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*REPORT TO THE SUBCOMMITTEE TO
INVESTIGATE PROBLEMS CONNECTED
WITH REFUGEES AND ESCAPEES
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
UNITED STATES SENATE*

**Continuing Difficulties In
Assisting War Victims
In Vietnam** B-133001

Agency for International Development
Department of State
Department of Defense

*BY THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL
OF THE UNITED STATES*



COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

B-133001

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The accompanying report presents the results of our review of the refugee and social welfare program in Vietnam. Our review was made in response to your request of April 21, 1970.

Because of the limited time available before presentation of this report to the Subcommittee, our fieldwork on this assignment was less detailed than we normally would perform.

Parts of this report were discussed with responsible agency officials in Saigon and in Washington and their comments were considered. We did not, however, obtain advance formal comments on the report.

We plan to make no further distribution of this report unless copies are specifically requested, and then we shall make distribution only after your agreement has been obtained or public announcement has been made by you concerning the contents of the report.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James B. Stacks".

Comptroller General
of the United States

The Honorable Edward M. Kennedy, Chairman
Subcommittee To Investigate Problems
Connected With Refugees and Escapees
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate

COMPTROLLER GENERAL'S REPORT TO THE
SUBCOMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE PROBLEMS
CONNECTED WITH REFUGEES AND ESCAPEES
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
UNITED STATES SENATE

CONTINUING DIFFICULTIES IN
ASSISTING WAR VICTIMS IN VIETNAM
Agency for International
Development
Department of State
Department of Defense B-133001

D I G E S T

WHY THE REVIEW WAS MADE

Since 1965 the General Accounting Office (GAO) has issued several reports to the Subcommittee on the status of refugees resulting from the conflict in South Vietnam. On April 21, 1970, the Subcommittee's Chairman requested that GAO update the reports. (See app., p. 49.)

This report deals with the refugee and social welfare program in Vietnam. Others will be issued on the civilian health and war-related casualty program in Vietnam and similar programs in Laos. To meet the requested reporting date, our observations are based on a less detailed review than we normally would perform.

GAO has not followed its usual practice of submitting a draft report to the responsible agencies for formal written comment. However, GAO discussed parts of this report with responsible agency officials in Saigon and Washington and their comments were considered.

Civil Operations for Rural Development Support officials, who are under the Commander, U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, and who make up the responsible U.S. advisory organization in Saigon, were especially concerned at what they considered a general omission in this report of positive achievements in the program since GAO's last review. They further emphasized the disruptive effects of the 1968 Tet offensive which necessitated diversion of available manpower and other resources to large-scale recovery operations.

The objective of this review was to answer specific inquiries from the Subcommittee; therefore, no attempt was made to evaluate the positive achievements. Also, GAO's review basically covered fiscal years 1969 and 1970 and therefore GAO was unable to measure the disruptions the 1968 Tet offensive had on the program.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Program management

Although some changes have taken place in the roles of the Government of Vietnam and the United States, overall program management remains in the hands of the Government of Vietnam; advice is provided by American personnel. (See p. 6.)

Priority accorded to refugee relief

Neither the United States nor the Government of Vietnam has established priorities for U.S. assistance programs. The primary emphasis during 1965-69 was on providing emergency relief in the form of resettlement allowances and temporary homes to the estimated 3.5 million refugees while the needs of other war victims such as widows, orphans, and the handicapped received less attention. Likewise, development of the sites in which refugees and former refugees are located has not received much attention. (See p. 8.)

Refugee reporting

Since February 1968 the refugee reporting system has undergone three major revisions but the information being reported is still conflicting, confusing, and inconsistent--in part, because it is compiled by untrained personnel. Reliability of the reported data should be improved. (See p. 10.)

Number of war victims

During 1969 the number of refugees declined from a high of over 1.4 million in February to a low of 268,000 in December. This decrease is misleading because of

- a reluctance by the Government of Vietnam to report new refugees,
- a policy of claiming refugees as resettled on the basis of payment of allowances even though many of these people need more help,
- an apparent misinterpretation by Vietnamese officials which resulted in refugees being classified as returned to their original village or resettled when the Government of Vietnam only promised to pay allowances,
- a policy of classifying refugees as returned to their original village and presumably self-sufficient when, in fact, many of them still cannot earn a living, and
- a policy of removing from the rolls refugees living outside of camps who have received their temporary allowances, which terminate benefits until such time as they are able to return to their original villages.

Other persons have suffered because of the war and are in need of assistance--war widows, orphans, and the physically disabled. The actual number in these categories is not known. There are, however, an estimated 258,000 orphans, 131,000 war widows, and 183,000 disabled persons. Some assistance had been provided these people by the Government of Vietnam. (See p. 16.)

Refugees from Cambodia

About 159,000 persons had left Cambodia as of July 1970 to seek refuge in South Vietnam--10,000 Cambodian refugees and 149,000 Vietnamese repatriates. They are not recognized as Vietnam refugees but are reported separately as refugees from Cambodia. (See p. 25.)

War victims in urban areas

The number of persons seeking refuge in urban areas (primarily Saigon) is unknown but is estimated at one million. Because of high employment most people find jobs; however, these jobs are usually dependent on the presence of U.S. troops. The unemployed in the urban areas receive no assistance from the Government of Vietnam or the Agency for International Development and are dependent on relatives and voluntary agencies. An estimated 600,000 people are dependent upon the presence of U.S. troops but no plans have been formulated to deal with these people when the troops withdraw. The United States and the Government of Vietnam anticipate that most of these people will want to return to their original homes. (See p. 26.)

Status of site facilities

There is still a considerable shortage of facilities--needed by war victims--such as housing, classrooms, wells, medical and sanitation facilities, and many of those that exist are inadequate. (See p. 28.)

Level of financial assistance

The United States has assisted refugee and social welfare programs in the form of direct dollar funding, local currency funding, and donated U.S. agricultural commodities. This amounted to \$49 million in fiscal year 1968 and \$53 million in 1969; \$60 million was programmed for 1970--a total of \$162 million. The 1970 increase is attributed, in part, to feeding Vietnamese repatriates and Cambodian refugees. (See p. 36.)

Correlation between refugees resettled and amount of resettlement funds expended

GAO was not able to correlate spending with the number of refugees reported as resettled or returned home because (1) the number of refugees reported to be resettled was not accurate and (2) refugees living in temporary camps, and scheduled for transfer into resettlement sites, did not receive monetary housing allowances if housing was provided. (See p. 37.)

Government of Vietnam support

The budget for the Ministry of Social Welfare--used primarily for salaries and operating expenses--has been \$4 million annually for calendar years 1968-70. In 1970 this was about 6 percent of the Government of Vietnam's total civil budget. (See p. 37.)

Voluntary agency and free-world assistance

Direct support to the refugee and social welfare programs by these organizations amounted to \$3.8 million in 1968 and \$4.3 million in 1969. Programmed support for fiscal year 1970 was estimated at \$3.8 million. (See p. 38.)

Piaster fund releases by
Ministry of Social Welfare

Slow spending continues to be a problem in the refugee and social welfare program. As a result many refugees vacated controlled areas and returned to Viet Cong areas. (See p. 41.)

During the first 5 months of 1970, only 12 percent of the resettlement fund and 1 percent of the social welfare fund had been spent. During 1969--the first-year funds were provided for comprehensive social welfare--only 6 percent was used. Of the remaining funds, 28 percent were never spent and 66 percent were authorized for 1970 spending or transferred to other projects. (See p. 41.)

