

# Duped S. Vietnamese Describes Drugging

By John Roderick  
Associated Press

AGANA, Guam—"I am not a Communist but I want to go home," said the South Vietnamese air force lieutenant softly. "My family is there. They need me."

Lt. Cao Van Yi, 27, is in Guam against his will. On May 1, he and 12 other Vietnamese airmen were drugged and flown to Guam from Utapao Air Force Base in Thailand.

They are among the 1,607 Vietnamese here who fled in terror from the nightmare of their collapsing country on April 30 but now want to return. When they will do so depends on Communist-held Saigon. Despite almost daily overtures through the United Nations, their future remains in doubt.

Retired Brig. Gen. James A. Herbert, in charge of the refugee camps here, said: "Their destination is Vietnam. The time is unknown. The response has been zero, to my knowledge. They are running out of patience."

Neither Cao, a gentle, round-faced man with a wisp of beard, nor his fellow airmen are bitter over their experience. But he asks, pleadingly, "When do you think we will be able to go back?"

The Air Force confirmed the drugging episode recently, hours after Rep. Joshua Eilberg (D-Pa.), chairman of the House Immigration subcom-

mittee, demanded an explanation of what he called "a horrible thing for our country."

The Air Force denied that physical force was used, but Cao said he was one of 65 refugees who had been threatened with death by two Army colonels attempting to force them to board a plane to Guam.

The Pentagon announced later that the commander of Utapao at the time of the incident had been relieved of his post for exceeding his authority in the matter.

Cao gave the following account of his trauma that began at 4 a.m. April 29, when he boarded a plane at Saigon's Tansonnhut air base while rockets exploded nearby:

"I was afraid to be hit, I was afraid to die. I got onto a plane and left, but didn't expect to land in Thailand," he said.

At Utapao, an American base, 65 South Vietnamese airmen who had fled as he had were herded together in a hangar. He was the only officer. None of them wanted to go to the United States. All wanted to go back home.

The next day Cao, who speaks and writes English (he was trained in the States), addressed letters to the U.S. embassy, the French embassy and the Thai government, asking permission to seek repatriation from Thailand. There was no reply.

On May 1 at 7 p.m. a batch

of 2,000 Vietnamese refugees boarded planes for the hop to Guam. The 65 sat stolidly in their hangar, refusing to budge, their legs crossed, their heads down.

"If you don't go," Cao quoted the colonels, "you will be imprisoned in Thailand." He said one colonel added: "Go or I will shoot you."

Twenty Thai soldiers and 15 U.S. marines made a circle around the seated men, their guns at the ready. It was too much for 50 of them, who boarded a transport plane a few hours later. Two collapsed from fear and hunger and were taken to a hospital.

"Four Americans came up behind me, twisted my arms behind my back and pushed my head against a wall," Cao said. "I heard the click of a . . . rifle as it was cocked. Then I was thrown onto a table and injected first in my left arm, then my right. I got sleepy and the next thing I knew I was in Guam."

His arms were numb, he said, his head ached and there was caked blood in his nostrils.

One of the original 13 changed his mind and left for the United States a few days after reaching Guam. The other 12 are among the would-be repatriates in four camps here. One of them, Nguyen Thanh Tung, 25, who arrived in the batch of 50, confirmed the death threats but did not see the drugging.