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THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

July 18, 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT
FROM : Cyrus Vance ✓
SUBJECT : United States Initiatives at the
United Nations Geneva Conference
on Indochinese Refugees

As you know Secretary General Waldheim has called a conference in Geneva July 20-21. In addition to Fritz our delegation will include eight members from the Congress, Dick Clark and the Governors of New Jersey and Iowa. Bold new initiatives from the international community are clearly needed to reverse the crisis in the region. Below are major United States initiatives which we recommend the Vice President present at this conference to respond to the crisis and stimulate a greater international effort. We have discussed these initiatives with OMB and they have agreed that, in light of the urgency, I should communicate them directly to you.

INITIATIVE #1 INCREASED ASSISTANCE FOR CARE AND MAINTENANCE

Estimates of the cost of the FY-1980 care and maintenance program of the UNHCR in Southeast Asia exceed \$350 million. In light of the Japanese pledge at Tokyo to pick up 50 per cent of UNHCR Indochinese program costs, we recommend that the United States reduce its planned contribution from 50 per cent of the total to 30 per cent. Even at 30 per cent, however, we are still faced with a requirement to contribute \$105 million in FY 1980 or \$64 million more than our current request. No other nation is likely to contribute this \$64 million. This item has been discussed with interested members of Congress who are supportive.

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GDS 7/18/85

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958
per 4/27/06 NSC/Tr re NSIC-06-030
DATE 5/10/06

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

- 2 -

Recommendation

That \$64 million be added to the State Department FY-1980 Budget Amendment to increase its planned contribution to the UNHCR for care and maintenance for Indo-chinese refugees for FY-1980 to \$105 million.

Approved _____ ✓ _____ Disapproved _____ J

INITIATIVE #2 SUPPORT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF REFUGEE PROCESSING CENTERS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

A central requirement for success at Geneva is to find an interim way to deal with the excess of refugees fleeing Indochina over the current rate of permanent resettlements worldwide. Our best present hope is to persuade Indonesia to provide a site for a holding center of 100,000 or more. We have also approached the PRC for such a center in China. These centers would admit refugees cleared by the United States and other resettlement nations but for whom there is no place in the current year's quota. They would serve, therefore, as a way to extend guarantees to the first asylum states beyond immediate resettlement and to place the refugees in a holding status. They also have the advantage to first-asylum states of being located in isolated areas where there is less friction with the local populace. The construction of such camps for up to 250,000 population and intra-regional transportation costs would cost an estimated \$200 million. While \$20 million might get this initiative started, based on the strong recommendation of Dick Clark from Geneva who believes it is essential to its final success, we believe the United States should be prepared to commit \$30 million in order to get the initiative moving. This figure also includes the major portion of the costs of temporarily opening Fort Chafee as a receiving center in this country (\$8.5 million) listed in Initiative #6. This item has been discussed with interested members of Congress who are supportive.

Recommendation

That \$30 million be added to the State Department FY-1980 Budget Amendment as a United States contribution to the UNHCR for the construction of Refugee Processing Centers.

Approved _____ ✓ _____ *except for \$8 1/2 mil* _____ Disapproved _____

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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- 3 -

INITIATIVE #3 MOVEMENT OF 100,000 REFUGEES TO A
REFUGEE PROCESSING CENTER USING US
MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND RESOURCES

As Refugee Processing Centers are identified and construction progresses, it will become urgent to move refugees quickly out of impacted first asylum areas to the centers. We propose to use civilian ships chartered by the United States Military Sea Lift Command for this purpose. The estimated cost of the transfer of 100,000 refugees from the main first asylum camps to a possible Indonesian site in West Irian would be \$14.0 million.

Recommendation

That you approve the use of Military Sea Lift Command charters to move refugees to new refugee centers and that \$14.0 million be added to the State Department FY-1980 budget to fund this activity.

Approved _____ ✓ _____ Disapproved _____

INITIATIVE #4 RESCUE AT SEA

The desperate situation of refugees in small boats in the South China Sea has led to strong calls for a more active involvement of United States naval forces in rescue at sea. While, in some respects this is highly desirable, it does raise serious problems because of the expectations which such increased activity can raise, leading to increased United States involvement and obligation in an almost unending continuum. The options;

Option 1. Continue current policy calling for United States naval vessels to provide resupply and repair assistance and pick up refugees only if they are in a life-threatening situation.