U.S. commodity support

The United States contributed food during fiscal years 1968, 1969, and 1970 worth \$10 million, \$14 million, and \$20 million, respectively. About half of the commodities are distributed by the Government of Vietnam and the other half by voluntary agencies. The commodities are not distributed on the basis of need and therefore some inequities have resulted. (See p. 42.)

Numerous nonfood commodities which are designed for refugees appear to have been in storage for a considerable length of time. The commodities belong to the Ministry of Social Welfare, and the United States has been unsuccessful in obtaining action to redistribute the property so it might be better used by other Ministries. (See p. 43.)

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE SUBCOMMITTEE

The Subcommittee may wish to bring this report to the attention of the Agency for International Development for possible use in improving its management of the program.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AID	Agency for International Development
CORDS	Civil Operations for Rural Development Support
DOD	Department of Defense
GAO	General Accounting Office
GVN	Government of Vietnam
USAID/VN	U.S. Agency for International Development, Vietnam

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The Subcommittee may wish to bring this report to the attention of the Agency for International Development for possible use in improving its management of the program.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

At the request of the Chairman, Subcommittee To Investigate Problems Connected With Refugees and Escapees, Senate Committee on the Judiciary, in a letter dated April 21, 1970, the General Accounting Office (GAO) has examined into the refugee and social welfare programs in Vietnam.

Specifically, the Subcommittee requested that we update the information contained in our earlier reports on the refugee program. In addition, the Subcommittee was interested in (1) the effect of Vietnamization and what it means in terms of refugees, (2) the relocation of refugees from refugee status to "relocated" or "resettled" status, and (3) the social welfare program in Vietnam.

The scope of our review is shown on page 45. Because of the limited time available for presentation of the report to the Subcommittee, our review was less detailed than we normally would perform.

In addition, the subject matter and report conclusions were not submitted to the agencies for formal written comment. We did discuss, however, parts of the report with the agency officials who had responsibilities for the matters covered in this report and their comments were considered.

CHAPTER 2

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

During our current review we found that, although some organizational changes had taken place in the roles of the Government of Vietnam (GVN) and U.S. organizations, overall program management responsibilities remained relatively the same as we previously reported in February 1968.

U.S. ORGANIZATION FOR REFUGEE RELIEF AND SOCIAL WELFARE

In May 1968 the responsibility for social welfare activities was transferred from the U.S. Agency for International Development, Vietnam (USAID/VN) to the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) Refugee Directorate,¹ who come under the Commander, U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, and in January 1970 this directorate was also given the responsibility for supporting the GVN program for war veterans. In May 1970, the organizational title "Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support" was changed to "Civil Operations for Rural Development Support."

The CORDS organization at the staff level includes civilian personnel whose salaries are paid by USAID/VN. Its responsibilities for management of the refugee relief and social welfare programs in the field are performed, as are all CORDS functions, through the individual region, province, and district CORDS organization. As of January 1, 1970, all four regional headquarters had individual staff positions authorized to provide relief assistance, and three had authorized positions to provide social welfare assistance. At the province level refugee advisors may be performing various functions including refugee relief and possibly social welfare functions. CORDS district personnel were responsible, in general, for all CORDS functions, including social welfare and refugee matters. In effect, the

¹Effective July 1, 1970, the Refugee Directorate was renamed the War Victims Directorate.

regional headquarters has both command and technical jurisdiction over social welfare matters in the field.

It should be noted, however, that the GVN administers the programs, and that program improvements are dependent on GVN actions and the emphasis they give to U.S. advisers' suggestions.

GVN ORGANIZATION FOR REFUGEE RELIEF AND SOCIAL WELFARE

Refugee relief was included in the Ministry of Social Welfare until a Special Commissariat for Refugees was established in February 1966. In November 1967 the Commissariat was merged again with the Ministry of Social Welfare, and in 1968 the health program was added to form the Ministry of Health, Social Welfare, and Relief. Separate Ministries were established in 1969 and, as of August 1970, refugee relief and social welfare activities were the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Welfare.

Social welfare is a relatively new responsibility for the GVN. Traditionally such services were provided to needy individuals by large, tightly-knit groupings of several generations of relatives. The war, however, caused burdens which exceeded the capability of the family groups and required the GVN's assistance.

Social welfare includes preventive and rehabilitation programs designed to benefit the Vietnamese population, in general, including community centers, day care centers, vocational rehabilitation, orphanages, homes for the aged, juvenile delinquency assistance, and disaster relief. Because of the war, most Ministry of Social Welfare programs have been directed toward relief and emergency assistance to war victims who include refugees, widows, orphans, the physically disabled, and the economically handicapped. Among the war victims the refugees have received the most attention from the GVN and the United States.

According to CORDS, the progress made during 1969 in dealing with the refugee problem will enable the GVN to direct more attention to the other categories of war victims and long-range social development programs.

PRIORITY ACCORDED TO REFUGEE RELIEF
AND SOCIAL WELFARE

Our February 1968 report stated that, although CORDS headquarters in Saigon had taken steps to accord a higher priority to the refugee program, these measures were not translated into effective actions at the operating level.

During our current review, we could find no evidence that a formal list of priorities had been established for U.S. assistance activities in Vietnam which would indicate the relative importance placed on the various programs. For example, the stated goals of the Agency for International Development (AID) for 1970 were not assigned any order of priority and were so broad as to encompass the entire range of AID programs: economic stabilization, pacification, public services, economic development, and easing the suffering of civilians displaced or injured by the war. In addition, U.S. officials at AID/Washington and Vietnam were not aware of any U.S. or GVN formal priority list for the management of assistance programs in Vietnam. We were informed, however, that refugee relief falls within the pacification program which is accorded a high priority by CORDS and the GVN. On the other hand, it does not appear that social welfare has an assigned priority.

On the basis of the data available, it appears that, within the CORDS and GVN program for refugees and social welfare, the primary emphasis from 1965 through 1969 was on providing emergency relief in the form of resettlement allowances and temporary homes to the estimated 3.5 million refugees displaced by the war, whereas the needs of other war victims such as widows, orphans, and the handicapped, received less attention. Likewise, the development of the sites in which refugees and former refugees are located appeared to have received a low priority.

During 1969 much progress was made, during the pacification program, in paying refugees their long overdue allowances, especially those refugees returning to their villages (thus reducing the number of refugees on the rolls). AID officials believed that this progress during 1969 would allow the GVN to devote an increasing amount of resources to (1) restoring destroyed or damaged hamlets for

returning refugees, (2) upgrading refugee sites with better housing and other essential facilities, and (3) attending to the needs of war widows, orphans, the physically handicapped, etc.

However, CORDS assessments of the 1970 refugee relief and social welfare programs have not indicated encouraging results with respect to war victims and community developments. Most of the reported activity in these areas consisted of discussions and meetings designed to reach policy agreements and to draw up program plans, and progress was described by CORDS as not rapid. As a result, although one of the key goals during 1970 was supposed to be improvement of the living conditions at resettlement sites and hamlets of returning refugees, this program continued to present many difficulties.

REPORTING

We found that the reporting system described in our February 1968 report to the Subcommittee had undergone three major revisions designed primarily to more efficiently measure the effectiveness of the refugee program, to provide all levels of management with a basis for making decisions, and to provide for more reliable and accurate data. We found that the data derived from the system in effect through February 1970 had remained deficient and the data from the new system was of questionable accuracy.

