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INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE RAISES SIGHTS FOR VIETNAM
RELIEF (490)

WASHINGTON, APRIL 19⁷³ - THE WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. FORCES FROM SOUTH
VIETNAM AND THE WINDING DOWN OF HOSTILITIES THERE DOES NOT MEAN
ABANDONMENT OF AMERICAN HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMS FOR WAR VICTIMS,
ACCORDING TO A SPOKESMAN FOR THE INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE
(IRC) OF NEW YORK CITY.

ANGIER BIDDLE DUKE, FORMER U.S. AMBASSADOR TO SPAIN AND DENMARK,
WHO IS CO-CHAIRMAN OF THE IRC, SAID AT A NEWS CONFERENCE APRIL 18
IN WASHINGTON HE IS CONFIDENT THAT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WILL CONTINUE
TO CONTRIBUTE FUNDS TO A NON-GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY SUCH AS IRC TO
AID THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE IN THEIR REHABILITATION EFFORTS. HE
POINTED OUT THAT THE IRC CURRENTLY OPERATES ON A HALF-MILLION-
DOLLAR BUDGET IN SOUTH VIETNAM AND IS AIMING TO INCREASE THE TOTAL
TO ONE MILLION DOLLARS THROUGH PRIVATE CONTRIBUTIONS.

MR. DUKE AND THE IRC'S OTHER CO-CHAIRMAN, LEONARD MARKS, FORMER
HEAD OF THE U.S. INFORMATION AGENCY, RECENTLY HEADED A FACT-
FINDING MISSION TO SOUTH VIETNAM TO INVESTIGATE PROBLEMS OF REFUGEES
AND TO PRESENT A SERIES OF PROPOSALS THAT WOULD HELP GUIDE IRC
AND OTHER RELIEF AGENCIES IN THEIR AID EFFORTS.

THE COMMITTEE ISSUED A REPORT SAYING ITS FUTURE OPERATIONS WOULD
COVER THREE BASIC AREAS: REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AND COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT; PUBLIC HEALTH AND MEDICAL SERVICES; AND CHILD CARE,
WITH EMPHASIS ON WAR ORPHANS AND SICK AND WOUNDED CHILDREN.

THE REPORT SAID THE PEOPLE OF VIETNAM--IN THE MISSION'S VIEW--
POSSESS AN ADMIRABLE DETERMINATION TO OVERCOME OBSTACLES AND REBUILD
THEIR NATION. "WE BELIEVE THEY CAN ACHIEVE THEIR GOAL, WITH
SUBSTANTIAL AND SUPPORTIVE AID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE," THE
REPORT ADDED.

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IN ANSWER TO A PRESS CONFERENCE QUESTION, MR. MARKS SAID SOUTH VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TOLD HIM THAT, BARRING ANY NEW HOSTILITIES WITHIN A YEAR OR 18 MONTHS, THEY EXPECTED THAT WITH PROPER FINANCING THEY COULD SETTLE REFUGEES IN AREAS WHERE THEY COULD BUILD SMALL HOUSES AND USE THE ADJACENT LAND FOR FARMING.

ASKED IF THE IRC WAS CONSIDERING AN AID PROGRAM FOR LAOS AND CAMBODIA, MR. DUKE, WHO HEADED RELIEF MISSIONS TO INDIA AND BANGLADESH IN 1971 AND 1972, SAID HIS ORGANIZATION HAD NOT ADDRESSED ITSELF TO THOSE NATIONS BECAUSE OF THE STATE OF HOSTILITIES THERE. HE ADDED THAT THE IRC WISHES TO DEVELOP A PROGRAM FOR THOSE COUNTRIES "AS SOON AS CONDITIONS PERMIT."

THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT IS AIMING TO SIMPLIFY ITS CHILD ADOPTION LAWS, MR. MARKS SAID, WHICH WOULD MAKE IT EASIER FOR AMERICANS TO ADOPT VIETNAMESE ORPHANS.

THE IRC, FOUNDED IN 1933 AND CONSIDERED AMERICA'S LEADING VOLUNTARY AGENCY ENGAGED IN REFUGEE RELIEF AND REHABILITATION WORK, HAS BEEN ENGAGED IN RELIEF PROJECTS IN VIETNAM SINCE 1954, WHEN NEARLY ONE MILLION NORTH VIETNAMESE FLED TO THE SOUTH AS REFUGEES. CURRENT IRC PROGRAMS IN VIETNAM ARE IN THE FIELDS OF CHILD CARE, MEDICINE AND PUBLIC HEALTH, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING. ITEM

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