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INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE, INC.

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October 27, 1978

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

Dear Rabbi Tanenbaum:

I understand that prior commitments make it necessary for you to envisage going to Southeast Asia in advance of the Citizens Commission. I would be glad to travel with you, if you agree, as it would give me the chance to do a bit of advance work for the Commission. In addition, we may well be joined by Mr. Neal Ball, a private citizen from Chicago, who has taken a great personal interest in Indochinese refugees. Neal is a Vice President of the American Hospital Supply Corporation. A few months ago he hosted a day for Leo in Chicago, including meetings with a number of corporate executives, a luncheon and meetings with the editorial boards of the major newspapers. He would not be considered a member of the Commission, but rather an interested friend.

I would suggest the following itinerary, and would welcome your comments on it.

- Friday, December 1 - Depart New York 11:00 a.m. *Hilton Hotel*
 Saturday, December 2 Arrive Hong Kong 9:40 p.m. *4:15 p.m.*
 Sunday, December 3 - Depart Hong Kong, arrive Kuala Lumpur.
 Monday, December 4 through Wednesday, December 6 - Visit boat camps in Malaysia, meet with U.S., U.N. and Malaysian officials.
 Thursday, December 7 - Depart Kuala Lumpur, arrive Bangkok.
 Friday, December 8 and Saturday, December 9 - Visit Cambodian camps at Aranyaprethet and Komput, plus boat camp at Laem Sing. OR Visit Lao Hmong camp at Nong Khai. Meet with U.S., U.N. and Thai officials.

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Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum
October 27, 1978

- Sunday, December 10 - Depart Bangkok, arrive Hong Kong.
- Monday, December 11 - Hong Kong - meet with Citizens Commission
(they will arrive in Hong Kong late Saturday,
December 9).
- Tuesday, December 12 - Depart Hong Kong - 1:00 p.m., arrive New York
5:15 p.m (same day).

Please call if you have any thoughts on the above schedule. It will be a bit grueling, but would cover the main points of interest. In addition, it would give you the opportunity to brief the Commission, much as James Michener did, upon their arrival.

I look forward to hearing from you on this at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,


Robert P. DeVecchi



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Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 95th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 124

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 10, 1978

No. 164—Part II

S 18076

AMEND THE IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY ACT

Mr. CRANSTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration of House Report 12509 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will state the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

H.R. 12509, an act to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to exclude from admission into, and to deport from, the United States all aliens who persecuted any person on the basis of race, religion, national origin, or political opinion, under the direction of the Nazi Government of Germany, and for other purposes.

The Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

UP AMENDMENT NO. 2050

(Purpose: to amend the Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1975, as amended, to continue full funding of the Indochina Refugee Assistance Program, subject to limitations, and for other purposes)

Mr. CRANSTON. Mr. President, I send to the desk an unprinted amendment in the nature of a substitute and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from California (Mr. CRANSTON) for himself, Mr. KENNEDY, and Mr. HAYAKAWA proposes an unprinted amendment numbered 2050.

Mr. CRANSTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that further reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

TITLE I

SEC. 101(a) Section 212(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1182 (a)), relating to general classes of aliens ineligible to receive visas and excluded from admission, is amended—

(1) by striking out the period at the end of paragraph (32) and inserting in lieu thereof a semicolon; and

(2) by adding immediately after paragraph (32) the following new paragraph:

“(33) Any alien who during the period beginning on March 23, 1933, and ending on May 8, 1945, under the direction of, or in association with—

“(A) the Nazi government in Germany,

“(B) any government in any area occupied by the military forces of the Nazi government of Germany,

“(C) any government established with the assistance or cooperation of the Nazi government of Germany, or

“(D) any government which was an ally of the Nazi government of Germany,

ordered, incited, assisted, or otherwise participated in the persecution of any person because of race, religion, national origin, or political opinion.”

Sec. 102. Section 312(d) (3) of such Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(d) (3)), relating to waiver of exclusions for certain non-immigrants, is amended by striking out “(27) and (28)” and inserting in lieu thereof “(27), (29), and (33)” each place it appears.

Sec. 103. Section 361(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1251(a)), relating to general classes of deportable aliens, is amended—

(1) by striking out “or” at the end of paragraph (17);

(2) by striking out the period at the end of paragraph (18) and inserting in lieu thereof “, or”; and

(3) by adding immediately after paragraph (18) the following new paragraph:

“(19) during the period beginning on March 23, 1933, and ending on May 8, 1945, under the direction of, or in association with—

“(A) the Nazi government of Germany,

“(B) any government in any area occupied by the military forces of the Nazi government of Germany,

“(C) any government established with the assistance or cooperation of the Nazi government of Germany, or

“(D) any government which was an ally of the Nazi government of Germany, ordered, incited, assisted, or otherwise participated in the persecution of any person because of race, religion, national origin, or political opinion.”

Sec. 104. Section 343(h) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1253(h)), relating to withholding of deportation, is amended by inserting “(other than an alien described in section 241(a) (19))” after “The Attorney General is authorized to withhold deportation of any alien”.

Sec. 105. Section 244(e) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1254(e)), relating to voluntary departure of aliens under deportation proceedings, is amended by striking out “or (18)” and inserting in lieu thereof “(18), or (19)”.

TITLE II

Sec. 201. Section 2(b) of the Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1975 is amended to read as follows:

“None of the funds authorized to be appropriated by subsection (a) may be available for obligation after September 30, 1979.”

Sec. 202. The amendments made by this title shall take effect on October 1, 1978.

Mr. CRANSTON. Saturday, September 30 at midnight Federal participation in the Indochina refugee assistance program dropped from 100 percent to 75 percent. As a result of the requirement that States and counties fund 25 percent of the assistance, a number of States and counties are contemplating an end to the refugee program. Since refugees normally are not eligible for regular welfare, these actions mean they will be receiving no assistance in adjusting to life in the United States.

I with my colleague from California (Mr. HAYAKAWA) and Senators KENNEDY, MOYNIHAN and HUMPHREY, introduced legislation last July to meet this problem, as well as to provide assistance to 25,000 new refugees being admitted this year. Subsequently, a revised proposal was worked out with the administration to provide 100 percent Federal assistance for all refugees during each individual refugee's first 36 months in the United States. Under this proposal beginning September 30, 1978, those individuals who have been in the United States 36 months will be terminated. Thus, someone who came in June 1975 will be dropped from IRAP assistance on September 30, 1978, and an individual arriving in December 1977 will continue to receive assistance until December 1980, assuming such assistance is required.

However, in order to obtain expedited action due to the lateness of the session, I have agreed as have my colleagues to a 1 year extension of the program with a repeal of the 4-year phase-out, now provided in current law. It was decided by the Human Resources Committee with the concurrence of Foreign Relations Committee that the phase-down was unworkable from an administrative point of view at the local level. Our action tonight makes imperative an over-all review of U.S. refugee policy early next year.

Mr. President, this I remains the same as the original bill. The second part of the amendment relates to the fact that on September 30 at midnight Federal participation in the Indochina refugee assistance program dropped from 100 percent to 75 percent as a result of the requirement that States and counties fund 25 percent of the assistance, and a number of States and counties are contemplating an end to the refugee program, which is very important in terms of assisting these people as they adjust to life in our country.

I want to thank Senator KENNEDY for his long and hard work on this bill, and Senator STROM THOMSON for his cooperation in enabling us to bring this to the floor in a modified version, and I thank Senator HAYAKAWA, my colleague, for his good support.

EXTENSION OF INDOCHINESE REFUGEE ASSISTANCE

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I am pleased to join with my distinguished colleague from California (Mr. CRANSTON) in sponsoring, and in expediting consideration today, this important legislation extending the Indochina refugee assistance program (IRAP), as authorized under the Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1975.

I believe the compromise bill we are offering, as reported out of the Human Resources Committee, and worked out in consultation with members of the Judiciary Committee—which has responsibility for all legislation relative to the admission of refugees—will fulfill our Nation's commitment to help Indochinese refugees build new lives in America.

Like many Americans, Mr. President, I have watched the remarkable progress Indochinese refugees have made in becoming contributing and productive members of their adopted communities all across our land. But the resettlement process is still in motion for many, and additional refugees are still arriving from Indochina.

This requires continuing Federal support for the resettlement program, especially the efforts of the voluntary and community agencies involved in helping the refugees help themselves. A reduction in Federal support at this time would also work undue hardship on several States, as well as deny full assistance to the additional refugees who are coming to our shores over the coming year—many to join family and friends already here.

The legislation we have before us will fulfill this continuing Federal responsibility by assuring 100 percent support for all refugees this fiscal year. This is a compromise, and next year we will look at providing 100 percent support for 3 more years for all new refugees—only new refugees—entering the United States after next year. So it has a built-in cut-off date of 1 year for all current refugees, so there will be no risk of a Cuban-type program which has continued unnecessarily for so many years—becoming “impact aid” for certain counties in Florida, rather than genuine assistance to refugees.

Mr. President, this legislation continues the record of support the Congress has properly given to State and local agencies, and to church groups and voluntary agencies, in helping them in their work with the refugees from Indochina. It is urgently needed legislation, since the current authorization for 100 percent financing ended last week.

For the record—and to elaborate on the need for this legislation—I submit for the Record the testimony offered by Mr. Wells Klein, executive director of the American Council for Nationalities Service, and spokesman for the American Council for Voluntary Agencies at our hearings.

The statement follows:

STATEMENT OF WELLS C. KLEIN

Mr. Chairman: My name is Wells C. Klein. I serve as Vice Chairman of the Committee on Migration and Refugee Affairs of the American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service. I am also the Executive Director of the American Council for Nationalities Service. The resettlement agencies joining me in testimony this morning are: American Council for Nationalities Service; American Fund for Czechoslovak Refugees; Church World Service; HIAS; International Rescue Committee; Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service; Migration and Refugee Services, United States Catholic Conference;

Tolstoy Foundation.

The voluntary resettlement agencies support the Cranston-Kennedy Bill to extend the Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act for an additional year at its current level of 100% reimbursement to the states for the costs of public assistance and related services. We take this position mindful of our earlier support for a “phase down” of Indo-

chinese refugee assistance. We believe, however, that the new flow of Indochinese refugees to the United States requires continued federal support, and, lacking a comprehensive, coherent and equitable refugee policy, we urge favorable consideration of S3502.

Mr. Chairman, we would like to go on record as viewing S3502 as an interim measure to assure continuity of service. Underlying our support for this legislation is our deep conviction that this nation is not organizing or allocating its resources effectively to assist refugees achieve self-sufficiency. We would define self-sufficiency not only in terms of not having to utilize public assistance, but also as earning sufficient income to enjoy a reasonably satisfactory quality of life, and as having achieved sufficient social and emotional adjustment to participate in American life.

In supporting the continuation of 100 percent reimbursement to the states for public assistance and associated costs, we hope and trust that the Administration and the Congress, the States, and the private sector will be able to delineate and implement, through the legislative process, a national refugee policy within the coming year.

The voluntary resettlement agencies also support the provision in S3502 to remove time limitations on the adjustment of status for Indochinese refugees, so that those arriving in the United States after January 1, 1978 can adjust to their status after two years without charge to numerical limitations. We also support the provision to increase special project funding from the present \$25,000,000 authorized to \$40,000,000. Finally, we urge that the Committee amend to S3502 the provision from the Administration's proposal dealing with unaccompanied minors. The resettlement agencies have been working closely with the State Department and HEW to establish appropriate systems to deal with the relatively small number of unaccompanied minors currently in the refugee caseload or projected over the next year. There are two issues: One is the question of guardianship. This is not a federal matter, but HEW has agreed to work with the resettlement agencies and the States on this question, so that legal guardianship for unaccompanied minors can be established as soon as possible after their arrival in the United States. The other issue is funding for adequate care and supervision of unaccompanied minors until they reach the age of 18. The provision in the Administration's proposal is essential for providing such funding and we therefore strongly urge its adoption.

We would like to point out, Mr. Chairman, that the Indochinese refugees were not traditionally a dependent population in their own countries and, with effective resettlement planning, the vast majority of the refugees should achieve self-sufficiency in their new homeland. In fact, the Indochinese refugees have come a long way in achieving self-sufficiency. Some statistics which bear on this observation may be of interest to the Committee.

In August of 1977, Indochinese refugee unemployment was 5.5 percent of the workforce as compared with a national unemployment rate of 6.9 percent. Extrapolating from these figures to the present, we would estimate Indochinese refugee unemployment at under 5 percent—a very low figure.

We are all aware, however, that the number of Indochinese refugees receiving some form of cash assistance, mostly supplemental assistance, has been consistently very high. This reflects underemployment and a great deal of entry-level employment with insufficient income to support large families. As of May 1, 1977, 36% of the refugees were receiving some form of cash assistance. However, as of May 1, 1978, despite the influx of 14,000 new refugees, the percentage of refugees receiving some form of cash assistance dropped to 29.6%. This is a significant reduction in refugee reliance on public assistance. Although it is difficult to establish a direct cause and effect relationship, we believe this record of significant achievement over a short period of time supports the continuation and strengthening of special projects programming.

Mr. Chairman, as you are aware, the appropriation for special projects for FY-1978 was ten million dollars. In view of the effectiveness of this program as well as the influx of new refugees anticipated in FY-1979, the resettlement agencies had assumed that the Administration would request funding for the continuation of special projects at the same level for the coming year. However, last spring, we learned that the Administration's budget proposal calls for only five million dollars for Special Project funding in FY-1979. Mr. Chairman, I would like to submit for the record a copy of a letter dated May 5, 1978, from the voluntary resettlement agencies to the Secretary of HEW on this subject. It seems to us that there is a significant lack of communications and understanding of intent, between the Congress and the Administration on this subject. At the very time the Congress is considering increasing the authorization for special project funding, the Administration is recommending a 50% reduction in the appropriation for special projects. It is our hope, Mr. Chairman, that you would raise this issue with the Administration, or with the Appropriations Committee, so that special projects will be funded at an adequate level.

Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the resettlement agencies, I would also like to raise some of our concerns with regard to the way in which special projects are being implemented. In a letter dated May 9, 1978, the resettlement agencies expressed their concerns on this subject to the Acting Commissioner of Social Security, and I would like to submit a copy of this letter for the record. The resettlement agencies hope that the “history” of the legislation currently being considered, particularly the increase in the authorization for special project funding, will reflect our concerns with the way in which such funding is allocated.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, the resettlement agencies have another serious concern which, though not directly within the immediate purview of this Committee, bears directly on the achievement of refugee self-sufficiency and on the cost-effective use of federal funds. I refer to the resettlement grants made available to the voluntary agencies to supplement contributions from the private sector. In 1975, the resettlement grant was at \$500 per capita. In the summer of 1977, and for reasons we do not fully understand, the resettlement grant was reduced to \$309 per capita. We anticipate that the resettlement grant level will be \$350 in FY-1979. Our contracts with the Department of State refer to “reception and placement.” However, all of the resettlement agencies—each in its own manner and through its own consistency or network of resettlement offices, endeavors to work with “its” refugees, until they achieve self-sufficiency. This process goes beyond “reception and placement” and each of the agencies relies heavily on financial support and support-in-kind from the private sector to assist with refugee resettlement. The resettlement grant, however, is critical in meeting the immediate “front end” costs of securing resettlement opportunities, of initial placement, and of professional staff to counsel and work with the refugees. Also, an adequate grant is critical to securing or stimulating contributions from the private sector—it operates as seed money. The \$350 per capita resettlement grant currently projected is simply insufficient to adequately supplement private agency resources in achieving effective resettlement. Thus, each agency, in its own manner, is forced to rely more heavily on public assistance than it would like, or than would otherwise be necessary. This is not a cost-effective use of public funds—it simply results in more refugees going on public assistance for a longer period of time with far greater expense to the federal government and the American taxpayer.

In this regard, I would like to submit for the record, the letter dated April 18, 1978 from the voluntary resettlement agencies to the Department of State together with the reply from the Department of State dated May 10, 1978. The reduction in the resettlement grant from \$500 in 1975 to \$350 today, despite interim inflation, is a matter of very

serious concern to the resettlement agencies and our broad constituencies. While we will certainly continue with Indochinese refugee resettlement, we know that we cannot do as effective a job as we would like, or should, without an adequate resettlement grant, and that the present allocation of resources with too little "front end" emphasis on the resettlement process is probably wasteful of public funds.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the resettlement agencies, I would like to express our appreciation for the opportunity to testify before the Committee this morning. Much as we appreciate the opportunity to express our concerns, we hope that this will not become an annual affair, and we look forward to working with the Congress and the Administration in developing a long-range refugee policy which will provide effectiveness and continuity to all of our efforts on behalf of refugees.

AMERICAN COUNCIL OF VOLUNTARY
AGENCIES FOR FOREIGN SERVICE, INC.,
New York, N.Y., May 5, 1978.

HON. JOSEPH A. CALIFANO, JR.,
Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. SECRETARY: I am writing on behalf of the refugee resettlement agencies associated with the American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service, to express our concern with the way in which we understand the Administration proposes to budget for "special projects" as authorized in PL 95-145. Our national structures have resettled the vast majority of Indochinese refugees coming to the United States and we continue to serve in the same capacity. The success or failure of the resettlement process depends in large part on our efforts, and the coordination of these efforts with federal and state programs.

PL 95-145 calls for a four-year phase-down of the Indochinese Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1975. Included in the authorization is \$25 million for "special projects" designed to deal with generic factors inhibiting the achievement of economic self-sufficiency on the part of the refugees. Of the authorized \$25 million, \$10 million was appropriated for FY-78. We understand, however, that the Administration has proposed an authorization of only \$5 million for FY-79, with the implicit assumption that \$5 million will be requested for each of the subsequent two years.

In our opinion, based on extensive work with the Indochinese refugee population, the plan to "string out" the remaining authorized funds over a three-year period reflects a lack of appreciation of the resettlement process and the need to focus resources to assist the refugees achieve self-sufficiency. We also question whether the present budget proposal accurately reflects the intent of Congress in authorizing the "special project" funding.

The purpose of the "special projects" is to deal with factors inhibiting refugee self-sufficiency, or put negatively, resulting in a high refugee caseload utilizing public assistance. As you are aware, a number of special projects were started prior to FY-78. With the \$10 million appropriated for FY-78, a majority of these projects have been extended and additional projects are, or will be, funded to assist refugees in attaining self-sufficiency. If only \$5 million for FY-79 is appropriated, it will require the discontinuation of many projects at the very time they can be expected to be achieving significant results. Such an eventuality would be most unfortunate from the point of view of our shared objective of assisting refugees to achieve self-sufficiency. It would "string out" the process of effective resettlement over an unnecessarily long period, and it would result in greater expenditures for public assistance on the part of federal and state governments than we believe would otherwise be required.

Therefore, as those agencies which the federal government has asked to resettle the Indochinese refugees, we in turn request the government to review its approach to "special project" funding. It is our urgent recommendation that the Administration request an appropriation of \$10 million for special projects in FY-79 with the remaining \$5 million budgeted for FY-80. This will bring maximum funding to bear in the immediate future when it is most needed.

We would greatly appreciate your bringing our concern to the attention of the appropriate offices so that the Administration's FY-79 Budget request will reflect a \$10 million line-item for "special projects" as authorized in PL 95-145.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

JOHN E. MCCARTHY,
Chairman Committee on Migration
and Refugee Affairs.

AMERICAN COUNCIL OF VOLUNTARY
AGENCIES FOR FOREIGN SERVICE, INC.,
New York, N.Y., May 9, 1978.

Mr. DON WORTMAN,
Acting Commissioner of Social Security, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Baltimore, Md.

DEAR DON: I am writing on behalf of the refugee resettlement agencies associated with the American Council of Voluntary Agencies to express some of our concerns regarding the allocation of "special projects" funds as authorized in P.L. 95-145.

Section 2(c) of P.L. 95-145 states that special projects and programs are to be administered in whole or in part by State or local public agencies or by private voluntary agencies participating in the Indochinese Refugee Assistance Program.

The resettlement agencies are fully in agreement with this statement. We are also aware that the legislative history of P.L. 95-145—specifically remarks by Senator Kennedy—emphasizes the intent that special projects be carried out "particularly" by private voluntary agencies participating in Indochinese refugee resettlement. Needless to say, we are in accord with this emphasis on the private sector.

It is our firm belief, however, that special project funding to assist Indochinese refugees achieve self-sufficiency should be carried out through whatever institutional structures are best equipped to achieve this objective, regardless of whether they are public or private entities. With this consideration in mind, we would urge that three basic guidelines be followed in the allocation of special projects funds.

1. That funding go only to those agencies (public or private) which have significant previous experience in working with the Indochinese refugee population.

2. That funding go only to those agencies (public or private) which have direct access to the refugee population. There should be no need to recruit a caseload as in some past instances.

3. That funding go to those agencies (public or private) which will actually be providing services or, in the case of a consortium, to the agency which will act in a fiduciary capacity for the consortium.

With reference to the last recommended guideline, we would draw your attention to those situations in which State and local public agencies are proposing to act as the umbrella for special project funding and then sub-contracting to the operating agencies. In these umbrella situations, it is our experience that contracting agencies tend to retain much of the administrative money, leaving the agencies providing direct services with little or no funds to carry out administration and supervision of the program. In addition, the contracting agency is often at some distance from the client caseload and

program considerations, and thus is not in a position to provide effective program administration. While we recognize the need for coordination in planning and implementing special projects, we believe that such coordination can be carried out without the need for a multi-tiered structure.

Also, in some instances (notably California), where the State becomes the contracting agency and sub-contracts program implementation, the State is either unwilling or legally unable to provide advance funding for the projects. Thus, the small private agency actually delivering the services is forced to underwrite the program from its own funds for a number of months before reimbursement can be secured from the State.

We are taking the liberty of bringing our concerns to your attention in advance of the actual allocation of funds and thus, on the basis of apprehension rather than fact. However, if we were to wait until the dust settles, allocation of FY-78 funds would have been completed and, if our apprehensions are warranted, this would be to the detriment of effective resettlement and the legitimate interests of our local structures.

Sincerely yours,

JOHN E. MCCARTHY,
Chairman, Committee on Migration,
and Refugee Affairs.

AMERICAN COUNCIL OF VOLUNTARY
AGENCIES FOR FOREIGN SERVICE, INC.,
New York, N.Y., April 18, 1978.

Mr. JAMES L. CARLIN,
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Humanitarian
Affairs, Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. CARLIN: Recent developments in the Indochinese refugee case have stimulated a review of the voluntary agency capabilities in terms of sponsorship and financial resources. The voluntary agencies are ready to undertake the humanitarian endeavor of resettling substantially increased numbers of refugees. But they will need increased supplementary financial support to discharge this responsibility in a professional manner, particularly over an extended period of time.

Our acceptance of the reduction in the Indochinese per capita resettlement grant last year from \$500 to \$300 was based on the expectation of a limited program, for a short period of time with strong emphasis on family reunion. In addition, we realized that only limited funds were available to the Department of State without a supplemental appropriation which was impractical at the time. Faced, however, with the need to find new resettlement opportunities for substantial groups of newcomers in an open-ended program, we believe that to maintain a professional level of resettlement requires a return to the \$500 per capita grant to supplement the contribution made by and through the resettlement agencies. We note that, due to inflation, \$500 today has the purchasing power of approximately \$400 in 1975. Thus, even at the \$500 level in 1978, we are, in effect requesting significantly less than was available to work with in the earlier program.

We believe that an adequate resettlement grant such as that we are requesting, used effectively by the resettlement agencies, will be cost-effective to the government in terms of helping the newly-arrived refugees achieve self-sufficiency. Whenever possible, we would like to avoid the necessity of relying on public assistance as part of the resettlement process.

Inflationary pressures, higher costs of rent and living expenses, as well as necessary salary adjustments and the need to hire additional professional staff, are all reasons for the rise in resettlement costs. We have also found that the composition of the new caseload calls for higher expenditures than during our earlier Indochinese resettlement experience.

Even if the time interval between arrival and economic self-sufficiency can be reduced to as little as, say, six weeks on the average,

the present \$300 grant is patently insufficient to supplement expenditures by the resettlement agencies for Care and Maintenance, to say nothing of the cost of securing resettlement opportunities as well as essential expenditures for casework, counselling, and administrative costs.

The lengthy stay of the Cambodian and Laotian refugees in camps in Thailand has also taken its toll in terms of physical deterioration and emotional strain. Because of the long stay in camp, many of these people will have special needs, and will require more attention and more time before they can be successfully resettled.

As we are going into a new phase of what is to be a long-range program, we believe a sober evaluation of the support structures is needed and will fully justify acceptance of the request expressed in this letter.

Sincerely,

JOHN E. MCCARTHY,
Chairman, Committee on Migration
and Refugee Affairs

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MATSUNAGA). Are there further amendments? If not, the question is on agreeing to the amendment of the Senator from California.

The amendment was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on the engrossment of the amendment and third reading of the bill.

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed and the bill to be read the third time.

The bill was read the third time and passed.

Mr. CRANSTON. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote by which the bill was passed.

Mr. ROBERT C. BYRD. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. ROBERT C. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Calendar Order No. 1167 be indefinitely postponed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

[end]

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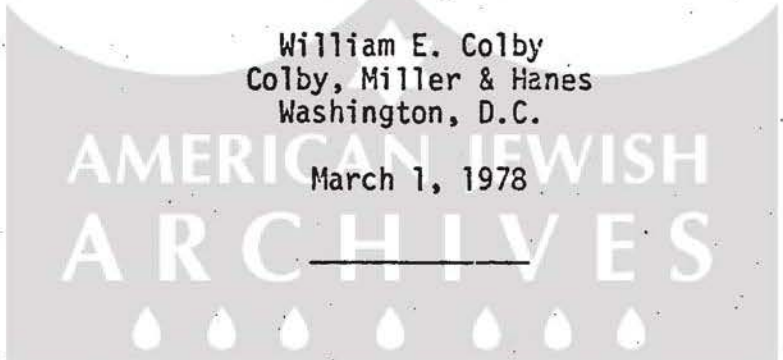
John Weeks, Stenberg, Oliver, MacKenzie, Robert Tamm

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

Testimony of

William E. Colby
Colby, Miller & Hanes
Washington, D.C.

March 1, 1978



Mr. Chairman. Thank you for this opportunity to speak before this Committee on the importance of providing continuing admission to the Vietnamese and other Indochinese with whom we fought and who now seek to escape the new rule in that country. I have been in touch with a number of my colleagues and others closely involved in America's role there and know that they share my concern for our fellow fighters in that conflict.

I do not propose to debate the rights and wrongs of our many years of effort in that country, nor the mistakes that may have been made by both Americans and Vietnamese in the course of it. I do believe, however, that honorable consideration to the people involved requires that we recall the extensive rhetoric of full support that our nation would give to the Vietnamese struggling against a hostile North Vietnam. That rhetoric was expressed by our Presidents, it was certainly supported by the appropriations of a series of our

Congresses, and for many years I believe it represented the consensus of most of our citizens. The fact that some of the things we did, did not help, the fact that there were weaknesses on the Vietnamese side, the fact that we eventually withdrew our support, and the fact that the final result was defeat, in no way in my mind reduces the very personal commitment we made to the people of Vietnam.

Upon the fall of Vietnam, we did, of course, react with the customary generosity of Americans. We provided an airlift for 130,000 Vietnamese and others to come to the United States. In a great outpouring of charity, our fellow citizens assisted in their resettlement and adjustment to life in this country. This was a great success in the tradition of our hospitable receipt of such refugees. Since that time, as you know full well, we have opened our doors to additional Vietnamese who have undertaken the dangerous and difficult route of escaping from that country despite the perils of the sea and the danger of rejection. It is my position here that we should continue that process of welcoming those Vietnamese and others who served with us in a combined effort and who find no hope for the future in the Vietnam now dominated by their erstwhile enemies.

We need not look far into the past to see our traditional welcome of refugees. We certainly provided this for substantial numbers of the refugees from Nazi dominated Europe during the late 1930's and 1940's. We welcomed large numbers of refugees in the exodus from many Eastern European countries in the post World War II era. After the Hungarian revolt of 1956, we welcomed some 150,000

people driven from that country by the reimposition of Soviet rule. From Cuba, we have received some 600,000 reflecting our special relationship with that nation over many generations and our feeling of obligation stemming from the abortive Bay of Pigs expedition. And another figure is important in the context of examining the dimension of this problem. Seven to eight million illegal aliens are generally believed to be in this country, primarily from our overpopulated and under-developed neighbors to our south. To these we can add our annual quota of some 170,000 aliens born in the eastern hemisphere and 120,000 of the western.

Against these totals, I believe we can agree that the 160,000 Vietnamese and Indochinese who have already come here and the 1500 Vietnamese per month escaping by boat, plus those escaping overland from Laos and Cambodia, are truly small numbers. It is clear that they do not present a major problem of assimilation nor of expenditure as against the many billions of dollars we employed in Vietnam and the major sacrifice we assumed of sending our forces and accepting the casualties we experienced.

Against these proportions, I believe that we certainly in the near term should be quite open and flat in our commitment to receive those who escape from Vietnam. Further, I believe we should hold out the prospect of admission to the United States to those still in Vietnam who are members of separated families or who were so involved in our joint effort there that they cannot hope for a favorable future within that country. I believe that we should take a positive approach toward these people still in Vietnam in the course of whatever relationship we may be able to develop with the present government of Vietnam.

and press strongly for their release for movement here. As you know, I have taken the position that we should help to rebuild and repair the human and material damage caused in Vietnam by both sides, but that any such approach not reflect any feeling of guilt or be called reparations. In this process I believe we should seek some reciprocity by the present government of Vietnam on behalf of the individuals to whom our earlier expressed commitments were so broad, releasing them to come to our shores.

I know that H.R. 7175 is an effort to develop a better general procedure for handling refugee problems than the present use of the Attorney General's parole for such larger groups. I welcome this step and the establishment of the commission proposed in H.R. 7175 in order to study this matter in depth and develop a long-term policy in accordance with our traditional sympathy for refugees during our history. On this standard, I believe the procedures of an annual authorization for the more regular flow of refugees is certainly appropriate, although I would urge that the provision not be an absolute annual limit of 20,000 but allow for expansion for justified cases. I believe the limit of 5,000 or 15%, whatever is smaller, of any "emergent refugee situation" appealed by an international refugee migration organization seems far too small, and I would suggest that this provision be dropped and combined in the one following.

With respect to the following provision covering situations of special concern to the United States, (which would certainly include Vietnam and Indochina, I believe, again, that a 20,000 limit without apparent mechanism for increasing it would be

interpreted around the world as a move in exactly the wrong direction. I submit that this provision should be replaced by a provision without limit, requiring a Presidential estimate of the numbers to be initially received submitted to the Congress for the Congress' concurrence, followed by the opportunity for the President to submit additional estimates as the situation changes, with the Congress having the ability to concur or not with the additions. I think this would provide a constitutional solution to such problems and would give Congress full control over the ultimate numbers but would not stultify the receipt of refugees by a maze of bureaucratic procedures and artificial numerical limitations.