Option 2. Have the Secretary of Defense reinforce existing orders to United States naval units and adjust their steaming routes and frequencies so as to provide more frequent and responsive assistance to refugees, including the pick-up of any in distress. The four

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

- 4 -

ships being chartered by the United States Navy to help transport refugees to Refugee Processing Centers would significantly augment our naval presence in the refugee sea zones in providing succor and picking up refugees. The total number of refugees picked up under this option would probably not be more than several hundred a month. It would place us on a level of overall response to the problems of refugees at sea slightly ahead of other countries. It would not require any increase in the appropriation request to Congress, or in the total number of parole numbers above the 14,000 per month level. Nor would it create significant new pulls upon refugees to leave Vietnam in hopes of being picked up.

Option 3. Same as Option 2 but with the addition of a half squadron of reconnaissance aircraft dedicated to search for refugee vessels in distress in refugee frequented sea areas. When such boats are sighted in distress, any United States vessels in the area would alter course as necessary to render assistance. Reports of refugee boats in distress will also be made available to ships of other nations in the area. These aircraft would be available initially for a four-month period, though it may prove necessary to extend this operation for several months to carry it through the monsoon season. The cost of these air operations for four months would be \$2.0 million; for six months \$3.0.

Option 4. Dedicate specific elements, such as the four Military Sea Lift Command vessels, to seek out and pick up refugees found at sea. This would provide a very dramatic instance of United States leadership. However, the numbers involved would likely be very large, especially as the mission of the ships became known, and could quite possibly exceed our current program of 14,000 a month if vigorously implemented, even without taking refugees, as presently planned, from the ASEAN states and Hong Kong. It seems likely to have a substantial magnet effect both in departures from Vietnam and in the pushing off of boats from first asylum states as they see much of our program shift to rescue at sea. Any refugees picked up by United States Military chartered vessels would almost certainly be landed only if they receive a resettlement guarantee from the United States, with short term resettlement required which would put such refugees ahead of the .

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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- 5 -

370,000 now in camps. The monetary costs for naval and sea operations would still be about \$19 million for a four-month period. The refugee costs above the presently authorized 14,000 monthly would still be about \$3.5 million per thousand refugees for the first year.

Option 5. Negotiate with the SRV to take refugees directly from Vietnam. This, of course, is the best remedy against drowning at sea but involves accepting numbers of refugees far beyond those that have been considered to date. It is also an open ended invitation to Vietnam to expel additional hundreds of thousands of people.

Recommendation

That you approve Option 3 and an addition of \$3.0 million to State's FY 1980 budget to provide the necessary reimbursement to DOD.

Approved



Disapproved



INITIATIVE #5 INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR REFUGEE
RESETTLEMENT

There is an urgent need to establish an International Fund for Refugee Resettlement under the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to promote and expedite refugee resettlement in developing countries. Many developing countries could absorb large numbers of refugees but are not able to place a priority on refugee resettlement at the cost of programs for their own population.

The Fund, to be capitalized at \$200 million over three years, would result in substantial savings to the United States. We would only pay for part of the costs of resettling refugees while reducing pressures for the United States to increase still further the number of refugees it accepts for resettlement.

If this were followed, it would require a 30 per cent contribution to the Fund, or \$60 million over three years. If other nations respond with significant offers we would plan to request our first tranche of \$20 million in the January supplemental and add \$20 million each in our budget for FY-1981 and FY-1982. If other nations do not contribute adequately, our contribution would be scaled down or the Fund would not be pursued.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

- 6 -

Recommendation

That you authorize the Vice President to propose the establishment of an International Fund for Refugee Resettlement and, if justified by international response, indicate that the Administration will request \$20 million in a January supplemental budget request and for the two years following.

Approve First year only as commitment - Be sure of Disapprove match.

INITIATIVE #6 ACCELERATED MOVEMENT OF 20,000 REFUGEES TO THE UNITED STATES USING A U.S. MILITARY INSTALLATION TEMPORARILY AS A TRANSIT CENTER

We are pressing hard to increase our regular processing flow direct from Asian camp to United States sponsor to meet the goal of 14,000 a month announced by you in Tokyo. We expect to admit 12,000 in July, 13,000 in August and 14,000 in September. Numbers for this movement are supplied through previous parole authorizations and funding is available from the refugee account and the refugee emergency fund.

