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Series D: International Relations Activities. 1961-1992

Box 61, Folder 3, International Rescue Committee, July-
December 1979.

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July 24, 1979

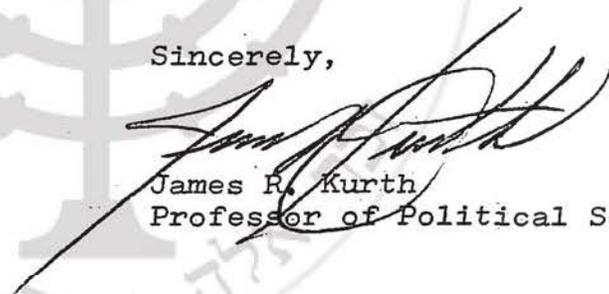
Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum
American Jewish Committee
165 East 56th Street
New York, New York 10022

Dear Rabbi Tanenbaum:

Enclosed is the draft of my article on
Indochinese refugees, which we discussed about a
week ago; you might find it of some slight interest.
The Citizens Commission on Indochinese Refugees is
mentioned on p. 6. The final version will include
some corrections and updatings.

Best wishes for your continuing important
work on this issue.

Sincerely,



James R. Kurth
Professor of Political Science

JRK:r

enclosure

WHILE ONE MILLION DROWN:

THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION AND THE INDOCHINESE REFUGEES

by

James R. Kurth

The Year of the Boats

Since the beginning of 1979, more than 450,000 refugees have been forced out of Indochina, and the doleful exodus now flows at a torrential rate. Every month since May some 60,000 refugees have landed upon the shores of the other nations surrounding the South China Sea. And every month an estimated 30,000-40,000 have drowned beneath its waters. The "nations of first asylum" - especially Malaysia, Indonesia, and Hong Kong - have declared that they have reached the limits of their capacity and that they will turn future refugees, perhaps 90,000 a month, away and adrift. Malaysia and Indonesia further have declared that, if other nations do not guarantee permanent resettlement of the some 350,000 refugees already in their camps, they will also expel these back into the sea, until, in the words of the Malaysian Foreign Minister, "there is no residue." And with some 1.2 million ethnic Chinese and perhaps another half-million "politically unreliable" Vietnamese remaining in Vietnam and likely to be expelled, there are the prospects that within the next year more than a million refugees could die, a toll that would equal the number of deaths in the long and terrible Indochinese war from 1961 to 1975.

What has been the response of the United States to this new and great

tragedy in Indochina? During 1979, the Carter Administration has been admitting Indochinese refugees into the U.S. for permanent resettlement at the rate of 4,000-5,000 a month. At the Tokyo Summit in June, the President announced that the U.S. would increase the number admitted to 14,000 a month (although in practice that figure will not be reached until October because of fiscal constraints) and that the U.S. would urge other nations outside Southeast Asia to increase their own admissions. But even if these other nations were to triple their admissions, a most unlikely outcome, the total figure for permanent resettlement in the U.S. and other nations outside of Southeast Asia would still come to less than 25,000 a month, or about one-fourth of the number of lives at stake. What will happen to the others? Will the United States leave them to die by drowning or by disease?

The current perceptions and policies of the Carter Administration may lead to this result. Officials within the State Department, the agency responsible for refugee policy, already say that the United States has done enough and that now it is up to other nations to do their part. Some members of Congress, including Frank Church, the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, have said the same. And thus up until now the Carter Administration has been retreading the same path that the Roosevelt Administration took forty years ago when it was faced with the tragedy of Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany. This was the path that led through innumerable international conferences and token national admissions and in the end led to the deaths of millions of Jews.

There is, however, another possible path. We shall argue in this article that there is within America a potential political coalition in support of the Indochinese refugees, a "party of humanity," that there are good reasons and feasible ways to permanently resettle the refugees, and that the Carter

Administration should undertake to save their lives without delay.

Remembrance of Times Past: The Roosevelt Administration and the Jewish Refugees

For about four years after the Nazis came to power in Germany, their actions against the Jews, although cruel and harsh, had a rather "traditional" quality about them, and it was natural for foreign observers and for German Jews themselves to think that the bad conditions were really temporary, that "this too will pass." But by early 1938, the Nazis were applying policies of extraordinary and systematic severity against Jews and were forcing increasing numbers of them, more than 300,000, to become refugees who sought admission to other countries. It is now sometimes forgotten that the Nazis chose as their first solution to "the Jewish question" expulsion rather than extermination. It would not be until January 1942, when the expulsion of the Jews from Europe no longer seemed a practical possibility, that the Nazis committed themselves to their systematic mass murder.

In the Spring of 1938, a number of leaders of American religious and humanitarian organizations, both Jewish and non-Jewish, brought their growing concern about the Jewish refugees to President Roosevelt and asked him to admit more of them into the United States. But 1938 was a year of sharp economic recession, within the overall Great Depression of the 1930's; it was also a year when Roosevelt's political fortunes were at their lowest ebb. He had lost his battle to enlarge the Supreme Court the year before, and he was losing his other battle to purge conservative Southern Senators and Congressmen. The President was little inclined to invest political capital in efforts to

liberalize the restrictive immigration laws or even to loosen the administration of the issuing of visas when the laws would have permitted it. And the State Department, the agency which would have carried out any policy to liberalize refugee admissions, was even less inclined to do so; indeed, its leading officials were actively hostile to the idea.¹

Caught between the refugee advocates on one side and the restriction advocates on the other, the President resolved his political dilemma by calling an international conference in which the U.S. would urge other nations to take the refugees in. The conference was duly held at Evian in France in July 1938. Not surprisingly, each of the other nations found their own reasons why they had done all they could for Jewish refugees and why it was now up to the other nations to do more; no one wanted to be "stuck with the Old Maid." The State Department did not want to unsettle its established and traditional relations with these nations by pushing this new and peripheral matter too hard. And so the Evian conference accomplished virtually nothing at all, and the nations continued to admit hardly any more Jewish refugees than they had before. In later years, there would be other international meetings, such as the Bermuda Conference of 1943, always for the same reasons - to urge someone else to solve the problem and to reassure the refugee advocates that at last something was going to be done - and always with the same result - that is, no result at all.

After the failure of the Evian conference Roosevelt turned for a time to another idea, that of resettlement of substantial numbers of Jewish refugees in relatively unpopulated areas of the world. New communities or even new nations would arise and resolve the problem. Two of the areas considered at length were British Guiana and Angola. His most ambitious conception was a "United States of Africa," which would have been composed of refugee communities

located in Tanganyika, Uganda, and Southern Rhodesia, but which would have remained under British sovereignty. But Roosevelt offered the British and other colonial powers no concrete incentives to permit their colonial territories to be used for these purposes; the State Department was again hostile to any new and unconventional proposal; and the colonial powers did not pursue the possibilities on their own. And so virtually nothing came of the idea of new communities or new nations of refugees, except of course for that one new nation - Israel - which was established by the Jews themselves in the face of determined resistance by the U.S. State Department and the British Foreign Office.

It would not be until early 1944 that Roosevelt, faced at last with a broad-based and politically-mobilized coalition of Jewish and non-Jewish religious and humanitarian organizations, took refugee policy out of the State Department and gave it to a new agency, the War Refugee Board, under the vigorous leadership of a young official from the Treasury Department, John Pehle. The WRB then undertook imaginative and energetic rescue efforts, and these probably saved the lives of 400,000 Jews who otherwise would have died. But by that time another six million Jews, many of whom could have been saved if the United States had acted earlier on resettlement, had been killed.

There are, then, two great lessons to be drawn from the Holocaust of the 1930's and the 1940's. One is that there can in fact come into being criminal regimes that will carry out a systematic policy of genocide against some of their own citizens, and this is the lesson which tells us something today about the government of Vietnam. But the other, the second lesson of the First Holocaust, is that there can also be negligent governments, "cold monsters," that will do little to save lives while that genocide goes on. And this is the

lesson which may tell us something about the government of the United States today.

Recapitulation of a Theme: The Carter Administration and the Indochinese Refugees

For about three years after the communist victory in South Vietnam in 1975 and after the one great surge of about 200,000 refugees at that time, the flow of refugees out of Vietnam was at a rate of about 3,000 a month, a rate that generally seemed predictable and managable. But in 1978, the Vietnamese government began to implement systematic and drastic measures against the petty bourgeoisie in general and the ethnic Chinese in particular, and to force growing numbers of them to become refugees. In the United States, a coalition of concerned religious and humanitarian organizations formed a Citizens Commission on Indochinese Refugees, which began to act as "the cutting edge" in mobilization of opinion on the issue. In January 1979, the commission prepared and submitted a comprehensive report to the President, the State Department, and the Congress, in which it called for increased admission of Indochinese refugees into the U.S. for permanent resettlement and for an emergency airlift and sealift to save the lives of refugees by bringing them temporarily to American relocation centers in the Pacific, such as in Guam.

In March, President Carter appointed Dick Clark, a former Senator from Iowa, as Coordinator for Refugee Affairs; his office was placed within the State Department, and he was given the rank of Ambassador so that he would be able to negotiate with other nations on increasing their numbers of refugee admissions. The strategy of the Carter Administration in 1979 was identical to that of the Roosevelt Administration in 1938: to deal with the problem primarily by urging other nations to take in more refugees. Its tactics were

three: (1) a round of international negotiations, culminating in a mammoth 60-nation conference at Geneva (across the lake from Evian) in July 1979; (2) a restriction on actual admissions into the U.S. for permanent resettlement to only 4,000-5,000 a month, in order "to keep the pressure on other countries"; and (3) a refusal for many months to undertake any emergency operations to save lives with a military airlift or sealift of refugees to temporary American relocation centers or even to grant civilian aircraft and ships rights to land refugees in Guam and elsewhere; "if we do it, the other countries will just sit back and do nothing."

Thus by June there were 20,000 refugees in overcrowded and unhealthy camps in Southeast Asia who had already been formally approved for entry into the U.S., but who were nevertheless left in the camps for months. The reasons that State Department officials gave for this anomaly were several. One argument was that there was not enough money to transport them (\$600 per refugee by civilian aircraft, and, oddly, about \$1,300 per refugee by military aircraft); but in late June the State Department opposed, unsuccessfully, a Congress-initiated appropriations amendment to provide the funds by shifting them temporarily out of U.S. allocations to U.N. technical assistance agencies. Another argument was that civilian aircraft were not available during the summer tourist season, although Edward Daly of World Airways stated that he could move 10,000 refugees a month. The State Department then replied that Daly's planes could not be used because they were DC-10's which were then temporarily banned from landing in the U.S., although with a little enterprise the problem could have been solved by having the DC-10's land at Vancouver in British Columbia or at Tijuana in Baja California. And once the ban on DC-10's was lifted, the State Department made no move to utilize them. Yet another

argument was that a military airlift and sealift would impose mechanical and logistical strains on the equipment, although one might have thought that the mass movement of people was what troop carriers were designed to do; at least this was the thought of this author, who once spent two years as a naval officer aboard the flagship of the Seventh Fleet.

In addition to the overall Administration strategy of international conferences and negotiations, the State Department had its own internal reasons for its inaction, as students of bureaucratic politics might expect. First, there was fiscal politics. Most federal funds for refugee matters are spent through the State Department. But in a time of budgetary restrictions, the more money the Department spends on refugees, the less it will have to spend on its activities which are more customary (e.g., U.N. technical assistance) or more glamorous (e.g., international conferences). Second, in the Summer of 1979, the Department was especially poorly organized on refugee matters. Persons dealing with refugees underwent rapid turnover; positions dealing with refugees were moved from one office to another.

For the most part, the political leadership to save the Indochinese refugees has come not from the Executive but from Congress. Congress, especially through a variety of hearings, resolutions, and budgetary amendments during June and July, urged and pushed the State Department and the President to do more than they were. On the other hand, Congress, like the Administration, was naturally drawn to the international conference notion and hoped that somehow it would solve the problem.

A number of members of Congress, both Democrats and Republicans, have been active proponents of the Indochinese refugees. Several Democratic proponents, such as Senator Edward Kennedy (Massachusetts;) and Representatives Stephen

Solarz and Lester Wolff (both of New York) have long led the Administration on the issue, for example, in urging increases in the numbers of refugees admitted into the U.S. for permanent settlement, although they have done so with moderation; they have not been publicly critical of the Administration's policies, and they have not "gotten too far ahead on the issue."

Other refugee proponents in Congress were more quick to see the need for more urgent and ambitious measures to rescue the thousands that were dying every day. Representative Elizabeth Holtzman (also of New York) in June urged a large-scale U.S. airlift and sealift to save lives. In July, several Republicans, who not surprisingly were willing to "get further out in front of the issue" than was the Administration or most of the Congressional Democrats, also pressed for a large-scale U.S. airlift and sealift rescue undertaking; these were Senators S. I. Hayakawa (California) and Rudy Boschwitz (Minnesota, himself once a refugee from Nazi Germany) and Representative Dave Stockman (Michigan).

Many Administration and Congressional figures feared, however, that increased admissions of Indochinese refugees into the U.S. would be politically unpopular, that "just beneath the surface" of public opinion was the "potential for a backlash" against the refugees and, of course, against the officials and politicians who aided them. A Democratic Administration - dependent upon its traditional constituencies of blacks and Hispanics with their high unemployment rates, workers with their high sensitivity to potential unemployment, and Southerners with their relatively higher nativism - was especially prone to such fears, even though leaders of some of these groups, in particular blacks and labor, actually had spoken out in favor of policies to help the refugees.

