

1,000 Vietnamese Refugees Want to Return, House

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WASHINGTON, May 22—L Dean Brown, director of the administrations' interagency task force on Indochina refugees, said today that about 1,000 Vietnamese who left their country in the last month now want to return to South Vietnam. (SEE WK 2 SEC)

The number is "smaller than we expected," another task force official said, adding, "Maybe the number will increase later."

In testimony before the House Judiciary Committee subcommittee on immigration, Mr. Brown also said that about 1,800 of the more than 130,000 Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees now under American authority had expressed a wish to go to countries other than the United States.

This number, too, is less than the Administration expected. Two weeks ago, Mr. Brown estimated that 20,000 Indochinese refugees would ask to be resettled somewhere besides in the United States.

'Close to Capacity'

Mr. Brown told the panel that American reception centers in the Pacific and in the United States were filled "close to capacity" with the 130,000 refugees, but he added that delays in moving them would ease soon.

"We believe the bottlenecks have been broken," he said.

He said the flow of refugees had been jammed in western Pacific staging areas as well as at three reception centers in the United States and added that the jamming was caused by security check problems during processing.

The next foreseeable bottleneck is the issue of sponsorship," Mr. Brown said, explaining that each refugee is required to have an American citizen or institution as a personal sponsor.

Relative to resettlement of some of the refugees in other countries, Mr. Brown said the 32-nation Intergovernmental Committee on European Migration is assisting this effort, although, he added, it has not been as cooperative as the Administration would like.

Most of the Vietnamese seeking to return to their own country are now on Guam. They include sailors whose ships were commandeered by fleeing soldiers.

Return Called Difficult

For the present, returning them to Vietnam is "difficult," Mr. Brown testified, because of the "obstreperous attitude" of representatives of the revolutionary Government in Sai-

gon toward inquiries by the United Nations Commissioner on Refugees.

Mr. Brown noted that, several weeks ago, Hanoi Radio had broadcast statements saying the refugees should return, but he added, "Now that there are some who want to come back, there are difficulties."

He said the United Nations would not arrange any returns until it was certain "that these people will be welcomed back, not punished."

Refugees are being appraised of their right to return and the availability of American and United Nations assistance to do so through camp newspapers and bulletin board announcements, as well as in interviews with American authorities.

Brown Leaving Group

Mr. Brown told the subcommittee that he was leaving the task force this weekend to run the Middle East Institute in New York again. He was warmly complimented for his work during the last five weeks by the six members of Congress attending the hearing.

His replacement will be Julia Vadala Taft, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, who has handled domestic aspects of the refugee program since its inception on April 18.

Mr. Brown, in turn, praised the subcommittee for a "magnificent job" in generating a bill to authorize \$455-million in refugee assistance. The legislation, carrying an appropriation of \$405-million, was sent to President Ford yesterday for his signature.

The screening bottleneck has several components, according to Mr. Brown and other task force officials.

Searching the Files

One problem is that the files of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, State and Defense Departments, Central Intelligence Agency, Immigration and Naturalization Service and Drug Enforcement Administration must be searched for what one official called "derogatory information" about each refugee seeking asylum in the United States.

Another problem, as described by this official, is that there are only 12 main family

names—Nguyen, for example—in Vietnam. "Try to get a computer to work on that," the official remarked.

Up to now, about 25 per cent of the refugees over the age of 17 have been cleared for entry into the United States, Mr. Brown said. By the end of the week, this figure should reach 50 per cent. "The problem is that all members of the family group must have clearance before any members of the group will want to leave," he added.

So far, according to James F. Greene, deputy director of the Naturalization Service, "approximately 30 cases" have been turned up by security checks in which there was "adverse information" indicating a criminal past. He said that some of these may "conceivably" have to be taken into custody or otherwise restricted in

their movements in the United States.

The sponsorship problem appears to be of a bureaucratic nature. Mr. Brown said the State Department had assembled a list of 12,500 potential sponsors for Indochinese refugee families. Thirty-five thousand sponsors are needed, he estimated.

But volunteer agencies have been independently gathering lists of potential sponsors, Mr. Brown added, and as soon as these are coordinated with the State Department's list that problem should be resolved.

Describing details of the resettlement effort, Mr. Brown said that, as of this morning, there were 130,425 Indochinese refugees under United States authority here and in the Pacific. Of these, 18,432 have left the relocation centers and are being resettled.

Panel Told

The rest include 4,520 on ships; 415 in "flight status;" 60,806 at restaging sites in Thailand, Subic Bay, the Philippines, Guam, Wake and Hawaii and 46,252 in three restaging centers in the United States.

Mr. Brown said that up to 15,000 Indochinese are to be accommodated at a fourth restaging center—at the Indian-town Gap, Pa., military reservation, about 23 miles east of Harrisburg. Other relocation centers are at Camp Pendleton in California, Fort Chaffee in Arkansas and Eglin Air Force Base in Florida.

The chairman of the committee, Representative Joshua Eilberg, Democrat of Pennsylvania, expressed "reservations" about the new restaging center. He said he had doubts about the efficacy of the old barracks of Indian-town Gap to house Indochinese refugees.