

BY THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL

Report To The Congress

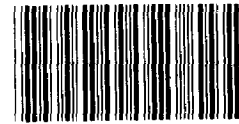
OF THE UNITED STATES

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The Indochinese Exodus: A Humanitarian Dilemma

The continuing flow of refugees from Communist Indochina has strained the willingness and ability of Asian asylum countries to provide temporary care for refugees. Refugee camps are overcrowded and inadequate. There is a need for camps where U.N. and voluntary agencies can care for refugees and can process them for permanent resettlement, free from political restraints and the international relations problems of the asylum countries.

Greater international participation in resettlement is essential. The U.S. commitment is clouded by outdated provisions in its immigration laws. Revisions that clearly embody U.S. intentions could help motivate participation of other nations and eliminate uncertainties which inhibit the resettlement work of voluntary agencies and Federal, State, and local governments.

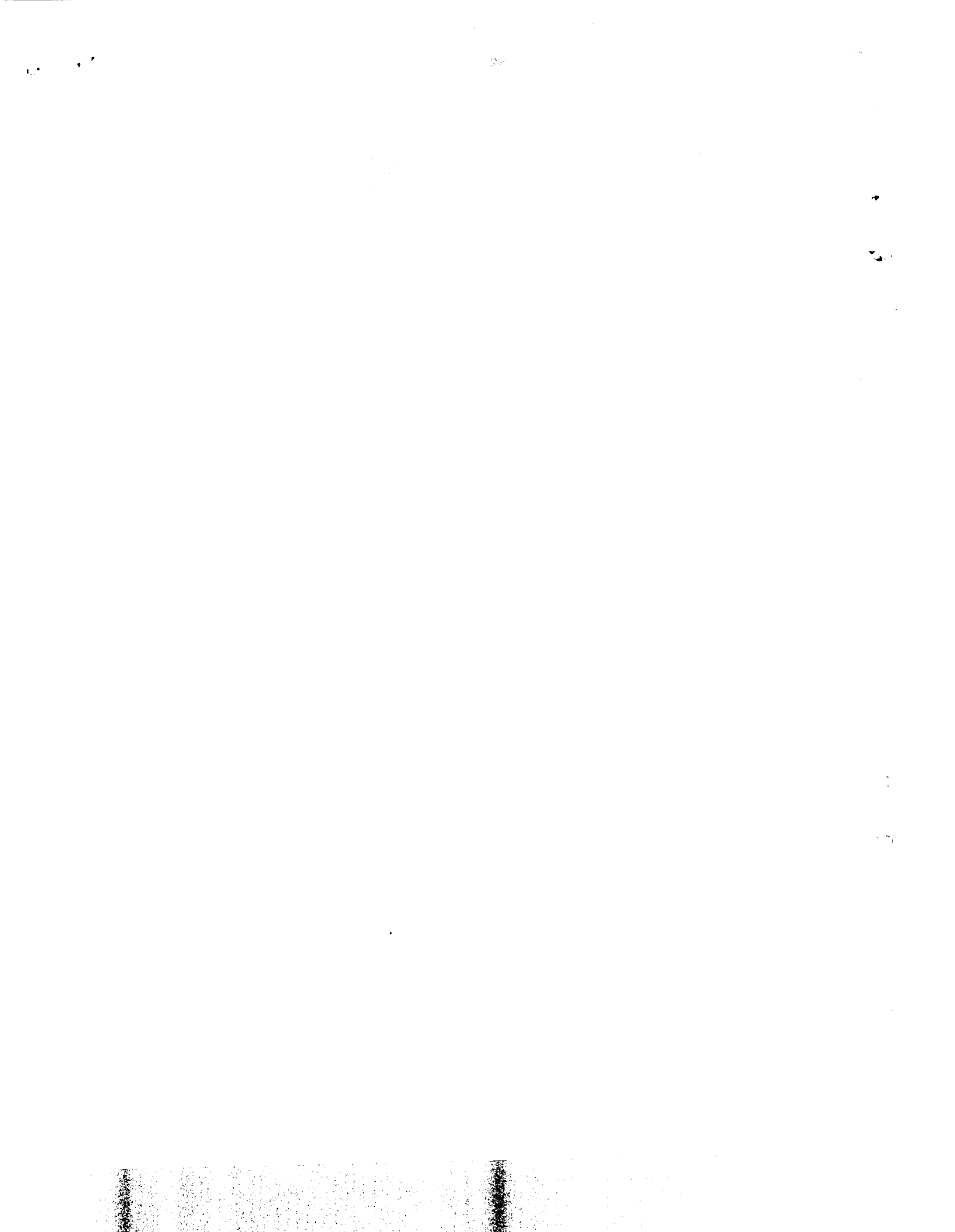


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COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

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To the President of the Senate and the
Speaker of the House of Representatives CWO 00001

This report describes (1) the nature and growth of the Indochinese refugee problem and (2) how the refugee problem is being addressed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the countries of first asylum in Southeast Asia, the United States, and other nations. The report describes the programs for selecting and processing refugees for admission to the United States and for resettling them in American communities.

Following the changes of Government in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos in the spring of 1975, we reported on the evacuation of refugees from Indochina and on the U.S. programs for their temporary care and resettlement. The continuing and escalating flow of refugees into Thailand and other Asian countries, however, gave rise to important questions concerning U.S. commitment and involvement in the resulting resettlement requirements.

We are sending copies of this report to the Director, Office of Management and Budget; the Secretaries of State and Health, Education, and Welfare; and to the Attorney General.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "James R. Stutz".

Comptroller General
of the United States

D I G E S T

BeKad.

Massive refugee migrations in Southeast Asia, set off in 1975 by changes of government in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, are a problem of both humanitarian and political concern to the United States.

The refugees pose potentially disruptive political problems for first-asylum countries--Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, the Philippines, and Hong Kong--and challenge the ability of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to deal effectively with the problem.

The situation of thousands of boat refugees being turned back to sea has drawn worldwide attention to the Indochina refugees, but only a few countries--the United States, France, Australia, and Canada--have accepted an appreciable number of refugees for resettlement. Since the evacuation from Vietnam in April 1975, ~~through fiscal year 1979~~, over \$1 billion has been made available, or is pending approval by the Congress, to help the refugees. (See app. I.) These funds have been and are being used for temporary care in first-asylum countries, to pay for transportation to resettlement countries, and for resettlement in the United States with help from voluntary agencies and State and local governments. Department of Defense camps which operated in the United States in 1975 were supported by these funds.

INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS
OF THE CRISIS

By the end of February 1979, there were about 143,000 land refugees in 13 camps in Thailand and over 75,000 boat refugees--29,000 in one small Malaysian island camp with virtually no health or sanitary facilities. Because the flow of refugees has surpassed resettlement

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offers from other countries and because it is likely to continue, asylum countries feel they are bearing an unfair burden that should be shared worldwide. (See ch. 1.)

Political factors in these countries also influence their willingness to accept more refugees. Thailand views the refugees as a possible irritant to its people and to stable relations with Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. Malaysia sees the boat refugees, many of which are ethnic Chinese, as potentially disrupting its delicate Malay-Chinese racial balance and future relations with Vietnam. Indonesia has similar ethnic and political concerns. Singapore thinks any relaxation of its no-refugee policy could lead to large numbers of refugees flowing onto its already crowded island. Hong Kong officials see the refugee flow as compounding its population problem with the influx of people from the People's Republic of China. (See ch. 1.)

Each of these countries has served as a temporary haven for Indochinese refugees. In all of them, there is a deep-seated hostility to the settlement of ethnic Vietnamese. Except for Malaysia, which allowed resettlement of 1,500 Moslems, none has indicated any willingness to accept the refugees for permanent resettlement.

In an effort to obtain worldwide participation in alleviating the Indochina refugee crisis, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, has changed its funding program and has held international conferences aimed at obtaining more resettlement offers. Between August 1975 and January 31, 1979, the United States provided about 52 percent--almost \$58 million--of the total contributions for the U.N. program. Last fall the program for 1979 was changed from a special to a general program, which could result in increased funds and wider international participation. A December 1978 U.N. conference attempting to increase resettlement offers, however, resulted in pledges for only 11,000 refugees--about half the number of November arrivals in Malaysia alone. (See ch. 2.)

NEED FOR MORE AGGRESSIVE FIELD
MONITORING BY THE U.N.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees considers its most important responsibility to be the protection of refugees no longer receiving national protection, and seeks permanent solutions to the refugee crisis. Temporary care of refugees is also financed. The Commissioner acts mostly as a conduit of funds, however, and does only limited monitoring of refugee camps in Southeast Asia, which are administered by asylum-country governments and voluntary agencies. Thus, U.N. field representatives are limited in their ability to influence treatment of the refugees or to closely control the use of U.N. funds. Most of the camps GAO visited were deficient in the care the U.N. seeks. (See ch. 3.)

NEED FOR ADDITIONAL TEMPORARY
CARE FACILITIES

GAO believes it imperative that appropriate asylum and additional temporary care facilities be provided and effectively managed. These facilities should be situated in areas that minimize the visibility of the refugees to the local populations. They should also be as free as possible from restraints caused by internal political and international relations problems in first-asylum countries.

GAO recommends that the Secretary of State, through the U.S. Mission to the United Nations in Geneva:

--Press to establish additional temporary care holding camps on islands in the South China Sea, or at other locations in the Far East, that would reduce refugee population visibility to local populations and relieve the pressures on the first-asylum countries. These camps should be administered by the United Nations and managed by voluntary agencies and international organizations. *; And*

UNHCR

--Inform the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees of the need for more aggressive field monitoring and of the need to insure that refugees are provided asylum and suitable care.

NEED FOR A U.S. REFUGEE ADMISSION
AND RESETTLEMENT POLICY

As of March 22, 1979, the United States had admitted more than 187,000 refugees since the spring of 1975. In 1978 alone, the United States authorized the admission by parole of 7,000 Indochinese refugees in January; 25,000 in June; and an additional 21,875 in December. Further, the United States stated that it was committed to admitting 25,000 refugees a year over the next few years. (See ch. 4.)

However, immigration law provides for the annual admission of only 17,400 refugees from Communist countries or the Middle East. Because of ideological, geographic, and numerical limitations of the law, refugee admissions have had to be made on an ad hoc basis, principally through the use of the Attorney General's discretionary parole authority, and to only a limited extent, through the conditional-entry provision of immigration law. Such continued use of the parole provision for these refugees has been challenged as going beyond the original intent of the parole authority. (See ch. 4.)

Current law does not clearly express U.S. intentions and commitments to refugee resettlement and has made planning and processing of refugees very difficult. Commitments need to be more formally embodied in law to express the will of the Congress and possibly to motivate other nations to share in refugee relief. (See ch. 4.)

The executive branch has recently submitted a bill for congressional consideration, proposing revisions in laws regarding refugee admissions and resettlement. GAO believes it addresses the major problems stemming from existing laws. (See ch. 7.)

U.S. officials overseas select land refugees in Thailand for admission to the United States based on

- close family ties in the United States,
- previous employment by the U.S. Government,
- close association with the U.S. Government,
and
- humanitarian reasons.

Another criteria was recently added for Cambodia refugees. (See ch. 4.) U.S. policy for boat refugees, is that those not receiving resettlement offers from other countries are eligible for U.S. admission. The other criteria are used only to determine the order in which they are admitted. (See ch. 4.)

All land refugees spend at least a year in camps in Thailand and some spend over 3 years, before coming to the United States. Boat refugees on the other hand, have sometimes been moved within months to encourage asylum countries to continue accepting them or because asylum governments refused to accept them for longer periods. (See ch. 4.)

Since June 1978, the United States has authorized the parole of 30,000 boat refugees and 16,875 land refugees, although there are over twice as many land refugees as boat refugees. This disproportionate number of admissions authorized for boat refugees, apparently justified because of the unwillingness of asylum governments to accept them, results in divergent treatment of the refugees and in the admission of some boat refugees before higher priority land refugees. (See ch. 4.)

We believe that the effective implementation of the GAO recommendation calling for the establishment of Commissioner-administered camps that are free of the internal political pressures now felt by first-asylum country governments, will permit more uniform and equitable treatment of land and boat refugees.

Without the pressures that ultimately lead to the need to expedite processing and resettling boat refugees faster than land refugees, U.S. refugee selection and processing procedures can be effectively formulated by and promulgated from a single organization which would

--clearly communicate the evidence required to substantiate refugee qualifications for admission to the United States and

--require uniform and consistent application of admission guidelines at all locations, when possible.

The use of sporadic, ad hoc parole actions for refugee admissions has resulted in uncertainties for voluntary agencies and for U.S. officials participating in U.S. resettlement. The lack of a consistent refugee policy has made it difficult for those involved to find sponsors, funds, and staff resettlement programs, as well as to set up English and job training programs to help refugees become integrated and self sufficient. In particular, GAO found the HEW management system lacking in detailed program guidelines and found it unable to effectively monitor the use of Federal refugee program funds. The dedication of hard-working individuals rather than an effective management system, is largely being relied on to help integrate the refugees. (See chs. 5 and 6.)

To improve the HEW management and control of Federal funds for refugee resettlement, the Secretary of HEW should require that monitoring of refugee program funds be tightened

--through closer surveillance by HEW regional office personnel and State and local government agencies and

--by audits of HEW-administered funds, including special projects, social services, and cash and medical assistance.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION
OF THE CONGRESS

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In its deliberations on authorizing or appropriating funds for temporary care and U.S. resettlement programs for Indochinese refugees, the Congress should require long-range data on

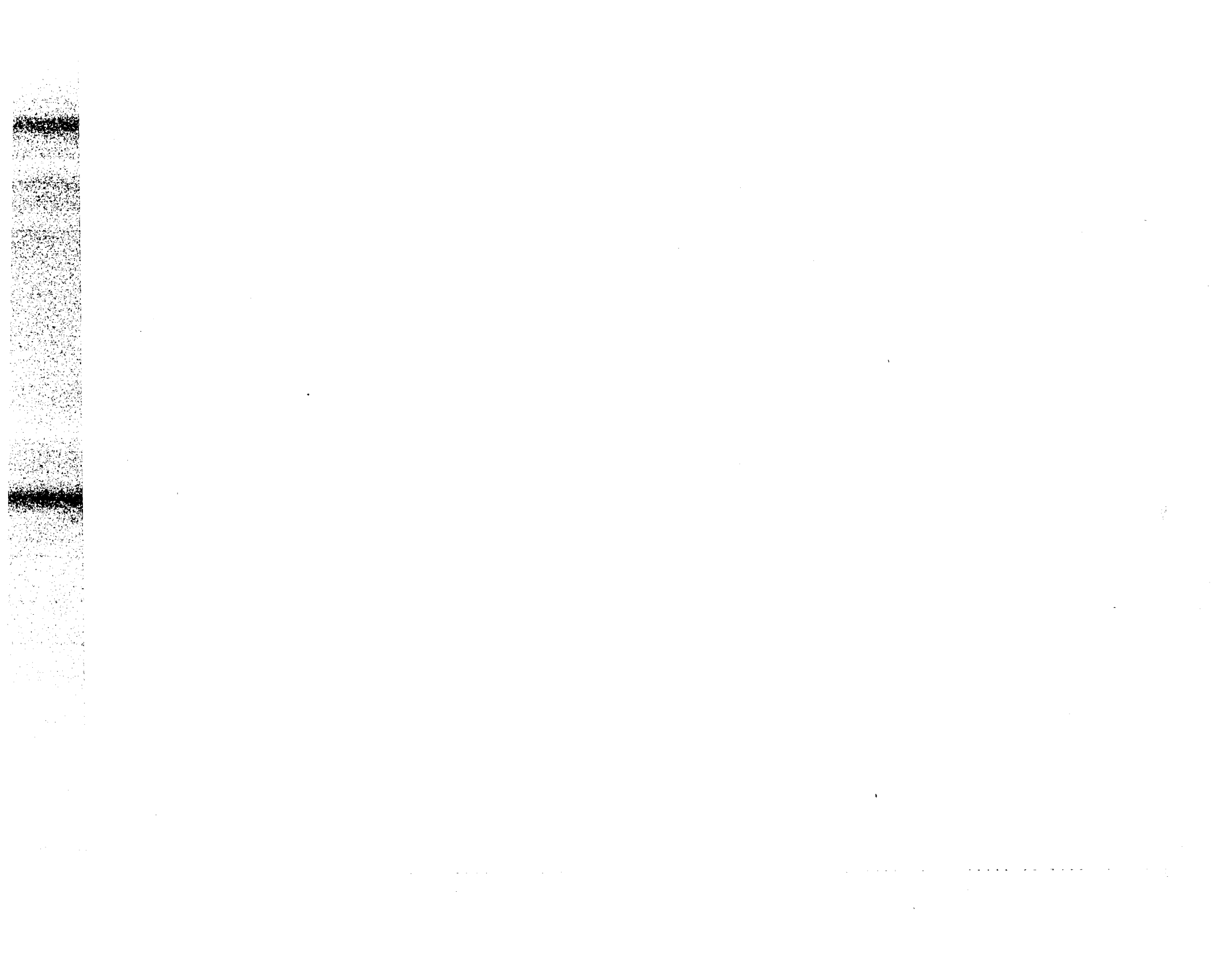
- anticipated number of refugees,
- number to be resettled in the United States,
- estimated costs of the program, and
- the extent to which the U.S. Government is to provide funds.

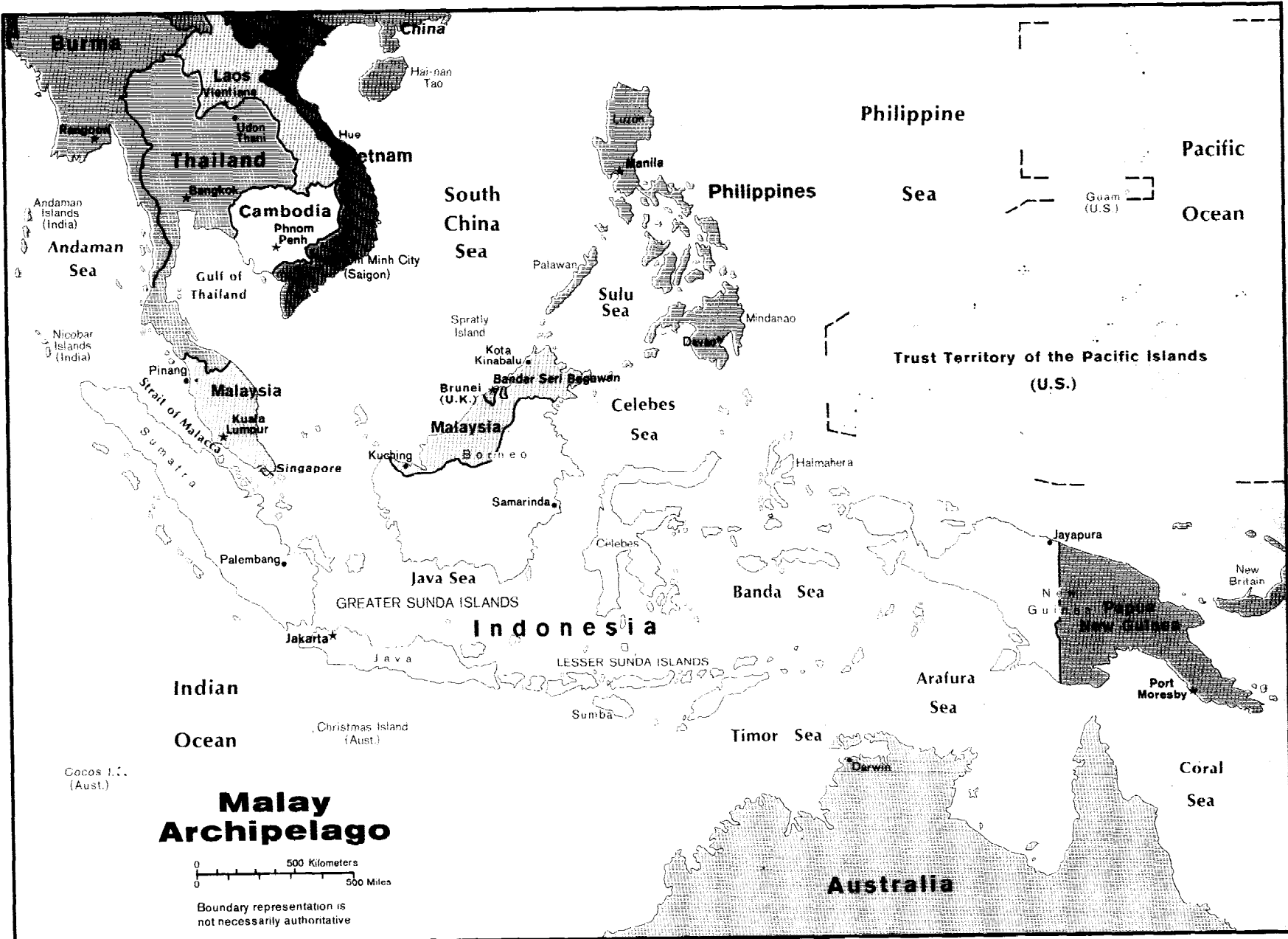
Since this data is interrelated and difficult to estimate, appropriate coordination among U.S. and international agencies is essential. A principal function of the U.S. Coordinator for Refugee Affairs recently appointed by the President could be the coordination and annual presentation of proposals to the Congress.

AGENCY COMMENTS

Officials of the Departments of State and HEW reviewed a draft of this report and stated their general agreement with its conclusions and recommendations. Revisions have been made where warranted by their comments.

In addition, Department of State officials provided information on matters which developed after GAO's fieldwork was completed. This information relates to diplomatic efforts with Vietnam to allow the safe departure of refugees from that country, efforts of the Association of Southeast Asian nations, Indonesia's offer for a refugee transit center on one of its islands, and the extent and ethnic composition of the present flow of refugees from Vietnam. (See ch. 1.) They also provided information about efforts to obtain greater international participation in the refugee program (see ch. 2), and improvements in U.S. processing of refugees in Malaysia. (See ch. 4.)







C o n t e n t s

		<u>Page</u>
DIGEST		i
CHAPTER		
1	THE NATURE AND GROWTH OF THE REFUGEE PROBLEM IN ASIAN COUNTRIES	1
	Thailand	2
	Malaysia	4
	Singapore	9
	Indonesia	10
	Why the Chinese are fleeing	
	Vietnam	11
	Agency comments	14
2	THE ROLE OF UNHCR	16
	UNHCR management control of the Indochinese refugee program	16
	Surveillance and monitorship of field operations	18
	Financial management control	19
	UNHCR efforts to implement durable solutions to the Indochinese refugee problem	21
	Voluntary repatriation	21
	Local integration	22
	Permanent resettlement	22
	UNHCR efforts to obtain greater international participation	23
	Additional temporary care facilities	25
	The role of ICEM	25
	Agency comments	28
3	CAMP CONDITIONS	29
	Thailand	29
	Food	29
	Water	32
	Shelter	32
	Medical care	33
	Supplies	34
	Self-reliance projects	34
	Education	34
	Refugee attitudes and morale	35

CHAPTER		<u>Page</u>
3	Malaysia	36
	Food	38
	Water	39
	Shelter	39
	Medical care	40
	Supplies	40
	Singapore	40
	Indonesia	41
4	U.S. SELECTION AND PROCESSING OF REFUGEES IN COUNTRIES OF FIRST ASYLUM	46
	Legislation governing refugee admissions to the United States	46
	U.S. parole actions	48
	Program criteria for inland camp refugees in Thailand	50
	Program criteria for boat refugees	51
	Systems for selecting and pro- cessing refugees	52
	Thailand	52
	Malaysia	55
	Singapore	57
	Indonesia	57
	GAO observations of processing problems	59
	Agency comments	62
5	REFUGEE RESFTTLEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES	65
	Indochina refugee: profile of the newcomers	66
	Nature of recently arrived refugees	68
	Uniqueness of Indochinese refugees	69
	U.S. voluntary agencies: the major actors	70
	Services provided and resettle- ment philosophies	71
	Problems encountered in resettling refugees	73

		<u>Page</u>
CHAPTER		
5	Uncertainties resulting from ad hoc parole actions and funding interruptions	73
	Reduction of the per capita grant	74
	Inadequacy of social service and job training programs	75
	Serious medical problems among refugees	76
	Lack of advance notifica- tion of refugee arrivals	76
	Refugee adjustment problem in the U.S.	77
	Volag ability to handle continued refugee inflows	77
6	FEDERAL AND STATE INVOLVEMENT: A PATCHWORK OF PROGRAMS AND FUNDING	79
	Lack of continuity and consistency in refugee programs	80
	HEW management weaknesses	81
	Welfare caseload	83
	Programs to promote refugee inte- gration and self-sufficiency	87
7	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	91
	Recommendations to the Secretary of State	95
	Recommendations to the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare	96
	Matters for consideration of the Congress	96
	Agency comments	97
8	SCOPE OF REVIEW	98
	Our prior reports on evacuation and resettlement	99
APPENDIX		
I	Indochinese Refugee Assistance and Resettle- ment Program Appropriations	100
II	Contributions to UNHCR for Refugees from Indochina in Thailand and Other Countries for 1975 through 1979	101

	<u>Page</u>	
APPENDIX		
III	United States Portion of UNHCR Reimburse- ments to ICEM for Transportation of Indochinese Refugees	102
IV	Resettlement of Refugees from the Indochina Peninsula from 1975 through January 1979	103
V	Voluntary Agencies Participating in Indochinese Refugee Resettlement	104
VI	Department of Health, Education, and Welfare Obligations, by States, for Welfare Assistance and Services Fiscal Year 1978	106

ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
HEW	Department of Health, Education, and Welfare
ICEM	Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration
INS	U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service
IPP	Indochinese parole program
JVA	joint voluntary agency
LRP	long-range parole
U.N.	United Nations
UNHCR	U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees
volag	voluntary agency

CHAPTER 1

THE NATURE AND GROWTH OF THE REFUGEE

PROBLEM IN ASIAN COUNTRIES

Changes of political regimes in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos in the spring of 1975 precipitated mass movements of refugees throughout Southeast Asia. About 130,000 Indochinese were resettled in the United States as a result of the U.S. evacuation in April 1975. Others fled into Thailand and other countries in Asia. Soon after the evacuation, it became apparent that a major resettlement operation was required to handle the continuing migration of refugees from Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam.

