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FROM - **SAIGON**

SUBJECT - **Refugee Program - Report January 1967**

REFERENCE -

The following comments are applicable to the refugee program during the month of January 1967:

A. Areas of Progress

Vocational training of refugees is continuing to receive emphasis by the Special Commissariat for Refugees (SCR). Through special arrangements between SCR and the Ministry of Education, the latter is offering vocational training to refugees at seven of its technical high schools. Instruction will be given in building and construction trades, forging, welding, electricity, engine repair and carpentry. These courses may be varied from time to time, depending on the requirement for particular skills in the labor market and size of the school. Each school will offer three-month courses and will train approximately 75 students, with the exception of the secondary school at DaNang which has a capacity of 250 students. The school at DaNang has already completed two training cycles with a total of 500 finishing the course. A third group will be ending their training approximately March 1, 1967. The other schools are still in their first three-month cycle of training but should complete this also on March 1, with approximately 400 graduating.

The Ministry of Labor is also cooperating with SCR and is offering vocational training to refugees at six locations. This program may also be expanded in the near future to include additional schools.

The Special Commissariat is providing funds for cottage type industries which are active in many provinces, and which make use of local materials used in hat and mat weaving, ceramics and furniture. Sewing and

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DRAFTED BY WCLuken:am	OFFICE OCO/REF	PHONE NO. 467	DATE 3-23-67	APPROVED BY Eric M. Hughes Assistant Director for Refugees, OCO
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tailoring is also a popular course for refugee training.

One of the industries which holds great promise for the future is a sawmill located in Quang Tri Province. The mill is capable of producing finished lumber which will find a ready market in the province. Vast stands of trees are located in the vicinity of the sawmill which guarantees a source of supply for many years to come. Refugees will be trained to not only operate the mill but also to cut the timber. Dr. Nguyen Phuc Que, Special Commissioner for Refugees, and General Tobias, Commanding General of Philippine Civic Action Group, have reached an agreement whereby six experienced sawyers will be furnished to give instruction in all phases of sawmill operation.

Dr. Que is also concerned that his cadre who will be working with refugees are adequately trained. With this in mind he has funded a program whereby Caritas-Vietnam will train 135 female camp workers. These individuals will receive instruction in developing programs to improve living standards through avenues of health, sanitation, recreation and maternal care. During the month twenty-seven of these social workers completed their training and received assignments in nineteen provinces with heavy refugee population.

A group of forty specially selected cadre of the SCR received an intensive two-week training period to prepare them to assist SCR province personnel in establishing an accurate statistical reporting system and in the preparation of camp inventories. These are to be mobile cadre and will not be assigned to any one province.

Operation Cedar Falls which commenced on January 8, 1967, in Binh Duong Province was an example of improved cooperation between military and civilian components. With advance warning, Office of Civil Operations (OCO) officials together with officials of the Government of Vietnam were able to make plans and to take such measures as were necessary to assist in the evacuation of refugees from the "Iron Triangle" area and to receive them at a temporary center established near the city of Phu Cuong. Shelter, food, and medical assistance were immediately available and the approximately 6,000 refugees were able to bring with them almost all their movable property, including livestock. These refugees will mainly be resettled in Lai Theu District of Binh Duong Province. Plans have been made to erect 1,300 dwellings, each with sufficient ground to permit cultivation of gardens. Dr. Nguyen Phuc Que, Special Commissioner for Refugees, GVN, was impressed with the manner in which this operation developed and has instructed his staff to stockpile key commodities in anticipation of future operations.

Voluntary agencies both in the United States and third countries continue to show an increasing interest in the refugee program. Mr. Charles Jordan, Chairman of the Refugee Commission of the International Council of Voluntary Agencies and Director of Overseas Programs of the American Joint Distribution Committee, together with Dan Lack, Legal Counsel for AJDC, spent ten days in

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Vietnam to determine the problems of refugees and other needy groups. Their report to their parent bodies will enable the members to determine the extent of further participation in the program in Vietnam. The League of Red Cross Societies (LICROSS) advised the Red Cross Society of Vietnam that an appeal was sent by them to twenty-four national Red Cross societies, asking them to support programs for the needy civilian population of South Vietnam. The appeal was for supplies such as milk, rice, sleeping mats, and cloth to be used in emergency issue to 50,000 families of new refugees. Personnel were also requested for the formation of teams who would work in refugee centers on projects concerned with community development and the training of Vietnamese social workers.

