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HUMANITARIAN PROBLEMS IN SOUTH VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA: TWO YEARS AFTER THE CEASE-FIRE

A STUDY MISSION REPORT

PREPARED FOR THE USE OF THE

SUBCOMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE PROBLEMS CONNECTED WITH REFUGEES AND ESCAPEES

OF THE

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PREFACE

(By Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Chairman)

January 27, 1975 marks the second anniversary of the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam.

1973 began with the promise of peace—with ceasefire agreements for Vietnam and Laos, and the anticipation of a similar agreement for Cambodia. It also began with generous commitments by governments and others to contribute to the post-war rehabilitation and reconstruction of the peoples and nations of Indochina. With all this in mind, in 1973 and 1974 special Study Missions traveled to the area in behalf of the Subcommittee—with the hope that the Subcommittee could contribute responsibly to a discussion over our country's future relations with Indochina, in the aftermath of war. But, as so often in the past, their efforts were carried out under the spectre of continuing violence and warfare, which not only served to heighten the agony of a rapidly growing number of civilians in the war affected areas, but which also threatened the prospect of ending violence—or at least lessening it significantly—under the ceasefire agreements.

And so, for a good share of Indochina, the problems in 1973 and 1974 have been less about a post-war future, than how to meet the daily exigencies of battle, and the growing humanitarian needs created by continuing war. These have also been problems for American policy. And the issue now at hand is less about a future peace, than about recent developments and the present course of American policy—especially toward Vietnam.

In Cambodia, a high level of violence continues unabated. Each day of war brings another day of human suffering. Tragedy is piled upon tragedy. As rockets fall upon Phnom Penh, and as more artillery is fired into the countryside, more civilians become casualties or die. More children are orphaned or maimed. And more refugees flee devastated villages and towns.

A ceasefire, of course, has never been declared in Cambodia, so the conflict there is at least labeled for what it is—war. In South Vietnam, however, an elaborate ceasefire mechanism has been constructed, agreed upon, and signed—yet the fighting goes on, and even escalates, as each side competes with the other in violating the Paris agreements.

As always, the most accurate barometer of the level of conflict in the field, is the movement of refugees and the occurrence of civilian war casualties. By this measure alone, the first year of the ceasefire in Vietnam was bad enough. But the second year produced a toll of war victims that comes close to matching some of the worst years of the pre-ceasefire war. New refugees numbered more than 594,000. And the total number of civilians admitted as war-related casualties to South Vietnamese hospitals was, by official count, at least 43,000. Moreover, the military deaths of both sides far surpassed those suffered by all American servicemen over an entire decade of the war.

All of this is not to denigrate the historic importance of the Paris agreements, which hopefully still provide a political framework for reconciliation in Vietnam, or to underestimate the importance of the very measurable progress towards reconciliation and normality in neighboring Laos. Rather, it is to remind us that war continues in many parts of Indochina, and that many civilians remain pawns in the conflict and continue to fall victim to the crossfire of war.

It is also to remind us that America is still involved in Indochina—and the question of what the character of this involvement should be—still remains an urgent issue before the American people.

The ceasefire agreements for Vietnam and Laos provided the United States with its first opportunity in over a decade to reorder our priorities in Indochina—to change the character of our involvement, to embark on new policies, and to practice some lessons from the failures and frustrations of the past.

But clearly, the thinking of a wartime bureaucracy, preoccupied with weapons delivery and how to maximize American influence and presence, still dominates our policies and programs in Indochina—despite new conditions, the ceasefire agreements, the return of our servicemen and prisoners of war, and the hopes of all Americans that we were finally disengaging from our heavy involvement in Indochina.

At the expense of vital American interests at home and abroad, the new Administration continues an old obsession with Indochina. Whatever the reason, there apparently remains a determination within the Administration to impose its views on the countries of the area. And in the absence of any change in Vietnam, on American terms, we shall continue to fuel a senseless war.

We are told we have a "moral commitment" in Indochina. And we hear officials say that if Congress does not provide the amount of military and economic aid requested, it will be a violation of the "clear understandings" the South Vietnamese had from us at the time of the ceasefire.

What "understandings"? And who made them? And why are they hidden from Congress and the American people?

And what about our "moral commitment"? What is so moral about providing vast quantities of ammunition for Indochina? What is so moral about an aid program that places a priority on fueling war and keeping a war-economy afloat, rather than helping to meet the needs of war victims throughout the area.

We have a moral obligation to help accomplish the political goals of the ceasefire agreements. We have a responsibility to remove our assistance to the people of Indochina from the political conflict, by channeling it through United Nations and other international humanitarian organizations. We have a duty to help people, not to buy time for governments too weak to support themselves.

Regrettably, the priority of American policy toward Indochina remains with the means of war rather than the tools for building peace. The President's recent request for additional military assistance to Saigon, and his suggesting the possibility of new American military operations, ignores the Paris Agreements of 1973 and our responsibility for helping to make them work.

Rather than hearing about military options and a need for more ammunition and military hardware for more war, Americans should be hearing about what our diplomats are doing to bring peace.

The lingering and bloody conflict in Cambodia deserves better of our diplomacy. The breakdown of the ceasefire agreement in Vietnam demands more than belligerent rhetoric and new military aid for Saigon. The fragile peace in Laos requires our support. And the deadlock in our relations with Hanoi must be broken.

As in the past, there is much to be done to bring peace and relief to the people and countries of Indochina. And there is much more our country must do to help.

INTRODUCTION

The Subcommittee's concern for refugee developments in Asia, especially in South Vietnam and Laos, was initially emphasized in a special report (S. Rept. 59, 89th Cong., first sess.) released on February 9, 1965. This concern was reiterated in a subsequent report (S. Rept. 371, 89th Cong., first sess.) released on June 25, 1965. Sensing the growing seriousness of the refugee problem, especially in South Vietnam, and a failure on the part of Washington and Saigon to readily identify this problem and initiate adequate programs of assistance, a series of 13 hearings followed in July, August, and September. After a field visit to South Vietnam and Laos by the Chairman and other members of the Subcommittee, and additional hearings and consultations, the Subcommittee issued a definitive report (S. Rept. 1058, 89th Cong. second sess.) of its findings and recommendations on March 4, 1966.

As the record since that time will indicate, war related civilian problems in South Vietnam, and all of Indochina, have been an item of continuing interest and primary concern to the Subcommittee. Field studies have been conducted almost annually by the Chairman and others, numerous hearings and additional consultations have been held, and reports on findings and recommendations have been held, and reports on findings and recommendations have been issued. A definitive report on field conditions during the "Vietnamization" phase of American policy, for example, was issued on September 28, 1970 (Committee Print, 91st Cong. second sess.).

The most recent Subcommittee report was issued on January 27, 1974, the first anniversary of the Paris Agreement, and is entitled "Relief and Rehabilitation of War Victims in Indochina: One Year After the Ceasefire" (U.S. Government Printing Office, Stock Number 5270-02260), and was based upon the findings of a special nine-member Study Mission which visited all countries of Indochina in 1973.

Throughout these activities over the past few years, the Subcommittee has offered its help and suggestions to officials in the Executive Branch and others, in a diligent effort to help find reasonable and humane solutions to the undeniably tragic problems which war has brought to the people of Indochina. The Subcommittee fully recognizes the progress that has been made over the years; but it also regrets that whatever priority our own Government has attached to these basically humanitarian problems, has too often been gauged by the degree of Congressional and public pressure, than by an active moral our political concern at the highest levels of our natural leadership.

This report is essentially an up-date of the 1974 Study Mission report, focusing primarily on humanitarian problems in South Vietnam and Cambodia. It attempts to assess the continuing problems of refugees, civilian war casualties, and other war-related humanitarian problems in these two countries. The field work for this report was

undertaken earlier in the year by Mr. Wells Klein, Executive Director of the American Council of Nationalities Service, New York, and Dr. David French, Director of the Office of Community Health Affairs of Boston University's Medical Center. Both have served, in their privat capacity, as consultants to the Subcommittee previously, and have traveled previously in the area. Additional information was gathered in a July 18, 1974 hearing,[1] and subsequent inquiry by the Subcommittee.

To supplement these reports, at the request of the Chairman, related studies on war victims and rehabilitation programs were undertaken by the General Accounting Office (GAO), and are printed in their entirety in the hearing record of July 18, 1974.

[1] "Humanitarian Problems in Indochina", Hearing, Subcommittee on Refugees, Committee on the Judiciary, U.S. Senate, July 18, 1974.

SOUTH VIETNAM


SOUTH VIETNAM
ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS
DEMARCATION LINE
QUANG TRI
Hue
THUA THIEN
Da Nang
QUANG NAM
I CORPS
QUANG TIN
QUANG NGAI
KONTUM
BINH DINH
PLEIKU
PHU BON
PHU YEN
DARLAC
KHANH HOA
QUANG DUC
TUYEN DUC
Da Lat
Cam Ranh
PHUOC LONG
BINH LONG
LAM DONG
NINH THUAN
II CORPS
TAY NINH
BINH DUONG
LONG KHANH
BINH TUY
BINH THUAN
HAU NGHIA
BIEN HOA
SAIGON
KIEN PHONG
KIEN TUONG
LONG AN
GIA DINH
PHUOC TUY
CHAU DOC
DINH TUONG
GO CONG
III CORPS
Vung Tau
AN GIANG
BA DEC
VINH LONG
KIEN HOA
DAO PHU QUOC (KIEN GIANG)
KIEN GIANG
PHONG DINH
VINH BINH
CAPITAL SPECIAL ZONE
CHUONG THIEN
BA XUYEN
BAC LIEU
IV CORPS
AN XUYEN
CON SON
(Administered from Saigon)
Military corps boundary
Province boundary
Da Lat Autonomous municipality
0 25 50 75 100 Miles
0 25 50 75 100 Kilometers

SOUTH VIETNAM

As for so many years in the past, the promise of peace still eludes the people of Vietnam. The second anniversary of "peace" in Vietnam will find more refugees driven from their homes and lands than ever before. More children are homeless orphans, and more war widows struggle for survival. And tens of thousands of men, women, and children continue to fall as casualties of continuing violence. Every new day in Vietnam sees more war, more violence and even greater tragedy.

The basic fact of life for the Vietnamese remains what it has been for the past forty years—unending conflict and ever-present violence. Today it is called a "ceasefire war," which began before the ink was dry on the Paris Agreement signed two years ago.

The war continues because the 1972 treaty, like the 1954 accords two decades earlier, failed to set in motion the steps necessary to settle the basic issues which have been at the root of the conflict in Vietnam for at least three generations. And because most of the old political dilemmas and the attendant military and territorial problems remain unresolved by the Paris Agreement, there is today still no end in sight to the war. There appears little interest, on either side, in seeking a negotiated settlement, or in further implementing the 1972 ceasefire provisions, except on each side's own terms. Until this changes—until renewed diplomatic efforts are undertaken to restore the Paris Agreement—there will be little prospect for a reduction in the violence, and even less hope for peace.

There is no better indication that the basic confrontation in Vietnam stands unchanged—and no more certain evidence of the continuing violence—than the statistics on the toll of human life the conflict continues to take in military casualties, civilian war casualties, and the creation of orphans, war widows, refugees, and the many other war victims maimed or disadvantaged each day by the violence.

To review some of these statistics on the human costs of the ongoing war, is to underscore the point that, contrary to today's headlines, the current violence is not "new" in South Vietnam, nor is it entirely the result of a "new" offensive. Rather, death and destruction has continued, from both sides, from the day the ceasefire agreements were signed in Paris.

The statistics on refugees and civilian war casualties tell us also not only how much the Vietnamese people continue to suffer, but also of America's continuing involvement in their suffering, and our even greater responsibility to help bring relief and rehabilitation to millions of war victims in need. Although American soldiers have left the shores of Vietnam, and the law forbids any direct American involvement in the fighting, we still finance the materials of war—to ship the bombs and the bullets that continue to kill Vietnamese. Whatever the merits or purpose of this policy—increasingly a subject of

controversy—the fact remains that America is involved in the war, although the dying has been "Vietnamized" for two years.

Had the United States no previous responsibility to help heal the wounds of a war we directly participated in—a responsibility we clearly have—the fact that we continue to fuel the war from afar, makes it all the more imperative that we recognize and understand the human toll resulting from a conflict our government continues to finance.

1. The Refugee Situation

The most enduring legacy of the Vietnam war will undoubtedly be its cumulative impact upon the lives and the social structure of the people of South Vietnam. Well over half of South Vietnam's estimated population of 19½ million people have been forced to move as refugees, often many times over, since the war escalated in late 1964 and early 1965. And each new day of conflict adds to this already massive dislocation. As Table 1 indicates, the cumulative total of refugees displaced since 1964–65 in South Vietnam, now stands at 11,683,000.

This represents an increase of 1,413,000 new refugees displaced since the ceasefire agreement was signed—some 818,000 new refugees in 1973, and 594,000 new refugees reported during 1974. This is a rate of refugee movement, during both years, that exceeds the total of every previous year of fighting in South Vietnam except the year of the Americanization of the conflict in 1966, the Tet offensive in 1968, and the 1972 Easter offensive.

Table 1.—*Statistical summary of refugee and war victim movement in South Vietnam, 1965–74*

1. Newly registered refugees:	
1965	772,000
1966	906,000
1967	436,000
1968	494,000
1969	590,000
1970	129,000
Registered in 1970, but generated earlier	281,000
1971	136,000
Registered in 1971, but generated earlier	268,000
1972	1,320,000
1973	[1] 818,700
1974	[2] 594,300
Cumulative total	6,745,000
2. Cambodian repatriates, ethnic Vietnamese expelled from Cambodia 1970	210,000
3. Estimated casualty and damage claimants, including some one million temporarily displaced during Tet and May, 1968	2,028,000
4. Displaced persons in PRG-controlled areas and other nonregistered refugees from the 1972 offensive	700,000
5. Estimated non-registered refugees, including some one million in Saigon ineligible since 1964 to register	[3] 2,000,000
Cumulative total since 1965	11,683,000

[1] For 1973 USAID indicates only 88,000 new refugees were officially registered; however, the Subcommittee estimate includes the total number of refugees generated during the year, both in government controlled as well as estimates of PRG areas, this also includes those temporarily displaced during the immediate post-ceasefire "land grabs," but not registered. For example, USAID/Saigon acknowledges 490,000 casualty and damage claimants in its up-dated 1973 statistics, some of whom are here considered as refugees, since they were forced to move temporarily from their homes during the immediate post-ceasefire struggle in 1973.

[2] Cumulative total of officially reported refugee movement throughout 1974, many of whom were never officially registered. Prior to May 1, 1974, no new refugees were registered, and subsequently only a small percentage of refugees forced to flee their homes, sometimes for many weeks, have actually been registered as "Temporarily Displaced War Victims."

[3] USAID claims no official estimates. This estimate is based upon the Subcommittee's hearings and findings from 1965–73.

During 1973, the first year of the ceasefire, the greatest refugee movement occurred during the months immediately after the accords were signed in Paris, as each side engaged in a period of "post-cease-fire land-grabs." During February and March 1973, offensive operations erupted in 33 of South Vietnam's 46 provinces, as both sides engaged in military efforts to reshape the nearly non-existent cease-fire line to its own advantage. This process continued throughout the year on a fluctuating basis, with the Government of South Vietnam (GVN) alleging there were some 31,672 ceasefire violations by the other side during 1973 alone—or about 100 violations for every day of the year. The Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam (PRG) has also protested ceasefire violations, citing GVN air operations in 1973 that were long denied, and only officially admitted in the early weeks of 1974.

During 1974 the GVN accused the other side of another 35,000 ceasefire violations, bringing the total past the 66,700 mark.

As always, the most accurate index of conditions in the countryside—of the level of conflict and violence—is the number of refugees fleeing rural areas and the number of civilian war casualties filling hospital wards. By these measures, it is clear that the second year of the ceasefire was one of the worst years for the people of South Vietnam.

As Table 2 indicates, some 594,300 South Vietnamese refugees were officially reported as being displaced during 1974—some for the second or third time. Based upon the cumulative reports from the field, the worst period during 1974 was not late in the year, during the "dry-season offensive", as officials in the Pentagon are prone to call it. Rather, the worst period for Vietnamese refugees was during the months of May–August, when escalated military operations were reported from both sides, especially in the northern and central regions. Some 353,100 refugees were reported displaced during May–August, compared to 201,800 during the recent September–December period.

These figures are cumulative totals of officially reported refugee movement. Only part were officially registered as "Temporarily Displaced War Victims," which was the new category introduced mid-way through 1974 as the refugee toll mounted. Prior to May 1st, it was GVN policy not to register new refugees, and even today no formal refugee camps are being constructed. Only some 39,000 refugees, including 26,000 Cambodian refugees, are today physically situated in refugee camps. The remainder have come and gone, and even of those who remain displaced, only a portion have been officially registered as "Temporarily Displaced War Victims", receiving modest rations of food and rice or some monetary assistance.

TABLE 2.—*Refugees in South Vietnam in 1974* [1]

1. January-April (refugees in old camps)	39,400
2. May–August (new refugees reported displaced; not in camps)	353,100
3. September-December (new refugees reported displaced; not in camps)	201,800
1974 total	594,300

[1] Based upon cumulative totals of officially reported refugee movements throughout the year, not upon official registrations. New refugees were not registered until after May 1 as "Temporarily Displaced War Victims," some of whom have now returned to their homes. Registration has consistently lagged behind refugee movement, and it is officially estimated that over 98,000 refugees displaced September–December remain unregistered and have received no assistance.

Even in provinces where the GVN has attempted to register refugees, official paperwork has, as usual, lagged behind. The U.S. Mission estimates, for example, that of the refugee movement in November-December, close to 100,000 refugees, particularly in the Mekong Delta region, remain unregistered and have received little or no assistance.

Since the ceasefire it has been the established policy of the Saigon government to empty the refugee camps, and to resettle as many refugees as possible from 1972, as well as those inadequately resettled in earlier years. Following the 1972 offensive and the upsurge of fighting immediately after the ceasefire, refugee camps throughout South Vietnam contained over 600,000 refugees, with tens of thousands in a refugee status out of camp. The deplorable situation of these people was documented in the Subcommittee's report of 1973.[1] The last of these in-camp refugees was finally resettled as of July 1, 1974—a full two years after they were first displaced during the 1972 offensive. However, as will be noted below, many of these refugees, who were resettled in the "model" resettlement villages in Region III, have now been displaced once again.

2. Civilian War Casualties

Tragically little has changed since the Subcommittee's report of last year in terms of the number of civilians who continue to fall victims to the continuing war in South Vietnam. As seen and experienced by the average Vietnamese, the "ceasefire war" is clearly as dangerous as the old war. The monthly rate of civilian war casualties admitted, by official count, to hospitals for treatment remains as high as last year.

The monthly average for 1974 was 3,600 war-related admissions each month, as compared to 3,616 war-related casualties each month in 1973; (see Tables 3 and 4). These monthly averages for civilian war-related casualties compares to a monthly average of 4,491 in 1972 or 4,228 in 1971—some of the peak years of the war. Thus, the ceasefire war has reduced the toll of civilian casualties only by an average of 700 to 900 each month. To those 3,600 civilians still wounded, and the undetermined number who die, this reduction is scant comfort. And they are added to the incredible toll of 553,279 civilian war casualties officially reported since 1965, and the Subcommittee's

[1] *Relief and Rehabilitation of War Victims in Indochina: One Year After the Ceasefire.* Subcommittee on Refugees, U.S. Senate, Jan. 27, 1974.

cumulative estimate of 1,435,000 both wounded and dead since 1965; (see Table 5).

TABLE 3.—CIVILIAN WAR CASUALTIES OFFICIALLY REPORTED BY SOUTH VIETNAMESE HOSPITALS IN 1973–74

Month	Officially reported war-related hospital admissions 1973	1974	Month	Officially reported war-related hospital admissions 1973	1974
January	5,506	3,069	August	3,199	4,184
February	5,476	3,213	September	2,851	3,227
March	4,137	3,504	October	3,037	3,232
April	3,333	3,634	November	2,900	[1] 3,600
May	3,184	3,778	December	3,240	[1] 4,500
June	3,624	3,338			
July	2,919	3,811	Total	43,406	43,090

[1] Estimates.

TABLE 4.—MONTHLY AVERAGE OF CIVILIAN WAR CASUALTIES IN SOUTH VIETNAM (ACCORDING TO OFFICIAL HOSPITAL ADMISSION STATISTICS)

Year	Annual total	Monthly average	Year	Annual total	Monthly average
1965–66	50,000	4,166	1971	50,737	4,228
1967	49,707	4,142	1972	53,901	4,491
1968	86,993	7,429	1973	43,406	3,606
1969	66,002	5,500	1974	43,090	3,600
1970	59,663	4,971			

TABLE 5.—STATISTICAL SUMMARY OF CIVILIAN WAR CASUALTIES IN SOUTH VIETNAM, 1965–74

Year	Officially reported hospital admissions [1]	Subcommittee casualty estimates including deaths	Subcommittee death estimates
1965	[2] 50,000	100,000	25,000
1966	[2] 50,000	150,000	50,000
1967	49,707	175,000	60,000
1968	86,993	300,000	100,000
1969	66,002	200,000	60,000
1970	59,663	125,000	30,000
1971	50,737	100,000	25,000
1972	53,901	200,000	65,000
1973	43,166	85,000	15,000
1974	43,090	[3]	[3]
Total	553,279	1,435,000	430,000

[1] Officially reported hospital admissions grossly understate the overall civilian war casualty problem. They exclude all civilian casualties treated elsewhere, those not treated at all, and most significantly, civilians who are killed outright or die before reaching treatment facilities.

By official count since 1967, women and children made up a significant proportion of hospital admissions—during 1972, for example, up to ⅓ of civilian war casualties were females 13 years old and older, and up to ¼ were children 12 years old and under. Thus, over 50 percent of civilian war casualty hospital admissions were children.

By official count since 1967, some 27 percent of civilian war casualty hospital admissions were attributed to shelling and bombing, some 20 percent to gunfire and grenades, and some 53 percent to mines and mortars—the Refugee Subcommittee estimates that well over 50 percent of civilian war casualties were attributed to Government of Vietnam and U.S. firepower.

[2] Represent estimates, based upon hearings, field reports, and reports submitted over the years by the General Accounting Office.

[3] Estimates not available.

TABLE 6.—*Human costs of the continuing war in South Vietnam since the ceasefire (a summary of official statistics, Jan. 28, 1973, through Jan. 8, 1975)*

I. Human costs since the ceasefire:	
1. North Vietnamese/PRG military reported killed	124,863
2. South Vietnamese military:	
ARVN killed	25,277
ARVN wounded	103,186
ARVN missing	13,416
3. Civilians wounded and admitted to hospitals	86,496
II. New refugees (January 1973–January 1975)	1,413,000
III. Totals:	
1. Military killed	150,140
2. Military/civilians wounded	189,682
3. New refugees in all areas	1,413,000
Total, since the ceasefire, of Vietnamese killed, wounded, or made refugees (according to official reports)	1,752,822

NOTE.—Total U.S. deaths for the entire war, 1961–73, are 45,933 combat deaths, 10,298 noncombat deaths, for a total of 56,231 American dead; some 1,500 are still listed as missing in action.

When the 1973 and 1974 toll of wounded and killed civilians is added to the official accounting of military casualties for the same period, it becomes tragically clear just how violent the ceasefire has been: (see Table 6). According to South Vietnamese records, between January 28, 1973 through January 8, 1974, an estimated 124,863 North Vietnamese/PRG military personnel were killed, along with 25,277 South Vietnamese (ARVN) military—for a total of 150,140 military deaths since the ceasefire, or three times the total American combat deaths of 45,933 during the entire decade of our involvement in the war. If the total military deaths are added to military and civilians wounded (189,682), plus new refugees and casualty claimants (1,413,000) since the ceasefire, the people of Vietnam have suffered far more in two years of "peace with honor," than America experienced during a decade of fighting.

3. REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AND RETURN TO VILLAGE

Since the beginning of the war, a constant theme of life in Vietnam has been the tragic cycle of violence and refugee movement, and an accompanying pattern of humanitarian need and refugee neglect. 1974 saw little change in the basic character of the refugee situation in South Vietnam. The year was marked more by a feeling of the clock-being-turned-back than of "progress" in refugee resettlement.

Insecurity and violence in the countryside once again escalated, forcing refugees to flee their homes and lands. Once again thousands sought the security and shelter of district towns and provincial cities. Many thousands more returned to old refugee sites and abandoned camps. Yesterday's model resettlement projects became today's new refugees, and return to village programs one day became a return to the refugee camp the next.

This cycle has been repeated time and again in South Vietnam, disrupting not only the lives of the Vietnamese people, but changing, perhaps forever, the land and living patterns of South Vietnam. Indeed, in just over a decade, South Vietnam has been transformed from a predominantly rural, agricultural nation—where there was a direct relationship between the population and the land—to a falsely-urbanized, disoriented society, that is really neither urban nor rural, and neither agricultural nor industrial. In many areas, particularly in the northern and coastal regions, the population has been totally displaced and strung out along the roads for physical security. From the air the bright red tile roofs of the traditional Vietnamese home have all too often given way to simple sheets of tin. The population of some district and provincial towns have increased by several hundred percent.

Despite a determined effort over the past two years to resettle all refugees, and permit refugees to return to their homes (especially in government controlled areas), the basic dimension of the refugee problem remains much the same. Like every year over the past decade, the GVN has announced new programs for refugee resettlement and return to village, even as new refugees are forced to flee from the countryside. And despite the accumulated experience and better capability in handling refugees on an emergency basis, conditions among new refugees remains sadly familiar.

Once again new refugees are being considered a temporary phenomenon. And official government policy today is very reminiscent of 1966, with instructions against registering new refugees, and prohibitions against the establishment of new refugee camps. As in the past, this is as much designed to avoid the "refugee camp syndrome", as it is representative of the false hope that the refugee problem will simply go away. This, despite a decade's experience in confronting an unending stream of refugees, and the repeated failure of Saigon's refugee resettlement and return-to-village programs—which never have really ended the cycle of refugee movement in South Vietnam because the cycle of war has never ended.

As noted earlier, the category of "Temporarily Displaced War Victims" (TDWV's) was only reluctantly reinstated on May 1, 1974, and a slow process of registration and refugee assistance has been initiated since then. (As of January 8, 1975, 133,370 TDWV's were officially registered, and 39,250 refugees were listed as living in "in-camp" situations, for a total of 172,620 officially on the refugee rolls.)

The thrust of the government's refugee program until May 1st was refugee resettlement and refugee-to-village—programs under the direction of the Land Development and Hamlet Building Program (LDHB), chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Dr. Phan Quang Dan. Through 1973 and the early months of 1974, the LDHB effort was rated by many observers as being relatively successful in meeting the twin goals of, first, emptying the refugee camps of 1972 and, secondly, creating new refugee resettlement areas in virgin, unoccupied land. In fact, by mid-year, the GVN was successful in resettling or returning to village (or, more accurately, close-to-their-village) all, or nearly all, of the 1972 refugees.

However, precisely during this period, some 330,000 new refugees were displaced during escalating violence from both sides in the cen-

tral and coastal provinces, particularly Quang Nam, Quang Ngai, and Binh Dinh provinces. By the end of the year the wave of new refugees continued to increase, and, in the process, overwhelming GVN plans for continued refugee resettlement programs. The current refugee crisis in the Mekong Delta and Region III have brought to a standstill the 1975 plans to resettle over 300,000 urban dwellers who were improperly settled in earlier years, or simply drifted to urban shantytowns, never receiving refugee assistance.

The tide of new refugees in Region III has also resulted in the displacement of several thousand people from last year's LDHB resettlement and return-to-village locations. The fall of Phouc Long province not only cut-off resettlement sites within the province, but also affected neighboring Long Khanh—a focal point for many of the LDHB projects. Once again, last year's model refugee projects are this year's casualties of continuing war.

4. Social Welfare and Rehabilitation Needs

As the Subcommittee's Study Mission noted in its report in 1974, the various human problems created by the years of violence in Vietnam can no longer be easily categorized as "refugee," "civilian war casualty," "orphan," or "war widow" problems. Taken together they constitute a massive, long-term social welfare and rehabilitation problem involving millions of people. They are the result of years of neglect as well as years of war, and they affect the entire population of South Vietnam, both in terms of physical well-being and economic productivity. Even if the violence were to stop today, the task of meeting these needs would be enormous, requiring years and substantial resources to meet. As it is, the violence has not ended, and the human toll mounts with each day, further mortgaging the future of the people of Vietnam.

Official statistics on social welfare needs inveitably fail to record fully the number of war victims who are in need of relief and rehabilitation. But as of 1974, according to USAID estimates, some 178,000 Vietnamese are physically disabled by the war. Of these, approximately 80,000 are amputees, 30,000 were blind, 10,000 deaf, 8,000 paraplegics, and another 50,000 disabled from paralysis, apoplexy, polio, and other causes.

In years past, rehabilitation services have been scant, if not nonexistent, and a large back-log still remains for rehabilitative treatment. For example, until recently there was a gap of nine years between patient requirements for prosthetic devices and artificial limb production. After considerable pressure from Congress and allocation of additional resources, the production and repair of prosthetic devices has increased, from 8,169 devices in 1971 to over 10,000 in 1973. During the past year, according to USAID, rehabilitation centers are operating at a maximum capacity, and further increases have been made in the production and fitting of artificial limbs, and in the training of patients in their use. The principal institute in Saigon, combined with three regional and ten provincial centers, now produce or repair some 30,000 devices each year. However, even at this rate of production, the long backlog of untreated cases will still not be eliminated for two and a half years—not until early 1977—even if the war stopped today.

5. Orphans: The Children of War

Nowhere are the social welfare and rehabilitation needs of Vietnam more evident than in the faces of the children of Vietnam—the orphans, the homeless children, the maimed and injured. Since half of South Vietnam's estimated 19.8 million population are under 15 years of age, at least half of all of the country's refugee and social welfare problems are also children under 15 years of age.

The shattering effect the war has had, and continues to have, on the social structure of South Vietnam can be seen, in part, in the number of orphans.[2] According to a recent survey undertaken by the GVN's Ministry of Social Welfare, some 20 percent of the families interviewed have orphans living with them, and out of all the children interviewed in other sites, 17 percent were found to be orphans. Official statistics on the orphan population remain incomplete, however, in part because the government has discouraged the establishment of orphanages, and because most orphans live with families, and many others remain uncounted.

As Table 7 outlines, there are officially estimated to be 879,715 orphans or half-orphans in South Vietnam. Of these, only 20,000 are in registered orphanages where they receive government assistance (each orphan receives a monthly allowance of $4.50, and the government assists in the support of officially registered orphanages).

Progress in the general field of child welfare has not paralleled that made in the area of adoption. There are now seven American and international adoption agencies working in South Vietnam. In general, they are now adequately funded, including major support from the U.S. Government. However, it is important to recognize that intercountry adoption is the best available alternative for only a few of Vietnam's hundreds of thousands of disadvantaged children, and that those voluntary agencies now engaged in intercountry adoption are sufficient in number and professional competence to handle the problem in terms of the essential criterion—what is best for the children.

[2] All references to orphans in South Vietnam include both orphans and half-orphans (where one parent is still living).

Table 7.—Orphans in South Vietnam (official estimates)

1. Total orphans (or half-orphans)	879, 715
Less orphans of military personnel receiving war victims allowances, most of whom are not in orphanages	—555, 620
Subtotal	324, 095
2. Civilian orphans, living with 1 parent, receiving government allowances	—150, 000
Civilian orphans having lost both parents remaining with relatives, not receiving aid	—150, 000
3. Total orphange population	24, 095
Less estimated number in nonregistered orphanages, or "street kids"	4, 000
4. Total orphans in registered orphanages	20, 095
Less—	
Estimated number not adoptable because they have living relatives	—10, 000
Estimated number not adoptable because of severe mental/physical handicap	—5, 000
5. Total number of adoptable orphans	5, 095
Less children classified "hard to place" because of some mental/physical handicap	—1, 000
6. Total considered available for immediate intercountry adoption (including 770 known to be American-fathered; 276 known to be partly black. In addition, an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 Vietnamese children of mixed parentage remain in the care of relatives.)	4, 095

As Table 8 indicates, during the past year 773 Vietnamese orphans have been processed for intercountry adoption by the seven accredited agencies in South Vietnam. This brings the total number of adopted children from January 1971 through the end of 1974 to 2,468 adoptions.

Previous reports of the Subcommittee have emphasized the need for adequate intercountry adoption services in South Vietnam. With the progress made in recent months it must now be stated, just as forcefully, that any further preoccupation with intercountry adoption, as against other child welfare services, will be a false issue working to the detriment of those tens of thousands of other disadvantaged children for whom Vietnam is, and will always be, home.

It was almost two years ago that the Subcommittee conducted a special hearing on "Orphans and Child Welfare in Vietnam.[3] Subsequent to that hearing the Subcommittee received many assurances from our Government that child welfare concerns in Vietnam would receive priority attention. Along with the Chairman, members of the Study Mission to Indochina in 1973, met with Secretary of State William Rogers on this problem, and during that discussion it was evident that the State Department and AID recognized the urgency of child welfare concerns in South Vietnam. In short, it appeared in 1973 that at long last the children of Vietnam would receive some reasonable attention and the priority they deserved.

[3] *Relief and Rehabilitation of War Victims in Indochina: Part II, Orphans and Child Welfare*, Subcommittee on Refugees, U.S. Senate, May 11, 1973.

TABLE 8.—ADOPTION OF ORPHANS FROM SOUTH VIETNAM IN 1974. NUMBER OF ADOPTED CHILDREN (FROM JAN. 1 TO SEPT. 30, 1974)

Agency	United States	Other countries	Tota
1. Friends for All Children	257	269	526
2. Holt Children's Services	112	0	112
3. International Social Service	45	20	65
4. Catholic Relief Services	34	2	36
5. Friends of Children of Vietnam	25	0	25
6. World Vision	6	0	6
7. Pearl Buck Foundation	3	0	3
Total	482	291	773

Yet, fourteen months later, by mid-1974, funds for child welfare services (with the exception of adoption) were only slowly reaching those voluntary agencies who will actually program child welfare services in the field. And a special conference of all relevant voluntary and governmental agencies to review and program these services for the future, proposed in 1973 and planned for mid-1974, was only convened this month—on Jan. 14, 1975. The two-week conference now meeting in Saigon, entitled "International Conference on Children and National Development: Children, Future of the Nation," will hopefully produce results that mean the thousands of disadvantaged children of Vietnam will have a future, or at least one better than in the recent past.

Once again, however, the urgency articulated in Washington regarding humanitarian needs of children in Vietnam has been slow to reach the U.S. Mission in Saigon. Only within the last seven months have 1973–74 Congressionally ear-marked funds for child welfare services begun to be received by voluntary agencies. These agencies have the professional staff and experience to provide immediate impact which the GVN Ministry of Social Welfare still lacks, and, hopefully, that impact will now be felt.

However, in essentially by-passing the Ministry of Social Welfare to achieve immediate impact, AID may be jeopardizing the future of services to children in Vietnam. As Dr. James Dumpson stated in testimony to the Subcommittee in 1973, ". . . most of what we can do for children in Vietnam can only be accomplished through Vietnamese institutions. It is, therefore, imperative to strengthen the Vietnamese Government and voluntary agencies at the same time we are addressing ourselves directly to the immediate needs of children." Ignoring this admonition is currently a serious deficiency in U.S. programs for child welfare. The objectives of immediate impact and of strengthening Vietnamese social welfare institutions should not, and are not, mutually exclusive.

Another area of concern which persists is the question of priority given to child welfare by the GVN. In the testimony last year the Study Mission urged the U.S. Government to ". . . raise the issue of the welfare of children with the Vietnamese Government at the highest level so that child welfare programing will receive equivalent priority on the Vietnamese side." It observed that "at this point the Vietnamese Ministry of Social Welfare is at the bottom of the Government's administrative structure and receives scant support in terms of funds and personnel."

In a separate report submitted to AID in 1973 after visiting Vietnam at the invitation of Ambassador Martin, Jean and John Thomas recommended ". . . what is needed in the welfare field is the same type of attention from President Thieu as he gave to the refugee efforts. What is most necessary is the enacting of a Presidential decree establishing an interministerial entity for social welfare."

Whatever the mechanism, it is apparent that the U.S. Mission approach to child welfare will remain lopsided and inadequate until both it and the GVN are willing to give equivalent priority to this area. Hopefully, the conference now convened in Saigon will serve to highlight the urgency of child welfare and strengthen the Ministry of Social Welfare.

6. Public Health Problems

The health problems of South Vietnam are basically those which are common to most developing, tropical countries, but exacerbated by years of war. Basically, they fall into six categories:

(1) infectious disease problems, which includes the very large problem of gastrointestinal infections and infestations, respiratory diseases, and tuberculosis and venereal disease;

(2) parasitic disease problems, including malaria and certain special parasitic diseases, such as schistasomiasis;

(3) malnutrition, which relates in a larger sense to the whole reproductive process of the population as well as to the basic ability to resist infectious diseases listed above;

(4) environmental conditions of the populace especially relating to their living conditions and the practices of general hygiene and sanitation;

(5) the effects of Westernization, especially those effects which are brought about by mechanization, leading to a disproportionate incidence of accidents; and

(6) problems which are peculiar to the mores and social conditions inherent in the population—the age range within the population, the usually agricultural or rural life led by the population, their customs and religion, the rate and nature of population growth or decline; all of which must be considered in terms of their effect on the utilization of medical care.

Although it is not useful here to go into the basic disease and other health problems characteristic of underdeveloped countries, it is, however, important to stress that the superimposition of prolonged warfare over a period of years obviously creates deprivation and other widespread effects on the population which have everything to do with its survival and ability to compete in the modern world. Such is the situation today in South Vietnam.

By way of example, the following figures are useful. Reviewing the combined effects of natural accidents, (especially having been increased by militarization and Westernization), and the casualties of warfare, combined with infectious and parasitic diseases, in 1970 this combined effect represented over one-fourth of the total morbidity of the population—a morbidity rate shared equally between the effects of trauma on the one hand and infection on the other. Mortality in 1970 in South Vietnam reveals that over 49 percent of the deaths were related to the combined effects of accidents, warfare and infection,

and again the effects of war were about equal to the effects of infection diseases.

Two years later, in 1972, there was little change and, in fact, the combined morbidity effect had increased to 28.7 percent while at the same time the effect of mortality had dropped somewhat from 49.3 percent to 43 percent. If one considers the increasing capacity of the South Vietnamese health system to record and digest its own statistics, it would be safe to assume that the apparent increase in morbidity has little meaning. However, at the same time, the drop in mortality over that period of time by a full 6 percent is significant and, indeed, represents an improvement in the overall ability of the medical care system to cope.

The ability to cope with the combined problems of war, accident and infection in South Vietnam have been related to a capable and astute indigenous population which has benefited by a considerable input in terms of know-how and money from the United States over the last 8 years. It is hardly justifiable that such involvement came about because of warfare; nevertheless, this side benefit of an improved medical system did result from this unfortunate experience. At the outset the U.S. military was primarily involved in the backup and much of the front-line medical care delivered in South Vietnam.

At its zenith American medical involvement was noted in every province of South Vietnam, at least in each of the provincial hospitals and in many instances even at district hospital levels and below. Since war casualties were handled not only by military installations but also to some extent in civilian hospitals, no fine line was ever drawn as to the extent of involvement of United States military personnel in medical care delivery. Like-wise, at times of lull in the fighting, United States military medical personnel, as well as other United States military personnel, often engaged in voluntary medical care support for the adjacent civilian population.

USAID during this same period developed a programmatic approach in the public health area which added to the input of military and voluntary health personnel from the United States and with the passage of time the USAID input heavily affected the evolution and modernization of the medical care system of South Vietnam. The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education were particularly involved in this process and the evidence is quite clear that a warm and symbiotic relationship existed between USAID health personnel and these two agencies of the South Vietnamese government.

Likewise, the same good relationships apparently existed throughout the lower echelons of the health care system although initially the major impact was at the top. The development of the health care input of USAID was allowed to proceed with a minimum of interference on the part of those components of the American government that were primarily interested in the political aspects of the conflict in Vietnam, unlike almost every other aspect of American involvement in Vietnam. The health aspect of United States involvement still appears to be free of domination or interference by unrelated political factors.

It is also interesting to note that American health personnel with major responsibilities in South Vietnam have evolved considerably from what would likely have been their normal state in the United States, in that they ultimately became convinced of the need to make a major investment at the level of the interface between the individual

person in South Vietnam and the medical care system. For this reason the initial major investment in medical education was for the purpose of developing highly trained specialists and a topheavy hospital-oriented medical care system, similar to that of the United States was halted. But a major conference was held in 1972, with input from outstanding consultants from other developing countries, that led to a complete reorientation of emphasis for the medical care system—a shift to a major commitment to community medicine and the training of community medical care practitioners who would be spread throughout the length and breadth of the land.

In addition, a major commitment was made to train other kinds of medical care personnel to be distributed throughout the country to work at the district, village and hamlet levels in order to make a major impact in the area of public health and preventive medicine. This reorientation is now in evidence everywhere. The public health personnel of USAID, the Health Ministry, Education Ministry, are to be commended for this approach which is already beginning to show signs of payoff in meeting the health care needs of South Vietnam. There is evidence of increasing utilization of health care services as a result of positive experiences by the populace which had previously been heavily dependent upon a traditional medical care system.

The development of widespread use of paraprofessionals, the ability to undertake systems of identification and recording of health problems and the general education of the populace relative to hygiene, nutrition and sanitation has to a great extent evolved from this medical care system, especially through the Ministry of Health's development of the National Institute of Public Health.

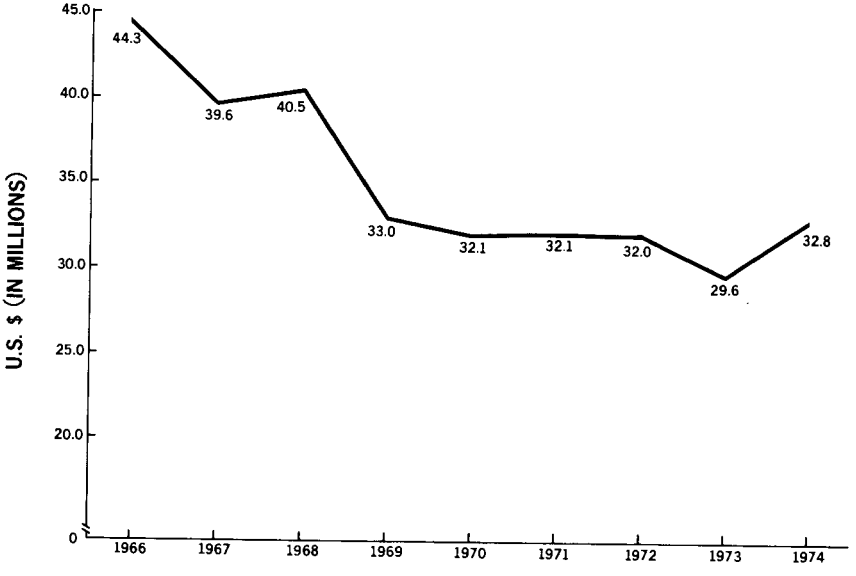
Regrettably, the successes achieved in this rational approach to the development of medical care comes just as cutbacks are being made in U.S. support—both in terms of direct funding by USAID as well as personnel input from USAID. These cuts appear to be endangering the continued successful development of public health services, and could perhaps prevent full maturation of a system which undoubtedly would ultimately be able to stand on its own two feet.

This situation is particularly precarious in terms of the medical logistics and supply system which has been developed, allowing the broad distribution of pharmaceuticals and other necessary medical supplies throughout the country. These cuts will also endanger the capital development and improvement of the district level and below health facilities (MID and MD), the development of the Under Six Program (which is a special maternal and child health program dependent upon the expansion of the capabilities of midwives), the National Laboratory Program, which is on its way to developing a standardized system of laboratory support for the entire country, including the training of necessary personnel, and a multiple number of programs in the process of developing through the emerging National Institute of Public Health.

The nature of these programs are unquestionably humanitarian, and it is essential that our government reorder its priorities in order to provide the minimal support necessary to continue these public health programs. As the following graph indicates, exactly the opposite is now occurring. The total amount, in real dollars, going to support public health programs in South Vietnam is going down—rapidly. Taking into account the reduction of direct U.S. funding, as well

as inflation in South Vietnam, the much touted increase in South Vietnamese government spending has still meant a steady decrease in overall funding available to the medical care system of South Vietnam.

It was the view of the Subcommittee's Study Mission [4] that such support can be achieved through multilateral channels, with the United States government paying its fair share of the burden. As noted below, the possibility of such a multilateral approach through the mechanisms of various agencies of the United Nations is entirely feasible at this time.



TOTAL U.S. AID/VIETNAM PUBLIC HEALTH SECTOR FUNDING
U.S. DOLLARS & PIASTERS IN U.S. $
(ACTUAL VALUE, AS ADJUSTED TO AVG. YEARLY RATE OF EXCHANGE)

7. Prisons and Political Prisoners

The most effective provisions of the ceasefire agreement, complied with best, if not fully, by all parties, are those relating to the exchange of military prisoners of war. All Americans identified by the North Vietnamese and PRG as being in their custody have now been repatriated. Although there remains serious questions in identifying the fate of all those still listed by our government as "missing in action," and in recovering the remains of those men known to be lost over Indochina, limited progress was at least made in these areas in 1973, although no hopeful developments occurred during 1974 and the issue remains unresolved.

Substantial progress has also been made between the Vietnamese parties in exchanging their military prisoners of war. However, the thorny issue of the release and repatriation of civilian and political prisoners, has continued to thwart the full implementation of the ceasefire provisions relating to prisoners, and has, in turn, blocked efforts to secure a complete accounting of American M.I.A.'s.

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[4] See hearings, *Humanitarian Problems in Indochina*, July 18, 1974.

Although direct or indirect American funding and involvement in the South Vietnamese police and prison system was ended by an act of Congress December 1973, and the USAID Public Safety Program was banned by the Paris agreement, the problem of political prisoners is still one that necessarily involves the United States. And it is one which concerns many Americans. For not only does the United States support the government of President Thieu in every other way, the terrible legacy of all those prisons and detention centers built over the years with American money is that they hold an undetermined number of political prisoners.

The question of political prisoners, along with the repatriation of military prisoners of war, are key aspects of the Paris agreements which our government is pledged to support. And even as we are today justifiably concerned that the other side fulfill its commitments relating to the identification of our men still missing, so, too, must we be concerned that our government actively support and encourage the implementation of those provisions relating to Vietnamese political prisoners.

For too many years the issue of political prisoners in South Vietnam was covered up—swept under the rug by officials in both Washington and Saigon, as if the issue did not exist. Again and again the U.S. Mission has down-played the issue. And, on this score, nothing has changed during 1974.

Ambassador Graham Martin told the Subcommittee's Study Mission in June that, emphatically and categorically, there were no political prisoners in South Vietnam. He indicated that he had instructed the Embassy's entire intelligence operation to undertake a comprehensive investigation of the political prisoner issue and that they had reported to him, and that his firm conclusion was, that there were no political prisoners in South Vietnam.

This conclusion, however, contrasts sharply not only with the findings of many respected non-government organizations, with the previous findings of and reports to the Subcommittee, but also with previous reports of the Department of State and the Embassy itself. In an April 1973 communication to the Subcommittee, the Embassy wrote: [5]

". . . the Embassy estimates that there are at present no more than 22,000 civilians of all types being held. This includes two broad categories: common criminals (thieves, smugglers, etc.) and those held because they committed politically motivated acts ranging from murder to printing anti-GVN propaganda, or belonged to organizations the GVN considers subversive. . . .

Before and since the ceasefire, the GVN has been converting A and B category "An Tri" detainees to common criminal status by the expedient of convicting them of ID card violations or draft-dodging. Categories A and B are those detainees whom, according to the GVN, held important positions in the Viet Cong Infrastructure down to hamlet level. . . .

During the long course of the Vietnam conflict, people from every area of the country have been arrested.

Subsequently, in an August 2, 1973 response to a letter of inquiry from the Subcommittee Chairman, the Department of State indicated: [6]

[5] Complete text can be found in "Relief and Rehabilitation of War Victims in Indochina: One Year After the Ceasefire," A Study Mission Report to the Subcommittee, January 27, 1974, pp. 136–140.

[6] See Congressional Record, Senate, Sept. 11, 1973, pp. 16300–16302.

There are political prisoners in South Vietnamese jails and incidents of abuse and mistreatment do occur. However, these problems have been exaggerated and inflated in the current public debate. The issue is an important one of concern to us, and we will continue to argue that the GVN make greater efforts to improve its performance.

The number of non-communist civilians detained for political dissent, i.e., "political prisoners", is a small portion of the prison population. Our Embassy in Saigon suggested that there may be between 500 and 1,000 detainees in this category. We simply do not have the means to determine to our satisfaction, and yours, the precise number of political prisoners in South Vietnamese prisons.

In short, in 1973 the Department of State officially acknowledged, and expressed its concern, over the political prisoners and that some mistreatment did occur. One year later, the American Ambassador and the U.S. Mission state flatly that there are no political prisoners. What has changed?

The Subcommittee Study Mission found the answer in a special briefing arranged by the South Vietnamese government, including representatives from the Ministry of Information, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of the Interior, among others. Unlike Ambassador Martin, they did not reject the notion that there may be civilians jailed in South Vietnam for political reasons. They suggested that the core of the problem was a definitional one: one man's political prisoner was another man's common criminal.

The Study Mission found, in effect, that without getting into a detailed comparison of legal codes or definitions of criminality, that these senior Vietnamese officials felt there were no political prisoners under *their* statutes or *their* interpretation of Vietnamese law. However, they recognized that many Americans upon reviewing these same prisoners, jailed for these allegations of "criminality", might conclude that they were political prisoners. The term constantly used—either in English or translated from Vietnamese—was that it was a question of "semantics." Furthermore, Vietnamese laws had been drafted and implemented under conditions of the insurgency and war, and therefore they naturally contained many elements for martial law. Furthermore, their enforcement might be subject to some selectivity.

On the basis of the Embassy's own findings, and the Study Mission's review in the field, we must once again conclude "that substantial numbers of political prisoners are held in South Vietnam . . . only the total numbers involved remain uncertain." In turn, our government must fulfill its pledge to make strong diplomatic representations to the South Vietnamese government in behalf of the humane and just treatment of all civilians detained for political reasons. The U.S. has a duty to firmly counsel the Saigon government to further sort out its political prisoners and rectify the rolls in all categories. We should encourage South Vietnam to invite the full and regular inspection of prison facilities under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross to allay international concerns over the treatment of prisoners. And, most important, we should support the immediate release of those prisoners not covered by the repatriation and return provisions of the Prisoner Protocol of the Paris agreement.

But little progress will be made in this important area of public concern as long as our Ambassador in Saigon persists in solving the problem by denying that it exists.

8. Internationalization of Humanitarian Assistance

Over the years, the Subcommitte has repeatedly emphasized the need to involve multilateral, and United Nations family agencies, in programs of humanitarian assistance to Vietnam and other countries of the Indochina peninsula. In the past some of these agencies have evidenced some reluctance to become too deeply involved in Indochina during the worst days of the war.

At this juncture, however, several international and United Nations agencies are considering, or have already undertaken, significant program expansions in Indochina. These include UNICEF, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, World Health Organization, United Nations Development Program, Indochina Operations Group of the International Red Cross, among others.

In the field of refugee resettlement and social welfare, there is a great deal which can be accomplished, and probably best accomplished, through multilateral assistance. In Vietnam, for instance, the Ministry of Social Welfare desperately needs technical assistance, as well as recognition, if it is to fulfill its mandate. UNICEF is the logical vehicle to provide assistance of this nature. If one considers Vietnam's estimated three percent rate of population increase together with its population structure of an unusually large number of young women about to enter their child bearing years, the prospects for economic stability, say nothing of growth in real per capita income, are alarming. So far, for political and religious reasons, South Vietnam has been unwilling to come to grips with its population problem. Yet it must, and on a crash basis, if any economic assistance is to be meaningful. Multilateral assistance in family planning and maternal and child care, through UNICEF and the UN Fund for Population Activities would probably be the most effective and expeditious approach to this critical requirement. If something is not done immediately to control population growth in South Vietnam, they automatically shelve any prospect for economic stability or development.

In both Vietnam and Cambodia the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees could provide additional vital assistance in refugee care and resettlement programs, as could WHO and IOG in the health field. The important city-to-farm program in Vietnam would be a logical focus for assistance from UNHCR. In Cambodia, UNICEF and WHO could make important contributions to assisting the Khmer government in dealing with its serious health and nutritional problems.

Taking USAID's project proposals, as submitted to Congress for fiscal year 1975, it is clear that a number of the programs in the refugee, social welfare, and medical fields, could usefully involve international support. Table 9 lists a sample of some of these projects for South Vietnam which the Study Mission found could easily be turned over, in whole or in part, to United Nations or other international agencies. This preliminary listing of a few sample projects totals $230.2 million—out of the $750 million requested for South Vietnam for fiscal year 1975. If even a portion, say 40 percent to 50 percent could be shifted to international agencies, with support of other nations willing to contribute, the United States would be able to reduce by some $100 million our direct bilateral aid to South Vietnam, yet not undermine these essential humanitarian programs.

TABLE 9.—A SAMPLE OF SOME SOUTH VIETNAM FISCAL YEAR 1975 USAID PROJECTS, PORTIONS OF WHICH MAY BE TURNED OVER TO INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES

South Vietnam project (as listed in AID congressional presentation)	Proposed amount (in millions)	Possible international agency
Crop production	$2.0	Food and Agriculture Organization.
War victims relief/rehabilitation	76.4	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.
Child care	8.2	United Nations Children's Fund.
Community preventive medicine	2.0	World Health Organization.
Public health service	.365	Do.
Development planning	.615	United Nations Development Program.
Rehabilitation of disabled	4.7	World Health Organization.
City-to-farm	30.0	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.
Canal dredging	10.0	Asian Development Bank.
Low-lift pump	4.0	Do.
My Thanh salt water	11.0	Do.
Urea plant	80.0	Do.
Population family planning	1.0	United Nations Fund for Population Activities.
Total	230.2	

In short, there are suitable and urgent humanitarian projects that can be undertaken by international agencies in South Vietnam, and those agencies are now in place or could expand their operations *if* the United States offered additional funding support. To date, however, there remains remarkably little change in our Government's basic approach towards the internationalization of humanitarian assistance, and not much new funding to encourage greater participation by the United Nations.

This must change, however; the language in the new Foreign Assistance Act, as passed by Congress in December and signed into law, is very clear: provision of humanitarian assistance to Indochina should be "wherever practicable under the auspices of and by the United Nations and its specialized agencies, other international organizations or arrangements, multilateral institutions, and private voluntary agencies with a minimum presence and activity of United States Government personnel." [7]

With this legislative mandate it should be expected that during 1975 the contributions of the United States will increase dramatically to such operative United Nations programs in Indochina as those of UNICEF, WHO, UNDP, among others. The program of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees—now funded at the modest level of $12 million for all of Indochina—could be usefully expanded.

[7] For the complete text of the law governing U.S. assistance to Indochina, see Appendix IV.

TABLE 10. OTHER DONOR ASSISTANCE COMMITMENTS TO SOUTH VIETNAM, 1970–75

[U.S. dollar in millions]

	Calendar year—					
	1970 actual	1971 actual	1972 actual	1973 estimated	1974 projected	1975 projected
A. Grant aid:						
1. Bilateral:						
Australia	2.3	4.0	5.2	15.0	4.0	----------
Canada	1.6	2.7	2.4	4.0	5.0	----------
China (Taiwan)	1.1	1.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	----------
France	5.1	5.1	6.5	9.0	10.0	----------
West Germany	5.4	7.8	7.1	5.0	5.0	----------
Japan	2.1	16.8	9.0	22.0	22.0	----------
Netherlands	.6	.6	.1	----------	.2	----------
New Zealand	.8	1.2	.7	1.0	1.0	----------
United Kingdom	.9	.6	.1	1.0	1.0	----------
Other	.7	.4	.5	3.0	2.8	----------
Subtotal	20.6	40.2	33.6	61.0	53.0	40.0
2. International institutions:						
U.N. agencies	3.4	3.7	----------	5.0	6.0	----------
Licross including UNHCR and IRC	1.1	3.8	----------			----------
Asian Development Bank	.1	.1	4.5	3.0	3.0	----------
Colombo plan						----------
Sub-total	4.6	7.6	4.5	8.0	9.0	10.0
3. Total, grant aid	25.2	47.8	38.1	69.0	62.0	50.0
B. Loan assistance:						
1. Asian Development Bank	2.5	2.5	6.3	13.0	30.0	20.0
2. Japan	5.2	25.2	10.0	27.0	35.0	70.0
3. France	----------	2.6	1.0	22.0	30.0	30.0
4. Germany	----------	----------	----------	16.0	16.0	20.0
5. Denmark and Netherlands	----------	----------	----------	15.0	10.0	5.0
6. Other countries	----------	----------	----------	6.0	3.0	5.0
7. IBRD	----------	----------	----------	----------	----------	50.0
Total loan	7.7	30.3	17.3	99.0	124.0	200.0
C. Total, grant and loan	32.9	78.1	55.4	168.0	186.0	250.0

9. Concluding Note

Where it was once easy to consider such matters as refugee care and resettlement, health services, and child welfare, as discreet areas of concern without specific reference to economic considerations, this is no longer possible. South Vietnam's deteriorating economy and mounting inflation affect every aspect of humanitarian assistance.

In its simplest terms, the basic problem is and remains the continuing war with no end in sight, and apparently no interest on either side in seeking a negotiated, rather than a military solution. The distorted economic structure and utilization of human resources dictated by this total preoccupation with military considerations is destined to continue. Thus in 1973 South Vietnam suffered a 65% inflation despite U.S. economic aid, and another 26% in the first six months of 1974—escalating each month since then.

In ten years, South Vietnam's urban population has nearly tripled, and with the withdrawal of American forces, with their some $300 million of personal and military spending gone, unemployment and under-employment are rampant in urban areas. With this unemploy-

ment, combined with the more than one million men in the armed forces, and the large number of people in government service, means that more than half of South Vietnam's work force is either not working or is unproductive in economic terms. In short, South Vietnam is in the midst of serious economic depression compounded by an alarming and mounting inflation.

Against this backdrop it is not surprising that malnutrition is increasing alarmingly in urban areas as people are forced by economic necessity to switch from rice and protein rich foods to starchy substitutes. School drop-outs are rising as thousands of families can no longer scrape together the 3,000 piasters ($5.00) per year required for school attendance. It is estimated that the number of "street children" has doubled since the beginning of last year, and infant abandonment is clearly rising as a result of economic pressure despite efforts to keep children with their families.

It seems to be generally acknowledged that humanitarian concerns in South Vietnam, especially today, cannot be viewed or resolved outside of the broader economic context. The degree of unanimity on this is reflected in the similar views held both by critics of United States involvement in South Vietnam as well as by the American Ambassador in Saigon. Obviously, there is need for economic stability if the people of South Vietnam—refugees, children, orphans, the elderly, and the urban poor and destitute—are to have any reasonable chance of progression beyond the struggle for sheer survival. But this is true for all countries—particularly developing nations around the globe. And the experience of depression and inflation is becoming all too real for millions of Americans as well.

How economic stability is to be achieved in South Vietnam, at what level of United States assistance, and with what hard decisions and belt-tightening, through what mechanisms—and whether it also means funding endless war—these are the critical policy questions the United States faces today. The question is not *whether* South Vietnam needs stability, but *how*. The answers too often given by high American officials in Saigon fail to reflect this complexity, they ignore the toll of on-going war, and they neglect the larger context of American priorities and commitments overseas. In considering how some degree of economic stability can be fashioned in South Vietnam, we must also consider the needs of our own country caught in the pincers of inflation and recession, as well as our basic humanitarian obligations to other nations, such as the Sahel or Bangladesh, where survival, not stability, is the most pressing concern.

It is within this larger context and with these basic questions in mind, that Congress and the American people must face the issue of future economic assistance to South Vietnam: what should be the level of aid and to achieve what objectives? In its Indochina budget requests for this past year the Administration had asked for $750 million. This was an amount far in excess—nearly double—the amount provided the previous year, and the requests for 1976 are destined to be just as high. Table 11 indicates just how expensive the ceasefire war has been, and how much the Indochina involvement continues to tax the U.S. Treasury.

