

# High Aide Says U.S. May Airlift 3,000 More Refugee Youngsters

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## Private Efforts Stressed

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WASHINGTON, April 8 — President Ford's chief refugee coordinator suggested at a Congressional hearing today that 3,000 to 4,000 more Vietnamese children might be airlifted to the United States.

Testifying as a House subcommittee opened hearings on the airlift, Daniel Parker, the administrator of the State Department's Agency for International Development, said that efforts were being made to bring the children here only through private relief agencies. He said the Federal Government's sole involvement was in flying them to this country.

Meanwhile, George Meany, president of the American Federation of Labor and Congress

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of Industrial Organizations, who has long been a champion of American involvement in Vietnam, said that rescue plans should encompass "not just orphans and refugees" but "people who've been on our side."

He said that "maybe 75,000" South Vietnamese might need to be evacuated to the United States if the Saigon Government could not be saved, but he urged that there be no limit on the offer of sanctuary to "our friends over there."

At the hearing held by the House Judiciary Committee's subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship and International Law, Mr. Parker said 1,311 Vietnamese children had been flown to the United States through the efforts of seven American social welfare groups not connected with the Federal Government.

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But his statement that 3,000 to 4,000 more would be airlifted was disputed at the hearing by Lauralee Peters, a State Department foreign service officer who has worked in refugee relief in South Vietnam.

Miss Peters, noting that Thursday was the date set for cutting off the airlift of children out of Saigon, said there were not enough relief workers to process 3,000 to 4,000 children in the two remaining days.

Mr. Parker said that the figures he gave were "rough and unofficial" and explained that any estimate of those still to be airlifted would depend on a number of variables, such as the ability to process the children's papers.

The subcommittee chairman, Representative Joshua Eilberg, Democrat of Pennsylvania, opened the hearing by stating that there was "a total lack of direction, leadership and coordination by the various agencies involved in the orphan airlift."

He said later that today's testimony had not cause him to change his views.

Mr. Parker, on the defensive under a barrage of detailed questions from five subcommittee members, said at one point that he did not know the answers.

"I am not an expert," he said. "I am an administrator."

## Agencies Heavily Burdened

At another point Mr. Parker said the burden of the relief work had been undertaken by seven American relief agencies, but he said he did not know their names.

The main point of his testimony was that the panic and flight of tens of thousands of South Vietnamese refugees had increased the burdens on relief organizations and intensified calls for action to aid homeless Vietnamese children.

Adoption of Vietnamese children by Americans is "the last resort" of the relief agencies, he said, noting that the

airlift began only last Wednesday and was marred by the crash of the first official American evacuation plane, a C-5A, near the Saigon airport.

Mr. Parker said that it was the responsibility of the private agencies to process the children and that the airlift "will continue as long as the voluntary agencies ask us to provide the transportation" with Air Force planes. Discussing the numbers who might be arriving, he said he had received an estimate from an official of a private agency that "3,000 to 4,000 additional orphans might come."

Mr. Parker also noted that the National Security Council would meet tomorrow to discuss long-term Federal policies for dealing with children and other refugees from Indochina.

Representative Elizabeth Holtzman, Democrat of Brooklyn, raised questions about the possible family connections of children who have been declared to be orphans.

Mr. Parker said he relied on the screening work of the private agencies while Miss Peters said that although attempts were made to find relatives, it was not always possible to do so.

Mr. Meany, speaking to newsmen earlier at a breakfast meeting, said the would "almost automatically" support any decision President Ford might make to send military equipment to the South Vietnamese Government.

He said that Mr. Ford should press Congress again for "whatever aid he can get over there for the Bietnamese people to keep their country." If that fails, he said, "I think we ought to go all out with humanitarian aid," including a potentially vast resettlement program.