

# Hill Unit Calls Resettlement Sloppy, Confused, Indecisive

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A Senate subcommittee charged yesterday that a "sloppy, laissez-faire approach" characterizes the Ford administration's program for resettling Indochina refugees.

A report issued by the Senate Judiciary subcommittee on refugees said the program lacks the "sense of urgency and high-level concern" that marked the effort to evacuate the refugees from South Vietnam and Cambodia. The re-

port predicted that "significant numbers of refugees" will remain in resettlement camps for more than six months and perhaps more than a year.

Figures made available over the weekend by the administration's inter-agency task force, established to coordinate refugee programs, show that the pace of refugee departures from camps still is far below the 1,000-a-day goal the task force had established.

The figures show that departures for resettlement reached

a high of 863 on May 29 and have slowed since. There were 648 on June 4 and 649 on June 5. A spokesman for the task force could not explain the slowdown.

Subcommittee Chairman Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) said that "drift and confusion mark the President's program and the activities of the Inter-Agency Task Force and because of this, the resettlement program is scarcely off the ground."

Of approximately 131,000 Vi-

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etnamese refugees, 29,000 have left the camps, 54,000 remain in four camps in this country and 45,000 are in staging areas in the western Pacific. Another 2,000 to 4,000 have gone to other countries, although there is no accurate count of these refugees, according to task force spokesman Elinor Green.

The subcommittee report commended the U.S. military effort to evacuate refugees and establish resettlement camps on short notice.

"The civilian side of the evacuation and resettlement effort has regrettably fallen far behind the accomplishments of the military services," the report said. "From the start, the task force has been characterized by a failure of leadership, poor organization, inadequate planning and belated decision-making. Unlike the military services, the civilian side allowed too many 'wasted days' to pass—permitting events to overtake plans and actions to fall behind requirements."

Efforts to prepare for the refugees were behind "from the very beginning," the report said. President Ford's announcement April 10 that "tens of thousands" of refugees would be evacuated "was followed by weeks of administrative paralysis and indecision," it said. "Whereas the military services began immediate planning for the move-

ment and care and maintenance of the refugees . . . on the civilian side little or no effort was made to plan ahead and mobilize resources in government and the private sector for refugee processing and resettlement."

The report described the civilian-run resettlement program as a "shambles . . . with a backlog of refugees, which threatens the humane resettlement of people in the shortest possible period of time."

It warned that the backup of refugees on Guam, where 32,000 are being held, could create serious health problems. And the report warned that the refugees, thousands of whom are living in tents on Guam, may be endangered by summer typhoons.

Julia Vadala Taft, head of the task force, said in a telephone interview that by mid-July 15,000 refugees would be left on Guam and they would be living in "typhoon-proof" housing.

The report also noted declining morale among the refugees, along with "too much idle time . . . and increased incidents of criminal acts."

The effort to arrange quickly contracts with private, voluntary agencies, which are handling the resettlement of refugees, has been "an unconscionable and disgraceful failure," marked by unnecessary conditions imposed by the government, provision of "false and misleading information" to the subcommittee by the task force and unnecessary delays that add up "to a month of false promises and sheer incompetence," the report said.

The report cited as "false and misleading information" two instances in which task force members assured the subcommittee that contracts with the voluntary agencies were about to be signed. Instead, the report said, the signing was delayed for weeks, and in some instances has not yet taken place.