

## Viet Camps May Close by Late Fall

By Lawrence Meyer

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The head of the Ford administration's effort to resettle Indochinese refugees predicted yesterday that the refugee camps could be closed down by the end of the fall.

The prediction, expressed by Julia Vadala Taft, came as

the first report of the Inter-agency Task Force on Indochina Refugees was sent to Congress by President Ford.

Denying that the refugee resettlement program is the "shambles" described earlier by a Senate subcommittee staff report, Mrs. Taft told a press conference, "I really feel like we're on track. I'm not saying we don't have problems . . . We can deal with them."

According to figures released yesterday by the task force, of 133,000 Vietnamese refugees, 40,655 have been resettled, including 3,962 who have gone to other countries; 27,000 remain in western Pacific staging areas, and 61,320 are in four refugee camps in this country.

In a related development, the Defense Department announced yesterday that all four military services would give enlistment preference to "qualified Cambodian and Vietnamese evacuees who had been previously trained" by American armed forces "as well as those in training in the United States when their government(s) fell."

Although Defense officials estimated that between 6,000

See REFUGEES, A7, Col. 1

## REFUGEES, From A1

and 8,000 refugees could qualify, they predicted that a much smaller number would actually enlist.

Refugees accepted into one of the four military services would start at the bottom of the enlisted ranks with a starting pay of \$344.10. They would be assigned to the jobs for which the American military had previously trained them.

Refugees without American military training would compete with residents of the United States on an equal basis.

In no case, however, would a refugee be eligible for service in the military here until he or she has attained the status of a resident alien—a preliminary step to citizenship. At present, most of the Indochinese refugees are in the United States on a "parole" basis, a category that allows them to be in the United States but does not make them eligible for citizenship.

Unless Congress enacts special legislation to exempt Indochinese refugees from the quotas of the present immigration law, only 20,000 Vietnamese a year could be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis for resident alien status.

Although Mrs. Taft was generally optimistic about refugee resettlement efforts, she acknowledged that the program is encountering problems. "I'm not kidding myself or the task force when I say we need

sponsors," she said. "We do need sponsors."

The nine private voluntary agencies that are resettling refugees have told the task force that they will be able to resettle some 60,000 to 70,000 refugees by summer's end, Mrs. Taft said.

As a result, she said, the task force is increasing its efforts to find sponsors for the refugees.

According to the task force report, more refugees have resettled in California than the next six areas combined. As of June 10, the report said, 8,135 refugees had gone to California, 1,614 to Virginia, 1,604 to New York, 1,246 to Texas, 1,202 to the District of Columbia, 1,075 to Hawaii and 939 to Florida.

At the outset of the refugee resettlement program, California officials had expressed concern that the bulk of the refugees would settle in Southern California. Mrs. Taft said yesterday that the voluntary agencies "are making a concerted effort to see that there is a more equitable solution" to the distribution of refugees across the country.

Mrs. Taft also said that by today all refugees on Guam should be out of tents and living in "temporary fixed facilities" that can withstand typhoons.

She said that about 2,000 refugees now have expressed a desire to return to Vietnam and that arrangements are being made by the United Nations high commissioner for refugees.