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SUBJECT - Refugee Relief and Resettlement Project

REFERENCE - M.O. 1025.1

4390063004301

NON-CAPITAL PROJECT PAPER (PROP)

Country: Laos Project No. 439-11-820-063

Submission Date: Original: X Revision No. \_\_\_\_\_

Project Title: Refugee Relief and Resettlement

U.S. obligation span: Undetermined, estimated through FY 1975

Gross life of project financial requirement: Undetermined (\$000)

U.S. Dollars (FY 1969 through FY 1973) . . . . . \$10,300

U.S.-owned or controlled local currency . . . . .  
(450 million Kip at the cost of 240.1) . . . . . 1,375

Cooperating country cash contribution . . . . .

PL 480 Title II "inputs" using Title II funding

Refugee Food - 24,540 M.T. PL 480 Title II commodities . . . . . 4,544 \*

Refugee Cotton - 2,334,300 meters Cotton Cloth . . . . . 1,510 \*

Total U.S. Government Dollar Input. . . . . \$13,220

Other Donor: 5,000 M.T. French rice (from French popular subscription) . . . . . 600 \*

**GRAND TOTAL \$13,820**

Estimated cost delivered in Laos

ATTACHMENT: Displaced Population Due to Enemy Action

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I. SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Justification for the Project: The Refugee Relief and Resettlement Project continues to be a large-scale emergency effort required because of recurring and persistent military and political instability in the Laos countryside. Each year thousands of new refugees are displaced in Laos. Other groups are displaced time and again due to the P.L. (usually reinforced by the Viet Minh) attacks or harassment in marginal areas, particularly in the northern reaches of Xieng Khouang, Sam Neua, Luang Prabang, and Houa Khong Provinces. Presently, of a total of over 260,000 refugees, approximately 230,000 are in the north, largely Meo hill tribe people (130,000) but with a sizeable group of Lao (60,000) and other ethnic groups, including Lao Theung, Yao, Thai Dam and Lu. The balance of 30,000 are in the central and southern regions of Laos and include Lao, Lao Theung, and Mon Khmer (Kha) and a few Meo. Khammoune Province has approximately 7,000 Lao and Lao Theung.

In the Pakse Region (the six southernmost Provinces), there are currently 20,000 refugees, mostly Mon Khmer mountain people who were displaced by the recent enemy offensives in Thateng, Paksong and the area in and around the besieged towns of Saravane and Attapeu. Of the total 260,000 refugees in Laos, 170,000 receive some degree of assistance in Laos --- food, clothing, tools, the minimal requirement of household and bedding items, school and health services.

Refugees in Laos represent approximately 10 percent of the total population and the efforts of the RLG and USAID to provide at least minimal food and relief commodities needed is a significant factor in the establishment of a broad base of popular support for the current RLG in maintaining its independence, and assuring general political stability for the country.

Assistance for these refugees, particularly for those hill tribesmen and their families who are located in contested mountainous areas of northern Laos and serve as paramilitary forces, is essential. These forces augment the regular troops of the FAR and provide an effective screen against infiltration by the P.L. They patrol the mountains of Xieng Khouang, Sam Neua and Houa Khong Provinces and man strong points

of resistance along key infiltration routes to urban areas and the Vientiane Plain. They usually occupy land that will only partially support them and which is inaccessible, in most cases, except by air drop or through the use of rotary wing and STOL aircraft; thus, they must be supplied and supported by air.

## II. PROJECT GOALS

The Refugee Relief and Resettlement Project is not only a humanitarian effort; it also contributes to political and social stability within the country, clearly demonstrates the concern of the RIG and the free world for the victims of communist aggression, and fosters the development of political institutions which strengthen ties between the government and its people.

The Project assists the Royal Laos Government: (1) to provide relief and assistance to groups uprooted by war and temporarily unable to care for themselves, and (2) when possible, to relocate refugee groups to more secure areas where they can eventually become self-sufficient. Where feasible, the resettlement operations are combined with development programs of USAID and the RIG so that the resettled people become not merely self-sufficient but with assistance through irrigation, modern methods of diversified agriculture, training and improved facilities, able to overcome the physical, social and cultural barriers to economic advancement in Laos and become positive assets to their national economy.

## III. GENERAL PLAN OF ACTION

The Refugee Relief and Resettlement program is designed to deal with the constantly fluctuating refugee burden. The number of refugees in need of assistance at any particular time is almost totally dependent on military events. This fact is illustrated in the attached chart "Displaced Population Due to Enemy Action 1964-69". For purposes of administration and to facilitate movement and accounting of supplies and support commodities, the program is divided into four categories of assistance. These are:

### A. Relief Assistance:

1. Full Relief - This is assistance provided to people who are in immediate need of food, clothing and other supplies because they are out of their homes by advancing communists. They are labeled as "refugees - full relief."

