Red Crescent, etc.

Evening free.

Sat., Feb. 18 8:00 a.m.

Depart for Bangkok on Thai Airways 416.
(The Embassy has changed our airline and
hotel reservations.)

9:20
12:00

Arrive Bangkok. Stay at Erawan Hotel.
Joint press conference with the Thailand
Group.



February 12, 1978

"SOUTHEAST ASIA: MISSION OF MERCY

WINS RELIGION COMMENTARY

RABBI MARC H. TANENBAUM* OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

This broadcast is being taped at the airport in Seattle, Washington, as a twelve-member national citizens' committee prepares to depart on a ten-day mission to study the growing refugee problems in Southeast Asia. This past Thursday morning was spent in a lengthy discussion with U. S. State Department officials of the extent and magnitude of the suffering that more than 100,000 refugees from Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia are going through in the refugee camps in Thailand and elsewhere. From these discussions, and from reports prepared by the International Rescue Committee, which is sponsoring this mission, it is now abundantly clear that the human family is facing what Senator Edward Kennedy has recently called "a new humanitarian crisis in Southeast Asia which threatens the health and well-being of millions of people." During this coming week, this group of Christian and Jewish leaders will visit and interview Vietnamese boat people and land refugees in Hong Kong, the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and Japan. There will also be extended meetings with officials of these governments and American diplomats in order to enable us to develop a deeper understanding of the magnitude of this urgent humanitarian problem, and to propose a comprehensive program for meeting these critical human needs. Throughout this mission of mercy, the Rabbinic teaching will be uppermost in the minds of many of us, "He who saves a single life is regarded as if he has saved an entire world."

*Rabbi Tanenbaum, who is National Director of Interreligious Affairs of the American Jewish Committee, presents a weekly religion commentary over WINS-Westinghouse Broadcasting System.

RPR

CBCP - Center for Assistance to Displaced Persons

210 Taft Avenue, Manila

Philippines

Tel. [REDACTED] 50-09-13

13 February 1978

Mr. Rabbie Marc Janenbaum
165 East 56th Street
New York, N. Y. 10022 U.S.A.

Dear Mr. Rabbie:

Many, many thanks for your visit and your phone call from the airport. I am sorry I was not feeling very well - guess it was anxiety due to the coming operation.

Enclosed is a copy of a report I wanted to give your group so you can have an idea what we are doing here. Too bad your visit was too short you had no time to visit CADP and its little projects. I hope we can go around next time. Many thanks and God bless you.

Sincerely yours,

for

Sister Thelma Peña, D.C.
Director
Joint Volag Representative
in the Philippines

By: Jaci

**A REPORT ON THE VIETNAMESE REFUGEES IN THE PHILIPPINES
AND THE CENTER FOR ASSISTANCE TO DISPLACED PERSONS
(AS OF DECEMBER 31, 1977)**

- A. In 1977, the arrivals on boats from Vietnam reached 1132 the biggest compared to arrivals in 1975 of 108 people and in 1976 of 604 cases. Resettlements to third countries in 1977 are as follows:

USA	- 760 = Resettlements in 1977:	
		173 Conditional Entry Resettled
		264 Indochinese Parole Program Resettled
		323 Approved under IFP Awaiting Departure
Canada	- 50	
France	- 11	
Australia	- 12	
Switzerland	- 2	
Belgium	- 1	
Germany	- 22	
	<u>858</u> = Resettlements in 1977	

Pending decision - USA	- 103 (new parole program 1978)
Canada	- 37
France	- 3
Australia	- 3
Germany	- 3
	<u>149</u> Waiting Approval

Refused by 3rd countries or "not approved by USA" - 558

- B. Last November 30th, Jaime Cardinal L. Sin blessed twelve Apartments or housing units for the use of Vietnamese refugees who opted to settle permanently in the Philippines. These are the Vietnamese wives and children of Filipinos who lived in Vietnam. The Seton Homes are located in Pandacan, Manila.
- C. On December 18th, ninety-two (92) Vietnamese refugees participated in a whole day of recollection at the Santa Isabel College. Retreat master was Vietnamese priest, Fr. Dominic Luong, SSS.
- D. Last January 14th, an income-producing project was blessed by Magr. Ferdinand Mampin. It is the Pho-Vietnamese Specialty, a restaurant of Vietnamese dishes to be managed by eight (8) Vietnamese women. Located at Makati Fast Food Makati Commercial Center, it hopes to develop the families of repatriates toward self-reliance.
- E. Fourteen (14) dress-shoppes are now operating after more than fourteen Vietnamese women were sent to sewing skills training centers and loaned an amount for a sewing machine and a little shop.

F. Types of Assistance Given to Vietnamese Non-boat Cases:

1. Counselling toward local resettlement:

a. Training in income-generating skills, such as dressmaking, cooking, tailoring, manicure, small restaurant management.

b. Employment:

- i. self-employment projects - 26 families
- ii. job placement - 19 families
- iii. employment for abroad - 15 families

c. Housing:

- i. a small housing loan - 3 families
- ii. temporary shelter in a home (28 persons) or an institution (43 persons)

d. Adult education:

- i. special English class - 20 family heads
- ii. assistance to earn credentials in order to enroll in higher education - 20 family heads

e. Scholarship Program:

- i. scholarship for graders - 142 pupils
- ii. free board, lodging and education - 13 pupils
- iii. UNHCR scholarship for High School and College - 9 students

f. Translation of documents - 435 documents

2. Counselling given to crisis-intervention cases:

a. Regarding Vietnamese refugees outside the camp:

- i. medical assistance - 59 families
- ii. legal assistance - 37 families
- iii. counselling - 1) group - 38 families
2) individual - 28 families

b. Regarding Vietnamese refugees in the camp:

- i. counselling - 120 families
- ii. legal assistance - 36 families

c. Other special services:

- i. adoption - 4 children
- ii. Filipinos who had left their families in Vietnam came to CADP for advice on how to bring them over - 40 families

G. Conclusion

The Center for Assistance to Displaced Persons (CADP) is a development center and welfare agency licensed and accredited by the Department of Social Services and Development of the government of the Republic of the Philippines. It was established in September 1975 to assist the displaced persons from Indochina to adjust themselves and integrate into Philippine society and lead them towards self-reliance. Sister Thelma Peña, D.C. is in-charge of this Center, located in the compound of Sta. Isabel College. The Center takes care of a) boat cases in the Philippines; and b) Vietnamese women and children of Filipinos. Sr. Thelma has been appointed official representative in the Philippines of the United States Catholic Conference and the Joint Voluntary Agencies in the United States.

Report Submitted on 31 December 1978

By:

Sr. Thelma, D.C.
Sister Thelma Peña, D.C.
CADP Director
Joint Volag Representative
in the Philippines

INDOCHINESE REFUGEES IN INDONESIA

- I Since May 1975, approximately 750 refugees have arrived in Indonesia on small fishing craft or on larger craft which have rescued them at sea. Indonesia has granted the refugees temporary asylum and housed them in camps in various parts of the country: Jakarta, Bogor, Pontianak (West Kalimantan), and Tanjung Pinang (Riau Province). Currently there are 276 refugees in Indonesia.

	Jakarta	141	
	Bogor	16	
	Pontianak	6	
	Tanjung Pinang	60	
Tanjung Priok ←	Jakarta Harbor	53	(on board 3 boats)

180 persons do not yet have resettlement offers.

A boat with 7 persons reached Jakarta directly from Vietnam last week. Before that, the most recent arrival was in late November 1977.

- II United States Immigration officials visited Indonesia in 1976 and in June and October 1977. All together, 580 persons were approved for admission to the U.S. All but 76 have left Indonesia.

Expanded Parole Program 1976	74
Conditional Entry Program	31
Indochina Parole Program 1977	470
Immigrant Visas	5

USINS officials are expected to interview refugees for IPP-78 sometime this spring.

- III 86 persons have been offered resettlement in third countries:

France	34
Canada	12
Australia	40

Most have already departed. Australian immigration officials, in Indonesia for interviewing this week, are expected to approve additional numbers for Australian resettlement.

February 15, 1978

Citizens' Commission
International Rescue Committee
President Hotel
Bangkok, Thailand

NEWS RELEASE

For Release: Saturday,
18 February 1978

Bangkok - An urgent appeal to President Carter, the US State Department, and the American Congress to provide bold moral leadership for the international community by authorizing as quickly as possible the admission into the United States of the maximum feasible number of Vietnamese boat people and other Indochinese refugees and was made today by a national commission of 12 leading American citizens.

The appeal was issued at a press conference sponsored by the International Rescue Committee, America's oldest non-sectarian relief and resettlement agency for world refugee problems. A preliminary statement of the findings of the Citizens' Commission was issued here by Leo Cherne, IRC Chairman, and William Casey, former Undersecretary of State.

Messrs. Cherne and Casey served as Co-Chairman of a fact-finding commission which, during the past ten days, carried out what is believed to be one of the most systematic and extensive investigations of the present conditions of Vietnamese boat people and refugees from Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam. The delegation, representing

major communities of the American people, interviewed numerous Indochinese boat people and inland refugees, and held extensive discussions with key Southeast Asian government leaders and American Embassy officials in Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore, the Phillipines, and Hong Kong. Mr. Cherne led a delegation that concentrated on refugee problems in Thailand. Mr. Casey led a group that visited the other countries where most of the boat people are located. Both groups reassembled in Bangkok yesterday to share their findings.

The Commission is drafting a comprehensive report on their fact-finding mission which will make detailed recommendations for US refugee and resettlement policy and program which they intend to submit during the next several weeks to the American Government and people, as well as to international agencies.

An indication of the broadly representative and authoritative character of the Commission is reflected in the composition of the task force whose members are listed on the attached fact sheet.

In their preliminary statement issued today at the news conference, the Citizens' Commission made these major points.

1. The US must adopt a coherent and generous policy for the admission of Indochinese refugees over the

long range, replacing the practice of reacting belatedly to successive refugee crises since the spring of 1975.

2. Such a program will, in our opinion, moderate anxieties among Southeast Asian countries that by granting temporary asylum they would be left with unwanted refugees on their hands, will support the substantial efforts of those countries elsewhere in the world who are already participating in the resettlement effort, and will encourage new countries to join this common endeavor.

3. The special circumstances of boat people, the small number of Vietnamese who have come to Thailand overland, and Cambodian refugees make it imperative that all existing criteria and categories for their admission to the United States be waived, and that the movement of those refugees who are accepted for admission be accelerated. Our Government should make clear its firm intention that permanent resettlement for these refugees will in all instances be assured.

4. The criteria for admitting overland refugees from Laos to the United States should be eased and applied more generously and sensitively. By applying the usual criteria for admission of refugees to the US, we continue to deny the hidden and pervasive character of the US role in "the Secret War" in Laos. By virtue of our having worked

with virtually all of the peaceful and military instruments of Laos in an ambiguous war, not only are the normal criteria of very doubtful validity - but adequate proof such as is required by our authorities simply does not exist.

5. The suggested distinction between "economic" and "political" refugees from Indochina is spurious, invidious, and often used quite consciously to relieve any who would normally assist political refugees from feeling any obligation toward the asserted "economic refugees". The ability to make such a classification has even, in violation of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, been used as justification of forcible repatriation of refugees in some instances.

Reorganization of economic life in all three of the Indochinese countries has been massive and harsh. The consequences have been nearly universal. These governmental measures can be understood only as part of an integrated effort to reorient the entire life, culture and politics of those peoples. By identifying as enemies of the State all whose lives have been based on private property, freedom of thought and expression, or a different allegiance of philosophy, these regimes endanger a multitude if not most of their subjects. The very act of fleeing seals the fate of any who might otherwise have escaped persecution.

Few if any would run the terrible risks of escaping to face possible indefinite stay in refugee camps or rejection by country after country, merely because their balance sheets were unsatisfactory.

6. If any of the nations in this area should decide to resettle some of the refugees permanently, the United States should be ready to provide generous financial, technical and other assistance to these humanitarian endeavors.

7. We appeal to all shipowners, masters, maritime unions, countries of registry and countries in East Asia: From this day forward let no ships pass by persons of whatever nationality who are in danger of drowning at sea; let no port be closed to their debarkation and temporary succor; let no merchant ship which has received these refugees be penalized in carrying out its normal function. Whatever this takes, in the way of transit camps, bonding arrangements, experienced representatives stationed in every country to which these boats come to work out immediate ad hoc arrangements to unexpected situations, should be set in place with the help and under the direction of the UNHCR.

We request the US Government to reinforce a requirement to this effect on all US flag vessels. We suggest, in addition, under US or international auspices a quickly arranged meeting of all interested parties for a uniform international appeal to all shipping.

END

Citizens Commission

International Rescue Committee

Fact Sheet

A Commission of prominent American national leaders, organized by the International Rescue Committee, is completing a mission to Southeast Asia. The purpose of the mission is to examine at first hand the growing emergency situation of Indochinese refugees fleeing their homelands -- Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos - seeking freedom.

The members of the Commission, each acting in his private capacity:

The Hon. Leo Cherne - Chairman, International Rescue Committee, Co-Chairman of the Commission.