Within these overall comments I have a few specific comments on H.R. 7175:

A. I believe it a great mistake to include the provision that the admissions exclude anyone whose primary motivation is economic improvement. Aside from the fact that most of those present in this room are here because their ancestors looked primarily for economic improvement, confronting a newly arrived refugee in a foreign country and asking him for his "primary motive" in seeking to go to the United States puts an unnecessary hurdle before him. Economic advantage is at least part of the attraction which brings many to our shores, and the chance that the confused refugee in his first dealings with an American officer might admit this to his permanent detriment suggests that the provision not be in the bill. The basic definition of

"refugee", the Congressional review of the numbers and the circumstances should be enough to protect against substantial abuse along these lines.

B. I believe it a mistake to require a two year conditional entry before permanent residence. This creates problems in our relationships with countries temporarily harboring refugees, we have not in our experience sent any substantial number back, and I believe we can make the basic decision that the individual is or is not a refugee to be welcomed to our shores for permanent residence at the time we initially contact him.

C. I think it a great mistake to require that other countries take a "fair share" of refugees from any situation. Certainly it could be appropriate that the executive be urged to get other nations to help, but to haggle over the admission of refugees on the basis of whether someone else is doing more or less than we are is, I think, demeaning to the great nation we are.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to end on the note that we continue the spirit of the Statue of Liberty, the "Mother of Exiles," in our relationship to the refugees of the world, and especially that we lift our "lamp beside the golden door" for the Indochinese allies we encouraged and supported, proving that we can be as loyal an ally in defeat as we can be in victory. Thank you.

Response by Leo Cherne, Chairman, International Rescue Committee,
to an Article on Cambodia in The Washington Post, Sunday, February 19, 1978
and distributed by The Washington Post Service

"IS CAMBODIA GUILTY OF MASS MURDER OR IS IT VICTIM OF GROSS DISTORTION"

This headline on an unsigned article published by The Miami Herald and attributed to The Washington Post Service greeted me on the very first day of my return from the border between Cambodia and Thailand.

After talking to Mr. Osnos, Foreign Editor of the Post, I learned that the article, as it had appeared in the Post, was more sensibly titled, "THE UNKNOWN DIMENSIONS OF THE CAMBODIAN TRAGEDY." Mr. Osnos speculated that there may have been additional omissions in the Miami version I had read. I have since read the original in the Post and there had been some substantial cuts in the version I read, including several important modifying paragraphs. This response is to that original piece by Lewis M. Simons.

The accident of returning from Thailand just as this syndicated piece was circulating flows from the fact that a commission of prominent national leaders, organized by the International Rescue Committee, had just concluded a mission to Southeast Asia to examine at first hand the growing emergency of refugees who have fled or are fleeing their homelands in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam.

Several of those distinguished citizens, under the leadership of former Under-secretary of State William J. Casey, visited most of the Island Outposts to which Vietnamese refugees have fled in boats across the large and dangerous waters of the South China Sea and the Gulf of Thailand. With Casey were Rabbi Marc Tannenbaum, former Ambassador Cecil Lyon, Professor Kenneth Cauthen of the Colgate Rochester Divinity School,

and Louis Wiesner, former State Department director of the Office of Refugee and Migration Affairs.

It should be said that among the commission members were some who had opposed U.S. involvement in Vietnam and others who supported that involvement. At no point, however, was there disagreement about the plight of those who fled, about the conditions which lead them to risk their lives, and the aid which must be extended to these victims of brutal repression. Estimates of those who fail in their desperate effort to escape Vietnam by boat and drown at sea were variously suggested by Southeast Asian officials at somewhere between 40% and 60%. But no one really knows.

While this group concentrated on the Vietnamese "boat people" around the Southeast Asia perimeter, another group, led by me as Chairman of the International Rescue Committee, traveled throughout Thailand. We did so to see as much as we could at first-hand about those who had fled Laos and Cambodia, the countries bordering on Thailand, as well as the boat refugees in Thailand. This group included James Michener; Bayard Rustin, leader of the civil rights movement; Monsignor John Ahern, Director for Social Development of the Archdiocese of New York; President of Freedom House, John Richardson; civil rights activist, Thelma Richardson; Stephen Young of the Committee on Human Rights of the Bar Association of the City of New York; and Robert P. DeVecchi, staff specialist of the IRC. The group visited nine of the fifteen refugee camps in Thailand, including the three reserved for the 15,000 who had succeeded in fleeing Cambodia.

We conferred with the representatives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Society of Red Cross Organizations, high officials of the Thai government and U.S. officials. Detailed confidential talks were held with several

representatives of other countries. And we conducted in-depth interviews with a great many of the refugees themselves.

We saw the shrapnel wounds suffered by those who were shot crossing from Cambodia into Thailand. Many who had reached the safety of Thailand had lost their wives, children, family or friends to bamboo traps, or land mines, or simple sickness, exhaustion, fever and starvation during the long days of the hazardous march through the jungle and mountains which had to be crossed before the relative safety of the border could be reached. Some had traveled over one hundred miles on foot, subsisting on roots, wild fruits and berries. Many bear the scars of their flight -- wounds, injuries and endemic diseases such as malaria.

The medical clinics in the camps staffed by physicians and nurses from France, Norway, the Philippines, the U.S., and other countries showed us vivid evidence of the consequences of the journey. The evidence was irresistible that only the most desperate people, fleeing horrors of unimaginable character, would have left their ancestral homes, their families and undertake so nearly hopeless a journey.

Some will be quick to say that they could have been criminals fleeing death sentences, exploiting landlords destined for extinction, malcontents, the former rich and powerful of Sihanouk's court or Lon Nol's army. In fact, however, those among the refugees who were not the simplest of farmers or small shop keepers were some young men and women who had served not only the previous government but others from the revolutionary forces of the Khmer Rouge as well.

On April 17, 1975 began the climax of the most total, brutal, unrelenting experiment in creating the world's "purist" and most total Communist state, intent on creating "the new man," trained to serve that revolution. Only such a remade person could assure the ruthless relentlessness of this new experiment in creating an economy without money, industry, property, or the variety of corrupting customs and individual needs which have restrained every one of the other Communist states from yet reaching the ultimate goal of "true Communism." In Cambodia, that ambitious plan was explicitly ordered and begun on a day in April, 1975.

On that one day, within a 24-hour period, every person in every city in Cambodia was ordered on pain of death to leave everything behind and start on a march, an average of 50 miles, into the interior where uncleared jungles awaited them and where, from scratch, they would hack open spaces, build the barest of shelters, clear fields, sow crops, learn a new discipline.

ended
When physical labor in the fields at nightfall, ~~was no longer possible~~, they were herded into re-education groups to be taught the only permissible truth -- the remorseless nature of the new society and the absolute and unquestioning compliance essential to their developing into "the new man."

But let's step back just a bit to that all-too-vividly-reported day in April 1975 when on command and punishable by instant death, the most ruthless and extraordinary exodus in all the world's history occurred.

The aged, the crippled, the healthy, the pregnant, the bedridden, the children and babes in arms -- all were compelled to leave on foot. All of the people of Phnom Penh, Battambang, Siem Reap, Sihanoukville and dozens of other towns whose names are altogether unfamiliar to us, began their march into the interior.

For their 50-mile journey, neither food nor water were provided. Only the provisions hastily taken from their homes and hand-carried by the fleeing millions would sustain them during the coming days.

Every hospital in Phnom Penh was emptied. The exact word is emptied, except for the dead. Surgeons in the midst of internal surgery were compelled to stop then and there. The anesthetized and still open patients were, we are told by the various European (mostly French) doctors, simply left there on the operating tables. Patients in their hospital beds, if they could, crawled out on foot, were carried on backs or litters either by family who came running for them or by healthier patients. In some instances, to beat the deadline for evacuation of the hospitals, patients were reportedly thrown from their hospital windows.

Women in the last days of pregnancy gave birth unassisted along the roadways. Many infants and mothers did not survive. The weaker and the older fell by the wayside and remained unburied.

Panic was epidemic. Phnom Penh alone had an estimated war-swollen population of over three million who in that one day trampled each other to out-race the Khmer Rouge as they pressed forward along the few available roads. Estimates of those who died in "stage one" of "the new society" range from a low of 400,000 to a median figure of 800,000.

Now to the Washington Post Service story. It raises some undeniably fundamental questions.

"How many Cambodians have been killed since the end of the war three years ago? Tens of thousands? Hundreds of thousands? A million? Two million? All of these figures are used. But no one knows."

That is quite right! No one really does know how many died. But many do know that the toll almost certainly reached the largest percentage of a population of any country destroyed in so short a time, in so wanton and indiscriminate a manner, in the service of a command for which bestiality is an inadequate word.

"If nobody really knows much about what is happening in Cambodia, why do most Americans assume the Cambodian Communists run the most brutal regime since the Nazis?" Is the answer, as their handful of foreign friends allege, that Western governments and news media are guilty of 'distortion and wild fabrications?'"

Damn good question! To which the most pointed answer is that there ARE people who know. Their credentials are impeccable. And their way of knowing is remarkably ordinary and beyond challenge.

When the events which have just been summarized happened there were a number of widely respected journalists in Phnom Penh. The newsmen were restricted to the French Embassy compound, but they were not compelled to wear blindfolds. They remained in confinement within the Embassy grounds for a month. These reporters happened to include several nationalities serving a wide segment of the overseas press.

They saw what was happening. As journalists do, they made notes. Their number was enlarged to include foreign diplomats, and the foreign doctors who were compelled to evacuate the hospitals they had previously served.

Suddenly in the middle of May, they were boarded on trucks and transported on one of the few roads to Thailand where they were now free to file what they had seen and heard. Much that they reported literally passed before their windows fronting on the streets where they personally witnessed the future invented and enacted.

Sidney Shanberg of the New York Times, whose press coverage from Calcutta was extensive and sensitive during the flight of ten million from East Pakistan, was among those who were in Phnom Penh in April 1975. His pages of detailed coverage in the Times first told us in the United States what had occurred. French, Swedish, British, Japanese and other colleagues echoed Shanberg's reports. Each added a fresh detail or two -- but there was a terrifyingly stark similarity to their eye-witness reports.

These facts have never been denied by the Khmer Rouge. A few outside apologists told us the need to break a few eggs if a really fresh omelette was to be conceived. They spoke of the corruption of the cities which had to be destroyed if the old ways were to be replaced by a wholly new and revolutionary state and a "new person" created appropriate to that society. They told of the desperate necessity for rice, for food and how urgent was this forced exodus from the cities to the food-potential of the countryside.

Here and there in the rest of the world, individuals and organizations filed protests with the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva. I filed one for Freedom House. It remained unanswered for more than three months before receipt of a rejection explaining that the Commission could not look into matters where only second-hand information formed the basis of the complaint. The International Society of Red Cross Organizations was quite prompt in advising that it was unable to be of help because it had no organization in Cambodia.

Contrary to the Washington Post story which suggests that the Cambodian inventions or distortions were conceived by U.S. and Thai officials intent on blackening Cambodia's reputation, the fact is that for three years no protest of any kind issued from Washington or, to my knowledge, from any other government in the West. Cambodia and the Cambodian people had fallen into a deep bottomless hole.

"As to press coverage, most journalists who have ever attempted to 'cover' Cambodia probably would concede that one guess is as good as another."

Doesn't the Washington Post in its morgue have a file of the first-hand eyewitness reports filed by those journalists after their trucked exit from Cambodia into Thailand? They were driven along a couple of routes going through town and town, emptied, pillaged and occupied by small units of Khmer Rouge soldiers nibbling on the last goodies still left in any of the deserted shops or stalls.

The recent eyewitness reports of the first group of neutral country diplomats who a month ago were ushered through Phnom Penh and Siem Reap described ghost cities they saw falling into silent decay, with the now worthless paper currency blowing in the breeze together with the accumulating debris of where only three years ago almost half the population of Cambodia lived.

The Washington Post story cites "the one published account that most arouses the defenders of the Cambodian regime, "The Murder of a Gentle Land" by Anthony Paul and John Barron. The book has given popular credence to the genocide thesis. Its critics complain that it is based almost entirely on refugee accounts and thus is one-sided."

Refugees do tend to be one-sided. The memorial at Dachau contains only such one-sided accounts. The repository at Vad Yashem is "flawed" with a similar bias. Yevtushenko, in writing "Babi Yar" since he wasn't there and those who were are almost all dead, must have yielded to a similar one-sided weakness listening to the one-sided reports of the survivors.

The Washington Post, in offering one of the explanations for the campaign of lies and distortions about Cambodia, cites in particular Gareth

Porter, one of "Cambodia's few friends in the United States." Porter charges, "that a number of diplomats in the U.S. embassy in Thailand were interested in saving their own reputations. 'These people had predicted that millions of people would starve to death once the United States pulled out of Cambodia,' he said. 'When the regime clearly averted mass starvation, these people would have lost face. So they created the genocide claim.'''

Porter, which U.S. diplomats created this claim to save face? Those who were in the Bangkok Embassy in 1975? Those who preceded them? Those who are there now? They are different, you know. Their faces are different. The Secretaries of State they serve are different. Yet the reports about events inside Cambodia appear quite similar.

How odd it is that the first U.S. official to testify to Congress about the outrages in Cambodia was Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs, Richard Holbrooke. He never served in the Bangkok mission. Holbrooke had no vested position in support of U.S. involvement in Indochina. I believe that the opposite was his view. The blunt fact is that this official cry of anguish came from an officer in the Carter Administration.

On July 27, 1977, as Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Holbrooke, testifying before the Subcommittee on International Organizations of the House Committee on International Relations, made the following observations:

"Since 1975, Cambodia has been almost completely sealed from the outside world. Our information on life there comes mainly from official Cambodian radio broadcasts, from official public statements and from refugee accounts. Unfortunately, impartial outside observers are not allowed into Cambodia so the tragic refugee reports cannot be conclusively documented. Nevertheless, the reports are too numerous and too detailed to be denied reasonable credibility.

"Based on all the evidence available to us, we have concluded that Cambodian authorities have flagrantly and systematically violated the most basic human rights. They have ordered or permitted extensive killings; forcibly relocated the urban population; brutally treated supporters of the previous government; and suppressed personal and political freedoms.

"The new government seeks a radical restructuring of Cambodian personality and society. Coercion is their instrument to effect rapid change. Individual political liberties have been eradicated or subordinated to collective goals.

"The most common refugee complaints about life in their homeland cite pervasive fear of execution; the absence of personal freedom; constant hard labor; and inadequate food and medical care.

"Estimates of the number of deaths resulting from the new Cambodian government's policies vary widely. Cambodian authorities claim that only two to three thousand died during the evacuation of Phnom Penh after the Khmer communist takeover and as many again during the first months in the countryside. Journalists and scholars, some testifying before this subcommittee, guess that between half a million and 1.2 million have died since 1975. We have no way to confirm a precise figure, but the number of deaths appears to be in the tens if not hundreds of thousands.

"Reports indicate that many were killed at once because of their connection with the former government at even low levels. Political executions still take place without trial or any pretense of due process but in reduced scale. Others have been killed because they were 'educated' or privileged or because they complained of the hard work or low rations. Many others, particularly the aged, the infirm and the very young, have died because of disease, malnutrition or the rigors of life in Cambodia today.

"The Cambodian authorities do not recognize freedom of speech, assembly or press. International travel is controlled and emigration forbidden. Despite constitutional 'guarantees,' traditional religion apparently has no role. In some locations, Buddhist monks have been forced to defrock and pagodas have become warehouses. Mosques have reportedly been closed and defiled."

Before Holbrook also is dismissed as another "cold warrior," defender of the "domino theory" or simply as paranoid, recall that he helped create and was Editor of that often iconoclastic journal "Foreign Policy," an analytic journal on foreign policy unwedded to the prevailing foreign policy establishment and the orthodoxy of its periodical, "Foreign Affairs."

"From this bare bones intelligence-gathering, projections have been drawn. It is these projections that have led to the conclusion that the Cambodian leaders are genocidal monsters and that the torment of the once-gentle land has no parallel in modern history."

"How many wars have there been which were not followed by reprisals, sometimes involving massive numbers of deaths?"

Too few, alas. It is interesting to find even an off-hand admission of "reprisals sometimes involving massive numbers of deaths." But I ask nevertheless where and when in the ghastliest of natural disasters were entire cities so completely depopulated? And at what cost to life was this revolutionary command followed? Where else in one ruthless step did a political leadership set out to "make a new man" however great the death, the pain, the obliteration in its entirety of an ancient culture and -- forgive me -- a gentle people?

One last quote.

"Why is it that the United States, with its vast intelligence network, should know so little about events in Cambodia?"

"The vast intelligence network" almost certainly knows a great deal about events in Cambodia. In the interests of the increasing declassification of intelligence which is occurring, why doesn't The Washington Post request even a partial opening of those post-April 1975 CIA reports, eliminating sensitive content to sources and methods?

Actually, The Washington Post article provides its own hypothesis to this paucity of information:

"The answer seems to be that Cambodia no longer counts for anything in the U.S. scheme of things. At least that's what the officials say. 'All of Indochina, as an

intelligence target, is of very, very low priority. And Cambodia is so low as to be almost nonexistent,' said one official."

"So now Cambodia is on the U.S. back burner, receiving only cursory, and often shabby, attention. Since the renegade regime has openly gone to war with Vietnam, which is perceived as relatively stable in the Indochinese context, Cambodia is swiftly losing even its few friends here."

But in the closing paragraphs of the piece, there is a remarkable admission:

"Contrary to most views in the United States, Porter insists that the forced evacuation of Phnom Penh and other Cambodian cities immediately after the war's end was well-advised, though 'heavy-handed.'"

"There's a new hysteria which reveals a worrying dimension of the leaders' instability,' said Porter. Although he insisted that charges of genocide were baseless, Porter conceded that the regime was 'very, very tough. Harsh. It's a great tragedy.'"

It is a tragedy indeed! And, however incomplete our knowledge, one which is as undeniable as it is monstrous.

INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE

AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES
Citizens Commission
on

Indochinese Refugees

Hon. Leo Cherne, Chairman

Hon. William J. Casey, Co-Chairman

February-March 1978

זכר אלה יעקב וישראל

A PERSONAL RECOLLECTION

by

Leo Cherne
Chairman, International Rescue Committee

AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES

In appreciation and tribute to

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

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

Excerpts from THE CONSUL
by Gian-Carlo Menotti, 1950

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Yet you came anyway."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"How much time would that take?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Mr. Fish?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

POSTSCRIPT:

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

"For how long?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The International Rescue Committee's

Chronology of Citizens Commission on Indochinese Refugees: 1978

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

February 2 Meeting with Asst. Secretary Patt Derian and staff to receive State Department's briefing on the current refugee situation in Southeast Asia.

February 4-9 Jim Michener (a member of the Commission) and Bob DeVecchi visit Cambodian and Vietnamese boat camps in Thailand in advance of main group.

February 8 Despite blinding snowstorms throughout the Eastern U.S., the Commission set out on its mission.

February 10-11 Commission briefing in Hong Kong and visit to refugees. James Michener returns from Thailand to brief his colleagues and assembled government officials on his visits to boat camps and Cambodian camps.

February 11-17 One group under Leo Cherne, Chairman of the IRC, traveled in Thailand visiting boat camps and Laotian and Cambodian refugee centers. Virtually all the relevant U.S. Government and Thai government officials received the Commission and shared their views. The group under former Undersecretary of State William J. Casey visited the Philippines, Singapore, and Indonesia. In all instances, they visited the areas where fleeing boats had been permitted to land, visited other refugee centers and in all cases met with the appropriate U.S. and local officials.

February 17 Both groups reconvene in Bangkok to share their observations, reach conclusions and prepare recommendations for press conference the next day.

February 18 Joint press conference in Bangkok.

February 19-21 Casey, Lyon and Wiesner go to Taiwan to explore possibility of further refugee sanctuary there.

February 22-24 Casey in Macao and Korea for the same purpose.

February 23-24 Cherne and Bayard Rustin reported to AFL-CIO Executive Council, which unanimously endorsed Commission recommendations.

February 28 Commission meets at a working luncheon with newly appointed UNHCR High Commissioner Hartling, together with key members of his staff, his Deputy at UN in New York, and officials of U.S. State Department most directly involved.

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

A Plea for Refuge

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Recommendations of the Citizens' Commission on Indochinese Refugees

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Wide World Photos

der the direction of the UNHCR.

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

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

Commission Members

LEO CHERNE, Co-Chairman
Chairman, International Rescue Committee

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

PROFESSOR KENNETH CAUTHEN
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MRS. THELMA RICHARDSON
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ROBERT DE VECCHI
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Leo Cherne



Executive Director
The Research Institute of America, Inc.
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April 20, 1978

TO: Members of the Citizens Commission on
Indochinese Refugees

Dear Colleague:

I hope you'll forgive my xeroxing this note of follow-up on our Commission activities. I'm afraid I've all but inundated the Research Institute staff with Commission activity in recent weeks.

First of all, I am enclosing two Addenda pages for the Personal Recollection. Several of us have been extremely active in connection with the last item referred to in those pages, the problem of the Cambodian refugees. At first it seemed that an inconspicuous way of solving that problem would be to urge an administrative change in the criteria or the points themselves rather than run the gamut of a new parole effort for Cambodians. There was some sympathy for this approach within the National Security Council. However, the refugee affairs people in State correctly point out that to bring in any significant number of Cambodians via such a route, even if possible, would be at the cost of radically reducing the number for Vietnamese and Lao.

More fundamental is the fact that there is a historic logic to the heavy weight which is given to family reunification and former U.S. association, which should not be pushed aside simply because it doesn't fit the Cambodians.

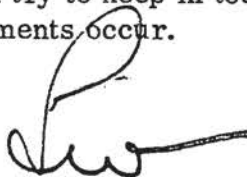
Third, and most persuasive of all, is the feeling that we made so strong a case for special consideration for Cambodian and Vietnamese land people that we ought not back away from that. The State Department is already seriously considering recommending to the White House a completely separate parole system to meet the needs of the Cambodians. The chance of success via this route would, of course, be less than in an "unnoticed" change in the point system. But principle is better served by our original recommendation and it may well be the Cambodians may

yet be the beneficiary of sticking to that principle. For the moment, we're laying off further pressure on the White House, partially because the present program has not yet engaged the action by the Attorney General that's needed, and, secondly, because we do not wish to foster the impression that we're the State Department's secret weapon against the White House (that not being the case anyway). This does not, however, require that we let up in our effort to attract attention to the tragedy of Cambodia.

The Wall Street Journal has asked me to do a piece on what's happening inside Cambodia which I hope I can put together. In that connection, I have succeeded in getting the CIA to declassify at least some of its "inside CIA" intelligence after 1975. By the time you read this, you may already have read what I hope will be a very good editorial for support for the IRC in the Wall Street Journal. Best of all would be for The New York Times, having received the award for Kamm's coverage, to acknowledge that he did get some help in affecting change in U.S. government policy, and identifying where that help came from.

Most of you know that an effort is being made to assemble a full record of our Commission -- collateral data, reports, statistics, newspaper clippings, and so forth. The Research Institute has undertaken to print the resulting document as its contribution to the IRC. Crudely estimated, at least six weeks is likely to be involved in a truly massive editing and condensing job. I would urge that those of you who took copious notes try to have them transcribed and made available.

Unless there is an important need for a meeting of our Commission on specific steps to be taken, I will try to keep in touch with you in this manner when significant developments occur.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'LW' with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Enclosure

ADDENDA

The extremely gratifying news that Henry Kamm was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for International Reporting for focusing world attention on the Indochinese boat people has special meaning for our Commission. The New York Times, in covering the Pulitzer awards, notes that the articles by Mr. Kamm "have continued for months to describe the plight of fugitives from Indochina making their way to neighboring countries by any means possible -- only to find themselves unwanted guests. The result, the citation said, has been to cause the United States, among other nations, to widen its acceptance of such refugees, as well as to induce more humanitarian treatment in the unwilling host countries."

In focusing this Personal Recollection so completely on the Citizens Commission itself, the narrative begins on November 16th and does not acknowledge the contribution Henry Kamm and other journalists made during the succeeding months toward keeping this tragedy before the eyes of the world and indeed adding to the urgency on the part of the Commission as it undertook its task.

Page 1 of the report refers to "the shutting of the gate" by the United States on the Indochinese refugees. In literal terms, this is not exactly correct since some refugees were still coming through and others still being processed to be available for resettlement under the Indochinese Parole Program whose "eligible" rolls had not yet been entirely exhausted.

A serious error, however, is on page 26 in connection with Recommendation 3 made by the Commission. That recommendation states: "The special circumstances of boat people, the Vietnamese who have come to Thailand overland, and of Cambodian refugees make it imperative that all existing criteria and categories for their admission to the United States be waived, and that the movement of those refugees who are accepted for admission be accelerated."

Based on the information available at the time this report was written, there is the following comment: "Each of these three will become U.S. policy. However, the means of treating the boat people will differ from those yet worked out for the Cambodian refugees and a comparable result for the latter cannot yet be considered assured. Result -- 80%."

Once the Administration's program was presented to the Eilberg Committee, it became clear that the outcome did not follow our recommendation. While the numbers of paroles to be granted, once the Attorney General acts, will be substantial,

the criteria which will determine eligibility for parole will remain as they have been, and the Commission's recommendation that the criteria be waived for the Cambodians and overland Vietnamese has not been made part of the Administration's program.

Tragically, that is a most significant fact since the criteria heavily weigh eligibility for parole in favor of those with close family in the United States as well as those with previous association with the U.S. government. Neither of these circumstances apply to all but a miniscule number of the Cambodians and either the criteria would have to be changed or, more likely, a separate program initiated granting parole for the Cambodians. They already receive "points" toward possible resettlement in the United States because of the special hazard of the environment from which they escape. But those points are not sufficient by themselves to enable an adequate number of the Cambodians to be resettled. The same facts handicap resettlement for the 2,000 Vietnamese overland refugees.

Needless to say, our efforts to correct that situation, one of such human importance, will continue.



Leo Cherne



*Executive Director
The Research Institute of America, Inc.
589 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017*

April 27, 1978

TO: Members of the IRC Citizens Commission
on Indochinese Refugees

Dear Colleagues:

Once again I must apologize for reproducing this communication rather than personally addressing it to each of you.

Unless the arrangement falls through, I believe I have worked out a fairly generous improvement in the picture which faces the Cambodian refugees. The problem is best stated in a memo I am enclosing prepared by Bob DeVecchi indicating how the point system which would continue to be used for the new 12,500 paroles would penalize the Cambodians. We've had a number of conversations with Shep Loman since and I must say that I was compelled to face the dilemma which confronts him in the distribution of this 12,500 number.

The estimate is that there will be 8,000 boat people and, following our recommendation, they will receive separate category priority handling. The effect of that is to leave a total of 4,500 paroles for all of the remaining. In competition for these, there are 3,000 pre-August arrivals in Category III who did not qualify within the entire refugee group. In addition, there are 2,000 who specifically helped the United States but not in a direct military capacity and they have been unable to cross the barrier and qualify. On top of this there are 4,800 post-August 11 arrivals of whom it is estimated 40% will qualify for priority handling in Categories I and II. None of this of course includes (except for the boat people) those who will still make it to safety between now and the end of the fiscal year, October 1.

We have learned of an additional development which perhaps is only temporary but which can further seriously complicate the picture. Boat cases had been arriving at a rate of 1,500 a month

and if the present rate continues, this month some 2,500 will have arrived. Should that represent a new increased continuous flow, even the new Presidential decisions will prove woefully inadequate.

In any event, Shep Loman's resistance to an increase in the numbers for Cambodian refugees flows from the fact that there are only a tiny handful who either qualify because they have family in this country or in any way serve the U.S. government and therefore must be squeezed in under the special but subordinate Category III reflecting special hazard. As you can see from DeVecchi's figures, out of 8,000, 191 Cambodians qualify.

In the light of the President's specific condemnation of Cambodia as "the worst violator of human rights in the entire world," I impressed on Jessica Tuchman at the NSC, Mark Schneider (Pat Derian's deputy) as well as Shep Loman how bad it would look if Cambodia is the worst offender and at the same time receives the least consideration in our parole program. Loman has an effective answer to this. "For every additional Cambodian we squeeze in as a result of your suggestion that we change the point system, I will be compelled to deny parole to a member of the Hmong who actually fought on behalf of the United States during the war in Laos."

The result of all these discussions is that Loman finally agreed to a compromise proposal I made. I suggested that despite the Commission's recommendations, special consideration not be given the 2,000 Vietnamese who have come to Thailand via Laos. The seriousness of their plight is unmistakable simply because they are unresettleable in Thailand and they, like the Cambodians barely qualify for our paroles. However, the special horror of Cambodia as well as the unique hazards involved in the escape, coupled with the continuing jeopardy they live in at the hands of the Khmer Rouge since their camps are all at the Cambodian border, argue for special treatment. He finally agreed to a change in the administrative procedure to assure that some 1,500 Cambodians a year be given paroles. This would at least deplete the essentially stagnant camp population by 10% a year. It could also be used to encourage the Thais to resettle at least a comparable number of the Cambodians in the areas near their camp where the ethnic character has always been more Cambodian than it is Thai and where Khmer is spoken by many who have been long-time residents.

I did indicate to Loman that while I was ready in the name of the

Commission to accept this compromise, the Commission as a whole would undoubtedly still feel the special responsibility, once the present plan is formalized and in motion, to ask for a separate ethnic parole for the Cambodians. He is completely sympathetic to our doing so. In the meantime, of course, even the first step has not been taken. The Attorney General has simply not yet decided to act nor even confer with the Congressional committees, as he is obligated to -- though they don't have the authority to keep him from issuing the paroles.

Sternberg, Wiesner and DeVecchi, who have been close to this whole situation, are very happy with the compromise Loman suggested, and I hope it leaves none of you dissatisfied. I made the judgment that I simply could not accomplish more than that via the administrative route. If you are in favor at the appropriate time of an appeal to the State Department, the President and Attorney General for a special parole for Cambodian refugees of somewhere between 5,000 and 7,500 a year, please let me know and of course let me know of any differences you have with this present and contemplated approach.

The Wall Street Journal has been after me to do a 1,300-word piece on Cambodia for their editorial page. I sent them a piece of more than 7,000 words from which they can select the sections which most interest them. But I know that you will want to read the full piece. If their use of a portion doesn't gut the article, I will still try to salvage the balance and place it elsewhere simply to keep the heat on the Cambodian aspect of the problem. I do know that John Richardson has sent a message from Freedom House to the President complimenting him on his forthright condemnation of the Cambodian atrocities.

Warm regards,

Sincerely,



LC:is
Enclosures

INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE

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

To: Leo Cherne
(cc: Carel, Lou, Al)

Date: April 14, 1978

From: Bob DeVecchi *BDV*

Subject: Point System for Cat. III's

I do not have a copy of the "point system" formula used to determine Cat. III (close association with U.S.) eligibility. Lou will try to get a copy from State. It awards points on the basis of previous services, position and/or rank, length of service, combat, wounded in action, etc. There are special bonus points awarded to Cambodians just because they are Cambodian.

