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

Follow-Up Review On Assistance To War Victims In Vietnam

B-133001

Agency for International Development

Department of State

Department of Defense

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BY THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 27, 1972

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

B-133001

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The accompanying report presents the results of our inquiries into assistance provided to war victims in Vietnam and into U.S. policy and planning for rehabilitation and reconstruction in Vietnam. Our inquiries were made in response to your request of July 7, 1971.

We have not followed our usual practice of submitting the report to responsible agencies for comments; however, we have discussed the results of our review with responsible U.S. officials in Saigon. Their comments have been considered in preparing this report.

These factors should be given due consideration in any use made of this report.

You may wish to bring this report to the attention of the agency for possible use in improving its management of the program.

We believe the contents of this report would be of interest to other committees and to members of Congress. Release of the report will be made only upon your agreement or upon your public announcement concerning the contents of the report.

Sincerely yours,

Elmer B. Staats

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

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II Refugee sites, social welfare sites, and warehouses visited by GAO 92

ABBREVIATIONS

AID	Agency for International Development
CORDS	Civil Operation for Rural Development Support
GAO	General Accounting Office
GVN	Government of Vietnam

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

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DIGEST

WHY THE REVIEW WAS MADE

The Subcommittee Chairman requested the General Accounting Office (GAO) to update previous inquiries into war-related civilian problems in Vietnam and to inquire into U.S. programs of long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction relating to the war victims. (See app. I.)

GAO has not followed its usual practice of submitting a draft report to the responsible agencies for formal written comments. GAO discussed the results of the review with responsible U.S. officials in Saigon, however, and their comments were considered in the development of this report. Also GAO reviewed and considered Agency for International Development comments on its prior report of November 1970.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Program management

The Government of Vietnam (GVN) Ministry of Social Welfare is responsible for the management of the war victims program. The United States provides financial, commodity, and technical support, but U.S. personnel have no direct authority or responsibility with respect to program operations. (See p. 7.)

Priority accorded to refugee relief and social welfare activities

No formal list of priorities has been established for U.S. assistance activities in Vietnam. The relative importance placed on the program may be inferred from the fact that the program, having funds of $6.3 million, ranked seventh among the 10 largest dollar-funded projects in fiscal year 1971. Also it received the equivalent of $30.5 million (26 percent) of the local currency which had been provided in support of the Vietnamese civil budget. (See p. 10.)

Management information system

The reliability of the frequently revised management information system continued to be affected by the reporting of erroneous, misleading, and confusing data. Vietnamese representatives do not stress the importance

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of reporting accurate information, and very little effort is made to verify the information being reported. (See p. 13.)

Long-range plans

Many years of U.S. assistance has increased the GVN capability to deal with emergency relief, but not with long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction problems of war victims. The United States has no plans for long-range assistance to war victims, and its future commitment in this respect is unknown. Four-year plans are being prepared by GVN, but U.S. officials question GVN's capability of formulating effective plans. (See p. 17.)

Temporary assistance to refugees

Payment of temporary benefits continued to receive high priority. Some persons still were not being recognized promptly as refugees, however, and benefits for recognized refugees were delayed for long periods of time. (See p. 21.)

Newly generated refugees

GVN reports showed that the number of refugees generated during the first 9 months of 1971 totaled 120,484. Relocation of people from the U-Minh Forest area of Military Region 4 and relocation of Montagnards and other South Vietnamese in Military Region 2 generated a significant number of refugees. (See pp. 21 and 23.)

A U.S. observer told GAO that the forced relocations of Montagnards and other South Vietnamese in Military Region 2 had been ill planned and had been made without the approval of the Central Pacification and Development Council. U.S. field personnel opposed the relocations, but top U.S. management did nothing to oppose the moves. (See p. 25.)

The living conditions at most of the relocation sites generally were poor. Deficiencies included lack of farmland, water, food, and proper medical facilities. Numerous deaths have occurred. (See p. 28.)

Vietnamese repatriates and refugees from Cambodia

U.S. observers reported that long-range GVN support of 200,000 repatriates and refugees from Cambodia had been inadequate, and some are finding it difficult to be self-sustaining. (See p. 30.)

Rehabilitation and reconstruction activities to assist resettled and return-to-village refugees

The GVN policy is to help refugees return to their original homes or, when security does not warrant it, to resettle them as soon as possible in good locations. Since 1964 GVN has assisted a million refugees in

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returning to their original villages and 2.2 million to resettle. Nevertheless many of the needs of refugees have not been met. (See p. 32.)

Although some progress has been made, problems continue to plague the program. They include a lack of coordination between Vietnamese Ministries, an inadequate consideration of refugees' wishes and needs, a slow expenditure rate, shortages of trained personnel, and a lack of interest by some Vietnamese personnel. (See p. 35.)

Conditions at site facilities

GAO representatives visited 38 refugee sites--two in Military Region 1, 21 in Military Region 2, one in Military Region 3, and 14 in Military Region 4.

On the basis of GVN criteria, a majority of the sites lacked adequate classrooms, wells, and medical and sanitation facilities in Military Region 2. Also the refugees did not have the quantity of land which U.S. observers believed necessary to be self-supporting. This seemed to be the principal obstacle to economic development of the sites. (See p. 40.)

In Military Region 4 the greatest needs were for community development projects, teachers, and medical services. The majority of the refugees appeared to be economically self-sufficient, and their homes were comparable to those of nonrefugees in the area. (See p. 54.)

GAO did not attempt to make an onsite assessment of conditions in Military Region 1 because of extensive damage to the area caused by an October 1971 typhoon. A U.S. study report issued in March 1971, however, provided a graphic portrayal of the serious problems in that region. (See p. 61.)

Assistance to other war victims

The care of other war victims--including widows, orphans, dependent children, and physically disabled--continued to receive less emphasis than that afforded to refugees. Also GVN had given less attention to war damage claimants who had suffered personal injury, death in the family, or property losses. (See p. 63.)

War victims in urban areas

Since 1962 there has been a major population shift to urban areas because of the war. These war victims are not recognized as refugees because GVN wants to discourage further overcrowding of the cities. They are, however, eligible for benefits when they return to their villages. (See p. 74.)

U.S. staffing

The number of U.S. advisors assigned to the war victims program has been reduced from 100 in January 1969 to 44 in September 1971. By June 1974 the number is expected to be reduced to 10. (See p. 78.)

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GVN staffing

Manpower shortages and the need for greater GVN expertise in social development are becoming increasingly more apparent as emphasis is being shifted from relief to welfare. The Ministry of Social Welfare has increased its staff, but it is still unable to fulfill all the existing social needs.

Level of financial assistance

GVN refugee and social welfare programs received financial assistance totaling about $72.4 million and $65.6 million in fiscal years 1969 and 1970, respectively. The fiscal year 1971 estimate was $50.4 million, down about 21 percent.

The U.S. contribution has decreased from 85 percent of the total assistance provided in fiscal year 1969 to 69 percent in fiscal year 1971. The GVN contribution increased from 5.2 percent to 18 percent during the same period. (See p. 81.)

Slow rate of piaster expenditures

The rate at which piaster expenditures were made by the Ministry of Social Welfare province representatives in 1971 continued to be slow, but it appeared to have improved slightly when compared with the 1970 rate.

U.S. commodity support

The food provided by the United States was not always distributed on the basis of need. In some cases it was being used to feed farm animals or was being exchanged for more palatable items. In many instances commodities were held in storage for excessive periods and became unfit for human consumption. Between April and September 1971, commodities valued at about $3.3 million had been condemned or were in the process of being condemned as unfit for human consumption. (See p. 85.)

Voluntary agencies and international organizations

Little effort has been made by GVN to seek more financial and technical support from voluntary agencies and international organizations as U.S. assistance declines. (See p. 88.)

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE SUBCOMMITTEE

The Subcommittee may wish to bring this report to the attention of responsible agency officials for possible use in improving management of the program.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This report is one of several General Accounting Office reports since 1965 on U.S.-supported programs of assistance to refugees and to other war victims in Vietnam. GAO's inquiries into war victims programs in Vietnam were made at the request of the Chairman, Subcommittee To Investigate Problems Connected With Refugees and Escapees, Senate Committee on the Judiciary. The Chairman's most recent request was in a letter dated July 7, 1971. (See app. I.) This report deals with social and economic problems of war victims. Matters concerning civilian health and civilian war-related casualties in Vietnam will be discussed in a separate report.

The Government of Vietnam provides assistance to war victims under a refugee relief and social welfare program which receives financial, commodity, and technical assistance from the United States. The program has, over the years, evolved from a program of assistance to persons displaced by the war (refugees) to a program intended to assist all persons who have suffered from the war (war victims)--refugees, widows, orphans, the physically disabled, the economically handicapped, and persons who have suffered personal injuries, loss of family member, or property damage.

The overall objective of the program, as presently defined, is to provide emergency relief to satisfy the immediate economic needs of war victims and to rehabilitate and reintegrate them into normal community and national life. Emphasis is directed toward assisting refugees in returning to their original villages or resettling them in new locations.

GVN assistance to refugees, the largest category of war victims, primarily concentrates on the payment of monetary allowances and distribution of commodities in four stages.

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--Immediate benefits to take care of the needs of newly generated refugees for the first 7 days.

--Temporary benefits to refugees for a period of up to 3 months.

--Resettlement benefits to assist refugees in settling in some area other than their original village.

--Return-to-village benefits to assist and encourage refugees to return to their original village.

In addition to individual benefits to refugees, funds are allocated to resettlement and return-to-village sites for development activities designed to normalize the lives of the refugee occupants.

Also monetary allowances are paid to war victims who have suffered personal injuries, death within the family, or house damage as a result of allied or enemy action.

In addition, social, vocational, and physical rehabilitation and community development activities aid is given to other war victims, such as widows, orphans, physically disabled, and other economically handicapped persons.

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CHAPTER 2

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

The management of programs to assist war victims is the responsibility of GVN. GVN controls all facets of the programs and exercises authority over day-to-day operations. The United States provides financial, commodity, and technical support and acts only in an advisory capacity in the management of the program.

A description of the GVN and U.S. organizations and other aspects of program management are discussed in the following sections.

GVN ORGANIZATION FOR REFUGEE RELIEF AND SOCIAL WELFARE

The Ministry of Social Welfare is the primary GVN organization responsible for refugee relief and social welfare activities. A number of reorganizations have taken place within GVN for these activities and are described below.

--From February 1966 to November 1967, a Special Commissariat for Refugees handled all refugee relief activities.

--In 1968 the responsibility for the health program was assigned to the Ministry of Social Welfare which became the Ministry of Health, Social Welfare, and Relief. Separate Ministries were established in 1969--a Ministry of Health and a Ministry of Social Welfare.

--Since 1969 the Ministry of Social Welfare has been responsible for all refugee relief and social welfare activities.

In addition to a central office in Saigon, the Ministry of Social Welfare has a regional and provincial organization. The Ministry has a staff at each of the four military region headquarters in DaNang, Nha Trang, Bien Hoa,

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and Can Tho, and there are Ministry officials in each of Vietnam's 44 provinces. The military regions and administrative subdivisions are shown on the following map.

U.S. ORGANIZATION FOR REFUGEE RELIEF AND SOCIAL WELFARE

The U.S. financial, commodity, and technical support provided to GVN for refugee and social welfare activities is administered by the Civil Operations for Rural Development Support (CORDS) War Victims Directorate, reporting to the Commander, U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam. CORDS assumed this responsibility in May 1968 from the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) Mission, Vietnam. The CORDS organization at the staff level includes civilian personnel whose salaries are paid by the AID Mission; AID also provides much of the program costs.

The CORDS War Victims Directorate is organized at several levels corresponding to those of the GVN's Ministry of Social Welfare. The Director and his staff in Saigon advise the Ministry on policies, procedures, financial management, and the reporting and evaluation of programs. The War Victims Directorate Staff at regional[1] and provincial levels advise their GVN counterparts on the implementation of programs and keep CORDS and the Directorate in Saigon advised of program progress and problems. At the provincial level war victims advisors may be performing various other advisory functions in addition to refugee relief and social welfare. Below the province level CORDS personnel in the districts are responsible, in general, for all CORDS advisory functions, including social welfare and refugee matters.

The staffing of the War Victims Directorate is discussed in more detail in chapter 8.

The operation of refugee and social welfare activities in Washington is the responsibility of the Office of Rural

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[1]There is no war victims advisory staff in Military Region 3 headquarters at Bien Hoa. This advisory function is handled by the War Victims Directorate Staff in Saigon.

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Development in AID's Bureau for Supporting Assistance. That Office is primarily responsible for participating in the formulation of policies, programs, and projects through its assigned functions of reviewing and evaluating proposals by the AID Mission in Vietnam and of monitoring Mission activities. In practice the Office functions as a backstop for the Mission and does not take an active role in the formulation processes but relies instead on the Mission's expertise and proximity to refugee and social welfare activities.

PRIORITY ACCORDED TO REFUGEE RELIEF AND SOCIAL WELFARE ACTIVITIES

No formal list of priorities has been established for U.S. assistance activities in Vietnam which would indicate the importance placed on refugee relief and social welfare activities to assist war victims in relation to other GVN programs assisted by the United States. The levels of resources allocated to the activities, however, may provide some useful, but not necessarily conclusive, indications of the relative importance of the activities. Moreover the allocation of available resources was considered by AID officials in Washington and in Vietnam to be an indication of the relative priorities of the various assistance programs. The following list shows the amount of funds programmed for fiscal year 1971 for the 10 largest dollar-funded projects. The list shows that the war victims project ranked seventh in dollars programmed.

Project	Amount (millions)
Highway improvement	$52.5
Public health	17.7
Public safety	11.5
Engineering projects	8.9
Chieu Hoi (note a)	8.4
Logistics	6.8
War victims	6.3
Agriculture	4.8
Education	4.5
National Information Service	1.3

[a]Chieu Hoi is a Vietnamese term meaning open arms. The project supports GVN efforts to induce military and civilian supporters of the Viet Cong and North Vietnam's Armed Forces personnel to come over to the side of GVN.