Although the United States, France, and other countries responded to the crisis by accepting refugees for resettlement, the flow of people into asylum countries far exceeded the numbers able to be permanently resettled outside their countries of origin. This has resulted in a current camp population (as of the end of February 1979) of about 218,000 Indochinese refugees in temporary asylum in

--Thailand, about 147,000;

--Malaysia, about 51,000;

--other countries, including the Philippines, Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan, Indonesia, and areas on or near the Indochina peninsula, about 20,000.

In the more than 3 years that have elapsed since the change of regimes in Indochina in the spring of 1975, the United States has inaugurated a number of programs for resettlement of Indochinese refugees. By the end of December 1978, the United States had resettled approximately 176,000 of them. In addition to about 130,000 refugees that were evacuated from Indochina in 1975, these include over 25,000 land refugees that had first sought asylum in Thailand and about 21,000 refugees escaping by boat that had gone to Thailand and other Asian countries of first asylum.

Refugees from Laos and Cambodia stream overland in ever-growing numbers into Thailand. Thailand had over 140,000 such persons in early 1979, and departures from refugee camps for resettlement elsewhere in the world have not kept pace with arrivals. In addition, some refugees arrive in Thailand by small boats from Vietnam.

The number of refugees escaping by boat from Vietnam has been increasing at an alarming rate. Most of these boat people sail to Malaysia, and some go to Thailand and other countries of first asylum, including Singapore, Indonesia, Hong Kong, and the Philippines.

Both Thai and Malaysian officials are concerned that countries engaged in permanent resettlement activities are not taking enough refugees on a regular basis. Understandably, many Southeast Asian countries may be concerned that they will be stuck with numbers of refugees who have no other place to go.

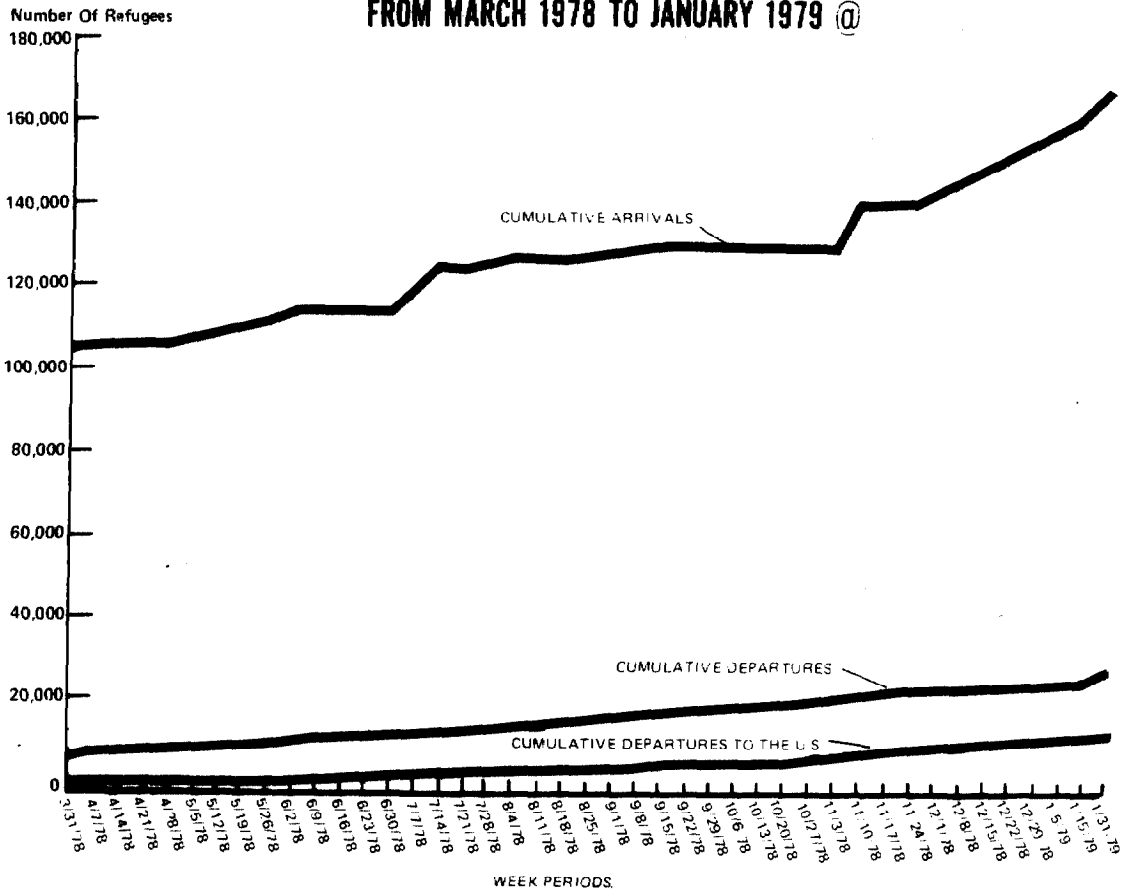
The following section describes the problems created by the increasing refugee population in Thailand's inland and boat camps. In subsequent sections we discuss the problems of Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia--the other three asylum countries selected for our review.

THAILAND

Perhaps the basic problem for the Thai Government is that it has yet to find a means of focusing world attention on the presence of some 147,000 refugees within its borders. Thai officials believe that insufficient worldwide attention has been focused on boat refugees. In addition to the fact that it cannot effect the departure of most refugees, Thailand also has little choice about how and when the refugees arrive. Because of its extremely long land borders, Thailand's temporary asylum policy for refugees has, of necessity, been based on the reality that the Government simply cannot intercept most persons fleeing conditions in neighboring countries. Although the Thailand-Laos border is long, a senior Thai official indicated that one option would be to seal the border if the refugee influx continues. In fact, the daily refugee population is increasing, and by the end of February 1979, it was already about 147,000.

The graph below depicts the growth of the refugee population in Thai inland camps since March 1978. It does not, however, include refugees in the two Thai boat camps, which contained 3,608 refugees as of December 31, 1978.

GROWTH OF THE LAND REFUGEE PROBLEM IN THAILAND FROM MARCH 1978 TO JANUARY 1979 [Ⓐ]



[Ⓐ] EXCLUDES BOAT REFUGEES IN THAILAND DATA ON ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES PRIOR TO THE WEEK ENDING MARCH 31, 1978. NOT AVAILABLE REFUGEE POPULATION AS OF THE BEGINNING OF THAT WEEK IS INCLUDED IN CUMULATIVE ARRIVALS

There have been brief periods when Thailand has allegedly attempted to forcibly repatriate some persons caught crossing the border. For the most part, however, Thai officials have not forced refugees to return involuntarily to their homelands. Indeed, the official Thai Government policy has been to encourage voluntary repatriation or resettlement in third countries. Besides, even if forced repatriation were to become official policy, there simply are not enough border guards to effectively control the refugee influx.

Humanitarian values also influence Thai policy concerning the acceptance of refugees. As senior officials pointed out, "We're a Buddhist country and must abide by Buddhist precepts. We have a long tradition of helping refugees." Thai officials quickly point out, however, that such help is in the form of temporary shelter and care, not permanent resettlement. Indeed, when officials discuss the resettlement issue, they stress that the rest of the world must first relieve Thailand of the bulk of its refugee burden before the country can even consider resettling refugees. Thai officials indicated that no more than 20,000 could be resettled locally.

Recent economic policies of the Laotian Government have motivated the exodus of merchant and professional classes from Laos' urban areas. About 80 percent of the refugees currently in Thailand came from Laos. Many lowland Laotians left (1) in response to the nationalization of retail trade by their Government and (2) because of restrictions on political and social freedom. By December 1978, about 69,500 Hmong tribespeople had fled the repressive practices of the Laotian Government and Vietnamese forces and took refuge in camps in Thailand.

Cambodians have fled to escape near-destitute living conditions and violence in the countryside. Responses of the major asylum countries we visited to the boat people follow.

MALAYSIA

Malaysians are faced with a growing dilemma; the conditions under which they began accepting refugees from Indochina for temporary asylum have changed, as have the kind and volume of those refugees. During 1976 and 1977 a limited number of ethnic Vietnamese refugees arrived, most destined fairly soon afterwards for resettlement in a third country. In addition, many were considered political refugees because they worked

for the pre-1975 Vietnamese Government and, as a result, were in clear danger of oppression from the new Communist Government.

However, refugees arriving in Malaysia increased alarmingly. Further, the kind of refugee who came to the shores of Malaysia changed. Refugees who came to Malaysia at the time of our review were predominantly Sino-Vietnamese. If the numbers of refugees continue to rise dramatically, Malaysia may find it more difficult to effect resettlement elsewhere. The unofficial fear among Malay leaders is that many Sino-Vietnamese refugees with no place else to go might eventually upset the delicate Malay-Chinese racial balance. Should incoming Chinese tax local resources to house and contain them, and other countries abilities' to resettle them, some refugees could conceivably melt into Malaysian society. From a Malay point of view, the overall racial balance of the country could be adversely affected.

The boat refugee population in all first-asylum countries since March 1978 is shown in the graph on page 13. As shown in the following table, 46,286, or 75 percent of the total boat refugees in all first-asylum countries as of December 31, 1978, were in Malaysia.

Boat refugee camp population
as of December 31, 1978

<u>Country</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Thailand	3,608	6
Malaysia	46,286	75
Hong Kong	4,810	8
Indonesia	2,607	4
Japan	597	1
Korea	74	-
Philippines	2,265	4
Singapore	641	1
Taiwan	834	1
Other	<u>7</u>	<u>-</u>
Total	<u>61,729</u>	100

This situation is further complicated by the fact that the source of the refugee population, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, is a strong military force in Southeast Asia, and, hence, one which the Malaysian Government is wary of antagonizing. Thus, the Malaysian response to the arrival of thousands of refugees of Chinese ethnicity from Vietnam

is proscribed by both internal political considerations as well as by concern regarding its future relations with Vietnam.

Malaysia's inability to deal firmly and directly with Hanoi concerning the refugees was demonstrated during the recent visit to Kuala Lumpur of Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Van Dong. According to a senior Malaysian official, the refugee question was one of several topics discussed, but by many accounts its treatment was handled very gingerly. The Vietnamese official regretted the problems Malaysia inherited, but praised Kuala Lumpur for its humanitarian response. He and his Malaysian counterpart jointly urged the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other nations to assist the refugees.

Malaysia is apparently not in a position to act with great firmness. Its naval capability is modest, and shows little potential ability to seal off the coast and block further refugee boat arrivals. Similarly, there seems to be no potentially strong bargaining position which Malaysia and the other states in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), might collectively use in pressuring Vietnam to cut off the exodus of its Chinese population, according to Malaysian officials.

If its options are limited with respect to stemming the problem at its source, however, Malaysia's ability to facilitate the retransit of refugees to other countries is equally circumscribed. At the end of 1978, there were over 46,000 refugees in Malaysia, and departures had not kept pace with arrivals. Refugees were placed for the most part on islands off the eastern coast of the Malay Peninsula. The prognosis for either existing or new resettlement countries taking significant numbers of the new refugees from Malaysia did not appear promising. As of the end of 1978, only four nations--the United States, France, Australia, and Canada--were taking significant numbers of refugees for resettlement. European nations, with the exception of France, have previously taken only token numbers. (See app. IV.) Most other nations of the world accept none, even wealthy nations like Japan. (See ch. 2.)

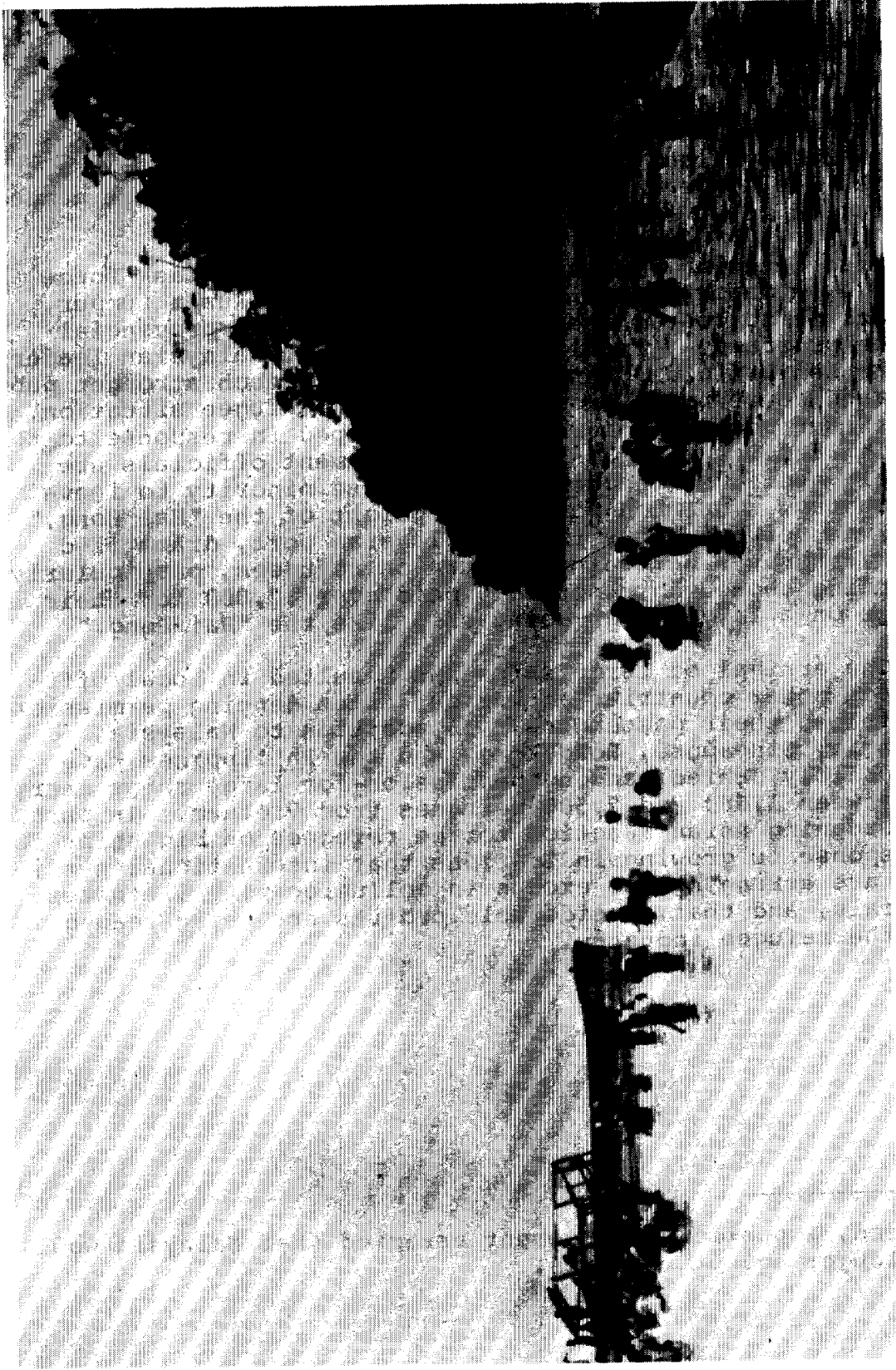
In this situation, Malaysian officials fear that their country will be left with more Sino-Vietnamese refugees in island enclaves along the coast, where management and security will increasingly be a burden for both national and local governments.

Nevertheless, as 1978 drew to a close, there were signs that Malaysia was beginning to develop a firmer policy and more activist role vis-a-vis its growing refugee problem. It sent a strong delegation to the December conference on Indochinese refugees held in Geneva. However, Malaysian leaders were surely disappointed by the results of the conference, when only \$12 million was added to UNHCR coffers for the next year and only about 11,000 new resettlement slots were reportedly promised by conference participants. (See ch. 2.) Indeed, Malaysia received two times that number of refugees in November alone.

Also late in 1978, a Malaysian interagency task force headed by a major general was established in Kuala Lumpur. Its goal is to coordinate and plan Federal and provincial refugee programs. Finally, as 1979 dawned, Malaysian leaders and the semiofficial press began to take a much stronger public stand concerning Hanoi's role in the refugee situation. ^{1/} That firmer posture toward Hanoi developed in response to the emerging reality that Vietnamese Government officials are actively assisting the country's Chinese minority to leave the country. The much publicized plight of the "Hai Hong," which was refused entry into a Malaysian port, dramatized the Government's hardening posture on refugees, particularly concerning those who reportedly paid over \$2,000 for their passage on a large ocean-going ship like the "Hai Hong."

The arrival of large ships has resulted in local officials of other countries at various times denying permission to off-load their passengers. In addition to Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Hong Kong, and the Philippines have all publicly denied landing permission for large ships carrying between 1,000 and 2,500 refugees from Vietnam. In part, the hardening Asian reaction to the refugees on big ships is in response to growing indications that international syndicates are arranging the exodus in collusion with Vietnamese officials, and that considerable profits are being reaped from the refugee industry.

^{1/}Indeed, a public announcement asserted that Malaysia would no longer accept refugees.



BOAT REFUGEES COMING ASHORE AT PULAU BIDONG, MALAYSIA

SINGAPORE

Singapore first became involved in the exodus of persons from Indochinese states in 1975 when United States personnel left Vietnam. Some 1,000 refugees, mostly from Vietnam, sailed for Singapore waters and found temporary refuge on St. Johns Island.

The East South Asia regional representative of the UNHCR reportedly gave verbal assurances to the Singapore Government that all of those persons would, in due time, be resettled in third countries. However, the verbal assurances were not followed with speedy action, and Singapore still had several hundred refugees months later. Of those, 109 were granted permanent residence in Singapore. To date no other refugees from Indochina have been resettled in Singapore.

The Singapore Government subsequently adopted the most firm policy of all Asian states with respect to the growing exodus of Indochinese refugees. Briefly stated, the Singapore policy before October 1978 was:

1. No refugee boat of any kind would be allowed to enter Singapore waters, nor to off-load its human cargo. Only on the rarest of occasions, in cases of dire hardship, would an exception be made to permit a refugee boat temporary docking rights at a Singapore wharf. In those instances, only emergency repairs and provisions would be provided before the ship sailed to another destination.
2. The only Indochinese refugees permitted entry into Singapore waters and to disembark at all must meet the following conditions:
 - a. Refugees must be on board a ship which had picked them up on the high seas.
 - b. The country whose flag the rescue ship was flying, through its local Embassy in Singapore, must guarantee, before the refugees' disembarkation, that it will assure prompt passage to and resettlement in its territory.
 - c. Refugees meeting these criteria could land and temporarily reside in Singapore providing that their local expenses were underwritten by other than Singapore sources, usually the UNHCR.

In October 1978, the Singapore Government notified all Embassies and the High Commission that the above-mentioned policies would be further strengthened in that the maximum number of refugees on Singapore soil at any time would not exceed 1,000, and the maximum period any refugee could remain in Singapore would thereafter be 90 days.

A major reason for the Singapore refugee policy is the fear among Singapore leaders that in the future a much larger number of ethnic Chinese refugees might flood Singapore from adjacent areas should communal tensions arise in the future in Malaysia or Indonesia. Moreover, Singapore is a small island city-state with a population of over 2.3 million--one of the highest population densities in Asia. State Department officials told us that, even with less restrictive policies, its capacity to absorb refugees is severely limited.

INDONESIA

Until late 1978, Indonesia had the luxury of largely avoiding the problem of unwanted Indochinese refugees which its neighbors faced. Before October 1978, most refugees leaving Vietnam did so in small boats. It was more convenient and safe for them, particularly during turbulent weather, to head for Malaysia. The Malaysians' generally humanitarian reception apparently served as a magnet for subsequent boats. As a result, as long as the refugees were able to land on the Malay coast, they evidently had few incentives to attempt the longer voyage south to Indonesian waters.

During 1978, Indonesian leaders apparently did not feel that a serious enough problem was developing to necessitate either greater cooperation within ASEAN, to collectively meet the problem, or directly with Malaysia.

In addition, before 1978, refugees from Vietnam arriving in insular and peninsular Southeast Asia had been reportedly predominantly ethnic Vietnamese. As such, they had not generated major threat perceptions and animosities among Indonesians which probably would have been the case if they had been Chinese. Recently, however, Indonesia has had to confront a new kind of refugee, Sino-Vietnamese, arriving in large ocean-going ships like the "Southern Cross" in September and the "Hai Hong" in October.

Heretofore, Indonesian policy has been to allow as few refugees as possible to land, and to permit them only temporary asylum in its territory pending their resettlement elsewhere. This policy went hand in glove with the active role allegedly played by the Indonesian Navy in diverting as

many seaworthy refugee ships as possible from their intended landing in Indonesia. Frequently, according to Australian officials, the Navy gave those it intercepted provisions necessary to continue their voyage, probably to Australia. However, the U.S. Ambassador pointed out to us that the policy of the Indonesian Government is not to push off refugee boats, particularly those which are unseaworthy or whose passengers are in grave physical condition.

When the UNHCR refused to certify as refugees the passengers on the unwanted "Hai Hong," and thereby refused funds for their care, the Indonesian Government had to decide if it would allow them to stay, at its own expense. The subsequent decision by Government leaders to escort the ship out of Indonesian waters was probably made, in part, to deter future large ships from eyeing Indonesian islands as potential landing sites.

In 1979, Indonesia is being dragged into a regional problem which, until recently, it has been largely able to ignore. If it resumes actively diverting all refugee ships, it may damage the oral agreement recently reached with Australia by which Canberra has been more actively processing and accepting refugees in Indonesia in return for Jakarta's promise to allow them temporary asylum.

Jakarta, on its own or collectively through ASEAN, has little leverage to convince Hanoi to control or reduce the exodus of its populace.

Given domestic animosities aimed at the approximately three million ethnic Chinese in Indonesia, there is little likelihood that Jakarta will opt for a policy of resettling many of the predominantly Chinese refugees now flowing out of Vietnam.

WHY THE CHINESE ARE FLEEING VIETNAM

By mid-1978, the percentage of boat refugees who are Sino-Vietnamese was about 66 percent. In part this is a result of the March 1978 decrees by the Vietnamese Government, and their actual implementation in mid-year. The currencies of southern and northern Vietnam were unified, bank accounts frozen, and retail trade nationalized. Since many Chinese residents of southern Vietnam were engaged in trade and commerce, their economic roots were suddenly pulled from under them by the governmental decrees. As a consequence, without work they are then considered by the Government to be unproductive members of society and, thereby, susceptible to being assigned to live in the remote and barren farming areas of

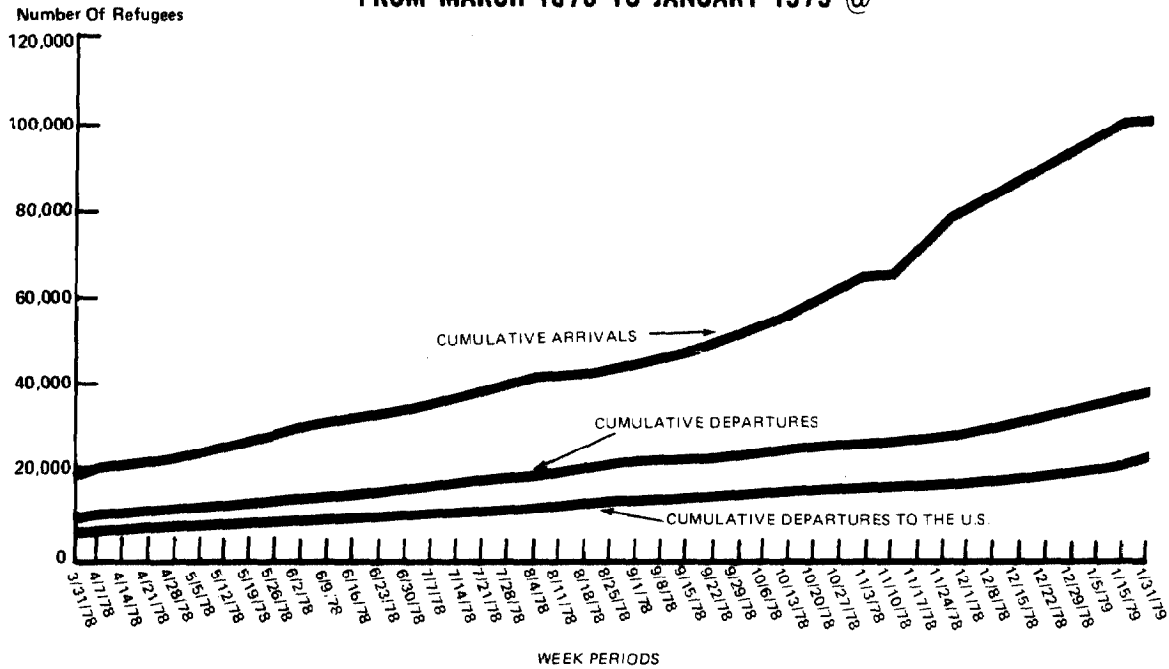
the New Economic Zones. State Department officials told us that the Government of Vietnam makes no inputs into the development of these zones, and many who are sent there view their forced transfer as life threatening.

Thus, by mid-1978, the choice for many of the Chinese community of southern Vietnam was either to accept the probability that for the rest of their lives they would be subsistence farmers in a remote and desolate area or flee the country and hope to be eventually resettled in another country.

Many Chinese had apparently converted much of their wealth into gold bullion. As a result, when the Government decrees were handed down these persons were prepared and did not lose all of their gold. Others, however, were not so lucky. It should be noted, though, that the Government decrees, coming fully 3 years after the country was politically unified, were reportedly applied uniformly to all sectors of the southern population. The Chinese were apparently hit the hardest because they were disproportionately involved in retail trade and the professions and were, thus, wealthier.

Since the Hanoi Government had also had a precipitous falling out with the People's Republic of China, political animosities against Peking were translated into a heightening of historic ethnic animosity directed at the local Chinese minority. Hence, while the Vietnamese Government shoved Chinese in the northern part of the country across the border into Yunnan and by sea to other parts of Southern China, U.S. Embassy officials reported that Vietnamese officials in the south actively encouraged, abetted, and made money from the exodus of local Chinese to other Southeast Asian countries.