The Hon. William J. Casey - Former Under-Secretary of State, member Executive Committee, International Rescue Committee, Co-Chairman of the Commission.

Msgr. John Ahern - Director for Social Development, Archdiocese of New York.

Prof. Kenneth Cauthen - Colgate-Rochester School of Divinity.

The Hon. Cecil Lyon - United States Ambassador - Retired.

Mr. James Michener - Author.

The Hon. John Richardson - Former Assistant Secretary of State, President of Freedom House.

Mrs. Thelma Richardson - Civil Rights Activist.

Mr. Bayard Rustin - Chairman, Social Democrats - USA; President - A. Phillips Randolph Institute.

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum - National Inter-religious Affairs Director
of the American Jewish Committee.

Mr. Stephen Young - Committee on Human Rights, Bar Association, City
of New York.

Mr. Robert P. DeVecchi - Staff Director, International Rescue Committee.

Mr. Louis A. Wiesner - Staff Director, International Rescue Committee.

In addition, the following individuals were unable to travel with the
Commission but will participate as active members in the preparation of
its final report and recommendations:

Mr. Warren C. Meeker - Chairman of the Board, Research Institute of
America.

Mr. Albert Shanker - Member of the Executive Committee, AFL-CIO; President
of the United Federation of Teachers.

Rabbi Henry Siegman - Executive Vice President - Synagogue Council of
America.

Mrs. Elizabeth Copley Thaw - Member of the Executive Committee, Inter-
national Rescue Committee.

In the course of its work, members of the Citizens' Commission visited
Hong Kong, the Philippines, Indonesia, Singapore and Thailand. Subsequent
visits to Taiwan, Macau and Korea will be made. Regrettably, the Commission
was unable to visit Malaysia, although it met with officials directly con-
cerned with the significant Indochinese refugee problem in that country.

In Thailand, members of the Commission visited nine (9) refugee camps as
well as meeting with high Thai officials. They also met with the repre-

of the
sentatives/United Nations High Commission for Refugees, ICEM and the
American Embassy. In all other countries, refugee camps and transit
centers, were inspected. In addition, the Commission met with boat
refugees on their boats. Meetings were held as well with high national,
international and diplomatic officials involved in refugee matters in
these countries.

The information gathered by the Commission will be incorporated in a
final report. It will make specific recommendations regarding U.S. refugee
policy to the President, the Secretary of State, the Attorney General, the
appropriate Committees of the Senate and House of Representatives and to
the American people. These recommendations will be directed towards how
best the United States should respond to this refugee emergency, in keeping
with the best traditions and interests of the American people.

Bangkok, Thailand

12:00 Hours - Local Time

February 18, 1978

Group Wants U.S. To Raise Its Quota On Asian Refugees

By HENRY KAMM

Special to The New York Times

BANGKOK, Thailand, Feb. 18—A citizens' committee of Americans called today for the adoption of a long-range program by the United States to admit more Indochinese refugees and to speed their processing.

"The plight of the Indochinese refugees compares in tragedy, depth of despair and urgent need of assistance to any of the groups of the tragic last 50 years

that we have lived through," said Leo Cherne, chairman of the International Rescue Committee, at a news conference after it had made a tour of Asia.

The committee was founded in 1933 to help German refugees after Hitler came to power. Other members on the tour included James A. Michener, the author; Bayard Rustin, the civil-rights leader, and former Under Secretary of State William J. Casey, former Assistant Secretary of State John Richardson Jr., Msgr. John B. Ahern of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York, and Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

Mr. Cherne said in reply to a question that he felt neither President Carter nor Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance had expressed sufficient concern for the refugees. He said he hoped his group's report

would rekindle their interest, and said that Mr. Vance had asked to be informed of the group's findings.

About 16,000 Indochinese have been admitted to the United States since the end of the war in 1975, and more than 100,000 refugees are stranded in Asian transit camps.

Rabbi Tanenbaum said that public concern over the homeless refugees was "virtually nonexistent," and that there was little knowledge of the extent of the problem nor feeling that the United States owed what he called a "special responsibility" to victims of the war in Indochina.

Among the group's recommendations were:

¶The elimination of all criteria for admission that now exclude many Vietnamese and Cambodians. Mr. Cherne ad-

vocated "the absolute assurance of sanctuary" for all who have fled Cambodia. About 15,000 Cambodians are waiting in Thai camps and prisons for asylum.

¶A more generous application of immigration criteria to Laotian refugees, who number more than 80,000. The group said that because the United States had conducted the war in Laos in secrecy, legal proof that many Laotians were on American payrolls does not exist.

¶The dropping of any distinction between political and economic refugees, a distinction that sometimes makes only those escaping for reasons judged to be political eligible for refugee status.

¶An appeal to all maritime countries to let no ship pass people in danger of drowning, to close no ports to them and to let no ship be penalized for bringing refugees to port.

13 Petticoat Lane
Troy, New York 12180
February 20, 1978

Rabbi Marc H. Tannenbaum
American Jewish Committee
165 East 65th. Street
New York, New York 10022

Dear Rabbi Tannenbaum:

I am writing to you because I read of your interest in the plight of Asian refugees as reported in the New York Times, Sunday, February 19, 1978.

In addition to the recommendations printed in the newspaper article with which I fully agree, my concern is for the reunification of families of refugees tragically split in the last days of South Vietnam. Family members - husbands/wives and children, who were left behind in Vietnam, are faced with serious difficulties in being reunited with their family members who are now in the United States.

My concern for this problem stems from assisting two families to settle here in Troy when I was employed as the Council of Churches Executive Director. I continue to be involved in helping a father sort out the limited possibilities for bringing his wife and 7 children to join him here.

I would appreciate your advise on this question.

May I extend my encouragement as you continue your efforts on behalf of refugees.

Sincerely,


Marie J. Mercer

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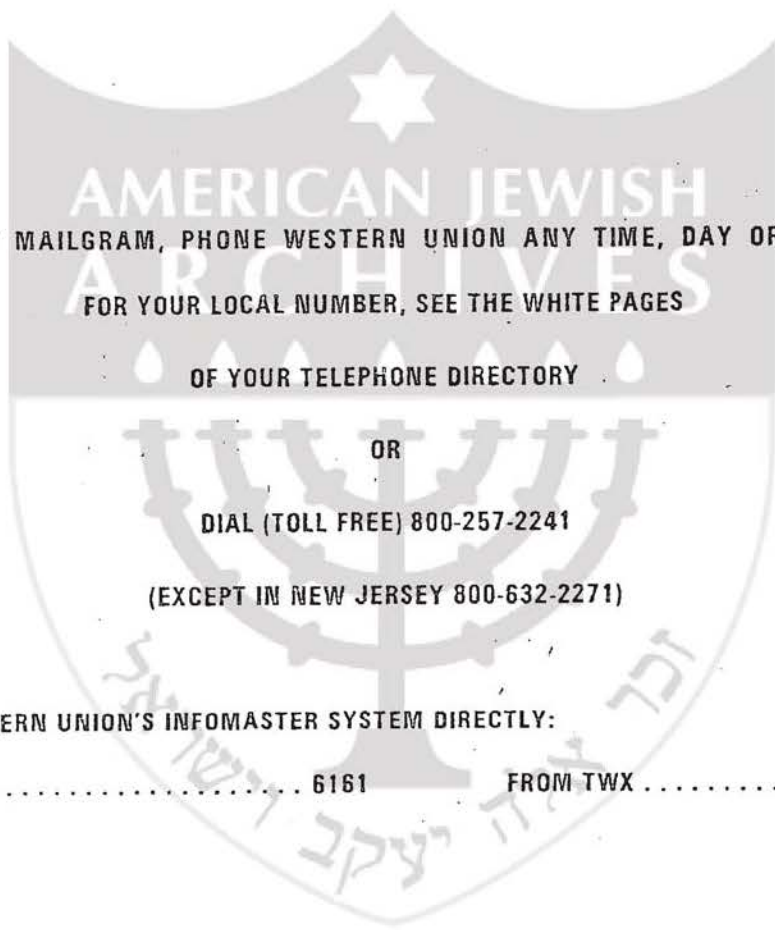
▷ RABBI MARC H TANENBAUM
AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE
165 EAST 56 ST
NEW YORK NY 10022

THE HOUSE JUDICIARY SUBCOMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION, HEADED BY CONGRESSMAN JOSHUA EILBERG, WILL HOLD HEARINGS NEXT WEDNESDAY MORNING, MARCH 1, AT 930, ON FUTURE PLANS FOR INDOCHINESE REFUGEE EMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES. THE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CITIZENS COMMISSION WILL BE THE MAJOR SUBJECT. ALL COMMISSION MEMBERS ARE OFFICIALLY INVITED AND URGED TO ATTEND. LEO CHERNE AND BILL CASEY HAVE BEEN ASKED TO PRESENT TESTIMONY ON BEHALF OF THE COMMISSION, AND EILBERG'S STAFF CHIEF STATES THAT QUESTIONS WILL BE DIRECTED TO COMMISSION MEMBERS. HEARINGS ARE SCHEDULED IN ROOM B352 OF RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING BUT CONFIRM ON ARRIVAL AS ROOM MAY BE SWITCHED. PLEASE CALL ME AT IRC MONDAY, OR TUESDAY MORNING LATEST (212-679-0010) TO ADVISE IF YOU WILL ATTEND

AL KASTNER
INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE
386 PARK AVE SOUTH
NEW YORK NY 10016

15:20 EST

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February 26, 1978

"INDOCHINESE REFUGEES"

WINS RELIGION COMMENTARY

RABBI MARC H. TANENBAUM* OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

In the refugee camp in Manila, the Philippines, a Vietnamese mother of nine children followed us around everywhere we went, anxiety and depression etched in her tragic face. She had been confined in that Vietnamese camp for nearly three years, and she had no relatives to sponsor her leaving. In Siekiu, Thailand, 250 Vietnamese were confined in a barbed wire detention camp for more than two years, with four people sleeping on straw mats in a box-like prison cell. At the harbor of Jakarta, Indonesia, we spoke in French with a Cambodian ship's captain who escaped with 20 others in a leaky boat, risking their lives on a troubled sea. Why did you risk everything to leave? we asked. "Pcur la libert ." For liberty, for individual freedom. A blizzard of such moving impressions assaulted our International Rescue Committee delegation during the past two weeks as we sought firsthand information on the plight of Vietnamese boat people and Indochinese refugees. A detailed report of our findings is being prepared for President Carter, the State Department, and Congress with recommendations for a more humane policy toward these suffering people. For the moment, this much is abundantly clear. More than sixty percent of the boat people have perished at sea while merchant ships pass them by callously. The international community must put a stop to that indifference to human life, and now. Our group will not rest until that scandal of dehumanization comes to an end.

*Rabbi Tanenbaum, who is National Director of Interreligious Affairs of the American Jewish Committee, presents a weekly religion commentary over WINS-Westinghouse Broadcasting System.

INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE

AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES
Citizens Commission
on

Indochinese Refugees

Hon. Leo Cherne, Chairman

Hon. William J. Casey, Co-Chairman

February-March 1978

זכר אלה יעקב וישראל

A PERSONAL RECOLLECTION

by

Leo Cherne

Chairman, International Rescue Committee

**AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES**

In appreciation and tribute to

**Hon. William J. Casey
Monsignor John Ahern
Professor Kenneth Cauthen
Ambassador Cecil B. Lyon
James A. Michener
Hon. John Richardson, Jr.
Thelma Richardson
Bayard Rustin
Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum
Stephen Young
Robert DeVecchi
Louis A. Wiesner**

**Carel Sternberg
Alton Kastner
Ron Drago
Henry Allen
Jeanne MacDaniels
Nan Borton**

Excerpts from THE CONSUL
by Gian-Carlo Menotti, 1950

Menotti's opera is the story of Magda Sorel and her unsuccessful effort to obtain a visa which will enable her to leave an unnamed totalitarian country in order that she may join her husband, a political fugitive, who is waiting for her on the border and who it is feared will return out of love for his wife if she is unable to get a visa and join him.

To this we've come:
that men withhold the world from men;
no ship nor shore for him who drowns at sea,
no home nor grave for him who dies on land.
To this we've come:
that man be born a stranger upon God's earth,
that he be chosen without a chance for choice,
that he be hunted without the hope of refuge.
To this we've come,
and you, you too shall weep!

Papers! Papers! Papers!
But don't you understand?
What shall I tell you to make you understand?
My child is dead. John's mother is dying.
My own life is in danger. I ask you for help.
And all you give me is papers!

What will your papers do?
They cannot stop the clock!
They are too thin an armor against a bullet!
What is your name: Magda Sorel.
Age: Thirty-three.
What does that matter?
All that matters is that the time is late,
that I'm afraid and I need your help.

This is my answer:
My name is woman.
Age: still young
Color of hair: grey
Color of eyes: the color of tears.
Occupation: Waiting!
Waiting, waiting, waiting!
Waiting, waiting, waiting!

These pages unavoidably reflect those events, developments and conversations in which I was personally involved. Though all of us joined in Bangkok at the end of our mission to share our observations and experiences, these recollections are altogether inadequate in commenting on the activities of those Commission members who visited certain camps and attended conferences while others of us (having divided our responsibility) were elsewhere. Since I led the group which visited Thailand, this memoir most seriously slights the details of the extensive travel and study in which the "Islands" group, led by Bill Casey, participated.