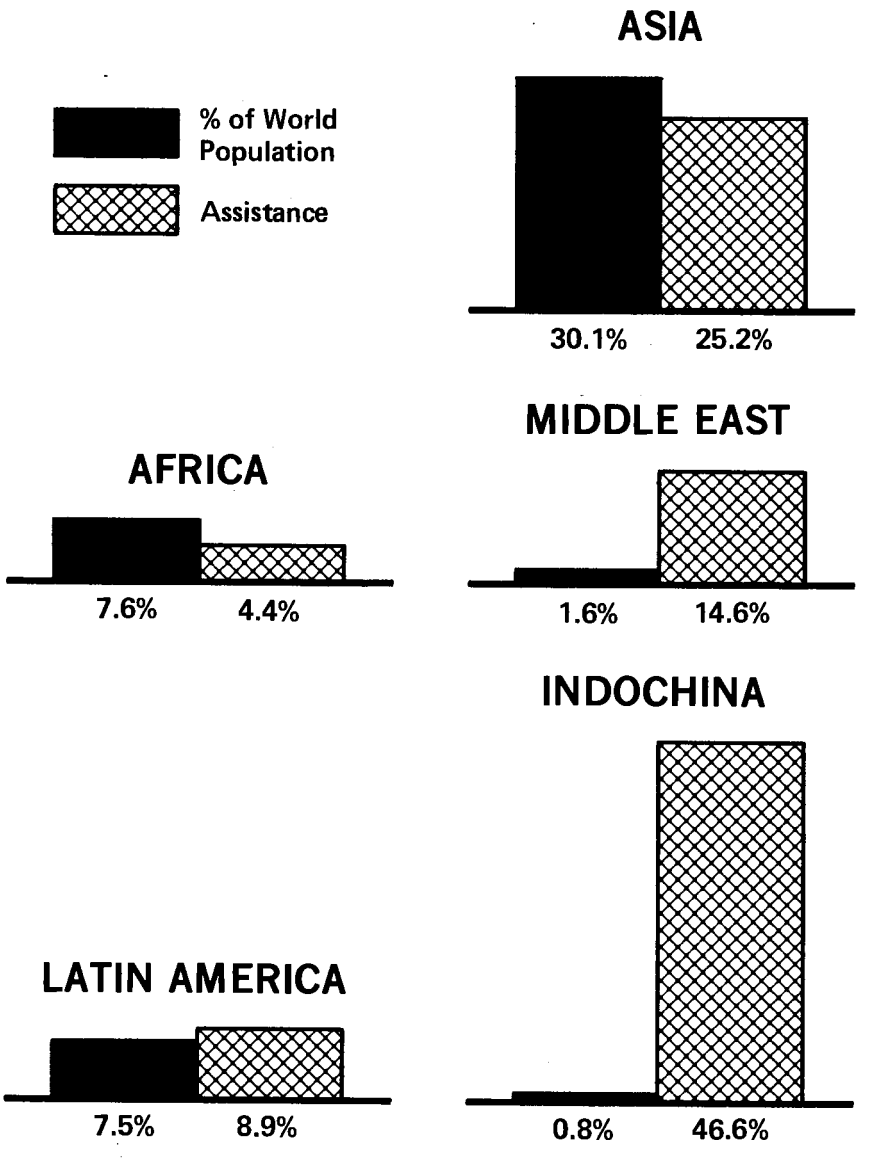
TABLE 11.—TOTAL U.S. MILITARY AND ECONOMIC AID TO INDOCHINA SINCE THE CEASE-FIRE

[In millions of dollars]

Country	Fiscal year 1973 (4th quarter)	1974	1975	Totals by country
1. South Vietnam	737.3	1,874.2	1,274.9	3,886.4
2. Cambodia	24.3	629.3	452.0	1,105.6
3. Laos	50.4	178.8	70.0	299.2
4. Southeast Asia (incremental)	889.0	900.0	281.0	2,700.0
Total	1,701.0	4,212.3	2,077.9	7,991.2

Also, to understand how significant the aid we now give Indochina is within the context of our total foreign assistance program—to see how Indochina fits into the larger picture of our economic aid around the globe—the following graph indicates the percentage of world population in countries receiving U.S. aid, compared to percentage that region will receive of total U.S. foreign assistance for fiscal year 1975. Thus, the countries in Asia receiving our aid have 30.1 percent of the world's population, but receive only 25.2 percent of our total foreign aid. Whereas neighboring Indochina, with less than 10 percent of the world's population, receives close to half of our total economic aid program. And the current request for Indochina aid perpetuates this askewed distribution of our economic aid program—to the neglect of other humanitarian needs and development requirements in countries far more in need of our assistance.

Percentage of World Population in Countries Receiving Foreign Aid, and Proposed Share of Total U.S. Foreign Aid, Fiscal Year 1975



*Data apply only to countries within the region receiving U.S. Foreign Aid

The rationale behind the Administration's massive funding requests for Saigon has been that if the United States provided higher levels of economic assistance for two to three years, South Vietnam will somehow achieve economic self-sufficiency and no longer be dependent upon the United States. However, this "economic take-off" argument resembles the bankrupt policies of old—a new light at the end of the same old tunnel. As the war continues, as the human toll mounts, as the economy deteriorates, the simple fact remains that Saigon continues to face the same old dilemmas of war and conflict it has faced since 1962. And until diplomacy changes this, there will be no basic change in the humanitarian or economic situation in South Vietnam.

In pure economic terms, there also remains considerable question whether "self-sufficiency" can be achieved in the time frame suggested by the Administration, particularly in the midst of continuing war. A World Bank report last year suggested that South Vietnam will be dependent on outside aid and foreign exchange support until at least the 1980's. Furthermore, a significant portion of the Administration's original request was slated for capital development in one form of another, and it is questionable whether a wartime economy with all its attendant abnormalities is the place to embark on a major program of economic and capital development.

The continuing levels of economic assistance to South Vietnam must be viewed also in relation to our own domestic needs, which are considerable and obviously growing worse—and, as noted above, in relation to our economic assistance responsibilities in other areas of the world. Many of the less developed countries could also achieve significant economic progress and in some cases reach "take-off" with a continuing infusion of capital on the order of magnitude suggested for South Vietnam.

Economic assistance obviously has political implications. With the levels of assistance proposed for Saigon, the Administration is trying to achieve by economic means what it could not by military. We remain caught in the inertia of the past—still trying to "win the war". But peace cannot be bought. If peace is to come, as it eventually must, then it will result from negotiation and compromise over those basic differences between the contestants which have been generic to the conflict for decades.

Nothing will be achieved by the big powers loading their respective sides of the scales with more and more assistance. On the contrary, this dependence on others has the effect of further rigidifying the situation and prolonging the war. Why seek a resolution, why start the long and painful process of identifying possible areas of compromise and reconciliation when the United States, or China, or Russia are always ever present to maintain the status quo?

By advocating both a reduction in, and restructuring of, our economic assistance to South Vietnam from the levels proposed by the Administration, Congress has emphasized that America's remaining obligations in Indochina are not to a specific government but rather to the people, and to the elusive promise of peace. The objective of our continuing assistance must be the achievement of economic and social stability and the reconstruction of the human and material resources of Vietnam. But this clearly cannot be achieved amidst continuing violence and conflict.

The United States must be willing to underwrite the costs of necessary humanitarian programs; even as the war unnecessarily drags on. However, our commitment to long range economic development, to a new and more sophisticated economic structure, to industrial parks and the like, such projects should be held in abeyance until a peace settlement is achieved, then these proposals can be judged on their own merits and in relation to similar requirements in other parts of the world.

CAMBODIA


Thailand
Laos
Ubon Ratchathani
Sisaket
Surin
Buri Raman
Pakse
Attapeu
Oddar Meanchey
Siem Reap
Preah Vihear
Stung Treng
Ratanakiri
Battambang
Kompong Thom
Kratie
Mondolkiri
Pursat
Kompong Chhnang
Kompong Cham
Phnom Penh
Koh Kong
Kompong Speu
Takeo
Kampot
South Vietnam
Saigon
Gulf of Thailand
Dao Phu Quoc
Cambodia
International boundary
Province boundary
National capital
Province capital
Railroad
Road
Trail
0 25 50 Miles
0 25 50 Kilometers
NAMES AND BOUNDARY REPRESENTATION ARE NOT NECESSARILY AUTHORITATIVE
Base 500895 3-72

CAMBODIA

The lingering, senseless war in Cambodia is perhaps the saddest legacy for America's presumably successful diplomacy to leave behind in Indochina. Since the United States invasion in 1970, which brought the Indochina war to Cambodia, we have watched the tragically familiar pattern of Vietnam and Laos repeated—in the destruction of the countryside, the creation of refugees, and the occurrence of civilian war casualties. As Cambodia continues to bleed, a stalemated war creates a mounting level of human suffering that, proportionately, surpasses the worst the world has seen in Vietnam.

1. The Refugee Situation

The effect of the war on Cambodia has been to force the countryside to move into the city. A rural people, once self-sufficient, have been pushed into a falsely urbanized situation where they must beg for work and food. This is most obvious around Phnom Penh—once a lovely city of only 600,000 people—now filled and surrounded with refugee shanty-towns, doubling the population. Over half of Cambodia's six million population have become refugees since the war began.

Accurate statistics on the movement of refugees in Cambodia are impossible to gather. The American Embassy conservatively reports that there are currently some 1,240,000 officially registered refugees in the less than 15 percent to 20 percent land area now controlled by the Khmer Government. According to the Embassy, the refugees represent well over 25 percent of the total population under government control.

Other estimates, including those of the Subcommittee Study Mission, indicate that the cumulative total of refugees is considerably higher. Table 12, indicates the cumulative total of refugees in Cambodia since 1970.

Table 12.—*Cumulative total of refugees in Cambodia (as of December 1974)*

1. Officially registered refugees:	
Phnom Penh	502,047
Provinces	678,413
Laos, Vietnam, Thailand	58,590
Subtotal	1,239,050
2. Estimated nonregistered refugees	500,000
3. Ethnic Vietnamese forced to flee to South Vietnam in 1970–71	250,000
4. Military dependents displaced	400,000
Subtotal	2,389,050
6. Estimated 35 percent of total population of Cambodia is outside government areas, half being displaced	1,000,000
Total	3,389,050

This estimate of the cumulative total of refugees in Cambodia includes both the 1,239,050 refugees officially registered—in Phnom Penh, the provinces, as well as neighboring countries—also an estimated 500,000 non-registered refugees. These are refugees who have moved with the ebb and flow of the conflict, who now crowd around provincial towns for safety, or drift into the shanty-towns of Phnom Penh and are never registered. In addition to these civilian refugees, one must also count some 400,000 military dependents, women and children, who have been displaced from their homes by the tide of war.

Finally, there are at least two million people living under the control of the Khmer Rouge. No refugee or population statistics are available for this sizeable group of people. However, it is known that the other side has dealt harshly with the civilian population under its control and that extensive forced movement of people has occurred for political and military purposes. This, combined with the insecurity and violence in the countryside, suggests that at least half of the civilian population under non-government control must be classified as refugees or displaced persons.

These are the cumulative statistics of refugee movement in Cambodia since 1970. The actual number of refugees now in camps or receiving emergency and general assistance is, of course, somewhat smaller in number. This is due, in part to the fact that some refugees have been resettled, some have been absorbed into the general population, or received the benefits available to them and since removed from the rolls, as is more likely the case, some have never received any assistance.

According to reports of USAID, based upon government and voluntary agency statistics, the total number of formal refugee camps in Phnom Penh is 63, housing 70,392 refugees. The total number of refugees actually receiving emergency and general assistance from all sources is only 533,950, broken down as follows:

Source:	*Number of refugees*
Cambodian government	3,830
Voluntary agencies:	
Catholic Relief Service	204,452
World Vision Relief	79,349
CARE	134,519
Save the Children	9,000
International agencies:	
IOG/Red Cross	92,300
UNICEF	------
Total	533,950

2. Conditions in the Field

Since early 1973 the refugee population has almost doubled its previous size. To quote a recent Embassy report: "The refugee problem has been compounded by a commensurate drop in production as refugees move from the land into and around urban areas. This in time has led to a shortage of many basic food stuffs and is one of the contributing factors in the hyperinflationary situation which exists in Cambodia today." The report goes on to say that "The key to the refugee situation then is not only to provide immediate assistance but

also to resettle as many of the refugee population as possible on productive land." But the tide of war has permitted little progress in this area. Indeed, conditions steadily deteriorate.

To provide a point of reference for a discussion of present conditions, it is useful to note the findings of last year's Study Mission report:

> To summarize the refugee situation, the prognosis is dismal. Neither our government nor the Cambodian Government have any organized refugee program. Adequate housing, sanitation, and medical service are either nonexistent or in short supply. Increasing numbers of refugees are being generated by an accelerated level of military activity and intensified American bombing. The repression on both sides is increasing with the government losing its precarious control and relying more and more on American intervention. And in the midst of this are over a million refugees, half of them children. They are receiving virtually no assistance and face malnutrition, serious food shortages and, in some areas, the real specter of starvation.

The military and economic situation has been further eroded since then, and the conditions of refugees are more serious today than at any point during the war. In fact, within the first three weeks of 1975, the Cambodian government estimates that some 60,000 new refugees were displaced during the recent fighting.

The land area controlled by the Lon Nol Government has further decreased in 1974, so that it now controls less than 15 percent of the nation's territory. Into this is squeezed between 60 percent to 70 percent of the population. The agricultural system of this once rice-rich nation is now so thoroughly disrupted, that instead of exporting rice, as it once did no a sizeable scale, Cambodia is close to starvation and wholly dependent on the United States for close to three-fourths of all the rice it consumes.

Farmers now form the increasing mass of the unemployed in Phnom Penh and other provincial cities. The war has totally incapacitated the economy. War damage alone amounts to over $2 billion. Nearly half of the hospital facilities have been destroyed by bombing and shelling. Over 45 percent of the roads are destroyed or damaged. Some 45 percent of the bridges are down. Communications and transportation are severely disrupted, with all highways to the capital blocked, and the river passage up the Mekong risky. An estimated 50 percent of all vehicles in Cambodia before the war are now destroyed or damaged, and its meager industrial capacity has been shattered.

3. Refugee Assistance Program

For the first three years of the war, there existed no effective program for assisting refugees. Few government services, and even less government aid directly reached the hands of the vast majority of the displaced persons. As a result, there were few formalized refugee camps in Phnom Penh or in the provinces until 1973. Refugees were forced to shift for themselves, with little or no help, and seemingly even less concern, from the Khmer government or the United States. This neglect was the object of Subcommittee criticism and concern for three long years, and hearings during this period are replete with references to the failure of the American government to help the Cambodians respond to the escalating refugee crisis.

However, by late 1973, and throughout 1974, USAID has rapidly increased its support for refugee assistance, and the recent responses

of the United States and Khmer governments to the refugee problem are encouraging. Because of statutory limitations on the number of official American personnel who can be in Cambodia at any given time, and because the voluntary agencies represent an excellent resource, the U.S. Government has contracted with World Vision, CARE, and Catholic Relief Services to provide emergency refugee assistance, medical services and resettlement assistance to the refugee population. Although these agency's programs reflect different priorities, and their programs are at different stages of development, each is operational and making a significant contribution. Together they utilize 67 international staff and 278 Khmer staff. In addition, the Indochina Operational Group of the International Red Cross (ICRC and LICROSS) has five highly effective medical teams operating in Cambodia, involving 25 international and 60 Khmer staff. All of this is a quantum jump from the level of assistance given the previous year.

On its part, the Khmer Government has begun the difficult task of reorganizing its response to the refugee crisis. The new Minister of Refugees, M. Kong Orn appears both concerned and competent. He faces a difficult task and deserves all the support that the U.S. Government can provide. Although the present government structure is clearly inadequate to deal with the enormity of the refugee problem, (a reality recognized by both governments), it is, nonetheless, important that U.S. Government and private agency efforts be undertaken in consultation and coordination with the Khmer Government. This is a matter of both principle and practical effectiveness.

In response to a suggestion from the American Embassy the Khmer Government has recently organized the Resettlement and Development Foundation, a semi-autonomous body where membership is drawn from the Khmer business community. With U.S. funding the R.D.F. will concentrate on refugee resettlement. Although it only received its first funding in April the Foundation is now at work in Phnom Penh, and Kompong Thom.

While the unfortunately belated responses of the United States and Khmer governments are quite clearly insufficient to meet the escalating refugee problem, the Study Mission found that a positive beginning has been made and both governments appear to be moving forward as rapidly as circumstances permit. Yet obviously, much more is needed as long as the war drags on. It is to be hoped that future planning and program expansion will reflect the urgency that the Cambodian tragedy demands.

While the U.S. Embassy now has six positions allocated to refugee personnel, an additional two, or preferably three, slots are needed, particularly in view of the increasing logistical support both the voluntary agencies and the Resettlement and Development Foundation will require. In addition, if one or two additional voluntary agencies are interested in working with the refugee problem, and if they are professionally competent to do so, they should be actively encouraged to participate in the program with substantial U.S. funding.

4. Civilian War Casualties

Unlike refugees, who can at least be counted if anyone cares, civilian war casualties are usually buried, or, if they survive, are admitted to

hospitals or treated at dispensaries. Because few records are kept, the full number of Cambodians who have died as civilian casualties will never be known, and because hospital admissions are not always noted, the number of war victims who survived their wounds will never be fully known.

Thus, the available statistics on civilian war casualties are grossly incomplete, particularly prior to 1973. The only statistics the Khmer government has available are those on survivors who have applied for government assistance. On this basis, as of mid-1973, government reports indicate that at least 29,000 civilians had been wounded and 12,661 killed because of the fighting. However, USAID reports that last year the Ministry of Public Health estimated that the number of civilian war casualties averaged at about the rate of 7,000 per month, or 84,000 dead and wounded over the year. Unofficial estimates, however, place the toll close to 100,000, and the cumulative number of civilian war casualties since the war began is well over 450,000—an inexact but probably more realistic figure.

A further measure of the impact of the war on the people is what has happened to the medical system of Cambodia. According to official statistics, the hospital capacity has been reduced by half, so that the pressure of treating war injured—both civilians and military personnel—has overwhelmed the remaining facilities. Because of age, the lack of replacement, the poor maintenance, 25 percent of all medical equipment is inoperative. Were it not for outside assistance—most of which arrived some three and a half years after the war began—the medical situation in Cambodia would be far more serious than it already is.

This past year, the U.S. and the IOG have rapidly increased aid to the medical system. USAID moved ten fully equipped 200-bed Mobile Emergency Surgical Hospitals to Cambodia. Nine of these units are now in place and are operating at the Ministry of Health's provincial and Phnom Penh hospital sites. In support of emergency relief, the voluntary and international agencies in Cambodia have also greatly expanded their medical programs and in total they now have a combined Khmer/International Medical Staff of more than 200 people who, on an average, treat more than 40,000 patients a month.

5. Orphan Problem

Before the war there was no "orphan problem" in Cambodia. Children of parents who died or were abandoned were sheltered by the joint family. For a Khmer to refuse to take in the orphaned children of a relative was considered a denial of family responsibility and would more than likely bring down the criticism of the whole community, especially in the closely-knit rural areas. Sometimes, however, when there were no relatives to raise an orphaned child, the child would be turned over to the pagoda for the monks to raise. As in other Asian countries the Government played only a minor role. Orphanages were rare, and the Government itself only operated the Sangkum Reastr Niyum Orphanage in Phnom Penh, which was considered more of a political training center than anything else. Though adoptions were not uncommon before the war, most were arranged by relatives and members of the family, and the only role played by the Govern-

ment was to record and legalize adoptions which had already been made.

With the outbreak of the war, the orphan problem quickly grew in size and seriousness. For the most part, the increase in the number of orphans came as the result of parents being killed by the actual fighting. Another cause was the increasing economic problems besetting the country. Before the war, the cost of living in Cambodia was relatively low and many Cambodians could quite easily raise a large family. With prices rising (280 percent inflation in 1973 alone), jobs harder to find, and food becoming less plentiful, children are now being abandoned.

Besides the increased number of orphans caused by the spread of hostilities, the orphan problem has been further aggravated by Cambodia's decreasing ability to support these children. Again, a primary factor is the economic situation. Where before the war, a Khmer family could quite easily take on the economic burden of supporting an orphaned child, many are now hard pressed to feed, clothe, and shelter their own family, much less another family member's child.

A further factor is the disruption of the Khmer family structure. Before the war, almost everyone knew where their relatives were and if a child was suddenly orphaned, word would quickly spread to the other members of the family. In the provinces this is still the case, and explains in part the absence of easily identifiable orphans in most of the provinces to date. In Phnom Penh and among the military, however, families and relatives now quickly become disconnected and many orphans remain abandoned simply because relatives capable of raising them never learn of their plight. As before, the pagodas still informally take in children to raise, but they are already overcrowded with orphan children and are clearly unable to fill the entire need.

There is no accurate information available on the numbers of orphans and their present condition. One Cambodian official estimates that there are over 15,000 orphans or half-orphans in Phnom Penh alone. In early 1973, the Cambodian Ministry of Interior estimated that there were 250,000 orphans, although how this number was compiled remains unclear. Of all the estimates on the numbers of orphans, those of the Ministry of Social Action are considered by USAID as the most accurate, since it has the specific responsibility for registering and caring for orphans. According to the Minister for Social Action and Labor, there are approximately 3,000–4,000 orphans in the country who are not being properly or adequately cared for. Of this number, he estimates 2.000–3,000 are in Phnom Penh and the remainder in the provinces. These figures are very conservative, and fail to include all orphans in the care of families. The Ministry breaks down the orphan population as follows:

	Orphans
In refugees camps	100
In recognized orphanages	200/300
In pagodas	500
Living with relatives or in provinces	1,000–2,000
Kompong Thom	500
Kampot	100
Battambang	100
Kompong Speu	Some

The remainder are scattered throughout other provinces.

Faced with the increasing number of orphans, the Government of Cambodia and several national and international humanitarian organizations have instituted a number of relief programs. For the most part these programs have centered around the traditional concept of organized orphanages. At the present time there are five orphanages in Phnom Penh and three in Battambang, with more planned.

6. Concluding Note

As the Study Mission report observed last year, Cambodia was the last nation of Indochina to fall victim to the spreading Vietnam war. Today it still seems destined to be the last to see it end. The even greater tragedy for Cambodia has been that neither the war's beginning, nor apparently its end, will be under its control.

But there are some hopeful signs. First, some greater measure of concern has now been expressed by our government over the growing humanitarian crisis overtaking the people of Cambodia. Some programs and services are now underway, and more are promised. Second, the Subcommittee Study Mission observed in the field a new determination to press for peaceful accommodation and negotiation necessary to achieve a ceasefire and a political settlement. For this new tone the new American Ambassador deserves high marks and, even more, our full support.

Only when peace is no longer the last item on our priority list, will we, in concert with the people of Cambodia and others in the international community, be able to truly contribute to the relief and rehabilitation of that sad land.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

I. South Vietnam

1. Any pretense that the Paris Agreement for "Ending the War and Restoring Peace" has accomplished what it is entitled, is shattered by a simple look at official statistics on the continuing toll of refugees and civilian war casualties. The record shows that the official monthly average of war-related hospital admissions (3,600 each month) is the same level as last year, and down only slightly from previous years. In fact, the toll since the ceasefire is comparable to the levels of 1971 and 1972, peak years of the fighting.

New refugees continue to flee from the conflict in the countryside, reminiscent of the worst days of the past. Since the ceasefire agreement was signed, an estimated 1,413,000 refugees were displaced in South Vietnam—818,000 in 1973, and 594,000 in 1974. The cumulative total of refugees displaced since the war escalated in 1964–65, now stands at 11,683,000—well over half of the total population.

2. Based upon official reports from the field, the worst period for refugees during 1974 was not late in the year, during what the Pentagon calls a "dry-season offensive;" rather, the greatest number of new refugees moved during the months of May-August, when escalated military operations were reported from both sides in the northern and central provinces. Some 353,100 new refugees were reported displaced by the end of the summer, compared to 201,800 during the last months of 1974.

3. The "ceasefire war" raging in South Vietnam is clearly as dangerous as the old war. When the 1973 and 1974 toll of wounded and killed civilians is added to the official accounting of military casualties, it totals 339,822 Vietnamese killed or wounded in two years (compared to 56,231 American dead over an entire decade of fighting).

4. Programs for refugee resettlement and return to village have come to a halt, and 1974 was marked more by a feeling of the clock-being-turned-back than of "progress" in refugee resettlement.

5. The full extent of the war's impact upon the land and people of Vietnam will perhaps never be known, for along with the toll in lives and lost limbs, there has also been an accompanying toll in the strength and functioning of societal institutions.

Once a predominantly rural society, today some 65% of South Vietnam's population lives in an urbanized setting—mostly in a false urban situation, without a sustaining economic base. A critical need remains to return people to the land. However, South Vietnam remains a deficit agricultural area, with no prospect of becoming self-sufficient as long as there is conflict in the countryside.

A massive social welfare problem has emerged in the need to care for orphans, war widows, and, for the first time in Vietnamese history, institutions to care for the aged, who normally is cared for in the extended family.

Rehabilitation needs of 178,000 Vietnamese physically disabled by the war remain to be met. Although some progress has been reported in providing prosthetic devices to 80,000 amputees, the long backlog of untreated cases will still not be eliminated for 2½ years, even if the war were to be stopped tomorrow.

6. After over a year of foot-dragging, programs for inter-country adoption of Vietnamese orphans have now received necessary funds. However, a critical problem remains in other child welfare programs. Only in recent months, after fourteen months delay, have Congressionally ear-marked funds for child welfare programs reached the agencies working in the field, and a child welfare conference planned for 1973–1974 was convened a year late, on January 14, 1975.

The sums involved in child welfare remain small—some $7.5 million for 1974, and $8.2 million programmed for fiscal year 1975. Thus, there is a continuing need to provide additional support for child welfare, and to strengthen the capabilities of the Ministry of Social Welfare and other indigneous organizations to provide services to all children disadvantaged by the war.

7. Although continued progress is evident in the hospital and public health programs in South Vietnam, the burden of civilian and military casualties continues to out-pace its capacity to treat or to rehabilitate them. But while pressure on the medical system remains constant, U.S. support for it has continued to decline.

II. Cambodia

1. In four years of war, Cambodia has become a nation of refugees. Over half its population have become refugees, moving from the countryside into the city. A desperate situation last year has become even more precarious this year, as each new day of war adds more refugees to swollen towns and cities which offer no shelter and even less hope. Some 1,140,000 refugees are officially registered, but the cumulative total of refugees is close to 3,389,000.

2. War damage has been extensive, as the Cambodian government steadily loses control of territory—now claiming less than 15 percent under government control. Once a rice-rich nation, it now depends upon three-quarters of its rice from the United States.

3. Medical needs are critical. Without the presence of medical teams from the Indochina Operational Group of the International Red Cross, the war casualty problem in Cambodia would be catastrophic, rather than the mere crisis it is today. Nearly 50 percent of the hospital facilities have been destroyed, and there is no internal capability of administrative capacity to deal with the new medical burdens created by war—some 7,000 civilian war casualties each month. There remain critical shortages of beds, medical supplies and personnel to treat an ever growing number of casualties, much less to provide rehabilitative services.

4. The refugees of Cambodia have long been ignored. Only this past year—after years of inexcuseable neglect—have additional funds and personnel been made available for refugee programs within AID and for the programs of voluntary agencies.

5. As in South Vietnam, a serious orphan problem has emerged with the war in Cambodia. Estimates of orphans who have lost one or both parents range as high as 250,000. The U.S. Embassy estimates that

there are 3,000 to 4,000 orphans who have no family, and are in need of the care of orphanages which do not exist.

6. Nowhere in Indochina is there greater urgency to the humanitarian needs of refugees and war victims, and the highest priority must be placed upon increased international assistance and American support for the programs of the International Red Cross and other voluntary agencies. And this urgency will remain until diplomacy ends the long, entirely senseless war in Cambodia.

RECOMMENDATION

As indicated at the outset, the primary purpose of this Study Mission report was to help document the continuing humanitarian needs of millions of war victims in South Vietnam and Cambodia. Despite the ceasefire agreements, and the rhetoric of peace, the violence continues in South Vietnam, and in Cambodia the war drags on as before. Each new day of war adds to the already massive humanitarian problems that confront both nations.

Over the coming weeks and months—as it has since 1965— the Subcommittee will continue to be as tenacious in its recommendations for action as it feels the pressing humanitarian needs in Indochina warrant. However, for the purposes of this up-dated report, two concluding recommendations are offered.

First, renewed efforts are needed on the diplomatic front. For two years the American people have heard more about new military options and the need for more guns and bombs for a "ceasefire war." But the breakdown of the Paris agreement demands more than a threat of new bombing. The lingering and bloody conflict in Indochina deserves more of our diplomacy, and less of our ammunition.

In the days ahead, Congress and the American people will want to know more fully what our diplomats are doing to bring peace. We will want to know what the President has done to help accomplish the political goals of the ceasefire agreements, and securing a truce in Vietnam. Until the question of peace, rather than war, becomes the focus of our government's effort in Indochina, we will see continuing war rather than peace.

Second, new efforts are required to meet the growing humanitarian needs of Indochina, and a key factor in accomplishing this is the internationalization of humanitarian assistance to the people throughout the area. The overwhelming conclusion of a visit to South Vietnam and Cambodia today is the simple, but tragic, fact: because of continuing violence the human toll of a decade of war escalates, and the world is confronted with a very serious regional crisis of people. The needs of new war victims, especially in Cambodia, are great and immediate. The efforts being made to meet these needs are fragmented and inadequate. And the regional character of the problem—including the flight of people over international boundaries—is producing problems which must be dealt with on an international, rather than purely bi-lateral, basis.

Today, there is both an opportunity as well as a critical need for the internationalization of humanitarian assistance to Indochina—particularly in Cambodia, but also in Laos, where a fragile government of national union is struggling to maintain the peace. Even in South Vietnam, where the ceasefire has broken down, there is a pressing need to reduce old patterns of outside bi-lateral aid, and to promote greater international participation, and to encourage a transition in America's relationship with the government in Saigon.

Increased international participation in the humanitarian relief and rehabilitaton problems of Indochina will also serve to involve all channels of assistance, thereby reducing the total amount of direct United States assistance required, yet increasing the total amount of humanitarian aid available to the peoples of Indochina.

Equally important, the opportunity is now at hand to immediately involve international humanitarian organizations in the relief effort in South Vietnam and Cambodia—and all of Indochina. This is particularly so regarding the United Nations and its specialized agencies. The Study Mission found, for the first time, not just a generalized expression of interest in participating in Indochina programs, but rather a very specific and tangible set of programs and intentions by U.N. agencies—*if* only the necessary funding were available.

The first priority of our government in the days ahead, in terms of humanitarian assistance in Indochina, must be to pledge our dollar support to such international relief and rehabilitation programs as those of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the U.N. Fund for Population Activities, and international organizations as the Indochina Operational Group of the International Red Cross, the Asian Development Bank, among others.

It is the recommendation of the Study Mission that our government now fund these international humanitarian programs, and we must fund them at a level which will serve to make them operational, and which will encourage other nations to contribute their share. And this process can begin not tomorrow, nor next fiscal year, but today. To do otherwise, is not only to miss new opportunities for change and for helping the people of Indochina in need, but also to repeat the program failures and the policy frustrations of the past.

There can be a new beginning in Indochina, if only our government seeks it.

APPENDIX I.—CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN SENATOR KENNEDY AND SECRETARY OF STATE, HENRY A. KISSINGER, ON U.S. POLICY IN INDOCHINA

1. TEXT OF SENATOR KENNEDY'S LETTER OF INQUIRY TO SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,
Washington, D.C., March 13, 1974.

Hon. HENRY A. KISSINGER,
Secretary of State, Department of State,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. SECRETARY: As you know, there is continuing and, I feel, growing congressional and public concern over the course of American policy toward Indochina. Inquiry by the Subcommittee on Refugees and other committees of the Congress, an unclassified cable of March 6 from Ambassador Graham Martin in Saigon, other statements by officials in the Executive Branch, the supplemental appropriation request for the current fiscal year and the anticipated requests for fiscal year 1975, news dispatches from the field, and various private reports, raise troubling questions for many Americans over the character and objective of our policy towards Indochina and over the kinds and levels of our current involvement in South Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.

In light of the growing concern over American policy toward Indochina and the contradictory and incomplete information currently available, I would like to request comprehensive comment and review on the following items:

(1) The general character and objectives of American policy towards Indochina as a whole and tellers each government or political authority in the area;

(2) The general content and nature of existing obligations and commitments to the governments in Saigon, Phnom Penh and Vientiane;

(3) The kinds, categories and levels of support and assistance given or projected to the governments in Saigon, Phnom Penh and Vientiane for fiscal year 1973 through 1975—including (a) a breakdown of the number, distribution, activities and agency/departmental association of official American personnel, as well as those associated with private business and other organizations under contract to the United States government; and (b) a breakdown from all sources of humanitarian assistance, police and public safety oriented assistance, general supporting and economic development assistance, and military assistance;

(4) The current status and problems of reported efforts to establish an international consortium for general reconstruction assistance to the area;

(5) The current status and problems of the Administrations stated intention to encourage internationalizing humanitarian assistance to the area;

(6) The curret status of negotiations between Washington and Hanoi on American reconstruction assistance to North Vietnam;

(7) The Departments assessment on the implementation of the ceasefire agreements for both Vietnam and Laos;

(8) The Departments assessment of the overall situation in Cambodia and the possibility for a ceasefire agreement; and

(9) Recent diplomatic initiatives, involving the United States, aimed at a reduction of violence in Indochina and a greater measure of normalization in the area.

In addition to the above areas of inquiry, I would also appreciate very much the Department's comment on a series of recommendations contained in a recent report based on the Subcommittee's Study Mission to Indochina last year. Lengthy excerpts from this report, including some of the recommendations, were issued in late January and informally made available to officials in the Executive Branch. The recommendations focus on the relief and rehabilitation of war victims, but also include comment and suggestions on the broader aspects of United States policies and programs in the area.

In light of persisting hopes among all our citizens for peace in Indochina, and to clarify our country's commitments and continuing involvement in the area, I feel it would be extremely helpful if definitive information on our government's

policy, involvement and future planning could be made available to the Subcommittee. I am hopeful, Mr. Secretary, that the Subcommittee can anticipate a response at an early date, and that appropriate officials from the Executive Branch will also be available for consultations or hearings.

In conclusion, let me express my personal dismay over a theme in Ambassador Martin's cable of March 6. For him to suggest a tie between alleged decisions in Hanoi and the views of Members of Congress and their staffs about the course of American policy towards South Vietnam and Inodchina, is the worst kind of innuendo and regretably ignores the many legitimate questions and concerns of the Congress and the American people over our commitments to the government's of Indochina and over the continuing level of our involvement in the political and military confrontations of the area. And I would appreciate very much your comment on the Ambassador's cable.

Many thanks for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

EDWARD M. KENNEDY,
Chairman, Subcommittee on Refugees.

Enclosure.

2. TEXT OF SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER'S RESPONSE

THE SECRETARY OF STATE,
Washington, March 25, 1974.

Hon. EDWARD M. KENNEDY,
Chairman, Subcommittee on Refugees,
Committee on the Judiciary, U.S. Senate

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: In response to your letter of March 13 on various aspects of United States policy toward Indochina, I am enclosing our comment on the nine specific items you have outlined. I hope this information will be useful to you. As to the recommendations of the Subcommittee's Study Mission to Indochina last year, which were enclosed with your letter, I have asked Governor Holton to review these and to prepare our comments for submission to you as soon as possible.

Your letter also expresses concern over a March 6 cable by Ambassador Martin commenting on a recent press article on the United States role in Viet-Nam. I do not believe the Ambassador is suggesting a cause-and-effect relationship between decisions in Hanoi and the views of any individual Members of Congress or their staffs. What he is describing is a very real and sophisticated propaganda effort by North Viet-Nam to bring to bear on a wide spectrum of Americans its own special view of the situation in Indochina. The Ambassador believes, and in this he has our full confidence and support, that we must counter these distortions emanating from Hanoi and continue to provide the best answers to the concerned questions many Americans have about our Indochina policy.

Warm regards,

HENRY A. KISSINGER.

Enclosure: Comment on Indochina Policy Issues.

(1) "The general character and objectives of American policy towards Indochina as a whole and towards each government or political authority in the area;"

There are two basic themes in our policy toward Indochina. The first is our belief that a secure peace in Indochina is an important element in our efforts to achieve a worldwide structure of peace. Conversely, we believe that an evolution toward peace in other troubled areas helps bring about the stability for which we strive in Indochina. Consequently, our Indochina policy has been geared to bring about the conditions which will enable the contending parties to find a peaceful resolution of their differences.

A resolution of differences can, of course, be achieved by other than peaceful means. For example, North Viet-Nam might seek to conquer South Viet-Nam by force of arms. Such a resolution, however, would almost certainly be a temporary one and would not produce the long-term and stable peace which is essential. Therefore, a corollary to our search for peace, and the second theme of our policy, is to discourage the takeover of the various parts of Indochina by force. Forcible conquest is not only repugnant to American traditions

but also has serious destablizing effects which are not limited to the area under immediate threat.

We would stress the point that the United States has no desire to see any particular form of government or social system in the Indochina countries. What we do hope to see is a free choice by the people of Indochina as to the governments and systems under which they will live. To that end we have devoted immense human and material resources to assist them in protecting this right of choice.

Our objective with regard to the Government of Viet-Nam, the Government of the Khmer Republic and the Royal Lao Government is to provide them with the material assistance and political encouragement which they need in determining their own futures and in helping to create conditions which will permit free decisions. In Laos, happily, real progress has been made, partly because of our assistance. The Vientiane Agreement and Protocols give clear evidence of the possibility for the peaceful settlement our policies are designed to foster. We have supported the Royal Lao Government and, when it is formed, we will look with great sympathy on the Government of National Union. We welcome a peaceful and neutral Laos and, where appropriate, we will continue to encourage the parties to work out their remaining problems.

In Cambodia we are convinced that long-term prospects for stability would be enhanced by a cease-fire and a negotiated settlement among the Khmer elements to the conflict. Because such stability is in our interests we are providing diplomatic and material support to the legitimate government of the Khmer Republic, both in its self-defense efforts and in its search for a political solution to the war.

Our objective in Viet-Nam continues to be to help strengthen the conditions which made possible the Paris Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Viet-Nam. With this in mind we have supported the Republic of Viet-Nam with both military and economic assistance. We believe that by providing the Vietnamese Government the necessary means to defend itself and to develop a viable economy, the government in Hanoi will conclude that political solutions are much preferable to renewed use of major military force. The presence of of large numbers of North Vietnamese troops in the South demonstrates that the military threat from Hanoi is still very much in evidence. Because of that threat we must still ensure that the Republic of Viet-Nam has the means to protect its independence. We note, however, that the level of violence is markedly less than it was prior to the cease-fire and believe that our policy of support for South Viet-Nam has been instrumental in deterring major North Vietnamese offensives.

Our objective with regard to the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam, and its southern arm, the Provisional Revolutionary Government, is to encourage full compliance with the Paris Agreement. We have been disappointed by North Viet-Nam's serious violations of important provisions of the Agreement. However, we still believe that the Agreement provides a workable framework for a peaceful and lasting settlement, and we will continue to use all means available to us to support the cease-fire and to encourage closer observance of it. Our future relations with Hanoi obviously depend in large part on how faithfully North Viet-Nam complies with the Agreement.

We have also undertaken our assistance to Laos and support for the Royal Lao Government because of our own broad national interests, not because of any formal commitment to that country. The most important and visible of our interests is our desire for a just settlement of the tragic war in Indochina. Laos plays a key role in his effort to achieve the peace. Indeed, Laos is the bright spot in Indochina where the fruits of our efforts to assist and support the Royal Lao Government are most clearly seen. A cease-fire based on an agreement worked out by the two Lao parties has endured for more than a year. The two parties have together organized joint security forces in the two capital cities of Vientiane and Luang Prabang and a coalition government may not be far away. We feel that these large steps toward a lasting peace in Laos would probably not have succeeded but for our steadfast support for the efforts of the Royal Lao Government.

(2) "The general content and nature of existing obligations and commitments to the governments in Saigon, Phnom Penh and Vientiane;"

The U.S. has no bilateral written commitment to the Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam. However, as a signator of the Paris Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Viet-Nam, the United States committed itself to

strengthening the conditions which made the cease-fire possible and to the goal of the South Vietnamese people's right to self-determination. With these commitments in mind, we continue to provide to the Republic of Viet-Nam the means necessary for its self-defense and for its economic viability.

We also recognize that we have derived a certain obligation from our long and deep involvement in Viet-Nam. Perceiving our own interest in a stable Viet-Nam free to make its own political choices, we have encouraged the Vietnamese people in their struggle for independence. We have invested great human and material resources to support them in protecting their own as well as broader interests. We have thus committed ourselves very substantially, both politically and morally. While the South Vietnamese Government and people are demonstrating increasing self-reliance, we believe it is important that we continue our support as long as it is needed.

Our relations with the Government of the Khmer Republic also do not stem from a formal commitment but are based on our own national interests. Recognizing that events in Cambodia relate directly to the bitter hostilities in other parts of Indochina, we have sought to help create stability in that country as a part of our effort to encourage the development of peace in the entire region. We, therefore, support the legitimate government of Cambodia, in the hope that its increasing strength will encourage the Khmer Communists toward a political settlement rather than continued conflict.

(3) "The kinds, categories and levels of support and assistance given or projected to the governments in Saigon, Phnom Penh and Vientiane for fiscal year 1973 through 1975—including (a) a breakdown of the number, distribution, activities and agency/departmental association of official American personnel, as well as those associated with private business and other organizations under contract to the United States government; and (b) a breakdown from all sources of humanitarian assistance, police and public safety oriented assistance, general supporting and economic development assistance, and military assistance;"

(A) U.S. ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE

Our annual Congressional Presentation books provide the data requested here in considerable detail. These Congressional Presentation books for FY 1975 will shortly be delivered to the Congress. We provide these first, as a matter of course, to the authorizing and appropriations Committees of the Senate and the House and then routinely make them available to all Members as well as the interested public. We will be happy to provide your Subcommittee on Refugees with copies as soon as available.

The Congressional Presentation books focus, of course, on our proposals for the coming year, FY 1975, but also contain data on both the current fiscal year, FY 1974, and the preceding, FY 1973. This year, as last, we are preparing a separate book providing the details of our economic assistance programs for the Indochina countries.

These Congressional Presentation books form a partial basis, of course, for extensive Hearings held each year by the authorizing committees in the Senate and House, and then by the appropriations committees. We would expect the question you pose, as well as many others, to be further explored in considerable depth during the course of these Hearings.

(B) U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE

Our military assistance to South Viet-Nam and Laos is provided under MASF. The breakdown of this assistance for the period you requested is as follows:

Year	Ceiling	New obligational authority
Fiscal year—		
1973	$2,735,000,000	$2,563,000,000
1974	1,126,000,000	907,500,000
1975	[1] 1,600,000,000	[2] 1,450,000,000

[1] Requested.
[2] Vietnam only; Laos will be included under MAP for fiscal year 1975.

The level of official U.S. military/civilian personnel in South Viet-Nam during the same period is as follows:

Year	Military	Civilian
January 1973	[1] 23,516	830
January 1974	[2] 221	1,200
June 1974	[2] 221	936

[1] Assigned.
[2] Authorized.

The number of U.S. civilian contractors has declined from 5,737 in January, 1973, to 2,736 in January, 1974. This number is expected to decrease further to 2,130 by June, 1974. We do not yet have a projected level of U.S. civilian contractors for FY 1975.

Our military assistance to Cambodia is furnished under MAP. This assistance totalled $148.6 million in FY 1973 and $325 million in FY 1974. The level of our military assistance for FY 1975 is now under review. The amount to be proposed will be included in the Congressional presentation documents on military assistance which we expect to submit to Congress shortly.

U.S. military and civilian personnel in Cambodia during the period you requested is as follows:

Year	Military	Civilian
December 1972	112	53
December 1973	113	55
December 1974	113	(1)

[1] Data not available.

U.S. military and civilian personnel in Laos during the period you requested is as follows:

Year	Military	Civilian
December 1972	185	457
December 1973	180	424
December 1974	[1] 30	(2)

[1] Based on the assumption that a coalition government will be formed in Laos before the end of this year.
[2] Data not available.

(4) "The current status and problems of reported efforts to establish an international consortium for general reconstruction assistance to the area."

In April 1973, President Thieu asked the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) to help form an aid group for the Republic of Viet-Nam. The IBRD agreed to make the effort, providing that this would be acceptable to the Bank membership and that the group could be organized in association with both the IBRD and the Asian Development Bank. In May the World Bank sent a study mission to Viet-Nam to review the situation. In August, Japan suggested that the Bank arrange a preliminary meeting to exchange views on aid to the countries of Indochina. The Japanese also proposed that the member countries discuss the formation of a loose Indochina consultative group for the area wide coordination, with sub-groups for any of the four countries concerned which might request such a group and where conditions were satisfactory.

An initial meeting was held at the Bank's Paris office in October. The United States supported the Bank's efforts as well as the Japanese proposal. The Bank sent a second mission to Viet-Nam in November and subsequently proposed that a follow-on meeting be held in February of this year to discuss the formation of the Indochina consultative group. However, the reactions of participating

countries to the energy crisis and to the Congressional decision on IDA replenishment led the Bank to postpone the meeting, tentatively until late Spring. In February, at the request of the Lao Government, a World Bank team also visited Laos to assess the situation and to discuss a possible consultative group for that country.

The United States continues to support efforts to form a Indochina consultative group. We also favor the proposal that there be sub-groups for each recipient country to which donors may contribute as they wish. The sub-groups would be formed when considered appropriate by donors and at the request of the recipient. We remain in close consultation with the World Bank and other interested parties on this matter. We are hopeful that a second meeting of participants might be held in the near future and that such a meeting might lead to the establishment of the groups in question. A reversal of the negative Congressional action on IDA replenishment would clearly enhance the possibility of success in this regard.

(5) "The current status and problems of the Administration's stated intention to encourage internationalizing humanitarian assistance to the area;"

In addition to U.S. bilateral humanitarian assistance to the Indochina countries which totals $111.4 million for FY 1974, the Department and the Agency for International Development (AID) continue to encourage other donors, including international organizations, to provide such assistance. AID made a grant of $2 million on November 1, 1973, to the Indochina Operation Group of the International Committee of the Red Cross and discussions are continuing about an additional grant to that organization. UNICEF has recently completed its study of the problems in the Indochina countries and has just submitted its proposed program to possible donor countries. We have encouraged UNICEF in its study and are pleased that it is now prepared to expand its activities in all three countries.

The World Health Organization has had meaningful programs in Laos, Cambodia, and Viet-Nam which supplement and do not overlap with activities supported by the United States. We have encouraged that organization to play an even more important role, particularly in the malaria control program, and we at the same time would phase out of our activities in that field.

Our discussion with the Indochina countries have stressed the desirability of establishing plans and priorities for programs and projects which require assistance so that other donor countries and organizations can fit their assistance efforts into the host country requirements.

(6) "The current status of negotiations between Washington and Hanoi on American reconstruction assistance to North Viet-Nam."

Following the conclusion of the Peace Agreement last year, preliminary discussions of post-war reconstruction were held in Paris between U.S. and North Vietnamese members of the Joint Economic Commission. These talks have been suspended since last July. The Administration's position, which we believe is shared by the great majority of members of Congress, is that the U.S. cannot at this time move forward with an assistance program for North Viet-Nam. To date, North Viet-Nam has failed substantially to live up to a number of the essential terms of the Agreement, including those relating to the introduction of troops and war materiel into South Viet-Nam, the cessation of military activities in Cambodia and Laos, and the accounting for our missing-in-action. Should Hanoi turn away from a military solution and demonstrate a serious compliance with the Agreement, then we would be prepared, with the approval of Congress, to proceed with our undertaking regarding reconstruction assistance to North Viet-Nam.

(7) "The Department's assessment on the implementation on the cease-fire agreements for both Viet-Nam and Laos;"

The cease-fire in Viet-Nam has resulted in a substantial decrease in the level of hostilities; for example, military casualties since the cease-fire have been about one-third the level of casualties suffered in the years preceding the Paris Agreement. Nonetheless, it is unfortunately evident that significant violence continues to occur and that the cease-fire is far from scrupulously observed. The fundamental problem is that the North Vietnamese are still determined to seize political power in the South, using military means if necessary. To this end they have maintained unrelenting military pressure against the South Vietnamese Government and have continued widespread terrorism against the population. In particularly flagrant violation of the Agreement North Viet-Nam has persisted in its infiltration of men and materiel into the South, bringing in more than one hundred thousand troops and large quantities of heavy equipment since the cease-fire began. South Vietnamese forces have reacted against these attacks by North Vietnamese forces and several sizable engagements have taken place.

Despite these serious violations, we continue to believe that the Paris Agreement has already brought substantial benefits and continues to provide a workable framework for peace. After more than a quarter century of fighting it would have been unrealistic to expect that the Agreement would bring an instant and complete end to the conflict. What it has done, however, is to reduce the level of violence significantly and provide mechanisms for discussion. The two Vietnamese parties are talking to each other and are achieving some results, even if these results are much less than we would like to see. The final exchange of prisoners which was completed on March 7 is illustrative.

We assess the cease-fire agreement in Laos as being so far largely successful. The level of combat was reduced substantially immediately following the ceasefire and has since fallen to a handful of incidents per week. There is hope that if developments continue as they have, the Laos cease-fire will work and the Lao, through their own efforts, will be able to establish a coalition government and a stable peace in their country.

(8) "The Department's assessment of the overall situation in Cambodia and the possibility for a ceasefire agreement."

Despite continued pressure by the Khmer insurgents, now generally under the control of the Khmer Communist Party, the Khmer armed forces have successfully repulsed two major insurgents operations, one against Kompong Cham and, more recently, against Phnom Penh, with no US combat support. Serious miiltary problems remain, and continued hard fighting during the next few months is expected, both in the provinces and around the capital.

A broadened political base, a new Prime Minister and a more effective cabinet offer signs of improvements in the civil administration. The enormous dislocation of the war, destroying production, producing over a million refugees and encouraging spiralling inflation, face the leaders of the Khmer Republic with serious problems.

Nonetheless, we are convinced that with US material and diplomatic support the Khmer Republic's demonstration of military and economic viability will persuade their now intransigent opponents to move to a political solution of the Cambodian conflict. The Khmer Republic's Foreign Minister on March 21 reiterated his government's position that a solution for Cambodia should be peaceful and not forced by arms or capitulation. Instead, his government will continue to seek talks with the other side. His government hopes their efforts for peace will achieve some results after the current insurgent offensive.

(9) "Recent diplomatic initiatives, involving the United States, aimed at a reduction of violence in Indochina and a greater measure of normalization in the area."

Since the signing of the Viet-Nam cease-fire agreement, the United States has been in constant liaison with the interested parties, including those outside of the Indochina area. While it would not be useful to provide details of all of these contacts, we can assure the Congress that we have used every means at our disposal to encourage a reduction in the level of violence and an orderly resolution of the conflict. We be'ieve these measures have had some success. The level of fighting is down substantially from 1972 and the Vietnamese parties have taken at least beginning steps toward a satisfactory accommodation. Further, the interested outside parties remain basically committed to building on the framework of the cease-fire agreement.

When Hanoi established a pattern of serious violations of the Agreement shortly after its conclusion, Dr. Kissinger met with Special Adviser Le Duc Tho and negotiated the Paris Communique of June 13, 1973, with a view to stabilizing the situation. Secretary Kissinger returned to Paris in December, 1973, to again discuss with Special Adviser Tho the status of the implementation of the Agreement. We will continue to maintain such contacts with Vietnamese and other parties in the hope that Hanoi will eventually be persuaded that its interests lie in peaceful development rather than in conflict.

In Laos we have offered every encouragement to an evolution toward peace. At this time the Laotian parties are making great progress in the formation of a government of national union. We can help in this regard with our sympathy and encouragement while properly leaving the issue in the hands of those most interested, the Lao people.

The Government of the Khmer Republic, with our complete endorsement, has made notable efforts to terminate the hostilities in that country. Following the cease-fire in Viet-Nam, the Cambodian Government unilaterally ceased hostile activity by its forces in the hope that the other side would respond. Unfortunately that striking gesture was rebuffed. On frequent occasions thereafter the

Khmer Republic made proposals designed to move the conflict from the battlefield to political fora, with our strong support in each instance. Although all of those proposals have been ignored by the Khmer Communists, we continue to hope that the current relative military balance will make apparent to the other side what the Khmer Republic has already perceived, that peace is a far more hopeful prospect for Cambodia than incessant conflict.

3. TEXT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE'S RESPONSE TO THE SUBCOMMITTEE STUDY MISSION'S RECOMMENDATION

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, D.C., May 17, 1974.

Hon. EDWARD M. KENNEDY,
Chairman, Subcommittee on Refugees, Committee on the Judiciary, U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: As you will recall, Secretary Kissinger in his letter to you of March 25 stated that we would forward to you the Department's comments on the recommendations of the Subcommittee's Study Mission to Indochina. These comments are enclosed.

If I can be of further assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely yours,

LINWOOD HOLTON,
Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations.

Enclosure: Comments on Subcommittee's Study Mission Recommendations.

(1) *"Study on Bombing.*—The Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, and other officials in the executive branch should seriously consider a survey of American military practices in Indochina along the lines of the Strategic Bombing Survey undertaken in Europe and Asia following World War II. In light of the airwar's devastating impact upon civilians and civilian facilities, and the sharp controversy over the military effectiveness and political purposes of the airwar and other military practices, such a survey for Indochina by a broad spectrum of appropriate experts from both govenment and the private sector could provide a useful basis for future American military, diplomatic, and humanitarian policies and actions."

* * * * * * *

The Department of State agrees in principle that it could be useful to undertake a broad "survey" of past U.S. military operations in Indochina. The Department of Defense and the individual Services have already conducted numerous studies of particular aspects of our military activities in the countries of Indochina. Unlike the situation at the end of World War II, however, we have no access to large areas that would be critical to such a study, particularly the parts of North Viet-Nam and Laos that were bombed in the campaign to halt North Vietnamese infiltration of men and supplies into the South and to convince Hanoi it could not prevail by force. Access to parts of South Viet-Nam and Cambodia is also limited at present by continuing combat operations in those countries.

Furthermore, such studies in the past have relied heavily upon data and information, either captured during and subsequent to the conflict or provided by officials of the Government and Armed Forces of the former enemy. It is unlikely that either of these essential ingredients for a more meaningful detailed study will, for the foreseeable future, be available to historians who might conduct any such official survey.

(2) *"Diplomatic Conference on Geneva Conventions.*—A Diplomatic Conference on Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 opens in Geneva in late February 1974. On the agenda are two draft protocols concerning prisoners of war, the protection of non-combatants, the protection and relief of war victims, weaponry and other matters. The experience of recent conflicts—especially the Indochina War, which so heavily and tragically involved the United States—makes it incumbent upon the President that he instruct the American delegation to maximize its efforts in behalf of meaningful changes in the Conventions of 1949, and to support continuing efforts by the International Committee of the Red Cross and others in pressing for restraints on "conventional" and other weaponry not covered by the agenda of the Conference. The present conflict of views on these matters between the Departments of State and Defense must be resolved for an effective American contribution at the Conference."

* * * * * * *

The United States Delegation to the Diplomatic Conference went to Geneva prepared to work for improved implementation of the existing Geneva Conventions and to establish new rules of humanitarian law, including improved procedures for the accounting for the missing and dead in armed conflict. Unfortunately, the Conference became bogged down on procedural questions and on the issue of the applicability of the draft protocols in so-called "wars of national liberation." As a result of extended debate on these matters, little progress was made on such matters as prisoners of war, protection of civilians, accounting for the missing and other substantive issues.

The International Committee of the Red Cross plans to convene a meeting of government experts this June in Lucerne to study the question of weapons which are indiscriminate in their effects or which cause unnecessary suffering, in which an American delegation from the State and Defense Departments will participate. We are presently examining with the Department of Defense the weapons that may be involved. We shall wish to study the results of the meeting of government experts before determining the position of the United States Government.

(3) *"New Policy and Diplomacy towards Indochina.*—The President must finally break with the patterns and failures of the past and chart a new beginning in our relations with Indochina. We must further change the character of our involvement in the area, embark on new policies, and practice some lessons of the past. First, in line with Congressional directives in 1973, the Administration must finally shed its obsession with weapons deliveries and give top priority to humanitarian and people concerns in our allocation of aid to Indochina.

"Second, new efforts, as outlined below, are also needed on the diplomatic front. The lingering and bloody war in Cambodia deserves better of our diplomacy. The breakdown of the cease-fire agreement in Viet-Nam demands more than a threat of new bombing. The fragile peace in Laos requires our more active support, as well as more rapid changes in the character and purpose of our presence in Vientiane. And the deadlock in our relations with Hanoi must be broken."

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The Department of State agrees that new policies must constantly be evolved to cope with new realities and to further the national interest of the United Sates, consistent with the principles which are fundamental to our society. We are aware, however, that successful policy formulation does not usually depend solely on unilateral action; the actions and policies of other parties to a particular situation must necessarily influence our own approach. In Indochina we must recognize that many of the patterns which produced our policies have not changed as substantially as we would have liked. In Viet-Nam, for example, we are forced to consider the fact that North Viet-Nam remains the aggressor. Very large North Vietnamese forces remain in the South and continue to exert heavy pressure on the South Vietnamese Government and people. Prudence and realism require us to be aware of the existence of that situation in our policy reviews. We would welcome policy shifts in Hanoi which would ease the tension and thus permit us to review policy in the light of a new situation.

The Administration does not have an "obsession" with weapons deliveries in Viet-Nam. The Administration does recognize, however, that the Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam, in the face of unrelenting attack, needs the means to protect itself. We believe that denying such assistance would not contribute to peace but would inevitably lead to the greater use of force by North Viet-Nam. We believe that the demonstration of continued South Vietnamese abilities for self-defense will eventually bring the North Vietnamese authorities to the realization that political accommodation is preferable to endless violence.

Specific programs of humanitarian assistance receive high priority in our planning for Viet-Nam. We would note, however, that the development of the South Vietnamese economy towards self-sufficiency will have a major effect in meeting humanitarian aims. Unemployment and underemployment are significant problems which affect refugees and non-refugees alike. Low wages and high costs cause hardship for the entire population. Many of our assistance programs are designed to provide the stimulus necessary to correct these large economic distortions which cause suffering for all segments of the society.

Thanks to the cessation of fighting in Laos the Administration is giving top priority to humanitarian and people concerns. From a high of $375 million, U.S. military assistance has dropped to $89.6 million in fiscal year 1974. For fiscal year 1975, the Administration is requesting $90 million, a slight increase which reflects largely the rise in cost of petroleum products, increased delivery costs and some pipeline items. On the other hand, at least one-third of the aid budget is directly devoted to humanitarian and "people" concerns and the balance is de-

voted to stabilization, support and development activities which are a prerequisite for the well-being of the entire population. A total of $40.6 million currently is budgeted for fiscal year 1974 for economic assistance and $56.0 million is requested for fiscal year 1975. Public Law 480 food for Lao refugees in the estimated amounts of $3.5 million and $2.5 million are additive to those figures.

In Cambodia, because of the continued heavy fighting resulting from the refusal of the Khmer Communists to accept a cease-fire and enter into negotiations, the military aid program has continued at a high level of $325 million so far for fiscal year 1974 and will have to remain at least at that level in fiscal year 1975, unless a cease-fire, which is our aim, is achieved. Refugee relief assistance for Cambodia has increased from $1.2 million in fiscal year 1973 to $13.4 million in fiscal year 1974, and $20 million is being requested for fiscal year 1975. To counter the sharp drop in domestic production of rice, some 110,000mt of Public Law 480 rice had to be imported in FY 73, and for fiscal year 1974 the total will rise to some 265,000mt. Agency for International Development (AID) is raising the number of direct hire personnel dealing with refugees from one to six. These people will supplement the work currently being carried out by Volunteer Agencies.

The suggestion that new efforts on the diplomatic front are needed on the part of the Administration to settle the Cambodian War is one of which the Administration has always been fully conscious. Regrettably, just as it takes two to wage war, it takes two parties to make a peace. In Cambodia, the Government of the Khmer Republic has offered a unilateral cease-fire and negotiations with anyone, anywhere and at any time but has been rebuffed since the Paris Agreement of 1973. Despite those offers the Khmer Communists have increased the intensity of their attacks and have repeatedly rejected, in public and in private, all efforts by ourselves and the Khmer government to achieve a peaceful settlement. In Laos, it is recognized that the U.S. has steadfastly supported the efforts of the Prime Minister, Prince Souvanna Phouma, to achieve a lasting peace. It is now our policy to continue to support, together with all other parties, the efforts of the new Provisional Government of National Union to maintain a lasting peace, to resettle and rehabilitate the many displaced Lao and to begin the serious development of the nation.

(4) "*Internationalizing Aid—International Red Cross.*—To the maximum degree practicable, our government should finally pursue the internationalization of relief and rehabilitation needs in Indochina through United Nations agencies and other channels. In this connection, our government should finally give its strong support to the Indochina Operational Group (IOG) of the International Red Cross. The IOG is currently the only international humanitarian agency with representatives or communication in all the war affected areas of Indochina. The IOG's demonstrated expertise and effectiveness deserves a special emergency contribution of $10 to $15 million for immediate humanitarian purposes in Indochina."

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The U.S. Government made a $2,000,000 grant in fiscal year 1974 in support of the operations of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Indochina (ICRC). We plan to make an additional grant at the request of the ICRC in fiscal year 1975 and we will seriously consider any future funding requests advanced by the ICRC. The ICRC has currently raised about half of its $33 million target for the program in Indochina being funded by donations from both governments and National Red Cross organizations. We oppose a larger USG donation at this time for two reasons:

1. A larger USG donation to the total planned would almost certainly reduce the pressure on the ICRC to successfully pursue donations from other potential donors, thus diluting the international character of the ICRC program.

2. We question the ability of the ICRC to mount and sustain a program of the size they are planning. More specifically we are seriously concerned that the quality of the persons available to manage the program would suffer from a too rapid expansion and, hence, the quality of the program itself would suffer.

UNICEF is expanding its programs in the countries of Indochina, and we have encouraged this interest. While we have not yet received a firm proposal, we anticipate making a grant to UNICEF for activities in South Viet-Nam, Cambodia and Laos.

As indicated in an earlier response, the World Health Organization has had meaningful programs in Laos, Cambodia, and Viet-Nam which supplement and do not overlap with activities supported by the United States. We have encouraged that organization to play an even more important role, particularly in the malaria

control program, and we at the same time would phase out our remaining activities in that field.

Our discussions with the Indochina countries have stressed the desirability of establishing plans and priorities for programs and projects which require asistance so that other donor countries and organizations can fit their assistance efforts into the host country requirements.

Additional information was provided the Subcommittee by Mr. Robert H. Nooter, A.I.D.'s Assistant Administrator of the Bureau for Supporting Assistance, in a statement subsequent to the Subcommittee's August 1, 1973, hearing.

