

APR 7 1975

Saigon Ends

The Orphan

Airlift
SFCronicle

Saigon

South Vietnam has refused to issue any more exit documents for Vietnamese war orphans to leave the country, effectively halting "Operation Babylift," a senior American refugee worker said today.

"As of today, the evacuation of orphans is over," said Don Scott, director of World Vision in Vietnam.

"A senior aide to the minister (Social Welfare Minister Phan Quang Dan) told me no more exit visas will be issued to orphans."

"Absolutely no more or-

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phans will leave." Dan said, according to the aide.

Scott said Dan's reasoning was that he had promised to expedite the exit of 1400 orphans, and that all their papers will have been processed by mid-afternoon today.

The minister, who was unavailable, reportedly reasoned that since he had met his promise to allow 1400 children out of South Vietnam, no more will be taken out.

Before the report of the halting of the orphan airlift, opposition politicians made public a letter from Dan which quotes U.S. Ambassador Graham Martin as saying the evacuation of orphans "will help create a shift in American public opinion in favor" of South Vietnam.

A U.S. embassy spokesman, asked for comment on the letter, said Martin "has had as his overriding concern the welfare of the orphans."

The spokesman said Dan and Martin met last week on the orphan airlift. (30 MAR - 5 APR)

The letter was written last Wednesday to then-Premier Tran Thien Khiem, requesting prompt clearance for the evacuation of about 1400 Vietnamese orphans. (2 APR)

Dan confirmed that the letter was authentic.

An unofficial translation of Dan's letter refers to the U.S. ambassador and his intervening "directly with me to ask for permission to evacuate these children en masse abroad.

"He stressed that this evacuation . . . will help create a shift in American public opinion in favor of the Republic of Vietnam. Especially when these children land in the United States, they will be subject to television, radio and press agency coverage and the effect will be tremendous."

Associated Press