I have several regrets -- that it is impossible here to identify by name the members of the IRC staffs in Asia who were as tireless in helping our effort as they are devoted in their responsibilities to the refugees. I regret that Carl Gershman and Tom Kahn did not figure in these pages since, outside of IRC, they more than any other individuals relentlessly gathered maximum support for this undertaking. And I regret especially that Albert Shanker, Lee Thaw and Warren Meeker, who had accepted membership on the Commission, were at the last moment prevented from adding their talents and sharing this experience. Nevertheless, they contributed significantly to the planning of our work and the results we achieved.

This story begins last November 16th in my office at the Research Institute. As top Washington correspondents say when they wish to protect their source, "a very highly placed official in the State Department" flew up to visit me. He could not have been more depressed and was, in addition, more than a little embarrassed. His message was simple but terribly final:

"We have failed in our efforts to persuade the White House to fight for resettlement for any more Indochinese refugees and that of course also includes the people who are trying to escape from Vietnam by boat. The situation grows more tragic by the hour, and with the White House reluctant and the Congress and the Attorney General opposed to issuing any more visa waivers (called paroles), I feel pretty hopeless."

"If you're that hopeless, what led you to fly from Washington to see me?"

"Frankly, Leo, that's what embarrasses me. I don't really know why I'm burdening you with this, and I'm troubled that I'm taking your time without purpose."

"Yet you came anyway."

"I felt I had to talk to somebody who would understand what this 'shutting of the gate' means even if only to talk it out. And everyone I turned to in Washington, who was sympathetic to the efforts that we've been making in State to budge the White House, suggested maybe the International Rescue Committee will have an inspiration."

"Well, Alfred (that's about as far from his name as I can get), first of all I'm happy and honored that you came up to see me. Secondly, maybe there is something that we can do. Can we break down the problem into separate pieces? What is your most immediate problem and what is the next order of priority?"

"Well, most immediately, there are 7,000 'boat people' who have been lucky enough to complete their escape who are scattered along the shores of Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and as far away as Hong Kong and Australia. We must move them as rapidly as possible. Longer range, refugees are risking their lives to escape from Cambodia and Laos at the rate of about 4,000 a month and they're piling up in Thailand, which already has 80,000 of them in refugee camps, and for which IRC is the major agency coordinating medical relief in Bangkok and in the camps scattered throughout Thailand. But now Thailand simply refuses to take in more unless they can count on the United States over the long run taking a fair share of these people, as France, Canada, Australia, the Philippines and others are doing. And, of course, on top of the 4,000 a month crossing the borders, the boat people are still arriving at the rate of 1,500 a month.

"The tragedy, as you know Leo, is compounded by the fact that entire families risk their lives in small, leaky fishing boats to cross the dangerous waters of the South China Sea and the Gulf of Siam, and the estimate we have is that roughly 50 percent drown at sea. The further tragedy is that even when they make shore, a number of countries refuse to let them land and simply shove them back to sea again. In some cases, they're given additional fuel, helped to make minor repairs. Some of them have found it necessary to go as far south as Australia before they're permitted to land.

"Of those who drown at sea, a significant number could have been saved if one of the hundreds of commercial vessels which travel that part of the world with various kinds of cargo, when they see them in distress, would take them on board. But that is happening less and less, despite the fact that the law of the sea requires it. Many countries won't let the freighter dock and even discharge its commercial cargo if there are refugees aboard and some, like Singapore, will permit the unloading of cargo but refuse to offer refuge to the boat people who were picked up.

"The result, therefore, was inevitable. Very few commercial vessels are now willing to risk impeding their commercial function, as they would if they take the boat

people aboard. Even when they see a smaller boat sinking, their eyes are more and more averted."

"All right, Alfred, let me see what help I may be able to muster. There is a meeting of the Board of the IRC in the next few days and I'm sure they will authorize my sending an urgent appeal to Brzezinski and the Attorney General to immediately grant the 7,000 parole numbers you need for the boat refugees already beached.

"The Attorney General is the key to this because it is his office which has the power by law to authorize parole, and, of course, he won't do so unless Brzezinski somehow persuades the President of the urgency of doing this. Clearly you at State have not persuaded Carter.

"There's no guarantee the appeal will work, but I assure you it will be emphatic."

(Several days later, a strongly worded mailgram urgently calling for 7,000 additional parole numbers went to both the Attorney General and Brzezinski. Other representations, governmental and nongovernmental, were also made. Within a month, exactly 7,000 parole numbers were authorized by the A. G.

But this, while indispensable, still did nothing about the longer-term problem of roughly 4,000 refugees a month continuing to come from Laos and Cambodia into Thailand, in addition to those arriving by boat to Thailand and other Southeast Asian countries, at least one of which would let them land.)

It was clear to me as it was to my visitor that if we succeeded with the one-shot appeal for 7,000 visa waivers, it would be the last such effort that could be made and that something much more fundamental would have to be done to turn the government around sufficiently to understand the need for a longer-range refugee policy on which other governments can count and which would lead them to take their share of these unfortunate people.

"On that one, Alfred, I'm not hopeful. But there's one procedure which we have used a half-dozen times in the past in the face of a great refugee crisis in an effort to affect the U.S. government and public opinion. That procedure involves assembling a group of prominent and experienced American citizens to form themselves into a Citizens Commission to investigate the particular crisis and report back its findings to the press, the public and especially the White House, State Department, Attorney General and the Congress. I believe I can get the IRC to finance such a Commission initially and many of the members will, of course, pick up their own expenses."

The same Board meeting which authorized me to send that demand for 7,000 parole numbers to the White House also authorized the formation of such a Commission. We knew we had to have representatives, if possible, from the major religious groups, from business, from organized labor, former government officials, and at least one person so thoroughly accepted for credibility that the Commission's results could not be ignored. The "star" system plays its part even in crisis politics.

By January 1, the Commission members were lined up. There were one or two last-minute replacements when urgent demands changed the plans, for example, of Cardinal Cooke who suggested that Monsignor John Ahern, Director of Social Development for the Archdiocese of New York go in his place. The Executive Vice-President of the Synagogue Council of America received a last-minute invitation from President Anwar Sadat to come to Cairo with a group of Jewish theologians for a first and historic meeting with a leading group of Moslem theologians. Albert Shanker, President of the American Federation of Teachers, got bogged down in teacher union negotiations, but we knew he would do us as much good as a member of the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO which was scheduled to meet in Miami just as our Commission would be completing its work. Warren Meeker, who had been asked to go to represent the Research Institute, and Lee Copley Thaw, who had organized the IRC's Bangladesh program, were both compelled to withdraw at the last minute for personal reasons.

Among those who were able to go were James Michener, who had returned only

three days before from the South Sea Islands where he was doing a documentary for NBC; Bill Casey, whose first ten years after law schools were spent here at the Research Institute and who had since then become head of the Securities and Exchange Commission, Chairman of the Export-Import Bank, and Undersecretary of State, and who agreed to be Co-Chairman of our Commission. Bill Casey led the section of the Commission which visited the Island Outposts where the boat people were either accepted or rejected -- Hong Kong, the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Macao, Taiwan and South Korea.

I undertook to lead the group, which included Jim Michener, and which traveled the length and breadth of Thailand visiting the camps of the 4,000 "boat people" stranded there, camps for the 15,000 Cambodians who had succeeded in escaping from what is undoubtedly today's most brutal dictatorship in the world, and for the 80,000 of the Lao and Meo tribesmen who had fled from Laos across the Mekong into northern Thailand. With Bill Casey were Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, Director of Interreligious Affairs for the American Jewish Committee; Professor Kenneth Cauthen of the Colgate Rochester Divinity School, a distinguished theologian especially well known among Baptist churches of the South; Cecil Lyon, former Ambassador to Chile and Ceylon; and Louis Wiesner, former Director of the Office of Refugee Affairs in the State Department.

Among our Thai group were Monsignor John Ahern, Bayard Rustin, President of The Philip Randolph Institute, and leader of the civil rights coalition in America during the Sixties. Rustin was as astonishing in his effect on the refugees as he was in our meeting with the U. S. and Thai officials in Bangkok and even more indefatigable on his return to the U. S. John Richardson, Jr., former Assistant Secretary of State and President of Freedom House, was also in our group, as was Thelma Richardson, his wife, who played a major role some years ago in the long and bitter struggle to break down the residency barriers in Bronxville, N. Y. Bob DeVecchi, a former Foreign Service Officer, joined IRC to help resettle the large wave of Vietnamese refugees who came here in 1975, and now in charge of the IRC Indochina Refugee Program, was

our staff organizer, and Stephen Young, son of the former U.S. Ambassador to Thailand, married to a Vietnamese girl, fluent in both the Vietnamese and Thai languages rounded out our group.

We agreed that James Michener, whose schedule of meetings with television people and publishers made it impossible to leave with the group, would go directly to Thailand a week before the rest of us and, in turn, join us when we arrived in Hong Kong to give us the benefit of his judgments and observations. Bob DeVecchi, who had just recently returned from two months in Thailand, accompanied Michener and remained in Thailand to await the arrival of those of us who were next headed there.

The rest of us were scheduled to leave New York on February 8 in order to catch a flight in Seattle that goes non-stop to Tokyo. But February 8 was the day after the two-day snowstorm and no planes were leaving either from Kennedy or Newark. Through some heroic efforts by Carel Sternberg and Al Kastner, the Executive and Deputy Directors of IRC, United and Northwest Airlines cooperated in getting the first flight off the ground from Newark just in time for us to reach Seattle that evening.

The State Department had sent its key expert in Indochinese refugee affairs to Seattle in part to brief us and also to convey the Secretary's gratitude for our making this effort.

We arrived in Hong Kong where the eight leading representatives of the U.S. and Crown Colony governments met with us to give us their definitive briefings on the entire Southeast Asian refugee picture. They could not have been more forthcoming or grateful for our initiative.

Casey's group now left for Manila and mine for Bangkok. None of us has ever been on as grueling a schedule of travel by commercial, private, Embassy aircraft, cars, buses, and jeeps.

In Manila the Casey group learned, as I did simultaneously in Bangkok, that the government of Malaysia had informed the U. S. State Department, despite their previous agreement, that they would not receive the Casey delegation unless Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum was excluded. Malaysia is Islamic and facing the pressures of a highly nationalistic Islamic party, was unwilling to receive a Rabbi. (It is interesting to note that Marc Tanenbaum is America's leading Jewish figure, invariably called on to meet with the leading religious leaders of the other faiths.) The Casey group skipped Malaysia and instead flew to Indonesia where, although it is also an Islamic country, they were heartily welcomed.

In each of the Islands the Casey group visited the boat camps, met with the key public officials and even negotiated future commitments from those governments, dependent in most cases on what the U. S. government would finally define as its refugee policy. It deserves to be said that the Philippines has consistently been the most hospitable to any arriving boat refugees from Vietnam; Singapore the least. The group met as well with shipping company owners in an effort to solve the dilemma of commercial vessels denying rescue to boats in trouble at sea and in two instances opened up possibilities of Asian transit camps for the growing number of boat people.

In the meantime, those of us in Thailand visited two of the squalid enclaves where those boat people whose boats could travel no further had been permitted to land. I have not often seen refugee camps more crowded, less sanitary or more isolated in their wretchedness.

We visited the three camps where Cambodians are located just across their former border and where raiding parties were beginning to make nightly appearances from Cambodia north to the three largest camps where low-land Lao as well as hill tribesmen (the Meo or more properly Hmung tribe) from Laos are quartered. These camps turned out to be by far the best of the refugee camps -- spacious, generally hospitable, with some play areas for the youngsters, and even enough room for the refugees to set up

their own vocational training centers and small garden plots where they raise vegetables which they sell to nearby townspeople. The IRC maintains large and truly model medical facilities in these camps, providing for the critical needs of tropical medicine, inoculating against epidemic diseases, and the whole range of medicine from childbirth to critical surgery. The doctors and nurses are from the Philippines, France, and the United States. Refugee paramedics have been trained on the spot in order to enable them to continue to use their skills on behalf of their people after the Westerners leave.

The most moving episode for a number of us in the course of the trip took place in the largest of these camps at Nong Khai. Several thousand of the Laotian refugees and their Buddhist leader conducted a large ceremony in the community hall which had been constructed for all of their group purposes. A huge offering symbolizing life in the form of a cluster of fruits, vegetables, flowers and religious amulets was the centerpiece. The members of the Commission were asked to gather in front of the offering as the Buddhist priest conferred upon us the honor reserved for "holy men." It is nearly impossible to describe the reverence on the faces of these people who were dressed in their native costumes, in ages ranging from childhood to the most elderly, taking their turn to each tie a white string made of hand-woven pure cotton around our wrists. After the knot was tied, they would rub a hand over our arm or face. It was explained to us that the knot symbolized their reverence and the touching was for the purpose of deriving from the contact some of our "holiness."