The first revision took place in March 1969 after CORDS determined that a manually prepared report was inadequate as a management planning tool. As a result, an automatic data processing system was implemented. Under this system, the CORDS refugee advisors were responsible for preparing the report. However, the Ministry of Social Welfare provincial officials were also preparing a report for submission to the Ministry. We were informed by a CORDS Refugee Directorate official that the refugee advisors primarily used the records of Ministry officials as their source of information for the statistical data included in the report. Along with the accumulation of this data, the refugee advisors were also responsible for preparing the narrative section of the report, in which they were supposed to comment on important factors needing emphasis, and any problem areas requiring corrective action by CORDS.

General instructions were issued by CORDS which set forth the criteria for the refugee advisors to follow in the preparation of the report, both from the statistical and narrative aspects. These instructions stressed the importance of the refugee advisors' and the Ministry officials' reaching precise agreement on the categories of refugees, types of sites, and number of refugees in each site.

We were informed by a CORDS Refugee Directorate official that, in numerous instances, the statistics reported by the Ministry officials in their reports were not comparable to the data being reported by the CORDS refugee advisors. This official stated that the primary reason for these wide variances in the statistical data was due mainly to a difference in interpretation of the Ministry of Social

Welfare's regulations by the refugee advisors and the Ministry's officials.

The second revision took place in May 1969 when the Ministry of Social Welfare amended its refugee reporting system to include essentially the same data items provided under the CORDS reporting system. The Ministry's report was prepared by Ministry personnel in collaboration with a CORDS advisor whose signature was required on the report to indicate his concurrence.

In April 1970 a new reporting system was initiated by CORDS. Our review and evaluation of this new reporting system were limited by time considerations. Certain weaknesses, however, are apparent on the basis of our discussions and limited review described below.

A CORDS Refugee Directorate official informed us that the new automated reporting system was developed and implemented in order to have only one joint report submitted. This official stated that the primary reason for devising this new system was the lack of comparable statistics reported by the refugee advisors and the Ministry's officials under the previous reporting system. We were also told that other reasons for the new reporting system were

- the inclusion of "in return-to-village process" and "war victim" statistics and information in the reporting process,
- the elimination of the term "resettled" from the reporting process, and
- the addition of other data requested by the Ministry of Social Welfare in the reporting process.

As under the previous reporting system, the new reporting format is intended to provide CORDS and Ministry of Social Welfare management officials with reliable information for effective and efficient planning, programming, and budgeting for the refugee program. However, under the new reporting system, the statistical section of the report is prepared by Ministry provincial officials in Vietnamese.

A CORDS Refugee Directorate official has informed us that, according to verbal reporting instructions, refugee advisors are supposed to review this data for accuracy and validity. Any disagreements are to be pointed out in the narrative section of the report, and any matters needing emphasis or any problem areas requiring corrective action by CORDS should be included.

The revised reporting system has eliminated the old dual reporting system and will represent a needed improvement, if it is properly implemented and policed to ensure real compliance. We feel, however, that the new system has not eliminated the problem of unreliable data, since most of the information will continue to be supplied by the Ministry's provincial officials in Vietnamese. We believe that there will be a need for full cooperation by these officials and a need for improvement in the reliability of the input data, a requirement which conditions any discussion or evaluation of the adequacy of program operations. Our observations regarding this very important subject are discussed below.

Unreliability of the refugee data being reported

Although much essential refugee data was available to enable CORDS and/or AID/Washington to evaluate the program, we found that the basic information being reported in the automatic data processing report in Vietnam was generally conflicting, confusing, and inconsistent.

Data collected for inclusion in the monthly refugee reports generally comes from the Ministry of Social Welfare provincial officials who, according to AID/Washington and CORDS officials, have not had formal training on data collection and reporting. Also, we found that much of the basic data being reported is based on subjective assessments made by Ministry of Social Welfare personnel using GVN criteria.

On the basis of discussions with CORDS officials in the six provinces visited and GVN Ministry provincial officials in some of these provinces, we believe that the basic data being reported has and will continue to be highly questionable.

For example, in Quang Ngai Province in I Corps, the CORDS refugee advisor and the Ministry official stated that most of the data reported under the old reporting system was purely estimated, because there was not enough time every month to complete the reports accurately. The refugee advisor stated that the site characteristic data was very inaccurate. He stated that neither he nor the Ministry official could visit each site on a regular basis because of limited time and lack of security. Regarding the new reporting system, the refugee advisor explained that he was unable to review the monthly reports because the data is printed in Vietnamese and that he did not have sufficient time to have it translated. Therefore, he just signs off on it and hopes that it is accurate. The Ministry official told us that the GVN placed little emphasis on these reports and that he never had received any feedback from the Ministry of Social Welfare about it.

In Vinh Long Province in IV Corps, the Assistant New Life Development Officer (no refugee advisor in this Province), who is also responsible for the refugee program, stated that the refugee information reported is unreliable and of little value because all the deficiencies have yet to be eliminated from the system. He pointed out that the philosophy behind the new reporting system was that it was going to be a joint report to be utilized by the United States and the GVN, but in practice the report is utilized only by the United States and it will probably remain that way.

Our analysis of the statistical data that was reported under the old system as of February 20, 1970 showed obvious questionable site characteristic data for 44 percent of the sites in I, II, and III Corps as follows:

Corps (note a)	Number of sites		
	Sites reported	Reporting questionable data	Percent reporting questionable data
I	160	76	48
II	119	63	53
III	<u>101</u>	<u>29</u>	29
Total and average percent	<u>380</u>	<u>168</u>	44

^aIV Corps is not included because its geographical and social conditions preclude reporting comparable data. In addition, Quang Tri Province in I Corps is not included because it did not report any data.

Following are examples of obviously questionable data that we found during our analysis of the reports:

1. Sites where latrine facilities, water supply, medical facilities, and medical services were rated as inadequate; however, the overall physical conditions of the sites were rated as adequate.
2. Sites where there were no children reported in school but classrooms were reported in use.
3. Sites where children were reported in school but no classrooms were reported in use.
4. Sites where there were reported to be no classrooms available, yet classrooms were reportedly being used.
5. Sites where there were more children in school than the total school age population.

We have been informed by a Refugee Directorate official that CORDS is aware of these types of deficiencies in the reporting system and that this is taken into consideration by CORDS when using these reports for planning, programming, and budgeting for the refugee program. This official stated that these deficiencies resulted because

- CORDS field personnel were preparing this report without having adequate time to verify the accuracy and validity of the data,
- CORDS field personnel were preparing this report without having adequate knowledge and background necessary to ensure adequate reporting,
- reporting instructions were being misinterpreted or were not being followed, and
- clerical errors were being made.

In June 1970 AID/Washington officials told us that they were aware of inconsistencies and conflicting information appearing in the monthly reports received from

Vietnam and that they felt the reports were unreliable. They also stated that both AID/Washington and CORDS were continuously seeking ways to improve the quality of the reports.

CHAPTER 3

NUMBER OF WAR VICTIMS

REFUGEES

Although the total number of civilians suffering as a result of the war, the extent of the assistance provided by the GVN, and the conditions under which these people were living are unknown, we were able to obtain data from the GVN relating to some of these victims, i.e., refugees. The following table shows the changes that have taken place since 1967 in the refugee population as recognized by the GVN.

<u>Period</u>	<u>Number</u>
Dec. 1967	794,000
" 1968	1,329,000
" 1969	268,000
June 1970	570,000 ^a

^aThe increase between December 1969 and June 1970 is primarily due to a change in the reporting classifications. Effective in April 1970, the category of "refugees in return-to-village process" was added to the statistics. As of June 1970 the number reported in this category was about 280,000.

