

New Flow of Indochinese Refugees

Washington

State Department officials said yesterday that 11,000 additional refugees from Southeast Asia — the remnants of America's involvement in the Indochina war — have begun to arrive in the United States for resettlement.

The refugees, mostly from Laos, are being admitted under a special "expanded parole" ordered by Attorney General Edward Levi. Levi's order raised to a total 145,000 the number of Southeast Asian refugees exempted from normal immigration quotas.

State Department officials said the expanded program includes people whose past links with the United States or with defeated Southeast Asian military forces might endanger them. There also are former U.S. government employees, people with close relatives in the United States and refugees regarded as "pressing humanitarian cases."

Officials said that most of the new immigrants are Laotians who fled to Thailand when the Lao government passed into Communist control after the fall of Vietnam. But they said that 600 are people who recently slipped out of Vietnam and Cambodia aboard small boats.

The refugees are being flown to the United States from Bangkok, officials said, most of them by commercial airline. Because they go directly to the part of the United States where they will settle, no interim refugee camp system is necessary.

Once in this country, the refugees become the responsibility of private welfare agencies such as the U.S. Catholic Agency or the International Refugee Committee. The U.S. government gives the agencies \$500 to help resettle each refugee.

Officials said the new immigrants will bring the expanded refugee program's cost to about \$108 million — \$55 million for resettlement costs and \$53 million for air fare.

They said "almost enough" U.S. sponsors have been found for the new refugees. The sponsors take financial responsibility for the refugees when they arrive in this country.

Officials said the distribution of the refugees is fairly even throughout the United States. They said, however, there are some areas of concentration such as Iowa where the state has set up a program to keep the members of the Thaidam tribe of Laos intact and together.

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