Tradition required that except as the strings fell off by themselves, we were not to remove them for 72 hours. I believe Bob DeVecchi is still wearing a couple of his. I finally cut mine off in Washington a week later when in the succession of conferences with Brzezinski, Mondale, Vance, and the three hours of testimony before the House Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship and International Law, it became apparent that my wrists appeared to be wrapped in bandages which had now become quite dirty and might even suggest that I had slit my wrists. Frankly, I think I would have if our mission had failed.

If the greatest beauty we were exposed to occurred in Nong Khai, so too did evidences of the cruel tragedy. On November 15, the Thai government issued an order that no more refugees from Laos would be permitted sanctuary. When they were apprehended crossing the half-mile wide Mekong River, the police were under orders to forceably return them to Laos. On a number of occasions several U. S. and European newspaper men saw them literally being shot within moments of their arrival in Laos. A larger number did make it to the Thai shore only to be arrested on the charge of illegal entry. They were then tried, fined and imprisoned for the length of time needed to pay off the fine. But then the trouble began for them. Since November 15, they are no longer consigned to one of the refugee camps, but are kept instead in "detention centers."

We were able to visit one of these walled detention areas just a few miles away from that model camp I just described. In that one detention center, 1,200 men, women and children were crowded into an area smaller than the ground level on which the Institute building stands. There were no facilities for them. In fact, there was shelter from sun and rain and damp of the night for only 200 of the 1,200. The remainder literally spent their days and nights on the open ground.

The most important distinction between a refugee camp and a "detention center" is that under the rules of the UN, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is permitted to enter and observe whether the rules of decency are being complied with in a refugee camp. In addition, the UNHCR provides the funds to both the provincial authorities and the voluntary agencies for food, medicine, shelter, and so forth. (The amounts provided per person in the boat camp I have previously described is 4¢ a day per person.) But in a detention center, there is none of this international presence empowered to see whether the rules of decency are observed, nor can complaints be made to someone who can do something about them. The only exception is that IRC doctors, after lengthy pleading, are now permitted to go in once every couple of weeks to help meet the most urgent medical needs.

There was one small hopeful touch. One of the voluntary agencies had succeeded in getting into the center several hundred yards of black plastic cloth, and the refugees were planting bamboo stakes in the ground which would make it possible for the cloth to be laid across the bamboo stakes to provide some roofing cover against the elements.

One urgent observation that came from our visiting 9 of the 15 refugee camps throughout Thailand: Not only are the voluntary agency people working around the clock to be of whatever help possible, but the U. S. government officials (we have consular offices scattered throughout Thailand) are among the most dedicated and relentlessly working people we have found anywhere. In good part, that has to be laid at the door of Tom Barnes who is the State Department's Coordinator of Refugee Affairs in Bangkok. His integrity and energy are relentless. He smiles infrequently but that, I think, is a Foreign Service Officer's stiff-lipped facade to hide the softness of the heart which animates him.

When the Casey group and my group had completed our respective travels, we all converged on Bangkok where two remarkable things happened in the all-too-short period of eight hours. The first was the arrival from Malaysia of three visitors: the top U. S. refugee official; the top voluntary agency coordinating official; and a representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Knowing that the Casey group had been denied entry, they took it upon themselves to travel to Bangkok to meet with us, brief us thoroughly on what we would have seen had we gone there, and to be of whatever help they could be in the formulation of our conclusions.

The second event was even more remarkable. We were due at 11 o'clock the next morning to hold our press conference at the Press Club in Bangkok where representatives of the world press, including almost every East Asian country, were assembled for us to report our conclusions and the recommendations we intended to bring back to the United States. We had one evening (after having been separated for nearly two weeks) to agree not only on what we would say at the press conference but what, in fact, our rec-

ommendations to the White House, State Department, and the Congress would be. Believe it or not, before midnight we had formulated the six central recommendations which we planned to press for. They were designed to be the heart of the first formalized U.S. refugee policy for Indochinese refugees on shore, at sea, wherever their location.

The miracle of this agreement among us on the Commission lies less in the limit of time than it does in the remarkably different nature of our backgrounds. Not only were three religions represented, but a political spectrum which ran from Social Democrats USA to the more conservative Republican outlook. We were white and black. We were Wasp and East European. And, most significantly, we had been all over the lot in our views concerning the U.S. involvement in Vietnam during the Sixties and Seventies. There were those who had opposed the war from the beginning, some held positions in between, and those who gave support to the U.S. involvement to the end. Yet, not on one point nor even the shading of a word was there a millimeter of difference among us.

The press conference went well. There aren't many that end with applause. Fewer still where Americans are involved overseas.

Stage One of our work was finished. The important but problematic part was now to begin: how to reach our targeted audience.

The first break came in the important fact that the major U.S. newspapers and wire services covered the story of our press conference and our Commission's conclusions nationwide. This provided the essential paving for our return. The next day we broke up and headed home.

I spoke of Bayard Rustin. I failed to tell you that he concluded that holy ceremony at Nong Khai in a way no one else could have. As the leader of the Commission, I was asked to make some remarks. My words were of hope and of our intention, come hell or high water, to move the American government.

But then without prompting Bayard Rustin got up and said simply that he would like to sing two not very well-known freedom songs which were sung by his people in their darker times. Bayard has a magnificent voice. He once sang with the Paul Robeson group when both were young. I can assure you that his songs are still reverberating in Nong Khai. There were no ethnic distinctions among the tears they produced.

Well, on that Sunday departure, Bayard Rustin decided to do what no sane man experienced in around-the-world travel would undertake. He booked a flight which would go directly from Bangkok to New York, stopping only for flight changes in Hong Kong and Tokyo -- and this on top of the fatigue of all that we had been through. His reason was simple: He had to stop in New York, drop his bags off, get some fresh clothing and take the first flight to Miami so that he could report directly to the full Executive Council of the AFL-CIO which was concluding its meeting there. He knew that one of the arguments against letting in more refugees would be the large U. S. unemployment, especially severe among blacks, and that many would say that letting in Indochinese refugees would threaten the jobs of American workers. He knew that he had to persuade the labor leaders meeting in Florida otherwise.

I knew my endurance was not equal to his and I had by now just completely run out of gas, so I accompanied him as far as Tokyo where I spent the night before taking the next day's polar flight directly to New York. My wife's family lives in South Florida. She was visiting them while I was in Asia and I was so exhausted when I arrived in New York that I decided to fly down to join them for the Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday left of that week, just to recharge my batteries. One-half hour after I arrived, I received a call from Liz Paul to convey the urgent message that George Meany wanted to see me. I said, "How can I, I'm in Florida?" She said, "So is he. He's chairing the meeting of the AFL-CIO Council in Bal Harbour." I had completely forgotten what Bayard had planned to do and where. Within an hour, I had rented a car and was in North Miami Beach. I learned that Bayard Rustin had just reported the Commission's

conclusions to the Executive Council, that they voted unanimously to support them and that George Meany added his own personal endorsement of our eight recommendations, later compressed into six major points.

As I arrived, Governor Jerry Brown of California was leaving. He had traveled there hoping to secure the AFL-CIO endorsement for his intended primary contest against Carter in 1980. Meany gave him 45 minutes of inscrutable ambiguity. At Meany's insistence, I spent an hour and a half with him and his single-minded purpose was to find out, "How can I help you?" After the chief's "blessings" I met with a number of the other labor leaders, including one who is the AFL-CIO's legislative representative dealing with the Congressmen and Senators. I conveyed to him the urgency of our testifying before the appropriate Committee of the Congress. His answer was simple: "I'll call the Chairman (Eilberg) and try to arrange an invitation." I returned to South Miami from the hour trip and within an hour received an invitation to testify four days later before Eilberg's Immigration Committee of the Congress.

I then took a risky step. I said, "If you're asking me to testify, I must respectfully decline. But if you're inviting the full Commission to appear, and for my Co-Chairman and me to be given sufficient time to detail a very complex picture without which our recommendations cannot be understood, we would be eager to attend."

"How much time would that take?"

"We would need as much of a full morning session as you can give us."

He called back in five minutes to say, "Agreed."

I called the IRC office to quickly round up members of the Commission for the March 1 morning session. I then called the State Department and spoke to Patricia Derian, Assistant Secretary for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, to tell her of the labor union endorsement and the Eilberg Committee's invitation. State's enthusiasm

was understandably unlimited. I learned for the first time that our Commission had already had an effect while we were there of which we were unaware. President Carter had heard of what came to be known in Washington as "the blue ribbon panel" which was investigating the situation in Asia and he immediately ordered the National Security Council to prepare a White House plan on refugees to be completed within ten days with a view to personally signing it three days later. But it was clear that our time was short if our recommendations were to have an impact in shaping that still uncompleted White House plan.

Though it was Saturday afternoon, I phoned Brzezinski to convey the two developments of which he was not yet aware: that the AFL-CIO and George Meany had totally endorsed our recommendations, and that the Eilberg Committee had invited us to testify on Wednesday and confided that Eilberg had said that he had failed in several efforts to get the Administration's "plans." "I'm calling you, Zbig, for two reasons. I don't want you to think I'm making an end-run around you and therefore the Commission is available to brief you on our conclusions and recommendations before they're spelled out in detail at the Eilberg hearing." He asked the head of the task force which had been set up for the President to meet with our staff directors Wiesner and DeVecchi. Brzezinski also explained that only the developing crisis at the Horn of Africa prevented him from meeting with us before the Eilberg hearing, but he asked that our Commission come and visit with him immediately following our appearance on the Hill. I explained that we could not because we had already arranged to meet with Senator Kennedy and his staff immediately following the Eilberg hearing. Kennedy has for years been the key Senator responsible for the Senate's immigration legislation. So we set up a meeting toward the end of the afternoon.

Within hours of the telephone conversation with Brzezinski, I received a call from Shep Loman, head of refugee affairs in the State Department, telling us that they had just learned that the newly appointed United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, former Prime Minister Hartling of Denmark, was coming to the States on Tuesday to

make his first call on the Secretary of State. Remarkably enough, he added that there was agreement within the Department that because of the respect with which our Commission was held, they hoped we would give a luncheon in honor of the High Commissioner immediately following his visit with the Secretary, and suggested we invite representatives of the State Department as well as the High Commissioner's staff to be our guests. This we did. It turned into a working luncheon and before we were finished, we had reached a full understanding with the key man in charge of all the refugee programs throughout the world.

Immediately following that gracious and very productive luncheon at Washington's Cosmos Club, the members of the Commission and the IRC staff members rushed back to the IRC Washington office for the now urgent preparation for our appearance before the Eilberg Committee the next morning. At this point, we needed to formulate extensive statements by Bill Casey, summarizing the work of his portion of the Commission. I had to do the same, both for the Thai part as well as for the Commission's recommendations as a whole. On top of this, we learned at the very last minute that 70 clean copies of this statement and of the appropriate press releases for the members who would attend the Eilberg hearings all had to be in the Congressional hearing room by 9 the next morning. And by 9 they were.

At 9:50 a. m. , the formal hearings of the Committee on the Judiciary began and, unusual for a Congressional hearing, all but one of the members of the entire Committee were present, as well as Counsel for both the Majority and Minority members. Except for 40 minutes devoted to other testimony, including that of the Former Director of Central Intelligence, Bill Colby, the entire session of more than 3 1/2 hours was devoted to our Commission.

Neither Casey nor I ever got a chance to complete our prepared statements (a usual occurrence) because questions from the Congressmen flew thick and fast. The essence of much of the questioning dealt with such elements as, Hasn't the United States done

enough already? What are other countries doing? If we let these refugees in, won't we encourage others to flee? Why is this our special obligation? If we open the gates to the United States, will any other countries be willing to take any? What kind of numbers of people are we talking about? What's the logic of letting in Indochinese refugees and rejecting illegal immigrants from countries like Mexico? One theme more than any other was repeated: What assurances can we give that other countries will accept a proportionate part of this resettlement effort?

Monsignor John Ahern is a quiet and normally reticent man. But suddenly he raised his hand and asked permission of the Chairman to make a remark. That remark had an electrifying effect on all who were in that room, an effect which I haven't seen since one moment during the Army-McCarthy hearings. Lawyer Joseph Welch turned at one point to Joseph McCarthy who had just accused Welch of having a young assistant whom McCarthy had charged as being a fellow traveler of the communists. Those of us who lived through the Fifties will never forget that moment when Welch slowly turned to the Senator and said, "Senator McCarthy, at long last Senator, have you no shame? Are you finally bereft of all shame?" Everyone in the room that day and all who watched on television knew that the McCarthy era had just ended.

Eilberg quickly acknowledged John Ahern's request and this is the sequence exactly as it is reproduced from the Minutes of the Congressional hearing:

"Msgr. Ahern. I find that the question which has been raised a number of times, what will other countries do, is acutely embarrassing, first because the Commission as such can only offer hopes, not guarantees.

"Secondly, it ignores a substantial current history. On Monday I interviewed a gentleman who is a Ugandan refugee in Kenya, one of 60,000. I am not aware that Kenya asked us how many we would take before they took any.

"Finally, the measure of what we do is not what others do, but what we are able to

do. If we get into the situation in which we are waiting for others, it is almost the Kitty Genovese syndrome: who is going to call the police first, and the lady dies anyway.

"Mr. Rustin. Mr. Chairman, I would like to say a word on this, if I may?