We believe that the above figures representing the number of refugees at various times are misleading and significantly understated as to the true number of people in need of assistance because of

- a reluctance by the GVN to report some newly generated refugees,
- a GVN policy of claiming refugees in sites as resettled on the basis of the payment of GVN refugee allowances, despite the fact that many of these people are in need of assistance,

- an apparent misinterpretation of GVN policy resulting in refugees being classified as returned to their original villages or resettled on the basis of the GVN promise to pay the refugee allowances,
- a GVN policy of classifying refugees as returned to their original village despite the fact that many of these people are not economically viable and lack basic facilities, and
- a GVN policy of removing from the rolls certain refugee groups living outside refugee camps who have received their 1 month's temporary allowances, which terminate benefits until such time as they are able to return to their original village.

It is the GVN's stated policy to help restore victims of war and communities affected by military operations to self-sufficiency by providing individuals with allowances and by furnishing adequate facilities for education, health, and sanitation so that these communities may be included in the hamlet administrative structure of the GVN.

In commenting on this section of the report, CORDS officials in Saigon stated that most of the people returning to villages did so by choice rather than by force by the government. They felt that the GVN had done much for the refugees and that considerable progress toward program objectives had been achieved. Evaluation of CORDS comments would have necessitated additional fieldwork; however, because of the limited time available, we were unable to perform the additional work. Therefore, we are unable to evaluate their comments.

Following are the results of our limited review regarding certain aspects of the progress made by the GVN in meeting its stated responsibilities and the reliance that can be placed on the GVN refugee figures.

Newly generated refugees

We found that many people are being relocated but are not being recognized as refugees. As a result, it appears that relatively little assistance has been provided to these people by the GVN.

Current GVN policy clearly requires that security be brought to the people, not people to security. The generating of refugees must be avoided to the greatest extent possible; any unavoidable relocation of a group of people is to take place only with the prior approval of the GVN Central Pacification and Development Council; and, if this Council approves the relocation, the military unit conducting the operation must notify the appropriate GVN province officials so that preparations and planning for the reception and care of the refugees can be completed prior to the movement.

We found that this policy, however, appears to be only occasionally observed in practice. In I Corps¹ where the problem appears to be focused owing to the level and nature of military activity, the record indicates that very few instances of prior approval by the Central Pacification and Development Council were obtained for such relocations in calendar year 1969. A CORDS official cited 17 instances during calendar year 1969 in which about 25,000 people were relocated without prior approval. In accordance with the above policy, some GVN Province Chiefs refuse to classify these people as refugees.

A CORDS official stated in December 1969 that, when these people were not handled as refugees but as unofficial war victims, any relief accorded them became a scrounging operation. He stated that, if the assistance was insufficient, as it usually was, the misery of these people and their hostility toward the GVN were correspondingly greater.

Although the exact number of such unrecognized refugees and the amount of GVN assistance being provided them are not known, it appears that the number of such unrecognized refugees is considerable and that some relief assistance is being provided. For example, in I Corps alone, a CORDS official estimated that about 50,000 people have been relocated without prior GVN approval. He believes, however,

¹Vietnam is divided into four military regions, labeled as I, II, III, IV combat tactical zones (abbreviated Corps by the U.S. military).

that about 20,000 of these people have now been recognized as refugees and are receiving some assistance from the GVN.

Reduction in number of refugees

We found that a significant reduction in the number of refugees carried on the rolls has occurred between February 1969 through December 1969. It appears that this reduction has come about mainly because of the GVN's policy of claiming refugees in sites as resettled on the basis of the payment of GVN refugee allowances. These refugees were removed from the rolls despite the facts that many were not economically self-sufficient, some are living in sites where there is no future economic potential, some are living in substandard and crowded shelters, and/or do not have access to adequate facilities such as wells, latrines, classrooms, and dispensaries. (See p. 32 for our observations of some of these sites.)

The record shows that, at the end of 1967, about 794,000 persons were carried on the rolls by the GVN as refugees. These numbers increased to over 1.3 million at the end of 1968 and over 1.4 million in February 1969. However, by the end of 1969 there were only about 268,000 persons counted by the GVN as refugees.

On the basis of information available in Washington, 14 percent of the 1969 reduction was due to the removal of war victims who did not meet the GVN criteria for refugee status of having fled Viet Cong-controlled areas and of living in groups of 20 or more families.

In May 1970, CORDS reported that, among the 586,000 refugees who were reported as having been completely resettled in 1969, a good number had received only a month's rice; others had received nothing except a promise of assistance whenever they return to their original village; and thousands lived in substandard sites after receiving their full resettlement allowances. Moreover, the refugees reported in the category of completely resettled were dropped from the rolls, even though a good number of them were still refugees.

In April 1970 a refugee official from I Corps estimated that there were over 390,000 refugees and former refugees in I Corps who were still living in substandard sites. However, I Corps reported only about 137,000 refugees. It seems that consideration should be given to reinstating these 253,000 resettled refugees on the active case load, to ensure that their living conditions are improved. This might prove to be an incentive to the GVN to step up the improvement of the living conditions at the substandard sites, which appears to have been largely neglected to date. A CORDS Refugee Directorate official informed us that they attempted to convince the GVN to retain these people on the active case load until the living standards of the sites have been upgraded. However, they have not been successful to date.

As pointed out on page 16, the understatement of the number of refugees was partially remedied in April 1970 by adding back to the refugee roll those persons who had returned home but had not received all their allowances. As of June 1970, about 280,000 refugees were reported in this category.

Refugees in resettlement sites

As stated above, we found that many of the refugees paid allowances by the GVN and classified as resettled were, in our opinion, only slightly better off than prior to receipt of the payment.

To be eligible to receive resettlement allowances from the GVN, refugees in temporary camps must be moved to a resettlement site, or temporary refugee camps must be recognized by the GVN as a site to be converted into a resettlement location. This would involve the general upgrading of the camp including construction of wells, schools, dispensaries, etc. The GVN objective regarding resettlement sites is to provide adequate facilities for inclusion in the regular hamlet administrative structure of the GVN.

During 1969 the Ministry of Social Welfare planned to upgrade the temporary camps which AID claimed housed thousands of refugees in substandard conditions. Primarily because the GVN gave top priority to paying resettlement and

return-to-village allowances to the refugees, these plans were not too successful.

AID reported that, despite the GVN's failure to upgrade most temporary camps to an acceptable level, it was a common occurrence for the GVN to designate temporary camps as resettlement sites on the basis of resettlement allowances paid without regard to adequacy of site facilities or economic condition of the occupants.

According to USAID/VN and CORDS officials, as soon as allowance payments are made by the GVN, most distribution of food to these people by the GVN ceased.

Statistics available showed that, between February 1969 and April 1970, over 600,000 refugees were paid resettlement allowances and dropped from the GVN roll as refugees. AID estimated, however, that 400,000 of these remained in their original camps which were mostly substandard. The USAID/VN Mission Director in April 1970 reported that, considering the magnitude of the refugee problem and the nature of the conflict, most people in the resettlement sites were only about one third as well off as before being displaced.

Returned-to-village refugees

Thousands of refugees were taken off the GVN refugee rolls and were declared to be returned to their original villages even though the GVN had not helped these people return to a self-supporting status but had only promised to pay the benefits as soon as they returned to their villages. In addition, apparently the GVN had not furnished many of these people with adequate facilities for education, health, and sanitation and had ceased distribution of foodstuffs.

Once returned-to-village refugees are paid their allowances, their villages are considered normalized and are no longer considered the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Welfare but come under the Central Pacification and Development Councils, located in each province, which coordinate pacification efforts of all GVN ministries including the development of hamlets reoccupied by refugees returning to their former homes.