(5) "*Needs of Orphans and Children.*—The special needs of orphans and other children disadvantaged by the war have a long record of neglect on the part of the governments in Indochina and the U.S. Mission in Saigon, Vientiane and Phnom Penh. Given this record of neglect and the documented needs among millions of children in the war-affected areas, our government should make every effort to increase the priority of concern over children—in both our assistance to the area and in our representations to the governments in Saigon, Vientiane and Phnom Penh. In the case of South Viet-Nam, the Department of State and the Agency for International Development must finally cut redtape and expeditiously implement its new program to aid the process of adoption of orphans by American citizens, and to up-grade support for child welfare and health programs. The outline of the new programs was recently communicated to the Subcommittee. Meeting the urgent needs of the orphaned, the lame, and all disadvantaged children in Viet-Nam is long-overdue. Special emphasis in the adoption process should be placed on American-fathered children. It is unconscionable to delay this effort in behalf of children in need."

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Children welfare programs mounted by each of the governments of Indochina are tailored to the realities of the individual country. Accordingly, the programs supported by the U.S. Government are different in each of the three countries and are presented below as discrete undertakings, which, indeed, they are.

SOUTH VIET-NAM

Agency for International Development's (AID) new $7.5 million program, previously reported to you, is progressing as designed to improve the welfare of Vietnamese children disadvantaged by the war, particularly orphans. The program provides almost $5.5 million for the participation of U.S. voluntary agencies in assisting an estimated 160,000 disadvantaged children, including 17,000 children in orphanages. The program is making improvements in child nutrition and in the management and physical condition of orphanages and child care centers and in the processing of orphans for intercountry adoptions as well as improved health services for malnourshied, diseased and handicapped children.

The priority target is being accomplished, namely providing immediate assistance to orphans and other institutionalized children requiring food, clothing, shelter and medical care. Also, action has been initiated to provide services which strengthen the family unit by developing alternatives to child abandonment through the expansion of home nursery and day care center programs and foster home care. The program activities are:

Orphanage Support and Improvement: Food and clothing allowances, health care, equipment, improvement of facilities and staff training. ($1,736,000, with $1,355,000 for voluntary agencies and $381,000 for the Ministry of Social Welfare)

International Adoption: American agencies expanding and improving intercountry adoption programs and related welfare activities. ($470,000, all for voluntary agencies)

Pediatric Clinics: Medical care for disadvantaged children with priority to those pre-adoption cases requiring special medical attention. ($340,000, all for voluntary agencies)

Day Care Centers: Equipment, food and staff training for existing day care centers and support in the development of new centers. ($1,428,000, with $1,180,000 for voluntary agencies and $248,000 for the Ministry of Social Welfare)

Home Nursery Care: Day nursery services for infants. ($760,000, all for vountary agencies)

Nutrition Centers: Expansion of existing nutrition centers and creation of additional centers for seriously malnourished children. ($630,000, all for voluntary agencies)

Handicapped Children: Improved custodial care and therapy. ($178,000, with $140,000 for voluntary agencies and $38,000 for the Ministry of Social Welfare)

Foster Care: Foster home care services for children as an alternative to their abandonment, institutionalization or adoption. ($570,000, all for voluntary agencies)

Prevention of Infant Abandonment: Counseling service to emotionally distraught expectant mothers who might abandon their children. ($44,000, with $25,000 for voluntary agencies and $19,000 for the Ministry of Social Welfare)

Civilian Widows Assistance: Support, vocational training and small-scale capital assistance to widowed mothers. ($76,000, all for the Ministry of Social Welfare)

Training: Pediatric and nutrition training to midwives and other medical personnel, child welfare service training to Ministry of Social Welfare employees. ($552.000, with $324,000 for the Ministry of Health and $228,000 for the Ministry of Social Welfare)

LAOS

The Agency for International Development (AID) assistance which can be categorized as "humanitarian" contributes either directly or indirectly to the well-being of children, including orphans. The humanitarian part of the AID program is involved in the resettlement of refugees, the development of health and education facilities and the provision of food, other relief supplies and medical care.

Public Law 480 Title II food assistance (both direct to the Royal Lao Government and through Catholic Relief Service) is aimed at meeting a portion of the emergency food needs of refugees and disaster victims, including children.

The primary voluntary agencies operating in Laos concentrate on medical assistance (personnel, services and commodities) and provision of food assistance (CRS), with emphasis on assisting refugees and meeting other emergency needs.

Through World Vision, Inc., private donors support up to 2,000 school children each year, most of whom are orphans or children of disabled war veterans.

The Asian Christian Service (ACS) concentrates on refugee relief activities, but has expanded its work to include activities in rehabilitation, reconstruction and development as well. ACS children-oriented programs include the distribution of about 25 tons of dehydrated milk supplements (provided by Switzerland and Holland) per year.

CAMBODIA

The needs of orphans and children are being met as part of the emergency refugee relief programs being conducted with Agency for International Development (AID) grant support by the voluntary agencies (CRS, WVRO, CARE and the ICRC) in Cambodia. These programs are currently being expanded at a rapid rate and are being directed primarily toward assuring that the emergency shelter, food and medical needs of all refugees are being provided and only secondarily toward improving the care of especially vulnerable groups such as orphans and children. However, a beginning has been made by WVRO (in the establishment of a children's nutrition center near Phnom Penh) and by CRS (in the assistance now being provided two orphanages), and we anticipate that more care will be devoted to orphans and children as the emergency circumstances permit.

(6) *"Refugee Resettlement in South Viet-Nam.*—To help normalize civilian life and avoid a festering refugee problem, as experienced in the Middle East and elsewhere, our government should strongly encourage and support—at the highest levels of the Saigon government—the *voluntary* resettlement of refugees in *secure* areas or their "return to village" in any area of South Viet-Nam where their native village is located. The cease-fire agreement provides for "freedom of movement", including the return of refugees to hamlets and villages now controlled by the PRG. Our government should strongly discourage and withdraw any support from programs using the refugees as pawns and "trojan horses" to expand Saigon's control in contested areas of the countryside. The strategic and forced movement of people—a key element in pacification—should play no role in American policy and programs in South Viet-Nam."

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The U.S. Government has supported and continues to strongly encourage and support—at the highest levels of Viet-Nam's government—the voluntary

resettlement and return-to-village of South Viet-Nam's refugees. As evidence of this, the U.S. Government played a major role in helping the Government of Viet-Nam return nearly 355,000 refugees (most of them generated during the 1972 NVA offensives) to their home areas and resettle an additional 214,000 refugees to secure areas during 1973. These individuals receive food and housing allowances and a wide variety of community development benefits to help them restore their lives and once again become productive citizens. The U.S. Government certainly supports the principle of "freedom of movement" stated in the cease-fire agreement and has communicated this support to the Government of Viet-Nam. To our knowledge, no group of refugees has ever requested permission or assistance from the Government of Viet-Nam to move to "PRG" areas. Some, of course, may have returned to their homes in areas now controlled by the PRG. The decision is an individual one, as is the movement. The overwhelming majority of refugees displaced from areas taken over by the North Vietnamese or Viet Cong do not wish to return to those areas. Hundreds of thousands of these refugees have volunteered for resettlement programs in Government of Viet-Nam territory in preference to returning to their old lands where these are under NVA or VC control. Several different sites are ordinarily offered for resettlement, and in most cases refugee leaders have a hand in the selection or approval of a site. Self-resettlement benefits of VN$100,000 to $150,000 are often provided to those who do not wish to accept the sites offered, and families then leave camps to live in a place of their choice. Neither the U.S. Government nor the Government of Viet-Nam condone forced relocation of people. Additional information on resettlement was provided to the Subcommittee in a letter dated July 31, 1973, from former AID Administrator, John A. Hannah.

(7) "*Physical Rehabilitation.*—Tens of thousands of amputees, paraplegics, blind persons, deaf persons, and others with serious physical limitations resulting from the war, languish unattended in many parts of Indochina. Virtually no physical rehabilitation programs exist in Cambodia. The situation in Laos is little better. And in South Vietnam, despite documented needs and years of good intentions on the part of the Thieu Government and the U.S. Mission in Saigon, the situation among the physically disabled remains one of appalling neglect. The continued lack of meaningful progress in providing prosthetic devices for the lame civilians of South Vietnam is fast becoming a scandal of distressing proportions—especially when measured against the expeditious American delivery of weapons and materials of war. The time is long overdue for new initiatives and a greater measure of official concern in this important area of rehabilitation."

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As in the response to recommendation Number 5, the status of the physical rehabilitation programs in each of the three countries varies with the nature and gravity of the individual country circumstance. The programs supported by the USG in each of the countries accordingly are different and may be outlined as follows:

SOUTH VIET-NAM

While there remain a significant number of Vietnamese disabled who have not yet received definite rehabilitative care, the GVN medical rehabilitation program, with USAID assistance, has continued to expand and to improve its efficiency. Dr. Howard Rusk, of the World Rehabilitation Fund, recently said of this program: "Viet-Nam's program for the construction of Prosthetic Devices has grown to become the largest of any program of this type in the world. The pilot project initiated for the Rehabilitation of the Blind has had enormous success and is comparable to some of the best programs in the United States, using methods developed at the Catholic Guide for all the blind in the state of Massachusetts."

In 1966, the total output of Prosthetic Devices by the National Rehabilitation Institute was 1,615, with an additional output of 691 braces and 383 repairs. In 1973, the total production of prosthetic devices was 7,756 with 2,061 braces produced and 4,679 repairs. The NRI's capability is being further expanded at the present time by the addition of ten new satellite rehabilitation units being constructed at selected province hospital sites. These units, scheduled for completion by the end of fiscal year 1974, will more than double the present annual output of prosthetic/orthotic devices and repair services. Of equal importance, the province hospital satellite units will provide the mechanism for more effectively extending rehabilitation services to rural populations who found the

previous central rehabilitation locations to be relatively inaccessible. By the end of calendar year 1974, when the ten additional hospital units reach full capacity, it is expected that total production of the NRI system, including prosthetic/orthotic devices and repairs, may reach 36,000 per year.

Recognizing that here still remains a backlog of disabled people requiring specialized treatment and rehabilitative care, the Mission is currently re-examining the entire GVN medical rehabilitation program to determine the feasibility of expanding USG assistance to this area still more if the overall level of funding being sought from the Congress in fiscal year 1975 is made available.

CAMBODIA

As noted under the response to Recommendation 5, virtually the full attention of the voluntary agencies now working in Cambodia under A.I.D. grants has been devoted to assuring that the emergency shelter, food, and medical needs of refugees is being provided and little, or no, attention has been devoted to more sophisticated treatment requirements. We aniticipate that physical rehabilitation programs will be evolved and put into practice by the voluntary agencies but only after other more immediate priority programs—such as intensified care for orphans and children—are attended to. This is based on two considerations:

(1) The number of persons permanently disabled by war wounds to date is still relatively small; and

(2) The large number of refugees must be afforded a higher priority of attention.

LAOS

U.S. support for physical rehabilitation programs in Laos has been largely in conjunction with other bilateral or multilateral assistance. In addition to official assistance (A.I.D. and D.O.D.), many U.S. personnel have provided informal assistance in support of Lao physical rehabilitation programs. The primary institution is the Orthopedic Center in Vientiane. It has been funded and operated by the Directorate of Veterans' Affairs with assistance from UNDP (two technical advisors) and USG-DOD (USAID-R.O.), with approximately $80,000 a year in medical supplies and commodities. It is staffed by Forces Armee Royale (military) personnel. Present capacity is 50 amputees per month, the majority being military with about ten percent being civilian.

The International Red Cross is assisting the RLG in establishing a second orthopedic center at Savamakhet. WHO has provided a training course for physiotherapists.

(8) "*Defusing the Bombs in the Countryside.*—By conservative estimate, there are some 300 million to 600 million pounds of undetonated explosives strewn today throughout the Vietanamese countryside—unexplored mines, booby-traps, and bombs. Little or no effect has been made to launch a systematic program of ordnance removal. In fact, the official view expressed to the Subcommittee is that "the clearing of ordnance, according to preliminary reports, has so far not been a major problem." Yet, hospital admission statistics tell a different story, as Vietnamese civilians continue to lose life and limb to mines and booby-traps in the field. America clearly has a responsibility to help support and fund a program to defuse these mines and bombs, many of which we left behind. To date, our government has given this responsibility little thought, and even less action."

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The Chief of the Army of the Republic of Viet-Nam (ARVN) Logistics submitted a report on exploded ordnance, and also our four Consulate Generals have thoroughly reviewed the situation in their areas. During 1973 there were no known incidents in Region 2 as of October 1, few if any in Region 4, and three in Region 3. In Region 1 the statistics are not available except for the most affected province of Quang Tri, which reported that eight had been killed and thirty-five wounded by unexploded ordnance between February and October 1973.

The Government of Viet-Nam (GVN) normally follows standardized ordnance clearing procedures in refugee areas, having military units conduct preliminary clearing operations before the people arrive. Such operations are thorough at housing sites and along roads, although of necessity, less so over the hundreds of thousands of hectares of farmland. Later, if farmers uncover ordnance, they

report it to the local authorities, who have National Police, regional forces or popular forces dispose of it. However, if a great deal of ordnance is found or large explosive devices are involved, local authorities then contact district and province chiefs, who may request ARVN forces in the vicinity to handle the disposal.

The GVN does not maintain regular reports on the clearance of unexploded ordnance, the number uncovered and disposed of, the number of troops involved, or the number of injuries and deaths resulting from explosions. The disposal of unexploded ordnance is regarded by the GVN as one of the many normal tasks it undertakes in the return of refugees to their original village or resettlement sites and, therefore, special and separate reports are not kept. Moreover, there is often no way of knowing whether unexploded ordnance predates the January, 1973, agreements or was subsequently planted by North Vietnamese Army/Viet Cong (NVA/VC) forces. The ARVN is equipped for ordnance disposal so no United States assistance has been requested for current ordnance clearing operations and none is expected to be requested.

The continuing problems of deaths and injuries in some refugee resettlement areas arises from the present campaign of NVA/VC forces to harrass these areas by planting of mines, indiscriminate mortar attacks, and the use of long-range rockets. Recently the Republic of Viet-Nam delegation to the Two Party Joint Military Commission proposed cessation of the use of these weapons which result only in indiscriminate killing and maiming of innocent civilians and children. The proposal was immediately rejected by the Communist side. Additional information was provided the Subcommittee by Mr. Robert H. Nooter, Assistant Administrator of A.I.D.'s Bureau for Supporting Assistance, subsequent to the Subcommittee's hearing on August 1, 1973, and in a letter dated February 13, 1974, from Mr. Matthew J. Harvey, A.I.D.'s Assistant Administrator for Legislative Affairs.

(9) *Prisons and Political Prisoners in South Viet-Nam.*—The record is clear that political prisoners exist in South Viet-Nam. And the record is also clear that the Thieu government has been thwarting a resolution of the prisoners' plight. But the complicity of our own government in the abuse of justice and fairplay is also clear. And this should outrage the conscience of all Americans. Americans should yield to no one in condemning the cruelty to civilians by the PRG and its allies. But what they do cannot relieve our responsibility to help minimize and remedy the hardship and distress of civilians, including political prisoners in South Viet-Nam.

(a) In line with the letter and spirit of a 1973 congressional directive, the President should rapidly phase-out all American sponsored or supported public safety oriented programs in South Viet-Nam, Laos, and Cambodia—and immediately divert unexpended funds for such purposes to meet humanitarian needs among orphans and other victims of the war.

(b) The United States should make immediate and strong diplomatic representations to the Thieu government in behalf of the humane and just treatment of all civilians detained for political reasons. Among other things, the United States should firmly counsel the Thieu government to invite a full inspection of prison facilities under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and to provide for the orderly due process and/or release of those detainees not covered by the repatriation and return provisions in the prisoner protocol of the cease-fire agreement.

(c) The United States should make diplomatic representations—through various channels and in cooperation with other governments concerned over the future of South Viet-Nam—to further encourage and facilitate negotiations between the Thieu government and the PRG, as provided for in the cease-fire agreements, for the repatriation and return of those political prisoners on both sides covered by the agreement."

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The Department of State cannot agree with the Study Mission's assertion that "the record is clear that political prisoners exist in South Viet-Nam."

One of the principal sources of confusion in this highly complex matter is the definition of the term "political prisoner." We interpret this term, as applied to South Viet-Nam, to refer to individuals of non-communist, non-violent persuasion who are imprisoned only for expressing their criticism of the Government. We note in this regard that the Government of Viet-Nam's (GVN) stated policy does not permit the arrest of anyone for mere political dissent. However, when an act of political dissent is coupled with actions that violate public

order or threaten national security the responsible person or groups of persons are subject to detention.

We also do not agree with the Study Mission's statement that the South Vietnamese Government has blocked resolution of the civilian prisoner's plight. While progress in resolving this issue has been slow, a review of the record clearly shows that the performance of the Vietnamese Government has been markedly better than that of the Communist side. For example, we note that on the basis of the initial lists exchanged by the parties following the cease-fire, the GVN has now turned over 5,081 civilian prisoners to the "PRG" (Viet Cong) in return for only 637 of its own civilian personnel. In other words the GVN released almost eight Communist prisoners for every one of its personnel received from the Viet Cong.

The GVN's willingness to accept this unfavorable exchange ratio, in spite of the Viet Cong's continued refusal to provide an accounting for the published list of names of some 70,000 Government officials and private civilians kidnapped or otherwise detained by the Communists during the course of the war, appears to us as a compelling indication of its interest in resolving the civilian prisoner problem. We would also note, that GVN authorities have offered to release to the Viet Cong any remaining civilian prisoners identified by the Viet Cong as Communist cadre. In addition to those released to the Viet Cong, since the beginning of 1973, the South Vietnamese Government has granted amnesty to approximately 9,100 civilian prisoners.

What has been the performance of the Viet Cong? As noted above they have consistently refused to release or give an accounting of the many thousands of South Vietnamese civilians they have abducted or otherwise detained during the war. Furthermore, unlike the GVN, the Communists have also refused to provide any information about the number or location of their civilian detention camps, the conditions of the camps or the number of prisoners held therein. Also on several occasions during the first phase of the prisoner exchanges the Viet Cong sparked demonstrations at the release sites which led to the interruption of the exchanges for several months.

In sum, it seems evident to us that the primary responsibility for the "abuse of justice and fairplay" with regard to civilian prisoners rests squarely with the Communist side. The Study Mission's contention that the U.S. is an accomplice in thwarting a resolution of the civilian prisoner issue is unfounded. Since the ceasefire the U.S. has consistently encouraged the two South Vietnamese parties towards an early resolution of this matter in accordance with Article 8(c) of the Agreement. As an outside power our ability to influence events in this sensitive area is clearly limited, but we will continue to do what we reasonably can to secure the humane treatment and prompt release of prisoners of both sides. We have on a number of occasions since the cease-fire conveyed to the GVN our great interest in the humane treatment of prisoners, civilian and military alike. In this regard we note that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) continues to conduct visits to GVN military POW camps as it has since 1966. (In notable contrast to the attitude of the GVN, the Communists have never permitted ICRC visits to their prison camps.)

We would add that the extensive evidence available to us simply does not sustain the highly publicized charges that civilian prisoners are subjected to widespread, systematic mistreatment in the jails of the Republic of Viet-Nam No one claims that abuse of prisoners has never occurred in the GVN prison system; nor for that matter, could such a claim be made for penal institutions in the United States and many other countries. Certainly, this claim could not be made for North Vietnamese and Viet Cong penal institutions. Considering the passions aroused over two decades of war in Viet-Nam it would be remarkable if some incidents did not occur. However, based on our past advisory experiences and the current observations of our Embassy in Saigon, it is clearly evident that most published reports about abuses are highly exaggerated.

With reference to the Study Mission's recommendation in subsection (a), we are presently terminating U.S. public safety programs in South Viet-Nam, Laos, and Cambodia as required by recent legislation. These programs will be ended well before the legislative deadline of August 17, 1974.

We are enclosing for the Subcommittee's information a copy of a comprehensive survey of the civilian prisoner population in South Vietnamese jails prepared by the U.S. Embassy in Saigon.

(10) *"Emergency Relief Needs in Cambodia.*—In the absence of a ceasefire agreement for Cambodia, and in light of the massive toll of civilian casualties

and refugees from continuing war, the emergency humanitarian needs of war victims must be a matter of very urgent concern to our own government and all involved. Despite belated efforts to meet these needs, conditions among war victims continue to deteriorate. Food and shelter and medicine are still in short supply. Private voluntary agencies and the Indochina Operational Group of the Red Cross provide the most effective mechanism for additional relief efforts. It is imperative that the United States generously support, in cash and kind, the emergency relief programs of these agencies."

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A number of emergency relief programs were initiated in fiscal year 1973 to begin to cope with the problems noted in the recommendation. These are being expanded at a rapid rate utilizing the services of a number of U. S. and International Voluntary Agencies. Also the U.S. Government is strongly supporting the operations of the Resettlement and Development Foundation (RD) which is the agency designated by the GKR to manage refugee resettlement.

As an indication of the extent of the U.S. Government's concerns, when the GKR requested assistance in managing its growing refugee program, we:

1. Airshipped six and surface-shipped four Packaged Disaster Hospitals for use in the areas with the greatest numbers of refugees. (Two of these hospitals are still being held in reserve for emergency deployment.)

2. Funded grants to the Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the World Vision Relief Organization (WVRO) and the Indochina Operations Group (IOG) for the establishment and operation of four of the ten hospitals.

3. Funded additional grants to CRS, WVRO, CARE, and the IOG to enable them to supply emergency food, shelter and in-camp medical care to refugees and to begin a refugee resettlement program. Including the $1,175,000 of fiscal year 1973 grants, we will by the end of fiscal year 1974, have provided $6,517,000 to the Voluntary Agencies (including the Cambodian portion of the IOG program). An additional $8,058,000 is also being granted this fiscal year to the RDF and to cover direct hire costs related to refugees.

4. We are requesting $20,010,000 in fiscal year 1975 for our refugee program of relief and resettlement.

(11) "*Relief and Rehabilitation in Laos.*—In support of the ceasefire agreement for Laos and the continuing progress anticipated in forming a government of national union, the United States should move more rapidly in changing the character, personnel and purpose of our presence in Vientiane. Moreover, in light of the enormous humanitarian and reconstruction needs among the people of Laos, the United States should strongly encourage expanding programs of relief and rehabilitation in all parts of the country, and generously contribute to these programs. In this connection, a special effort should be made to encourage and expand the work of voluntary agencies, the Indochina Operational Group of the Red Cross, UNICEF, and other appropriate international channels."

Recognizing that the rapidly evolving post-cease-fire environment in Laos is creating a situation whose parameters are quite different from those of the war-time era, the USAID is currently redirecting its economic and humanitarian assistance efforts. Programs are being shifted from emergency war-time objectives to longer term post-war humanitarian, reconstruction and development oriented activities, some of which already have been noted favorably by the Lao Patriotic Front (LPF). With the Provisional Government of National Union (PGNU) now formed, U.S. aid will be given to and through the PGNU. The future thrust, extent and degree of country-wide coverage of U.S. aid will be determined in conjunction with officials of the PGNU.

Although the U.S. is continuing to encourage the participation of voluntary agencies in rehabilitation and relief efforts, most organizations appear to prefer to wait until sometime after the formation of the new government before making any commitments. With the formation of the PGNU, the atmosphere for their future involvement should be greatly enhanced. Because of both budgetary and manpower limitations however, it is doubtful that voluntary agencies will assume a major share of current U.S. humanitarian activities. The Indochina Operations Group (IOG) of the International Committee of the Red Cross, of course, is currently operating in Laos as well as in the other Indochina countries, although the current program in Laos is not related entirely to refugee assistance. In Laos, the IOG has provided some medical supplies and equipment to the LPF. Although we certainly support the expansion of IOG, as well as other donors' relief and rehabilitation efforts in Laos, it is important that any expansion not outstrip their ability to maintain the quality of their operations.

(12) *"Relations with Hanoi—Relief and Rehabilitation in North Vietnam.*—In the context of recognized understandings between Washington and Hanoi, and of continuing efforts to implement the ceasefire agreement and protocols for Vietnam, the United States should take new initiatives to break the apparent diplomatic deadlock with North Vietnam. Such activity is needed to help chart a new beginning in our relations with Indochina—and could usefully serve many ends, including the following:

(a) An accounting of Americans missing in action;

(b) An accounting of American and other journalists missing in Cambodia;

(c) A ceasefire agreement for Cambodia;

(d) A de-escalation of military conflict in South Vietnam, and a new emphasis on the political framework and objectives of the ceasefire agreement for Vietnam;

(e) A renewal of negotiations on American contributions to reconstruction of North Vietnam—primarily humanitarian assistance for medical facilities and housing and general rehabilitation needs;

(f) A beginning toward the normalizing of relations between Washington and Hanoi, as expressed by Secretary of State Kissinger on January 24, 1973: "And therefore it is our firm intention in our relationship to the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam to move from hostility to normalization to conciliation and cooperation. And we believe that under conditions of peace we can contribute throughout Indochina to a realization of the humane aspirations of all the people of Indochina. And we will, in that spirit, perform our traditional role of helping people realize these aspirations in peace."

* * * * * * *

U.S. relations with the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam (DRV), including prospects for a U.S.-financed reconstruction program for that country, have been treated in Secretary Kissinger's letter of March 25 to Senator Kennedy. As the Secretary noted in his letter, our relations with the DRV depend to a large extent on Hanoi's observance of the January 27, 1973, Cease-fire Agreement. We have made it clear to the North Vietnamese that we stand ready to proceed with steps towards normalization of relations once Hanoi provides evidence of its intention to comply seriously with the Agreement's provisions. We have emphasized this position on a number of occasions both publicly and privately at the various levels of contact that we maintain with Hanoi.

In light of the DRV's persistent failure to observe the cease-fire provisions, our options for new initiatives toward Hanoi are limited. Furthermore, it is our belief that new U.S. initiatives to remove the obstacles towards a more normal relationship with North Viet-Nam cannot be one-sided if they are to have a reasonable chance of success. They should be based on some indication that the DRV is genuinely interested in helping to establish the conditions of peace in Indochina necessary for such a relationship to develop. In this regard it is sobering to note that several Government of Viet-Nam initiatives during the past year, designed to break the diplomatic impasse with the communists, have been uniformly rebuffed by Hanoi.

Nonetheless we have not abandoned hope of eventually moving towards a better relationship with North Viet-Nam. Through our various channels of communication with Hanoi, we will continue to seek means for developing a more fruitful dialogue with the North Vietnamese leadership. However, we will also continue to impress upon the North Vietnamese the fundamental importance we attach to compliance with the Cease-fire Agreement as the primary condition for the normalization of relations with us.

APPENDIX II.—General Accounting Office Report on Obligations for U.S. Programs in Cambodia, Laos and South Vietnam (Fiscal Year 1974 and 1975 proposed)

COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES,
Washington, D.C., June 10, 1974.

B–159451.

Hon. EDWARD M. KENNEDY, *Chairman,*
Subcommittee on Refugees and Escapees,
Committee on the Judiciary,
U.S. Senate

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: This report is in response to your April 10, 1974, request that we provide your Subcommittee with comprehensive statistics on U.S. Government expenditures in Cambodia, Laos, and South Vietnam. You asked that the statistics be broken down by country and, insofar as possible, into the following categories: fiscal year 1974 (1) budget presentation, (2) authorization, (3) appropriation, (4) revised estimate, and fiscal year 1975 proposed. You also asked that we try to identify U.S. costs in Thailand which are directly related to U.S. programs in these countries.

The enclosed schedule shows expected obligations for each country, including directly related costs incurred in Thailand, as provided by officials of the agencies involved.

We did not obtain figures on Central Intelligence Agency operations or on contributions to multinational organizations. Fiscal year 1974 authorizations and appropriations are not included because this data is available by functional category only, and the agencies said it cannot be set out by country.

At your request we did not obtain agency comments. If you have any questions regarding this material, our staff will be happy to discuss them with you. We do not plan to distribute this report further unless you agree or publicly announce its contents.

Sincerely yours,

ELMER B. STAATS,
Comptroller General of the United States.

Enclosure.

OBLIGATIONS FOR U.S. PROGRAMS IN CAMBODIA, LAOS AND SOUTH VIETNAM FOR FISCAL YEARS 1974 AND 1975

[In thousands of dollars]

	Cambodia			Laos			South Vietnam		
	1974			1974			1974		
	Budget presentation	Estimates	1975 proposed	Budget presentation	Estimates	1975 proposed	Budget presentation	Estimates	1975 proposed
Department of Defense:									
Military assistance services funded:									
Army:									
Operations and maintenance	0	0	0	(1)	26,900	0	(1)	266,200	304,800
Procurement	0	0	0	(1)	40,900	0	(1)	323,400	473,800
Military personnel	0	0	0	(1)	9,600	0	(1)	32,800	24,000
Military construction	0	0	0	(1)	0	0	(1)	200	0
Total	0	0	0		77,400	0		622,600	802,600
Air Force:									
Operations and maintenance	0	0	0	(1)	37,300	0	(1)	180,500	250,400
Procurement	0	0	0	(1)	1,800	0	(1)	180,000	341,700
Total	0	0	0		39,100	0		360,500	592,100
Navy:									
Operations and maintenance	0	0	0	(1)	0	0	(1)	20,200	19,200
Procurement	0	0	0	(1)	0	0	(1)	2,300	36,100
Total	0	0	0		0	0		22,500	55,300
Miscellaneous	0	0	0	311,200	0	0	1,159,600	3,900	0
Total	0	0	0	311,200	116,500	0	1,559,600	1,009,500	1,450,000
Military assistance program	173,000	325,012	362,500	0	0	85,200	0	0	0
Excess Defense articles (actual value)	7,000	7,000	1,250	3,000	3,000	900	35,000	35,000	35,000
Military assistance groups:									
Military equipment delivery team[1]	(1)	2,840	2,846	0	0	0	0	0	0
Defense Attache Office (Laos figure includes Deputy Chief, Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group, Thailand)	0	0	0	(1)	2,496	2,257	(1)	[2] 45,204	[2] 46,501
Requirements office	0	0	0	(1)	1,879	(1)	0	0	0
Total	180,000	334,852	366,596	314,200	123,875	88,357	1,594,600	1,089,704	1,531,501

Department of State:									
Direct expenses		850	913		938	1,008		5,086	5,086
Shared administrative expenses (Department of State share)		303	315		353	366		479	474
Total	(1)	1,153	1,228	(1)	1,291	1,374	(1)	5,565	5,560
Agency for International Development:									
Indochina postwar reconstruction:									
Stabilization	0	0	0	18,200	16,100	17,500	0	0	0
Development	0	0	0	12,500}	10,900	22,400	{$48,000}	15,000	227,700
Reconstruction	5,000	0	0	5,900}			{ 50,000}		
Humanitarian assistance	4,000	13,400	20,000	18,400	13,000	15,300	85,000	85,000	135,000
Technical assistance	1,000	1,200	1,500	0	0	0	17,000	15,000	0
Food and nutrition	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	185,000
Industrial production	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	155,000
Transportation and miscellaneous	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	47,300
Commercial import program	46,700	62,100	71,000	0	0	0	275,000	239,000	0
Regional program [5]									
Interregional AID support [6]									
Multilateral stabilization	18,300	18,300	17,500			0		0	0
Total	75,000	95,000	110,000	55,000	40,000	55,200	475,000	354,000	750,000
Narcotics	0	3	0	1,500	1,500	1,152	200	205	0
Population control	0	0	0	900	600	800	1,500	1,000	1,000
Development loans	0	0	0	5,000	5,000	0	0	110,000	0
Excess property distribution (at original acquisition cost through Mar. 31)		320			364			701	
Public Law 480 shipment:									
Title I	29,980	197,782	82,179	0	0	0	150,000	309,027	182,550
Title II	20	54	54	3,000	5,206	4,544	5,000	789	836
Total	105,000	293,159	192,233	65,400	52,670	61,696	631,700	775,722	934,386
U.S. Information Agency:									
U.S. Mission country costs:									
Direct costs	108	76	49	580	586	639	2,061	1,837	2,059
Support costs	95	63	64	237	250	252	795	574	595
Regional post equipment: Officer (administrative servicing): Direct costs	0	0	0	0	0	0	44	48	49
Saigon correspondent staff (Voice of America): Direct costs	0	0	0	0	0	0	36	41	39
Total	203	139	113	817	836	891	2,936	2,550	2,742

OBLIGATIONS FOR U.S. PROGRAMS IN CAMBODIA, LAOS AND SOUTH VIETNAM FOR FISCAL YEARS 1974 AND 1975—Continued

[In thousands of dollars]

	Cambodia			Laos			South Vietnam		
	1974			1974			1974		
	Budget presentation	Estimates	1975 proposed	Budget presentation	Estimates	1975 proposed	Budget presentation	Estimates	1975 proposed
Drug Enforcement Administration (Department of Justice):									
Salaries, benefits, foreign allowances	(5)	0	0	(5)	63	63	(5)	125	125
Shared administrative expenses (payable to Department of State)	(5)	0	0	(5)	11	11	(5)	20	22
Operating expenses	(5)	0	0	(5)	42	53	(5)	19	20
Other (in Thailand program)	(5)	25	30	(5)	25	30	(5)	25	30
Total	(5)	25	30	(5)	141	157	(5)	189	197
Federal Supply Service (General Services Administration):									
Salaries and related expenses	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	39	0
Travel (in-country)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	40	0
Department of the Treasury: Exchange Stabilization fund—Assessment of South Vietnam's financial and economic development	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	109
Internal Revenue Service:									
Salaries and related expenses		0	0		0	0		31	
Administrative expenses		0	0		0	0		14	
Total	(1)	0	0	(1)	0	0	(1)	45	(1)
General Accounting Office:									
Salaries and other personnel expenses	0	0	0	0	0	0	(5)	281	0
Shared administrative expenses (payable to Department of State)	0	0	0	0	0	0	(5)	57	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	(5)	338	0
U.S. Government's total	[3] 285,203	629,328	560,200	[4] 380,417	178,813	152,475	[6] 2,229,236	1,874,253	[6] 2,474,495

[1] Not provided by agency.
[2] Does not include cost of approximately 120 U.S. and 650 foreign national employees of 14 DOD agencies.
[3] Not broken down by country. Estimated at $9,000,000 in fiscal year 1974 and $9,400,000 in fiscal year 1975.
[4] Pro-rata share of AID's worldwide technical and administrative activities which support the Indochina program. Estimated at $16,900,000 in fiscal year 1974 and $18,700,000 in fiscal year 1975.
[5] This figure not specified in budget.
[6] Totals represent sum of available figures

APPENDIX III—LETTER TO SENATOR KENNEDY FROM A.I.D. COMMENTING ON G.A.O. REPORTS ON SOUTH VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT,
Washington, D.C., January 22, 1975.

Hon. EDWARD M. KENNEDY,
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Refugees,
U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: In my letter to you of September 6, 1974, I conveyed our comments on the GAO Follow-Up Review of Laos and indicated that we would furnish our comments on the GAO Follow-Up Reports on South Vietnam and Cambodia as soon as we had received the views of our Missions in each of those countries. Our Missions have now furnished their views and these are incorporated in the commentary that follows.

SOUTH VIETNAM

The report presents an accurate overview of the status of the refugee/social welfare and health programs as they existed just over a year ago. In the intervening period a significant organizational change has taken place affecting the Ministry of Social Welfare (MSW) and the Directorate General for Land Development and Hamlet Building (LDHB). Since February 28, 1974, the MSW and the LDHB have been fused into one functional organization under the authority of the Deputy Prime Minister, Dr. Phan Quang Dan, who is also Minister of Social Welfare and Director General of LDHB. As a result, LDHB now receives full support from the Logistics, Finance and Reports branches of the MSW, as well as from the MSW Field Staffs in the regions and provinces. The MSW now also receives the leadership and representation in governmental circles of a Deputy Prime Minister.

The immediate benefits that have begun to accrue from this change are reflected in the A.I.D. comments on the GAO statements:

1. *GAO:* No reports of expenditures are received from the Directorate General of Land Development and Hamlet Building. For the social welfare program, however, USAID receives a monthly report which compares the amount of funds programmed with the amount of funds allocated. Funds allocated in the social-welfare program usually represent transfers to institutions or voluntary agencies who administer the program concerned. The Relief and Rehabilitation Directorate receives no additional reporting on the final disposition of allocated funds.

Comments: Since June 30, 1974, all LDHB expenditures in the provinces have been included in the periodic reports of the MSW.

2. *GAO:* GVN officials, however, believe that camp conditions are still unsatisfactory even after this camp improvement. The believe the only way to improve conditions is to move the people out of camps through resettlement and return-to-village (RTV) programs.

Comments: The overcrowding in refugee camps that contributed significantly to the "unsatisfactory" conditions has been largely eliminated by the resettlement and RTV programs undertaken by the GVN. The total number of refugees in camps has been reduced from 233,800 on January 1, 1974, to 41,200 as of November 6, 1974. It should be noted that of this total only 14,900 are Vietnamese. The balance of 26,300 are Cambodian refugees who cannot return to their country at this time.

3. *GAO:* Although USAID Public Health officials conclude that the Montagnard health problems can be related to unsanitary and crowded conditions at Montagnard temporary camps, they also admit that Montagnards living outside of camps have higher mortality rates than their ethnic Vietnamese counterparts. GVN, however, is planning no special health program for the Montagnards, according to USAID, even though they have greater health problems than their ethnic counterparts. USAID said that both groups will continue to receive the same type of health care, including the construction of village and hamlet dispensaries and visits from province health teams. USAID public health officials believe that the sooner the Montagnards are resettled, the better off they will be.

Comments: Health care provided by the GVN to refugees in temporary camps is considered adequate and is the same for Montagnards as for ethnic Vietnamese. The real solution to health problems which are inherent in overcrowded camp living conditions is to press for early resettlement. Such resettlement is being accomplished, much having been done in this important area during the past year.

4. *GAO:* Vehicle maintenance was one of the largest problems at these depots . . . Although the Ministry has had some success in training medical equipment maintenance personnel, it is still short of qualified peronnel.

Comments: The achievement of an acceptable level of repair and maintenance of Ministry of Health (MOH) vehicles has long been recognized as a serious problem. Special efforts are being made by the MOH to have the Ministry of Education accredit the excellent MOH training course for mechanics. Such accreditation would enable MOH trained mechanics to secure a higher civil service rating and to receive salaries competitive with those in the private sector.

5. *GAO:* In previous years as much as nine years elapsed between prosthetic requirements and artificial limb production. USAID said prosthetic production and repair has increased, from 8,169 devices in 1971 to an estimated 10,000 in 1973. Through August 1973 a total of 7,081 devices were produced or repaired. Because of plant capacity, the Institute cannot increase annual output beyond 10,000 units, so many amputees will probably continue waiting extended periods of time for these devices.

Comments: The rehabilitation centers are operating at a maximum capacity in the production and fitting of artificial limbs and in the training of recipients in their use. The main center, the three regional and the ten provincial satellites now produce or repair 30,000 devices per year. There is no waiting period for admission to the NRI or to one of its branch centers. Once a patient is admitted, the average time for the construction and fitting of a device is two weeks. At the current rate of production the backlog of untreated cases should be eliminated in two and one half years.

6. *GAO:* GVN had not been providing timely payment to war damage victims, and the situation at the time of our review was much the same. The backlog of payments has increased from 241,000 claimants in September 1971 to about 308,000 as of August 31, 1973. More than 68,000 of the claims were made before the January 1973 cease-fire. We were told that the reason for these backlogs was the low priority GVN placed on the program.

Comments: While 246,000 people submitted claims in 1972, the number doubled to nearly half a million in 1973. Compensation was provided to some 600,000 people during the year for claims submitted in 1973 or in prior years.

7. *GAO:* Although numerous programs have been established to assist other war victims, none have been directed towards the undetermined, but large number of urban refugees. From 1971 to 1973, GVN continued its policy of providing no direct assistance to war victims who sought refuge in urban areas. The reason for this policy was to discourage further overcrowding of the cities.

Comments: The LDHB has requested A.I.D. assistance in resettling displaced persons living in urban areas. Should the funds requested of the Congress for this purpose be provided, we estimate that about 300,000 urban dwellers can be resettled in FY 1975.

8. *GAO:* The Director General of Land Development and Hamlet Building—an agency independent of the Ministry of Social Welfare—said that his staff was short in both the field and in headquarters.

Comments: The LDHB staff has now been augmented, as noted above, by the fusion of the LDHB and the MSW.

9. *GAO:* Conditions in Vietnam still preclude the gathering of accurate and reliable statistics on the total number of civilian war-related casualties. USAID is currently reporting only admissions to the Ministry of Health civilian hospitals as compiled by Ministry of Health. The number of casualties receiving treatment at other hospitals and the number who received no treatment or who died without treatment is unknown.

Comments: Both the MOH and the USAID are acutely aware of the shortcomings of the casualty reporting system now in use. However, it is encouraging to note that casualty reporting from the District Health Centers to the Province hospitals has improved; mainly due to the Joint Utilization Program whereby Vietnamese military medical personnel have been assigned to District-level facilities for the treatment of the civilian population. The MOH, in a measure toward improving civilian casualty reporting, has directed the District Health Centers to report known casualties to the Provincial Hospitals for inclusion in the Hospital reports to the Ministry.

CAMBODIA

The following are Mission comments on the GAO report on refugees:

1. *GAO:* To help carry out resettlement, the A.I.D. staff responsible for refugee matters in Phnom Penh has been increased from one to six direct-hire personnel.

Comments: In March of 1974, the Resettlement and Development Foundation was established as a semi-autonomous government approved agency to deal with medium and long-term refugee resettlement programs. USAID funded its operations for the balance of the calendar year.

2. *GAO:* Since GAO's last review, the Cambodian Government has established a new Ministry of Social Action and Refugees which has overall responsibility for refugee matters.

Comments: The Ministry of Social Action and Refugees is still functional but has been incorporated into the new Ministry of Refugees and Community Development which is discussed below in detail.

3. *GAO:* The functions and responsibilities of six agencies which contribute to relief of refugees are, however, still fragmented and lack coordination. The Government has not yet developed an overall program for dealing effectively with refugee problems and continues to provide relief on a case-by-case basis.

Comments: The impression is left by the GAO report that the Khmer Government (CKR) was taking an interest in refugee relief but was not yet able to establish and administer a unified refugee program. When the GAO report was prepared, this assessment was accurate. Now, however, the situation is significantly different. In June of 1974, the CKR reorganized the refugee program and replaced the unwieldy and ineffective Ministry of Social Action, Refugees, Labor and Community Development with a new streamlined Ministry of Refugees and Community Development. Led by an active, American-trained minister, this new Ministry has started to lay the groundwork for what we hope will be a unified, comprehensive refugee program. The first change instituted by the Ministry was to establish a number of provincial refugee bureaus staffed by Community Development personnel. (Six bureaus are already operational.) Next, the Ministry instituted the first comprehensive survey of refugees ever organized in the Khmer Republic. Five provinces have been surveyed already and the information gathered is now being compiled. In addition to these "in-house" innovations, the new Ministry has also started to more effectively coordinate the relief roles of the various agencies involved. Already the responsibility for emergency relief in six provinces has been assigned to individual relief agencies in order to avoid the confusion caused by too many agencies working in a single area. The Ministry has also started to standardize the distribution of relief commodities and all of the relief agencies have for the first time started to distribute identical rations of rice. In the coming months, as the Ministry gains more experience, we expect that it will play an even more effective coordinating role in the refugee relief program.

4. *GAO:* Cambodia reported that, in August 1973, 10,000 registered refugees were living in camps; 393,000 were living in and around Phnom Penh, but outside the camps; and 330,000 were in provincial cities. The Government no longer publishes estimates of the total number of Cambodians displaced by hostile actions. The U.S. Embassy in Phnom Penh estimated in August 1973 that an additional 200,000 refugees were not registered.

Comments: The refugee statistics compiled by the GKR since 1972 are neither accurate nor complete. In addition, since they are accumulative, they also reflect the considerable number of refugees who have been able to resettle on their own and who are no longer in need of assistance. However, even with all of these deficiencies, the GKR statistics do serve one useful purpose in that they reflect the overall increase in the size of the Khmer refugee problem from the beginning of 1972. The GKR Ministry of Refugees and Community Development has again started to publish the estimated number of unregistered refugees, but the Mission has refrained from using these figures since we still are not clear on how they were compiled. However, it is certain that the number of unregistered refugees has not decreased since the GAO report was prepared, and in all likelihood has increased. The following updates refugee statistics:

	August 1972	August 1973	August 1974
Registered refugees:			
Inside Cambodia:			
Phnom Penh			
In camps	2,137	9,913	65,992
Out of camps	269,642	393,398	428,340
Provinces	228,096	329,580	576,390
Outside Cambodia:			
Thailand		2,652	7,582
Laos		1,496	8,481
South Vietnam		25,937	42,447
Malaysia		16	16
Total	499,875	762,992	1,129,248

5. *GAO:* An A.I.D. official reported in November 1973 that living conditions have deteriorated in Phnom Penh. Food is scarce and has become more expensive. Unemployment has increased, and overcrowding has become acute.

Comments: Unfortunately, this assessment is as valid now as it was before. There are several reasons for this. First the already swollen ranks of unemployed refugees are continually expanding as new refugees come in. Since January 1974, over 300,000 new refugees have left communist controlled areas and most of them have not been able to find work. Second, the land area controlled by the Government has in some locations decreased during 1974 and the resulting loss of farmland has forced many refugee farmers to seek employment elsewhere. Third, the influx of new refugees into the already limited job market and the continuing inflation have disrupted the livelihood of any previously self-supporting refugees and their standard of living has, as a result, deteriorated rapidly. Because of these factors, the Mission now estimates that the number of refugees in need of assistance has increased from 250,000 in late 1973 to about 500,000 at the present time.

6. *GAO:* The Cambodian Government recorded war damage claims totaling $176 million. The U.S. Embassy in Phnom Penh reported that none had been paid as of October 1973.

Comments: At the present time, the GKR is not in a position to repay war damage claims; but, they do continue to receive and record such claims. As of December 10, 1974, the claims totaled approximately 73 billion riels ($45 million at the exchange rate then current).

7. *GAO:* The four U.S. voluntary and international agencies to which A.I.D. made cash grants are filling some war-affected Cambodians' needs for food, clothing, and simple medical care.

Comments: Since the compilation of the information used in the GAO report, the refugee relief program in the Khmer Republic has significantly expanded and diversified. As before, the voluntary and international agencies continue to carry the brunt of emergency relief. Now, however, with more staff and larger budgets, these relief agencies are able to assist a greater number of refugees than before. In January 1974, the voluntary and international agencies were able to provide emergency relief to 270,000 needy refugees. By September, this number had nearly doubled to over 510,000. Along with an increase in the number of refugees assisted, there has also been a concurrent increase in the number of relief services provided. In support of emergency relief, the voluntary and international agencies have greatly expanded their medical programs and in total they now have a combined Khmer/International Medical Staff totaling more than 200 people who, on an average, treat more than 40,000 patients a month. Medical care provided now includes innoculations, child care, maternity classes, nutritional programs, general health and surgery. Apart from medical assistance, the second most significant expansion and diversification in the relief agencies' programs has been in the field of emergency economic development. Here, the emphasis has been on helping settled refugees to reach self-sufficiency by establishing such small-scale projects as vegetable growing, fishing, weaving, etc., though each voluntary agency emphasizes different aspects of emergency development. The impact of their combined programs is significant. During September 1974 alone, over 46,000 refugees received economic assistance and the number is growing every month.

In addition to the refugee relief programs of the voluntary and international agencies, there is also the resettlement program of the Resettlement and Development Foundation (RDF). Little more than a concept when the GAO report

was being compiled, the RDF is now fully operational and is concentrating as planned on large-scale, permanent refugee resettlement. Already, after being in existence for only nine months, the RDF has resettled over 7,000 families (35,000 people) and is planning to expand even further during the next dry season.

To evaluate precisely the impact of the refugee relief program in the Khmer Republic is difficult while the military and economic situation is so unstable. However, judging from the number of refugees reached by the various parts of this program, it is safe to say that it has a significant impact on the overall refugee problem which goes far beyond "filling some war-affected Cambodians' needs for food, clothing, and simple medical care."

The following updates voluntary and international agency refugee activity statistics.

	CRS	CARE	WVRO	ICRC
A. Personnel:				
International	38	6	23	25
Khmer	90	38	150	60
B. Budget—Fiscal year 1974:				
Riels (millions)	2,822	643	712	28
U.S. dollars (millions)	1.4		0.5	1.1
C. Assistance provided, September 1974:				
Emergency	197,000	129,000	57,000	92,000
Medical	19,500		15,000	5,000
Economic	25,000	7,500	13,000	
Total	241,500	136,500	85,500	97,000

8. *GAO*: These recipients—refugees, displaced persons, and other war victims—are not required to be officially registered.

Comments: Since its creation, in June 1974, the Ministry of Refugees and Community Development has reorganized its registration program and has energetically tried to register all new refugees. This program still needs to be expanded, however, and in some areas the lists of registered refugees kept by the Ministry are not up-to-date or complete. Therefore, while the Ministry continues to refine its registration system, the voluntary and international agencies in some areas continue to draw up their own distribution lists which do not necessarily include only registered refugees. In the future, however, we expect that the relief agencies will more and more rely on the Ministry's list of registered refugees.

9. *GAO*: The Cambodian Government gave its Ministry of Social Action and Refugees the equivalent of $125,000 for relief of civilian war victims in 1973. A.I.D. was unable to provide data on amounts that Cambodia budgeted to other ministries.

Comments: During Calendar Year (CY) 1974, the CKR budget for the Ministry of Social Action and Refugees was 81 million riels ($115,000) and for the Ministry of Community Development, 83 million riels ($118,000). For calendar year 1975, we expect the new Ministry of Refugees and Community Development to receive a budget of around 160 million riels. In addition to this GKR budgetary support, the United States Government also provided 100 million riels ($142,000) additional funds to the Ministry of Refugees and Community Development in calendar year 1974; and, we expect to provide additional funds in calendar year 1975.

10. *GAO*: The International Committee of the Red Cross and other international voluntary relief organizations have helped to provide assistance to civilian war victims in Cambodia. Japan, Britain, the Chinese Republic, and other countries have provided needed commodities to Cambodia.

Comments: The spending levels and project descriptions for CRS, CARE, WVRO and the ICRC are included in the comments under paragraph number 7. In addition, the following voluntary and humanitarian agencies are also involved in refugee relief in the Khmer Republic:

Seventh Day Adventists: Clothing Distributions;

Neighbors Aid to Asia (NATA): General Relief Work With Orphans and Refugees;

Asian Christian Service: Medical and Social Work Among the Refugees in Phnom Penh and Kompong Chhnang;

Save the Children Fund: Child Welfare, Mostly in Phnom Penh;
Oxfam: Support for Relief Programs of Local Khmer Organizations;
Thomas A. Dooley Foundation: Medical Assistance; and
UNICEF: Educational, Medical, and Nutritional Work Among Refugees.

Besides these voluntary and humanitarian agencies, Oisca International, a Japanese agency, also donated five M/T of clothing during October 1974.

11. *GAO*: The U.S. Embassy in Phnom Penh reported that Cambodia's records show that as of July 1973 at least 29,000 civilians had been wounded and 12,661 killed becauseof fighting in that country.

Comments: During CY 1974, the GKR Ministry of Public Health estimated that the number of civilian war casualties continued at about the rate of 7,000 per month.

12. *GAO:* The number of doctors and medical personnel appears to be adequate. However, the extent to which sanitary methods are used in treatment and the quality of indigenous medical personnel in Cambodia are generally below average for Southeast Asia. In five major hospitals 25 percent of the equipment is estimated to be inoperative because it is over 20 years old, and maintenance facilities and practices are reportedly inadequate. Since GAO's last review, the pharmaceuticals situation has improved.

Comments: The medical equipment situation has improved since A.I.D. moved ten, fully equipped, 200 bed Mobile Emergency Surgical Hospitals (MESH) to Cambodia. Nine of these units are in place and are operating at the Ministry of Health provincial and Phnom Penh hospital sites. One MESH unit has been issued to the recently completed, but not yet operational, Go Be Hospital just outside of Phnom Penh. It is still true that approximately 25 percent of the medical equipment in some hospitals is inoperative due to age, lack of replacement parts and poor maintenance. Replacement parts are particularly difficult to obtain for old equipment manufactured in Communist Bloc nations.

The Ministry of Health is improving its ability to cope with the health and medical care problems of the population by sponsoring advanced medical training for about 100 physicians in such countries as France, Germany, Malaysia and Singapore. The International Committee of the Red Cross, World Vision Relief Organization and Catholic Relief Services have fielded medical teams under A.I.D. grants, to improve the professional level of medical care in Cambodia. The Lutheran World Relief also will provide a medical team under an A.I.D. grant when this is executed in January 1975. In addition, UNICEF plans to upgrade health facilities and to conduct training for health workers under a program to be supported by an A.I.D. grant.

We hope this information on South Vietnam and Cambodia will be helpful to you. If we can be of further assistance, please let us know.

Sincerely yours,

JOHN E. MURPHY,
Deputy Administrator.

APPENDIX IV.—TEXT OF THE LAW GOVERNING UNITED STATES ASSISTANCE TO INDOCHINA

(From Public Law 93–559, approved December 30, 1974)

Note: On the eve of the second anniversary of the Paris Agreement, the Congress passed the Foreign Assistance Act of 1974, placing for the first time tight controls and legislative guidelines on continued United States assistance to South Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. It established for the first time a national "policy with respect to Indochina," as well as "principles governing economic aid to Indochina."

Because of this law's significance in affecting future relations with the countries of Indochina, the complete text is printed below.

POLICY WITH RESPECT TO INDOCHINA

SEC. 34. (a) The Congress finds that the cease-fire provided for in the Paris Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam has not been observed by any of the Vietnamese parties to the conflict. Military operations of an offensive and defensive nature continue throughout South Vietnam. In Cambodia, the civil war between insurgent forces and the Lon Nol government has intensified, resulting in widespread human suffering and the virtual destruction of the Cambodian economy.

(b) The Congress further finds that continuation of the military struggles in South Vietnam and Cambodia are not in the interest of the parties directly engaged in the conflicts, the people of Indochina or world peace. In order to lessen the human suffering in Indochina and to bring about a genuine peace there, the Congress urges and requests the President and the Secretary of State to undertake the following measures:

(1) to initiate negotiations with representatives of the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China to arrange a mutually agreed-upon and rapid de-escalation of military assistance on the part of the three principal suppliers of arms and material to all Vietnamese and Cambodian parties engaged in conflict;

(2) to urge by all available means that the Government of the Khmer Republic enter in negotiations with representatives of the Khmer Government of National Union for the purpose of arranging an immediate cease-fire and political settlement of the conflict; and to use all available means to establish contact with the Khmer Government of National Union, and to urge them to participate in such negotiations. The United States should urge all Cambodian parties to use the good offices of the United Nations or a respected third country for the purpose of bringing an end to hostilities and reaching a political settlement;

(3) to utilize any public or private forum to negotiate directly with representatives of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the Provisional Revolutionary Government, and the Republic of Vietnam to seek a new cease-fire in Vietnam and full compliance with the provisions of the Paris Agreement on Ending the War and restoring Peace in Vietnam, including a full accounting for Americans missing in Indochina;

(4) to reconvene the Paris Conference to seek full implementation of the provisions of the Agreement of January 27, 1973, on the part of all Vietnamese parties to the conflict; and

(5) to maintain regular and full consultation with the appropriate committees of the Congress and report to the Congress and the Nation at regular intervals on the progress toward obtaining a total cessation of hostilities in Indochina and a mutual reduction of military assistance to that area.

PRINCIPLES GOVERNING ECONOMIC AID TO INDOCHINA

SEC. 35. (a) Congress calls upon the President and Secretary of State to take the following actions designed to maximize the benefit of United States economic assistance:

(1) to organize a consortium to include multilateral financial institutions to help plan for Indochina reconstruction and development; to coordinate multilateral and bilateral contributions to the area's economic recovery; and to provide continuing advice to the recipient nations on the use of their own and outside resources;

(2) to develop, in coordination with the recipient governments, other donors, and the multilateral financial institutions, a comprehensive plan for Indochina reconstruction and economic development;

(3) to develop country-by-country reconstruction and development plans, including detailed plans for the development of individual economic sectors, that can be used to identify and coordinate specific economic development projects and programs and to direct United States resources into areas of maximum benefits;

(4) to shift the emphasis of United States aid programs from consumption-oriented expenditures to economic development;

(5) to identify possible structural economic reforms in areas such as taxation, exchange rates, savings mechanisms, internal pricing, income distribution, land tenure, budgetary allocations and corruption, which should be undertaken if Indochinese economic development is to progress;

(6) to include in Indochina economic planning and programming specific performance criteria and standards which will enable the Congress and the executive branch to judge the adequacy of the recipient's efforts and to determine whether, and what amount of, continued United States funding is justified; and

(7) to provide humanitarian assistance to Indochina wherever practicable under the auspices of and by the United Nations and its specialized agencies, other international organizations or arrangements, multilateral institutions, and private voluntary agencies with a minimum presence and activity of United States Government personnel.

(b) This section shall not be construed to imply continuation of a United States financial commitment beyond the authorization provided for in this Act or amendments made by this Act.

INDOCHINA POSTWAR RECONSTRUCTION

SEC. 36. (a) There are authorized to be appropriated to the President to furnish assistance for the relief and reconstruction of South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, in addition to funds otherwise available for such purposes, for the fiscal year 1975 not to exceed $617,000,000. Of the amount appropriated for fiscal year 1975—

(1) $449,900,000 shall be available only for the relief and reconstruction of South Vietnam in accordance with section 38 of this Act;

(2) $100,000,000 shall be available only for the relief and reconstruction of Cambodia in accordance with section 39 of this Act;

(3) $40,000,000 shall be available only for the relief and reconstruction of Laos in accordance with section 40 of this Act;

(4) $4,100,000 shall be available only for the regional development program;

(5) $16,000,000 shall be available only for support costs for the agency primarily responsible for carrying out this part; and

(6) $7,000,000 shall be available only for humanitarian assistance through international organizations.

Such amounts are authorized to remain available until expended.

(b) The authority of section 610(a) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 may not be used in fiscal year 1975 to transfer funds made available for any provision of such Act of 1961 into funds made available for part V of such Act for South Vietnam, Cambodia, or Laos under this section.

(c) No assistance may be provided to South Vietnam, Cambodia, or Laos in fiscal year 1975 under part I (including chapter 4 of part II) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. This prohibition may not be waived under section 614(a) of such Act of 1961 or any other provision of law.

(d) Notwithstanding subsection (b) of this section, funds made available under any provisions of this or any other law for the purpose of providing military assistance for South Vietnam, Laos, or Cambodia during fiscal year 1975 may be transferred to, and consolidated with, any funds made available to that country for war relief, reconstruction, or general economic development, if such transfer does not result in a greater amount than is allocated for such country under paragraph (1), (2), or (3) of subsection (a).

(e) To the extent not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, all prohibitions, restrictions, limitations, and authorities contained in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 which are applicable to part V of such Act of 1961 shall apply with respect to the assistance authorized by this section.

ASSISTANCE TO SOUTH VIETNAMESE CHILDREN

Sec. 37. (a) It is the sense of the Congress that inadequate provision has been made (1) for the establishment, expansion and improvement of day care centers, orphanages, hostels, school feeding programs, health and welfare programs, and training related to these programs which are designed for the benefit of South Vietnamese children, disadvantaged by hostilities in Vietnam or conditions re-

lated to those hostilities, and (2) for the adoption by United States citizens of South Vietnamese children who are orphaned or abandoned, or whose parents or sole surviving parent, as the case may be, has irrevocably relinquished all parental rights, particularly children fathered by United States citizens.

(b) The President is, therefore, authorized to provide assistance, on terms and conditions he considers appropriate, for the purposes described in clauses (1) and (2) of subsection (a) of this section. Of the funds appropriated pursuant to section 36(a) of this Act, $10,000,000, or its equivalent in local currency, shall be available until expended solely to carry out this section. Not more than 10 per centum of the funds made available to carry out this section may be expended for the purposes referred to in clause (2) of subsection (a). Assistance provided under this section shall be furnished, to the maximum extent practicable, under the auspices of and by international agencies or private voluntary agencies.

LIMITATIONS WITH RESPECT TO SOUTH VIETNAM

SEC. 38. (a) The $449,900,000 made available in accordance with section 36 (a) (1) of this Act shall be allocated as follows:

(1) $90,000,000 for humanitarian assistance, of which there shall be available—

(A) $70,000,000 for refugee relief;

(B) $10,000,000 for child care; and

(C) $10.000,000 for health care;

(2) $154,500,000 for agricultural assistance, of which there shall be available—

(A) $85,000,000 for fertilizer;

(B) $12,000,000 for POL (for agriculture);

(C) $6,000,000 for insecticides and pesticides;

(D) $10,000,000 for agricultural machinery and equipment (including spare parts);

(E) $3,500,000 for agricultural advisory services;

(F) $20,000,000 for rural credit;

(G) $10,000,000 for canal dredging;

(H) $4,000,000 for low-lift pumps; and

(I) $4,000,000 for fish farm development;

(3) $139,800,000 for industrial development assistance of which there shall be available—

(A) $124,000,000 for commodities;

(B) $10,000,000 for industrial credit; and

(C) $5,800,000 for industrial advisory services (including feasibility studies);

(4) $65,600,000 for miscellaneous assistance, of which there shall be available—

(A) $47,900,000 for the service sector (including POL, machinery equipment, and spare parts); and

(B) $17,700,000 for technical services and operating expenses.

(b) (1) No funds made available in accordance with section 36(a) (1) may be transferred to, or consolidated with, the funds made available for military assistance, nor may more than 20 per centum of the funds made available under paragraph (1), (2), (3), or (4) of subsection (a) of this section be transferred to, or consolidated with, the funds made available under any other such paragraph.

(2) Whenever the President determines it to be necessary in carrying out this section, any funds made available under any subparagraph of paragraph (1), (2), (3), or (4) of subsection (a) of this section may be transferred to, and consolidated with, the funds made available under any other subparagraph of that same paragraph.

(3) The President shall fully inform the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate of each transfer he intends to make under paragraph (1) or (2) of this subsection prior to making such transfer.