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Counterpart Vietnamese piaster funds[1] are also allocated to various projects through the U.S. support of the GVN civil budget. In calendar year 1970 the counterpart budget was 12 billion piasters and the war victims program was allocated 3.5 billion piasters or 29.2 percent of the budget. In calendar year 1971, 3.6 billion piasters, or 25.7 percent, of the counterpart budget of 14 billion piasters was allocated to the war victims program.

Primary emphasis within the GVN war victims program from 1965 through 1969 was focused on providing emergency relief in the form of temporary benefits and resettlement allowances to refugees displaced by the war, whereas the needs of other war victims, such as orphans, widows, and the physically disabled, received less attention. Similarly the development of the sites in which refugees and former refugees were located was slow and less than satisfactory conditions existed at the sites.

During 1970 an influx of repatriates from Cambodia and of victims of floods in the northern half of South Vietnam, which made 300,000 persons homeless, resulted in concentration on emergency relief payments and deferral of long-range development programs. A similar situation existed in 1971 when a typhoon caused flooding and extensive damage in the five northernmost provinces of Vietnam.

In 1971 priority within the war victims program continued to be directed toward the payment of refugee benefits. Refugees continued to be generated so that fulfilling emergency and temporary relief needs made it difficult to give sufficient attention to development projects. As a result rehabilitation and reconstruction activities designed specifically to assist war victims to overcome the long-term problems caused by the war have made little progress.

We recognize that other development activities, such as highway, agricultural, and health projects, carried out by other GVN Ministries may indirectly benefit war victims to the same extent as the general population, but without a

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[1]U.S.-controlled currencies generated under other U.S. assistance programs.

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participatory base, such as land to farm, which we discuss in later chapters of this report, the war victims may not be in a position to realize the full potential from these activities.

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MANAGEMENT IMFORMATION SYSTEM

The reporting system previously described in our November 1970 report has been providing both the Ministry of Social Welfare and the CORDS War Victims Directorate with data relating to refugee and social welfare programs. It was developed to facilitate the gathering of data needed to assess the progress of the various Ministry activities. The system produces two basic reports--a narrative report and a statistical report which is computer processed.

The narrative report serves as a field communique relating to areas of special interest. This report is prepared by the American advisor in the province. He uses it to explain any special occurrences, to raise questions, to offer advice and opinions, and to identify problem areas requiring action at the headquarters level.

The statistical report is prepared from data collected by Vietnamese Social Welfare Service Chiefs in each province. Our inspection of these reports in October 1971 showed that the reliability of the statistical data continued to be affected by erroneous, misleading, and confusing data. For example:

--Some provinces reported an increase in newly generated refugees without a corresponding increase in any category of refugees--temporary, resettlement, or return-to-village refugees.

--Some provinces reported that a larger number of persons had returned to villages than shown on previous reports as in process of returning to their villages and indicated that a number of refugees were being generated and returned to villages within the same month--a somewhat improbable accomplishment.

--Some report sections presented cumulative totals as the current reporting data. Some provinces showed lower cumulative totals than in previous months with no explanation as to whether the prior reports had been erroneous.

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The CORDS War Victims Directorate was aware of the apparent deficiencies of the reports. Many instances of inaccurate and unreliable data had been brought to the attention of American advisors in the field. In some cases corrective actions had been taken, but, in numerous instances, repeated notices to field personnel had brought little results. Inaccurate and unreliable data continued to be reported.

CORDS officials attributed the inaccuracies to several factors. Some representatives of the GVN Ministry of Social Welfare considered the report to be an American requirement with little or no benefit to the Vietnamese. Some American advisors lacked interest in statistical work and the Vietnamese tended to follow the example they set. As a result, very little emphasis was given by the Ministry representatives to reporting accurate information and apparently little effort was made to verify the information being reported. Other contributing factors included the complicated format of field forms, lack of qualified Ministry representatives in the field, and a constant change in field staff.

Two shortcomings of the current system which limited its effectiveness as a management tool are:

--The system did not provide sufficient data to enable the monitoring of the progress of site and hamlet development.

--The system contained no data elements pertaining to the vocational training program initiated by the Ministry of Social Welfare in cooperation with the Ministry of Education.

The War Victims Directorate viewed the reporting system as a valuable management tool in spite of its shortcomings. The narrative reports were looked upon as a day-to-day aid to management of operations, and the statistical reports provided trend data for useful planning purposes.

In September 1971 a major revision of the reporting system was approved and was expected to be implemented before the end of 1971. This is the fourth revision of the system since 1967. Changes to be made were designed to:

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1. Revise and improve the reporting format.

2. Expand data requirements to enable the GVN Ministry and the CORDS Directorate to exercise more effective control over social welfare programs.

3. Introduce new data elements to enable the Ministry to have more effective managerial control over its funds and personnel and its vocational training program. Current manual reports were to be eliminated.

The increased requirements for other program data and the further revisions to the system may, in our opinion, compound the difficulty in obtaining reliable data.

The CORDS War Victims Directorate anticipated that difficulties would be encountered by the Vietnamese in obtaining and reporting the desired information and planned to conduct educational programs for personnel in the field responsible for collecting and reporting data. Instructions for field personnel were scheduled to begin in December 1971.

Computer functions were being performed by the Military Assistance Command's Data Management Agency. It can be anticipated that many problems will be encountered when GVN takes over the computer operation, a primary problem being a lack of qualified personnel. Plans were being developed for accomplishing the shift of responsibilities to GVN.

U.S. ADVISORY INFLUENCE

Although the United States has no direct control over the war victims program, U.S. advisors working with Vietnamese counterparts at all levels have exercised influence over the direction of the program. The extent of influence exercised by U.S. advisors is difficult to quantify, but this advisory effort has reportedly resulted in some positive actions for a more effective program by the GVN Ministry of Social Welfare that would not have ordinarily been taken. Examples of some of the positive results of U.S. advisory efforts as described to us by CORDS are:

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--Development project requests from Go Cong province in Military Region 4 were submitted only after the CORDS War Victims Directorate, working through the CORDS Province Senior Advisor, approached province officials on the importance of the development program.

--A "corrupt" Social Welfare Service Chief in Dinh Thuan province in Military Region 2 was removed by the Ministry of Social Welfare as a result of urgings from the War Victims Directorate in Saigon.

--Persistent efforts by the Refugee Division, War Victims Directorate, resulted in the shipment of commodities to Military Region 1 that were being delayed because of procedural red tape.

--The Ministry of Social Welfare allocated funds for a fishing wharf and two deep-sea fishing boats in Thua Thien province after a U.S. advisor became interested in the project. It was estimated that over 3,000 refugees would be assisted with jobs and that other refugees would benefit through a cheaper source of food.

--A refugee advisor in Quang Tin province in Military Region 1 succeeded in getting the Social Welfare Chief to register about 40,000 return-to-village refugees who had returned home some months previously and had become eligible for GVN assistance.

The examples described above are not intended to be a complete list of accomplishments--they are only indicative of the types of situations that reportedly occurred.

During our review we visited 38 refugee sites and met with CORDS personnel in Saigon, in the regional headquarters, and in many of the provinces. In almost every case the U.S. personnel were sympathetic to the needs of war victims and seemed to be dedicated to the objective of easing the suffering of those displaced by the war. Often the U.S. advisors in the field went about their tasks at considerable risk to their personal safety. The problems described elsewhere in this report are not intended as criticism of these efforts.

CHAPTER 3

LONG-RANGE PLANS

As discussed in subsequent chapters of this report, some progress has been made in meeting the immediate needs of war victims. Large numbers of refugees have been given temporary assistance in an effort to alleviate the hardships resulting from the disruption of normal life and displacement caused by the war. Large numbers of refugees have been returned to their original villages or resettled in new areas. Other war victims, although not given the same priority as refugees, have benefited from increased awareness and from attention that has been given to their problems.

The progress made by GVN in dealing with the problems of war victims was, in large part, made possible because of substantial support provided by the United States. The U.S. contribution has included direct dollar aid of over $19.7 million since fiscal year 1969, and a large part of these funds provided many man-years of effort by U.S. advisors working with Vietnamese counterparts in the field. In addition to providing dollar aid, the United States has provided the equivalent of over $88 million[1] in counterpart piasters which financed more than 79 percent of the Ministry of Social Welfare's budget.

The support provided by the United States and the GVN's own resources have been used, for the most part, on short-range solutions to war victims problems, that is, for emergency relief.

The many years of U.S. assistance have increased the GVN capability to deal with emergency relief. It has not effectively strengthened or developed, however, an essential GVN capability to deal with the long-term problems of war victims--rehabilitation and reconstruction.

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[1]Throughout this report conversions of Vietnamese piasters to U.S.-dollar equivalents were made at the rate of 118 to 1--the official rate of exchange in effect as of October 31, 1971.

The United States has not developed long-range plans for dealing with the long-term human problems of refugees and other war victims who continue to suffer from social and economic disadvantages caused by the war. Also the United States has not made projections as to the magnitude of effort that would be required to meet the long-term needs of war victims. Although formal and informal studies have been made concerning long-range goals and needs in Vietnam, U.S. officials have not translated these into plans for future actions.

CORDS has only short-term plans, and officials have told us that long-range planning is virtually impossible because of the constant interruptions caused by emergencies, the general instability caused by the war, and the declining foreign assistance authorizations.

Future levels of U.S. commitments in the areas of reconstruction and rehabilitation are unknown. The proposed fiscal year 1973 Mission project budget submission calls for U.S. dollar commitments to be phased out by fiscal year 1974. Further support would have to come from piaster counterpart funds generated from other U.S. programs, but the magnitude of this support will be dependent upon future actions by the Congress and upon priorities given to these programs.

In September 1971 GVN directed its Ministries to prepare 4-year action plans. This is the first attempt by GVN to formulate long-term programs for civil agencies. CORDS officials, however, predicted that it would be some time before the Ministry of Social Welfare would be capable of formulating effective long-term plans.

Preliminary indications are that the Ministry would like to carry out a wide variety of programs including (1) temporary and long-term development assistance to refugees and war victims, (2) assistance to needy people, (3) natural disaster and accident relief, (4) support of day-care centers and orphanages, (5) assistance for the prevention of social vices, including juvenile delinquency, drug addiction, and prostitution, (6) support of vocational training programs for delinquents and orphans, (7) assistance program for the physical and vocational rehabilitation of disabled war victims, (8) support of community centers, and (9) training of more specialized personnel. A

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high-level official of the Ministry told us that it was difficult to make realistic plans without knowledge of the amounts or resources available, especially when external assistance was declining.

A U.S. foreign policy statement published by the Department of State in October 1971 indicates that the United States intends to deal primarily with general economic development in future years and that the United States previously had made a formal commitment for economic assistance to Vietnam. One of the stated goals is to reduce the economic and social consequences of the war through emergency provision of food, shelter, and resettlement for refugees and medical assistance for civilian war casualties. An AID/Washington official agreed with our observation that these were short-term goals that did not address themselves to the reconstruction problems that would continue long after refugees were resettled and casualties were treated.

AID's position traditionally has been that economic development is the key to a country's self-sufficiency and that social development is a by-product of economic development. Thus AID felt that problems of war victims would be solved by economic development. CORDS officials told us that they did not subscribe to this position; instead they favor a separate program for humanitarian assistance. This, they feel, would give the human problems appropriate recognition and support.

Statements made by AID officials concerning long-range activities in Vietnam deal mainly with economic development and, for the most part, do not recommend separate programs for assistance to war victims. Likewise, a 2-year study supported at the higher levels of the United States Government and GVN and dealing with comprehensive policies and programs on the postwar development in Vietnam recommended that the primary postwar objective should be the attainment of economic independence. No recommendation was made concerning overall objectives and policies for aiding all war victims.

The concentration on short-run activities related to refugees evolved from a policy decision made by AID in 1969 to eliminate social welfare as a separate project.

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This policy of assisting short-term activities continues to be used by CORDS, and its interest in long-term activities is limited to a desire to increase the Ministry of Social Welfare's capability to administer long-range programs. CORDS expects the desired capability to result indirectly from the Ministry's success in handling emergency relief activities.

CORDS officials have been aware that virtually all the counterpart funding and staffing has been applied by GVN to the emergency relief program and little attention has been given to social development in Vietnam. CORDS social development officials have advocated in the past that GVN and the United States should identify the problems of the immediate and long-term future that may be experienced by physically disabled war victims, displaced citizens suffering property losses, war widows, and orphans.

Several studies and/or analyses have dealt with the need for long-range planning in Vietnam. Although the problems of war victims are recognized, most of the studies deal with economic planning and make no specific recommendations for plans and policies for rehabilitation and reconstruction of war victims. Many studies suggested a multilateral aid approach for postwar funding; the United States would respond only to specific requests from GVN.

One of the most comprehensive studies was conducted as early as 1967 by an AID-financed social welfare task force. The resulting report indicated that there were recognizable social welfare problems, both short term and long term. The task force made many recommendations including social development planning that would establish goals and objectives, set priorities, outline programs, and estimate personnel and financial needs. The study, in general, was not acted on because of the belief that the war made it impractical for use in Vietnam.

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CHAPTER 4

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES

Even though there was an overall reduction in the scale of military operations throughout South Vietnam, the number of refugees generated and placed in GVN-controlled areas during the first 9 months of 1971 exceeded the average monthly level of the 2 previous years. Military operations in the U-Minh Forest area of Military Region 4 and the relocation of Montagnards and other South Vietnamese in Military Region 2 were the principal reasons for the generation of the increased number of refugees. The number of new refugees registered and living in GVN-controlled sites since 1968 is shown in the following schedule.

Year	Refugees registered
1968	340,000
1969	115,000
1970	135,000
1971 (from Jan. 1 to Sept. 20)	120,484
	710,484

The GVN's refugee relief activities continue to concentrate on emergency assistance directed toward satisfying the immediate needs of refugees for food, clothing, and shelter. GVN classifies this as temporary assistance divided into two categories--immediate and temporary.

Since the inception of refugee relief activities in 1964 and through September 1971, GVN estimates that it has paid temporary benefits to over 2.5 million persons who have been displaced by the war. This includes an estimated 476,000 persons not living in GVN refugee camps (out-of-camp refugees) and an estimated 200,000 Vietnamese repatriates from Cambodia.

