

WXPost APR 5 1975
Asylum Bid Poses Dilemma

A 'Miracle' Child

By Ron Shaffer
Washington Post Staff Writer

As his newly-adopted son was brought to him at National Airport yesterday, Merle Fischlowitz stared, smiled, raised his camera to take a picture, knocked the flash attachment off, put the camera down, and never took his eyes off his new child. "Look at him," he managed to say. "There he is."

An Eastern Airlines volunteer escort handed the child to Fischlowitz' wife, Barbara, and she wrapped her arms tightly around the bewildered youngster. "It's OK, Benjamin, it's OK," she kept repeating, her eyes moist.

With no more words than that, but with hugs and looks of approval, the Silver Spring couple greeted an 18-month-old orphan, who had been brought 12,500 miles from a fallen provincial capital in South Vietnam to fulfill their two-year desire to have a child.

Benjamin was one of 55 Vietnamese orphans brought out of South Vietnam on Wednesday on a widely-publicized World Airlines flight that left without permission of the Vietnamese or American governments. He stayed at the U.S. Army Presidio in San Francisco on Thursday, and was one of the first from that flight to reach the Washington area.

See CHILD, A8, Col. 1

Could Stir Panic

By Marilyn Berger
Washington Post Staff Writer

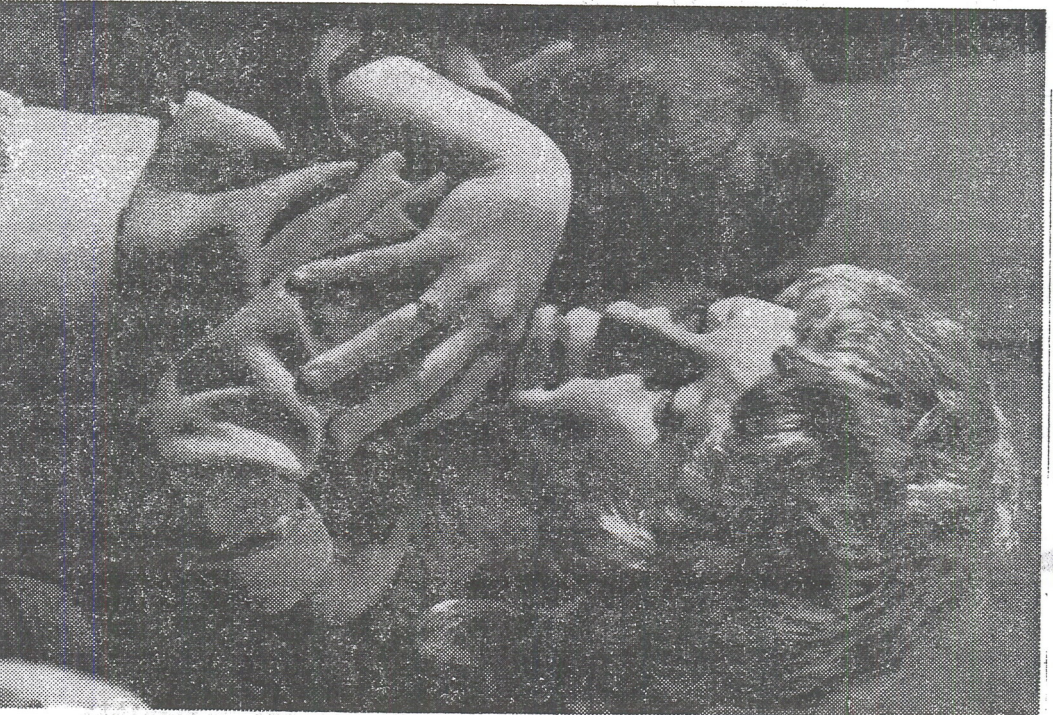
The prospect that hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese may seek refuge in the United States has plunged American policy makers into a difficult dilemma.

If they wait too long to open the doors, officials say, it may be too late for these refugees, many of whom have worked for Americans in Vietnam, to get out following a Communist takeover. If they move too quickly, officials fear, they could spread panic and a sense of impending defeat at a time when it is American policy that Saigon can hold.

President Ford said in his press conference Thursday that "under existing law action by the Attorney General can permit refugees who are fleeing problems in their own country to come to the United States." He said this authority was used after World War II and following the Soviet suppression of a revolt in Hungary in 1956. It was also used to provide refuge for Cubans escaping from the regime of Fidel Castro.

The President also said he had "directed American officials in Saigon to act immediately to cut red tape and other bureaucratic obstacles" preventing orphans from coming to the the United States.

See ASYLUM, A9, Col. 3



Holding their adopted Vietnamese children are, from left, Denise Ingram of Casper, Wyo., Adele Kolinsky of Spring Valley, N.Y., and Linda Moritz of Loveland, Colo.

Associated Press and United Press International

ASYLUM, From A1

American officials said yesterday that an interdepartmental task force, headed by Assistant Secretary of State Philip C. Habib, is now considering how to waive restrictions to permit the entry of large numbers of refugees—with estimates running anywhere from 100,000 to over a million.

One State Department official said that "tens of thousands" of Vietnamese have worked for the United States and could suffer from persecution under a Communist regime. "It's a huge problem and, we are well aware of it. We are doing and will do what we can . . . The United States has never turned people away."