Under the 8,000 land portion of the present IPP program, the pre-screening identified over 3,800 Cat. I (immediate family in U.S.), about 1,000 Cat. II's (former U.S. employees) and 175 Cat. IV's (special humanitarian consideration). This left only 3,000 numbers for the more than 22,000 potentially qualified Cat. III's.

Based on the point system as devised in Bangkok, the eligible Cat. III's break down as follows:

Lao	760
Hmong	1964
Overland Vietnamese	67
Cambodians	<u>191</u>
Total	2,982

The percentage of Cambodian qualifiers is pitifully low. They simply do not "point up" as well as the Lao or Hmong. Perhaps as the program goes along and the more qualified Lao and Hmong get to go, the threshold will be lowered, and more Cambodians will become eligible. Another way to alter this situation would be to change the point system formula to give the Cambodians more weight.

In retrospect, however, I believe the Commission's recommendation to make a distinction between Cambodians and overland Vietnamese viz a viz Lao and Hmong has merit. It is an "apples and oranges" situation, and trying to apply any equitable formula covering all four groups just may not be possible.

All of these figures refer to cambodian refugees

From Lou Wiesner

State Dept. figures

Camp population of Cambodia

14,309 Feb. 28

33 left for US in March

14,435 March 30

UNHCR

Camp population Jan. 31

Refugees in centers Thailand

14,986 ~~Feb. 28~~

14,592 Feb. 28

They may include those in detention centers

Cumulative departures from Thailand

16,366 Mar. 31

Of these -

Australia	404
Austria	111
Belgium	38
Canada	240
France	8,789
Hong Kong	2
Italy	8
Japan	5
Malaysia	1,578
New Zealand	10
Switzerland	14
UK	3
US	5,158

What we had from State Dept. 9,000

What that means - approx 4,000 people came to the US in the initial evacuation back in April of 1975

5,158 for camps subsequently

REVIEW & OUTLOOK

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26, 1978

Pressure Groups

Last spring word began to spread about the plight of the Indochinese refugees, created by the fall of Saigon in 1975, continuing to escape from Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia in unexpectedly large numbers. The special "parole" programs the U.S. government had set up to admit them to this country outside the normal quotas were proving too small and too slow. Asian countries were refusing to admit them or keeping them in distressing conditions. For a long time, the Carter administration would not take steps to deal with the problem; lately that seems to have changed, and it's illuminating to see how the change came about.

What was needed was first another parole program to take care of the immediate emergency and next a legislative change to make our refugee policy more flexible for the long run. These ideas were not without support in the administration, but no one in the right places seemed to care enough to push aside the objections that kept getting raised. Some people said parole authority was intended to apply only to selected individuals, not to large groups of people like the 5,600 or so Vietnamese "boat people" now stranded throughout Asia. Some people thought that admitting more refugees would alienate those who worried about American unemployment, especially blacks and union leaders.

Finally, late last fall, people outside the government decided to give a push to the refugee cause. This past February, the International Rescue Committee, which has been aiding refugees around the world for some 45 years, sent a study commission of prominent Americans to take a first-hand look at the refugees' situation in

Asia. The visitors found what they had expected: that the problem was big enough to demand further U.S. action. But the commission also decided to press into service the "interests" whose reaction the administration seemed afraid of.

Their effort succeeded. At the end of March, the AFL-CIO's executive council issued a statement not only voicing no objection to more refugee admissions but actively supporting the idea. And a statement signed by 90 of the country's most prominent black leaders called on President Carter to act. Unemployment was certainly a problem, they thought; but "we oppose the dehumanizing tendency of placing price tags on the heads of Indochinese refugees." These positions seem to have played a significant part in finally forming an administration policy. The government now says it intends to use parole authority to admit more of the refugees, and to support legislation to make the treatment of refugees more liberal and flexible.

It's pleasing to see the administration moved onto the right course. But it's perhaps even more important to see the role that major American interest groups have played so far. This is not a good time in the world for tolerance, let alone generosity, in these matters. In some places ethnic rivalry has degenerated to the level of barbarism; and racially or ethnically restrictive policies are also appearing in countries whose history teaches something better. The black leaders and labor leaders who have spoken out about the refugees have avoided that kind of ugly parochialism, and it's an example of no small value of our ability to deal with the problems we're going to be facing in the years ahead.

CAMBODIA -- AUSCHWITZ OF ASIA

by Leo Cherne
Chairman, International Rescue Committee
Executive Director, Research Institute of America

"It appears to have taken six years to kill nine million human beings in Nazi Germany and in the countries she occupied. It appears to have taken one day to inflict catastrophic disaster on more than three million Cambodians."

With these words, three years ago Freedom House filed an appeal with the UN Commission on Human Rights for an inquiry into the events in Cambodia reported in such compelling detail by Sydney Schanberg's Pulitzer Prize winning articles in The New York Times. The UN High Commission for Human Rights took three months to respond to that Freedom House appeal -- negatively. During these three years, a few books and articles have focused our attention on Cambodia, but governments have remained silent.

In July 1977, the House International Relations Subcommittee initiated a Congressional inquiry into the events occurring in Cambodia and Richard Holbrooke, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs, eloquently denounced the events occurring in Democratic Kampuchea.

In the spring of 1978, the Canadian government denounced the killing and suffering in Cambodia. On April 20, 1978, President Carter, detailing reports of atrocities committed by communist Cambodia, called the Cambodian government "the worst violator of human rights in the world today." And on April 21, an International Inquiry initiated by Norway's four political parties invited witnesses from many countries to testify in Oslo.

Until these recent months, no government leader or international body sought to penetrate the silence. Only Chaim Herzog, Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations, has raised a solitary voice on the floor of the United Nations in a futile effort to attract attention to the horror of Cambodia. The blunt fact is that "three to four million people fell into a deep, black, echoless hole."

There is a morbid parallel in this to the international blindness to the camps in Nazi Germany in which the "Final Solution" was being pursued. But this is not the only similarity. There are deadly parallels in the actions and purposes, however differently pursued, between those taken by Nazi Germany and those which are occurring in Cambodia -- these in particular:

1. The ruthlessness which was employed in the extermination of the enemies of the state by each state is unique in its vast and wanton disregard of human life.

2. The ruthlessness in each country was in the service of an ideal -- racial purity in Nazi Germany, political purity in "Democratic Kampuchea," as the new Cambodia is called.

3. Each nation set out to create a new man fit for such an "ideal" society. All who do not fit the mold were to be reshaped or eliminated.

4. Both revolutionary regimes saw in the culture and the society which preceded their access to power the threat of corruption of the "ideal." And each remorselessly set about to extirpate the old culture.

5. Each identified the classes, the groups which by definition must be expunged.

6. Each exalted the principle "arbeit macht frei."

7. Each took elaborate pains to veil the more brutal aspects of "the plan" in secrecy. Since the purpose in Cambodia was more total, all was veiled in secrecy including the identity of the leaders of the Anka, as the leadership was called until the Communist Party of Cambodia was established within the last year.

8. And most ironic of all, though Germany was fascist and Cambodia communist, each identified a neighboring communist state as its ultimate enemy from the very beginning. To the Nazis, the enemy was always Bolshevik Russia. To the secret leadership of the Anka, the enemy had from the very beginning been the Hanoi-led state of Vietnam.

9. And for a time the Nazis and the Khmer Rouge, while another enemy had to be vanquished first, made common cause with their own true and ultimate enemy.

It is also clear that where technology was the main instrument in Hitler's destruction of the polluters of his Aryan ideal, brute force is the primary weapon in Cambodian cleansing of the corrupting and resisting elements within its borders. It is more than symbolism that Democratic Kampuchea has been able to bring about the death of a greater portion of its population, perhaps more than in any other country in this century, with the simple and systematic reliance on starvation, disease, age coupled with the discipline provided by death administered by a hoe, a wooden club, an axe. Apparently only the fatigue of the executioners occasionally produces the use of the rifle when the numbers to be killed are simply too wearying for the teenage Khmer who performs the necessary chore.

If the similarities between Nazi Germany and Cambodia are striking, there are also striking dissimilarities.

Hitler's vision was of a thousand-year Reich built on the steel of technology, science and military might and an elaboration of the industrial state beyond challenge. The Kampuchean ideal appears to envisage a return to the agricultural model of the Khmer empire at its Fourteenth Century peak. But this time it means to be strong enough to ward off the invasion and absorption by Vietnam which had previously all but decimated the Khmer kingdom. Although the near destruction of the Khmer empire was as much a result of the erosion of its territory by the Thais, Thailand continues to be regarded warily but with none of the ideological certainty that is focused on the conviction that communist Vietnam is the paramount enemy.

What is it we know without doubt about the Cambodia of the last three years? We know that during the first few hours after the Khmer Rouge victory and the establishment of Democratic Kampuchea, every citizen, every Cambodian, whatever age or sex, who inhabited any of the towns and cities in that country was compelled to evacuate those cities. They took with them only that which they could physically carry on their lemming-like march into the jungle countryside. We know that they traveled an estimated 65 miles, that there were no provisions for their sustenance along the route. We know that many of them died in the course of this forced march. We know that the pregnant women in the last days of their pregnancy gave birth along the roadside, and that few of these children survived the ordeal. We know that every patient in every hospital in Phnom Penh, whatever his condition, was compelled to leave.

There were roughly 20 international journalists in that largest city of Cambodia at the time of the victory of the Khmer Rouge. They were interned in the French Embassy for the next couple of weeks, but they were not blindfolded. Diplomats from other Embassies were added to their company in that compound, as were the foreign doctors who had been serving in the hospitals of that war-swollen city with a population of somewhere between three and four million, nearly half of the population of the entire country. We know from the reports which were filed by these journalists in the United States and in Europe when they were finally released and taken by a truck convoy to Thailand some of the gruesome details of that initial phase of the Khmer Rouge revolution. We know that doctors who were in the midst of surgery were in some instances compelled to leave their work unfinished. We know that where patients were unable to leave their rooms, some were dropped to the pavement from the windows. We know that others were wheeled in their hospital beds by fellow patients able to do so or members of the family who rushed to the hospitals to assist in the evacuation of their sick relatives.

We know from that day to this, Phnom Penh and every other city and town in Cambodia has remained deserted and crumbling. We know that soldiers of the Khmer Rouge emptied and looted the stores in each of the towns, some of them tiny indeed,

along the road the journalists traveled when they were evacuated on May 11. We know from a handful of Scandinavian diplomats who were permitted to visit Phnom Penh two months ago that an estimated 30,000 people are trucked in and out of the city daily to perform certain tasks which are still regarded as essential, particularly in the manufacture of certain basic materials -- cement, weapons, fabric -- the state continues to require. They report the total desolation and note that even the paper currency of Cambodia still blows in the wind in the remaining debris along the deserted streets of that city.

The few diplomatic missions allowed in Phnom Penh (though they largely represent communist nations) are under virtual house arrest, confined to their compounds with meals delivered daily by soldiers who speak only Khmer. Messages are communicated to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by a single functionary who visits the missions daily, barring a stint in the rice fields. Only the Chinese Embassy has radio communications with its home offices. The only significant foreign presence tolerated by the communists is the thousand-odd advisers from China who are helping to keep a few factories functioning and providing other forms of technical advice.

Like other cities and towns, Phnom Penh is virtually empty -- down from approximately 3 million at the end of the war to fewer than 20,000 people. Living conditions are primitive, with no shops, telephones, or postal service; because the authorities have eliminated currency, goods must be bartered.

It is unlikely that there's a more complete detailing anywhere of the evacuation of Phnom Penh than Sydney Schanberg's who was able for the first time to file his correspondence when he arrived in Bangkok with the others who had been interned. We should know in addition that he exercised with utmost care the journalist's creed of objectivity. In conversations and writing since by Schanberg, and they have been sparse, he goes out of his way to assert that the United States is not without responsibility for these events. His thesis, and it is not without merit, is that the Khmer Rouge was a small secret rag-tag communist army until the American bombing of the Parrot's Beak and the U.S. incursion into Cambodia in 1970 helped convert this small force into an army of nearly 100,000 intent on the overthrow of the Lon Nol government and the creation of the first pure communist society anywhere in the world.

As with all else that has occurred in Cambodia, there's not only method to the madness, but in both the method and the madness one finds the parallel to Hitler's Germany. The mass murder launched by Adolf Hitler did not, as many historians have pointed out, occur in a vacuum. The draconian peace of Versailles, the imposed post-war economic chaos, the devastating inflation -- all played their part in producing a vision. That vision was "Mein Kampf," and its ultimate expression was the "Final Solution."

Hitler's vision was the "ideal" of racial purity. The new Cambodia is committed to an equally ruthless and equally clear-cut ideal -- pure communism -- and to the creation of a new human being so sharply attuned to the needs of such a state that there will be no risk that he will contaminate, or corrupt, or undermine that ideal community. The Nazi doctrine of racial purity sought to eliminate the inferior and obstructing elements -- the Marxists, the Gypsies, the anti-Nazi clergy and political leaders, the mental defectives, the Jews. Cambodia sees with equal clarity that all those who carry the virus of the old, corrupt and imperialist culture must be eliminated. Any association with either the Lon Nol or the Sihanouk governments must simply be stamped out. So too must the Buddhist monks, the irretrievably religious among the population, the commercial classes, the teachers and scholars, except for the handful who had previously identified themselves with the Khmer Rouge. Any one suspect of the slightest political independence represents danger which must be removed. These have been eliminated. In a country Buddhist for centuries, there is not one Temple which is functioning or has not been pillaged, and many are used as government warehouses.

The vast and total nature of the reordering of all of Cambodian life toward the accomplishment of these ends can be seen from just these few details:

The traditional family unit is one victim of the massive restructuring of Cambodian society. While a certain amount of separation was an unavoidable consequence of the enormous population relocation that followed the communist victory, the new regime apparently has deliberately tried to expunge family loyalties in order to forcibly substitute new loyalty patterns -- to the commune and to the state.

Cadre reportedly enjoy special privileges, and avoid many of the hardships of the common peasants. Refugees claim that their traditional songs, folk ways, and even their religion have been stripped away by the new regime.

Typically, everyone is organized in groups of ten, with one supervisor and three cells of three persons. Each member of a cell is responsible for the behavior of the other two. People who make too many "mistakes" are led away and never seen again. The constant fear of death keeps everyone working long hours, the more able-bodied far from their homes and the more frail closer to home.

It was at first explained by those like Gareth Porter of the Indochinese Resource Center that the purpose of the evacuation of the cities was to assure that the rice fields destroyed by the war be quickly restored to avert mass starvation. The logic of this motivation was reinforced by the herding of the survivors of the evacuation into units working from dawn to dusk clearing forests, digging irrigation canals, preparing for the planting of rice.

If humanity was the motivating purpose, there was a fatal flaw. A greater supply of vegetables and a few other staples was stored in or near Phnom Penh than

in the countryside. And not for eight months, with the Monsoon already past, was there the possibility of even the first rice crop in the countryside.

There is, however, a stronger refutation of this asserted compassionate purpose. It was provided by Pol Pot, secretary-general of the reborn Communist Party in the course of his recent visit to Peking. He spoke explicitly of the urgency of the evacuation of Cambodia's towns and cities. Not once was the necessity of food production mentioned. He was quite explicit in his marathon four-and-a-half-hour address about the purpose of the evacuation of the cities, the need to break up any threat to Cambodia's security. "In our Cambodian society," he declared, "there also exist life-and-death contradictions, because enemies in the shape of various spy rings working for imperialism and international reactionaries are still planted among us to carry out subversive activities against our revolution."

With the Americans long gone and Lon Nol's forces destroyed, his strictures about security quite clearly were aimed at Hanoi: "There is also another handful of reactionary elements who continue to carry out activities against us and attempt to subvert our Kampuchean revolution." "These counter-revolutionary elements, which betray and try to sabotage the revolution, are not regarded as of our people. They are regarded as enemies of Democratic Kampuchea, and we must deal with them the way we would deal with any enemy."

Pol Pot's concern was not without warrant. It is clear that there was an abortive revolt inside Cambodia in April 1976 in which hundreds and perhaps thousands of the "old Khmer Rouge" were eliminated. "Old Khmer Rouge" is the Aesopian name for the Hanoi-trained Khmer forces who apparently joined in rebellion against the Anka across the entire north and northeast which most closely borders North Vietnam. A coup which apparently failed took place in northwestern Cambodia in the spring of 1977. There were mass arrests of party and military leaders in March and April. Many officials, accused of being Thai or American agents, were apparently executed. New efforts may have been undertaken in northwestern Cambodia last fall to identify and execute those who are in any way a threat to the reinforced control.

But in the nearly five hours of the speech in Peking a great deal more was said and Pol Pot let fall the fact that the evacuation of the cities had for years been the plan the Anka had in mind as essential to the creation of the new decontaminated society they intended to create.

Edward Shawcross, the gifted foreign affairs writer for The London Times, writing in The New York Review to years ago, still saw "rice" as the major factor, even as he agreed that "the barbarous cruelty of the Khmer Rouge can be compared with the extermination of the Kulaks or the Gulag Archipelago."

But by April 1978, Shawcross, reviewing his previous convictions, the full text of Pol Pot's address in China and a massive body of new evidence, wrote an

extraordinary new article for The New York Review entitled "The Third Indochina War." It is now clear to Shawcross that either feared or desired war with Vietnam was the only satisfactory explanation of much that has occurred. He now finds evidence that the war between Cambodia and Vietnam, which has only recently become visible to us, actually began within weeks of the withdrawal of the U.S. from Vietnam in 1975. Not only was the hatred between the two a repetitive fact of centuries of history but as Shawcross observes the fuel for the new fire was poured as early as 1954 "when Peking and Hanoi agreed that the Khmer Rouge should be disbanded and its cadres withdrawn to Hanoi." "The Cambodians," Shawcross adds, "never forgave or forgot this betrayal." There and then, Pol Pot asserted in Peking, "the revolutionary struggle of our people dissolved into thin air."

Wars require two participants. Hanoi is not unaccommodating. The following letter was published in the Vietnamese paper Nhan Dan and considered important enough to be broadcast on Radio Hanoi. It describes a midnight Khmer Rouge attack on a Vietnamese village six months ago:

"All of the houses were surrounded by Cambodian soldiers who immediately opened fire and used machetes, axes, sabers and sharpened sticks to slay the villagers.... A fleeing child was caught by a soldier who cut off his leg and threw him into the flames. All seven members of Mrs. Truong Thi Rot's family were beheaded. Rot was disemboweled and had a seven-month fetus placed on her chest.

"All the eight members of Nguyen Van Tam's family were beheaded and the heads were put on a table for amusement. All eight persons in Nguyen Thi Nghanh's house were disemboweled, the intestines (piled) in one shocking heap. Mr. Quang's wife was also disemboweled. The killers took out her five-month fetus, then cut off her breast and chopped her body in three parts. Her two-year-old boy... was torn in two and dumped into a well.

"...the Cambodians have continually raided across the border and 'have perpetrated utterly inhuman crimes, raping, tearing fetuses from mother's wombs, disemboweling adults, burning children alive.'"

Shawcross adds his own commentary. It is stark:

"Such an account is fairly characteristic of the way in which totalitarian governments speak of their enemies in wartime and it might easily be dismissed as mere hyperbole. If it seems more credible than other propaganda this is because it matches refugee accounts of Khmer Rouge behavior in Cambodia itself and the way in which the Khmer Rouge soldiers are known to have performed in the border villages where they have been fighting the Thais. With a few exceptions the stories which have emerged from Cambodia in the past two years have confirmed the impression, given by the early refugees, of a vast and somber work camp where toil is unending, rewards are nonexistent, families are separated, and murder is a constantly used tool of social

discipline. Well before Hanoi published similar assessments, Democratic Kampuchea seemed to many in the West a uniquely atrocious experiment in human engineering conducted, in Hanoi's words, by 'infantile communists' who pursued 'a consistent policy of national hatred' and were 'deliberately turning young Kampucheans into medieval butchers' to indulge in 'savage repressions' and 'bloody massacres.'"

There is little doubt about this central fact in Cambodian purpose left since Radio Phnom Penh joined the battle of the airwaves, accusing Hanoi of seeking to "stage coup d'etats to topple Democratic Cambodia through a handful of traitorous forces who were Vietnam's agents." Even North Korea's Kim il Sung has congratulated the Cambodian leaders on their success in eliminating traitors in their midst.

That Pol Pot chose Peking to deliver his 288-minute tirade against the reactionaries in the communist camp is not without additional significance. Mr. Pot has not forgotten China's role in the 1954 betrayal of the Khmer Rouge to the Hanoi faction.

All of this disposes the myth of primacy of adequate food to feed the Cambodians as the central fact in the ghastly events of 1975 and the forced march of four million Cambodians. But it does much more. It even suggests some dominoes may yet fall -- if not the ones we thought would fall first. It establishes the sheer ruthlessness which can exist between and within communist nations. But that is no longer virgin fact.

It does not adequately detail what has happened inside Cambodia since 1975 which has caused 100,000 to flee to the doubtful safety of Vietnam and nearly 50,000 toward the ancient antagonism and doubtful safety in Thailand.

Even desperation has its levels of comparative intolerability. If one is to understand the sheer terror which must have voluntarily driven tens of thousands of Cambodians into the arms of the traditionally hated Vietnamese, we must first refresh our sense of the desperation which presently exists in Vietnam. To this day, some 3,000 to 4,000 Vietnamese crowd into anything that will float, knowing that they risk their lives if their plans to escape are discovered or frustrated. Of that number, an estimated 50% of those who seek to navigate the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand drown at sea, leaving some 1,500 to 2,000 who find ultimate if unwelcome asylum. Despite these unbearable odds, the flight from Vietnam continues, even as the flight of Cambodians into Vietnam in some unavailable number is surely going on.

Yes, there is a pecking order even in Hell -- and at the bottom of this one stand the Cambodian people. This article can not even summarize the essential attributes of the Cambodian Hell.

"Murder of a Gentle Land" by Barron and Paul required several hundred pages to record the essence of several hundred interviews conducted in the refugee camps along the Thai-Cambodian border. It was at first fashionable to dismiss that work because it was published by the Reader's Digest. But here is what skeptic Shawcross says of the interviews Anthony Paul conducted for that book:

"They seemed carefully done. Paul recorded a great many horror stories -- about the forced march from Phnom Penh; the appalling rigors of life in the new work camps; the destruction of all traditional social relationships, including the family; the use of murder, and the threat of murder, as a means of control. He considers these stories have a consistency that -- even allowing for the natural tendencies of refugees to exaggerate -- confirms their basic truth. Father Francois Ponchaud, the author of 'Cambodge Année Zéro' and probably the man who has made the most thorough study of the refugees from Democratic Kampuchea, agrees with him. So do I."

But most of those who have closely followed the events in Cambodia credit that French volume, "Cambodge Année Zéro" with the most demanding as well as exhaustive recreation of life inside the Auschwitz of Asia. I must again credit Shawcross and The New York Review for these paragraphs on Francois Ponchaud's background and conclusions:

"Ponchaud, after long experience in Cambodia, originally welcomed the prospect of a revolutionary change. After leaving in 1975 and talking to refugees in Thailand, he was forced to conclude that a horrifying system was being imposed on the Khmers. The English edition of his book will make it clear, as his French text does not, that his research was based not only on Cambodian government radio broadcasts and on ninety-four written statements by refugees but also on his own careful questioning of most of these refugees as well as hundreds of others.

"Indeed, Father Ponchaud says he has by now talked to well over a thousand Cambodian refugees, seeing them not only in Thailand but also in France, where some 10,000 of them now live. He describes in detail how he checks their stories against one another, discounting those which seem exaggerated or false. His research appears more thorough than any yet undertaken, and he contradicts those who argue that 'executions have numbered at most in the thousands; that these were localized in areas of limited Khmer Rouge influence and unusual peasant discontent....' On the contrary, Ponchaud estimated last autumn that the number executed was 'certainly more than one hundred thousand' -- including not only a large proportion of the old regime's military personnel, civil servants, and teachers but also many of the educated class and of those who dared to express their aversion to the regime's brutal methods. These killings, his interviews showed, took place in many parts of Cambodia.

"At the end of February, Ponchaud gave the following summary of his most recent research:

"The estimate that more than 100,000 Khmers have been executed must now be taken as an absolute minimum. It is possible that two or three times as many people have been executed. The number who have died because of the lack of food and of medical and sanitary facilities, and from the frantic pace of work, may well be more than two million. I have had reports of villages in which a third, a half, or even nine-tenths of the population have died.

"I recently interviewed forty refugees who fled during 1977 from the provinces of Battambang, Kompong Thom, Siem Reap, Oddar Mean Chey, Kompong Cham, Kratie, Koh Kong, and Pursat. There was general agreement that while 1975 had been hard and 1976 harder, 1977 was terrible. The collectivization program has brought increasing misery. Even less food is available for communal use than previously. Work at night has become a general practice."

There is one "flaw" in the work by Barron and Paul and the French volume by Ponchaud which Holt, Rinehart and Winston will publish in English during the coming months: They lean heavily on the accounts of refugees, those who have risked their lives to flee and succeeded to reach safe, if hostile, sanctuary. Noam Chomsky and others complain that refugee accounts are by definition one sided.

Refugees do tend to be one-sided. The memorial at Dachau contains only such one-sided accounts. The repository at Vad Yashem is "flawed" with a similar bias. Yevtushenko, in writing "Babi Yar" since he wasn't there and those who were are almost all dead, must have yielded to a similar one-sided weakness listening to the one-sided reports of the survivors.

There is one thing in common among every source I have cited or quoted to this point. They were either critical of U.S. policy during the Indochina war, or actively opposed the U.S. intervention. Or they are explicit enemies of the U.S., whether Cambodian, Vietnamese or North Korean. The reference to "Murder of a Gentle Land" is the only exception. I do not know the earlier views of John Barron or Anthony Paul.

The International Rescue Committee, which has played a substantial role in assisting thousands of those who have fled the three Indochinese communist states, has of necessity had a longer, more continuous and extensive contact with the Cambodian refugees who have managed to reach Thailand.

Because of prohibitions against travel, strict controls over people with access to boats, and the establishment of a mined and heavily patrolled no-man's land along the Thai border, the number of refugees escaping from Cambodia to Thailand averages fewer than 100 a month. Since 1975, however, as many as 100,000 Cambodians may have fled to Vietnam.

Since IRC personnel comprise the administrative group assisting the U.S. Embassy representing all the voluntary agencies involved in the possibility of re-settlement to the United States, detailed interviews have been conducted with virtually all of the refugees from Cambodia as well as those who land by boat from Vietnam or those who cross from Laos to Thailand. Sixty percent of all medical assistance to the refugee populations from Indochina is administered under IRC's direction, though the doctors and nurses who serve in these clinics come from countries as diverse as Norway, the Philippines, France, and the United States. In addition, the recent Citizens Commission on Indochinese Refugees formed by the IRC visited the Cambodian refugee camps to conduct their own independent study of that group.

The sum total of this extensive and often intimate contact more than confirms the details of life in Cambodia reported by Barron, Paul, Shawcross and Ponchaud. The following facts emerge time and again.

The refugees say there are no "people's courts," and it is left to the local communist squads to decide who lives or dies. In most areas, all former civil servants have apparently been executed along with their families. All former officers and non-commissioned officers have been killed and in many areas even privates of the defeated army are being sought out and killed. Anyone showing any signs of education, including teachers, students, technicians, and businessmen, is suspect and is likely to die. Those who were in authority before the communists took over, such as village headmen, are killed with their families. In most cases, the executions are not public, the communists being satisfied to quietly eliminate potential problems.

The widespread executions have deprived Cambodia of the bulk of irreplaceable special skills. Doctors have either been killed or sent to the rice paddies and have been replaced by youths who are given three months training. Primitive methods are used, such as injections of coconut milk into patients as a kind of cure-all (a technique used by Viet Cong doctors when plasma is in short supply). This loss of talent inevitably makes the regime more dependent on Chinese advisors.

Conversations by members of the IRC Citizens Commission on Indochinese Refugees with diplomats in several of the Southeast Asian countries conclude there is no way even for the communists to make a serious estimate as to how many have died, but the diplomats have guessed that the population may be down by from 15 to 20 percent. With so many potential troublemakers already executed and the population utterly cowed, executions are becoming less common.

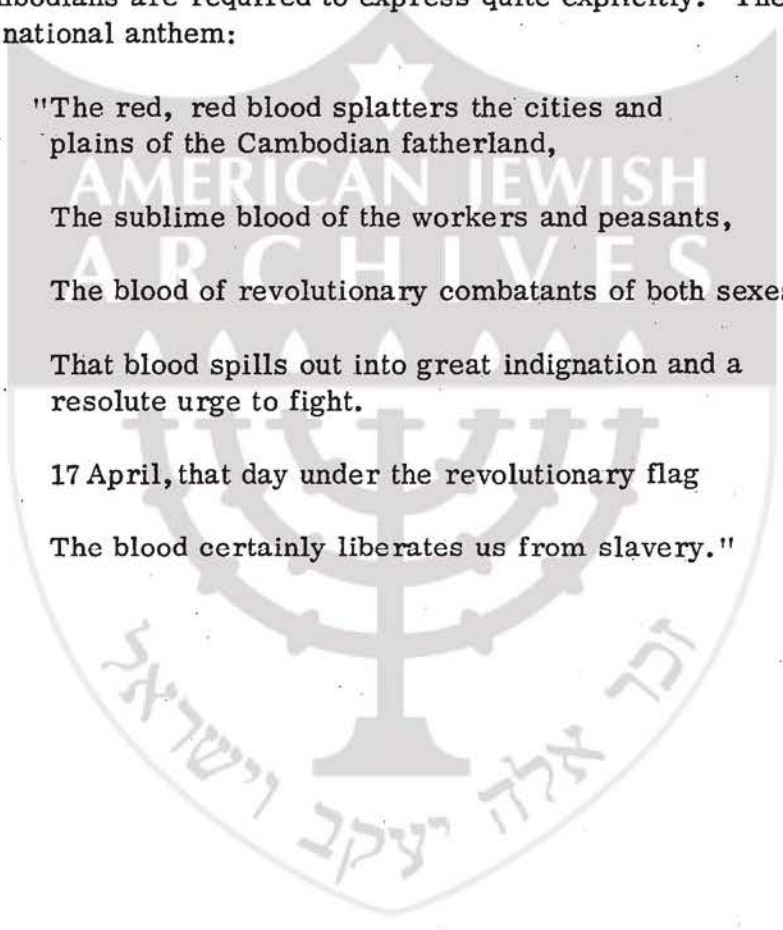
We are left then with one fact from which at least small satisfaction can be taken. Though life for those who live within Cambodia has been described as "harsh in 1975, harsher in 1976, and harshest of all in 1977," the numbers who remain to be executed appear to be declining.

The three Ambassadors to Peking from three Scandinavian countries who wished to visit Angkor Vat were given permission by the Cambodian authorities to visit Phnom Penh and Siem Reap en route. Their reports are extremely revealing. The cities remain crumbling, deserted, as almost as lifeless as Angkor Vat except for some 20,000 who are trucked in and out of the capital daily to perform some still essential chores. Among them there must be those who bring the food, the meals, the necessities, and the mail to the Ambassadors from the friendly communist states who cannot leave their embassy grounds.

