

The University of Oklahoma is available to assist the Task Force in placing from 6,000 to 10,000 refugees in available housing spaces within the colleges and universities throughout the State of Oklahoma. This movement of processed/unsponsored refugees from the Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, port of entry would make room for a like number of unprocessed refugees from Guam to <sup>be moved to</sup> ~~enter~~, the port of entry on the mainland.

Its proximity to Oklahoma (7 miles) makes Fort Chaffee an ideal port of entry from which to draw these thousands of processed/unsponsored refugees.

Administratively, the institutions of higher education in Oklahoma would be designated by the appropriate Federal Authority as a Training Branch auxiliary to the Fort Chaffee port of entry. The refugees would remain under the responsibility and control of Task Force officials at Fort Chaffee. The full implications of "responsibility and control" would be more specifically delineated by detailed discussion among the agencies involved. The sponsor identification and placement of refugees would remain within the scope of the contracted volunteer relief organizations. The institutions for higher education in Oklahoma, under contract, would be responsible for:

- (1) Housing and <sup>f</sup>ood Service
- (2) Medical Care
- (3) Bilingual training for elementary and secondary school age children.

- (4) Bilingual training for those over ~~elementary~~ elementary and secondary school age with emphasis on individuals who will be entering the job market.
- (5) Acculturation training for all individuals between the age of 15 and 60, (i.e. Initial integration of Vietnamese refugees into American society).
- (6) Upgrading of skills for those with marketable skills.
- (7) Counseling in the selection of a career field for those without a marketable skill and skill training in the field selected.
- (8) Refresher training for refugees possessing a professional background (doctor, dentist, engineer, etc.)
- (9) Remedial education (where required.)
- (10) Any other training that the Task Force believes necessary for the refugee to function as a productive self-supporting member of our society.
- (11) Counseling in all appropriate matters as the need arises.

All services by Oklahoma's colleges and universities will be coordinated by the Southwest Center for Human Relations Studies, The University of Oklahoma.

Training and services will be conducted by and within the 30 public and private colleges and universities through out the State, and are either adjacent to the colleges and universities or within a thirty minute bus ride.

#### Rationale

- (1) Refugees entering the Training Branch in Oklahoma will have been processed with security checks completed.
- (2) The dispersal of the processed refugee to the training branch will

Provide valuable space at Fort Chaffee for the mounting number of unprocessed refugees entering the continental United States.

(3) Rather than concentrating 24,000 refugees in one location during training, <sup>this program</sup> ~~training in Oklahoma~~ would assemble no more than 1,000 refugees at any one college or university. Normally there would be only 150 to 200. These numbers preclude the refugees from standing out conspicuously in an educational community of 1,000 to 20,000 students.

(4) Fort Chaffee lacks the facilities to conduct the varied training sessions which must be conducted simultaneously.

(5) The atmosphere and morale at the ports of entry are not conducive to learning.

(6) For skills training at Fort Chaffee, all training equipment and personnel must be physically moved and a training center established on a site which is already experiencing space problems.

(7) Training expense at the ~~Training Branch~~ <sup>T</sup> would be diminished. Most trainers will be instructing in existing schools and living at home, <sup>thus</sup> eliminating travel and per-diem expense that would be incurred if the hundreds of trainers and staff were to conduct this volume of training at Fort Chaffee.

(8) Refugees at the ~~Training Branch~~ <sup>T</sup> will enjoy direct and immediate participation in the American society <sup>in</sup> which they are being prepared to enter.

(9) As the refugees are certified by the Training Branch, Task Force and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare as ready to take their place in American society and are placed with sponsors, the cycle will be repeated, (i.e., new processed refugees from Fort Chaffee will enter the Training Branch, <sup>can settle</sup> ~~through~~ training, become certified, and will

be placed with a sponsor and new job.)

(10) Coordinate with the Voluntary Organizations and the National Computerized Job Bank in Oklahoma City in identifying skill needs and job availability. The placement process could begin sufficiently in advance of the expected date of completion of skill training to permit the placement of graduates with a minimum period of unproductive holding time.

