

Indochinese Refugee Reports

Information Exchange Project American Public Welfare Association
1125 Fifteenth Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20005 (202) 293-7550

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IN THIS ISSUE:

- Refugee Act of 1979 Passes First Hurdle.....1-3
- Private Study Recommends New Focus in Refugee Resettlement.....3-4
- I. Recent Developments
- IRAP Funding after September 30.....5
 - Department of State FY'80 Refugee Funds.....5
 - AFL-CIO Support of Refugee Admissions.....5
 - October Meetings.....6
 - Boat People Emergency Fund...6-7
- II. Resource Exchange
- Educational Guides.....7
- III. Statistical Reports.....8

REFUGEE ACT OF 1979 PASSES FIRST HURDLE

In a dramatic move that could speed final passage of the bill, the Senate unanimously approved the Refugee Act of 1979, with amendments, on September 6. Although House Judiciary Committee action is not anticipated until September 19, the Senate action could hasten House consideration of the bill. Current authorization for the Indochinese Refugee Assistance Program (IRAP) expires on September 30.

The bill, S. 643, which will cover all refugees entering the U.S., provides for 100% federal funding for cash and medical assistance for two years from a refugee's date of entry, with no time limitation on federal funding for social services. An amendment offered by Senator Alan Cranston (D-California) extends the Indochinese Refugee Assistance Program for one year, providing an additional year of federal funding for many Indochinese refugees who will already have been in the U.S. for two years at the time of passage of the bill. Without the amendment, states would have to begin financing assistance for a large number of refugees who entered the U.S. prior to October 1, 1977.

As expected, Senator Walter Huddleston (D-Kentucky) offered several amendments to

the bill, all of which carried. In an unanticipated move, he proposed an amendment to terminate, after September 30, 1982, authority to admit a normal flow of 50,000 refugees each year. Thus, three years after the bill is enacted, refugees would have to be admitted under the special admissions provisions of the bill, and numbers would be determined by presidential consultation with House and Senate Judiciary Committee members.

Another Huddleston amendment requires that, in addition to the president consulting with members of the Judiciary Committees prior to admitting refugees above the normal flow limit, those Committees must hold hearings on the proposed admissions and issue a report to the Congress on the findings of the hearings. Also by amendment, Huddleston proposed that special admissions be based upon determining that a refugee is "of special responsibility" to the U.S., a more stringent requirement than "of special concern."

Voicing a complaint that states cannot adequately prepare for the admission of refugees, Senator Gary Hart (D-Colorado) sponsored an amendment to require that the information provided by the president to the Judiciary Committees also be provided to state governors, along with information regarding the numbers to be admitted and a description of federal programs available to assist in the resettlement of refugees. The amendment carried.

To bring the bill into conformity with a previously-agreed upon six-year phaseout for the Cuban refugee program, Senator Lawson Chiles (D-Florida), introduced an amendment, which carried, specifying the breakdown of federal funding during the remaining years of that phase-out period.

Floor Debate

The bill was considered under a two-hour limit on general debate, with 30

minutes allotted to each amendment.

During the period of general debate, Senator Huddleston made extensive remarks qualifying his support of the refugee bill. He expressed concern that the impact of total yearly immigration (including illegal aliens as well as legal immigrants and refugees) on population growth, unemployment and welfare costs to the state and federal governments is not conclusively documented. Each of his amendments, arrived at in lengthy consultations with the Judiciary Committee and with the administration, were introduced to provide additional constraints on the process of admitting refugees to this country.

By terminating the 50,000 annual refugee quota after three years, Huddleston seeks to ensure that Congress will reconsider the quota after the Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy has had time to make its recommendations. Senator Kennedy expressed qualified support of this amendment, stating that he felt it unnecessary but was willing to see it go to conference when the House and Senate meet to iron out differences in their two versions of the bill.

Huddleston explained that the purpose of requiring the Judiciary Committees to hold hearings when the president seeks to admit more than 50,000 refugees is "to establish the principal that Congress, as a whole, will establish immigration policy for the country in an informed and open manner." Congressional input could come in the form of testimony at the hearings or in a "sense of the House (or Senate) resolution" regarding the proposed admissions. The decision on the request remains with the Judiciary Committees.

In explanatory remarks introducing his amendment to extend the IRAP program for another year, Senator Cranston stated that without the amendment many refugees would be ineligible for federal aid at the time of passage of the Refugee Act. A large and disproportionate burden for the expenses would immediately fall on certain localities and states with a high concentration of refugees. The amendment passed was a substitute to an earlier

amendment which would have extended IRAP for two years for all Indochinese refugees and then provide for full federal reimbursement for cash and medical assistance to Indochinese refugees for three years after date of entry. The compromise was apparently reached in consultation with Judiciary Committee Chairman Senator Edward Kennedy, who voiced support for Cranston's substitute amendment.