These Scandinavian diplomats noted too what so many of the refugees have reported, the sheer absence of older people. The young are the "new men" best suited for this society in pursuit of purity. The Ambassadors refused to draw any conclusions on what happened to the old. But one of these men experienced in the many ways of a curious world did say this of the Kampuchea he saw: "It was like an absurd film. It was like a nightmare. It is difficult to believe it is true."

But what transient though experienced foreigners may find difficult to believe, Cambodians are required to express quite explicitly. These are the words of their new national anthem:

"The red, red blood splatters the cities and
plains of the Cambodian fatherland,
The sublime blood of the workers and peasants,
The blood of revolutionary combatants of both sexes.
That blood spills out into great indignation and a
resolute urge to fight.
17 April, that day under the revolutionary flag
The blood certainly liberates us from slavery."



The Catholic Charities
OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK

DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

1011 FIRST AVENUE • NEW YORK, N. Y. 10022


April 12, 1978

Mr. Alfred Kastner
International Rescue Committee
386 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10016


Dear Al:

I'm not sure this was worth all the effort to edit and reproduce. Use it or any part of it as suits your own judgment.

Sincerely,


John B. Ahern

JBA/dh
Attachment.

I believe there is an excellent and extremely detailed report and am sure you will all find it a valuable addition to our individual observations and conclusions - Thanks to John Ahern


The Catholic Charities

OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK

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The attached report is a copy of notes made in the field. The important points may be summarized as follows:

1. The willingness of the Royal Thai Government to continue admitting refugees is wholly dependent on the rapid resettlement of most refugees to other countries.
2. The Thais believe the current U.S. program is totally inadequate in the numbers to be admitted, in the selective screening, and in the slowness of movement.
3. Though the exclusionary policies of the Royal Thai Government and increased border and shore-line patrol in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia may reduce the flow of refugees, political repression and economic decline in those countries will continue to motivate numbers of people to attempt escape.
4. Confinement to refugee camps and detention centers for a long period of time is and will be terribly destructive to the dignity and morale of a mass of people who took extraordinary risks to secure personal freedom. It may also make real the Thais fear of insurgency and guerilla movements among the refugees.
5. It does not seem realistic to assume that most of the refugees will eventually be integrated into the Thais population. Some modest numbers of Laotians and Cambodians may be integrated. Both because of our past relationships and because of our resources the United States should assume a substantial responsibility for resettlement in our country. Although the Vietnamese boat cases have received far more attention, our major effort must be focused on the overland refugees.
6. The priorities and categories in effect for the selection of parolees under the approvals of August, 1977, and January, 1978, make some

sense in the context of choosing 22,000 persons for resettlement out of a total refugee population of over 100,000 refugees. However, such priorities and categories should not continue as the sole measurements were the United States to expand significantly its resettlement program.

7. If U.S. policy becomes more generous, it is important that actual resettlement then occur expeditiously. This will require sufficient lead time so that the voluntary agencies might secure assurances in timely fashion. It also implies, in my opinion, consideration of the establishment of a transit facility on U.S. territory.

REPORT

Seattle 2-9-78 - Briefing

Though the International Rescue Committee plays an unaccustomed larger role in Thailand in coordinating for other voluntary agencies in building case files and channelling medical services, the focus of the Commission is all voluntary agencies, all U.S. Government apparatus, and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees program. The Commission was put together because neither the Administration nor the Congress were taking responsibility in giving leadership to changes needed in the past piecemeal use of the parole process. Since public opinion is also soft, the Commission must address both our Government in its branches and the American public.

It is suggested for our perspective that:

1. The willingness of coastal countries and ships on high seas to give first asylum is dependent on a clear commitment from "third countries" to resettle. U.S.A. should probably carry 2/3 of this burden because that many boat refugees seem to fit our categories.
2. Thailand is in a difficult position because of the land refugees since it is the only "first asylum" country. About 1000 new arrivals each month (to December 1977) fit current U.S. categories.
3. Since there is no finite predictable number of refugees, consideration must be given to an open-ended resettlement program.

Clear commitments have been forthcoming from few other nations. Canada has agreed to accept 50 boat cases a month. France, quietly, is resettling about 1000 per month.

On 11-15-77 Thailand adopted an exclusionary policy. Border patrols are instructed to intercept refugees and to ask them to return. If they refuse, they are arrested as illegal aliens and detained in Thai camps unrelated to U.N.H.C.R. supported programs.

Account must also be taken of the view that a good resettlement program

could increase the flow of refugees geometrically.

Note was also made that, from a very important perspective, the refugee problem is related to larger problems of world hunger and rural redevelopment.

The possibility of integration into Thailand is very delicate. An official and open policy of integration would likely produce a stampede into Thailand. Thailand's own population of 42,000,000 to 45,000,000 is increasing at a 2.6% annual rate. Land is already in short supply. The Royal Thai Government is making some small beginnings of a rural resettlement program for its own people. There is an especial problem for Vietnamese refugees. In 1946/47 some 60,000 Vietnamese fled into N.E. Thailand from French-controlled Laos. The Thais consider them communist infiltrators. There seems to be some basis for believing that many who remain are, in fact, under the control of Communist Cadres.

The Thais are willing, very informally, to discuss the distant possibility of some number of compatible refugees being integrated into Thailand. Japan and the U.S. have indicated willingness to support such a program, even as part of general rural economic redevelopment aid. The Thais may see the integration of refugees as an element in their general development plan as a more attractive package to draw additional international aid.

Some refugees might not be able to handle third country resettlement. There will certainly be a large number of refugees, especially Cambodians, who will not fit U.S. current categories.

There might be value, then, for the Commission to raise gently the possibilities of integration for ethnically compatible refugees, especially if they could be given documentation which would permit self-resettlement in Thailand. For centuries, the borders have been porous and there are historical precedents. It is also important to explain to local Government officials that the actual departure rates of Refugees to the U. S. are not an index of present U. S. commitment.

Finally, interviews with refugees indicate that, even though there are great physical dangers and the reluctant reception is known, conditions in Laos, Vietnam, and especially Cambodia are so bad that the flow will continue - perhaps at a lower rate. It is important to get a picture of refugee motivation - especially to determine the weight of economic and political factors.

Since Thailand is attempting to reestablish diplomatic relations with its neighbors we must anticipate a discussion of the refugees. Internationalizing resettlement could permit the Thais to respond to their neighbors' diplomatic pressure by saying they are only offering the humanitarian service of first asylum.

It also seems diplomatically desirable to balance international and U.S. support of resettlement with aid to Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia even though there might be doubt on the internal equity in the distribution of such aid.

Cambodia is a special problem. Reports indicate a very harsh regime. Security is tight; most refugees seem to have come from nearby border areas. Relatively few fit U.S. criteria.

Mission Objectives

1. We are U.S. citizens from wide-range of American Community.
2. We must learn as much as possible.
3. We must acknowledge the efforts and generosity of the Thais and other first asylum countries while we also acknowledge that U.S. short term episodic commitments have not been encouraging to first asylum countries.
4. Inform first asylum countries that it is our intention to:
 - A. Press for firm and sufficient U.S. commitment to boat cases.
 - B. Press for firm and sufficient U.S. commitment for land cases and for support from U.S. for integration if local governments choose that.
5. International assistance to Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia in present economic difficulties and food shortages.
6. We will remain in contact with House Sub-Committee (Eilburg) in light of 2-15-78 hearings.

Hong Kong 2-11-78 Briefing

Cherne - mission may remain an entity after return to U.S. in order to pursue its objectives.

Feldman - Immigration and Naturalization Service Area Chief.

Piece-meal U.S. program is difficult to administer sensibly and sensitively. Under law, Hong Kong is the only place where conditional entry applications may be filed and processed; but Hong Kong is only a transit point, not an asylum, since Hong Kong Government does not technically allow asylum. Since voluntary agencies are guaranteeing housing and jobs, no Labor Department certification is required.

The additional 7,000 numbers for boat cases approved on 1-25-78 are being processed now and will probably be used up by 6/78.

I.N.S. has four field staff in Thailand; they have processed 2,300 cases already. It is expected the 8,000 land numbers will divide into 6,400 numbers for Cat. I and II and 1,600 Cat. III. At the present time there are 396 processed and approved refugees in Hong Kong transit facility.

There are rumors the Administration may favor an annual approval to receive 40,000 refugees from both hemispheres. It seems Congressman Eilburg leans toward a ceiling of 25,000 refugee preference numbers plus another 5,000 which Congress must provide. Present law provides for 10,200 refugees preference numbers for Eastern Hemisphere and some 7,000 for Western Hemisphere, but no provision to recoup unused numbers from either hemisphere.

The last Eilburg Amendment cost the Hispanics heavily, e.g. Mexico lost about 40,000 numbers.

Stewart - International Committee for European Migration

In-transit refugees are housed in three hotels, maintained by U.N.H.C.R. at \$7.46 (U.S.) per day. There is no joint voluntary agency representative in Hong Kong.

A serious problem is the slowness of voluntary agencies of U.S. in producing assurances; this is particularly true of church agencies. Just recently, Mr. McCarthy of USCC has guaranteed return of assurances from his agency in three to four weeks. If this is possible it would be highly satisfactory. I.C.E.M. arranges transportation to receiving country.

Lahiguera - State Department - Political/Refugee Officer

Very hard to project outflow from Vietnam. There have been two bad harvests, former businessmen are being pushed to farmwork; Catholics, former government officials, and students are fearful of persecution; collectivization of fisheries in South; planning to collectivize farms; forced reduction of population in Saigon; conscription.

While up to now the Viet Government has not seemed disturbed by outflow, recent publicity seems to have gotten to them.

Carter - Hong Kong Government Immigration Office

In 1974 Hong Kong had to adopt a strict policy against illegal immigrants. To be consistent, Hong Kong Government refused disembarkation rights to Southeast Asia refugees. The move was taken in order to internationalize the concern. This did in fact lead to U.N.H.C.R. action of giving assurances of care, maintenance, and forward movement. Quietly, Hong Kong is permitting refugees to stay and is not repatriating. Hong Kong also has a representative in Saigon processing emigration of dependents of Hong Kong residents. Vietnam Government does not seem upset by movement of non-ethnic Vietnamese.

Mitchiner

Don't lecture the Thai Government officials. Conditions in the camps are not good, but not abominable. Medical support is decent. The young volunteer

staffs are great - French, American, Australian, New Zealanders.

The Cambodians and Vietnamese are unacceptable to the Thais; there is ground to fear the Cambodians may be thrown back across the border. The hill tribe people are always on the move and the Thais believe they will gradually drift back across the border. There is implicit acceptance that the ethnically compatible Laotians will be integrated.

The Thais, since 11-15-77 have taken control of border crossers and are treating them as illegal immigrants. They are being classified as political (10%) or economic (90%) refugees. The official Thai policy is that the economic refugees must return to their country of origin.

Bangkok - 2-11-78

Prior to departure for Songkhla we met informally (2-11-78) with I.R.C. screening staff and U.S. Embassy Refugee Section staff.

Learned that Rabbi Tannembaum is not welcome in Kuala Lampeu. Basis - local election, Moslem sensibilities, his identification with Israeli position. All Commission members cancelled trip, with option, at later date, to send another group.

Songkhla - 2-12-78 - Allegations of Thai robbing, raping, beating up refugees.

Meeting with Governor, Vice-Governor (real head of camp program) and Police Chief.

The refugees here are all Vietnamese and the Governor and his staff regard them as a serious problem of internal security. The Governor and his staff have all had experience in the N.E. Provinces where the Vietnamese refugees of 1946 (approximately 40/50,000) are regarded as a Fifth Column set in place.

Since 11-15-77 boats in good shape are turned away (after necessary resupply). Arrivals who cannot be turned back are illegal aliens and are jailed. R.T.G. has announced intention to gather these detainees in two central camps (not yet opened) without U.N.H.C.R. participation. Governor's attitude was harsh, even though some lesser officials were more compassionate. All were adamant that the refugees must be moved as quickly as possible. The Governor asked why we have not set up a camp in the U.S. and gotten this problem off his back. He complained also about the slowness of reimbursement from Ministry of Interior; his suppliers won't deliver without payment and he is often out of funds.

The Camp is about one long block square on the shore line. Population of 886 - wood, canvas, and tin shacks built side by side in long rows, each probably 8x8. Some living on boats were there is more air and light (about 20 boats). Latrines built right over water in camp. Though food delivery is sparse and irregular, no one seemed hungry. What is missing is cultural practice of constant snacking. Charcoal is seriously inadequate. Medical service in camp and nearby Thais hospital.

Local church groups - Baptist and Catholic have access to camp and are helpful with activities (school) and medicines.

Luncheon with government officials and American locals confirmed above information and broadened context of security problem. There is a long tradition of piracy which now takes the form of extortion to prevent kidnapping and actual kidnapping. The hard core of Malaysian Red leadership is in the jungle on the Thai side of the border. The Thai Communist party has guerilla and cadre camps in the jungle, student leadership defects to these camps, and to socialist cadres also.

Spent about 1½ hours on a boat talking with about 20 refugees. Mixture of young men and older, military veterans. All agree that many boats never make it, but people will continue to come because: (1) life is hard at home (confiscation of crop or fish, re-education of young, closing business, forced relocation) and (2) hatred for regime. Vivid expression of strong feelings. Few in group were eligible under U.S. categories, especially the single young men who were the only ones in family to get out. There were, however, many family groups.

Bangkok - 2-13-78

Embassador Whitehouse and Staff

Short briefing which concentrated on statistics (g.v)

Gen Prem

Deputy Minister of Interior - day to day man in charge since Minister is also Prime Minister.

Mr. Upadit - Foreign Minister

Both made the same points, though in different styles:

1. The refugees, especially Vietnamese and Cambodians who are regarded as security risks, must go. Thought must also be given to repatriation or removal of Vietnamese from 1946 who remain.
2. More money is needed for adequate care of refugees.
3. R.T.G. has great difficulty and would welcome aid in caring for Thais poor.
4. The U.S. should open a camp in the States now for all those it will eventually take. The U.S. (and France) should stop taking only the best refugee.
5. The Foreign Ministry is negotiating normalization with its neighbors. The refugee question will come up.

Transit Hotel - Bangkok - 2-13-78

Once refugees have been approved for U.S., State Department pays transportation from Thai camps to Bangkok site, e.g. 21 hours by bus from Songkhia to Bangkok. Medical screening done - T.B., V.D., opium (one example of woman's denied reunion with family members in U.S. because of opium use).

Crowded in new apartment house, no permanent interior partitions, in middle of urban block. Not bad, even though now overcrowded.

Some wait a long time (months) for U.S. voluntary agency assurances. Have back-log of large number moved quickly from boat camps.

Is also transit spot for other nation resettlement.

Goodyear - Head of U.N.H.C.R.- Bangkok

U.N.H.C.R. has offices in Laos and Vietnam.

Since 11-15-78 Thai policy is to stop the inflow by "encouraged return" and diverting to non-U.N. detention centers.

Projection of fate of 100,000 in camps:

1. emigration - 20,000 more than already planned.
2. voluntary repatriation at some time.
3. integration of 20/40,000, probably Laotian hill folks.

In anticipation of integration, U.N. is working with Thais for "self-reliance projects" for refugees. One of the serious problems is that, in some areas, the refugees are living better than native Thais.

Vietnam - Vietnam Government has made it clear that at this time it does not wish repatriation; they describe boat cases as "traitors". So boat cases are special need, no humane way to send them back. Thais are willing to accept so long as there is firm commitment and fast action on resettlement. Clear action by third countries to back-up commitments is necessary. Songhia is special case because of animosity of Prov. Governor and Vice-Governor who are strongly anti-Vietnamese.

Laotians in Camps - for vast majority there is no climate for repatriation. Laotian Government says they can come back but it will initiate no program. Laos Government sees three distinct groups:

1. non-ethnic Laos.
2. criminals who need re-education.
3. simple folk are welcome.

Though U.N.H.C.R. does not see repatriation as imminent, it would worry about how voluntary it would be.

Cambodia - voluntary repatriation is out of the question. Integration may be possible if security fear is allayed.

Camps - U.N.H.C.R. budget is 25¢ (U.S.) per day per adult refugee for total needs. Voluntary agencies can soften harshness by providing amenities. Unfortunately U.N.H.C.R. has no role (even appeal) in post 11-15-77 detainees.

Areas of improvement

U.S. response to boat cases is generous, but terribly slow. Why not move accepted cases to U.S. transit facility.

High Seas Cases - U.N.H.C.R. trying to persuade Port Authorities to permit disembarkation at first port of call on U.N.H.C.R. assurance of forwarding.

Udon - 2-14-78

John Finney - U.S. Consul - briefing.

The N.E. is the Appalachia of Thailand. Population is 5/8 of Laos origin. The Northeast consists of 14 Provinces and about 16 million people - about 1/3 of land, annual income, and population of Thailand. There are five camps in the Northeast:

- * Loei - mostly Hmong
- * Nongkhai - mostly lowland Laotian and some Hmong
- Ubonratchathani - mostly lowland Laotian
- Surin - mostly Cambodian
- Koret - Vietnamese Laotian (Laos-Gorn Vietnamese)

(* Camps visited)

In-camp population is 56,000, plus a rumored new 3,500 admissions in Ubon detention facilities.

It is hard to estimate out-of-camp refugees. They slip across and move in with friends or relatives (there has been a long, long history of movement back and forth across borders). There may be as many as 15/20,000 spread out along the whole N.E. border. About 4/5,000 have been pulled into refugee camps by R.T.G.

Since 11-15-78 border crossers are reported up the District and Providence chain of command. They are jailed, fined (work-off) and then sent

to District Detention.

The current rate of influx is hard to estimate. The June to December, 1977, rate of 3/3,500 per month panicked R.T.G. and led to 11-15-77 decree. Since then rate seems to be 800/1200 per month, mostly due to Exclusionary Policy.

Viet Refugees of 1946 were first welcomed because of Thai antipathy to French. The Vietnamese had originally been brought into Laos by French. After the war, the French reoccupied lowland towns, the Viet Minh sympathizers fled. From 1956 to 1964 Thai concern about security led to repatriation to North Vietnam of about 40,000, questionable how voluntary it was. Gul of Tonkin incident caused North Vietnam to halt reception because it was "dangerous". Remanent in Thailand have no rights in Thailand, though some have bought Thai papers and blended in. Many of those who remain seem under Communist cadre control, even Christian families.

Since the 11-15-77 decree, no refugees are welcomed in N.E. Thai screening of border crossers leans heavily to defining almost all as economic refugees, based on last bad harvest in Laos. Officially, the Thais say there are no political refugees, but local officials have forwarded some to U.N.H.C.R. camps - e.g. armed Hmong border crossers.

The Lowland Laos from the Vientiane Plain are semi-urban, non-agricultural people. Those from the South Laos Panhandle are mostly rural.

The Hmong are highland foragers and marginal farmers. Many, many were involved in U.S. guerrilla forces.

The Cambodians are all rural people and former soldiers.

The local Thais officials tend to be personally sympathetic to Lowland Laos and Cambodians. They are strongly negative to hill tribes and Vietnamese Laotians for fear of infiltration. There is also fear in a land-short area of traditional hill tribes slash and burn farming methods. (Slash and burn on hills, plant two crops of rice, then leave exhausted land and big erosion problems.)

The local population is resentful that refugees are living better than some of Thais and are seen as depressing wages. But in some cases the camps are an economic shot in the arm - e.g. Nongkai has a Thais population of about 30,000; the camp has a population of 23,000. A lot of U.N.H.C.R. money going into local economy, plus remittances to refugees from overseas.

Refugee camps have become societies within a society. There is a lot of movement in and out of camps. Some refugees slip in and out in support of resistance in Laos and Cambodia. The Thais quietly equip some refugees to gather intelligence in Laos and Cambodia, in turn the Laotian and Cambodian regimes infiltrate the camps.

Thailand, in its N.E., has more ethnic Laotians than Laos itself. Laos has about 1.5 million ethnic Laotians out of 3 million population. Laos now seems to be a client state of Vietnam.

Thailand's security problem increased because 80% of student leadership went underground when the military took over in October, 1977.

Resettlement - There is a strong ethnic and linguistic affinity with Thai population resident in N.E.; therefore, integration is theoretically feasible. Acceptability of Cambodians is limited to N.E.

Udon - 2-14-78

Interview with Vice-Governor Sombun

Sombun stated policy - there are no more refugees after 11-15-77. All illegal immigrants will be detained if they refuse to return. Legitimate political escapes will eventually be processed into U.N.H.C.R. Camps. Others are expected to go back, but will not be forced to do so involuntarily.

The question of whether Laos Government sees all escapees as political defectors is being explored with Laos Government.

After third nations have made maximum effort and reduced population to 10/20,000 range, the Thais certainly won't kill the remainder.

The West is "creaming" refugees and this is not fair to refugees or to Thailand. If Carter is serious about human rights, he should be able to over-rule political objections to taking poor refugees.

The current U.N.H.C.R. allowance of 4 Baht (20-25¢) per adult and 3 Baht (15-17¢) per child is rock bottom. There are some cash flow problems.

Reluctant agreement was reached for visit to Detention facility as long as there were no pictures. It has capacity of about 250; it now holds 1,000, mostly Hmong.

Non Khai Camps

Camp population:

overall	36,000
resettled	12,500
remaining	23,500 - about 2 to 1 lowland Laotians over Hmong, some scattering of Vietnamese.

Shelters are wood, bamboo and thatch, generally orderly and clean appearances, sanitary facilities not bad, some medical care by I.R.C. staff, food in regular but small portions. Wood and charcoal are hard to come by. Some have relatives who send money, so there is cash and barter economy.

Camps have schools run by Baptists and Thai Sisters (Catholic Council of Thai Development funded), Red Cross Hospital, and Y.W.C.A. skill training - blacksmith. Possible source of income to Hmong-embroidery among Hmong women.

Fr. Richard Thiele, C.S.S.R. (Chicago) from local parish has access to camp. Chapels for Laotians and Hmong (Sunday Mass). Dick says there are a number of Catholics in Hmong population. He has active St. Vincent de Paul Society among refugees. He distributes a good bit of medicine.

Spoke with four young lowland Laotian men - 19 year old seminarian, 20 year old seminarian, 21 year old seminarian, 26 year old Brother. One spoke pretty good English, one moderate English. Reasons for leaving: constant loudspeaker propaganda, indoctrination of young people, confiscation of rice. All crossed Mekong by boat, one survived capsizing in which two infants drowned. Three of the young men were only ones of large families to come out. Their housing was bamboo and thatch over wooden floor, straw mats, charcoal brazier, iron pots. Dick Thiele keeps all four busy as catechists and visitors of other refugees. They were cleanly dressed in shirts, pants and sneakers. None are eligible for U.S. program.

Hmong tend to have dirtier homes and much accumulated dust on their traditional black clothing - generally living in long huts divided by mosquito netting or black polyvinyl. Gold teeth, many smiles, infants and toddlers are often nakes as not, women do intricate embroidery. Men seemed aimless. Many of the men were guerilla warfare specialists, fire teams, air strike callers, scouts for U.S. intelligence operations.

Dick hopes to develop market for Hmong embroidery - Christian and Missionary Alliance also trying.

Local Americans with long local history and long Vietnamese contact support suspicion that "old" Vietnamese are controlled by Communist cadres.

Detention Center - Non Khai

Capacity of 250, contains 1,000, mostly Hmong. Jammed, long tents of bamboo and black polyvinyl, living on ground, behind high stockade and armed guards.

One pump-handle well, dirty water and it is in short supply, medical services from main camp. The polyvinyl provided thru Thai Sisters is life-saver. Camp is filthy. In rainy season it will be one big puddle.

Vinai Camp - Loei Province 2-15-78

About 40 KM on dirt road - checkpoints in many places.

Camp originally built, just at fall of Saigon, and most of refugees brought in by C.I.A. Original populations was most hill tribe people who had fought for U.S. for years.

As of 2-15-78, Camp population -

3,842 men	
3,817 women	In last month -
2,449 boys	
<u>2,291 girls</u>	65 newborn
12,419	10 deaths

No new admissions since 11-15-77. France resettled 282 last year.

Schools:

Women's Vocational - 64
Adult Education - 141
Primary School - 1,710 students
Blacksmith School - 94 men

Camp Commanding Officer even had count of livestock. He had listed past occupation of male refugees:

77 - policemen
710 - soldiers
474 - civil service officials

His interview with Laotian refugees coming in before cut off indicate refugee flow will continue because of food situation.

Camp Commanding Officer is political science graduate of Indian University, spoke excellent English. There is elected refugee chairman, a Hmong, who spoke English. He has a brother in New York working for I.R.C.

This was only camp where a detailed picture of camp organization was presented.

Thai personnel number three. Camp Organization:

10 families to a building - building head
12 buildings to a unit - unit head
3 units to a center - center head
4 centers to the camp - elected head

Camp Commanding Officer and head man seem to get along. Water supply is well water system in camp, supply good. Medical services supplied by New Zealander and Indian M.D. (World Vision?) Major medical problem is basic public health measures. Current incidence of measles and dysentery entered camp thru local Thais. There is, according to camp head-man, current fighting in Laos between Government and former U.S. trained forces. The Hmong are being suppressed especially.

We did not see much of the camp because of time problem. Had lunch with Camp Commanding Officer, camp head-man and six sub-heads.

Saw I.N.S. men and I.R.C. staff working on approvals - wood shed, dirt floor.

Camp head-man had written out statement. After welcome and appreciation to Thais and I.R.C. and hope that generosity continues - the main message:

Hmong are an especial target of the Communists and must flee to survive. Many are now prisoners or are in re-education camps. Refugees have many relatives and friends in Laos who want to join them. They hope the U.S. and

rest of world will accept them for humanitarian and anti-communist reasons.

They are especially anxious for U.S. acceptance and resettlement because they are fearful of Communist take-over of Thailand. In their present state they can't recapture Laos and are afraid they will have to fight the Communists again in Thailand. What the Hmong want is peace, freedom, jobs. In light of U.S. human rights stand, now that we have seen that the Hmong have no land and need a place to live, the U.S. should do something about it.

He considered these points important:

1. A 5 to 6 year program to resettle all refugees.
2. Unless U.S. takes Hmong, they will have to fight their way back into Laos to stand with their brothers.
3. Vietnamese are sending large numbers of young, single soldiers into Laos so that they will marry Laotian girls and kill off race.
4. The U.S. should put pressure on Vietnam to get out of Laos.
5. The refugees respect President Carter's human rights stand. If the U.S. can't relocate Hmong, then re-arm them so they can fight to take their country back.
6. Some (many) of the refugees have many wives or smoke opium. Please change present law so that those with custom may go to U.S. No new polygamy or opium practice.
7. About 200,000 people in Laos are now fighting for their freedom; treat them as liberally for resettlement as you did Vietnamese.

When questioned about problems, sub-headmen mentioned:

Food, clothing, and medicines are in short supply.

Because refugees have no money, teachers are of poor quality and low performance.

There are some unattached children.

Nan 2-15-78

Dinner in evening with Governor Saithai and his staff. By far the most remarkable official yet. Spoke English.

There are two camps in Province, mostly Hmong and Yao. Since 11-15-77, he has been trying to send back border crossers. He has 108 illegal immigrants in detention at District Headquarters now and invited us to visit them. His police are keeping 96 others on the other side of the border.

He believes the camps are demoralizing; people should have work to do, land to farm, space to raise animals. Thinks it could occur so long as Thais were also helped. There is insurgency in the area and he is fearful the Hmong will be turned around. Clearly wishes R.T.G. policy were more lenient.

2-16-78 Pua Detention Center

Open front yard of District Headquarters, All Hmong, 108 persons, long tent of bamboo and red polyvinyl on ground, plenty of wood. Right out in street. We had breakfast in Thai restaurant beside compound in full view. They came out of Laos as a group, a whole village. Took four days walking in Laos and two days in Thailand. Started out with about 10 rifles, had three when they crossed border.

Nam Yao - 2-16-78

The most spectacular camp we've seen. Four gullied hills looked like one continuous thatch. There are 13,758 people here, almost all hill tribes, Hmong, Yao, Yellow-Leaf, and other small tribes.

Dugouts and communication trenches around camp. H.Q. because of mortar and rocket attack a while ago and because curve in road is favorite ambush spot. Camp C.O. says we are creaming the crop, wants U.S. to take 1/2 educated and 1/2 poor. There is a brand new Tom Dooley Memorial Hospital just across the road. Serves refugees principally, but also Thai population in area. Large Thai market across road, too, to serve refugees. Paramedic school, regular schools, clothing production (C.A.M.A. equipped). Seemed to be a very open, bustling camp. Lots of traffic in and out of gate - down to river for washing, 20/25 feet lengths of green bamboo being carried in. Water supply is big problem because it is at bottom of hill. Present pumping system from river to bottom of hill was expensive. Real need is river pumping station (cost, about 100,000 Baht (\$5,000) on river at back side of hill to pump water to top of hill for gravity feed to living areas. No big illness problems beyond public sanitation related illnesses. Tin latrines (pit toilets) scattered on hillside.

The hills were very steep, naturally drained by gullies. In rainy season paths are slick. All bamboo, thatch and mat huts. Pretty clean.

Most moving experience was discovering an English class in session. Teacher was young male Hmong who spoke and wrote English excellently. About 20 kids (mostly boys) and one adult. Printed blackboard, copy books, rote system. The kids are illiterate in their own language, but the copy books were English script, copied from blackboard.

Spent most of my time with Yao - bright, good looking people, women all working on embroidery which they try to sell, along with bracelets. Saw one old gal sucking on the opium pipe. Kids are bright, alert, active. Most of this group came out two years ago.

