

Information given to CORDS/WV by Dr. John W. Taylor, Minh
Quy (Pat Smith's) Hospital, Pleiku
Address: c/o 67th Evacuation Hospital, APO 96318, Pleiku

Ben Het is an ARVN Ranger border camp in the tri-border area
manned by ARVN Rangers, with 2 U.S. advisors. The location is
in Montagnard territory, occupied entirely by Montagnards where
the majority of fighting was staged in the Kontum offensive. Right
now there are 1400 Montagnard refugees who have come to this
border camp and they are expecting a total of 1700 before the
refugees stop coming. There are no facilities for housing, food,
etc., and all the Montagnards are desperate to get out. The area
is still insecure, getting frequent incoming rounds.

The medical situation. Many people are in poor shape and can't
walk out--it is miles from anywhere. Minh Quy Hospital has
three Montagnard health workers in the Ben Het Camp for the
refugees, the 4th was wounded and had to be moved out. In addition,
there is Tom Coles, director of the hospital's village health worker
program. He has also been in the Ben Het Camp. The activities
of these people have included running a sick call and giving
medication. They currently have 200 people charted who need
medicines every day, plus another 100 needing dressings every day.
Many of these people need hospitalization and they are broken down
into three priorities for evacuation. The sick patients in the three
categories are divided geographically so if a chopper comes in they
can be evacuated. They are orderly and ready to go at all times,
but the problem is transportation. An epidemic of measles has
just broken out, plague is in the camp but not a big problem yet.
The idea is to get everyone out to Kontum or Pleiku, taking the
sickest people first. The American Ranger Command in Pleiku
has been quite helpful in getting small Huey helicopters into the
area when they can, but they are limited in what they can do because
of the volume of people there. VNAF has given virtually no air
support on Chinooks to the operation, even though it seems to us that
they are available in the Pleiku area.

U.S. authorities in Pleiku are reluctant to increase their effort
without some sort of reciprocation by VNAF. The medical facilities
in Kontum and Pleiku, and the refugee facilities in these two areas,
are adequate to handle the load.

What we would like to know is who is responsible to get the people
out of there.