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Viet Official Starts Life Anew in Va.

By Ron Shaffer

Washington Post Staff Writer

Until three weeks ago Dr. Phan Quang Dan was the deputy premier of South Vietnam, the man in charge of evacuating orphans and resettling some 2 million refugees who had fled Communist forces as they moved south in Vietnam.

Today he is himself a refugee, living in a two-bedroom apartment in Falls Church with 11 other Vietnamese.

Dan has only the set of clothes he wears every day, and the few papers and books he could carry as he escaped. Without a job, he spends his time visiting friends pondering the events that have uprooted his life.

Dan, 56, was one of the few non-military officials in the government of former President Nguyen Van Thieu. He lived modestly in a house without air conditioning near downtown Saigon.

Dan is the highest-ranking South Vietnamese government official to arrive in the Washington area since the end of the war.

He spoke this week with apparent lack of concern over his own future — he was an M.D. from the Sorbonne and has a doctorate of public health from Harvard — and with satisfaction over his role in the orphan evacuation.

The orphanages were badly overcrowded, he said, and would receive low priority under Communist rule. "The babies would have died of hunger and disease." In addition, he said, the adoption program abroad had been tested; "we had been following the babies



PHAN QUANG DAN
... helped orphans

and they were well taken care of."

But Dan said, the exodus from the north created refugee problems faster than he could deal with them. At one point, he said, he had 6,000 refugees resettled in a camp in Ninh Thuan province near the coastal city of Nha Trang. "About 20 VC came to the camp, but they were shaking and the camp commander told them to go away and they did," Dan said. "But when the camp commander cabled the province chief to report it, the province chief was gone."

"Nha Trang was abandoned days before any Communists came in," he said. "We were shocked."

In the last days, Dan said, he told Vietnamese Air Force and Navy commanders to take their craft and leave the country to prevent the Communists from getting valuable war material.

On Saturday, April 26, (three days before the surrender) Dan said, American embassy officials told him the Communists wanted to negotiate a tripartite gov-

ernment with him and Gen. Duong Van Minh.

"I told them it is too late," Dan said.

The next day he left the country with his family on one of the last flights out of Saigon.

Dan said he has sent resumes to some universities, and hopes to be able to teach here or do research work in environment or population control. In the meantime, he said, he will go to Camp Pendleton soon to work with refugees there.

Of his own refugee status, he says, "this whole country is one of refugees, economic, political refugees from many parts of the world who came here to organize a free society. I will manage."