John B. Oberer

INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE

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

To: Citizens' Commission on
Indochinese Refugees
From: Leo Cherne

Date: April 27, 1978

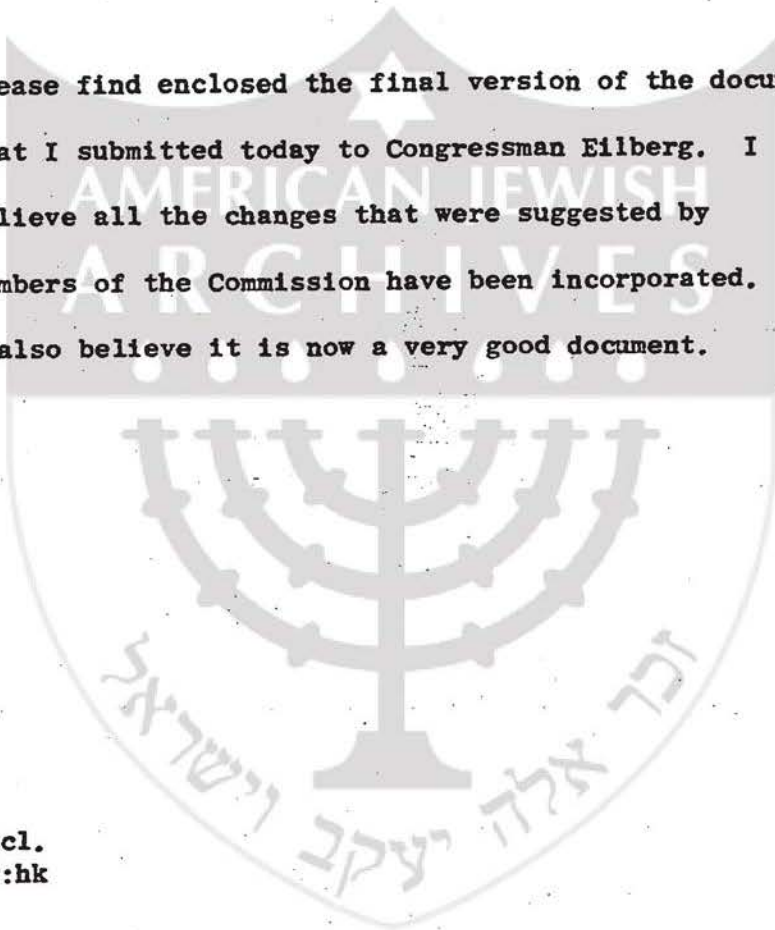
Subject: Congressman Eilberg's Questions
and Our Answers

*Return
refugees
over camp*

*Judy
Vietnam
"Memoranda"
Hawaii*

Please find enclosed the final version of the document
that I submitted today to Congressman Eilberg. I
believe all the changes that were suggested by
members of the Commission have been incorporated.
I also believe it is now a very good document.

Encl.
LC:hk





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TOWARD A LONG-RANGE CONSISTENT AND HUMANE
INDOCHINA REFUGEE POLICY

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

The questions and answers follow:

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

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

At present, the Thai authorities are permitting boats to land. It was our impression, however, that the Thai ministerial and provincial officials considered this liberalized attitude a departure from stated policy, contingent on a decrease in the number of boat people now awaiting resettlement outlets. We believe the presence or the absence of a long-range United States program will decide whether the Thais continue their "relaxed" position or revert to a policy of pushing boats back to sea.

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

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

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

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

Senator Kennedy's bill (S 2751), we believe, combines the advantages of a new numerical ceiling with a clear definition of the Attorney General's parole authority for emergent or humanitarian reasons or reasons in the public interest. It also establishes the statutory requirements of consultation with the appropriate committee of the Senate and the House.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Has your experience in Southeast Asia substantiated these reports? Have you witnessed any incidents of refusals by the Thai Government to accept temporary asylum seekers? Please describe these incidents.

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

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

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

b) International agreements are always a goal to be pursued, provided they

do not become substitutes for compassionate action. The search for a multi-lateral agreement in the late thirties was used as such a substitute, and there was no effective action to save the people who were to become the victims of the holocaust.

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

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

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

From our visits and conversations with provincial officials we concluded that the official policy is being applied though not everywhere with the same vigor. We were left with the distinct impression that these harsh measures had resulted from the uncertainty about future resettlement schemes and United States policies. There is no doubt in our mind that what we do in the United States is

directly linked to what is happening in Thailand and elsewhere in Southeast Asia.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Answer: a) Many international meetings have already considered this subject over the last three years, including periodic sessions of the UNHCR Executive Committee, the ICEM Council, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly. This is an ongoing process. We feel, nevertheless, that a carefully prepared international conference might well further resettlement opportunities, generate more financial assistance, and discourage Far Eastern countries from denying asylum to boat cases. Most important would be to involve countries that have thus far refused to show a measure of concern.

b) Our Commission was unable to visit Malaysia. We did, however, invite the UNHCR representative, the U.S. Embassy Refugee Officer and the Joint Volag Representative in Malaysia to join our deliberations in Bangkok. From what we know about the UNHCR meeting in Kuala Lumpur it would appear that the January session was convened by the resident representative of the High Commissioner for the purpose of exchanging information and views about the boat people and to stress the need for more resettlement outlets. The invited governments were with one or two exceptions represented by diplomats stationed in Malaysia. We understand the meeting was useful but it did not have quantifiable results.

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

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

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

With which countries?

What was the reaction of each of these countries?

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

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

Answer: a) There has been no progress in local resettlement in Thailand, and it seems unlikely that there will be until the numbers of refugees temporarily in the country is stabilized. Hong Kong has accepted about 9,000 people from Vietnam, almost all ethnic Chinese, many of whom could claim some relationship with Hong Kong residents. It is continuing to receive family members directly from Saigon. The Republic of China (Taiwan) has resettled several thousand ethnic Chinese. Malaysia took 1,570 Cambodian Moslems from camps in Thailand. The Philippines have taken a few hundred Vietnamese and Singapore about one hundred.

We did not visit Australia or New Zealand, but are informed that both countries have continuing programs of receiving Indochinese for permanent resettlement.

b) We did raise the question of local resettlement with government officials in several of the countries we visited. While the results were less than we had hoped for, and none of the governments would make public commitments, we believe that there is room for modest encouragement, once the U.S. has made clear its longer-term commitment.

c) Resettlement on a significant scale especially in Thailand would undoubtedly require substantial U.S. financial assistance.

d) Most of the countries of first asylum are heavily populated, if not overpopulated. We would favor a more vigorous effort by the UNHCR, however, to add to the list of countries worldwide which are willing to resettle refugees. But the U.S. should not condition its willingness to resettle more Indochinese on what other countries are doing.

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

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

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

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

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

d) The present consultation between the Executive Branch and the Congress on emergency parole situations is at best a very loose and informal process where decisions have practically been made beforehand by the Executive Branch. Don't you think that this process should be formalized so that Congress would have full participation in the decision rather than being consulted after the fact?

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

e) Our refugee programs have generally been directed to refugees who are of "special concern" to the United States. Would you please give the Subcommittee your ideas of what a "special concern" refugee is?

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

Answer: a) The Indochinese refugee emergency is so critical and the need for a clear signal so urgent, that our Commission recommended acting upon it apart from a general refugee policy. But the Commission members, although not experts

with regard to "all refugee situations," were gratified to learn that the new policy of the Administration makes provision also for refugees from the Soviet Union and for Latin American refugees.

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

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

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

e) Compassion for the underdogs and concern for human rights generate concern for refugees. The Commission, in focusing on one refugee group, did not mean to

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

b) There will be, it must be assumed, requests for more funds, though we do not know for how much and for how long. The initial costs, including transportation expenses to the United States, have been estimated at about \$1,000 per refugee. Estimates on follow-up costs involved in federal reimbursement to the

States, are being worked out by HEW. We assume that the Administration will request the Congress to appropriate additional funds but expect the amounts will be relatively modest.

c) Disclaiming familiarity with appropriation procedures, the Commission members feel that the use of emergency funds that can be replenished may on occasion be the right way of financing an emergency program.

d) By all means, let's make sure the financial aspects of the Indochinese program are thoroughly examined. But let us not overlook the danger of responding too slowly or in a niggardly manner. The members of the Commission are convinced that the cost of the resettlement operation, of whatever scope, would be less than a fraction of one percent of the cost of the war we waged unsuccessfully in Indochina. The Commission, therefore, does not doubt that the Congress will support the Administration in doing what our common humanity requires.

New York, April 25, 1978

INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE

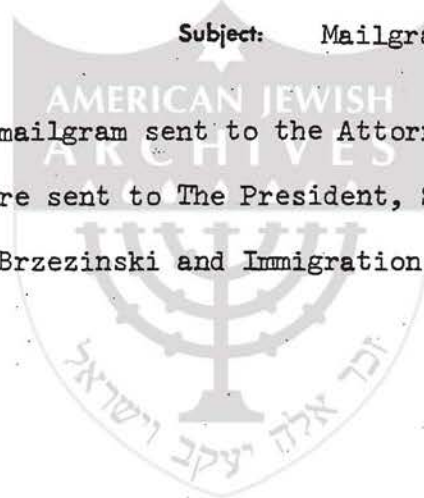
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To: Members of The Citizens' Commission, Date: 5/1/78
Carel, Al
From: Bob DeVecchi Subject: Mailgram to the Attorney General

Attached is the text of a mailgram sent to the Attorney General on April 29.

Copies of this mailgram were sent to The President, Secretary of State Vance,
National Security Advisor Brzezinski and Immigration Commissioner Castillo.

Bob DeVecchi



April 28, 1978

The Honorable
Griffin Bell
Attorney General
Department of Justice
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Attorney General,

The Citizen's Commission on Indochinese Refugees chaired by the Honorable William J. Casey and myself, after studying the problems of the Indochinese refugees, presented a series of recommendations to the State Department and the White House. We welcome the Presidential policy decisions on this question of March 29th.

The substance of these decisions was conveyed to the House Sub-Committee of the Judiciary on April 12th by Assistant Secretary of State Derian and Commissioner of Immigration Castillo. We understand you were asked to communicate with the Sub-Committee with a view to consulting on the rapid implementation of these decisions. We are deeply distressed that a month has passed since the President's decisions and that necessary implementing steps have not been completed. Our distress flows from two circumstances. The plight of the refugees, both boat people and those who have escaped overland from Cambodia and Laos, was acute when we observed them in mid-February. Forcible repatriation to the countries of escape was occurring. Increasing outrages have been inflicted on the helpless victims on boats who have sought safe havens.

Meanwhile, we have distressing new information. The number of escapees by boat approximates 3,000 refugees this month in Southeast Asia. At the same time, Lao and Hmong refugees continue to cross the border into Thailand, despite restrictive measures applied against them by Thai authorities since last November 15th.

Without rapid action on the part of the United States more and more boats will be turned back to sea, and increasing numbers of Lao and Hmong refugees will be pressed back towards Laos to face either death or imprisonment.

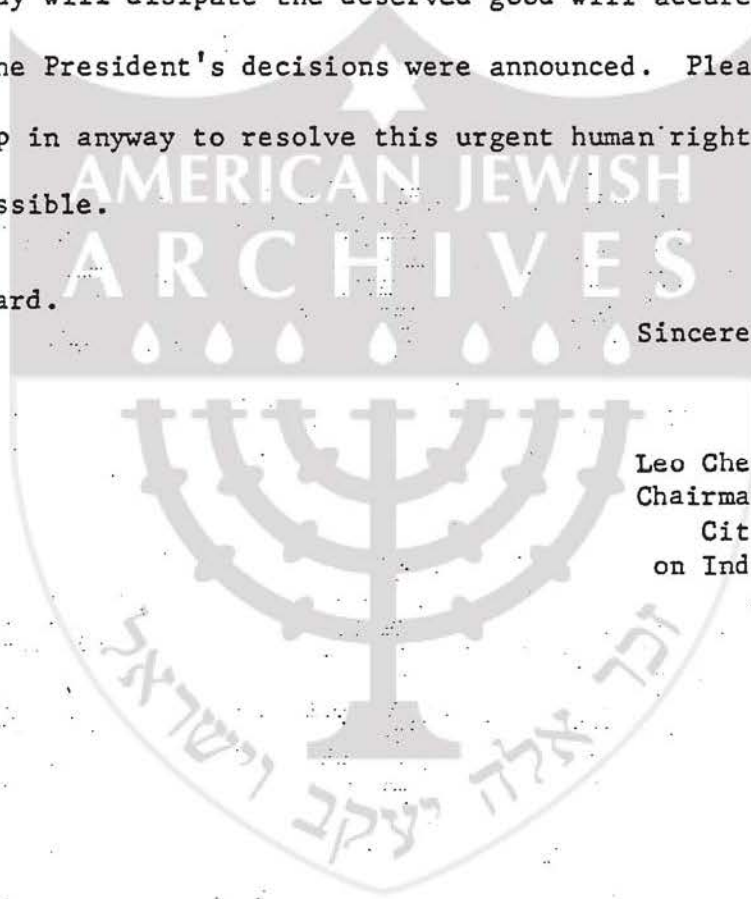
It is absolutely essential that the new parole program be instituted at the earliest moment if lives are to be saved. We are also very concerned that continued delay will dissipate the deserved good will accrued to the United States when the President's decisions were announced. Please call upon us if we can help in anyway to resolve this urgent human rights question as rapidly as possible.

With deep regard.

Sincerely yours,

Leo Cherne
Chairman

Citizen's Commission
on Indochinese Refugees



ADDENDA

The extremely gratifying news that Henry Kamm was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for International Reporting for focusing world attention on the Indochinese boat people has special meaning for our Commission. The New York Times, in covering the Pulitzer awards, notes that the articles by Mr. Kamm "have continued for months to describe the plight of fugitives from Indochina making their way to neighboring countries by any means possible -- only to find themselves unwanted guests. The result, the citation said, has been to cause the United States, among other nations, to widen its acceptance of such refugees, as well as to induce more humanitarian treatment in the unwilling host countries."

In focusing this Personal Recollection so completely on the Citizens Commission itself, the narrative begins on November 16th and does not acknowledge the contribution Henry Kamm and other journalists made toward keeping this tragedy before the eyes of the world and indeed adding to the urgency on the part of the Commission as it undertook its task.

Page 1 of the report refers to "the shutting of the gate" by the United States on the Indochinese refugees. This is not literally correct since some refugees were still coming through and others still being processed to be available for resettlement under the Indochinese Parole Program whose "eligible" rolls had not yet been entirely exhausted.

A serious error, however, is on page 26 in connection with Recommendation 3 made by the Commission. That recommendation states: "The special circumstances of boat people, the Vietnamese who have come to Thailand overland, and of Cambodian refugees make it imperative that all existing criteria and categories for their admission to the United States be waived, and that the movement of those refugees who are accepted for admission be accelerated."

Based on the information available at the time this report was written, there is the following comment: "Each of these three will become U.S. policy. However, the means of treating the boat people will differ from those yet worked out for the Cambodian refugees and a comparable result for the latter cannot yet be considered assured. Result -- 80%."

Once the Administration's program was presented to the Eilberg Committee, it became clear that the outcome did not follow our recommendation. While the numbers of paroles to be granted, once the Attorney General acts, will be substantial,

the criteria which will determine eligibility for parole will remain as they have been, and the Commission's recommendation that the criteria be waived for the Cambodians and overland Vietnamese has not been made part of the Administration's program.

Tragically, that is a most significant fact since the criteria heavily weigh eligibility for parole in favor of those with close family in the United States as well as those with previous association with the U.S. government. Neither of these circumstances apply to all but a miniscule number of the Cambodians and either the criteria would have to be changed or, more likely, a separate program initiated granting parole for the Cambodians. They already receive "points" toward possible resettlement in the United States because of the special hazard of the environment from which they escape. But those points are not sufficient by themselves to enable an adequate number of the Cambodians to be resettled. The same facts handicap resettlement for the 2,000 Vietnamese overland refugees.

Needless to say, our efforts to correct that situation, one of such human importance, will continue.



A Chronology of the International Rescue Committee's

Special Studies, Commissions and Specific Rescue Projects

The International Rescue Committee is the merged combination of similar-purposed organizations. The first was formed immediately after Hitler came to power and was known as the International Relief Association. The second group was formed on June 25, 1940, three days after the French signed the Armistice agreement with Germany. That entity was the Emergency Rescue Committee. In 1942, both of these voluntary associations merged as the International Rescue and Relief Committee. In the period following the end of World War II, when the relief function made necessary by the presence of thousands of displaced persons in Europe came to an end, the word "relief" was dropped from the organization title and it has continued ever since as the International Rescue Committee.

To this day, the purpose of the Committee is what it was in 1933: to assist those who, often at risk of life, are in flight from totalitarian countries. It makes no distinction among the totalitarian character of the countries from which people flee, whether left, right, or some other form of nondescript terror.

During the 45 years of this continuity there have been a number of occasions when special committees or commissions of distinguished Americans were created or stimulated by the IRC for a sharply-focused, single-purpose, suddenly urgent or as a result of a particular refugee crisis. On some occasions, the memberships of these special-purpose groups were selected entirely from the Board of the IRC. More often, however, a broader spectrum of American experience was drawn upon in order to maximize the depth and effectiveness being focused on the particular problem or study to be conducted, as well as to enlarge public understanding of the particular refugee crisis or issue. What follows is a brief description, not of the variety of refugee crises to which the IRC has responded and to which it remains responsive, but those occasions when special purposes, usually sharply focused and of limited duration, were undertaken:

March 1933 -- The consequences of Hitler's rise to power

Shortly after Hitler's rise to power, a small group of Americans met to determine what could be done to assist those whose political opposition to Hitlerism would put them in jeopardy or cause them to flee Germany. Among those who gathered for that urgent study were Reinhold Niebuhr, John Dewey, Amos Pinchot, Sterling Spiro, Bryn Hovde and Paul Brissenden.

After briefly consulting with leading anti-Nazi academicians and democratic political leaders in Europe, that group decided that an organized effort to help those

who would have to flee should be created, and the International Relief Association came into being. It was mistakenly assumed that the numbers who might have to flee would be limited and the need for the organization's existence temporary.

November 1933 -- The flight of the intellectuals

The academics in the IRC (assisted by others drawn from the outside) formed a special body to look into the specific question of how employment might be found for the professors, scholars and scientists after their resettlement in the United States. The problem of adequate use of their special capabilities was complicated by the fact that the United States was at the very depth of its Great Depression. This study led to the conclusion that, in addition to seeking placement where possible in existing universities, an effort should be made to form a new educational entity to keep intact this extraordinary group of European intellectuals. That recommendation undoubtedly played an influential role toward what led to the formation of the University in Exile which, in turn, formed the core of The New School for Social Research.

June 1940 -- The French trap

With the fall of France, that country which had for the years before the war become a major haven for those fleeing the countries occupied or threatened by the Nazis, suddenly became a trap closing in on the most gifted and courageous of the men and women who were clearly identified as having opposed the rise of fascism. The Nazis occupied three-fifths of the country, including the Atlantic Coast down to the Spanish border, and the agreement signed by Marshall Petain bound the French government "to surrender on demand all persons under German jurisdiction named by the German government." To close the trap, Marshall Petain grounded all planes, cancelled all sailings, and stopped issuing exit visas.

A group of individuals in the United States met to determine by what means hundreds of the leading political figures, scientists, educators, artists, writers, businessmen, and others on Hitler's "wanted list" might be saved. That inquiry led to two actions. The first was the formation of the Emergency Rescue Committee, headed by Dr. Frank Kingdon.

In March 1942, this Committee merged its efforts with the predecessor International Relief Association and in one common undertaking, the leadership talents of both extraordinary groups of American leaders were harnessed. To John Dewey, Reinhold Niebuhr and their colleagues assembled during the prewar years were now added the leadership of, to name a few, Professor Charles Beard, Dr. Frank Kingdon, college presidents Harry Gideonse and William Allan Nielson, George Shuster, Robert Hutchins, Alvin Johnson, and the distinguished journalists Dorothy Thompson and Elmer Davis.

June 1940 -- Operation Rescue

But as the merged organizations gathered a rare assembly of leadership talent, still another step had already involved a rare assembly of audacious and self-effacing courage. Under the leadership of Varian Fry and with the vital support of Anna Caples, Paul Hagen, Harold Oram, and volunteers from Switzerland, France, Spain, Portugal and Africa, an office operating primarily in Marseilles was set up for the ostensible purpose of providing stipends to needy refugees in Marseilles for food, clothing and medicine. The actual purpose of the operation, functioning under the cover name "Centre Americain de Secours" was by one method or another using false passports of five nationalities to enable as many as possible to escape the country, sometimes as "seamen," or, more frequently, by escorting the individuals, in ones and twos, across the Pyrenees. Using a number of "safe houses" along the escape route (especially the home of sculptor Aristide Maillol) those being smuggled out of Marseilles were accompanied on foot across mountain passes where they were placed in the hands of individuals who undertook to continue them along this underground railway through Spain either to Portugal or North Africa. One young Czech refugee, representing the IRC, joined the staff of the Centre to assist in the escape of others like himself.

In the summer of 1941, Varian Fry was expelled from Marseilles. Yet the operation continued from this point on in the hands of a group of Europeans until November 11, 1942. On that day, the German Army occupied the "unoccupied" zone of France, and Operation Emergency Rescue came to an end.

The young Czech on the rescue squad managed to leave via North Africa and from there to the United States. After a period in the U.S. Army until the close of the war, he became a member of the staff of the IRC in New York. He is Carel Sternberg, and he's been the IRC's Executive Director during the last twenty years.

The British Navy provided an essential \$10,000 to the underground operation in exchange for an agreement to arrange the escape of several hundred members of the British forces interned in an old fort in Marseilles. Altogether, 2,000 of the most able, courageous and gifted men and women on the "wanted list" were brought to safety. Among them were Jacques Lipchitz, Marc Chagall, Konrad Heiden, Franz Werfel, Heinrich Mann, Andre Breton, Andre Masson, Wanda Landowska, Hans Habe, and Hannah Arendt. In addition, there were the political activists, the anti-Nazi business executives, scientists like Nobel Prize winner Oscar Meyerhof whose escape from France and resettlement in the United States additionally enriched all of American life and culture.

1945 - 1946

A group of IRC Board members and other distinguished Americans like Eleanor Roosevelt became increasingly exercised over the forceable repatriation to the Soviet Union of Soviet civilians and soldiers who had fled the Soviet Union or had been taken prisoner by the German army. This body of individuals formed the core of those who, through the able leadership of Eleanor Roosevelt, protested to the allied governments and to the UN this gross violation of human rights. This effort was largely unsuccessful except in the focus of principle which Eleanor Roosevelt led and which culminated in the United Nations Human Rights Convention.

1948 -- The Iron Curtain Refugee Commission

In the summer of 1946, alarmed by a succession of defeats at the polls, the Kremlin decided to crack down. In quick succession, the Communists in Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary and East Germany moved to suppress the opposition and to install totalitarian regimes modeled on the Stalinist pattern. With the Communist coup, in February 1948 in Czechoslovakia, the Iron Curtain had descended over the whole of Eastern Europe. A commission was formed to examine the implications of this widening of the Iron Curtain, particularly in terms of jeopardy to those democratic leaders of the newly "acquired" countries. The commission included Admiral Richard E. Byrd, Lt. General Walter Beadle Smith, and General Carl Spaatz, with the support of 27 state governors and other community leaders. This newly formed IRC campaign quickly organized emergency assistance for the thousands of new escapees along the Iron Curtain from Sweden to Turkey and helped arouse the conscience and understanding of the American people by placing before them, in case history after case history, the true but incredible story of the "massacre of the innocents" in the Communist-dominated countries.

1948

By 1948, it became apparent that the variety of relief and resettlement efforts in motion were inadequately meeting the needs of a group of people who were always difficult to place effectively -- the exiled professionals. Under the chairmanship of Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr, assisted by the Reverend Laurence J. McGinley, S.J., President of Fordham University, and Dr. Millicent C. MacIntosh, President of Barnard College, and aided by an initial gift of \$100,000 from the Lessing J. Rosenwald Foundation (the single largest grant ever made by that Foundation), the IRC recommended a sharply focused effort to assist these professionals. Dr. Niebuhr stated the function crisply: "Never before in the 20th century has any nation been presented with a greater opportunity to contribute so directly to the preservation of invaluable creative sources and to the enrichment of its own civilization."

With an additional grant of \$500,000 from the Ford Foundation and another \$200,000 from other sources, that commission was able to report by March 1952 that 1,700 refugee professionals had been resettled, who, with their families, numbered 3,227 persons.

During this interval, the health of IRC's chairman, Reinhold Niebuhr, began to fail and he was finally led to suggest to the Board that Leo Cherne, who had been actively involved in the Committee since the end of the war, succeed him as chairman.

1950-1951 -- The Berlin Mission

The year 1950 was one of crisis and testing for the West. In June of 1948, the Communists had instituted the Berlin Blockade in an open effort to starve the people of West Berlin into submission. The West had disarmed to a dangerous degree -- but the challenge of Berlin was one that could not be ignored. The United States responded to the blockade with the Berlin Airlift.

A voluntary citizens group was formed to determine the means by which the American people might add their assistance to the City of Berlin as the Airlift dragged on. Under the leadership of Richard E. Byrd, General Lucius D. Clay and former Secretary of State Sumner El Welles, and with the strong encouragement of High Commissioner John McCloy, "Project Berlin" was added to IRC's undertakings. It involved an emergency appeal to enable the massive shipment of foods in desperately short supply in Berlin. Though the cost was estimated at \$1,000 for each 50,000 pounds of food delivered, and the goal was set at 2 million pounds of food, the emergency appeal brought in sufficient funds to ship 4,224,000 pounds of milk, butter and cheese to the people of Berlin.

Winter of 1953 -- Project Berlin II

Ernst Reuter, one of Germany's leading anti-Nazi political figures of the 1920's and 30's was twice imprisoned and sentenced to death by the Nazis. He escaped Nazi prison after the first sentence, intent on continuing his efforts. After his second escape, he was assisted by the IRC to refuge in Turkey where, during the war years while working as an engineer, he directed the work of the IRC for those refugees fleeing eastward. At the close of the war, the IRC provided his transportation back to Berlin, where he became the first Mayor of a free Berlin.

The ravages of the growing Cold War, the destruction inflicted on the city by the Berlin Blockade did little to discourage the flight to West Berlin of several hundred thousand East Germans. More than one in every ten in a city plagued by unemployment and surrounded by Soviet-occupied territory, was a refugee. During the winter of 1952,

as many as 6,000 refugees a day were fleeing to a city which had neither accommodation nor work for them. Urged on by Mayor Reuter, a committee of Americans was formed to quickly explore the possibility of American help in meeting this new and massive refugee crisis.

Under the leadership of General Lucius D. Clay, John McCloy, General Carl Spaatz, Paul Hoffman, Admiral Richard E. Byrd and Leo Cherne, Ernst Reuter was brought to the United States to confer directly with President Eisenhower. On January 21st, Mayor Reuter told the press that Berlin's plight had become so critical that the city needed immediate assistance from its Western friends if it were to remain free. This special committee organized a national campaign. Reuter addressed scores of meetings from one end of the country to another and within the first few weeks \$850,000 in cash assistance was provided from private American sources and hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of essential goods were shipped directly to Berlin.

1954 -- The Flight from Hanoi

Within the first weeks after the Geneva Armistice ended the civil war in Vietnam and provided for the right of any individual in North and South Vietnam to change his residence, the flow of refugees from North Vietnam into Saigon became massive. A committee of IRC Directors was formed to explore the question whether the IRC should, for the first time, assist in a refugee resettlement program in an Asian country. The committee included IBM's Arthur Watson, Dwight Eisenhower's former SHAEF aide Jock Lawrence and Joseph Buttinger, and a decision was made that Leo Cherne travel to Saigon to determine whether a role appropriate for an American agency existed.

President Ngo Dinh Diem told Mr. Cherne that he was particularly concerned with the problem of the refugee students and intellectuals. His new country was desperately short of leaders and administrative cadres. Among the refugees there was an abundance of talent. Properly utilized, this talent could make the difference between survival and extinction for free Vietnam.

After several weeks' exploration, Cherne reported the urgency of assistance to the political leaders of the long-suppressed democratic parties who were fleeing South, and, in particular, to the students and faculty of the University of Hanoi who, almost as a body, sought sanctuary in the South. Upon Cherne's return to the States, Joseph Buttinger volunteered to go to South Vietnam to organize reception and resettlement efforts for this group.

The IRC continued its programs of assistance, particularly for the professionals and academic refugees, until 1961 when the IRC ended its operations in Vietnam in protest against the Ngo Dinh Diem government because of outrages committed at the University of Hue and among Buddhist dissidents.

February 1956 -- The Donovan Commission on the Soviet Redefection Campaign

Toward the end of 1955, there were numerous reports of Communist pressures on escapees from the Iron Curtain countries, aimed at inducing or forcing these escapees to return to their homelands. The International Rescue Committee received increasing evidence from refugee leaders in the United States and Europe that the Communist redefection campaign was not sporadic or haphazard but that it was international in scope, extravagantly financed, carefully planned and centrally directed.

In February 1956, the IRC organized an Emergency Commission under the chairmanship of Willian J. Donovan to assess the problem in detail. It was the commission's assignment to study and evaluate (1) the Communist objectives, (2) the methods employed, (3) the extent and effectiveness of the redefection campaign, and (4) possible counter measures. The commission spent three weeks in February in France, Austria, Switzerland, and Germany. It met with officials concerned with the refugees and it interrogated and took written testimony from hundreds of individual refugees.

The commission found that the principal objectives of the redefection campaign were (1) to break the back of the liberation movements in exile, (2) to discourage others behind the Iron Curtain who were disposed to consider escape, (3) to deprive the West of the propaganda element inherent in the mass escape of refugees from the Communist "paradise," (4) to provide the Communist propaganda apparatus with a steady supply of redefectors, whose stories of "disillusionment" in the West were most useful for general consumption at home and for broadcasts to the uncommitted countries of Asia and Africa.

Members of the Donovan commission included Clairborne Pell, Sheba Strunsky Goodman, Willian vanden Heuvel, Irving Brown, Leo Cherne, Joseph Buttinger, Angier Biddle Duke, and Richard and Karin Salzmann. An extensive report on the purposes, techniques and consequences of the redefection campaign was issued by the commission on its return to the United States, presented to President Eisenhower and eventually the Soviet redefection effort throughout the world ground to a halt.

1956 -- Operation Budapest

On October 23, 1956, within hours after the overthrow of the Soviet-dominated government of Budapest by students, workers and defecting militia, the IRC appealed to Dwight D. Eisenhower and Adlai Stevenson (then in the closing weeks of the national campaign) to express the sympathy of the American people. Uncertain of the effect on their respective campaigns, neither candidate chose to identify himself with the Hungarian Freedom Fighters.

This led to Angier Biddle Duke and Leo Cherne flying to Austria to determine what might be done to provide non-military assistance to the students and worker councils and the revived free political parties in the suddenly democratic Austria.

John Richardson, a corporate lawyer, volunteered his services throughout this period and, in fact, arranged for a gift of 100,000 units of Terramycin to accompany Duke and Cherne on their trip in the hope that it might be brought to Budapest. Cherne and Marcel Faust, head of IRC's Vienna office, drove to Budapest carrying the essential antibiotics, other medicines, food and clothing and placed them in the hands of the leadership groups. Faust and Cherne were the first Americans to visit with Cardinal Mindszenty within two hours after his release from seven years in prison, leaving with him a large shipment of drugs as a token of private American identification with the freedom struggle.

1956

With the suppression of the Revolution, thousands of Hungarians began their flight from Hungary to safety in Austria. Under the leadership of General William Donovan and with William vanden Heuvel, Herman Steinkraus, Claiborne Pell and James Michener, this commission went to the frontier to determine what emergency assistance would be needed to assist those in flight, many of them young children sent across alone with only name tags for identification. The commission returned to recommend a major U.S. resettlement effort. This helped to stimulate a national program which in a brief period of time brought close to 40,000 Hungarian refugees to the United States.

Shortly thereafter, Claiborne Pell returned to Vienna where for nearly a year he directed the IRC's Hungarian refugee effort in Europe.