House Action

Various concerned groups are now directing efforts at support for the bill and for an extension of IRAP among members of the full House Judiciary Committee, which will consider the bill on Wednesday, September 19. Although much will need to be accomplished in a House/Senate conference on the bill when it has gotten through the House, there is still some tempered optimism that the bill may clear the Congress before the Indochinese Refugee Assistance program authorization expires on September 30.

On Wednesday, September 11, the New Coalition, composed of representatives from the National Governor's Association, the National Association of State Legislatures, the National Association of Counties, the League of Cities, and the National Conference of Mayors, met with President Carter to discuss the need for full federal funding for refugee assistance. Although the administration officially stands by its original request for two years of federal funding, Ron Gibbs of the National Association of Counties states that there was sympathy for the concern that states and localities should not bear the brunt of a federal decision to admit refugees. The National Association of Counties is actively lobbying members of the House Judiciary Committee for support of an extension of IRAP.

To reference the debate of the bill

in the Senate, see the *Congressional Record*, September 6, S11999-12003 and 12006-12029.

PRIVATE STUDY RECOMMENDS NEW FOCUS IN REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

In a report prepared for the Social Security Administration's Bureau of Research and Statistics, the New Transcentury Foundation recommends a new focus for refugee resettlement that views refugees as only a *transitionally* dependent population in need of temporary, intensive English language and skills training and mental health services. Julia Vadala Taft, head of President Ford's 1975 Interagency Task Force on Refugees, led the foundation study team, which conducted extensive direct observations of current national Indochinese resettlement efforts, as well as historical and statistical research on this and other U.S. resettlement programs.

With the refugee program undergoing internal reorganization at HEW, and the Refugee Act still not through the Congress, it is unclear how -- or to what extent-- the fifty-six recommendations of the report might be utilized or considered. However, the data compiled on the Indochinese refugee assistance program, as well as the recommendations made, will be of interest to all who work in the resettlement field. The report has already attracted national attention in the press and was referred to in floor debate of the Refugee Act in the Senate.

Past resettlement efforts in the U.S. have failed to recognize, according to the report, that most refugees were productive, self-sufficient members of their own societies -- survivors who can adjust successfully in a short period of time if given adequate language and skills training and psychological support early in the resettlement process. The study pointedly criticizes government expenditures for domestic resettlement assistance, which are currently greater for cash and medical assistance than for social services. Referring to a model used by

Canada and Australia, called front-end loading, the report suggests that a heavy initial investment in social services would offer greater long-term payoffs than are now realized by insufficient investments in these areas.

Guidelines for Financial and Medical Assistance

The recommendation is made that short-term cash assistance should provide linkage to employment and training systems. The authors suggest that if cash assistance continues to be offered through HEW, the SSA should investigate the possibility of offering such aid through a non-AFDC related program. An alternative would be for the Department of Labor to study a possible program similar to Unemployment Compensation. The report makes several recommendations to increase the involvement of the Department of Labor in domestic resettlement, through CETA programs and the U.S. Employment Service.

On the issue of medical assistance, the authors (Davis S. North and David A. Ford as well as Taft) concluded that eligibility for medical care should not be tied to cash assistance eligibility and income. Instead, the report recommends that care should be provided through a universal medicaid entitlement with no requirements for categorical eligibility. Another alternative would be to provide coverage through a group health insurance plan (such as Blue Cross/Blue Shield), available through voluntary agencies and paid for by the federal government. The authors noted that many refugees have been reluctant to get off welfare because low-paying, entry level jobs often do not provide the medical benefits they need, a fact which was pointed out in Congressional hearings on the Refugee Act.

Strengthening Refugee-serving Institutions

Throughout the report, references are made to the unavailability of accurate data on certain programs and the failure of the federal and state governments and voluntary agencies to gather data on the benefits of various approaches to resettlement assistance. Consequently, although recognizing that the Office of the Coordinator for Refugee Affairs is a move in the direction of better cooperation between all agencies, the study nevertheless recommends that one federal agency should coordinate all federal funding and program management and monitoring, as well as policy, both internationally and domestically. The study suggests that the federal government should establish its data needs and require states and voluntary agencies to submit the data needed to evaluate programs.