Although large numbers of refugees have been assisted by GVN, long delays have occurred in recognizing and registering refugees and in making payments.

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PAYMENT OF TEMPORARY BENEFITS

As of September 1971 the number of refugees recognized by GVN as being entitled to temporary benefits totaled 114,720. For 1971 GVN budgeted 325 million counterpart piasters, including a carryover from 1970, for temporary relief payments.

Refugees are entitled to receive temporary assistance by virtue of being recognized as refugees by GVN. Refugee status is accorded only to those displaced persons who have fled their homes in insecure areas after January 1, 1964, and who have sought refuge in secure areas under GVN control. This has generally been considered to include

--persons who voluntarily leave their homes in Communist-controlled areas to take up residence in GVN-controlled areas,

--persons who leave their homes because of enemy incursions into their village, or

--persons who are moved from their homes in insecure areas by GVN to clear the area for a military operation.

To be eligible for assistance, the refugee must live in a recognized GVN refugee site. Refugees living outside sites have not been recognized by GVN since the end of 1970.

Temporary assistance provided by GVN consists of immediate benefits of rice, condensed milk, and salt for 7 days and temporary benefits of rice or an equivalent monetary allowance for a period of up to 3 months. In addition, refugees are provided with emergency clothing and usually are housed in GVN-provided shelters.

The matter of payments of temporary benefits to refugees continues to be a high-priority item, and GVN performance in providing these benefits is considered by U.S. officials to be adequate. Some persons are not being promptly recognized as refugees, however, and therefore are not receiving benefits on a timely basis or benefits for recognized refugees are being delayed for long periods of time.

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During the first 9 months of calendar year 1971, CORDS estimated that 260,000 persons were paid temporary benefits. Although large numbers of refugees have been assisted by GVN, the following items are examples of delays in recognizing refugees and making payments.

--From Darlac province, Military Region 2, 736 Montagnards were relocated in 1968. They were not officially recognized as refugees, however, and did not receive temporary assistance benefits until 1971.

--In May 1971, 240 Montagnards in Kontum province, Military Region 2, were attacked by the Viet Cong and made homeless. These persons relocated near a military compound; however, as of October 1971 they had not been recognized as refugees and had received no assistance from GVN.

--In 1969 a group of Vietnamese came out of the U-Minh Forest to escape Communist control and resettled in Dong Hoa hamlet, Kien Giang province, Military Region 4. These persons were not recognized by GVN as refugees and received no relief benefits.

In February 1971 a CORDS refugee advisor reported that the Ministry of Social Welfare was slow to react to the needs of the Montagnards in the hope that they would go back "into the hills which they often in fact do." In June the same advisor in another report, stated, in part:

> "it is a grim existence waiting for the government officials to do their thing ***. As a result twenty eight of the refugees said 'to hell with it' and faded back into the surrounding hills and jungles where they can at least 'get by' either with or in spite of the Viet-Cong. I cannot understand why the U.S. and the Vietnamese Governments spend so much on propaganda telling people about the 'good life' available to those who seek government protection, when in fact so little is actually done."

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NEWLY GENERATED REFUGEES

The GVN policy states that the generation of refugees must be avoided to the greatest possible extent; 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. If the Council approves the relocations, the military unit conducting the operation must notify the appropriate GVN province officials so that preparation and planning for the reception and care of the refugees can be completed prior to the movement.

In some cases this policy has not been followed. Relocations have been made without the advance approval and prior planning needed to ensure that relief operations will be carried out properly. As a consequence, refugees were either not recognized or recognized only after long delays.

Two events late in 1970 and early in 1971 accounted for a large part of the increase in the generation of refugees. Military operations in the U-Minh Forest area of Military Region 4 and the relocation of Montagnards and other South Vietnamese in Military Region 2 resulted in generating over 120,000 refugees.

Military operations in U-Minh Forest area

Beginning late in 1970 the GVN military operations in the U-Minh Forest, a major Communist stronghold in the Delta provinces of Kien Giang, Chuong Thien, and An Xuyen, resulted in the movement of about 60,000 persons. Their relocation was planned in advance and was approved by the Central Pacification and Development Council. Many are still refugees because only a small number have been able to return to their homes.

Even though the relocations were planned in advance, controls over relief operations were inadequate. Serious irregularities in relief administration were disclosed by both GVN and CORDS officials. As a result, all refugee relief payments in Chuong Thien province were discontinued in March 1971 and in Kien Giang province in September 1971

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until a new survey could be made of the numbers and locations of refugees.

The survey of Chuong Thien resulted in almost 10,000 names' being dropped from the rolls. A CORDS official stated that GVN soldiers had their names put on the rolls and in some cases had received refugee benefits. Refugee relief payments did not resume in Chuong Thien until November 1971.

The survey in Kien Giang had not been completed, and GVN was providing no assistance to these refugees when we visited the area in November 1971.

Relocation of Montagnards and other South Vietnamese in Military Region 2

From May 1970 through August 20, 1971, about 62,546 Montagnards and other South Vietnamese were relocated in Military Region 2. The relocations took place in the provinces of Pleiku, Binh Thuan, Darlac, Phu Bon, Dontum, Tuyen Duc, and Phu Yen. These relocations were ordered by the GVN Commanding General of Military Region 2 who termed the campaign "Gathering the People." The reasons given for the relocations were (1) to bring the persons to more secure areas and (2) to deny support to the Viet Cong.

A CORDS observer reported that many persons had been relocated against their wills--without adequate preparation and without the approval of the Central Pacification and Development Council. Many of the Montagnards complained of being forced to leave behind their prized personal possessions, such as gongs, jars, and hardwood furniture. A Montagnard from Buon[1] Kli B, located in Darlac province, told us that the GVN soldiers had killed some of their livestock and had stolen some of their personal possessions. We were told that many of the families had been moved--with only a few hours' notice--and that adequate transportation had not been provided. Most had been forced to walk either part of or all of the way to the relocation site.

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[1]Buon is the Montagnard term for hamlet.

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CORDS officials at the working level opposed these massive relocations; however, top officials in the CORDS organization--as far as we could determine--made no representations to GVN to oppose the moves.

A CORDS War Victims Directorate official stated in March 1971 that:

> "The consolidation of Highlander hamlets is not voluntary unless communities as a whole have spontaneously requested or fully consented to the relocation ***. The only justification for such a forced relocation is an extreme military necessity ***. Besides grave military necessity, there is no reason good enough to justify forced relocations. The desire to publicize abroad or at home the political propaganda that ninety-five percent of the population lives under GVN control is no justification for relocation ***. Worse still, there is a suspicion not only among Highlanders but also among Americans and others, that the consolidation of hamlets in MR 2 is only a government ploy to deprive Highlanders of their lands. This suspicion quickly becomes a conviction when, within weeks of the relocation, Vietnamese are allowed to farm the fields from which Highlanders were forcibly evicted. When this happens, the benevolent image of the government suffers another blow at home and abroad ***."

A CORDS official in Military Region 2 stated that he was opposed to the relocations because they did not materially enhance the economic and physical security of the persons moved.

In May 1971 a Central Pacification Development Council directive was issued which restated its requirement that all relocations must have prior council approval. The directive further stated that approval would not be given unless the proposed relocation was necessary because of urgent security reasons and unless proper plans had been made to diminish the hardships of the persons. The council has reaffirmed the basic GVN policy of not bringing persons to

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security but, if necessary, redeploying forces to bring security to the persons where they are. CORDS encouraged and supported this approach.

Conditions at the relocation sites

A CORDS assessment of the situation in Military Region 2 indicated that conditions at most of the relocation sites were generally inadequate because of a lack of water, food, relief supplies, and farmland. We noted a general lack of medical facilities at the relocation sites that we visited. The lack of land is the most serious problem for the Montagnards because most of them are farmers, and without land self-sufficiency cannot be attained.

GVN officials promised the relocated people that land would be made available; however, this promise has not always been kept. In Buon Kli B, Darlac province, the relocated Montagnards were promised land surrounding their relocation site; however, other Vietnamese have moved in and are farming at least three quarters of the promised land. In some cases the Montagnards are returning to their original fields, which in some instances involves walking between 2 and 6 miles. Although the Montagnards moved from their land for security reasons, other Vietnamese in some cases moved in to farm the Montagnards' land.

A return-to-village program is generally recognized as the only means of providing adequate farmland to refugees, and a rough rule of thumb used by U.S. advisors is that at least 2-1/2 hectares[1] of land is needed for each family to survive. Some relocation sites have less than 1 hectare of land for each family, however, and some have as little as a quarter hectare for each family. For example, the Montagnards at Buon Kli B and Buon M'Bre have about 500 square meters[2] for each family, and at Buon H'Dok only a half hectare is provided for each of its 150 families. These buons are located in Darlac province.

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[1]One hectare is equivalent to about 2.5 acres.

[2]One square meter is equivalent to about 11 square feet.

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Health problems at Montagnard relocation sites

The actual mortality rate of Montagnards at the relocation sites cannot be determined because of inaccurate and inconsistant reporting. Numerous deaths have been reported from relocation sites in Pleiku province. It is estimated that about 300 people have died because of exposure, malnutrition, tuberculosis, or an influenza-type virus.

A public health doctor assigned to the AID Mission in Vietnam reported that the deaths in Pleiku province had been caused by an influenza-type pneumonia or other common carrier infections which showed up when resistance was lowered due to changes in food and exposure to cold and dust. Most of the deaths occurred about 2 months after the relocations.

According to the public health doctor, removing the Montagnards from their traditional lands and forcing them to live in an alien environment was undoubtedly a significant contributing factor in the high death rates at these resettlement sites.

FUTURE RELOCATION PLANS

Plans are being made to relocate refugees from the former Ha Thanh resettlement site in Quang Tri province in Military Region 1 to a new location in Military Region 3. On the surface it appears that the refugees want to move because conditions at their present site offered no chance for them to become self-sustaining. Nevertheless some CORDS documents indicate that the planned move was prompted by GVN.

A GVN official has indicated to one U.S. observer the possibility of moving 300,000 persons in 1972. Most of these people would be from Quang Nam and Quang Ngai provinces in Military Region 1. The primary reasons given for these possible relocations were:

--The "embarrassing situation" in Military Region 1, where the refugees frequently had little or no land to farm and were caught in the fighting still going on.

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--The worsening unemployment situation as the Americans pull out.

The GVN official said that another reason for the relocations of the refugees would be that the abandoned land could be turned into a free-fire zone to make it easier to fight the enemy. Such massive relocation imposes refugee problems which may exceed the ability of GVN to effectively handle required relief operations.

We discussed the planned relocations with CORDS officials and they told us that assurances had been obtained from GVN that any future moves would be done only on a voluntary basis.

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VIETNAMESE REPATRIATES AND REFUGEES FROM CAMBODIA

In addition to providing assistance to refugees generated within Vietnam, GVN also has provided emergency relief since April 1970 to about 200,000 Vietnamese repatriates and refugees who crossed the border from Cambodia to seek sanctuary in Vietnam. The emergency relief program for these repatriates and refugees generally has been regarded by U.S. officials as having been handled in an effective and efficient manner by GVN. U.S. observers reported, however, that the long-range support of these repatriates and refugees had been inadequate and that some of them had been finding it difficult to be self-sustaining.

CORDS officials told us that GVN gave top priority to relief operations for the repatriates and that the Director of a special Interministerial Committee almost had been given a free hand in running the program. A CORDS official also stated that all other social welfare and refugee programs had suffered in the provinces where efforts had been concentrated on the repatriates.

GVN initiated a standard relief program for the repatriates in which they were provided with reception rations, temporary allowances, and resettlement allowances. The total cost of the repatriate program from April 1970 to June 1971 was 540 million piasters (about $4.6 million). A CORDS official informed us that, as of September 1971, there were about 4,000 Vietnamese in Phnom Penh who were awaiting repatriation.

A CORDS official stated that the long-range planning for the care of the repatriates and refugees from Cambodia had been completely inadequate and that this was exemplified by the fact that GVN had not attempted to find employment for these persons and had not allotted them enough land to farm.

As of September 30, 1971, CORDS reported that over 185,000 repatriates had been paid resettlement allowances and had been absorbed into the Vietnamese society. Statistics compiled in Vietnam show that 40 percent of the

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repatriates were skilled workers, 21 percent were merchants, 13 percent were fishermen, 13 percent were farmers, 10 percent were rubber plantation workers, and 3 percent were unskilled. According to CORDS underemployment is the major problem facing the repatriates from Cambodia. In Military Region 3 repatriates are reportedly moving from province to province in search of better job opportunities.

We visited a repatriate camp located at Suoi Cat in Military Region 3 in October 1971. The site contained approximately 4,000 persons. The following information on site conditions is based on our observations and discussions with CORDS officials and camp leaders.

--A CORDS official told us that the people at the camp had received all their monetary and rice allowances from GVN; however, the religious leader of the camp said that only about two thirds of the rice allowance had been actually received. He said that he had had to sign for the total allowances or the camp would have received nothing.

--The Ministry of Social Welfare had not provided required camp facilities. There were no GVN-provided wells, dispensaries, or other medical facilities. The people used rainwater for drinking. Cement casings for four wells had been at the site for over a year. In accordance with site development criteria, a total of 30 wells would be required. A school was being constructed and was about a third completed. In the meantime, about 700 children were being taught by five Catholic nuns in makeshift classrooms having no furniture.

--The camp had only 150 hectares (about 375 acres) of land that were cultivatable. This amount is, on the basis of an estimated requirement of 2-1/2 hectares a family, inadequate to sustain 600 families. The allotted 3,000 hectares of land must be cleared of trees and Viet Cong booby traps and mines. A Ministry of Social Welfare promise to clear more land was not kept.

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CHAPTER 5

REHABILITATION AND RECONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES TO ASSIST RESETTLED AND RETURN-TO-VILLAGE REFUGEES

GVN's stated policy is to help refugees return to their original homes or, when the security situation does not warrant a return, to resettle them as soon as possible in economically viable locations. Of the six million Vietnamese estimated by the GVN to have been refugees over the past 7 years, the Ministry of Social Welfare has assisted about 3.2 million (53 percent). About a million were returned to their villages and about 2.2 million were resettled elsewhere.