While greatly appreciating this increase in the United States program, the Indonesians have indicated that an additional dramatic United States gesture to ease the burden in camps could be decisive in their agreeing to a holding center for 100,000 refugees. Additionally, the Malaysians have been pressing hard for some sort of camp in the United States, acknowledging it could have only symbolic, short-term impact. Thus, we would plan to accelerate movement under the new 14,000 monthly parole by moving 20,000 refugees of the 168,000 refugees authorized and funded in FY 1980 immediately to a camp on a United States military installation (Fort Chafee). This would mean the actual admission of a total of 59,000 refugees in the last three months of FY 1979. This would be a temporary measure and we would expect to have all these refugees out of the camp by November. The voluntary agencies have long pressed us for such a move and we believe they can handle the task in this time frame. Movement, from October on, through normal processing direct to United States sponsor without an interim camp would continue at the rate of 12,400 monthly to average 14,000 per month for FY-1980.

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The estimated cost of this proposal to State is \$13.5 million. Since the UNHCR would bear an indirect portion of these costs because of the reduction of our planned contribution, the net additional to the Department of State is only \$5.1 million. However, HEW costs will increase by approximately \$7 million since the refugee arrival rate for Fiscal Year 1980 will be disproportionately heavy in the first two months of FY-1980.

Recommendation

That you approve the accelerated admission of 20,000 Indochinese refugees to be processed through the use of a United States military installation and the funding necessary to support this initiative.

Approved _____ Disapproved _____ ✓

The total additional funding involved in these initiatives for FY 1979-80, under my recommendations, is thus \$143 million. Consultations with Congress show a readiness to support the funding required for such an initiative in Geneva.

I prefer to avoid this. 14,000 per month can be accommodated, I believe, without a "refugee camp" in our country which would have limited practical value.

PUBLIC STATEMENTS

DRAFT SPEECH, GENEVA ARRIVAL STATEMENT AND
OTHER PUBLIC STATEMENTS HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED
TO THE WHITE HOUSE FOR REVIEW AND EDITING.

SUGGESTED OPENING STATEMENT FOR VICE PRESIDENT'S PRESS CONFERENCE

Thank you for coming. Before I take your questions, I'd like to give you our assessment of the meeting and where we go from here.

First of all, I think we can agree the Conference has been a success. The Conference is ^{part of} a process, beginning with the Tokyo Summit in June and followed by the Bali meeting earlier this month. There has been a growing mobilization of the international community to deal with the tragedy of the Indochinese refugees--President Carter's announcement on doubling our own intake, Japan's pledge of 50% of UNHCR costs, the Canadian announcement just before the Conference opened increasing their intake to 50,000 over three years, increased resettlement efforts by France and other countries, etc.

The announcements on specific proposals we have heard these last two days continue this process. Further concrete actions will follow the meeting here. Naturally, everything has not been sweetness and light. But the important thing is that the momentum has continued to build. We have to make sure that it stays that way.

As far as the US delegation is concerned, we did not come here for a session in blame fixing. I think we all know where the blame lies. Hanoi must understand that the international community cannot tolerate its policy of forcing out

entire population groups from its own territory and the territory of Laos and Kampuchea which it effectively dominates. We will have more to say about this in other UN bodies such as the Security Council and General Assembly.

Here at Geneva, we needed to accomplish three things. First, to mobilize the international community to take concrete actions which would demonstrate to the first asylum countries like Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia that they are not being asked to shoulder the burden alone. I think this has been done. I want to praise the ASEAN countries for their compassion and sense of responsibility to all humanity.

Secondly, the concrete actions on resettlement and temporary care. We wanted to expand and regularize the resettlement process, not only in numbers of refugees resettled but also in the numbers of countries involved. Our goal was at least a doubling to 250,000 this year. We are pleased that so many new countries have added themselves to the resettlement list, even though gaps in that list still remain. It was also obvious that UNHCR must have increased resources to render prompt and effective aid to refugees in camps.

Again, we are pleased that so many have responded generously even though still more needs to be done.

Third, the international community needed to address the issue of rescue at sea. We all know the grim statistics

of the toll being taken among those refugees forced out by Vietnam in inadequate and unseaworthy boats. The Conference has taken significant steps in this regard, not the least of which are the instructions issued to the United States Navy which I mentioned in the Hall just a few minutes ago.