By summer other groups in the public, such as religious and humanitarian

organizations and the Chinese-American community were increasing and coordinating their political efforts on behalf of the refugees. The Chinese-American community had been slow to mobilize on the Indochinese refugee issue even though many of the refugees have been ethnic Chinese. However, the number of Chinese-Americans is quite small, only some 600,000, and half of these are in three states (California, New York, and Hawaii). Substantial numbers are themselves recent immigrants, who are only beginning to learn the ways of influencing the American policy process.

In addition, the Chinese Civil War still continues within the Chinese communities of America; some organizations, often the more experienced and established ones, still favor the Kuomintang on Taiwan; others favor the Peoples Republic. This split delayed the effective reaction of the Chinese-American community to the Indochinese refugee crisis. The PRC and its Chinese-American supporters had called attention to the plight of ethnic-Chinese refugees from Vietnam as early as the Summer of 1978, but other Chinese-American organizations, not wishing to be identified with the PRC or with communism, held off from focusing on the issue for a year. It was not until June 1979, when the New York Times published several articles which demonstrated that the Vietnamese government had undertaken a systematic policy of persecution of its ethnic Chinese, i.e., until the American "establishment" made the issue "legitimate," that these organizations began to move. A broad-based coalition of Chinese-American groups coalesced around the leadership of an effective organizer, Lawrence Chang, began to work with religious and humanitarian organizations, and held a 10,000-person demonstration in front of United Nations headquarters in New York on July 15, the eve of the Geneva conference.

Will the chosen solution of the Administration and the preferred solution of the Congress, that of international conferences and negotiations, accomplish the tasks of saving lives and permanent resettlement? It is most unlikely. First, other societies are considerably less porous and more rigid than the United States, and they see themselves having little connection with the Indochinese past and no responsibility for the Indochinese condition today; they will not admit refugees for permanent resettlement in more than token numbers. Second, even if the international solution were to succeed by State Department standards, it would fail in human terms. For the State Department, if the other nations outside Southeast Asia were to increase their admissions to a total of 7,000 a month, it will mean a success; for 50,000-70,000 refugees a month, however, it could mean death by drowning or disease. If the Carter Administration wants to avoid being an accomplice, a silent partner, in this outcome, it will have to undertake more urgent and ambitious measures.

The most urgent need, of course, is for a large-scale airlift and sealift, a "sea sweep," to bring the refugees from their sinking boats in the South China Sea and from the unhealthy camps in Southeast Asia to already existing temporary relocation centers in the American islands of the Pacific, as in Guam. This should not be only a one-shot operation but a continuing one for the next several months, until the refugee flow out of Indochina subsides. But the real challenge lies in resolving the problem of permanent resettlement. And here it is useful to consider the two "paths not taken" by the Roosevelt Administration nearly forty years ago, i.e., resettlement in new communities or a new nation and resettlement in the United States itself.

Resettlement in New Communities: From New Caledonia to New Indochina

What are the possibilities for a revival of the concept of permanent resettlement through new communities or new nations? At first glance, they would not seem to be promising. There are very few colonial territories remaining, such as those that once briefly captured Roosevelt's imagination, and newly-independent nations will be especially hostile to the idea of admitting into their fragile social systems a new and large Chinese or Vietnamese minority.

Nevertheless, some of the few remaining colonial territories are worth consideration, in particular those in the South Pacific, including New Caledonia and the New Hebrides. The potential suitability of New Caledonia, an overseas territory of France, is especially impressive. It is an island which is relatively large in area (6,500 square miles or about the size of Massachusetts, thirty times the size of Singapore, and fifteen times the size of Hong Kong with the New Territories, those two city-states of overseas Chinese which have been highly successful economically); which is now relatively small in population (150,000 compared to Singapore's 3 million and Hong Kong's 5 million); and which is relatively rich in resources (nickel) while now economically underdeveloped. It is located between Australia and New Zealand, is roughly the same distance from Tokyo as Singapore, and, as a territory of France, has easy access to the European Economic Community. The combination of an industrious and enterprising ethnic-Chinese population with American and Japanese capital (direct investment, backed in the short run with guarantees by the U.S., French, and possibly Japanese governments) could create a sort of "New Indochina" that would also be, in economic terms, a second Singapore. And this new Indochina could become a haven and a home, a new world and a promised land, for perhaps 500,000 or more refugees from the old.²

Unlike the colonial powers of forty years ago, which found no incentive to receive refugees into their colonial territories, France today would probably calculate that it would doubly benefit, from the rapid economic development of one of its possessions and from the creation of another way to provide for some of its own Indochinese refugees. If the State Department insists upon an international solution, it would accomplish far more by immediately entering into serious negotiations with France and Japan to bring about this new community rather than empty and frivolous ones at international conferences with nations that can do little or nothing.

Resettlement in the United States: From Indochinese to New Americans

Finally, is there any real reason why the United States could not also admit 500,000 or even more Indochinese refugees for permanent resettlement and indeed why it would not positively benefit itself by doing so? Are there really any sensible and realistic reasons not to? The figure 500,000 is less than one-fourth or three months of the natural increase in U.S. population by births each year; it is less than the 700,000 refugees who have been admitted from Cuba and who have been a major force in revitalizing the economy of South Florida and in particular of Miami; and the figure 500,000 is less even than the margin of error in government calculations of the influx of illegal immigrants into the U.S. each year.

Indeed, the economic impact of those Indochinese refugees that do come will quickly become positive. The fact is that refugees, like other persons, not only hold jobs but they also make jobs. To argue that the refugees "will take jobs away from our own people" does not take into account, for example, that the small-businessman skills and attitudes characteristic of many of the refugees are, if everything, in scarce supply in this country, that in every economy in the world such people create more jobs for others not only by their

consumption but by their enterprise. Such arguments also ignore the facts that Asian-Americans born in this country have higher average education and income levels than those of the American population at large, that recent immigrants from Hong Kong and Korea have already revitalized substantial sections of New York and Los Angeles, and finally that the most recent immigrants, those from Vietnam since 1975, already have employment rates equal to the American population as a whole and that those who have been here for more than two years are already completely or largely self-supporting. In short, the qualities of the traditional American spirit reside as much or more in Asian-Americans as in the rest of us, which is probably why some of our more small-minded and mean-spirited fellow citizens, and some of their political representatives, don't like them.

* * * * *

Three years after President Roosevelt had called for the Evian conference, he had to turn his attention to a new and very different crisis that had suddenly erupted in a faraway country about which he knew nothing. In July of 1941, the Japanese suddenly occupied a territory of the French Empire which was then known as Cochin China, which later Americans would know as South Vietnam, and which we know today as that region of Vietnam whose major urban center is Ho Chi Minh City. Roosevelt's response to the occupation was to impose an oil embargo, the first effective one in history, upon Japan. The Japanese response, in turn, was to set into motion the military plans that would lead to Pearl Harbor -- and from there led to a great deal more.

Indochina, thus, has been part of American history for almost four decades. In 1975, many of us thought that at long last it would cease to be

so. This was the hope among both those who had supported the U.S. military involvement there from 1961 to 1975 and those who, like this author, had opposed it. But "the cunning of history" has made it otherwise. For now it is clear that the only way that America can truly transcend its long and troubled relationship with Indochina, while remaining true to the characteristic American ideals of liberty, generosity, and decency, is to permit some Indochinese to become part of ourselves.

If Americans should decide to exclude the refugees, however, there would still remain one virtue accessible to us, and that would be to be honest about ourselves. And that virtue we would demonstrate by taking the boat once more to the Statue of Liberty, by taking down the great plaque which bears the famous words of Emma Lazarus offering a haven to "the huddled masses yearning to be free," and by breaking it into a million small pieces and casting them into New York Harbor. And they, like a million human beings in the South China Sea, would sink forever beneath the waves.

NOTES

1. The policies of the Roosevelt Administration toward Jewish refugees have been given detailed analysis in Arthur D. Morse, While Six Million Died: A Chronicle of American Apathy (New York: Random House, 1967); and Henry L. Feingold, The Politics of Rescue: The Roosevelt Administration and the Holocaust, 1938-1945 (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1970).

2. The idea of New Caledonia becoming a new Singapore for Indo-chinese refugees seems to have been first expressed by William E. Colby in an article in the Japan Times, June 28, 1979. Although it is also probably the first time that this author has ever agreed with Mr. Colby on a matter concerning Indochina, his article makes an excellent case.



THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

date August 7, 1979
to Irving Levine
from Gary Rubin
subject Conceptualizing a Conference on the Right of Refugees To Be Received

I. The Problem

- A. There currently exists no systematic method for dealing with refugees, allocating them fairly among receiving countries, or guaranteeing for them a safe haven in their flight from oppression or disaster.
- B. The refugees are caught in a curious "Catch-22" situation in regard to their legal status. They have an acknowledged right to leave their country due to a well-founded fear of persecution or suffering but have no recognized right to go anywhere. Obviously, the right to leave means very little if one has no available destination.
- C. This is no mere theoretical problem. The current situation of the boat people is only the most contemporary and dramatic example of a forced outflow of thousands of migrants from their native lands. The last three decades have seen the exile of Russian Jews, Hungarians, Cubans, and Indochinese from their countries. Present crises in Iran, Africa, and Southeast Asia and potential upheavals in South America guarantee that this is not a problem that will disappear soon.
- D. The challenge then becomes to set up a regular, orderly and humane mechanism to resettle refugees in countries of asylum. This will have to include the development of the notion that people fleeing their native countries for genuine reasons of political oppression or natural disaster have a basic human right to be received by some nation able to accept them.

II. Background of the Problem

- A. Reception of refugees has always been considered the prerogative of individual countries rather than the right of those needing asylum. Ancient kingdoms and empires sometimes accepted whole nations fleeing military conquerors, gave them arms and used them as soldiers for defense of their own boundaries. In the Middle Ages, countries would often take in groups of refugees in exchange for either military or economic service. During the Reformation and Counterreformation periods refugees were continually expelled from some nations and received into others for religious reasons. In the twentieth century, the economic capacity of receiving countries has emerged as the prime consideration in granting refuge. In each instance, reception has been contingent on the varying interests of the countries of asylum rather than on concern for the needs or rights of the refugees.

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

- B. The concept of asylum also has a long history. It arose in ancient times when individuals who were charged with committing criminal acts and could not depend on the judicial systems of the places in which they lived often fled to designated locations, such as churches or special cities, to seek refuge. This practice declined with the development of effective court administration. A second tradition emerged in which political refugees could request asylum from countries sympathetic to their plight. This practice continues to the present day. It remains the prerogative of a nation to grant protection; individual refugees have no right to claim it.
- C. The twentieth century has seen the beginnings of regularized mechanisms to deal with refugees. These include:
- i. Private organizations, such as Jewish and Quaker relief societies, and the International Red Cross have developed large networks to aid refugees in countries where they have been allowed to settle either permanently or temporarily.
 - ii. In 1921, the League of Nations appointed a High Commissioner for Refugees. This office was able to facilitate travel for many stateless persons, repatriate some, and resettle others in receptive countries. The granting of asylum, however, was complicated by the onset of the Great Depression which made nations reluctant to add to their populations. Again, the final arbiter of the fate of refugees was the decision of various nations on whether or not to accept them.
 - iii. After World War II, the United Nations took over the work of caring for refugees. From the outset, it assumed that the problem of stateless persons was temporary and that after a short period of resettlement of people displaced by the War no more refugees would exist. For this reason the International Refugee Organization, set up by the UN in 1947, was liquidated as planned in 1952. At that point, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees was appointed to oversee remaining problems in this field. Originally, he was also given a temporary mandate and very limited powers. The problems of refugees persisted, however, and gradually the High Commissioner acquired greater authority to deal with them. At first a non-operational officer with jurisdiction over a limited segment of the refugee population, he has widened his functions to the extension of "good offices" to any country which requests it. In addition, the Commissioner has developed operating funds to support his programs. While he is still subject to the authority of sovereign nations to admit any number of entrants they deem fit, his moral and operational latitude has expanded to the point where his influence is felt on nearly all refugee matters.

- iv. Another important development in this period has been the calling of international conferences on the refugee issue. In 1938, President Roosevelt convened a multi-nation meeting in Evian, France to consider the problem of refugees from Nazi Germany. It refused to recognize the Jewish identity of the exiles or the anti-Semitic nature of their oppression and did little to aid them. Its major accomplishment was the creation of the Intergovernmental Committee on Political Refugees which carried on a largely fruitless search for safe havens. Another meeting on this issue, in Bermuda in 1943, accomplished just as little. Conferences held after the war achieved somewhat better results. In 1951, a plenipotentiary conference adopted the Geneva Convention which acknowledged that refugees, although stateless, had recognized legal status. Subsequent meetings have had mixed outcomes. The most recent Geneva Conference, however, in July 1979, elicited pledges of increased receptivity by countries of both first and permanent asylum.

