

HOUSE PANEL CUTS AID FOR REFUGEES TO \$405-MILLION

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Sets Fund for 14 Months—
Ford Asked \$507-Million
for Next 28 Months

By DAVID BINDER

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WASHINGTON, May 8 — A House Appropriations subcommittee today cut President Ford's request for \$507-million for Indochina refugees to \$405-million and said that the relief program should be funded with this sum for the next 14 months.

The Administration's request was based on cost estimates for transport and resettlement of 150,000 Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees over the next 28 months.

L. Dean Brown, director of the Interagency Task Force on Refugees, said of the figure reached by the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations:

"I am delighted, because it is a solid endorsement of the President's request. We will work with this, and if it doesn't work, we will come back for more."

How Fund Was Cut

Mr. Brown said that Representative Otto E. Passman, Democrat of Louisiana, who is chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, had made clear in a hearing that the subcommittee was working on the assumption that there would be 115,000 Indochina refugees in need of aid—not 150,000.

The subcommittee slashed the Administration's request to \$405-million in these categories.

¶\$155-million for daily maintenance of refugees at \$15 per person, down from \$185-million.

¶\$65-million for airlifting refugees out of Indochina to

the continental United States, down from \$99-million.

¶\$70-million for resettlement efforts through voluntary agencies, down from \$78-million.

¶\$100-million for subsequent welfare and medical costs, including education and vocational training, down from \$125-million.

¶\$15-million for movement of 20,000 refugees to other countries, down from \$20-million.

Testimony Is Recalled

In testimony before the subcommittee, Mr. Brown stated that 113,340 Vietnamese and Cambodians were "in the American pipeline," and that there were 35,000 to 37,000 additional Indochinese who might eventually qualify as refugees.

This, and the determination that as many as 20,000 of the Vietnamese and Cambodians under American care already had sponsors in this country, prompted the subcommittee to make the cuts, pending later disclosure of a larger refugee total.

Mr. Passman called for speedy action on a recommended appropriation after hearing from Mr. Brown that the Administration had already spent \$89-million on evacuation and care of refugees from Indochina and had only \$11-million left from assistance funds.

The available funds would run out "in the next few days," Mr. Brown testified. They had been borrowed from an Indochina reconstruction fund set up under the Foreign Assist-

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ance Act and suspended after Saigon and Phnom Penh fell to Communist forces last month.

In San Francisco, meanwhile, the Immigration Service announced that it would reinvestigate many of the Vietnamese children who had been brought to this country for adoption to determine whether any were not orphans and therefore not eligible for adoption. [Page 12.]

Both the House and the Senate appeared to be responding as best they could to President Ford's repeated appeals over the last week for "urgent action" to provide adequate funds for the refugees.

The Senate is expected to vote next week on an authorization, although it may not meet the Administration's request for \$507-million.

Last night, the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration marked up a bill authorizing "such sums as may be needed" for refugee aid. This enabled the legislation to go before the full Judiciary Committee this evening.

While the mood in both legislative bodies appeared to favor passage of a sizable authorization for refugee assistance, there was still some opposition in the House and Senate.

Asserting that he had discovered he could "feed myself on \$1 a day," Representative Clarence D. Long, Democrat of Maryland, told Mr. Brown that he thought the feeding cost of \$3.40 for each Vietnamese refugee projected by the Administration was "way out of line."

"I just think your whole pro-

gram is full of water," he said and declined to vote with the majority on the \$405-million authorization in the Appropriations subcommittee.

In the Senate, James Abourezk, Democrat of South Dakota, introduced a bill that would authorize only \$127-million in refugee aid.

In an accompanying speech, he accused the Administration of providing "inadequate and sketchy reports to the Congress" on the entire Indochina situation and suggested that it was trying to aid "thousands of trained political assassins."

But the majority sentiment of the Senate favoring refugee aid was demonstrated a little later in a vote on a resolution by Alan Cranston of California and James B. Allen of Alabama, both Democrats.

The resolution, stating that "the Senate warmly welcomes the latest exiles to our shores," passed 91 to 1—the lone dissenter being William L. Scott, Republican of Virginia.

The Administration is still hoping that other countries will help the United States to resettle Indochina refugees, Mr. Brown testified.

He said that Canada had offered to take 3,000 refugees, and that Australia's Prime Minister Gough Whitlam had told President Ford that he would admit 1,500. Gabon, Ivory Coast and Morocco have also offered to take several hundred Vietnamese each.