One last thing. I want to praise particularly the work which my close friend, Ambassador Dick Clark and his team have done both before and at this Conference, and the strenuous efforts made by Secretary General Waldheim and his and the UNHCR staff to make this Conference the success it was. Finally, I want to thank especially Governor Byrne of New Jersey, Governor Ray of Iowa, Chairman Peter Rodino, Chairman Lester Wolff and the entire delegation from the United States Congress. Their advice and their assistance were truly invaluable in meeting our objectives for the Conference.

U.S. Doubling of Indochinese Refugee Admissions

Q. Why has the United States decided to double Indochinese refugee admissions when we are having so much trouble processing the number that has already been authorized?

A. The reason is simple: hundreds of thousands of Indochinese refugees face death in Southeast Asia if the rest of the world doesn't respond to this crisis. With our humanitarian tradition and great national resources, we cannot afford to ignore this human tragedy. I am confident that we can work out the procedures for admitting 14,000 Indochinese a month.

In the past, delays in approving refugees for admission have resulted primarily from lack of funds or legal authority to admit them, rather than problems in processing them. But the Congress has just passed the supplemental budget requests necessary to accelerate our admissions rate for the remainder of this fiscal year, and there seems to be a great deal of Congressional support for our plans to admit 14,000 a month. We are pressing to get up to 14,000 as quickly as possible, probably in September. We plan to move 59,000 in the next three months.

We are working closely with the federal and voluntary agencies involved in refugee assistance and admissions to streamline the procedures for screening refugees and finding them sponsors in this country. The voluntary agencies assure us that they can find enough sponsors for all the refugees we would like to bring into the United States.

Per Capita Resettlement Rate

Q. How do U.S. admissions of Indochinese refugees compare with those of other countries on a per capita basis?

A. The United States has admitted 94 Indochinese refugees per 100,000 population, and the rate will go up. But the significant number is the total, which will reach almost 400,000 by the end of next year. Only Australia has admitted more on a per capita basis (143 per 100,000 population).

Per capita rates for other countries are Canada 47, New Zealand 32, Sweden and Switzerland 16, Norway 15, Belgium 12, Germany 5, the United Kingdom 3.

July 19, 1979

Cost of Refugee Programs

- Q. How can we afford to bring in 14,000 refugees a month at a time of fiscal austerity?
- A. Refugee programs do require substantial funding. But the investment we make in these refugees is clearly worthwhile. Our experience since 1975 has been that the Indochinese work very hard and soon become self-sufficient and contributing members of our society. The vast majority of the refugee workforce is now employed, and the taxes they pay soon offset the cost of the initial assistance provided by the government and private voluntary agencies. The United States became the richest nation in the world in part because of the hard work and achievement by the generations of refugees who have preceded us. I am sure we still have the resources and compassion to extend a hand to those in need, and those willing to help themselves.

July 19, 1979

Charges that the U.S. is Responsible for Refugee Crisis

- Q. Do you have any comment on charges that the flood of Indochinese refugees in Southeast Asia is the "hang-over" of U.S. involvement in Vietnam?
- A. This is completely untrue. The United States may have had some responsibility for the exodus from South Vietnam in 1975. But the situation has changed completely since that time, and we no longer have any influence over the factors that are causing people to flee the three countries of Indochina at the moment. The Hanoi regime has deliberately created conditions and treated its people in such a way that large numbers of them feel compelled to leave at great risk to their lives. For the most part, the people subject to discrimination or persecution now -- particularly the ethnic Chinese -- had no association with the United States during the war. The continuing conflict in Kampuchea and tension in Laos, also causing refugees to flee, are not due to any action by the U.S.

July 19, 1979

Is the United States Doing Enough?

- Q. Do you really think that U.S. Indochinese refugee admissions of 14,000 a month are going to solve the problem at a time when arrival rates in countries of first asylum are running as high as 60,000 a month? Shouldn't the United States be doing even more?
- A. The Indochinese refugee problem is clearly of such magnitude now that no single nation could possibly "solve the problem." It is truly an international problem, and the solutions must come from the entire international community. New policies by Hanoi should be the first step.

We believe that our new policy of admitting 14,000 Indochinese a month represents a very generous response which, in conjunction with resettlement programs of other countries, should prove able to deal with the problem over time. In the interim, arrival rates far surpass resettlement rates. We are, therefore, seeking interim measures (such as the RPC's) to deal with this problem.

The crux of the matter for the future is clearly the source -- rather than the symptoms -- of the refugee outflow. We hope that the international community can somehow induce the Vietnamese to moderate the policies that compel people to flee at risk to their lives.