(c) No funds may be obligated for any of the purposes described in subsection (a) of this section in, to, for, or on behalf of South Vietnam in any fiscal year beginning after June 30, 1975, unless such funds have been specifically authorized by law enacted after the date of enactment of this section. In no case shall funds in any amount in excess of the amount specifically authorized by law for any fiscal year be obligated for any such purpose during such fiscal year.

(d) After the date of enactment of this section, whenever any request is

made to the Congress for the appropriation of funds for use in, to, for, or on behalf of South Vietnam for any fiscal year the President shall furnish a written report to the Congress explaining the purpose for which such funds are to be used in such fiscal year.

(e) The President shall submit to the Congress within thirty days after the end of each quarter of each fiscal year, beginning with the fiscal year which begins July 1, 1974, a written report showing the total amount of funds obligated in, to, for, or on behalf of South Vietnam during the preceding quarter by the United States Government, and shall include in such report a general breakdown of the total amount obligated, describing the different purposes for which such funds were obligated and the total amount obligated for such purpose.

(f)(1) Effective six months after the date of enactment of this section, the total number of civilian officers and employees, including contract employees, of executive agencies of the United States Government who are citizens of the United States and of members of the Armed Forces of the United States present in South Vietnam shall not at any one time exceed four thousand, not more than two thousand five hundred of whom shall be members of such armed forces and direct hire and contract employees of the Department of Defense. Effective one year after the date of enactment of this section, such total number shall not exceed at any one time three thousand, not more than one thousand five hundred of whom shall be members of such armed forces and direct hire and contract employees of the Department of Defense.

(2) Effective six months after the date of enactment of this section, the United States shall not, at any one time, pay in whole or in part directly or indirectly, the compensation or allowances of more than eight hundred individuals in South Vietnam who are citizens of countries other than South Vietnam or the United States. Effective one year after the date of enactment of this section, the total number of individuals whose compensation or allowance is so paid shall not exceed at any one time five hundred.

(3) For purposes of this subsection, "executive agency of the United States Government" means any agency, department, board, wholly or partly owned corporation, instrumentality, commission, or establishment within the executive branch of the United States Government.

(4) This subsection shall not be construed to apply with respect to any individual in South Vietnam who (A) is an employee or volunteer worker of a voluntary private, nonprofit relief organization or is an employee or volunteer worker of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and (B) engages only in activities providing humanitarian assistance in South Vietnam.

(g) This section shall not be construed as a commitment by the United States to South Vietnam for its defense.

LIMITATIONS WITH RESPECT TO CAMBODIA

SEC. 39. (a) Section 655 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 is amended as follows:

(1) by striking out "$341,000,000" in subsection (a) and inserting "$377,000,000" in lieu thereof.

(2) by striking out "1972" in subsection (a) and inserting "1975. Of that sum, there shall be available no more than $200,000,000 for military assistance. In addition to such $377,000,000, defense articles and services may be ordered under section 506 of this Act for Cambodia in an amount not to exceed $75,000,000 in fiscal year 1975." In lieu thereof.

(3) by striking out "$341,000,000" in subsection (b) and inserting "$377,000,000" in lieu thereof.

(4) by striking out "1972" in subsection (b) and inserting "1975" in lieu thereof.

(b) Section 656 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 is amended by adding at the end thereof the following sentence: "This section shall not be construed to apply with respect to any individual in Cambodia who (A) is an employee or volunteer worker of a voluntary private, nonprofit relief organization or is an employee or volunteer worker of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and (B) engages only in activities providing humanitarian assistance in Cambodia."

(c) The $100,000,000 made available in accordance with section 36(a)(2) of this Act shall be allocated as follows:

(1) $20,000,000 for humanitarian assistance;

(2) $63,000,000 for commodity import assistance;

(3) $15,000,000 for multilateral stabilization assistance; and

(4) $2,000,000 for technical support and participant training.

(d) No funds made available in accordance with section 36(a)(2) may be transferred to, or consolidated with, the funds allocated for military assistance to Cambodia under section 655(a) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, nor may more than 20 per centum of the funds made available under any paragraph of subsection (c) of this section be transferred to, or consolidated with, the funds made available under any other such paragraph.

(e) No funds may be obligated for any of the purposes described in section 655(a) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 in, to, for, or on behalf of Cambodia in any fiscal year beginning after June 30, 1975, unless such funds have been specifically authorized by law enacted after the date of enactment of this section. In no case shall funds in any amount in excess of the amount specifically authorized by law for any fiscal year be obligated for any such purpose during such fiscal year.

(f) This section shall not be construed as a commitment by the United States to Cambodia for its defense.

LIMITATIONS WITH RESPECT TO LAOS

SEC. 40. (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no funds authorized to be appropriated by this or any other law may be obligated in any amount in excess of $70,000,000 during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1975, for the purpose of carrying out directly or indirectly any economic or military assistance, or any operation, project, or program of any kind, or for providing any goods, supplies, materials, equipment, services, personnel, or advisers in, to, for, or on behalf of Laos. Of that amount, there shall be available—

(1) $30,000,000 for military assistance; and

(2) $40,000,000 only for economic assistance, of which there shall be available—

(A) $11,000,000 for humanitarian assistance;

(B) $6,500,000 for reconstruction and development assistance;

(C) $16,100,000 for stabilization assistance; and

(D) $6,400,000 for technical support.

(b) No funds made available under paragraph (2) of subsection (a) of this section may be transferred to, or consolidated with, the funds made available under paragraph (1) of such subsection, nor may more than 20 per centum of the funds made available under any subparagraph of paragraph (2) be transferred to, or consolidated with, the funds made available under any other such subparagraph.

(c) In computing the limitations on obligation authority under subsection (a) of this section with respect to such fiscal year, there shall be included in the computation the value of any goods, supplies, materials, equipment, services, personnel, or advisers provided, to, for, or on behalf of Laos in such fiscal year by gift, donation, loan, lease or otherwise. For the purpose of this subsection, "value" means the fair market value of any goods, supplies, materials, or equipment provided, to, for, or on behalf of Laos but in no case less than 33⅓ per centum of the amount the United States paid at the time such goods, supplies, materials, or equipment were acquired by the United States.

(d) No funds may be obligated for any of the purposes described in subsection (a) of this section in, to, for, or on behalf of Laos in any fiscal year beginning after June 30, 1975, unless such funds have been specifically authorized by law enacted after the date of enactment of this section. In no case shall funds in any amount in excess of the amount specifically authorized by law for any fiscal year be obligated for any such purpose during such fiscal year.

(e) After the date of enactment of this section, whenever any request is made to the Congress for the appropriation of funds for use in, to, for, or on behalf of Laos, for any fiscal year, the President shall furnish a written report to the Congress explaining the purpose for which such funds are to be used in such fiscal year.

(f) The President shall submit to the Congress within thirty days after the end of each quarter of each fiscal year beginning with the fiscal year which begins July 1, 1974, a written report showing the total amount of funds obligated in, to, for, or on behalf of Laos during the preceding quarter by the United States Government and shall include in such report a general breakdown of the total amount obligated, describing the different purposes for which such funds were obligated and the total amount obligated for such purpose.

(g) This section shall not be construed as a commitment by the United States to Laos for its defense.

APPENDIX V.—SELECTED PRESS REPORTS AND COMMENTARIES ON CONDITIONS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

[From the Washington Post, Jan. 19, 1975]

THE VIETNAM DRAMA: STILL LOOKING FOR AN ENDING

(By Philip A. McCombs)

SAIGON.—What is the American interest in South Vietnam in 1975, nearly two years after the signing of the Paris cease-fire agreement? What is the American policy here, and what should it be?

While the debate on these questions no longer dominates American political life, it remains, here at least, as bitter and sometimes as hysterical as ever. A senior American diplomat at a recent dinner described a reporter for a major American newspaper here as a "traitor." A liberal Democratic congressman, visiting Saigon recently, gazed glumly from a coffee shop at the heavy downtown traffic and said: "Yeah, I listened to all [U.S. Ambassador Graham] Martin's arguments. What a bunch of crap."

All sides seem convinced that the way this drama finally plays itself out will deeply affect our self-image as well as the world's view of us as a people and a nation.

Our policy on how to close the drama here appears to be: Get out of Vietnam by ending massive military and economic aid as quickly as possible without letting the Communists take over. Or, if they do eventually take over, without letting it appear that this was due to a lack of U.S. will.

As part of this goal the State Department, through the U.S. embassy here, appears during the last year to have been waging two fights, one a propaganda battle against the U.S. Congress and the other a secret struggle to keep President Nguyen Van Thieu in line with U.S. objectives. Both battles are going on essentialy out of view, although the first has surfaced frequently in the form of the American embassy's strained relations with the press.

Martin exploded publicly a year ago over a lengthy news article documenting the hypothesis that massive U.S. assistance to Saigon set the pace of the war. Now that U.S. military aid has been halved to $700 million and the pace of the war has dramatically shifted, with Saigon on the defensive inside the South, it seems possible that Martin's anger was stimulated more by the article's impact on Congress than by any errors it might have contained.

This conclusion seems all the more likely given the bitter mood of many American diplomats here. One quickly learns that not only journalists but surprisingly large number of American congressmen seem to be on the "traitor" list.

During the past month of spectacular Communist battlefield successes, this bitterness has been accompanied by fear. "Jesus, this is the worst it's ever been," an American diplomat recently. "We may not even be able to get out of here."

"A SENSE OF OBLIGATION"

Martin is an experienced, resourceful and tough diplomat who has formed a clear idea of what he hopes to accomplish here and who believes that, regardless of the atmosphere on Capitol Hill today, most Americans and members of Congress ultimately will share his point of view.

With adequate U.S. economic aid, Martin told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in testimony last July, "We can confidently anticipate that in a very few years we will be able to regard our Vietnam involvement as closed. If the secretary's [Kissinger's] recommendations are heeded, our involvement will be closed in the way that the great majority of Americans quite obviously want it closed—leaving the Republic of Vietnam economically viable, militarily capable of defending itself with its own manpower against both external aggression and externally supported internal subversion, and free to choose its own leaders and its own government as its citizens themselves may freely determine."

Kissinger, in a letter last June 1 to the chairman of the Senate Armed Services

Committee, wrote, "I have a very personal sense of obligation to do everything I can to make good on our moral commitment to assist [South Vietnam] in its survival as an independent state." This survival, wrote the secretary, "is indispensable to the creation of an enduring structure of peace in Southeast Asia."

Kissinger also wrote—and this a year and a half after the cease-fire agreement—that America's longer-range objective "is not just a reduction in the level of hostilities but more importantly the creation in Southeast Asia of an environment conducive to enduring peace and reconstruction."

CONFRONTATION WITH HANOI

These goals have tended to keep the United States in a position of stark confrontation with Hanoi two years after the cease-fire agreement.

In the U.S. embassy's view, Hanoi is principally to blame for this. According to intelligence reports, Hanoi has not given up its goal of total victory in the South by political, military and economic means. Its troops are now attacking widely in key areas of the country in what intelligence sources say might be termed a limited offensive. Politically, the Communists, encouraged for a time by the rise of a vocal political opposition to Thieu in Saigon, have announced that they will no longer negotiate with Thieu but only with a more reasonable successor.

In its public statements, the U.S. embassy appears to be backing Thieu to the hilt. Thus the embassy consistently has attacked the Communists with an intense rhetoric reminiscent of the height of American involvement here. It also is examining closely every expenditure to make sure that money is going for the most necessary items. And tallies of Communist troops and equipment are being carefully reevaluated for presentation to Congress. Since purchasing comparable military talent and equipment costs more in the American economy than in Communist lands, the experts say, this analysis should encourage Congress to appropriate more money for South Vietnam.

THE BATTLE WITH THIEU

From this overall situation of confrontation and continuing war, one gets the sense that the cease-fire agreement has been forgotten and replaced by a win-lose situation, with no other possibility for resolving the conflict. But American diplomats here last year were indeed exploring other possibilities.

While the U.S. embassy was doing its best to support South Vietnam's fight against the Communists and was willing to talk publicly about this, it was not willing to talk about its secret battle to keep President Thieu in line with American objectives.

In fact, Martin bridled frequently during the past year at any suggestion in the press of tensions between the embassy and the Saigon government. But extensive interviews with Western diplomats and Vietnamese government officials here suggest that President Thieu may be too intransigently anti-Communist to suit American policymakers.

Martin has been pressuring Thieu for at least a year to be more flexible toward the Communists, sources say. What this "flexibility" is exactly is unclear, but observers have suggested that it might mean making some substantial concession that would get political talks going again in Paris under the terms of the cease-fire agreement.

"Flexibility" is something that may fit well under the rubric of detente with the major Communist powers that forms Secretary Kissinger's global policy. But Thieu, according to reliable reports, would have nothing to do with it, despite explicit signals from Martin that detente might have some beneficial results for Thieu's government: Witness the decrease in the Soviet and Chinese supply of arms to Hanoi during the year. Even arguments that such flexibility would improve Thieu's image on Capitol Hill and perhaps lead to bigger aid allotments for his government failed to convince Thieu.

In fact, despite Ambassador Martin's reputation in Washington as an unabashed Thieu supporter, Thieu is said to regard the crusty diplomat as completely untrustworthy and ready to cut Thieu's throat politically at a signal from Henry Kissinger that this would be in the U.S. interest.

AN APOCALYPTIC VIEW

Whether Thieu really has anything to fear from Martin and Kissinger is an open question. However, Thieu, whose military and political position has eroded

broadly in the past two years, clearly has much to fear from the U.S. Congress. November's Democratic landslide had a tremendously disheartening impact on his government, coming as it did atop the last Congress' slash in Saigon military aid and its rejection of any significant increase in economic aid.

Militarily, the cutbacks have not only placed the country in a completely defensive posture but have generated a psychology of desperation and retreat. If this trend continues, it is not at all clear that it will lead to a balanced political settlement in the South.

For one thing, the Communists, sensing victory, may simply press on all the harder. For another, Thieu himself is said by some who know and watch him carefully to be somewhat apocalyptic in his view of developments. He is said to feel deeply and bitterly that his former American allies now are undercutting him. In his speeches during the past year, Thieu has spoken passionately of fighting to the last drop of blood and the last bullet, and has proclaimed that there can be no coalition government with the Communists.

If the situation deteriorates too much, some observers think, Thieu may be inclined to simply pull out and let the house of cards fall.

POLITICAL CONCESSIONS

Politically, the congressional aid cutbacks forced Thieu to make a series of concessions to his opponents inside South Vietnam and made possible last fall's anti-government demonstration.

Whether the political concessions amount to genuine democratic reforms remains an open question. Western diplomats here tend to view Thieu as an enormously skillful politician who is determined to hang on to every scrap of power he can. He did this, observers say, while at the same time grudgingly yielding to pressures and suggestions from the U.S. embassy to make such concessions, again if only to dress up his image for the U.S. Congress.

A year ago, Thieu seemed to all outward appearances to be in a very strong position both militarily and politically. But even then, palace insiders say, Thieu and his key advisors foresaw fairly clearly the coming aid crisis and the probability that it would be exacerbated by the weakening and possible destruction of the Nixon administration by Watergate.

At that time, the insiders say, Thieu and his intimates developed the strategy that they are still following today: Determination not to make any significant political concessions to the Communists, combined with limited concessions to internal political opponents, especially prior to this year's Vietnam elections.

As an added twist to this complex equation, some South Vietnamese government officials say they think Thieu is privately prepared to accept some sort of political solution with the Communists in the south, but only if he is absolutely sure of keeping the upper hand. As Thieu's position continues to deteriorate, though, this possibility seems less and less likely.

SOUNDINGS ON A COALITION

Thieu's two-pronged strategy seems to explain a number of developments during the past year that seemed odd when viewed in isolation.

Last June Thieu began a series of exceptionally passionate speeches declaring that he would never bend to the Communists or allow a coalition government to be imposed on the South, despite being partially undercut by his former allies. The Paris agreement contemplates a political solution in the South but not necessarily a coalition government, and many observers were puzzled at Thieu's long denunciations of coalition.

He spoke of a "second agreement" being forced on South Vietnam, one that would set up a coalition that the Communists could take over. The Communists could never win the elections contemplated in the Paris agreement, Thieu contended, which is why they were stalling in political talks.

Speaking of U.S. aid in a June 6 speech, Thieu declared: "If the U.S. ally also forsakes this half of our nation and country, it will end up by adding strength to the Communist empire . . . If we are asked: "Go ahead and sign a coalition agreement in return for aid,' I do not know if someone would do that, but certainly not me."

It then transpired, according to Western diplomats here, that senior U.S. embassy officials had been going around to top South Vietnamese officials and politicians, deliberately raising the question of a coalition in the South and eliciting views on the subject. This apparently encouraged Thieu's conviction

that Kissinger would cut Thieu's throat the moment he felt a coalition—no matter how disadvantageous to Thieu—could be achieved, thereby extracting the U.S. from Vietnam.

No amount of reassurance of support by Martin or other U.S. officials could shake this view, since the U.S. obviously would want to give every appearance of supporting Thieu prior to cutting him loose in order to achieve the best possible terms in a coalition.

How much of this is real and how much is simply South Vietnamese government paranoia is unclear, but Thieu evidently wanted to make his deeply felt position clear in speeches while stopping short of publicly accusing the U.S. of outright betrayal.

FIRINGS IN THE PALACE

Martin also pressured Thieu, according to sources, to make a series of concessions to the political opposition—in short, to democratize, or at least to give the appearance of democratizing. In some cases, Martin presented the names of persons he wanted Thieu to get rid of in face-to-face conversations with Thieu. In other cases, the pressure was reportedly less direct.

Thieu went along with many of these suggestions, firing longtime aides and apparently divesting himself of some powers. The advantages seemed clearer than in the case of being flexible with the Communists: If Thieu comes to the presidential election next October as the only real candidate, the negative reaction in the American Congress is likely to be drastic.

Last May he fired Nguyen Van Ngan, the palace strongman who had engineered Thieu's iron control over the legislature and gained passage of a constitutional amendment allowing Thieu to run for an unprecedented third term of office.

Thieu also apparently weakened his own powerful Democracy political party by announcing that civil servants and soldiers, who built the party into the only strong and nationwide party, could no longer officially support it.

Last summer a group of Catholic priests boldly announced that they would launch an anti-corruption movement aimed at Thieu himself. Surprisingly, the idea did not die immediately but developed into a broad anti-government movement including other groups and launching the series of sometimes violent street marches that have disrupted Saigon in the last few months of 1974.

Apparently in accord with demands by these groups—but also fitting into his original strategy—Thieu made additional political concessions. He allowed the legislature to rewrite the political party law to make it easy for any number of parties to field candidates in this year's elections. He fired another controversial palace strongman, Information Minister Hoang Duc Nha, plus other allegedly corrupt ministers, three top generals and other military officers who were said to be corrupt.

CONTACTING THE OPPOSITION

It is probably true, in the view of some political observers here, that the United States might prefer some other, more pliable leader than Thieu—but only if such a change would not lead to an immediate collapse of South Vietnam to the Communists.

Thus when the political opposition to Thieu was at its height last October and November, U.S. officials and an augmented corps of senior CIA agents were opening fresh contacts with the opposition, reportedly convincing Thieu that the United States might be about to topple him. Opening these contacts, or reopening them in many cases, in fact amounted to a major policy move because it appeared to open a new option of dropping Thieu in favor of one of his opponents.

The situation cooled, however, after the embassy became convinced that the opposition could put forward no powerful leaders who could command a truly massive following among the people. On Oct. 21, the embassy issued a six-page statement of wholehearted support for Thieu, denying that it supported any of the dissenting political groups and attacking the Communists in page after page of strong rhetoric.

The Oct. 21 statement was followed by a warm message of support from President Ford on the occasion of National Day, Nov. 1. Thieu appeared in public that day, ebullient. There hasn't been a truly serious anti-government demonstration since then.

This may also be due to the fact that the leadership of the various protesting groups seems badly divided, and most of the leaders seem fundamentally con-

servative. They, too, didn't want to topple Thieu if that might bring chaos and an immediate Communist takeover.

The recent cooling of the protests takes place in an atmosphere of massive police intervention, but exercised with political subtlety. There are still marches in Saigon, but the police have learned how to isolate marchers from the crowds of sidewalk onlookers who might join them as they did in some of the earlier, larger demonstrations. Secret police have also infiltrated universities and student groups, effectively silencing them. And police intimidation—with prolonged arrests and threats of physical abuse—has been used against some newspapermen and others.

In addition to the pressures on Thieu, American diplomats for at least a year have been seriously discussing coalition with Vietnamese officials on an informal, private basis. A typical approach has been, "All right, now what do you really think about the possibilities of a coalition?"

Such conversations, apparently conducted in a fairly widespread and systematic way by U.S. officials, have contributed to the impression of some observers that, ultimately, the American interest in South Vietnam may be adequately served by considerably less than Thieu is willing to settle for.

Americans in Vietnam

Saigon.—There are more Americans in South Vietnam now than there were a year ago, but the number working for the U.S. Government has dropped dramatically.

Today there are 6,862 Americans here, according to a U.S. embassy spokesman, and 2,937 of these work for the American government.

This category includes 1,265 working as civilians for the embassy and its large defense attaché's office, 142 U.S. military personnel, 1,488 American contractors doing work for U.S. agencies and 42 club and commissary managers and the like, working for U.S. officials and paid with non-appropriated funds.

Last year, the embassy spokesman said, there were 6,665 Americans in South Vietnam, and 5,051 of these worked for the U.S. government.

Thus, during the year, the number of persons working for the U.S. government has been reduced by 2,114 according to the official statistics. Most of these reductions (1,658) have been contractors whose contracts were discontinued as a result of congressional cutbacks in military aid to South Vietnam, the spokesman said. The other large reduction was of civilians working for the embassy and its defense attache.

This year there are 3,925 non-government Americans here in comparison with 1,614 last year, the spokesman said, an increase of 2,311.

Most of this increase has been due to an influx of businessmen connected with exploration for oil off the shores of Vietnam and with other businesses, the spokesman said. He also cited increases in the number of American students, professors, missionaries, doctors and tourists in the country.

There are 354 dependents of U.S. civilian and military officials here, the spokesman said, and these are counted as non-government Americans.

The 142 American military personnel here include 48 in the defense attaché's office, 75 Marine guards, and 19 involved with the search for missing Americans in Indochina.

The 1,265 civilian U.S. officials are categorized: 729 in the Defense Department, 375 in the Agency for International Development, 129 in the State Department, 24 in the U.S. Information Service, 3 in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, 2 in the Treasury Department and 3 in the Drug Enforcement Administration.

The spokesman refused to say how many Central Intelligence Agency personnel are in South Vietnam, but he said they were mixed in with the other figures to make the grand total of U.S. personnel correct.

The CIA here is called the Office of the Special Assistant to the Ambassador, or OSA. A recent edition of the U.S. embassy phone book here lists 29 OSA employees in Saigon alone, all with American names. There are CIA employees stationed in all the important areas of the country that are controlled by the government, sources say.

Various sources estimate that there are 100 to 300 American CIA personnel in the country. The number may fluctuate greatly as agents come in and out, the sources say. The number rose during last fall's anti-government demonstrations here.

[From the New York Times, Jan. 17, 1975]

SHAKY VIETNAM ACCORDS—THEIR INFLUENCE SEEMS TO BE WANING AS THE PACE OF THE CONFLICT INCREASES

(By David K. Shipler)

SAIGON.—The Paris agreements appear to be exerting less influence on events in Vietnam than at any time since they were signed two years ago. Although they led to the release of American prisoners and the withdrawal of American troops, the war they sought to end is being fought at a tempo comparable to that of the early years of American involvement: More South Vietnamese soldiers died in 1974 than in 1965, 1966 or 1967.

The agreements call for democratic liberties and open, peaceful political struggle between the two sides, but the Saigon Government has continued to exclude Communists from any legal role in political life even though such a role of mandated. The Communists, in a recent hardening of their position, have announced their refusal to negotiate with President Nguyen Van Thieu, calling instead for his overthrow, as they have in the past.

Far from tempering this propaganda war, the agreements become increasingly an instrument of denunciation by both sides rather than a vehicle for compromise.

Some foreign diplomats and Vietnamese officials are convinced that the agreements still impose a measure of military inhibition on the combatants, preventing the Communists, for example, from attacking Saigon. But others see the restraint eroding badly, and some diplomats have even begun speaking of the Paris settlement as merely a historical fact, comparing it to the abortive Indochina accords reached in Geneva in 1954.

"LANGUAGE NOBODY SPEAKS"

"When I first got here I was reading the Paris agreement like my Bible every night," said one of the four members on the paralyzed International Commission of Control and Supervision. "But now I don't need it any more. Nobody is looking at it any more. It's like a dictionary for a language that nobody speaks."

As usual Saigon is full of speculation that the next months will bring the grinding conflict to some fresh turning point, that from the Communists' current accelerated military campaign will come new negotiations.

Diplomats theorize that President Thieu may offer to carry out parts of the agreements that Hanoi and the Vietcong have considered favorable to their side: the formation of a tripartite National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord, for example, consisting of Government, Vietcong and neutralist representatives to oversee national elections in which the Vietcong would participate.

There is no hard evidence that Mr. Thieu is about to do this, so the speculation remains only a tentative counterpoint to the dominant theme—continued warfare.

The seeds of the present violation of the Paris agreements were planted early.

The cease-fire came in a period when the South Vietnamese armed forces were stronger than they had ever been, thanks in part to last-minute American efforts to send advanced aircraft and large quantities of modern weapons and ammunition before the deadline.

SAIGON FLEXED MUSCLES

The purpose was to augment Saigon's stockpile so it would not suffer under the requirement that all resupply be held to one-for-one replacent of items destroyed, damaged, worn out or used up.

According to foreign military men and diplomats the American program also encouraged the South Vietnamese to flex their muscles. "They did not want the cease-fire," a military attache noted. "Morale was up. They had done well during '72. For their purposes the cease-fire should have come later."

In retrospect Western military analysts also consider the hour at which the truce was to have begun ill-chosen from the Government's viewpoint. Coming at midnight, Greenwich mean time —8 A.M. on Jan. 28, 1973, in Vietnam—it was preceded by hours of darkness, a time of maximum Vietcong mobility and supremacy in much of the countryside.

The Communists used the cover of that final night to move into many areas that they had not firmly controlled, and when dawn came the Vietcong flag flew over 350 hamlets and villages. To impartial diplomats and newsmen at the time, some Vietcong territorial claims seemed valid, others false. In any case the proliferation of flags touched off a series of Government attacks that shifted control of most of the villages and cleared most of the roads within a few days.

To a degree the fighting of those first days set the early pattern. Government forces kept up the pressure, suffering some reverses but generally gaining territory, planting new outposts to guard rice land as well as returning refugees, and scoring some significant victories, most notably the uprooting of a 20-year-old Communist base known as Tri Phap in the Mekong Delta 50 miles southwest of Saigon.

In contrast the Communists conducted major new operations with ground troops in the first year, favoring artillery, mortar and rocket attacks on Government outposts and concentrating on building their military strength in the South.

The rapid growth of North Vietnamese military and supply capability in South Vietnam has alarmed the Government.

Since the cease-fire and the end of American bombing, the North Vietnamese have built an extensive network of good roads in South Vietnam, American intelligence reports, and have turned the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos into a four-lane gravel-surfaced highway.

They have enlarged and improved a dozen airfields—all former American bases—in the western mountains of South Vietnam. They have violated the Paris agreements by sending tanks, artillery, antiaircraft guns, missiles and thousands of fresh soldiers south, raising their contingent, American officialse estimate from 160,000 at the time of the cease-fire to 220,000.

Some diplomats believe the infiltration was accomplished simply to give Hanoi a military option in case the Paris agreements failed to produce the anticipated political evolution. But Saigon saw the new troops and weapons as preparation for an offensive, so President Thieu advocated pre-emptive attacks.

TURNING POINT IN 1973

On Oct. 15, 1973, the Vietcong issued an order that is now seen as a turning point in the post-cease fire war. It directed Communist units to "fight back at the Saigon administration as long as it has not discontinued its war acts, any place and in appropriate forms and forces, thus compelling the opponent to strictly implement the Paris agreement on Vietnam."

As the Communists began to step up attacks and jockey for position, and as cuts in American military aid began to have their effect, the South Vietnamese forces started on a long slide downward.

In the last seven or eight months Government units have been outflanked and outmaneuvered, pushed out of newly controlled areas and drawn into costly battles. Since May the Communists have overrun 11 district capitals, six of them in December.

The province capital of Phuoc Binh, an isolated town 75 miles north of Saigon, fell to persistent assault by North Vietnamese troops, tanks and artillery, making it the first such capital to be lost since Quang Tri, on May 1, 1972.

Now there is a pervasive feeling that the balance of military power is tipping toward the Communists.

"At no point in I don't know how many years have they been so very strong, so very mobile," a well-placed South Vietnamese Army officer remarked. "The reverse is true with us. We are weaker and less mobile than before. They are in a position to attack anywhere. At no point in the history of the war has the prospect of defeat looked so real."

Military analysts expect an intensified North Vietnamese campaign in the next few months aimed not only at grabbing strategic military positions and obliterating pockets of Government control but also at inflecting the heaviest possible casualties on Government forces.

This is regarded here as a new phase in a sophisticated psychological, military and political game designed to erode President Thieu's power base by undermining morale in the army and calling his judgment into question. There are already reports of generals who disagree with attempts to hold such isolated military useless spots as Phuoc Binh at the price of valuable men and planes, especially in a time of dwindling American aid.

The effect of the aid cuts—to $700-million this year compared with $1.2-billion last year—is hotly debated in Saigon, with American and South Vietnamese

officials insisting that ammunition and fuel are short, while less partial diplomats and military men counter that the cuts have eliminated only the waste.

The army has given up a number of outposts because they were too expensive to supply and defend. And the air force—which had been built up to one of the largest in the world—has grounded about a third of its 1,800 aircraft, including all its propeller-driven A–1 Skyraiders. The number of American civilian mechanics, mostly aircraft technicians, have dropped from 5,200 on cease-fire day to 1,500 today, according to the United States Embassy.

NUMEROUS COMBAT MISSIONS

Nevertheless, a foreign military attaché reports the air force continues to fly numerous combat missions—"they've got 1,200 aircraft here, the other side has none"—and the Government stockpiles can support four or five months of intense fighting on the scale of the 1972 Communist offensive.

But a soldier's fear that there is not enough ammunition for the critical battle, his sense that he no longer has the luxury of tossing a grenade into a fishpond at his whim, damages morale as surely as real shortages, officers observe.

"They don't fight back," an Asian diplomat told an American. "It's important for them to have enough hand grenades to kill fish with. It's a waste, but this is the type of war you taught them."

The conflict is still governed, as it has been for 20 years, by a central political fact: the unswerving devotion of the North Vietnamese and their Vietcong allies to reunification of the country.

That is why the Communists hailed the Paris agreements as a victory—not merely because they expelled the American troops, but also because they prescribed political evolution that explicitly envisioned reunification, albeit in a peaceful form, as the end product.

"The reunification of Vietnam shall be carried out step by step through peaceful means on the basis of discussions and agreements between North and South Vietnam, without coercion or annexation by either party, and without foreign interference," reads the beginning of Chapter V, a section rarely quoted by American or South Vietnamese officials.

SCOFFING AT UNIFICATION

"Reunification?" scoffed a Cabinet minister in Saigon, "perhaps after the two Germanys and the two Koreas are reunified we can begin talking about Vietnam."

To what degree the Communists believed Saigon would implement the Paris accords' political provisions is unclear. Some think they were fully aware of Mr. Thieu's objections to an open political role for the Vietcong; the South Vietnamese Constitution, after all, outlaws Communism. There is also speculation that Hanoi expected some American pressure on Saigon to observe the accords and hoped that dwindling aid would weaken and topple Mr. Thieu.

This has not happened, and the Communists appear to have turned the clock back, resuming an orchestrated campaign aimed at changing the regime in Saigon and ultimately gaining a political foothold in the Government.

"They are like pianists," an experienced European diplomat observed of the Communists. "The military, economic and political keys are all on the same keyboard, but they must be played well to make good music. You can't make a mistake or play one note too strongly. It is very difficult to play the right tune."

The outcome remains unpredictable. Will President Thieu run again when his term expires in October? Will his generals remain his supporters? As standards of living continue to fall will economic hardship be translated into political dissatisfaction or military apathy? Will the fragmented, precarious non-Communist opposition gain momentum and resilience? How will Washington, Peking and Moscow respond to increased fighting?

MORE SUBTLE QUESTIONS

Beyond these neat questions of power and politics lie more subtle issues.

"Americans see it in very clear statistical terms," a South Vietnamese official observed. "Body count, body count—if you kill enough Communists, pretty soon there won't be any Communists left. The Vietnamese have never bought that thinking.

"The main difference between Kissinger and us is that the Americans are very pragmatic people who can say, Forget about principle as long as something works.

Go to Peking and throw out all your principles. No Vietnamese on either side could make this final jump. He hangs onto the fiction, the principle."

Speaking solemnly, almost in a whisper, the official continued: "Our goal is to gain the respect that is due us from the Communists. First they have to recognize that we are Vietnamese and just as nationalistic as they are. They have to get rid of this idea that we are puppets."

Military aid cuts will resolve nothing, he said, adding: "If we had our hands behind our backs, we would probably still be arguing with our mouths. This is a total war in every sense I can think of."

[From the Washington Star-News, Oct. 21, 1974]

GLOOM IS DEEPENING THROUGHOUT INDOCHINA

(By Henry S. Bradsher)

SAIGON.—Throughout Indochina today, the gloom is deepening.

The old threat that has loomed larger ever since the United States began withdrawing from South Vietnam has now acquired a greater sense of immediacy.

Government officials, politically aware citizens and diplomats are wondering with growing concern whether this blood-soaked peninsula is moving with accelerating speed toward eventual control by North Vietnam, or by local Communists under strong influence from Hanoi.

This concern still falls considerably short of desperation, despair or a sense of inevitability. A collapse of anti-Communist morale is not in sight. But there is a distinct ebbing of confidence in long term prospects. It results from a strong apprehension that resistance to continuing Communist pressure cannot be sustained at an adequate level.

THE WAR GOES ON in South Vietnam, little affected by the American unilateral declaration of peace almost two years ago. Cambodia, too, suffers unending war, stalemated at the present level of outside aid to the two sides. The fragile cease-fire in Laos has shifted the nature of that struggle without ending it. And in Thailand, Communist insurgency continues with North Vietnamese aid.

The basic problems remain the same as they were when the Americans were here with their half-million soldiers and their willingness to pour in whatever money and material was needed to meet the threats to friendly governments.

If the Americans had never been here, those governments would not exist in their present form, but they were and they do and hence the gloom.

The problems are the same; the old solutions are either no longer available or no longer work very well.

With American support dwindling, the governments of South Vietnam and Cambodia, and non-Communists in Laos who are now in uneasy coalition with the Communist, are caught between continuing Communist pressure and their own inability to generate greater internal strength.

No one knows just where the threshold lies at which U.S. military and economic aid will be too low to keep viable the Saigon and Phnom Penh governments, and the non-Communist element in Vientiane. Computing a dollar figure for each country is complicated by unstable local factors, varying degrees of corruption and wastage, and deliberate exaggeration of need in order to provide a margin for cuts.

There is also the psychological factor of maintaining confidence in each country. The feeling is widespread in Indochina that the United States public in general and Congress in particular misjudge the threshold, or simply do not care. Congress has cut military aid to South Vietnam in the year which began July 1 to about one half in real terms what it had been the previous year, and chopped economic aid to Saigon, and refused to given special military aid to Cambodia like that which kept the Cambodian army going in the last fiscal year.

Just how real and direct is the tie between aid cuts and the ability of these governments to survive is, however, open to debate.

A senior American official in one of the Indochinese countries said candidly the other day that "I don't know how we can spend all the money" that was left after Congress had made cuts in the now-postponed version of the foreign aid bill. A deputy premier in another of the countries said, "American aid is more than sufficient if we can use it properly"—adding that it is not used properly now. Some military officers in the third country feel that their army could and would fight better if it had less American equipment and ammunition to perpetuate the addiction to inappropriate U.S. Army tactics.

These are, though, disputed opinions. The more general attitude, as well as the official posture, among both government ministers and diplomats is that while inflation is pushing up the threshold Congress is going the opposite direction.

The psychological result is perhaps as significant as any measurement in 105mm artillery shells, 79 grenade launchers and gallons of aviation fuel. If the feeling spreads in these countries that they cannot keep going on the old basis, not only for lack of ammunition but also because inflation makes it impossible for a soldier to feed his family, then that alone can cause a crumbling.

Some of the same top officials who talk one moment of the desirability of negotiations with the Communists—whether directly with Hanoi or with local elements whom they view as Hanoi's agents—speak the next moment of the implacability of the adversary. They remain equivocal whether their hope of a negotiated settlement is sufficient to overcome their assumption, based on long and bitter experience, that North Vietnam will never settle for less at the negotiating table than it hopes to win from protracted war.

Here in South Vietnam "our war will not be solved by military means, it must be negotiated," Hoang Duc Nha said in an interview the other day. Nha, the minister of information, has been President Nguyen Van Thieu's key adviser and was the only South Vietnamese official to sit with Thieu in all the tortuous negotiations two years ago that finally produced the Paris agreement, which was supposed to halt this war but did not.

The Cambodian regime of President Lon Nol has been seeking futilely for years to establish contact with its enemies in order to negotiate a truce but the other side appears to be divided and rejects every negotiating offer, even when the regime retreated last July to offering talks without any preconditions.

In his office at the education ministry in Phnom Penh, from which his predecessor was dragged to a mysterious death last June, acting Premier Pan Sothi said recently that "low-intensity war is the prospect." But efforts by Prince Norodom Sihanouk's exile regime to take away the Cambodian seat in the United Nations is causing grave concern.

"A doubt exists that we could go on and fight the war" if the seat is lost, Pan Sothi said, because the climate of confidence would be destroyed.

Laos has negotiated, and the result has been the reestablishment of coalition government, which has broken down twice before in the last two decades. Now members of the old Vientiane government that had been fighting the Pathet Lao are dominating the coalition. One of them, Major General Oudone Sananikone, said in his Defense Ministry office recently that "the war goes on, a political war now." He complained that the Communists had all the advantages in the coalition, getting a share of power in Vientiane without giving up any control of their own territory and supported by the neutralist premier, Prince Souvanna Phouma, in arguments with the rightists.

The deputy foreign minister of Thailand, Major General Chatichai Coonhavan, in his ministry building overlooking the fabulously spired and tinted roofs of the royal palace at Bangkok, said that if North Vietnam "wanted to bring back peace in one region it could in a few days." But Hanoi goes on supporting wars and the Communist insurgency in Thailand, he said. The opening up of democratic debate in Thailand which began a year ago with the overthrow of military rulers who committed the country to American policy in Indochina has created uncertainty over future attitudes for this situation. For now, however, American warplanes remain on standby alert in Thailand for possible resumption of bombing in Indochina.

It is only in Thailand that basic policy toward the Communist problem seems to be under active consideration.

Officials and opposition political leaders in South Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos talk gloomily of short-term prospects. There is a marked reluctance to dwell upon the ultimate result of the current gloomy trends in the economic and military situations, should they continue unchecked by some presently unforeseeable change of circumstances. Some kind of mental block seems to make it impossible to face the possibility of losing these long wars and falling under the control of the enemies, or a single enemy for those who see the local threat as only a front for Hanoi. This block exists on conversation with outsiders, anyway.

It is generally assumed among foreign observers and even among lower officials that many of the top people in these countries are looking ahead to the possibility of collapse. Although no proof is offered, many say that Swiss bank accounts and other fallback arrangements are being made with funds which originate through U.S. aid.

Diplomats are also more open in their speculation about the future than local people, being less personally involved. Many of them wonder aloud whether the three Indochinese countries are already on an inevitable slide into Communist control, and how long it will take. A few years? A decade?

It is an impossible question to answer, as everyone realizes, even though the essential importance is the pessimism of the asking. The ability of nations to survive apparently hopeless situations is often surprising, and conditions that look desperate can sometimes drag on indefinitely.

The military situations in South Vietnam and Cambodia are the primary reason for the regional gloom. Economic problems are generally seen as a result of the continued fighting, although the difficulties of paying former soldiers in Laos suggests that a ceasefire alone fails to remove economic problems. Since the Paris agreement supposedly went into effect in South Vietnam almost 21 months ago, fighting has continued at approximately the same level as it did in between major offensives of the war. Each side has been guilty of violating the cease-fire when it felt it could gain territorial or population advantages.

The Saigon government's internal propaganda has wavered between proclaiming a major Communist offensive to be underway or to be imminent, as if the Thieu regime cannot itself decide. This has been paralleled by U.S. embassy wavering that has apparently been keyed to efforts to obtain larger aid allocations from Congress.

The current intensive fighting around Hue and Da Nang along South Vietnam's northern coast, and in almost uninhabited parts of the central highlands, is more jockeying for future positions of value in any big Communist offensive than a major drive in itself.

There is no doubt that the North Vietnamese army, at a currently estimated strength of just below 200,000 soldiers in the South, is stronger than it has ever been. It has more artillery, some big enough to shell government positions from outside the range of return gunfire, more armored vehicles, more anti-aircraft cover and better mobility than when it launched the last big offensive at Easter 1972.

The development of roads and pipelines into Communist controlled areas of South Vietnam has significantly changed the prospects for any future upsurge. Hanoi can now rush reinforcements south in a few weeks instead of taking months on the old bomb-harassed Ho Chi Minh trail. The trail itself remains in use, contrary to North Vietnam's obligation to remove its troops from Laos after the cease-fire there. In Cambodia some 50,000 soldiers, labeled by the Americans "Khmer Communists" for lack of any more discriminating identification of probably still disparate opponents of Lon Nol, control most of the country. Neither side presently has the manpower or armaments to make a decisive breakthrough. The Phnom Penh government just staggers on from one dry season to the next wet season, reacting to what the enemy does.

"As long as U.S. aid stays at last year's level, this war could go on for another 10 years," one informed observer commented as Congress was cutting the aid. Unlike the Viet Cong, however, enemy propaganda in Cambodia does not talk of a long war. It emphasizes that the withdrawal of U.S. aid would bring a quick end with the collapse of Lon Nol's regime. Pathet Lao troops in Laos, who have mostly replaced in forward positions North Vietnamese units that did the actual wartime fighting for them, have been jockeying for territorial advantage, particularly around the royal capital, Luang Prabang. But a Pathet Lao spokesman in Vientiane, the government seat, serves cold drinks, talks of his side observing the ceasefire. He also insists U.S. and Thai forces must leave although independent observers agree that they are ready.

[From the Washington Star-News, Oct. 23, 1974]

INDOCHINA SEES COMMUNISTS' GOALS AS UNCHANGED

(By Henry S. Bradsher)

SAIGON.—In the four countries that are under direct or indirect military pressure from North Vietnam, government officials are unable to see any slackening of the Communist threat since the Paris agreement was signed 21 months ago.

At most, Hanoi has varied its tactics, possibly slowing down its timetable, but its goal remains control of Indochina, these officials are convinced.

There are, however, a number of questions about this interpretation of the view from Hanoi:

Does open warfare by North Vietnamese troops or local forces armed and supplied by North Vietnam remain the primary tactic for trying to take over South Vietnam and Cambodia, as well as harass Thailand, or is Hanoi now counting on political and economic decay to undermine these countries' anti-Communist defenses?

How closely does Hanoi control the pro-Communist movements in the various countries, including the Pathet Lao which is now in a coaliton government with Laos, rather than North Vietnam simply supporting local nationalist elements with some independence of their own?

What support is Hanoi now getting from other Communist countries for its continuing military pressure, and is there a split between Hanoi and Peking while Moscow is reluctant to back major warfare?

Such questions are not for officials of the target countries. They tend to work on the simple assumption that they are under attack from North Vietnam, whether because of historic Vietnamese expansionism or modern Communism makes no difference, and there is no time to waste on subtleties.

Indeed, a search through these countries for local experts on North Vietnamese affairs, men who are studying the enemy the better to understand how to fight him, turns up almost no one who bothers even to analyze the shifts in Hanoi's pronouncements. Only foreign experts, mostly American, do that.

"If Hanoi would just realize that it cannot impose its will on South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, then the degree of conflict would be reduced," the acting premier of Cambodia, Pan Sothi, said in a recent interview in Phnom Penh.

This plaintive note is struck by officials throughout the area, but none expects any such realization. While President Nguyen Van Thieu in South Vietnam says the Communists "still harbor their scheme to conquer to south," similar statements are made in the other countries.

While the Cambodian government is the closest to collapse, it is in South Vietnam that direct North Vietnamese army pressure is most obvious.

Since the so-called cease-fire in January 1973, some 150,000 northern soldiers have entered the South, almost as many have left in a rotation of troops, and the Communist "main force" strength is now estimated at nearly 200,000. More importantly, the improvement of communications now makes it possible to reinforce this army very quickly, reducing Saigon's old logistical edge.

But while Hanoi has the capability of a massive offensive in the South, with enough ammunition and fuel stockpiled for one or two years' all out combat, the launching of one seems unlikely to foreign experts, despite Thieu's continual alerts to his people to prepare for an imminent assault.

Intelligence reports indicate that several top-ranking Hanoi officals visited the south last October to study the situation in Communist-controlled areas. They reportedly found local support weak. Time was needed to try to develop it and, hopefully, to let Thieu's regime sink into worse economic problems that would weaken it.

Early this year North Vietnam publicly committed itself to economic construction at home as the first priority, war in the South second. After further debate, this was reaffirmed last month. The allocation of resources to a new five-year economic development plan is reducing the flexibility to turn back to all-out war, while an absence of stepped-up conscription or military trainng indicates no major offensive soon.

Careful analysis of North Vietnamese statements and other reports indicates that Hanoi is concerned with grave domestic economic problems, some just realized as a result of recent property and population surveys. "They're in even worse economic shape than the South," one expert said, but some others doubt this.

Thieu's main adviser during the cease-fire negotiations, Hoang Duc Nha, disagrees with the analysts that Hanoi now puts homefront construction first. "We in South Vietnam know the North Vietnamese very well," he says. "When they make a lot of speeches, they don't do anything. They're bluffing" to cover war preparations.

There is little doubt in the minds of both South Vietnamese officials and foreign experts that the Viet Cong's "provisional revolutionary government" is essentially a front for Hanoi's control. It's avowed goal of eventual unification of all Vietnam would seem to confirm its lack of any independent basis.

But in Cambodia the situation is much more complicated.

For one thing, Hanoi seems to have only about 2,500 liaison officers and advisers with the forces fighting Marshal Lon Nol's Phnom Penh regime, which

number perhaps 50,000. More importantly, Hanoi has failed to supply these forces with anti-aircraft weapons or large enough guns to halt the Mekong River convoys that keep Phnom Penh alive. This causes speculation that North Vietnam does not really want the capital to fall.

There are signs of division within the Communist camp between Cambodian nationalists and those Cambodians who were trained in and are working for North Vietnam in its desire to have one unified Communist Indochina. A recent toughening of Communist policy, using brutality to control the countryside instead of trying to win popular support, might be attributed to a greater influence for the nationalist element which lacks political experience.

The Pathet Lao members of the coalition in Vientiane clearly are getting their instructions from Viengsay, the new Communist headquarters near the old wartime caves of Sam Neua. The leaders of the pro-Communist movement who came down from the hills after a cease-fire went into effect last April are not the top-ranking Pathet Lao officials. The key people stayed in Viengsay, and coalition members commute there.

Western analysts have long assumed that those key people get their instructions from, or are so closely attuned that they automatically work in the interests of, North Vietnam.

But there are some signs that the titular leader of the Pathet Lao, Prince Souphanouvong, who heads the National Coalition Political Council based at Luang Prabang, and some others are susceptible to Chinese influence. This could create tensions within the Lao Communist movement.

Contrary to the Laos' cease-fire agreement, North Vietnam has kept troops in Laos. There are about 13,000, half combat soldier and half support, in the northern part of the country. Estimates of those in the panhandle are about 40,000 support troops mainly engaged in supplying Communist forces in South Vietnam and Cambodia and 14,000 combat soldiers.

The support troops are continuing to channel supplies across Laos to the Thai insurgency of some 8,000 guerrilla fighters, according to officials in Bangkok. While Hanoi provided the main outside influence on those insurgents, there has in the past been a Chinese element as well as essentially indigenous guerrilla warfare.

Many analysts think China is competing with North Vietnam for influence throughout Indochina and Thailand. The reasoning is that China would rather see a Balkanized area where it can exercise separate influence with each country than have to face on its southern border the kind of major power that North Vietnam might become if it were able to weld the region together under its control.

[From the Washington Star-News, Oct. 22, 1974]

Indochina in Agony—Economic Woes Intensify

(By Henry S. Bradsher)

Saigon.—Duch Sule sat on a wooden bed in the garden outside his weather-beaten house near Phenom Penh, talking with the quiet air of an educated man, but worried.

"I tried to get a job as a taxi-bus driver, but I couldn't. Some of the other teachers have part-time jobs, but even then it's hard."

Before war came to Cambodia, Duch Sule earned 78,000 riels a month at his school. It cost about 8 percent of that to buy the basic staple, rice, for his family.

Now he earns 30,000 riels and rice takes up half of it. Other food expenses take the remainder. His wife is able to earn only 400 riels a day in the marketplace—not enough for all the other things the family needs.

On the outskirts of Saigon, Nguyen Van Than, who was called away from teaching to fight in the army, is now back teaching 55 pupils all subjects in five elementary grades after losing his right eye in combat.

When he started teaching in 1960, Than paid one-seventh of his salary of 5,500 piasters to feed his family. Now it costs two-thirds of his current salary, 34,000 piasters. He and his wife sew mosquito nets at home to try to make ends meet.

While hundreds of thousands, perhaps 2 million, persons are unemployed and unable to pay for enough rice, even people on fixed government salaries in Indochina like teachers are hard-pressed these days to survive. Both South Vietnamese and Camodian soldiers, whose monthly pay has been whittled down by inflation to only enough to feed their families for about 10 days, are resorting to looting and petty extortion from the people they are supposed to be protecting from Communism.

It was just such military abuse of the civilian population in Vietnam more than a decade ago that alienated popular support and enabled the Viet Cong to build up its strength. The massive American involvement in Vietnam reduced this problem for some years. But now the combination of reduced U.S. aid and roaring inflation has brought it back to South Vietnam, posed additional problems for Cambodia and led to rioting by soldiers in Laos.

These three Indochinese countries have for years existed on American money. The United States provides approximately two-thirds of the combined civilian and military financial needs of South Vietnam. As the Cambodian government's territorial control and tax base have contracted, the U.S. contribution to the national budget has risen from about a quarter two years ago to two-thirds now—and if military supplies are added, the American share comes close to 90 percent of total expenses. Laos would scarcely have a monetized economy without U.S. aid.

All three countries are worried how they might survive in the future. Their economies have been adapted to the modernization that war has brought, and it is no easier to send an unemployed Saigon dock-worker or former U.S. army camp laborer back to the rice paddy than it is to get a laid-off Detroit factory hand to return to a Kentucky farm—harder, even, when the farm is now occupied by the enemy.

Officials in Vietnam and Cambodia are even more urgently concerned with the possibility that reductions of military aid will leave their soldiers without adequate ammunition to withstand Communist attacks. Some outposts have been abandoned as no longer feasible to maintain with less firepower available, enabling the enemy to expand his control.

Despite the arguments being made for continuing American aid at more or less same levels, there is widespread skepticism among observers in Indochina that even the full amounts would do much more than keep the governments grinding into seemingly endless wars, rather than solving basic problems. It is even uncertain that the same levels would remain adequate as inflation, both the imported worldwide variety and that spurred by deficit financing in these countries, eats into resources.

Nor is there any certainty that aid cuts will have the theoretically ideal effect of forcing clearer thinking about priorities and sensible economies in spending. The Indochinese governments look even less capable of that than most.

In none of these countries is there any serious long-term consideration of economic problems. They all have planning ministries but planning is impossible under the strained circumstances.

In fact, Vietnam and Cambodia are concerned with the immediate problems of survival, and things are little better in Laos.

This makes the Nixon and Ford administrations' requests to Congress for "postwar reconstruction assistance" a sad joke. There is nothing past about the wars in Vietnam and Cambodia, nothing is being reconstructed while the destruction goes on and fighting deters any meaningful productive investment, and rather than assistance the U.S. aid is primary sustenance.

Nonetheless, the administration has contended that a five-year program of declining aid for South Vietnam would enable this country to take off into economic self reliance. This was an early salespoint on this year's foreign aid program.

It was not thought up by U.S. economic experts in Saigon. When pressed on the idea that South Vietnam can become self-sufficient within any foreseeable future, they agree with the foreign observer who commented that the idea depended upon half a dozen or more favorable assumptions all coming true, but none of them looked very likely.

Only the glimmer of offshore oil holds much encouragement, and the Communists are trying their best to discourage foreign exploration for it off South Vietnam. Cambodia is involved in disputes over delineation of its offshore waters with Vietnam and Thailand, which between them want to reduce Phnom Penh's share to almost nothing, while Laos is left out in oil like almost everything else of economic value.

For years this correspondent has been hearing in these countries moans from U.S. officials about congressional cuts in aid appropriations. Each year there would be explanations how goods in the pipeline or some fortituous circumstance had allowed the client government to survive the previous year's cuts, but this year the full amount was really needed if economic stability and the war effort was to be maintained.

The repetition of the year after year suggested considerable watering of aid requests to insure that the reduced appropriation would still be enough. But if there was water, officials contend, it has evaporated and Congress is now cutting into essentials that help these countries stay fed and armed. The contention is hard to evaluate, but the visible problems of declining living standards tend to support it.

"An economy with less resiliency than ours would have collapsed by now," the minister of trade and industry, Nguyen Duc Cuong, said in a recent interview.

Cuong said the country faces a dilemma whether to put primary emphasis on fighting inflation, "only 50 percent this year if we are lucky," or on trying to spend out of the recession caused by U.S. troop withdrawals, imported inflation, the war and other problems. "We can not expect the economy to do any better if U.S. aid is cut," Cuong said, "we can only hope to manage so the situation won't be too explosive."

President Nguyen Van Thieu vows that South Vietnam "will certainly be ready to fight until the last drop of blood, the last bullet and the last grain of rice," if the United States fails to provide enough aid. In a rather gloomy speech recently, one in which he only vaguely defended himself against corruption charges, Thieu said the U.S. government had promised him adequate aid at the time of the so-called cease-fire. Americans are now "encountering economic and financial difficulties," Thieu said. "Nevertheless, they cannot swallow their promises and shirk their obligation to one of their allies."

When the Paris agreement was signed 21 months ago to let the Americans out of the war, the U.S. government also promised, Thieu said, that it "would react vigorously to Communist violations of the cease-fire, their continued infiltration into the South and their lack of respect for the Paris agreement.

"What have we seen so far?" Thieu asked. "There has been no U.S. reaction to the Communist infiltration into the South and their grave violations of the cease-fire. This is because of the U.S. internal situation."

In an interview, Tran Van Lam, who as foreign minister signed the Paris agreement for South Vietnam, said that Henry A. Kissinger had given him assurances during the negotiations which have failed to work out. Now it does not make sense for the United States to cut its aid, Lam protested.

While such protests are heard from the government, old political opponents of Thieu have been reinvigorated by the signs of fading American backing for his regime.

Thieu has come to represent American interests in Vietnam in the eyes of many people here, fairly or unfairly. He has been able to deliver aid. Now if he can no longer deliver, his usefulness is more likely to be questioned.

Prince Norodom Sihanouk, the ousted leader of Cambodia who now from Peking fronts for Communist effort to take over his country, said the other day that the territory controlled by the Lon Nol regime is "nothing but an economic corpse—a 'non-state' which has no economy of its own and is surviving with great difficulty on the constant and massive aid injections from its U.S. masters."

Early this year the U.S. embassy in Phnom Penh was saying that it had a virtual blank check from the Nixon administration to provide whatever military and economic aid was needed to sustain "the finest example of the Nixon Doctrine in action," as the former president once called it. Now the mood has changed.

Congress has been closing loopholes which made it possible to find extra money for Cambodia. At the same time the Communists have shut off the flow of rubber from their zone, bartered against U.S. aid goods, which provided the Phnom Penh regime with its only significant foreign exchange earnings.

Corruption is a problem in all three Indochinese countries but in none is it more of a drain on the war effort and homefront economic stability than in Cambodia.

"We copy the French in so many things" in this former French colonial area, one official in Phnom Penh commented, "it's a shame we don't use their system of taxing visible wealth instead of official income." The visible wealth of generals and some civilian officials since U.S. aid began flowing into Cambodia has increased enormously while salaries have remained low.

But Marshal Lon Nol ignores the obvious corruption of top military and civilian officials, making it impossble to clean up a malignant situation. When the U.S. embassy insisted last spring that repayment be made for some stolen aviation gasoline provided by American aid, it was paid—but the payment originated ultimately from other U.S. funds.

The economic situation in Cambodia, where inflation is now running some 250 percent a year in the Phnom Penh enclave, is a major factor in political unrest.

Subsidization of rice at such a low level that much was smuggled abroad while the United States shipped more in has now been reduced. But that overdue measure of raising rice prices touched off demonstrations against the government.

In Laos U.S. aid is now supporting a government in which the Communist Pathet Lao holds half the places and has more than half the influence. A Pathet Lao spokesman explained that his side did not mind the continued aid so long as American intentions were good, meaning money but no influence.

In fact, the Communists apparently hope the United States will continue to help foot the bill for that primitive country with some expensive modern tastes which Americans helped develop. Aid promises have recently been collected from North Vietnam, North Korea, China and other Communist countries, but some Western nations have been put off by rather pre-emptory demands for free plane tickets and hotels for a Cambodian aid mission to go beg from them. Thailand has an independent economy, troubled like most others in today's world but standing without massive American backing. But while U.S. Air Force continues to use Thai bases, American aid has been slashed and troop spending is off, raising questions in Bangkok of whether there should be some direct tie between bases and aid.

[From the New York Times, Sept. 21, 1974]

VIETNAM OUTLOOK: STILL A TUNNEL, STILL A LIGHT

(By David K. Shipler)

SAIGON, SOUTH VIETNAM.—There is a new version of the old light at the end of the tunnel in Vietnam.

The wishful thought used to be that the North Vietnamese, pounded by American firepower would finally find the price too high and give up. Now there is a belief that the South Vietnamese Government can defend itself militarily, "take off" economically and prove to be such a going concern that the North, frustrated, will abandon its aggressive designs.

Another new version comes from the left end of the political spectrum: No longer is it the expectation that with the withdrawal of American troops and planes, peace will come, but rather that further cuts in American aid—against which President Ford made a strong appeal yesterday—will force President Nguyen Van Thieu into a political settlement with the Communists that will end the war.

Central to these theories is a decade-old assumption about the power of Washington to determine the outcome of the struggle by adding or subtracting assistance.

For this fiscal year the White House has sought $1.45-billion in military aid and $750-million in economic aid, compared with $1.23-billion and $349-million respectively last year. The Administration maintains that the funds will prevent military deterioration and propel South Vietnam close to economic self-sufficiency in two or three years.

CUTS VOTED IN CONGRESS

In contrast, the Senate and the House of Representatives have cut the military aid to $700-million and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee has voted $420-million in economic aid. The cuts have been advocated by legislators who maintain that President Thieu, seeing American support flagging, will have no alternative but to follow the mandate for a political settlement set forth in the Paris cease-fire agreement.

Saigon is full of officials and analysts—Vietnamese, Europeans and even some Americans—who are not entirely comfortable with the arguments of either the Administration or Congress. They are convinced that Hanoi is determined to reunify Vietnam—if not politically, as the Paris agreement prescribes, then militarily. They note that it has been proved conclusively by the United States Army, Marines, Air Force and Navy that the North Vietnamese cannot be dislodged from the South.

Saigon, then, is left only with one realistic military goal: a continued stalemate in which the Government clings to highways, population centers and rice lands. This makes the economy highly vulnerable to disruption by the Communists, who can cut major roads, destroy bridges and sabotage factories erected with badly needed foreign capital.

In fact, the key to what Americans call South Vietnam's ability to take off economically, and the centerpiece of Government economists' plans, is pre-

cisely the weakest link in the military chain: the rural countryside, where, it is hoped, enough food and timber can be produced to form the basis of substantial export industries that, in turn, can generate employment and enough foreign exchange to redress a severe payments deficit.

WHERE THE CONFLICT IS

The trouble is that the countryside is where the war is being fought. South Vietnam has not been able to export rice since 1964, the last year before the beginning of the American build-up that helped make much of the country unsafe for farming. Last year 6.6 million tons of rice were grown in Government-held parts of South Vietnam and 300,000 tons had to be imported.

Only the fledgling shrimp and fish industry remains relatively immune to military attack, and shore-based processing plants could still be targets if they became too lucrative.

Students of Hanoi policy believe that the North Vietnamese will do everything they can to prevent South Vietnam's economic development, for, it is thought, the Communist scenario for victory run something like this: The economy worsens, governmental corruption increases, soldiers and civil servants cannot feed their families and at last, perhaps with a military push, the revolution inundates the crumbling Saigon regime

This description of Hanoi's strategy, widely accepted now, has led an American diplomat who dissents from the official line to postulate more North Vietnamese military action if American aid is increased and South Vietnam makes economic progress. Conversely, he thinks that less aid would fit Hanoi's prognosis of continuing decline, thereby inducing deferment of an all-out offensive.

"If heavy injections of aid really do bring the country to the take-off point," he said, "that guarantees a military solution." And Saigon cannot win militarily, he observed, adding that the only chance of preserving a non-Communist government is through the political mechanism of the Paris agreement—democratic liberties and open general elections.

A DISTRUSTFUL GOVERNMENT

"You have a government in Saigon so distrustful that it cannot possibly see itself implementing the Paris accords," the diplomat said. "If another regime would take over, willing to take the political risk, there's a real hope of keeping the place out of Communist control. I don't see any hope on the military side."