Although progress has been made in making payments to refugees who are resettled or returned to their original homes, relief effort and progress in meeting the long-term needs of war victims suffer from these deficiencies.

--Payments of resettlement and return-to-village benefits are not made promptly. Reasons cited were natural disasters and large relocations of people.

--Commodities, such as roofing, were not provided when needed because of an inadequate logistical system.

--Allowances are not periodically increased to keep pace with increased prices of some consumer goods.

--Needed long-term development projects have not been undertaken or successfully implemented because of numerous problems, including the lack of coordination between GVN Ministries, inadequate consideration of refugee wishes and needs, slow rate of expenditures, lack of trained personnel, and lack of interest by GVN personnel.

NUMBER OF REFUGEES IN RESETTLEMENT AND RETURN-TO-VILLAGE SITES

A major goal of GVN is to assist the refugees in returning to their original villages. Refugees may return

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and receive further GVN assistance after a vacated area has been made secure. In the event security conditions preclude refugees from returning to their village, attempts are made to resettle them in secure, populated areas, or on unused land in the same province. If this is not feasible, temporary camps can be converted to resettlement sites if they are located in secure areas having easy access to water and roads and if the sites have the potential for economic viability. The resettlement of refugees often is considered temporary. The fact that the refugees received resettlement allowances does not preclude the subsequent receipt of return-to-village benefits.

As of August 31, 1971, CORDS reported that there were 1,576 return-to-village locations, having about a million residents and that about 900,000 refugees were residing in 911 resettlement sites. CORDS reports showed that about 2.5 million refugees had received full return-to-village and resettlement allowances and that, in addition, 412,000 refugees were still receiving these allowances as of September 20, 1971.

RESETTLEMENT AND RETURN-TO-VILLAGE BENEFIT PAYMENTS

Refugees processed for resettlement or return-to-village are entitled to:

--3,600 piasters for each person for a 6-month rice allowance,

--7,500 piasters for each family for housing material, and

--8,500 piasters for each family or 10 sheets of aluminum roofing.

As indicated below the payments of allowances to refugees in return-to-village and resettlement processes were at much slower rates during the first 6 months of 1971 than during the same period in 1970. Moreover fewer refugees were paid in 1971, even though the active case load increased.

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Return-to-Village and Resettlement Benefits

	First 6 months of	
	1970	1971
Refugees paid	183,000	156,000
Average active case load	342,000	409,000

The lower rate of payments and the increased case load was attributed to the floods during the latter part of 1970 and to the relocations in Military Regions 2 and 4 during 1971 which required concentration of relief operations on emergency assistance. (See ch. 3.)

CORDS' monthly field assessments indicate that aluminum roofing, a much needed housing benefit, is not being received in sufficient quantities to meet normal demand. Roofing allocations, once the responsibility of the GVN Central Logistics Agency, are now the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Welfare; province officials report that allocations have been slow in arriving and that quantities are insufficient. No emergency stocks had been provided to the provinces, although sufficient stocks for normal and emergency requirements were on hand in Saigon.

According to a July 1970 report, cash payments in lieu of commodities during a time of inflationary price increases on certain commodities had a substantial impact on benefits available to refugees. For instance the cash allowance for 90 kilograms[1] of rice was 2,250 piasters for each person for 6 months; however, the July 1970 market price for 90 kilograms ranged from 3,690 piasters to 4,650 piasters. Similarly, the allowance for 10 bags of cement was 2,500 piasters for each family but the market price was between 2,860 piasters and 3,520 piasters. This gap was described as having potential adverse effects on the overall GVN refugee program.

In January 1971, the rice allowance was increased to 3,600 piasters for each person for 6 months but the market

[1]One kilogram is equivalent to about 2.2 pounds.

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price had risen to between 4,140 piasters and 6,840 piasters for 90 kilograms. As of September 1971 the price had climbed to between 4,905 piasters and 7,380 piasters.

In 1972 GVN will begin paying cash allowances in lieu of supplying aluminum roofing to refugees. U.S. officials are concerned that the cash allowance will not be enough to buy 10 sheets of roofing.

SITE DEVELOPMENT OF RESETTLEMENT AND RETURN-TO-VILLAGE LOCATIONS

For several years CORDS and GVN directed efforts primarily toward providing emergency relief assistance to refugees whereas long-term development projects were given a secondary priority. Emergency relief assistance continues to be given relatively more attention. Since 1969, however, both CORDS and GVN have shown increased interest in the development of resettlement and return-to-village sites as a first step toward meeting long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction needs.

Our report in November 1970 pointed out that little had been done to develop the return-to-village sites because the responsible GVN Ministries had not budgeted funds for that purpose. Also plans to improve resettlement sites had not been fully implemented.

CORDS reported that development projects carried out during 1970 by the Ministry of Social Welfare included the construction of 350 classrooms and 30 maternity clinics or dispensaries, the implementation of 183 self-help projects, and 170 vocational training classes. We estimate that about 61,000 recipients--or about 15 percent of the 407,000 persons estimated to be living in resettlement sites which needed upgrading--benefited from this effort.

The GVN's 1971 Community Defense and Local Development Plan emphasizes development projects at return-to-village sites. The plan states, in part, that, to encourage refugees to return to their original villages during 1971, the Ministry of Social Welfare will allocate funds to implement development projects in hamlets having 300 or more refugees who have returned home. The following section shows that

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the program has been plagued with various problems, including lack of coordination between GVN Ministries, inadequate consideration of refugee wishes and needs, slow expenditure rate, lack of trained personnel, and lack of interest by GVN personnel.

Site development needs, plans, and accomplishments

Development project criteria established by GVN to satisfy the needs of refugees in resettlement and return-to-village sites requires the providing of

--one well for each 20 families;

--one latrine for each 10 families;

--three teachers and three classrooms for each site or hamlet having more than 300 refugees;

--one hamlet medicine chest for each site or hamlet having more than 500 refugees;

--one maternity clinic or dispensary for each site or hamlet having more than 2,000 refugees;

--three self-help projects, such as irrigation canals, at each resettlement site or return-to-village hamlet having more than 300 refugees; and

--special site and hamlet development projects, as needed, such as installation of water pumps.

Sites provided with the basic facilities outlined above are considered normalized. In addition a normalized site is one that has been integrated as an administrative and political entity of the village and district in which it is located.

The Ministry of Social Welfare has been responsible for development of resettlement sites since 1966. The return-to-village site development is a relatively new function of the Ministry. Plans in 1969 called for return-to-village areas to participate in development assistance

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programs of other GVN Ministries coordinated by the Central Pacification and Development Council.

This arrangement, however, was not successful and the return-to-village sites did not receive the planned assistance primarily because:

--Projects were required to be programmed a year in advance, and this relative inflexibility precluded performance in situations requiring immediate or timely assistance.

--Ministries disagreed as to respective areas of responsibility.

--Other Ministries continued to assume that the Ministry of Social Welfare was totally responsible for refugee site development, regardless of the site location, and the Ministries did not carry out development projects to the extent planned.

Data available in the Ministry of Social Welfare and CORDS management information system apparently is not being used to plan development projects, because, in some instances, the number of projects planned was not in accordance with reported requirements. Moreover little progress appears to have been made during 1971 toward providing reported facility requirements. The following schedule compares the requirements reported in December 1970 with the numbers planned to be provided by the Ministry as of January 1971 and the requirements reported in August 1971.

Comparison of Site Development Project Requirements With Projects Programmed

Facilities required	Requirements as of 12-20-70	Programmed as of 1-1-71	Requirements as of 8-20-71
Wells	993	1,031	907
Latrines	4,939	837	4,290
Classrooms	431	544	444
Teachers	475	519	553

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No information was available at CORDS to show the status of completion for each type of project. An analysis of the rate at which allocated funds were being expended, however, indicates that progress has been slow.

The Ministry of Social Welfare in 1971 budgeted about 539 million piasters for resettlement and return-to-village site development. About 491 million piasters had been allocated to the various projects as of August 31, 1971. As shown below, however, only about 26 percent of the allocated funds had been expended.

Funds Allocated and Expended on
1971 Development Projects
As of August 31, 1971

Planned projects	Funds allocated	Funds expended	Percent
	(piasters)		
Sanitation-- 1,031 wells, 837 latrines, and 13 spillways	29,687,000	5,884,000	19.8
Education-- 544 classrooms and 519 teachers	173,143,370	43,638,558	25.2
Health-- 62 maternity clinics or dispensaries	38,391,246	7,130,652	18.6
Self-help-- 2,368 projects	153,884,000	45,780,864	29.7
Vocational training-- 321 courses	86,155,950	21,033,274	24.4
Land clearance-- 160 hectares	3,900,000	3,000,000	76.9
Miscellaneous	5,881,000	950,077	16.2
	491,042,566	127,117,425	25.8

Reasons cited for the slow rate of expenditures include emergencies, slow fund releases, and lack of security coordination, trained personnel, and interest on the part of GVN officials.

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Most U.S. advisors we talked to believed that, more serious than the slow expenditures process, was the problem of the development projects established by GVN for resettlement and return-to-village sites which were stereotyped and which were not designed to meet the specific needs of the refugees. For example, we observed that schools were built and that wells were dug; yet the one overriding need of most of the refugees had not been provided by GVN--land to farm. Also, the construction of a dispensary is of little value without providing medicine and medical personnel and classrooms are useless without teachers. We found that such situations were prevalent in several of the sites we visited.

Conditions observed at resettlement and return-to-village sites are discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

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CHAPTER 6

CONDITIONS AT REFUGEE SITES

During our fieldwork in Vietnam, we visited 38 refugee sites--temporary, resettlement, and return-to-village areas. (See app. II for list of sites visited--two in Military Region 1, 21 in Military Region 2, one in Military Region 3, and 14 in Military Region 4.) On the basis of criteria established by GVN (see p. 36), many of the refugee sites needed facilities, such as housing, classrooms, wells, medical facilities, medical services, and sanitation facilities. The most serious problem found at most of the sites visited was the lack of opportunity for self-support and/or economic potential.

Although we had planned to visit sites in Military Region 1, a typhoon which had caused extensive damage during October 1971 precluded objective observations of site conditions. A March 1971 survey issued by CORDS, however, provides useful data on conditions in that region, and these are set forth on pages 61 and 62.

Other factors considered in selecting sites for GAO visits were:

--The extensive generation of refugees caused by military operations in the U-Minh Forest in Military Region 4 late in 1970.

--The large relocations of Montagnards and other South Vietnamese in Military Region 2 in 1970 and early in 1971.

--Security risks involved in visiting sites in Military Region 4.

--The relatively small refugee case load in Military Region 3.

Approximately 124,000 refugees were residing in the sites visited. The following descriptions are based on our observations at the sites and on information provided to us by CORDS and GVN officials and by residents of the sites we visited.

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MILITARY REGION 2

In Military Region 2 we found that, on the basis of GVN criteria, a majority of the sites lacked adequate classrooms, wells, and medical and sanitation facilities. Also, at a majority of the sites, the refugees did not have the quantity of land which U.S. observers believed was needed for the achievement of economic viability. The nonavailability of farmland seemed to be the principal obstacle to economic development of the sites. The following descriptions of 11 sites are representative of the 21 sites we visited in Military Region 2.

Khanh Hoa province

1. Cu Tanh 1, 2, and 3--This resettlement site, commonly called Cay Cay, housed about 903 Montagnards. The site was established in 1966 when the Montagnards voluntarily left their original homes because of the lack of security. A CORDS official informed us that a return-to-village program was established for these people but that the Montagnards refused to leave Cay Cay because they believed their original village was still insecure.

   Cay Cay is bordered on three sides by a privately owned plantation and by Highway QL 1. The Montagnards did not appear to have 2-1/2 hectares of farmland a family, which is required for the family to be self-sufficient. The facilities at this site did not meet the requirements of the GVN criteria listed on page 36. There were a total of six wells in the entire camp area and no latrines. A CORDS official stated that it took over a year to get funds from the Ministry of Social Welfare for four of the wells. The other two wells were built by the Montagnards. There were two classrooms and a dispensary at the site.

   The conditions we have described applied to all three of the camps at this site; however, GVN considered that one of the camps had been normalized. We were told by several of the Montagnard inhabitants that the Ministry of Social Welfare had not provided the

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additional benefits of rice, clothing, and U.S. Public Law 480 commodities promised to them. These refugees said that they were in need of food and shelter. The people of Cay Cay have never received Public Law 480 commodities.

GAO Photo

Well used by Montagnards at Cay Cay resettlement site, Khanh Hoa province.

2. Ha Gia--Approximately 208 refugees returned to this hamlet in October 1970. It is located on the South China sea coastline near Highway QL 1. The site is within 7 kilometers[1] of their original hamlet; however, they could not return to their original homes because of the lack of security. All of these people have received their return-to-village allowances.

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[1]One kilometer is equivalent to 5/8 mile.