III. Toward a Solution of the Refugee Problem

- A. The momentum generated by the progress of the recent Geneva Conference (though dampened somewhat by Kurt Waldheim's seeming acquiescence in Vietnam's curtailing of its citizens' right to leave) should be seized upon to expand the recognized rights of refugees. AJC could capitalize on its reputation gained in this field from the Uppsala Conference of 1972 on "The Right to Leave and To Return" to sponsor a high-level meeting on "The Right To Be Received." Such a conference might have the following components:
 - i. A strong resolution endorsed by organizations active in this area, including religious leaders, experts in migration and human movements, people with practical experience in the field, and prominent political and diplomatic figures recognizing the right of legitimate refugees to be received in some country of asylum should be drawn up, passed and publicized. This statement would serve as the moral and programmatic centerpiece of the conference. Post-conference publicity should seek to establish this right as an internationally recognized norm.
 - ii. The conference might look at the history of previous migrations and stress their positive economic, social and moral impacts on the receiving countries.
 - iii. Refugees should be taken into a nation not primarily for economic reasons but because of a moral obligation to provide asylum. In this vein, the conference could explore the growth of international recognition of human rights in general and refugee rights in particular and view the acknowledgement of a refugee's right to be received as the next logical step in this process.
 - iv. The conference should buttress its assertion of a human right of refugees to be received by establishing an internationally recognized objective standard which would determine how many refugees a country would be expected to admit. This standard might be tied to a nation's GNP, unemployment rates, industrial capacity, population level and density and other social and economic factors. It is crucial that this formula be determined on the basis of easily quantifiable and objective criteria so that it will be seen as providing a fair and unbiased benchmark of a country's absorptive capacity. Sessions at the conference could then survey various parts of the world to compare how many refugees nations have actually admitted with how many they could accept according to the objective standard. It should aim at putting the force of international sanction behind this objective standard and at making it a powerful moral instrument for persuading countries to increase their immigration quotas.

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

3930 KIRBY, SUITE 390 • HOUSTON, TEXAS • 77098 • 524-1133

cc: Milton Tobian
 Harold Applebaum
 — Marc Tanenbaum
 Irving Levine
 David Harris

date August 9, 1979
to Ira Silverman
from Sanford Kanter
subject Indochinese Refugees

A Jewish response to the Indochinese refugees is developing out of the contacts initiated last week and described in my memo of August 6, 1979.

The Federation director, who was a refugee himself, will pressure Jewish Family Service to change its attitude and to work with Indochinese refugees. Further, the Federation director called H.I.A.S. to protest that he had not been contacted and that they are not pressing the issue forcefully enough.

The Rabbi of Temple Emanu El called the Director of HMM to say that it is his intention that Emanu El sponsor a refugee family.

Refugee

The TV interview for the head of the Interfaith/Resettlement Committee, mentioned in the August 6 memo, was taped this morning at the CBS affiliate, KHOU. The head of the committee of the IRRC and I are devising a follow up TV show to feature a refugee family that was successfully resettled, and people who have actually sponsored refugees.

I am starting to work to secure a proclamation from the mayor to be read at a press conference with religious leaders.

The Houston Chapter Chair now wishes to become involved in the Indochinese refugee debate.

Regards.



HENRY A. KISSINGER

September 19, 1979

Dear Leo:

I will be pleased to serve on the board of the Citizens' Commission on Indo-chinese Refugees and to lend whatever weight I can to increasing the participation of influential Europeans. The entire free world needs to be awakened to the suffering of these unfortunate people, and your efforts have my total support.

Best regards,

Henry A. Kissinger

Mr. Leo Cherne
Co-Chairman
Citizens' Commission on
Indochinese Refugees
c/o International Rescue
Committee, Inc.
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U.S. Weighs Impact of Attack in Cambodia

By BERNARD GWERTZMAN

Special to The New York Times

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y., Sept. 25 — Administration officials are consulting with allies and Congress on steps to alleviate expected military and refugee pressures on Thailand caused by the apparent new Vietnam offensive in Cambodia, American officials said today.

Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance conferred with Australian and New Zealand officials this morning on the intelligence reports indicating that 170,000 to 200,000 Vietnamese soldiers in Cambodia were deployed for a "dry season" offensive to wipe out the 20,000 to 30,000 troops still loyal to the Pol Pot regime. The American officials said the initial infantry skirmishes seem to have taken place about a week ago.

The goal of the drive, one of the officials said, "is to annihilate" the Pol Pot forces, even if it means encroaching on Thailand's borders with Cambodia. He said the information had been provided by Vietnamese defectors.

The officials said that Mr. Vance was giving the matter high priority in talks with Asian and European countries friendly to the United States and that Richard Holbrooke, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, would discuss the matter with Deputy Foreign Minister Phan Hien of Vietnam in New York.

Mr. Holbrooke is expected to give a long briefing to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Thursday, the officials said.

Several Factors Concern U.S.

They described a series of American concerns regarding Indochina.

¶The new offensive, which could run until March, makes it impossible to arrange a political compromise between the competing Cambodian Governments of Heng Samrin and Mr. Pol Pot, at least until the fighting is over. This in turn makes it more difficult for relief to be sent to Cambodia to ease the wide-scale starvation and malnutrition.

¶Because Mr. Pol Pot's main bastion is close to the Thai border, Vietnamese forces may cross into Thailand, causing political and security problems for the American ally. Steps have been taken to expedite the shipment of military aid from the United States.

¶There already are about 220,000 refugees in camps in Thailand, including about 100,000 Cambodians. Several Western governments estimate that a new all-out war could result in 200,000 more refugees pouring into Thailand from Cambodia.

¶Although there are no signs at present of a Chinese military buildup along the Vietnam border, a successful attack against the Pol Pot forces by the Vietnamese could provoke the Chinese to decide to repeat their intrusion of last winter when they sought to "punish" the Vietnamese for their invasion of Cambodia last December. The Vietnamese have moved 150,000 to 180,000 regular troops north of Hanoi to counter such a Chinese move.

Call for 'Vigorous' Action

Yesterday, Mr. Vance, in his address to the General Assembly, said "vigorous and large-scale international action is required to bring relief to the starving in Kampuchea, now facing one of the great human tragedies of modern times."

¶"Tens of thousands of sick and hungry Khmer are already pressing on Thai-

land's border," Mr. Vance said. "Hundreds of thousands may soon follow them. Even more widespread famine and disease are in prospect, especially in view of recent reports of intensified fighting."

He said that to avert catastrophe, an international program of relief must be established as soon as possible.

The officials said that the Vietnamese decision to launch an attack had been predicted and "the United States condemns it." He said it only increases the sense of disaster in the area.

A possible political compromise would be to have Prince Norodom Sihanouk, the former Cambodian chief of state, head a government of national reconciliation. But the prince now lives in Pyongyang, North Korea, because he refused to go along with China's decision to support Mr. Pol Pot completely.



Vietnam Reported to Open Offensive in Cambodia

By HENRY KAMM

Special to The New York Times

BANGKOK, Thailand, Sept. 25 — Although the rainy season has not yet ended, a Vietnamese offensive against the forces of the deposed Pol Pot regime has been started in central Cambodia, informed sources reported here today.

They said that several Vietnamese divisions began a major operation in the area north of Phnom Penh and west of the Mekong River about 10 days ago, apparently with the goal of flushing out and destroying the guerrilla units that have so far limited Vietnamese control to the main cities and roads. An estimated 20 Vietnamese divisions are occupying Cambodia.

According to refugees, the monsoon season in Cambodia has been unusually dry this year, and this, the sources surmised, might be the reason for the early start of the offensive. Secondary roads usually made impassible by monsoon rains are apparently able to be used.

The offensive has not yet resulted in major clashes, the sources said, because the Pol Pot forces withdraw at the approach of the pursuing troops.

Guerrillas Exploit Mobility

The campaign reminded seasoned observers here of the usually fruitless "search and destroy" operations conducted by American troops in Vietnam. As was the case then, a conventional, well-equipped army is seeking to draw into battle a network of small guerrilla units. The guerrillas, however, exploit their superior mobility to avoid battle and ambush the attackers wherever possible.

The Cambodian resistance forces are estimated to number about 40,000, while Vietnamese troop strength is put at 180,000, with a steady flow of draftees from southern Vietnam going into Cambodia to reinforce divisions there.

The Pol Pot forces are thought to contest actively from 80 to 85 percent of Cambodia's area. They control parts of the civilian population and food supplies in a country where, one knowledgeable source said today, "massive starvation" is a general condition.

The sources believe that the strategy of the Vietnamese is to oblige as much of the civilian population as they can to join the Cambodian civilians living under their control close to the main roads that Vietnamese troops are securing. Preliminary evidence is said to indicate that the Vietnamese are following a "scorched earth" policy in the areas they cannot permanently secure.

Relief Efforts Denounced

At least one analyst believes that Vietnam's strategy amounts to imposing starvation on its enemies and innocent Cambodian bystanders not in Vietnamese-held areas while appealing to Western countries to provide food for the Cambodians under its domination.

In support, the analyst cited an angry denunciation last Friday of relief efforts at the Thai border by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations Children's Fund. The Vietnamese-created Cambodian regime of President Heng Samrin objected to the distribution of relief there to Cambodian civilians who are not under Vietnamese control.

The two organizations are also negotiating with the Heng Samrin authorities to establish a food-relief campaign in the areas under Vietnamese control.

Sources here report that even the roads that are accessible to the Vietnamese Army are safe only during the day and that all movements of troops and supplies take place in convoy. A steady flow of

supply flights to airfields at Phnom Penh, Battambang and Siem Reap is viewed as an indication of considerable insecurity in overland communications.

The sources reported that only the Ho Chi Minh City-Phnom Penh highway and the southernmost coastal road were under firm Vietnamese control.



The New York Times / Sept. 26, 1975

Vietnamese have reportedly begun an offensive in area north of Phnom Penh and west of the Mekong River.

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HELP URGED FOR CAMBODIANS MASSING ON THAI BORDER

The Citizens Commission on Indochinese Refugees has in the past expressed its revulsion at the atrocities committed by the Pol Pot regime against its own people -- crimes against humanity on a scale not seen since the holocaust. Cambodia has truly become the Auschwitz of Asia, and the Khmer people a nation of refugees.

The Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia which installed the Heng Samrin government in Phnom Penh has only increased their misery. Continued fighting between Vietnamese/Heng Samrin forces and remnants of the deposed Pol Pot regime has uprooted the entire Cambodian people and plunged them into the abyss of hunger and disease. In this Year of the Child, more than two million Cambodian children are among the starving, the dying and the dead.

After the sufferings of the past four-and-a-half years during which an estimated two million Cambodians died, the specter of famine and disease threatens to decimate the remaining population. That grim prospect, compounded by the Vietnamese dry-season offensive which began in mid-September, will inexorably thrust toward and across the Thai border several hundred thousand refugees. The very survival of Khmer civilization is in question. The world must respond to this tragedy.

The Citizens Commission applauds the work of UNICEF and ICRC (the International Committee of the Red Cross) in mounting a continuous and

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-- more --

monitored international relief program in Cambodia (although this effort will not reach the border area where hundreds of thousands of Cambodian refugees are gathering). We profoundly hope that no further obstacles will be put in the way of this humanitarian work by the Vietnamese or Pol Pot forces.

We believe the Royal Thai Government and the Thai Red Cross deserve high praise for their humanitarian concern for Cambodians on both sides of the border. We recognize the burden this imposes on Thailand. The Commission expresses the hope Thailand will continue its present policy and provide temporary asylum for those who flee.

The Citizens Commission is greatly encouraged that plans are being developed by the United States government, under the direction of Ambassador Dick Clark's office, to assist those victims of the present conflict who can be reached -- both Cambodians and displaced Thais. We are confident that Congress will respond positively and speedily to a request for the necessary funds. It is also heartening that our government recognizes the vital role of the voluntary agencies, especially Catholic Relief Services, which has been feeding thousands of afflicted Cambodians on both sides of the border, and the International Rescue Committee, which has been providing urgently needed medical aid in the border area.

However, a massive mobilization of human and material resources will be needed within days. Both the private and governmental sectors of the United States and many other nations must join to help Thailand meet the imminent crisis. It is reliably estimated that more than 200,000 displaced Cambodians will soon gather at or near the Thai border. We must act now. The fate of an entire people is at stake.

9/27/79

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September 27, 1979

To: Citizens Commission Members

From: Al Kastner

Attached is a Citizens Commission statement on an imminent Cambodian emergency. It was prepared by Leo Cherne, Bill Casey and staff in consultation with John Whitehead, the IRC President, and was issued today with a press release. IRC has committed \$75,000 to initiate a medical program for the Cambodians who are expected to be at the Thai border in a short time. Articles from yesterday's New York Times are also enclosed.

Please note the announcement of the 70th Birthday Dinner for Bayard Rustin to be held on March 6, 1980. *note*

Leonel J. Castillo, the outgoing Commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and Henry Kissinger have accepted invitations to join the Commission. Their letters of acceptance to Leo are enclosed.

a.k.

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REPORT TO THE CITIZENS COMMISSION ON INDOCHINESE REFUGEES
ON THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND MEDICAL CARE NEEDS OF THE KHMER
REFUGEES IN THAILAND AND AN ESTIMATE OF THE NEEDS OF THE
MILLIONS OF DISPLACED KHMER WITHIN KAMPUCHEA

Submitted by Philip R. Lee, MD, Medical Consultant

AMERICAN JEWISH

It is impossible with the information that is available to make precise estimates of the nature or magnitude of the health problems of the Khmer refugees within Thailand or the displaced Khmer in Kampuchea. It is evident, however, that the over 300,000 malnourished, disease ridden refugees in Thailand represent only a fraction of the total Khmer population who face possible death by starvation or the diseases that accompany severe malnutrition.

Food - or the lack of it - is the most urgent and important need. At the present time, the food available to the Khmer refugees in Thailand, particularly the bulk who are in the border areas, appears to grossly inadequate for their needs. The goal of the World Food Program is to provide these refugees with 2100-2200 calories of food per person per day. This is the minimum needed to maintain a malnourished individual.

Five hundred (500) grams of food per day will feed one person. A ton of food a day will feed 2000 people. To meet the most urgent needs of the Khmer refugees currently in Thailand requires 1500 tons of food per day -- delivered to those in need. In the border areas, despite the heroic efforts of the World Food Program and UNICEF, it appears that these goals have not been met. The problem is not the availability of rice and other essentials but the fact that the massive and rapid increase in the number of refugees in the border areas has outpaced the delivery of food in these areas. I was informed by a Khmer physician in the Ban Nong Samet Camp that until the deliveries on one day of our visit, there had been no food delivery for five days. He stated that the food supply available was 169 tons for four days. Instead of the minimum of one ton per day per 2000 people, this averaged less than half of that. When deliveries were first planned, the amounts was undoubtedly adequate for the number who were estimated to be in the camp area.