GROWTH OF THE BOAT REFUGEE PROBLEM FROM MARCH 1978 TO JANUARY 1979 @



@DATA ON ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES PRIOR TO THE WEEK ENDING MARCH 31, 1978, NOT AVAILABLE. REFUGEE POPULATION AS OF THE BEGINNING OF THAT WEEK IS INCLUDED IN CUMULATIVE ARRIVALS.

AGENCY COMMENTS

The Departments of State and Health, Education, and Welfare reviewed a draft of this report. We held several meetings with officials of these Departments to discuss their comments. At these meetings we were provided updated information and suggestions for clarification. Revisions, as appropriate, have been made throughout the report.

In commenting on this chapter, State Department officials told us that the Indochinese refugee problem has been a matter of increasing concern to ASEAN and was expressed as a regional problem in ASEAN-U.S. talks last August. However, the ASEAN countries have not, until recently, participated significantly in international attempts to seek resettlement opportunities or in UNHCR funding, leaving this mainly to the United States and other resettlement countries. These problems are only slowly being remedied. Moreover, Thailand is seeking a seat on the UNHCR Executive Committee.

We were also told that, in the wake of ASEAN discussions on the refugee problem, Indonesia has offered the use of one of its islands as a transit center for refugees, to be administered by the UNHCR under strict limits. The State Department believes that, if this island center can be implemented, it will be a considerable regional asset.

Department of State officials said that diplomatic efforts are being made to regularize the flow of refugees from Indochina. The State Department recognizes the importance of seeking a humane solution to the plight of the refugees and of easing the strain on first-asylum countries. In this connection, U.S. representatives have urged the Vietnamese Government to work with the UNHCR to develop a program regularizing the outflow of the refugees. The Vietnamese have also been told of the U.S. concern for refugees flowing out of Vietnam, and that the United States is disturbed at the apparent collusion of Vietnamese officials who are accepting compensation for permitting the departure of refugees on large ocean-going ships.

Department of State officials said that, for a period of 4 to 6 months, the evidence was relatively clear that organized escapes were taking place with the agreement and, probably, active complicity of the Government of Vietnam. They said that it was during the last quarter of 1978 that arrivals of boat refugees in first-asylum areas averaged over 17,000 per month; and that a substantial majority of these were Sino-Vietnamese, though many ethnic Vietnamese also escaped in this fashion. Department officials said that such openly

arranged escapes seem to have stopped at least for the time being. They said this may have been due to protests to the Vietnamese Government by various Asian nations. The boat refugee flow has dropped substantially since December 1978 but still remains high, averaging about 10,000 per month in the first quarter of 1979. The State Department officials said that, although many Sino-Vietnamese still escape, a majority of the current clandestine boat escapees are ethnic Vietnamese.

Other comments by Department of State officials are included at the end of chapters 2, 4, and 7.

CHAPTER 2

THE ROLE OF UNHCR

Since July 1975 the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has been the international focal point for efforts to resolve the Indochinese refugee problem. UNHCR considers its most important responsibility to be the international protection of refugees who no longer enjoy national protection. Asylum is a key aspect of the protection activities, and the High Commissioner encourages governments to follow liberal practices in opening their frontiers to refugees.

UNHCR also seeks and finances more durable solutions to the Indochinese refugee problem. It views the permanent solutions to the Indochinese refugee problem to be voluntary repatriation, local settlement within the first-asylum country, and permanent resettlement in other countries.

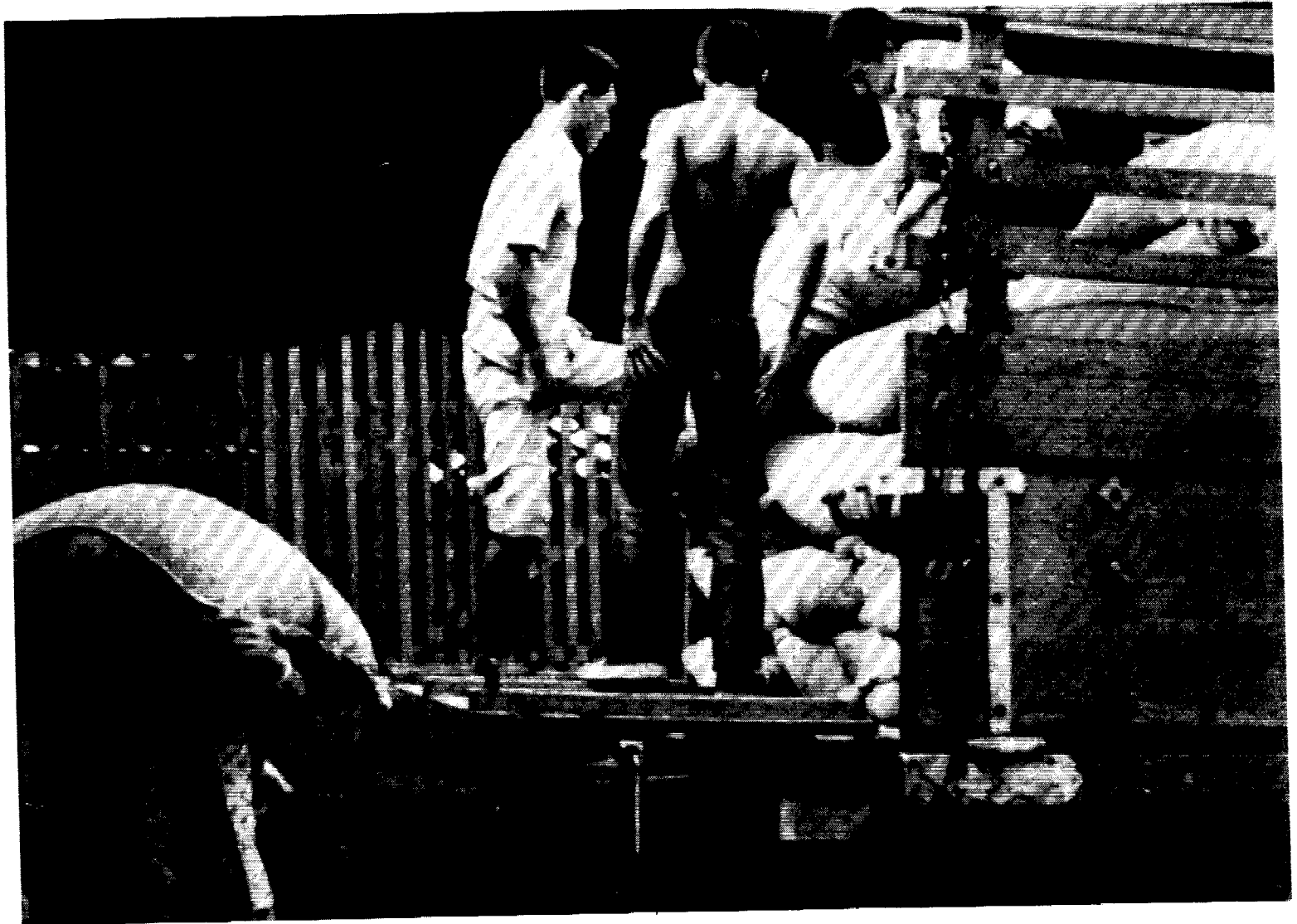
To provide protection and temporary care for the refugees, UNHCR attempts to insure that refugee treatment in the asylum countries conforms as far as possible to internationally accepted standards, as embodied in the Convention of 1951 and the Protocol of 1967. Minimum standards to be met are agreed upon by UNHCR and asylum-country governments.

UNHCR provides financial assistance to asylum-country governments and voluntary agencies (volags) for the temporary care of the refugees. This assistance includes support for food, water, shelter, medical care, and supplies. UNHCR may also draw from other U.N. resources, such as the World Food Program and the World Health Organization.

UNHCR MANAGEMENT CONTROL OF THE INDOCHINESE REFUGEE PROGRAM

UNHCR is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. Its regional office of Western South Asia located in Bangkok, Thailand, monitors assistance to refugees in Thailand. The regional office of Eastern South Asia in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, monitors UNHCR assistance to refugees in Indonesia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Macao, and South Korea. There is also an office in Manila that reports directly to UNHCR headquarters.

UNHCR is a nonoperational agency in the asylum countries. Its program is implemented by asylum-country governments and volags. UNHCR has little control over the operation of the government agencies and must work through asylum countries' systems. In Thailand this method makes it difficult to



DELIVERY OF UNHCR - FUNDED RICE TO BAN NAM YAO REFUGEE CAMP IN THAILAND

accomplish something within a reasonable time. For example, 6 weeks passed before food rations were increased to include food for 800 new arrivals at one camp. (See ch. 3.) The levels of Thai bureaucracy involved in administering refugee camps include the Ministry of Interior, the provincial government, and the district government. In Malaysia, UNHCR provides funds to the Malaysian Red Crescent Society for the care of refugees. UNHCR personnel also maintain liaison with local Malaysian Government officials at Federal and State levels.

In Indonesia, two organizations are provided UNHCR funds for care and shelter of refugees. The Ministry of Social Services administers the Jakarta camp, while provincial authorities in the Riau Archipelago administer the camp at Tanjung Pinang.

Surveillance and monitorship of field operations

UNHCR monitors its assistance program through field representatives. To insure the protection of the refugees, duties of the field representatives include monitoring camp conditions and reporting improper actions of camp authorities. The field representatives also register refugees to assist them in applying for resettlement.

Prior to October 1978, the UNHCR regional office in Thailand had only four field representatives to monitor 15 camps in that country. Another field representative has recently been added. Each representative is responsible for camps within specific geographic areas. One field representative told us that he was able to visit each of the six camps for which he was responsible only about once every 2 weeks and that more field representatives were needed.

In October 1978 there were only three UNHCR field representatives for Malaysia: one in Borneo and the other two on the east coast of the Malay Peninsula. In addition, another representative was assigned to Singapore, and a fifth was responsible for UNHCR activities in Indonesia. In late 1978, the latter two did not, however, have permanent offices or residences in the country to which they were assigned.

The ability of field representatives and regional offices to insure that the appropriate quality of care is provided refugees in the camps that we visited in Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia is discussed further in chapter 3.

Financial management control

From August 1975 through January 31, 1979, governments and volags have contributed over \$112 million to the UNHCR program for the care of Indochinese refugees in Asian countries and for their transportation to other countries for resettlement. The United States provided almost \$58 million--about 52 percent of the total. The next five highest contributors provided a combined amount of about \$45 million--or 40 percent. (See the table in app. II.) As of November 1978, an \$8 million deficit had been incurred for this program for calendar year 1978.

In 1979, assistance will be provided under the UNHCR general program. The change from the special to the general program was made because the Indochinese refugee situation is continuing. Under the special program, it had been addressed on an emergency basis. According to a U.S. mission official in Geneva, the United States has been anxious to see the shift from a special to a general program because international acceptance of the problem would be further demonstrated. Although only about 19 member governments have contributed to the Indochinese refugee special program, about 64 of the U.N. member governments generally contribute to the general program. Although this change creates a greater potential for financing of the program and acceptance of refugees for resettlement, it may not necessarily achieve such results. The general program is funded by voluntary contributions, and according to one UNHCR official, donors tend to earmark their contributions. Therefore, the burden of funding the Indochinese refugee program may continue to fall on the United States and the former special program contributors.

For the refugees in Thailand, UNHCR provided about \$33 million from August 1975 through November 1978 for their care and resettlement. Another \$17.5 million was projected for December 1, 1978, through December 31, 1979. At the time of our visit, the 1978 UNHCR estimated budget was distributed as follows:

<u>Service</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Food	39
Shelter	3
Water/electricity	2
Medical care	3
Supplies (clothing, household equipment, etc.)	3
Education	3
Self-reliance projects	17
Inland transportation	2
Overseas transportation	<u>28</u>
Total	<u>100</u> a/

a/Although the 1978 budget has been revised, this schedule serves to illustrate various elements in the budget.

UNHCR advances funds to the Thai Ministry of Interior based on refugee rolls maintained by the Thai camp officials. These officials are required each month to report the number of refugees in camp to the provincial government which then must submit a tentative budget to the Ministry for camp needs. When the Ministry has expended 80 percent of the advanced funds, a request must be submitted to UNHCR for additional funds. The Ministry must also provide documentation for past expenditures. Documentation must be submitted for the remaining 20 percent of the first advance in addition to 80 percent of the next advance.

After the assistance program started in Thailand, UNHCR recognized that some misuse of funds and diversion of food had occurred. In December 1976, the U.N. Internal Audit Service reviewed the program, particularly the accountability of financial expenditures. The auditors had been dissatisfied with financial reports from the Thai Government which showed how the funds were allocated rather than how they were spent. The internal auditors were critical of the UNHCR poor financial control and the inadequate financial operating system of the Government. A full-scale audit of program activities resulted, and program expenditures were reconstructed through September 1977. The documentation system currently in use was then instituted. Auditors returning to Thailand in December 1977, were relatively pleased with the improvements made regarding more responsive and comprehensive reporting from the Government.

The UNHCR budget for Malaysia in 1978 was \$18 million. UNHCR officials have estimated that at least \$20 million will be needed in 1979.

The agreement between UNHCR and the Malaysian Red Crescent Society provides for a specific expenditure amount. After 65 percent is expended, vouchers are submitted to UNHCR, which then reimburses the Red Crescent. In its next request, documentation must be submitted for the remaining 35 percent of the first advance in addition to 65 percent of the second advance, and so on. The UNHCR regional representative told us that full documentation is not being provided and that no U.N. internal audit has been made of the Malaysia program. The Red Crescent does maintain separate accounting records, however, which are available for audit, as stated in the written agreement between UNHCR and the Red Crescent.

UNHCR believes that it has taken appropriate measures to insure reasonable control over funding and program implementation. It recognizes that it is not likely to completely stop the potential misuse of funds, but more realistically it attempts to minimize the number of such instances. According to the Chief, Programming and Coordination Section of UNHCR, the voluntary nature of UNHCR programs tends to mean that management and financial controls can only be so tight. If controls become too stringent, then asylum-country governments may easily reject the whole program. For this reason, there was a need to temper the controls to provide some flexibility.

UNHCR efforts to implement durable solutions to the Indochinese refugee problem

Since the UNHCR has begun assisting refugees from the Indochinese peninsula, the influx of refugees has far exceeded those able to be voluntarily repatriated, locally integrated, or permanently resettled. As of the end of February 1979, about 218,000 Indochinese refugees are still in temporary asylum in Thailand and other areas on or near the Indochinese peninsula.

UNHCR has taken three basic approaches to solve refugee problems. One, when feasible, is the local integration of refugees within the asylum countries. Other alternatives are voluntary repatriation of refugees to their countries of origin or the permanent resettlement of refugees to a third country.

Voluntary repatriation

Voluntary repatriation is normally the most desirable solution, but it is dependent on the refugee's willingness to return and the government's willingness to guarantee protection to the refugees who return to their homelands. The

unstable conditions in Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam have unfortunately made voluntary repatriation unworkable. Through increased assistance to these countries by UNHCR and other sources, the High Commissioner is hopeful that in the future the numbers of refugees leaving these countries for economic reasons may diminish.

Local integration

UNHCR has been attempting to persuade the Thai Government to allow local integration of refugees at least from Laos--almost 100,000 in-country in November 1978. The Thai Government has been reluctant to allow local integration for political or economic reasons. During a September 1978 visit to Indochina by the High Commissioner, a joint communique was issued by the High Commissioner and the Thai Government. The statement noted Thailand's willingness to plan a refugee self-sufficiency pilot project. Thailand Government officials objected to the description of this project as a local integration effort. They did not release specific details for the project. (See ch. 1.)

According to UNHCP officials, self-sufficiency projects can be a first step toward eventual local integration of refugees. In an earlier visit in 1978, the U.S. Vice President indicated U.S. willingness to contribute \$2 million to such an effort. UNHCR officials stated that the international community probably would be willing to contribute more funds toward self-sufficiency schemes than it has for UNHCR care efforts.

Although prospects for local settlement within the asylum countries offer little hope for success (see ch. 1), UNHCR has been promoting and supporting self-reliance projects. These projects, which include agriculture, poultry, pig farming, and handicrafts, also prepare refugees for possible local integration. In Thailand, UNHCR also supports the Government camp education program, which provides basic education for children and literacy courses and vocational training for adults. This education helps prepare the refugees for possible future local settlement.

Permanent resettlement

Since the Indochinese refugee problem began, permanent resettlement has been the most workable solution. Before UNHCR involvement, the United States resettled some 130,000 Indochinese refugees--almost all of which reached the United States in April and May 1975 through the evacuation procedure. From the UNHCR involvement in Indochina through January 1979

almost 149,000 refugees have been permanently resettled-- almost all in 23 countries. (See app. IV.)

For permanent resettlement in countries other than the United States, UNHCR provides funds to the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM) for the transportation of refugees from asylum countries to most permanent resettlement countries. The United States directly supports ICEM for movement of refugees accepted for U.S. resettlement. In Thailand, UNHCR also supports ICEM for transportation to Bangkok of refugees departing camps for countries other than the United States. The ICEM role is described in greater detail in a latter section of this chapter.

To expedite the processing for permanent resettlement, UNHCR obtains basic biographic data on refugees. This resettlement processing is done for all Vietnamese land and boat refugees. At the time of our visit, UNHCR started to do this in Thailand for land refugees, but was reluctant because it felt that these refugees were given false hope that they would definitely be resettled elsewhere. Land refugees usually wait for officials from the United States and other governments to visit the camps before applying for resettlement.

Although Indochinese refugees have been and are continuing to be successfully resettled, UNHCR does not expect this approach to be the answer to the problem, especially in light of the increasing magnitude of the problem. The UNHCR long-range goal for Indochinese refugees is local integration of most refugees and permanent resettlement for the remainder. Based on the apparent unwillingness of the governments of asylum countries to allow local integration of large numbers of refugees, this goal appears to be unattainable.

UNHCR efforts to obtain greater international participation

During the High Commissioner's visit to Thailand in September 1978, the High Commissioner and Thai Ministry of Interior officials agreed that the Indochinese refugee problem was not a problem for Thailand alone, but one of international concern, and that the responsibility for resolving this humanitarian problem should be shared by the international community. They further agreed that durable solutions should be urgently sought. The High Commissioner agreed to consider a Thai proposal that included a pooling of efforts by the international community to gain the widest possible resettlement opportunities in third countries and a liberalization of selection criteria. He also agreed that the land-refugee cases deserved special attention

in view of their numbers and that he would continue to bring their needs to the attention of the international community.

At the conclusion of his mission to Southeast Asia, the High Commissioner briefed the diplomatic representatives of 21 countries on his visits to Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, and Malaysia. This September 20, 1978, briefing in Kuala Lumpur was viewed as part of continuing consultations between UNHCR and governments on a rapidly changing situation. The High Commissioner emphasized the following:

- Where possible, the criteria for selection of refugees for permanent resettlement should be liberalized, and equal opportunity for boat and land cases should be provided.
- Greater speed is needed in processing and moving refugees to countries for permanent resettlement.
- Permanent resettlement countries should devise plans and announce the number of refugees to be admitted to enable a balanced movement from each asylum country. The announcement of the number to be admitted over a longer term basis would clearly help in the overall planning and pooling of opportunities.
- The UNHCR initial target of U.S. \$18.26 million, for 1978 for Indochinese refugees was grossly inadequate. Ten million dollars more was needed for 1978.

A much larger conference was held in Geneva in December, attended by 34 nations. As a result of the second conference, some 11,000 new resettlement slots were pledged by the participants, and an additional \$12 million was donated to UNHCR for Indochinese refugees. UNHCR made a plea for broad participation in the refugee problem by all members of the international community. The additional resettlement slots, however, amount to only about half the arrivals in Malaysia during November alone.

The United States participated in both conferences, but carefully avoided (1) submitting a draft agenda for either meeting, (2) issuing attention-getting press statements, or (3) behaving during the sessions as anything more than just one of the participants. The goal behind such behavior was to identify the refugee problem as a world problem--not solely an American concern.

At the September 1978 conference, the U.S. representatives committed to accept 25,000 Indochinese refugees for resettlement and stressed that this commitment was a continuing one. They stated that the U.S. Government intended to submit legislation early in 1979 toward the establishment of a long-range program for Indochinese resettlement, possibly at the same level of intake of 25,000.

Additional temporary care facilities

The increasing influx of boat cases had led UNHCR to seek additional accommodations, especially in Hong Kong, and subsequently in Macao. A UNHCR official stated that the Philippines and Indonesia are the only countries that have the potential for additional temporary care facilities.

Department of State officials told us that Hong Kong believes the refugee flow is compounding its population problem with the influx of people from the People's Republic of China.

During January 1979 in Thailand, ASFAN foreign ministers met primarily to discuss the Cambodia situation. During this meeting, Indonesia officials reportedly offered one island as a regional holding center for Indochinese boat refugees. These officials also stated, however, that they want guarantees that all refugees held at this center would be resettled elsewhere within a reasonable time. Officials feared that, otherwise, thousands of refugees would be left on the island.

The role of ICEM

ICEM provides transportation for refugees from asylum countries to many permanent resettlement countries. ICEM is an apolitical organization, independent of the United Nations, and is based in Geneva.

ICEM operations began in Thailand in late April 1975. The regional office in Bangkok is responsible for movements from Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore. A branch of the regional office is located in Kuala Lumpur. A regional office in Hong Kong is responsible for movements from Indonesia.

ICEM has an agreement with the Department of State for the movement of refugees from asylum countries to those U.S. airports closest to their final resettlement destinations. ICEM also has an agreement with UNHCR for moving refugees to some other third countries. From April 25, 1975, through

October 31, 1978, over 65,000 refugees had been transported from Thailand to resettlement countries. Of this total, over 33,000 (51 percent) were sent to the United States. Between January 1 and October 31, 1978, over 18,000 went to resettlement countries, of which over 11,000 (61 percent) went to the United States.

ICEM financing has come from two main sources: the United States and UNHCR. The United States reimbursed ICEM for transportation at reduced rates and for related services, such as medical examinations, fingerprinting, and photographs for refugees admitted to the United States under Indochinese parole programs.

Contributions from UNHCR are used for reimbursement to ICEM for Indochinese refugee medical examinations and transportation costs to all resettlement countries, except the United States. Of the UNHCR contributions to ICEM, a significant portion came from the United States. (See app. III.) In calendar year 1977, for example, 58 percent of total UNHCR contributions to ICEM came from the United States.

For transportation to the United States, ICEM purchases airline tickets directly from Pan American, Northwest Orient, or Trans World Airlines, and uses charters when required. These airlines in turn make arrangements with U.S. domestic airlines to transport refugees to their final U.S. destinations. ICEM may also make arrangements through foreign carriers if U.S. carriers cannot accommodate refugees ready for transport.

We were told that the cost of transportation from Thailand or Malaysia to the United States is generally 50 percent of normal economy fare. The cost of domestic airline transportation to reach refugees' final destinations is usually 100 percent of the domestic economy airfare. The average cost of air travel from asylum countries that we visited to refugees' final U.S. destinations has been less than \$500.

Transportation to the United States is paid from U.S. Government equities on deposit in the ICEM loan fund for refugees from non-European countries. Before departure, refugees sign noninterest-bearing notes with the volags to repay part of their transportation cost within 3 years. For refugees departing Thailand for the United States, the loan to be repaid by an adult is the same, regardless of the U.S. destination. That amount is reduced by 50 percent for a child 2 to 12 years old and 90 percent for a child under 2 years old. This proration is the same used by some international air carriers.

The period of repayment depends on the size of the refugee families. For example, a single refugee may have to repay the loan within a year, whereas a refugee with a spouse and three children may be given 3 years. The purpose of this procedure is to avoid placing undue financial hardship on refugees and their families. ICEM tries to make refugees' monthly payments no more than \$50 to \$60.

Refugee loan repayments are handled by volags in the receiving countries. Through agreement with ICEM, the volags act as collection agencies. ICEM receives 75 percent of the money collected as a return to U.S. Government equity in the ICEM loan funds, and the volags keep the remaining 25 percent for collection services rendered. Volags do not have to specify who is making repayments; they are only required to identify the collections as paybacks for transportation from Indochina.

Actual loan repayment arrangements are between the volags and the refugees. U.S. volags attempt to get refugees to begin payments within 3 months after arrival with a 3-year maximum payback period. The 25-percent collection service fee provides the incentive for agencies to collect the loan repayments.

ICEM also directs medical examinations for approved refugees in the U.S. program to clear them for departure to the United States. Further, ICEM also prepares some of the necessary documents for the entry of refugees into the United States.

To satisfy requirements of immigration law, medical exams are to be performed in accordance with regulations and requirements of the U.S. Public Health Service. In Thailand, the ICEM medical staff either supervises the examinations at local provincial hospitals or its mobile medical team does them in the camps. Other medical examinations are performed in Bangkok. The average cost for these medical services in Thailand which include physical examinations, x-rays, blood tests, and urinalysis, is about \$5.58 for each refugee. (See chapter 5 regarding the effectiveness of the ICEM medical exams.)

In mid-1978 the ICEM regional office in Bangkok projected its 12-month budget for the U.S. refugee program to be around \$9 million. The budget was based on the projected departure of 19,000 refugees from Thailand (about 12,500 land and 2,500 boat refugees under long-range parole and about 4,000 approved earlier under IPP-77 or IPP-78).

In Malaysia, an ICEM country director is assisted by a medical director in processing physical exams for the refugees. ICEM has little involvement in refugee processing in Singapore. The ICEM Bangkok office is only used by the U.S. Consul's Office for requesting refugee transportation tickets to the United States. Usual ICEM functions of arrangements for medical examinations and loan agreements are performed by the U.S. Consular Office or UNHCR. The U.S. Vice Consul told us that ICEM would arrange for a full-time individual to work in the U.S. Consular Office, beginning November 4, 1978. According to State Department officials, the charge of \$30 per refugee is in effect for the first 15,000 refugees processed in 1979. After the first 15,000 refugees, the service charge will be at the rate of \$5 per refugee.

AGENCY COMMENTS

As discussed in chapter 1, a draft of this report was reviewed by State Department officials in March 1979. In commenting on efforts to obtain greater international participation in the Indochinese refugee program, they said that the problem is still being viewed by many as being especially linked to the past association of the United States, France, and other countries to Indochina. These officials said, however, that it is increasingly seen as a problem for the world community and pointed out that

- the Federal Republic of Germany has recently increased its participation to over 4,000 refugees to be admitted in 1979;
- for the first time, the United Kingdom will admit 1,500 refugees;
- the Government of Japan has made substantial financial contributions;
- many other countries have increased their participation; and
- perhaps most significant, the Government of Sweden decided to accept 300 refugees.

