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Waldheim's Position On Refugees

Rome

Secretary General Kurt Waldheim said yesterday that the fate of the South Vietnamese refugees in areas occupied by communist forces is "a very controversial political problem" from which the United Nations should steer clear.

In an interview here, Waldheim explained why he had rejected a United States request Tuesday for an appeal by him to the communist authorities in South Vietnam not to interfere with the evacuation program now under way.

"There is a war going on and one side has occupied a part of the territory and doesn't want to cooperate, and this creates a political problem," the secretary general observed. "It is not in the interest of the United Nations to get involved in this political aspect."

The secretary general said he has received assurances from Hanoi and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Viet Cong that they would "do everything" to feed and aid the displaced persons in the areas under their control.

New York Times