An independent committee of citizens formed with the assistance of the International Rescue Committee for study of the problems and policies affecting the refugees from Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam.

An additional problem was pointed out to us by Farouk Abdel Nabi, Deputy Representative, World Food Program/FAO, namely that when the rice and other food was provided, the Khmer refugees ate only a portion of it and saved the rest. Also, the very sick, malnourished refugees, particularly sick children was too weak to feed themselves and they were apparently not getting rice when it was available in the camp.

The World Food Program has been asked by the Heng Samrin Government to provide food assistance for 2.5 million people within Kampuchea. This will require 1200 tons of food or 36,000 tons of food per month. Recent estimates indicate that initially about 200 tons of food has reached Kampuchea through World Food Program/UNICEF and voluntary agency auspices. By the end of October, it was estimated that an additional 6000-7000 tons reached Phnom Penh and Kompong Son by air and sea. The goal for November is 20,000 tons and for December 30,000 tons.

To achieve these goals will require a massive increase in the deliveries of food to at least 2.5 million Khmers who are undernourished or starving.

It is my understanding that if all goes well the best that can be achieved is the delivery of 10,000 tons of food to Kampuchea through the port of Kompong Som and 12,000 tons per month via the Mekong River. Of the food delivered to Kompong Som, 3000 tons can be moved to Phnom Penh by rail and 7000 tons to Phnom Penh or other areas by truck. The food that comes up the Mekong would be off-loaded and delivered to multiple sites by barge or small boats. This method particularly would be used to deliver food to the 400,000-500,000 in the area around Tong Sap.

The easiest part of the task will be delivering food and medicines to the dock at Kompong Son. The absence of virtually any administrative structure or trained personnel to receive, unload, store, transport and deliver the food in time to those in need is an enormous problem. Many areas of the country are still not secure and it will be difficult, if not impossible, under present circumstances to deliver food to these areas.

The area east of Aranyaprathet - in the area around Sisophon - it is estimated that there may be 300,000-400,000 Khmer who have come from other areas of Kampuchea hoping to find food in this once rice rich area. Food could most easily be made available to these people and to many along highways five and six in western Kampuchea by truck from Thailand.

Although statements quoted in the press by UNICEF officials indicate optimism in reaching their statue goal of 165,000 tons of food delivered to Kampuchea over the next six months, I am skeptical that this will be achieved without a massive, cooperative international effort. The food shipped to Kompong Son by sea or up the Mekong River, or that flown into Phnom Penh cannot possibly reach the displaced Khmer who are currently in areas not under the control of the Heng Samrin Government, not to speak of those in disputed areas.

The most urgent need in all of the areas - Kampuchea, the border areas and the established camps under UNHCR (e.g., Sakeo I, Mairut) is the feeding of infants and children. Infant mortality rates have, I would estimate, seem staggeringly high. Infant rehydration and feeding must have the first priority. Children under the age of five - and their mothers require special outreach efforts that were no where in evidence during our visits, but are just in the planning stages.

Second in priority to meeting the essential need for food and water for the refugees has been medical care. Doctors in the refugee camps and those who are currently working the border areas with the hundreds of thousands of refugees give top priority after food and water to drugs and the medical personnel needed to treat the desperately ill refugees.

The major health problems of the refugees, in addition to malnutrition and dehydration are malaria, dysentery, pneumonia, wound infection and other common infections. Particularly urgent is the need for the establishment of adequate programs for the rehydration of infants and young children severely dehydrated because of diarrhea. Although intravenous fluids must occasionally be used for this purpose, very effective oral rehydration solutions can be used. A standard WHO formula has been widely used in many countries, but apparently is not widely used in Thailand or in any of the refugee camps. I was told, however, that it is available in the Sakeo camp. This situation requires immediate attention. In the Sakeo camp, I was told that whole blood was also on short supply, although efforts are being made to correct this problem it has apparently not been given priority attention.

The drugs that are urgently needed to treat malaria and other diseases cannot be effectively used without skilled physicians and nurses, who can both provide needed medical services for the sick and who must train and supervise less skilled health workers. To date, the on-rush of the overwhelming numbers of critically ill patients has made it

impossible for the doctors and nurses in all but the oldest and most well established camps to do more than treat the sick who are able to reach their simple hospital facilities. It has not been possible to reach into the refugee camps to find many who are equally ill - or dying - and provide them with urgently needed care.

The lack of any outreach efforts, even in the camps that were visited results not only in a continuing burden of illness, but undoubtedly needless death and disability in such camps as Sakeo. There was no possibility of any outreach program in the Nong Samet Camp with the small ICRC medical team (one physician, two nurses and technician) and the added Khmer health personnel (three physicians and 36 nurses).

One of the difficulties in meeting the medical care needs of the refugees has been lack of access to the border area camps. Another has been the very rapid increase in the number of refugees and the severity of their health problems. Planning has been difficult and the early estimates of need for physicians, nurses and other health care personnel was far below what has been needed.

An ICRC team proposed a tentative set up for medical care of Khmer refugees in Thailand. The plan initially called for outpatient stations capable of attending to five percent of the camp population daily. For a camp with 30,000 refugees, an outpatient clinic would care for 1500 patients per day according to the ICRC estimate.

The estimated staffing need for a clinic serving 30,000 refugees was two physicians, 10 nurses in the diagnostic situation, 4 nurses in the dispensing and treatment station and 2 nurses for mobile screening teams. If this group was supplemented by community health workers, supervised by the nurses it might be possible to provide the necessary care. There was no estimate of the need for community health workers for such clinics, nor did they include estimates of the personnel required for the urgently needed rehydration facilities that should be part of such centers.

Listed separately, but without any projection of needs were day-care feeding centers, residential feeding centers, supplementary feeding stations, mother-child care clinics and family planning centers. Estimates of their needs should be promptly made and high priority accorded the immediate establishment of the infant and child feeding services.

It was also estimated that one 200-bed hospital could meet the needs of 30,000 refugees for in-patient hospital care. The staffing for a 200-bed hospital was to be three physicians, 5 nurses for daytime duty, one nurse for night duty.

For a holding center of 50,000, a 300-bed hospital with 6 physicians, 10 nurses for day duty (one per 30 patients), two nurses for night duty, a dentist, a laboratory team, an anesthetist (nurse), an instrument nurse, a radiotope technician and a pharmacist were proposed.

Four outpatient stations were proposed - one located at the field hospital. Daily attendance at the four was expected to be 2500 patients per day (five percent of the population). Sixteen (16) nurses at the diagnostic station was proposed and 8 in the treatment dispensing station. One clerk and one interpreter for each nurse. The six hospital physicians were also to serve the outpatients.

How does this compare with what we found? At Mairut (Trat) there was probably 6000 refugees, 1000 arriving since October 1st. There were three Medicine San Frontien (MSF) physicians and two MSF nurses in simple hospital which was in a thatch house with a cement floor. The physicians and nurses were fully occupied caring for hospitalized patients, many of whom, including a severely malnourished infant, appeared desperately ill at the time of our visit. With the staff available outreach into the camp to reach the sick was not feasible. In one of the buildings housing new refugees, there were many who appeared ill. Some, particularly several of the infants, were clearly malnourished. Malnutrition, diarrhea, malaria and other common infections was apparently the predominant medical problems at Mairut.

At the border camp at Ban Nong Samet, the ICRC medical team was in for its second day of visiting the camp. It had been allowed to enter only the day before. This group - a physician, two nurses and a technician was all that was allowed to a camp holding probably 160,000 Khmer - or more. Security was apparently the factor that delayed permission from the Thai military for the ICRC team to enter the camp. There

were three Cambodian physicians and 36 Cambodian nurses in this camp. The hospital consisted of a cluster of squalid, hovels that were filled with what I was told was 386 patients with diarrhea, malaria, ordinary infections, parasites and malnutrition. The hospital differed in appearance very little from the rest of the camp, except for the presence of the medical personnel and an occasional plastic bottle of intravenous fluid in evidence.

In the other camps on the border, housing perhaps an additional 130,000 - 170,000 Khmer refugees have yet to have an organized medical care available because the ICRC has not been permitted to send medical teams into these areas.

The holding camp at Sakeo was established two weeks ago and rapidly filled with 30,000 refugees cramped into very squalid, primitive quarters. Primarily small tent-like stations made of sticks with plastic or matt canvas. Many of the refugees were desperately ill at the time of the move and there were no hospital facilities available then. The initial makeshift hospital facilities have only recently been replaced and the facilities are adequate to handle the most urgent and acute medical problems. In the 120-125 patient infectious disease unit staffed by an IRC physician, two additional physicians, six nurses, a technologist and a volunteer -- well above the ICRC estimates of need, but absolutely essential for the care of these desperately ill patients. There are two other hospitals -- one for men and one for women. The number of beds (over 1200) for the 30,000 refugees, exceeded the 300 estimated for a holding center of 50,000 or the 200 beds suggested for a border camp of 30,000 refugees. Thus current experience indicates that the early estimates were very low.

Current estimates call for one hospital bed for every 50 refugees (half the number of the present beds) and one hospital bed for every 150 refugees in Sakeo II where presumably the population will not be as malnourished and disease ravaged as those in Sakeo I. The number of health personnel needed is now estimated to be 20 physicians and 40 nurses and health aids for a camp of 50,000 refugees.

Much of what can be done in the immediate future and in the long term to provide adequate medical care and food to the Khmer refugees within Thailand will depend on the voluntary agencies and national societies currently active and those just joining the effort. Any plans for the future must be based on

the agencies that have been working to meet the needs of the growing number of refugees in Thailand since 1976. As of September 30, 1979, there was 168,897 displaced persons in UNHCR-supported refugee camps in Thailand. This number was reduced to 163,269 on October 31, 1979. Medical care in 14 of these camps is being provided by the International Rescue Committee, German Red Cross, Medecine Sans Frontiere, Tom Dooley Heritage, YMCA-World Alliance, World Vision, Save the Children Fund of Britain, and the Thailand Red Cross.

Food, including feeding program for children and the potential for infant feeding (in collaboration with the medical teams has been provided primarily by Catholic Relief Services and Food for the Hungry. The Catholic Relief Service was the first group to provide food aid to the displaced Khmer along the Thai-Kampuchea border.

With the vast influx of Kampuchean refugees, the job of planning and coordinating all the medical care efforts has been assigned to the ICRC, both in the border areas and the camps, such as Sakeo I, that are being established or expanded and will be under UNHCR control.

Although we did not visit any of the established camps except Mairut (formerly called Klongyai), I was informed that there has been great difficulties in providing medical care in some camps, particularly Loei, because of the rapid increase in the number of refugees with serious overcrowding and understaffing. It should be noted, that in the report of the Study Mission of the U.S. House of Representatives, August 2-11, 1979, The Indochinese Refugee Situation August 1979, it was noted:

"A major deficiency noted in each of the refugee camps visited was the lack of adequate medical services. In order to alleviate this problem the United States should strongly urge all host governments, including Thailand, to permit World Health Organization (WHO) assistance in the camps. Such assistance could be made available to both camp inhabitants and the local indigenous population in order to counter the host government's concern that the level of refugee care not rise above that provided to the inhabitants."

Future needs for medical care -- most or all of it to be provided through voluntary agencies - must be adequate to meet the needs of an estimated 300,000 sick, malnourished refugees.

At the present time, only Sakeo I is operational with 30,000 refugees, a 1000 (or more) bed hospital. At the present time in Sakeo I and in the border camp areas (at least Ban Nong Samet), the ICRC has the following medical personnel:

	<u>ICRC</u>	<u>LEAGUE</u>	<u>NAT. SOC.</u>	<u>VOLAGS</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Doctors	3	-	13	15	31
Nurses	7	-	56	22	85
Nutritionist	-	1	-	-	1
Pharmacist	1	-	-	-	1
Lab Technician	-	-	1	-	1
TOTALS	11	1	70	37	119

The League Secretariat has coordinated the recruitment of medical personnel from eleven national societies in Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany (Federal Republic), Great Britain, Netherlands, Sweden, and Thailand. Volunteers from the United States have offered their services through a variety of channels, particularly the International Rescue Committee.

The biggest problem will be the rapid deployment of the volunteer physicians, nurses, pharmacists, paramedics and associated administrative and support personnel to the areas of greatest need. The bulk of the responsibility for the job must fall on the ICRC staff which, in addition to its 11 medical personnel, currently consists of only 20 people in Thailand. It is simply impossible for such a small staff to plan, coordinate, deploy and support the physicians, nurses and other personnel needed to care for the present refugee population in organized refugee centers, let alone those in the border areas who may be moved into holding centers within the next few weeks.

The determination of need for medical personnel must, of course, be made by those on site and responsible. I believe that the growth in the number of refugees has continuously outpaced the plans. Current resources deployed are grossly inadequate to meet the needs and must be augmented as soon as possible if further unnecessary loss of life is to be achieved. Future planning must include not only those who are already in established camps and the border areas but additional refugees who may be forced into Thailand in the coming weeks.

If the medical care needs of the displaced Khmer within Kampuchea are to be met the figures cited must be increased many times. It is not possible to even estimate those needs in the absence of any information about the availability of medical personnel in Kampuchea.

Public health measures -- particularly the availability of potable water supplies for the refugees, latrines for human waste, garbage disposal and insect control have lagged behind other measures, particularly the provision of food and acute medical care.

