

## State Department Taking Steps To Repatriate Some Refugees

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EGLIN AIR FORCE BASE, Fla., June 23—At least 44 Vietnamese who came here in the evacuation of their country in April have decided that they want to go back, and State Department officials have arranged for the first steps of their journey home.

An Air Force plane is tentatively scheduled to take 34 repatriates to Camp Pendleton, Calif., late tomorrow night where they will await further processing. A spokesman at the refugee relocation center here said that 10 other Vietnamese had stated their desire to return and would probably be on board also.

In California they will join at least 165 of their countrymen who have made a similar choice.

"Of course," the spokesman said, "the key to this whole is whether the P.R.G. [Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam] will accept these individuals."

Although the United Nations has attempted to ascertain the view of the new regime in

Saigon toward Vietnamese who wish to go home, there has as yet been no official response.

The State Department and the Air Force have not allowed either the identification of or interviews with any of those here who have decided on repatriation, an embargo described as "in their best interest."

All but "one or two" of the 44 here who wish to return are men, the spokesman said, and the reason for repatriation most frequently given is a desire to be reunited with family members who were not evacuated.

Many were Vietnamese Air Force crews ordered to remove planes and other military equipment from the country in the face of the Communists' sweep, he said.

Others were civilians inadvertently caught in the panic of the massive evacuation. "They were afraid," the spokesman said, "and now that they had some time to think, they simply want to go home to be with their friends and families."

The refugee center, a collection of tents erected in a sandy pine grove about 15 miles from the Gulf of Mexico, now has a population of just under 4,800 Vietnamese.

According to the Air Force personnel who have overseen its day to day life since its construction in early May, there have been no conflicts between those seeking repatriation and the overwhelming majority of those who wish to remain in the United States.

At Fort Chaffee, Ark., from which 165 Vietnamese were flown to Camp Pendleton yesterday to await repatriation, there have been scuffles, demonstrations and at least one fight.

"But that hasn't been the case here," the Air Force spokesman said. "Everyone—us and the Vietnamese—has tried to respect their decision and to help them exercise their choice."

A Vietnamese refugee—not one seeking repatriation—interviewed without official permission, concurred. "I think" he said, "that we are now looking out for No. 1. We do not even know who they are that want to go back but if they want to go back that is their problem and not ours."