CHAPTER 3

CAMP CONDITIONS

THAILAND

Thailand has 15 refugee camps. As of December 31, 1978, the population in those camps totaled over 140,000. Thirteen camps contain land refugees who crossed the border from Laos and Cambodia; eight camps are for the Laotians (Hmong and Lowland Lao); four camps are for the Cambodians; and one is for the ethnic Vietnamese from Laos. The other two camps contain boat people from Vietnam.

In July 1975, UNHCR and the Thai Government entered an agreement which set minimum standards for treatment of those refugees given temporary asylum--understanding that these standards would not exceed the local Thai living standards. Standards were established for food, water, shelter, medical care, and supplies.

We visited the following land camps and one boat camp:

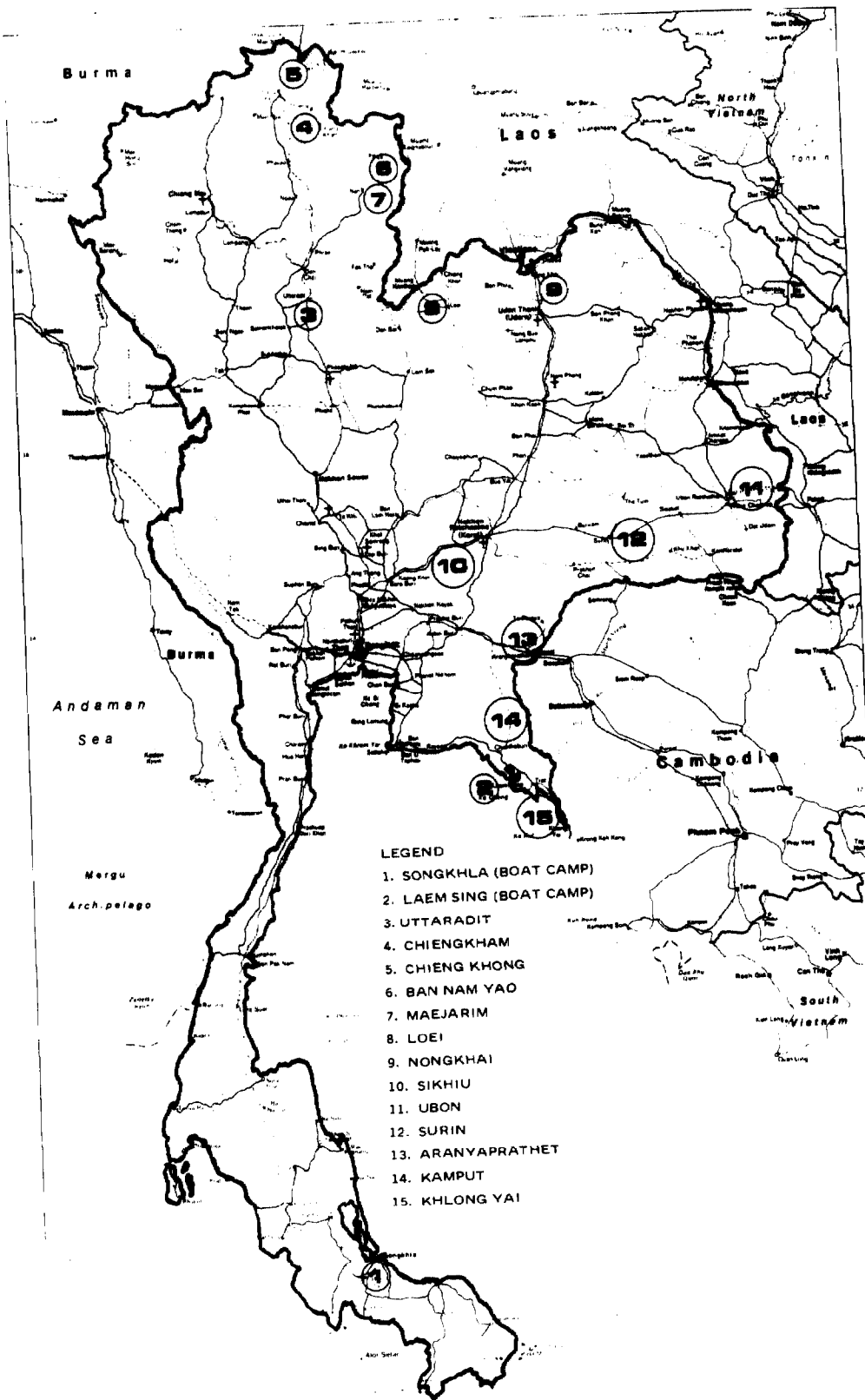
Nong Khai	Laotian
Ean Nam Yao	Laotian hill tribes
Aranyaprathet	Kanpuchean
Sikhiu	ethnic Vietnamese from Laos
Kanput	Kanpuchean
Laem Sing	Vietnamese (boat people)

Our observations follow on (1) whether and how the standards were met in these camps, (2) the implementation of self-reliance projects and education programs, and (3) refugee attitudes and morale in the camp.

Food

Monthly food rations for each refugee adult and child is standardized by type and amount. The types of food provided include rice, meat, vegetables, fish sauce, salt, and other seasonings. The UNHCR Deputy Regional Representative informed us that, in establishing the food standard, both World Health Organization and Food and Agriculture Organization standards were considered. He also asserted that the established standard exceeds the diet of the average Southeast Asian and is much higher than the minimum required for survival.

INDOCHINESE REFUGEE CAMPS IN THAILAND



Although the food situation was not critical in the camps we visited, most refugees reported that they received less food than standard amounts and that the food received was often spoiled. Many refugees had to buy additional food.

Because food rations were based on refugee rolls taken about 2 months before actual food delivery, the actual quantity of food distributed was insufficient. The growth in some camp populations in 2 months resulted in substandard rations for each refugee. The refugee population at the camp at Ubon, for example, grew from about 22,500 as of September 30, 1978, to over 37,000 as of November 30, 1978. After 800 refugees arrived at Aranyaprathet in the fall of 1978, 6 weeks passed before food rations were increased.

A misunderstanding between the provincial governments and UNHCR over the food standards arose. When food prices increased, the provincial government decreased the amount of food provided to the refugees. To correct this misunderstanding, UNHCR emphasized that the food quantity is standard and that the provincial government should meet this standard.

At some camps, the refugee distribution committees retained some food as payment for their services. This is not considered in determining the amount of food to be distributed.

In Aranyaprathet, the refugee leader told us they had been receiving less-than-standard rations until a new district officer took over and personally observed the food delivery and distribution. The Thai district officer agreed that there had been problems in the camp, and said he had been sent there to clean up the corruption.

The standard types of food were generally provided at all the camps we visited except at Sikhiu, the ethnic Vietnamese camp. Those refugees received only rice and soup. The UNHCR Regional Representative, informed us that the provincial government was responsible for this.

UNHCR field representatives monitor the types and amounts of food received through first-hand observation of food deliveries and distribution. Four field representatives responsible for 15 Thai camps is apparently inadequate to effectively monitor the quantity and quality of food provided to the refugees.

Water

Both UNHCR and the Thai Government agree that the camp water supply is to be similar in quality to that found in the local environment of the Thai population. It is also to be made reasonably accessible to all refugees in a camp. UNHCR funds are used to build wells, small dams, and water distribution systems.

In some areas of Thailand, the water supply is scarce. During the summer, water must be trucked to some camps. It is also quite common for refugees to buy water from Thai vendors in nearby towns. Many also dig wells near the shelters.

We found that the standard for water was met reasonably at most camps except Nong Khai. At the time of our visit, two of the four water distribution systems there were not operating. We also observed completely dry wells and water troughs. One refugee informed us that the water troughs had been dry for about one and a half years. The UNHCR field representative who monitors conditions at Nong Khai informed us that water availability is a general problem there. He also stated that the provincial government has been very slow in repairing the nonfunctioning pump of one system even though UNHCR funds are available. Further, he was unaware that the other system was inoperative.

Shelter

UNHCR provides funds for basic shelter for the refugees. Generally, this shelter is a long house or a hut. An average of 200 to 250 refugees is standard for each long house, however, there is no standard number for a hut.

According to its agreement with Thailand, UNHCR is to pay for the construction of long houses and for the building materials for huts. UNHCR is also to provide funds for the replacement and upkeep of existing shelters.

Without exception, shelters at the camps we visited were overcrowded. Each long house at Nong Khai, for example, contained at least 250 to 300 refugees. At the time of our visit to Aranyaprathet, the school and the technical training center were used as sleeping quarters for 800 new arrivals.

The refugees were afforded very little privacy. Some long houses had wooden partitions, whereas, others were partitioned with only cardboard and string.

Generally, refugees who preferred to live in huts had to purchase building materials with their own funds or gathered material from the forest surrounding the camp--despite the UNHCR commitment to pay for materials. At Laem Sing, the boat camp, refugees used plastic sheeting to construct lean-to shelters on the beach.

Medical care

Camp medical care was provided by various volags, who built and staffed the medical facilities at most camps. At some camps their services were extended to the local Thai population as well.

UNHCR is the major source of funds for the drugs provided to the camp hospitals and clinics. The Thai Red Cross distributes the drugs to each camp. A standard list of basic drugs to be provided the camps was agreed on by UNHCR, the Thai Red Cross, and various volags.

Volag officials at Nong Khai and Ban Nam Yao, however, stated that the drugs funded by UNHCR were inadequate for camp needs. They had to purchase additional drugs with their own funds, spending about \$1,000 and \$500, respectively, each month on additional drugs.

Generally, the refugees we talked to in the camps believed that the provided medical care was good. Volag medical staffs also stated that the care was adequate and, in some cases, better than that available to the local Thais.

One notable exception is the Sikhiu camp where refugees are afforded little medical care. No diagnostic facility is located in or near the camp. The volag doctor and nurse from Aranyaprathet visit Sikhiu every 2 weeks, and two Thai Red Cross nurses make half-day visits twice each week. Another Thai Red Cross nurse is stationed at the camp and is responsible for dispensing drugs. The three nurses do not attempt medical examinations, but dispense medicine based on each patient's own diagnosis.

Refugees at Sikhiu told us that those requiring more serious medical care are sent to a provincial hospital, are treated, and are sent home the same day. One refugee told us that his father had been ill for 2 years but that each time he went to the hospital he was sent home the same day. When the father became worse, a priest took him to a Catholic hospital, where his illness was diagnosed as a severe heart condition.

The refugee further stated that refugees were requested to donate blood to the provincial hospital, and a volag nurse confirmed this statement.

Supplies

UNHCR funds provide some supplies for refugees. UNHCR intends to provide each refugee a blanket and a mosquito net upon arrival in camp. These and other items are distributed annually, and the volags often provide other supplies, such as clothing and cooking utensils. Refugees interviewed at some camps told us that they were not given any supplies. Further, some refugees purchased supplies with their own funds.

Self-reliance projects

UNHCR, Thai Government, and volags are members of a planning committee for these projects. In 1978, this tripartite committee approved various projects which the volags were to implement. UNHCR offered support of \$109,484.

At the time of our visits, we were told that self-reliance projects had met little success. Neither the refugees nor the Thai Government want projects which indicate that refugees will be allowed to remain permanently. (See ch. 1.) Many factors have also contributed to their lack of success. At Nong Khai, for example, about 65 of the 75 looms in a weaving project are idle. Only about 10 refugees use the looms because thread is not supplied and few can afford to buy it.

One project common to most camps was family gardening. This had enjoyed the most success, but poor soil, lack of water, and reluctance of the Thai Government to permit the use of land has hampered efforts.

Education

UNHCR signed an agreement with the Thai Ministry of Education in mid-1978, to support their education program in the camps. According to the UNHCR Regional Representative, the objective of this program is to bring the educational level of the refugees up to that of the Thais to prepare some of them for eventual, permanent settlement in Thailand. Both refugee and local Thai children are to attend the primary schools which will be constructed in the camps.

UNHCR funds are being used for constructing schools and training teachers in the camps. Until the education program

is fully operational, UNHCR will continue to support the volag education programs operating at various camps.

Educational opportunities are very limited. Schools at the camps we visited were built and supplied by volags and staffed by refugee or Ministry of Education teachers. Most schools had inadequate supplies and consisted of simple bamboo structures with rough tables and chairs. At most camp schools, classes are conducted by Ministry teachers and are limited to lessons in Thai language. At several camps, lessons in French and English language were available, but in most instances, were offered by other refugees on a fee basis.

Refugee attitudes and morale

Refugees generally consider the camps to be temporary stops on their way to the United States or other countries. Because they believe they will soon leave, they told us that they tolerate crowded living conditions, limited supplies, sometimes bad food, and endless boredom.

Inside the camps, little constructive activity--either occupational, educational, or recreational--is available. The camps are crowded and noisy, making a good night's sleep a luxury. Confinement to the camps bothered the refugees the most. Refugees are seldom permitted to leave the camps without prior approval; and then for only short periods of time. Further, medical personnel at both Nong Khai and Ban Nam Yao told us there is an increasing incidence among refugees of mental disorders, wife and child beating, and infidelity, which they attribute to camp life.

At some camps, fear has also been added to refugee problems. At Aranyaprathet, one refugee told us of the murder of a woman, supposedly by Thai robbers who had sneaked into the camp. A few weeks later, her grieving husband committed suicide. At Sikhiu, a refugee and UNHCR field representative told us that a refugee was murdered by the Thai camp guards. The UNHCR field representative pursued the matter, and a month after the murder, the Ministry of Interior acknowledged that it had occurred and agreed to an investigation. At the end of our fieldwork, this investigation was still in progress. According to a volag representative, refugees in camps near the border areas were also fearful of insurgents operating in these areas.

In September 1978, a group of Laotian refugees who had resettled in the Washington, D.C. area told us of their experiences in camps at Nong Khai and Ubon. These people had lived in the camps for periods ranging from 1 to 3 years.

They told us of irregularities which they had either experienced or observed, including the following:

- Refugees paid money to Thai officials or other Lao refugees for admission to the camp, for food, water, medical care, shelter, and operation of businesses in the camps.
- Food for the refugees was diverted by Thai officials.
- Refugees paid Thai officials to receive their mail from relatives in the United States.
- Refugees paid the Laotian head of the camp at Nong Khai to obtain his authorization for cashing checks and money orders sent to the refugees from United States relatives.

MALAYSIA

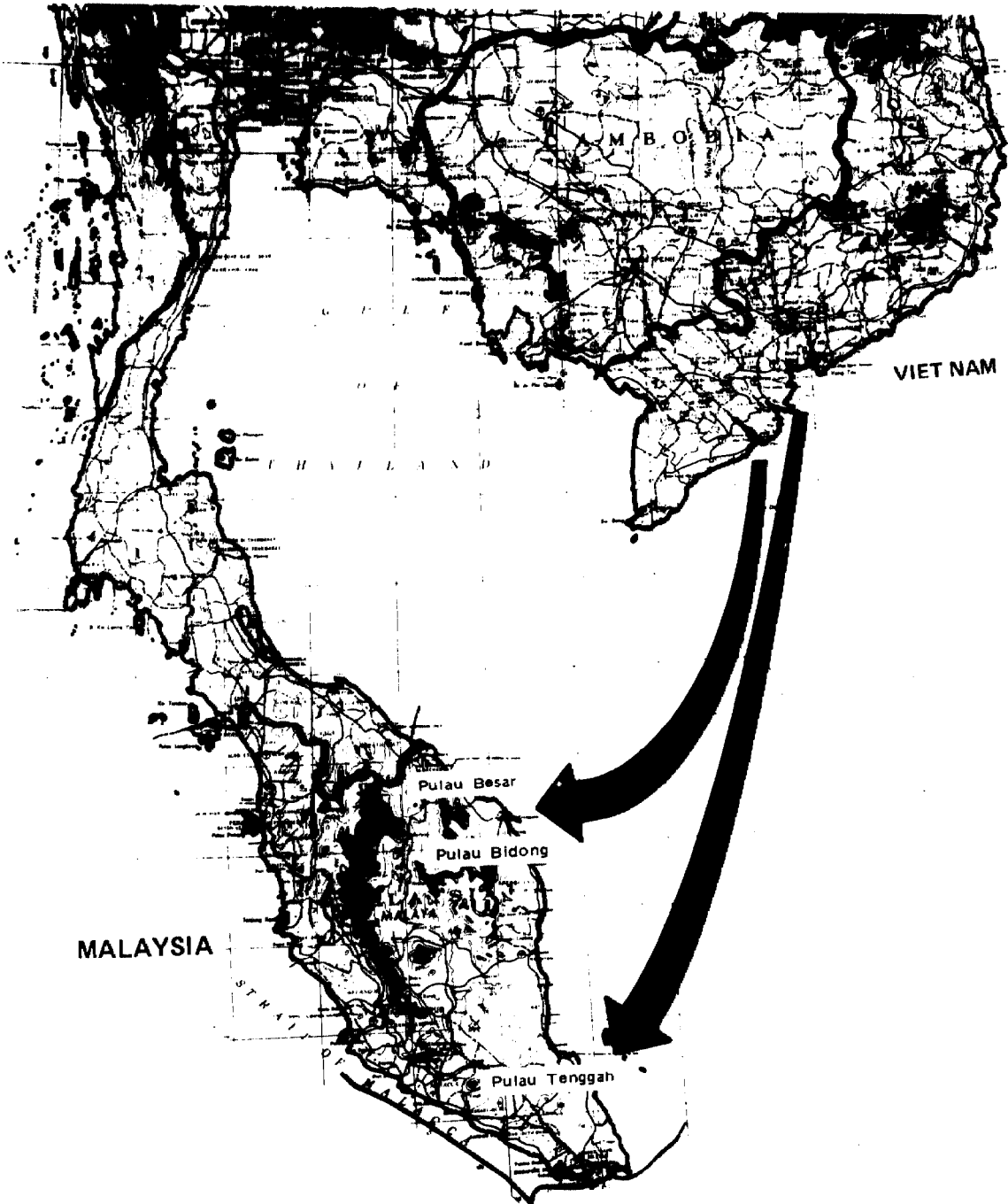
Of the more than 50,000 boat refugees in Asian camps at the end of November 1978, about 36,000 were in Malaysian camps.

Seven refugee camps are operated by the Malaysian Red Crescent Society, with funding from UNHCR. At the time of our visit to Malaysia, however, four of these camps had populations of only 500 each and were apparently destined to be phased out in the near future. The other three camps--Pulau Besar, Pulau Tengah, and the camp on Bidong Island (which we visited)--were very active. At the time of our visit, virtually all incoming refugees were being sent to Bidong Island, about 23 miles off the eastern coast of Malaysia.

The camp population in Malaysia as of February 28, 1979, follows.

<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>POPULATION</u>
Pulau Tengah	9,500
Pulau Besar	1,700
Pulau Bidong	29,000
Kota Baru	2,800
Kuantan	5,000
Sabah	170
Sarawak	750
Transit Center	<u>1,977</u>
Total	<u>50,897</u>

VOYAGE OF THE BOAT PEOPLE TO CAMPS IN MALAYSIA



By the end of November 1978, over 50,000 refugees had come to Malaysia since August 1977. About half of these arrived since September 1978. The three active camps in Malaysia and the Red Crescent organization were not able to cope with this extremely large increase in the number of incoming refugees, and crisis conditions were developing.

The population on Bidong, for example, on October 19, 1978, the day the GAO team visited that camp, was about 10,000--an increase of 5,000 over the 3-week period prior to that visit. Reportedly, there were over 25,000 refugees in that camp at the end of November 1978. The UNHCR regional representative told us that he had been involved in discussions about the probable opening of Bidong by the Malaysian Government and protested from the beginning because UNHCR wanted time to prepare the facilities. The Malaysian Government reportedly delayed the opening of the camp three times, but it was finally opened in August 1978. At that time no advance preparation had been made and the situation soon turned into a crisis as conditions in the overcrowded camp worsened. By late 1978, seven UNHCR field representatives were working on Bidong conditions in an attempt to improve the situation and register the backlog of refugees.

Pulau Besar and Pulau Tengah, the two older and more established camps, contrast sharply with the highly unstable and burgeoning camp on Bidong Island. Indeed, camp conditions in Bidong are precarious, with food deliveries and medical assistance subject to disruption by the weather, particularly the severe monsoon. Our observations during our visits to these camps follow.

Food

The food rations for the refugees in Malaysia are similar to those provided in Thailand. They consist of rice, meat, vegetables, fish, fish sauce, and seasonings. Both Pulau Besar and Pulau Tengah refugees have generally sufficient food. Some refugees are also able, with the help of funds earned or sent from abroad, to purchase additional food.

The situation on Bidong stood in marked contrast. Because that island is the site to which most incoming refugees were being referred by Malaysian authorities, the arrival rate far outstripped available food. There were no storage facilities on the island, even for sacks of rice. As a result, the food had to be brought out and distributed several times a week.

The Red Crescent representative who purchases food for the refugee population, did not have an accurate count of the refugees on Bidong Island. Because of the rapidly increasing inflow of refugees to the island, the representative was usually buying food for an estimated population which was smaller than the actual number on the island. When new refugees arrived they had to either purchase food for the first few days from the island black market, share the meager rations of the older residents, or go without food.

Water

Pulau Besar had enough wells with lots of good water--even enough to irrigate the dozens of small family vegetable gardens. Additional general purpose water is readily available, should agricultural production be developed, because the camp is located at the mouth of a fresh water river.

Pulau Tengah had some 18 wells with cement collars. The daily lowering of the water level, however, makes the water more salty. The local UNHCR representative told us he is considering transporting drinking water if the situation worsens.

At Bidong, there were only two wells having water barely safe enough to drink. They have concrete collars. Another dozen holes had been dug, but lacking any solid support, they were little more than receptacles for muddy water. There were no latrines and all refugees daily went into the forested mountainside above the camp sites to relieve themselves. When the monsoon rains arrived, their waste was washed down the hill and was seeping into the soil. A crisis loomed since our visit--over a dozen cases of infectious hepatitis had been taken to the Trengannu hospital, and more cases were anticipated.

Shelter

On Pulau Besar, most homes were made of bamboo and palm thatch; others were built of wood. No such luxury existed on Tengah, although all residents had at least a roof, made of either plastic and thatch or corrugated iron, and all had four walls around them. Because they could usually move into dwellings recently vacated by refugee families departing for resettlement, even the newest arrivals found shelters. The shelters at these two camps were adequate.

Again, the contrast with the camp at Bidong is striking. Perhaps, a third of all camp residents on that island, mostly the new arrivals, had no shelters. On the day of our visit,

some 500 new refugees waded ashore, and no shelter was available to them. For those with gold, an immediate purchase for an exorbitant price of a piece of plastic for shelter from black marketeers was possible.

Most new arrivals are soon assigned a plot of land where they may build a house. They must then gather palm thatch for roofs and sides and sapplings for the sleeping platforms and superstructures. No rattan or bamboo is available on the island, and as a result, old rice sacks are frequently used as siding. These too, we were told, are purchased from black marketeers.

Only the leeward side of the island has flatland. The rest of the shore is composed of boulders, while almost all of Bidong's center is mountain.

Medical care

On Pulau Tengah and Besar rudimentary clinics were staffed on a rotating basis by one of the nine Vietnamese doctors on Tengah and the twenty Vietnamese doctors on Besar.

In Bidong, however, there were no medical facilities, and refugee doctors were attempting to treat the sick with virtually no medicines or equipment. Emergency cases were moved to a hospital in Trengannu on the east coast if there happened to be a boat willing to take them. On October 19, 1978, for example, U.S. staff on the island, including GAO staff, physically carried five serious cases to their boat, off-loaded them in Trengannu, and took them to the hospital in a taxi.

Supplies

On Bidong Island, the refugees received no supplies upon arrival--not even a cooking utensil or an article of clothing. Refugees who arrive with cash or gold can purchase supplies at exorbitant prices from the black market.

SINGAPORE

The camp situation for refugees in Singapore differed markedly from conditions in other first-asylum countries in Southeast Asia. The number of refugees is strictly limited, with a maximum of 1,000 at any time permitted in the island republic. Most are housed in an adequate multi-family housing complex on the northern tip of the island. A few are lodged at a YMCA closer to the center of the city.

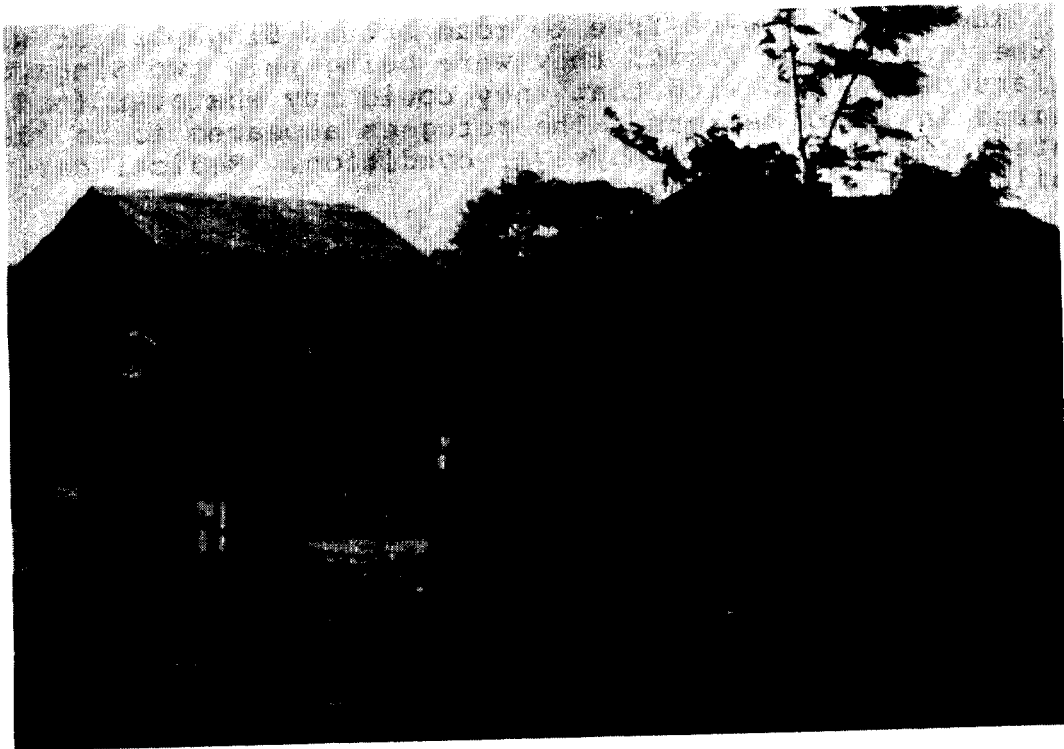
The refugees were free to roam around Singapore at will. At the time of our visit, they were being paid two Singapore dollars daily, and with that they could buy whatever food they desired in local markets. The refugees appeared to be adequately fed and in good physical condition. Medical care was available at a nearby hospital.