B. Problem Areas

The number of refugees in temporary centers continues to show an increase over the previous month. Heavy rains, particularly in Regions I and II early in the month hampered the refugee resettlement program. The inclement weather also made distribution of commodities to refugees difficult and almost impossible in remote areas. Planned use of military aircraft did not always materialize as the aircraft were diverted for use in military operations.

Lack of adequate transport continues to plague local officials as well as the fact that many of the vehicles received through Army surplus channels are requiring considerable repair soon after arrival in the country. This may be due in part to improper maintenance. Irregularity in the schedule of relief payments can be traced in many cases to the fact that SCR personnel are unable to visit refugee centers on a regular basis.

Security in some areas has deteriorated and refugees are reluctant to return to their original homes. This is particularly true in certain cases in Quang Tri Province, Thua Thien Province and Kontum Province.

In Quang Tri Province a group of refugees who returned to their homes came back to the refugee center due to Viet Cong threats and a grenade incident. Kontum Province also reported that sixty refugees were kidnapped from a refugee center in the Province.

An impasse has been reached between the Director General of Budget and Foreign Aid, GVN, and USAID officials which has delayed the release of counter-part piastre funds. This in turn is an obstacle to the implementation of the 1967 refugee program, particularly that pertaining to the refugee resettlement phase.

C. Viet Cong Activities Directed Against Refugees

The refugee having left his home denies the Viet Cong a source of man-power and support. Realizing the seriousness of the situation, the Viet Cong resort to harassment and terrorist activities in an attempt to force the refugee to return to his home. It is also not uncommon for the communists to kidnap or impress refugees to solve their need for porters and to harvest crops. Incidents occurring during the month are as follows:

In Kontum Province on January 12, 1967, at 1830 hours a Montagnard woman and child from the refugee camp at Dak Sut were ambushed and killed while riding in the back of a truck.

On January 14, 1967, in the same province at 0500 hours, sixty refugees were taken by the Viet Cong from the refugee hamlet at Konhonang. Blankets, food, and weapons were also taken. Three refugees escaped and informed the District Chief of the incident.

D. Headquarters Overview

A general improvement in the administration of the refugee program by province officials of the Special Commissariat is noted. In many provinces they are formulating plans for resettlement which could take care of the bulk of the refugee population. Kontum Province, for example, plans to have the major portion of its 18,000 refugees permanently resettled within three months. The ability to respond to emergency situations is also encouraging, as in Quang Ngai Province where military operations of United States and Republic of Korea troops brought in 10,000 new refugees. Quick action by SCZ and Office of Civil Operations officials aided by a Red Cross team provided shelter and food for these persons in six new camps.

Dr. Que continues to press for improvement in his staff and maintains his practice of frequent visits to the provinces. This is particularly effective in stimulating his staff and improving relations at the province level.

OCO/REF staff in the field needs to be increased to meet the needs of the expanding refugee population. These specialists can do much to improve coordination between military and civilian agencies and assist Special Commissariat for Refugees staff in carrying out their assignments.

Statistics for the month of January 1967 indicate there was an increase of 78,276 refugees over the previous month. The population of refugees being cared for in temporary shelters showed a net gain of 20,972, while

those considered to be refugees but living outside of government sponsored centers rose by 11,347 persons. The number of persons who moved from temporary centers to resettlement sites or returned to their homes was reported to be 45,957. Region III was the most active in resettlement of refugees, reporting a total of 26,438 for the month. At the end of the month 349,905 refugees were concentrated in temporary refugee centers with the heaviest concentration being in Region II, followed by Regions I, IV, and III in that order. Refugees living outside the centers amounted to a total of 492,370 persons with the concentration in regions being in the same order as for temporary centers. Statistics for this analysis were furnished by Special Commissariat for Refugees.

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