No one who knows President Thieu thinks he will be forced by aid cuts to open the political process to the Vietcong. Some believe the opposite: that if he is weakened he will be even less inclined to enter the political arena. "I think Thieu will be stubborn as hell," a Western diplomat remarked. "He'll have to be physically ejected before there can be a political settlement."

There are two basic views of the reasons for the lack of political progress since the Paris agreement.

One holds that the President simply wants to retain the power he has carefully accrued and that he has no motive to invite the Vietcong to try to take it from him. He is said to have been angered by the Paris agreement's political aspects when they were presented to him.

The other view—it is generally held by American officials—is that the Communists are blocking a political settlement because they know they could not win a truly free election.

"The Vietcong have no political ward heelers, no grassroots structure," said an expert on Communist affairs. It is the opposite of the 1954–56 period, when the Vietminh had the structure in the country and Ngo Dinh Diem had nothing."

Furthermore, there is a fundamental fear in the Government and the American Embassy that if the Vietcong were given the democratic freedom guaranteed by the Paris agreement, they would resort to terrorism. "Democratic freedoms?" an American official scoffed. "This is a pretext. You can't let thousands of armed people run around with mortars and machine guns."

MILITARY ACTION REDUCED

What, then, do aid cuts effect? The reduction in military aid has already prompted Government forces to retreat from some isolated outposts that would have been defended vigorously a few months ago. The army has stopped firing most of the artillery shells it used to lob randomly into Communist-held areas.

This week the Saigon military command announced the curtailment of air force flights to conserve fuel and ammunition. Finally, the Pentagon was reported to be planning to postpone or cancel delivery of many of the F–5E jet fighters that South Vietnam has been promised.

According to military men, however, the cuts are not deep enough to cause Saigon's quick defeat.

Economic aid may still end up at a higher level than last year, but with oil and fertilizer prices soaring, the real benefit may be smaller. Economics prefer to cut projects aimed at building industry—agricultural and industrial credit banks, fertilizer plants, fish farms and the like—before curtailing the program that provides foreign exchange to permit the Government to import badly needed goods.

There is widespread agreement that standards of living will continue to decline, especially for the jobless in the urban areas, many of whom once worked for the American military establishment. Unemployment runs about 15 percent, according to the best estimates. How this will translate into political discontent is anyone's guess.

"They're such a resilient people," a Western diplomat commented. "It seems to me they've got a long way to go before the mobs come out on the street."

[From the Wall Street Journal, Sept. 14, 1974]

AS VIETNAMESE KEEP LOSING LIVES, U.S. LOSES ONLY MONEY—AND U.S. AID IS DECLINING; INSTEAD OF WINDING DOWN, WAR IS SPIRALING UPWARD—A DISMAL ECONOMIC PICTURE

(By Peter R. Kann)

SAIGON.—"Just a few years ago we were the 'bastion of freedom' in Asia. You had a half-million soldiers. Fifty thousand of them died. And now? Now no one wants to know that we exist."

So says an influential Vietnamese economist, less in bitterness than in resignation.

Remember Vietnam? It's that little sliver of Southeast Asia in which America once saw its vital national interests to be at stake and in which America fought the longest war of its history. But that was before Watergate. Before the Middle East war. Before the energy crisis. Before Cyprus. Before streaking.

The Vietnam war, of course, is still continuing, even if America and the rest of the world have turned to other concerns and other crises. The Paris peace agreement of January 1973 came nowhere near to bringing peace to Vietnam; it simply got America out of Vietnam. These days (as in the days before America discovered a national interest here), there are only Vietnamese killing Vietnamese, which may be a vaguely comforting thought—unless you happen to be Vietnamese.

These days Vietnam is costing America nothing but money—and less and less even of that. An administration request for $750 million in economic aid to try to stem the deterioration of South Vietnam's economy apparently will be slashed to about $400 million in Congress. And recently Congress tentatively trimmed 1974–75 military aid to Vietnam to $700 million. (The Ford administration still hopes to get both figures raised.) U.S. military men here originally had sought $1.6 billion, though this request was pruned by the Pentagon even before it reached Congress. "Not even the Pentagon is sympathetic any more," a senior U.S. military man here says. "They (the Pentagon) want more money for the National Guard. What war is the National Guard fighting?"

ABOVE A "TOLERABLE LEVEL"

In the past several weeks, the level of fighting in Vietnam has increased to the highest since the Paris agreement was signed and a cease-fire supposedly went into effect. The current fighting remains well below a "general offensive," but with divisional fronts, regimental attacks, heavy artillery barrages and air strikes, the level certainly is well above that "tolerable level of violence" that the peace accords were supposed to produce. The war, rather than "winding down" as many had predicted, instead seems to be spiraling upward.

Some observers see a ray of hope in this. They think that the mounting violence may force Vietnam back onto the world's conscience, that it may prompt President Ford to take some new initiatives, that it may lead Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to reopen talks with the North Vietnamese, that it may even

cause the contending Vietnamese leaderships to begin talking seriously about compromises.

But compromise and peace aren't the sort of propositions that most Vietnamese would bet much money on. Vietnamese frequently say that "something has to change" or that "it cannot go on like this forever." But such phrases are mouthed as ritualistically as an American might say: "Inflation has to stop sometime." For the Vietnamese, the war has been going on for a quarter-century; whole generations have been born into it. And based on the record, there is little reason to believe that the war cannot—or will not—go on and on.

THE LOSS OF VIETNAMESE LIVES

Perhaps it will go on at a level that will permit America largely to ignore it and at a level that won't interfere with various great-power deals and detentes. Yet, even at that level of benign neglect, the war has cost some 80,000 Vietnamese lives over the past 18 months.

There are some analysts who believe that Vietnam will be impossible to ignore. They see the Communists launching another general offensive that could present President Ford and Congress with the choice of intervening militarily or watching much of South Vietnam fall to the North Vietnamese. Few analysts predict such an offensive the rest of this year. Even fewer, however, predict any movement toward real peace.

The fact is that neither side has made the sort of major military gains during the past 18 months that would substantially alter the military balance of power and that thus might lead to compromising of rigid political positions. Saigon forces have been taking a beating in increased fighting these past few weeks, but they are far from losing the war.

THE DYING CONTINUES

Despite dire predictions, the army of South Vietnam hasn't deserted in droves or panicked and run without American air support. South Vietnamese soldiers continue to fight and to die, just like North Vietnamese soldiers and the Vietcong.

Both sides can claim some victories, and both have had to swallow some defeats. Some small hunks of territory have changed hands. But, as one longtime American official says, "Neither side has gained anything that comes close to justifying the bloodshed, the awfulness."

It's probably fair to say that each side is winning its own war. South Vietnamese main-force units generally have done well in major engagements, including offensives into traditional Communist base areas. The Communists, meanwhile, have made gains at smaller-unit warfare—overrunning militia outposts in the Mekong Delta or ranger camps in the Central Highlands. In recent weeks, they also have made gains with larger-unit actions near the central coast city of De Nang. Still, no one truly can be said to be winning *the* war.

If there has been any marked change in the past year or so, it is the extent to which both sides now are openly, indeed flagrantly, violating the supposed cease-fire. Even U.S. embassy officials, who last year stiffly maintained that the Saigon government was abiding by the terms of the cease-fire, these days are almost boasting about the South Vietnamese army's "aggressiveness," its offensives into Communist base area, its success in expunging Vietcong "leopard spots" from the map, its "pacification pushes." All qualify as violations of a supposed cease-fire in place. (It is questionable whether Washington policymakers are as pleased about Saigon's aggressiveness as U.S. officials in Saigon are. "The U.S. embassy is a kind of leopard spot on U.S. policy," one official here says.)

The Vietcong certainly have been no less blatant about their cease-fire violations. In the past few weeks, they have assaulted and occupied, at least temporarily, two government district capitals on the central coast.

Trying to quantify and apportion blame for cease-fire violations, however, is an unproductive exercise. The definition of "contested" can be stretched to cover much of rural Vietnam (though not to cover district capitals or traditional base areas). Almost any combat can be called "reactive," relating to prior fighting in the same place or to offensive action somewhere else.

And since the war never really ceased in much of Vietnam, it is almost academic to ask who started it in some particular place. It is worth noting that a number of European military attaches here believe that the Saigon government has been a bit more aggressive than the Communists since early 1973, but they too shy away from quantifying blame.

The basic prerequesite for an effective cease-fire—agreeing on who controls what (the Paris agreement talks of determining "the areas controlled by each party")—has proved difficult. For one thing, basic political issues are involved. From Saigon's point of view, recognizing Communist zones amounts to recognizing the Vietcong's Provisional Revolutionary Government, and this Saigon refuses to do. "Thieu (President Nguyen Van Thieu) just won't admit the Vietcong control anything," a senior U.S. official says.

Meanwhile, the elaborate cease-fire control apparatus, including the four-party International Commission for Control and Supervision, remains moribund because it cannot function unless the contending Vietnamese want to do so.

A real political solution remains even more distant than a real cease-fire. No one here ever has assumed that "free elections" would do anything more than ratify the degree of control over the population that each side exercises.

At present, the Vietcong, even by generous diplomatic estimates, fully control no more than 10% of South Vietnam's roughly 20 million people. And U.S. officials put the figure at less than 5%. In either case, it is far from enough to entice the Communists into an electorial contest. (If elections were held after dark, the Communists undoubtedly would fare far better.) President Thieu, for his part, refuses to consider any sort of coalition structure or to see any future role for a "third force."

THE GREAT-POWER THEORY

Many Vietnamese devoutly believe that there can't be any Vietnamese solution to the war, that everything depends on great-power politics and pressures. But that doesn't quite conform to reality, neither Vietnam having proved notably easy to push around. Hanoi has proved highly adept at playing its Soviet and Chinese allies off against each other while charting its own course. And Saigon, despite what the Communist say and may even believe, isn't simply Washington's puppet. (If President Thieu is a puppet, he is one who has outlasted two U.S. presidential puppeteers, and there isn't any reason to think he is about to dance to the tune of a new one.)

It is true that both Saigon and Hanoi are dependent on great-power allies for military and economic assistance. Thus, when Washington reduces aid to Saigon, some Vietnamese view it as part of a sophisticated great-power plan to scale down the war by pinching off supplies. One problem with this theory is that there isn't any public evidence to indicate that Moscow and Peking are pursuing the same policy. Hanoi, moreover, already has massive stockpiles of military equipment inside South Vietnam. U.S. analysts say these stockpiles are adequate to sustain the current level of combat for three years or to sustain a full year of fighting at the level of the 1972 spring offensive. (The Communists' logistics system has been much improved since the U.S. stopped bombing in Indochina. New all-weather roads and pipelines now give the Communists a logistics capability they never have had in the history of the war.)

South Vietnamese and U.S. officials here naturally are very distressed at the reduced level of aid that will be forthcoming from Washington. The aid cuts are all the more severe because of price inflation. The price of fuel has almost doubled in the past year, and the price of ammunition has risen by at least 20%, U.S. officials here say. Saigon, of course, always has been far less frugal than the Communists in its use of military supplies (although far more frugal than the U.S. Army, which used to drop more bombs in one month here than the Vietnamese air force has dropped in the last 18). The military-aid cut thus might force the South Vietnamese to become more frugal and more cautious. On the other hand, it may simply cause the South Vietnamese to fight less effectively and to take higher casualties in doing so.

In any case, there is little sign that the great powers, any more than the Vietnamese themselves, have a "game plan" for ending this war.

Some economists believe that economic accommodation may be the last best hope for Vietnam. The Vietnamese economy is in deep trouble. There are many reasons for this though almost all relate in some way to the war. The war's effect is partly indirect or historic. The 1972 spring offensive caused a physical and psychological disruption that is still being felt. The pullout of U.S. troops cost Vietnam considerable income and cost at least 300,000 Vietnamese their jobs. World inflation has hit Vietnam as hard as any other nation because the war has turned it into a thoroughly import-reliant country. And the cost of maintaining a million-man army is a crushing economic burden.

BUTTER AND GUNS

But the war also has more direct economic effects. Many of South Vietnam's basic and valuable natural resources—the timber and minerals in the highlands, the rubber plantations near the Cambodian border, even the cinnamon orchards south of Da Nang—are in contested or Communist-controlled areas. The Vietcong cannot make use of these resources, and the Saigon government cannot get at them. Economists thus suggest that an economic detente, permitting free economic movement, would serve everyone's interest. Economic accommodations, they suggest, logically could lead to some localized military deescalation, to some constructive political contact and perhaps even to de facto recognition of certain zones of control. But even this appears unlikely.

The larger hopes of economists and others that both North and South Vietnam would sharply reduce military investment and operations in order to concentrate national energies on economic reconstruction and development have proved largely illusory. Both societies have made some efforts at reconstruction and have some plans for development, but neither society has been willing or able to make better a higher priority than guns. And neither society is rich enough to have both.

"We desperately need a reduced level of violence, one that will permit economic recovery so that the ultimate political settlement, whenever it comes, will be between two going societies, not two ghost societies," a Vietnamese economist says. But he doesn't say it expectantly.

North Vietnam's economic problems remain mostly shrouded from Western view. South Vietnam's are glaringly obvious. Prices in this country have risen about 70% in the past 12 months, and this inflation naturally has struck hardest at fixed wage earners, such as soldiers, and at the unemployed. World inflation is part of the problem because Vietnam is having to pay vastly higher prices for petroleum, fertilizer and other basic imports. The government has tried to preserve dwindling foreign-exchange reserves by restricting less vital imports. This, however, causes shortages and further price inflation.

Domestic production, meanwhile, is contracting, with most factories operating far below capacity and some simply closing. This, in turn, means further unemployment, less purchasing power, less production.

Real per-capita income has dropped about 20% in the past two years, "a really, shocking decline," in the words of Willard Sharpe, the top U.S. economic official here. "Economic conditions are worse now than they have ever been before," says Pham Kim Ngoc, until recently the minister of commerce and industry. His successor, Nguyen Duc Cuong, recites a long litany of economic troubles and then adds: "I'm surprised that the people aren't out in the streets demonstrating against me, I really am."

THE BASIC FACT

Despite import restrictions, Vietnam continues to suffer a payments deficit of about $750 million. Foreign investment remains largely a pipe dream. There is still a war on in Vietnam, and no model investment laws and incentives can come close to offsetting the single basic fact. "In other Asian countries, foreign businessmen are crying all the way to the bank," an American businessman here says. "In Vietnam, they're crying all the way to the airport."

How do you find doing business in Vietnam? another businessman is asked. "Like making love to a corpse," he replies.

Tourism was another bright hope of the period immediately after the peace agreement. Government officials for a time even were promoting battlefield tours. "That was a mistake," says Pham Luong Quang, commissioner general for tourism. "Foreigners aren't yet ready for Vietnam nostalgia. It takes 20 years to become a Normandy. Our battlefields still seem to be pretty active." There is a trickle of tourists visiting Saigon and nearby beaches, but much of Vietnam's beauty remains a bit risky to reach. All of this means that the only present—and foreseeable—economic life ring for Vietnam is American aid.

RICE AND OIL

There are two bright spots in this otherwise-dismal economic vista. One is rice production, which has been increasing pretty steadily since the late 1960s.

The other is oil. A dozen foreign oil companies, including some international giants, have paid bonuses totaling $9 million for offshore oil-exploration rights. The first well has been drilled. It showed some indications of oil but was aban-

doned. If major deposits are found, it could make an enormous difference here, turning Vietnam from a pauper nation into a self-supporting one. For the moment, however, oil is a dream rather than a reality.

If Vietnam lacks both peace and prosperity, it does, at least, have politics. But its politics are of the palace variety, consisting of infighting and intrigues, or rumors thereof, among a handful of men closest to President Thieu.

The political infighting makes for good gossip in the tea shops of Saigon's Tu Do Street, but it is a meaningless kind of politics to the man in the street or the man in the paddy. "Our politics give the illusion of activity in the absence of direction,"an influential Vietnamese says. Certainly nothing in Vietnam is heading in the direction of peace and prosperity, which are what the Vietnamese people desperately want and need.

[From the Washington Post, Jan. 29, 1975]

THIEU: "WON'T GIVE UP"

(By Philip A. McCombs)

SAIGON.—At the war raged on past the second anniversary of the Paris cease-fire agreement, President Nguyen Van Thieu said firmly, "I won't give up," and appealed to the new U.S. Congress for $300 million in emergency military aid.

Thieu said that the sum he requested was "the minimum" South Vietnam must have to avert a "very disastrous situation."

In an interview with "The Washington Post yesterday, Thieu said he wanted to impress on the American people and the American Congress that we badly need their support . . . to resist Communist aggression and the takeover of South Vietnam."

"I won't give up! We won't give up! Not President Thieu! The South Vietnamese people won't give up," he declared.

Thieu is a short, vigorous man with silvery gray hair. He spoke in English—competently but with a slightly French cast—during the hour-long interview.

It was the first major interview he has granted to the Western print media since Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci saw him in January 1973, but it appears to mark a new policy toward the press. Last week he saw a French television interviewer, and tonight he was taped for an American Broadcasting Company program.

Thieu said he was "still confident that the U.S. will never abandon an ally in wartime," but later in the interview he remarked with emotion, "And if the American people abandon them, what will the South Vietnamese people do? They will fight to the last cartridge they have on hand!"

Thieu came on as courageous and firm during the interview conducted in his third-floor office in a corner of the large, modern Independence Palace, whose sprawling green grounds somewhat resemble the White House grounds, only larger.

The president often sat on the edge of his chair and gesticulated to emphasize his points. He laughed from time to time, and consulted aides seated nearby for the right word in English. The blank impenetrability of his eyes is said to be a mark of his leadership. He wore a business suit.

He appeared sure of himself as he diplomatically skirted some touchy points—like his relations with the Americans—but directly answered other questions.

On balance, he seemed to hold out little hope for peace in South Vietnam, if only because of his own grim assessment of Communist intentions, an assessment shared by most other analysts here.

For his own part, Thieu said that he wants to see democratic elections carried out under the terms of the Paris agreement and that he is unconditionally ready to return to the negotiating table to bring this about. He suggested, however, that he is prepared to make no further concessions to the Communists other than those provided for in the agreement itself.

The cease-fire agreement went into effect here at 8 a.m. two years ago. Since then, 149,000 Vietnamese have died and 1.4 million have been made homeless by the war. During the last quarter of 1974, an average of 344 South Vietnamese soldiers died each week.

On this anniversary, both the Communists and Thieu's internal political opposition here have called for him to resign.

North Vietman's foreign minister, Nguyen Duy Trinh, reiterated the Communist demand for Thieu's overthrow as a precondition for resuming political

talks—a demand that Thieu cited as part the Communist "betrayal" of the agreement.

In Saigon, opposition groups including Buddhists and Catholics issued a statement calling for Thieu's resignation as a prelude to peace.

I began the interview by asking Thieu about charges that he is as intransigent as the Communists and that the U.S. aid cutbacks have curbed him.

He responded with a short diplomatic history leading to the signing of the agreement, and suggested that he signed it, even though not entirely happy with it, because it offered "a basis for peace."

This shows, he said, that his government was not stubborn or demanding. Further, he said, his government had advanced concrete schedules for bringing about elections under the terms of the agreement, but these, he charged, were rejected by the Communists.

"What they want is to buy time to send more troops from North Vietnam, to rebuild airfields, to build highways, a pipeline, to have more storage for their artillery, rockets and (other) logistics from Russia and China," he said.

Thieu said the Communist armies have launched a "general offensive" that accounts for the widespread fighting now. He used the phrase many times. Analysts differ on how "general" the offensive is. Most say it is limited, at least so far.

Communist documents released recently by the U.S. embassy here give this strategy for 1975:

"Main forces are to attack and destroy the enemy while concentrating efforts on expanding and consolidating liberated areas (and) base areas . . . In addition, they are to make preparations for future large-scale offensives."

Said Thieu: "How can the people in the world and the United States say that I am the man who obstructs the peace?"

Under the Paris agreement, political talks to set up a National Council of Reconciliation and Concord, which in turn would arrange for elections, were established at La Celle St. Cloud near Paris, but these talks ceased April 16, 1974.

Thieu said he is ready to resume these talks without any preconditions. Asked if he is prepared to make concessions to the Communists now to bring about peace, he said:

"We have no concessions, no more concessions to give to the Communists. We only think we would like the Paris accords to be carried out." Thieu said his aim in signing the accords was to bring about self-determination for the Vietnamese people.

The Communist aim, he charged, was to "send the American troops away and [be able] to attack a South Vietnamese army weaker and without any American support."

I asked him if he felt betrayed by the Americans.

"Not yet," he said, and then launched into his appeal to the U.S. Congress. "I am very confident that the U.S., which has never lost any war, which has never failed to help any people who would like to preserve their independence," will support the Saigon government. He noted that 50,000 Americans died here.

I asked Thieu what assurance he could give the American people that the war would eventually end and they wouldn't have to continue giving forever.

He first said the American people must never believe that he is asking for "open-ended aid." He said that "substantial" economic aid would lead to economic takeoff so that such aid could decline to $100 million by 1980 or 1981.

This view roughly echoes that of U.S. Ambassador Graham Martin. But the $449 million allocated to South Vietnam this year is only roughly half what Martin thought necessary this year.

Thieu said that the possibility of finding commercially salable oil in the South China Sea off South Vietnam's coast tended to brighten the long-range economic picture here.

Military, however, Thieu could not offer much assurance. He mentioned the general offensive again, and said, "If there's no war, if the North Vietnamese respect the agreement, we don't need any more military aid."

He pointed out that American budgetary requirements have not permitted the full one-for-one replacement of military equipment and ammunition permitted under the Paris agreement.

He said the halving of military aid to $700 million this year reduced the "combat efficiency" of his forces by 60 per cent.

"We have lost many outposts, we have lost many districts and even a province city because we lack of mobility, we lack of support, we lack of everything," Thieu said.

He said the $300 million emergency military aid is the minimum needed now in the face of the Communist threat, but the most assurance that he appeared to offer the American taxpayer was this: "Nobody can predict, but I think when we have the means, as soon as possible, to cope with the situation, the situation will become less serious."

Warming to the subject, smiling and chuckling, Thieu compared South Vietnam's situation to that of a sick man: "You are the doctor. [If] you treat him on time, give him enough pills, it's much easier for you to treat him in the long run. But let the sickness become too serious, and it will be too late. Sometimes I am afraid that the additional aid of the United States will arrive after we are overrun by the Communists."

Asked about a coalition government for South Vietnam, and about hints in his speeches last year that the Americans might be edging him in that direction, Thieu responded that if the Communists fail to take over the country by force, they would try to do so by imposing a coalition government that they could take over.

"This Paris agreement never mentions coalition," Thieu noted.

Thieu said there was only one way a valid coalition could be arrived at: "Any government elected by the South Vietnamese people through the general elections, whether it be Communist, non-Communist, coalition—we don't care—[would be valid]. The main thing is that it's elected and chosen democratically and freely by the whole South Vietnamese people as is [provided for] in the Paris agreement."

Thieu said the Americans never pushed him toward a coalition, that it wouldn't make any sense, I noted that at one point, while the Paris agreement was being negotiated, Thieu and Henry Kissinger had reportedly disagreed seriously over sections of it that might be interpreted as tending toward a coalition.

All that was in the past, laughed Thieu. "Now, since that time, no more problem with Dr. Kissinger and me!"

Thieu was asked if he had decided to run in the October 1975 presidential elections in South Vietnam, and who else might run.

"I have not yet made any decision," he said. "Because last year I predicted that this year we (would) have a very difficult economic situation, a general offensive of the Communists. Let me see what I can do on three points: to beat the Communist offensive, to deal with the economic situation, and to perform on my administrative reform. I will judge myself if I deserve to be a candidate again."

He said "many" others would run for president—"maybe, some that you have known and maybe some new political leaders from the opposition." He declined to name names.

"How do you deal with opposition charges that you have limited political freedom?" I asked.

"What do you think of that!" he exclaimed in response. "Never, ah, you may never see so much freedom, so much democracy in a country in the midst of war and where the enemy is not too far from the capital . . . and they (the political opposition) insult me in the Congress, in the Senate, they insult me in the church, in the temple, Buddhist temple . . ."

Then Thieu said forcefully: "No! Nobody, not one single politician has been put in jail since 10 years I have been in the government. No one. I can tell you no one. No one!"

Does that mean there are no political prisoners?

"No political prisoners."

Thieu noted that laws providing for press censorship and a limitation on the number of political parties are being liberalized by the legislature.

I asked Thieu about the allegations of corruption against him, including the one that he was paid $7 million by the United States to sign the cease-fire agreement.

He replied that he has been fighting corruption for years, that he has proclaimed it "a national danger, a national shame." He said that all developing countries can expect to have corruption problems.

"I recognize there's corruption." he said. "but the most important thing is that I am determined to fight corruption. Now, last year and this year, I have put on retirement many generals, many officers, many cadres of administration, even without trial, despite their status.

"I have changed all province chiefs and almost all the district chiefs, two or three times, sometimes because of speculation of corruption."

Thieu charged that the Communists use the corruption issue to charge government officials falsely, this leaving a stain.

Smiling, bouncing somewhat in his chair, Thieu talked about how they charge everyone with corruption but themselves: "So, only the Communists are the best men, only the Communists are the most proper men! . . . I am the most proper man! I am the most honest man, everyone else is a dirty man, corrupted man!" he said, imitating the Communists.

Turning more serious, Thieu said corruption must be fought, but not taken as a "pretext to spoil our society, to discredit the government."

"Oh, yes, about the [seven] million dollars," Thieu said after an aide reminded him. "I think the U.S. government is not so naive to give me that amount of dollars without a [receipt]." He also said, with a big smile, that if he had taken such a payoff he would have resigned and gone off to enjoy it.

Asked how he felt about operations of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency in Vietnam, he said he knows that the agency operates here but that it doesn't interfere "with the internal political situation in Vietnam."

I asked him if he foresaw any possibilities for peace in Indochina as a whole now, and also whether reports are correct that his warplanes had flown into Cambodia to assist the latest convoy up the Mekong to Phnom Penh.

Thieu denied that his warplanes had done so.

"First you must remember that as long as this leadership remains in power in Hanoi, they will continue to pursue the goal of domination of the whole of Indochina by force," he said. "They are all there in Hanoi, the old doctrinaires, the old revolutionary men, that never abandon their goal of 50 years ago or 30 years ago. They are not politicians. Sometimes I say that they are more Communist than [those in] Moscow and Peking . . ."

Thieu charged that there are still 50,000 North Vienamese troops in Laos despite the Laotian coalition government and a ban on them there. In Cambodia, he said, "I think there's a solution between Khmers and Khmers" without North Vietnamese influence.

And in South Vietnam, Thieu said, the withdrawal of half a million North Vietnamese troops would allow him to "have a political solution with the front, (the Vietcong). "It is written down in the Paris agreement. So the main obstacle to peace in Indochina is the presence of North Vietnamese troops everywhere."

Thieu's estimate of half a million North Vietnamese troops in the South is about 300,000 more than the best Western intelligence estimates show.

I asked Thieu at this point if he means that North Vietnamese troops must go home before there can be an election under the terms of the agreement—in other words, was he setting that precondition?

His answer was that his government had proposed at the now-disrupted follow-up discussions in Paris that the withdrawal of North Vietnamese troops from the South go on simultaneously with the development of a political solution in the South.

He also pointed out his reasoning in wanting to get rid of these troops: "It's against the principle of self-determination when you have [foreign troops] inside."

Should elections take place under the Paris accords in a short period of time?

"Oh yes, the shorter the better because we need peace . . . We have proposed a period of six months for that . . ."

Asked if he foresees any chance of the Paris discussions re-opening soon, Thieu was pessimistic. He said that until six months ago he still hoped that the talks could resume, but that now one no longer merely has violations of the cease-fire, but "real war, and more than that a general offensive."

He said the Communists interrupted the talks in Paris and also military talks here in Saigon that, under the agreement, were supposed to help implement the agreement.

"We have proposed to resume the talks without preconditions, even when they are attacking our province and district cities," said Thieu. "They reject this."

Thieu was asked why his forces lost Phuocbinh, the capital of Phuoclong Province, early in January without being able to reinforce it.

"If we had enough tactical air support," said Thieu, "if we had enough helicopters to transport the troops, certainly we [could have] reinforced Phuoclong on time."

Thieu went on talking about what his forces lack, so I asked him why government forces are still firing 10 times as many artillery shells as the Communists, according to reliable figures?

He explained: "Imagine that when the Americans were here we had B–52s, tactical air support, heavy artillery, more mobility of troops, more helicopter gunships. Now . . . we have nothing. So we have to use our artillery to compensate" for the lost firepower.

Thieu reported that when he visits field military units the soldiers constantly complain about lack of ammunition. They have to move on foot now instead of using helicopters, and Thieu said, by way of summarizing these circumstances, "They [have] come back to the Vietnamese way of fighting."

Asked if there are any secret peace talks going on, he said no, that it was quite unlikely with the Communists on the offensive.

"And finally," I asked, "what will happen if Congress does not grant you the $300 million in additional military aid?"

"It would be a very disastrous situation," he answered immediately. He added, "Sometimes the feeling that the United States has abandoned South Vietnam encourages the Communists (in their attempts) to take over South Vietnam."

"To give enough aid for South Vietnam to defend itself doesn't mean to encourage South Vietnam to wage war," he said. "Sometimes that's a wrong belief in the United States."

When I asked him, "You won't give up?" He answered with the series of exclamations with which this article begins.

"What kind of peace did the American peope expend more than $200 billion and 50,000 American lives to buy?" he went on. "Your blood, your sacrifices, your ideals, your prestige went to buy a peace (in which you abandon your ally), I don't believe so."

Later he said, "If the South Vietnamese people like the Communists there [would have been] no war for 20 years . . . Every family has some dead! . . . If they continue to suffer that way it's because they're determined to resist the Communists and to save their sons and grandsons.

"If they don't like President Thieu and President Thieu is a warmonger, it's very easy to overthrow President Thieu and to walk with the Communists. Now, if they continue to fight, that means they do it themselves, not because of President Thieu, and if the American people abandon them, what will the South Vietnamese people do? They will fight to the last cartridge they have on hand."

Even if the $300 million isn't granted you'll hold firm?

"Certainly," he said. "We have to fight with what we have . . . We take sides. We would like to be on the side of freedom. How can the free world abandon us?"

[From the New Yorker magazine, Jan. 6, 1975]

LETTER FROM SAIGON

Political unrest in South Vietnam is once more erupting into the streets, as it has so often before, but lately there have been some signs of non-Communist nationalist strength that could be a new political factor—specifically, in helping to produce a more truly representative government, able to buy time in negotiations with the Communists before a final showdown. This movement faces a number of familiar handicaps, including the endless rivalry among South Vietnamese political and religious leaders and the usual rigidity of the regime of President Nguyen Van Thieu—now in its eighth year—toward non-Communist opponents. Beyond that, the Communists remain as determined as ever to use their organized military and political power to achieve their unaltered aim of conquering the South one way or another. Nevertheless, the South Vietnamese nationalists, because they are no longer beset by phobias about a vast American presence, feel that they face a new and challenging opportunity. It is soon likely to be tested—and so is the Thieu government itself—in a fresh round of peace talks in Paris and in Vietnam.

Now that Vietnam has ceased to be the paramount and all-consuming issue it once was in the United States and much of the rest of the world—though in the almost two years since the ineffective Vietnam ceasefire was proclaimed more lives have been lost in combat here than anywhere else on earth—its fate and fortunes are basically back in the hands of the North and the South Vietnamese themselves rather than in those of outside forces. Of course, it would be a mistake to assume that the United States, the Soviet Union, and China are no longer concerned about what happens in Vietnam or that they are no longer supporting the opposing sides. The issue of continuing American aid is at the moment regarded as particularly vital in Saigon, and Hanoi is similarly de-

pendent upon and worried about Moscow's and Peking's present and future assistance. The balance of the contending forces, when factors of morale and organization as well as numbers of men and amounts of equipment are taken into consideration, is roughly even. A Communist member of the moribund International Commission of Control and Supervision commented recently, "One side is not strong enough to win, and the other is not weak enough to lose"—references to Hanoi and Saigon, respectively—which seemed to me as cogent a summation as any I have heard.

During the conversations that President Ford and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger had last month with the Russians in Vladivostok and that Kissinger had with the Chinese in Peking, the Communists were again asked to urge the North Vietnamese to return to the peace table to work out further steps toward a long-term settlement. The Americans held considerably less leverage this time, though, than when we were still fully engaged. There are now only seventy-four hundred Americans here, of whom sixteen hundred are official employees—just a hundred and forty-one of them military—and the rest are hired government contractors and miscellaneous civilians and their dependents. Besides, other issues—notably the Middle East, nuclear disarmament, oil, and international trade—are now higher on the agenda of matters to be discussed with the Communist powers. Even so, the competing objectives of the Russians and the Chinese—and, to a somewhat lesser extent, of the Americans—on the Asian continent are still a most vital matter, and Vietnam is still the key to the Asian equation. Whatever compromises may now have been reached by the big powers on the Vietnam question will go a long way toward determining what happens when peace talks resume, possibly early next year. At that time, President Thieu has hinted, he will go further than he has ever yet gone in offering the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam, Hanoi's Southern arm, a chance to discuss seriously the political future of the country. Though the P.R.G. declared in a radio broadcast in October that it will not talk with Thieu as long as he remains in power, there is no reason to believe that the Communists mean it any more seriously now than they did before they negotiated in Paris, when they said the same thing. If whatever Thieu offers is good enough, they will certainly discuss it—even if, as before, they continue to talk and fight at the same time.

The substance of a Thieu offer would probably be as follows: The South Vietnamese will agree to the establishment of firm demarcation lines and what amount to buffer zones between the opposing parties—as has been done in Laos, where, so far, similar arrangements are working. The Saigon government will also finally agree to the setting up of a tripartite National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord, as outlined in the original Paris accord, giving equal voices to the Communists, the Thieu government, and a supposedly neutral element, whose members are to be approved by the two other factions. The P.R.G. will, in effect, be acknowledged as the pro-tem government of part of South Vietnam in its own right, with a recognized capital in Loc Ninh, near the Cambodian border—concessions that the Communists desperately want, along with recognition of the legal status of their own armed forces. The concept of holding general elections involving both Communist and non-Communist factions will be accepted by Saigon for the first time, looking toward the eventual selection of a new National Assembly, and also, perhaps, a Constituent Assembly, to write a new constitution.

So far, feelers sent out to the Communists suggesting a return to the peace table have elicited no response, so they have not yet had a chance to hear Thieu's new proposals, but Communist intraparty communications have indicated more of a willingness than previously to discuss concrete new peace arrangements. When the Paris agreement was signed, in January, 1973, it was almost immediately apparent that neither side was prepared to talk seriously about a permanent settlement. The fighting in Vietnam scarcely abated as each side violated the ceasefire in an attempt to grab as much contested territory as possible, and fighting has continued at a varying pace ever since, reaching a peak in August and September of this year. After slackening somewhat for two months, it picked up again in the first half of December, partly owing to the annual competition for portions of the new rice harvest. While the Communists have seized more land, notably in the southernmost parts of the Mekong Delta and in the northern tier of the country, they are privately admitting that at this time they control as little as seven per cent of South Vietnam's population of almost twenty million. A few months ago, they were privately claiming twelve per cent, while publicly asserting that they represented a majority of the people.

Their most recent plans, according to orders given to their troops, call for a further stepped-up series of attacks in the next two months, and neither Western nor Vietnamese intelligence sources in Saigon rule out the possibility of a general offensive, within the next twelve months, combining the strategy and tactics of the 1968 Tet offensive and the 1972 Easter offensive—the first of which concentrated on the cities and the second on the countryside. With around three hundred thousand soldiers in the South, about a quarter of them local Vietcong troops and the rest North Vietnamese regulars, and with ample supplies, including tanks and new antiaircraft weapons, the Communists are fully capable of another all-out offensive lasting two or three months, or, alternatively, of maintaining the present pace of fighting for four or five years. The level of military activity in the months ahead thus might well depend on the peace talks, if they start in earnest. If Hanoi, which has plenty of economic and morale problems of its own, can buy time by getting the P.R.G. legalized, and thus preparing the groundwork for a coalition government, it will probably do so; if the talks fail to get off the ground, the second option—another full-scale attack—will in all likelihood be chosen.

Despite the continued military threat, this is the first time since the Paris conference that the Thieu government, its local nationalist opposition, and the Communists all seem inclined to strike a bargain that could, in the immediate future, bring about a temporary peace and a legitimate, peaceful political contest in the South. It is interesting to note that while some degree of de-facto accommodation between elements of the opposing sides has always existed in the Delta, a similar development is now taking place in the Central Highlands and in some of the coastal areas of central Vietnam. A softening of anti-Communist attitudes has derived from mounting resentment against Thieu and against official corruption, and from widespread economic distress, which has affected everyone from the civilian population to the men in Saigon's armed forces, who have had to cope with shortage of everything from ammunition to helicopters; because of the fuel crisis and a lack of spare parts, the total number of helicopter missions throughout the country, for example, has dropped in the past few months from sixteen thousand a month to three thousand, while transport planes and fighter-bombers have also been flying far fewer missions. As the soldiers have become more apathetic, they and their families have privately come to terms with Communist forces in the hamlets and villages, agreeing not to fight, and even making deals for Vietcong cooperation in hunting deer and other animals for food or for sale in the cities. Communist officials have raised no objections to this low-level process of accommodation, and to me such inevitable developments have always seemed the best way to make progress toward peace.

As has been true of the opposition to President Park Chung Hee, in South Korea, and President Ferdinand E. Marcos, in the Philippines, the movement against Thieu has been led largely by militant Catholic clerics and laymen—at least, so far. This is truly remarkable in South Vietnam, for not only are the Catholics, a minority of two million (mostly refugees who fled North Vietnam after the end of the French Indo-China war, in 1954) but the national government has been dominated by Catholics for most of the last two decades—first in the regime of Ngo Dinh Diem, between 1955 and 1963, and since 1967 in that of Thieu. Last June, taking their cue from recent Vatican declarations emphasizing peace and deploring social evils, and from statements by South Vietnam's fifteen-member Council of Bishops, which, in the fall of 1973 and early in 1974, warned that "this country may be led to ruin by corruption, particularly when corruption is carried out by those in power," a group of priests, under the leadership of Father Tran Huu Thanh, a fifty-nine-year-old Redemptorist priest in Saigon, launched the People's Anti-Corruption Movement. The movement was encouraged by several of the more militant bishops—especially Bishop Nguyen Van Nghi, of the Saigon diocese—who, in turn, had the support of the highest-ranking prelate in the country, Arch-bishop Nguyen Van Binh. In September, following a series of seminars and meetings at parishes in Saigon and Hue which enabled Father Thanh and his supporters to obtain the signatures of three hundred and one priests out of a total of seventeen hundred in the country upon a "Manifesto Against Corruption, Injustice, and Social Decadence"—in essence, a generalized attack on the Theiu regime—the movement issued a more specific manifesto, "Indictment Number One."

The indictment, the full text of which was published by three Saigon newspapers (the day's issues were swiftly confiscated), was directed primarily against corrupt practices that Theiu, members of his family, and his small, closely knit

entourage were alleged to have engaged in. It accused Theiu of making huge profits from real-estate deals; of condoning speculative fertilizer deals engineered by his wife's brother; of permitting his wife to make huge profits from a private hospital in Saigon that she had ostensibly built to help the poor; of allowing some of his closet military and civilian associates to profit from a vast heroin traffic—in which, it was suggested, he may have had a share; and of closing his eyes to corrupt rice trading in central Vietnam that was conducted in part by his aunt, whose son Hoang Duc Nha, until recently Minister of Information, was one of his top advisers.

So far, none of these charges have been proved, but Theiu who has himself condemned the present widespread corruption as "a national calamity and shame," has made no real effort to answer them. He has simply declared them to be "smoke screens, fabricated charges entirely forged, and totally groundless slander," and though he is known to have stopped National Assembly committees from investigating some of the allegations, he has said that "if my relatives or my wife or children are corrupt or violate the law, let the law deal with them. I will not take up their defense or condone [their offenses]. In an effort to seize a reformer's role in the campaign against corruption, he dismissed three hundred and seventy-seven officers of the armed forces from their current jobs, but many or most of them, including three corps commanders, have simply been transferred to other posts.

The corps commanders were put in charge of training camps for newly inducted soldiers, and some of the other officers, ironically, were assigned to the Inspector General's Department, which investigates charges of corruption in the armed forces. In addition, in an effort to satisfy the demands that he reorganize and cleanse the government, Thieu forced the resignation of Nha and three other top ministers—those in charge of trade and industry, of finance, and of agriculture. As it happened, all four men, in fact, whatever their personal faults, were among the more able in the government. Thieu and his Prime Minister Tran Thien Khiem, offered the posts to members of the opposition, who refused them, and at the end of November, after five weeks of maneuvering, and a partial reorganization of Cabinet functions, the jobs were assigned to ranking civil servants—a move that did nothing to resolve the political situation and left things much as they were. Moreover, the controversial Nha will probably continue to advise Thieu.

All this has naturally pleased the Communists, and must make them ponder further the question of whether to negotiate with Thieu now or wait until the burgeoning nationalist third force grows stronger or until the possibility of Thieu's leaving office becomes a probability. Thieu is alternating an attitude of defensiveness with one of toughness and bravado. In two recent speeches, he has spoken of "my last year in office," asserted that it was "not important" whether he was President any longer but only that the South remain "in the hands of the nationalists"—i.e., anti-Communists—and said, "Please do not worry about me henceforth." Presidental elections are scheduled for next October, following elections for the House of Representatives, and speculation about whether Thieu will run again has consequently become a favorite pastime in Saigon's rumor-filled coffee and noodle shops.

In his tougher moments, by contrast, Thieu has said that he will never give up as long as he feels it his duty to continue leading the crusade against the Communists. At the end of October, he ordered his plainclothes police to break up an all-night vigil of Father Thanh's movement at the Tan Sa Chau parish church on the outskirts of Saigon, and during the melee seventy-five people were injured and Father Thanh was shoved to the ground. Two weeks later, Thieu, addressing a group at the Information Ministry, warned Catholic demonstrators to stay in their churches, Buddhists to stay in their pagodas, and opposition assemblymen to stay in the House and in the Senate, where they enjoy immunity. In an even tougher speech the same day to seventy-eight government deputies, he said he would use tanks if he had to in order to force the assemblymen to behave. He warned, as he has done repeatedly, of plots by the Communists and the "colonialists"—by which he apparently means the French (although he was once a French mercenary soldier himself) and, obliquely, the Americans, who he feels have let him down—to take over Vietnam, and cited as an example what happened in Chile. There is no doubt that in his efforts to discount the opposition movements by calling them names Thieu is trying to conceal his fear of them, and although this does not mean he won't run for reelection—dictators

seldom give up easily—my own hunch is that he is scanning all the probabilities and will retire gracefully if he can. If he does, he will want to go out a hero, and he could best do that by obtaining, or at least arranging for, a settlement that, while giving the Communists a minority voice in the government, would preserve the legality of the seven-year-old Second Republic.

Despite the violations of liberty in South Vietnam, including the mistreatment of prisoners and what at best amounts to limited freedom of the press, the regime prides itself on the legitimacy it derives from the constitution adopted, under American pressure, in 1967. The American diplomats now say, in a somewhat faltering defense of Thieu, that they are neither for nor against his running again—though he made such an eventuality possible only by forcing through the National Assembly last January an amendment to permit a third term. Still, the United States prides itself on having fostered that legitimacy, such as it is, and the American are therefore against Thieu's resigning before the next election—which is what the opposition is now demanding. The more practical members of the oppsition, and some American officials, too, would prefer to see him clear the air by announcing straight-forwardly that he won't run in 1975, and that he will meanwhile devote himself to cleaning up the government as best he can and preparing the way for a proper and orderly succession, based on a well-run election.

Among the uncertainties of that election, in addition to the status of Thieu, of further peace negotiations, and of the military situation, is that of the new nationalist movement, which is still divided and amorphous. Though in many ways the nationalist movement is more reminiscent of that in 1945 and 1946, when everyone was against the French, than of that in 1963 and 1966, when the Buddhists were alone in fighting the government, it has so far shown only tentative signs of solidifying. Both Catholics and Buddhists are still debating their own problems of policy and organization, and, while maintaining some liaison, are still cautious and suspicious of each other's motives. Some of the nonreligious leaders and the professional nationlists, such as Tran Quoc Buu, the head of Vietnam's largest labor organization, are trying to act as conciliators, and as time goes on they are apt to play a more significant role. What is more important, however, is that a number of militant young Catholic priests, young Buddhists, and experienced nonreligious nationlists are working together behind the scenes to create the foundation for a true third force—one that would be dominated by neither the Communists nor the government and would hold a valid balance of power in any election. This sort of quiet and efficient cooperation, again reminiscent of the mid-forties, is something Vietnam could not develop during three decades of war of unrealistic experimentation with imposed Western-style democracy. Potentially, at least, it represents a search for a truly Vietnamese solution, without too much concern over what Americans or any other foreigners think.

Father Thanh, with whom I had several conversations, is an obviously sincere and well-meaning, if somewhat naive, man. One of six children of a mandarin family from central Vietnam, he began organizing youth movements against the Communist Vietminh in Hanoi two years after he was ordained there, in 1943, and fled the city just the day before Ho Chi Minh's entry in August, 1945. In 1954, he worked with pro-Communist Vietnamese refugees in northeast Thailand and wrote three books, so far unpublished, dealing, respectively, with social justice, education, and psychological warfare. After Diem returned to Vietnam in 1954, Father Thanh was one of six Catholic leaders who helped Diem's nefarious brother Ngo Dinh Nhu formulate his Vietnamese version of the humanist French social philosophy known as *personnalisme*. Eventually, however, Father Thanh had become disillusioned with the Diem government, and went to live and study in Brussels, returning to Vietnam in 1960. For a time, he taught in the national military academy and the defense college and thus has some influence among young Army officers, who, though the Army does not play the political role it once did, could in a crisis lend support to a political movement they felt could avert a Communist takeover.

One of the difficulties that Father Thanh faces is that he is more of a theorist than either a strategist or a tactician. He has surrounded himself with a motley group of clerical and lay advisers who represent every hue of the political spectrum, and include a number of certifiable opportunists—among them former members of the Can Lao, a semi-secret organization that was the backbone of the Diem regime. Also supporting him are members of the old-line nationalist parties, most

notably the secretive Dai Viet, to which one of Thieu's two brothers (and some say Thieu himself) has belonged. After Thieu tried to preempt the corruption issue, Father Thanh decided to come out against the President personally and, instead of merely advocating the reform of the regime, to demand the President's resignation. Though he says that he, too, believes in maintaining the government's legitimacy and its constitutional framework, he has called for the creation of a transitional political council pending new elections, and this council would presumably take the place of a legal succession either by Vice-President Tran Van Huong, who is in fragile health, or, if Huong quit, by Senate President Tran Van Lam (a Catholic), who is not especially popular. None of these solutions would appear to be workable, and they would probably make it easier for the Communists to infiltrate and divide the opposition ranks. In the next few months, Father Thanh told me, he and his group will try to organize support in the provinces, holding meetings in local parishes, particularly in the southern Delta. More demonstrations will also be held in Saigon, in the hope of obtaining greater support from a public that has so far remained both skeptical and scared by Thieu's warnings of a stiffer crackdown on dissenters. One confrontation took place at the end of November and resulted in a fresh outburst of street violence. The Americans, while disavowing allegations that they have secretly backed Father Thanh and other opposition elements, have counselled the President to maintain a strong hand but to be judicious in the use of force and, above all, not to employ American weapons against civilian protesters—something that the opposition has condemned Thieu for doing.

The Buddhists of the An Quang faction, who backed the 1963 overthrow of Diem (only to see his regime ultimately replaced by another Catholic-led one), have been content this time to let the Catholics take the lead in the opposition movement, although Buddhist lay groups have played a major part in the formation of an organization called the National Reconciliation Force, headed by Senator Vu Van Mau. The N.R.F.—whose members have openly designated themselves "the new third force"—is, as its name implies, more directly in favor of reaching an agreement with the Communists according to the terms of the Paris pact. It has held some meetings at the An Quang pagoda and has the personal support there of Thich Tri Quang, the leader of the 1963 revolt. Tri Quang, in fact, helped sponsor the creation of the N.R.F. last August, when his longtime colleague and antagonist, Thich Thien Minh (they have been at odds since their student days, thirty years ago), was in Europe attending a world church conference. Upon his return, Thich Thien Minh was furious. The High Secular Council of the An Quang Unified Buddhist Association is composed of eighteen Buddhist priests, some of whom claim that efforts to heal the breach between the two monks are progressing, yet in numerous talks I had with Buddhist clerical and lay leaders I gathered that the division within An Quang remains deep. Partly for this reason, the Buddhist priests and the Catholic priests have not yet got together. However, Father Thanh and his group have held several friendly discussions with some of the bonzes—notably with Thich Giac Duc, who supervises six Buddhist youth groups—and a new and healthy development has been the presence of several hundred Buddhists at Catholic meetings and a number of Catholics at Buddhist rallies.

Senator Mau and Vo Dinh Cuong, a particularly militant lay leader, who heads the Buddhist Family Organization, the largest of the lay groups, have been travelling around central Vietnam trying to establish provincial branches of the N.R.F., and, like the Catholics, they are now trying to organize in the Delta. For the Buddhists, whose leaders are practically all from central Vietnam, this presents an especially difficult problem, because the bonzes in the south are members of the traditionally apolitical Theravada sect, whereas Buddhists of the central and northern sections of the country belong to the far more numerous and politically militant Mahayana group. The N.R.F. demanded Thieu's resignation before the Catholics did, and want a new constitution written before the next election. Though the N.R.F. plans to hold a national convention by next June, it has a lot of organizational work to do before it can be taken seriously. The present looseness of the group, together with the leftist bent of some of its more vocal and active members, leaves it more open to Communist penetration than Father Thanh's ranks are—a danger of which its leaders profess to be aware and to be guarding against. What both of these overt movements so far lack is a clear policy line, and this is precisely what those more experienced nationalists and younger clerical elements of both religions who are working behind the scenes are trying to formulate. The labor leader Tran Quoc Buu, for his part, is trying

to achieve this objective through the Social Democratic Alliance, in which his Farmer-Worker Party, the Cong Nong, is the most vocal and best organized of seven member groups. Buu, who for the past two years had sought to cooperate with Thieu and to persuade him to adopt social and political reforms, recently made a strong speech to his labor groups denouncing the corruption and social and economic evils that have racked the country under the Thieu regime. He told me the other day he would do his best to consolidate the opposition but would not be a candidate for President, yet there are many observers in Vietnam, including a number of Americans, who regard him as a logical choice to head a ticket next October.

As the political scramble intensifies, there is increasing talk of the possibility of a combined Catholic-Buddhist Presidential ticket next fall. One name being mentioned is that of Justice Tran Minh Tiet, of the Supreme Court, a moderate Catholic, who conceivably might run with Senator Mau, though neither of the two is a particularly forceful man. General Duong Van Minh, the nominal leader of the 1963 coup, who was Chief of State and has strong Buddhist support, is still a potential candidate, as he was in 1971, and so is Air Vice-Marshal Nguyen Cao Ky, the former Prime Minister, who has been carefully trying to mend his political fences, particularly with the Buddhists, whom he brutally repressed in 1966. If Thieu does withdraw from the race, Khiem, the present Prime Minister, who has maintained a long-time political marriage of convenience with Thieu, though they are not personally close, would probably run with the approbation of both Thieu and the Americans, even though Khiem's family, like Thieu's, has been widely accused of corruption. Not to be discounted, especially if the military and political situations should disintegrate, is a tacit alliance among Khiem; General Cao Van Vien, the Chief of the Joint General Staff; and Marshal Ky. In a crisis, this triumvirate could conceivably take temporary control of the government. Ky is by far the most dynamic personality of the three, and, though a North Vietnamese by birth, he has acquired considerable popularity during his long years in the South. Moreover, he is willing to meet the Communists halfway in tough negotiations.

Although the political situation in South Vietnam shows signs of vitality again for the first time in many years, the economic and social picture is disheartening. The country, like most of the rest of the world, is in a serious recession, and there seems little hope of any real recovery in the near future. Inflation, which increased at a rate of sixty-five per cent in 1973, is running at about forty per cent this year. Purchasing power and consumption have continued to drop, and no one except the very rich has the money to buy anything beyond the bare necessities. There are at least half a million unemployed in a population of twenty million, though their lot is being somewhat improved by a government-sponsored program to put a hundred thousand men to work rehabilitating the cities of Saigon and Danang and constructing irrigation projects nearby. Manufacturing activity has continued to decline in major industries, including textiles, cigarettes, and sugar refining; nevertheless, the country is now self-sufficient in sugar, thanks to increased crops. The production of other crops, including corn, tobacco, and vegetables, has also increased, and the rice harvest, which was up substantially last year, is expected to equal that level, with a crop of seven million tons of paddy predicted for 1974; this would make the country, formerly a rice exporter, almost self-sufficient once more.

The domestic prices of all these products have continued to soar, however. Export earnings have increased, but not as much as expected, owing chiefly to a declining demand for fishery products, especially shrimp, and for lumber and rubber. As a result of harsh austerity measures introduced by former Commerce and Industry Minister Nguyen Duc Cuong, which eliminated virtually all luxury imports and cut back on fuel imports—the local price of petroleum quadrupled during the year—Vietnam's balance-of-payments situation is relatively sound, and its foreign reserves went up from seventy million dollars last April to a hundred and sixty million in November. But, aside from offshore oil exploration, there is virtually no new investment, and inventories are piling up. In the year since I was last here, the shops and restaurants in the downtown Saigon area have become almost empty, and the number of beggars on the streets has increased noticeably. Even in Cholon, the relatively prosperous Chinese section of the capital, the volume of business has declined. The Vietnamese have had one recent stroke of luck: Early in November, one of the American-backed exploration teams struck oil in the South China Sea, with a promised output of fifteen hundred barrels of oil a day, plus a large

amount of natural gas. It will take perhaps another year to determine whether the general area being explored is big enough for a hoped-for production of fifty thousand barrels of oil a day within five years. This and other factors could eventually produce an upturn, but in the meantime the atmosphere of stagnation is pervasive.

This increasingly serious social-economic situation is undoubtedly one reason that the Communists are carefully weighing their options. If they press their military attacks now, while they negotiate, or prior to accepting another ceasefire, they will be in a more advantageous position later, as negotiations come to fruition. In the northern half of South Vietnam, the Communists have almost finished building a new series of connecting roads, which, given their current disposition of forces, all but cuts the country in two from the Laotian border to the Central Highlands and then diagonally northward to the coast of Quang Nam Province. They have finished paving the old Ho Chi Minh Trial, using limestone and packed dirt, and have built an oil pipeline that runs all the way from North Vietnam to Quang Duc Province, northeast of Saigon, with refueling stations along the way. Except in really wet weather, they can now bring in fresh supplies and men from North Vietnam to the III Corps area, just north of Saigon, in three to four weeks instead of the two and a half months it used to take them when the trail was a web of dirt roads subject to constant American bombardment. In recent weeks, they have made a heavy buildup of supplies to be moved South. In the northern and central parts of South Vietnam, the Communists are effectively interdicting the lateral network of government highways; threatening the government's pacification program, which has been made more difficult by the forcing of some two hundred thousand new refugees from the areas they had been resettled in following the 1972 Communist offensive; recapturing most of the lightly populated territory they lost after the 1973 ceasefire; and forcing the government to surrender many of its lightly manned outposts.

Particularly in the northernmost tier of the country, where the best Communist forces have tied down the best government troops, the North Vietnamese have consolidated their hold. In the crucial III Corps region, the Communists are opening up new infiltration routes, and they are doing the same thing in the Delta while consolidating their substantial hold on the five southernmost provinces and disrupting pacification efforts there. Thus, despite the decrease over the past year in the figures for population under their control, they are obviously prepared to regain control not only over more people—perhaps more than ever before—but over more land. In the past year or so, they have colonized areas in the northern part of the country, sending in sixty thousand men, women, and children from the North, including both Southern families who went North in 1954 and new Northern ones, and their aim is to send down several hundred thousand such colonists in the next few years. At the same time, they have directed selective artillery barrages against government-controlled village areas to create more refugees, and have stepped up their kidnappings of peasants, of whom eighty-five hundred have been forcibly removed to Communist areas since the ceasefire.

The Communist regular forces of two hundred and twenty-five thousand, which comprise fourteen divisions and numerous autonomous regiments, backed up by six additional divisions in North Vietnam, are confronted by three hundred and seventy-two thousand regular South Vietnamese Army men, plus four hundred and fifty thousand territorials of the Regional and Popular Forces, and four hundred thousand armed People's Self-Defense Forces in the villages and hamlets. However, as many as a quarter of the regular Army men and about that fraction of the territorials are either so-called "phantom soldiers" (who do not in fact exist and are simply carried on the lists to pad officers' payrolls) or "flower soldiers" (who are given permission by their superiors to work on their family farms and whose pay is split between them and their commanders). Then, a hundred and fifty thousand of the over-all total are deserters, are wounded or sick, are serving terms for breaking discipline, or are undergoing training courses. Still others are doing odd jobs for province chiefs, who make deals with battalion commanders for these men, known as "ornamental soldiers." Moreover, at least half the Regional Forces are immobilized in outposts, and many regulars are serving in rear areas or holding down desk jobs. Fresh recruitment targets have not been met. On any given day, accordingly, the actual number of Communist and government forces confronting each other in battle is about even, and if the goverment holds a slight edge, that is minimized by the declining morale of

its troops. The decline is reflected in the ratio of weapons lost, especially where outposts have been surrendered or abandoned. Before the Americans came in force to Vietnam in 1965, the government was losing about two weapons—mostly guns—for every one that the Communists lost. During the period of the American war, the ratio swung way around, with the Communists losing many weapons in captured supply bunkers. Now it is back where it was in the pre-1965 period.

Counterbalancing such statistics is an equally dark analysis of conditions in North Vietnam. Through intelligence reports, and also through some of the most direct public self-criticism in which the North Vietnamese leaders have ever engaged, there emerges a picture of a country at odds with itself, uncertain about its future commitments to the South in the face of the need of economic reconstruction at home, and confronting the greatest social unrest since the upheavals that accompanied the dracon land-reform program of the mid-fifties. The fact that the Hanoi regime is not attempting to gloss over its difficulties shows both its perception of the problems and its awareness that it must do something to mollify a population that, with the war against the Americans over, expected an easier life and a lot more concessions than it is receiving. A speech by Prime Minister Pham Van Dong on September 1st, celebrating the anniversary of the August, 1945 revolution, called for unity within the Laodong (Workers') Party, rather than, as in the past' "unity of the people"—a change that reveals the scope of the problems in North Vietnam.

Editorials and official proclamations constantly stress the need for better "management" in order to improve the slackening agricultural coöperative movement, which is still given top priority, and it is evident that the farms are in serious difficulties—difficulties that were increased by a recent bad crop resulting from a midyear drought followed by late-season typhoons and floods; the word "famine" was used in descriptions of conditions six months ago. "We are facing a situation filled with difficult and complicated tasks. . . . We must not waste even a single day or minute," Premier Dong said. In the spate of criticism about poor labor output and low productivity, Dong and other high Party officials have been unrelenting in attacking "indiscriminate" comments on Party policies and singling out people who have not been sufficiently punished for stealing state property, engaging in illegal business, or disturbing order and security. Last summer, seventeen people were shot in Hanoi for corruption, and a hundred and fifty were arrested in Haiphong for charges ranging from draft dodging to black marketeering. There may soon be a full-fledged Party purge—already heralded by the creation of what may be a Chinese-type Red Guard militia. Both Dong and Le Duan, the First Secretary of the Party, who is generally regarded as North Vietnam's top leader, have regularly called for "a mass revolutionary movement to rehabilitate and develop the economy." A new five-year plan, the first in ten years, is supposed to begin in 1976: it was announced partly at the urging of the Soviets, and has not yet been clearly formulated—a state of affairs suggesting that differences prevail within Party ranks.

Official self-criticism reached a peak in an editorial in the September issue of Hoc Tap, Hanoi's leading theoretical monthly, which deplored "alien and hostile tendencies" and "a current of evil thoughts." The "vile deeds" of "dishonest opportunists," the editorial added, as well as "thoughts of the petty bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie and of the imperialists and their henchmen . . . were the manifestation of the energy's psychological warfare and of the lack of vigilance over the secret, fishy moves of bad elements." Nothing as tough as this had been printed in North Vietnam in many years, and it is interesting to note that there has been similar criticism of the behavior of the population and the cadres in Communist areas in the South by the top Communist command there.

Through the peculiar mixture of strengths and weaknesses revealed by the opposing sides, the major powers loom larger than ever over the stricken battlefield. Together, the Soviet Union and China are still sending an estimated one and a third billion dollars' worth of aid to North Vietnam, at least half of it now consisting of economic assistance, mostly in the form of food and grain. The United States, while waiting for Congress to pass a new economic-aid-appropriations bill for Saigon, is operating under a resolution contiuuing last year's terms, by which the Vietnamese received three hundred and fifty million in economic assistance. The fiscal 1975 authorization is for four hundred and fifty million in economic aid, but the money has yet to be appropriated. (The 1975 military-aid appropriation stands at seven hundred million dollars, down from eight hundred and twenty-three million last year.)

Our Ambassador, Graham A. Martin—though about ten years ago, when he was

Ambassador to Thailand, he opposed sending half a million Americans to fight in Vietnam—believes strongly in our obligation to help the South Vietnamese survive. Accordingly, he originally sought a billion six hundred million dollars and eight hundred and fifty million dollars for military and economic assistance, respectively, this year, and is doing all he can to persuade Congress to restore at least some of the cuts it has made. Unless Congress acts, he maintains, it will be impossible to resupply Vietnam on the basis of the one-for-one agreement reached with the Communists in Paris—that is, to replace each piece of military equipment lost—and it will be impossible for South Vietnam to overcome its economic problems. After another year or two of comparable or slightly reduced economic help, he argues, the country should be in a position to take advantage of its agricultural and other resources and be ready to "take off," provided peace can be achieved.