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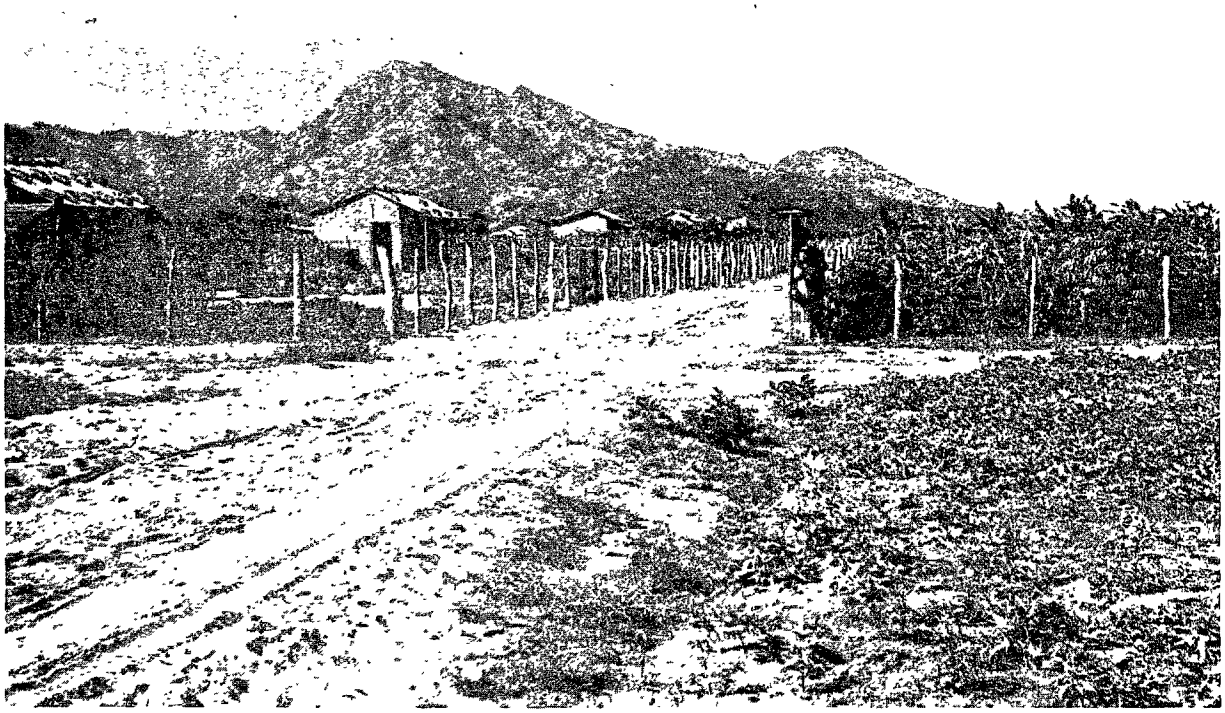
Overall, the conditions at this hamlet appeared to meet the GVN criteria listed on page 36 and the hamlet seemed to have potential for future economic viability. The hamlet's biggest problem was getting promised benefits from the Ministry of Social Welfare. About 1.7 million piasters in development project funds had been allocated for the site in 1970 and 1971, but very little of this money had been received.

There were no classrooms or latrines at the site. Most of the families had built their own wells. Each family has about 900 square meters of land near its home and squatter's rights to other land in the area. The refugees have not received title to the land on which their homes are located. The farmers have land to farm and the fishermen have direct access to the sea.



GAO Photo

Return-to-village site at Ha Gia, Khanh Hoa province

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Darlac province

1. Buon Kli B--This resettlement site was established in February 1971 when 6,244 Montagnards were forcibly relocated because of the reported insecurity of the area in which they were living.

   One of the spokesmen for the refugees told us that the Ministry of Social Welfare had given them some initial benefits but, at the same time, had confiscated many of their "green cards" or statements entitling them to other benefits. As a result, many have not received the additional benefits to which they are entitled.

   GVN promised them the land surrounding the resettlement site; however, the ethnic Vietnamese are now farming the land promised to the Montagnards. The refugee spokesman stated that additional land and food was necessary for their survival.

   None of the facilities observed at this site met the GVN criteria listed on page 36. There was a five-classroom school for 2,000 school-age children. There were no latrines and only three wells. There was one maternity clinic but no dispensary and no medicine. The housing appeared to be inferior to that occupied by Montagnards at other locations, and the people were living in crowded conditions. A refugee spokesman stated that about 20 persons had died from sicknesses and lack of food.

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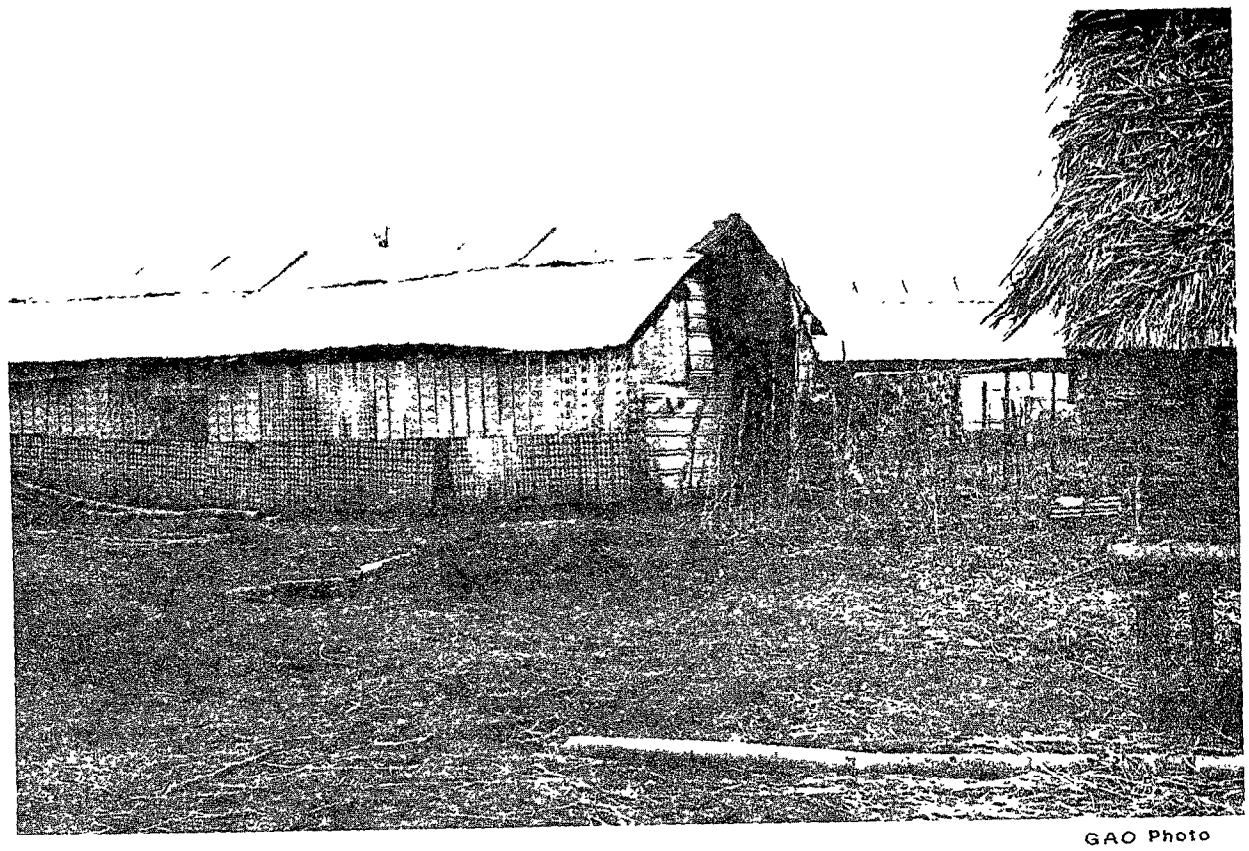

GAO Photo

Montagnard homes at the Buon Kli B relocation site, Darlac province

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GAO Photo

Vietnamese farming land intended for the Montagnards at the Buon Kli B relocation site, Darlac province

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2. Buon H'Dok--This site housed about 678 people and was established in 1968 as a resettlement site. The area was considered insecure, and the village chief would not stay overnight because he feared for his life. These refugees had not received all of their relief payments and other benefits.

   There was no schoolhouse and no dispensary, nor were there any wells or latrines. The people were living in very crowded conditions. The entire camp area consisted of about a half hectare of land (a little more than 1 acre). Since the people cannot farm for a living, they work as day laborers at a nearby French plantation and at U.S. military units in the area.

3. Buon M'Bre--Approximately 899 Montagnards were resettled at this site in January 1971. They were given a week's notice to leave their original buons by GVN because of security. After relocation they were attacked by the Viet Cong at their new site.

   GVN did not provide the farmland that it had promised. Other South Vietnamese are farming the land surrounding the resettlement site. The village chief has stated that they now have adequate food and that their harvest will provide food for about 3 months. Thereafter they do not know where they will get their food. They have received some Public Law 480 commodities.

   The refugees dug their own wells. The water in these wells was very dirty and they had no lids to keep out dirt and debris. At the wells people were bathing, washing clothes, and drawing cooking water. Around the wells cows were drinking water. The site had 20 latrines, one classroom and two teachers for 300 school-age children, and one dispensary. The dispensary had been completed about a month earlier; there was no medic or medicine and unsanitary conditions were noted.

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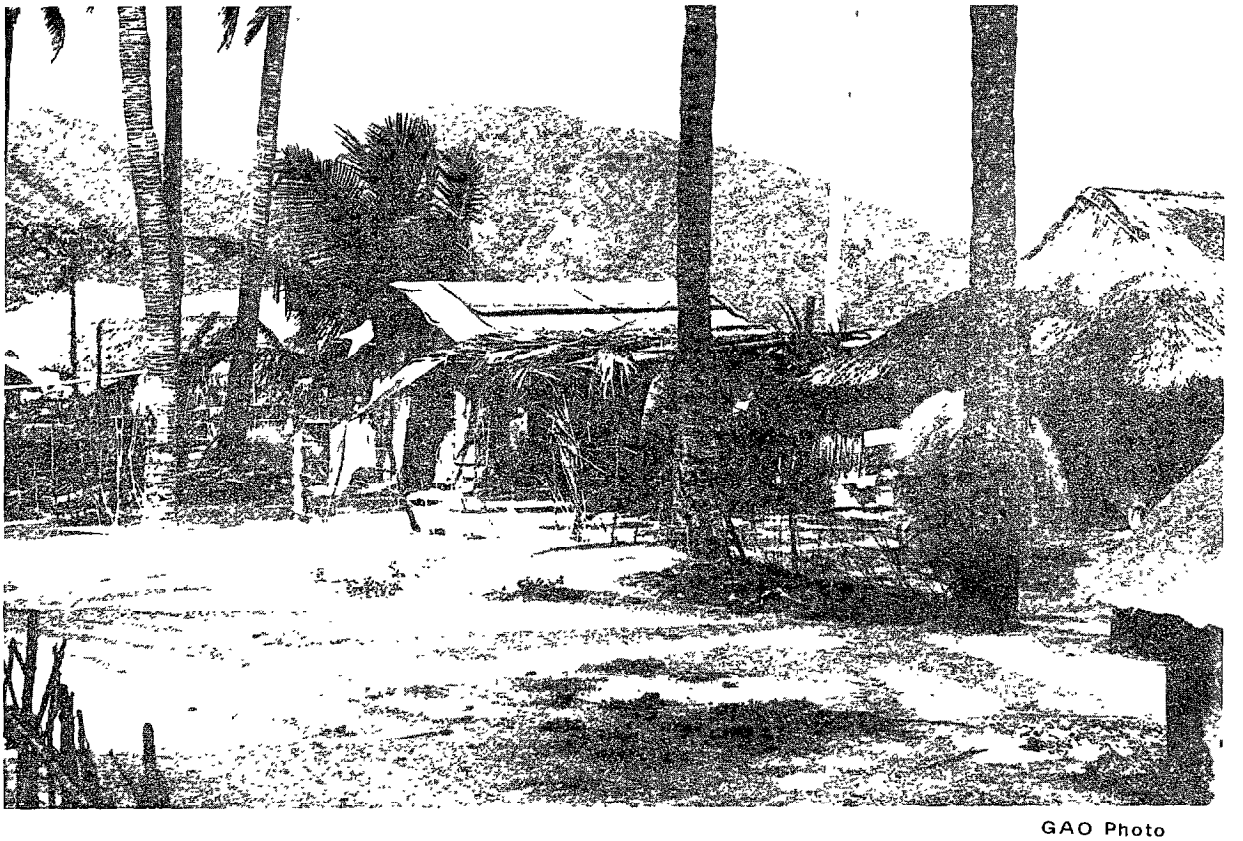
Phu Yen province

1. Tuy Luat Hoa--This resettlement-relocation site which accommodated about 800 Vietnamese was located on an inlet to the South China sea. These people were relocated by GVN because of the insecurity of their original hamlets. They received tin roofing, a 3-month rice allowance, and some fishing equipment from GVN. The CORDS refugee advisor told us that they were entitled to a 6-month rice allowance but that the Ministry of Social Welfare Service Chief arbitrarily determined that a 3-month rice allowance was sufficient for their needs.

   There were only two wells, no latrines, no schools, and no teachers. There was no dispensary or medicine at the site. We were informed by the village chief that, during the dry season, they had a water shortage because the wells dried up.



GAO Photo

South Vietnamese relocation site at Tuy Luat Hoa hamlet, Phu Yen province

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2. Chop Chi--This temporary reception center-resettlement site, housing an undetermined number of refugees, was established in 1968 near Highway QL 1 and very close to the railroad. The area was considered normalized by GVN. Most of the occupants came in 1968 and have received all their benefits.

The refugees were living in run-down row-type houses. No self-help or Ministry of Social Welfare development projects were noted. The camp had numerous wells but no latrines, school, or dispensary. The children attended the district school, and the district dispensary was used as a medical facility. Most of the camp's occupants were farmers, but no land was available to farm, and we understand that they are barely earning a living as day laborers. We were told that the people wanted to return to their original villages but that the lack of security would not permit it.

GAO Photo

Chop Chi temporary reception center-resettlement camp, Phu Yen province

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3. An Xuan--This resettlement site, established in 1967, is occupied by about 250 persons. Most of the people living here were either very old or very young. The refugee advisor stated that the young men were either in the GVN army or captives of the Viet Cong. There was very little land to farm, although we did note small garden plots within the camp.

The buildings which housed the people were dilapidated and falling apart. The local security forces used the walls of vacant buildings for target practice. The refugee advisor stated that the people took very little pride in their homes because they were not traditional Vietnamese homes. The buildings were dirty--many were without roofs and, by most standards, unlivable. GVN listed this site as normalized. There was one school, which was hardly used. There was a dispensary, which had no medicine. There were eight latrines, which were not used and were being dismantled. There was one water reservoir, which cost 270,000 piasters and which was never used.

GAO Photo

An Xuan refugee resettlement site, Phu Yen province

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Pleiku province

1. Plei De Groi--About 2,500 Montagnards were forcibly relocated to this resettlement site in January 1971. In October 1971 only 750 persons lived at this site. The rest of the Montagnards had left the site reportedly because of the terrible living conditions. In March 1971 it was reported that between 200 and 300 Montagnards had died at this camp because of exposure, malnutrition, tuberculosis in older patients, or an influenza-type virus.

