

200,000 New Refugees Reported Since the Truce

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By SEYMOUR M. HERSH
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An Aide to Senate Panel Says Figures Show War Goes on 'With a Ferocity'

WASHINGTON, Feb. 27—The Senate subcommittee on refugees reported today that more than 200,000 South Vietnamese civilians were made homeless during the first three weeks of the Vietnam cease-fire, the highest refugee rate since the weeks following North Vietnam's offensive last April.

Subcommittee sources, citing official statistics supplied by the Agency for International Development, also reported that civilian casualties — wounded and dead — were running at 4,500 to 5,500 a month since the cease-fire Jan. 28. Casualties for the first eight months of 1971, by comparison, averaged 3,500 a month, according to the agency's figures.

"The story of these statistics, in terms of the Vietnamese people," one subcommittee aide said, "is that the war has continued with a ferocity."

Figures Sealed Down

The subcommittee, which is headed by Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Democrat of Massachusetts, has been recording the civilian casualty and refugee toll in South Vietnam since 1966 and periodically makes public its statistics.

Subcommittee aides noted that the development agency's official total of 213,400 refugees for the three-week period from Jan 28 to Feb. 16 was in itself significantly scaled down. To demonstrate this, they cited the following analysis by

the agency for the week ended Feb. 9:

"While no additional refugee generations were reported between Jan. 1 and the cease-fire, since that time an estimated 238,000 new refugees have been generated throughout the country. The Ministry of Social Welfare estimates that there are at least 50,000 additional new refugees who have not yet been reported."

The next week's report by

the agency, which was routinely made available to the Senate subcommittee, readjusted the total to 213,400 without comment, the Kennedy aides said.

At least 50,000 refugees were created in the delta and Can Tho areas south of Saigon, the subcommittee source said, indicating that heavy fighting continued there. Pentagon officials, pressed for details on the number of military engagements, referred a caller today to the South Vietnamese command in Saigon.

The subcommittee reported that refugees and other war victims since 1965 had reached a total of 10.1 million in a population of 18 million.