July 19, 1979

U.S. Position on Security Council Session

- Q. Does the United States intend to call for a United Nations Security Council meeting to deal with the question of Vietnamese refugees after the present Geneva meeting?
- A. We believe that follow-up action in the UN system may be warranted depending on the results here in Geneva. There can be little doubt that the refugee problem is directly related to the inhumane domestic policies of the Vietnamese Government as well as Vietnamese military action in Cambodia and has created regional instability. The UN Security Council is the appropriate body to deal with such questions of threats to international security and peace. We believe a Security Council meeting could very well be useful in terms of identifying the basis of the problem and expressing the will of the Council, as well as the international community, with regard to Vietnam's actions.

July 19, 1979

Refugee Issue at the UN General Assembly

- Q. Do you believe the UN General Assembly this fall should also take up the matter of refugees?
- A. It seems to us that this would be an appropriate matter for the General Assembly to address in view of the clear concern and interest exhibited by the international community with regard to the refugee problem and to the Vietnamese policies that have caused it. We feel the General Assembly could address both the humanitarian aspects of this problem as well as political questions related to Vietnam's actions.

July 19, 1979

Location of Refugee Processing Centers

- Q. Where are the Refugee Processing Centers you mentioned that will accommodate 250,000 people? If you don't have them lined up yet, how long will it take?
- A. The UNHCR is working with other governments, including the U.S. and ASEAN, to arrange for refugee processing centers. In May the Indonesians designated Galang Island (about 40 miles south of Singapore) as the first RPC. A team from the UNHCR and Japan has completed preparatory work and construction and refugee movements should begin soon. The Philippine Government also stated its intention of providing an island for this purpose. Other countries have been approached to provide additional sites, and plans are being made for financing, transportation and rapid construction. However, no final decisions on new sites have been made.

July 19, 1979

Refugee Centers on U.S. Territory

- Q. Rather than looking for sites for new RPCs in first asylum countries, why don't you just reopen the camps on Guam that you used for the Vietnamese in 1975?
- A. The point of a refugee processing center is to provide facilities to hold refugees with assurances of eventual resettlement until they can be moved to their new homes. This may take several years in some cases. Once refugees are on U.S. territory, we have no authority to hold them indefinitely if they haven't committed a crime. Moreover, they count immediately against the number of refugees we have pledged for the current years, so there is no long-term advantage to first asylum countries.

July 19, 1979

U.S. Policy on Rescue at Sea

- Q. What has U.S. policy been in the past on rescuing refugees at sea and bringing them to the U.S.?
- A. Under international law, ships of all registry--including ships carrying flags of convenience--are obligated to assist or rescue persons in distress on the high seas. We have always urged U.S.-owned or registered ships to respect this requirement. It is also a long-standing U.S. policy to guarantee permanent resettlement to refugees rescued at sea by U.S. ships, if such guarantees are necessary to unload the refugees at the next scheduled port of call. We have had a positive response from U.S. shipping organizations.

U.S. Assistance for First-Asylum Countries

- Is there any program of special American assistance to assist the countries of first asylum in Southeast Asia in coping with the burden of caring for Indochinese refugees?
- A. It is United States policy to provide multilateral -- rather than bilateral -- aid to Southeast Asian first asylum countries for temporary refugee assistance. We have been financing about half the cost of the Indochinese refugee assistance program operated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The UNHCR provides care and maintenance for most of the refugees in the region, and the dollar costs to the host country governments, except Hong Kong, are relatively low. With increasing costs of U.S. admission and domestic resettlement programs, the Japanese have agreed to take perhaps 50% of the UNHCR budget and we expect other governments to also do much more. Our proportion of the total expenses for temporary assistance will decrease sharply.

We are prepared to consider bilateral as well as multilateral aid to countries for development projects which would include refugee resettlement. As yet no specific projects have been identified.

At the moment the crucial factor for the first asylum countries like Malaysia and Indonesia is not lack of funds for care and maintenance for refugees in camps; it is rather what the first asylum countries consider an inadequate response on the part of other nations in offering permanent resettlement opportunities to the refugees.

July 19, 1979

KAMPUCHEA FOOD SHORTAGE

Q. Are reports of famine in Kampuchea (Cambodia) true?

A. The inability of independent observers to conduct a survey of food need in Kampuchea up to this time has precluded any clear assessment of the severity of food shortages in Kampuchea.

