

# Agency Says U.S. Airlifts Carry Some Children of Saigon Elite

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SAN FRANCISCO, April 13 (UPI)—Some of the Vietnamese children airlifted to the United States are sons and daughters of political and military officials, an official of a United States adoption agency said today.

How these children got aboard the transports flying refugees from Vietnam is not clear. Maria Eitz, an official of Frienda for All Children, which has sponsored most of the flights, said that bribes might have been involved.

More than 800 children have been brought from Saigon to the temporary center at the Presidio of San Francisco Army Base for adoption by United States families. The flights began shortly after the offensive by North Vietnamese and Provisional Revolutionary Government forces in South Vietnam.

Mrs. Eitz said that she had seen several children whose identification papers indicated they had parents and relatives in South Vietnam. She said that their families might have paid bribes to get them aboard.

"There may have been cases where [a South Vietnamese official] said, 'If you take these four children, then you can take these 60 orphans.'" In other cases, she said, orphans "may have been replaced on the planes by children from families that had money."

It was not known how many nonorphans were placed aboard the refugee flights, she said.

Officials of Orphans Airlift, a nonprofit agency established here to receive the children, said that they assumed all the children were orphans and relied on United States adoption agencies based in Saigon to authenticate the children.

Jane Barton, a spokeswoman

for the American Friends Services Committee, who opposes evacuation of the children, said that she had talked to the three children of a South Vietnamese colonel who flew here with their young cousin.

"There are unquestionably children in the airlift who are true orphans," she said. "But I talked to a number of children who said they are not orphans."

Tran Tuong Nhu of the International Children's Fund in Berkeley, which also has attacked the flights, said that she and other Vietnamese-speaking members had talked to several children who arrived on flights.

"We picked 10 children at random at the Presidio on Wednesday," she said. "Not one of them said they were orphans."

Muoi McConnell, a Vietnamese-born volunteer nurse's aide who has worked with the orphans, said, "There are some children here who were in Saigon orphanages for only a couple of days before they were flown here."

## 35 Children Hospitalized

LOS ANGELES, April 13 (UPI)—More than 35 South Vietnamese and Cambodian refugee children, of a group of 329 that arrived yesterday, remained hospitalized with a variety of ailments today, including possible tuberculosis.

One 3-month-old boy died on the flight from Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines. An autopsy showed that the child had died of pneumonia, dehydration and problems brought about by premature birth.

All of the children suffered from malnutrition, dehydration and diarrhea, a health official said.