October 1957 -- The Zellerbach Commission on the European Refugee Situation

The historic events in Central Europe, which included the East Berlin riots, the riots in Poznan, Poland, the convulsion in Hungary, all contributed to so vast a wave of political refugees seeking safety in the free countries of Western Europe that in October 1957 the IRC thought it desirable that a high-level commission be formed to assess the problems and needs of this vast movement of people seeking sanctuary. Under the chairmanship of Harld L. Zellerbach, with Angier Biddle Duke as co-chairman, the commission included Eugenie Anderson, Irving Brown, Mrs. David Levy, Eugene Lyons, and the Right Reverend James A. Pike.

The commission's report not only described in detail the effects of the refugee influx but recommended to the American people a stable, comprehensive and systematic

participation by the United States in the growing and urgent needs for assistance and resettlement.

1958 -- Medico

Tom Dooley returned to the United States to urge upon the IRC the formation of a commission to visit Dr. Albert Schweitzer in Lambarene in order to formally establish, in Asia, a parallel to Schweitzer's work in the Gabon. Leo Cherne headed that commission, together with Dr. Peter D. Comanduras and long-time Schweitzer friend, Erica Anderson, to appeal for his leadership in the formation of a new group which the IRC would undertake to form -- Medico. Angier Biddle Duke and Tom Dooley, at the same time, led the formation of a support effort in the United States. Dr. Schweitzer had refrained throughout his life from associating with other medical efforts patterned after his. Nevertheless, the week's visit with him produced the first reversal of that policy. He agreed to accept the Honorary Chairmanship of Medico, authorizing us to quote him: "I endorse MEDICO with all my heart." The Medico operation spread rapidly, from missions in Laos to North Africa. Unfortunately, though still in his early 30's, Dr. Tom Dooley discovered while in Laos that he had cancer. He returned to the United States where treatment proved unavailing and with his passing the IRC made the decision to transfer Medico to an organization better equipped to carry on its specialized function. Ever since then it has been a division of CARE.

February 1959 -- The Cuban Revolution

Within one month after Castro's overthrow of the Batista government, two members of the IRC Board went to Havana with a view to determining whether at some point a flow of democratic anti-Batista, anti-Castro refugees might occur.

The flight of Batistianos was expected and occurred early. The IRC played no role in their resettlement. By the end of 1959, the first of what proved to be a large wave of democratic victims of the Castro government began to flee. The IRC was the first agency to offer assistance to these leaders in the long history of the struggle for democracy in Cuba. Within months, the leading members of the democratic wing of the Castro movement disappeared, were lost in flight, or were, like Huber Matos, imprisoned.

The IRC has played a major resettlement role for more than 20 percent of the more than half-million Cuban refugees who fled to this country. The Cuban crisis introduced the volunteer efforts of a group of women who had previously lived in Cuba and who had originated and manned the major relief and resettlement operations in Miami and New York. Among these women are Betsy Landreth, Dolores Leviant, Sophie Gimbel, Nena Goodman, several of whom subsequently became key members of the IRC Board and Executive Committee.

1960 -- The Flight of Chinese Intellectuals

In 1960, Leo Cherne and his business colleague, Carl Hovgard, were urged by close associates of Ngo Dinh Diem in the U.S. and Vietnam to travel to Saigon to see what might be done to encourage the end of growing repression under Diem's presidency. It was the feeling among some members of the Diem cabinet, some Americans there like Wolf Ladejinsky, others here in contact with top figures in Saigon like Joseph Buttinger, Gil Jonas and Wesley Fishel that because of IRC's early help, Cherne would be the one person Diem would most likely listen to. Meetings with him and other members of his government, as well as U.S. Embassy personnel, continued for a week. The promises made at the end were totally encouraging, and included specific commitments to sharply reduce the functions performed by the President's brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu and his wife. But the results proved nil.

Immediately thereafter, Cherne and Hovgard traveled to Hong Kong for an arranged conference with the leaders of Aid Refugee Chinese Intellectuals which had been formed in the late Fifties to assist those fleeing the Mainland. This led to the IRC taking over their entire resettlement effort in Hong Kong under the existing leadership of Halleck Rose and Travis Fletcher and to begin an effort to determine whether any help to the Tibetan refugees in India from the IRC was feasible. Hovgard and Fletcher traveled to meet with the Dalai Lama at Benares. A modest IRC grant was given to the Dalai Lama, but the conclusion was reached that assistance provided by the government of India could not in any significant way be effectively supplemented by the IRC.

1965

The increasing American involvement in Vietnam led to an appeal by President Lyndon Johnson to all voluntary agencies to either increase or initiate assistance to the relief and resettlement of the growing number of war-created internal refugees in Vietnam. Cherne and Wells Klein went to Saigon to determine whether IRC's previous decision to end its operations there should be reconsidered. In concert with the other voluntary agencies, the IRC resumed its operations, concentrating on resettlement, especially among the neglected Montagnard people. One of IRC's resettlement villages was subsequently considered the model resettlement operation in Vietnam.

1968 -- Soviet tanks in Prague

Within hours after the student uprising in Prague following the Soviet invasion by thousands of tanks and troops, William Casey and Leo Cherne left for Europe to determine whether assistance might be provided by the IRC through its European officers

in Vienna and Munich. Casey, on conferring with Willy Brandt, advised Cherne in Vienna that the German frontier with Czechoslovakia was not being used for the flight of refugees and that all indications were that Austria would be the main exit point for a substantial refugee outflow. Casey joined Cherne in Vienna where they made an unsuccessful effort to drive to Bratislava in Czechoslovakia but were stopped by a roadblock of Russian tanks at the outskirts of the city. On returning to Vienna the decision was made to step up IRC assistance to the substantial numbers who were fleeing in what appeared certain would be a major refugee influx.

1971 --The rape of East Pakistan

Late in April 1971, the Chancellor of the University of Chittagong traveled from London, where he had been lecturing, to New York in order to meet with Leonard Sussman of Freedom House and Sternberg and Cherne of the IRC to tell us of the massacre which had occurred two weeks earlier of nearly the entire student body and faculty of the Universities of Dacca and Chittagong, and appealing to us for assistance in bringing this tragedy to the world's attention. In the ensuing sixty days, millions fled East Pakistan to neighboring Bengal, a flight which would ultimately be the largest of this century -- some 10 million refugees.

Angier Biddle Duke undertook to head up a quickly formed commission to go to Calcutta to determine what IRC might do with its modest resources in the face of this human tidal wave. That commission included among its members Lee Thaw, Thomas Phipps, Dr. Edward Weiner, Mort Hamburg. Under Duke's leadership, the commission rapidly surveyed the relief efforts being mounted by the state of Bengal, the government of New Delhi and the voluntary agencies from several continents. It reached a dramatic conclusion: no sum of money IRC could raise could significantly contribute to the needs of 10 million utterly destitute people suffering, in addition, spreading cholera, dysentery and a variety of other killer diseases.

The Duke commission recommended to the IRC and was immediately authorized to proceed to employ all available refugee doctors, on condition that the doctors volunteer to spread their medical capability in as many of the camps as possible and to quickly set up emergency medical clinics. By hiring the physicians directly and supplying them with equipment and supplies provided by the Indian government and the Red Cross, the IRC actually initiated the beginnings of a health system for ten million people. The physicians not only mounted quick emergency assistance but established a nucleus for teaching public health, sanitation and child care to the huge population in the hastily assembled camps.

After the commission returned, Lee Thaw remained to supervise that massive operation during the coming weeks, until she in turn was replaced by Professor Aaron

Levenstein and his wife, Margery, who took advantage of the summer college leave to spend two months enlarging the program. Among other things, they arranged with the Calcutta University group to register all teachers who had come out of East Pakistan. While the IRC mission was there, the University registered 3,800 teachers, including 94 university professors, 839 undergraduate college teachers (with approximately 1,000 registrations still pending), and about 1,900 primary and secondary school teachers.

Using the same formula that the Duke commission had initiated with doctors, the Levensteins employed teachers who, in turn, were assigned to the multitude of camps to provide at least rudimentary education for the millions of young children who were among the refugees. In an especially imaginative adjunct program, the Levensteins employed a score of the most outstanding scholars of East Pakistan who had succeeded in fleeing the massacre of the intellectuals and put them to work recording the history of the entire episode for such a day as a free nation of Bangladesh might be established.

Lee Thaw, Carel Sternberg and Leo Cherne were in Calcutta at the precise moment when the war against Pakistan ended and the nation of Bangladesh was formed. The IRC participated from the very beginning in the re-establishment of the refugees in their homeland, now called Bangladesh. With financing from the U.S. Government, the IRC undertook to restore and enlarge the world's most important cholera center in the capital of the new state.

As an interesting footnote to the episode, Chancellor Chowdhury, who first visited the U.S. to appeal to the IRC, became the first president of the new nation of Bangladesh.

April 1973 -- Fact Finding Commission on Vietnamese Refugee & Children's Problems

The IRC had several years previously increasingly focused on the subsistence and health problems of the war-orphaned children and the children of uprooted families. In the course of expanding this capability, the IRC had established a convalescent center for children who had undergone reconstructive surgery in the Barsky Unit of the Saigon Hospital. In addition, IRC was administering a network of day-care centers for children, self-help projects in refugee camps, providing as well direct medical assistance in the refugee camps.

Suddenly a cease fire agreement was reached by the U.S., accompanied by a progressive withdrawal of U.S. military forces. IRC quickly organized a mission of volunteer leaders shortly after the withdrawal of the last American troops to conduct an on-the-spot survey of refugee and children's programs facing the Vietnamese. The group was headed by Leonard H. Marks, now IRC President, and Angier Biddle

Duke, Honorary Chairman, together with Joseph Buttinger, David Sher, Robin Duke, I.M. Scott, Cecil Lyon and IRC's Deputy Executive Director, Al Kastner. Senator Kenneth Keating, though a member of the commission, remained in Washington to pursue the same inquiry within U.S. government sources in the Capital.

The mission which had traveled extensively throughout Vietnam recommended an extended IRC program of humanitarian assistance especially for uprooted children and war orphans. The recommendations of the mission led, among other projects, to the establishment of a 70-bed intensive care unit for war orphans in Saigon which was opened in December 1973. The purpose of the unit, which served accredited American adoption agencies operating in Vietnam, was to restore the health of orphans and enable them to become candidates for adoption mainly for American families.

1978 -- The Citizens Commission on Indochinese Refugees

Spurred by information that the parole system was about to come to an end and that further refuge in the United States for Indochinese refugees was increasingly unlikely, the IRC formed The Citizens Commission on Indochinese Refugees...

* * * *

Even this recital of the special missions of the IRC fails to take into account the numerous instances in which individual members of the Board of the IRC put whatever else they were doing aside in order to undertake an emergency exploration or mission to a troublespot in the world where refugee crises were erupting. Particularly active in a number of such missions were Board members Ambassador Cecil Lyon, Lee Thaw, and staff members Louis Wiesner and Bob DeVecchi. In addition, in the Spring of 1977 Leo Cherne established the first IRC program in Kenya to assist Ugandan refugees, an activity which was subsequently substantially deepened and enlarged by Cecil Lyon.

But of greater importance is the fact that this is at most a record of responses to specific needs and emergencies by special groups, large and small, composed of individuals, some of whom are members of the IRC Board and many who are not. What this record does not tell is of the very much larger work which is IRC's daily responsibility. Russians, both Jew and Christian, Yugoslavians, Biafrans, Kurds, South African blacks, Haitians, Chileans, Argentinians, Lithuanians, Indonesians, and others in the course of an IRC day have crossed the threshold of one of the Committee's offices in 15 countries on every continent except Australia and the Soviet Chinese land mass in the hope of assistance from the IRC.

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES RECEIVES
APPEAL FROM PRISONERS IN PHILIPPINES

By Religious News Service (2-7-78)

GENEVA (RNS) -- The World Council of Churches has received an appeal from some 60 political prisoners in the Philippines asking it -- to promote "a sustained campaign to restore human rights and fundamental freedoms of the people in our country."

It was sent in response to a cable sent last September by WCC General Secretary Philip Potter to Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos. Dr. Potter had urged Mr. Marcos to grant amnesty to all political prisoners and restore "human rights and fundamental freedoms" in the country.

While expressing gratitude to the WCC for Dr. Potter's appeal, the political prisoners in the Bicutan Rehabilitation Center said the situation has grown worse since the national referendum in December. According to the prisoners, the referendum led to "a further consolidation of his (President Marcos') absolute power by taking the positions both of President and Prime Minister in a 'transition government.'"

The prisoners wrote, "With martial-law authority thus reinforced, we are afraid we have gone much farther away from attaining national freedom and democracy."

They declared that "this development merely intensified the intense desire and determination of the people to win their freedom. We therefore ask you to spread among the freedom-loving peoples of the world our appeal for a sustained campaign to restore human rights and fundamental freedoms of the people in our country. Through our concerted efforts, we shall surely achieve final victory."

-0-

1977 PEAK YEAR FOR REFUGEES,
RESCUE COMMITTEE REPORTS

By Religious News Service (2-7-78)

NEW YORK (RNS) -- The year 1977 was the most active period of the International Rescue Committee (IRC), since it was founded in 1933 to help anti-Nazis fleeing from Hitler's Germany, according to an IRC report issued here.

The report said that relief and resettlement services in 1977 were provided for refugees from 30 countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe, and the Soviet Union.

The major IRC program during 1977 was on behalf of refugees from Indochina.

"Since last October," said IRS chairman Leo Cherne in a statement, "the flow of boat people alone fleeing from Vietnam has averaged 1,500 a month. In addition, between 2,000 and 3,000 Laotians have been crossing the Mekong River into Thailand every month."

(more)

PAGE -7-

"IRC medical teams have the responsibility for 60,000 of the 100,000 Laotian, Cambodian, and Vietnamese refugees in Thailand camps.

"IRC is also active in the resettlement of Indochinese entering the United States and other countries, and has sponsored more than 20,000 of the refugees since May 1975."

IRC is the leading American non-sectarian agency helping refugees escaping from persecution and violence in totalitarian countries.

-0-

MISSION SCHOLAR FINDS 'CRUSADE' IS OFFENSIVE AS CHRISTIAN TERM

By Religious News Service (2-7-78)

MILLIGAN COLLEGE, Tenn. (RNS) -- A Protestant missions scholar has urged Christians to banish the word "crusades" from their vocabulary.

Dr. Charles R. Taber makes the suggestion in the Winter issue of Milligan Missiogram, published quarterly by Milligan College, a Churches of Christ institution. He is the editor of the publication.

Dr. Taber begins by asking, "A crusade is an exciting thing, isn't it? The word conjures up for us (westerners, that is) colorful visions of knighthood in full flower, of Ivanhoe and Richard the Lion Hearted and Frederick Red-Bear and perhaps of Saint Louis. It evokes feelings of high adventure and derring-do (all in the service of Christ, of course), of victory and conquest."

But, he then inquires, "isn't that precisely the trouble with the term -- that it calls up military images, triumphalistic images of violence and war, at total variance with the character of the Prince of Peace and with the true strategy and tactics of his Kingdom?"

Dr. Taber declares that "historically, the Crusades were one of the most sordid and despicable actions ever committed by Christians, and that is saying a lot." After examining the violence that characterized the Crusades, he then asserts that all this is still relevant today.

The scholar comments that "as far as Muslims are concerned, the Crusades happened yesterday; by and large, the Christian Churches have shown few signs of repentance; and to cap it all off, Christians persist in using the hateful old term to label some of their present activities. Why should Muslims let down their guard when Christians give all the signs of approving what their forefathers did?"

Dr. Taber urges "(a) that we make strong, explicit, and public expressions of our horror at what the Crusaders did, and (b) that we banish the word crusades from our vocabulary. It is not an honorable word, and we should not use it as if it were. For the sake of Christ's Kingdom, let us have no more crusades!"

-0-

LEO CHERNE
Chairman

WILLIAM J. CASEY
Co-Chairman

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CITIZENS COMMISSION ON INDOCHINESE REFUGEES

CARE OF INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE, INC.

386 PARK AVENUE SOUTH • NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10016

TEL. (212) 679-0010 • CABLE: INTERESCUE, NEW YORK

July 30, 1980

To: The Citizens Commission

From: Bob DeVecchi

Subject: July 24 Commission Meeting

The Citizens Commission met to discuss the implications of a possible cessation of cross-border feeding of Cambodian refugees. There are indications that UNICEF and the International Committee of the Red Cross would not resume this program, interrupted by the Vietnamese incursions in late June. U.S. Ambassador to Thailand Morton Abramowitz attended the meeting and spoke at length on the present refugee situation in Southeast Asia, the Cambodian relief effort and future prospects.

During the discussion, three main areas of concern were identified, each requiring Commission consideration:

1. The Cambodian situation. Leo Cherne had telegraphed the Commission's concern about the cross border feeding operations prior to the meeting. Attached are copies of his messages and the encouraging replies from Jim Grant of UNICEF.

It is expected that the cross border program, or land bridge, will slowly be reconstituted. At present, fewer Cambodians seem to be coming to the border area than expected. This may in part be due to the success of the operation prior to the Vietnamese attacks, which were directed to non Khmer Rouge, civilian camps, and to hints from inside Cambodia of some improvement in the distribution of international food aid. How extensive the latter is we do not know, but it is not sufficient to reduce the importance of the land bridge.

Reports on the acreage now under cultivation in Cambodia, security inside the country and the movements of people from agricultural areas either to the border or to the Phnom Penh area all point to the prospect of a severe food crisis in the months ahead. The tragic events of last fall could well happen again, and a new influx of Cambodians in search of food towards Thailand is a distinct possibility.

The Commission decided that a mission to Thailand was not appropriate at this time. However, the situation will be watched closely, and if it seems desirable, a mission would be sent on very short notice.

2. Admission of Cambodian Refugees to the United States. There are some 150,000 Cambodian refugees presently in holding camps in Thailand. Of these,

some 20,000 have been identified as meeting the criteria for admission to the United States.

The Commission expressed the view that as many as qualify should be given the opportunity to come here in the months ahead. This view was expressed in a telegram sent to Secretary of State Muskie (copy attached). It was subsequently reported that at least 10,000 of these refugees will be processed for the U.S. in the next three months, with the balance to come in succeeding months.

3. Refugee Arrivals in Southeast Asia and Continuation of the U.S. Program in FY-81. Indochinese refugees continue to arrive in countries of first asylum in Southeast Asia at a high rate. Boat arrivals are at the highest level in twelve months, and now average 10,000 per month. Refugees from Laos continue to arrive in Thailand at a rate of over 8,000 per month.

The worldwide resettlement effort, led by the U.S. commitment of 14,000 per month, has resulted in a steady reduction over the past year in the number of refugees in countries of first asylum. It is vital that this continue.

In the weeks ahead, the Administration will consult with the Congress to determine how many Indochinese refugees the U.S. will accept in Fiscal Year 1981. The Administration appears to be committed to continuing the 14,000 per month rate, but this is by no means certain. Budgetary pressures and Congressional concerns could result in a significant lowering of the U.S. commitment, which would adversely effect the resettlement efforts of other countries, the receptivity of countries of first asylum to new refugees, and ultimately the fate of the refugees themselves.

The Citizens Commission will closely monitor the progress of these consultations which must be concluded by September 31, and will take action as appropriate.

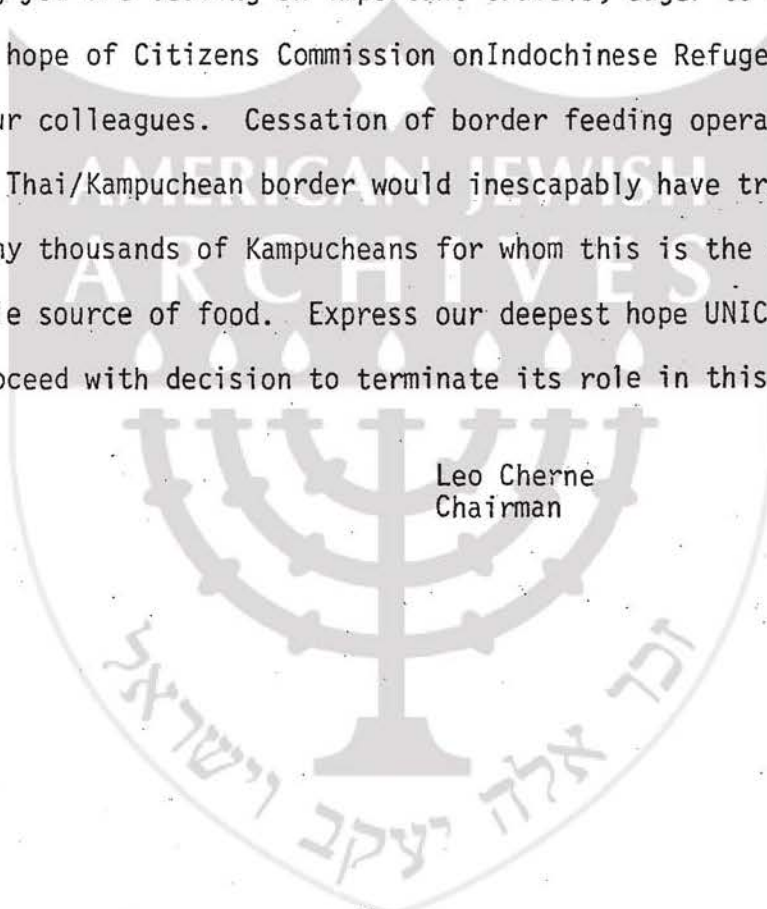
July 10, 1980

Telegram sent to:

James Grant
Executive Director of UNICEF
866 UN Plaza
New York, N.Y. 10017

Knowing you are leaving on important travels, eager to convey strong hope of Citizens Commission on Indochinese Refugees to you and your colleagues. Cessation of border feeding operations across Thai/Kampuchean border would inescapably have tragic consequences for many thousands of Kampuchean for whom this is the only reliable source of food. Express our deepest hope UNICEF will not proceed with decision to terminate its role in this undertaking.

Leo Cherne
Chairman



Telegram sent to:(night letter)

July 14, 1980

Honorable Alexander Hay
CICR
17 Avenue de la Paix
1211 Geneva 10 Switzerland

Mr. James McDougall
UNICEF
Palais des Nations
1211 Geneva 10 Switzerland

Convey strong hope of Citizens Commission On Indochinese Refugees that voluntary feeding operation across Thai/Kampuchean border be continued. Termination of food availability by this means would have tragic consequences for many thousands Kampuchean for whom this is the only reliable source of food. Period of impending food shortage would also threaten a mass flow toward the border with attendant serious political and military consequences. CICR role has been indispensable. Voluntary organizations cannot substitute for a respected international involvement. Deep gratitude for the heavy burden you and your colleagues have carried with the urgent hope that it will be continued.

Citizens Commission on Indochinese Refugees
Leo Cherne, Chairman

(In telegram to Mr.McDougall, UNICEF replaced CICR in text.)

AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

370 100

19 WEST WEAFFIELD AVENUE LENOX HILLS, NEW YORK 10701

T000 131-1 M402 02 07/14/80 22:57

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DEL
/ GRN1040 UCF049
RR USA
.NEWYORK (UNICEF) 14 JUL 1980 OF
/ZIP 10017

LED CHERME
CHAIRMAN CITIZENS COMMISSION ON INDOCHINESE REFUGEES
RESCUE INSTITUTE OF AMERICA
509 5TH AVE
NEW YORK NY 10017

AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

.UCF049-7
IN REPLY TO YOUR TELEGRAM DATED 10 JULY COMMA EYE WOULD LIKE TO
INFORM YOU THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO DECISION TO HALT THE BORDER
FEEDING OPERATIONS STOP
CERTAIN NEWS REPORTS WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN CHECKED WITH THE THREE
INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES CONCERNED HAVE BEEN MISLEADING
PARTICULARLY IN THEIR HADLINES STOP AFTER RECENT INTERRUPTION
DUE TO FIGHTING COMMA FEEDING PROGRAMME IS AGAIN EFFECTIVE
FOR THE MAJORITY OF THE CAMPS POPULATION OF APPROXIMATELY
150THOUSAND PEOPLE STOP THE UNOFFICIAL LANDBRIDGE ACROSS THE
BORDER CAN NOT RESUME PRESENTLY ON ANY LARGE SCALE BECAUSE
XTHE BORDER IS SEALED BY MILITARY FORCES HOWEVER FOOD DISTRIBUTION
HAS BEEN MADE TO A LIMITED NUMBER OF NONRESIDENTS WHO WERE
PERMITTED TO COME TO THE BORDER IN CERTAIN LOCATIONS STOP
WE SHARE YOUR CONCERN TO REACH AS MANY NEEDY CIVILIAN
CAMBODIANS AS POSSIBLE ON A NONDISCRIMINATORY BASIS STOP
UNICEF WILL ENDEAVOUR TO CONTINUE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS
UNdertaking IN LINE WITH ITS MANDATE AS FULLY AS PRESENT CONDITIONS
AND CIRCUMSTANCES ALLOW STOP REGARDS
(JAMES P. GRANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UNICEF NEWYORK)

07142221

NNNN
TNKL

x
Gmail
not needed

*cc. M. Abramowitz
- Al Kestel
C. Stenberg
Rob. Kellerman*

July 16, 1980

James Grant
Executive Director of UNICEF
866 UN Plaza
New York, N.Y. 10017

Deeply appreciate your telegram. Still very concerned that feeding operation at Nong Cham has not yet been reestablished. Suggest that your colleagues investigate with a view to earliest resumption at this critical point. Strongly hope that nothing short of a physical impossibility of moving food across the border will impede your complete and obviously difficult participation.

Leo Cherne, Chairman
Citizens Commission on Indochinese Refugees



COMMISSION

WESTONE TELEPHONE SERVICE, INC. NEW YORK 07031

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/ GRN1405 UCF1135
.NEWYORK (UNICEF) 18 JUL 1980 OF

LED CHERNE
CHAIRMAN CITIZENS COMMISSION ON INDOCHINESE REFUGEES
RESCUE INSTITUTE OF AMERICA
589 5TH AVENUE
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017

.UCF1135-7 APPRECIATE AND FULLY SHARE YOUR CONCERN STOP
NONG CHAN PREVIOUSLY EVACUATED DUE TO FIGHTING AMONG KHYMER
ELEMENTS IN AREA STOP FOLLOWING RETURN TO CAMP FOOD
DISTRIBUTION FOR RESIDENTS ACCOMPLISHED ALTHOUGH WITH
DIFFICULTY STOP UNICEF TRYING RESUME CROSS BORDER FEEDING,
PRESENTLY ARRANGING REQUIRED COOPERATION THAI MILITARY AUTHORITIES
AND CAMP LEADERS STOP CROSS BORDER FEEDING PRESENTLY
OPERATING SAN LOR CHANGAN VERY FEW ARRIVALS FROM KAMPUCHEA AS
BORDER STILL SEALED BY MILITARY FORCES STOP.

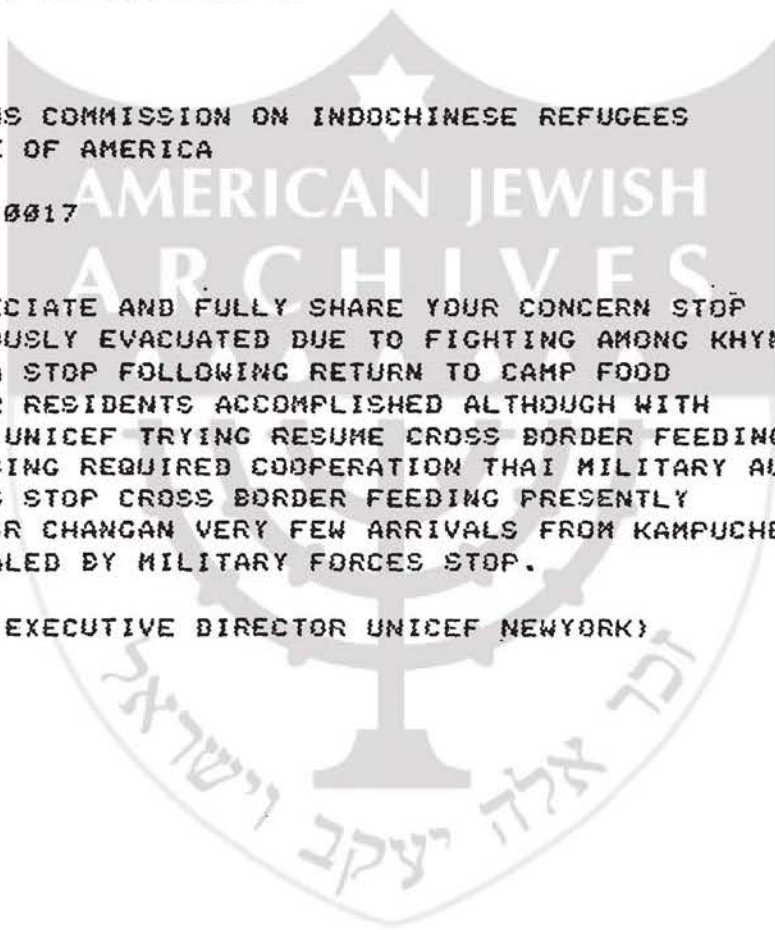
REGARDS

(JAMES P. GRANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UNICEF NEWYORK)
CDL UCF1135-7

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MAILGRAM SERVICE CENTER
MIDDLETOWN, VA. 22645

western union

Mailgram



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1 2126790010 MGM TDMT NEW YORK NY 07-25 0236P EST

INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE MRS KATEL
386 PARK AVE SOUTH
NEW YORK NY 10016

RECEIVED JUL 28 1980

THIS MAILGRAM IS A CONFIRMATION COPY OF THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE:

2126790010 TDMT NEW YORK NY 163 07-25 0236P EST
PMS AMBASSADOR VICTOR PALMIERI, US COORDINATOR FOR REFUGEES RPT DLY
MGM
US DEPT OF STATE
WASHINGTON DC 20520
THE FOLLOWING TELEGRAM HAS BEEN SENT TO SECRETARY OF STATE MUSKIE

"THE CITIZENS COMMISSION ON INDOCHINESE REFUGEES WARMLY APPLAUDS THE PLEDGE MADE BY YOU IN KUALA LUMPUR THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL ACCEPT 168,000 INDOCHINESE REFUGEES IN FISCAL YEAR 1981. WE WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS OUR STRONG FEELING THAT DURING THE REMAINING MONTHS OF THIS FISCAL YEAR AND INTO FY81 AS APPROPRIATE THE NUMBER OF CAMBODIAN REFUGEES BEING RESETTLED HERE BE INCREASED SIGNIFICANTLY. THE CONTINUING CAMBODIAN TRAGEDY THREATENS TO BECOME EVEN MORE GRAVE IN THE IMMEDIATE WEEKS AHEAD. WE BELIEVE THAT HUMANITY AND EQUITY REQUIRE US TO BRING IN THOSE CAMBODIANS WHO MEET USA PROGRAM CRITERIA AND ARE DESPERATE FOR THE CHANCE TO REBUILD THEIR SHATTERED LIVES. WE FEEL EQUALLY CERTAIN THAT THE PROFOUND CONCERN OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE FOR THE PLIGHT OF CAMBODIAN REFUGEES GENERATED OVER THE PAST YEAR WILL ASSURE THEIR FAVORABLE RECEPTION AMONG US.