What with the corruption that obtains in Vietnam today, and Congress's disinclination to pour more money down the Vietnamese drain, Martin may have a hard time persuading the American legislators—and particularly the ones just elected—to change their minds. He remains convinced that Vietnam has been made a victim of the congressional campaign to slice the Pentagon's over-all budget, and he feels that the economic cuts that have been made are especially shortsighted in view of the current inflation. Aside from the actual sums of money, which do not amount to much compared to the total of approximately a hundred and fifty billion we have spent so far for the war in Indo-China, there are difficult political and moral equations involved.

Most Americans here feel that the North Vietnamese will be encouraged to attack rather than negotiate if the aid cuts stand and the economic situation in the South deteriorates further. On the other hand, a minority of Americans here believe that if the cuts stand Thieu will be more inclined to negotiate, and that he would do better politically to negotiate now, given the government's numerically widespread, if tenuous, control over the country, than he would after another Communist offensive, in which he stands a good chance of losing a lot of ground. The emerging third force elements, even though anxious to be independent of the Americans, favor continued aid, but they would prefer to see it given on a bilateral basis to both North and South Vietnam after a satisfactory peace is obtained.

For Russia, China, and the United States to impose a collective limit on their aid would afford the best hope of forestalling the continuing slaughter, which otherwise may go on indefinitely. The Sino-Soviet conflict, let alone the revolutionary dynamics and obligations of the Communist brotherhood of nations, assuredly makes any such limitation on the part of Russia and China difficult. As for our own assistance to South Vietnam, Ambassador Martin argues, if it can be sustained at last year's level for two more years at most, this should give the various non-Communist factions a last chance to get together and maintain that country's independence.

[From the Christian Science Monitor, Jan. 23, 1975]

What Priority Vietnam?

(By Charles W. Yost)

Washington.—There is no reason to doubt the will and capacity of the United States to cope with an array of extremely serious new domestic and foreign problems—at least sufficiently to ward off immediate disaster and to lay the groundwork for longer-range solutions. What is open to serious question is whether even the U.S. has the resources, and its leaders the time and the stamina, to bear all these new burdens and still carry the accumulated baggage of coldwar involvements undertaken in quite different circumstances.

Certainly some such involvements, such as the strategic arms race with the Soviet Union or commitments to our allies in Europe and Japan, are inescapable in any near future, though the absurdly extravagant level and cost of the arms race requires rigorous review. Other such involvements, however, can no longer claim to match in significance the new wave of predicaments the U.S. now confronts.

It is in this broader context that the U.S. should weigh the demands now being addressed to Congress for more aid to Vietnam and Cambodia, and the threats now being leveled at Hanoi which imply that increased belligerency on its part will evoke some unspecified but presumably belligerent U.S. response.

There is no point in going over for the thousandth time the arguments for **and**

against the U.S. presence in Indo-China. The question in 1975 is where, in America's present scale of priorities, military and economic aid to the Thieu and Lon Nol governments should properly fall.

Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger said in a recent press conference: "It would be a serious error on the part of the U.S., and I believe a serious moral lapse, for us to contemplate the semiabandonment of an ally by failure to provide them with the appropriate financial resources."

This statement begs the question by its use of the word "appropriate." What is an appropriate contribution for this purpose at this time? The U.S. has been providing substantial assistance to South Vietnam for more than 20 years. For about seven it had a military force of several hundred thousand men in the country and spent billions of dollars for its defense.

Finally the U.S. decided that southern Indo-China was not all that vital; that its anxiety that China intended to move in and take over had not been well-founded; that North Vietnam itself hardly constituted a threat to American security. The U.S. moved out its forces and proclaimed the Nixon doctrine of disengagement from mainland Asia.

Of course the U.S. also announced its intention to continue to supply "appropriate" assistance. Indeed, at a time when much of the "third world" desperately needs help, America continues to give the lion's share of its none-too-generous foreign aid to Vietnam and Cambodia.

But what was appropriate in the affluence and relative tranquility of January, 1973, may not be at all appropriate in the economic depression and unsettled international climate of January, 1975. It is high time for Indo-China to be moved close to the bottom of America's list of national priorities.

This is particularly the case since neither the Thieu nor Lon Nol governments has during the last two years shown any real disposition to seek a political settlement and end of the fighting. Until they do, the war will go on indefinitely.

It may not be impertinent, therefore, to wonder whether it is not in fact the administration which is guilty both of a "moral lapse" and of a political anachronism in maintaining our involvement in Southeast Asia at the expense of more adequate response to much graver and more immediate dangers.

Events of the past two weeks have shown once again the hazards of America's failure to withdraw from this long-standing overcommitment. Hanoi has only to launch an offensive to take a city and the U.S. instinctively reverts to the rhetoric of the '60's.

America must at last make up its mind. Either it decides once and for all that what happens in Vietnam and Cambodia is not a matter of vital interest, and tailor its policy and its aid accordingly. Or the U.S. continues to maintain Thieu and Lon Nol at whatever cost is necessary, risk renewed involvement, and pretend nothing has happened in the world since 1965.

[Evening Star—D.C.—Sept. 20, 1974]

Cut U.S. Aid Held Sufficient for Saigon Forces

(By Tammy Arbuckle)

Saigon.—The $700 million in American military aid to South Vietnam is sufficient for the South Vietnamese army to stop the Communists, and indeed this reduction in U.S. military aid may, in the long run, make the South Vietnam army more effective, informed military sources say. Some middle level South Vietnam military agree.

The sources base their view on a combination of two circumstances. These are a new look at, and reshuffle of, logistic priorities by the United States, and a change in South Vietnam army tactics with a drift to less conventional warfare. Informed military sources qualify their assessment that $700 million is sufficient with the condition that these two things should continue to go ahead successfully.

This assessment would seem to run counter to other reports from Saigon that proposed congressional military aid cuts will put the South Vietnamese in deep trouble. Many of these reports are based on U.S. embassy reports to newsmen that fuel already is cut by 50 percent, planes are not flying, shells are insufficient and so forth.

It seems, however, all those public complaints by U.S. officials in Saigon are a final attempt to stave off congressional cuts. But underneath the furor, U.S. officials expect these reductions and are revamping logistics to suit the funds they expect to be available, informed sources say. Americans privately confirm this.

The sources point to the record of U.S. Gen. Homer Smith, the new Saigon defense attaché. Smith's background is logistics from lieutenant on up. Experts consider him the right man for the job ahead.

Describing what is ahead, sources said the cuts in fuel and other supplies recently made public by U.S. officials is a reaction to American overspending in South Vietnam in the first quarter of fiscal 1975. The U.S. Embassy was basing its expenditures on hoped-for military funds of up to $1 billion.

They anticipated going ahead with the war on a continuing resolution basis.

Sources said there is no doubt there is sufficient ammunition and fuel in South Vietnam to prosecute the war but conservation is the U.S. order of the day while logistics are reconsidered and overhauled.

Military experts described the nature of the problem facing the United States in this way. In Vietnam there is a great deal of expensive ammunition including bombs which cost $1,500 each and helicopters which need expensive fuel to fly. But when those expensive items are used they are also expensive to replace. Sources suggest that what might happen is, rather than spend money on bombs the United States will opt to spend the money on very large numbers of mortar shells which are cheap and many military men consider them more effective than big bombs. The South Vietnamese air force may have to mothball most of its 800 helicopters, but this would effectively force Vietnamese commanders to spend more time in the field with their troops instead of passing their time in expensive restaurants in the cities.

Unless there is a changeover to less expense engines of war, sources warn, the South Vietnamese may find themselves with the costly items they now need less and a shortage of bread-and-butter items such as bullets and mortar shells.

U.S. Officials here say no decisions have been made on these matters pending definite information on funds but that the matter is being closely considered. The reductions of jets and fuel are seen, however, as the start of a trend to avoid costly items. The South Vietnamese army for tactical reasons has already been moving to less conventional forms of fighting. It has been little publicized, but South Vietnamese long-range Special Forces teams have already been creating havoc in Communist areas of control in South Vietnam. A few months ago these small special groups ripped up part of the North Vietnamese oil pipelines near the Laos border. Several North Vietnam supply depots in Communist territory in South Vietnam have been hit successfully. In bigger actions, some of the better South Vietnam units are adapting to night infantry attacks. Airborne troops, for example, at Thung Duc Valley are gaining 100 yards each night toward the recapture of that district capital near Da Nang. By this method it's argued that the move towards the essential cheaper infantry weapons will reinforce the newborn tendency of the South Vietnamese to, as they put it, use Vietnamese tactics. Yet there should still be sufficient funds, it is estimated, to pay for the artillery and armor still necessary for likely major conventional actions against the even more conventional terrain-grabbing North Vietnamese forces.

It is said by Military sources here that artillery shells were fired much too frequently and uselessly by both U.S. and South Vietnamese forces and that reductions in money will force the South Vietnamese to save their shells and use them only when they are really needed. The greater use of infantry rather than massive and expensive bombing and shelling undoubtedly will lead to a considerable increase in South Vietnamese casualties. The massive bombing and shelling policies were left over from the unwillingness of previous U.S. administrations to risk a political outcry in the United States which would have resulted from any high U.S. casualties. The Americans listed 46,000 killed in nine years of combat in Vietnam.

The South Vietnamese combat formula for coming months if the military aid figure rests at $700 million—as is almost certain since U.S. Senate-House conferees have approved the relevant defense appropriations bill—is therefore likely to be larger use of infantry, more night fighting, and some guerrilla pressure on North Vietnamese and Viet Cong held areas.

For big actions which are seen likely to occur against an increasingly conventional Communist force, armor and artillery with the A37 Dragonfly aircraft for air strikes, a less expensive and more accurate aircraft, will be available.

Military sources see the Communists as fighting for terrain now, tying down some of their own forces in defense, and therefore becoming vulnerable to higher South Vietnamese forces except in the big battles.

[From the Baltimore Sun, Sept. 4, 1974]

DÉTENTE UNKNOWN IN SAIGON; TRUCE MACHINERY STILLBORN

(By Arnold R. Isaacs)

SAIGON.—The continuing bloodshed in Vietnam has swept away most of the 9 chapters and 23 articles of the Paris peace agreement, but a few traces remain.

One is the Provisional Revolutionary Government delegation, which still sits, like a bit of alien flotsam washed up on a hostile beach, in its quarters deep inside Saigon's huge Tan Son Nhut Air Base.

The delegation is housed in a compound of barracks and offices that is still customarily referred to as Camp Davis—the name it was given when the Americans were serving here. (It is named after the first American soldier officially listed as killed in Vietnam.)

Now that it is the Communist headquarters, the South Vietnamese treat it, not surprisingly, as if it contained some particularly deadly infection.

Barbed-wire barriers circle the compound and it is heavily guarded by South Vietnamese military police. No ordinary Vietnamese civilian can approach it, and only the senior officers of the delegation are allowed to leave, on official business. For the lower-ranking Communist soldiers, serving on the delegation must be somewhat like being in a better-than-average prison camp.

Journalists are allowed into the compound once a week, and a recent visit there showed that it had not changed much in more than a year.

"ACTS OF WAR"

The same photos of National Liberation Front leaders still hung on the walls of the converted barracks that serves as a briefing room. The same packages of harsh North Vietnamese cigarettes and the same bottles of watery orangeade were set out on the tables. The eyes of the Provisional Revolutionary Government soldiers watched with the same wary remoteness.

The press conference also was unchanged, a litany of alleged cease-fire violations by the Saigon government that was a perfert mirror image of the daily press briefings given by the South Vietnamese spokesmen downtown.

"The Nguyen Van Thieu administration continues to step up its acts of war," intoned Col. Vo Dong Giang, the chief PRG representative.

"It has carried out indiscriminate bombings against populated areas inside the areas controlled by the PRG . . . in two days more than 300 civilians have been killed or injured . . . their actions expose their bellicose and counter-revolutionary nature . . . in defense of the property and lives of the population, and to preserve the Paris agreement, the liberation armed forces of South Vietnam and the people have dealt new punishing blows to the Nguyen Van Thieu armed forces."

Richard M. Nixon had resigned two days earlier as President of the United States, so a few more journalists than usual had made the trip to Camp Davis to hear the Vietnamese Communist reaction to the change in Washington.

When it came, there was no echo of the worldwide mood of detente, no whisper of the hopes that had surfaced nearly everywhere else on the globe for a healthier phase of American life. Colonel Giang's comments seemed a frozen echo of the past.

Mr. Nixon's fall, he said, had been caused not just by Watergate but by his "barbarous and criminal doctrines" in Vietnam and elsewhere. "It does not matter if there is a change of one figure in the presidency of the U.S. . . . the question of peace or war in South Vietnam depends on whether or not U.S. policies will change."

There was "no indication," he added, that the new American President would shift ground. "On the contrary, Mr. Ford has appeared to be fairly faithful to the policy of U.S. administrations, most recently the Nixon administration . . . the South Vietnamese people will wage their struggle not because Mr. Nixon is in or out of the White House, but because of the necessity to preserve the Paris agreement."

Colonel Giang heads a delegation that arrived in Saigon a year and a half ago to represent the Communist side on the two-party Joint Military Commission, which was set up under the Paris agreement to administer the cease-fire.

ITS ONLY ACCOMPLISHMENT

Its only accomplishment since then has been to carry out an exchange of Vietnamese war prisoners—an exchange marred by claims on both sides that not all prisoners were returned.

It has not even begun any of the other tasks assigned to it by the Paris pact, which included the all-important mapping of zones of military control.

Under the initial agreement, the South Vietnamese and the Provisional Revolutionary Government were to have joint military teams in 7 regional headquarters and 25 local sites across Vietnam to supervise the truce. But the deployment never took place.

Communist delegations did go briefly to some, though not all, of the regional posts, but after series of demonstrations against them by local civilians, some of which had the apparent sanction of the South Vietnamese authorities, the PRG withdrew all its delegates to Saigon.

There the commission has lapsed into fruitless bickering, most recently over the PRG demand for a written guarantee of diplomatic privileges and immunities for its delegates. For weeks on end, the Communist and South Vietnamese sides have not met at all.

[From the New York Times, Aug. 21, 1974]

70,000 REFUGEES FLEE NEW VIETNAM CLASHES

(By David K. Shipler)

Da Nang, South Vietnam, Aug. 16—At 5 o'clock this morning, Mrs. Le Thi Ba finally gave up. She and her husband had held out for 20 days, living in their own sandbagged bunker, subsisting on meager rations of rice, trying with every ounce of strength to stay in their tiny village of Son Phuc despite incessant shelling by North Vietnamese gunners.

But the rice had run out, and so before dawn Mrs. Ba gathered her 2-year-old son into her arms and began the long walk out, becoming the newest of the estimated 70,000 new refugees created by the recent weeks of heavy fighting in the northern provinces of South Vietnam.

The number has doubled in just the last 10 days, officials here say. Many of the refugees are hugging Route 1, the major strip of security in Government areas here. They are jammed into schoolhouses and crowded into shacks made of ammunition crates, and they are running out of food. Although some have received emergency supplies of rice from the Government, many others say they have been given nothing.

GRIMY AND WEARY

Mrs. Ba, traveling by foot and by bus, found her way this morning to a school at the edge of Da Nang, 25 miles northeast of her village. She stood in the schoolyard, her face grimy and weary. Her son played listlessly with an empty rice bowl.

Just down the road, like a haunting symbol of an era South Vietnam has tried to put behind, stood one of the country's biggest refugee camps—empty. Its corrugated tin buildings, as vast as warehouses, rattled and crashed in the wind like the hulks of wrecked ships. The Government had succeeded there, and in most other parts of the country, in emptying the squalid refugee camps and moving the uprooted people onto farmland or back to villages.

The new wave of refugees now represents a serious setback to that effort. And the effort itself, some say, was partly responsible for the outbreak of fighting.

CONTROL OF RICE LANDS

To secure land for resettlement, the South Vietnamese Army has tried to consolidate control over fertile rice lands, sometimes sweeping through contested areas sometimes through Vietcong-held villages.

One foreign diplomat who watches the situation said that he thought one reason for the recent Communist attacks was to regain land they bleieved was rightfully theirs at the time of the cease-fire in January, 1973.

Last spring, he explained, the Communists lost considerable ground in Military Region I to a South Vietnamese offensive in the coastal areas of Quang Ngai Province, especially Duc Pho and Mo Duc Districts, and in other lowland rice-growing regions.

GOVERNMENT BLOCKADE

"They're strong in the western hills and not in the lowlands,' he said of the Communist forces. "That's why they've pressed so hard for implementation of the Paris accords—that gives them freedom of movement—they were supposed to have corridors of supply. But the Government has set up a blockade openly and attempted to isolate pockets of Communist control, cut them off from sources of supply."

Another view of the Communist strategy was put forth by a refugee, Nguyen Tanh, the elected chief of the village council of Loc Son, about 25 miles southeast of Da Nang.

"The main thing in the Paris agreement is general elections," Mr. Tanh explained, "and the Communists cannot accept a general election with this side because they have no people and with no people they have no votes. That's why they have kept violating the cease-fire—not to get land, but to get people."

Mr. Tanh and his fellow villagers, who left Loc Son in 1965, finally went back last December. They had a lot of work to do on their neglected rice fields.

But now the rice is tall and lush. In a month, it will be ready to harvest. But they will probably not be there.

"HAD TO FLEE AGAIN"

"Now we were about to get the first good harvest and we had to flee again," Mr. Tanh said in disgust. "If the Government doesn't do anything quickly, our crops will fall into Communist hands and we all will die here of starvation."

What he would like the Government to do is to retake his village, but the South Vietnamese Army has it hands full at the moment just trying to hold the North Vietnamese troops where they are and prevent the fall of Duc Duc and Dai Loc district towns, which have been shelled daily.

The strategy of the refugees has become challenging and risky. Some go to their fields by day, returning to safe havens at night. Others climb into the hills to gather firewood to sell along the major highways. It is an existence that takes as much military instinct as a general's, for a miscalculation of the safety of a road, a misreading of an armed unit's position or of the likelihood of an attack can be fatal.

Some refugees feel they have annoyed the Government by being overly cautious, by fleeing before fighting reached their villages.

"These people here don't want to live with the Communists," explained one refugee from the Que Son valley south of Da Nang. "That's why they fled to the nationalist side. And now if the nationalists don't look into their situation and help them, where do they go?"

[From the New York Times, Oct. 1, 1974]

NORTHERNERS, PROSPEROUS BUT UNEASY IN SOUTH VIETNAM, SLIDING INTO OPPOSITION

"When you rally to the national Government, you will enjoy a freedom that not only suits you, but be re-established both physically and morally in a new life of peace and security."

—NGO DINH DIEM, 1954.

(By James M. Markham)

SAIGON, SOUTH VIETNAM, September 30.—Twenty years ago a great exodus of modern Asian history dislocated Vietnam. A torrent of political and religious refugees—928,152, by one count—fled from the North to the South.

The stunning defeat of the French expeditionary corps at Dien Bien Phu and the conclusion of the Geneva agreements catapulted Ho Chi Minh to power in the North. Driven by fear, experiences of Communist control and no small amount of propaganda, many northern Vietnamese clambered into American and French airplanes and warships and came to the South.

About 4,000 refugees went from the South to the North, which then had a population of 17 million. In addition, 130,000 guerrillas, party functionaries and their dependents "regrouped" under the provisions of the Geneva accords and went North.

Now, two decades later, the promise of the fledgling Government of the late Ngo Dinh Diem, Premier and later President, has been redeemed in part.

In the main northern refugees have prospered here; indeed, they dominate many professions and occupy the critical second ranks of others, including the army.

Despite material success, a strain of unease, disenchantment and even fear runs through northern refugee circles, for Mr. Diem's promise of freedom has been fulfilled only by comparison with North Vietnam, and peace and security are distant hopes.

Half willingly, educated Northerners, particularly Roman Catholic priests, have now moved into the unaccustomed role of opponents of their Government. Some are uneasy, knowing that their limited campaign against official corruption could explode into something much more significant or even benefit the Communists. Others have become dedicated opponents of President Nguyen Van Thieu, arguing that the anti-Communist cause will be lost by default if he stays.

By their own accounts the Northerners feel at home in the South, where life is much easier than in the harsh Tonkin of their memories. "Suppose Vietnam ever gets unified," said Au Ngoc Ho, a prosperous business consultant and former Economics Minister. "Will the North Vietnamese ever go back? Oh no! Only for a visit—to show off what they got in the South."

Many refugees from the North emphasize that the history of Vietnam is marked by migration southward—not unlike the American's push westward in the 19th century—and that many authentic Southerners are removed from the North by only a few generations.

"Every Southerner has a Northerner in his genealogical tree," observed Dang Van Sung, publisher of South Vietnam's most respected newspaper, Chinh Luan, "so I am a Southerner of the first generation."

A deep strain of nostalgia colors the pioneering spirit. Virtually all Northerners left relatives behind; most came south hoping to return in 1956, when the country was to have somehow been reunited under the Geneva accords.

Hanoi people retain a deep love for the city they have not seen in 20 years. Many were anguished when American planes bombed it.

"Hanoi is a cultural city," said Nguyen Tuong Ba, a successful lawyer who is organizing a new association of Hanoi high-school graduates.

"The degree of traditional culture is higher. The food is better. The women are more beautiful—and better singers."

Whatever the delights of the past, Northerners proudly describe the positive impact they have had on the South, which they often regard with mixed sentiments—a lush land of opportunity whose inhabitants, in their view, tend to be unenterprising, flabby, too easy-going. Invariably, Northerners recall that Hanoi women of the exodus set the style of the appealing ao dai, now the national dress; Southerners devour pho, a noodle soup, and rau muong, a kind of watercress—both once northern dishes.

Capt. Nguyen Ngoc Phach, an articulate officer of the Joint General Staff, maintains that the South was commercially "tame" until 1954. "The economy was run by the Chinese, the French, the Indians, not the Vietnamese," he explained.

The Northerners, who had the advantage of easier access to the university the French built at Hanoi and brought with them a far more vibrant literary and cultural tradition than existed in the South, continue to be dominant in the arts and, to a lesser extent, in the universities. It is no accident that a book entitled "The Best Stories of Our Country: 20 Years of Literature in the South, 1954–1973," contains works by 29 authors born north of the 17th Parallel and 16 born south of it.

Although the southern-born children of refugees are graduating from universities, continued northern prominence in the liberal professions is hinted by examination results. A sampling of medical examinations for 1961 showed that 16 of 29 new doctors in the South had been born in the North; in 1973 a similar sampling showed that 48 of 100 were born in the North.

While statistics are not available, it is generally agreed that a disproportionate number of Northerners are lawyers, judges and prosecutors.

South Vietnam's increasingly outspoken press is another profession where Northerners have left their mark. Northern journalists and publishers are at least as numerous as their southern counterparts.

Northern-born people can be found throughout the southern civil service. The Foreign Ministry is a traditional northern preserve and northern Buddhists hold key positions in the Ministry of Information and Open Arms.

While Northerners have done well in business, Southerners still control banking, the profitable and highly politicized pharmaceutical industry and large-scale agriculture.

Northerners argue with considerable persuasiveness that it is not clannishness that has advanced them across the professional spectrum but, rather, the challenge of being refugees and the rugged life many of them had led in the North. Some say their southern-born children are getting lazy.

When it comes to the army—the fulcrum of power in South Vietnam—some Northerners maintain that southern clannishness has cut them out of the topmost positions. Even so, Northerners can be found throughout the army in the ranks of colonels and majors; two of South Vietnam's top divisions, the marines and the airborne, have a northern cast; and Gen. Cao Van Vien, Chief of the Joint General Staff, is a Northerner.

It is not altogether clear what "Northerner" means in political terms. For example, the commander of the vital Third Military Region, Lieut. Gen. Pham Quoc Thuan, is a Northerner who has placed Northerners in key positions. But he is also a reputedly loyal protege of President Thieu, a Southerner.

In the political arena the distinction begins to break down. One study of South Mr. Diem suggests that schooling and other associations are more influential * * * than region in cabinet-making. (Interestingly, a striking proportion of the Communist leaders of North Vietnam were born in what is now South Vietnam.)

Mr. Diem used the Catholic refugees—the overwhelming percentage of the exodus—to buttress his Government. So the 1963 coup that cost him his life took on an antinorthern tone that, as a refugee put it, "gave us a guilt complex for some time."

A PERIOD OF TRANSITION

The northern Catholics did not abandon anti-Communism, however, nor were they conspicuous in their opposition to the succession of military governments that followed Mr. Diem. For a while opposition was in the hands of northern and central Buddhists.

A sea change is under way in some sections of the northern Catholic community here, which is increasingly committed to an anticorruption campaign aimed at Mr. Thieu. The movement began three months ago with a strongly worded proclamation signed by 301 priests, a third migrants from the North.

Hoa Binh, a Saigon newspaper run by northern Catholics, has helped spearhead the campaign. After repeated seizures, it closed down; then it defiantly reopened and resumed its attacks on the Government.

It is clear that not all the Catholics activists want to overthrow Mr. Thieu. "If we do it right, it will help the Government, it will make it stronger," said the Rev. Pham Duc Su, who led 26,000 Catholics out of Hung Yen Province 20 years ago. "There is still no alternative to Mr. Thieu."

Others feel that the President, who converted to Catholicism relatively late in life, must go. "I have always feared that with the governments we have we will lose the war," said the Rev. Hoang Quynh, a principal organizer of the 1954 exodus. "If Mr. Thieu remains there, the country will be lost."

OLD FEARS ARE REVIVED

The combination of a deteriorating economic situation, constant Communist military pressure and the new opposition stance seems to have generated profound unease in some Catholic quarters.

"There is one similarity with the situation of 1954," said Father Quynh. "We live almost the same fear of a Vietnam take-over as in 1954."

Mr. Sung, publisher of Chinh Luan and a Buddhist, is less despairing but is modest in his hopes.

"When I came from the North in 1954, all I wanted was to go back to a free Hanoi," he recalled. "A little later, in 1965, at the height of the war, I wanted to keep South Vietnam free from Quang Tri to Ca Mau"—from the 1954 cease-fire line north of Hue to the southernmost tip. "Now," he said, "I want to keep Vietnam free, even if it is a little diminished."

[From the New York Times, Sept. 14, 1974]

South Vietnam: New Martyrs, New Paupers and New Friends

THE TALK OF SAIGON

(By James M. Markham)

Saigon, South Vietnam, Sept. 13—On the surface, it looks like fiery 1963, the last year of President Ngo Dinh Diem. With disquieting regularity, desperate men are dousing themselves with gasoline and burning to death on the streets of Saigon. In the last four months, six men—three of them war veterans—have immolated themselves in public. A seventh, a monk, was saved by the police on Sept. 2 as he burned in front of Saigon's rococo city hall.

Yet the public's reaction to this carnage is silence, even cynicism. For most of the suicides, instead of raging against the Government, have been protesting "Communist aggression" in South Vietnam. Or so the Government says.

Most of the deaths have followed a rather set pattern. Soon after the human blaze peaks, the police and the Government television crews arrive. The police scoop up letters left behind by the suicide victim.

Immediately, the Government propaganda machinery swings into action. Radio and television spread the news of another "sacred torch of peace." In three cases, posters and banners featuring the martyrs' names, photographs and last, anti-Communist words have been draped and pasted around town.

After a 20-year old disabled veteran, Le Quang Do, burned himself in front of the presidential palace, the Government spokesman, Pham Quoc Cuong, observed: "The sacrifice of combatant Le Quang Do should serve as a bright example to those who have been calling for peace while sitting in their air-conditioned rooms."

But except in the cases of two or possibly three of the suicides, few Saigon people believe that the spate of self immolations has been altogether spontaneous.

"I cannot say firmly that there is or is not prearrangement for these deaths," said Dinh Trung Thu, the secretary general of South Vietnam's main veterans' group. But Mr. Thu said flatly that the Government had excerpted the suicide letters to give them an exclusively anti-Communist cast.

Tran Tam, a former presidential candidate, said after the suicide of Phan Van Lua on Aug. 15: "The police were around all morning. The man took so much time to pour the gasoline on himself—and no one raised a hand. This is monstrous. Everyone knows they are victims."

In a subtle rebuke to the Governmen's propaganda campaign, some newspapers have taken to publishing the news of the suicides in the section usually devoted to traffic accidents and such things.

In a statement over the national radio on Sept. 9, President Nguyen Van Thieu called on "all people who are burning with ideas of sacrifice to refrain from now on from this act of self-destruction, even though it be for a high purpose."

Though still bustling in appearance, Saigon sinks deeper into economic misery. Reduced to a subsistence level, many civil servants, officers and other middle-class people have begun, painfully, to pull their children out of school. Either they cannot afford school fees or they need to send the children to work.

At the Son Ha elementary and secondary school, Lu Ho, the superintendent, said that since May the number of students has plummeted from 1,500 to 800.

"And of the 800 remaining," Mr. Ho said, "I am paying the fees of 300, giving them clothes, shoes, books."

The superintendant said that "even colonels" had withdrawn their children. "If they don't steal they can't afford the fees," he said.

Mr. Ho, who also teaches philosophy at the private school, said that several times girls had fainted in classes. Their families could not afford to give them breakfast.

In another, grimy quarter of Saigon, Le Hoang Than, who is 15, almost wept when he was asked if he missed school.

He dropped out of the seventh grade recently and now makes a little over 15 cents a day picking scrap paper and dirty plastic bags off the streets. "There's no money at home," he said, simply.

The boy is one of 100 people who daily deliver the stinking waste material to a depot run by the Young Catholic Workers. Another 40 people—many of them students who have either dropped out of school or are trying to stay in—sort and bundle the material. It is then sold to Chinese merchants, who recycle it.

The depot is run as a cooperative. The waste pickers are cut in on the profits—in five months, an average of 15 tons a month have been sold—and at night young seminarians teach the dropouts and adult illiterates.

Alieu Badara N'jie, the Foreign Minister of Gambia, was just in Saigon, where he received an effusive official welcome. He was the first foreign minister of any nation to make an official visit to Saigon since the January, 1973, cease-fire.

Even though Gambia is very small (population 390,000), the South Vietnamese gave the Foreign Minister the royal treatment. The city was hung with banners wishing long life to "Gambia-Vietnam friendship" and the visitor was entertained at two sumptuous banquets.

One European ambassador said he nearly broke out in church giggles at the second banquet, since even some Saigon Cabinet ministers, smirking, found the fuss over the small African nation a bit disproportionate. "The whole city was doubled over with laughter," said the ambassador.

Foreign Ministry officials now count Gambia as a sure vote in international conferences, where they are in stiff competition with the Vietcong's Provisional Revolutionary Government.

The demise of Givral, Saigon's premier rumor mill, has been rumored for some time. An exception to the rule, this rumor has proved to be true.

Givral, the unostentatious coffee shop known to old hands as Radio Catinat, has been split in two—a tiny pastry shop bears the old name, but most of the building is now a slick restaurant called The Garden.

Saigon journalists now wander, unsatisfied, from one Tu Do Street coffee shop to another, looking for a new headquarters. "It will never be the same," said one.

[From the Washington Post, Sept. 3, 1974]

Some Would Risk Communist Rule—Refugees Charge Saigon Impedes Return Home

(By Philip A. McCombs)

Danang, South Vietnam, September 2.—Many war refugees are eager to return to their old homes even though it may mean living under Communist control, and some of them have been forcibly prevented from doing this by government police measures.

There are also many refugees who would rather remain on the government side than come under Communist control. It is impossible to determine how many fall in each group.

Under the Paris cease-fire agreement signed in January 1973, there is supposed to be free movement between the two sides. In fact, very little of this has taken place.

If it had, a large number of people might have been expected to return to homes now in Communist-controlled areas.

During the American involvement in the war, large numbers of people were loaded on trucks and helicopters and taken to refugee camps when the allies swept through large areas to "pacify" them.

By moving the people out, the allies could assume that anyone still in the area was the enemy, who could be killed.

The government has now been resettling the dislocated people in government-controlled areas, but many people seems to have a different idea about where they would like to live.

"If the government would allow me to go back home I'd go immediately," said one woman, who was holding her baby as she talked in a refugee camp in Quang-ngai Province, about 75 miles south of here on Vietnam's central coast. Her home is now in Communist hands.

"We can't return because our native village is controlled by the other side and the government won't let us," explained another woman standing nearby.

They spoke about reprisals by government soldiers against those who might try to go back.

"If we went back, the government would have to guarantee us that there wouldn't be any arrests and that we wouldn't be disturbed by government soldiers," said the first woman.

"No more shooting at us and capturing us," put in a man. Asked if they meant they didn't care whether they lived under government or Communist control, the group of about 50 refugees gathered around said "Right, right", they just wanted to go home.

An old man recalled how, long ago, they left home. "The Americans used helicopters, and they forced us on board," he said. "We went with just our bare hands, couldn't carry any kind of property with us."

The people said they had been flown to the refugee camp where they still live in Quangngai Province. Fighting has been heavy there for the past month as Communist forces press down to the coast from their mountain base areas.

For the first year or so, the people said, they had U.S. and government assistance. But that stopped and they had to support themselves by buying tea from mountain tribesmen and selling it in city markets.

The current fighting has made this impossible, and now they said they would like to go home, where they could farm.

There were no government officials around during the interview, which may account for the unusual candor. Usually officials are present and one can never be sure how much refugees' anti-Communist statements are affected by this presence. In some cases people voice genuine anti-Communist sentiments even when officials are not present.

Another example of people wanting to return to areas not controlled by the government is the village of Hoaphung, near the beach three miles southwest of Danang.

"There are a thousand people in my village and 90 percent of them are pro-Vietcong," said the young village chief dejectedly.

He was interviewed in Danang, where he lives because it is too insecure in the village for him to spend the nights there. He goes to the village office every other day, sharing the dangerous job with other village officials who also live in Danang.

The chief, Nguyen Mui, 29, said he was dejected because one day last month, 80 families in the village tore down their houses and carted them to rebuild in a nearby Vietcong-controlled area.

They told him, the chief said, that they would prefer to live there because it was their home ground, from which they had been removed in the late 1960s when the Americans were pacifying and bulldozing the area.

Though they were not moved far from their home ground, the place they moved to had poor soil and they were crowded.

After this happened, Mui said, he was accused by his boss, the district chief, of being pro-Vietcong, which he says he is not. He said the district chief ordered him to use "any suitable measures" to get the people back.

"I was ordered to have my cadres go in and destroy all the houses that the people tore down and rebuilt in the new area," said Mui.

He said he didn't like to do that, because "All the village chiefs before me applied military measures to suppress the people but I'd rather apply social-welfare measures that make the people like me."

The problem was finally resolved last week, when the district chief decided that the people could be controlled in their new location by moving a platoon of airborne troops into the area.

Mui said that one of the first things the troops did in the area last week was to arrest four persons thought to have led the people in tearing down their houses and relocating them.

He said the sudden move by the 80 families was "part of a Vietcong campaign to destroy all the refugee camps and get the people to return to their native hamlets."

Now that the airborne troops are in his village, Mui said the district chief told him to "explain to the people the situation so as to help keep them from falling into the Communist scheme of aggression."

[From the New York Times, Oct. 29, 1973]

Both Sides Oppress Vietnamese Villagers

(By David K. Shipler)

Hoai My, South Vietnam, October 20.—A deceptive serenity cloaks this humble village near the central coast of South Vietnam. The Lai Giang River, broad and clear, moves lazily through the lush rice paddies to the sea. On its southern bank, mingling among banana trees and coconut palms, thatched houses stand interwined by meandering paths.

There is no barbed wire here, there are no sandbags or bunkers. But here is one place where the endless struggle of the Vietnam war is still being played out with the continuing agony of the last decade.

The people of Hoai My have just emerged from 18 months under Vietcong control; their village is occupied now by Government troops. But it has hardly been a step from darkness to sunlight, for they have found life under both painful and oppressive.

The Vietcong, who held the village from April, 1972, until about a month ago, extracted heavy taxes in the form of precious rice, villagers say. Despite the Paris cease-fire agreement's guarantee of freedom of movement, those who tried to leave were sent into the mountains for indoctrination and forced labor, according to the peasants.

On the other side, the Government continually defied the cease-fire, subjecting the village to periodic shelling. In late September, as the rice was nearly ready for harvest, the villagers say, Government forces launched air strikes and heavy artillery barrages, killing a number of civilians and destroying houses.

LOOTING LAID TO SOLDIERS

Government troops then moved into Hoai My, stealing water buffalo and rice and jewelry from the people, who complain that looting and harassment continue.

Six women of the village said that on October 18 several militiamen of the Government's 217th Regional Force Battalion, which is occupying Hoai My, entered the home of a pregnant woman named Mrs. Tho and took her rice.

"She tried to stop them," one of the women said, "and they beat her, and now she is ill."

A young man who is a member of a Government ranger battalion stationed elsewhere said that his wife, a village resident who fled during the fighting, returned yesterday to gather some of her belongings.

"The R.F. took the necklace and bracelet she was wearing," the ranger said. Tight-lipped and looking weakly at the ground, he had none of the normal swagger and pride of a ranger.

Hoai My is an hour's walk and then a boat ride from the nearest road, so there are no cars or trucks or motorbikes. In its remoteness it is beyond the reach of civilian government. Since the fighting, village officials have not dared return, and the prevailing force here is not the law but the gun.

CAUTION IN PUBLIC

People are afraid. Out on the dusty paths, where the young soldiers—many of them teen-agers—move back and forth ominously with their American-made M-16 rifles, the peasants speak cautiously. But in the coolness of their mud-and-thatch houses they tell their stories.

A middle-aged woman pointed to the sky visible through the skeleton of her roof. Part of it had been formed of sheets of corrugated metal, and Government troops, she said, tore most of them off to cover the outpost.

She paid heavy taxes during Vietcong control, she related, but at least she was able to farm.

"When the Government soldiers came," she continued, "they took the cows and buffaloes away or they killed them. They sold one cow for 20,000 piasters [$38] and one buffalo for 25,000, and we dare not say anything.

Without her buffalo she cannot plow her muddy fields, so she cannot grow the rice that South Vietnam desperately needs. "I do not know what to do now to earn a living, so I just buy rice and sell it in Bong Son," she said, referring to the nearby district capital on the main road.

As she spoke several villagers gathered outside to talk in quiet tones. A young woman related that a Government soldier was leading away her buffalo until she pleaded with him and bribed him with 5,000 piasters.

SECOND BRIBE DIDN'T WORK

Then another soldier came for the buffalo. She pleaded him to leave it and gave him 10,000 piasters. He accepted the money, she said, but he still took the animal away.

Suddenly the talk died. Outside a soldier in fatigues had appeared in the crowd. The people began to speak about innocent things such as the price of rice.

In a while, after the soldier moved away, another woman began. At the time the Government troops fought their way into the village, she said, her husband was in Bong Son, so she tried to flee, but before she could take her rice to Bong Son, the troops came and seized a lot of it.

Under the Vietcong the taking of rice was not so random, some villagers con-

tended, but a systematic, organized process. On a stalk of rice, you could pick the grain on top and the grain on the bottom, and all in between was theirs," said a sinewy man named Ho Ha.

"Life was terrible!" Mr. Ha spat the words. "All your body was marked with labor, Whenever they saw that you started to farm more, they would tax you more."

Phan Long, a farmer and carpenter, said the Vietcong made every peasant put a pot in his kitchen, "and every time you cook some rice, you put some in the pot." Once in a while they came by and picked up the rice," he said. "Just listening to the tax rise, you could not sleep for many nights."

UNTIL THEY DIE

Both Mr. Ha and Mr. Long told of the imprisonment of Government employes and those who tried to leave. "Those who worked for the Government are imprisoned by them in the mountains until they die of disease," said Mr. Long, who assessed that he was "very happy to live under the Government."

"We knew of people trying to leave the liberated area and were caught by them," Mr. Ha said. "They had to be indoctrinated in the mountains—for one month to many months—lectures all the time and hard work, like digging trenches."

Every few months, he said, a visiting troupe of singers and dancers would come to the village to put on performances as a way to indoctrinate people—"they are always about how good they are and how victorious they are."

Those who had sons or husbands in the army were placed in a special category by the Vietcong, according to Nguyen Thi Nien, the mother of an infantryman stationed in the Central Highlands. These families were often assigned special tasks.

Before the invasion by Government troops the area was shelled and bombed, Mrs. Nien said, adding: "Whenever a woman in the village was killed by artillery fire, they told us to take her body to the district village to protest and also to ask the authorities to return our sons to us.

"The women would take the body to a nearby army outpost," she said, "and the troops would say it was not their company that fired into your area, but it happens, our country is at war and people get killed."

MURKY ALLEGIANCES

Hoai My, deep in a traditionally strong Communist area, has long been subject to shifting control and shifting political sympathies, and the allegiances of the peasants are as murky as the muddy water that inundates the paddies at this time of year.

All that seems secondary now, for if the war was ever truly a battle for men's hearts and minds, it has lost this character here, degenerating into a fight over rice.

The Government offensive was initiated to deprive the Vietcong of rice just at harvest time, according to Capt. Dang Sanh Son, deputy commander of the Regional Force battalion in the village.

"The occupation of the area is a big setback for Communist forces in the province," the captain explained. "Their forces in the western part rely on the forces in this eastern side for a rice supply."

He does not talk about changing men's minds. He is proud of a night ambush he staged two nights ago in which six Vietcong soldiers were killed. He is proud of cutting off an irrigation canal that had been providing water for the rice in a few hamlets still under Vietcong control. "With no water their rice will die, and they will die with it," he said.

Without embarrassment, he reported "that when we moved in here, many people ran the other way." He noted too that his men had made their headquarters in the house of a Vietcong official whose wife stayed behind.

SOME SAY IT'S UNSAFE

Many villagers ran to the Government side, fleeing the fighting. While some have come back, others who check the village by day leave well before dark. They consider it unsafe, citing an unexploded bomb in a house and remarking that fighting still breaks out from time to time.

Captain Son wishes they would return, especially the officials who can tell

whether the women who trudge into the village every day to take out rice are residents or opportunistic outsiders. This is an issue that has produced friction and exchanges of charges of corruption between the Regional Force battalion in Hoai My and a Ranger unit across the river.

This morning a militiaman in a boat headed for Hoai My shouted to a boatload of women carrying rice the other way that the Rangers were stealing everyone's rice. He directed them to a path that would avoid the rangers.

The rangers say that the Regional Force is selling rice cheaply to anyone who gets to the village and that the ranger checkpoint across the river is designed to prevent outsiders from making off with the crop. Identity papers are examined, a ranger said, and if a nonresident is found, she is detained for a few hours and warned.

Beneath the surface of Hoai My's idyllic setting, the war continues on many levels. Asked when he thought it would end, Captain Son replied: "I will let that question be answered by the politicians. Our duty is just to protect our land and our native place. The more land under our control, the better. The fate of the country will be decided by others, not by us here."

[From the New York Times, Aug. 24, 1974]

VIETNAM VILLAGERS ARE VICTIMS OF BOTH SIDES

MAIMED OFTEN DON'T KNOW WHOSE MINE WAS RESPONSIBLE

(By David D. Shipler)

QUANG NGAI, SOUTH VIETNAM.—Just off the major highways along South Vietnam's central coast, the patterns of Government and Communist control shift and glide and overlap like shadows.

It is not strange, then, that the 14-year-old boy named Nguyen Hue does not know whose mine it was that blew off his leg two weeks ago. He was cutting firewood, as he had done many times before, in a place near Son Kim village, where his parents have a farm. The mine had been planted out of sight. By whom? "How can I know?" he asks.

Nor is Tran Dinh Du, 13, sure about the mine that took his right leg off below the knee as he was cutting grass to sell as feed. "I don't know," he says, "but people then told me it was ours."

What people mean by "ours" in Quang Ngai province is not always certain, for as a method of survival during this long civil war, the peasants have acquired an instinct for blending with the current political landscape, whatever genuine sympathies and allegiances they hold below the surface.

Many move quite easily from one political vocabulary to another, and in this kind of war there is no neutral terminology to describe the combatants.

Some American Quakers who run a medical clinic here for amputees like Nguyen Hue and Tran Dinh Du have observed that if a patient from the countryside is asked a question about "the Vietcong" or "the Communists" he will answer approximately in that lexicon. But if the same question is asked about "liberation forces," the "front" or the "Provisional Revolutionary Government," the answers come back in that terminology.

In the countryside around the district capital of Nghia Hanh, six miles southwest of Quang Ngai, the Vietcong have reportedly spread the word that they will refrain from shelling the town from 7 to 9 a.m. each day to give people a chance to go to the market.

As skillful and manipulative as this may appear, in some views the Vietcong have lost political sophistication in recent years. Their local cadres and guerrillas are younger, more hot-headed, less disciplined. Their methods of violence, once calculated and tailored to precise objectives, have acquired an erratic quality and a measure of unpredictability.

This partisan analysis, advanced by some American and South Vietnamese officials who have an interest in discrediting the Vietcong, sustains the notion that American military involvement did score a certain victory here after all by depleting the ranks of the Vietcong's experienced leadership, leaving them without mature people to carry on the struggle.

If it is true—and the truth of such matters is always elusive in Vietnam—it may explain some of the senseless cruelty.

When Nguyen Cho was very small, his father was killed in his ricefield by Government troops. "I don't know where his grave is," says the boy, who is now 13.

As he grew up, he met Vietcong guerrillas many times. "Once they told me to go away with them—'the revolution will take care of you,' they said. I told them I didn't want to go."

Two months ago, while he and friend named Tu were watching over a grazing cow in a familiar field, Cho walked up to a guava tree from which he had picked fruit once before. Suddenly, an explosion ripped through the lower part of his left leg, killing Tu and leaving Cho bleeding on the ground.

"The Communists had tied a mine to the bottom of the tree," Cho explained. "I knew immediately it was the Communists because as I lay on the ground there, villagers came and were about to take me away when the Communists came and told the people not to take me, but to pay for the mine before taking me away.

"I begged them to release me. They told me and the villagers, 'pay for the mine or we'll take this boy to the mountains.' I begged them, telling them I was an orphan. They finally agreed, but they said they would get payment from the lady I worked for."

Cho figures that the guerrillas were angry to have wasted a mine on a boy when it was evidently intended for Government troops.

"The war is crueler than before," said Pham Cong, chief of the village council of Binh Thanh, 12 miles north of Quang Ngai city. "They have more weapons now," he said of the Vietcong, "and they have changed their policy. They don't spend much time teaching or giving propaganda lectures. They are very tough with those not on their side."

At the edge of Binh Thanh village, not more than 200 yards off the main Government highway, Route 1, there is a settlement of refugees who get frequent visits from the Vietcong.

In broad daylight after the Government militiamen had gone off to lunch, some Vietcong guerrillas, firing small arms, came to the periphery of the settlement. A burst of gunfire came from behind a row of houses. It was answered with the thump of a Government mortar round fired from the highway.

Villagers raced for their homemade bunkers. More automatic weapons fire. Whoomp! Another mortar round. Silence.

[From the Washington Post, Aug. 7, 1974]

'PEOPLE GRABBING' SEEN AS AIM OF VC ATTACKS

(By Philip A. McCombs)

DANANG, August 5.—During a visit to the Vietcong a few months ago, I sat at dusk beside a trail in the high mountains southwest of here, sipping spiced tea from a canteen and gazing 20 miles across the dark plain at the evening's first twinkling lights in Danang.

It was quite a view, and my Vietcong guides fell silent for a time as we rested in what seemed an atmosphere of utter peace.

Suddenly, about three weeks ago, that same vast coastal plain and the lower valleys of the high brooding mountains erupted in spasms of war as Communist forces attacked four important population centers nestled in against the mountains, all located an easy hour's drive from Danang.

At least 20,000 refugees have come out of the valleys and across the dusty plain, and 25,000 more persons have either been or are about to be lost to the Communists or liberated by them, according to your point of view.

The fighting is still going on and masses of people are still being rooted out of their homes to be claimed by one side or the other.

Accordingly to observers here, this is the largest-scale fighting in the Danang area since the Vietnam cease-fire went into effect 18 months ago.

In addition, it is the first time since the cease-fire that regular units of the North Vietnamese army have been committed to battles near Danang. Since these are the best units that the Communists have, their presence is taken to mean that, whatever the Communists intend to accomplish here, they are very serious about it.

There are nearly as many theories about the reasons for the latest series of attacks as there are observers: The Communists want to attack Danang, they want to cut off highway 1 stretching all the way to Saigon, they are "practicing" for a general offensive next year.

All of these theories may be true, but there seem to be two more important reasons for the attacks.

First, they appear to be designed to "grab people" to live in the sparsely-populated Vietcong areas. Second, there is the Vietcong's own explanation that the attacks are in retaliation for continuing cease-fire violations by government forces in the area.

During my visit to the Vietcong in April, they were careful to steer conversations away from their own military plans, although they spent a good deal of time accusing the Saigon government of invading their territory or shelling it in violation of the cease-fire agreement.

They were also careful to avoid any suggestion that North Vietnamese units were in the area or that northerners might have any kind of an influential role in the Vietcong political and administrative setup.

Instead, the Vietcong emphasized their politcial idealism, their hatred of the "American imperialists," and the tremendous effort they are making in the zone they control to open schools and hospitals and bring about economic development—in short, to get life back to normal for the people whose lives had been shattered by so many years of war.

But things seemed far from normal south of here last week.

The scene was a stunning spectacle of war in sharp contrast to the relative peacefulness of a few months ago.

The sound of bombs and artillery explosions came from all sides. A dozen spirals of dirty black, brown and white smoke dotted the plain like whirlwinds, marking the targets of government air strikes or Communist artillery shells fired from deep in the mountains.

You could look up toward the green mountains and see jets darting earthward out of the clouds, and the explosions of their bombs and rockets on the hillsides.

The "people grabbing" efforts that have followed these attacks have been described by refugees here.

Refugees from the Queson Valley said the Vietcong had come into their villages before dawn and announced over loudspeakers that they would bring trucks later to transport the people deep into the "liberated zone."

"They set up checkpoints to keep people from leaving the village," said one 19-year-old girl. "About half the population was able to escape anyway."

Another refugee said the man with the loudspeaker had a northern accent, which is quite different from the accent of the people here on Vietnam's central coast.

The refugees made it clear that they were not as much afraid of the fighting as they were of being picked up by the Vietcong and taken away.

"I was afraid they would take me into the mountains of their zone," said an old woman. "I'm afraid I would starve there because I heard they make you live on a collective farm."

An old man said: "We are all afraid of the Vietcong. You must work hard for them hauling supplies, and they don't pay you anything."

Not far away in the mountains, in a formerly government-controlled area in southern Ducduc District, the government has completely lost contract with another 2,000 people and the soldiers who were with them.

Reports coming out of the area say that the Communists are loading these 12,000 people on boats and trucks and taking them several miles south and deeper into the mountains near the old district capital of Hiepduc. I remember that area very well, because it was near my deepest point of penetration into the Vietcong zone during my two-week visit with the Communists.

It was a pleasant enough place, seemed firmly under Communist control, and economic development, mainly the reopening of long-closed ricelands, seemed to be taking place.

But I remember noticing that there were very few people in the area—a few merchants here and there, a few peasants working in the fields.

It was a sharp contrast to the lands controlled by the government or in contested areas on the flatlands to the east, where thousands of people lived in crowded huts along the roads and where the fields were packed with hundreds of working peasants.

The grand hopes and plans of economic development voiced by the Vietcong officials seemed somehow out of key with the rather barren landscape.

Should a large number of people be brought to that area, an economic boom might certainly follow.

The Vietcong said that only about 100 people a month moved into their zone, a small trickle for a province as large as Quangnam with a total population of about 600,000.

The trickle was so small, the Vietcong said, because government secret police and military operations prevented the people from crossing over.

About 20 miles east of Danang, in another area that has been a hot spot in recent weeks, about 13,000 people are surrounded by Communist forces in the town of Thuongduc.

The fighting has been so intense that helicopters for several days were not able to make it in even to evacuate the wounded. The government has been able to maintain radio contact with the garrison there, however.

The second reason for the attack—government cease-fire violations—was advanced by Vietcong spokesman Vo Dong Giang in Saigon the other day.

In April the Vietcong claimed that the government had shelled at random in their area of control and had, some months after the cease-fire, set up a series of hilltop outposts in Vietcong territory.

They also said that government troops had conducted many battalion-sized and smaller sweeps through Vietcong territory in violation of the cease-fire.

The government reply to these claims is that it has done nothing that was not a direct response to Communist cease-fire violations.

Well informed, non-Comunist sources have confirmed that the government did, in fact, set up hilltop outposts after the cease-fire went into effect, and that this was a military measure intended to disrupt Communist efforts to gather the important rice crop in the Queson Valley area 20 miles south of here.

Since the cease-fire agreement stipulates that "the armed forces of the two South Vietnamese parties shall remain in place," setting up the outposts would seem to violate the agreement.

The most purely retaliatory act in the past several weeks of fighting appears to be the Communist shelling of Ducduc district town located on the plain just over the mountains from the Queson Valley.

The town has been virtually leveled. About 600 houses have been destroyed or damaged. A total of about 9,000 shells fell on the town, sometimes as many as 600 a day.

Some 8,000 refugees, almost the entire population of the town, filed to Danang. This weekend, shells were still falling sporadically on Ducduc, and some refugees were returning for their possessions.

SAIGON FORCES RETAKE 2 BASES NEAR DANANG

SAIGON, August 5.—Counterattacking South Vietnamese Rangers today captured 2 of the 11 outposts lost in weekend fighting on the approaches to Danang, but military spokesmen said two key towns there are still in "imminent danger."

Government officers in the field said casualties in the fighting were 208 Communist-led soldiers and 30 government troops killed, 98 government troops wounded and 25 missing.

New fighting was reported on a broad front west and south of Danang.

Military sources in the field said the recapture of two outposts near Ducduc and Thuongduc does not lessen the threat to the towns from units of the Vietcong 511th Division and the North Vietnamese 324th Division.

South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu said in Saigon that the fighting along the northern coast was the beginning of a general Communist offensive. He compared it to the 1968 Tet offensive declaring: "They think the allies can no longer help us."

GIS' VIETNAM TERRAIN ABANDONED—COMMUNISTS HOLD OLD BATTLEFIELDS

SAIGON, August 5 (UPI)—Two years after American troops stopped fighting major battles in the Vietnam war, almost all their famous battlefields are in the hands of the Communists.

Hamburger Hill at the edge of the Ashau Valley, where one officer ordered 12 charges up the slopes for a "gallant victory," lies for behind Communist lines.

Khesanh is a North Vietnamese airfield and missile ground. Conthien is a Vietcong political stronghold.

U.S. commanders during the Vietnam war turned out to be mistaken in their belief that the Communists never fought to hold land. Today, the Communists control more land than they did in 1965 when the Marines landed at Danang.

Only one of the famous American battlefields of Vietnam, a coastal enclave

around Chulai Base, 335 miles north of Saigon, can be visited by Westerners today, but it is surrounded on three sides by the Vietcong.

American troops entered the "Iron Triangle" Communist stronghold 15 miles north of Saigon in 1967 for a highly publicized victory, but now the area is dominated by the Communists again.

War Zone C, 60 miles northwest of Saigon and the target for operation Junction City in 1967—another "victory" which claimed 282 American lives—today is a major North Vietnamese army recreation and rest area.

The first American battlefield stand was made by the 1st Cavalry Division in the Iadrang Valley of the Central Highlands, 280 miles north of Saigon, against the best of the North Vietnamese army in November 1965.

The Americans claimed victory but the valley today is firmly under control of North Vietnamese forces.

The last American stand came in the summer of 1972 at Artillery Base Pace, 75 miles northwest of Saigon. It also lies deep behind Communist lines now. The Vietcong's de facto capital, Locninh, is close by.

In 1967, U.S. paratroopers fought their way up Dakto Hill, losing 325 men.

The troops ate hot Thanksgiving meals that November even as the battle raged, but the Communists eventually won the hill and control it today.

[From the New York Times, Nov. 30, 1974]

JAMMED CITIES POSE A LONG-TERM PERIL TO SAIGON GOVERNMENT

By David K. Shipler)

SAIGON, SOUTH VIETNAM.—The urbanization of Vietnamese society is proving to be one of the most durable products of the American involvement in the Vietnam war, and one that contains acute political and economic liabilities for the South Vietnamese Government.

Millions of rural families were pushed from the countryside during the years of warfare, especially by the intensive American bombing and shelling, and were drawn to the cities by the concentrations of jobs and the short-lived economic boom at American military installations.

In a rapid and dramatic migration the proportion of the population living in cities jumped from 15 percent to 45 percent between 1960 and the final American withdrawal 19 months ago.

Now the cities are swollen, improverished and unwieldly. Although they lie beyond the reach of direct Communist control, they provide breeding places for anti-Government sentiment and hold the potential for political instability. Since the American withdrawal they have become sites of widespread joblessness, declining living standards and increasingly vivid contrasts between rich and poor.

IMPACT AND GOAL

As a result the immense American impact may ultimately help undermine the major American goal: the retention of a stable non-Communist government for South Vietnam.

Saigon is now one of the world's densest cities, more so than Tokyo, New York or London.

Cam Ranh, a seaside town of 3,000 in 1960, exploded into a ramshackle city of 115,000 by 1972 as refugees settled around the gates of a vast American base, building shacks out of ammunition crates and the debris of war.

In the same period Da Nang, also the site of large American installations, rose from 104,000 to 458,000. Nha Trang from 49,000 to 206,000, Can Tho from 49,000 to 171,000.

This "false" urbanization was described as "one of the hidden costs of the war" in a 1972 study by James E. Bogle, a planner who was under contract to the United States Government.

"The United States, in its pursuit of the war, has accomplished two objectives which will affect development in both Vietnams," he wrote. "First, it has defeated the Mao Tse-tung theory of a revolt against urban centers by the urbanization of the people of South Vietnam, and, second, in bombing North Vietnam, it has forced decentralization of the urban centers in that country.

"It is not hard to speculate on which of the two Vietnams may emerge politically and economically the stronger. The republic's gross urban problems lie before it, while North Vietnam should be much better able to cope with fewer urban problems."

The war has always had priority, and neither the vast American aid program nor the Government in Saigon has placed much emphasis on urban ills.

Although Washington has occasionally financed urban-planning studies, there is no urban specialist among the array of American technicians and advisers still in South Vietnam, according to John F. Hogan Jr., press attaché at the embassy. Little money goes to urban programs.

'ONLY SOLUTION': LAND

Part of the reason lies in the fundamental economic theory that seems to guide both Washington and Saigon: that once peace comes a great tide of reverse migration will sweep jobless urban residents back to the countryside, where they can produce the food, rubber and timber considered essential for economic recovery.

Th main exponent of this assumption is Dr. Phan Quang Dan, Deputy Premier for social welfare and land development, in whose office stand four six-foot-high filing cabinets stuffed with applications from families that want to return to rural areas.

"They have lost their jobs," Dr. Dan said. "There were no factories, no industries. Just the sheer presence of American troops, American enterprises, attracted them to the cities. The only practical solution is to give them a piece of land. I do not see any other solution unless you bring back the G.I.'s."

Dr. Dan's view is widely held, and the Government has made deliberate decisions not to try to make the cities more attractive. Electricity and running water have not been extended into vast new Saigon neighborhoods of shacks on stilts above canals and marshland.

"We think Saigon is growing too fast, said Bui Huu Tuan, Deputy Minister of Public Works. "Everything we do now is to stop this growth. We cannot do nothing—nothing is impossible. We do the minimum to keep down the political pressure in Saigon."

"Right now we do not destroy any slum area," he explained in a recent interview. "We leave them there, we forget them. We do not provide them with water or power—we forget them."

Yet Mr. Tuan is part of a small corps of officials convinced that migration back to the countryside will be limited. Urbanization must be reckoned with and harnessed to promote industrial expansion, he believes, so he is interested in building up smaller cities where agriculturally related industry is needed.

Officials believe that since the American withdrawal the flow to the cities has slowed to a trickle. Despite the continued fighting and the normal trends of developing countries toward some urbanization, there has even been some reverse migration.

Cam Ranh, for example, appears to have lost population. It has the air of an old mill town whose only industry closed down a few years back. Along the roads and paths outside the former base some shacks stand empty. Some families have been accepted into the Government's resettlement program.

It is also easy to find those who will stay in the cities. They are everywhere, many of them children who barely remember the farm.

CENTERS OF OPPOSITION

The cities have become the centers of political opposition to President Nguyen Van Thieu, and while Western intelligence analysts see no evidence of an increase in Vietcong political activity there, the Communists have made little secret of their delight over the growing unrest.

Governmental corruption becomes more infuriating as economic fortunes decline in the cities, and it is the Roman Catholic anticorruption front that poses the greatest threat to Mr. Thieu. Its leaders and sources of support are in the cities, as are the constituencies of most of the opposition legislators. Mr. Thieu and his political allies have done least well in balloting in city precincts.

Many Vietnamese believe that urban life has changed their society irrevocably by loosening family ties, bringing crime and drug addiction and sowing suspicion among neighbors.

Housing is bad. The Government has built only 800 subsidized apartments in the last year, most priced well above the means of poor families.

To many, the city seems alien, Western, un-Vietnamese. A young man said sadly: "The Confucian basis of the country, which respected intellectuals and did not respect merchants and soldiers—now that is reversed. A lot of people are attracted by the city. They will not do the old thing again."

[From the New York Times, Oct. 15, 1974]

Intricate Street Games for Saigon's Children

(By David K. Shipler)

Saigon, South Vietnam, September 14.—Eight-year-old Dao Chich, whose nickname means "Burglar," holds a sandal up to one eye and squints seriously along the sole, taking careful aim at a small cluster of rubber bands that he and his two opponents have put on the sidewalk about 30 feet away.

With a sudden snap of his wrist, he sends the sandal skimming just above the pavement, sliding precisely into the little stack of rubber bands and spraying them across the concrete. Dao Chich has won again. He scampers down the sidewalk, picks up the rubber bands and stuffs them into his pocket.

