

Ford Signs Refugee Aid Bill

Associated Press

President Ford signed a \$405 million appropriations bill yesterday to provide funds to find homes, jobs, and a fresh start for more than 100,000 Indochina refugees.

More than \$70 million has been set aside for contracts with nine private, voluntary agencies to assist in resettlement of the refugees. Another \$65 million will go to the Defense Department to cover airlifting costs, \$155 million is for food, medical care and other items and \$15 million will assist 20,000 refugees headed for other countries. The money will be available until June 30, 1976.

The first 500 refugees will arrive at the Indiantown Gap, Pa., refugee camp Wednesday, a State Department spokeswoman said. As of yesterday there were 63,168 refugees in Pacific camps, 46,332 in U.S. resettlement camps and 19,467 had been processed and released.

Mr. Ford signed two measures yesterday:

One appropriates \$405 million in special assistance to refugees from Cambodia and Vietnam. It provides \$305 million for the state Department to use in relocation and resettlement of refugees, and \$100 million for the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare to use in providing health and job counseling services in the refugees' resettlement in the United States.

A second measure authorizes total spending of \$455 million for the refugees, giving Congress the option to appropriate \$50 million more.

The authorization bill requires the government to make sure the refugees are told they are free to return to their homelands if they wish and that travel expenses would be paid.

Government funds from other sources totaling about \$98 million were used to pay the initial cost of the evacuation and the establishment of refugees camps at Camp Pendleton, Calif., Eglin Air Force

Base, Fla., and Ft. Chaffee, Ark.

Mr. Ford has named a 17-member citizens advisory committee to assist in refugee resettlement. It is headed by John Eisenhower, former ambassador to Belgium and son of President Eisenhower.

President Ford had requested \$507 million for refugee aid.

The refugee aid bill signed by Mr. Ford requires the administration to report to Congress within 30 days on how many refugees want to return to the countries and what arrangements are being made for them. The administration also must report on how the resettlement plan is working to find homes for the refugees.

During the last weeks of the war in Indochina, President Ford urged Congress to provide \$972 million in military and refugee aid to Indochina. The request for military aid was dropped, however, and a reassessment of funds needed for refugee aid was made.

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