

# Refugees to Get Priority In U.S. Aid After a Truce

NYTimes

By BERNARD GWERTZMAN  
Special to The New York Times

DEC 7 1972

WASHINGTON, Dec. 6—The Nixon Administration has ordered that postwar aid programs give highest priority to the resettlement and rehabilitation of the millions of refugees

dislocated by the fighting in South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, a well-placed Administration official said today.

The official, familiar with the urgent program under way in the Agency for International Development, said that the problem of either moving the refugees back to their home areas or settling them permanently in new locations had received prime consideration within the Government.

At present, however, there is disagreement in Washington on the extent of the refugee problem, although all estimates agree that it is very serious.

## Government Data Challenged

The United States Government reports some 700,000 refugees now receiving relief in South Vietnam, with an additional unknown number not on any official roll. There are believed to be about 250,000 refugees in Laos, an official said, and hundreds of thousands, perhaps as many as two million, in Cambodia.

Senator Edward M. Kennedy's Subcommittee on Refugees which has regularly criticized the Administration's Indochina policies, has charged that the Government estimates of refugees are too small.

The committee contends that there are at least two million refugees in South Vietnam, and that approximately eight mil-

Continued on Page 5, Column 3

lion people at one time or another have been in that category. The country's population is 17.5 million.

For planning, the Administration has been basing its postwar aid programs on a \$7.5-billion figure discussed by the Administration for the five years after a cease-fire. Of this amount, North Vietnam has been told it could count on \$2.5-billion.

At the moment, the Administration has not decided how much of the \$7.5-billion will have to come from Congressional appropriations, how much might be provided from private voluntary agencies, the official said.

The official said he expected that after a cease-fire a meeting of potential donor states would be called to discuss future aid programs in Indochina. It is hoped that many countries in Europe, Asia and the Communist world would participate.

Following that meeting, the Administration would be in a position to make an accurate estimate of how much money Congress would be asked to supply above the current aid appropriations, which are now running at \$448-million yearly for South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

## Shift in Mood Hoped For

Congress has been unenthusiastic in recent years about foreign aid, but Administration officials hope that with an end to the fighting the legislators might become more generous.

One problem looming in the minds of the planners is how to justify the \$2.5-billion request for aid to North Vietnam. Hanoi has talked of obtaining "reparations" from the United States for the bombing raids on North Vietnamese territory.

In Section 8 of the nine-point draft accord announced by Hanoi on Oct. 26 and confirmed by Henry A. Kissinger that day, the United States was obliged to "contribute to healing the war wounds and to the postwar construction in the Democratic Republic of [North] Vietnam and in all of Indochina."

One official said that Congress might balk at appropriating such funds if Hanoi tried to depict them as "blood money."

One aid official said that after a cease-fire, survey teams would make reports on the situation in Indochina and detailed planning could com-

mence on second-priority items. These would include bridges, waterworks and other projects of less urgency than the resettlement of the refugees, who at present are either living in camps or temporary homes or are wandering in cities and in the countryside.

Conversations would also begin, the official said, on the extent of aid that Hanoi might want to receive. But officials doubt that North Vietnam will allow a regular aid mission to set up a headquarters in its territory.

One aid official said that while the \$7.5-billion figure, first mentioned by the Administration in January, seemed large, it was "not out of the ballpark."

He said that after subtracting the \$2.5-billion for North Vietnam, this would mean \$5-billion for South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia over a five-year period, or \$1-billion a year.

In its latest budget request, the Administration asked Congress for \$710-million for the three countries for the current fiscal year. This figure was sliced to the current level of \$448-million.

The official noted that \$1-billion was only \$300-million more than had been asked for this year, and said that "in a time of peace, you'd expect that aid could be better used, and would be more in demand."

As to the costs of resettling refugees, the official said that a rough estimate would be a minimum of \$100-million for South Vietnam the first year. He stressed that resettlement was not as expensive as major capital projects.

The planning for postwar developments in Indochina has been going on in desultory fashion for several years. But about four months ago, under criticism from Senator Kennedy that it was not doing enough, the Agency for International Development set up a task force headed by Roderic L. O'Connor, who was given the title Assistant Administrator for Special Projects.

He was formerly in charge of coordinating the agency's entire support assistance programs.

The planning has intensified in the period since the disclosure on Oct. 26 of the draft agreement with North Vietnam, an official said.