2. **Partial Relief** - This is assistance generally provided to former "refugees--full relief", who have located in new, often remote areas, and have managed to become partially self-sufficient with minimal assistance or supervision from the Refugee Relief Branch. At various times of the year, these people run short of clothing, rice, salt, or other commodities and require limited assistance. This also may be assistance provided to new refugees who from the outset are partially self-sufficient.

B. Relocation Assistance:

This is assistance generally given to former refugees, "full or partial relief", who move, or have been moved, to new areas. The relocation usually occurs after a unilateral decision by a particular group of people to move because of poor security in the area they currently occupy. The movement may also result from a decision by constituted authority to move the group for strategic reasons. These people generally prefer to live in upland areas and ultimately desire to return to their former homes. However, they are actively encouraged to live in the new areas on a permanent basis.

Relocated Refugees

~~Relocated~~ Refugees generally are partially self-sufficient and receive foodstuffs, clothing and other commodities to supplement what they can produce for themselves. In addition, the Refugee Relief Branch provides some technical agricultural and other assistance and supplies to bring these people to full self-sufficiency. Improved rice seed varieties; chickens, pigs, ducks; carpentry tools, etc., are provided to induce these people to remain in the area even after hostilities have ceased.

C. Assistance to Paramilitary and Their Dependents:

This is assistance provided to the "hard-core" tribal military forces and their dependents. The rice this group manages to plant is usually subject to being burned or stolen by enemy forces. The Refugee Relief Branch has provided these people with food and other supplementary assistance, as needed, on a continuing basis. (Funding for food and air transportation thereof is financed by DOD, beginning in FY 1969) (See FY 1970 Country Field Submission.)

#### D. Resettlement Assistance:

This is assistance given to former 'refugees--full or partial relief', who have agreed to permanently resettle in areas provided for them by the Lao Government. Resettlement locations are selected on the basis of their economic, political and strategic value. The settlers are placed on these locations in accordance with existing RLG laws on land tenure. They are given temporary cultivation permits and upon meeting the minimum improvement requirements under the law, they will receive title to the land. The selection of resettlement sites has been coordinated with other development projects supported by USAID. Sites selected are areas with lowland paddy rice potential, and areas generally adjacent to "farm to market" roads, and which a gravity flow or pump-type irrigation system is either under construction or being examined for feasibility. The areas offer greater opportunities for economic viability than lands upon which relocatees are placed. Resettlers receive the same kinds of assistance as "relocatees" plus assistance in establishing a basic social and economic infrastructure--schools, wells, dispensaries, and the like. Emphasis is also placed on training, improved agricultural methods, diversification of crops, marketing and cooperatives.

#### IV. SCOPE AND THRUST OF THE PROGRAM

The Refugee Relief and Resettlement Program for FY 1970-71 will continue as in past years to be oriented toward security, political and stabilization objectives. During FY 1971 it is expected that most of the refugee activity will continue to be in the hills of Northern Laos and will be overwhelmingly drawn from the ethnic minority hill tribes. These people will be largely growers of slash and burn hill rice and difficult to resettle on more productive paddy lands. Although most of the refugees will continue to be hill tribesmen, a substantial number is expected to be lowland Lao who are traditional paddy farmers. It is primarily toward this group of refugees that the resettlement program is directed. These lowland Lao, possibly 8-12,000 in number, will require permanent resettlement on paddy land. They can become producers of surplus rice and other crops more quickly than hill tribesmen and are potential beneficiaries of planned small-scale irrigation systems, land distribution programs, training courses, and the like.

The numbers of refugees for FY 1967-1968 remained relatively stable. In FY 69, as indicated in attached Table 1, there was a significant increase in the number of refugees. This resulted from the combined P.L.-Viet Minh offensives which began during the rainy season of FY 69 and have continued to date. Some reduction is expected in the number of refugees during the present rainy season (early FY 70) on the assumption that the offensive action by the enemy will be reduced. (See Table 1.)

Table 2 (attached) established the estimated maximum parameters of the refugee problem. The table evaluates the number of refugees that would require assistance if the main RLG bastions in the northern province were seized by the P.L., and the villagers and paramilitary were faced with having to evacuate their positions.

#### V. UTILIZATION OF PL 480, TITLE II COMMODITIES

PL 480 Title II foods, and cotton cloth although covered in separate PROPS are included as an "input" in the Refugee Relief and Resettlement PROP. The foods, and the cloth after fabrication into finished items, are supplied to refugees receiving full or partial assistance, and while being "relocated" or resettled.