Saigon is a city of street games. Along the broad boulevards, in the quiet side streets, deep among the labyrinths of lanes and alleys that lace the city, children play with what they have, making ingenious games of the simplest ingredients: sandals and rubber bands, cans and battle caps, chopsticks and coins, corncobs and sticks, marbles and stones, broken bits of brick.

SANDAL-THROWING GAMES

Sandal-throwing is the base for a whole family of games with numerous variations. Sometimes instead of rubber bands the targets are bottle caps or cans.

In one popular version called tat lon—the words mean "throw" and "can"—a can is placed inside a small circle drawn on the street. One boy, who is It, stands by the can.

Others try to knock the can away with their sandals. Whoever succeeds must then run and pick up his shoe before the boy who is It can get to the can and put it back in the circle. The child who loses is It for the next round.

Coins are used in another category of games, and there is hardly a residential block in Saigon where, if you listen carefully, you cannot hear the clink of coins against concrete. The basic idea is to throw your coin at your opponent's. If you hit it—which these small Saigon marksmen do with regularity—you keep it.

The variations go on and on. The Government has conveniently made coins about the size of a quarter that are worth only 1½ cents, so coin games flourish.

As for marble games, there is dan lo, in which a little hole is dug and each player tries to shoot into the hole first. Whoever wins has the first turn to try to hit someone else's marble. "If a boy hits my marble three times, then he can pick up mine," explains Xuan, a 13-year-old.

There is nam lo, "five holes" which is played something like croquet. Each player shoots the marble into one hole after another, and whoever gets to the fifth hole first can then hit the others' marbles.

And there is what the children call dan mo, which is a bit like the opening shots of billiards. Nine marbles are placed inside a triangle drawn on the sidewalk, each player trying to knock the marbles out with a marble of his own. The word "dan" means "marble" and "mo," pronounced "maw," is simply a Vietnamese imitation of the French word "mort"—dead marbles.

GIRLS' PLAY DIFFERS

"Do girls ever play these games?" a bunch of boys is asked. They hoot with laughter.

"Girls play marbles very well," says Thanh who is 13. "They couldn't get a marble into a hole 10 meters big."

Girls play a game like jacks, but with chopsticks. Nguven Thi Diep, a 12-year old, agreed to show a curious American how it was done.

She squatted on the sidewalk, threw a ball into the air with her left hand, let it bounce once and caught it. While that was happening, she did fancy things with five pair of chopsticks.

First, she held them in a bunch and turned them over in her two hands twice. On the next throw, she tossed them on the ground, picked up two with her left hand and caught the ball in the same hand.

Then, as the ball was in the air again, she slapped the chopsticks twice against her left palm and caught the ball. Then she tapped them twice on the sidewalk and caught the ball. Then she tossed them down again, picked up two with her left hand, put them under her right arm and caught the ball.

Then she began again, doing everything in threes, then fours, fives, sixes. The ball flew higher and higher, the chopsticks clicked and clicked. Even the boys watched in admiration.

Soccer in Saigon is like stickball in New York. The goals are made of piled rocks. The ball is often so deflated that it seems soggy when it bounces. The players get tangled up in neighbors' laundry, and sometimes in neighbors' children. But the boys who play are usually very good, and some go from the streets to the ranks of professionals.

The war creeps into some of the street games, which are played by children who have never known a time of peace in their short lives. Some have fights with stones, and they call it combat.

Others line up in teams, one on either side of Cong Ly Street and hurl corncobs at each other. One side is the Vietcong and the other is Vietnam. The corncobs are their grenades.

Recently a 12-year-old boy who ran across the street to retrieve a corncob was hit by a car and killed. The kids on Cong Ly Street don't play the game much anymore.

[From the New York Times, Jan. 22, 1975]

Heavy Psychological Toll Is Half-Hidden but Shattering Result of the Long Vietnam War

(By James M. Markham)

Saigon, South Vietnam, January 20—An outsider in South Vietnam is forcefully struck by the appearance of normality almost everywhere. In the bustling cities, in the beautiful, expansive countryside, people conduct their lives in seeming obliviousness to the war.

After decades of foreign intervention and civil conflict, this may be one of the people's most precious achievements, but it appears to be extremely costly.

The mental stress of a war whose weapons have been as much psychological as military has been enormous, and since the uneasy cease-fire of January, 1973, it appears to have become even more intense.

"In the beginning there was great hope for peace," a Saigon psychiatrist said, "and now the despair is greater because there had been hope."

He said that after it became apparent that the fighting would continue, a number of women with draft-age sons came for treatment for acute depression. They had hoped that their 17-year-olds and 18-year-olds would be spared.

AGONIZING CROSSROADS

Among teen-agers reaching the agonizing crossroads of deferment or of conscription until age 43, a rise in the number of cases of schizophrenia has been noted, the psychiatrist reported. In Europe and America the onset of analogous crises usually comes much later, he added.

Dr. Tran Minh Tung, a former Minister of Health and a pioneer in mental health in South Vietnam, agreed that the sundering of the cease-fire and the continuing war has had a dispiriting effect on "the mind of the people."

"Maybe the people have become more war-weary, more pessimistic about the outcome, even though the people were very blasé about the prospect of peace," he suggested. "But still we did entertain some hope."

Dr. Cao Van Le, who runs the country's one overloaded mental institution, at Bien Hoa, north of Saigon, believes the sharp economic decline after the American disengagement added importantly to the level of stress, with the patient load tripling in a year.

Biet Noa has slightly fewer than 2,000 resident patients, the bulk of them psychotics who became uncontrollably violent at home, Dr. Le said, and about 20 outpatients appear daily for a month's drugs.

DRUG SUPPLY REDUCED

The American pullout has reduced the drug supply, so shock therapy is widely used to make up the difference. Aside from helping to train a few doctors, the United States has given no assistance to South Vietnam's fledgling mental-health program.

A. Terry Rambo, a Vietnamese-speaking American who, as a social anthropologist, has made several studies of stress, has noted "much more open display

of violence—fist fights in the streets, to a small degree violent crime, and suicides." Such behavior is extremely unusual for Vietnamese, who are disciplined from infancy to smother aggressive impulses in personal relations.

Mr. Rambo and others believe that the greatest psychological pressures are on people in "contested" zones in rural areas where control passes back and forth between the Communist and Saigon sides.

In a study two years ago on the people of Ben Suc, who were uprooted from their village—believed to be sympathetic to the Vietcong—by the United States Army in 1967, it was found that the level of strain was significantly higher than ever recorded in studies of other nations and cultures.

Sixty-five percent of those interviewed, the new study reported, "register above the point which, by the clinical standards of North America, would be considered an indicator of need for consultation and very probably for therapeutic aid."

It is noteworthy that the Army operation in 1967 split up families that, for a variety of reasons, have not been reunited. Students of Vietnamese behavior believe that the enduring institution of the family—the focus of the most intense loyalties—is probably the strongest guarantee against psychic and social disintegration.

Discussing earlier problems, Dr. Tung, the former Health Minister, recounted that after he had helped the villagers from some war-torn Mekong Delta districts, he soon had a flood of patients from the area, mostly poor people who made the long trip in hope of relief.

They complained of bombing and shelling attacks, he said, and they were worried about their teen-agers conscripted into militia units, about a husband abducted by the Vietcong or a brother jailed on suspicion of helping the Communists.

"They suffer," the doctor said. "They think this is fate. They do not blame the officials. They do not blame the Communists."

Gary D. Murfin, a political scientists at the University of Hawaii, is completing a study on the long-term effects of the dislocation of 10 million of South Vietnam's 19 million people from 1965 to 1974. He argues that forced relocation for political reasons generates such psychological strain that people become immune to appeals to loyalty.

Another Saigon psychiatrist said that many psychotic patients appeared to have trouble establishing a national identity.

"Some say they are French, some Americans, other nationalist—but what is it, a nationalist?" he said. "They feel the other side is perhaps more Vietnamese—that it has a stronger identity in psychological terms."

"But," the psychiatrist added, "the other side is also more fatiguing, displined, demanding."

"Almost all my paranoid schizophrenics believe they are being followed by the C.I.A. or the political police," he continued. "The simple, uneducated ones talk about the political police, the younger, more educated ones about the C.I.A."

He maintained that the suspiciousness bred by civil war had led the Vietnamese to develop "a total loss of confidence in one another" apart from the family.

Even a casual observer can see manifestations of this suspiciousness: a bureaucracy in which no one trusts another to do his job, a Government that sees most signs of opposition as Communist plots, the governed who rarely believe their leaders and who concoct the most fantastic, Byzantine explanations for the simplest events.

"We live very much in an atmosphere of distrust," Dr. Tung remarked. "We have become more or less paranoid in this war."

[From the New York Times, Nov. 13, 1973]

VILLAGERS LINGERING IN MISERY IN 'SAFE' SITE NEAR SAIGON

(By David K. Shipler)

BINH HOA, SOUTH VIETNAM.—It has been nearly seven years since American troops suddenly surrounded the prosperous village of Ben Suc, forced its residents into a barren make-shift camp 20 miles away and then burned, bombed and bulldozed the village out of existence.

The campaign was part of Operation Cedar Falls, an effort to end once and for all the Vietcong's resilient stronghold in the Iron Triangle, an area of forests and settlements northwest of Saigon.

That day—Jan. 8, 1967—proved pivotal in the lives of the villagers, but not in the way the Americans had foreseen.

The people of Ben Suc were told that they were being rescued from Vietcong domination, that they would be moved to a "safe" location, that life would be better. It was a struggle to win their hearts and minds, the Americans explained.

Now the villagers are forgotten people, landless and poor, living in rows of cramped concrete houses that are jammed together along a few dusty paths here in Binh Hoa, 10 miles north of Saigon.

'A VERY EASY LIFE'

"In Ben Suc we had a very easy life," said a strong-faced woman. "A lot of rice, rice fields, fish, a lot of vegetables near the forest, a lot of brick houses with red tiles."

"Who wanted to go away? Nobody at all," she told an American visitor, adding: "Your troops came and told us to get out, and if we did not go they threatened to shoot at us and burn our houses."

Now most of the villagers have no land to farm. Those who grew up depending only on the strength of their backs must reply on others to hire them by the day at tiny wages.

In Ben Suc they had been secure in the abundance and stability of a rich agricultural community; now, in desperation, some have slid into the orbit of Saigon, commuting to the city, subjecting themselves to the profound uncertainties of the deteriorating urban economy.

"I have not had work for a long time," said Lam Van Ba, a muscular man who had been a farmer in Ben Suc but who was sitting idle in front of his small house.

"Life was easy there," he said. "You have so much rice at home you feel very comfortable. You are not afraid of anything. If you stop working for a month you are not afraid. But here if you stop only for a week you worry very much."

DOLLAR A DAY FOR A WHILE

He has worked as a mason's helper, earning about a dollar a day. Recently, as the prices of concrete and steel have risen sharply, construction has been curtailed, and he and other villagers have gone without jobs.

"Life is very bad," Mr. Ba said. "The price of rice is very high. Many families eat just once a day."

The woman with the strong face commented: "We are very sad. The pay is nothing. We have barely enough rice, and not even enough money to buy wood for the kitchen."

Some pride has gone out of the people too. One house stands empty, abandoned by a family that fled to escape deep debts. "They were honest and sincere people—just unlucky," a neighbor explained.

No Government official has visited the people of Ben Suc for years, they say. Soon after the village was destroyed, the Government had the dingy concrete houses built here and it provided rice for six months.

Then officials came to take a census, the villagers recall, and others gave out old clothing, some so tattered that it had to be thrown away. Since that time, they say, there has been nothing.

A few people have been caught in a kind of reverse land reform. Seven years ago Government bulldozers cleared away some forest so that a little farming could be done. Villagers worked the land, digging up stumps and roots and plowing and planting.

THE OWNERS REAPPEAR

While some people paid a modest rent, others were given plots by the Government and paid nothing. Now that the land has become productive, its owners are arriving to take it back.

"Mine was taken away last year," said Vo Van Lung. "I was given 1,000 piasters [less than $2] by the owner for my labor, for cultivating the piece of land."

He charges that the "owners" recently bought the land from Government officials. "They are relatives or friends of the district chief," he said. "They are rich and they are powerful, so how can you complain?"

Now Mr. Lung, who has six children, works occasionally for a dollar a day clearing weeds or helping to harvest somebody else's crops.

He does not blame the Americans who forced him from his village. "It is because of war," he said. "It is because of the situation. You have to accept it."

This spirit of resignation is common, but not universal, among the people of Ben Suc.

When an American walks through the settlement, he is introduced to Nguyen Van Loi, 9 years old, and is told that American troops killed his mother and father when Ben Suc was destroyed.

FOUR SONS WERE SLAIN

An elderly woman says angrily, "My mother was 80 years old, and one American hit her on her head with a stick!" Phan Thi Dep tells how her four sons, aged 14 to 18, were killed that morning as they worked in their rice fields. "My daughter survived because she went to the field late on that day," she added. "She had to cook rice."

Still, smiles seem to come easily. "Smiling is a good omen for the future," said Nguyen Thi So. "Even if you have nothing in your stomach now, you smile in the hope of having something in your stomach tomorrow."

A woman said, "If you run out of tears, then you have to smile."

In the book "The Village of Ben Suc," Jonathan Schell describes in detail the American attack, ending with an account of the final bombing of the ruins, "as though, having once decided to destroy it, we were now bent on annihilating every possible indication that the village of Ben Suc had ever existed."

If that was the goal it was not attained, for Ben Suc is still part of the people who lived there; they want to go back. "Maybe we will get back when we die," one old woman said to another. "Maybe they will take us back and bury us."

[From the New York Times, July 6, 1974]

WHERE WAR IS LIFE: TALES OF THE VIETNAM DELTA

(By James M. Markham)

ONG CHUONG ISLAND, SOUTH VIETNAM—In the delta, it is the war that defines life. The war is ancient, ordinary. But other things happen in the delta. Some are not so ordinary.

For example, on June 6, on this placid riverine island, 20 elderly men cut off the tips of one of their little fingers in front of a large crowd. Then, using the severed fingertips, they wrote "bat khuat"—"indomitable"in their own blood on large white banners.

A photograph of the 20 fingertips, encased like cuff links in a small tray, was "respectfully" sent to President Nguyen Van Thieu in Saigon.

This grisly act of defiance was in keeping with the sanguinary reputation of the Hoa Hao, a reformist Buddhist sect born of the social and psychological dislocations of French colonialism.

The Hoa Hao, who once slit French and Vietminh throats with equal pleasure, are no longer what they used to be: a law totally unto themselves. Divided into at least three major factions, the Hoa Hao spend much of their energy fighting each other. A string of underworld-style killings of Hoa Hao dignitaries remains unresolved.

POTENTIAL FOR HAVOC

But the finger-chopping exercise was an ominous reminder of the Hoa Hao's potential for causing havoc. And the Government respects their virulent anti-Communism.

So, after having refused for some time to meet a series of seven demands, President Thieu on June 21 flew to Can Tho and huddled with Luong Trong Tuong, leader of the most vociferous faction.

Mr. Thieu wisely bent on enough of the seven demands—increasing the number of draft-deferred Hoa Hao officials, granting three-day leaves to Hoa Hao soldiers on their religious holiday, promising to increase the number of Hoa Hao district and province chiefs—to mollify the militants on Ong Chuong.

But some of the Hoa Hao are still restless.

"We have fought against the Communists since 1945 and throughout the delta are our bones and blood," said Ta Anh Dang, a rigid-faced farmer and one of those who chopped off their fingertips. "Hundreds of thousands of Hoa Hao have died. But we are still mistreated."

The rambling delta district town of Ben Tranh has a cause célèbre.

On Oct. 25, 1973, Le Van Duyen, a well-to-do farmer who had been waging a

one-man crusade against corruption in the district, was shot to death in his home in the early morning.

Eventually, three local militiamen confessed to the murder, saying that they had been urged to do it by Lieut. Col. Ngo Quang Thi, the district chief, who had been the main target of Mr. Duyen's lonely campaign.

The colonel, the three militiamen and a fourth suspect were all charged with the crime by a civilian court in My Tho, but then the case was switched to the main delta military court in Can Tho.

About 60 people from Ben Tranh came down in trucks for the trial but were dismayed when the military prosecutor, instead of prosecuting, exculpated the colonel. "Such a handsome man could not be a killer," he said.

A five-man military panel headed by a civilian judge pronounced the defendants not guilty of the murder of "the saint of Ben Tranh," as Mr. Duyen is now known.

But Saigon newspapers, outraged and incredulous at the verdict, took up the case. To calm the uproar, the powers that be decided to retry the case in the principal military court in Saigon.

"We will be very happy to go to Saigon to witness another trial," said one Ben Tranh resident. "But we are afraid it will be the same thing again. It is a shame for Vietnam."

On Route 4 in Ben Tranh, local people have built a large concrete shrine in memory of Mr. Duyen. A street has been named after him and, a statue of the old man—in his peasant's white pajamas and conical hat—is planned.

In the shade of towering trees behind a pleasant pagoda in Cao Lanh, Ho Chi Minh's father, Nguyen Sanh Huy, lies buried.

Outside Cao Lanh, few know this. In the town itself not everyone knows.

"Elderly revolutionary," says the inscription on his gray stone monument, which local people say was built by the Vietminh in 1954 just before their "regroupment" to North Vietnam under the provisions of the Geneva accords.

Openly contemptuous of the French colonial authorities, Nguyen Sanh Huy was dismissed from a prefectural post in central Vietnam in the first decade of this century. He became a solitary wanderer—just as his son would.

An old man in Cao Lanh who has gathered a small oral history of the later years of the roaming Mandarin says that once—the year must have been 1911—father and son met in Saigon, where the man who was to become Ho Chi Minh was working in the Citroën garage on the Rue Despagne.

"BE A MAN"

The future leader of Vietnamese Communism wept when he saw the poverty of his father, the story goes. Angered, Nguyen Sanh Huy beat his son with a rattan stick, shouting, "You are a man, so be a man and don't shed tears like a girl."

Nguyen Sanh Huy came to Cao Lanh several years before his death in 1929. He practiced Chinese herbal medicine, lodging with his patients but never accepting money from them.

"He was well loved by all the people," said one 73-year-old man who remembers him. "He was very nice to children and would always pat them on the head."

Mr. Huy was originally buried in an unmarked grave. But after the Vietminh built the impressive monument, his fame began to spread.

Local people say that for many years at Tet, the lunar new year, someone stole into the graveyard and repainted the monument. Soldiers would wait in ambush for the mysterious Tet visitor but never trapped him.

Now, however, the grave has fallen into disrepair. Some people say that angry soldiers dislodged the stones at its base.

The coconut monk has piled up a bunch of firewood in the shape of a wide U and has threatened to incinerate himself if the police raid his island.

The problem is that the police, as part of a nationwide crackdown on draft dodging, have been checking the papers of the monk's 3,000 followers. Many are deserters.

Some people think that the coconut monk, who lives on an ornate floating pagoda off Phoenix Island in the middle of the Mekong River, is a little nuts.

"I have just sent another registered letter to President Thieu asking him to let me go abroad to visit Mao Tse-tung and Pham Van Dong to tell them to work for the peace of the country," bellowed the tiny, scrawny monk through an intercom that links the pagoda and the island. Pham Van Dong is Premier of North Vietnam.

The police do not seem to know what to do, although their paper-checking has already driven several hundred deserters to other havens.

[From the New York Times, Nov. 17, 1973]

War and Peace Side by Side in a Mekong Delta Hamlet

(By James F. Clarity)

Cai Lay, South Vietnam. November 4.—The people who live in the villages and hamlets of this lush, wet, green Mekong Delta area say their lot has not changed much since the signing of the cease-fire in Paris last January.

THE TALK OF CAI LAY

There seems to be less fighting now, say the people of Cai Lay, a district capital in Dinh Tuong Province about 40 miles southwest of Saigon. But only the brave or the foolish, they say, walk some roads after dusk.

Almost side by side are the harvesting of the rice crop and the shelling of suspected Communist positions a few miles away. A militiaman cleans his rifle carefully near where a farmer is equally diligent in putting a small shrimp on a hook to fish for his lunch in a rice paddy.

As kaleidoscopic and anomalous as the pattern of life in the area may seem to a foreigner, the people have accepted it because there is nothing else to do. Still, they are not without pride in their work—be it war or peace—and they are not without hope.

At the bunker that is the defense headquarters for the hamlet of Tay, an 18-year-old militiaman, Nguyen Tan Duc, cleaned his rifle and screwed it back together with the point of a sickle.

DIRT STOPS ROCKETS

His superior, a 47-year-old militiaman, proudly showed an automatic rifle and a machine gun he said his unit had captured while defending the bunker against Vietcong attack on Sept. 11. He said the walls of the bunker were made of dirt and that dirt stops Communist rockets better than concrete.

Where Route 4 is joined by the road to the town of Uam Giang, another district capital, a policeman warned that the side road was mined and that the town was being attacked by Vicetcong mortars. This was confirmed by people farther down the road, who said that no one had been killed so far in the assault and that passenger buses had turned back. The policeman ordered visitors to turn back also and to report to the district chief.

Behind the sandbag walls of the headquarters of B Battery, 71st Artillery Battalion, of the South Vietnamese Army's Seventh Division near Cai Lay, a 155-mm. cannon smoked after firing in the direction of the forest. "Tell them go away!" an officer shouted to the gate guard as three visitors approached.

At the Roman Catholic church in the village of Dong Hoa, the visiting priest, the Rev. Tran Van Huyen, said he had preached on "love among men" at morning mass. The collection from the 150 people who attented amounted, he said, to 300 or 400 piasters, the equivalent of 60 cents to 80 cents.

Father Huyen said that about 100 war orphans lived at the church now, and that some of them had become adults and still did not want to leave. One of these is Thai Thi Bach, a 23-year-old woman who said her right hand was sliced off by a fragment from a bomb dropped by an American plane nine years ago.

She said she had been given a new arm "with funny-looking hooks" and had thrown it away. She said she hoped to get another new arm someday, one that "looks like a real arm." Such arms cost about $20, she added, but she did not know where to get that much money.

Father Huyen commented that "the miracles and deeds of God are very hard to explain to people." One explanation, he said, is that Russians and Americans produce war materials and must find some place to use them. "Many of the people think that way," he added.

A few miles from the church, traffic on Route 4 was halted as more than a dozen armored personnel carriers rolled through a rice field away from a wooded area and clanked up onto the main road, apparently after a sweep in the forest. Soldiers sat in the carriers, many of them smiling. An order from their captain snapped loudly over their radios as foreigners were noticed on the road: Tell your men not to speak to those guys and do not refer them to me!"

As the vehicles rumbled down the road, artillery fire sounded to the south and helicopters with machine guns swept over the woods. A mile or so along the road, away from the armored vehicles, a soldier said that the Government forces lost the nearby hamlet of Phu Qui a few days ago and had been trying to win it back.

CHANGED THEIR MINDS

With the occasional thud of artillery in the background, a 41-year-old rice mill worker, Tran Van Phat, sat on the porch of his rockety wooden house in the hamlet of Nighia Hoa and spoke of the cease-fire agreement signed in January in Paris: "We thought there would be peace. About 10 days ago we began to think otherwise."

Mr. Phat said that as a laborer he earned the equivalent of about $1.25 on a good day. To earn this, he said, he and two other workers had to carry about 200 bags of rice, each weighing about 220 pounds, a distance of 10 yards.

Generally, Mr. Phat said, he earned enough to feed himself, his wife and their five children. He also said with some pride that district officials had appointed him "chief of the interfamily group" in his hamlet. As chief his duty is to report to the authorities any strangers he sees visiting houses at night.

If real peace ever comes to the delta, bringing with it the opening of land now considered too dangerous to work, Mr. Phat would like to become a farmer. "My hope is that I do not have to work for anybody else," he said. "They shout at you and use bad language."

Remarking that he did not much care which side won the war he sees around him, he said, "I just wish the fighting would stop."

[From the New York Times, Nov. 2, 1974]

MONTAGNARD UPRISING POSES A THREAT TO SAIGON DRIVE

(By James M. Markham)

BAN ME THUOT, SOUTH VIETNAM, OCTOBER 25.—An armed rebellion of dissident montagnard tribesmen has broken out in the province of Darlac and may be spreading into neighboring corners of the strategic Central Highlands.

If it continues to grow, the uprising, which is thought to have some 500 men under arms, could imperil the Saigon Government's struggle against the Communists in the highlands.

Some people here believe that the Communists have infiltrated the tribe movement. Others argue that a Government crackdown on the rebels is rapidly alienating tribesmen who are not disposed to join the insurrection and who hate the Communists.

WARNING BY OFFICIAL

"It's going to be very bad here," warned Y Jut Buon To, the dynamic, 31-year-old head of ethnic minority services in the highlands. "I don't think they can ever solve it with the military. It should be solved by the political."

"I don't want to get my people killed," he added. "They are ethnic minorities—they are going to become more minority."

Compounding the problems, a wave of brutal killings and robberies—attributed by some to the rebels, by others to bandits who justify pillage in the name of rebellion—have heightened tension between Vietnamese and the montagnards. That word is the generic name for the Central Highlands tribesmen who are not of the same racial origin as the Vietnamese.

Montagnards are ethnically distinct from the lowland Vietnamese, whose civilization is largely derived from China. Montagnard languages are of Malayo-Polynesian or Mon Khmer stock.

In August, when the violence reached a peak, about 50 people, mostly Vietnamese civilians, were reportedly killed in highway ambushes and holdups in remote villages in Darlac Province.

While the violence has abated, Vietnamese traders, taximen and truck drivers are still terrified of the lonely roads. Senior Vietnamese officials carry handguns for fear of assassination.

"There had been a certain union, an understanding, between the two communities," said a French priest who has lived in the highlands for many years. "But now a gulf has opened between them."

For their part, many montagnards find themselves caught between mixed feelings of sympathy and fear of the rebels and nervousness about the Government police reaction. A document issued in the name of the rebels charges that from July through September 160 tribesmen have been "lost, killed and massacred, others captured and subjected to savage torture."

Another, dispassionate source put the number of montagnards arrested by the Government at about 100. Some were reportedly taken as suspects in acts of

banditry and murder, others for their presumed sympathies with the rebels.

At present, two battalions of Government rangers—about 800 men—are set up in blocking positions outside montagnard villages in Darlac Province while policemen and militiamen check the papers of young highlanders.

The rangers have so far not clashed with the lightly armed rebels, who have avoided direct fighting with regular military units and have devoted most of their energies to winning over villagers and trying to stay alive.

The montagnard revolt, which is thought to be led by a disaffected former civil servant named Y Kpa Koi, is not without precedent. In 1964 and again in late 1965, montagnard troops, rallying to the standard of the United Front for the Struggle of the Oppressed Races, staged bloody rebellions that had to be put down with force.

GRIEVANCES ARE MANY

But, until recently, the Government of President Nguyen Van Thieu had succeeded in mollifying most of the leaders of Fubro, as the organization is known after its initials in French, and had brought many of them into the civilian administration. By comparison with previous Vietnamese regimes, the Thieu Government treated the montagnards fairly well.

But the montagnard grievances are legion. Vietnamese entrepreneurs and officials have encroached on and stolen their land.

Public services, particularly health and education, have been skimpily provided. Many montagnards live in squalor, with illiteracy and disease; their population growth rate appears to be close to nothing.

Moreover, the montagnard peoples—numbering perhaps 800,000—have suffered cruelly in the war. In 1972 and 1973 alone, 150,000 montagnards were reportedly made refugees by the fighting. some 70 percent of all montagnards now live outside their original home areas, according to one study.

At a time of political unrest and economic stagnation throughout South Vietnam, many people here are not surprised to find the montagnards—or, so far, the advanced Rhade tribe—stirring, too.

But some informed montagnards find Mr. Y Kpa Koi, who is a strong-willed, little-educated veteran of the French colonial army, a somewhat unlikely figure to emerge as the Che Guevara of the highlands.

A Jarai tribesman in his early 40's, Mr. Y Kpa Koi, whose wife is Rhade, was, until late in November, 1973, a senior administrator in the Ban Me Thuot Labor Department. Then he vanished into the forests and proclaimed the rebellion in the name of Fulro.

No one has a convincing explanation for his action. Though he had headed the Darlac chapter of a short-lived montagnard political organization that succeeded Fulro after the reconciliation with Saigon in the late sixties, Mr. Y Kpa Koi was not a well-known figure in Fulro itself.

Some people say that he ran into trouble with the law over some shady lumber deals involving Chinese middlemen and that his idealism was colored by opportunism. A few suspect that the Communists may have a hand in his defection.

Whatever his motivations, Mr. Y Kpa Koi gradually attracted a number of armed men, many of them demobilized irregulars who had kept the automatic rifles and grenade launchers that had been supplied by the departed America.

TOOK GENERAL'S TITLE

Mr. Y Kpa Koi took the title of general and soon his troops were displaying a letter in the Darlac villages that purportedly gave their rebellion the endorsement of Y Bham Enuol, the principal Fulro leader.

The whereabouts of Mr. Y Bham Enuol is a mystery. His customary residence in Phnom Penh but some montagnards say he is in Indonesia, while yet another report says he is ill in France.

"Oh, Fulro, Fulro," said one French coffee planter, sipping a beer in Ban Me Thuot's dingy French restaurant. "Before, they put it all on the backs of the Viets [Communists]. Now they blame the Fulros. The Fulros don't need to steal refrigerators. they don't kill old ladies in the middle of the streets."

Though the rebellion began in Darlac Province—whose population of 270,000 is estimated to be 45 percent Vietnamese and 55 percent montagnard—there are signs that it has begun to spread. Occasional acts of violence on the Darlac pattern have been noted in adjoining highlands provinces.

The movement's future may well depend on the Government's response. Nay Luett, the montagnard Minister of Ethnic Development, has so far taken a hard

line. Mr. Nay Luett, who spent four years in jail a decade ago for agitating on behalf of his people, denied on a recent visit here that Fulro even existed.

The rebellion has produced considerable anguish among montagnard leaders who are not unsympathetic to the grievances that may have produced it.

"Right now there are a lot of montagnards in the middle—they cannot adjust to what they should do," said Mr. Y Jut Buon Jo, the head of the ethnic minority sources, adding that he has been threatened several times by Kpa Koi partisans who want him to join them.

"They need leaders," he said.

Judge Y Blieng Hmok, the president of the montagnard court here, expressed a pervasive sadness over the racial schism brought on by the revolt and the Government's response to it.

"Without the Vietnamese the montagnards cannot live," he said. "But without the montagnards, the Vietnamese cannot work in the Central Highlands.

"But now the Vietnamese do not understand the montagnards and the montagnards do not understand the Vietnamese."

[From the New York Times, Feb. 2, 1975]

Hesitancy and Confusion Blamed in Saigon Defeat

(By James M. Markham)

Saigon, South Vietnam, January 31.— Diplomats and military analysts here have managed to piece together an account of the fall three weeks ago of Phuoc Binh, the first provincial capital to be captured by the Communists since their 1972 spring offensive, despite Government efforts to seal off from the public and press the soldiers who got out alive.

It appears according to these experts, that while some defenders fought bravely, many ran away; that the South Vietnamese Air Force, reluctantly called in to what it considered a hopeless fight, killed many Government troops with imprecise high-altitude bombing, and that the North Vietnamese further refined tactics intended to lose as few of their own men as possible.

"It is a shame to us all—not only to us, but to any other military man of any rank who had something to do with this battle," said an officer who was sent to defend Phuoc Binh.

Several South Vietnamese military sources paint a similar picture—one of indecisiveness and confusion at the highest command levels, uncertainty about whether the North Veitnamese intended to take Phuoc Binh or slowly strangle it, bad information on the size and quality of the opposing forces in the rolling plantation country around the encircled town. These sources argue that decisions were made with less consideration than is now believed.

Beginning in mid-December, the North Vietnamese easily took four Government-held district capitals and one base camp in Phuoc Long Province, which had never been far from their complete control. Only the isolated province capital, with a garrison of regional and provincial forces totaling 3,000 men remained.

The first Government reinforcements—a battalion of regular troops and three reconnaissance companies, or about 800 men—were reportedly sent into Phuoc Binh on Dec. 28, when the North Vietnamese were already within mortar range of the town, which lies 75 miles north of Saigon near the Cambodian border.

On the first day of the new year, the North Vietnamese chased a small garrison of Stieng tribesmen off the top of Ba Ra Mountain on the southeastern edge of the town.

From this point on, in the opinion of several military analysts, the battle was lost. The North Vietnamese could shell the town at will, which they began to do with great accuracy. Reliance on heavy artillery bombardment rather than ground troops characterized the North Vietnamese tactics, as it has in other battles recently.

Civilians—the province capital had a largely montagnard population of 26,000—began to slip out of the town, crossing the Daklung Bridge over the Song Be. So did many montagnard militiamen and some regular soldiers.

The first ground attacks came on Jan. 3, but the North Vietnamese put few troops behind their T–54 tanks. Demolition troops cleared obstacles for the tanks.

Many defenders reported later that their American-made, shoulder-fired rocket launchers were useless against the tanks, which had penetrated the southern edge of the town.

"We took aim on one of them, waited, waited until it was well in good range and then fired," said one officer. "Oh, it did not explode. It did not stop.

"To our amazement, the turret was moving, the big gun was pointing toward our trenches. Oh God, we sank down to the bottom of our trenches, crawled away like rats, with our mouths open in amazement."

In their analysis of the battle, Americans believe that the defenders fired the rocket at a range that was too close; to destroy a tank, they must be fired from 30 feet away, they say.

By Jan. 3, the Foreign Ministry in Saigon was preparing a press conference to announce the loss of Phuoc Binh. But the next day the Government sent into Phuoc Binh by helicopter two companies of the élite 81st Airborne Rangers—which fought well around Saigon during the 1968 Tet offensive and at An Loc during the 1972 offensive.

To their dismay, the 200 rangers found that the situation on the ground nowhere resembled the somewhat confident picture sketched by Col. Nguyen Thong Thanh, the commander of the town, in his bunker.

According to one ranger, the colonel described various positions around the town that were being held by battalions and companies that had in fact been reduced to handfuls of men who were looking for a way to escape.

Meanwhile, forced to altitudes of 10,000 feet or higher by intense 57-mm. heavy machine-gun fire, Government fighter-bombers were unable to provide significant support. Still they bombed.

"Never before had I seen such heavy casualties inflicted on our own lines by our own air force," said one member of the 81st Rangers. "The hospital was bombed, three or four military doctors were killed and hundreds of patients were killed, or wounded for a second time.

Stieng and Vietnamese refugees who managed to walk to Government positions, 30 miles away in neighboring Quang Duc Province, confirmed the bombing of the improvised hospital. According to another report, about 50 montagnards were killed when an antipersonnel bomb landed in their hamlet outside Phuoc Binh.

APPENDIX VI.—SELECTED PRESS REPORTS AND COMMENTARIES ON CONDITIONS IN CAMBODIA

[From the New York Times, Sept. 8, 1974]

CAMBODIA'S 'LITTLE' WAR: 600,000 CASUALTIES

(By Sydney H. Schanberg)

Early this year, Presiden Nixon sent a letter to Marshal Lon Nol, President of the Cambodian government in Phnom Penh, assuring him in fervent rhetoric that "the United States remains fully determined to provide maximum possible assistance to your heroic self-defense and will continue to stand side by side with the republic in the future as in the past."

An obvious question now is whether President Ford will be as stalwart in propping up the corrupt and unpopular Lon Nol Government against its enemies, the Communist-led Cambodian insurgents who are tutored by Hanoi and provided with arms from Peking and Moscow.

Some days ago, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, the exiled nominal leader of the insurgent forces said that since President Ford, unlike Mr. Nixon, had not "started the Cambodian war," he was not bound by "those old obligations." The Prince called on the new President to end all American aid to the Lon Noi Government, which he said would quickly bring about the collapse of the Phnom Penh forces and thus end the war.

No special signs have yet emanated from the Ford White House on how it intends to deal with Cambodia. But the new President has pledged to follow Mr. Nixon's foreign policy, and there is no reason to expect, either from his or Secretary of State Kissinger's past performances, that the Administration will waver in its support of the Phnom Penh side.

Congress, meanwhile, is in the process of cutting aid to Indochina. However, as the Vietnam war has demonstrated, there are ways for the executive branch to circumvent congressional curbs and budget cuts.

Officially declared American aid to Cambodia, which is augmented by unknown millions of dollars spent on such "hidden" costs as intelligence-gathering reconnaissance flights over insurgent territory, totals about $650 million a year, or nearly 2 million a day. Most of this is direct military aid. Economic assistance takes second priority.

American officials in Phnom Penh share Prince Sihanouk's view that if United States aid were cut substantially, say by half, the Lon Nol army would fall. The only difference is that the Americans do not accept this as a viable notion of peace.

In Cambodia itself, the carnage does not change from season to season. Yet it is illuminating to set down some of the basic facts and statistics of this war.

It has lasted nearly four-and-a-half years, longer than America's struggle in World War II. What started as a conflict between Cambodians and Vietnamese Communists has changed into one largely between Cambodians and Cambodians, although the ability of both sides to continue fighting is controlled by outside powers.

By the lowest possible estimates more than 300 Cambodians are killed or wounded every day. So far, at least 600,000 Cambodians have become casualty statistics, nearly one-tenth of the country's population of 7 million.

Although the massive American bombing in support of the Lon Nol army was halted by Congress over a year ago, this did not diminish the killing, for Washington made up for the loss of the United States air armada by pumping in large quantities of new armament and ammunition for the Phnom Penh forces. This included single-engine fighter-bombers, helicopter gunships, armored vehicles and artillery pieces. Since, some of this weaponry has ended up, through capture and corrupt sales, in insurgent hands. Both sides are now equipped

with a greater abundance of lethal instruments than before, and the fighting is intense. If anything, casualties have increased since the bombing stopped.

The refugee rlls have soared by 200,000 in that time to an estimated total of 3 million people, two-thirds of them in government territory and the rest on the insurgent side. Nearly half the people of Cambodia are now refugees.

Other statistics: 50,000 war widows registered with the government and 200,000 or more children orphaned.

And yet there is no discernible motion toward peace talks.

The Lon Nol Government, in what has become somewhat of an annual ritual arranged by the Americans, made another peace offer, in July, offering negotiations with no prior conditions. It was a more liberal offer than last year's, which demanded the withdrawal of North Vietnamese troops as a prerequisite for talks. But the 1974 version was rejected just as summarily as 1973's by Prince Sihanouk and he insurgents. They stuck to their public position that no discussion can take place until American aid to Phnom Penh is stopped and "the traitorous Lon Nol clique" removed.

The Americans would presumably give Marshal Lon Nol a friendly but vigorous push into exile if they thought his departure would win an assurance of serious negotiations from the other side, but they imply that no such assurances have even been hinted.

On the other hand, it would appear that not every avenue has been explored. A recommendation by John Gunther Dean, United States Ambassador in Phnom Penh, that contact be attempted with the insurgent leader, Khieu Samphan, while he was touring Eastern Europe and Africa a few monhs ago was rejected by Mr. Kissinger. The Secretary of State, reliable sources say, considered the move ill-timed, because the battlefield situation was going poorly for the Phnom Penh government at the time.

THE FIGHT IN THE U.N.

This dismal negotiating picture is compounded by the renewed attempt that will be made at the General Assembly session which opens later this month to oust the Lon Nol Government and seat the insurgents instead. The move failed last year, only narrowly, 53 to 50. Yet, demoralizing as the loss of the United Nations seat would be for Phnom Penh, it would not necessary mean an end to the war as long as Washington kept its sizeable military aid flowing to the Lon Nol army.

There has been a theory almost from the start of the Cambodian war—a theory that is gathering more adherents—that the North Vietnamese do not want this conflict to end until they have achieved their main objective, control of South Vietnam, and that until it suits them, they will not give the insurgents enough arms and ammunition to topple Phnom Penh. Hanoi, this theory goes, prefers the present inconclusive fighting in Cambodia to a new and strong Cambodia-insurgent government which, though leftist, might interfere, for reasons of national sovereignty or pride, with the North Vietnamese use of the Cambodian sanctuary areas and supply routes bordering South Vietnam.

Whether Hanoi-contrived or not, the relative strategic positions of the two sides in Cambodia have not significantly changed for some time. The insurgents control about 75 per cent of the country's territory and perhaps 40 per cent of the population. The government holds only the refugee-swollen major cities and towns, most of which exist as isolated enclaves, cut off by road and reachable only by air.

The insurgents have been unable to capture the big prize, Phnom Penh, but the Lon Nol forces, in turn, have been unable to recapture any lost territory.

The Americans, in their effort to persuade the other side that it is futile to continue fighting, choose to call this a stalemate, but such a word connotes the idea of deadlock, which is misleading.

In fact, the country is being destroyed. Vast and awesome battles take place which decide nothing but which leave whole strings of villages, towns, mosques, pagodas, schools flattened.

The other day, on a road northwest of Phnom Penh that is lined with the skeletons of former towns and hamlets, a young soldier looked around him at the clumps of rubble and shrugged: "By the time we find out who is right and who is wrong, everything in Cambodian will be broken into little pieces."

[From the New York Times, Dec. 17, 1974]

REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK: MADNESS OF WAR IN PHNOM PENH

(By Sydney H. Schanberg)

PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA.—Events in Cambodia have become misshapen in the image of the madness of this war—like the time when, at an evening reception, the armed forces commander, Lieut. Gen. Sosthene Fernandez, was asked by an acquaintance what he planned to do if the United States Congress went ahead with its plans to cut aid to Cambodia sharply. The general smiled impishly, strode to the other end of the room, threw his arms into the air in the posture of surrender and declared in French: "I'll do this."

Was he at all serious? No one at the reception really thought so. But then, a large cut in aid could really bring about the collapse of this corrupt and ineffective Government. Beyond that the war against the Communist-led Cambodian insurgents, now nearly five years old, has warped human behavior here out of any normal, predictable patterns. Up is sometimes one's old schoolmate or, often enough, an uncle or cousin. Perhaps General Fernandez was merely disguishing the truth with buffoonery.

BLACK HUMOR IS AN OUTLET

Indeed, black humor is one way of living with the grotesqueness of conditions here—with the Government printing money as fast as it can to keep up with a 300 per cent a year inflation rate reminiscent of Kuomintang China, and with Cambodia's population of seven million being mangled at a daily rate of at least 300 killed and wounded.

The insurgents hold the countryside and have cut most of the roads. The Government holds the fairly isolated cities and towns, including this capital city, now bursting with refugees. Both armies are Cambodian, but their ability to go on destroying their country and each other is controlled by the outside powers that provide their weapons while failing to provide peace talks. To participate in such a situation is to be slightly insane.

What follows is a compilation of some of the slightly insane things—odd and abhorrent and sad—that happened during a three-week visit.

An American economic consultant on contract to the United States Embassy was having a pre-dinner drink with his wife and some acquaintances beside the pool at the charmingly seedy Hotel Le Phnom. One of the acquaintances, a reporter, who had taken a trip up a battle-scarred road that day, commented that the Cambodians were tired and worn out with the war. The consultant vigorously disagreed.

"They're not tired," he said. "They're not tired at all. That's nonsense. All they need is some good leadership. A hundred Israeli commando officers could turn this thing around, or any hundred good officers."

The reporter asked where such leaders could be found in the present Cambodian Government.

"It's not hopeless," the consultant insisted. "This war can be won."

"Oh, come on, John," interjected his wife, who had been silent until then. "You know you're just as discouraged as everyone else. You're just saying that because he's a newsman."

He said nothing, she rose, and they went to dinner.

"It's hopeless, just hopeless," said a candid American diplomat at lunch one day. "The only thing they could possibly do to save things here is to take out the whole palace entourage and shoot them. Get rid of this corrupt leadership and try someone new—anyone. It's probably too late for it to work, but it's the only thing that has any chance at all."

There are beggars everywhere in Phnom Penh. A blind one sits on the sidewalk every day outside La Taverne, a restaurant opposite the post office, playing a Cambodian-style zither. As the dominant clientele has changed with the progress of the war from the old colonial French to the new Americans, so have the blind beggar's songs. These days he makes a fairly good living playing "In the Mood" and "Alexander's Ragtime Band."

Downtown Phnom Penh is a montage of unhappiness. So Leang, a 33-year-old teacher, cannot feed his family on his salary, equivalent to $9 a month, so he pedals a bicycle rickshaw in his free hours, earning 30 cents on a good day. He

says that he is hungry all the time, that he is eating the kind of lotus-pond greens that Cambodians used to feed to their ducks. "I'm miserable," he keeps repeating.

Twenty yards away, at a sidewalk foodstall, ragged, begrimed refugee children hunker near the tables, snatching at the chicken bones cast off by the customers, and sucking and chewing on them until nothing is left.

On the other side of the street, three soldiers—two of them missing a leg and the other apparently uninjured—stand in shop doorways, silent, waiting, their faces contorted in the professional beggar's half-smiling grimace. Sometimes the shopkeepers give them 19 riels—about six-tenths of a cent.

Down the block, at the Mekong River port, workmen are unloading bags of rice and corn from barges. They are paid next to nothing, so they try to hide some of the grain droppings in special pockets and sacks they have sewn on the inside of their scarecrow clothes. As they leave work through a narrow opening in the steel gate, the military policemen whap at the workers' pregnant bulges with their hands and nightsticks, until the corn and rice spills on the ground.

An American Embassy official, during an interview, brought up the old controversy over whether the approximately 100 American military men at the embassy ever break the Congressional ban against acting as military advisers to the Cambodians or whether they stick to their stated jobs of gathering battle information and supervising the delivery and use of American arms. The official said the embassy was being extremely careful not to give military advice.

Then his telephone rang. He spoke in urgent tones for a few minutes and came back to explain that the insurgents had just badly shot up a river supply convoy and that two barges carrying 1,000 tons of rice were floating free and about to fall into insurgent hands. The Cambodian high command wanted to know what to do, he said.

"They asked our advice," he went on without thinking. Then he thought—and broke into an embarrassed grin.

As it turned out, the Cambodians, who asked permission to sink the barges by bombing them, to keep the insurgents from getting the rice, were "advised" not to do that because the barges themselves were costly and worth saving. In the end, however, the Cambodian Navy was unable to save the barges, the rice went to the insurgents and the operation was a total loss.

Some people here have made a lot of money on the war, for nothing is corruption-proof any more in Cambodia. For example, there is something called the Exchange Support Fund, a $35-million-a-year fund consisting largely of American dollars for the use of the Cambodian Government to help pay for crucial foreign goods needed for the war effort. Luxury items are expressly forbidden.

About three months ago, the Government gave a local merchant $50.000 from the fund to import foreign beer, and more recently it released $175,000 for the import of cigarette lighters.

With morale low, draft evasion has become more the rule than the exception. Young men pay bribes for all kinds of exemption papers. One of the more bizarre exemptions is known as the "lop-lop" certificate. "Lop-lop," in translation, is equivalent to "crazy." One healthy Cambodian was asked what his lop-lop certificate said. "It says I'm out of my mind and I don't have to serve," he replied. He got the certificate fairly cheaply—only 50,000 riels, or about $31.

Bribes for other things are much higher. Teachers—badly underpaid and in a mutinous mood for a long time—have been demanding and getting 500,000 riels from students for the school diploma necessary to enter the university.

The Pentagon is still specializing in double talk about Cambodia. When a Wisconsin member of Congress charged last month that American pilots flying supplies to Cambodia were receiving combat pay, even though the Administration contends that no American troops are engaged in combat here, the Pentagon replied that the term "combat pay" was incorrect—it was "hostile-fire pay."

At about the same time, a newspaper report said that American military analysts in Thailand were making bombing recommendations to the Cambodians on the basis of American reconnaissance flights over insurgent territory.

The Pentagon acted to clear up the confusion immediately. Targets are not being recommended, it said, for this would be a violation of the Congressional ban on advisory and combat activities. What is actually happening, the Pentagon explained, is that "items of intelligence interest" are "identified" and "passed on" to the Cambodians, but "the judgment of what should be done" is left enitrely to them.

Tor Keu is one of the thousands of child soldiers in the Cambodian Army.

They join for many reasons, but mostly because it is a way to make a little money to live and eat on.

Tor Keu says he is 18 because that is the legal age for enlistment, but his is a frightened 12 at most. He has been in the army for a month.

It is dusk and he is walking along Route five northwest of Phnom Penh, on his way to met his soldier father—his mother is dead—at an outpost a few miles ahead.

Tor Keu is carrying a carbine of World War II vintage and his uniform is double his size: his shirt-front is held together by a safety pin and his trousers are so pitifully baggy and clownlike that they drag on the ground until he trips. Asked what he has had to eat during the day, he stares wanly at the ground and mumbles: "nothing. Only a little fish paste."

In Nov. 28, the United States' Thanksgiving Day, a large group of top Cambodian officials—mostly generals—gathered nervously at Marshal Lon Nol's Presidential palace to await the outcome of the United Nations vote on the Cambodian issue. The outcome could have brought a collapse of this Government had the United Nations seat for Cambodia been awarded to the insurgents, whose nominal leader is Prince Norodom Sihanouk.

When news of the narrow two-vote victory came, jubilation erupted. The generals, led by General Fernandez, their commander, began jigging around the room, singing an old French children's ditty, "Tout Va Trés Bien"—"Everything's All Right."

The generals, however, were singing only the title line and had apparently forgotten, or had never known, the rest of the song, in which things are anything but all right.

As the song goes on, stanza after stanza, the butler explains to the Marquise, who is telephoning from her Paris town house to find how things are going on her country estate, "Everything is all right, Madame Marquise," except that the kitchen is on fire, the barn has burned down, her husband, the Marquis, has died, and, finally, "Your favorite horse has died as well."

Cambodians are proud and independent people, and though the war has forced many of them to accept charity and even to beg, the shame lies deep.

In a village on the western edge of Phnom Penh, a family of five was slowly starving. Neither the husband nor the wife nor any of the children, could find a job. Next door lived a widower who raised pigs and was reasonably well off. He began to notice that the food he was leaving out for the pigs was disappearing, and suddenly realized that his desperate neighbors were sneaking over at night and taking the pig food to sustain themselves.

The widower felt bad about their condition, but he did not want to embarrass them. After carefully rehearsing what he was going to say, he went over to their house one day when the husband was out and said to the wife that everyone was suffering in Cambodia these days, but that he was fortunate enough to have a little extra, so would she please accept 10,000 riels to buy some food.

The wife wept in shame as she took the money. Then she went out and bought some rice and fish—but her sense of disgrace overcame her. So she bought some poison, too. That night she put the poison in the food and killed herself and all her family.

[From the New York Times, Feb. 9, 1974]

In Phnom Penh, Take Any Road to the War

(By Sydney H. Schanberg)

Phnom Penh, Cambodia, February 8.—Take a road, any road, out of Phnom Penh and in 5 to 10 miles, or even less, you will find the commonplace of war.

Not the awesome roaring of hundreds of giant cannon as in the Sinai campaigns, or the blazing tank duels when the Indians periodically fight the Pakistanis on the Punjab plain—just a slow but malignant paddy-field war that gnaws at the country's vitals and seems to last forever.

Tens of thousands have been killed or maimed, hundreds of thousands rendered homeless, but it has happened gradually over four years, and it has happened in the shadow of the greater conflict of Vietnam, so that world headlines hardly notice it anymore.

What follows is a report of what took place on three commonplace battlefronts on three recent days.

Prey Sar was a small village about seven miles southwest of Phnom Penh. Hardly anybody lives here now except the soldiers who fight here and their

families, who travel raggedly with them. The peasant farmers who lived here fled last month before an enemy advance, leaving their rice uncut and spoiled in the fields.

The front line is a row of scraggly trees through whose branches enemy bullets whine from time to time. The Communist-led Cambodian insurgents are only about 100 yards away in some heavy bamboo growth across an eerie open field where no one dares to walk or even crawl.

SOME SOLDIERS GO HOME

The Government battalion at this spot is badly under strength. Four months ago, when Capt. Chun Ram took command, the unit had 446 men. Now there are 290. Many of the missing are not battle casualties but "disparus"—"those who have disappeared"—a polite term from the language of Cambodia's former French colonial rulers, to describe the ADOL's who have tired of the endless fighting and have gone home.

They may or may not return after a time.

Others of the missing have been disabled by malaria, which is rampant because the unit has very few mosquito nets.

With the battalion weakened, it cannot mount a counterattack to dislodge the enemy forces and push them back across the Prek Thnot river. So the sides sit 100 yards apart across the empty field, firing mortars, machine guns and rifle-launched grenades at each other. It seems madness—hurling lethal toys back and forth and then watching through binoculars to see if the toys have killed anyone.

"Right spot! Right spot!" yells a Government lookout in a treetop as a 60-mm. Government mortar shell lands with a burst of smoke and dirt smack in the middle of a bamboo clump where some enemy troops were clustered. "They're running! They're running!" The Government troops break into triumphant grins, but then quickly turn poker-faced and hit the ground as several mortar shells come crumping in about 50 feet in front of them.

Not everybody ducks however. A few soldiers are wading through small rain ponds catching fish with bamboo traps for the unit's supper. They are close to the mortar explosions, but because the ponds are depressed, the men are below the line of fire and shrapnel, and they do not even look up.

Capt. Chum Ram suggests it would be safer if his visitors moved back a short distance to his poncho lean-to, where he has tried to preserve some of the amenities of life—a bottle of toilet water, a transistor radio, some pictures of the Buddhist monks who had blessed the gold good-luck charms he wears around his neck, and a Khmer paperback romance that he was reading before the mortal duel began.

Capt. Chum Ram is 29 years old, a graduate of the Cambodian military academy, an intelligent realist who does not question why he is here trying to kill other Cambodians, just as they are trying to kill him.

CAPTAIN LIGHTLY WOUNDED

"My mission is to fight," he says, "So I fight. Politics is for somebody else to look after."

He has talked to enemy soldiers on his field radio many times and urged them to negotiate, "but they want total victory and they have refused."

On a recent day when he was lightly wounded in the right arm by a mortar fragment, an insurgent officer yelled across the field at him, saying, "if you continue to resist, you'll be killed and you'll leave your wife and children behind." The enemy officer, the captain recalls, "shouted that he had been my colleague at the military academy—and it did sound like someone I knew at the academy.

Captain Chum Ram paused and said, "sometimes our officers get captured and reeducated." Then he put his head in his hands and said, almost in a moan, "Oh, oh, oh, oh. Look at what things have come to."

Not all frontline posts are as Spartan as Capt. Chum Ram's. It depends on what's available. Two miles to the east, also along the Prek Thnot, a large villa is available.

It's not as elegant as it used to be. The swimming pool is filled with mucky brown water, bougainvillea vines are growing wild up the sides of the two-story house, windows are broken, paint is peeling and dust is building on the imported wood paneling and goldleaf bas reliefs of ancient Khmer battles that adorn the walls of the living room.

The owner is out of the country, which is why two battalions of the First

Division have been able to take over the villa and make it their headquarters. The owner is Brig. Gen. Lon Non, younger brother of the Cambodian president, Marshal Lon Nol. General Lon Non, because of his unsavory reputation and the extralegal powers he was amassing at the presidential palace, was forced into unofficial exile last April by American pressure and is now residing, at least temporarily, in the United States.

The battalion commanders whose hammocks and cooking pots now decorate General Lon Non's front porch said they had received no special instructions about the care of the villa. "We're operating the same as we do in all areas," said one officer. "If there's an empty house suitable for a headquarters, we use it."

This seedily sumptuous command post belied the nearness of danger. The insurgent troops here are only about 200 or so yards away, and occasional deadly objects, such as machine-gun bullets and rifle grenades, come through the mango trees to land in the patio.

The officers said the windows in the villas and the adjacent guesthouse had been broken by "flying mines"—a new homemade weapon that has recently become popular with the insurgents. It is not clear exactly how the ungainly projectile is launched, but it is said to be able to fly about 100 yards.

The Government soldiers produced an unexploded one for their interested guests. It was a crudely fashioned flattish canister, very much like a 25-pound antitank mine. They said that it was filled with nails and glass and chemical explosive.

"This is not a safe place," said one officer. "They harass us all the time—especially at mealtimes."

Northwest of Phnom Penh, five miles up Route 5, the residents of the market and fishing town of Prek Phnau recently had a day of battle circuses with their dry bread.

Across the Tonle Sap, on the eastern bank, enemy troops had dug in, and now Government troops moving up the same bank from the south and four Government gunboats firing from the middle of the river—in a kind of pincer movement—were trying to dislodge them.

Many people from the town gathered on the safe western bank to watch and point and shout in awe as the gunboats poured mortar and machinegun and recoilless cannon fire into the enemy positions, and the Government troops, small but visible figures on the opposite bank, engaged their foe in close combat, sometimes standing up to hurl grenades at a distance of only 20 yards from the insurgent bunkers.

OUTLOOKERS IN FOE'S RANGE

It was a panorama of smoke and flames and booming noise that provided the villagers with a spectacular, if frightening, break from their burdensome lives. "Look, he's throwing a grenade!" "They carrying back two wounded!" "Look, everything's burning!" "They got the high ground and now they're across it!" came the cries as the Government infantry, despite mortar barrages by the enemy, pushed steadily forward.

Though the enemy troops could have fired mortars or machine-gun bullets into the crowds on the opposite bank, the bombardment by the gunboats and the flanking attack by the infantry kept them much too occupied.

If the people in the town knew they were exposed, they certainly did not show it. Those who were not massed on the bank watching the battle were placidly cleaning fish, or mashing fish into fish paste with their feet, or bathing in the river, or playing local chess on the sidewalks—all as if the sound of war was nothing but Muzak background music for their daily activities, which indeed it has almost become.

As dusk began to fall, voices in the crowd suddenly shouted, "look, they're carrying the heads!" Three Government soldiers on the opposite bank were walking back to their lines, each carrying by the hair the head of an enemy soldier. The severing of heads has become common on both sides in this increasingly sadistic war.

A few moments later, a motorized fishing boat on the opposite bank started across the river toward the town with a few of the victorious soldiers.

A youngster yelled to a bunch of his friends: "Let's go see the boat come in Maybe they've got the heads on board." And off they ran.

[From the New York Times, Jan. 16, 1975]

In a Besieged Cambodian City, Hunger, Death and the Whimpering of Children

(By Sydney H. Schanberg)

Neak Luong, Cambodia, January 14—Every 15 minutes or so a shell screams down explodes in this besieged town and another half-dozen people are killed or wounded. It goes on day and night.

The tile floors of the military infirmary and civilian hospital are slippery with blood. Bodies are everywhere—some people half conscious crying out in pain, some with gaping wounds who will not live. Some are already dead and, in the chaos, just lie there with no one to cover them or take them away.

Inside, a 7-year-old girl, a filthy bandage over the wound in her stomach, lies on a wooden table. The only doctor in the town feels her pulse. It is failing.

Suddenly her father appears, a soldier. He has come from the spot where another of his children, a 5-year-old girl, has just been killed by a mortar shell. His wife was killed three years ago by shelling in another town.

He picks up his daughter in his shaking arms; his face, bathed in a cold sweat, contorts as he tries to hold back the tears that come anyway.

"I love all my children," is all he says as he walks away with the dying child—heading for the helicopters that are too few to carry all the wounded to Phnom Penh.

There is deep hunger in Neak Luong, too. The soldiers here are getting by, for American and Cambodian transport planes are dropping some food by parachute for them—but there is none for the civilians.

By today, the 30,000 or more refugees who have fled to Neak Luong from outlying areas as the Communist-led insurgents have advanced toward the town have been reduced to subsistence on the thinnest of rice gruel. Every day it becomes thinner. Many are living in the open and it rains almost every night.

Yesterday the Catholic Relief Services, whose dogged Cambodian staff has stayed in Neak Luong to run gruel kitchens, tried to send a barge with 25 tons of rice down the Mekong River the 38 miles from Phnom Penh to the isolated town. But at the last minute, the barge was ordered to stay in Phnom Penh. The Cambodian military said the situation was too dangerous and the barge would probably be sunk if it tried to run the insurgents' gantlet.

"They're going to have to airdrop more food," said one disheartened relief worker. "That's all there is to it. Otherwise people will starve."

Already, as one walks around the shell-marked town one hears everywhere the sound of children whimpering.

The military situation here, though grave, does not seem to be deteriorating. Government reinforcements continue to pour in by helicopter and, while the Cambodian insurgents are right across the Mekong from Neak Luong, on the western bank of the river and also very close on most sides of the town itself, it does not appear likely at this point that they can overrun the town.

MISERY CONTINUES

Yet until the Government troops do more than just hold on—that is, until they push the insurgent back far enough to take the town out of shelling range—the human misery here, with shells raining in indiscriminately, will continue.

The Government's determination to save Neak Luong stems from the town's importance as virtually the last Government position on the lower Mekong. If it fell, the Government would lose all hope of getting supplies into Phnom Penh by way of the Mekong.

With all other surface routes cut long ago in this five-year war, the American-backed Government is now dependent on the Mekong for 80 percent or more of its supplies from the outside world.

Even now, the Mekong is temporarily blockaded. The rebels, in the annual dry season offensive that began New Year's Day, have seized control of so much of the river and its parallel road, Route 1, that the Americans have been forced to postpone indefinitely all the supply convoys—which come up from Thailand and South Vietnam.

LIFE GOES ON

As people went about their tasks today, many hardly seemed to hear mortars exploding, sometimes only 50 yards away, or the machinegun fire sputtering

around the edges of town, or the rockets whooshing into enemy positions from helicopter gunships overhead.

Amid all this, there was at times a preposterous normality.

In the market, where a few Chinese-run shops were open for those who still had money, a colonel who had just flown in with his fresh troops was examining a bottle of French cologne with a discriminating air. His boots were highly polished, his uniform briskly starched, his neck scarf just so. He squeezed the atomizer, sniffed the spray, then put it back and walked away disdainfully as if it did not meet his standards.

Last night the insurgents began increasing their shelling—with mortars, recoilless cannon and rockets. Through the night, the casualties rose.

At dawn, with the explosions heaviest in the southern sector of town, where most of the refugees had been huddled in the streets, a pagoda and a primary school, the refugees began fleeing with their sackfuls of belongings to the northern fringe of Neak Luong, which was not safe but at least safer.