The invasion and occupation of Kampuchea by Vietnamese forces and the consequent resistance by the ousted Government and the Khmer people themselves, has seriously disrupted the agricultural production cycle, necessitating reliance on outside food support.

We believe at a minimum that there will be severe localized food shortages in many areas of Kampuchea.

The U.S. has been trying since last March to stimulate action to forestall this eventuality.

- Q. What U.S. help is in prospect for the food shortage in Kampuchea?
- A. Secretary of State Vance has called for an international relief program for Kampuchea, reflecting deep U.S. concern about prospective severe food shortages in Kampuchea.

Following the Secretary's call, UN and International Red Cross representatives traveled to Phnom Penh, on July 17, to discuss possible modalities for delivery and distribution of emergency assistance to Khmer people in need.

As early as March, the U.S. had alerted the UNHCR, the ICRC, the World Food Program and other international bodies to the possibility of severe food shortages in Kampuchea as a result of disruption of agricultural production by the Vietnamese invasion. The U.S. has continued to discuss need with them, and these bodies in turn have been in regular contact with representatives of both the Pol Pot and the Heng Samrin regimes about the situation in areas under their control. The responses have not been encouraging.

In June, the U.S. contributed \$300,000 to the ICRC to assist large numbers of Khmer in the border area of Thailand and we have also coordinated closely with the Thai Government and private organizations to provide emergency food assistance to Khmer in the Thai-Kampuchean border areas.

The U.S. continues to urge international humanitarian assistance be aimed at meeting the basic humanitarian needs for all Khmer, under control of whatever authorities they fall. The U.S. also continues to press for an immediate political solution of the conflict in Kampuchea, the root cause of both the famine and the refugee problem.

July 19, 1979

Malaysian/Thai/Indonesian Refugee Policy

Q. What is our position on the policy of refusing to accept refugees, by sea or by land?

A. We are concerned that governments in Southeast Asia like Malaysia and Indonesia may not continue their previously generous policies of offering first asylum to refugees fleeing the countries of Indochina. Clearly we deplore any policy that might lead to a loss of life. But we understand the burden that the first asylum countries have had to bear with some 370,000 refugees already in camps and arrival rates running as high as 65,000 a month. The Malaysians and others have always tied their acceptance of new refugees to assurances that the refugees will eventually be resettled out of the region. We are confident that the cumulative effect of decisions taken since the Tokyo Summit and at this meeting will enable these governments to resume their humanitarian practices.

Thailand Deports Cambodian Refugees

Q. How many Cambodians is the United States accepting now?

A. We are planning to accept a total of 12,000 Cambodians in FY 79.

Q. Why can't we accept more Cambodians?

A. While the plight of these Cambodians is tragic, we are equally concerned about the 320,000 other Indochinese refugees who are now in refugee camps in Southeast Asian countries of first asylum, some of them have been awaiting permanent resettlement for up to four years. At the same time, new refugees continue to arrive at ever-increasing rates. In addition to the Khmer, we estimate that in the month of May alone, another 10,000 "land refugees" were granted asylum in Thailand, and 50-60,000 "boat people" received temporary asylum in Thailand and elsewhere in Southeast Asia. We do not know how many "boat people" drowned before reaching their destination, but some observers believe it could be as high as 50 percent.

We feel we must respond to this grave humanitarian situation by accepting refugees throughout Southeast Asia and Hong Kong of all ethnic and national groups, and all countries of origin. We do our best to balance the numbers we take each month, also taking into consideration what others are doing.

July 19, 1979

Expulsion of Sino-Vietnamese

Q. What is your evidence that Indochinese authorities are systematically persecuting and expelling their Chinese minority populations?

A. The mass of confirmed information we have received from refugees and other sources makes it clear that the Vietnamese government has instituted policies designed to rid itself of those elements of its society -- including Vietnamese of Chinese extraction -- which it believes undesirable. Often they are given the stark alternative of going to forced labor camps or fleeing by boat at great risk to their lives. In addition, the Vietnamese authorities appear to have profited directly from the resulting refugee outflow by requiring the payment of bribes to facilitate departures.

We strongly condemn these callous actions on the part of the Vietnamese government, policies which are anathema to the international community and have resulted in the loss of thousands of lives. We call upon Vietnam to live up to its obligations under the UN Charter to treat its own people humanely so that they do not feel compelled to flee at risk to their lives. Furthermore, we urge it to allow those people who wish to depart to do so in numbers commensurate with the ability of the international community to care for them.



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