The GVN gave these councils the responsibility for these villages in August 1969 when concern was expressed for the large numbers of refugees reportedly returning to their hamlets which had been ravaged by the war. We found, however, that little had been done to develop the hamlets reoccupied in 1969 mainly because the GVN ministries had not budgeted funds for that purpose.

During 1969 allowance payments and promises to pay allowances to a total of about 488,000 refugees resulted in their being dropped from the GVN refugee roll and transferred to a category signifying that they had returned to their original communities. As stated previously, however, some of these people were erroneously removed from the roll because they had not received all their benefits and have now been reclassified as refugees in return-to-village process.

In February 1970 the Ministry of Social Welfare reported that many of the return-to-village sites established during 1969 are short on health, sanitation, education, and market facilities. The Ministry stated that this shortcoming occurred because many provinces did not preplan for these facilities.

The USAID/VN Mission Director in April 1970 stated that, due to many variables, a qualitative measure of the return-to-village refugees' status was difficult to assess, however, they were probably only half as well off as before they were displaced.

Out-of-camp refugees

We found that large numbers of people living outside GVN refugee camps were removed from the rolls after they had received their temporary benefits, in accordance with GVN policy which terminates benefits until such time as they are able to return to their original villages. At that time, they will be entitled to receive return-to-village benefits.

Beginning in November 1968, the GVN initiated a program to find and register all refugees throughout Vietnam. According to AID, initial results of the survey were that

approximately 500,000 persons were added to the refugee population, mostly people living outside recognized GVN refugee camps.

In a subsequent policy decision by the GVN, three criteria for refugee status were set forth. To be considered a refugee a person must (1) have moved from an insecure area, (2) have done so on or after January 1, 1964, and (3) presently live in a group of 20 or more families. The GVN later established that those people living outside camp and meeting at least the first two criteria would be given a month's assistance allowance and would be removed from the refugee rolls. As a result, hundreds of thousands of out-of-camp war victims who had been added to the refugee rolls were removed from refugee status for having not met the criteria or for having received all assistance for which they were then eligible. Such persons were not eligible for any further assistance from the GVN until they returned to their home villages, at which time they would qualify for return-to-village benefits.

Currently, the out-of-camp refugees, living in groups of 20 or more families are recognized as refugees in CORDS and GVN reports but qualify for only limited assistance until they return home. As of June 1970, there were about 92,600 persons (or 16 percent of the total recorded refugees) in this category. Persons who live in groups of less than 20 families are not recognized as refugees and are not counted in the refugee reports.

Although the number of these people living in groups of less than 20 families is unknown, it seems to be quite large. For example, in IV Corps, AID reported that a large percentage of the refugees did not live in refugee camps but were scattered throughout the population, due partly to limited availability of land, economic factors, and preference.

It seems from the foregoing statement that the GVN in some cases has not been providing assistance to refugees on the basis of need, but rather on location. Refugees living in groups of 20 families or more received a month's temporary allowance, whereas refugees living in groups of less

than 20 families received no such benefits; however, we were unable to find any evidence indicating that either group of refugees was in need of assistance more than the other group.

OTHER WAR VICTIMS

War widows, orphans, and disabled persons

In addition to refugees, there are other victims of the war who do not leave their communities for extended residence in refugee camps although they too are in need of assistance. Included in this category are war widows, orphans, and the physically disabled. Unlike the refugee situation, however, we found that statistics were not available at AID/Washington and in Vietnam to show the total numbers, their condition and needs, and the number assisted by the GVN. We found that, although some assistance in the form of death benefits, housing allowances, and food had been provided by the GVN, the people included in this category generally were not considered top priority by the GVN.

It seems that the past emphasis placed by the GVN on providing emergency relief and resettlement payments to displaced persons has retarded the development of programs designed to provide services to other war victims. The following statistics as to the total number are the best available, although they are based on estimates by the GVN which, according to AID, are of questionable validity.

Disabled persons	183,000
Orphans	258,000
War widows	<u>131,000</u>
Total	<u>572,000</u>

Refugees from Cambodia

In addition to refugees and other war victims generated from within Vietnam, recent events in Cambodia have resulted in some 159,000 people crossing the border to seek refuge and sanctuary in Vietnam as of July 25, 1970. Included in the above total are about 10,000 Cambodian and Cambodian Montagnard refugees. The remaining 149,000 are Vietnamese repatriates.

The GVN has drawn up a standard relief program for these repatriates and refugees, in which they are provided

reception and temporary allowances. A CORDS Refugee Directorate official informed us that the funds for paying these allowances are obtained from the Ministry of Social Welfare budget. However, he stated that, when 75 percent of the total budget has been expended, an additional 600 million piasters will be made available from the U.S. Special Fund. We found that these repatriates and refugees are not included in the refugee statistics but are reported separately. A CORDS official informed us in July 1970 that there are approximately 70,000 additional ethnic Vietnamese in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, who are awaiting repatriation into Vietnam.

According to an official in the CORDS Refugee Directorate, the GVN has handled this emergency situation arising out of Cambodia efficiently, effectively, and timely; however, this official stated that this is being done, to a certain degree, at the expense of the regular refugees as it relates to funds and manpower.

War victims in urban areas

Although the actual number of persons seeking refuge in urban areas, rather than at recognized refugee camps, is unknown, AID/Washington officials have estimated the number at one million. These people chose to move to urban areas (primarily Saigon) and either live with relatives or seek employment. According to an AID/Washington official, these people were not considered as refugees because the GVN wanted to reduce further urbanization.

Presently there is high employment in the urban areas and most refugees have found means of support either directly because of the U.S. troops or indirectly by providing the troops with needed services, such as laundries and housekeeping. However, the unemployed refugee in the urban areas is eligible for no assistance from either the GVN or AID. Therefore, these refugees can only turn to their relatives and the voluntary agencies for assistance.

An AID official estimated that 600,000 of the persons seeking refuge in the urban areas are dependent upon the presence of U.S. troops for subsistence. It is anticipated by the GVN and AID that, as the U.S. troops withdraw, most of these people will want to return home. By certifying

themselves as meeting the refugee criteria, i.e., originally evacuated from insecure villages, they will be eligible for return-to-village benefits.

Although the problems associated with the "urban drift" have been recognized, no formal plans have been made to cope with them.

CHAPTER 4

STATUS OF SITE FACILITIES

During our current review, we found considerable shortfalls in construction and adequacy of needed facilities, such as housing, classrooms, wells, medical facilities, medical services, and sanitation facilities, for many war victims. In addition, we found that many of these individuals were living in sites that offered little opportunity for self-support and/or economic potential.

In July 1970 our staff inspected 18 sites in three provinces in I Corps that accommodated about 94,000 persons. Following are examples of conditions we noted at some of these sites.

Quang Tri Province

1. Ha-Thanh--At the time of our visit this site housed about 19,000 people. Ha-Thanh was originally established in December 1967 as a temporary refugee camp. Subsequently, it was converted into a resettlement site. All the people have received their resettlement allowances and have been dropped from the refugee rolls.

The site was located in what appeared to be a barren area. We saw very few crops, three medical aid stations, 20 wells (76 needed), no latrines (760 needed), and 30 classrooms. We believe these facilities are inadequate for 19,000 people. We were unable to count all the houses; however, it was very apparent that these people were living in crowded conditions.