Qualified Vietnamese would be employed to the full extent possible in support staff positions. An initial estimate would be 50 to 75 persons plus their families who would be sponsored by the universities involved and would be considered as self supporting.

There are many rationales we could advance for our concept of a "Training Branch" to the port of entry, Fort Chaffee, but the important benefit we suggest for the U.S. State Department and Department of Health, Education and Welfare is a model that could be replicated for a "Training Branch" for each port of entry which allows a more flexible approach to refugee training.

This paper contains much of the material, though in revised form, that was presented in a briefing to some members of the Refugee Task Force in Washington on May 5. <sup>Our</sup> ~~the~~ initial conviction that there is a definite need for this type of program has been reinforced in the interim by further study, consultation with experts in various appropriate fields and a visit to Fort Chaffee. We continue to feel that the Federal authorities are not seeking the easiest way out from under the refugee resettlement burden. Nor does it want to push the refugees out the front gate ill prepared for what they will encounter but would fully consider a training program that has been carefully conceived and <sup>that</sup> ~~would~~ be professionally implemented to the full benefit of the United States government, the American society and the Vietnamese refugee.

## INTRODUCTION

### Background

As the impact of the <sup>potential</sup> Vietnamese refugee influx became apparent, members of the staff of The University of Oklahoma took immediate steps to engage the problem with the vast and varied educational and training resources of the Oklahoma State System for Higher Education /is this the proper name for the monster?/.

~~Experienced~~ Staff and consultants experienced in acculturation programming were called in to examine the accelerating social, ~~and~~ economic and political problems /get a more colorful word here/ occurring at holding points in the Pacific and in the United States ports of entry. The expertise assembled saw a need for quick action by the Federal government to:

a) involve the refugees in a learning activity to prepare them for rapid integration into American society ~~AND~~ and to dispel the military-detention atmosphere of the refugee encampments.

b) disperse the refugees as much as possible, after required processing, for training in non-military, non-governmental atmospheres, preferably existing educational institutions and facilities.

## TALKING PAPER

Developed April 15, 1975

The Southwest Center for Human Relations Studies, a division of the Oklahoma Center for Continuing Education, University of Oklahoma, proposes to contract

to administer and coordinate the following services to 6,200 unsponsored South Vietnamese refugees now entering the United States:

- (1) Food and Lodging
- (2) Medical Services
- (3) Education Programs in English, Cross-Cultural Communication, U. S. History, Consumer Information, Civil and Criminal Law, U. S. Government, U. S. Geography, Economics, Judicial System (local, state and federal structure and operation), Planned Parenthood, Nutrition, Home Economics, and other subjects that are necessary for a meaningful assimilation of the refugees into the United States.
- (4) Conduct skills training at state vo-tech centers for refugees who need to be retrained for a skill that would be applicable to meaningful employment.
- (5) Develop programs for Vietnamese physicians through the University of Oklahoma medical school to assist them in meeting the O.M.A. and A.M.A. criterion--if this is infeasible, retrain them for another profession.
- (6) Develop programs for Vietnamese lawyers through the University of Oklahoma Law School to assist them in meeting the O.B.A. and A.B.A. standards or retrain for a new profession.
- (7) Assess the educational level of the school age children in order to determine educational needs.
- (8) Plan and develop early childhood programs for the younger children to prepare them to enter in to the basic public school program.

- (9) Assess vocational skills of refugees and coordinate with the National computerized job bank maintained in Oklahoma City by federal and state employment services for job placement.
- (10) Establish a "public relations program" -- utilizing the refugees to speak of their experiences (past and current)-- in order to help alleviate anxiety for both Americans and Vietnamese refugees.
- (12) Assist in a coordinated effort of public awareness of the special problems of the refugees.