Except in rare instances, refugees stay in Singapore for a maximum of 90 days. As a result, there is little time to develop self-help activities or vocational training programs in the two housing facilities. Because many of them are destined for resettlement in English-speaking countries, however, volunteers of the International Women's Club of Singapore provides daily English language instruction.

INDONESIA

Indonesia has until now needed to operate only two refugee camps. The largest camp is at Tinjang Pinjang, in the Riau archipelago, just south of Singapore. Its location in the northern part of the country is necessitated by the fact that most refugees sailing into Indonesian waters land in the Anadas Islands. There are no facilities in that remote area to shelter the refugees, so they are transported by the Indonesian Government to Tinjang Pinjang. The other refugee camp is in the suburbs of Jakarta. Only a few hundred refugees are housed there in a converted retirement village. Many are awaiting the completion of final processing for resettlement abroad. We observed that conditions there were good.

The UNHCR field representative in Indonesia told us that the U.N. pays for all refugee costs, excluding movement from the island, of arrival in Indonesia to the refugee camps. This representative is authorized to make disbursements from a U.N. checking account and then only monitors to be sure that the repayment requests and vouchers are in the proper form. For food and medicine, the UNHCR representative told us he only pays what is invoiced without questioning or monitoring if the food, medical services, and drugs were actually delivered. In Jakarta, 500 rupiahs and in Tinjang Pinang 300 to 400 rupiahs are allocated and paid daily for food for each refugee. Payment is made in Jakarta to the Ministry of Social Affairs and in Tinjang Pinang to local government authorities.



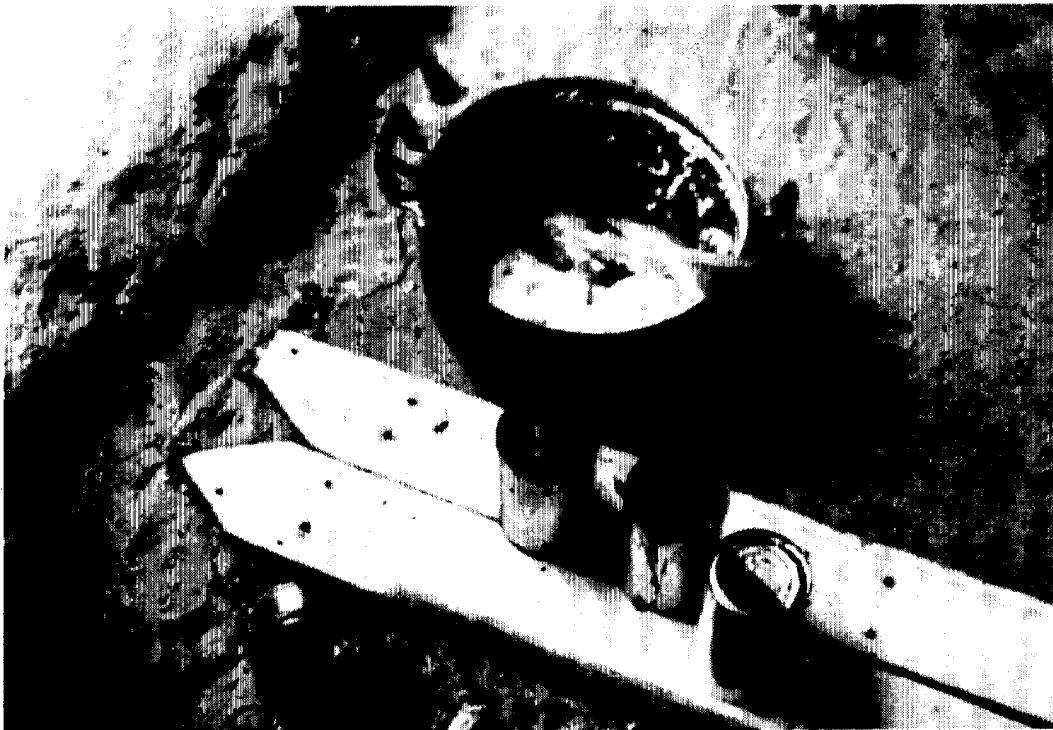
LIVING QUARTERS AND WELL AT ARANYAPRATHET, THAILAND



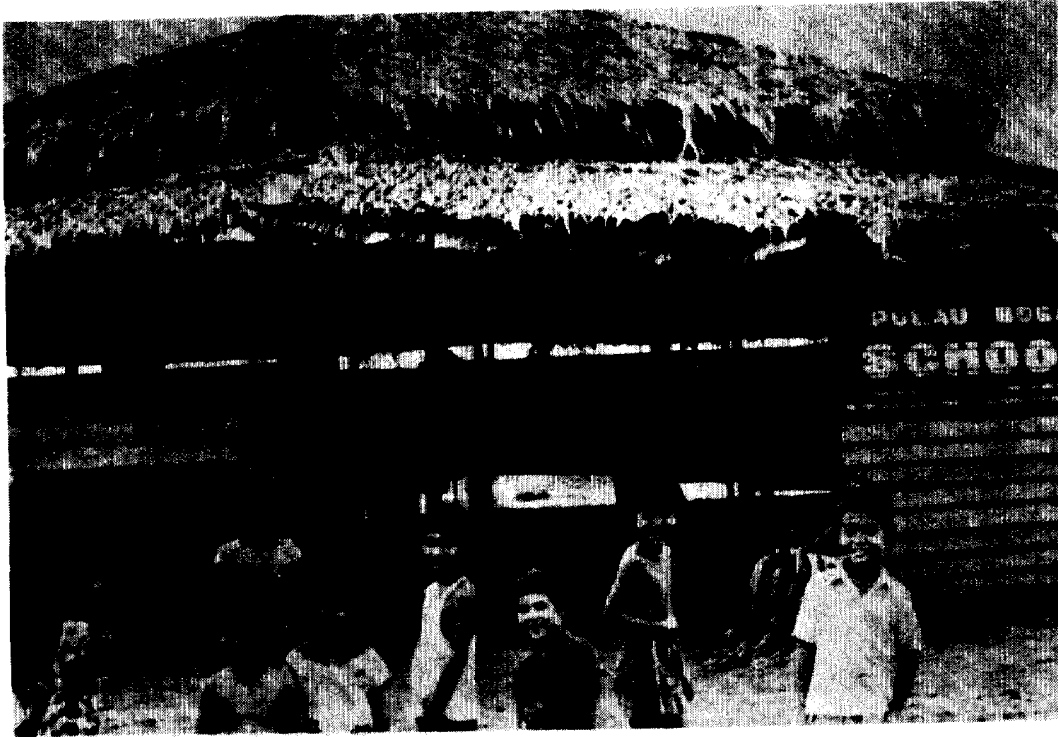
STREET SCENE IN REFUGEE CAMP AT KAMPUT, THAILAND



FAMILY GARDENING PROJECT AT ARANYAPRATHET REFUGEE CAMP



A FAMILY MEAL AT PULAU BIDONG, MALAYSIA



REFUGEE SCHOOL AT PULAU BESAR, MALAYSIA



TOTAL MEDICAL SUPPLIES FOR 10,000 REFUGEES AT PULAU BIDONG IN OCTOBER 1978



SHELTER OF PLASTIC SHEETING AT PULAU BIDONG, MALAYSIA



ONE OF TWO WELLS FOR 10,000 REFUGEES AT PULAU BIDONG, IN OCTOBER, 1978

CHAPTER 4

U.S. SELECTION AND PROCESSING OF REFUGEES IN COUNTRIES OF FIRST ASYLUM

Influenced by both the political and humanitarian dimensions of the continuing refugee build-up in Thailand, Malaysia, and other asylum countries in Southeast Asia, the United States has responded by admitting refugees for resettlement in this country. The inability of the United States to predict refugee outflows or to plan on a long-range basis for refugee admissions to the United States, however, has posed certain problems for those U.S. Government officials responsible for formulating and managing a positive U.S. program for participating in resettlement of refugees from the first-asylum countries. This has also given rise to uncertainties on the part of volags and State and local governments involved in implementing resettlement programs. (See ch. 5 and 6.) These uncertainties are further exacerbated by the absence of a clear expression of U.S. legislative intent and commitment governing admission to the United States.

LEGISLATION GOVERNING REFUGEE ADMISSIONS TO THE UNITED STATES

The two provisions of the Immigration and Nationality Act currently in use for refugee admission to the United States are the conditional-entry provision (8 U.S.C. § 1153 (a)(7)) and the parole provision (8 U.S.C. § 1182 (d)(5)). Since 1945, about 1.9 million refugees have been admitted to the United States under these or predecessor provisions.

The conditional-entry provision is the seventh preference category of the immigrant-visa preference system. (The other six categories provide for the admission of relatives and workers. The conditional-entry provision authorizes the annual admission of 17,400 refugees who have fled from Communist countries or the Middle East because of persecution, or who are the victims of natural disasters. Refugees admitted under this provision are counted against the annual immigration ceiling of 290,000 persons (8 U.S.C. § 1151 (a)). The language of the conditional-entry provision serves as the operative definition of the term refugee under present immigration laws. Legislation has been introduced in the 96th Congress, however, to change the definition to (1) eliminate the ideological and geographic limitation and (2) describe refugees in line with the definition used in the "1967 United Nations Protocol

Relating to the Status of Refugees." 1/ Other changes in the proposed bill are included on page 6.

The parole provision authorizes the Attorney General to parole aliens into the United States temporarily, at his discretion, under conditions prescribed by the Attorney General in emergencies or for reasons in the public interest. When the parole provision was enacted, legislative history suggests that the Congress intended it to be used by the Attorney General only on an individual basis. Because of its flexibility, however, the parole provision has been used on many occasions to accommodate groups of refugees ineligible for admission because of definitional and numerical limitations of the conditional-entry provision.

Although the Attorney General traditionally authorizes parole after receiving recommendations from the Secretary of State, and upon consultation with the Congress, such consultation is not explicitly required by law, and there is no numerical ceiling on the parole provision. Nevertheless, the parole provision, with the extensive administrative discretion allowed under it, remains the principal authority under which refugees are admitted to the United States.

The use of the parole provision for a class of aliens rather than for individual aliens originated in 1956 with the Hungarian refugees. Through this parole provision, most of the approximately 176,000 Indochina refugees have been admitted to the United States. Other groups of refugees paroled into the United States in the past 20 years include:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Refugee groups</u>
1956-58	32,000 Hungarian refugees
1962	15,000 Hong Kong refugees
1965-73	260,000 Cuban refugees
1970	6,500 Czechoslovakian refugees
1972	1,750 Ugandan refugees
1970-78	28,550 Soviet and East European refugees
1975-78	1,100 South American refugees (mostly Chilean)

1/Any person who, owing to well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion is unable or unwilling to return to his country, nationality or residence. (19 U.S.T. 6223, 6261.)

Refugees paroled into the United States are neither U.S. citizens nor permanent resident aliens, but are rather in an indefinite, voluntary-departure status. As parolees, the refugees were ineligible for certain types of Federal employment.

Recognizing (1) the likelihood that Indochinese refugees would be remaining in the United States and (2) the need to integrate them into U.S. society as soon as possible, the Congress enacted legislation in October 1978. This legislation enables refugees paroled into the United States before September 30, 1980, to adjust their status from parolee to permanent resident (P.L. 95-412, October 6, 1978, 92 Stat. 907).

The numerous instances that the Attorney General has had to use the parole authority for the Indochinese refugees, and the impact of these ad hoc actions on those responsible for selecting and processing refugees for admission to the United States are discussed below.

The ad hoc nature of the many parole actions and the uncertain status of refugee program funding, inherent in the absence of long-range legislative intent relating to refugees, are among the major problems (see chs. 5 and 6) experienced by volags and State and local governments engaged in resettlement activities in the United States.

U.S. PAROLE ACTIONS

Because refugee flows out of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos have been unpredictable, the United States has been unable to plan effectively for the selection and movement of refugees for U.S. admission. Since the fall of South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, in April 1975, the U.S. Attorney General has exercised his discretionary parole authority, on seven occasions, to move Indochinese refugees from the overcrowded land and boat camps in the first-asylum countries to the United States. Each of these was expected to alleviate an immediate need, and only in the spring of 1978, when administration officials said that 25,000 Indochina refugees a year over the next few years would be paroled, did the United States propose any forward program of refugee admission to the United States. Even this proposal was overtaken by unexpectedly heavy boat-refugee outflows in October and November 1978, resulting in an emergency parole decision in December 1978 for the admission of another 17,500 boat refugees. The United States has authorized the admission of 248,175 Indochinese refugees to the United States since March 1975, under the following parole decisions.

1. Orphans. In late March 1975, immediately prior to the downfall of South Vietnam, a parole program was authorized to remove some 2,300 children from U.S.-run orphanages. The first flight of orphans arrived on April 2, 1975, and by mid-April most of the 2,300 orphans had arrived in the United States.
2. Vi-Cam Program. On April 18, 1975, with the collapse of Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam, President Ford, after consultation with Congress, authorized the parole of 133,000 Indochinese refugees into the United States.
3. Expanded Parole Program. During the same period of time that the 133,000 refugees were being processed, thousands of other refugees were escaping by land and sea to Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines, and Taiwan. In the spring of 1976, as the number of refugees rose, particularly in Thailand, the Attorney General paroled an additional 11,000 Indochinese refugees.
4. Indochinese Parole Program. (IPP-77-IPP-78.) The flow of refugees from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, continued to grow until there were 100,000 in camps in Thailand. Thousands continued to escape from Vietnam by boat with many dying in the attempt. Because of the extremely urgent situation the Attorney General, on August 11, 1977, authorized the parole of 15,000 Indochina refugees into the United States--8,000 from 13 inland camps in Thailand and 7,000 boat refugees. On January 25, 1978, another parole was authorized for 7,000 boat refugees.
5. 1978 Long Range Parole (LRP). The Attorney General authorized LRP for 25,000 Indochinese refugees on June 14, 1978. This parole will extend through April 30, 1979. Under LRP, the United States will accept 12,500 refugees from inland Thai camps and 12,500 from East Asian boat camps. After an initial allocation for those who arrived in the camps before August 11, 1977, processing of both land and boat refugees is supposed to be at fixed monthly rates.

Because the number of refugees leaving Vietnam in 1978 significantly increased, and to comply with congressional direction relating to Cambodian refugees, the June 14, 1978, admission authorization was increased on December 5 from 25,000 to 46,875. The 21,875 increase provides for admitting an additional 17,500 Vietnamese boat refugees and 4,375 of the Cambodian refugees in Thai camps. (The provision for the Cambodians is in accordance with a Sense of the Congress Resolution which called for parole of 7,500 Cambodian

refugees in fiscal year 1979 and 7,500 refugees in fiscal year 1980.)

Most recently on April 13, 1979, the Attorney General authorized the parole of an additional 40,000 Indochinese refugees, to be admitted through September 30, 1979.

In addition, Public Law 95-412 enacted in the fall of 1978, lifted hemispheric limitations, making all 17,400 seventh-preference, conditional-entry refugees available. This had the effect of making about 5,000 unused Western Hemisphere spaces available for the Indochinese refugees from October 1, 1978 through April 30, 1979. Except for 966 spaces designated for boat refugees in Thailand, all these additional spaces were allocated for use in Hong Kong/Macao.

PROGRAM CRITERIA FOR INLAND
CAMP REFUGEES IN THAILAND

When the Attorney General authorized IPP-77, there were over 86,000 refugees located in inland camps throughout Thailand; when he authorized LRP, there were over 111,000. In view of the large number of U.S.-resettlement applications, and the availability of spaces for only a fraction of the refugee population, the United States established refugee-selection criteria. These criteria were not based on refugee skills. Besides the requirement of continued presence in the camp since at least August 11, 1977--for IPP-77--and June 14, 1978--for LRP--those potentially eligible for selection included refugees and their families who were classified in the following areas.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Refugees</u>
I	close relatives living in the United States
II	former employees of the U.S. Government in Indochina
III	closely associated with U.S. policies or programs because of having held positions in the former Indochinese governments or armed forces, having worked for American firms or organizations, or having received training in or by the U.S.

Category

Refugees

IV

not accepted by a third country, not within Category I, II, or III, and because of obviously compelling reasons, should be granted parole on humanitarian grounds

Those who qualify are considered in rough priority of the time they have been in refugee status. For those arriving in Thailand about the same time, preference for approval for admission to the United States is to be given to Category I over Categories II, III, or IV cases; and Category II over III or IV cases; and so on.

PROGRAM CRITERIA FOR BOAT REFUGEES

IPP-77 eventually encompassed all boat refugees who had reached Asian shores. The only provisos were that refugees not have resettlement commitments from other countries, and that they not be excludable from the United States under immigration law. IPP-78 had essentially the same liberal stipulation except for the added requirement that there be a 1-month delay from the date of the UNHCR biographic report before those refugees without close relatives in the United States could be considered for the U.S. program.

LRP employs the same category system for boat refugees as the one used for selection of inland refugees, but only to establish priority of movement. Category IV--humanitarian parole--encompasses those boat refugees who do not fit the other categories, and who are not inadmissible to the United States under immigration law, or who do not have resettlement offers from other countries.

Of the original 15,000 cases to be selected from Thailand under the 1978 LRP (12,500 land and 2,500 boat refugees), 6,993 had been approved as of the end of October 1978. The number of refugees approved in Categories I through IV were as follows:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Number of refugees</u>	<u>Percent</u>
I	522	7
II	332	5
III	5,910	85
IV	229	3

SYSTEMS FOR SELECTING AND
PROCESSING REFUGEES

Thailand

To direct the refugee program in Thailand, the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok has a Refugee Section consisting of seven Americans and two local employees. The chief of this section reports directly to the Deputy Chief of Mission. Working closely with this section is the Joint Voluntary Agency (JVA), a voluntary organization on contract with the State Department, which processes eligible refugees for U.S. parole. JVA in Thailand is the International Rescue Committee. JVA employs a staff of 55, including 20 Americans. Seven of these employees are caseworkers for designated refugee camps. Funds for both the Refugee Section and JVA come from U.S. Department of State refugee funds.

The refugee selection process begins at the camps with the JVA registration of refugees who wish to go to the United States. Registration teams contact Thai officials, refugee committees, and ethnic or building leaders when visiting the camps. These leaders are told the general category descriptions and assist in contacting and coordinating interviews with interested individuals.

Biographical data, which serves to determine those not qualified under U.S. criteria, is obtained to initially group refugees into Categories I to IV. Information obtained during registration is brought or sent to Bangkok where clerical staff prepare dossiers on those potentially qualified.

The staff also prepares security-check cables for all refugees who are 14 years or older, regardless of category. These cables are circulated to the Drug Enforcement Agency, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), and the State Department. If no response is received from these agencies within 20 working days, the Refugee Section and JVA assume that the refugee is not a risk to the security of the United States. Processing then continues.

For those eligible under Category I, cables are also sent to the American Red Cross to request verification of relatives claimed to be residing in the United States. For Category II refugees, employment-verification cables are sent to previous U.S. agency employers if possible.

For Category III refugees, Refugee Section Ethnic Affairs Officers interview and rank refugees based on their past civil or military histories. (These officers had previous experience in Laos, Cambodia, or Vietnam and knowledge of specific operations and those locations.) Category III refugees are ranked because of the limited availability of spaces after those in Categories I and II have been accepted for admission.

When refugee dossiers are generally complete, refugees who have met the criteria are presented to an INS officer. INS officers operate from the Refugee Section during their temporary assignment in Thailand. Refugees are presented to them as indicated here.

1. Those who registered for the U.S. programs at their first opportunity are eligible for presentation to INS about 1 year after entry into camp.
2. Those who elected not to register at their first opportunity are eligible for presentation to INS about 1 year after initial registration, unless convincing reasons exist to advance eligibility.

This system places a refugee in a clique based on either his camp entry date or date of registration for the U.S. program. Refugees arriving within the same time (i.e., within the same clique) are presented to INS officers before those arriving later (i.e., in later cliques). Within each clique, however, Category I is given preference over Categories II, III, and IV; Category II is given preference over Categories III and IV; and so on. All refugees in Categories I and II are usually presented to INS. Depending on the number of remaining parole spaces, refugees in Categories III and IV are then presented. Those not present compete in the subsequent clique.

Because there are far more refugees than available parole spaces, the U.S. Refugee Section in Thailand developed, and the Department of State approved, the clique system to provide more equitable treatment of refugees in Categories III and IV. Under the clique system, equity is achieved when these cases are presented to INS based on the length of time they have had refugee status. Otherwise, most of them would have almost no chance for going to the United States for LRP, JVA teams registered 70,536 land refugees from September 1977 through October 1978. There were 43,355--61 percent--found to be potentially qualified for only 12,500 available parole spaces. As shown in the following table, 32,315 of those potentially qualified--75 percent--were in Categories III and IV.

	<u>Category</u>				
	<u>I</u>	<u>II</u>	<u>III</u>	<u>IV</u>	<u>Total</u>
Laos	1,873	1,578	12,516	359	16,326
Hmong	4,904	1,664	13,565	591	20,724
Khmer	510	12	4,743	119	5,384
Vietnamese	<u>387</u>	<u>112</u>	<u>368</u>	<u>54</u>	<u>921</u>
Total	<u>7,674</u>	<u>3,366</u>	<u>31,192</u>	<u>1,123</u>	<u>43,355</u>
	18%	7%	72%	3%	100%

Ethnic Affairs Officers conduct interviews with each refugee, before INS presentation, to reverify family relations and determine if changes such as pregnancies, births, or marriages have occurred which may delay presentation of the cases. The results of these interviews and any other comments the officers may wish to make are also given to INS. INS officers do not independently verify the information in the files.

INS officers, accompanied by U.S. Refugee Section officials and JVA personnel, go to the camps to conduct personal interviews with the refugees. These interviews are used as the basis for approving or disapproving them for entry into the U.S. INS officials receive all file information collected by the Refugee Section for the cases presented to them. They question refugees only to determine whether they are inadmissible under immigration law. If an applicant for U.S. parole is not approved, INS officers note the applicable provision of the immigration law prohibiting his/her immigration. INS-rejected cases are not presented again unless additional documentation or information is obtained. The primary cause for INS rejection is misrepresentation of material facts. The judgement of the INS officers is the determining factor for refugee acceptance in all categories.

For INS-approved cases, ICEM immediately obtains individual or family photographs and fingerprints, and ICEM nurses collect urine samples for analysis. Medical examinations under the supervision of ICEM doctors are then arranged at local provincial hospitals or conducted by the ICEM mobile medical teams while the refugees are still in the camps. Some medical examinations are conducted by ICEM when the refugees are in the transit centers in Bangkok.

JVA records the approval of individuals or families in the case files and prepares biographical histories for each family member. Biographical information is then sent to the American Council on Voluntary Agencies in the United States which acts as coordinating body for the volags. One volag initiates the search for a sponsor--a person, family, or organization in the United States providing financial and other assistance to refugees when they arrive in the United States to assist in their resettlement. The American Council on Voluntary Agencies sends a list to the U.S. Refugee Section identifying the agency responsible for securing sponsorship. The Refugee Section and JVA officials stated that the time required to find a sponsor varies from 3 weeks to 8 months.

After the American Council on Voluntary Agencies confirms sponsorship, the U.S. Refugee Section notifies ICEM that the refugees are ready for movement from the camps to the transit center in Bangkok. ICEM, in turn, notifies UNHCR who arranges transportation for the refugees with the Thai Ministry of Interior from the camps to Bangkok.

Refugees at the transit centers are still the responsibility of UNHCR. ICEM takes care of those medical examinations in Bangkok not conducted in the camps. ICEM notifies JVA if any refugees must delay departure for medical reasons. Those refugees ready to depart are given B 100 (U.S. \$ 5.00) by JVA (for clothing or other articles) to prepare for their arrival in the United States. Refugees depart for the United States once they receive the required medical clearance, and departure and U.S.-entry documents. ICEM arranges transportation from Bangkok to the U.S. airport nearest the refugee's final destination.

Malaysia

The three-tier refugee interviewing performed in Thailand by JVA, Embassy refugee officers, and INS officials is also the system required in Malaysia. Similarly, the ICEM transportation and medical examination functions described in the preceding Thailand system description are also carried out in Malaysia. (See pp. to .)

The U.S. Embassy staff responsible for refugee matters in Malaysia are part of the Consular Section in Kuala Lumpur. At the time of our visit, two consulate officers were engaged full time in the program. The JVA in Malaysia is Church World Service, which is responsible for carrying out U.S. resettlement processing operations. The JVA staff consisted of about six Americans and several indigenous personnel. These operations are funded by the State Department.

Upon arrival of refugees in camp, UNHCR registration is required. This registration takes place through use of biographic data cards. These cards are then used by JVA to prescreen the applicant. The JVA representative prepares biographic case files and identifies categories in which refugees are eligible for processing. After the files are prepared, the JVA sends telegrams for security checks and for verification of relatives of Category I refugees in the United States.

Case files must then be reviewed by a U.S. Embassy refugee official for completeness and acceptability. The files are then presented to an INS official for acceptance or rejection.

For those INS-approved cases, biographic data is sent to the American Council on Voluntary Agencies for the volags to begin their sponsorship search. When the volags provide sponsorship assurances, notice is given to ICEM which arranges (1) transportation to the Kuala Lumpur transit center, (2) airline tickets and transportation to the airport, and (3) medical exams.

