

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Sunday, Oct. 15, 1967
10:15 p.m.

Mr. President:

Press file

Here is the account of the press
backgrounder in Saigon which lead
to the unfortunate item on refugee
camps on UPI.

It's hard to cope with such purposeful
distortion, but they are going to make
an effort, as you see.

WWR

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ACTION EA 19

INFO SSO 00, NSCE 00, USIE 00, SAL 01, SS 35, NSC 10, P 04, TGA 02, AID 30,
RSR 01, RSC 01, /103 W

P 141300Z OCT 67
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8881

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REF: STATE 53631

1. UPI ITEM QUOTED REFTEL IS UNFORTUNATELY CUT VERSION OF LONGER MORE BALANCED UPI SAIGON REPORT OF REGULAR THURSDAY NIGHT PRESS BACKGROUNDER HELD AT JUSPAO DIRECTORS HOME ON OCTOBER 12. IT DOES NOT REPEAT NOT REFLECT ACCURATELY EITHER THE SUBSTANCE OF THE EVENINGS DISCUSSION OR THE TONE OF THE ORIGINAL STORY FILED FROM SAIGON BY UPI CORRESPONDENT WHO WAS ONE OF APPROXIMATELY TWENTY-FIVE JOURNALISTS IN ATTENDANCE.

2. THEME OF BRIEFER GEORGE GOSS, REMARKS, WHICH DIRECTOR INDICATED WERE, AS USUAL, ATTRIBUTABLE ONLY TO "US OFFICIALS."

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MAY BE SUMMARIZED AS FOLLOWS:

3. GVN AND CORDS ARE ENGAGED IN A UNIQUE EFFORT WHOSE ACCOMPLISHMENTS, AND LACK OF ACCOMPLISHMENT, SHOULD BE MEASURED WITH FOLLOWING FACTS IN MIND: RARELY, IF EVER, HAS A GOVERNMENT ATTEMPTED TO SHELTER, FEED, AND RESETTLE A

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LARGE NUMBER OF DISPLACED PERSONS EVEN AS A SHOOTING WAR RAGED WITHIN ITS BORDERS. THE GVN'S EFFORTS ARE FURTHER COMPLICATED BY A GRAVE SHORTAGE OF TRAINED PERSONNEL, AND THE LIMITATIONS ON AVAILABLE LAND FOR RESETTLEMENT IMPOSED BY MILITARY ACTIONS AND LACK OF SECURITY. US OFFICIALS BELIEVE THAT, IN THE FACE OF THESE DIFFICULTIES, THE GVN HAS BEEN REMARKABLY RESPONSIVE AND RESPONSIBLE TO THE REFUGEE PROBLEM. DR. NGUYEN PHOC QUE, THE SPECIAL COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES, IS A DEDICATED, HARDWORKING, HONEST OFFICIAL WHO, WITH US SUPPORT, HAS MANAGED TO OVERCOME A SURPRISING NUMBER OF THE SHORTCOMINGS TO BE FOUND IN ANY AGENCY AS YOUNG AS HIS.

4. AT NO TIME DID THE BRIEFER MAKE THE STATEMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO HIM IN THE UPI LEAD, OR THOSE WITHIN QUOTES REFERRING TO "CORRUPT OFFICIALS" AND COMMODITIES. SUCH CHARGES WERE,

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HOWEVER, RAISED BY SEVERAL NEWSMEN PRESENT DURING Q&A THAT FOLLOWED THE EVENINGS MAJOR PRESENTATION. BRIEFER ACKNOWLEDGED THE VALIDITY OF SOME OF THE CORRESPONDENTS ACCUSATIONS OF PROFITEERING ON THE PART OF AN UNSPECIFIED NUMBER OF DISTRICT OFFICIALS, AND THE APPARENT LACK OF TOTAL SUCCESS OF THE CURRENT CONTROL SYSTEM. WHILE DOING SO, HE ALSO ATTEMPTED TO PUT THESE UNDENIABLE CIRCUMSTANCES BACK INTO THEIR PROPER CONTEXT.

5. UPI'S REPORTER STORY INCLUDED NEGATIVE POINTS BUT WHEN COMPOUNDED BY FURTHER EDITING IN NEW YORK NET EFFECT WAS TO REMOVE THE CONTEXT AND LEAVE A LESS THAN ACCURATE, UNBALANCED ACCOUNT.

6. IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT NONE OF OTHER CORRESPONDENTS PRESENT, INCLUDING AP, HAVE FILED STORY AS NEGATIVE AS UPI VERSION.

7. WE ASSUME THAT OTHER STORIES FROM BACKGROUNDER WILL SET RECORD STRIGHTER, AS WILL CBS INTERVIEW FILMED WITH GOSS OCTOBER 13.

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8. IN ADDITION, UPI/SAIGON HAS ACCEPTED OUR SUGGESTION THAT THE REFUGEE PROGRAM IS WORTHY OF LONGER, MORE SERIOUS ATTENTION THAN THEY HAVE ASSIGNED A REPORTER, HAS STARTED ON A STORY AND WILL SPEND THE NEXT THREE DAYS INTERVIEWING CORDS AND

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GVN OFFICIALS AND VISITING REFUGEE CAMPS AND RESETTLEMENT AREAS.
THE RESULTING STORY SHOULD SERVE AS AN ANTIDOTE TO THE PREVIOUS
ITEM.

9. TEXT BACKGROUNDER BEING TRANSMITTED SEPTEL. BUNKER

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