All services will be coordinated and conducted through 18 state-operated institutions of higher education. Present faculty and staff of these institutions will be utilized to conduct the prescribed services in their own campuses with state wide administration and coordination conducted by personnel of the Southwest Center for Human Relations Studies. There will be very little increase in personnel, if any, for this undertaking. The present faculty and staff of our institutions will be able to provide these services on overload basis. There will be a need to hire various refugees to assist in this program, i.e. secretaries, interpreters, medical personnel, bilingual teachers, and other needs that may arise.

The housing, medical and feeding situation and capabilities at our 18 state institutions are as follows:

H        According to a 1974 housing study, conducted by the Oklahoma  
O        Regents for higher education, there were 6,196 empty housing  
U        spaces in our 18 state universities, senior colleges and junior  
S        colleges. This study was conducted during the fall term of 1974,  
I        the fall term is normally the period of our highest enrollment.  
N        During the summer, from May 12 to August 15 our enrollment runs  
G

about 50% of the fall term. Taking this into consideration, our institutions could accommodate a few thousand more refugees during that 14 week period. These 18 state schools are located throughout the entire state. (Attachment 1)

**MEDICAL** Most of these institutions have their own hospitals or clinics staffed by medical doctors and registered nurses. Those that do not have their own medical facilities have arrangements with their local community hospitals and doctors.

**FEEDING** All 18 institutions have one or more cafeterias that could accommodate an influx of patrons with little difficulty.

Another housing location in Oklahoma that should be considered is Clinton-Sherman Air Force Base. This facility has space for hundreds of refugees. The physical condition of the housing on the base is excellent with many unoccupied houses to be used instead of the traditional barracks that would ordinarily be the only housing facility. There are adequate facilities for feeding and additionally to Clinton-Sherman's credit is the sociable nature of the rural community.

If this base is considered, the Southwest Center for Human Relations Studies proposes to be responsible for the coordination of staff, housing, feeding and conducting all classes and training at the base.

Some of the advantages of our proposal are:

- (1) There will be no more than 1,200 refugees at any one location and in most cases, the number would be closer to 150 - 300. This small number of refugees in each community will reduce the anxiety the local citizens may have about the refugees taking their jobs.



- (2) Considering that the majority of the refugees are professional people, the college or university environment will help to ease the cultural shock of the refugee influx.
- (3) Once refugees are placed in a community with a permanent job, they will be able to converse with more ease about their new country, its governmental system, the economy, etc. Perhaps, they will feel not so "foreign."
- (4) When these refugees are considered for citizenship, they will have had the necessary education to qualify.

There are many advantages we could list for the Vietnamese refugees, but more precisely--there is one most important benefit for the United States State Department that could emerge from the proposal we are advancing--That is, a Model for any future influx of refugees to our country and their systematic absorption into our society.

Note: This Talking Paper was by briefing, presented to Ambassador Dean Brown's Special IndoChina Task Force May 5, 1975.

TABLE V

PERCENT OF OCCUPANCY FOR SINGLE STUDENT HOUSING  
FOR STATE SYSTEM INSTITUTIONS - RANK ORDER  
1973-74

<u>Rank Order</u>	<u>Institution</u>	<u>Designed Capacity</u>	<u>% of Occupancy</u>	<u>Space Available</u>
1	OU	3,954	96.5	138
2	CSU	1,314	92.5	99
3	SEOSU	720	86.0	101
4	NEOAMC	1,025	84.8	156
5	OSU	6,358	83.6	1,043
6	SWOSU	1,574	77.9	348
7	NOC	410	74.4	105
8	OSU-T.T.	1,837	74.1	476
9	NWOSU	1,062	69.6	323
10	ECOSU	1,135	68.2	361
11	Cameron	579	57.2	248
12	Murray	378	56.1	166
13	Panhandle U	688	52.9	325
14	Eastern	728	51.6	352
15	NEOSU	2,258	47.4	1,188
16	Connors	310	43.5	175
17	Claremore	320	36.6	203
18	USAO	520	25.2	389
				6,196