

U.S. to Accept All 70,000 Of Self-Evacuated Refugees

By Lawrence Meyer
Washington Post Staff Writer

All of the 70,000 self-evacuated Vietnam refugees now making their way toward the Philippines and Guam will be accepted into the United States, a State Department spokesman said yesterday.

The administration's Inter-Agency Task Force, set up to coordinate Vietnam refugee planning, now is projecting that the number of refugees from South Vietnam could go as high as 150,000, according to informed sources.

Official estimates of the number of refugees already known to have left South Vietnam increased yesterday to 110,500. That figure in-

cludes those aboard ships, in refugee camps, at military bases in this country or already resettled here.

The estimate of refugees increased Thursday with the discovery of a 26-ship South Vietnamese naval flotilla carrying about 30,000 refugees. These refugees were in addition to the 80,000 evacuated by the United States or picked up in the South China Sea by Navy ships in the last few days. Yesterday officials said another 40,000 more may be in South Vietnamese Navy boats or may still be in the process of leaving the Mekong Delta area, where the Provisional Revolutionary Government has not yet consolidated its power.

"The administration believes it has a moral obligation to help these refugees who fled from the Communist takeover in Vietnam," State Department spokesman Robert L. Funseth said yesterday of the self-evacuees.

"As the President stated [Thursday], these refugees chose freedom. They do not ask that we be their keepers, but only for a time that we be their helpers. We are certain that the American people will support the administration in its efforts to help these refugees."

Funseth's statement confirmed the administration's readiness to amend the categories and number of refugees and number of
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gees it had earlier determined would be admitted into the United States.

The large number of refugees at sea particularly those aboard the South Vietnamese ships, is causing concern among American officials here.

The Philippine government has indicated to the United States that Vietnamese refugees are not wanted there, even if on American bases, for a temporary period. Guam, which is bearing the brunt of the refugee traffic before they are brought to this country, is crowded.

Refugees now on Guam will have to be flown to the United States on an expedited basis to make room for the 70,800 now estimated to be aboard ships in the South China Sea.

U. S. Navy ships have received messages from the South Vietnamese naval vessels appealing for aid. One message to U.S.S. Blue Ridge in the South China Sea said, "About 200 child-

ren might die of hunger and exhaustion if no help is forthcoming." Another message said, "Food and water will be critical."

The Danish state radio reported last night that a Danish freighter had picked up 3,000 South Vietnamese refugees from a sinking vessel in the South China Sea and was proceeding to the nearest port, news agencies reported.

Some American ships will be stopping in the Philippines for refueling and replenishment before going on to Guam.

The Philippine government threatened yesterday to arrest any military and government officials of the former South Vietnamese regime, including former South Vietnamese vice president Nguyen Cao Ky, who is on the U.S.S. Midway. It was not explained how the Philippine government would carry out the arrests since the refugees will go to American military bases.

In Thailand, the last of 3,703 Vietnamese refugees who fled to Utapao airfield earlier this week now have been shipped to Guam, ac-

ording to American sources.

In the United States, three military bases—Camp Pendleton, Calif., Fort Chafee, Ark., and Eglin Air Force Base, Fla.—have been selected to receive refugees and house them until they are permanently resettled.

A Defense Department spokesman said yesterday that the Pentagon now is looking at other bases as possible refugee sites, but none has been selected yet.

The first contingent of 350 Vietnamese refugees arrived at Ft. Chaffee yesterday. Ultimately, the Arkansas base may house as many as 20,000 refugees.

The failure of Congress to approve an administration request for \$327 million in humanitarian relief has left funds almost exhausted for dealing with the refugees, according to a State Department spokesman.

Although there is little doubt that Congress will approve the aid, the immediate lack of funds could slow down the resettlement process — heavily dependent upon the work of private agencies—and thus create

more problems.

Congressional sources estimated yesterday that it would cost from \$500 million to \$750 million for the six months of the refugee program.

Despite indications of hostility to the refugees in this country—including a Gallup poll showing that 54 per cent of those polled said Vietnamese refugees should not be permitted to live in the U.S. as opposed to 36 per cent who said they should be—private organizations and public officials came forward to offer their help and support for the refugees.

Leo Perlis, national director of the AFL-CIO's community services program,

said the union has offered to help in the integration and resettlement of refugees as it has in the past with Hungarian and Cuban refugees.

"Those were different times and different attitudes," Perlis said, referring to the Hungarian migration in 1956 and the Cuban refugees of the early 1960s. "My guess is that it will be more difficult . . . It will be very tough getting jobs with unemployment. But we're going to do our damndest."

Perlis said he had not yet detected any hostility among the rank and file, "but I expect some. No question about it. We had some with the Hungarians.

"I think generally we're going to find cooperation, but not the same kind of cooperation . . . Now the mood of the country is entirely different—frustration and some resentment. But we'll overcome that because I believe it's our obligation to help," Perlis said.

Washington Secretary of State Bruce Chapman said that Vietnamese refugees are welcome in his state. The Seattle city council earlier this week rejected, 7 to 1, a resolution welcoming refugees and offering them city aid. But Chapman said Thursday, "The refugees are welcome here. We're glad to have them, and the federal government is prepared to pick up the tab. I don't see that state and local governments will be burdened with that cost."