   Lack of security was given as the reason for the relocation; however, the Montagnards told us that they had experienced only one attack in 10 years at their original village. Since relocation in January 1971, they have been attacked three times by the Viet Cong. The GVN military moved them very quickly and they had little chance for taking their livestock and personal possessions with them. These people desired to return to their home villages.

   The site had a dispensary but had very little medicine. There was one school for 130 school-age children. There were six wells and no latrines. The land surrounding the resettlement site was to have been cultivated by the refugees; but, since the land has never been developed, not much of a crop was expected this year. Fertilizer was promised and a tractor was to be provided for their use; however, it will take at least another year for these people to harvest an adequate crop. The refugees need food; the Ministry of Social Welfare promised to give them more rice, but it had not been provided.

2. Plei-Ia Maih--The 775 Montagnards living at this site were forcibly relocated without advance notice in January 1971. It was reported, prior to relocation, that they were collaborating with the Viet Cong. The GVN military killed all of their animals, and they were forced to leave their homes and many of their personal possessions. They were moved for security reasons; but about 10 minutes before our arrival, the resettlement camp came under rocket

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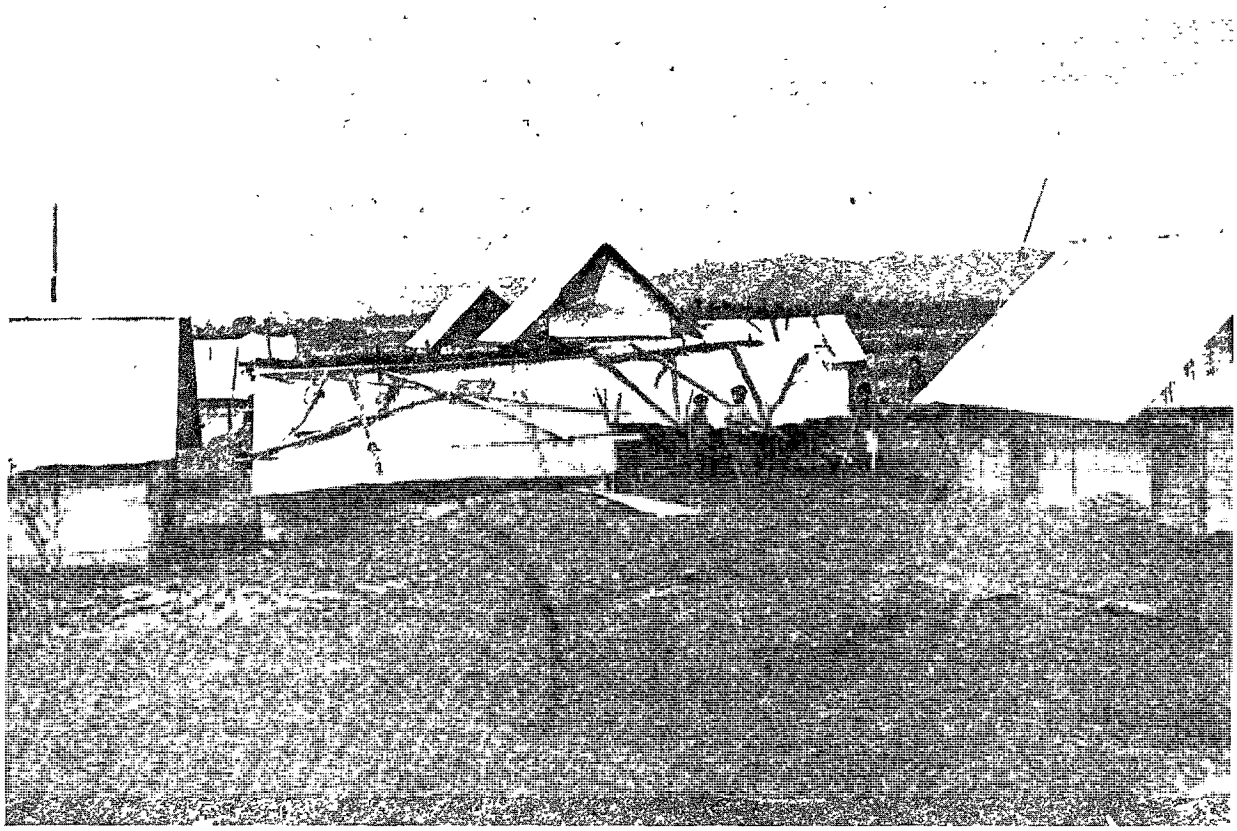
attack. There were no wells and latrines. There was one school. It had two classrooms but no teachers. The site had one dispensary and one medic but very little medicine. We were told that land was available but that a productive harvest would not be obtained this year because this was the first time the land had been farmed. Fertilizer was desperately needed. The refugee advisor stated that the people had lost the motivation needed to become self-sustaining. They had been moved many times and had lost the will to survive. They felt that, since GVN had moved them, it should be responsible for what happended to them. They had received all of their resettlement benefits. Apparently they will need additional assistance to survive.



GAO Photo

Montagnard homes at the Plei Ia Maih relocation site. Pleiku province

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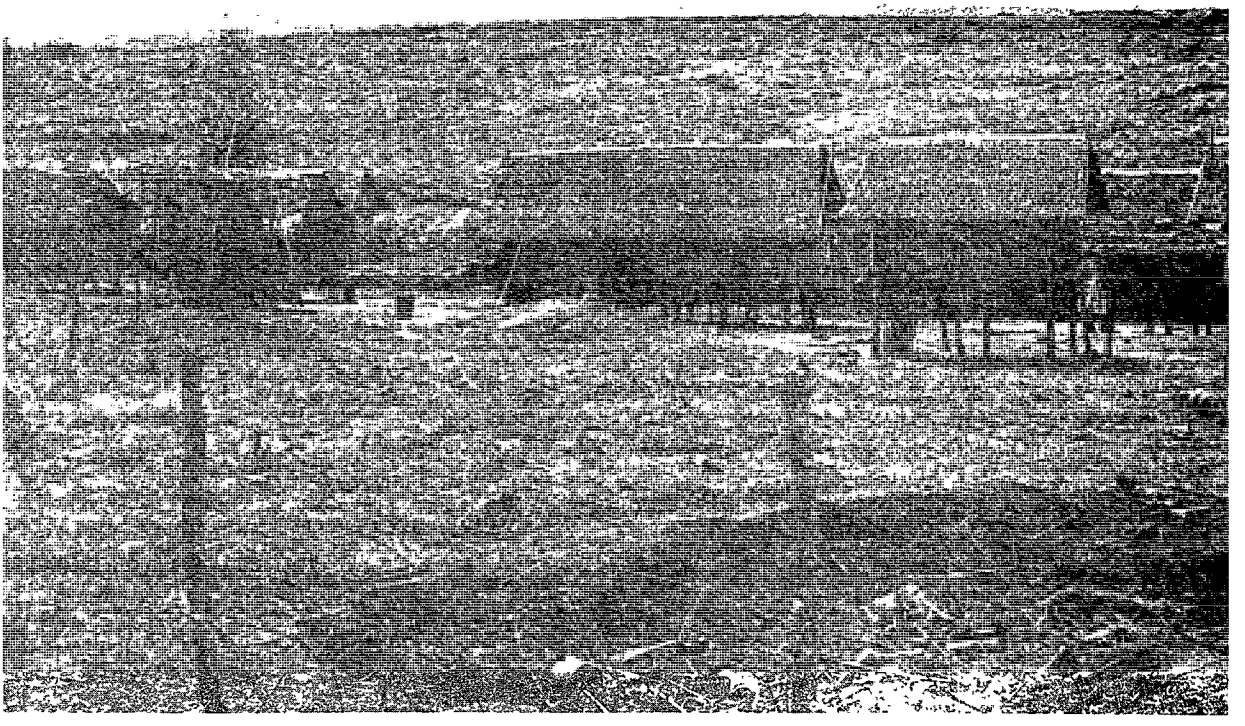
3. Plei-Doch--About 1,479 Montagnards voluntarily relocated here in January 1971. They were given temporary benefits and some Public Law 480 commodities but no resettlement benefits because the location was not officially recognized as a resettlement site by the GVN Central Pacification and Development Council.

   GVN had provided no wells, no latrines, no schools, and no dispensary at the site. The village chief told us that they had no medicine.

   The crops planted by these apparently industrious Montagnards are of poor quality because of bad soil, the absence of fertilizer, and severe heat.



GAO Photo

Montagnard homes at the Plei Doch relocation site, Pleiku province

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MILITARY REGION 4

In Military Region 4 the greatest needs were for community development projects, teachers, and medical services. The majority of refugees appeared to be economically self-sufficient and their homes appeared to be comparable to those of nonrefugees in the area. The following descriptions of five sites are representative of the 14 sites we visited in Military Region 4.

Chuong Thien province

1. Vinh Hoa--This refugee site, established in June 1970, is located on a canal leading out of the U-Minh Forest and has about 7,826 temporary and about 6,100 resettlement refugees from the U-Minh Forest. The refugee advisor told us that only about 50 percent of the temporary and 30 percent of the resettlement refugees had received benefits. All payments of benefits have been stopped in this village because of corruption. This site is now being surveyed to determine which refugees are entitled to benefits.

   The housing for the refugees appeared adequate. All the houses were made of thatch material with no aluminum roofing evident. The housing appeared to us to be comparable to or better than that of the nonrefugees in the area. The advisor said that this village had received limited distribution of roofing and that some parts of it apparently had been exchanged with local merchants for household goods.

   The economic potential for the area is good because most of the people are fishermen and have motorized sampans for canal transportation and rice trading. Also rice could be grown in larger quantities if the land was cleared. The village chief and the refugees said that there was no shortage of food in the village but that clothing, or money to buy clothing, was needed.

   The site had only one two-room schoolhouse and two teachers for the estimated 1,000 school-age children

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in the village. There was a partially finished dispensary at this site. The refugee advisor informed us that the dispensary probably would not be used for its intended purpose when completed because trained personnel would not come to this area.

There were no wells or latrines at the site. The people built their own latrines over the canals. To dig a well in this area would be expensive because it would have to be very deep to reach fresh water. Stored rainwater is used throughout the dry season.

Some of the refugees told us that they planned to stay and make their homes in the area. The site has potential but more development projects are needed to make it a progressive village.

2. Vinh Trinh--This refugee site, established in June 1970, has about 237 temporary and 2,725 resettlement refugees from the U-Minh Forest. All temporary refugee benefits have been received, but it is not known how many persons have received resettlement benefits.

   A village of about 1,000 persons has always existed at this site and the refugees have built homes around that village. The village is located along the canal, and sampans are used for transportation.

   We observed that about 12 houses had aluminum roofing. The refugee advisor said that this was the first time he had seen roofing used in the U-Minh Forest area because most U-Minh refugees sell the roofing and buy thatch material to build their homes.

   The village had a newly completed two-room schoolhouse but no teachers for the estimated 800 school-age children. A dispensary was under construction, and the service chief said it would be completed in December 1971.

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We saw no wells or latrines in the village; however, several small latrines had been built over the canal.

The village chief and the refugees said that there was enough food but that they needed clothing, or money to buy clothing. The people did not plan to return to their former U-Minh Forest homes in the near future.

Kien Giang province

1. Dong Thanh--This return-to-village site, established in March 1971, has a total population of 6,169 refugees and is located on a canal just north of the U-Minh Forest. The refugees said that they had left this area during the Tet offensive to go to Dong Hoa village. They returned to Dong Thanh in 1970 when it was made secure but have not yet received any GVN benefits. The village chief said that the Ministry of Social Welfare had finished its survey of the village about a week prior to our visit.

   There appeared to be adequate food for the people, but they said that they needed clothing and housewares, such as eating bowls and cooking pots. There were two schoolhouses which were staffed by teachers for the first and second grades only.

   The village chief said that school kits were needed for the estimated 1,500 school-age children. A small dispensary, well supplied with medicine, was being operated by a trained midwife.

   All improvements in this village were paid for by the Ministry of Rural Development with village self-development funds. We were told by the province advisor that no Ministry of Social Welfare development money had been allocated for Kien Giang province for 1971.

2. Dong Yen--This return-to-village and resettlement site of about 8,680 persons is not recognized by GVN because it has no village government.

