

Denial of Orphan Propaganda Ploy

Saigon

Phan Quang Dan, South Vietnam's deputy premier, yesterday angrily denied opposition charges that his government and Washington had arranged a mass exodus of orphans from this country for propaganda and political effect.

At a news conference here, Dan's voice rose to a scream as he said: "We did not create the orphans, and we are not making propaganda. The nations of the world have taken a spontaneous interest in accepting some of our orphans."

So far, about 1700 Vietnamese orphans have been flown from Vietnam to the United States. Dan said there will be no more mass flights, although some orphans will continue to go to homes in America.

U.S. Consul General Walter Burke said last week that although there are an estimated 25,000 orphans in South Vietnam, only about 2000 would be eligible to go to the United States.

He said regulations require that the orphans be in the charge of one of seven American-licensed charitable organizations working in Vietnam, and that most of the orphans do not fall in this category.

"Many, for example," he said, "are the wards of Buddhist institutions, which would not permit orphans to leave under any circumstances. There are similar impediments for many others."

A group of 14 politicians opposed to the government of President Nguyen Van Thieu has distributed a photostatic copy of a letter

written April 2 by Dan to Premier Tran Thien Kheim.

The letter recommended that the premier quickly authorize the emigration of 1000 Vietnamese orphans to the United States. It said that a mass emigration of orphans would "create deep emotions all over the world, especially in the United States which would be most helpful to the Republic of Vietnam."

The letter added: "The American ambassador said the collective shipment of these orphans and the exodus of millions of war refugees from the Communist-controlled areas would help reverse the current of American public opinion to the advantage of the Republic of Vietnam."

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