

4-5-75
NYT

Relief Groups Meet on Vietnam Effort

By KATHLEEN TELTSCH

Private United States relief agencies operating in Indochina are ready to resume their assistance to civilians if Communist authorities will permit them to work, spokesmen for leading aid agencies said yesterday.

Only two agencies—the American Friends Service Committee and the Mennonite Central Committee—still have workers in areas that have fallen to Vietnamese Communist forces in recent weeks. But others that have evacuated their staffs to Saigon for safety, are hoping to win the consent of North Vietnam or the Vietcong to permit them to operate on both sides of the fighting lines.

A private meeting of relief officials was called yesterday by the American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service—an umbrella organization for 42 religious or civic groups working in Indochina—and was held at the council's headquarters at, 300 Park Avenue South.

Airlifts Questioned

The members adopted a resolution attesting to the world community's responsibility to provide security and care for lost, abandoned and orphaned children, but they emphasized that transferring such youngsters abroad should be undertaken only when there was no alternative.

A number of relief representatives complained that a dramatic airlift of orphans was an emotional response to the prob-

lem—a way of assuaging American guilt about the Vietnam war—and they questioned the advisability of such moves.

Helpless children are unlikely to be endangered by new political circumstances of a Communist take-over it was said. Overstressing the children's plight distracts attention from more acute needs of the old, the infirm and other groups that might be more vulnerable, it was said.

A number of representatives said that they had indirect reports from their evacuated staff member that indicated the advancing Communist forces had not carried out reprisals. But others expressed concern about Vietnamese who had helped the foreign aid agencies and who might be harassed.

Although there was no joint position on the issue of mass evacuation of refugees, the representatives individually seemed to oppose such a course—some because it might mean greater hardship for those displaced from their homes and others because it would drain off future leaders from their communities.

UNICEF Opens Hanoi Office

During the meeting, Martin Sandberg, a Norwegian administrator for the United Nations Children's Fund, reported that UNICEF had opened its first office in Hanoi after months of negotiations with the North Vietnamese.

The North Vietnamese and the Vietcong began accepting

limited UNICEF help in 1973, he said, but relations of trust have been established gradually after many meetings on specific needs such as medical or educational equipment.

Virendra Dayal, representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, also said that his organization had begun a program of assistance, one project involving a small cloth-weaving operation to generate work for Vietnamese put out of work as a result of the war.

Waldheim on Refugees

ROME, April 4 (UPI)—Secretary General Waldheim of the United Nations said today that North Vietnam and the Vietcong had denied permission for evacuation of refugees from territory under their control.

The Secretary General said that he had decided not to make public appeals to the Communists to rescind the ban so as to not to jeopardize other United Nations humanitarian efforts in Indochina.

"I am personally deeply touched by the human suffering of these people, and I am certainly doing my utmost to be helpful through our humanitarian agencies," Mr. Waldheim told newsmen.

"But as the evacuation problem was concerned, I came to the conclusion in the light of information that I got that such a public appeal wouldn't really solve the problem," he said.