For the smaller established camps, such as Mairut, water supplies appeared adequate and sufficient latrines were available for waste disposal. Flies, however, were an enormous problem, particularly for the very sick patients in the hospital. Mosquito netting for the hospital was in short supply and there was no water pump that would permit the cleansing of the cement floor in the hospitals. Compared to other camps, however, these problems appear minor.

Water supply is a very serious problem because water must be trucked in -- at least to the border camp we visited at Nong Samet and at Sakeo. Large metal tanks are being installed and should meet the needs when sufficient number are in place. How long this will take depends on the priority established for meeting the need, the availability of tanks and transport. The minimum need for water estimated by the ICRC is two liters per capita per day, with a target of five liters. Time did not permit any estimate of how well these goals were being met, clearly, unless access is permitted by the Thai Government to the border camps no water can be provided unless a local supply is available.

In planning new camp sites -- perhaps for as many as 300,000 refugees first priority should be accorded areas where adequate well water is available or where wells can be dug to provide the needed water. Planning must also include proper planning for human waste and also garbage disposal. After visits with the senior UNHCR staff, I feel confident that with the arrival of the Swedish Disaster Planning Team, which includes engineers and public health physicians, the arrival of a former senior WHO physician who will be the senior medical officer in the UNHCR and the availability of excellent Thai personnel that adequate planning can be done for the required camps.

A few concluding observations seem in order. In addition to the public health and medical care needs discussed and the requirements for physician and nurses to provide needed medical care, it seems to me that where feasible training programs for community health aids should be established and a vital link established between the refugee population and the health profession. The nurses should supervise the health aids.

Equally important is the need to provide adequate management staff and support staff for the camps and the health care facilities within the camps. It is also important to be able to have a well-trained public health expert in each camp to advise the director, determine the adequacy of water supply and waste disposal program, determine the need for disease control programs as well as the need for immunization and other public health measures. It would be very helpful if the available epidemiological talent could be permitted to carry out studies in order to begin to get some clear idea of the nature of the disease burden among the refugees.

A word about data. The lack of information on the burden of disease among the refugees, as well as the lack of available data about health manpower (physicians, nurses, pharmacists, sanitarians) available in the country frustrates good planning in meeting the needs with the right kind of personnel in the most effective manner.

I was surprised at the lack of close ties with local or regional Thai hospitals to handle the refugees that cannot or should not be handed in the camps. Ways should be found to permit Thais access, if they wish it, to the teams providing care for the refugees.

The medical problems of the refugees within Thailand can continually be dealt with effectively provided there is a priority accorded to meeting the medical care needs of the refugee and adequate resources are deployed to do the job. At the present time, we are far, far from meeting even the minimal acute care needs. It will take the best and most cooperative effort of all concerned to accomplish the goal of providing adequate care for the Khmer refugees already in Thailand or soon expected.

Finally, I cannot stress strongly enough the needs of the infants and children who are the victims of the gross atrocities of the past four years in Kampuchea. Ways must be found to provide them with the food and medical care they need without further delay. All of the barriers to effectively meet the needs of the malnourished, diseased ravaged infants and children must be swept aside.

11/8/79



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CITIZENS COMMISSION ON INDOCHINESE REFUGEES

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8 November 1979

STATEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON CAMBODIA/KAMPUCHEA AND INDOCHINESE REFUGEES

This has been the most difficult of the three study missions of the Citizens Commission. This time we have been compelled to face two contrary realities: The first is this; we are witnessing the tragic culmination of an ironclad ideology instituted by the Pol Pot regime in 1975 which totally destroyed a society, sacrificed its culture and several million of its people, and virtually eliminated all its professional and educated people. Inevitably, ever-widening starvation resulted. During the last year, this tragedy was further complicated by the invasion of a foreign army from a totalitarian neighbor which has long coveted domination over all of Indochina. That neighbor, the Government of Vietnam, and now its installed regime in Phnom Penh as well, appear less brutal but equally determined to achieve absolute power at whatever human costs. The final complication is that the two contesting communist regimes are supported and supplied by the two vying communist giants, the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. We are compelled to observe that no final assurance of a rebirth in Cambodia is possible so long as this reality remains.

Furthermore, we cannot refrain from expressing that only fundamental political change in Cambodia will ultimately provide to the surviving Khmer the prospects for the revival of their race, the reconstruction of their culture, and the safety of their people. This is unobtainable, and it will continue to be unobtainable so long as Cambodia is contested for or controlled by any regime which uses starvation and repression to achieve its goal of domination.

The Citizens Commission has no alternative, therefore, except to limit its recommendations to those means which can maximize the saving of lives under these less than reassuring circumstances.

The second reality is this: We are dealing with the fate of an entire people. Even were a change in governments obtainable, which we believe it not now to be, political purposes must be subordinated to the elemental need of saving lives and protecting the remnants of a people decimated by adherence to a fanatical ideology. This reality requires every means to maximize the delivery of food and medicine and the professional talent to make that food and medicine fully useful, almost without reference to the political consequences or compromises that this lifesaving effort would involve.

With pain, our Commissioners concluded that they must concentrate on those recommendations which flow from the second reality.

Knowing that even the most apolitical of recommendations designed to save lives may wilt before the determined purposes of forces prepared to use starvation as a means of achieving and preserving their power, our recommendations include a call that outrage be voiced in countries throughout the civilized world. Only through clear and loud expression of world opinion will the willingness to permit genocide and mass starvation be blunted and modified.

We do not here deal with the actions undertaken by the Pol Pot Government which brought about the desperate circumstances of an entire people. We do not here deal with the military invasion by the armies of Vietnam and their tool, the Heng Samrin regime, or the purposes which motivated them. We do not here deal with the role of the Soviet Union in arming, supplying, and supporting the Government of Vietnam in its imperialism. We do not here deal with the conflict between the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union or that between the PRC and the Government of Vietnam or the reasons for the PRC's assistance to the now beleaguered Pol Pot regime. We do not deal with these matters much as we detest them. We are constrained by the unavoidable urgency to save the remnants of a people, the 4,000,000 survivors inside Cambodia/Kampuchea. One million, probably more, will soon die if help of sufficient magnitude is not rapidly organized and implemented.

In this the International Year of the Child, a special effort must be made to save the already substantially depleted next generation of Cambodians. Besides those facing imminent death inside Cambodia, there are an estimated 500,000 others who within weeks will be on the borders of Thailand. Their needs are as great and access to them is easier. Our recommendations to save the two surviving portions of the Cambodian population follow.

I. MAXIMIZING THE LIFESAVING POTENTIAL INSIDE CAMBODIA.

1. Agreements have been reached between the Heng Samrin regime and ICRC, UNICEF and certain voluntary agencies permitting the supply of food and medications through limited and specified routes. The efforts of these organizations must be applauded and supported. However, no present plans are adequate to prevent the death of as many as a million Khmer of all ages. Some believe the total may go higher. We, therefore, call upon governments throughout the world, upon the United Nations, upon the numerous charitable, religious, fraternal, civic and labor groups for a concerted expression of conscience demanding the widest access to supplies and lifesaving personnel throughout Cambodia/Kampuchea.

2. Military and political barriers to relieving the misery within Cambodia must not be accepted. If they are not lifted immediately, an international demand should be made in the strongest terms to end the deliberate starvation of non-combatants that will destroy the people of an entire nation, and responsibility fixed for today's and future generations to call to account.

3. Massive aid by international and private organizations must be mounted and actually brought to all feasible entry points accompanied by a demand for its unimpeded entry. These entry points and methods include:

a. Overland by truck convoys from Thailand. This is the most effective means of supply to a rural population. It has the additional advantage of emanating from a country where food and medicines are available and can be delivered at the lowest cost.

b. The port of Kompong Som (presently an approved port of entry) requires the improvement of docking and off-loading capabilities.

c. The Mekong River appears to have been accepted by Vietnam and the Heng Samrin Government as an artery of supply. This route is so vital that we must insist that it be fully utilized; off-loading must be permitted throughout the Mekong waterways; and improvement of off-loading facilities at Phnom Penh is an urgent necessity.

d. The provincial air strips in Cambodia are now being used by the Vietnamese Air Force to receive extensive military supplies. They should be used to receive food and medical supplies. This makes restriction of the permitted international air shipment of relief goods to Phnom Penh far more limiting than need be the case and less susceptible to distribution throughout the country.

e. Air drops have been suggested. Our study leads us to the conclusion that this method should be used only for those emergency occasions and locations when no other means are available. There is too great a tendency for this instrument to be simply cosmetic and alternatively viewed as threatening.

4. The massive shipment of food, medicines, and other vital supplies will of necessity be protracted, if life is to be sustained and human vitality restored. It is essential however that simultaneously extensive efforts be undertaken to rehabilitate Cambodian agriculture. The planting of crops now provides so marginal a source of food that only an effort large enough to be significant can restore the Cambodian people to the point where they can feed and care for themselves. Cambodia was within recent times a food rich, exporting country.

5. The concentration on the adequate supply of food is both urgent and wise. Equally important, however, are the most urgent public health and medical care emergencies which must be met. This need cannot be met without the permitted entry of substantial numbers of doctors, nurses, public health personnel and paramedics. A reliable estimate recently identified as 41 the number of medical personnel remaining in this decimated nation.

II. MAXIMIZING THE LIFESAVING POTENTIAL INSIDE THAILAND.

6. There must be a large increase in the basic supply of food, medicines, and public health and medical personnel along the border of Thailand and Cambodia where fleeing populations presently concentrated are inadequately served.

7. In the two present holding centers, there is a greater availability of medical personnel and supplies. It is, nevertheless, not fully adequate even to meet the needs of the hastily built hospitals and grossly insufficient to meet the needs of the thousands not hospitalized. We do not imply criticism, but it must be observed that all existing plans for increasing the numbers of health care personnel greatly underestimate the unfilled health needs. This problem will become more acute as many additional thousands cross the border and as new holding centers are bulldozed to contain them. (A detailed medical analysis prepared by the Medical Advisor to the Commission, Dr. Philip Lee, is attached.)

8. Plans are in motion to establish new camp sites and expand existing ones. It seems unlikely that without shortened target dates and increased efforts these facilities will be available in time to care for those certain to require them in the coming weeks. The needs are complex. They involve housing, no matter how minimal, sanitary facilities, food distribution, and the basic infrastructure needed to save the Khmer already in Thailand and an unforeseen but undoubtedly large number still likely to come.

9. The efforts of the Thai Government which initially carried the entire brunt of caring for the thousands who first crossed the border were indispensable. The rapid addition of feeding, medical, and other caring operations performed by private voluntary organizations greatly helped to meet the needs of a rapidly increasing flow. The most recent and potentially the most substantial addition to this effort has been the responsibility assumed by the International Committee of the Red Cross, UNICEF and the UNHCR. Much of this effort can only be described as heroic. It, nevertheless, leaves a gap which will become more serious as the anticipated flow of refugees increases and as the complexity of dealing with them intensifies. Improved communication and coordination are required to achieve a better distribution of tasks and levels of effort which are reasonably uniform. It is no criticism of the present arrangement to suggest that this problem must be tackled now if it is only to meet the existing emergency.

10. Among those who have crossed the border into Thailand are men, women and children in the most wretched of condition, military deserters not surprisingly in better shape, and some military personnel still under continuing discipline preparing to resume their functions in the days ahead. There have been some instances in which those soldiers who are not deserters appear to be enforcing their control of the fleeing population by occasional use of ruthless methods comparable to those which prevailed in Kampuchea during the last four years. It is absolutely essential that military personnel including the deserters be separated from those who have for so long been their victims.

11. Over 200,000 of those who have crossed into Thailand are scattered along the imperfectly marked border. Some who have crossed are intending to return to continue their military duties. The expected major offensive may be only a few weeks away. It is important, therefore, to promptly increase the rate of removal of refugees clustered at the border and transport them to well-organized holding centers.

III. INCREASING RESETTLEMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL INDO-CHINESE REFUGEES.

12. The deserved attention which has been focused throughout the world on the crisis of the Khmer people has already had the effect of diverting attention from the continuing need to increase the resettlement opportunities for the other Indochinese refugees, both those who at a monthly rate of 8,000 continue to flee by boat from Vietnam and those who at comparable risk to their lives are crossing the Mekong from the hills and lowlands of Laos into Thailand.

13. The expansion of resettlement opportunities requires that priority be given to those presently in Thailand and particularly to the Lao and Hmong, many of whom have been languishing in camps for years. Unless the world is prepared to meet this need, we cannot expect the Thais to honor indefinitely their commitment to permit new numbers who cross from Cambodia to be accommodated safely in Thailand. If at any point the Thai Government should find itself compelled to stop that flow, the world must share the responsibility for the outcome of such a step.

14. Some countries are not providing adequate resettlement opportunities. Others, especially France, Australia, Canada and the United States, which have taken substantial numbers, will probably face the necessity for some increase in resettlement. It is, however, clear that the sheer magnitude of this problem now requires the most imaginative and energetic exploration of altogether new havens for significant numbers of the refugee population. There are areas of the world suitable by reason of climate, agricultural potential, and underpopulation which, with generous international financial assistance, could become permanent havens for Indochinese refugees. The situation requires that these areas be developed and utilized.