"Mr. Eilberg. Mr. Rustin, of course.

"Mr. Rustin. One of the fundamental political questions I hope will not be obscured in this debate is if there are any people who should not want more refugees in this country it is on the one hand the trade union movement and on the other hand minority groups in this country which have in our ghettos, and I am not speaking merely of blacks, but poor whites, Mexican-Americans, and others, 30, 40, 50 percent, and some experts say 60 percent unemployment.

"I would like to point out three simple facts and have done.

"It is not the trade union movement which is raising these questions. On the one hand, George Meany has adopted through his executive council our recommendations.

"On the fourth of this month blacks -- the 15 so-called outstanding spokesmen of the black community -- are meeting in Atlanta. A statement has been prepared for them which essentially says, Let us not obscure the issue of American humanity.

"There are those in our community -- in the black community I speak of exclusively, now who are arguing we must not have another refugee come. We have such unemployment. The fact of the matter is, I submit to you, Mr. Chairman, if America can be cruel enough not to admit into this country people who if they are sent elsewhere will be shot, that same cruelty will make it impossible for them -- we, us -- Americans to deal with the problems in our ghettos and for our poor.

"This is for me a moral question in which we cannot turn our back on the only

thing I have been able to defend in America, despite segregation, discrimination, mistreatment of everybody who has come.

"One final point: if anybody in this room really thinks that by letting any of these people in they are taking jobs away from Americans who need them, they have not come to grips with one of the most serious problems we face in unemployment, and that is the tremendous distance between the aspiration of American poor, blacks first, and their ability to perform. Most Americans here will not, who need it, take the jobs ill-paying and dirty work that many of these refugees will take as they start the upward path to mobility, as all of us in the past, wherever we came from, had to take.

"I am addressing myself only to the political and moral question that if blacks and workers are taking this affectionate attitude, what other Americans ought not to?

"Mr. Eilberg. Thank you, Mr. Rustin.

"Mr. Fish?

"Mr. Fish. Father Ahern and Mr. Rustin, you have done a great service to this Committee.

"I think the Father alluded to the fact the question had come up numerous times but we were waiting for the answer that we finally got from you two, and this will be of enormous help as a matter of the public record and in the course of any debate of legislation on the floor of the House."

The questioning then resumed and went on for another thirty minutes. But the whole demeanor of the inquiry had changed and in just a very few minutes a clergyman and an eloquent black brought a luminous ray of light into the room.

Immediately thereafter, we had a marvelous meeting with Senator Ted Kennedy and members of his staff. They needed no persuasion and we were the ones who had to

call that meeting short to be in time for our appointment at the White House.

While our group was milling around the White House foyer, the Vice President happened to walk through, came over to greet me and said, "What are all these important people doing here with you?" I said, "Mr. Vice President, this is the IRC Commission which has just returned from Asia where we were investigating the Indochinese refugee picture and we're here to present our recommendations for Presidential action." He said, "I'm deeply interested in the problem. I'm going to Thailand myself next month. Is there any way that I can get the benefit of your study?" It took no more than a moment to put in his hands our full report, including our recommendations and elicit from him the comment, "I can't be in more complete support of what you people have been doing and want to express my appreciation for the initiative you've taken."

Just then Brzezinski was ready, and by way of opening the conversation I alerted him to the fact that we had just visited with the Vice President who expressed his deep interest in our report and support for our efforts.

An important exchange then took place. Once again the key was Bayard Rustin. Rustin said, "Mr. Brzezinski, I know it will be said by many that to let in thousands of Indochinese refugees at a time when there is abysmal unemployment among America's poor and especially America's black population is to risk further the possibility of their employment. I want to tell you what I told the AFL-CIO Council. If America lacks sufficient compassion to make room for the modest number of tragic victims of totalitarian governments in Asia, why would one think that America has the compassion to do anything about its own poor and black?" Brzezinski's reply was as quick as it was definitive: "If America doesn't meet its human responsibility to these people, it's no longer America." He had committed himself to what we wanted, more than we had expected, and the attitudes now profoundly improved over those which had prevailed at the moment of desperation in mid-November which led us to form our Commission.

We were invited to meet with the Secretary of State and the leading members of his staff. Secretary Vance not only expressed his gratitude for our mission, but astonishingly enough said he completely supported our recommendation that the United States be the country of certain refuge, especially for the Cambodians and Vietnamese boat people who had taken such risks to seek freedom. He went further and said, "I am also in favor of the United States offering immediate sanctuary to any boat people who are picked up at sea and denied landing at their next port. We will arrange to take them at that port and accept responsibility for them." I raised the question whether the Immigration Service regulations and procedures would make that possible and added that we were due to meet with the new Commissioner of Immigration, Mr. Castillo, that afternoon. He said, "You will do me a service if you take up my proposal with him and see whether he finds any barriers to our quickly waiving the normal immigration procedures."

Our meeting with the country's top immigration official could not have gone better than it did. I conveyed the Vance proposal to him and asked him whether there was any problem about the Immigration Service administering such a procedure. He consulted his deputy and they quickly concluded that they saw no problem which couldn't be overcome in a short period of time. I now had to make a somewhat indelicate move that had to be made if this were to be carried forward quickly. I said, "Mr. Commissioner, you and the Secretary of State are in agreement, but one of you is going to have to make a telephone call to the other. Who's going to be the first to pick up the phone?" His response was instantaneous: "I'll make it. But I will make a request of your Commission as well. You have done a remarkable job on this phase of the refugee problem. I'm not sure my boss the Attorney General will agree in every respect with my endorsement of your recommendations, but there is a much larger problem before us. The United States has never had a refugee policy incorporated into its laws and that's the reason we have always been compelled to deal with faulty expedients. Sometimes they work; sometimes they don't. Sometimes government officials are willing to take these steps; sometimes government officials are more reluctant. And the reason is simple --

our immigration laws have never defined a U. S. policy toward political refugees. Let me ask you, would your Commission give thought to what such a U. S. refugee policy should be in a revision of the U. S. immigration laws since we already have an Eilberg bill designed to revise those laws?"

I acknowledged that the challenge was a complicated and difficult one for us but that we would be honored to take a crack at it, and though the Commission has not yet decided to do so, I have no doubt that this voluntary group of independent citizens will agree to remain in existence until it completes that important challenge.

Within days after this meeting, Senator Kennedy introduced into the Senate his own revised immigration bill. He waited until after Senator Eastland had indicated that he didn't intend to run again and therefore Kennedy would be the new Chairman of the key Senate Judiciary Committee. Those of us who have seen the Kennedy bill regard it as close to a model bill, though we will continue to see whether the long-range policy question the Commission threw at us is fully solved in this proposed legislation.

But the problem of the Indochinese refugees can't wait for legislation. It requires a decision by the White House, action by the Attorney General, and consultation with the Congress. We had taken every step but one toward this end. We knew that the President's task force was nearly ready with its proposal for the President's desk. We knew that our recommendations played an increasingly heavy part in their final formulation, though we won't know until the President acts how much of a part. But we now knew that pressure had to be brought on the President directly.

At this point, a handful of us on the Commission and at the IRC went into high gear to stimulate expressions of important public opinion to be funneled to the President directly. Once again, Rustin came up with a masterstroke. He personally secured the signatures of 85 of America's most important black leaders supporting our Commission's recommendations. Included in that list were Vernon Jordan of the Urban League,

Benjamin Hooks of the NAACP, Julian Bond, Rev. Abernathy, Charles Evers, Lionel Hampton, Jesse Jackson, Clarence Mitchell, A. Philip Randolph, Roy Wilkins, Percy Sutton, Coretta King, Dr. Martin Luther King, Sr., virtually every black Mayor in the country and scores of others.

The Commission pooled our separate contributions and the IRC added the balance toward publication of that statement as an ad in the Sunday New York Times.

Simultaneously, I got the following organizations to quickly pass resolutions sent by mailgram to the President in support of the Commission's recommendations: The National Council of Jewish Women; the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith; the Coalition for a Democratic Majority; Social Democrats USA; Freedom House; National Council of Voluntary Agencies, and a score of other national organizations.

Monsignor Ahern undertook to secure an expression of support from the Hispanic community. Syndicated columns appeared that week in hundreds of newspapers throughout the country, columns by Bill Buckley, Charles Bartlett, John Roche and others. The New York Times wrote a major editorial entitled, "Our Vietnam Duty is Not Over" in which it supported the Commission's work. Radio and television interviews were quickly arranged with various members of the Commission.

One of the Commission members was so moved by his experience that he felt it essential in addition to his participation in the Commission to send his own personal appeal to the President. That person was James Michener. In some ways most striking, George Meany hand-delivered both to the President's office and to the office of the Secretary of State his own personal appeal that the President and the Secretary support the Commission's recommendations.

As I complete this not-yet-completed story, it is Wednesday, March 29th. All members of the task force, all members of the Cabinet, have "signed off" which in Washingtonese means "agreed" to the program which was put on the President's desk

on Friday, March 24. This morning, Wednesday, March 29, Air Force One left for Venezuela, Brazil and Nigeria with President Carter aboard. The program lies on his desk.

I close on a bitter note and a note of infinite hope. The bitter note is a statement which was made by Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew a month ago. It appeared in virtually every Asian newspaper, but not in the United States. It was an effort to explain why Singapore rejects the Indochinese refugees:

"President Carter had made human rights and human needs and the quality of all mankind a major assumption of his political beliefs and political policy and I think we ought to take him seriously and spell out the consequences of those major assumptions in its application to this one very poor outcome of a conflict that went on for many years and has not resolved itself...

"By the time you have tens of thousands of people willing to risk worse than death into the watery unknown, then if we are civilized human beings living up to our beliefs, then we ought to do something about it.

"Or again we are embarked upon an exercise that is just sanctimonious humbug."

The note of infinite hope: On November 16, 1977, the gates of America had swung shut on roughly 100,000 Vietnamese refugees. It is now March 29 and there is simply no question the gates will be opened and, in my opinion, more widely than we had imagined possible. The hope lies not only in this fact. It lies in our society that, however much criticized, is so remarkably open that a group of 11 people agreed to put everything aside and at great cost of time and energy traveled exactly halfway around the world in search of an adequate response to human need. It lies in the fact that, speaking for no one but themselves, they have opened more doors, affected more people, changed the minds of more government officials, moved the most stubborn of government entities in less than sixty days and at a total cost of something like \$50,000. It

lies in the fact that there is a non-sectarian agency which has been assisting refugees from political terror of the right or the left, formed a week after Hitler came to power, which saw the wisdom of underwriting this independent effort. It lies in the staff of that agency who had to make all kinds of complicated arrangements to achieve this end.

One man requires particular mention -- Al Kastner. He's Deputy Director of the IRC, and his in some ways was the hardest job: to organize, to coordinate before, during and after our trip to Asia all that needed to be done without some of the compensations we who went derived.

I ask myself, what did it mean to us as individuals, and I have only Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum's answer. He phoned me one Sunday to say, "Leo, I've been meaning to tell you for some time that the opportunity to be part of this Commission affected me more deeply than anything else in life, except for one episode." Unable to contain my curiosity, I asked, "What was that other episode?" He said, "To be invited to sit for two years as a representative of the Jewish people during the Vatican II Council."

POSTSCRIPT:

At 6.20 p. m. on Thursday, March 30, this phase of the effort I have described came to a conclusion. By coincidence, the curtain fell in the same place it opened, except that this time there was no visit from "Alfred." There was instead a telephone call from him from his State Department office. "Leo, I must tell you something in the most complete confidence and it's good news. Your Commission has accomplished what three months ago seemed totally impossible. I thought you should be the first to know that on Monday night as the President's bags were packed for his trip to Venezuela, Brazil and Nigeria, he acted favorably on the proposal which had been lying on his desk. The Executive Orders translating the action into government instruction are being rushed to completion and within a week or ten days the results ought to be made public. In the meantime, I ask that you tell no one else."

"For how long?"

"Well, I think Bernard Gwertzman of the New York Times somehow got the story and it may not be very long."

He then told me the details of the decisions which had been reached. I said, "Let me ask you one last question, Alfred. How do you feel?" "Ecstatic," and added, "How do you feel?" "No less than you do."

The very next morning, on the first page of the New York Times, was a story which carried the headline "NEW POLICY APPROVED TO ADMIT INDOCHINESE -- 25,000 Are Expected to Enter U. S. in Year Under Interim Rules," Washington, D. C., March 30.

By the time this appears, the details will be public. Quite simply, here's what this group of private citizens accomplished. The following are the major recommendations of our Commission and after each the decision reached by the White House.

Recommendation 1: "The United States must adopt a coherent and generous policy for the admission of Indochinese refugees over the long range, replacing the practice of reacting belatedly to successive refugee crises since the spring of 1975."

The Executive Order will announce a long-range coherent, generous program running over whatever number of years are needed for amendment of the immigration laws to enunciate the first comprehensive U.S. refugee policy. Result -- 100%

Recommendation 2: "Such a program will moderate anxieties among Southeast Asian countries, which, by granting temporary asylum, fear that unwanted refugees would be left on their hands; will support the substantial efforts of countries elsewhere in the world already participating in the resettlement effort; and will encourage new countries to join the common endeavor of granting sanctuary. The Commission recommends that the United States should be ready to provide generous financial, technical and other assistance to Southeast Asian nations which resettle the refugees permanently."