In addition to recommending that the Department of State continue to administer reception and placement grants to the voluntary agencies (volags), the study advises that volags should participate in all federally-initiated meetings for program management. To strengthen the role of the American Council for Voluntary Agencies (ACVA), the umbrella voluntary entity, the report recommends federal funding to expand ACVA's involvement in developing collaborative program efforts and long-range evaluation efforts.

Limited copies of the 216-page report, "Refugee Resettlement in the U.S.: Time for a New Focus," will be available within a month. Interested readers may phone Ms. Sue Armore (202) 673-5495 to request a copy, or write: Mr. David Arnaudo, Director, Income Maintenance Evaluation Group, Family Assistance Studies Staff, Office of Research and Statistics, SSA/HEW, 1875 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Room 914, Washington, D.C. 20009△

IRAP FUNDING AFTER SEPTEMBER 30

In the event that the Refugee Act of 1979 is not enacted before September 30, when current authorization for the Indochinese Refugee Assistance Program expires, federal reimbursement for assistance to Indochinese refugees will be extended through a continuing resolution for all Labor-HEW appropriations. The FY'80 appropriations bill for these two agencies, H.R. 4389, is expected to be tied up due to the abortion amendment. (On August 2, the House passed the conference report on the bill, but held to its disagreement on this amendment. A vote on the conference report is still needed in the Senate.)

Special language has been drafted to provide for funding that takes into account the increased numbers of refugees entering the U.S. In effect, this entails an authorization clause within an appropriations framework, because continuing resolutions normally only continue funding at the previous year's level.

More specific information on the continuing resolution should be made public in the next several days, according to an OMB official. (Date of writing: Thursday, September 12.)

DEPARTMENT OF STATE FY'80 REFUGEE FUNDS

On September 6, the House passed the Foreign Assistance and Related Programs Act (H.R. 4473), appropriating \$456,241,000 for migration and refugee assistance for the Department of State in FY'80. Of this amount, approximately \$327 million is specifically earmarked for Indochinese refugees, in contributions to the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) care and maintenance programs in Southeast Asian camps and for transportation of

Indochinese refugees to the U.S. and initial placement grants to voluntary agencies. The bill also appropriates \$40 million for the Emergency Fund, to provide for care and transportation of refugees in unforeseen emergency situations.

As passed, the bill contained the supplemental request of \$207.2 million submitted by the State Department to Congress following the Geneva conference on refugees in July at which the U.S. reaffirmed its decision to admit 168,000 refugees over the next year, or 14,000 a month. Authorization for the supplemental request is contained in H.R. 4955, which has been ordered favorably reported by the House Foreign Affairs Committee and which has been referred to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. A vote on the authorizing legislation is needed in both chambers of Congress.

On August 15, H.R. 3363, the authorization bill for the Department of State for FY'79, '80 and '81 appropriations, was signed into law by the president (P.L. 96-60)Δ

AFL-CIO SUPPORT OF REFUGEE ADMISSIONS

Negative press reports of tensions between Indochinese refugees and racial minorities in several communities throughout the U.S. have indicated a growing fear of the potential economic threat posed by refugees to America's own unemployed. Housing, welfare benefits and employment possibilities are viewed as inequitably available to the Indochinese.

Since May of 1975, the American organized labor movement has supported the resettlement of Indochinese refugees in the U.S. Consistent public statements of the AFL-CIO have charged that no economic threat is posed by the admission of refugees into the U.S. labor market.

Positions adopted at the August meeting of the AFL-CIO Executive Council reflect organized labor's stance on the issue. The Council supported both the

decision to double the monthly quota of refugees to be taken into this country and the president's decision to have ships from the Seventh Fleet rescue refugee boats in distress. Finally, the Council urged the Administration to work with other nations and the U.N. to organize an "immediate and massive" rescue effort to save boat people, stressing that the "strongest possible" measures should be taken to ensure that merchant vessels at sea rescue refugees in distress, according to the requirements of international law. On March 15, 1978, the AFL-CIO's president, George Meany, addressed a letter to President Carter concerning purported opposition to an increase in refugee resettlement: "I am aware that some voices have been raised in opposition to a more liberal policy [of admissions] on the grounds that it would exacerbate our employment problems and antagonize the trade union movement.

...No one is more concerned about the problem of unemployment than the AFL-CIO, but that problem would hardly be affected by the numbers of Indochinese refugees we are talking about. ...Unemployment is not the only thing the labor movement cares about. We care about suffering human beings everywhere Δ "

OCTOBER MEETINGS

The Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy will hold a public meeting on October 9, 1979 at the U.S. Department of State, 2201 C Street, N.W., Room 1107, Washington, D.C. The 16 members of the Commission are expected to attend.