CITIZENS COMMISSION ON INDOCHINESE REFUGEES

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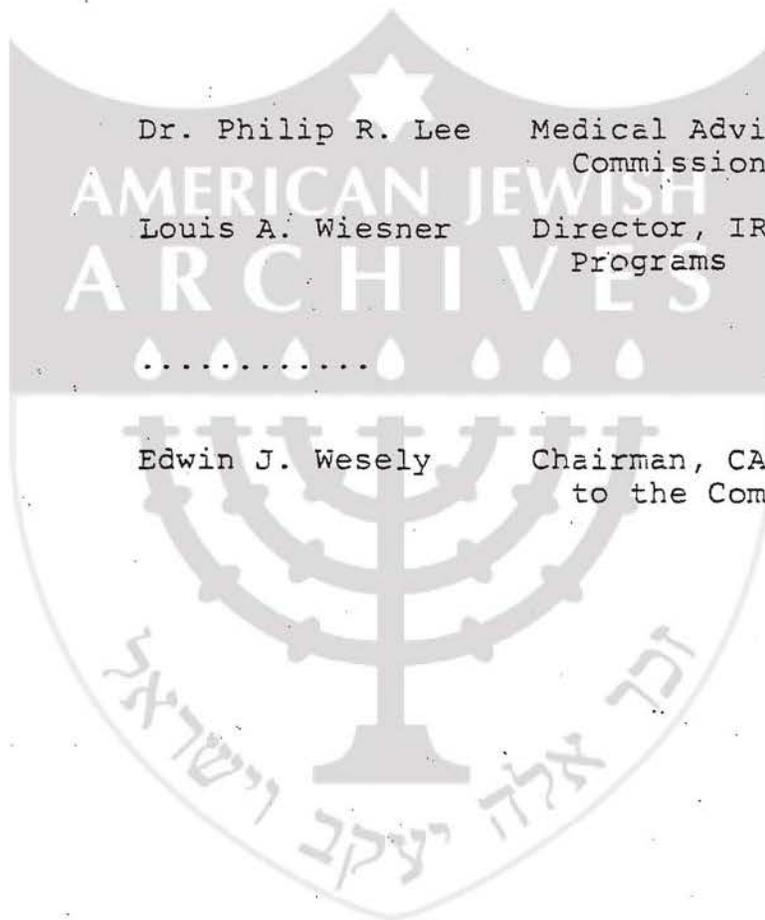
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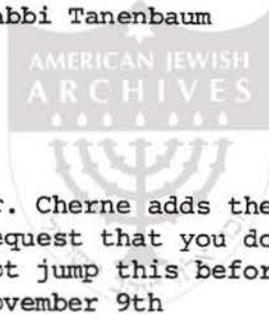
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LEO CHERNE

Rabbi Tanenbaum



Mr. Cherne adds the request that you do not jump this before November 9th

Paul

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

by

CITIZENS COMMISSION ON INDOCHINESE REFUGEES

BANGKOK NOVEMBER 9, 1979

AMERICAN JEWISH

Members of Commission who participated in survey mission to Cambodia-Thailand borders and conferences in Washington, Hong Kong and Thailand on entire Indochinese refugee situation;



THE CAMBODIANS ARE THE VICTIMS OF CALCULATED SOCIAL ENGINEERING

As others before us, we have seen at first hand the total exhaustion, the advanced starvation, the incredible prevalence of accompanying disease, the ever present reality of death among those Khmer who have crossed the border into Thailand.

These fleeing Khmer are where they can be fed and treated, (needs which we will return later in our report). However their desperate condition impresses us with the urgent need to reach some three million of their equally desperate compatriots inside Cambodia as rapidly as possible.

No victims of famine, during the last thirty-five years, so resemble the first photos of the survivors of the Nazi concentration camps after they were discovered and released by the allied troops.

The analogy between the concentration camp victims and the Cambodian people goes beyond the physical extremity both have suffered.

Like the dead and surviving in the concentration camps, the Cambodians still alive are the living remnants of a diabolic experiment in social engineering. The Nazi experiment sought the extinction of those ethnic groups which, according to Nazi philisophy, threatened to contaminate the purity of a master race. The present ghastly tragedy is the final act in an explicit effort to exterminate all existing Cambodians trained skills, knowledge, religion, economic structure and family cohesion. All city life, schools, hospitals and other manifestations of contemporary and "corrupt" culture were expunged by the Khmer Rouge in pursuit of the purest form of Communism on the face of the earth. Greater numbers of lives were sacrificed to the extermination camps in the service of Adolf Hitler's vision of Aryan purity. However, a greater percentage

of a nation's total population have already been exterminated in pursuit of Pol Pot's mad vision of a pure and completely cleansed society.

THE WAR WIDENED STARVATION

To the present already vast and incomprehensible tragedy suffered by the Cambodian people, there is now added the war for territorial and political domination of Cambodia by the two warring Communist forces. Whatever was left of primitive agriculture, whatever chance of limiting starvation, is now sacrificed to this additional assault on those who remain alive as a result, only an estimated 11% of last years inadequate crops are now under cultivation. Death by starvation is the grim prospect for a large part of the still surviving four million people.

We start our report with this preface not to regurgitate recent history. We do so because we do not believe that even the most urgent need, FOOD, will reach a sizeable portion of the still surviving population without an unambiguous diagnosis of the political reality inside Cambodia. The destruction of skills, professions, hospitals, training centers, social and economic infrastructure-has all but removed the native capacity needed to assist in the distribution of food and medicine. It is all the more urgent that food reach the largest numbers of the still alive Cambodians in all parts of that country.

THE EFFORTS BY THE INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES MUST BE SPEEDED

It is indispensable that the present efforts energetically mounted by UNICEF, ICRC, OSFAM and others be supported and speeded up. The outpouring of generosity among voluntary agencies, church groups, international institutions and governments, including large support recently announced by President Carter, these must proceed whatever the obstacles.

It is, however, important that the realities affecting this emergency undertaking be faced clearly and frankly.

LIMITATIONS IMPOSED INSIDE CAMBODIA MUST BE OPPOSED OPENLY

All of these efforts are hostage to the limitations and barriers imposed by the two antagonists to whom people are secondary to power. If most of the people cannot be reached, of course those who can be reached must be kept alive. But simultaneous efforts must be made constantly and vigourously to widen the scope of these international missions bring food, medicine and essential supplies.

SHIPMENT BY TRUCK ACROSS LAND ROUTES IS VITAL

The reasons are simple and stark. When the Heng Samrin regime so bluntly stated a week ago that movement of food and medicines by truck overland from Thailand will not be permitted. We estimate that a minimum of a million and more likely two million additional Cambodians were callously condemned to death. It is not solely that access is being denied to large geographic areas in Cambodia, including the population in areas which remain in the control of Pol Pot forces. There is a more compelling reality which limits the present announced plans to deliver food: There is no possibility of an airlift of food large enough to meet the needs of three million people. Even if planes were available, and airfields capable of accommodating them materialized miraculously, what would be required would be an airlift as large as the one which kept Berlin alive during the many months of the Berlin Blockade.

There have been suggestions that food be dropped from the air. After serious inquiry, we are convinced that such attempts would be resisted and that they are more designed to assuage our conscience than they are capable of reaching visible aggregations of starving people scattered across the dense, cloud-covered, often mountainous Cambodian terrain.

Shipment of food into the permitted harbor of Kompong Som should of course be speeded. But that, too, is an unadequate means of supply simply because of the physical limits imposed by that harbor. Even shops of moderate size cannot enter that damaged and inadequate port. Transfer of cargo to flat barges is therefore

necessary and this remorselessly limits the quantities and dangerously stretches the time during which supplies can be brought ashore. The race against death cannot be won by air or sea delivery to the two designated locations.

There is only one method of delivery which has the potential of moving food and other basic supplies reasonably rapidly in quantities which meet the magnitude of the pressing and fragile human need. That method was urged upon and flatly refused by the authorities in Phohn Pehn. That refusal was then indorsed by the government in Hanoi. That method proposed a massive movement by truck from Thailand, along protected routes into Cambodia. Even that method of delivery would require additional authorized truck routes to the two which were discussed so that the supplies could fan into the major areas of rural population in Cambodia.

The objection by the Heng Samrin regime was that this proposal was a blind for an imperialist effort to meddle in the internal affairs of Cambodia. This spurious objection was publicized despite the fact that the plan discussed with them specifically involved the use of international personnel of the ICRC and UNICEF to shepherd and supervise those shipments by truck.

THE REFUSAL OF A LAND ROUTE MUST NOT BE ACCEPTED

Despite the flatly negative position of the Vietnam supported forces, we urgently ask that the Secretary General of the U.N., the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, other appropriate international agencies and as many governments as possible, continue to press promptly and relentlessly for a reversal of that refusal.

Without an assurance of safety and permission by the authorities in Phnom Pehn, this one feasible approach capable of reaching a large number of the men, women and children inside Cambodia cannot begin.

A PROTRACTED EFFORT IS ESSENTIAL

The major religious and voluntary agencies in the United States and the

international aid missions know, even as they begin, that the tragedy inside Cambodia is not one that can be solved in a period of months. While the immediate focus is on rapid delivery of food and medical supplies, a population thus kept alive must be enabled to achieve sufficient stability and physical strength to sink roots, build shelter, plant and harvest crops. Plans are already underway to ship as many as a million hoes into Cambodia. Food must continue to be provided until crops are harvested in sufficient quantity to insure the continuation of life.

But the continuity of life also requires assurance of the peace and safety of that native population. The population still alive must be shielded from the consequences of continuing internal war.

MEDICAL AID INSIDE CAMBODIA IS NEEDED QUICKLY

Willingness, on the part of the warring forces to permit the entry of doctors and nurses in sufficient quantity to meet the desperate and immediate health needs of this shattered people is indispensable. If all the medicine which now exists in Cambodia were used solely to meet this life saving need, it would be grossly inadequate. Forty to fifty doctors, the number reported still alive inside Cambodia cannot treat three million people, eighty percent of whom suffer significant illnesses. Even those doctors cannot reach more than a small number of the humans who require their help.

It will be evident from these observations and recommendations, why the needed measures cannot proceed without substantial political accommodation by the authorities who determine life and death inside Cambodia. We cannot settle for the heart breaking premise that "there is no way to reach these people". The lesson of the first Holocaust provides sufficient reason. International attempts to modify today's political reality, in the sole interest of saving life, must be relentless. These efforts must not be discouraged even by repeated refusals. We cannot conclude that the Vietnamese officials in Hanoi or the authorities they support and arm in Phnom Ponh will not yield to persistent international outcry.

IS IT TOO LATE TO AVERT THE HOLOCAUST?

It must be aspur to all existing efforts, as well as those still not undertaken,

to know that even those efforts are more than four years late. A ghastly human price was exacted by the forced evacuation of all the living from every city and town in Cambodia in April 1975. It is estimated by those who were sympathetic to the Khmer Rouge resulted in the death of a million people. During the subsequent four years, the remorseless elimination of large segments of the population and accompanying starvation suffered by virtually all those surviving have taken an estimated additional toll of two million. A nation, which had a population of over seven million in 1975, is now a nation in which only an estimated four million people still survive. That Holocaust cannot be undone nor the events during the preceding 20 years. What can and must be done is to prevent the virtual obliteration of the Khmer people. This must be done inside Cambodia since that is where the greater number are trapped. It must, however, with flexibility, imagination and vigor, be the purpose of all work inside Thailand if we are to save an estimated half million of these survivors who it is thought, before flight is ended, will have dragged their sick and feeble bodies across the Cambodian border. All the relief programs along the Cambodian border must be large, flexible, imaginative and tireless.

WE MUST NOT NEGLECT THE OTHER INDOCHINESE REFUGEES

The non-Cambodian Indochinese refugees not be neglected as a consequence of the huge steps needed to save the Khmer people. The generosity of the United States is often characterized by a singleness of purpose. Too often there is a burst of concern and response which fades too soon.

The wide public attention devoted to the agony of the Vietnamese Boat People, (because they took a visible life and death gamble at sea) led to the substantial neglect of those who escaped Laos and Cambodia by land routes. Some 16,000 Cambodians were given sanctuary in Thailand before the present massive flight. Attention to the urgency of assisting the Boat People also shadowed the more than 100,000 who fled Laos at the equal risk to their lives.

Now the extraordinary international efforts by UNICEF, ICRC, OSFARM, the United

States Government and several other governments, joined by the U.S. voluntary and religious agencies may divert needed efforts designed to help the Vietnamese Boat People. And once again the refugees from Laos are likely to continue in the shadows. Such public attention immediately affects the continuing need to provide substantial resettlement opportunities are the Indochinese refugees. Agreement was reached at the Geneva Indochina Refugee Conference, between Secretary General Waldheim and a representative of the Government of Vietnam which has resulted in a substantial reduction of the numbers fleeing Vietnam. Nevertheless, a substantial number still risk their lives to flee that country. More than 8,000 Boat People a month continue to reach safety. That means that a probable fifteen thousand have fled each month, with one-half that number lost at sea. The flight of the Lao peoples remains at a relatively constant 4,000 a month.

As a result of the moderated flow during these recent months, the numbers being resettled in the United States and other countries for the first time now exceed the numbers continuing to flee from Vietnam and Laos.

NO REDUCTION OF REPRESSION IN VIETNAM IS APPARENT

The arrangement with Vietnam which induced her to shut her gates involves troubling moral questions involved a great price paid by disfavored segments of the Vietnamese people. The nations of the world, (including the United States) have not been prepared to accept a greater number of refugees than is presently the case. We have, therefore, perhaps with some sense of relief, acquiesced in the arrangement whereby Vietnam has been led to more effectively contain its desperate citizens.

We did not urge, let alone require that Vietnam discontinue its severely repressive policies. Those policies are so harsh that people are willing to risk their lives in flight. Nor has there been an orderly exit program from Vietnam despite U.S. efforts to speed such a program. Therefore, we are all in a very real sense, collaborator in the imprisonment of hundreds of thousand of people who are willing to risk death to escape the terror of their lives.