LEO CHERNE, CHAIRMAN CITIZENS COMMISSION OF INDOCHINESE REFUGEES
COPY TO AMBASSADOR VICTOR PALMIERI US COORDINATOR FOR REFUGEES"

386 PARK AVE SOUTH
NEW YORK NY 10016

14:37 EST

MGMCOMP MGM

CAMBODIAN ACTION UPDATE

A Project of the Cambodia Crisis Center

Vol. 1, No. 15

August 4, 1980

-----information hotlines-----

Church World Service	1-800-223-1310	212-870-3003 (N.Y.)
Cambodia Crisis Center	1-800-424-5051	202-347-2226 (D.C.)

Overview

DRAMATIC IMPROVEMENTS AT CAMBODIAN PORTS

The past few weeks have seen dramatic improvements in getting food shipments out of warehouses at Kompong Som and Phnom Penh and into the distribution pipeline. The warehouses are nearly empty, due in large part to U.S.S.R. assistance. Russian dockworkers have greatly improved offloading of barges at the ports, and the recent arrival of 137 trucks from the U.S.S.R. has increased -- to about 500 -- the number of trucks available for transporting food from Kompong Som to Phnom Penh. The daily train from Kompong Som can now carry about 14,000 - 15,000 metric tons (mt) of food each month.

Last spring the UNICEF/ICRC joint program estimated that about 45,000 mt per month could be unloaded at Cambodian ports, but that the ports' offtake capacity (the amount that can be transported from warehouses after unloading) was only 18,000 mt per month. Because of this discrepancy, relief agencies have had to limit their shipments so as not to overload the warehouses. Now, however, the agencies feel that the ability to move stocks out of the warehouses can match the unloading capacity from the barges.

The relief agencies will now be able to test the unloading and distribution systems inside Cambodia to their limits.

AGENCIES STEP UP
RELIEF SHIPMENTS
IN RESPONSE TO
INCREASED CAPACITY

The tremendous improvements of the past few weeks came as a somewhat unexpected bonus for the relief effort. In the past three months, the U.N. World Food Program was able to ship only 20,000 mt of food out of its 100,000 mt goal. Now, however, U.N. agencies are scrambling to quickly organize increased food and seed shipments to Cambodia. Until recently, OXFAM/NGO Consortium has been able to send one barge about every 10 days; in the last week of July, it sent three. Increased port capacity has freed the relief agencies to procure and ship food and supplies to an extent they had not previously been allowed.

CRITICAL NEED FOR
FUNDS WHILE PROGRESS
IS GOOD

Funding is a major problem. The time to act is now, while the going is as good as it's ever been. The cash flow must keep up with the demand, however. The U.N. agencies -- supported by governments of the world -- have received enough pledges to cover immediate needs, but do not have all the cash on hand. The U.N. must convince its government donors to speed up their timetables for actually contributing their pledged funds. Bureaucratic delays among individual governments can hamper this endeavor. And even if government donations can be speeded up, the U.N. agencies providing relief to Cambodians -- UNICEF (along with ICRC), the World Food Program, The Food and Agriculture Organization, the U.N. High Commissioner

for Refugees -- need additional pledges to cover their programs through December 1980, when the next major rice harvest becomes available.

Private voluntary agencies -- 28 of which are U.S.-based -- receive almost all their operating funds from private donations. Despite the \$56 million already donated from the American private sector, these agencies are in critical need of funds to meet immediate and pressing demands. OXFAM, for example, is towing a ferry to Phnom Penh for use as internal transport -- the first in the country since Pol Pot came to power. OXFAM has two more ferries on order, but the first has yet to be paid for. It costs \$250,000. Other agencies have similar projects which must be acted on quickly, and for which funds are needed. The Cambodian Action Update will be issuing a special bulletin shortly, outlining some of these upcoming projects.

PEOPLE RECEIVING
ENOUGH FOOD:
LEANEST TIME
AHEAD.

Reports indicate that people appear to be obtaining enough food, at least in the stabilized areas where relief officials are allowed to travel. Cases of severe malnutrition are few, and there is no evidence of famine. People are supplementing food supplied by relief agencies by fishing, growing home gardens and purchasing food from the black market. (Black market prices have risen to prohibitive heights, however, since the fighting and presence of Vietnamese troops along the Thai/Cambodian border.)

But the situation remains tenuous. There are no buffer stocks, should food supplies again fall below subsistence level. The next two-three months will be the leanest time, but continued relief shipments are needed to prevent the country from slipping back into famine conditions before the 1980 rice harvest is available in December.

HIGH COOPERATION
FROM PHNOM PENH

Relief agency officials visiting and stationed in Cambodia report a high degree of cooperation now from Phnom Penh authorities. Entry visas are more easily obtained, and relief personnel have been able to travel extensively throughout uncontested areas of the countryside.

A new "Committee for the Fight Against Famine," made up of high-level Phnom Penh officials, has begun direct distribution of food to farmers in Pursat, Kompong Chhang and Kompong Thom, according to a report from the ARRK Coalition's field staff. The Committee is using trucks from the Ministry of Agriculture, one of the most efficient branches of the Phnom Penh government. ARRK is sending in rice seed that can be used for food as well as planting. According to ARRK, farmers are induced to plant the seed through the Committee's policy of distributing food in payment for work.

RICE SEED PROJECT
FARES WELL; MORE SEED
SCHEDULED FOR SHIPMENT

Relief agencies are pleased with
the apparent success of rice seed
distribution, and will continue to

send more seed over the next several weeks. The following calculations give a "best case" estimate for a possible yield from the winter harvest. It is uncertain just how many hectares already have been planted, or will be planted in the next two months, although such reports are encouraging. And it is uncertain how much of the 10,000 mt of seed donated by Vietnam has so far been distributed. The following projections assume that about 72,500 mt of seed will have been received and distributed by mid-August (23,000 across the Thai border; 20,000 from FAO into Cambodian ports; 19,500 from voluntary agencies; and 10,000 from Vietnam). Estimates of yield per hectare, under present conditions in Cambodia, are 1 - 1.2 mt rice/ha. About 80 kg. of rice seed are needed to plant one hectare.

About 60% of harvested rice can be eaten, after milling.

BEST CASE: If all 72,500 mt of seed were planted, and the growing season and harvest goes normally, it would provide enough rice to feed 5 million for 44 weeks.

$$\frac{72,500 \text{ mt seed}}{.08 \text{ mt seed/ha.}} = 906,250 \text{ ha. planted}$$

$$906,250 \text{ ha.} \times 1.2 \text{ mt/ha.} = 1,087,500 \text{ mt unmilled rice}$$

$$1,087,500 \times .60 = 652,500 \text{ mt food rice}$$

$$\frac{652,500 \text{ mt food rice}}{5,000,000 \text{ population}} = .13 \text{ mt rice/person (287.1 lbs.)}$$

$$\frac{287.1 \text{ lbs rice/person}}{6.5 \text{ lbs./week (subsistence need)}} = 44.2 \text{ weeks}$$

The map (next page) indicates known areas where rice seed has already been distributed. Distribution reports for the 10,000 mt of seed from Vietnam are unavailable, and not reflected on the map. Most of it has probably gone to the eastern and southeastern provinces.

Thailand

WALDEIM VISITS
HANOI, BANGKOK

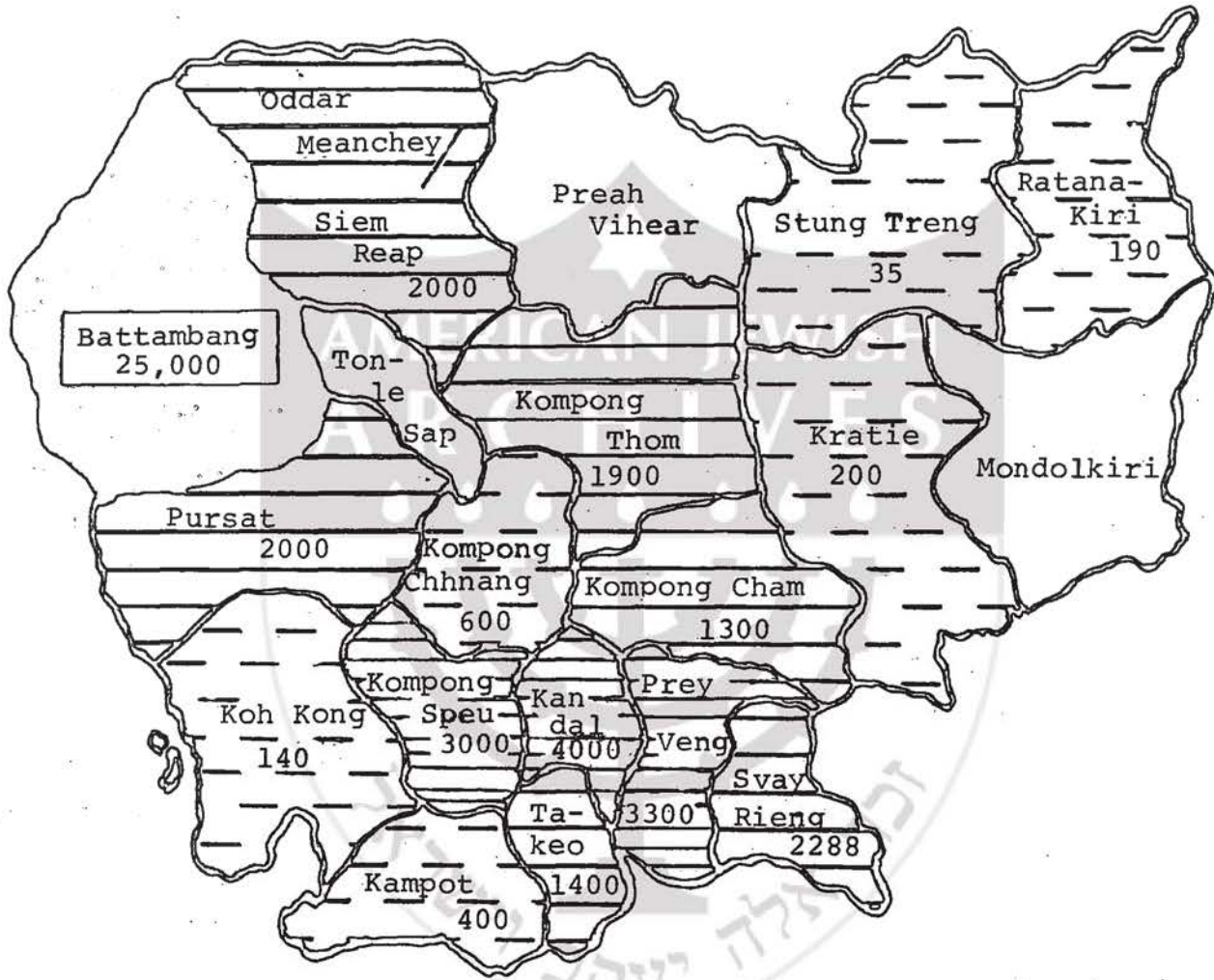
U.N. Secretary General Kurt Waldheim is visiting Hanoi and Bangkok to discuss conflicting proposals to ease tensions along the Thai/Cambodian border. Thailand has requested that U.N. observers be stationed along the border, an action that Waldheim says would need U.N. Security Council approval first. Vietnam has asked that a demilitarized zone be established. The Thais have rejected that proposal, since it would force Thailand to deal with the Phnom Penh government, which it does not recognize.

In Bangkok, Waldheim will also discuss the possibility of the UNHCR's acting as a liaison between Bangkok and Phnom Penh regarding any future voluntary repatriation of Khmers from the holding centers in Thailand.

FOOD SUPPLIED TO ALL
BORDER CAMPS

The UNICEF/ICRC joint program and the World Food Program have resumed food deliveries to three Khmer Rouge-controlled camps south of Aranyaprathet (Kao Din, Tap Prik and Nong Pru). In an effort to insure that civilian populations are fed, the agencies are distributing food directly to women and children.

RICE SEED DISTRIBUTION



Metric tons seed distributed:



Food is being provided directly to civilians in several other camps -- north of Aranyaprathet -- as well, rather than to camp leaders for distribution. The relief agencies distributing food along the border (including UNICEF, CARE, CONCERN, World Relief, Catholic Relief Services and Christian Outreach) have been trying different systems for direct individual distribution. In some cases they are providing daily short-term rations to women and girls over 10 years of age for family use.

The relief agencies have been taking their own head counts at the camps north of Aranyaprathet, rather than relying on camp leaders' figures, which they feel have often been inflated. The agencies' estimates for the major camps are:

Nong Samet	76,000
Nong Chan	25,000
Ban Sangae	3,000
Phnom Chat/ Kok Tahan	8,000
NW9 (Vietnamese)	3,100

All in all, some 167,000 people along the border are receiving a full ration of food (rice, oil, beans, fish and salt).

CROSS-BORDER
DISTRIBUTION
BEING RESUMED

A new cross-border distribution has been started to reach people coming from the interior of Cambodia. An average of 2,000 people are coming each week and are given 30 kg of rice each. So far, the Vietnamese troops have been allowing these people to travel to and from the border to receive food. If the number increases to over 5,000, the weekly distributions will be made more frequently.

In addition, some 50-100 people arrive daily at Nong Chan to

receive food rations and return to their villages within Cambodia.

People interviewed at the border distribution points report that conditions in the rural areas in Cambodia are not good (most of these people are from Battambang and Sisophon). Most come from areas that have not been well-served through the Phnom Penh distribution system, and the black market price of rice has doubled and sometimes tripled since the large-scale cross-border operation ceased at the time of the fighting along the border in late June.

MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE
IN HOLDING CENTERS
CONTINUES

Movements of holding center populations for the rainy season

began July 9.

- 6500 people are being moved from Khao I Dang to Chonburi (3,603 had been moved as of July 15.)
- 4,500 people were moved from Sa Kaeo I to Khao I Dang.
- Sa Kaeo I was emptied by late July, with the population moved to Sa Kaeo II, on higher ground.
- Starting July 28, 6,000 people were to begin moving from Khao I Dang to Kamput until 14,000 have been moved.
- Starting between August 12 and 21, people will be moved daily from Khao I Dang to Sa Kaeo II until 22,000 have been moved.

There are no exact dates or numbers yet for movements to Kab Cherng, and there will be additional movements to Chonburi and Mai Rut from time to time.

100 METRIC TONS FOOD
DELIVERED DAILY

Relief agencies supply approximately
100 mt food to the the holding centers each day; 85 mt come from the World Food Program (rice, oil,

beans, salt and fish) and 15 mt from voluntary agencies (supplementary meat and vegetables).

45% of the total population in the holding centers are children according to the UNHCR. As of May 31 there were 3,000 unaccompanied minors; 1,911 were housed in special children's centers and 1,183 were being taken care of by relatives or Khmer foster families in the camps. 150 children had been reunited with their families as of the end of May.

For those of the special children's centers, infants and very young children are assigned house mothers on a 1:1 basis. Older children live in groups of 10 or fewer, each group having its own house parents.

* * * * *

The following chart indicates UNHCR's proposed allocation of voluntary agency programs at the holding centers. The agencies listed are those headquartered in the United States or with offices in this country, and the programs for which they have primary supervision.

AGENCY	KHAO I DANG	SA KAE0 II	KAMPUT	MAI RUT	CHONBURI
CARE	Supp. feeding		supp. feeding		
Catholic Relief Services	unaccomp. minors hosp. feeding				supp feeding nutrition outreach unaccomp. minors recreation health ed. pediatrics clinics immunizations sanitation hosp. feeding public health medical training
International Rescue Comm.	children's ed. children's recreation teacher training pediatric clinics adult literacy skills training adult recreation cottage industries sanitation laboratory	unaccom. minors children's educ. library teacher training sanitation	sanitation	sanitation	children's ed. health ed. teacher training adult literacy
World Relief (with CAMA)		health ed. hosp. wards outpatient clinics			



AGENCY	KHAO I DANG	SA KAO II	KAMPUT	MAI RUT	CHONBURI
Food for the Hungry Int'l.		hosp. feeding supp. feeding recreation skills training cottages industries			skills training agriculture recreation cottages industries
American Refugee Committee	sanitation pub. health medical training hosp. wards				hospital wards
International Catholic Migration Commission				pediatric clinics	
*Save the Children Federation		nutrition outreach pediatric clinics hosp. feeding			
Seventh-Day Adventist World Service				hosp. wards	



AGENCY	KHAO I DANG	SA KAE0 II	KAMPUT	MAIRUT	CHONBURY
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World Vision

health ed.
immunization
adult literacy
skills training
agriculture
cottage indus.
wards
outpatients
clinics
pub. health
med. training

*CONCERN

nutrition
outreach
library
health ed.
adult literacy
skills train.
agriculture
cottage indus.
pub. health
med. training

nutrition
outreach
library
health ed.
adult
literacy
skills train.
agriculture
cott. ind.
pub. health
med. training

supp. feed.
nutrition
outreach
library
health ed.
adult lit.
skills
training
agriculture
cott. ind.
pub. health
med. training

* Has U.S. office. International headquarters elsewhere.

American Baptist Churches
Board of International Ministries
Valley Forge, PA 19481

American Friends Service Committee
1501 Cherry Street (Quakers)
Philadelphia, PA 19102

American Jewish Joint Distribution
Committee
60 East 42nd Street
New York, NY 10017

American Red Cross National Headquarters
17th and D Streets, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006

American Refugee Committee
310 Fourth Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Assemblies of God
Foreign Service Committee
1445 Boonville Avenue
Springfield, MO 65802

Baptist World Alliance
1628 Sixteenth Street
Washington, D.C. 20009

CARE
660 First Avenue
New York, NY 10016

Catholic Relief Services
1011 First Avenue
New York, NY 10022

Church World Service
Elkhart, IN 46515

Direct Relief Foundation
P.O. Box 1319
Santa Barbara, CA 93102

Food for the Hungry International
Intn'l. Coo'd. Cr. 7729 E. Greenway Rd.
Scottsdale, AZ 85260

International Catholic Migration
Commission
c/o U.S. Catholic Conference
1312 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005

International Rescue Committee
386 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10016

Lutheran World Relief
360 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10010

Meals for Millions/Freedom
from Hunger Foundation
P.O. Drawer 680
Santa Monica, CA 90406

Mennonite Central Committee
21 South 12th Street
Akron, PA 17501

Operation California
336 Foothill Road, #40
Beverly Hills, CA 90210

Oxfam-America
302 Columbus Avenue
Boston, MA 02116

The Salvation Army
World Service Office
1025 15th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005

Save the Children
48 Wilton Road
Westport, CT 06880

Seventh-Day Adventist World
Service
6840 Eastern Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20012

Synagogue Council of America
432 Park Avenue, South
New York, NY 10016

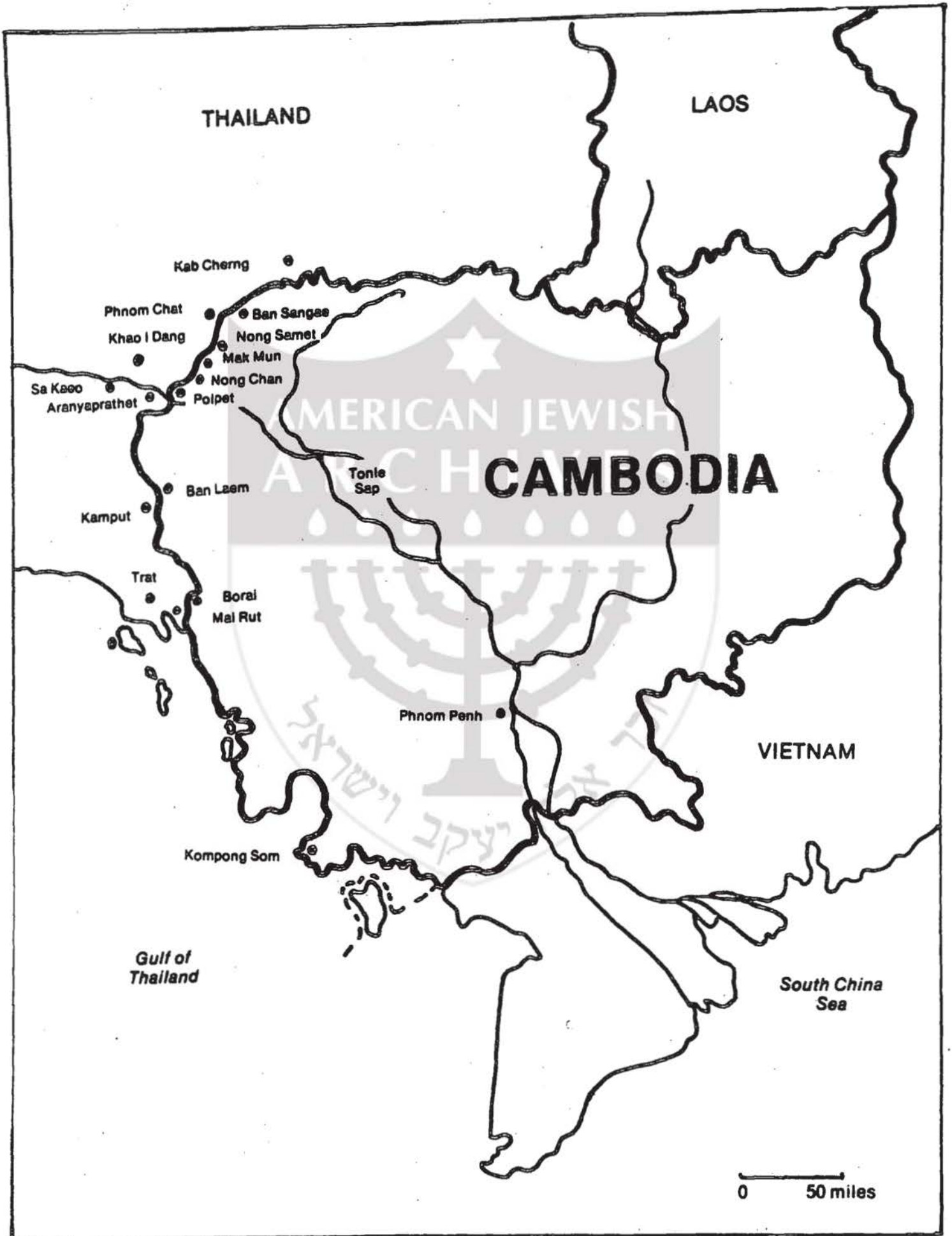
U.N. High Commissioner
for Refugees
1785 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20036

U.S. Committee for UNICEF
331 East 38th Street
New York, NY 10016

World Relief
1800 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005

World Vision International
P.O. Box "O"
Pasadena, CA 91109

Y.M.C.A.
International Division
291 Broadway
New York, NY 10001



March 1, 1978

Statement of William J. Casey, Co-chairman of the
Citizens Commission on Indochina Refugees
Before the Immigration, Citizenship
And International Law Subcommittee of the
House of Representatives Committee on the Judiciary

Members of the Citizens Commission sponsored by the International Rescue Committee visited Hong Kong, Manila, Singapore, Jakarta, Bangkok, Taipei, Macau and Seoul to gather information about the people fleeing from Vietnam in small boats and learn about the policies of the governments and conditions in the camps which receive them.

We were able to visit refugee centers in Hong Kong, where hotel rooms are provided, and in The Philippines, Singapore, Jakarta, and Macau where substantial buildings previously used as institutions for children and old people have been made available to refugees from Indochina. In all these places, the accommodations are quite adequate, although I should point out that the numbers to be accommodated were in the hundreds rather than in the thousands as in Thailand. They are staffed by competent and dedicated people provided by some combination of the host government, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and private voluntary agencies. We were assured by representatives of the local governments and our embassies in Taiwan and Korea that satisfactory accommodations are provided outside of Taipei for all those reaching Taiwan and at Pusan for the 100 odd people picked up at sea by Korean vessels.

We held discussions with officials concerned with refugees in The Philippines, Singapore, Indonesia, Taiwan, Macau and Hong Kong and were briefed by officials of our embassies and representatives of the United Nations High Commissioner stationed in Malaysia, Thailand, and Korea.

We were able to hold discussions with a great many families and groups which arrived together in the same boat. Invariably, they tell stories of great courage and determination in leaving their homeland. Many of them had worked with United States forces in Vietnam. All of them said that they had left because they found conditions of life intolerable in Vietnam. This was expressed sometimes as a desire and need for freedom, sometimes as an inability to stand communism or the rigid control and indoctrination being imposed in the "new Vietnam". The great majority expressed a desire to go to the United States.

These discussions brought out the great difficulty and intense planning of an escape from Vietnam by boat. Groups of individuals would be brought together in houses near the shore, some of them traveling long distances by car, bus, train or bicycle. On a given night they would rendezvous at some point where they would board the boat which had been provisioned with food and gas gathered over a period of time. Some of the parties had been detected by shore patrols and been forced to depart precipitously leaving some of their group behind. Then they still had to run the danger of encountering government boats patrolling the coastal waters.

The boats which got away from the area around Danang and Hue seemed to turn up in Hong Kong or Taiwan after 5 or 6 days and nights provided their

fuel held out and they did not encounter heavy storms. Those escaping from more southerly coastal areas tended to go due west to the Philippines, while those leaving from the delta tended to go south to Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia or in a few cases, all the way to Australia. Many of the boats had foundered. Some arrived after as long as 60 days at sea. Others, in distress, were picked up by tankers and merchant ships cruising the China Sea and the Gulf of Siam. No one knows how many others have disappeared at sea.

We were told that fishing boats and other craft are coming under increasing surveillance by Vietnamese shore police and the homes of boat owners are being watched.

It was clear to all of us that only the most oppressive conditions could have led these people to commit their lives to at least five days and nights on uncertain seas in small battered boats. When we asked, as we always did, why they had left their homes they would usually fail to comprehend how the question could be asked — so vivid and overwhelming in their minds were the motives and pressures behind their flight.

We were able to hold discussions with officials charged with developing and implementing policy toward boat refugees in all the places we visited. Although there were differences in shading and emphasis, we found a clear and strong common thread in the policies being followed by governments:

1. All of them express and manifest compassion in preventing loss of life, relieving pressing needs and providing temporary shelter.
2. None of them is prepared to provide permanent resettlement, except in special cases and in very small numbers.

3. All of them want to keep very quiet about any assistance they extend, because they do not want word of favorable treatment to make their countries a magnet for a continuing flow of refugees. Also they do not want to excite the the hostility of the new Vietnamese authorities.

Thus, we found that the governments we visited will do what they can to meet the immediate human needs of the boat people, but do not want to encourage others to escape, generally will not offer permanent resettlement and are intent on protecting themselves from being stuck with large numbers of refugees. They will continue to provide temporary refuge only as long as they feel assured that other countries will take most of them off their hands in due course.

There are differences in the degree of assurance that is required. This seems to vary inversely with the size of the country and directly with the number of refugees already there. A receiving country may require a high degree of assurance in the form of an explicit or "bankable" guarantee that a third country will take off their hands refugees who are permitted ashore. Others will be satisfied to permit refugees to land as long as representatives of a third country have a policy of permitting permanent resettlement and undertake "best efforts" to take arriving refugees off the hands of the receiving country.

What needs most urgently to be done now to save the lives of those leaving by sea is to overcome the fear of sea captains that if they follow the law of the sea and rescue foundering boats, they may be penalized by being denied entry to ports where they are scheduled to drop or pick up cargo, or be required to carry the refugees from port to port without being permitted to debark them. We were told that this fear, even if not always well founded, has led merchant

ships to turn their backs on foundering boats or to pursue a course where they would not be likely to encounter them.

We believe strongly that this perception of commercial damage cannot be allowed to cost lives and that it is one which must and can be overcome.

To accomplish that, it is necessary to show the countries which by virtue of their proximity offer first asylum, that will not have to absorb all those who manage to reach their shores. When their reception centers have been filled with very few moving on for long periods of time, political realities push them into a restrictive posture towards new arrivals. If the United States and other countries establish more open and long range policies providing permanent resettlement, these countries of first asylum will, we are convinced, not only drop restrictions to landing, which cost lives, but will accept some portion of an international responsibility to provide permanent resettlement. But, pending the establishment of these long range policies, there is an urgent need for quick relief to assure merchant ships that observing the law of the sea by rescuing people in foundering boats will not expose them to a heavy economic price in the loss of costly time in dropping or picking up their cargoes. This immediate relief can come from transit camps to relieve the pressure anywhere arriving boat people press too heavily on local ability or will to receive them.

Singapore is the most active port we visited and is also the most heavily populated country (over 10,000 persons per square mile). It has offered to

provide a transit camp on one of its islands which will assure that any ship can deposit refugees there as long as Singapore has the assurance that they will be resettled elsewhere. This assurance has been informally provided by ambassadors there, but their authority to do this should be clearly established. There are also Indonesian islands near Singapore which might be used as a transit camp. There is also the possibility of establishing a transit camp ⁱⁿ Macau. Let me say again, these transit camps will require the back up of a generous policy of permanent resettlement on the part of the United States and other countries.

We were impressed by the positive attitude toward joining in providing resettlement assurances to these countries of first asylum which was displayed by French, Canadian and Australian officials with whom we had the opportunity to talk. We believe that a generous stance by these countries and the United States can be a powerful influence in inducing other countries to share the responsibility.

We were also impressed with the willingness of officials of Singapore, Indonesia, Philippines and Hong Kong to improvise arrangements to reconcile their desire to meet immediate human needs and to avoid the economic, political and ethnic difficulties which shape their resistance to long term resettlement. For example, we found that Singapore, while unwilling to take refugees ashore without an explicit undertaking to provide permanent asylum in some other country, is willing to permit a merchant ship which has picked up refugees to come into port and handle its cargo responsibilities on the posting of a bond.

What is needed is a more clear cut, more coherent and more widely understood method of making the commitments necessary to comply with the needs and policies of the countries of first asylum. To that end the Commission makes these recommendations:

1. The fulcrum of a policy is the clearly enunciated willingness of the United States, France, Australia, Canada, and other countries, to permanently resettle all boat refugees, as well as U.S. willingness to waive all existing criteria and categories for overland Vietnamese and Cambodians in Thailand.
2. To meet immediate requirements, United States Ambassadors in the countries of first asylum should be provided with an appropriate allocation of the new 7000 parole authorization to use in assuring those countries that refugees taken ashore will be resettled in consultation and co-ordination with their colleagues from other countries willing to provide permanent resettlement.
3. An experienced UNHCR person should be permanently stationed in each country of first asylum to assist in working out ad hoc arrangements with government authorities to facilitate the landing of boat refugees in unexpected situations which will continue to arise.
4. Under the leadership of the UNHCR, the possibility of establishing transit camps for people picked up by merchant ships in the Singapore and in the Hong Kong area should be explored.