A CORDS official informed us that the substandard conditions of this site existed because the GVN Province Chief believed that these people were no longer the responsibility of the GVN, as far as providing food and upgrading the living conditions are concerned. He stated that the Province Chief only provided food when the situation became critical, such as when some starvation was reported or

when several hundred families were in critical condition.

2. Trung-Gio--This site housed about 14,000 people and was established as a temporary refugee camp in 1967 when these people came from the demilitarized zone. Subsequently, it was converted into a resettlement site. These people have received their resettlement allowances and have been dropped from the refugee rolls.

We found that wells, latrines, medical facilities, medical services, and classrooms were inadequate for these 14,000 people. There was little land available to grow crops, and in our opinion, very few people could subsist on the land. It appeared that the people did not have much opportunity for self-support, and the site had little economic potential.

Quang Nam Province

1. An My--This resettlement site was previously visited by GAO in 1967. At that time it was a temporary refugee camp and had two wells, no medical dispensary, and no sanitation facilities.

During our current review, we found that no significant improvements had been made. Currently, there are about 660 people in this site, which was established in 1965 as a temporary refugee camp. Only 73 people have received their resettlement allowances. We noted one school in the camp which appears to be inadequate. The site did not have latrines and medical facilities. We saw three wells which appeared to be enough.

2. Phu Lac (6)--At this location, there were about 2,070 people. We were informed that only 883 were recognized as refugees and that they would receive temporary benefits. We were advised that these people were all Viet Cong families and that they were relocated by force in February or March 1970. These people are under heavy guard by the Vietnamese military.

During our inspection, we observed that there were no latrines, no usable wells, no classrooms, and no medical facilities. The shelters were crudely constructed from a variety of waste material, such as empty ammunition boxes and cardboard. We observed that the number of shelters would not adequately house these people. The CORDS refugee advisor stated that there were no plans to improve the living conditions at this site.

3. Thanh Tay--This temporary refugee camp had about 6,000 refugees and they have been here since 1967. We found that the shelters were crudely constructed and that these people were living in very crowded conditions. The camp was surrounded by a fence and barbed wire and was guarded by the GVN military. We were informed that these people were all Viet Cong sympathizers. We observed some wells, one classroom, no latrines, and no medical facilities. The people and their clothes were very dirty.

The CORDS refugee advisor stated that these people had received their 30-day food allowance and that no other assistance had been provided them by the GVN. We noted that these people had no place to grow food.

Quang Ngai Province

1. Phu Nhom A--This site was visited by us during our last review in 1967. At that time, a Red Cross representative told us that this was one of the worst camps in his jurisdiction. During our last review, we found that it was overcrowded and that it had inadequate drainage, no dispensary, and no usable wells.

During our current review, we found that the above conditions had not improved. There were 1,124 former refugees in this site, and 397 families were living in 233 houses. At the time of our last review, this site was a temporary refugee camp. It has now been converted into a resettlement site. This site was originally established in 1964. We

noted that the people were just starting to construct drainage ditches under a food-for-work program.

During our inspection of the site, we observed that there were no schools for the children. The conditions of the houses or shacks were very poor. The people were very dirty and their clothes were dirty and shabby. There still were no usable wells and no medical facilities. The CORDS refugee advisor informed us that there were no plans to improve the living conditions of this site. On the basis of our inspection of this site, we believe that these people have little opportunity to be self-supporting, and there is little economic potential for this site.

2. My Trang--Approximately 800 unrecognized refugees are located in this hamlet. These people were relocated by military activity from a GVN-pacified area. The CORDS refugee advisor stated that these people could not be recognized as refugees because GVN policy specifies that refugees cannot originate from pacified areas. Because of the lack of time, we did not attempt to inspect all facilities at the site. It was apparent, however, that these people were living in substandard conditions. The refugee advisor stated that the GVN's assistance to these people consisted of some rolled oats in January 1970 and nothing since then.

We also visited 10 refugee sites in three provinces in IV Corps. The refugees were living in markedly different conditions than those in the other regions where they generally lived in normal refugee camps and resettlement sites. In the delta the refugees are scattered along canals and roads. These people are (1) integrated with the local inhabitants, (2) living in shelters they constructed, or (3) living with friends and relatives. Accordingly, we were unable to determine the exact number of refugees residing in the sites visited.

The geographical and social conditions existing in the delta preclude our comparing the refugees' living conditions in IV Corps with the conditions in the other three regions.

During our inspections of the sites, we observed that most of the refugees (1) appeared to be economically self-sufficient, (2) were living in sites where there appeared to be economic potential, and (3) were living in homes that, in most instances, were comparable to or better than the homes of some nonrefugees. Our observations at two of the sites visited in Kien Giang Province are described as follows:

Dong Thai and Dong Hoa--We found it difficult to identify all refugees in Dong Thai because some were merged with the nonrefugees. All the homes were located along the banks of the canal and were not clustered together. We observed that some of the refugee homes appeared to be bigger and better than some of the nonrefugee homes. Behind some of the refugee homes, plenty of land was available for farming. We were informed by a CORDS official that the land was being farmed by refugees. Food appeared to be plentiful, and no evidence of starvation or malnutrition existed among the inhabitants.

Further down the canal, in Dong Hoa where some unrecognized refugees were living, the homes were smaller and closer together but the people were not living in crowded conditions. We were informed that these people had received no benefits and would not receive any; because the Ministry of Social Welfare stated that, instead of moving to GVN-controlled areas, these people initially had moved to Viet Cong-controlled areas. Subsequently they returned to their former homes but they are not considered by the GVN as refugees returning to their villages.

We observed no shortage of water and there appeared to be adequate sanitation facilities. However, there was no dispensary in Dong Hoa. There were classrooms available but no teachers.

As of March 20, 1970, the monthly refugee report for 402 occupied sites in Vietnam showed that 176 sites (42 percent) were overcrowded and 87 sites (21 percent) were deficient in medical support. In addition, 833 classrooms were needed and an undetermined number of sites had

inadequate water supplies. Of the 382 sites for which ratings were assigned by Ministry of Social Welfare personnel, 91 of the sites (24 percent) were rated substandard.

Furthermore, the Minister of Social Welfare in March 1970 stated that many refugee sites, although secure and in existence for a long time, lacked necessary facilities for education, public health, sanitation, and water and that many refugees were poor and not self-supporting.

In June 1970 it was reported that, in 133 camp sites in I Corps, 224,963 people could not support themselves and that 213,718 of these 224,963 people were living in sites where there is no economic potential. No similar data was available for the other regions.

Although no detailed statistics were available in Vietnam pertaining to the conditions and deficiencies prevailing in hamlets or villages which are being reoccupied by returning refugees, it has been recognized by AID and the GVN that the overall living conditions are not adequate. In February 1970 the Minister of Social Welfare stated that return-to-village sites were in need of facilities for health, education, sanitation, water, and marketing.

CHAPTER 5

RESOURCES APPLIED

IN SUPPORT OF THE PROGRAM

U.S. STAFFING

Our analysis of CORDS staffing to administer programs for war victims showed that, as of July 1970, there have been increases in the percentage of total personnel on board (and field personnel) since our February 1968 report. Nevertheless, personnel shortages still are being experienced in the field.

In January 1969 authorized positions totaled 116 and 15 percent of these were unfilled. In response to a Presidential directive designed to bring about overall reduction in the U.S. effort in Vietnam, the ceiling in fiscal year 1970 was reduced to 97 positions. AID reported no serious difficulties with this reduction because vacant positions were the ones eliminated.

The following schedule compares the CORDS refugee and social welfare staffing and personnel shortages both inside and outside Saigon for various time periods.

