

U.S. role on Viet refugees now over

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The government's role in resettling 140,000 Indochina refugees ended formally yesterday as the last 26 of them got on a military bus at Ft. Chaffee, Ark. and departed for new homes across America.

About one out of six — 23,768 — were on public welfare and another 4,374 have applied for aid as of Dec. 1, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare reported.

Millions of dollars voted by Congress for resettlement, which could be mobilized for programs to keep the refugees off welfare, will lie unused for many months.

The funds, part of the \$500-per-refugee grants to 10 private immigrant aid agencies responsible for resettlement, have been allocated by the agencies for sizable contingency funds for "future" refugee needs.

This has created a paradoxical situation, some say, in which money is being saved for a rainy day that appears to be here right now.

For example, 669 refugees of a total 3,500 in Illinois were receiving cash assistance as of Nov. 26, with 187 more applying for it. In California, 30 per cent of the refugees are on welfare.