But the official view is that the situation in Vietnam has not yet reached the stage where it is necessary to announce refuge for persons wishing to come to the United States.

One official said that Vietnamese have not been flocking to the embassy in Saigon seeking permission to come to the United States, but it is conceded that they may not understand the seriousness of the situation. Another official, expressing the studied optimism projected by President Ford on Thursday, said: "There's a lot of Vietnam left."

The task force, according to informed officials, is, however, planning for the contingency that a large number of Vietnamese may

wish to come to the United States. An official said that this goes beyond the question of giving the permission to the actual logistics of where to put them if they do arrive.

But a spokesman at the Immigration and Naturalization Service, which would have to process such refugees, said that no orders have gone out to prepare for any large influx.

This official said his bureau could gear up quickly if the decision is made to permit the refugees to enter. But he said that if South Vietnam falls quickly not many would be likely to get out. If it doesn't fall to the Communists there would still be a question of how many persons the exist-

ing regime would permit to leave.

Meanwhile, it was learned that the State Department has officially asked the Immigration and Naturalization Service not to force the departure from the United States of South Vietnamese currently here. State Department officials said there are currently 13,872 South Vietnamese "legally admitted" to the United States, 2,095 of whom are tourists.

The authority to provide emergency refuge for persons wishing to leave their countries is contained in section 212 (d)(5) of the Immigration and Nationality Act which gives the attorney general discretion to permit refugees to enter the United States temporarily.

Immigration officials said that 40,000 Hungarians came into the United States under this law following the 1956 rebellion and, under a 1958 statute, were permitted to apply for adjustment to the status of permanent residents.

More than 650,000 Cubans were also permitted entry and, under a 1966 statute, given the right to apply for permanent resident status.

An official of the Immigration and Naturalization Service said yesterday that so far the entry of 2,000 Vietnamese orphans had been authorized. Attorney General Edward H. Levi told reporters Thursday that further action was under consideration.

S. Vietnamese Child Arrives From 'Hell' To New Home in Md.

CHILD, From A1

The Fischlowitzes went to National Airport yesterday after having heard that a U.S. government plane carrying 250 other orphans had crashed in Saigon, killing many of them.

Appreciating his own good fortune, Fischlowitz said, "Our feelings right now are what a miracle it is that with all the hell in Vietnam one child can get to us."

Benjamin, wearing a striped T-shirt, overalls and a wet diaper held together with airline wings, clung to his new mother for 10 minutes in the airport arrival lounge, and began to cry when his new father attempted to hold him.

"I was afraid he would be afraid of Barbara's blonde hair because he had never seen anything like that before," Fishlowitz laughed nervously. "I can see that's not going to be a problem."

The Fischlowitzes who have no children, are among the fortunate adoptive parents of Vietnamese war orphans. They have their child and because of the deteriorating military situation, they received him in six months, a year short of the normal waiting time.

With the Fischlowitzes at the airport was another adoptive couple, Michael and Margaret Kirby of Chevy Chase, who also were notified Thursday that their Vietnamese child would arrive here yesterday. They also received an 18-month-old boy.

Several thousand Americans, by State Department

estimate, are waiting to adopt Vietnamese orphans, and in the last week thousands more, moved by the misery they have seen on newscasts from Vietnam, have said they also want to adopt.

Fishlowitz, 42, and his wife, 28, marriage and vocational counselors who live in Silver Spring, received word in a telephone call Thursday that their son would arrive yesterday.

"The woman said she was Mrs. so and so from Friends of The Children of Vietnam, and we have your son in San Francisco," Fishlowitz said.

"I didn't say anything for a couple of minutes," Fishlowitz said, "I was crying a little. I said, 'excuse me' and she said that's OK because she had been up for the last 36 hours and I was the only thing keeping her going."

The Fischlowitzes decided to apply for a Vietnamese orphan last October, after thinking seriously about it for two years. "We wanted a child and we wanted to take care of someone less fortunate," Fishlowitz said.

They contacted Friends of the Children of Vietnam, in Denver, an adoption agency recommended by their rabbi. They sent in copies of birth certificates and their marriage certificate, and had a month-long home study by a local adoption agency, for whom they provided references and statements about themselves.

Although Fishlowitz declined to say what the adoption cost, he said the normal cost is about \$1,500.

On March 20, the couple



By Larry Morris—The Washington Post

Eighteen-month-old Thanh clings to Michael Kirby as wife Margaret smiles welcome.

received a letter from Friends of the Children and a picture of the child that had been selected for them. The photograph said his name was Phuong. "We thought he was cute but he looked awfully serious," Fishlowitz said. "We hope he learns to smile more with us."

All that is known about the child's past, Fishlowitz said, is that he was transferred to a Saigon orphanage

from one in Anloc, which was overrun by Communist troops March 18. "We have heard he may have had polio and might have some trouble walking," Fishlowitz said.

As the South Vietnamese in recent weeks encountered one military disaster after another, the Fishlowitzes became more impatient. "We kept thinking, 'Oh my God, when are they going to get him out,'" he said.

Margaret Schuh, the vol-

unteer who escorted Benjamin on the flight to Washington, said he seemed alert and repeated words she spoke to him. He could stand, but did not walk, she said.

Said Mrs. Fishlowitz: "I was told they had 15 minutes notice and had to run to get him on the plane... the people who flew him out... the people who took care of him in Saigon... The stories we have to tell this child some day!"