Those who did not run began digging deeper bunkers and trenches under their houses or shacks and scavenging for cloth to make sandbags.

There was squalor, fear and bedlam. But there was also the traditional Buddhist fatalism of the Cambodian people. Some of this trapped population, which totals at least 250,000 counting the refugees, seemed almost to accept that being caught here is simply their lot.

The colonel was an incongruity in Neak Luong today. The norm was blood-soaked stretchers, the smashed bodies of infants attached to plasma bottles, wounded soldiers being dragged or dragging themselves from every lane, and a meadow on the northern edge of town where the wounded who still had a chance were carried to await the evacuation helicopters.

[From the New York Times, Nov. 28, 1974]

Life Deteriorates as Cambodian Capital Struggles On and On To Cope With Warfare

(By Sydney H. Schanberg)

Phnom Penh, Cambodia, November 27—The fabric of life in Cambodia continues to unravel. With each passing month of this brutal war, living conditions deteriorate and the gentle code of Khmer society shows a few more cracks.

In the last few months, the deterioration has become its most conspicuous in the nearly five years of conflict. Morale is low and may sink further if the government of Marshal Lon Nol loses its seat in the United Nations—a matter now under debate in the General Assembly—or is deprived of much of its American aid, as some members of Congress have urged.

ROBBERIES ARE FREQUENT

Economic decay seems the critical factor. Prices of basic foods have soared. The rate of inflation is at least 250 per cent a year.

People are eating less, selling their belongings, taking extra jobs and cutting moral corners. Married women of poor families are practicing occasional discreet prostitution to feed their children.

Daylight robberies of homes—by men in uniform armed with rifles, pistols and grenades—have become frequent. To avoid being robbed, most people do not wear watches and necklaces on the street.

Reports are increasing of refugees eating rats and dogs—the price of dogs is rising—and a few refugee women are known to have offered their babies to foreigners to get money for food. These are extreme cases, but if conditions do not improve they are expected to become more frequent.

SOLDIERS SEEK HANDOUTS

A simple bowl of noodle soup, a common meal for Cambodians, was 4 riels in March, 1970, when the war began. Now it is 300 riels. A bread roll, which was 2 riels in 1970 and which every parent used to give to each child to take to school every morning, now costs 100 riels. So now, many children get only half a roll each, or none.

The pay of the average Cambodian civil servant or teacher has increased about fourfold since the war began, but prices have increased fifteenfold or more. A

teacher's pay, for example, is about 20,000 riels a month now, or only about $12 since the recent devaluation of the riel. This is not nearly enough to support a family.

The negative aspects of life seem to be increasing apace here—refugees, hunger, begging, causalties. More and more soldiers enter shops to ask for handouts; some demand them. The pay of the average soldier is about 16,000 riels a month, or about $10.

Refugee children are becoming bolder because they are hungrier. Three months ago, they would wait outside restaurants to beg from emerging patrons; now they go inside, where they huddle in dim corners, unbothered by sympathetic waiters, to wait for diners to finish eating. Then they dart forward to grab an uneaten crust or seize a soup bowl and quickly swallow what remains inside.

Some military units have occasionally refused to fight and have sometimes deliberately retreated because their troops have not been paid on time or because the pay is simply not enough.

Although Phnom Penh is not for the moment under direct military threat from the Communist-led insurgents, as it was a year ago, when rockets and artillery shells began to rain down at random, the capital seems more pessimistic.

"Hope" is not a word used here anymore, but "hopeless" is.

"I tell you the truth," said a middle-class Cambodian who recently sold a camera and a car among other belongings. "I don't care what happens any more. The two sides that are fighting are both Khmer [ethnic Cambodians]. So who is the enemy?

"Neither side does anything for me. I have to work to feed my family, whichever one wins."

Another educated Cambodian commented: "People have reached the stage where they don't care who wins. It is true they are afraid when the other side's rockets land in the city, but they have no political or military thoughts. They just want to survive."

The battlefield used to be the focus of attention here, the key to the outcome of this war—but not so much any more. Although the fighting and the heavy casualties have not ended, neither side has been able to win.

The Americans, who are the only remaining support of the Phnom Penh Government, also seem eager for a way out. Privately they admit this. They admit also that some face-saving kind of talks on a coalition would be enough—but the search for that has been futile, too.

ECONOMY IS CRUCIAL

The downward slide of the economy has become the crucial issue. Foreign observers think that unless inflation is checked fairly soon, it could lead to an eventual collapse of the Lon Nol Government.

The Cambodian people have remained generally stoic and passive about their suffering—in the tradition of their Buddhist culture—but they are changing visibly. To live, almost everyone whom one hears about seems to have turned to some form of corruption.

Professors demand huge bribes for diplomas and certificates for entry into the university. Civil servants steal paper from their offices to sell. High Government officials and local merchants buy all the United States Dollars they can so that they can send the dollars and their families out of the country.

An exit permit to leave the country costs a million riels, or $600, in bribes to officials. Government medical teams pocket medicine intended for refugees and the wounded and then sell it on the black market.

'ANARCHY HERE NOW'

"This is the first time we have seen society break down like this," said a Government servant who was recently robbed of a gold necklace and his wedding ring while standing on his front porch. "I don't like to talk against my country, but there is anarchy here now—no law and order."

Even the Government, to preserve some credibility with its people, has begun openly acknowledging the corruption. But it pleads that the problem is too widespread to solve in wartime, when other matters must take priority. "If everybody loses his national conscience," said Premier Long Boret at a news conference a few days ago, "you can increase the number of anticorruption officials tenfold or a hundredfold and you will achieve nothing."

American officials have tried to help stabilize the economy and reduce cor-

ruption, hoping that a stronger posture in Phnom Penh might help induce the other side to negotiate but the results have been negligible.

In September the Government, after persistent American prodding, instituted a series of American-crafted "austerity" measures to try to slow the inflation rate and keep rice from being smuggled to Thailand and South Vietnam. The effect has been minimal.

Reports have emerged occasionally from the military that when infantry units under enemy attack request artillery support, some artillery commanders demand bribes before they will start firing. During the monsoon season now ending, the insurgents failed to capture any new major objectives, but the Cambodian army was unable to regain any territory it had lost previously. In some areas, more land slipped into enemy hands.

Insurgents control at least three-quarters of the country, with the Government confined to the major cities and towns, which are mostly cut off from each other and reachable only by air.

"The situation is hopeless, but not yet desperate," said a Western diplomat, who reminded himself that the fall of Phnom Penh had been predicted prematurely several times in the past.

[From the New York Times, July 29, 1974]

PHNOM PENH STREETS HOME FOR THOUSANDS

(By Sydney H. Schanberg)

PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA, July 28.—At night, after the 9 o'clock curfew, when the restaurants where the foreigners and the Cambodian elite dine have emptied and there is no one on the streets to beg from, squads of ragged semiwild children count up their meager take and straggel off to the foul pieces of sidewalk where they live and sleep.

They are part of a new class in Phnom Penh—a class somewhat below the poor. Four and a half years ago, before the Communist-led insurrection, a beggar was an alien sight in this capital of wide boulevards, flowering trees and a French colonial ambience. And sidewalk dwellers simply did not exist.

A lot of things did not exist four and a half years ago, like leveled villages and hospitals overflowing with the wounded and dying.

Phnom Penh's population, swollen with refugees, has soared from 600,000 to over two million—which is almost a third of Cambodia's population.

BEYOND FAMILIES' HELP

At first most got shelter and help from relatives—a strong Cambodian tradition. In the last year or so the influx has gone beyond the capacity of family succor, and people have spilled onto the streets. Their shacks and lean-tos march like spreading ivy down the sidewalks; every day a few more hovels of cardboard and wood scraps appear.

There is no accurate count of the street people, but they number in the thousands and are increasing.

By day they beg, though a few find menial jobs such as shining shoes or patching bicycle tires. At night they retire to their sidewalk squalor. Some congregate around market areas, some along residential walls, some along the outside walls of public toilets.

Some have wood or plastic as lean-to covers to keep off the weather, and some have straw mats to lie on. Others simply live in the open, sleeping in their dirty, tattered clothes on pieces of cardboard. Garbage is often piled nearby, and rats occasionally slither over sleepers.

ILLNESS ON THE INCREASE

Illness is increasing—tuberculosis, dysentery—with most of it caused by lack of food. A vitamin deficiency common here—it is called speuk—causes a progressive loss of sensation in the feet and legs until the victim can no longer walk.

The largest and saddest group of street people are the children. Not all are orphans, but even those who have one parent are virtual orphans because they are left on their own and run wild.

They compete with crippled soldiers in begging around food stalls and mar-

kets, they snatch bread from the tables of small street restaurants, they pick pockets. Older girls—11, 12, 13—become prostitutes. Bigger children prey on little ones, stealing their belongings or food.

It is not yet as cruel as Saigon, where the war has been going on for a quarter of a century. The children here beg politely and do not pull a passerby's arm, but the situation is desperate.

There is a welfare program for the refugees, administered primarily by international relief agencies using United States funds, but it is small compared with the size of the problem and the size of the American military aid that fuels the war. And it rarely reaches the street people, for they are outside the organized relief structure.

SHELTER BEING ESTABLISHED

One relief group, the Missionary Brothers of Charity, is laying plans to open a shelter for street children—a place where they will be free to come and go as they wish, have a meal, take a bath, sleep on a clean pallet, get schooling if they want it.

The shelter is the idea of Brother Andrew, a lean, bearded, hawk-nosed man who heads the order, founded only a decade ago as the male counterpart of Mother Theresa's Missionary Sisters of Charity in Calcutta. Brother Andrew, now based in Saigon, has recently opened a program in Cambodia under the auspices of Catholic Relief Services.

"The important thing is to give them friendship and love and some laughter and joy, and to try to relieve their immediate needs," he said of the shelter. "But the door has to be open at all times so that they are not confined, because the freedom of the street has become very much a part of them."

"They come with one tremendous asset, the ability to survive," Brother Andrew continued. "If we soften them up and take away that ability, I don't think we've done them a service. Their lives are going to continue to be rough regardless of what we do."

The children describe the harshness of their lives with a simple yet tortured eloquence. One night a dozen told their stories as they sat around a visiting newsman on a sidewalk under a street lamp. Some seem perky, indomitable; others are beaten, forlorn, their heads lowered, their voices muted to a whisper.

FATHER DIED IN BATTLE

Chum Phal, who is 12, is from Dei Eth, a town 16 miles southeast of Phnom Penh. His father, a soldier, was killed in battle more than a year ago, his mother, in shock, lost her senses and is in the only Cambodian mental institution.

Asked how he managed, he replied: "I request money from people along the street. Sometimes I go into shops. Some people give me 5 or 10 riels. Some give me nothing, but they do not say bad things to me. They just say they have no small change."

Chhuon Yan, 13, is from a village 60 miles from Phnom Penh. Her father, badly burned in a shelling attack, cannot work. Her mother is a garbage picker, salvaging discarded plastic bags, washing them and reselling them to shopkeepers. The mother makes about 200 riels—half a dollar—a day, and her daughter gets 100 riels more begging.

Yan is ashamed of begging but, staring at the ground, she explained: "I must try to make some extra money for my parents because I know they do not have enough. Without my money mother would not be able to take care of my father."

Chum Sophat's father died over three years ago of some illnes she cannot describe. When their town, Prey Veng, came under attack last year, she and her mother fled to Phnom Penh. Here her mother found a new husband and decided her daughter was in the way. "She beat me so I ran away," said the girl, who is 12.

SHE NEEDS A STRAW MAT

She too begs. She said she made 50 riels a day, nowhere near enough to keep off hunger, and she looks weak. She has no straw sleeping mat. "I use a piece of cardboard," she said.

Though Yan Sophal is one of the older ones, he is small and looks younger than his 15 years. He came from a fishing family on a lake northeast of Phnom Penh where his father and mother were killed in a battle five months ago.

"There are no jobs here for me, so I must beg to get food," he said. Wringing his hands and twisting his fingers as he talked, he seemed haunted, frightened, wanting affection but afraid to trust anyone. Because of his deficient diet his feet are becoming numb, and he has an ugly rash across his shoulders.

The next day Sophal was taken to a doctor, Tek To, who is known for his humanitarianism. The doctor told the boy that there were other refugees living at his house and asked him to live there too. Sophal, reacting like an untamed animal, turned his head away and shook it negatively. He seemed afraid of a real home. "I do not want to go," he mumbled.

The doctor, sensing Sophal's anxieties, said there was no rush. He told him to take his time thinking the idea over and gave him a supply of medicine and vitamins.

That was over a week ago, and Sophal is still begging and still sleeping on the sidewalk. In only five months the street has become his home. Like thousands of other children here, he seems to remember no other.

[From the New York Times, Aug. 27, 1974]

A Distant Peace for Cambodians

Rumors are thick, but rebels spurn government bid

(By Sydney H. Schanberg)

Phnom Penh, Cambodia.—Rumors of peace talks blossom endlessly in the hothouse atmosphere of Phnom Penh.

Analysis news

Astrologers feel vibrations from Paris and predict negotiations before the next full moon. Optimists think the next nine months may be crucial, though they concede that they have been saying this for four and a half years. Pessimists see the war raging on for two or three years, with neither side able to win or willing to lose. So the war—and the rumors of peace—go on.

Someday, presumably, there will be peace talks for Cambodia, but given the prevailing conditions of bloody though inconclusive warfare—more than 300 killed or wounded daily—it is impossible to find anyone willing to bet on its happening soon.

In July, 1973, the Government of President Lon Nol made an offer for negotiations. It was rejected by the Communist-led insurgents as "trickery." This July the Government made a more liberal offer. It was just as summarily rejected.

Last year's offer set conditions for the opening of peace talks—the withdrawal of all foreign troops, meaning the Vietcong and North Vietnamese, and the establishment of a cease-fire. This year's, described as a "maximum" offer, set no conditions and said, "All questions that divide the Cambodians are subject to discussion."

The insurgents—led ceremonially from exile in Peking by Prince Norodom Sihanouk and in the field by the increasingly more important Khieu Samphan—have never shown interest in negotiations.

Only a few months ago, in a speech at a state banquet in Peking, Mr. Khieu Samphan accused the Lon Nol Government and the United States of resorting to "such vicious maneuvers as sham cease-fire, sham talks and sham peace." He added that his forces would "carry on our uncompromising and unyielding struggle" until military victory.

If Washington ends its support of Marshal Lon Nol and pulls out, the insurgent position goes, the entire problem would be resolved—which means that the Government would succumb.

That remains the insurgents' public stance. So far there is no sign of any less rigid private stance, nor is there any sign that the insurgents' Chinese and North Vietnamese sponsors are about to reduce their support significantly as a consequence of superpower détente.

The United States has apparently shied away from actual involvement in getting negotiations under way. A few months ago, when Mr. Khieu Samphan was making a lengthy tour of Eastern Europe and Africa to rally support, the American Ambassador here, John Gunther Dean, recommended to the State Department, according to authoritative sources, that there be an attempt to make contact with him and feel out his position. The idea was vetoed by Secretary of State

Kissinger, it is said, because he felt the move was ill-timed since the Government was doing badly on the battlefield.

NO CONTACT WITH FOE

In making this year's peace offer, the Lon Nol Government acknowledged that it had had no advance contact with the other side. Government officials say there have been no contacts since, nor did they expect any.

Despite the unlikelihood that early peace talks will result, the Government proposal—which, like last year's, was stage-managed by the Americans—does have other purposes.

Both offers were timed to the debate in the United States Congress over how much aid to give this country and the beginning of the Government's annual campaign to save its seat in the United Nations. China, Algeria and many so-called nonaligned nations want to give the seat to the exile government of Prince Sihanouk. Their first attempt, at the General Assembly session last year, failed only narrowly, and they are going to try again.

Long-time diplomatic observers think the vote will be close, though it cannot get much closer than it was last year—53 to 50 in favor of the Government.

PRODDING BY AMERICANS

American diplomats here believe the new peace offer will make the United Nations fight easier for Phnom Penh. More important, they believe, will be the stability that the Lon Nol Government is able to show at the time of the vote, in September or October.

The Americans here have been prodding the Cambodians into military activities that, over the last few months, have resulted in some improvement in the situation. The Americans have also been urging positive economic activity as well, though it has been only marginally successful in combating rampant inflation and equally rampant war profiteering.

The Americans, moreover, have increasingly become the shadow administration of this Government—shaping its programs, ordering its decisions. They say they want to breathe efficiency into its ministries and pump corruption out of them. This has been particularly true since the advent four months ago of Mr. Dean, an activist Ambassador whose apparent goal is to push the Government into the best possible negotiating position.

United States aid is running at more than $600-million a year in known, reported categories.

The concensus is that if this is cut by a half or even a third, the Government will fall—and quickly. The aid has always been crucial, but as the war has ground on for four and a half years, the Government's resources, never large, have virtually ceased to exist, and American money and weapons have become its only crutch.

[From the New York Times, Aug. 30, 1974]

WARFARE IN CAMBODIA REELS IN CONFUSION—ON AND ON

(By Sydney H. Schanberg)

PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA.—As the war in Cambodia grinds malignantly on through its fifth year, eroding all the normal patterns of life, events here become more and more bizarre, more and more surrealistic.

Wounded enemy soldiers report to Government hospitals for treatment.

Government antiaircraft crews protecting the presidential palace sometimes fire on their own planes (there are no enemy planes) because they get a bonus every time they shoot. Sometimes the planes fire back.

The President Marshal Lon Nol, seeking to woo the Khmer Rouge insurgents away from their North Vietnamese mentors, refers to them now in public speeches as "our compatriots on the other side who have fought us under duress."

A smoldering freighter struggles into Phnom Penh after being hit by insurgent shells on its way up the Mekong River. The initial public reaction is one of hope that the cargo can be saved, for surely it must be something vital, like fuel. With great difficulty, the fire in the hold is put out and the cargo is saved. It is whiskey.

Here are random jottings from a visitor's notebook, recording some of the normal abnormalities in Cambodian life.

It is not uncommon for a patient to present himself at an overcrowded military

hospital in Phnom Penh, carrying an observation and diagnosis slip signed by a Cambodian doctor working on the enemy side.

"They send us patients all the time," said a Government doctor, who asked not to be named.

Many patients are insurgent soldiers. Others are simply wounded and sick civilians living in insurgent territory.

"We know the doctors who send them," the Government physician said. "We studied with them before the war."

The Government doctor was trained in Paris and Boston as well as Phnom Penh. He spoke without malice—in fact, with some nostalgia—about his former colleagues who find themselves on the opposing side in this civil war, which is not really a civil war because it is kept alive and financed by greater powers.

He sympathizes with his colleagues' problems.

"They send us only the people they have tried to treat but have not been successful, because they don't have the proper facilities in the jungle and they are short of medicines and drugs."

Medical problems—next to astrology and soothsaying—often provide the meat for the gossip and folklore of this city. Primarily the problems of Marshal Lon Nol, who suffered a severe stroke early 1971, which left him partly paralyzed on his left side, but still able to walk daboriously with a leg brace and cane.

The state of his health is always a choice topic in the cafes and political backrooms.

Last year President Nixon invited the Marshal to come to the United States for special treatment. Marshal Lon Nol, according to persons close to him, wanted the treatment badly but saw the invitation as an attempt to remove him as an obstacle to negotiate with the other side. So he declined.

A Cambodian doctor who treats the President said, anonymously, that his health was quite good. But this doctor speaks with disdain of the local acupuncturist who still visits Marshal Lon Nol once a week.

"Acupuncture does not work on stroke cases," he said.

In pursuit of better health Marshal Lon Nol, who is 60 years old, also regularly consults soothsayers and Buddhist priests, who provide him with special spells, blessings and amulets.

When his wife gave birth six months ago to their fourth child, a girl named Santepia, the President was buoyed and elated.

He confided in a Western diplomat that he attributed it all to the Geritol he has been taking regularly since a friend gave him a supply last year.

The presidential palace has been bombed twice—in March and November, 1973—by Government pilots who then defected to the other side. As a result the antiaircraft batteries around the palace are under strict orders to shoot at anything with wings that comes anywhere near the compound.

Since the crews receive a bonus every time they fire their 37-mm guns, they fire them as often as possible—sometimes at commercial planes. This recently persuaded Air France to stop flying to Phonm Penh.

Sometimes the gunners fire at Government warplanes that stray into the area. Untitl recently, although the gunners had hit a few planes, they had not brought any down. But on Aug. 1 they shot up an unarmed observation plane.

PILOT SLIGHTLY HURT

The stunned pilot crashlanded a few miles away in the mud of a paddy field. The plane was a total loss, but the pilot somehow walked away from the wreckage with only a wounded arm.

Perhaps the most bizarre incident occurred some months ago, when a helicopter gunship mistakenly flew near the palace and the batteries opened up. Then the infantry guards at the palace fired their automatic rifles. Then the soldiers who guard the Polish Embassy across the street ran to the roof of that mission and opened up too.

The helicopter pilot decided he had had enough, so he let go at all of them with a few bursts from his machine guns, which tore up some lawn in the area. Then he veered off sharply to get himself out of range and returned to his base.

Despite the heavy expenditure of ammunition, nothing was hit.

The official line in both Phnom Penh and Washington is that this as a war to be fought and resolved between Cambodians without outside dictation. But Cambodians pay no attention to this. They have always known that other countries will determine the war's outcome and their fate.

Which is why they have welcomed the new American Ambassador, John Gunther Dean, with a surge of plain—that other countries will * * * from Vientiane, where he helped forge the coalition peace agreement for Laos—will perform the same miracle here.

From his activities and what he has told close associates, it is clear he will do anything to bring the Cambodian antagonists to the negotiating table. In only five months here the 48-year-old diplomat has exhausted himself trying to put some semblance of spine and effectiveness into the Lon Nol Government—on the theory that a strong military and political posture might bring the other side to talks.

He has bounded around the country, speaking bluntly to local officials and military commanders, issuing what are ttauntamount to orders to shape up.

This has obviously not delighted some generals and political leaders, but it has pleased most other Cambodians—not just the educated middle class, but the poorer working class as well.

Some of them now refer to Mr. Dean as "King of the Khmers," using the ancient name for the Cambodians.

A lot of airline enterpreneurs-of-sorts have pourd into Cambodia in recent months, bringing with them DC–3's from World War II and other aging craft. They have come to take advantage of the fast-money opportunities created by the fact that the main roads from the food-producing areas are cut and vital supplies can be brought to Phnom Penh only by air.

Some of the American pilots soon became disillusioned by the corruption, and callousness here.

"I'm disgusted," said Roland Milam, a 28-year-old corporation pilot who took a job in Cambodia because he thought he could save more money here and do some good as well.

"I'm going home next month," he went on. "I thought this was a struggling country, trying to pull itself together. I thought it was a war where the bad side was trying to take over the good side. But then I got here and I see you can't tell who's the good side and who's the bad side."

"When a Government soldier offers to sell you his gun on the street for $5." Mr. Milam said, "you know something's wrong. I see Government Air Force planes land at these provincial airfields and refuse to take the wounded back to Phnom Penh, where the only hospitals are.

They take sacks of sugar, instead. They can't make any money on a wounded soldier. "Seeing that sort of thing really gets to you after awhile. I think we should just pull out and let them settle it the way they always have, settle it by themselves without any interference."

[From the Baltimore Sun, Mar. 2, 1974]

War's Rising Savagery Pours Salt in Cambodia's Wounds

(By Arnold R. Isaacs)

Kompong, Speu, Cambodia—Along Cambodia's Highway 4, burned, broken tree-stumps stand among the shattered wreckage of what were once pleasant farming villages. For miles, not a house remains standing. In some places, grass has begun to grow again, but much of the earth is still blackened and dead.

Some of the destruction was caused by ground fighting. Some was deliberately caused by the Cambodian Communists, who have begun burning villages on a large scale. Most of it was probably the result of the massive American bombing campaign that began after the Vietnam cease-fire agreement in January, 1973, and ended by congressional action last August 15.

Whatever its cause, the devastation along Highway 4 reflects the increasing cruelty of the Cambodian war. The total extent of war damage is hard to measure, but a visitor leaves with the unmistakable impression that, in relation to its size and population, Cambodia has suffered worse agonies than Vietnam.

VIOLENCE OUT OF CONTROL

The savagery of the war has grown so intense that some observers feel Cambodia's soul has been mutilated as much as its land, and that violence is so out of control that even a negotiated peace will not end the killing.

The most incomprehensible aspect of the situation is the brutality of the Khmer Communists. Ironically, in the first several years of the war, when North

Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops made up most of the fighting strength of the insurgent side, there were few verified reports of wanton cruelty to civilians, despite the deep racial hatred between Khmers and Vietnamese and the killings of Vietnamese civilians who lived in Cambodian government territory when the war broke out.

At the time, refugees' descriptions indicated the Vietnamese Communists were somewhat more benevolent in Vietnam. There was less drafting of civilians for forced labor, less strict control on movement between rebel and government zones, and fewer executions.

ARTICLE OF FAITH

At that time, also, it was practically an article of faith among most Cambodians that "Khmers don't want to fight Khmers," and that if the Vietnamese and the big powers lost interest in Cambodia, the war could easily be resolved.

It did not work out that way. As Khmers gradually replaced Vietnamese troops on the rebel side, brutality increased. More and more often it seemed militarily, economically and politically senseless, unlike Viet Cong violence in Vietnam, which while harsh, nearly always was selective and served some political purpose, as in the case of the execution of unpopular government officials.

The cruelty of the Khmer insurgents often seems to have been sheer brutality for brutality's sake. The destruction of a refugee settlement on the fringe of Kompong Speu, 30 miles west of Phnom Penh and the last major town on Highway 4 still reachable overland from the capital, is a case in point.

"WE HAVE NO IDEA"

"They came in December, over there," said the refugee leader, motioning away across the powdery-dry fields stretching out from the camp. "We ran away. There were no government soldiers here, no fighting. They just burned down everything. We lost all we had. We have no idea why they did it."

This group of refugees had been driven out of their home village, 5 miles to the south, last spring. Their homes there were destroyed, either by insurgent attacks or American bombing. They had squatted around Kompong Speu with some 25,000 other refugees from the fighting along Highway 4, which is the most strategic route in the country since it leads to Kompong Som, Cambodia's only seaport.

Like most of the more than 2 million Cambodians uprooted by the war, they had received virtually no help. Last month, they finally received some housing materials from Catholic relief services.

The cruelty is by no means one-sided. It exists on the government side as well as among the insurgents. During the American air war, for example, many journalists and diplomats had the feeling that the Cambodian commanders calling in air strikes were extraordinarily unworried about civilian casualties. It was the American Embassy, rather than the Cambodian government, that set rules of engagement designed to protect civilian lives.

Foreigners who have watched Cambodian Army officers interrogate prisoners say that sickening tortures are sometimes used. Ordinary soldiers sometimes cut off the heads of dead enemies. Beatings are common in Cambodian jails and last month four students who were arrested in Phnom Penh were found the next day hanged in their cells, reportedly with signs of torture on their bodies—a case the government first called suicide but now admits it is "investigating."

[From the Washington Post, November 24, 1974]

CAMBODIA: COMMUNISM ALTERS LIFESTYLE

(By James Fenton)

AN THANH, REFUGEE CAMP, SOUTH VIETNAM.—Recent refugees from areas controlled by the Khmer Rouge report that Cambodia is undergoing a rapid forced transformation affecting every detail of life, from marriage laws to the Cambodian language itself.

There are nearly 40,000 Cambodian refugees at present in South Vietnam—the equivalent of the population of a major provincial capital. Many of them have fled from areas where the Cambodian Communists have been strong since the beginning of the war, the northern provinces of Kratie and Stung Treng.

Peon Sam Ath, a teacher, said: "At the beginning of the war all the peasants hated Lon Nol. They detested him as a Fascist." However, he said that the

peasants also disliked the measures taken by the Communists to control the people. These included, he said, enforced collectivization of property, attacks on religion and harsh punishments.

All those interviewed agreed that the name of Prince Sihanouk, the formal head of the insurgent government in Peking, was now no longer mentioned by the Khmer Rouge.

They said that this had led to a division among the insurgent forces in the Kompong Cham area, where a group called the Khmer Sor or White Khmers had broken away from the Khmer Rouge and taken to the forests. The White Khmers, whose leaders are former Communist officials, are mostly Cham Moslems. They support Sihanouk and oppose collectivization of property. They believe simply in the abolition of middlemen.

If it is true that the Cham Moslems support Sihanouk, this puts into question much of the diplomatic activity of Cambodian Prime Minister Long Boret on the eve of a key U.N. vote. Phnom Penh has recently made a bid to obtain Arab support for retaining its U.N. seat on the ground that the Lon Nol government is defending the interests of Islam in Cambodia.

The refugees, however, insisted that the Cham Moslems in the liberated zones were working for the overthrow of Lon Nol.

A Cambodian newcomer to Khmer Rouge territory would have a new, unfamiliar vocabulary to learn. According to a student who had been captured last year during the siege of Kompong Cham, the Communists have introduced many new words and usages to express their philosophy.

Apart from obvious expressions, such as comrade and citizen, which have replaced the polite forms of address used in Phnom Penh, there are fresh coinages to cover the stock Khmer Rouge concepts of hard work, giving orders, reprimanding, punishment and secrecy. The new word for reprimanding, for instance, means literally "Reconstruction."

Neang Bun Hoa, a student, said that a man who violated Khmer Rouge laws by having an illicit love affair would find himself treated to a very severe "reconstruction." This would be followed by at least three months of punitive labor.

Other refugees claimed that such infringements were often punished by death. One refugee from Svay Rieng Province said that thousands of villagers had been killed for not toeing the Khmer Rouge line.

Several refugees claimed to have seen two Communist leaders, Hu Nim and Hou Youn, but none had set eyes on Khieu Samphan, the Khmer Rouge prime minister.

Nor did they have any idea where the Khmer Rouge government was situated or how it was run. Such matters, they said, were not allowed to be discussed. But they expressed respect for the abilities of the three leaders.

The refugees' main dislike was reserved for the Communist administrators, for the marginal privileges they enjoyed—such as cigarette money and use of motorized vehicles—and for their cruelty in executing official policy.

They said that if a peasant owned a large house, the Khmer Rouge would insist that it be pulled down and a smaller one built in its place. One refugee claimed that the large houses in Kratie Province which had not been destroyed by U.S. bombing had been demolished by the Communists themselves in the interests of equality.

All the refugees interviewed expressed a strong desire to go to Phnom Penh. However, the Cambodian Embassy in Saigon (CMA) can repatriate only 60 a week. Nearly all of those being sent home at the moment are Khmers of Chinese or part Chinese origin.

Those who are living in the camps are experiencing a poverty similar to that they suffered among the Khmer Rouge. With one difference—and that is that they have no work to do.

[From the Washington Post, June 9, 1974]

REFUGEE AID SKYROCKETS IN CAMBODIA

(By Elizabeth Becker)

PHNOM PENH.—The Cambodian government and the U.S. Embassy are engaged in a costly program of aid to win the support of civilian populations in insurgent areas.

The rebel authorities alienated many civilians in their areas last fall when they imposed an austerity program for distribution of food and other supplies in preparation for their dry-season offensive.

At the time, large numbers of civilians crossed over to government areas, complaining about a shortage of food and clothing.

The U.S. Embassy moved quickly to capitalize on the situation by increasing the size of its Agency for International Development mission here. The mission now is the second largest AID unit in the world.

Last year the United States spent $1.5 million of a total economic aid package of $93 million on refugee projects in Cambodia. This year, economic aid has jumped to $272 million, of which $20.5 million is to help refugees. Among items sent Cambodia were 225,000 tons of rice—for a country of less than 5 million people.

"If the U.S. spent as much in India, that country's famine problem would be over," said a high-ranking foreign diplomat.

In the provinces the abundance of aid, the comfortable resettlement villages, the distribution of food and technical assistance such as free fishing equipment provided by foreign relief organizations apparently have won over the refugees.

The showpieces of the vast aid expansion are various projects undertaken by the foreign voluntary agencies. President Loan Nol and Premier Long Baret have reaped political advantages by touring provincial refugee settlements where they welcome inhabitants in the name of the government.

The United States has donated $20 million of its aid funds to agencies such as CARE, Catholic Relief Services, World Vision and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

"We provide grants to voluntary agencies and they administer their own programs subject to our approval," said Thomas Olmstead, the embassy's AID director.

According to informed sources, there were two reasons behind the U.S. decision to channel so much relief money through international agencies.

First, there was the experience in South Vietnam where many relief programs were riddled by corruption and inefficiency. The U.S. mission in Phnom Penh wanted independent professional groups to handle Cambodia's refugees.

Secondly, the embassy is limited by law to 200 persons. It could not afford to fill 20 of those slots with relief workers.

The voluntary agencies are cautious about discussing their role in Cambodia. The Red Cross claims it does not report directly to the embassy but only to its headquarters in Geneva. It says the United States provides only 7 per cent of its budget.

The other organizations are all U.S.-based and receive most of the embassy grants. Aside from foreign staff salaries and special projects such as medical teams, their budgets are wholly financed by U.S. aid.

"We are often accused of being an arm of American policy here," one American director said. "I guess it is no secret that most of our budgets come entirely from American government sources. Almost all private donations are going to other countries with greater emergency problems."

Most observers think the agencies are doing admirable work. They are feeding hundreds of thousands and housing even more. A visitor to any provincial camp or soup kitchen is likely to hear spontaneous expressions of gratitude from refugees.

The visitor also is likely to hear speeches from politicians of various stature who want to be associated with the aid program. One American relief official became so disgusted with the practice that he prohibited appearances by politicians.

While discussing relief projects in the northern city of Kompong Thom, U.S. Ambassador John Gunther Dean reportedly told a foreign diplomat, "This is what the war is all about—refugees—and we are winning."

He also reportedly said that the increase in refugees represented "a vote by the feet for this side."

The agencies' work has had only marginal impact on Phnom Penh which is becoming largely a city of refugees.

Because of inflation, the real personal income for the working class in the capital dropped 50 per cent in the past year. Workers have been hit much harder than the wealthier classes since the basic items on which they spend so much of their income have drawn the sharpest price increases.

Last year, a timely—and massive—shipment of rice from the United States lowered the cost of the grain. But the black-market price is rising again and fast approaching the price last fall when the city had only half the amount now in stock.

Hoarding, the poor distribution are the only explanation for the increase, a foreign economic specialist said.

"The U.S. Embassy can control the expenditure of its aid by private relief organizations but not by the Cambodian government," a foreign diplomat said. "Corruption continues unabated."

"The working class is hurt the most," a foreign economist said. "It is the poor 90 per cent of the population that has made the sacrifices for the war."

[From the New York Times, Mar. 9, 1974]

Life Poor, But Cambodian Refugees Are Glad To Be Free of Rebels

(By Sydney H. Schanberg)

Kompong Thom, Cambodia—Two strange sites greet the vistor to this cut-off province capital 75 miles north of Phnom Penh.

THE TALK OF KOMPONG THOM

First, as the plane approaches for a landing, one sees long, green strips stretching out like signals on the brown earth. Then, on the ground, there are throngs wearing black pajama-like garb and Ho Chi Minh sandals cut from rubber tires, as if one had suddenly come upon a village on the Communist side.

The green strips are sheets of plastic provided by foreign agencies that are being used by new refugees to roof makeshift communal tents. And the people in black are the new refugees—about 20,000 of them—who dress that way because, until recently, they lived in areas under insurgent control in the region around Kompong Thom.

What changed their status was the decision of the Communist-lead insurgents to withdraw most of their troops from here for the current offensive against Phnom Penh, the capital, and the decision by the military commander here to take advantage of the drastically thinned enemy ranks to regain control of some of the population.

This pattern has been repeated recently around other province capitals—Siem Reap to the northwest and Takeo to the south—but the result in Komopong Thom have been the most favorable—the largest group of civilians to be returned to Government control in a war nearly four years old.

By all accounts the people came over to the Government side willingly, some even eagerly, as soon as they realized the enemy soldiers were on the run and could not block them.

Witnesses described it as a dramatic spectacle—first the Cambodian insurgents trying to herd the people away as they withdrew, then the arrival of the advance Government elements, then skirmishing and confusion as the outnumbered enemy went into hasty retreat and the refugees began to break away helter-skelter, and, finally, the refugees reorganizing and moving en masse across the plain toward Government territory in a great sea of people, cattle and oxcarts.

"It was like Moses leading his people out of Egypt," said a Western missionary here.

The refugees had been under enemy control since the beginning of the war, and judging from interviews with many of them, they are happy to be out of it—even though they know about the failings on the Government side, including widespread corruption and frequent indifference or ineptitude in dealing with the problems of war victims and refugees.

Describing their lives in enemy territory, some say they saw people shot; others say they only saw people taken away, not to return. Some say their movements were narrowly restricted, while others say the rules were more flexible. Apparently it depended on the village and the degree of rigidity of the particular insurgent unit.

Long Iem, a 23-year-old farmer who caught and sold fish when he was not growing rice, is typical of the refugees. At the start of the war in 1970, he related, Vietnamese Communist troops entered his village with an interpreter. They asked whether the people supported Prince Norodom Sihanouk, the exiled nominal leader of the insurgents, who had been deposed only weeks before, or were supporters of Marshal Lon Nol, President of the Cambodian Government in Phnom Penh, who had deposed him.

"We were afraid," Mr. Long Iem explained, "so we all said Sihanouk. Then we went looking for pictures of Sihanouk in old books and magazines to put up on our walls.

After four or five months, he said, the Vietnamese brought in Cambodian troops and Communist party officials to organize the village. By the end of 1972 the Cambodian rebels were in complete charge and the Vietnamese were gone.

Mr. Long Iem, like many other refugees, said the Vietnamese were more decent to them than the Cambodian insurgents, known as Khmer Rouge.

From their stories it would appear that the Vietnamese made an effort to maintain the forms of popular decision-making—by seeming to seek a consensus or by holding a trial—while the insurgents simply did as they wished.

"The Khmer Rouge were more brutal," Mr. Long Iem said. "We are not angry at the Vietnamese, only at the Khmers."

What bothered him most about living on the other side, he said—other refugees agreed—was the rigid communal form of life, the mandatory sharing of property and money, the ban on private business, the forced labor on community projects, the persecution of Buddhist monks, the puritanical attitude toward relations between the sexes.

According to Mr. Long Iem, the insurgents said: "Our system is clean and right. We must destroy everything of the old system." He added that "if someone refused to follow one of their rules, they killed him."

Referring to the insurgents, Mr. Long Iem went on: "They said those who have some wealth must take care of the poor. I am poor, but I speak truly to you, I do not like that system. Those who have money have worked hard too. They have earned their money, so why should it be taken away."

"They gave us more work but less to eat," he said. "How can you find the strength to work in the day if you get only rice soup for the evening meal?"

Mr. Long Iem did not make it out of enemy territory with all his family—only his aging mother, his teen-age brother and his 2-year-old daughter. His wife and their other child, a month-old daughter, were in a more distant place when the Government troops came and could not get away.

It would be natural to expect that the Government, having gained 20,000 people who willingly came over to its side, would do everything in its power to see that they were properly taken care of. This has not been the case.

Aside from crowing about the achievement on the national radio and in other propaganda organs, the Government has done almost nothing to provide food, shelter and other necessities. While it is true that Kompong Thom is reachable only by air and that Government resources are limited, transport planes at the Phnom Penh airport either lie idle or are used to carry high officials and their families on junkets.

Virtually the only aid getting into Kompong Thom is being brought by international relief agencies—primarily Catholic Relief Services—on Air America planes chartered by the United States Embassy in Phnom Penh.

So negligent has the Government been that military units here finally had to burn large caches of badly needed rice to keep it from falling back into the enemy's hands. Despite urgent radio requests the Government delayed sending the trucks needed to carry the rice the 35 miles to Kompong Thom; those it did send lacked fuel.

"The Government gives us nothing," said Brig. Gen. Teap Ben, the province Governor and military commander here. "They keep saying 'yes, yes' to all my requests, but everything says on paper in some office in Phnom Penh."

Most of the refugees are living in gypsy-like camps in open fields on the edges of Kompong Thom—installed there by officials to avoid overcrowding and health problems in the small town, whose population has been doubled by the newcomers.

Before the war this was a gentle, snoozy provincial center of yellow stucco buildings with red tile roofs, rich with vegetables from the land around it and fish from the meandering Sen River.

Almost from the start of the fighting, Kompong Thom was surrounded by enemy forces, and most of its buildings have been destroyed or damaged in one siege or another.

Beyond the town the plains are sequined with water-filled craters from the bombs that American B–52's dropped to hold the invaders off.

Though the defense perimeter has been temporarily enlarged and the enemy cannot send his shells into the town, this is not expected to be a permanent condition. "They will be back," General Teap Ben predicted. "They will seek revenge here."

On the river bank in a shaded corner sits a relic of the town's leisurely past—a zoo of about a dozen cages that used to hold monkeys, snakes, deer, birds,

boar and crocodiles. The cages are empty now, except for one that a poultry merchant uses as a pen for ducks and chickens. The zoo animals were all eaten by hungry Government soldiers a long time ago, when sieges made it impossible to forage.

While no one in Kompong Thom has to eat crocodile these days, the inpouring of refugees has made food, especially rice, scarce, and the problem could become serious.

"I do not want any more," the general said bluntly, because there is nothing to feed them with. I do not want people coming in here to die in front of my eyes."

[From the New York Times, June 24, 1974]

PROFITEERS IN CAMBODIA FIND FOOD IS NOW GOLD

(By David K. Shipler)

PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA.—With her major cities besieged by Communist-led insurgents, Cambodia has become a paradise for a new kind of profiteering—not in gold or opium, but in food.

It takes half an hour for a load of fresh fish to triple in value as it is flown the 50 miles from the city of Kompong Chhnang to the beleaguered capital of Phnom Penh. Over that distance, beef prices nearly double, and sugar rises 50 percent.

Merchants who are brand new to the food business are reported making profits of $10,000 a day simply by flying the scarce staples from the country's agricultural areas, over insurgent-held territory and into Phnom Penh, where many families spend their entire incomes just to feed themselves.

In an economy stagnated by war, this is one of the only booming segments. Sixteen private airlines are operating their 30-year-old DC–3's jamming Phnom Penh's Pochentong Airport, turning the tarmac into a busy truck terminal and marketplace.

American and Taiwanese pilots have flocked to Cambodia. A man selling planes arrived last week. Two huge new aircraft engines stood on a flatbed trailer outside an airline office in the center of town.

The frenzied commerce has run like a fever through Phnom Penh, as if the city were an old western mining town whose plentiful gold might run out at any moment.

The prospect of fast money is so intoxicating, and the poverty of most working Cambodians so acute, that suffering and greed have been blended into a corrosive mixture that produces ingenious systems of cheating and corruption.

Pilots and airline officials report that merchants try to overload planes by tampering with scales or by paying off pilots to carry an extra few hundred pounds.

SUGAR HIDDEN ON PLANES

Laborers, soldiers and officials who work at outlying airports try to cash in on the trade by hiding 22-pound bags of sugar on planes to be picked up by their collaborators later at the airport in Phnom Penh, pilots say.

"A couple of weeks they hid 200 kilos [440 pounds] of sugar in the tail section of a DC–3," one aircraft owner declared. "The pilot couldn't move the controls, so they opened up the tail section and found the sugar."

In another instance, he said, workers and military men took advantage of a moment when a plane, ready to take off for Phnom Penh, had lowered its flaps, revealing long hollow spaces in the wings.

"They were stuffing 10-kilo bags of sugar into the holes in the wings," the owner exclaimed. "Fortunately, one of our ground people saw it and warned the pilot." Otherwise he said, after the plane was airborne the pilot would have raised the flaps and jammed them.

One recent morning, on the dirt airstrip that serves Kompong Chhnang, a Cambodian Air Force pilot took off in an American-made T–28 propeller-driven plane. No bombs were slung beneath the wings, however, and no co-pilot was in the back seat. Instead, the seat was piled high with bags of sugar.

The sugar comes from Thailand, shipped by road to Battambang or Kompong Chhnang, where women crowd along the airstrip selling 22-pound bags for 2,500 riels, about $6 at the official exchange rate.

Beyond Kompong Chhnang the road is controlled by insurgents, and so, in Phnom Penh, other women clamor to buy the bags for $9 each from the crewmen, soldiers and military policemen who take them off the planes.

BIG PROFIT TO BE MADE

By selling just three bags a day, a laborer at the airport can make six times his daily wage of about $1.50 and a plane's crewman can double his day's pay by simply carrying one bag on a 30-minute flight from Kompong Chhnang to Phnom Penh.

But the big money is in tons, not pounds. The food merchants are almost all ethnic Chinese, and their use of the shortages to drive up prices has stirred the latent anti-Chinese bigotry that pervades Indochina.

The merchants buy fresh fish for about 34 cents a pound in Kompong Chhnang and sell it for about $1 in Phnom Penh.

The cost of airlifting it to the capital runs only 10 cents a pound so that even with that expense, the bribery and the low wages, paid to loaders and truck drivers, businessmen estimate that merchants make at least 55 cents profit a pound.

A DC-3 carries 7,000 pounds and generally flies two to three trips a day. That adds up to a daily profit of $7,700 to $11,550.

The airlift has been made possible by the United States, which buys all the aviation fuel with dollars, sells it to private distributors for riels and turns the riels over to the Government.

One official said that Washington had agreed to increase fuel shipments on the condition that they would not be sold on the black market and that the airline would fly only within Cambodia transporting only food.

"We do not want them flying drugs in from Laos," one American remarked.

A PLANELOAD OF HENNESSY

There is no evidence that they fly drugs, but pilots say they sometimes fly smuggled luxury goods. "I've come out of Kompong Som with a complete planeload of Hennessy," one pilot declared.

The fuel comes up the Mekong River by convoy, along with American rice, which is then flown from Phnom Penh to other encircled cities.

These flights are often forced on private airlines by the Government, which never pays, airline executives complain. Pilots say they are also required to use private planes to ferry troops and ammunition around the country, free of charge.

"We pay the [control] tower a few thousand riels so we don't have to fly these every day," one pilot asserted, and they say, 'O.K.—tomorrow'."

One airline executive pulled out a notebook listing 12 different agencies and officials who had to be bribed in a provincial airport, including the military chief who allegedly receives 5,000 riels, or about $12.50 each time a plane lands.

In Phnom Penh, a pilot said, "We pay the security police 100,000 riels a month for not stealing fuel."

1,500 GALLONS STOLEN

"They hit me one night for over 1,500 gallons," one aircraft owner complained. "I figure it would have taken three trucks, ten people, five siphons and at least eight hours worth of work to siphon off that much fuel. The plane was sitting right on the apron in front of the control tower, but nobody knew anything."

Pilots have also found security policemen trying to sell them spare parts that were stolen the night before.

"They steal your fuel, they steal your oil, they steal your hydraulic fluid—anything they can sell," one pilot said.

"You pay the guy who pumps gasoline into your plane, you pay the tower operators, the customs police—even truck drivers get paid off. You know why? Because otherwise when he backs his truck up to your plane he'll bump it."

If the corruption were only better organized the pilot mused. The trouble is that every man is out for himself. "You could live with it if it were controlled," he explained. "If you knew that 10 per cent of what you made went to corruption, then you could plan."

But Cambodia cannot plan these days. It is a country scrambling to live from day to day amid a war and its profiteers. "Khmers used to be soft, very soft," a young Cambodian observed sadly. "But not now."

[From the New York Times, Aug. 8, 1974]

In Cambodia Corporation Is as Commonplace as War

(By Sydney H. Schanberg)

Phnom Penh, Cambodia, August 7—A high school teacher was explaining to a foreign friend how he manages to survive on a salary of about $15 a month. "We have a couple of rich relatives in the family who help the rest of us," he said. "They are Army officers."

But military salaries are also extremely low, so he was asked how his army relatives made their money. "Oh," he said, "they steal from the Government."

He spoke these words naturally, as if discussing the weather or giving someone his address.

Corruption has become natural in Cambodia—as commonplace as the war.

The four and a half years of fighting, in addition to killing and wounding hundreds of Cambodians every day, has destroyed the country's economy and replaced it with an artificial system that breeds an annual rate of inflation close to 300 per cent and a network of greed and venality that touches virtually everyone, right down to the children on the street selling bottles of stolen military gasoline at black-market prices.

It is a system supported, like almost everything else here, by United States aid, which totaled less than $9 million in the first year of the war, in 1970, but has now soared to more than $600 million a year in reported assistance—and consequently more if hidden costs like military reconnaissance flights from Thailand are counted.

At the war's beginning, attention focused on spectacular corruption, such as the 100,000 "phantom" soldiers whose salaries were being pocketed by unscrupulous unit commanders. Or corruption at the top, such as the rumored Swiss bank accounts of the high and powerful in the Government of Marshal Lon Nol.

But now, though spectacular corruption has not gone away—a river convoy of salt crucially needed by the isolated city of Kompong Cham northeast of Phnom Penh mysteriously, "disappeared" a couple of months ago—corruption has also become unspectacular, pervasive, ordinary.

CIRCLE OF EXPLOITATION

Everyone is involved—the poor out of need, because of their hunger; and others out of greed, because of the temptation to become rich by profiteering.

Little people are now preying on other little people—a sure sign that the norms of war have at least for now replaced Cambodia's Buddhist traditions, which teach Khmers to help one another.

A typical cycle of exploitation goes something like this: a military policeman gives his superior officer a bribe to obtain what has become known in local slang as a "grease post"—such as patrolling one of the big markets. Once in the market, the military policeman demands payoffs from the small shopkeepers there. The shopkeepers in turn raise prices. The little man, to pay those inflated prices for such necessities as rice, fish paste or salt, must also find a way to increase his income, usually illegally.

One way is to become involved in the sale of stolen gas. Army drivers siphon off some gasoline every day from their vehicles and then sell it to others who resell it openly, presumably after paying bribes to the police to gain their cooperation.

While long lines of cars do queque up at the filling stations to buy their rationed 1.3 gallons a week at the Government-fixed price a much larger amount of gas is sold on the street at three and a half times that price.

The Americans bring in all of Cambodia's fuel with aid dollars, and theoretically they have tightened controls on its use. But the controls are mostly on paper.

The American Embassy, through a recent audit, did find $310,000 of military aviation fuel missing and forced the Cambodian Government to repay Washington for it, but Embassy officials are realistic and know the corruption is too widespread for them to halt more than a fraction of the abuses.

AUSTERITY IGNORED

The Americans have also tried to tighten controls and impose programs to check inflation, to stop the import of luxury goods, to block the sale of arms

and drugs and other supplies to the enemy and in general to try to push the Lon Nol Government toward a measure of efficiency and austerity. The results, however, are superficial and sometimes nonexistent.

Luxury goods keep coming in: cars from France and Germany, motorbikes and transistor radios and television sets from Japan, wines and cheeses from Europe and an undiminished supply of canned food from China, a country which also supplies most of the arms for the enemy troops.

Gold and dollars are smuggled out of the country by generals and other high officials. Pilots refuse to carry critically wounded soldiers back to Phnom Penh from provincial capitals in their empty planes. They take back sugar and other scarce staples instead because they can make a handsome profit on the food. Sales of weapons and ammunition to the enemy also continue to be reported.

Anyone can buy an American M–16 rifle through black market contacts for $7 or $8.

Last month the Government declared a ban on all official banquets and receptions except on national holidays. A few days later—no holiday in sight—Marshall Lon Nol gave a reception for a visiting American Air Force general.

On all Cambodian roads, soldiers and military policemen at checkpoints extort bribes from people carrying goods to market, a practice so common it has almost become a new national custom.

River traffic is similarly controlled. Authoritative sources say that traffic on the Tonle Sap which flows to Phnom Penh from the northwest, is run by Vincent Fernandez, a former police colonel and an older brother of Lieut. Gen. Sosthene Fernandez. These sources say Mr. Fernandez compels payments from boat owners for the use of the river. According to the sources he also tried to force the American Embassy—which recently chartered 16 barges and tugs to carry food to Phnom Penh from a provincial city—to do business with him. But angry Embassy officials refused.

Evidence of corruption comes from the ordinary foxhole soldier. One such soldier in a patched uniform with rubber sandals instead of boots hitches a ride back to Phnom Penh from his post 20 miles to the northwest. Sok Kong, 25 years old, is going to the capital to buy a mosquito net, a crucial piece of equipment in the malaria-infested countryside. But one that the Government does not issue to him.

"The Americans have a good heart," he says without being asked. "They give all the equipment we need. But we don't get it. The big people take it all."

[From the New York Times, Jan. 17, 1975]

U.S. Has Last-Ditch Plan for Cambodia

(By Sydney H. Schanberg)

Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Jan. 16—The American Embassy here said today that there was an emergency contingency plan to use the United States Air Force to run a large supply airlift into Cambodia to keep the Phnom Penn Government from falling to the insurgents.

However, the embassy, responding to questions, said this would be done only "as a last resort" and that it was "not even being considered at this point"—because the military situation did not yet warrant it.

With the insurgent offensive now two weeks old, the Government's supply situation is not getting any better. For the Communist-led rebels have effectively cut the Mekong River, on which Phnom Penh normally depends for 80 percent of its supplies.

River convoys halted

Not a single river convoy—bringing American-provided food, gasoline, ammunition and other essentials from Thailand and South Vietnam—has been attempted since the insurgents opened their annual dry-season offensive on New Year's Day.

Phnom Penh is beginning to run short of basics. Gasoline rationing, for example, began on Monday.

While the situation is not desperate yet, the Lon Nol Government must do something soon to ease enemy pressure on the Mekong. If not, the Americans will have to consider a full airlift from neighboring Thailand.

In a sense, the American Air Force is already flying supplies from its Thai bases into Cambodia—though these fall far short of the country's needs.

SHIFT TO BIRD AIR

Last October, the United States Embassy acted in response to the growing political hostility at home to the continued American involvement here. It turned over air-supply duties, which the Air Force had been handling from the beginning of this nearly five-year-old war, to a so-called civilian contractor in Thailand named Bird Air.

But the move was largely cosmetic, for under the contract Bird Air was simply given several Air Force transport planes—with the insignia painted out. The pilots, who are described as civilians, are mostly "returned" Air Force officers.

Because this operation resembles other earlier extralegal programs run by the United States Government in Indochina, there has been speculation that this one too is extralegal, and could be connected with the Central Intelligence Agency, which has financed airlines in the region.

The embassy, which has no comment on this speculation, says that Bird Air has eight planes, mostly C–130's and that it can operate, under its contract, a maximum of 10 flights a day. The embassy indicates that Bird Air is running at the maximum and bringing in at most 200 tons of supplies daily, which is only one-tenth of Phnom Penh's needs.

Ammunition alone is being expended at a rate of 600 tons a day. Then, too, 600 tons of rice a day are needed for Phnom Penh and its environs, not to mention fuel, medicines, spare parts and other supplies.

Before the offensive, Bird Air averaged two flights a day. Although it now flies in 10 loads a day, the bulk is ammunition.

Some of the supplies must be airdropped to garrisons that are cut off. The vital town of Neak Luong, which sits on the Mekong 38 miles southeast of Phnom Penh and is now under siege, is getting most of its supplies this way. And what it is getting is only enough for its soldiers. There is almost no rice left for the more than 30,000 refugees huddled there.

In 1973, when the Mekong was under heavy enemy fire, the American Air Force had to run an airlift from Thailand of 40 to 50 transports a day. And that was when river convoys were only reduced, but not halted.

A United States Embassy spokesman said today that the present plan was to use Bird Air "to the maximum" until Government troops opened large enough segments of the Mekong and the road that parallels it, Route 1, to allow at least some convoys to get through.

The spokesman said that "only in extremis' would the embassy turn to the "surge capability" of the Air Force—that is, the airlift.

The embassy gives the impression that the White House is determined to keep the Lon Nol Government from falling and will take all steps necessary to accomplish this—even if it is necessitates exceeding the aid limits set by Congress.

For the fiscal year that will end June 30, Congress has imposed a ceiling of $452-million on military and economic aid to Cambodia—which is about $200-million less than last year. When President Ford signed the foreign aid bill, he called the Cambodia part "clearly inadequate" and made it clear that he would ask for more later. Reports from Washington now indicate that he may ask for $150-million to $200-million in additional aid for Phnom Penh.

However, Congress seems to be in a resistant mood.

An increasing number of Congressmen have come to feel that aid to Cambodia is not bringing the situation closer to peace talks but is prolonging the war. This clashes directly with the views of Secretary of State Kissinger, who said he believes that the limits on aid encourage insurgent attacks and reduce the likelihood of negotiations.

[From the Washington Post, June 23, 1974]

HANOI COOLS ON REBELS—SEEN LESSENING SUPPORT FOR CAMBODIAN INSURGENTS

(By Philip A. McCombs)

SAIGON, June 22—North Vietnam appears to be trying to prevent its Khmer insurgent allies from winning the war in Cambodia, according to Hanoi-watchers here.

The policy—a change from general support for a clear-cut victory—is the result of steadily deteriorating relations between the allies.

The prevailing view in North Vietnam's ruling Politburo appears to be that an

insurgent government in Phnom Penh now would be strongly anti-Hanoi and would remain so, frustrating Hanoi's long-range goal of hegemony over Indochina, analysts here believe.

"North Vietnam wants an indeterminate situation, no clear-cut winner," said an expert observer. "They prefer to have the war bubble along. What they particularly do not want is the collapse of the Lon Nol government."

Instead, it appears that Hanoi would prefer to wait until events and personalities begin to fall into place in its favor before making any move to bring a clear-cut victory in Phnom Penh, he said.

It is not clear what effect such a change in Hanoi's policy might have on United States interests in Indochina, although it would appear to ease the strain on the United States in its support of the Lon Nol government in Phnom Penh.

The perception of a Hanoi policy change comes half a year after exiled Cambodian Prince Norodom Sihanouk told a magazine correspondent in Algiers that North Vietnam virtually had betrayed the insurgents.

"We have had to do without their active support since June 1972," Sihanouk told the Far Eastern Economic Review.

"North Vietnam wants our victory to be deferred because the Vietnamese are afraid that a victory for us would bring American retaliation on them."

The new policy appears to mesh well with Hanoi's overall strategy, which has long placed, the main emphasis on victory in South Vietnam.

Hanoi has been the main supporter and supplier of weapons and ammunition to the Khmer insurgent armies during the four-year-old war in Cambodia.

While North Vietnamese combat units no longer fight against the Lon Nol government, there are still more than 5,000 North Vietnamese advisers working with insurgent armies in rear areas.

Racial and cultural differences between Vietnamese and Cambodians have long accounted for some strains between the allies, but observers think that sometime during the past year and a half things got so bad that Hanoi adopted a no-win policy with respect to the insurgents.

This is seen as a switch from Hanoi's former policy, which appeared to favor a clearcut victory for the insurgents, provided that supporting such a victory would not unduly drain Hanoi's resources or hinder progress toward its primary goal of victory in South Vietnam.

A minority of Hanoi-watchers here disagree, saying that North Vietnam has not changed its policy. These dissenters are military personnel. Their critics say they have not taken into account the entire range of evidence.

"It's a natural exacerbation of relations between allies with somewhat conflicting views, objectives and strategies," said one analyst. "Also it stems from blaming each other for setbacks and defeats."

Evidence of bad relations is contained in thick files of reports of interrogations of Communist defectors and captives.

The files contain numerous stories of Cambodian units refusing to give rice to the North Vietnamese and Vietnamese officers refusing to turn arms shipped from the North over to their insurgent allies. Instead, they might give the insurgents their old weapon.

"They say, 'what the hell, we need the new stuff, these Cambodians aren't using it right, they're selling it off.' and so on," said a Hanoi watcher. "It comes down to dustups, even gunfire in a few cases."

The cases are all on a low level, but they are so widespread that during the past half year they have commanded the attention of analysts.

Observers think that Hanois insurgents policy is a subtle one that involves stalling, red tape and cutting down the number of advisers, rather than a direct effort to sabotage.

An insurgent request for machine-gun bullets would never be refused by the North Vietnamese, for example, but the shipment might be delayed for a long time.

"Its like the United States and Thieu," said an observer. "You can maneuver and nudge him into certain policies, but you can't blackmail him."

At the same time, North Vietnamese leaders are working to keep the Khmer insurgent leaderships divided, possible talking to different insurgent leaders separately and privately and assuring them of support.

"They don't want the insurgents to get together," said an analyst." "If a really charismatic insurgent leader came along, that would be the end for North Vietnam."

The reason is, in this analysis, "The whole momentum in Cambodia is anti-Vietnamese. North Vietnam feels that this mood has heightened, and if the insurgents sweep on and take Phnom Penh the [new] government would be initially hostile to North Vietnam and would continue to get more and more hostile."

Hanoi's eventual goal is to have, in both Cambodia and Laos, governments that are nonaligned with world power blocs, but clearly defer to Hanoi; that clear all major governmental decisions with Hanoi; and that are influenced by an indigenous political party or force primarily loyal to Hanoi.

The prospects that any of these requirements will be met in Cambodia soon are bleak.

In Laos, on the other hand, North Vietnamese influence seems strong and secure, and relations with the pro-Communist Pathet Lao are easy-going.

Pathet Lao leaders regularly attend Politburo meetings in Hanoi, where they are members of the Lao Dong (Workers') Party.

It remains to be seen whether Pathet Lao leaders in the new Laotian coalition government will make major decisions without checking first with Hanoi, but in any case Hanoi's ultimate position of hegemony in Laos is seen as relatively secure.

In Cambodia, there is no known Khmer political party or force that is primarily loyal to Hanoi.

In place of such a party or force, Hanoi has tried to substitute a rigorous Communist Party structure, but the attempt isn't working very well since, as one analyst put it, "Cambodians aren't very ideologically minded."

Analysts here have noticed animosity between the Khmer insurgents and North Vietnamese at least as far back as the spring of 1970, when U.S. and South Vietnamese forces invaded Communist sanctuaries inside Cambodia.

Documents captured in the sanctuaries disclosed conflicts between the allies over moving Cambodian peasants when the North Vietnames established cambat bases, and so on. There were also racial slurs and disparaging remarks on both sides.

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