For the same reason as before, the Commission's result appears complete including the near certainty of arrangements whereby the U.S. will provide assistance to Southeast Asian countries that offer permanent resettlement to a substantial number of Indochinese refugees.

Recommendation 3: "The special circumstances of boat people, the Vietnamese who have come to Thailand overland, and of Cambodian refugees make it imperative that all existing criteria and categories for their admission to the United States be waived, and that the movement of those refugees who are accepted for admission be accelerated. Our government should make clear its firm intention that permanent resettlement for these refugees will in all instances be assured."

Each of these three will become U.S. policy. However, the means of treating the boat people will differ from those yet worked out for the Cambodian refugees and a comparable result for the latter cannot yet be considered assured. Result -- 80%.

Recommendation 4: "The criteria for admitting refugees from Laos to the United States should be eased and applied more generously and sensitively. By applying the usual criteria for admission of refugees, the United States continues to deny the hidden and pervasive character of its role in 'the secret war' in Laos. Having worked with virtually all of the peaceful and military instruments of Laos in an ambiguous war, the normal criteria for the admission of Laotian refugees are of very doubtful validity, and adequate proof such as is required by our authorities simply does not exist."

It may not be fully evident from the Executive Order, but we know that new instructions will be issued which will achieve more than 90% of this objective.

Recommendation 5: "The Commission appeals to all shipowners, masters, maritime unions, countries of registry and countries in East Asia: let no ships pass by persons of whatever nationality who are in danger of drowning at sea; let no port be closed to their debarkation and temporary succor; let no merchant ship which has received these refugees be penalized in carrying out its normal function. Whatever this takes to achieve -- in the way of transit camps, bonding arrangements, experienced representatives stationed in every country in which these boats come, or ad hoc arrangements to unexpected situations -- action must be taken."

On this final recommendation, in some ways the one most involving life and death because it deals with the death by drowning at sea of those who can't make shore, Administration action plans to go even further than we had recommended. Secretary Vance plans that any U. S.-owned ship, whatever flag it carries, will be informed that it must pick up refugees if they see them, drop them at their next port of call and if they are refused permission to land, the U. S. Consul will in that port of call with the full cooperation of the immigration authorities, immediately take responsibility for them, waive all visa requirements, and transport them to the United States.

In addition, the maritime unions of the U. S. have alerted their members to protest any action by any ship which ignores the urgent appeals for help at sea, and to picket or strike such ships if necessary.

There is a sixth recommendation that the distinction made between economic and political refugees from Indochina be dropped. The fact of escape alone makes any refugees from these countries political, and risks their death or imprisonment should they be returned.

This recommendation cannot be effectuated by the U.S. Government. In most instances, it is a distinction made by the country of first asylum and consequently the Administration's program, when announced, will not address itself to this problem. Result -- impossible to ascertain now, though we feel certain that both the generosity and specificity of the U.S. program will find favorable echoes in the policies of the Southeast Asian governments.

Within weeks, the next act of the drama must begin. Resettlement will have to be arranged for roughly 25,000 new Indochinese refugees a year either until they can no longer get out, or until the circumstances in those countries change sufficiently to no longer make it essential that people risk their lives for a taste of freedom.

PPS: While the Commission's work sharply focused its urgency and efforts on the refugees from Indochina, the results already brighten the prospects for continued haven in the U.S. for those who flee dictatorships in Latin America, the Soviet Union and wherever else the most elemental human rights remain denied.

The International Rescue Committee's

Chronology of Citizens Commission on Indochinese Refugees: 1978

- November 16, 1977 Leo Cherne of IRC learned that the U. S. Administration had just concluded that there was little further possibility of additional parole of Indochinese refugees, even though the outflow from Laos and Vietnam (Cambodia having sealed its borders) was approaching 4,500 a month. There seemed to be little local public support and considerable opposition to bringing in more refugees. Other countries, especially France, Australia, and Canada, were resettling more Indochinese refugees (after the initial evacuation in 1975) than the U. S. , but were far from able to keep up with the flow. Countries of first asylum in Southeast Asia were being overwhelmed, with almost 100,000 in Thailand alone, and were increasingly pushing Vietnamese boats back to sea and beginning to forcibly repatriate refugees from Laos and Cambodia or holding them as illegal entrants in detention centers.
- December 9 As authorized by the IRC Board on December 5, Leo Cherne sent urgent messages to National Security Advisor Brzezinski and Attorney General Bell asking that another 7,000 Indochinese "boat people" be granted parole promptly.
- He also set in motion plans for a Citizens Commission to investigate the situation of the refugees in Southeast Asian Countries and return with recommendations appropriate to the growing tragedy in Southeast Asia.
- December 27 Letter to Cherne from Brzezinski that Administration is preparing to ask Secretary Vance to request the Attorney General to grant 7,000 paroles after consulting with Congress.
- Jan. 11-15, 1978 Invitations to selected distinguished citizens to participate in a proposed mission to eight locations in Southeast Asia.
- January 22 Completion and announcement of the IRC Citizens Commission.
- January 25 After a hearing the day before in the House Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship and International Law (Joshua Eilberg, Chairman), the Attorney General announced the issuance of parole for 7,000 boat people.
- February 1 Letter from Secretary Vance to Leo Cherne expressing strong encouragement for projected undertaking of the IRC's Citizens Commission.

- February 2 Meeting with Asst. Secretary Patt Derian and staff to receive State Department's briefing on the current refugee situation in Southeast Asia.
- February 4-9 Jim Michener (a member of the Commission) and Bob DeVecchi visit Cambodian and Vietnamese boat camps in Thailand in advance of main group.
- February 8 Despite blinding snowstorms throughout the Eastern U.S., the Commission set out on its mission.
- February 10-11 Commission briefing in Hong Kong and visit to refugees. James Michener returns from Thailand to brief his colleagues and assembled government officials on his visits to boat camps and Cambodian camps.
- February 11-17 One group under Leo Cherne, Chairman of the IRC, traveled in Thailand visiting boat camps and Laotian and Cambodian refugee centers. Virtually all the relevant U.S. Government and Thai government officials received the Commission and shared their views. The group under former Undersecretary of State William J. Casey visited the Philippines, Singapore, and Indonesia. In all instances, they visited the areas where fleeing boats had been permitted to land, visited other refugee centers and in all cases met with the appropriate U.S. and local officials.
- February 17 Both groups reconvene in Bangkok to share their observations, reach conclusions and prepare recommendations for press conference the next day.
- February 18 Joint press conference in Bangkok.
- February 19-21 Casey, Lyon and Wiesner go to Taiwan to explore possibility of further refugee sanctuary there.
- February 22-24 Casey in Macao and Korea for the same purpose.
- February 23-24 Cherne and Bayard Rustin reported to AFL-CIO Executive Council, which unanimously endorsed Commission recommendations.
- February 28 Commission meets at a working luncheon with newly appointed UNHCR High Commissioner Hartling, together with key members of his staff, his Deputy at UN in New York, and officials of U.S. State Department most directly involved.

- March 1 Commission testified before the House Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship and International Law.
- Commission called on Senator Kennedy and Brzezinski, talked briefly with Vice President Mondale who expressed his deep interest.
- March 2 Commission appeals to leading religious and secular public interest groups to support its findings and recommendations, and convey their support to the President. Within the next two weeks expressions of full support addressed to President Carter were sent by the National Council of Jewish Women, the American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service, U.S. Catholic Conference and American Jewish Committee, Freedom House, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, Social Democrats USA, Coalition for a Democratic Majority and a score of other major national organizations.
- March 14 Commission called on Secretary Vance, Counsel to Senate Judiciary Committee Rawitz, and Immigration Commissioner Castillo.
- March 15 Kennedy refugee bill introduced (S 2751).
- March 19 Ad by Bayard Rustin and over 80 other black leaders supporting the Commission's recommendations in N. Y. Times.
- March 20 Continued liaison with Administration, Congressional, and other leaders in an effort to further enlarge support of Commission's conclusions and recommendations.
- March 26 George Meany sends hand-carried letter to President Carter and Vance urging that Administration policy be based on the findings and recommendations of the IRC's Commission.
- March 27 135 leading Americans endorse Commission's recommendations. Group includes Roger Baldwin, Saul Bellow, Msgr. George Higgins, John Roche, Ben Wattenberg, Ambassador Silberman, Sidney Hook, and the leaders of a substantial number of the nation's trade unions.
- March 29 Before leaving on his four-nation overseas trip, President Carter reached his decision for a program of admission of Indochinese, Latin American, and Soviet refugees by parole. Indochinese program very similar to Commission's recommendations.

A Plea for Refuge

Following adoption of its statement on Indochinese Refugees, the Executive Council heard the recommendations of the Citizens' Commission on Indochinese Refugees. Organized by the International Rescue Committee, the Citizens' Commission, made up of prominent Americans, had just returned from Southeast Asia where they conducted a fact-finding study on the refugee problems, visiting refugee camps and conferring with government officials in Thailand, the Philippines, Singapore, Indonesia, Taiwan and Hong Kong. The Commission's findings will be submitted to the President, Secretary of State, the Attorney General and appropriate committees of Congress. By motion of President George Meany, the Council voted to adopt the recommendations of the Citizens' Commission in conjunction with its own resolution.

Almost three years have passed since the Communist military victory in Indochina. For the people of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, the end of the conflict brought, not the promised reconciliation and relief, but even greater suffering than was caused by colonialism and war.

Today, Vietnam is a harsh dictatorship, an impoverished country ruled from Hanoi. The so-called Provisional Revolutionary Government of southerners was banished three months after Hanoi's conquest. All political, intellectual, and religious freedom has been abolished, along with the freedom of association and the right to organize independent trade unions. The regime has established vast concentration camps — euphemistically called "re-education camps"—where some 300,000 to 500,000 political prisoners are now held.

Among the prisoners are not only army officers and officials of the former regime but such political opponents of that regime as Tran Van Tuyen, the elected leader of the Opposition Bloc in South Vietnam's National Assembly, trade unionists, and religious leaders—including virtually all the leaders of the An Quang Buddhist Pagoda, who were arrested in one sweep last April. Thousands of non-political figures have also been arrested, among them the country's most distinguished writers, artists, intellectuals, doctors and lawyers. The rest of the population is subject to

daily indoctrination and lives in constant fear of government-instigated terror. More than one million people have already been sent off to the dreaded "New Economic Zones," which are work camps in remote jungle areas.

Similar conditions exist in Laos, which is now occupied by 25,000 Vietnamese troops. Yet, these conditions are mild compared with what the Cambodians are suffering at the hands of their Communist rulers. One to two million people, out of a population of about seven million, have died since the Communists entered Phnom Penh on April 17, 1975. Almost a half million died in the unprecedented forced marches by which the Communists emptied every major Cambodian city during the first week of their rule. Another 100,000 to 200,000 Cambodians have been executed. All military officers and government officials and their families were executed immediately after the Communist takeover; and early in 1976 orders were issued to execute all former government officials and soldiers, regardless of rank, together with all teachers, Buddhist monks, and village chiefs. Still more deaths have been caused by disease and starvation in the slave camp "villages" where the Cambodians were sent after the forced marches. Here the population is divided by sex and age into work gangs, and forced to toil 12 to 15 hours a day.

Tens of thousands of Vietnamese citizens have fled, risking their lives. Since the only land route out of Vietnam is into Cambodia, the Vietnamese escape in small and unseaworthy coastal craft across the typhoon waters of the South China Sea. Passing ships have ignored their distress signals in violation of the law of the sea because shipping companies are economically penalized by Southeast Asian countries for unloading refugees. More than half of the "boat people" are thought to have drowned.

About 100,000 refugees are now in camps in Thailand. An additional 7,500 Vietnamese "boat people" await resettlement. An estimated 4,500 Vietnamese and Laotian refugees arrive every month in non-Communist Southeast Asia. Most Cambodians who attempt escape are killed by Khmer Rouge troops or by border mines.

Since the initial influx of 135,000 Vietnamese after the war, the United States has admitted about 15,000. The White House is now seeking parole

authority to admit 7,000 more. A more generous, open-ended U.S. policy is needed to save the lives of people who are fleeing oppression.

America is a land of liberty and a traditional refuge for the persecuted. Moreover, we have a special obligation to aid the refugees from Indochina, in light of our long and ultimately unsuccessful involvement in the conflict in that region. The very existence of these refugees demonstrates that whatever errors the United States made in Indochina, we were not wrong in trying to help the people of that region avoid dictatorship and slavery.

The AFL-CIO calls upon the Administration to work with other countries, using both example and persuasion, to guarantee all these refugees a home.

Recommendations of the Citizens' Commission on Indochinese Refugees

1. The U.S. must adopt a coherent and generous policy for the admission of Indochinese refugees over the long range, replacing the practice of reacting belatedly to successive refugee crises since the spring of 1975.

2. Such a program will, in our opinion, moderate anxieties among Southeast Asian countries that by granting temporary asylum they would be left with unwanted refugees on their hands, will support the substantial efforts of those countries elsewhere in the world who are already participating in the resettlement effort, and will encourage new countries to join this common endeavor.