The two major items to be considered at this meeting are: 1) the confirmation of sites and dates for public hearings around the country; and 2) the general question of how many persons

the United States can handle.

The Select Commission has a new address:

The Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy
New Executive Office Building
Room 2020
726 Jackson Place, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20506

A panel of refugee specialists will discuss the "Indochinese Refugee Crisis, the American Response" at the *American Public Welfare Association Northeast Regional Conference* on October 11, 1979 from 1:30-3:00. The APWA Northeast Regional Conference will be held October 9-12 at the Baltimore Hilton, Baltimore, Maryland. For further information, contact:

Mr. Wilbert L. Walker
Deputy Director
Social Services Administration
Maryland Department of Human Resources
11 South Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

The panelists will be Jerry Tinker, Counsel for Immigration and Refugee Affairs, Committee on the Judiciary, Dennis Gallagher, Director, Office of Refugee Affairs, and Marie Flanagan, Tressler Lutheran Service Association. Norman Lourie, Chairman, National Coalition for Refugee Resettlement, will appear as reactor Δ

BOAT PEOPLE EMERGENCY FUND

Save the Children Federation, Inc., in cooperation with the American Council for Nationalities Services, has undertaken a nationwide drive for funds to purchase medical supplies and a protein dietary supplement (fish sauce) for refugees in Indochinese camps.

Save the Children has a 46-year history in international emergency relief and child assistance programs. To date, the drive

has raised \$550,000 for the Boat People Emergency Fund. Those interested in making donations can send checks (made payable to "Save the Children") to: Save the Children Federation, Boat People Emergency Fund, Department P, Westport, Connecticut 06880. For further information, contact Laura Malis, Public Information Coordinator, Save the Children Federation, 48 Wilton Road, Westport, Connecticut 06880 (203) 226-7272 Δ

Resource Exchange

Private

EDUCATIONAL GUIDES AVAILABLE

The National Indochinese Clearinghouse will soon be making updated adult educational materials available again, once funding is released for this purpose. The Clearinghouse informs us that several elementary and secondary publications which it will no longer publish are available through ERIC:

Preschool Education Series

ESL in Kindergarten: Orientation and Scheduling, ED 116476, 4 pg., amount: \$1.67

ESL in Kindergarten: Teaching Pronunciation & Grammar, ED 116477, 6 pg., amount: \$1.67

ESL in Kindergarten: Testing Young Children, ED 116478, 4 pg., amount: \$1.67

Elementary Education Series

On Keeping Lines of Communication With Indochinese Children Open, ED 116482, 6 pg., amount: \$1.67

Classroom Instructions in Vietnamese: Inside the Classroom, ED 116483, 4 pg., amount: \$1.67

Vietnamese History, Literature and Folklore, ED 116484, 4 pg., amount: \$1.67

Classroom Instruction in Vietnamese: Outside the Classroom ED 116485, 10 pg., amount: \$1.67

Continuing English Studies During the Summer, ED 125302, 14 pg., amount: \$1.67

Supplemental ESL Activities for Classroom Teachers, ED 153498, 10 pg., amount: \$1.67

Intermediate/Secondary Education Series

Vietnamese History, Literature & Folklore, ED 116480, 6 pg., amount: \$1.67

Detailed Content of Vietnamese Secondary Curriculum, ED 129060, 72 pg., amount: \$3.50

Continuing English Studies During the Summer, ED 125302, 14 pg., amount: \$1.67

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Statistical Reports

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The Department of State gave the following figures for Indochinese refugees in Thailand camps and boat refugees in other Southeast Asian countries as of August 31, 1979. It should be noted that the figures do not reflect the number of refugees arriving in various countries who are not registered in UNHCR camps.

<u>As of August 31, 1979</u>	<u>Current Camp</u>		<u>Refugees</u>		<u>U.S. Refugees</u>	
	<u>Population</u>		<u>Arriving</u>		<u>Departing</u>	
Thailand	land: 166,218 boat: 8,104	land: 3,188 boat: 163	land: 3,130 boat: 220			
Malaysia	55,742	2,650	5,015			
Hong Kong & Macao	70,199	3,409	1,024			
Indonesia	45,856	813	1,185			
Japan	966	447	10			
Philippines	5,939	503	277			
Singapore	1,399	774	15			
Others (Taiwan)	868	33	3			
TOTAL:	355,291	11,980	10,879			