**INTERNATIONAL
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EILBERG COMMITTEE ASKED TO SUPPORT ADMISSION OF MORE INDOCHINESE REFUGEES

Washington, D.C., March 1 -- A Citizens' Commission on Indochinese Refugees today (Wednesday) urged the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration, headed by Congressman Joshua Eilberg, to support the admission of greater numbers of Indochinese refugees to the United States. The Commission specifically recommended the accelerated movement of all Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees, the waiving of existing criteria for their admission and a more liberal and sensitively applied policy for the admission of refugees from Laos.

The appeal was made by Leo Cherne, Chairman of the International Rescue Committee, and William J. Casey, former Under Secretary of State, on behalf of a Citizens' Commission of prominent Americans who have just returned from Southeast Asia where they conducted a fact-finding study on the Indochina refugee problem. Mr. Cherne and Mr. Casey were Co-Chairmen of the Commission which visited refugee camps and had extensive discussions with American and host government officials in Thailand, the Philippines, Singapore, Indonesia, Taiwan and Hong Kong. (A list of the Commission members is attached.)

Mr. Cherne said that the Commission carried out what they believed to be the most systematic, extensive investigation of Vietnamese boat people and other Indochinese refugees. He pointed out that since 1975 about one-third of a million refugees have fled from Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos. Some 200,000 of the refugees have been granted asylum in western countries, primarily the United States and France.

Of the remaining refugees scattered in refugee camps throughout Southeast Asia, the majority - at least 100,000 - are concentrated in Thailand. All lead a precarious existence, and thousands are in constant danger of being forcibly returned to their countries of origin. Large numbers of Vietnamese boat people have drowned in the Gulf of Siam and South China Sea. Yet, an estimated 1,500 boat people continue to escape every month and between 2,000 to 3,000 Laotians enter Thailand. Laotians are now no longer accepted in Thailand as refugees; they are being imprisoned or sent to detention camps, or forcibly repatriated to Laos.

The testimony of the Citizens' Commission to Congressman Eilberg's subcommittee included the following recommendations:

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

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

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

permanent resettlement for these refugees will in all instances be assured.

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

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

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

The Commission commends the United States Government for its policy of requiring such humanitarian action from all U.S. flag vessels, and urges the

Government to explore the possibility of extending this practice to all U.S. owned vessels.

A full report of the Commission's findings and conclusions will be submitted to the President, the Secretary of State, the Attorney General, and the appropriate committees of Congress.

3/1/78



CITIZENS' COMMISSION ON INDOCHINESE REFUGEES

The Commission was organized by the International Rescue Committee, which was founded in 1933 at the time Hitler seized control of Germany. IRC is the leading American voluntary agency providing relief and resettlement services for refugees escaping from persecution and violence in totalitarian countries. During the past year, IRC assisted refugees from 30 countries on four continents.

AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES
MEMBERS

Leo Cherne, Co-Chairman
Chairman, International Rescue Committee

William J. Casey, Co-Chairman
Law firm of Rogers & Wells
(Former Under Secretary of State
for Economic Affairs)

Monsignor John Ahern
Director of Social Development
Catholic Archdiocese of New York

Bayard Rustin
President, The Philip Randolph Institute
Chairman, Social Democrats, U.S.A.

Professor Kenneth Cauthen
Colgate Rochester Divinity School

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum
Director of Interreligious Affairs,
American Jewish Committee

Cecil B. Lyon
Former Ambassador to Chile and Ceylon

Stephen Young
Law firm of Simpson Thacher & Bartlett
Commission on International Human Rights,
Bar Association of New York

James A. Michener
Author

Robert P. DeVecchi
International Rescue Committee

John Richardson, Jr.
President, Freedom House
Executive Director, Center for
Strategic and International Studies
(Former Assistant Secretary of State
for Educational and Cultural Affairs)

Louis A. Wiesner
International Rescue Committee

Mrs. Thelma Richardson
Civil Rights leader

STATEMENT BY THE HONORABLE LEO CHERNE
CO-CHAIRMAN OF THE CITIZENS' COMMISSION ON INDOCHINESE REFUGEES
ORGANIZED BY THE INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE TO
THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION, CITIZENSHIP AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

MARCH 1, 1978

May I first express to Chairman Eilberg and the members of this Committee the most profound respect and appreciation for the invitation to our Commission to appear before this committee.

A Citizens' Commission of prominent American national leaders, organized by the International Rescue Committee, has just recently completed an extensive mission to Southeast Asia. The purpose of this undertaking was to examine the situation of Indochinese refugees fleeing their homelands in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos in difficult, hazardous, and too often fatal efforts to seek freedom. The Commission organized itself into two groups to make possible the examination of the problems confronting all these people in flight, both on the mainland of Southeast Asia and the various island nations bordering the South China Sea and the Gulf of Siam.

Under the Co-Chairmanship of William J. Casey, former Undersecretary of State and member of the Executive Committee of the International Rescue Committee, one group of the Commission concentrated on those island locations in which boat refugees from Vietnam have found safe haven or have encountered problems.

The remaining members of the Commission under my direction as Co-Chairman devoted themselves entirely to studying the circumstances confronting the various groups of Indochinese Refugees throughout the length of Thailand. Members of our group

visited 9 of 15 refugee camps which had been established in that country by the Government of Thailand and supported with assistance from major voluntary agencies who provide essential medical services and other vital needs. We in particular were concerned to study in detail the two locations set aside for those "Boat People" from Vietnam who have been at least temporarily permitted to land in Thailand. We visited as well three camps set aside for the 15,000 Cambodians who have succeeded in reaching the safety of Thailand. We also visited a number of camps in the northeast and in the north of Thailand where the ethnic Lao as well as the Hill Tribes from Laos are congregated. Predominant among these Hill Tribes are the Hmong, more familiarly known in this country by a term they consider derogatory, the Meo Tribesmen. With some difficulty we arranged to visit a major detention center in the northeast where 1,200 refugees from Laos who arrived in Thailand after November 15th were herded into a facility that might be adequate at best for 200 people. In each of the refugee camp areas we met with local Thai officials, several of whom were quite candid about two facts: that in placing refugees arriving after November 15th in detention camps outside the UNHCR mandate they were acting on orders from Bangkok and the orders which they had received were designed to bring about as large a number of repatriations as possible by increasingly draconian measures, including forced repatriation.

Prior to these inland visits we met extensively with high Thai Government officials, and United States Embassy staff. In addition our discussions with representatives of the UNHCR were

frank and consistently helpful. All of these steps were preceeded by a lengthy telegram I sent from Hong Kong as Chairman of the Commission to Chairman Eilberg detailing both our plans and purposes of our mission. This was preceeded by helpful conversations before our trip between members of the IRC staff and the staff of this Committee. At the conclusion of the study missions by both groups we met in Bangkok to share our observations and develop a set of conclusions and recommendations.

I think it important as a Commission of private citizens, to add not only were our backgrounds different but our views about the United States role in Indochina ran the gamut from long-standing opposition to U. S. involvement to substantial support of U. S. policy. Despite these backgrounds of difference, we emerged from our shared observations with a set of conclusions and recommendations that in every respect are unanimous. These were expressed at a press conference held in Bangkok on February 18th.

In the week that followed the following striking sequence of events has occurred. I received a request from George Meany, then meeting with the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO in Miami, to meet with him. At the same time Bayard Rustin had rushed back from Bangkok to summarize the work of the Commission to the Council. The Executive Council unanimously approved a resolution of generous support for Indochina refugees, including a more liberal policy for re-settlement in the United States. George Meany added to that his own personal motion calling for the Executive Council unanimously to endorse the recommendations of our Citizens' Commission. I

subsequently received a call from Mr. Cline inviting the Commission to this hearing for the purpose of testifying in detail. Yesterday the Commission hosted a luncheon for the new United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in order that he might learn of the experiences of the Commission and its recommendations. The Commission subsequently received an invitation to meet briefly with Dr. Brzezinski and most recently an inquiry was made whether the Commission might meet with Senator Kennedy and several of his colleagues. We also have been invited to meet with Secretary of State Vance in the near future, at a date to be determined.

The Commission was formed less than three months ago when the future prospects for re-settlement of Indochinese refugees in this country seemed deeply troubled. In addition, decisions had been made by the Government of Thailand which were implemented on November 15th to discourage the arrival of any more refugees from Indochina, particularly from Laos. At that point, detention centers were established, which operate outside the UNHCR mandate. Newly-arriving refugees are arrested on arrival, tried on the charge of illegal entry, jailed, and then sent to detention centers of indescribable morbidity. Most persuasive to our growing belief that the situation was critical, was the increasing number of horror stories concerning the "Boat People." These refugees aboard invariably over-crowded boats of often limited sea-worthiness, boats carrying a heavy cargo of children, were increasingly being denied haven in port after port. It had also become clear that commercial vessels plying those seas were encountering heavy penalties if they recognized the ancient law of the sea by rescuing refugees

lost or foundering at sea. In consequence, commercial ships were increasingly passing up refugees in distress.

We were also moved by one other very deep concern. --- The plight of the refugees, roughly 15,000 in number, who had managed to escape the outrage which has been occurring in Cambodia. And finally, we did not know nor learn until our visit to Thailand of two additional problems which have not yet received the attention of the press but which strongly affected our conclusions: We learned that roughly 9 out of 10 refugees from Laos who have arrived in the past 3 months have been classified as "economic" refugees. And we learned of the existence of secret orders encouraging their enforced repatriation. During the period of our visit, there was not only confirmation that forced repatriation is taking place but also confirmation of the fact that in some instances these forcibly repatriated Lao were summarily executed after then re-crossed the narrow Mekong River.

If the bleakness of the prospect which led us to undertake this mission seems over-stated to some, it must, I think, nevertheless be acknowledged that our object was to rekindle public attention by means of what we might succeed in learning, toward those recommendations which would emerge from our very different backgrounds and viewpoints. The events of the week since our return make us feel that our efforts were worthwhile. Regardless of what weight may be given to the recommendations which we will make to this Committee, the invitation to appear before you is in itself an achievement of which we are entitled to be pleased, and for which we are deeply

grateful. I believe that I can best demonstrate that gratitude by going directly into the fundamental recommendations on which we have unanimously agreed. After I have done so, - and the steps we suggest are quite crisp - I believe it would be useful for me to amplify the special circumstances and the particular reasoning which led us to certain of these recommendations. I will not attempt to cover each of them.

AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES
RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The United States must adopt a coherent and generous policy for the admission of Indochinese refugees over the long range, replacing the practice of reacting belatedly to successive refugee crises since the spring of 1975.
2. Such a program will, in the Commission's opinion, moderate anxieties among Southeast Asian countries which, by granting temporary asylum, fear they would be left unwanted refugees on their hands; will support the substantial efforts of countries elsewhere in the world already participating in the re-settlement effort; and will encourage new countries to join the common endeavor of granting sanctuary. The Commission recommends that the United States should be ready to provide generous financial, technical and other assistance to Southeast Asian nations which resettle the refugees permanently.

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

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

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

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

The Commission commends the United States Government for its policy of requiring such humanitarian action from all U. S. flag vessels, and urges the Government to explore the possibility of extending this practice to all U. S. owned vessels.

A full report of the Commission's findings and conclusions will be submitted to the President, the Secretary of State, the Attorney General, and the appropriate committees of Congress.

We well understand that there are limits to the numbers of refugees who will be accepted by the United States. We are torn between our desire to make recommendations which would easily be accepted, and a conflicting desire to describe the situation and problems we have seen without reference to the extent of possible US participation in their amelioration. We believe we have followed a course somewhere between the acceptable and the unavoidable necessity. We do so in the hope and belief that this will be helpful. By seeing the dimensions of the problem, and by enlarging its understanding in the United States we may facilitate a useful long range plan for dealing with these refugees while extending the limits of what is currently considered feasible.

THE VIETNAMESE REALITY

Increasing repression is presently being extended throughout Vietnam. The draconian measures which have been taken to enforce denials of basic human rights are somewhat better known than the events which have taken place in Cambodia and Laos. The list of the "enemies" of the Vietnamese State is large. The suffering they endure is great and growing. For a host of political offenses and a variety of former occupations and associations, privation, confiscation, imprisonment, confinement for political re-education, and death are the disciplinary instruments. The evidence of this is so clear as to have aroused public expressions of dismay among many Americans who totally opposed the US involvement in Vietnam. Similar expressions of anxiety and public protest have come from the citizens of other countries who were equally critical of the US role.

THE BOAT CASES IN THAILAND

My colleague and co-chairman, Bill Casey, has amply and graphically described the plight and courage of the Boat People. The US response to this monument to human desperation and the will for freedom must be clear, unequivocal, and prompt. It is our view that former US involvement in Vietnam while an important source of the special obligation we have is dwarfed by the remorseless requirements of our own humanity, our commitment to life itself and our recently official enlargement of our concern for human rights.

It is our summary conclusion that the only proper US policy consists of several parts. We must urge upon the Government of Thailand which has borne the brunt of this entire refugee flow whether by land or by sea, that equity, safety, and humane treatment be accorded to all Vietnamese boat cases who succeed in reaching any point along the long coastline of Thailand or are within sight of shore.

It is not, however, sufficient for us to implore governments which offer first asylum to the boat cases to be more consistent and considerate. Some governments in Southeast Asia do indeed provide unchallenged and generous initial refuge. Our encouragement must be accompanied by our willingness to participate in the funding of the work of the UNHCR to whatever degree may be required to improve the amenities and life support systems available to the boat people.

Above all, we must by a clearly stated and longer range program make evident to the governments of first asylum that we do indeed mean to take

the lead in providing resettlement of these people in the US.

LONG - TERM

Wherever we have turned, it was either expressly stated or implicit that our present arrangements appear intermittent, insufficient, and above all, unreliable. No clear view of what the US will do even in the near term emerges from our present or previous policies. We believe in fact that such a forward looking, dependable and clearly articulated US program will have immediately beneficial results. There will almost certainly be fewer occasions where boats will be wantonly returned to the dangers of the sea. We believe there will be a greater readiness to improve the facilities, the boat camps, in which those who do land are gathered for the long months in which their cases are examined and resettlement opportunities to the US and other countries explored.

And we believe strongly that the US policies and procedures toward resettlement must, as far as is humanly possible, be speeded up.

The prospective policy which we urge upon the US is premised on the concept that the boat cases must in all instances be accorded reliable and humane refuge, that third countries must be encouraged to take as great a number of these people as they are able to, and that the refugees who have come by boat must in a brief a period of time be restored to an environment more conducive to normal life and decency than is possible in the present boat camps. One US policy decision more than any other will have the effect of accomplishing all of these desired ends. The US must for reasons of humanity and special obligation be the country of final resort for all those who cannot be resettled reasonably, effectively

and promptly elsewhere. Application of restrictive criteria toward the boat cases is obstructive to this end.

Cambodia

The events which have taken place in Cambodia and which continue make of that country a land so inhuman that it tempts one to wonder whether here, finally, is a place where the living envy the dead.

The judgement of our commission is that a major objective of US policy must be directed towards early and effective resettlement for those Cambodian refugees who have survived the hell which is now their country and the untold hazards of their flight. There are presently some 15,000 such refugees in Thailand who now await such assistance.

The incursion into Cambodia by US Forces during the closing stages of US military involvement in Indochina is perhaps the most controversial of the actions taken by the US Government in that war, although US military and other direct involvement in Cambodia throughout the entire period of the war in Indochina was less than it was in Vietnam or Laos. This fact handicaps the Cambodian refugees in an ironically prejudicial manner. Since the criteria for refugee resettlement in the US emphasizes family reunification or former association with the US government or any of its entities, the Cambodian refugees in Thailand previously associated with the US in any form are a small percentage among the refugees. Application of these criteria should therefore be waived altogether or at a minimum subordinated when Cambodian refugees apply for resettlement in the US.

No circumstances since the death camps of Germany more nearly describe the circumstances which presently exist in Cambodia. It is inconceivable that criteria expressive of degrees of compassion based on priority relationships could, in conscience, have been applied to the survivors of the Nazi concentration camps any more than they can now in logic or honor be applied to the refugees from Cambodia.

It is our strong opinion that while all efforts should be continued to encourage permanent resettlement for Cambodian refugees in other countries, the only proper course for the US would require that it be the country of final resort if all other efforts fail.

The Refugees from Laos

The picture of Laos which emerges is a stark and often a brutal one. Control is total. Reorganization of the economic and agricultural life in Laos has been massive and is in the words of one observer, "a total mess". The harshest methods of all have been applied to the agricultural sector of Laotian life. Since Laos has almost no other source of economic vitality, this simply means that the consequences are nearly universal. Starvation exists in significant measure. Rations of food even for the more fortunate are inadequate.

These are not isolated or experimental efforts by the authorities in Laos. These governmental measures can only be understood as an integrated effort to politically reorient the entire life, culture, politics, and dependence of the

Laotian people. Expressions of political, ethnic, religious or other differences are treated harshly and, as in Vietnam, the penal mechanism of the re-education center is the omnipresent threat for whoever may appear to threaten the interests of the State.

The importance of this recital of the reality in Laos is that it has lead this Commission to conclude that a distinction between so-called economic and political refugees from Laos has no validity and no proper place in any decisions which effect the future of refugees from that country.

We have learned that there is in fact a more shocking aspect to the situation. The ability to classify these individuals as economic refugees and to try to persuade other countries that there is merit to this contention has enabled, in violation of international law and of the United Nations Covenant on Human Rights, the forceful repatriation of significant numbers of those who seek to escape from Laos into Thailand. We have ourselves heard frank admission from officials of provincial authorities in Thailand that the practice of forcibly returning those that local authorities designate as economic refugees is a policy decision and that there is no intention to discontinue these steps.

In addition to this circumstance the entire concept of forced repatriation, abhorrent in itself, clearly subjects those being returned to a hazardous environment.

Further substantiation of the reality in Laos was conveyed by an American stationed in Laos. His observations were simple and direct. The possibility of safe return to Laos is non-existent. The willingness of Laotian authorities to "forgive and forget" runs counter to their entire effort to restructure their society. He asserted that he had personally observed the most drastic punitive consequences inflicted on returning Laotians.

We cannot conclude our report and recommendations on the Lao refugees without reference to the American involvement in Laos during the long years of the Indochina struggle. That phase of the U. S. effort is thus far the least well known or documented. There is reason to believe that the U. S. involvement in a variety of administrative, governmental aid, social welfare, political and military functions was extensive. One can even guess with some degree of responsibility that the U. S. role, if not simply measured in numbers of Americans involved, may well have been more pervasive in assisting, supporting, and on occasion directing a wide range of activities in that country than in Vietnam. Our Commission believes that this background must be considered in applying certain criteria for eligibility for resettlement into the U.S. Those existing categories for resettlement which in any way reflect relationship with governmental or any other institutional entities of the former Government of Laos must carry special weight. It is important that categories be interpreted in a liberal, flexible and generous manner. We include in this section the largest group of people who have fled from Laos and who indeed originate from that country but are a distinct ethnic and geographical group who lived primarily in the hills of Laos. In the U. S. they have been commonly identified as Meo. The word does have a pejorative connotation, but they are besknown in the U. S. that term. Their actual tribal identification is Hmong. They and other ethnic tribal groups common to the hills of Laos played the single largest military, guerrilla and para-military role in the long effort to establish a free and independent Laos and to frustrate the plans of the Pathet

Lao and the North Vietnamese. Again because of the ambiguity of the American efforts in Laos, the application of the criteria as they relate to resettlement of these hill-tribe people in the U. S. must be generously applied. Provable specificity is often hard to come by; documents are rare or non-existent. There is a fact however that is undeniable. These hill tribesmen suffered the heaviest casualties of any of the peoples in Laos. These casualties unfortunately continue. The Government of Laos supported by Vietnams troops is at present involved in a concerted effort to drive the remaining hill people from their highland strongholds inside Laos towards the lowlands where they can be dealt with more readily. The efforts to accomplish this have involved the use of toxic agents, napalm and explosives dropped, we are told, by North Vietnamese aircraft. If the Thai Government is prepared to offer durable resettlement inside Thailand for any significant number of the various ethnic groups from Laos in Thailand in a manner which assures their safety, ethnic, and cultural identity, then it is this Commission's recommendation that the U. S. be prepared to participate generously in the form of financial and technical assistance, together with other countries and international agencies to speed that process. However that possibility must not be permitted to stall or postpone the American resettlement efforts which this Commission is recommending in the U. S.

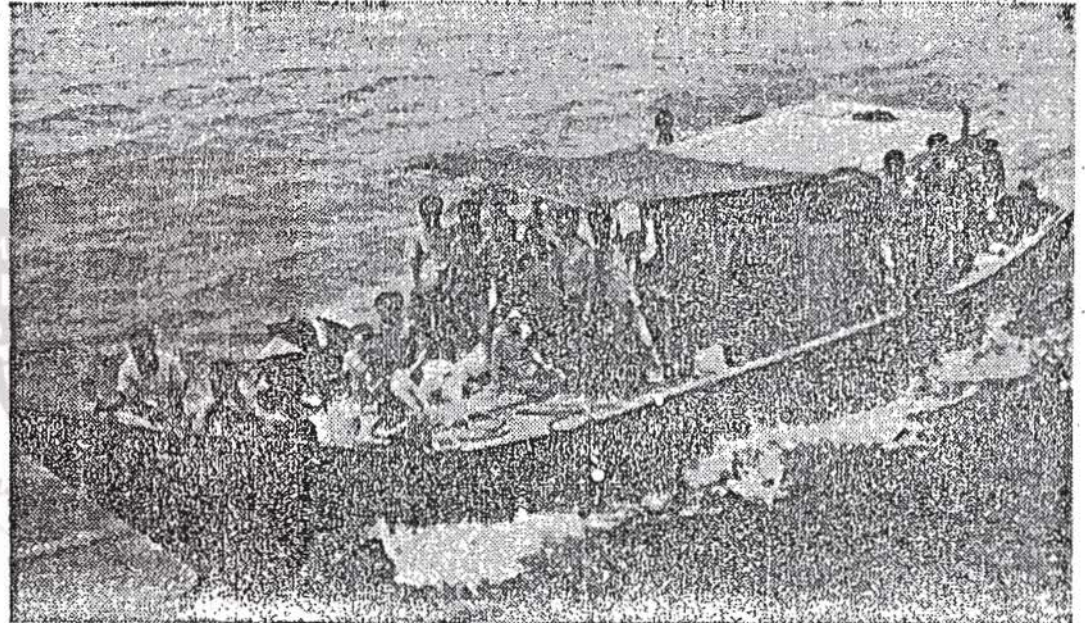
THE THAI DETENTION CENTERS

It is the stated purpose that refugees who arrived in Thailand since November 15th will be retained in detention centers until such time as it is possible for the Thais to return them to their country of origin. Since it is not the function of the Commission to make recommendations directed to foreign governments and since unfortunately we are unable to suggest an appropriate role the U. S. Government can play in this sovereign matter involving the Government of Thailand, we regrettably limit our observation to this tragic fact. It is none the less apparent that this harsh measure is inexorably linked to the prospects of resettlement of refugees in third countries and that part of the purpose is to apply pressure on third countries to increase their settlement efforts. The objective is clearly to move as many of the 100,000 refugees now in Thailand out of the country at the earliest moment. This adds to the importance and urgency of all the previous recommendations regarding a long range American plan adequate to the needs of all these refugees.

View points

The Boat People: A Plea to Humanity

Like the Jews escaping the Holocaust, refugees from Vietnam and Cambodia are cast adrift in a seemingly uncaring world. For the sake of civilization, we must act now to save them.



A Vietnamese refugee boat in the South China Sea

AP Photo

By Marc H. Tanenbaum

The drowning of 200 Vietnamese boat people last week off the shores of Malaysia dramatized the magnitude of the humanitarian crisis that is swiftly building up in Southeast Asia.

With 150,000 Indochinese refugees now awaiting resettlement and the possibilities of great loss of life mounting, the United Nations high commissioner for refugees has called a conference Dec. 11 and 12 in Geneva to develop an international strategy for coping with this massive problem. President Carter took a step in dealing with the problem this week, when he announced his intention of doubling the immigration quota for Southeast Asian refugees to 50,000, both to help relieve the human agonies and to stimulate other countries to follow the American example.

I am leaving this weekend on a two-week mission to Malasia, Thailand, Indonesia and Hong Kong, in an effort to increase public knowledge and understanding of the refugee crisis. The trip is a sequel to a simi-

Marc H. Tanenbaum, national interreligious affairs director of the American Jewish Committee, is a member of the Citizens Commission on Indochinese Refugees organized by the International Rescue Committee.

lar mission the Citizens Commission on Indochinese Refugees undertook in February to view the plight of the Vietnamese "boat people" and refugees from Cambodia—a mission that left a deep and lasting impression on me.

* * *

In the harbor of Djakarta, the frail, battered Vietnamese boat lay listlessly at anchor, looking exhausted under the blistering February sun that scorched the Indonesian archipelago. I walked out on the rotting wharf and jumped onto a boat, no larger than an oversized rowboat.

There were 15 people aboard, jammed together in sweltering closeness. The man who greeted me was Nguyen Than, the father of several of the eight children on the boat and "captain" of this decrepit vessel. He was a Vietnamese Catholic from Saigon, a teacher educated in a mission school and competent in English.

I introduced myself as one of the 14-member U.S. Citizens Commission for Indochinese Refugees organized by the International Rescue Committee, engaged in a fact-finding mission on the plight of Vietnamese boat people, as well as Cambodian and other Indochinese refugees in Hong Kong, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore. I asked Nguyen Than to tell me his "story."

While his diminutive wife and sisters-in-law were busy putting together a meal of rice and fish and the children jostled each other in quiet play, Nguyen Than unfolded the tale of his exodus from oppression.

The Communist government in Hanoi had ordered him and his family to the rural countryside for "re-education" as members of the new collective society. Hanoi confiscated what little earthly goods they had, and worse still, they began to confiscate their freedom and dignity as human beings. Nguyen Than was dismissed from his teaching post and was commanded to become a farmer at a rural collective. Through bribes and stealth, Nguyen Than crossed through the Vietnamese forests, reached the shoreline and in the middle of the night escaped on a decayed fishing boat that he and his two brothers had purchased at what was for them an astronomical cost.

They sailed for four weeks across the turbulent South China Sea. They were turned away by border patrols from the shores of Singapore and the Philippines. "By the third week," Nguyen Than told me, "we

had no more food and water. We began to drink the sea-water and eat seaweed. Our children became deathly sick and feverish and we were certain that we would die."

And then this small man's face became fierce with anguish and he spoke these words, which penetrated my heart. "Rabbi, you as a Jew will understand this better than most other people. As terrible as was the starvation, the physical pain in our bodies, the worst thing of all was the awareness that we were abandoned by the world, that our lives meant absolutely nothing to anybody, that human life has become worthless."

He looked intensely into my eyes and added, "I now understand what it meant to be a Jew in Nazi Germany in the 1930s, when all the world knew that your Jewish people were being destroyed and you were abandoned."

Abandoned. Not only were these 15 human beings turned away from haven by fellow Asians, but during their harrowing odyssey on the sea they were abandoned as well by people from the western world.

"Twenty-three freighters passed us by—we counted them—23 large ships carrying cargo, probably to Singapore. Most of them were great ships carrying western or Japanese flags. We waved at them, begging them to pick us up, at least to give us water and food. Nothing. A couple times some freighters slowed down and their crews came up on deck to watch us as if we were some entertainment. Some of the people even smiled or laughed at us."

As Nguyen Than spoke, I suddenly found his face and voice dissolving before me, and I was overwhelmed by other images.

It was 1939, the boat churning in the turbulent ocean was the St. Louis. The human cargo aboard was 936 Jewish men, women and children, fleeing certain death in Nazi Germany. Like the Indochinese refugees, they too had to buy their way out of oppression, paying large sums for passage on the St. Louis and buying "official landing certificates" that were to guarantee them entry into Cuba. Some 730 of the Jewish refugees were also able to purchase American immigration quota numbers, just in case the Cuban haven should fall through.

On May 27, 1939, they docked at Havana. They were told their "official landing certificates" were invalid. Cuba's President, Frederico Laredo Bru, told

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them they could land if they could produce \$1-million within 24 hours. An impossibility.

Despair. Abandonment. Several men committed suicide. Cuban gunboats forced the ship back into the Atlantic Ocean. Frantically, desperately, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee pleaded with South American countries to provide asylum. Cables to Colombia, Chile, Paraguay, Argentina. "Regard these passengers as doomed if they are returned to German soil," said the cables.

The reply came back—no room at the inn.

Then incredibly, the United States government, under the "heroic" leadership of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Secretary of State Cordell Hull, rejected the refugees who possessed immigration numbers. Apparently, they did not want to meddle in the "internal affairs" of Nazi Germany.

The St. Louis returned to Europe. Belgium, Holland, France and England each received several hundred of the Jewish refugees—although the Nazis would later overrun Belgium, Holland and France, and all those who fled to those countries were massacred in the Nazi genocide.

The St. Louis episode changed my life. I attended a rally for the "boat people" of the St. Louis in Madison Square Garden. I made a vow to myself then—which I believe is a silent vow that every Jew who lives under the shadow of the Nazi trauma has made to himself or herself. The vow is a paraphrase from the Book of Leviticus: "You shall not stand idly by while the blood of your brothers and sisters cries out to you from the earth."

That's why I joined novelist James Michener, civil rights leader Bayard Rustin, economist Leo Cherne, Ambassadors William Casey and Cecil Lyons and others last February on that mission of saving human lives in Southeast Asia. Our citizens commission played a role in moving the U.S. Congress to adopt legislation to admit 25,000 Vietnamese boat people and 15,000 Cambodians to this land of freedom.

Since last January, when some 1,500 Vietnamese sought haven elsewhere, refugees have been fleeing that country at an increasing rate. About 10,000 escaped in October, and despite monsoons, there will be thousands more during the coming months desperately seeking a chance to live. Unless something changes, it is estimated more than half of these refugees will drown in the sea.

The St. Louis tragedy taught me one permanent, universal lesson: a world that was callous and indifferent to the suffering and the massacre of millions of Armenians in 1915 became a world that was callous and indifferent to the suffering and agony of six million Jewish men, women and children slaughtered by the Nazis.

And a world that stood by silently while Jewish lives became worthless is now a world that stands by silently while thousands of Vietnamese boat people perish in the sea, while 2 to 3 million Cambodians were massacred before the eyes of humanity during the past two years, while 300,000 black Christians were destroyed by Idi Amin's terror, while 40,000 Lebanese Christian and Moslem civilians were killed, while Catholics and Protestants die every day in Ireland.

There is an epidemic of dehumanization in the world today. Civilization, H.G. Wells has written, ultimately is a race between education and catastrophe. We are leaving for Malaysia and Thailand today to try to help lift up before the consciousness of the American people and of the whole human family the central moral issue of our age—that is, the dignity of every human life created in the sacred image of God.

The very survival of a sane, civilized humankind depends on our learning that moral lesson, and our doing something about it . . . now.