3. The special circumstances of boat people, the small number of Vietnamese who have come to Thailand overland, and Cambodian refugees make it imperative that all existing criteria and categories for their admission to the United States be waived, and that the movement of those refugees who are accepted for admission be accelerated. Our Government should make clear its firm intention that permanent resettlement for these refugees will in all instances be assured.

4. The criteria for admitting overland refugees from Laos to the United States should be eased and applied more generously and sensitively. By applying the usual criteria for admission of refugees to the U.S., we continue to deny the hidden and pervasive character of the U.S. role in "the

secret War" in Laos. By virtue of our having worked with virtually all of the peaceful and military instruments of Laos in an ambiguous war, not only are the normal criteria of very doubtful validity—but adequate proof such as is required by our authorities imply does not exist.

5. The suggested distinction between "economic" and "political" refugees from Indochina is spurious, envidious, and often used quite consciously to relieve any who would normally assist political refugees from feeling any obligation toward the so-called "economic refugees". The ability to make such a classification has even, in violation of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, been used as justification of forcible repatriation of refugees in some instances.

Reorganization of economic life in all three of the Indochinese countries has been massive and harsh. The consequences have been nearly universal. These governmental measures can be understood only as part of an integrated effort to reorient the entire life, culture and politics of those peoples. By identifying as enemies of the State all whose lives have been based on private property, freedom of thought and expression, or a different allegiance of philosophy, these regimes endanger a multitude if not most of their subjects. The very act of fleeing seals the fate of any who might otherwise have escaped persecution. Few if any would run the terrible risks of escaping to face possible indefinite stay in refugee camps or ejection by country after country, merely because their balance sheets were unsatisfactory.

6. If any of the nations in this area should decide to resettle some of the refugees permanently, the United States should be ready to provide generous financial, technical and other assistance to these humanitarian endeavors.

7. We appeal to all shipowners, masters, maritime unions, countries of registry and countries in East Asia: From this day forward let no ships pass by persons of whatever nationality who are in danger of drowning at sea; let no port be closed to their debarkation and temporary succor; let no merchant ship which has received these refugees be penalized in carrying out its normal function. Whatever this takes, in the way of transit camps, bonding arrangements, experienced representatives stationed in every country to which these boats come to work out immediate ad hoc arrangements to unexpected situations, should be set in place with the help and un-



Wide World Photos

der the direction of the UNHCR.

We request the U.S. Government to reinforce a requirement to this effect on all U.S. flag vessels. We suggest,

in addition, under U.S. or international auspices a quickly arranged meeting of all interested parties for a uniform international appeal to all shipping.

Commission Members

LEO CHERNE, Co-Chairman
Chairman, International Rescue Committee

MONSIGNOR JOHN AHERN
Director of Social Development
Catholic Archdiocese of New York

PROFESSOR KENNETH CAUTHEN
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Chairman, Social Democrats, U.S.A.

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International Rescue Committee

INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE

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To: Members of the Indochina Refugee Commission Date: April 5, 1978
From: Bob DeVecchi Subject: Congressman Eilberg's Questions and our Answers

After the hearing in Washington we were given a set of questions to which the Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Immigration and Refugees requested our written replies.

Enclosed is the draft of our position. Congressman Eilberg has scheduled hearings for April 12, and it would be good if our answers could reach him by that time.

Please let me have your amendments and emendations or approval of the draft at your earliest convenience.

If you permit me I will call you on Monday to get your reactions.

Bob DeVecchi

BD:ah





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TOWARD A LONG-RANGE CONSISTENT AND HUMANE

INDOCHINA REFUGEE POLICY

On March 1, 1978 the Citizens' Commission on Indochinese Refugees, organized by the International Rescue Committee, appeared before Congressman Joshua Eilberg and the Sub-Committee on Immigration of the House Committee on the Judiciary. Having given extensive testimony, the Citizens' Commission was asked to supply written replies to a set of questions prepared by Congressman Eilberg's staff.

The questions and answers follow:

1. Question: What effect did the recent 7,000 parole program have on the attitudes and actions of the Thai Government? Positive or negative? Did they read it as a limitation or a liberalization of the United States policy on providing permanent resettlement opportunities? Has the Thai position on boat people hardened or relaxed since the announcement of the United States program?

Answer: It was our finding that the announcement of an additional parole program for 7,000 had a limited effect on the government of Thailand as well as on other governments of countries of first asylum in South East Asia. These governments seemed to be under no illusion that this program would solve the problem. In view of an escape rate of 1,000 to 1,500 people a month, it is clear to all concerned that 7,000 numbers would be used up very quickly.

At present, the Thai authorities are permitting boats to land. It was our impression, however, that the Thai ministerial and provincial officials considered this liberalized attitude a departure from stated policy, contingent on a decrease in the number of boat people now awaiting resettlement outlets.

We believe the presence or the absence of a long-range United States program will decide whether the Thais continue their "relaxed" position or revert to a policy of pushing boats back to sea.

2. Question: A. Can you comment on the parole decision making process in terms of its efficiency and desirability?

B. Do you agree that there should be some coordinating mechanism within the White House which would advise the President on decisions to admit groups or classes of refugees? In other words, would you favor the creation within the White House of an Office of Refugee Policy which would coordinate the viewpoints of the Departments of State and Justice and make an independent recommendation to the President?

Answer: A. In the absence of legislation that would replace the authority now vested in the Attorney General to parole into the United States refugees "for emergent reasons or for reasons deemed strictly in the public interest," Section 212(d)5 of the Immigration and Nationality Act remains the only available instrument of a long-range policy of positive action. In the case of refugees from Indochina, the use of 212(d)5 was justified both on grounds of emergent reasons as well as reasons in the public interest.

In 1975, when the cataclysmic end to our 25 year involvement on Indochina was at hand, the Attorney General exercised his parole authority in consultation with the Congress in an efficient and decisive manner. The later record was less efficient and certainly less decisive.

Senator Kennedy's bill (S 2751), we believe, combines the advantages of a new numerical ceiling with a clear definition of the Attorney General's parole authority for emergent or humanitarian reasons or reasons in the public interest.

It also establishes the statutory requirement of consultation with the appropriate committee of the Senate and the House.

B. The question of the desirability of an Office of Refugee Policy in the White House exceeds the scope of our Commission's inquiry. Though it may or may not be desirable to institutionalize a White House role in refugee matters, there should be better coordination within the Executive branch than we have seen in the recent past.

3. Question: You have indicated that you would favor an open-ended Indochinese refugee immigration program. What shape would such a program take?

If the United States were to adopt an unlimited refugee resettlement program for Indochina refugees, how many do you estimate would come into the country annually?

A. What kind of screening would you favor? Would not implementation of such a screening process be an enormous task requiring a large amount of State Department resources?

B. Do you think that some sort of multilateral international agreement should be sought providing for a sharing of the burden of resettling refugees?

C. Press reports have indicated that the Thai Government is concerned about the lack of assurances regarding permanent resettlement of refugees temporarily granted asylum in that country, and that this concern has resulted in instances of refusal to grant temporary asylum. It is thought by some that if such assurances are not forthcoming, the Government of Thailand may resort to large-scale refusals to grant temporary asylum to these persons.

Has your experience in South East Asia substantiated these reports? Have

you witnessed any incidents of refusals by the Thai Government to accept temporary asylum seekers? Please describe these incidents?

D. In your opinion, what kinds of assurances by resettling countries would be required in order to alleviate the concerns of the Thai Government?

Answer: The Citizens' Commission on Indochinese Refugees has expressed its hope for an open-ended immigration program, and we have been encouraged by the President's approval, as reported in the New York Times of March 31, of the proposal to admit all boat people unable to find homes elsewhere and to place no advance numerical limitation on Laotian refugees with family ties here or a background of previous cooperation with the United States. We hope that our findings regarding the special needs of the small number of remaining Vietnamese refugees in Thailand and the Cambodian escapees will still be considered. And even though we are reluctant to be drawn into the numbers game, we believe that the figure of 25,000 a year, provided the exodus continues, is a reasonable approximation of the likely dimension of the program.

A. The Joint Volag Representative Offices in South East Asia have conducted the preliminary screening of over 90,000 Indochinese refugees in Thailand and virtually all boat cases elsewhere. Files have been opened on 50,000 refugees, i.e., all those who either felt they qualify or wished to be considered by the United States. This apparatus is still in place and, in our opinion, could handle expeditiously the requirements implicit in an ongoing program.

B. International agreements are always a goal to be pursued provided they are not advanced as a substitute for compassionate action. The search for a

multilateral agreement in the late thirties was used as such a substitute, and nothing was done to save the people who were to become the victims of the holocaust. The United States cannot wait for Japan to wake up to its humanitarian responsibilities. But an international conference to which Japan would be invited may be the only way of involving this most important Asian country in long-range efforts in behalf of Indochinese refugees.

C. Since November 15, 1977, the Thai Government no longer considers overland refugees from Laos and Cambodia to be "displaced persons" within the meaning of its understanding with the UNHCR. They are now considered illegal entrants even though many of them eventually are being transferred to the refugee camps supported with UNHCR funds.

The policy of the Thai Government at the time of our visit was to repatriate refugees if they were apprehended at the moment of entry or to place them in detention centers where they were to be divided into economic and political refugees. Those deemed economic would be repatriated. The members of the Commission were unanimous in considering the distinction between economic and political refugees, as applied to people escaping from Cambodia or Laos, spurious and invidious.

Commission members were able to visit two of the Thai detention centers, one in Nong Khai, on the Mekong river, the other in Pua. In Nong Khai there were more than 1,200 Lao refugees cramped together in an area constructed originally for perhaps 200 people. They were under armed guard and not permitted outside the walled camp. The detention facility at Pua is the police station of Nan province. Over 200 Hmong refugees were camped on the grounds. They had been there for two months.

From our visits and conversations with provincial officials we concluded that the official policy is being applied though not everywhere with the same vigor.

We were left with the distinct impression that these harsh measures had resulted from the uncertainty about future resettlement schemes and United States policies. There is no doubt in our mind that what we do in the United States is directly linked to what is happening in Thailand and elsewhere in South East Asia.

D. A great deal has been said about iron-clad assurances by resettlement countries without which the countries of first land-fall would not adopt a more humane policy. It is our belief that if it can be credibly established that the present program is not the last resettlement program and that the United States will continue to accept refugees, the Thai Government will be ready to enter into constructive discussions about long-range solutions.

4. Question: On July 12, 1977, I wrote President Carter recommending that he take an initiative to call for an international conference to consider the Indochinese refugee question.

The impression is clear that the Department of State does not favor the United States taking the initiative to convene such a conference.

The reasons given for opposing this proposal is that several countries presently participating in the resettlement of Indochinese refugees are opposed to publicizing their present role for fear that the people in their countries might react adversely to the efforts they are now making.

Nonetheless, two international organizations have adopted resolutions which government representatives have favored seeking to gather additional cooperation in resolving the Indochinese refugee question.

A. How do you and your fellow Commissioners feel about the United States taking the initiative to convene an international conference on the subject? Could it not have the salutary effect of (1) encouraging further resettlement opportunities, (2) generating more financial assistance, and (3) discouraging Far East countries

from denying asylum, especially to "boat cases"?

B. Did the Commission examine the results of the UNHCR conference held on the subject in January in Kuala Lumpur?

In your opinion was the conference productive? What conclusions were reached which could alleviate the suffering of the refugee?

Would further conferences along this line convened by UNHCR be beneficial?

C. Has the Commission had the opportunity to meet with the new High Commissioner for Refugees, Poul Hartling?

Has he expressed any new ideas on the Indochinese refugee problem?

Answer: A. The Commission feels that an international conference if carefully prepared would encourage further resettlement opportunities, generate more financial assistance, and discourage Far Eastern countries from denying asylum to boat cases. It further believes that countries that have been accepting refugees are less important to the success of an international conference than countries which have thus far refused to show concern. The closer the relationship of the United States with a given country, the greater the likelihood that we would be able to influence its future conduct.

B. Our Commission was unable to visit Malaysia. We did, however, invite the UNHCR representative, the U.S. Embassy Refugee Officer and the Joint Volag Representative in Malaysia to join our deliberations in Bangkok. From what we know about the UNHCR meeting in Kuala Lumpur it would appear that the January session was convened by the resident representative of the High Commissioner for the purpose of exchanging information and views about the boat people and to stress the need for more resettlement outlets. The invited governments were with

one or two exceptions represented by diplomats stationed in Malaysia. We understand the meeting was useful but it did not have quantifiable results.

C. The Commission met with the new High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Poul Hartling, on February 28 in Washington. The High Commissioner spoke with strong conviction about the Indochina refugee situation and we were favorably impressed by his sincerity and business-like manner.

5. Question: A. What progress has been made in local resettlement efforts in the host countries, especially Thailand?

B. In the Commission's conversations with Heads of State, was the question of local resettlement of refugees raised?

With which countries?

What was the reaction of each of these countries?

C. Would the reaction of these countries be more favorable were the United States to make some financial commitments to assist in these resettlement projects?