##### A. Food:

During the obligation span some 24,540 M.T., of Title II foods have been, or it is estimated will be, provided for refugees. The CCC cost of food delivered in Laos (estimated) is \$4,544,000. Current Title II food utilization includes only corn meal and vegetable oil, both of which are distributed almost entirely by air drop or air-land to the refugees living in the contested areas of northern Laos. Looking to the future, accelerated efforts will be made to utilize additional Title II food resources to extent feasible to offset local purchases.

##### B. Cotton:

During the obligation period some 2,334,000 meters of Title II cloth have been, or will be provided for refugees. The CCC cost delivered in Laos is about \$1,510,000 - (estimated).

The PL 439 Title II cotton cloth project is relatively new, the first cloth arriving in Laos during FY 69. Under this project several hundred refugee women are gainfully employed being paid on a piece work basis for making skirts, blouses, pants, shirts, and towels, etc. Some women receive group training, some are provided with sewing machines to which they acquire ownership on a time purchase plan. After manufacture, the finished cotton products are distributed by USAID/RLC to needy refugees along with other basic commodities. Although this is a modest project it has offset substantial offshore purchases of cotton products and is simultaneously encouraging a new "home industry" that is designed to assist in alleviating the need for assistance to refugees.

#### VI. COST REDUCTION AND OTHER FACTORS

In FY 69 significant progress was made in the shift from rice procured from Thailand to the purchase of local rice available in certain rice surplus areas of Laos.

More emphasis will be placed on assistance to refugee hill people to increase rice production in remote and inaccessible areas. Local procurement and stockpiling of surplus rice in these areas significantly reduces the requirement for air transportation or air drops and provides a marked reduction in the overall cost of refugee relief to the USAID program.

Also, the rice drop system will be examined with a view toward improved bagging methods and utilization of U.S.-procured plastic sacks in preference to local jute variety. The utilization of aircraft in the drop program will be examined to increase efficiency in the scheduling of the aircraft.

A small amount of funds (\$10,000) are programmed as consultant fees for evaluation and testing. It is anticipated that improved operation efficiency and reduction of rice losses due to improved operational methods will provide savings that will greatly offset the cost of this project.

In FY 70-71, as in the past, USAID Refugee Relief Branch will continue to work closely with its counterpart organization, the RLG Ministry of Social Welfare. Again in FY 70, six participants will be authorized three months' training with the Thailand Director of Public Welfare in order to further improve their level of competence as Ministry of Social Welfare junior functionaries.

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Attachments:

Table 1

Table 2

TABLE 1

ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES  
(USAID Financed)

Category	FY 1969		FY 1970		FY 1971	
	Number Rec'g. Assist. 1/	Number Rec'g. Food 1/	Number Rec'g. Assist. 2/	Number Rec'g. Food 2/	Number Rec'g. Assist. 2/	Number Rec'g. Food 2/
1. Full Relief Assist.	82,000	82,000	70,000	70,000	70,000	70,000
2. Partial Assist.	20,000	11,800	25,000	12,000	25,000	12,000
3. Resettlement Assist.	8,000	5,000	8,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
<b>Total</b>	<u>110,000</u>	<u>98,800</u>	<u>103,000</u>	<u>87,000</u>	<u>103,000</u>	<u>87,000</u>

1/ Actual numbers as of June 1969

2/ Figures are averages based on anticipated monthly fluctuations.

RELIEF ASSISTANCE  
(USAID Financed)

	Total Receiving Food June 1969	Less Those Est. To Attain Self-Sufficiency By Harvest November 1969	Plus Est. New Arrivals Through FY 1970	Estimated Average FY 1970
Ban Houei Sai	9,000	4,000	5,000	10,000
Sayaboury	1,300	1,300	500	500
Luang Prabang	9,000	4,000	5,000	10,000
Xiang Khouang/Sam Neua	70,000	35,000	20,000	55,000
Vientiane/Lorikane	1,000	500	1,000	1,500
Thakhet/Savannakhet	500	500	500	500
Pakse	<u>7,500</u>	<u>3,000</u>	<u>5,000</u>	<u>9,500</u>
<b>Total</b>	<u>98,300</u>	<u>48,300</u>	<u>37,000</u>	<u>87,000</u>

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TABLE 2

In the event of a sustained all-out offensive by the Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese, the refugee problem within the country could possibly, and would probably, reach the following proportions:

	<u>Region</u>	<u>Number</u>
1.	Xieng Khouang-Vientiane area	200,000-250,000
2.	Houa Khong	10,000
3.	Luang Prabang and Sayaboury	27,000
4.	Borikhane and Thakhek	5,000
5.	Savannakhet, Sedone area	<u>30,000</u>

Estimated 272,000 to 300,000 refugees.

*for* RUSHING *[Signature]*

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