WE MUST PREPARE FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF AN ENLARGED REFUGEE OUTFLOW

Even this present, not satisfactory situation, may prove fragile. There is no certainty that Vietnam will continue to seal its borders as remorselessly as it does today. There is no certainty that the end of the monsoon season now upon us, will not see an increased flow. There is a dangerous possibility that hostilities between China and Vietnam may again erupt. If such an event occurs, it is likely that Vietnam will again seek to extrude their Sino-Vietnamese population and other disfavored groups. We urge that the U.N. and the UNHCR continue and increase all possible efforts to stimulate increased refugee settlement by present and additional countries. We also urge that a special section be created in the office of the Secretary General of the U.N., which will urgently pursue widening resettlement of the three groups of Indochinese refugees. It is clear that the willingness of the countries of Southeast Asia to provide any additional, even temporary, asylum for the continuing flow of refugees has either vanished or is declining rapidly. We are concerned that Indonesia, which has taken thousands of those not permitted to land in Malaysia, may be approaching the limits of their willingness to provide temporary asylum.

NEW AREAS OF SUBSTANTIAL RESETTLEMENT OPPORTUNITY MUST BE FOUND

The office of the Secretary General of the U.N., aided by other governments, must initiate completely new approaches to stimulate resettlement, for the most part agricultural, in countries of the world which have unused but suitable areas useful for a primarily agricultural population and which are presently thinly populated. This will make a double contribution. It would widen refugee resettlement and create some addition to world food supplies at a time when there is increasing concern about future food adequacy.

WE MUST FACE THE POLITICAL REALITY UNDERLYING TODAY'S INDOCHINESE TRAGEDY

The very urgency of moderating the flow of refugees from Vietnam has, as we have previously said, encouraged us to ignore the political reality inside the

three countries of what was formerly Indochina. All involved ignored the essential disregard of human life by those governments in an entirely proper effort to seek their cooperation. For the same reason, no comment has been made which would incur the opposition of major powers which are aiding and stimulating the warring factions contesting power in Cambodia. This political approach, sanitized of any concern for the practices of the parties involved is necessarily expedient. It can only be temporary. Long range solutions, essential if the lives and human rights of the three peoples are to be protected, will require us to focus on the repressive, punitive and lethal practices which exact so high a human price. If we cannot by pressure succeed in altering practices so destructive to millions of people, we must sharply increase the willingness on the part of many countries, including the United States, to substantially increase the numbers to be resettled outside Indochina so that at least those who flee and survive can find new lives. If policies and practices, so draconian as to cause people to risk the life of their children in flight cannot be changed, we must be prepared to take substantial increases in numbers of those who deserve the opportunity to flee and find safety and a new life elsewhere.

The demographic reality in the three afflicted countries adds to the urgency of seeking a positive change even if such changes only result in the minimum guarantees of human rights in Cambodia and Laos. Both countries, for reason of present and past tragedies, are now underpopulated. The land in those two countries is capable of sustaining their present and additional people. In contrast, Vietnam is approaching the point of overpopulation and may, therefore, have less incentive to regard its population with humanity. It may, in fact, covet the agriculture potential of its less populated neighbors.

THE ANXIETY THROUGHOUT SOUTH-EAST ASIA

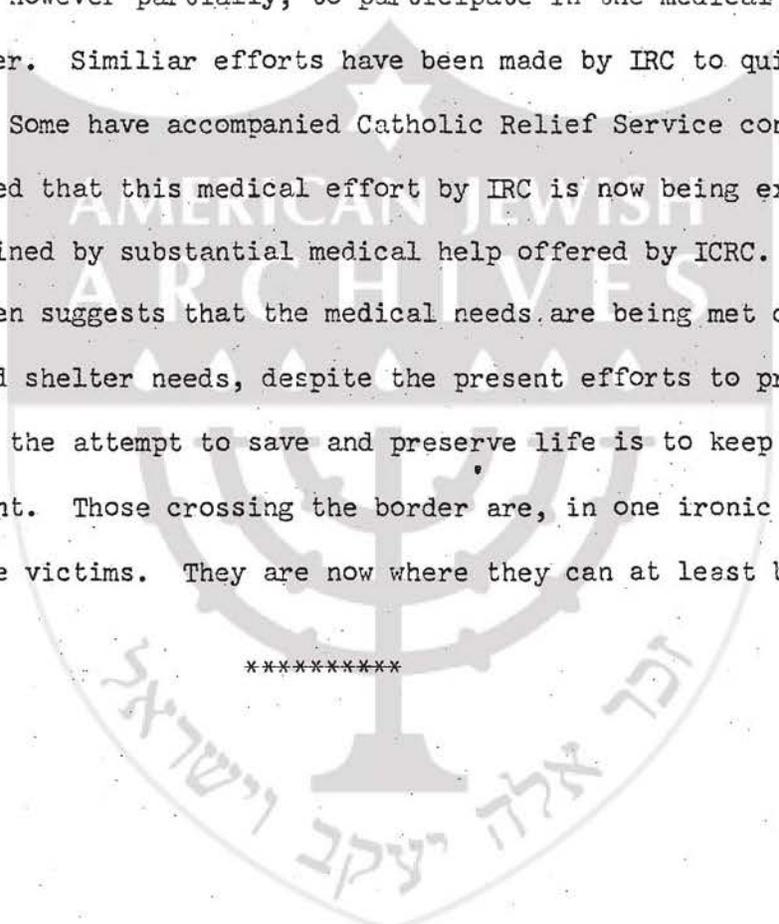
There is a well founded, if exaggerated, conviction among the neighboring countries of Southeast Asia, that the refugee outpouring from Vietnam has been

part of a calculated effort to destabilize the fragile racial-ethnic balances throughout Southeast Asia. This concern is particularly vivid in Malaysia and Singapore. It is probable that there will be a similiar and increasing concern in Indonesia.

There is a more immediate fear in Thailand, which has historic reason to fear Vietnamese aggression. Thailand now finds itself with a half million refugees and military forces on its northern and eastern borders.

It is part of the tragic character of this century that refugees flows inextricably involve political, military and human considerations. We have witnessed the flight of large numbers of refugees from a number of countries. These refugees have been pawns of political purposes. Above and beyond these waves of people in flight, there have been two terrifying instances thirty years apart, in which the victims involved have been unable to flee. Those millions have been doomed to extinction, contained in countries which other nations conclude "we cannot get at". It is no diminution of the gratitude one must have for the efforts of the United Nations and particularly of UNICEF, of ICRC, of OSFAM and others who urgently seeking to ship food into Cambodia to emphasize these political aspects of todays reality. The very agencies urgently seeking to reach the sick and starving are, of course, acutely aware of these realisties. These efforts have been delayed for months while attempts have been made to seek permission to not only ship food but to assure that the food will not be misused as a weapon of war. Such agreement has finally been reached. We reluctantly feel compelled to stress that an agreement reached is not automatically an agreement honored. We must also caution that administering present understandings requires substantial international staffs inside Cambodia to assure that help reaches those for whom it is intended. What we have seen on the border of Cambodia-Thailand has compelled us to recognize that even when there is no resistance to the aid being made available, there is an acute shortage of adequate trained staff to meet the most crying immediate needs of the fleeing population. One can only admire the tenacious energy of Catholic Relief Services in moving substantial quantities of food

to the thousands of Cambodian refugees who have already crossed into Thailand as well as their efforts to make food available to those who can cross the border and bring the food back into Cambodia. Similiar recognition must go to the Thai military and Red Cross. They not only have permitted this massive number to cross the borders, displacing thousands of native Thai in the process, but have sought however partially, to participate in the medical help to provide along that border. Similiar efforts have been made by IRC to quickly mount medical teams. Some have accompanied Catholic Relief Service convoys of food. We are encouraged that this medical effort by IRC is now being expanded rapidly and is being joined by substantial medical help offered by ICRC. But nothing that we have seen suggests that the medical needs are being met completely, nor are the food and shelter needs, despite the present efforts to provide them. Much must be done if the attempt to save and preserve life is to keep up with the continuing flight. Those crossing the border are, in one ironic respect, the most fortunate of the victims. They are now where they can at least be reached.



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AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE
165 E. 56TH ST
NEW YORK, NY 10022

FOLLOWING IS THE MAILGRAM SENT TO MRS. CARTER ON NOVEMBER 9:

NOVEMBER 9, 1979

MRS. ROSALYNN CARTER
ATTN FAITH COLLINS
THE WHITE HOUSE

I APPLAUD YOUR EFFORTS TO MOBILIZE THE AMERICAN PUBLIC TO ASSIST CAMBODIANS FLEEING TO THAILAND. WE HAVE MOBILIZED THE STATE OF WISCONSIN IN A LIFE-SAVING EFFORT THAT I BELIEVE WILL GIVE YOU THE CONFIDENCE THAT AMERICA IS WILLING TO RESPOND TO YOUR LEADERSHIP IN THIS EFFORT. THROUGH THE MEDICAL COLLEGE OF WISCONSIN WE HAVE ORGANIZED A COALITION KNOWN AS THE WISCONSIN INDO CHINA REFUGEE RELIEF, INC. WE ARE RAISING \$100,000 TO BE USED TO SEND FIVE DOCTORS AND A NURSE, TOGETHER WITH MEDICAL SUPPLIES AND FOOD, TO THAILAND TO PROVIDE MUCH NEEDED LIFE-SAVING MEDICAL SERVICES. THIS PROGRAM IS COORDINATED WITH THE AMERICAN RESCUE COMMITTEE AND THE RED CROSS. ACCEPTANCE OF OUR PLAN BY CONTRIBUTORS HAS BEEN EXCELLENT.

I BELIEVE THAT WITH YOUR LEADERSHIP WE CAN MOBILIZE, IMMEDIATELY, 20 LARGE CITY OPERATIONS TO SEND MEDICAL TEAMS, MEDICAL SUPPLIES, ETC. TO THAILAND. I AM SENDING YOU A SEPARATE LETTER DESCRIBING HOW THIS CAN BE DONE. I STAND READY TO HELP IN ANY WAY POSSIBLE. I AM THE PAST PRESIDENT OF MANPOWER, INC., AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION OPERATING IN 720 CITIES IN 34 COUNTRIES. KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK. MY PHONE NUMBER IS (414) 961-1000. MY ADDRESS IS 5301 NORTH IRONWOOD ROAD, MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN 53217.

ELMER L. WINTER

16:52 EST

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INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE, INC.

CABLE: INTERESCUE, NEW YORK

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

THE IRC AND THE CAMBODIAN REFUGEE EMERGENCY

A. Present Program

The International Rescue Committee has had teams of medical doctors, nurses and paramedics working on the Thai-Cambodian border since late 1976. Their primary mission has been to provide basic medical care for Cambodian refugees in camps in Thailand and for groups of Cambodian refugees coming across the border.

At the outset of the present crisis, the IRC substantially increased its teams and broadened their scope of operation. These included expanded medical services to refugees in remote border areas ranging from Surin in the north to Mai Rut in the south.

When the Sa Kaeo holding area was established, IRC medical personnel moved in as well. The team assigned there set up a basic intensive care unit, a blood bank and, with Catholic Relief Services, a special unit for orphaned children. This initial team consisted of 5 doctors, 8 nurses and 2 paramedical lab technicians.

This effort has just been augmented by the arrival of a medical team consisting of 2 doctors, 10 nurses and 2 paramedics from the San Francisco bay area.

Thus, IRC presently has a medical component at Sa Kaeo: 7 doctors, 18 nurses and 4 paramedics helping the over 40,000 Cambodian refugees billeted there.

Another IRC medical unit consisting of 1 doctor, 1 nurse and 1 nurse's aide is assigned to the Komput area near the border. This area is to become a second major holding area for Cambodian refugees. There are presently some 10,000 refugees there.

IRC continues to have primary responsibility for the medical care of the refugees in the camp at Aranyaprathet. This camp, with a population of some 12,000, is served by an IRC team consisting of 1 doctor, 2 nurses and a number of locally trained refugee assistants.

A medical team of the American Refugee Committee from Minneapolis, consisting of 6 doctors, 8 nurses and 1 paramedic, arrived in Thailand yesterday to augment the combined IRC emergency operation.

IRC has purchased as well considerable amounts of supplies, including drugs, medicines, and 600 beds for Sa Kaeo.

The effort is backed by a small support staff in Bangkok. The program is coordinated closely with the ICRC, UNHCR and other voluntary agencies, especially Catholic Relief Services.

B. Future Plans

IRC intends to continue its present commitment to help Cambodian refugees in Thailand to the full extent of its resources in the months ahead as new holding areas are set up for the perhaps 300,000 refugees who have by now entered Thailand as well as those still to come. Therefore, our efforts are directed towards recruiting teams which can commit themselves for an extended period (6 months to 1 year) or to rotating arrangements with medical schools and hospitals through which a continuity of trained medical personnel on the spot can be assured.

C. What Fund-Raising Efforts Have Been Undertaken.

Direct Mail: Between October 1 - December 1, more than 500,000 individual appeals.

Corporations: Appeal to Chief Executive Officers of leading American companies will be mailed about November 20.

Theatre Committee for Cambodian Refugee Relief: Collections being made in all major theatres started November 7, will continue through November 20. Unions, producers, performers also contributing individually (including \$18,000 from Joseph Papp, \$10,000 from Liv Ullman). Some theatres throughout country will participate. Expect total amount raised to be \$100,000 to \$150,000.

Benefits: Fund raising benefits to be held in many areas, in cooperation with religious and secular associations, community, student and educational groups.

IRC's goal for the Cambodian Refugee Crisis is \$1,000,000.