D. In your estimation, what avenues should be explored to make countries of asylum more favorably disposed to the resettlement of refugees within their country?

Answer: A. There has been, to the best of our knowledge, no progress in local resettlement efforts, not in Thailand and not elsewhere in South East Asia with the exception of Taiwan and, with regard to family reunion cases, in Hong Kong. Japan seems to be the worst offender.

As for Thailand, it was our impression that because of the marked increase in the number of new refugees over the past few months, the Thai Government is, if anything, less receptive to considering local integration today than they were six months or a year ago.

B. It was our impression that no productive dialogue was possible at the

time of our visit to South East Asia when governments were loath to admit people adrift in boats and our purpose was to argue the need for emergency measures rather than discuss future resettlement. We were able to hold discussions with officials in Manila, Singapore, Jakarta and Bangkok. Although there were differences in shadings and emphasis, none offered permanent resettlement opportunities except for special groups and in very small numbers.

C. There can be no doubt that once we have made clear our long-term commitment, the countries of first asylum in South East Asia and especially Thailand will react more favorably if financial and technical assistance from the United States is offered. The Commission believes that AID could play a stimulating role in this respect.

6. Question: As you are aware this Subcommittee has reported out Legislation, H.R. 7175, which seeks to establish a long-range policy eliminating ad hoc parole programs which have been resorted to in the past.

We have been trying in vain to get from the Administration some clear cut proposals for such a program.

A. Does your Citizens' Commission favor acting upon a separate Indochines refugee policy or attempting to resolve that situation within the context of a general policy for handling all refugee situations?

B. Do you feel that there is sufficient data available of the impact of previous refugee programs on all aspects of U.S. life to enable the Administration and the Congress to arrive at solid conclusions for a long-range policy?

C. What do you envisage as a viable long-range comprehensive refugee policy which could respond to normal flow of refugees and emergency situations?

D. The present consultation between the Executive Branch and the Congress on emergency parole situations is at best a very loose and informal process where decisions have practically been made beforehand by the Executive Branch.

Don't you think that this process should be formalized so that Congress would have full participation in the decision rather than being consulted after the fact?

Should not all the financial aspects of a parole program be examined before a decision is made?

E. Our refugee programs have generally been directed to refugees who are of "special concern" to the United States.

Would you please give the Subcommittee your ideas of what a "special concern" refugee is?

Of the present refugee situations in the world today, which of these would you characterize as "special concern" and why?

Answer: A. The Indochinese refugee emergency is so critical and the need for a clear signal so urgent, that our Commission recommended acting upon it apart from a general refugee policy. But the Commission members, although not experts with regard to "all refugee situation", were gratified to learn that the new policy of the Administration makes provision also for refugees from the Soviet Union and for Latin American refugees.

B. Our Commission was formed to examine a very specific problem and how best our country could respond to it. We do not claim to know whether sufficient data have been gathered on the impact of previous refugee programs on all aspects of U.S. life. But we hasten to add that we are not aware of any compilation of data which might lead us to regret whatever generosity our country has shown to refugees in the past. The consensus would appear to be that the United States has been well served by admitting refugees, and that quite irrespective of their nationality or color.

C. The Commission members are in favor of close cooperation between the Executive Branch and the Congress in all matters pertaining to refugees. Controversy between the branches is bound to hurt the refugee cause. Yet we do uphold the authority of the Attorney General to use parole for the admission of refugees. None of the members of the Commission who are lawyers has been able to find fault with the policies invoked by the Attorneys General of five Administrations, policies which, on occasion, were initiated by Congressional committees, and which, in all instances, were validated by subsequent Congressional action in appropriating funds as well as enacting laws adjusting the status of those admitted on parole.

D. The Commission members do believe that consultation between the Executive and the Congressional Committees should be formalized, and they support the approach contained in the Kennedy bill to achieve this purpose. As for the financial aspects of any parole program, they sometimes cannot be worked out beforehand. Coping with an emergency always requires flexibility.

E. Compassion for the underdogs and concern for human rights generate concern for refugees. The Commission, in focusing on one refugee group, did not mean to imply that other refugees are not deserving of our help. Within this general framework of equality there are groups that for historical or geographic reasons have a special relationship with us. The bulk of the Ugandan refugees went to Great Britain because they had old ties with England. The refugees from Bangladesh went to India, 10 million of them, because that was the only country they could run to. Most of the Cuban refugees came to the United States, and geography was not the only factor in this movement. The special relationship of the Indochinese refugees with the United States and, indeed, our special obligation, flow from our nation's involvement in Indochina over a quarter of a century.

7. Question: A. In considering any new Indochinese program, has any thought been given to the financial aspects of such a program? Could you give the Subcommittee an estimate of the costs involved in the implementation of such a program?

B. Has any thought also been given to the Indochinese Assistance program which is scheduled to phase out in four years?

Would there be a request for more funds in this program? How much and for how long?

C. The Department of State has been funding their parole programs under their emergency fund and then approaching Congress to replenish this fund.

Do you think that this system of financing refugee programs is the most practical and most efficient?

What this amounts to in my estimation is that the money is spent and a request is then made after the fact to finance the program.

In your opinion, is this a logical way to proceed?

What do you recommend the procedure should be to obtain the necessary funds to finance any emergency refugee situation.

D. For the Indochinese program that you are recommending, should not the financial aspects be considered simultaneously with a discussion of the numbers and conditions of entry of refugees?

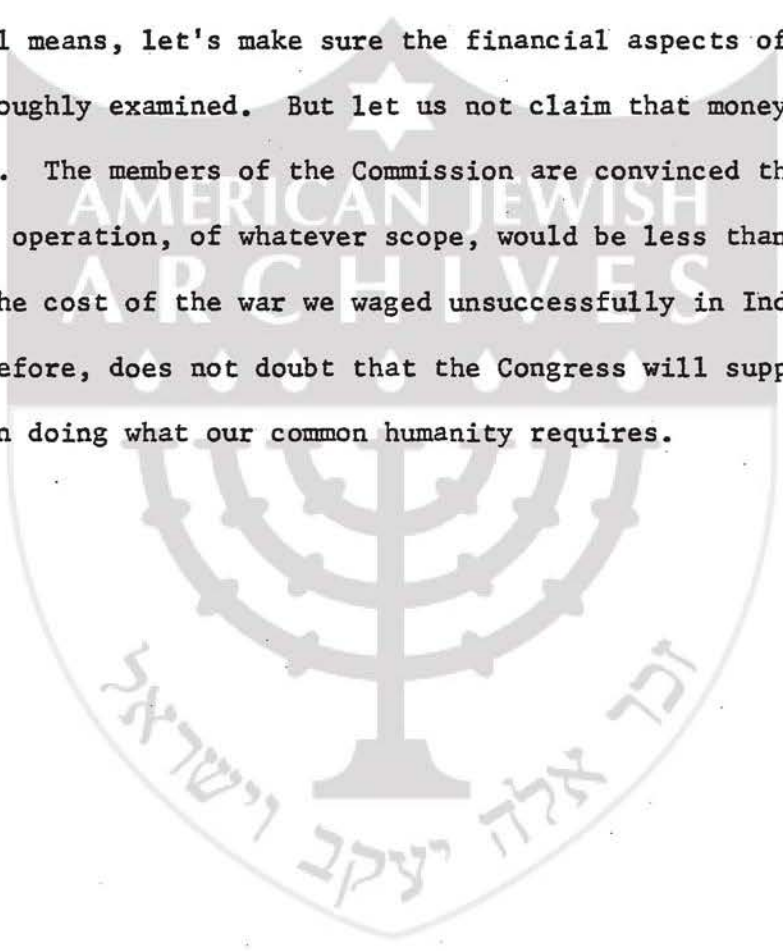
Answer: A. The Commission has not made an analysis of the costs that might be involved if its recommendations are accepted and put into practice. In the words of one of its members, it opposes the dehumanizing tendency of placing price tags on the heads of refugees.

B. There will be, it must be assumed, requests for more funds, though we do not know for how much and for how long. The initial costs, including transportation expenses to the United States, have been estimated at about \$1,000 per

refugee. Estimates on follow-up costs involved in federal reimbursement to the States, are likely to double this figure.

C. Disclaiming familiarity with appropriation procedures, the Commission members feel that the use of emergency funds that can be replenished may be the only way of financing an emergency program.

D. By all means, let's make sure the financial aspects of the Indochinese program are thoroughly examined. But let us not claim that money is more important than human lives. The members of the Commission are convinced that the cost of the resettlement operation, of whatever scope, would be less than a fraction of one percent of the cost of the war we waged unsuccessfully in Indochina. The Commission, therefore, does not doubt that the Congress will support the Administration in doing what our common humanity requires.



LEO CHERNE
589 FIFTH AVENUE
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10017

April 14, 1978

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum
Director of Interreligious Affairs
American Jewish Committee
165 East 56th Street
New York, New York 10022

Dear Marc:

Both your fellow members on the Commission and the members of the IRC Board regret that you were unable to join us yesterday. The work of the Commission was the major matter on the agenda, and a good deal of it was ceremonial. I particularly regret that you could not personally experience the gratitude for our work which was expressed.

Had you been there, I would have given you a memento I prepared for each member of the Commission, as well as for the staff members whose names you'll find on the title page, the three members of our Commission who at the last minute were unable to join us, and Tom Kahn and Carl Gershman whose collateral help with the AFL-CIO and a score of other organizations was essential to our success.

I also reported on the Presidential decision memoranda which formed the basis of the Administration revealing its program to the Eilberg Committee the day before. The Administration has decided on the issuance of 12,500 paroles for Indochinese refugees for the six months of this remaining fiscal year and a comparable number for each successive six-month period until an immigration law incorporates an adequate refugee policy accomplishing the same purposes. In addition, 6,000 more parole numbers are to be made available to Russian refugees for each six-month interval -- an invaluable by-product of our efforts.

Secretary Vance does plan within days to instruct all U.S.-owned vessels to pick up Vietnamese refugees in trouble and deposit them at their next port of call. If they are not provided sanctuary by that nation, the U.S. Consul and the Immigration Service will arrange for their

transfer to the United States. This not only completely follows the spirit of our recommendation, but actually goes well beyond it in practical implementation.

The only area that we recommended in which the proposed actions are unsatisfactory involves the Cambodian refugees and the 2,000 overland Vietnamese. No special provision was made for either group and we shall continue as a Commission to immediately seek to alter this dreadful omission. We will also continue to apply pressure on the Attorney General who must issue the paroles and on the Eilberg Committee with whom he must consult but is not bound by. We are told that the Senate Committee's concurrence is pro forma.

I am also enclosing a Chronology I prepared for all of the IRC special committees, missions, rescue projects against which the work of our Commission can be best understood. It is an integral piece of this specialized aspect of IRC's work.

My debt to you is beyond adequate expression.

Sincerely,



LC:is
Enclosures



THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

72nd Annual Meeting
Waldorf Astoria

Statement on Cambodia

For consideration by the
National Executive Council
Sunday, May 21, 1978

If published reports of mass killings in Cambodia by its Communist rulers are even only partially true, then the scale of ^{murder} ~~murder~~ in that small, tragic land, perpetrated in pursuit of a political end, approaches the enormity of the Nazi exterminations based on a myth of racial purity. If these reports are true, the Cambodian regime is guilty of the ultimate violation of human rights -- the mass murder of its own citizens.

The AJC is dismayed by the failure of all but a few states to take cognizance of the killings and the failure of the U.N. itself to deal with the situation with the great urgency it warrants.

We call upon the developing nations of the world, especially in Africa and Asia, to register publicly their outrage and protest against this deliberate and massive destruction of life.

We urge the U.S. Attorney General to authorize the admission to our country under the parole provisions of our immigration law of the thousands of Cambodian refugees living in tragic circumstances in camps in Thailand.

We call on President Carter to invite the leaders of the democratic nations to meet with him to consider possible courses of action to bring to bear maximum moral and political pressure against the reign of terror in Cambodia.

Approved by the
Foreign Affairs Commission
May 17, 1978

23340
No. 0803/ 23349



Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Saranrom Palace, Bangkok.

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23 May B.E. 2521 (1978)

Dear Mr. Cherne,

I should like to acknowledge, with thanks and appreciation, the receipt of your letter dated April 14, 1978, in which you informed me of the positive results of your commendable efforts in bringing to light to the American public and Government the true situation of the Indochinese displaced persons as it now exists in our country.

It is indeed gratifying for all of us here to have learned that the recommendations submitted by the Citizens Commission on Indochinese Refugees have been well received, and are now substantially reflected in the continuing Indochinese resettlement programme recently approved by President Carter. In this connection, there is no doubt in my mind that they also reflect a remarkable ability and devotion that you and your staffs brought to this difficult task.

The Government and people of Thailand are grateful to you and the Citizens Commission on Indochinese Refugees for your deep concern and the invaluable contribution that you have made towards improving the plight of Indochinese displaced persons in our country. Naturally, we at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were glad to have been of some assistance to you. And you can rest assured that we shall always be fully co-operative with you in the search for a successful resolution of this international problem.

Sincerely,

(Dr. Upadit Pachariyangkun)

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand

Mr. Leo Cherne,
International Rescue Committee,
NEW YORK.