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# Calls to Adopt Vietnamese Swamp State Dept.

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Almost all of the Vietnamese orphans now identified as available for adoption already are destined for American families whose names were on a waiting list before the current Communist offensive, officials said yesterday.

According to State Department and local adoption agency officials, about 2,000 Vietnamese orphans have been declared free enough of family ties to be adopted, and as many as 4,000 more could fall into that category.

The State Department besieged by telephone inquiries about the adoption process, said yesterday that its long-distance toll-free number has been changed to 800-368-1180, a line with greater capacity. The Washington area number remains 6:2-9800.

The State Department also said that adoption of the orphans by Americans not on waiting lists prior to the offensive now depends on two factors:

• Whether other Vietnamese children can be identified—by the seven American agencies licensed to do so—as free enough from Vietnamese family ties to be available for adoption. Agency representatives say they are trying to find more children.

• Whether the South Vietnamese government will allow more than the 2,000 children already approved for homes in the United States to leave South Vietnam. Saigon's position on the question is not clear, according to the State Department.

Relief specialists with private American agencies say they believe that tens of thousands of Vietnamese orphans could become available for adoption.

Before the current Communist offensive, Americans seeking to adopt Vietnamese children had to wait an average of 18 months and pay an average of \$1,500 to \$2,000 before the child was brought to this country.

Federal government officials now report almost no waiting period and say that

processing of the child can be done after the child has arrived.

Processing includes a study of the child's future home by a nearby adoption agency, references biographical and financial statements.

If more children are made available for adoption, the process again may require 18 months and cost as much as \$2,000, according to local agency representatives. The fee would drop by about \$500 if free air transportation were provided.

In the Washington area, the Emergency Committee to Save the Babies (938-4904) is soliciting donations for air transportation and taking names of potential adoptive parents. The Council on Adoptable Children (656-1119) is providing counseling and references to U.S. adoption agencies represented in Vietnam.

The American Red Cross (737-8300) and CARE (296-5696) have requested their names be added to published lists of agencies funnel monetary contributions to South Vietnamese refugees.