New York, N.Y. November 11, 1979

November 9, 1979

MAILGRAM TO: Mrs. Rosalynn Carter - Attn: Faith Collins
The White House

I APPLAUD YOUR EFFORTS TO MOBILIZE THE AMERICAN PUBLIC TO ASSIST CAMBODIANS FLEEING TO THAILAND. WE HAVE MOBILIZED THE STATE OF WISCONSIN IN A LIFE SAVING EFFORT THAT I BELIEVE WILL GIVE YOU THE CONFIDENCE THAT AMERICA IS WILLING TO RESPOND TO YOUR LEADERSHIP IN THIS EFFORT. THROUGH THE MEDICAL COLLEGE OF WISCONSIN WE HAVE ORGANIZED A COALITION KNOWN AS THE WISCONSIN INDO CHINA REFUGEE RELIEF, INC. WE ARE RAISING \$100,000 TO BE USED TO SEND FIVE DOCTORS AND A NURSE, TOGETHER WITH MEDICAL SUPPLIES AND FOOD, TO THAILAND TO PROVIDE MUCH NEEDED LIFE SAVING MEDICAL SERVICES. THIS PROGRAM IS COORDINATED WITH THE AMERICAN RESCUE COMMITTEE AND THE RED CROSS. ACCEPTANCE OF OUR PLAN BY CONTRIBUTORS HAS BEEN EXCELLENT.

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Elmer L. Winter



INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE, INC.

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

11/15/79

Dear Max,

I know you will want
to see the enclosed reports.
& hope you recover quickly
from the flu.

Best regards,

Al Kastner

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The Southeast Asian Refugees

Background Memorandum

Approximately 450-500,000 refugees have fled Indochina (i.e. Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos) since 1975.

Of these, close to 250,000 have been granted asylum in the United States and other Western lands.

International Rescue Efforts

Following the collapse of the Thieu regime in April 1975, the United States accepted an initial 132,000 Vietnamese refugees. Since then, until November of this year, the United States has admitted an additional 50,000 refugees, for a total of 182,000 over the four years. By April 1979 it is expected that the United States will have admitted at least 15,000 more.

Other countries who have granted asylum to the Indochinese refugees include (as of November 1978):

France	--	43,817
Australia	--	13,347
Canada	--	7,560
Britain	--	644
Italy	--	225
Netherlands-		204
New Zealand-		665

Japan is reported to have allowed only one family of refugees to enter its country.

At present, more than 40,000 Indochinese refugees are in transit camps in Malaysia.

More than 136,000 refugees are also presently in Thailand.

The "Boat People"

Of the 450-500,000 who have fled since 1975, approximately 75,000 have left by sea -- the so-called "boat people" -- landing primarily in Malaysia. The other refugees escaped overland, primarily to Thailand.

Many of those who sought to flee by sea are known to have perished. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that only 60 percent of those who escape by sea survive. In recent weeks, more than 350 boat people have perished at sea.

Of the 75,000 Vietnamese who successfully escaped by sea during the last four years, 37,000 have been resettled and another 38,000 are scattered in temporary camps, mainly in Malaysia.

The number of "boat people" has been increasing at an enormous rate over the last few months. Last spring, about 1,500 refugees a month aboard small boats were entering other Southeast Asian countries after leaving Vietnam. In May of this year the number rose to 5,000 and increased to 10,000 in October. It is expected that the number of "boat people" will jump to 20,000 for the month of November.

The Hai Hong Refugees

At present, the following countries have agreed to admit some of the 2,500 refugees aboard the Hai Hong:

France	--	222
Canada	--	604
West Germany	-	1,000
Belgium	--	<u>150</u>
TOTAL		1,976

The United States has agreed to admit all the Vietnam refugees aboard the Hai Hong who are not resettled in other countries.

As of December 1, 1978, France has admitted 222 of the Hai Hong refugees; Canada has accepted 479 and West Germany 159.

U. S. Efforts

In April 1978, the U. S. Government decided to admit 15,000 Indochinese refugees annually into the United States; 12,500, or half would be "boat people" and the remaining 12,500 admitted would be Laotian or Cambodian refugees who had fled overland to Thailand.

This November, Attorney General Griffin Bell approved the entry of an additional 2,500 "boat people," the number aboard the Hai Hong, in order to convince Malaysia to grant temporary haven to those refugees aboard the freighter. This action would increase the total number of "boat people" admitted to the United States for the year ending on April 30, 1979 to 15,000.

The decision to increase the number of refugees admitted to the United States stimulated considerable debate within the Administration and Congress. The Human Rights and East Asian Bureaus of the State Department had been pressing for the admission of a larger number of refugees. Attorney General Bell,

who must consult with the State Department and the Congressional committees dealing with refugee affairs before approving the admission of more refugees under his "parole" authority, was initially reluctant to increase the number allowed in under this emergency procedure.

Regarding the Hai Hong refugees, the Administration was of the view that the 2,500 additional refugees to be approved for admission to the United States should come from among those who had already been waiting in camps in Malaysia and that Malaysia should allow the Hai Hong refugees to enter its country at least on a temporary basis.

On November 29, Attorney General Bell announced that he was planning to admit an additional 21,875 Indochinese refugees, about three-quarters of them Vietnamese "boat people" and the rest Cambodians, by the end of April 1979. This would bring to 30,000 the number of "boat people" the United States would admit for the year ending April 30, 1978.

Future Efforts

These actions do not solve the increasingly critical problem of the "boat people" or the general refugee problem in Southeast Asia. The United States is projecting a buildup of approximately 120,000 "boat people" by next spring, considerably more than the number presently in temporary camps in Malaysia.

Partly at the suggestion of the United States, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees will convene a meeting in Geneva on December 11-12 of more than 30 countries to seek international action on the Southeast Asian refugee problem.

Jewish Efforts

As his first act in office, Prime Minister Begin of Israel granted asylum to 66 Vietnamese "boat people" who were rescued at sea by an Israeli freighter.

In the United States, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) has aided in the resettlement of Indochinese refugees in conjunction with local Jewish community agencies and private sponsors. From August 1977 to September 1978, HIAS has assisted in the resettlement of 660 Indochinese refugees or 3 percent of the 22,000 admitted to the United States during that period.

This year, HIAS has agreed to aid in the resettlement of 1,250 Indochinese refugees, or 5 percent of the 25,000 that are expected to be admitted to the United States. At present, however, the numbers of Indochinese refugees that are expected to be admitted to the United States this coming year have increased to 60,000 and HIAS is now discussing the possibility of assisting 3,000, or 5 percent, of this new number.

Efforts of the American Jewish Committee

Last year, Marc Tanenbaum, AJC National Director of Interreligious Affairs, participated in a mission to Southeast Asia arranged by the Citizens Commission on Indochinese Refugees with the assistance of the International Rescue Committee. The findings of that commission had been instrumental in the decision by the U. S. Government to increase the number of Indochinese refugees granted asylum in the United States.

Last May, at its Annual Meeting, the AJC adopted a resolution urging the U. S. Government to admit under the parole provisions of the immigration law, or under special legislation, the thousands of Cambodian refugees living in camps in Thailand.

On November 22, the AJC issued a statement comparing the plight of the "boat people" aboard the Hai Hong to the Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany aboard the ship St. Louis in 1939 when the United States and other countries refused to grant them haven. The statement called upon President Carter and Attorney General Bell to immediately use emergency powers available for admission of the Hai Hong "boat people" and assistance to other Vietnamese in a similar plight.

At the beginning of December, Rabbi Tanenbaum and two other members of the Citizens Commission on Indochinese Refugees embarked on a second 10-day mission to Southeast Asia to investigate conditions of Vietnamese "boat people" and Cambodian and Laotian refugees in camps in Malaysia and Thailand.

The Southeast Asian Refugees
Fact Sheet

Number of Refugees who have fled Indochina since 1975 450-500,000

The General Refugee Problem in Southeast Asia

Malaysia	More than 40,000
Thailand	More than <u>136,000</u>
TOTAL	More than 176,000 (increasing daily)

The "Boat People" -- (i. e. Those escaping by sea to Malaysia)

Approximately 38,000, increasing at a monthly rate of 20,000.

Projection of 120,000 by Spring 1979.

The Hai Hong Refugees

Total	2,500
-------	-------

Number expected to be granted asylum
(by country)

		<u>Resettled as of 12/2/78</u>
France	222	222
Canada	604	479
West Germany	1,000	159
Belgium	<u>150</u>	
TOTAL	1,976	

(The United States has agreed to accept those not admitted by other countries)

Overall Rescue Efforts Since 1975 (Approximates as of November, 1978)

United States	182,000
France	43,817
Australia	13,347
Canada	7,560
Britain	644
Italy	225
Netherlands	204
New Zealand	665
Israel	66

MB
12/7/78
78-580-23



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20536

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AND REFER TO THIS FILE NO.

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

Leo Cherne, Chairman
Citizens Commission on Indochinese Refugees
Care of International Rescue Committee, Inc.
386 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10016

Dear Mr. Cherne: *Leo,*

Thank you for your gracious letter of August 31, 1979 inviting me to accept election to the Citizens Commission on Indochinese Refugees.

I appreciate the very kind words about me expressed in your letter and I am honored to accept election to the Citizens Commission.

Sincerely,

Leonel
Leonel J. Castillo
Commissioner



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Re: Cambodian Refugee Amendment in Conference Report on H.R. 12934

Dear Colleague:

Very shortly, the House of Representatives will be considering an amendment on Cambodian refugees brought back in technical disagreement by the conferees on H.R. 12934, the bill making appropriations for Departments of State, Justice, Commerce, the Judiciary and related agencies for fiscal year 1979.

The amendment recommended by the conferees is the result, and tracks the language, of a nongermane Senate amendment to H.R. 12934. Specifically, it expresses the sense of the Congress that the Attorney General exercise his parole authority under the Immigration and Nationality Act to admit, over a two year period, 15,000 Cambodian refugees presently in camps in Thailand. This amendment arises out of a deep concern, which I am sure all of us share, over the ruthless and brutal treatment of Cambodian citizens at the hands of Communist leaders in that country.

However, as Chairman and ranking minority Member of the Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, and International Law, we are constrained to oppose this amendment. In our judgment, there are several reasons why this amendment must be defeated.

First of all, the amendment, while well-intentioned, will do absolutely nothing to relieve the horrible suffering of millions of Cambodians who have been unable to escape from that country.

Secondly, the amendment will be detrimental to the efforts of our government to establish a reasonable, humanitarian and long-range refugee policy. Its effect would be to perpetuate the past policy of responding to refugee problems in an "ad hoc", piecemeal fashion. In fact, this amendment comes at a time when most interested parties from the Legislative and Executive Branches and from the private voluntary agency sector are agreed that we must have a carefully-developed, comprehensive, national refugee policy.

Thirdly, the amendment could clearly impede our efforts to "internationalize" the Indochina refugee situation -- a development we believe is vital to any satisfactory resolution of this most serious problem.

Based upon a close scrutiny of this problem over the past three years by our Subcommittee and recent discussions that we have had with the Foreign Ministers of Thailand and Malaysia, we continue to believe that an International Conference on Indochina refugees among interested countries must be convened. It is imperative that we focus the attention - and the conscience - of the world community on this difficult problem in an effort to foster greater international cooperation and to increase resettlement opportunities for all Indochina refugees.

Finally, this amendment severely undermines the policies and procedures which have been established for the admission of Indochina refugees. These policies (including the selection criteria) have been developed by the Executive Branch following close consultation with Members of the House Judiciary Committee and the Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, and International Law.

As a result, the current eligibility criteria gives priority to those who have had some past association with the U.S. or who are related to persons residing in this country. Special priority is also given to those refugees who find themselves in a particularly precarious position, such as Vietnamese "boat case" refugees who continue to be pushed "back to sea" by many countries in Southeast Asia.

It should be pointed out that the plight of the 15,000 Cambodian refugees in Thailand (notwithstanding the severe hardship which they have endured and escaped from) is indistinguishable from that of the over 100,000 Laotian refugees there, in terms of their humanitarian needs and their desire for permanent resettlement opportunities.

Rather than adopt an inflexible and absolute program to admit all Cambodian refugees, the preferable approach would be to recommend review and revision of the current eligibility criteria applied under the present U.S. program in order to give special consideration to the unique situation presented by the Cambodian refugees in Thailand.

In order to carry out the views expressed in this letter, it is our intention to offer the following substitute amendment:

Sec. 605. It is the sense of the Congress that --

- (1) the Attorney General, in consultation with the Congress, should develop special eligibility criteria under the current U.S. parole program for Indochina Refugees which would enable a larger number of refugees from Cambodia to qualify for admission to the United States;
- (2) the Secretary of State should undertake immediately steps leading to the convening of an International Conference on Indochina Refugees; and
- (3) the Attorney General and the Secretaries of State and Health, Education and Welfare should submit to the Congress, at the earliest possible time, a unified position on legislation which would establish for the United States a comprehensive and long-range policy for admitting and resettling refugees.

*See Sec. 605 of statute has talked
see it --
See Gov*

*make it up 40% must
WIPER - has initiative
how - urging - report
will happen*

in time to take / political

*Comprehensive
timetable - to good avail
early in January*

This substitute amendment can only be considered if the motion offered by Congressman Slack (to agree to the amendment suggested by the conferees) is defeated. We, therefore, urge your support for defeating that motion and for approving our substitute amendment.

Sincerely,

HAMILTON FISH, JR.

HAMILTON FISH, JR.
Ranking Minority Member
Subcommittee on Immigration,
Citizenship, and International Law

JOSHUA EILBERG

JOSHUA EILBERG
Chairman
Subcommittee on Immigration,
Citizenship, and International
Law