CORDS Staffing Responsible for Refugees and Social Welfare

	U.S. position authorizations and staffing		
	<u>Nov. 1967</u>	<u>Jan. 1969</u>	<u>July 1970</u>
Total:			
Authorized	96	116	97
On board	72	100	87 ^a
Percent short(-)	-25	-14	-10
Saigon:			
Authorized	27	27	26
On board	28	25	27
Percent short(-) or over	+4	-7	+4
Field:			
Authorized	69	89	71
On board	44	75	60
Percent short(-)	-36	-16	-15

^aThis number includes 78 persons actually working in Vietnam, four enroute to Vietnam, and five in training for specific positions.

The July 1970 staffing includes seven authorized positions for the social welfare program, of which six were filled.

The number of on-board personnel, however, isn't necessarily indicative of the number working on the programs. It appeared that some CORDS field personnel responsible for refugee and social welfare activities were assigned other responsibilities at the discretion of the CORDS province senior advisor. For example, we found that a refugee advisor had been assigned, in addition to his refugee responsibilities, the duties of supply and logistics officer. Also, other CORDS personnel do refugee and social welfare work in cases where no advisor is specifically assigned to the programs.

LEVEL OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

According to information available at AID, United States, voluntary agencies, and the GVN during fiscal years 1968 and 1969 contributed about \$57 million and \$61 million, respectively, in support of the refugee and social welfare program. Estimates of the fiscal year 1970 level of assistance are about \$68 million, 89 percent of which is expected to come from the United States, 6 percent from voluntary agencies and free-world assistance, and 5 percent from the GVN.

U.S. support

Financial assistance for the refugee and social welfare programs is largely provided by the United States either directly with dollars or indirectly with local currency (piasters) derived from the sales of U.S. agricultural commodities under the Agricultural Trade and Development Act of 1954 (commonly referred to as Public Law 480) or from the sales of commodities furnished under the AID Commodity Import Program for use within Vietnam.

In fiscal years 1968 and 1969, U.S. direct assistance (exclusive of piasters) amounted to about \$14 million and \$10 million, respectively, and about \$6 million was programmed for fiscal year 1970. In addition to this direct assistance, the United States also contributed Public Law 480 agricultural commodities valued at about \$10 million in fiscal year 1968 and \$14 million in fiscal year 1969. About \$13 million initially was programmed for fiscal year 1970 but this was increased to \$20 million to enable the feeding of Vietnamese repatriates and Cambodian refugees.

The piaster support of the refugee and social welfare program in fiscal years 1968 and 1969 amounted to the equivalent of \$25 million and \$29 million, respectively. For fiscal year 1970 the equivalent of about \$34 million was programmed. According to AID/Washington officials, the increase in piaster funds during 1970 (despite a decrease in the number of refugees on the GVN rolls) was needed to pay the backlog of refugees who hadn't received their allowances; to improve living conditions in the refugee camps; and to provide allowances to an unknown number of eligible war victims who were expected to return to their villages

but who were not previously counted as refugees or who had never been registered.

Correlation between refugees resettled
and amount of resettlement funds expended

We were not able to correlate increases or decreases in the number of resettled refugees with increases or decreases in the amount of allowances paid, primarily because the number of refugees reported to be resettled was not accurate. In an October 1969 CORDS report to AID/Washington on the development and status of the refugee reporting system, it was pointed out that several problems existed concerning the number of refugees reported as returning to their original communities, including (1) the possible duplicate reporting of resettled refugees who subsequently return to their original community, in both the resettled category and the return-to-village category, and (2) the possible inclusion of other individuals in the return-to-village category who were not entitled to resettlement benefits.

Another problem in correlating the number of resettled refugees and the amount of resettlement payments was that refugees living in temporary camps, scheduled for conversion into resettlement sites, were not entitled to receive monetary housing allowances if housing was already provided by the GVN. However, the number of this group of refugees may be included in the reported number of refugees resettled.

The Ministry of Social Welfare estimated that about 750,000 refugees would be reestablished during 1970. Of this number 200,000 would be resettled and 550,000 would return to their original communities. The Ministry also estimated that an additional 130,000 new refugees would be generated during 1970.

GVN support

In addition to the piaster funds provided by the United States, during calendar years 1968 and 1969 the GVN provided the equivalent of \$4.3 million and \$3.6 million primarily for salaries and expenses of Ministry personnel in support

of the refugee and social welfare program. For calendar year 1970 the GVN programmed \$4.3 million.

The following table shows the relationship between budgeted GVN expenditures for the refugee and social welfare program and for all civil (as distinguished from defense) programs and the amounts of U.S.-provided piaster funds, which are included in the GVN budget, for calendar years 1967 and 1970.

	Piaster support of GVN refugee relief and social welfare programs			
	1967		1970	
	Total <u>budget</u>	U. S. - provided <u>portion</u>	Total <u>budget</u>	U. S. - provided <u>portion</u>
(in millions of U. S. dollar equivalents)				
Total civil bud- get	279.7	67.8	571.2	105.1
Refugee and social welfare budget	12.3	10.6	34.1	29.8
Percentage	4.4	15.6	6.0	28.4

Voluntary agency and free-world assistance

Another resource available to the refugee and social welfare program is the support provided by some 37 U.S. and third-country voluntary agencies listed with CORDS in Vietnam, and assistance provided by other free-world countries. Data available, which is based on estimates furnished by the voluntary agencies and other countries, indicated that, for fiscal years 1968 and 1969, the amounts provided in support of these programs by voluntary agencies were about \$3.8 million and \$4.3 million, respectively, in direct support exclusive of personnel costs. Programmed support for fiscal year 1970 is estimated to be about \$3.8 million. The assistance is concentrated on health programs, educational and institutional feeding projects, and the providing of personnel and services in support of the refugee relief and social welfare program.

The activities of the voluntary agencies are coordinated with the GVN through the Ministry of Social Welfare. Refugee activities and social welfare activities of eight U.S. voluntary agencies are currently being financially supported by the United States under AID contracts. About \$1 million has been expended for fiscal year 1970, under contracts with these eight voluntary agencies. In addition, USAID/VN is providing storage facilities and transportation support for the voluntary agencies in the field.

Low rate of expenditure in support
of social welfare program

Our review showed that, notwithstanding an acknowledged need for a social welfare program, very small amounts of funds have been provided for the program, and the funds made available were expended at an extremely low rate for various reasons including (1) the relatively low priority assigned to the social welfare program, (2) limited organizational and manpower capabilities within the GVN Ministry of Social Welfare, and (3) an apparent reluctance on the part of the GVN to assume funding responsibilities.

Prior to calendar year 1969, counterpart funds were not provided for a comprehensive social welfare program because the major U.S. concern was for refugee relief. During 1969 a social welfare assistance program was developed and it is expected that in 1970 the major U.S. effort will shift from emergency relief to the rehabilitation of war victims, i.e., social development.

Only about 4 percent of the counterpart funds programmed in 1969 to the Ministry of Social Welfare were provided for social welfare activities. In addition, the Ministry of Social Welfare did not expend a significant amount of these programmed funds. For example, in calendar year 1969, a total of 133 million piasters (about \$1.1 million) was programmed for the social welfare program. Of this amount, only about 7.7 million piasters (approximately \$65,000) or only 6 percent was expended during 1969; 28 percent was unexpended, and thus no longer available for this program; and the major part of the remaining 66 percent of the funds was authorized for Ministry of Social Welfare expenditure in 1970 or transferred to the Ministry of Public Works for future Ministry of Social Welfare construction projects.