Delays are likely to occur for the refugees at any processing step. UNHCR, for instance, may not be able to register new arrivals for several weeks. Until registration cards are available, JVA does not set up biographical files because U.N. biographical information is the source documentation for U.S. processing. For Category III and IV cases, the registration cards must also bear notations of other country refusals.

The refugee-arrival rate has outpaced the U.S. refugee office staffing level, resulting in a large (prescreening) backlog for the seven camps. In October 1977 there were 6,000 refugees in Malaysia. As of October 1978, there were 24,000 refugees, but the refugee office staffing level had remained constant. At Bidong, there was a prescreening backlog of about 8,000 people. Refugee officials attributed the backlog to the rapid increase in the Island population from about 500 in August of 1978 to over 12,000 in mid-October 1978. One JVA representative said in October 1978 that it would take 6 months to register new arrivals at Bidong.

Processing personnel also encounter logistic difficulty in getting to many of the refugee camps, especially the Bidong camp, which is located about 23 miles off Kuala Trengganu. The refugee office had no boat transportation to that island and had to arrange with local fishing boats for the trip.

The trip to the Bidong camp was at least a 2-1/2 hour fishing boat ride, with arrival at camp usually around 11 a.m. and departure about 6 p.m., despite the danger of night travel on heavy seas. Also, adequate housing accommodations for processing personnel were not available on the island.

Singapore

Refugee processing in Singapore is the responsibility of the U.S. Consul. The Vice-Consul performs the processing operations. An administrative assistant has recently been added to the staff. The Vice-Consul told us that he generally spends half his time with the refugee program. Of the 751 refugees in Singapore, 71 had arrived on a U.S.-flag ship as of September 1978.

With the Singapore Government requirement of guaranteed resettlement of refugees rescued at sea by U.S.-owned or U.S.-flag vessels before allowing refugees to land (see ch. 1), U.S. selection criteria had been superseded. The United States guarantees the Singapore Government, when possible, that all refugees rescued by U.S. ships will be moved from Singapore within 90 days. For these cases, no categorization is involved and all refugees are processed for INS approval and departure to the United States. We noted, however, that although countries must guarantee resettlement of refugees its vessels rescue, there are situations, such as reuniting families, when other countries will undertake resettlement.

Categorization is only applicable to cases of refugees rescued by foreign-flag vessels when UNHCR, through initial registration, identifies refugees wanting to go to the United States. Registration cards are sent to the U.S. Consul who interviews the refugees and identifies those with close relatives in the United States and those who have worked for the United States in Vietnam (Categories I and II). These cases are referred to the JVA, the Catholic Relief Service, which obtains detailed biographic data and secures the necessary affidavits from relatives in the United States. These cases are then reviewed by the Vice-Consul and, if acceptable, presented to the INS officer for review, assignment of category, and approval or rejection.

Indonesia

In Indonesia, the Embassy officials responsible for processing refugees are the U.S. Consul and Vice Consul. The Indonesia refugee program is operated by the Vice-Consul, who is designated as the refugee officer. He told us refugee duties take about 15 percent of his time.

When refugees arrive in camp, UNHCR registration is required. This registration takes place through use of biographic data cards and fact sheets. These cards and sheets are then given to and used by the U.S.-contracted joint volag representative, American Council for Nationalities Service. The JVA representative prepares case files of biographic data and places each refugee in categories for processing. As part of file preparation, the volag drafts telegrams for Visa Falcon security clearances and relative verification if the refugees indicate Category I relationships.

Case files are then presented by the volag or refugee officer to an INS official for approval. The refugee officers do not routinely review the cases before INS approval. Where questions come up before presentation to INS, volag representatives discuss the cases with the refugee officers.

When a case is approved, JVA biographical data is submitted to the American Council of Voluntary Agencies in New York to obtain refugee sponsorship. In the interim, departure documents are prepared by volag representatives, which include photographs, fingerprints forms, and necessary exit forms. Volag representatives also arrange medical examinations. Refugee officers do the fingerprinting.

JVA authorized each refugee a \$5.00 purchase of clothing which was used for gloves and hats for those refugees going to cold climates. Some refugees received no clothing of any sort and the volag said that no reimbursement expenses were claimed for these people.

Transportation to and from the medical exam was being arranged for and paid by JVA or United Nations Development Program, the organization that was representing UNHCR. UNHCR now has a representative assigned in Jakarta. In Tanjung Pinang, the local government provides and arranges for medical exams and necessary transportation.

Upon receipt of the telegram from the State Department that refugee assurances have been received from the American Council for Nationalities Service, ICEM in Hong Kong, is cabled to make travel arrangements. ICEM confirms departure schedules and notifies the airlines in Hong Kong to have the local Northwest Orient or Pan American ticket agent issue tickets locally. Promissory notes for repayment of the airfare is then signed by the refugees before flying to Hong Kong via Garuda Airlines. After an overnight layover, the refugees depart for the United States on an American-flag carrier.

When the refugees are cleared by the volag for departure to the United States, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is notified and schedules transportation from Tanjung Pinang to Jakarta. The Department of Social Services in Jakarta moves the refugees to the airport.

GAO OBSERVATIONS OF PROCESSING PROBLEMS

Our review of selected refugee cases from the land camps we visited in Thailand revealed no instances where prescribed procedures for processing were not being generally followed. For the cases we reviewed, the refugees were categorized properly, based on the information in their files.

Our review of the processing of selected refugee cases in the Malaysian boat camps we visited revealed that the case files contained insufficient documentation for JVA and Embassy officials to appropriately classify priorities or verify the refugee claims. The INS officer working on Bidong Island on the day of our visit spent much of his interviewing time trying to verify or refute refugee statements.

No notations were made in the case files to show evidence of review by the refugee officer and no record of refugee ranking was available to enable review of the priority procedures the refugee office used.

We found that the three-tier interviewing system by JVA, Embassy, and INS officers was not always followed because refugee cases were sometimes presented to INS officials without having been interviewed by the Embassy refugee officer. The chief refugee officer told us that as many as 20 percent of the files the JVA prepared were not reviewed by Embassy refugee officers and were presented to INS by JVA. The INS officer said that he had no way of telling from the case file if and when a refugee officer reviewed the case.

We found that files were arranged alphabetically by processing stage, and a white status card for each case file was prepared to facilitate location of the file. A few refugees had been moved to several camps, and it was unknown who and how many were moved. Refugee officials admitted that this created some problems because when cases were presented to INS, the individuals had already moved to different camps without the refugee office's knowledge.

At the time of our visit to Indonesia in November 1978, no case backlog existed in either of the two camps for setting up case files, although an INS review backlog existed because

August was the last month INS officers had been in Indonesia to process applicants. INS officers go to Indonesia only about three times a year, and visits have been made only four times since July 1977. The JVA representatives told us that on occasion an INS officer has been requested but the request was denied or delayed because of higher priorities elsewhere. He is often not scheduled to visit Indonesia when the INS Hong Kong office does not deem the caseload to be large enough to warrant sending a representative.

Refugee files are established and maintained by JVA and arranged by camp, alphabetically and by processing stage. Generally, the files were processed promptly. The JVA representatives told us that about 80-85 percent of the cases processed and of the refugees departed for the United States have been Category I. For each case a security check must be cleared and an affidavit of relationship received.

The refugee officer reviews the biographical information and, in the past, has had difficulties in determining whether certain cases should be Category III or IV. If the volag or refugee officer determines the case to be Category IV, it is not presented to INS. The INS officer, however, makes the final category decision and, at the time of our visit, there had been 21 cases approved by INS as Category IV, although they had been submitted as Category III.

No Category IV cases have been submitted to INS for review. INS has given no estimate of time about when the Category IV cases will be admitted to the United States because there is a large backlog of Category III cases. We were told that the past INS-approved Category I, II, or III cases had been processed for admission.

Generally Category III case files only have the refugee biographical data and no additional documents. Consequently, the INS officers must decide the merit of the case solely on refugee statements.

When we visited Indonesia in November 1978, cumulative refugee boat arrivals in Indonesia were 3,248. Only 572 had arrived as of August 11, 1977, and 2,676 since then. Of the 2,676 refugees, 1,204 were from the vessel "Southern Cross." The United States had selected 538 refugees under IPP and 65 under LRP which began around September 1978. Cumulative departures to other third countries had been 458. At the time of our visit, 2,874 refugees had not had resettlement offers.

The disproportionate number of admissions authorized for boat cases and the difference in purposes to be served in applying essentially similar criteria (Categories I through IV)--i.e., to select inland camp refugees for admissions and to establish priorities for moving boat refugees--create some paradoxical comparisons.

Land refugees in Thailand remain in camps for at least a year even though they are awaiting reunification with close family members in the United States (Category I) or are former employees of the U.S. Government in Indochina (Category II). At the time of our visit to Malaysia in October 1978, boat refugees were being processed and sent to the United States in a matter of a few months, regardless of category. We interviewed one young Vietnamese boat refugee who had served less than 6 months as a private in the South Vietnamese Army and had been classified as a Category III refugee. He was in the Kuala Lumpur transit center awaiting air transportation to the United States. He had fled from Vietnam only 5 months before the date of our interview.

In April 1978, hearings of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, and International Law, the Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs testified:

"The question has been raised, Mr. Chairman, as to the fairness of taking boat case refugees not resettled elsewhere but leaving refugees escaping by land, who may be equally or better qualified. Indeed, there is a second group of refugees whom we have helped in every program to date with the exception of the January 25 parole. These are those among the refugees escaping by land who have close relatives in the United States or who have demonstrated past association with the United States, for which they were disadvantaged in their homeland under the governments. This group has been and, in the future, would continue to be drawn almost entirely from the camps of Thailand.

"Our exclusion of this group from the January parole in no sense indicated a lessening of our concern for these refugees. On the contrary, the 8,000 parole numbers granted for land camp refugees in August 1977 were some thousands short of the number of refugees qualified under program criteria. However, the parole authorized on January 25 did not include admission of overland

refugees, because the emergency was particularly critical for boat refugees."

We were told that processing refugees in Thailand could be accomplished in a much shorter time, but that there was concern that quicker processing of those authorized could result in another parole request because of greater pressure on the United States from first-asylum countries to resettle much greater numbers.

In an October 24, 1978, cable discussing processing procedures for boat refugees, the State Department recognized that, because of the continuing and increasing numbers of boat refugees arriving in first-asylum countries, all could not be accepted under LRP. The State Department cable directed, therefore, that each month all boat refugees worldwide, having no guarantee of resettlement from any country will be considered in rough priority of time they have been in refugee status. Among those arriving within the same timeframe, those in Category I will be accepted first, then, consecutively, those in Categories II, III, and IV.

Another problem noted was that only a few Cambodian refugees in Thai inland camps had been selected for U.S. admission. Most of the Cambodian refugees do not meet the requirements of Categories I, II, and III; and all parole authorizations before the December 1978 increase in the LRP authorization have not allowed for sufficient admissions to include the Category IV Cambodian refugees. However, the December 1978 implementation of the recent Sense of the Congress Resolution calling for the parole of 7,500 Cambodian refugees in fiscal year 1979 and 7,500 in fiscal year 1980 will correct this problem.

AGENCY COMMENTS

As discussed in chapter 1, a draft of this report was reviewed by State Department officials in March 1979. In commenting on this chapter, they told us that, in January 1979, the refugee office staff in Malaysia was increased to six officers and the JVA staff was almost doubled. They said that substantial progress has been made in working through the backlog of new arrivals on Pulau Bidong with work almost current on refugees claiming Category I or II status.

The offshore location of Pulau Bidong continues to cause severe logistic difficulties. UNHCR has informed the refugee office that they have located a much more suitable boat for transporting refugee-processing teams to the island. The

travel time to the island on this boat would be cut to about 1 and 1/4 hours.

The interviewing space for processing teams on the island is now reasonably adequate. There are still no satisfactory accommodations for teams staying overnight on the island but, with the availability of faster water transportation, this will become less necessary.

Regarding our observation on the inadequate documentation in the case files we reviewed in Malaysia, the State Department officials pointed out that, with the increased staffs now dealing with this caseload, it will be possible to develop more detailed case files. These officials said that, the most critical need, initially, was to demonstrate substantial refugee placement to the Malaysian Government. Thus, the principal test was an INS interview to assure that the refugee was not ineligible for entry into the program. Thereafter refugees were moved as quickly as security checks and other documentation could be completed and sponsors could be found. As out-processing in Malaysia levels--between 3,500 and 4,000 a month--and trained staffs become adequate, a more measured approach to dealing with this caseload will be possible. The essential required documentation, however, has been completed, including Visa Falcon security checks, American Red Cross relative verification, and previous employment verifications.

As staffs become more adequate, the three-tier interviewing system is now being consistently followed in Malaysia. The refugee office reviews each file prior to final interview by the INS officer. JVA no longer presents cases to the INS officer.



64

AN INS OFFICER INTERVIEWING A REFUGEE FAMILY ELIGIBLE FOR ADMISSION TO THE U.S. — PULAU BIDONG, MALAYSIA, OCTOBER 1978.

CHAPTER 5

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

Continuing a long tradition of welcome for those seeking freedom from persecution, the United States had admitted about 187,000 Indochina refugees for resettlement in this country as of March 22, 1979. As discussed in chapter 1, the current refugee crisis has become increasingly acute because of repressive actions in Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos, affecting virtually all strata of those societies. Recent refugee admissions to the United States are being justified primarily on humanitarian grounds rather than prior political associations. Thus, although the first group of refugees entering the United States were educated and skilled individuals, the refugees now seeking asylum and resettlement include the poor and illiterate, as well.

We reviewed the resettlement of the early wave of Indochina refugees in a May 1977 report ("Domestic Resettlement of Indochina Refugees--Struggle for Self Reliance," HRD-77-35, May 10, 1977.) Because of the continuing refugee problem in Southeast Asia and the changing composition of the refugee population, we have looked further at the progress and problems experienced by Indochinese refugees in the United States and at the Federal and State Government resettlement programs.

Unlike the early wave of refugees evacuated to temporary care facilities at U.S. military bases, refugees now come to the United States with prearranged volag sponsors. The refugees are met at the airport and the sponsors or volag staffs provide housing, food, and other necessities. In fact, volags play the major role in helping the refugees become integrated and self-supporting. U.S. Government involvement in domestic resettlement consists mainly of (1) partial financial support for the refugees through State Department grants to the volags for each refugee resettled and (2) HEW funding for certain job training, social services, and welfare costs.

Major problems in refugee resettlement stem from difficulties inherent in the use of sporadic parole actions and uncertain funding decisions. Volag and Government officials assisting in refugee resettlement have not been able to do the kind of long-range planning and preparation they feel is needed, and there is widespread feeling that the United States needs to improve its ability to respond to refugee emergencies more consistently and predictably.

INDOCHINA REFUGEES:
PROFILE OF THE NEWCOMERS

The Indochina refugee population is predominantly Vietnamese, with a small mix of Laotians and Cambodians--about 10 to 12 percent. Virtually, all boat refugees come from Vietnam, whereas refugees in the Thai camps are mostly Laotians--84 percent--and Cambodians--12 percent. The June 1978 parole for 12,500 land camp refugees and 12,500 boat refugees, together with the December 1978 parole of 17,500 boat refugees and 4,375 Cambodians, should slightly increase the proportion of Laotians and Cambodians.

An effort was made during the initial resettlement wave in 1975-76 to distribute the refugee population throughout the United States, to avoid the kind of geographic concentration experienced with the Cuban refugees. Nevertheless, there is a substantial concentration of Indochinese refugees in California resulting from refugee movements there for reasons of family ties, warmer weather, better job opportunities, and a larger refugee community. HEW statistics as of March 22, 1978, show the following 10 States having the largest refugee populations.

<u>State</u>	<u>Refugee population</u>
California	50,861
Texas	17,092
Pennsylvania	8,450
Louisiana	7,547
Virginia	7,134
Washington	6,698
Illinois	6,235
Florida	5,862
New York	5,330
Minnesota	4,743

Because of generally recognized refugee migrations to California, it is likely that the HFW figure understates the refugee population there. Except for the INS annual alien registration figures, there is no precise way to measure refugee movements within the United States. Estimates of California's current refugee population vary widely.

No comprehensive surveys have been made of the education and skill levels of the current Indochinese population in the United States. English-speaking ability and job skill are not among the criteria applied overseas for selecting refugees to be admitted to the United States, although family ties and previous employment or close association with the

United States may tend to result in refugees with these skills being selected. On the other hand, the majority of Hmong Hill tribesman from Laos, admitted to the United States under the previous-employment or close-association criteria, speak no English and are unable to read or write.

Surveys based on a sample of the early wave of Vietnamese refugees have been made on contract through HEW and provide some information on the refugee population. According to a survey performed in the summer of 1977, 1/ about 66 percent of the refugees age 16 or older were estimated to be in the United States labor force--a rate closely comparable to that for the overall population of the United States. Of all refugee households surveyed, 89 percent derived at least a portion of their income from employment; thus, refugee dependency on welfare for total financial support was estimated to be, at most, 11 percent of the households. About 80 percent of the employed refugees, however, were earning less than \$200 a week, and it is said that these low wage levels, combined with large, extended families, account for the high percentages of refugees on welfare--33 percent nationwide. Reasons most frequently cited by refugees for not seeking employment were: attending school (48.2 percent); keeping house (29.8 percent); poor health (21.3 percent); and poor English (9.1 percent).

As the principal systematic effort to gather nationwide statistics on refugee skill levels and employment rates, the results of these contract studies have been widely reported. However, because these studies are based on interviews with a sample of the early wave Vietnamese refugees and do not reflect the experiences of the more recently arrived refugees, the studies do not present a full picture of the present Indochina refugee population. We believe there is an important need for more reliable statistical information on refugee resettlement progress. HEW noted that it does plan to update the statistical profile and show information according to the refugees' year of arrival.

Although a formal, statistical profile of the refugee population was beyond the scope of this review, we were able, through our field work in the States of California, Washington, and New York, to formulate general impressions of resettlement through interviews with refugees, volags, refugee sponsors, and Federal and State officials handling refugee programs.

1/The survey was conducted through telephone interviews with 607 heads of household (containing 2,817 persons) representing a cross-section of Vietnamese refugees.

Nature of recently arrived refugees

The refugees arriving within the past year have proven to be generally less educated and much less able to speak English than the Vietnamese refugees evacuated to the United States in 1975. However, some of the boat refugees now escaping from Vietnam are middle-class, educated ethnic Chinese. The newer refugees also tend to have more serious medical problems (a result of 2 to 3 years in the refugee camps) and have suffered more traumatic experiences in the process of escaping. In addition, some refugees, particularly some Hmong Laotians, cannot read or write in their own languages and are virtually unexposed to Western culture. These refugees have special adjustment problems. They need to be told, for example, to diaper their babies, not to burn firewood on top of their stoves, etc. Despite the years they may have spent in the refugee camps, most of the newer refugees arrive in the United States with little idea of the style of life here. Particularly for those refugees who lived only in rural areas, life in America can be a jolting cultural shock.

Nevertheless, these newer refugees are reported to be no more difficult to resettle than the previous groups of Vietnamese professionals and military officers, in the sense that their expectations are much lower and they are more willing to take the survival-type jobs generally available to refugees. The earlier refugees are said to have been reluctant to take these lower level jobs and are much more frustrated and depressed by their inferior status in the United States. The newer refugees may not be ready for work at the time they reach the United States because of initial medical and adjustment problems, but many of these refugee groups have already established a reputation for being industrious and reliable workers. The refugees tend to prefer city life in the United States--even those who were farmers in their own countries--because of the isolation of rural life here and the vast differences in farming techniques.

As survivors of difficult and dangerous land and boat escapes from Indochina, the refugees tend to be notably independent and street-wise. A major reason for refugee-sponsor breakdowns (particularly for single males) has been refugee sensitivity and resistance to sponsor control. Unaccompanied minors have often led self-sufficient lives in Southeast Asia, but in the United States they require legal guardianship and may be placed in foster homes.

Accustomed to fending for themselves, many refugees are described as aggressive in seeking the benefits available to them. They are reported to be aware of the differences both in (1) volag resettlement practices (such as the amount of pocket money handed out) and (2) the State welfare and service benefits that can be provided to them. In one instance, for example, a volag reportedly provided a blind Cambodian with a tape recorder to help him learn English when no language class was available, and other refugees complained about being denied this. Volag vigilance in keeping informed on Federal and State programs available to refugees has probably also encouraged refugee participation in these programs. In Orange County, California, it was reported that Indochinese refugees are participating in certain Labor Department programs at a rate higher than their proportionate population in the county.

Refugees initially dispersed in rural areas have moved to urban areas to take advantage of job opportunities and community and cultural support which existing Indochinese refugee communities can offer. To avoid placing a burden on any one community, the volags told us they are now making conscious efforts to disperse refugees in clusters around the country, particularly to places where job prospects are good. For instance, we found that at least one volag in San Francisco has discouraged the placement of refugee fishermen in the area because of the difficulty of entry into the Italian-dominated fishing industry there. More refugees have been placed in the San Jose area, however, where they may find jobs in the electronics assembly industry.

There have been reports around the country of community sensitivity to the presence of refugees and of resentment that refugees are receiving benefits not available to other disadvantaged groups. We did not encounter this as a widespread problem, however. In most States, the refugee population is small relative to other immigrant or minority groups.

Uniqueness of Indochinese refugees

The absence of a previously existing Indochinese community in the United States is a major factor distinguishing these Indochinese refugees from most other recent immigrant groups here. The Asian community in this country is composed of a variety of disparate and independent ethnic groups--Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Samoan, etc.--who may have no more in common with these refugees than do, for example, Hispanic or Italian-Americans. Indeed, the Indochinese community itself is hardly cohesive, and intense rivalries

between nationalities, ethnic groups, and political factions persist in the United States. In some English language and job training classes which mix nationalities, the importance of such differences has become apparent.

Now that the earlier wave of refugees has had some time to become settled here, they have begun to act as an immigrant community. Refugee groups have started to circulate their own newspapers which include information about refugee programs. Many informal refugee associations have arisen spontaneously, often for purposes of cultural or social events. Some of the refugees are serving as sponsors for recently arrived family members, but it does not appear they are capable yet of providing the kind of financial support to new arrivals that the volags have provided. For the immediate future, the 4-year old Indochinese community's most important role is likely to be cultural support and information sharing.

U.S. VOLUNTARY AGENCIES:
THE MAJOR ACTORS

Refugee resettlement in the United States is carried out almost entirely by the following eight voluntary resettlement agencies:

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Percent of refugees resettled Between August 1977 and December 1978 (note a)</u>
U.S. Catholic Conference	45
International Rescue Committee	15
Lutheran Immigrant Refugee Service	13
American Council for Nationalities Service	9
Church World Service	9
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society	3
American Fund for Czechoslovak Refugees	2
Tolstoy Foundation	2

a/Approximately 1 percent are resettled by the Iowa State resettlement agency.

Of these eight agencies, only three are church-related volags which use church congregations or families as sponsors. The others are agencies which resettle refugees directly, using their own staffs as caseworkers. A brief description of each of these volags is found in appendix V.

Each resettlement agency has a contract with the State Department under which it receives a per capita reception and placement grant to assist in refugee resettlement. Initially, in 1975, this grant was \$500. In 1977 the grant was \$300, and, in 1978, the grant was raised to \$350. These grants are meant to serve as overall seed money for volag resettlement efforts rather than as amounts to be passed through directly to each refugee. Resettlement services are defined in the grant contract as including, but not necessarily limited to

- migration planning and services, such as promoting and securing resettlement opportunities;
- reception services to refugees arriving in the United States, such as reception costs, lodging, food, clothing, emergency medical and dental services, counseling, distribution of pocket money to refugees up to \$50 to individuals and \$100 to family units;
- inland transportation in the United States, including baggage;
- interim services to facilitate adjustment within the resettlement community, such as lodging, food, clothing, medical and dental services, language, educational and vocational training, counseling, and placement.

Services provided and resettlement philosophies

Now that the refugees are placed directly with the volags when they arrive in the United States (as opposed to being placed in U.S. transit camps), volags are currently playing a greater role than they did in 1975 at the time of the evacuation. Volag services may include: airport reception; basic orientation to the U.S. lifestyle; arrangements for housing, food, and clothing; medical screening; job placement; information and referral services for English and job-training programs (the volags often conduct these programs themselves); translation services and personal guidance; and requests to INS and the State Department for family reunifications. In addition, volags are key in assisting refugees adjust their immigration status from parolees to permanent residents--a change that should help improve some refugee employment prospects.

Each volag has an individual philosophy and method of resettlement, but all view resettlement as a process only beginning with initial reception and placement. Financial self-sufficiency and integration within U.S. society are the ultimate long-term goals. Volags differ primarily in their organizational set-ups, with areas of strength and weakness reflecting their constituencies and network of services. The church-related volags, for example, use local church groups or families as sponsors to provide housing, food, and counseling, and thus can handle large, extended refugee families more easily than those agencies (International Rescue Committee and American Council for Nationalities Service, for example), which resettle refugees directly, without using intermediate sponsors. These direct resettlement agencies, however, tend to be more appropriate for single males or young couples who may be too independent to maintain relationships with sponsoring families. These agencies tend to be staffed in their local offices throughout the United States by professional job developers or guidance counselors. The volags feel that these divisions in resettlement specialization result in a complementary resettlement effort.

Although these differing volag resettlement practices have resulted in cases of confusion for the refugees as to exactly what they are entitled to, it appears that volags are providing the services noted in the contracts. The amount distributed in initial pocket money, for example, differs among the volags, but it appears that the refugees generally receive over the \$350 per capita grant (directly or indirectly) in rent and food payments, clothing, furniture, transportation, translation and referral services.

Volag capacity to follow refugee progress beyond the few months here is affected, though, by staff limitations. And, except in strong sponsorship arrangements, once the initial 2 to 3 months of direct volag support elapses, the burden is generally on the refugees to go to the volags or sponsors for assistance. Refugees may switch volags, but the second volags do not receive the \$350 per capita grant for resettlement services in such cases.

Volags agree on the importance of finding jobs for refugees as soon as possible, and they place considerable pressure on the refugees to accept job offers. They are generally very reluctant to refer the refugees to welfare, although they recognize the inevitability of having to use welfare as supplementary income for large refugee families or for refugees who are not immediately work-ready, because of medical or adjustment problems. They also tend to agree on the preference

of learning English on the job, with part-time English classes in the evenings.

