

WXPost Thousands to Aid Viet Refugees



By
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Thousands of federal workers will be pulled off their present assignments dealing with domestic welfare, health and employment problems to help with the U.S. part of the Vietnamese refugee resettlement program.

There is no way to estimate the exact number of government workers who will be involved. But during the peak of the Cuban refugee program—which is still going on after nearly 13 years—between 5,000 and 7,000 government workers spent most of their time on resettlement matters.

Federal officials here believe that despite smaller estimates made by administration spokesmen, as many as 130,000 to 150,000 Vietnamese refugees may be brought to this country, depending upon the political and military settlement reached by Saigon and Hanoi.

Although the Pentagon has been intentionally vague about the number of Vietnamese refugees now in the official "pipeline", one official told this column that there are already 85,000 refugees at American bases in the Philippines, Wake Island and Guam. More are arriving daily and, after initial processing, they will be sent to three sites on the U.S. mainland.

In addition to the regular processing and relocation problems American civil servants politicians who favor resettlement, but not in their areas.

Shortly after the White House announced that resettlement centers had been established at Camp Pendleton, Eglin Air Force Base and Ft. Chaffee, of-

passed in the early 1960s to help the influx of Cubans who came to this country. Officials expect this will be a tougher program to handle, because the Vietnamese face significantly more problems of race, language, culture, customs and even climate than did the Cubans. Many of the Cubans came over in the relative calm of regular flights worked out between the American and Castro governments, and had relatives here to help them.

Budget for the new refugee program currently is estimated at \$83 million (with many agencies to be tapped for "detail" workers who will be kept on their parent agency or program's payroll) but that, some officials say, could triple as the demand for services and number of refugees here rise.

Many people assigned to help run the refugee relocation believe that the 90-day entry-to-resettlement timetable may be overly optimistic. It is based, they say, on the assumption that a large number of the refugees will be well-educated professionals able to cope with language and job problems, and able to help their own families in a strange country.

The toughest cases for American workers—and this could be most of the cases—will center around refugees with limited educations, those without marketable skills, the very old and young, and people with mental or physical health problems.

Several federal agencies have already begun to comb personnel records looking for employees with skills to help in the refugee program, and others have been told to update their inoculations in case they are called to work directly with the refugees.

The brunt of the American side of the resettlement program will be handled by Health, Education and Welfare. Other agencies that will have people assigned to resettlement duties include Justice, Treasury and Defense.

Whither the Postal Service? That is the theme of the coming Direct Mail Marketing Association's April 30-May 2 national conference at L'Enfant Plaza Hotel. The sessions will cover everything from postal rates to the impact of a mail strike on the economy.

Coalition of Public Employees has named **Harvey W. Zorbaugh Jr.** its director. He comes from the National Education Association. CAPE includes the NEA, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees; National Treasury Employees Union and the American Nurses' Association.

Officials from California, Florida and Arkansas were on the telephone to political and bureaucratic contacts here, demanding that the refugees be moved out from their areas within 90 days.

Most of the complaints by the California, Florida and Arkansas officials, centered on serious unemployment in their areas. Government aides here said that local governments are not anxious to have a permanent group of foreigners who might be a drain on local welfare and health programs, or who might upset the local labor market because of their willingness to work cheap.

The relocation program will be handled under legislation