Apparently the 1970 funds will not be expended much faster. For example, of 112.4 million piasters (about \$953,000) programmed for social welfare in calendar year 1970, only 1.6 million piasters (approximately \$14,000) or about 1 percent had been expended as of June 1970.

A CORDS Refugee Directorate official informed us in June 1970 that only small amounts of counterpart funds had been programmed for social welfare activities, primarily because the Ministry of Social Welfare did not have the organizational and manpower capabilities to handle social welfare activities at the present time.

According to AID officials, the primary reasons for the low expenditures were that (1) since the social welfare program had no priority, it was difficult to get construction permission for social welfare projects and (2) after the first year the costs of operating the social welfare program would be paid from the GVN's own funds, rather than the U.S. counterpart funds. The GVN is reluctant to obligate itself to a long-range program.

Piaster fund releases by Ministry of Social Welfare

We found that the overall release of funds for refugee relief expenditures by the Ministry of Social Welfare appears to have improved somewhat over what we reported in February 1968. However, indications are that the rate of payment of resettlement benefits is still below the piaster expenditure rate contemplated by the Ministry's budget. For example, through May 30, 1970, 64 percent of the resettlement budget had been allocated to the provinces; however, only 12 percent had been expended by the Province Chiefs.

Although detailed information was unavailable for calendar year 1968 concerning the rate of release and expenditure of funds, we did find that during the year only 70 percent of the resettlement budget had been expended.

During the first half of 1969, the release of funds was extremely slow with only 13 percent of the budgeted resettlement funds being expended through July. AID blamed the slow releases on a complicated GVN allotment process, badly prepared program plans, insufficient Ministry province personnel, and lack of decentralized province payment procedures. However, AID reported that administrative improvements were made by the Ministry during the end of 1969

which resulted in improvement in the number of refugees paid their authorized allowances. By the close of 1969, improvements increased the rate of expenditures to 94 percent of the budgeted amount.

We were informed by a CORDS refugee official in IV Corps that for the first 4 months of 1970, the refugees in IV Corps, for the most part, had been neglected because of the Ministry of Social Welfare's failure to release the temporary and resettlement funds on a timely basis. He stated that, as a result, numerous refugees vacated GVN-controlled areas and returned to Viet Cong-controlled areas.

U.S. commodity support

The United States, under title II of Public Law 480 (food-for-peace program) donates agricultural commodities to support war victims and other Vietnamese who, because of war, disease, and other factors, are unable to provide basic food needs for themselves. The dollar amount of commodities programmed for the refugee and social welfare programs for fiscal years 1968 and 1969 was estimated to be \$9.8 million and \$13.9 million respectively. The programmed amount for 1970 was estimated at \$13 million. Subsequently, the amount was increased to \$20 million; the increase being attributed to feeding Vietnamese repatriates and Cambodian refugees from Cambodia.

The Ministry of Social Welfare has overall responsibility for administration and supervision of the food program. About 55 percent of the title II, Public Law 480 food is distributed by the GVN through its pacification program and the remaining 45 percent is distributed by the voluntary agencies.

In October 1969 a team of CORDS and USAID/VN officials made an evaluation report of the title II, Public Law 480 food program in Vietnam and included the criteria used to determine needy recipients and the distribution and utilization of the commodities. They reported that foodstuffs provided by the United States under title II of Public Law 480 primarily in support of the refugee and social welfare programs were in some cases (1) not being utilized

properly, (2) not being distributed in an expeditious manner, and (3) not always being issued on the basis of need.

Information available indicates that USAID/VN has taken some corrective actions in response to recommendations made by the evaluation team, such as reducing the amount of the commodities not readily acceptable to the Vietnamese; establishing committees to help correlate the activities of the United States, GVN, and voluntary agencies; and stopping illegal distributions of commodities.

Although we were unable to fully evaluate the corrective actions taken because of the limited time available for this review, it appears that their actions should help correct the first two problem areas. However, the third area relating to the commodities not being issued according to need appears to remain uncorrected.

The evaluation team reported that throughout Vietnam title II, Public Law 480 commodities were not being distributed on the basis of need as provided by the program objectives. It was reported that no criteria had been developed to determine persons in need and those who were self-supporting. Cases were reported where needy Vietnamese failed to receive food and less needy employed persons continued to receive food.

In addition to agricultural commodities furnished under title II of Public Law 480, the United States has provided other commodities under project assistance. During our visits to the project commodity warehouses located in Saigon, we noted that numerous items designed for refugees, such as tarpaulins, tents, sewing kits, sewing machines, saws, shovels, and picks, appeared to have been in storage for a considerable length of time. We were advised by a USAID/VN official that no issues had been made for some of these commodities for over a year. He stated that the sewing machines were rusting and that the tarpaulins and tents were deteriorating from dry rot.

In our review of the GVN property records, we found further evidence of nonutilization of some project commodities. For example, there were 1,690 sheets of 20- by 20-foot tarpaulins valued at about \$80,000 on hand at

June 30, 1970. This merchandise was part of a shipment of 1,900 sheets of tarpaulin received during November 1968. We noted that, in approximately 19 months, only 210 sheets of this tarpaulin has been issued, and that 200 of these sheets were issued in April and May 1970 for use in support of the Vietnamese repatriates and Cambodian refugees.

We were advised by a CORDS Refugee Directorate official that these project commodities are the property of the GVN Ministry of Social Welfare. He stated that this Ministry, like other GVN Ministries, would not under normal circumstances transfer excess or unneeded property to other Ministries who might be better able to utilize them for their own programs. Although CORDS is aware of this problem, we were informed that they have been unsuccessful, as yet, in convincing the Ministry to either utilize these commodities or transfer them so that they may be properly utilized.

CHAPTER 6

SCOPE OF REVIEW

This review was conducted at the request of the Chairman, Subcommittee To Investigate Problems Connected With Refugees and Escapees, Committee on the Judiciary, U.S. Senate. It was directed primarily toward updating our prior inquiries into the problems associated with the refugee program in Vietnam and performing initial research into the social welfare program in Vietnam.

The review was conducted at AID headquarters in Washington, D.C., at CORDS headquarters in Saigon, Vietnam, and at various refugee camps throughout I and IV Corps in Vietnam. Our work included examination of available records, discussions with responsible agency officials, and observations in the field.

To try to meet the reporting date requested by the General Counsel of the Subcommittee, fieldwork on this assignment was less detailed than we normally would perform.

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JOHN H. HOLLOMAN III
CHIEF COUNSEL AND STAFF DIRECTOR

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

April 21, 1970

The Honorable Elmer Staats
United States Comptroller General
441 "G" Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Staats:

As you probably know, since 1965 war-related civilian problems in Vietnam have been a major concern of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Refugees. On two occasions, in 1965 and 1967, the Subcommittee requested the General Accounting Office to investigate the handling of these problems, and reports were subsequently filed with the Subcommittee.

In light of the continuing Congressional and public interest in the items covered by the investigations, I feel it would be helpful to update the earlier reports, and would like to request that the General Accounting Office reopen its inquiry into war-related civilian problems in Vietnam. In this connection, I would also like to request that a similar inquiry be made into the movement of refugees and the occurrence of civilian war casualties in neighboring Laos. *file*

To facilitate these investigations, it would be helpful if you would designate a representative of the General Accounting Office to get in touch with Mr. Dale deHaan, Counsel to the Subcommittee, for additional information on what we feel the investigations should cover.

Many thanks for your consideration and best wishes.

Sincerely,



Edward M. Kennedy, Chairman,
Subcommittee on Refugees and
Escapes