Problems encountered in resettling refugees

The major problems volags have faced in planning for and carrying out refugee resettlement have been

- (1) uncertainties resulting from ad hoc parole actions and funding interruptions,
- (2) reduction of the per capita State Department grant,
- (3) the inadequacy of social services and job training programs,
- (4) medical problems among refugees,
- (5) lack of advance notification of refugee arrivals, and
- (6) refugee adjustment problems in the United States.

Uncertainties resulting from ad hoc parole actions and funding interruptions

Church-related volags have emphasized the difficulties in finding and preparing refugee sponsors on the kind of stop-and-start basis that has characterized refugee admission to the United States. They reported that the lack, until recently, of nationwide publicity about the Southeast Asian refugee crisis had affected public interest in sponsoring refugees. And although they were confident they could develop sponsor interest through church publications and other means, they said they would need greater certainty about refugee admissions decisions to determine their needs well enough in advance for planning purposes.

Volags would like to be able to (1) set up a backlog of sponsors ready to take refugees and (2) maintain a level of qualified staff. They are reluctant, however, to take these actions independently of Federal Government planning. With seven different parole actions--each expected to meet the crisis--the volag experiences have been of constant gearing up and closing down.

With greater continuity in U.S. refugee admission policies, volags could plan for and solicit sponsorships more

actively, as well as maintain a consistent level of staff and services for the refugees. All volags involved in refugee resettlement support a more regularized and predictable refugee admissions policy as preferable to the present system of limited conditional-entry quotas combined with sporadic parole actions.

In addition, the temporary, crisis-oriented nature of the Indochina Refugee Assistance Program, combined with cutbacks in the resettlement grant and funding uncertainties, has made it difficult for volags to be able to place refugees in federally funded English language and job training programs. These uncertainties include a 5-month interruption in HEW funding from October 1977 to March 1978 and a congressional decision in October 1978 to rescind the planned 3-year phasedown of Federal reimbursements to the States (for welfare, medical, social services, and administrative expenditures for refugees) and to authorize the Indochina Refugee Assistance Program only through September 30, 1979.

Uncertainties arising from the use of the parole authority and from funding interruptions have also had an adverse effect on Federal refugee programs, as described in chapter 6.

Reduction of the per capita grant

Although the \$350 per capita grant from the State Department was designed primarily as a reception and placement grant, the volags emphasize the distinction between initial reception and placement services and the longer term resettlement services they provide to help integrate refugees into U.S. society. They recognize that this grant is not meant to defray all refugee resettlement costs, and that each agency must rely heavily on financial contributions and support in kind from local communities. In their view, the grant operates as seed money and as a catalyst critical to securing individual contributions from the private sector.

Volags stress that the reduction in the grant from its 1975 level of \$500, to \$300 in 1977-78, to a 1979 level of \$350 has impaired the quality of their resettlement services, and has resulted in sponsorships more difficult to obtain because of the volag's reduced ability to provide backup services. In addition they say these cutbacks have forced them to rely more heavily on public assistance for the refugees than they would like or feel would otherwise be necessary. In requesting an increase in the grant to \$500 for fiscal year 1979, the volags stated:

"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 the earlier Indochina resettlement experience***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."

In response to the formal volag request for a grant increase to \$500 for fiscal year 1979, the State Department requested that volags justify their per capita resettlement costs. An estimate by the volags in October 1978, which averaged per capita costs for the eight agencies, indicated an average cost of \$877 for each refugee. The estimate showed cash outlays of \$508 and contributed goods and services estimated to be worth \$369.

The above costs do not include the estimated value of contributed goods and services at the national level, nor the estimated value of community services to refugees generated by sponsors. According to the volags, these areas represent additional expenditures, but could not be adequately quantified. Also, the \$877 average per capita resettlement cost was figured for a 9-month period and does not include expenditures which may be made over a refugee's longer resettlement.

Government officials would like to have further breakdowns for resettlement costs but these have been hard to obtain. The volags keep detailed financial records of how each per capita grant is spent, but the money spent beyond that from independent charitable contributions to the volags or sponsors' private resources cannot be examined closely. We did not audit the agencies' estimated per capita costs.

Inadequacy of social service and job training programs

Several local volags noted the inadequacy of State-run social service and job training programs and felt that the funding uncertainties mentioned above exacerbate the problem.

In California, the passage of Proposition 13 (the property tax initiative) has resulted in generalized social services cutbacks. In addition, refugees have often been unable to participate in California's existing social service programs because of an absence of transportation and child care services. Funding uncertainties and year-to-year changes in the kinds and providers of services have meant program delays. (See ch. 6.) Information dissemination and referral are among the most valuable services the volags perform, but uncertainties as to the availability of social services for refugees have made the volags' jobs more difficult.

Volags would like to become more involved in the design and operation of Government refugee resettlement programs. They would also like closer consultations with FEW staffs in periodic regional forums in order to determine refugee needs.

Serious medical problems among refugees

ICEM conducts medical exams in Southeast Asia and screens specifically for tuberculosis and venereal disease, but occasional cases of both of these have been discovered in new arrivals. Other medical and dental problems are widespread, and volags spend considerable time (one estimated 90 percent of its caseworkers' time) assisting the refugees with medical matters, such as making appointments, providing transportation and translation services. Not all volags see that the refugees routinely get complete medical exams when they arrive in the United States--a practice which we feel should be made standard.

Lack of advance notification of refugee arrivals

ICEM schedules refugees on commercial flights, but volag officials say they receive an average of only about 5 days prior notice, making it very difficult in some cases for them to find adequate housing or to notify refugees' families. Occasionally, the only notification volags may get is when airport personnel call, telling them the refugees have arrived. Scheduling for refugee flights should be flexible because, for example, a medical hold on one refugee may result in a last-minute substitution of another refugee. Nevertheless, longer advance notice is desirable, and ICEM or the State Department should review the situation to determine possible improvements.

Refugee adjustment problems in the United States

As noted earlier, many refugees arrive in the United States with no idea of what life in America is like, and they may experience real adjustment problems in their initial few months here. The volags see a need for better pre-immigration counseling for the refugees, to introduce the refugees to what they might expect in their first few months here and to learn what geographic locations, job possibilities, and sponsorship arrangements might prove the best choices, and perhaps thus reduce interstate refugee migrations.

The volags' ability to follow-up on refugee progress after arrival in the United States is limited, though, by staff shortages, interstate refugee migrations, and a belief that most refugees in need will approach them for help. Also, in Seattle we were told that volag follow-up ability is limited by the refusal of some HEW offices to disclose lists of refugees on welfare because of privacy considerations. Several volags desired more guidance from their New York City central offices on (1) resettlement policies and practices and (2) more information about refugees arriving for resettlement. In connection with this, the central volag offices themselves cited a need for more complete information from the JVA overseas regarding the language and job skills of each refugee case.

We feel volag-refugee relationships could be improved through (1) more complete reporting from the JVA overseas on each refugee case, (2) better volag preparation of sponsors regarding refugee needs and the kinds of Federal and State programs available for them, and (3) more active follow-up on refugee progress. These improvements, however, may entail additional staff resources.

The question has been raised about whether a temporary holding facility in the United States would be desirable to orient refugees and ease their adjustment period. Such a facility could probably be most helpful in cases where refugees must be moved quickly from places of first asylum or in evacuation situations. The resettlement agencies believe, however, and we agree, that many factors, including costs and the desirability of such a protected environment, would need to be thoroughly explored.

Volag ability to handle continued refugee inflows

Volags have taken a very positive approach to refugee resettlement in the United States, and they have encouraged

the United States to admit more Indochina refugees from the overcrowded land and boat camps in Southeast Asia. The volags strongly supported the June 1978 parole of 25,000 refugees and the emergency December 1978 parole of 17,500 boat and 4,375 Cambodian refugees, as well the administration's stated intention to take 25,000 more Indochina refugees in each of the next few years. Before the parole decision, the volags did agree collectively that they would be able to handle the emergency 176,500 boat refugees and the 4,375 Cambodians.

Volags are concerned, however, about the difficulties they may have in providing quality resettlement without an increase in the per capita grant. The boat refugees pose a particular problem for the volags because there is greater pressure from the first-asylum governments to move them out. Often the volags have been called upon to deliver assurances of sponsorship and move boat refugees as quickly as possible. The volags have responded to this pressure, though they admit that such situations make it more difficult for them to maintain the quality of resettlement--i.e., the sponsors may not be as informed and prepared for dealing with refugee needs as would be the case if volags were able to plan better for refugee arrivals.

As noted earlier, the existing Indochinese refugee community in the United States has not yet become well enough established to serve as sponsors themselves, except in close family reunion cases, although they do provide important cultural support.

Volags are strongly committed to the concept of the United States as a place of refuge for those escaping from persecution, and they have been resettling refugees for many years. They note that they help resettle virtually all nationalities of refugees, regardless of whether they receive per capita grants. For a number of Indochina refugees who entered the United States under the conditional-entry provisions rather than under the parole actions, volags, in fact, received no per capita grants, yet said they provided these refugees with the same services they provided other Indochina refugees. However, the Indochinese may be more difficult in some ways to resettle than other groups--the Soviet and East European Jews, for example--(1) because they have virtually no prior immigrant base in this country, (2) because of their large numbers and the urgent need to resettle them quickly, and (3) because of the traumatic experiences from which they are escaping.

CHAPTER 6

FEDERAL AND STATE INVOLVEMENT: A PATCHWORK OF PROGRAMS AND FUNDING

Federal assistance for resettlement of certain groups of refugees in the United States is provided under several different, specific programs. These programs are the Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1975, which expires September 30, 1979; the Cuban Refugee Program authorized under the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962, which expires at the end of fiscal year 1983; and the U.S. Refugee Program for Soviet and East European refugees, authorized under this same Act.

Other groups of refugees admitted into the United States have received no special Federal benefits, although a \$20 million fiscal year 1979 foreign assistance appropriation was earmarked for HEW matching grants to volags for resettlement projects for non-Cuban and non-Indochinese refugees. (P.L. 95-481, October 18, 1978, 92 Stat. 1597.) Although it is expected that refugees from the Soviet Union will be the primary group to be served by the new program, the program is intended to assist all refugees not covered by the Cuban and Indochinese programs. Even under the Indochinese, Cuban, and Soviet refugee programs, federally provided benefits vary widely. For example, under the Cuban program, such benefits have been authorized for a period of over 18 years, while Indochinese program benefits have been scheduled to extend only over a 4 and 1/2-year period. In addition, under the Indochinese program, refugee eligibility for permanent resident status is not jeopardized by receipt of public assistance, but under the Soviet program it is. The difference in regulations governing each program, and the absence of resettlement programs for other refugees coming to the United States, illustrate the lack of consistency and basic equity in current U.S. refugee-resettlement policies.

The Federal Indochina Refugee Assistance Program is the principal Government involvement in refugee resettlement and is composed of (1) direct financing of special projects for English and job training and mental health counseling and (2) reimbursements to State Governments for welfare, medical, and social service costs for refugees. Most of these programs are funded and administered by the HEW Office of Family Assistance in the Social Security Administration, but its Office of Education has also funded and administered adult education projects for refugees and assistance for school districts with high refugee populations. Other than State

Department grants to the volags, there are virtually no other Federal funds specifically earmarked for Indochina refugee resettlement programs. Refugees are eligible for other Federal programs, through the Labor Department or HUD, for example, but refugee participation in these programs is not identifiable. Since 1975, about \$505 million has been appropriated for HEW Indochina refugee programs. (See app. I.) HEW funds obligated for State welfare assistance and social services as well as for State and local administration were about \$98 million in 1978. (See app. VI.) This amount does not include funds obligated for special projects or supplemental security income.

LACK OF CONTINUITY AND CONSISTENCY IN REFUGEE PROGRAMS

The unpredictability of refugee admissions to the United States and uncertainties about the future of Federal Government refugee programs constitute two of the major difficulties encountered in the resettlement effort. The original Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1975 expired on September 30, 1977, and the authorization for the continuation of the program, on a 4-year phaseout basis, was not enacted until October 28, 1977. A 5-month interruption in Government-sponsored resettlement programs occurred between October 1977 and March 1978, when Federal appropriations for these programs were delayed, and 11 States suspended financial support for special refugee programs. In some States, experienced staff were lost and never replaced, and some social services like employment counseling and placement were never resumed.

The delays also had a serious impact on most special projects providing English language and employment services. Those funded during fiscal year 1977 terminated early in fiscal year 1978, and additional funding could not be provided until the appropriation was available. The delays also prevented advertising for new project proposals in the Federal Register until after March 7, and the period required for public comments subsequent to that publication pushed back the date when actual proposals were received by HEW to June 22, 1978. In California, for example, where lengthy State control processes are involved, some subgrants were not awarded until October 1978.

An additional element of uncertainty was introduced in October 1978, when the 4-year phaseout was rescinded and funds were authorized only through September 30, 1979. It is expected, however, that the law will be revised to continue Federal support for resettlement programs. In addition, Office of Education adult education funds for refugees were

provided for fiscal year 1977, were not provided for 1978, and were authorized, but not appropriated, for 1979.

Achieving consistency in the Indochina refugee program, however, is only part of a broader need to bring consistency to what is currently a patchwork of different Federal programs for different refugee groups in the United States. Volags dealing with all refugee groups state that it is difficult to keep track of these separate programs and, most importantly, that such program differences are basically inequitable. Federal and State refugee program staffs have also noted this problem.

HEW management weaknesses

A result of these uncertainties is that HEW and State Government officials have had a difficult time planning and managing refugee programs on any but a very ad hoc basis. Over the past 3 years, the HEW Indochina Refugee Program Office has had several reorganizations, its staff levels have fluctuated, detailed program guidelines have never been formulated, and some important evaluation and monitoring responsibilities have not been carried out.

The HEW central office is composed of 28 persons, most with multilingual competence in Vietnamese, Cambodian, or Laotian. HEW regional offices are staffed with about 17 refugee specialists and translator/assistants. Most of these we encountered were hard-working and devoted.

The regional staffs have been disrupted, however, by HEW reorganizations, funding delays, and staff reductions. There are no detailed and comprehensive program guidelines, as are generally available for HEW programs, and decisions are made through action transmittals. As one regional official noted, no program evaluations had been made because he felt there are no program evaluation guidelines. HEW staffs have not made systematic, nationwide audits of State Government refugee programs or of claims for Federal reimbursements, although occasional, individual State audits have been made.

HEW regional staffs were given responsibility in late 1977 for monitoring the State federally funded social services contracts for refugee programs. The regional office staffs, however, said they had little experience in this area. They were aware of a current lack of oversight of State Government contracts and of the potential for abuse in this area. (At least one State Government refugee program contractor has been found guilty of criminal fraud.) A few

regional staffs expressed reluctance to take on these oversight responsibilities without more guidance from HEW headquarters, regarding acceptable program policies and procedures.

Some HEW officials, however, have said that the time and money spent more closely monitoring these federally reimbursed social service contracts would be out of proportion to the funds involved, particularly since these were originally viewed to be temporary one-time expenditures. These officials also said that these Federal reimbursements thus have tended to be administered on the assumption of the grantees' good faith. Because these State social service contracts are 100 percent federally funded, there may be a tendency, we believe, for States to be less conscientious in monitoring program expenditures and effectiveness. With HEW regional refugee staffs presently not equipped to monitor these adequately, we believe the potential for abuse continues and needs to be corrected, particularly if the United States sets up a formal, long-term refugee resettlement program.

HEW regional staffs also serve as contacts for the volags, State officials, and, occasionally, for the refugees themselves. However, because of funding uncertainties and the lack of detailed program guidelines, regional HEW staffs have sometimes been unable to provide timely and definitive information. In addition, these staffs could provide little information on refugee programs for which they are not responsible, such as Office of Education grants for school districts and for adult education.

The Office of Education has no representation in HEW regional offices, and there has been little coordination between its staff handling refugee projects and the HEW refugee program staff in the regions. Its monitoring of these special refugee education projects throughout the country from HEW headquarters was inadequate. Generally only one site visit was made to each project about 6 months after the projects were to have started, with no requirements for interim progress reporting. Some of these projects were late in starting (one in California had done nothing after 5 months) or, because of inexperience, needed more guidance to be successful. In the Office of Education selection process for grant recipients, the HEW regional refugee staffs were not routinely consulted regarding applicants' prior experiences with refugee programs. If special refugee education programs are to be continued through the Office of Education, we believe there is a distinct need for (1) improved coordination with HEW regional refugee program staffs and (2) closer oversight of the grantees.

WELFARE CASELOAD

The Indochina Refugee Assistance Act provides for full Federal reimbursement to the States through September 30, 1979, for cash assistance, medical assistance, social services, and administrative costs incurred for Indochina refugees. HEW reports that, as of August 1978, about 33 percent of the refugee population was receiving cash-assistance payments. This compares with a figure of about 35 percent in August 1977. (A breakdown of HEW obligations by State for fiscal year 1978 is shown in Appendix VI.) During this 1-year period ended August 1978, the refugee population rose by 16,165--from 145,700 to 161,865--while the number receiving assistance rose by 2,873--from 50,771 to 53,644.

For the 10 States having the largest refugee populations, the following table shows the refugees receiving at least some cash assistance and the increase or decrease in cash-assistance caseloads over a 1-year period. As noted earlier, a 1977 sample survey of the refugee population found that an estimated 89 percent of refugee households were receiving some income resulting from employment and that, consequently, at most, 11 percent were solely dependent on cash assistance. The following table does not distinguish between those fully dependent on cash assistance and those for whom these payments serve as supplementary income. Also, because of interstate migrations to States such as California, Texas, Louisiana, and Washington, refugee population figures may be underestimated and the percentages receiving cash assistance overestimated.

INDOCHINESE REFUGEE PROGRAM CASH ASSISTANCE

	Population (note a) as of 11-1-78 (INS figure updated by HEW)	Persons receiving cash assistance as of 8-1-78	Percent (note a)	Percentage increase or decrease in cases receiving cash assistance between 8-77 and 8-78
California	46,637	26,900	57.7	+30.7
Texas	15,894	2,031	12.8	-16.2
Pennsylvania	7,642	1,529	20.0	- 8.7
Louisiana	7,237	1,125	15.5	+51.6
Virginia	6,791	1,508	22.2	- 2.8
Washington	6,104	2,378	38.9	-12.7
Florida	5,454	1,318	24.2	-19.6
Illinois	5,210	1,174	22.5	+ 5.7
New York	4,596	706	15.4	-12.7
Minnesota	<u>4,136</u>	<u>1,301</u>	<u>31.4</u>	<u>+35.4</u>
Total nationwide (note b)	<u>170,698</u>	<u>53,644</u>	31.4 (note c)	+ 6.3

Source: HEW

Note a: Except for INS's annual alien registration figures, there is no precise way to measure the movements of refugees within the United States. Particularly, for States receiving significant refugee inflows from interstate migrations, such as California, Texas, Louisiana, or Washington, the population figures may be underestimated and the percentages receiving cash assistance, overestimated.

Note b: The columns do not add because only 10 State refugee populations are noted.

Note c: This figure is slightly lower than the figure of 33 percent mentioned in the text, because it is based on November refugee population figures.

Eligibility requirements for Indochina refugee program cash assistance differ from regular Aid for Dependent Children requirements in two major respects.

1. The family composition requirement has been altered for the refugee program to allow intact families (for example, with fathers present) to receive aid.
2. The 100-hour rule has been waived under the refugee program to allow aid for refugees working over 100 hours a month but still earning under a certain income.

These waivers were instituted because many refugees coming to the United States have been members of large, intact families where the heads of household--even if working full time--might not make enough money to support their families. Normally, the Federal Government pays about 50 percent of State Aid for Dependent Children costs, but under the refugee program, the Government pays 100 percent of such cash assistance costs.

HEW officials estimate that these waivers have meant, in some States, that two to three times as many refugees are receiving cash assistance through the refugee program than would otherwise be eligible for regular Aid for Dependent Children benefits. If full Federal funding of these special refugee program benefits were cut off, the States would then have to choose whether or not to continue these eligibility waivers. Missouri has already discontinued participation in the refugee program, and refugees there must meet standard eligibility requirements for all State residents. In addition, special social service projects are not being made available in Missouri, even though these are currently 100-percent federally funded.

Many other States are apprehensive about absorbing even a small percentage of future assistance costs. Some States have also complained about the efficiency of administering a special program for so few cases. If the States are to be required to provide a partial match to refugee program assistance funding, it is currently considered questionable whether some States will participate in the refugee program. The degree of State responsibility for refugees brought into the country under a Federal humanitarian policy is an issue beyond the scope of this review. But this problem does illustrate the need for (1) a more thorough understanding of the short- and long-term costs and benefits involved in refugee admissions to this country and (2) a more consistently planned

strategy for effectively resettling refugee groups, to assist them to become integrated and self-supporting.

As indicated by the table above, California has by far the largest number and percentage of refugees on welfare, as well as the largest absolute growth in cash-assistance caseload. If refugee migrations to California are taken into account, however, the percentage of refugees on welfare would be much lower. For example, if an estimate of 65,000 for the California refugee population is more accurate than the INS figure, the percentage of refugees on assistance would be in the 40-percent range, rather than at the 57.7 percent range. This would be the case also with Louisiana and Texas, both of which report significant refugee inflows from interstate migrations. Another factor in the high rate of refugees on welfare in California is that the State is considered to have a more generous welfare system than some other States, and some refugees have opted for the welfare payment when they seek to receive intensive language and job training.

In Washington State--another State with a high percentage (38.9 percent) of refugees on welfare--the trend is in the opposite direction with a 12.7 percent decrease in the cash-assistance caseload despite reports of refugee migrations to the State. We found the assistance caseload in Washington to be composed of two different groups--families averaging five members and young, single men and women, many of whom were previously soldiers or had office experience. It was expected, when the refugee program was first designed, that many large Indochinese families would require some cash assistance because, even if the head of household were present and employed, he was considered likely to be employed only part time or at low wages.

The number of singles, however, receiving refugee program cash assistance and attending universities or other schools full time has concerned Federal and State officials in Washington State. These refugee students are considered employable but are reported not to be actively seeking employment. At one welfare office in Seattle, for example, it was found, in the fall of 1978, that of a total of 373 refugee clients, 108 were in some type of college. Washington State officials told us they would like (1) benefits for singles in school reduced and (2) work requirements tightened. Many volag officials also strongly support the tightening of such requirements. HEW officials agreed that this situation should be reviewed. Current HEW policy, though, does allow cash assistance for students under age 21.

A 12.7-percent decline in cash-assistance cases from August 1977 to August 1978 was also reported for New York State, in contrast with an almost 20-percent increase (707 persons) in the State Indochinese refugee population between January and November 1978. Formal and informal reports indicate an increasing stability among refugees, both economically and vocationally. Some areas, for example, report more requests for assistance in home ownership, insurance, and other long-term planning. Some refugees have undertaken sponsorship responsibilities for relatives needing immigration assistance to the United States.

Reasons for refugee employment difficulties are reported to be poor English ability, lack of job skills, medical and adjustment problems, seasonal work, or voluntary resignations from jobs to attend skill-training courses. Refugees in rural areas are reported to have problems finding transportation and child care services in order to go to work or attend skill-training classes.

PROGRAMS TO PROMOTE REFUGEE INTEGRATION AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Beyond overcoming initial medical and cultural adjustment problems, the overwhelming need in resettling refugees is for English language and job-skills training. In funding special projects and State social services programs, HEW has recognized these as basic needs as well as the means for reducing refugee dependence on welfare.

HEW regional office staffs screen volag and other group proposals for these special project grants. Of the \$10 million appropriated in fiscal year 1978 for these grants, \$7.2 million was allocated to fund 80 English language and employment-training projects and \$2.8 million was allocated to 37 mental health counseling projects around the country. These grants were to be available to public and private nonprofit agencies. HEW reports that 38 of these 117 special project grants, representing 20 percent of the \$10 million, went to the volags.

Changes in the law this past fall, providing that these projects are to be administered primarily by nonprofit agencies involved in the resettlement of Indochina refugees, will mean a greater share for volags in these special projects. Federal and State officials are not generally supportive of this change, however, because they feel some experienced State and local programs may be cut. We noted that start-up times for refugee projects can be from 3 to 6 months, despite a preference supposedly given in selecting projects to

organizations having experience with Indochina refugees. We believe the important need is for experience on the part of the providers of services--whether volags or State and local programs--so that the benefits of such experience can be maximized.

State social services programs, fully reimbursed by the Federal Government, include language and skill training, as well as supportive services, such as child care, transportation, and job counseling. The availability of such programs varies for each State and within each State. Refugees can take part in existing State programs, although some programs are designed primarily for Indochina refugees. The amounts obligated for reimbursement to the States by the Federal Government for fiscal year 1978 are shown in appendix VI.

As noted earlier, many of these projects--both special projects and State social service projects--have been affected by funding interruptions and uncertainties, and lengthy project implementation has been attributed to problems in hiring experienced staff or in designing teaching materials. These projects have also needed continued guidance from HEW staffs, but problems should be minimized as the providers of these services gain experience in working with the Indochinese refugees.

Because the more recent refugees tend to be poorer, less able to speak English, and less exposed to urban life than the early wave of refugees, their needs are greater in terms of English language and skill training, and supportive social services. Even though these refugees are reported to be highly motivated and eager to work, even at very menial jobs, their skill levels are very low. English and job upgrading programs for these newer refugees are as important as for those earlier refugees who are underemployed, in terms of background and previous experience.

English language training is viewed as the primary need, without which vocational training can be useless and wasted. The San Francisco Public School system reports, for example, that 70 percent of its Indochinese students are trained but are unemployed because of continuing language problems. Because of the background of the newer refugees, it is felt that English language programs may need to concentrate on providing basic literacy. That many refugee students are unfamiliar with classroom situations and cannot be expected to sit for long class sessions each day should also be recognized. In addition, lack of transportation and child care services affected refugee attendance at English classes. These services, we believe, are particularly important for

elderly refugees and women with small children who otherwise may remain isolated from the community and society, as other family members learn English and interact on a daily basis with the community.

For job placement, the immediate challenge in dealing with many of the newly arrived refugees is to place them in a position where they can obtain and hold basic, survival-type jobs. And it appears that volags and HEW are addressing these needs by designing work-oriented training programs. In addition to job-related English instruction, the programs now being designed for refugees include sessions on how to fill out job application forms and prepare for interviews. These programs also include work-setting training (for example, following time schedules and office or factory routines) and actual job-oriented skill training.