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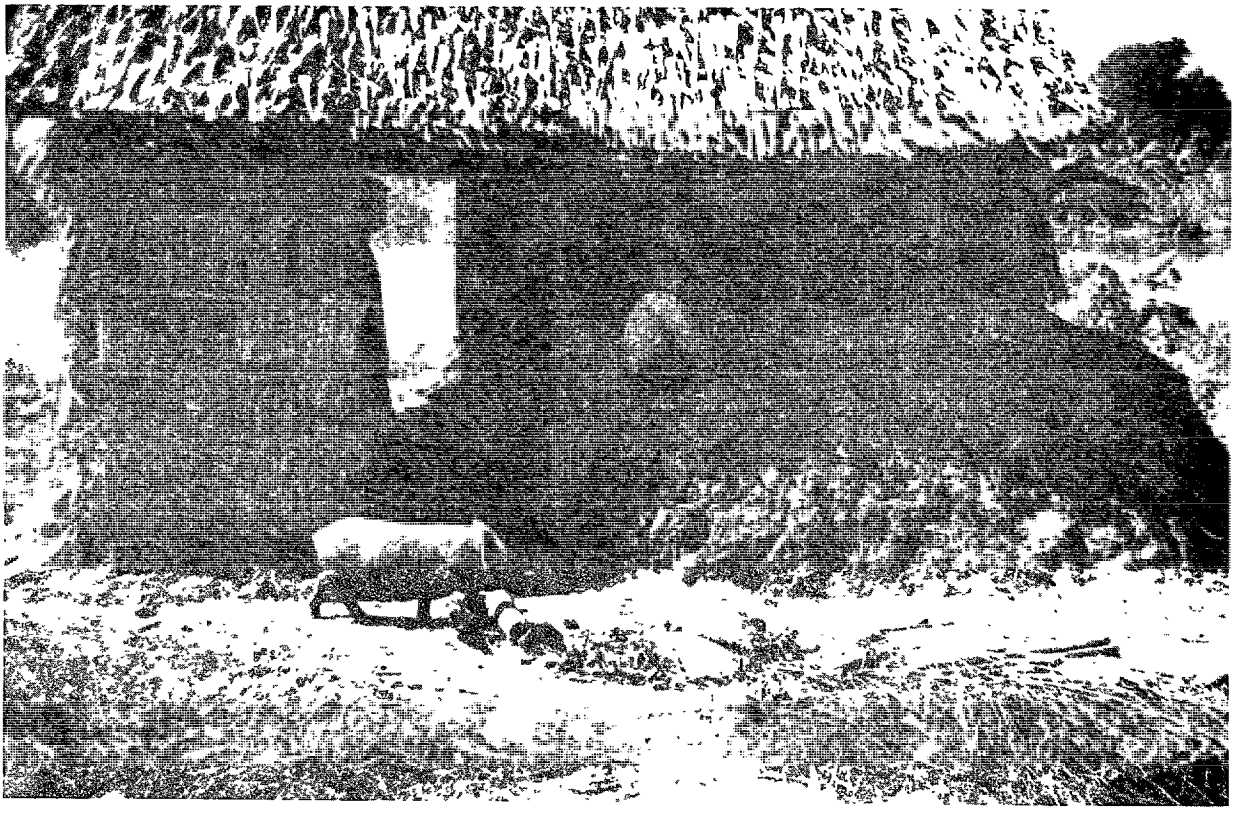
The appointed village chief said that election of village officials would be held on December 26, 1971. He said that he had sent a listing of all return-to-village and resettlement refugees to the Ministry of Social Welfare in August 1971 but that he had not heard from the Ministry concerning payments to these persons. The number of return-to-village and resettlement refugees was unknown. The refugees we talked to said that they were planning to make this area their permanent home. They had moved from their former homes at least 23 months ago but had not received benefits from GVN. They had been in Dong Yen for about 1 year. The village has a dispensary but no trained personnel to operate it.



GAO Photo

Refugee homes at the Dong Thanh return-to-village site, Kien Giang province

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Phong Dinh province

1. Truong Thanh village--Truong Thanh village was a Viet Cong stronghold from 1964 through 1967. During this time the villagers sought safety in other more secure locations. By 1970 these former residents had begun to believe that security had been improved and that the return to their homes was possible. In November 1971 Truong Thanh had a population of 5,440, or 615 families. Full return-to-village benefits have been provided to 350 "early arrival" families and benefits for the remaining 265 are being processed.

   The people of Truong Thanh might be termed pioneers for they are inhabitants of an area which does not offer absolute security. The Mekong Delta does not offer its rural residents the luxury of electrical power, sewers, paved roads or streets, and other services associated with more developed countries. The area does provide, however, its inhabitants with a source of livelihood. We were told that the typical Truong Thanh resident is a farmer with an average yearly income equivalent to $3,636.

   Villagers told us that they needed additional cooking oil, clothing, and tiller tractors. The village chief pointed out a marketplace that had been built as a civic action project by the U.S. Air Force. Aluminum roofing was evident in the neighborhood of thatched structures.

   Truong Thanh's elementary school is staffed by only two teachers who work 5 days a week and have 200 students in each of two daily shifts. A single cement footbridge spans the canal that runs through the community. The canal serves as a main street, water source, and supplier of fish. Medical facilities consist of a single maternity dispensary, staffed by one nurse.

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GAO Photo

Refugee homes at the Truong Thanh return-to-village site, Phong Dinh province

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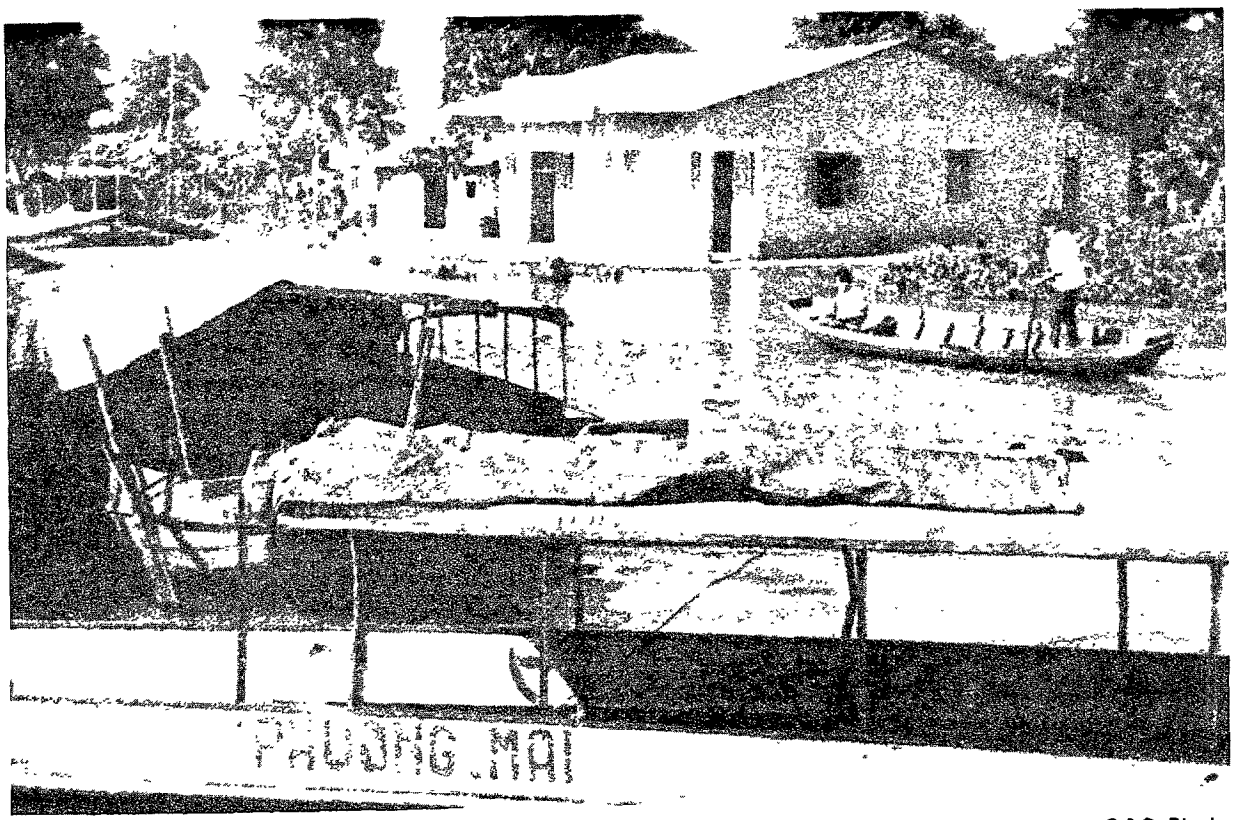

GAO Photo

Maternity dispensary located at the Truong Thanh return-to-village site, Phong Dinh province

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MILITARY REGION 1

Nowhere in Vietnam are the problems of assisting refugees more noticeable than in Military Region 1 that comprises the five northernmost provinces in Vietnam. Although we had planned to visit sites in this region, a typhoon which had caused extensive damage during October 1971 precluded objective observations of site conditions. In March 1971, however, CORDS issued the results of a survey of 252 temporary and resettlement sites conducted during parts of 1970 and 1971. Although the survey had faults, it was a useful source of information that showed basic historical data and site adequacies or inadequacies and it could be useful in planning site changes. The survey noted that the region was beginning to take steps to develop the sites and recognized the immensity of GVN's task. Following are some of the overall deficiencies reported.

--Of the work force, 40 percent was unemployed.

--Shortages of teachers, low class attendance, and little opportunity for secondary education.

--Few vocational training courses for disabled war victims.

--Insufficient site visits by doctors and health workers.

--Insufficient security.

Over 90 percent of the sites were listed as being normalized when, in fact, the survey showed that they did not meet the GVN criteria.

For example, of the 252 sites surveyed, about 240 were listed as being normalized but the following deficiencies were found.

--There were no latrines at 187 sites.

--There were no schools at 32 sites, 31 other sites had no usable classrooms, and 50 had no teachers.

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--There were no first-aid stations at 34 sites, and 26 sites had first-aid stations located from 2 to 50 miles from the site. Only 29 had a permanent health worker. Visits by health workers were infrequent, usually not more than once a month; and no visits at all were reported for 65 sites.

--Drinking water was inadequate at 111 sites and 233 sites had inadequate irrigation water.

GVN generally had not been responsive to the needs of many of the 450,000 refugees in the 252 sites, although the sites were in existence about 4 years. For example:

--There were 1,500 persons who had lost one or more limbs but only 702 had artificial limbs.

--There were about 5,200 disabled persons who were not able to work.

--Over 84 percent of the sites reported that no land was available for cultivation. About 70 percent of the workers were farmers.

--Only about 3,900 of the more than 85,700 families were reported as having garden plots.

--Only 26 sites had water pumps, and only six sites had tractors.

More attention is planned by GVN for site development activities, especially vocational training and self-help projects. Site development funds allocated in 1970 were about 50 million piasters ($420,000) compared with nearly 130 million piasters ($1.1 million) allocated in 1971. Approved projects include 190 classrooms, five maternity dispensaries, 614 self-help projects, and 76 vocational training courses. The region reported, however, that, as of August 1971, progress for some of the projects had been delayed because of floods, slow fund releases, lack of coordination, and lack of trained personnel to implement projects.

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CHAPTER 7

ASSISTANCE TO OTHER WAR VICTIMS

In November 1970 we reported that GVN assigned top priority to assisting war victims who fled their homes and relatively low priority to certain other war victims--war widows, orphans, and the physically disabled. There has been no change in these relative priorities. Of the 3.6 billion piasters in counterpart funds allocated to the Ministry of Social Welfare, only 109 million (about $927,000) was programmed for support of activities directly benefiting other war victims. We did note, however, that increased attention had been given to other war victims after our review in 1970.

During this review we noted that GVN had also accorded low priority to settling the compensation claims of war victims who had suffered personal injury or property losses. Since 1969 the backlog of unpaid claims has increased from 169,900 to 241,000.

The following statistics on the number of other war victims, including compensation claimants, are the best available as of September 1971. They are GVN estimates that, according to CORDS officials, are of questionable validity.

War victims	Civilian	Military	Total
War widows	69,000	75,800	144,800
Orphans	107,000	303,300	410,300
Physically disabled	132,000	53,000	185,000
War compensation claimants (note a)	241,000	-	241,000
	549,000	432,100	981,100

[a]Figures shown are for the estimated backlog of claimants as of September 1971.

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In addition to the Ministry of Social Welfare, other Ministries of GVN have programs to assist war victims. These include the Ministries of Veterans Affairs, Education, and Health.

Assistance to other war victims and related activities are discussed in the following sections, with particular emphasis on the civilian war victims that receive assistance from U.S.-supported programs of the Ministry of Social Welfare.

WAR WIDOWS

GVN estimated that, as of September 1, 1971, there were about 75,800 Vietnamese military widows and 69,000 civilian war widows.

The military war widow is eligible to receive a monthly pension of 2,530 to 5,700 piasters (on the basis of the number of children in the family), commissary privileges, free medical care, vocational training, and other educational benefits. The civilian war widow, in contrast, is eligible to receive a one-time-only payment of 4,000 piasters to help defray the cost of a coffin.

Under new guidelines established by the AID Mission in Vietnam, war widows will no longer be eligible for Public Law 480 commodities.

Some vocational training is available for civilian war widows; however, only about 2,000 took advantage of this training in 1970. Some were trained in child care and worked in the 104 registered day-care centers in Vietnam that were established to permit widows and parents of low-income families to work and support their children at home instead of placing them in orphanages. Still the great majority of the widows are unskilled and unemployed and would be prime candidates for vocational training. CORDS officials stated that there were no plans to expand the assistance given to civilian war widows. CORDS will continue to emphasize the importance of vocational training.

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WAR ORPHANS

GVN estimated that there were 410,000 war orphans in Vietnam as of September 1, 1971. Included in this figure were about 303,000 children of military personnel and civil servants killed in a military action. Orphans such as these 303,000 resulting from military actions are called "wards of the nation" and receive special consideration and assistance from GVN.

The other 107,000 are orphans whose parents were civilians. Orphans such as these are not given the special consideration that is given to orphans who are wards of the nation. As of September 1971 about 17,000 of these civilian orphans were being cared for in 118 private orphanages registered with the Ministry of Social Welfare. Each orphanage is eligible to receive 600 piasters ($5.08) a child for each month from the Ministry and to receive Public Law 480 commodities. The remaining 90,000 civilian orphans who are not in registered orphanages receive no assistance from GVN. They live in private homes, nonregistered orphanages, churches, or pagodas or, in some cases, in the streets.

More than half of the children in orphanages reportedly have one or both parents living. The most prevalent reason for their institutionalization was the inability of the mother or father to care for them financially. Some of the parents were in the military; others were veterans or civilians disabled by the war. Many children were placed in orphanages by refugees as they moved into urban areas and found they could not support large families.

The orphans who are wards of the nation are eligible for care in GVN-supported public orphanages; however, there are only two such orphanages in Vietnam that care for about 800 orphans. These orphans, unlike civilian orphans, receive assistance from GVN whether or not they are being cared for in orphanages. They receive a quarterly support allowance (2,400 piasters) and are granted preferential placement in public schools. Also they have more opportunities for vocational training than the civilian orphans have.

GVN has taken the position that additional orphanages are not needed in Vietnam and the CORDS War Victims

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Directorate has supported that position even though there were 120 registered orphanages and an estimated 410,000 orphans. Neither GVN nor CORDS knew the number of nonregistered orphanages in Vietnam or the extent to which orphans were being cared for in nonregistered orphanages.

Adoption of orphaned children was not supervised or controlled by the Ministry of Social Welfare but was handled primarily by private lawyers. No statistics were available on the number of in-country adoptions or on the number adopted abroad, except that 247 visas for orphans were issued from 1969 through October 1971 by the American Consulate. The only professionally qualified international adoption agency in Vietnam handled seven adoptions during 1970. As of November 1971 a law was pending which would allow the Ministry to investigate and recommend prospective adoptive families in Vietnam and would relax some of the prohibitive regulations regarding international adoptions.

