

NYT  
4-5-75

# In Saigon, a Deep Bitterness

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Special to The New York Times

SAIGON, South Vietnam, April 4—"It is nice to see you Americans taking home souvenirs of our country as you leave — china elephants and orphans," a South Vietnamese Army lieutenant remarked bitterly today. "Too bad some of them broke today, but we have plenty more."

The officer was alluding to the crash this afternoon of a United States C-5A transport plane carrying 243 orphans and 43 accompanying adults, plus 18 crewmen. Many were killed.

"You got what you needed from our country, and now it is time for you to leave, letting us pay the final bill," he added. "Well, it's a good system, I must say."

The lieutenant was one of countless Vietnamese who feel a growing sense of desperation for their families and themselves in the belief that an erstwhile ally is rapidly reducing its links with their collapsing country. Like many others he has been trying without success to get his family and himself out.

## A Handful Can Leave

For a handful, such as the director general of Air Vietnam, Nguyen Tan Trung, there is always an exit. Mr. Trung, related by marriage to both President Nguyen Van Thieu and Premier Tran Thien Khiem, was scheduled to leave. For others—unless they happen to be eligible orphans—it is different. The exits are barred, and no helping hand is being extended from abroad.

Although the United States Embassy indicated that there would be no help in getting out Vietnamese in general, Americans who have been waiting to adopt a select group of orphans will be accommodated.

Among the trapped are the Vietnamese employes and families of American companies even though the compa-

nies are ready to fly them out and provide for them.

"It is harder for a South Vietnamese to get out of this country, even in normal times, than for an East German to leave the Communist bloc," an expert on such matters commented. "With the right contacts it is possible to buy a passport for \$1,000 of so, but even with that there is no guarantee of getting out of the airport."

As Saigon families frantically made the rounds of foreign consulates picking up visa forms—fully aware of the impossibility of getting passports—foreigners continued to pour out.

## Registry at Embassy

A chartered Lufthansa DC-10 jet left tonight jammed with Germans. Before the passengers boarded there were many tearful farewells between German men and Vietnamese women.

Americans were also leaving in large numbers. A chartered Pan American 707 jet left tonight after curfew—apparently to make the flight as inconspicuous as possible and children, among them officers of the three American banks doing business in Saigon—First National City,

Chase Manhattan and the Bank of America. Other American companies were also evacuating their American employes and families.

The American companies had been asked to register with the embassy the names of all employes, American and non-American other than Vietnamese, for possible evacuation. It was made clear that the embassy would not concern itself with Vietnamese employes.

Some Americans and Vietnamese were in agreement that the sentimental interest that led to the evacuation of orphans at the expense of families and adults was unwise and perhaps harmful.

"The Communists have an excellent record in looking after children," an American said. "Orphans here under the Communists would probably be better off than under the present Saigon Government. The real tragedy is the leaving behind of the adults who may face reprisals or death for having worked for the Americans."

A Vietnamese added: "It is awful, but somehow that crash of the orphan plane is symbolic of America's experience in Vietnam. It is your last hurrah."