The need to find some sort of initial work for refugees concerns most volags and some State officials, but most also recognize the crucial need for long-range career planning. Investment in extended and intensive vocational training, combined with good career guidance, has resulted, for some of the first wave of Vietnamese refugees in higher paying jobs and financial independence.

We visited several refugee job training programs being conducted with Federal funding, but found it difficult to assess their effectiveness. Some programs had only recently started and did not yet have job placement records. Others did have such records, but there was little information available on whether the refugees had been placed in the job they had been trained for or how long they had kept the jobs. HEW and State officials responsible for monitoring these programs could not readily verify that class attendance or job placement rates were, in fact, what the service providers claimed.

We also found that the volags, because they try to keep informed on the awards for refugee projects, and because they have the most frequent contacts with the refugees, tend to act as monitors of these awards. In California, for example, the volags were aware of an Office of Education project which had not done anything 5 months after receiving funding, and their complaints to HEW about this problem prompted an HEW visit to the project and pressure to initiate services. As noted earlier, closer HEW project surveillance is desirable, particularly if refugee assistance is to become a long-term Federal program. Timely publication of all recipients of special project and State social service grants would also facilitate volag monitoring of refugee programs.

A need for mental health counseling for refugees was identified about a year after the initial wave of refugees came to the United States. These problems were attributed to the trauma of the Indochina situation, thoughts of close relatives left behind in the evacuation, and the resettlement adjustments to be made in unfamiliar surroundings. Conventional methods of dealing with these problems appeared ineffective because Western psychiatric concepts were alien to the Indochinese culture.

Most of HEW's \$2.8 million on mental health grants were just starting in the fall of 1978. The objective of these grants is to bridge the gap between existing mental health services and the needs of the Indochinese community by (1) alerting mental health practitioners of the needs of the refugee population, (2) encouraging the training of refugees as paraprofessionals in mental health, and (3) developing community support systems on behalf of the refugees, such as links with social service providers.

For the most part, refugee needs are generally being served by the volags and by federally funded projects, but it appears this is being accomplished despite the absence of, rather than because of, a comprehensive national refugee resettlement policy. Hard-working and dedicated individuals in both the public and private sectors are devoting efforts to the challenge of assisting refugees to become integrated and self-sufficient in U.S. society. A positive and predictable Federal policy for refugee admissions and resettlement would help assure that refugee resettlement is a product of a more organized, consistent national effort, rather than of fortunate circumstance. The fact that refugee emergencies tend to be inherently uncertain does not mean that greater predictability cannot be brought to U.S. refugee admission and resettlement policies.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

During our work in Thailand and Malaysia, the principal first-asylum countries, we found that the inflow of refugees from Indochina had increased dramatically and was continuing at proportions beyond the capacity of available care facilities. In all the first-asylum countries we visited--Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia--there was considerable concern and uncertainty about the role their Governments were playing in accepting and caring for the refugees. Those Governments were adamantly opposed to permanent refugee settlement in their respective countries. They were faced with serious internal political and international relations problems which arose from providing temporary care to those refugees awaiting permanent resettlement in other countries.

Conditions that we witnessed in temporary care camps in Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia were the following:

<u>Camps</u>	<u>Conditions</u>
Indonesia, Singapore, and two Malaysian camps	fair
Thai camps for Laotians and Cambodians	overcrowded, but adequate
Pulau Bidong (Malaysia) for Vietnamese boat refugees	extremely poor, and virtually chaotic
Thai camp for ethnic Vietnamese	extremely poor, and virtually chaotic

In all camps, the conditions reflected an apparent first-asylum country intent to limit the appeal or desirability of the camps to potential refugees still in Communist Indochina, by providing only basic necessities to sustain the refugees while awaiting permanent resettlement elsewhere.

Since July 1975, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has been the international focal point for efforts to resolve the Indochinese refugee problem. Through contributions from the international community, the High Commissioner has provided financial assistance to first-asylum country governments and volags for temporary refugee care, while working toward, and financing, permanent solutions to the Indochinese refugee problem. In providing

temporary care, the High Commissioner does not play an operational role. Instead, the High Commissioner has relied on first-asylum governments and volags for program implementation. In most of the camps we visited, these arrangements have not produced the conditions of care the High Commissioner seeks. Part of the shortfall is of course attributable to the unexpected magnitude and rate of inflow of the refugees. Nevertheless, UNHCR regional office and field representatives appeared to be apathetic in many instances in getting deficiencies remedied.

UNHCR considers its most important responsibility to be international protection of refugees no longer enjoying national protection. Asylum is a key aspect of the protection activities and the High Commissioner has encouraged governments to follow liberal practices in opening their frontiers to refugees.

There have been brief periods when Thailand allegedly forced repatriation of some refugees; and Malaysia recently threatened to discontinue accepting refugees. Singapore allows no boat refugees to enter its waters, and it places strict requirements to insure quick departure of these rescued by ships on the high seas and brought to Singapore. Indonesian policy has been to allow as few refugees as possible to land, and there were times in the past when its Navy allegedly diverted as many seaworthy refugee boats as possible from intended landings in Indonesia. In addition, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Hong Kong, and the Philippines have all publicly denied landing permission for large ships carrying refugees from Vietnam.

International protection, however, although essential, is not considered by the High Commissioner to be the panacea for the Indochinese refugee problem. Permanent solutions are centered on such actions as voluntary repatriation, local settlement within the first-asylum countries, or permanent resettlement elsewhere.

Voluntary repatriation and local settlement have not been viable responses to the problem; and permanent resettlement in the United States, France, Australia, and in other countries has not kept pace with the continually increasing flow of refugees into the first-asylum countries. Response to UNHCR-led efforts to enlist the participation of more countries in resolving the problem--either by allowing refugee resettlement in their countries and/or by financial contributions to the program--have been disappointing. The problem is still being viewed by many as being especially linked to the past association by the

United States, France, and other countries to Indochina. Thus, the United States will probably continue to be an important funding source for the Indochinese program and a major haven for permanent resettlement for the refugees. As such, we believe that actions need to be taken to more effectively deal with the problem.

There seems to be little immediate prospect for ending refugee outflows from Indochina and even though it may be possible to obtain significantly increased resettlement offers from third countries, the excess of arrivals in first-asylum areas over resettlements is likely to continue for some time. It is imperative, therefore, that the refugees be given appropriate asylum and that additional temporary care facilities be provided and effectively managed. In our opinion, this requires that the facilities be situated in surroundings that are as free as possible of restraints created by the internal political and international relations problems of first-asylum countries. We believe this might be accomplished by establishing the camps in remote, uninhabited locations that minimize the visibility of the refugee populations.

Essentially similar procedures are used by U.S. embassies in first-asylum countries for selecting and processing land and boat refugees for admission to the United States. However, these procedures are implemented to expedite the movement of boat refugees to the United States, while land refugees eligible for admission to the United States are spending from 1 to more than 3 years in Thai camps. These disparities apparently result from a need to encourage asylum countries to continue accepting boat refugees, or--in the event of asylum-government refusals--to accept boat refugees for longer periods. We also noted that the number of boat refugees authorized for admission to the United States has been disproportionately large when compared to the authorization allocated for the much greater numbers of land refugees.

Our review has shown that existing provisions in immigration legislation have compelled the administration to use considerable discretion from time to time in authorizing the admission of large numbers of Indochinese refugees for resettlement in the United States. From the spring of 1975 to March 22, 1979, more than 187,000 refugees had been permanently resettled in the United States. In 1978 alone, the United States authorized the admission by parole of 53,875 Indochinese refugees and decided that it would admit 25,000 a year for the next few years. In addition, on April 13, 1979, the Attorney General authorized the parole

of an additional 40,000 Indochinese refugees through September 30, 1979. Existing immigration law, however, provides for the conditional entry of only 17,400 refugees annually who have fled from Communist countries or from the Middle East because of persecution. Because of the ideological, geographic, and numerical limitations of the immigration law, Indochinese refugee admissions have had to be made on an ad hoc basis--principally through the use of the Attorney General's discretionary parole authority--rather than through the conditional-entry provision. Such continued use of the parole provision for refugee groups appears to go beyond the original intent of the parole authority.

The absence in the law of a clear expression of U.S. intention and commitment to participate in refugee resettlement has also made planning very difficult, both for U.S. officials overseas who process refugees for U.S. admission and for U.S. domestic officials and for volags involved in refugee resettlement. We believe that such commitments need to be more formally embodied in law to serve (1) as a clear expression of the will of the Congress and also possibly (2) as a catalyst, motivating other nations to share in humanitarian refugee-relief efforts.

Because of the uncertainties of present refugee-admission policies, the principal entities undertaking refugee resettlement are the United States--volags, HEW, and State and local Government agencies--as well as those abroad who are responsible for selecting and processing refugees for admission, have often experienced periods of anxiety and uncertainty as to the intent of the Congress and the prospective availability of resources to do their work. It is also apparent that the lack of any long-term refugee policy has led to volag difficulties in finding sponsors, maintaining staff, and projecting special project requirements. We found the HEW management system, for example, lacking detailed program guidelines and unable to effectively monitor the use of Federal refugee program funds.

Although many of the problems experienced by the volags and Government officials in resettling Indochinese refugees stem from difficulties inherent in planning for refugee emergencies, we believe a greater degree of continuity, consistency, and predictability can be brought to U.S. refugee admission and resettlement policies. A more realistic annual quota for refugee admissions, with a fully coordinated refugee-resettlement program, would help ameliorate some of these resettlement planning and management problems, which have resulted from sporadic parole actions and funding uncertainties. Such a resettlement

program would facilitate planning for (1) finding sponsors, (2) staffing refugee programs with qualified and experienced persons, and (3) setting up and monitoring the English language and job training programs necessary to help refugees become integrated and self-sufficient in U.S. society.

The executive branch has recently submitted a bill for congressional consideration, proposing revisions in current laws regarding refugee admission and resettlement. Basically, this bill would revise the definition of refugee to eliminate the geographic and ideological restrictions now applicable to conditional-entry refugees, and would provide both for a normal flow not to exceed 50,000 refugees a year and for the admission of additional refugees--undertaken in consultation with the Congress--when emergency situations exist. The Attorney General's parole authority under current law would remain unchanged. In addition, the bill would establish a uniform basis for the provision of resettlement assistance, so that all refugee groups could be equally eligible.

We believe this proposed legislation addresses the major problem areas we have encountered regarding U.S. refugee admission and resettlement programs that stem from deficiencies in existing legislation. If enacted, the legislation would manifest the intent of the Congress as a basis for the formulation of national policy relative to the program. In addition to the redefinition of the term refugee, the bill increases refugee admissions to a level more in line with U.S. intentions to share in resettling the anticipated continuing flow of refugees from Indochina, the Soviet Union, and Eastern Europe, and other areas of the world from which refugees have been fleeing in recent years. It provides for dealing with large groups of refugees that may result from unanticipated emergency situations, and it retains parole authority for individual situations.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE
SECRETARY OF STATE

Since the United States is the predominant member of the international community participating in the UNHCR program providing for temporary care of the Indochinese refugees, we recommend that the Secretary of State, through the U.S. Mission in Geneva

--press to establish additional temporary care holding camps, on islands in the South China Sea or at other locations in the Far East that would (1) reduce refugee population visibility to local populations area and (2) relieve the

pressures on the first-asylum countries. These camps should be administered by the United Nations and managed by voluntary agencies and international organizations.

- inform the United Nations High Commissioner of the need for more aggressive field monitoring and of the need to insure suitable care.

We believe that the effective implementation of the above recommendation calling for the establishment of UNHCR-administered camps that are free of the internal political pressures now felt by first-asylum country governments will permit more uniform and equitable treatment of land and boat refugees who are potential selectees for admission to the United States. Without the pressures that ultimately lead to the need to expedite processing and resettling of boat refugees faster than land refugees, refugee selection and processing directives can be effectively formulated by, and promulgated from, a single centralized organization which would

- clearly communicate the evidence required to substantiate refugee qualifications for admission to the United States and
- require uniform and consistent application of admissions guidelines at all locations, when possible.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

We recommend that the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare require that monitoring of refugee program grant funds be tightened (1) through closer surveillance by HEW regional office personnel and State and local government agencies and (2) by audits of HEW-administered funds--including special projects, social services, and cash and medical assistance.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION OF THE CONGRESS

We believe that the Congress, in its deliberations in authorizing or appropriating funds for temporary care and U.S. resettlement programs for Indochinese refugees, should require long-range forward planning data that encompasses

- anticipated number of refugees;
- numbers to be resettled in the United States;
- estimated components and costs of all aspects of the program, including care of the refugees and their selection, admission, resettlement, and integration into American communities; and
- the extent to which the U.S. Government is to provide funds.

Since this data is interrelated and difficult to estimate, appropriate coordination among U.S. and international agencies is essential. A principal function of the U.S. Coordinator for Refugee Affairs, recently appointed by the President, could be the coordination and annual presentation of proposals and data to the Congress.

AGENCY COMMENTS

In commenting on this report, both the Department of State and the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare have stated their general agreement with the conclusions and recommendations relative to their respective areas of responsibility.

CHAPTER 8

SCOPE OF REVIEW

We reviewed authorizing legislation, accumulated and reviewed pertinent data on temporary care and resettlement activities, and discussed program operations with responsible officials of the Departments of State and Health, Education, and Welfare in Washington, D.C.

During September, October, and November 1978, we visited the headquarters of UNHCR in Geneva, and the UNHCR regional offices in Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur. During that period, we visited and observed the implementation of temporary care and U.S. processing programs at selected refugee camps in Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia. In those countries, we reviewed pertinent data and talked with responsible officials of U.S. Embassy offices dealing with refugee matters, including INS officials on temporary duty assignments for approving refugees for admission to the United States. We discussed refugee policies and problems with high-level Government officials of those countries. We also talked with representatives of volags carrying out activities in the refugee camps.

Our work in Geneva and in the countries in the Far East was directed primarily toward assessing the nature and growth of the refugee problem in first-asylum countries; the effectiveness of UNHCR in dealing with the refugee problem; the conditions under which the refugees were living in the camps; and the problems associated with selection and processing of refugees for admission to the United States.

We talked to officials and examined pertinent records at the New York City and Washington, D.C., offices of U.S. volags engaged in assisting U.S. Embassies in first-asylum countries in the selection and processing of refugees, and in the work of resettling refugees throughout the United States.

We also made visits to selected states where refugees were being resettled--the States of California, Washington, and New York. In those States, we interviewed refugees and officials of refugee associations. We visited HEW regional offices cognizant of programs in those States to review pertinent data on U.S. Government financing of State and local government agency refugee activities and special projects. We visited offices of State Government agencies and selected local government agencies that were active in carrying out the programs.

Our work at the offices of the volags and in the States of California, Washington, and New York was directed primarily toward assessing the capacity of the various agencies and U.S. Government regional offices to address and resolve problems associated with refugee resettlement in the United States.

Our prior reports on evacuation
and resettlement

We previously issued four reports dealing with Indochina refugees. The initial report to the Senate Appropriations Committee, "Review of Preliminary Estimates of Evacuation and Cambodian Refugees," (ID-75-68, May 27, 1975), dealt with preliminary estimates of evacuation costs and our views regarding their validity. Our second report to the Congress, "U.S. Provides Safe Haven for Indochinese Refugees," (ID-75-71, June 16, 1975), included information on estimated program costs and the handling of the flow of refugees from the Western Pacific restaging areas to the U.S. reception centers. The third report to the Congress, "Evacuation and Temporary Care Afforded Indochinese Refugees--Operation New Life," (ID-76-63, June 1, 1976), provided current information on temporary care at the U.S. reception centers, and included certain cost data. The fourth report to the Congress, "Domestic Resettlement of Indochinese Refugees--Struggle for Self-Reliance," (HRD-77-35, May 10, 1977), describes our observations on resettlement, including placement of refugees with sponsors and initial steps toward integration into American society.

INDOCHINESE REFUGEE ASSISTANCE AND RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM
SUMMARY OF APPROPRIATIONS, APPROPRIATION TRANSFERS, AND EMERGENCY FUND DRAWDOWNS
IN MILLIONS OF DOLLARS AS OF APRIL 5, 1979

	TOTAL	Fiscal Years			
		1975-76	1977	1978	1979
DEPARTMENT OF STATE					
Appropriations and Supplemental Appropriations					
Public Law 94-24 (net of \$53 million transferred to HEW)	252.0	252.0			
Public Law 95-26	7.4		7.4		
Public Law 95-148	8.5			8.5	
Public Law 95-240	6.3			6.3	
Public Law 95-355	2.5			2.5	
Public Law 95-426	38.4				38.4
Pending Approval	68.2 ^{2/}				68.2
Appropriation Transfers					
Presidential Determination 75-13	5.0	5.0			
Presidential Determination 75-17	98.0	98.0			
Presidential Determination 76-03	6.8	6.8			
Drawdowns from Emergency Fund/ Migration and Refugee Assistance Act 1/					
Presidential Determination 77-11	2.1		2.1		
Presidential Determination 77-21	3.0			3.0	
Presidential Determination 77-22	4.2			4.2	
Presidential Determination 78-05	5.7			5.7	
Presidential Determination 79-01	5.0				5.0
TOTAL DEPARTMENT OF STATE	513.1	361.8	9.5	30.2	111.6
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE (HEW)					
Appropriation and Supplemental Appropriations					
Public Law 94-24 (including \$53 million transferred from State)	153.0	153.0			
Public Law 94-441	50.0		50.0		
Public Law 95-26	28.7		28.7		
Public Law 95-240	124.0			124.0	
Public Law 95-549	98.0				98.0
Pending Approval	51.7 ^{2/}				51.7
TOTAL DEPARTMENT OF HEW	505.4	153.0	78.7	124.0	147.7
GRAND TOTAL	<u>1018.5</u>	<u>514.8</u>	<u>88.2</u>	<u>154.2</u>	<u>261.3</u>

^{1/}As originally enacted, section 2(c) of the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act provided that the President could augment appropriations made specifically for refugee assistance to meet unexpected needs by transferring up to \$10 million of funds appropriated to him under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended. Congress included a provision in the Foreign Relations Assistance Act, Fiscal Year 1976, Public Law No. 94-141, which amended section 2(c) to create the Emergency Fund.

^{2/}These amounts represent FY 1979 supplemental requests pending congressional action.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO UNHCR
FOR
REFUGEES FROM INDOCHINA IN THAILAND AND OTHER COUNTRIES
FOR 1975 THROUGH 1979
as of January 31, 1979

<u>Donor</u>	<u>Total</u>	Amount contributed (cash and kind)			
		<u>1975-76</u> <u>Programme</u>	<u>1977</u> <u>Programme</u>	<u>1978</u> <u>Programme</u>	<u>1979</u> <u>Programme</u>
Australia	\$ 7,362,045	\$ 1,329,116	\$ 1,123,596	\$ 4,909,333	\$ -
Austria	43,512	27,096	-	16,416	-
Belgium	594,873	128,206	200,000	266,667	-
Canada	1,342,654	246,154	443,925	652,575	-
Cyprus	1,001	-	481	520	-
Denmark	2,109,248	947,492	413,533	748,223	-
Germany, Fed. Rep.	4,368,204	1,569,102	679,591	1,959,511	170,000
Greece	15,000	15,000	-	-	-
Ireland	77,033	-	17,391	59,642	-
Japan	23,586,444	1,320,295	531,915	10,234,234	11,500,000
Mauritius	11,133	10,000	-	1,133	-
Netherlands	2,131,872	573,297	408,163	1,150,412	-
New Zealand	154,639	154,639	-	-	-
Norway	4,069,564	134,892	1,159,478	2,775,194	-
Philippines	25,000	5,000	10,000	-	10,000
Sweden	781,845	-	-	781,845	-
Switzerland	964,661	235,428	117,647	611,586	-
United Kingdom	5,588,580	304,260	1,336,441	3,947,879	-
United States	57,855,000	11,920,000	9,935,000	13,500,000	7,500,000 15,000,000
European Economic Community	429,000	-	-	429,000	-
Subtotal (governments)	111,511,308	18,909,977	16,377,161	42,044,170	34,180,000
Subtotal (nongovernment, organizations and others)	547,219	55,842	194,666	296,711	-
Grand Total	<u>\$112,058,527</u>	<u>\$18,965,819</u>	<u>\$16,571,827</u>	<u>\$42,340,981</u>	<u>\$34,180,000</u>

UNITED STATES PORTION OF
UNHCR REIMBURSEMENTS TO ICEM FOR
TRANSPORTATION OF INDOCHINESE REFUGEES (note 1)

	<u>1976</u>	<u>1977</u>	<u>1978</u> (note 2)
UNHCR Reimbursement	<u>\$2,915,000</u>	<u>\$4,150,441</u>	<u>\$7,500,000</u>
U.S. Portion of the UNHCR Reimbursement	\$ <u>300,000</u>	<u>\$2,400,000</u>	<u>\$2,500,000</u>
U.S. Portion Expressed as a Percentage	<u>10.29%</u>	<u>57.83%</u>	<u>33.33%</u>

Note 1

The above contributions from the UNHCR are reimbursements to ICEM for transportation of refugees to resettlement countries other than the United States. In addition, the United States directly reimburses ICEM for transportation and other services provided to refugees admitted to the United States. (See chapter 2.)

Note 2

Estimates based on anticipated needs and U.S. payments to UNHCR as of September 1, 1978.

RESETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES
FROM THE INDOCHINA PENINSULA
FROM 1975 THROUGH JANUARY 1979

<u>Country of resettlement</u>	<u>Number of refugees resettled a/</u>
Australia	16,336 (11,060)
Austria	235 (23)
Belgium	1,198 (71)
Canada	10,531 (1,966)
Denmark	404 (104)
France	46,670 (3,173)
Fr Germany	2,549 (1,460)
Gabon	4
Hong Kong	188 (67)
Israel	168 (168)
Italy	250 (24)
Iran	47
Japan	51 (41)
Luxembourg	6
Malaysia	1,584 (6)
New Caledonia	38
New Zealand	693 (441)
Netherlands	328 (155)
Norway	708 (618)
Philippines	126
Switzerland	1,374 (547)
United Kingdom	880 (362)
U.S.A.	64,039 ^{b/} (25,660)
Other/Deaths	543
Repatriated	(99)
Total	148,950 (46,045)

a/Figures in brackets represent boat people.

b/Excluding approximately 130,000 persons evacuated to the United States in the spring of 1975.

VOLUNTARY AGENCIES PARTICIPATING IN
INDOCHINESE REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

U.S. Catholic Conference (USCC)

USCC is the official representative of the Catholic Bishops of the United States in the fields of migration, immigration and refugee affairs. The Conference utilizes a nationwide network of dioceses to resettle refugees. Each diocese has a resettlement director who acts as a liaison between USCC and the local parish or individual sponsor.

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS)

LIRS is a department of the Division of Mission and Ministry of the Lutheran Council in the United States. It handles immigration and refugee affairs through a network of about 30 regional consultants, most of which operate out of Lutheran Social Services Agencies located throughout the country. These consultants serve as the link between LIRS and the Lutheran congregations.

Church World Service (CWS)

CWS is a department of the Division of Overseas Ministries of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States. CWS is responsible for the operation and coordination of the Council's immigration and refugee program. It obtains sponsors from local churches, groups, or individuals who volunteer their help.

International Rescue Committee (IRC)

IRC is a nonsectarian organization, in existence since 1933, whose objective is to provide assistance to refugees throughout the world. IRC resettles refugees directly, using its 10 regional offices to provide resettlement services such as housing, counseling, job development, and referral.

American Council for Nationalities Service (ACNS)

ACNS is the national organization for a network of some 30 community supported social service agencies devoted to serving the needs of immigrants and refugees. ACNS resettles refugees directly through this member agency structure.

United HIAS Service, Inc.

HIAS is a worldwide Jewish migration agency operating through Jewish Family Service Agencies which are organizationally autonomous from HIAS. Normally, the agency services only Jewish refugees and migrants, but at the request of the State Department it agreed to resettle Indochinese refugees.

American Fund for Czechoslovak Refugees (AFCR)

AFCR is a refugee resettlement agency located in New York City, which uses Indochinese family relatives and, in some cases, employers as sponsors.

Tolstoy Foundation

The Tolstoy Foundation's Department of Immigration and Resettlement is a refugee resettlement agency with two regional offices. It is mostly concerned with assisting Soviet and East European immigrants, though it has participated in the Indochinese program through the use of Indochinese family relatives and, in some cases, employers as refugee sponsors.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
OBLIGATIONS, BY STATES, FOR WELFARE ASSISTANCE
AND SERVICES, FISCAL YEAR 1978

	Indochinese Refugee Program
Alabama	188,327
Alaska	50,000
Arizona	666,000
Arkansas	298,017
California	38,244,900
Colorado	2,303,108
Connecticut	564,852
Delaware	42,300
District of Columbia	215,911
Florida	2,344,670
Georgia	61,682
Guam	808,936
Hawaii	2,869,696
Idaho	57,000
Illinois	1,928,184
Indiana	472,517
Iowa	953,892
Kansas	659,229
Kentucky	406,939
Louisiana	2,763,496
Maine	70,000
Maryland	743,385
Massachusetts	880,946
Michigan	2,530,903
Minnesota	2,928,218
Mississippi	79,044
Missouri	---
Montana	211,808
Nebraska	474,000
Nevada	116,943
Nevada	27,300
New Hampshire	1,202,716
New Jersey	316,257
New Mexico	2,654,529
New York	349,660
North Carolina	113,379
North Dakota	740,000
Ohio	820,611
Oklahoma	4,474,469
Oregon	6,808,250
Pennsylvania	---
Puerto Rico	657,180
Rhode Island	122,664
South Carolina	85,153
South Dakota	150,000
Tennessee	3,792,085
Texas	290,690
Utah	15,500
Vermont	---
Virgin Islands	---
Virginia	2,883,798
Washington	6,365,146
West Virginia	150,000
Wisconsin	2,369,694
Wyoming	7,492
Total	98,331,476 ^{1/}

^{1/}Includes welfare assistance, state and local administration and social services only. Excludes Indochinese program special projects and SSI state supplementation.

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