It is believed that American-fathered Vietnamese children have added to the orphan population in Vietnam. The U.S. Mission in Vietnam estimated that there were 320 racially mixed children in orphanages and an overall total of about 5,400 in Vietnam; however, not all were fathered by Americans. These racially mixed children are not singled out for special attention and no assistance is provided to them unless they are placed in the registered orphanages. It is the policy of the U.S. Mission not to encourage any program aimed at any specific group of people because of race, especially orphans, since such a program would set these orphans apart from the rest of society.

We visited five orphanages accommodating about 1,259 children whose ages ranged from 1 to 18 years. Four of the orphanages were privately operated and the other one was an orphanage for GVN wards of the nation. All five received some form of Ministry of Social Welfare support, which ranged from a high of 50 piasters to a low of about 3 piasters (less than 3 cents) a child for each day. This support was intended as a food allowance; however, it often was used to defray other operating expenses. In most cases the allowances were considered inadequate by supervisory personnel at the orphanages and other means were used to support the orphanages.

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The general condition of the orphanages seemed to be directly related to the level of Ministry support. Two orphanages which received only 15 piasters or less a child for each day were in very poor condition--dirty, crowded, and without adequate food supplies. Three orphanages which received 20 piasters or more were clean and generally in good condition. All of the orphanages visited had received some Public Law 480 commodities.

Tu Tam Orphanage, Pleiku province

Establishment of day-care centers

In an effort to reduce the orphanage population of those children with living parents, the Ministry of Social Welfare has supported the creation of day-care centers allowing war widows and the needy to earn a living and keep their children at home. From 1968 to 1971 the total number of registered facilities has increased from 77 to 104 and the children under care increased from about 5,800 to 12,000. Statistics were not available on the number of unregistered centers.

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The Ministry supports the registered day-care centers from the national budget at the rate of 200 piasters ($1.61) a child for each month. The United States has provided counterpart piaster support, Public Law 480 commodities, and technical assistance.

Counterpart funds have been used principally for construction or renovation of day-care centers and for some equipment. In calendar year 1969, 55,539,995 piasters (about $471,000) was budgeted for the construction of seven day-care centers, but the facilities were not built because program plans were changed. Only 5,526,000 piasters (about $47,000) were budgeted in 1970, and they were used for renovation of existing facilities. The 15,000,000 piasters ($127,119) budgeted for calendar year 1971 were primarily for expansion, renovation, and equipment.

In October 1971 we visited three registered day-care centers in Khanh Hoa, Phu Yen, and Pleiku provinces in Military Region 2. Brief descriptions of these centers and our observations follow.

--The day-care center in Khanh Hoa was established as a model for the province and was operated by the International Rescue Committee which considered the funds and Public Law 480 commodities the center received from the Ministry of Social Welfare as adequate for its 150 children.

--The center in Phu Yen was built in May 1970 with funds provided by the Ministry of Social Welfare. The land originally intended for the center was divided in half to accommodate a new house for the Ministry's Social Welfare Chief. The center receives a monthly allowance and some Public Law 480 commodities, but the support was indicated to be barely adequate to care for the 60 children currently attending the center.

--The center in Pleiku, built by the National Red Cross, Saigon, has been operating since 1967 and has been caring for 50 children. No funds for its operation were provided by the Ministry of Social Welfare. Financial support was provided by the National Red

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Cross, Saigon, which planned to discontinue its support of the center in 1972; at that time the Pleiku Chapter of the Red Cross must take over the financial support of the center. The center was crowded and was in generally poor condition.

CORDS has recognized that a long-term problem exists throughout Vietnam with respect to all socially disadvantaged children; however, it has adopted the position that new programs in the child welfare area either should attract continuing support from the private sector or should require only short-term funding so that the program will not become financially dependent on the United States or GVN. CORDS officials have supported a GVN proposal to allocate 545 million piasters from counterpart funds in 1972 to support an expanded program of child welfare services.

Day-care center, Nha Trang

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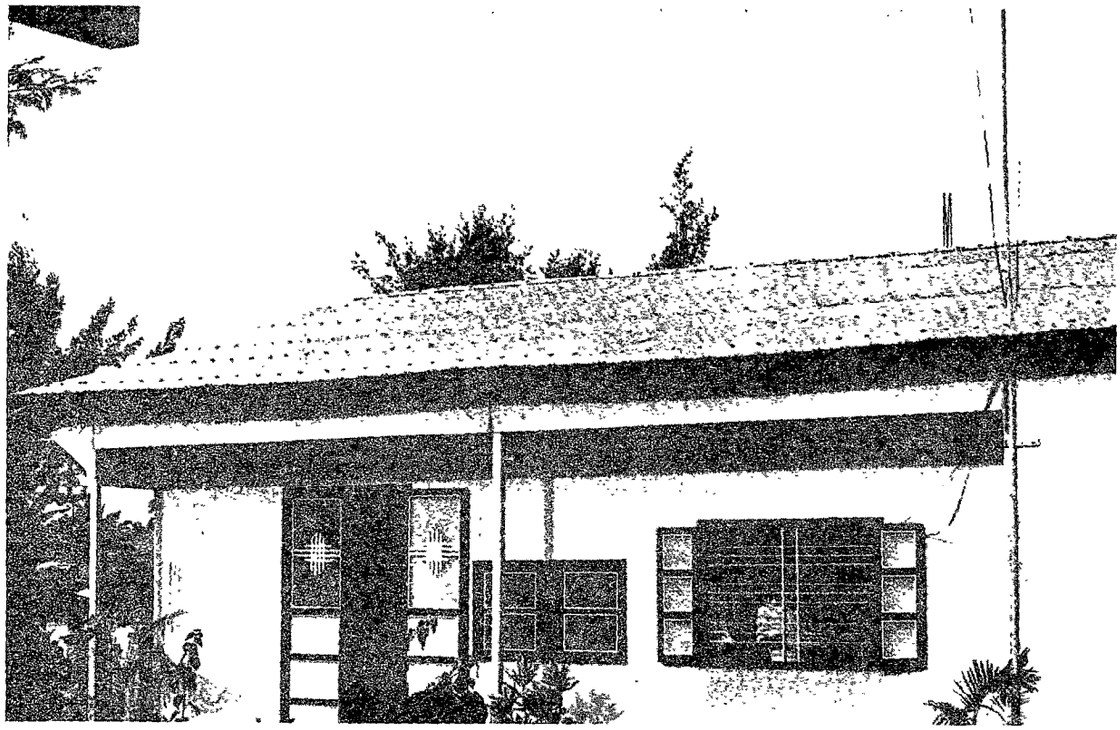

Ministry of Social Welfare Service Chief's house, Phu Yen province, located on land allocated for the expansion of an adjacent day-care center. The refugee advisor told us that the roofing on the chief's home was intended for the refugee program.

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PHYSICALLY DISABLED

Although some progress has been made in assisting disabled persons, their needs have not been met. The responsibility for rehabilitation of physically disabled war victims is shared by the Ministries of Social Welfare, Health, and Vietnamese Affairs.

According to the best estimates available, there were about 185,000 disabled war victims in Vietnam as of September 1971. CORDS estimated that 68 percent of the disabled were between the ages of 15 and 35, 21 percent were between 35 and 49, and 2 percent were under 15. A CORDS study reported that over the next 3 years, the case load of physically disabled could number 215,000 because attacks directed at civilians will continue, farming accidents from mines will increase with return-to-village movements, and traffic accidents undistinguishable from war-related injuries will continue.

The following schedule presents CORDS estimates of the number of physically disabled war victims in Vietnam as of September 1971 and the number assisted in fiscal year 1971.

Type	Number	Total assisted
Amputees	88,260	5,000
Blind and/or deaf	36,890	100
Paraplegics	8,360	360
Others (burns, fractures)	51,490	30,000
Total	185,000	35,460

The need for physical rehabilitation of war victims has been recognized by GVN. The GVN facilities for rehabilitation consisted of four National Rehabilitation Institute centers (in DaNang, Qui Nhon, Saigon, and Can Tho) offering medical service to the war-related handicapped as well as other handicapped groups. The programs vary at the different centers, but the DaNang Center focused primarily on amputees. The case load (509) for April 1971 was distributed as follows: 66 percent to Saigon, 21 percent to DaNang, 11 percent to Can Tho, and 2 percent to Qui Nhon.

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Artificial limbs have been provided for 5,000 amputees. The National Rehabilitation Institute produced 7,135 artificial limbs in 1970 and 3,700 through June 30, 1971, which included repaired devices representing about 28.5 percent and 33.6 percent of production, respectively. The plans called for the Institute to increase production of prosthetic devices for amputees and polio cases to a maximum of 10,000 a year. At this rate it would be 9 years or more before all of the now-existing 88,260 amputees could receive a device. The problem is more serious, however, because a large number of devices must be replaced or repaired periodically. An adult requires a replacement every 2 years, and a child requires a replacement every 6 months.

There are several other programs directed at improving the conditions of the physically disabled. Among these are the Cong Hoa military hospital which fits 1,000 prosthetic devices a year and a Quaker Service program in Quang Ngai which fits an average of 130 prosthetic devices a year.

Also the Ministry of Social Welfare's DaNang Regional Social Service Center was organized in June 1971 to carry on job assessment and referral services for the physically handicapped and would work with the Rehabilitation Institute. It is to serve as a model for social welfare services for war victims, with primary emphasis on the needs of the physically handicapped.

Under an AID contract the World Rehabilitation Fund has been engaged to provide four technical advisors for job assessment, vocational counseling, vocational training, and the development of a sheltered workshop for the very seriously disabled. The major aim of the contract is to assist the technical schools of the Ministry of Education to become more responsive to training needs of the handicapped.

WAR DAMAGE VICTIMS

War victims who have suffered personal injuries, death in the family, or house damage as a result of allied or enemy actions are eligible for benefits from the Ministry of Social Welfare. These victims are entitled to emergency relief benefits, including food, materials for house repair, and money.

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Information provided by a U.S. official to the Subcommittee To Investigate Problems Connected With Refugees and Escapees in April 1971 showed that there had been a backlog of payments to war damage victims. This backlog consisted of an estimated 237,000 claimants at the end of 1970. Through September 1971 the backlog had increased to over 241,000.

The following schedule presents the total number of war damage victims registered and assisted from 1968 through September 1971 and the cumulative backlog.

Year	Total registered	Total assisted	Cumulative backlog
1968	1,070,000	900,000	170,000
1969	289,900	290,000	169,900
1970	198,100	131,300	236,700
1971 (September)	129,378	124,627	241,451

The backlog has increased on a yearly basis due principally to GVN's slow response. For example:

--In April 1971 the Viet Cong attacked and destroyed 108 homes in Duc My village, Khanh Hoa province, Military Region 2; however, as of October 1971 none of the victims had received any benefits.

--In July 1971 Kien Giang province, Military Region 4, reported an increase in the number of reported war victims paid. The increase, however, was due to the payment of benefits to war victims who were generated during 1969 but were not paid until July 1971. The CORDS refugee advisors estimated that only 10 percent of the war victims in Kien Giang received any compensation from the Ministry of Social Welfare.

--In September 1971 the Deputy Social Welfare Service Chief in Dalat started to pay war victims generated over a year earlier.

--In September 1971 war victims in Quang Nam province, received 6,328 of 7,900 required sheets of tin. Some of these war victims were generated in 1969.

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--In April 1971 war victims resulting from the 1968 Tet offensive and located in Gia Dinh province were given tin roofing. The CORDS Social Welfare advisor stated, "All good things come to those who wait."

CORDS advisors have reported numerous other instances of war victims' not receiving benefits on a timely basis. CORDS personnel stated that they had been aware of the problem and were continually stressing to GVN the importance of promptly responding to the needs of the war damage victims.

WAR VICTIMS IN URBAN AREAS

Since 1962 there has been a major population shift to urban areas because of the war. War victims who seek refuge in urban areas, however, are not recognized as refugees by GVN. GVN adopted this policy to discourage further overcrowding of the cities.

Some people who have moved to urban areas undoubtedly have found employment with the U.S. military and civilian agencies or have benefited indirectly from the U.S. presence in Vietnam. In 1969 the number of Vietnamese employed by U.S. agencies was about 160,000. This had been reduced to 118,000 as of July 1971. It is expected that by June 1972 only about 80,000 Vietnamese will be employed by U.S. agencies. There were no estimates on the number of persons employed as domestic help by U.S. personnel or in the various service establishments around military bases and camps.

Although unemployment as a result of the reduction in the American presence has not yet become apparent in urban areas, unemployment will likely result as the reductions continue.

An AID study issued early in 1970 indicated that, because of the war, it had been impossible for Vietnam to adequately plan and provide for urban growth. Some striking deficiencies reported were an inadequate fire protection, a shortage of personnel and facilities in health care and education, and a shortage of housing.

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In an effort to alleviate the problem of overcrowding in the urban areas, GVN has encouraged people to return to their original homes by making them eligible for return-to-village benefits. Also in March 1971 GVN established a Directorate General of Land Development and Hamlet Building. The objective of this Directorate is to strengthen the economy of Vietnam by developing abandoned or virgin land throughout Vietnam. The primary source of manpower for this venture is expected to be the Armed Forces of Vietnam, although other groups, including disabled war veterans, refugees, and other war victims, are expected to participate. One of the expected results of this shift to rural areas is the reduction of persons living in refugee resettlement sites and urban areas. The program is still in the formulation stages and no land has been distributed.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Both GVN and CORDS have recognized the need for vocational training of war victims, and substantial efforts have been directed toward developing programs and plans. Nevertheless accomplishments, when related to the needs of the total war victim population, have not been significant. With over 300,000 war widows and physically disabled persons in the active case load, as well as an unknown number of refugees unable to farm because of the lack of land, the requirements for vocational training to assist these war victims to become self-supporting can be expected to be sizable. To date GVN and CORDS have not determined the extent and nature of vocational training needed.

Accomplishments to date have been relatively modest in comparison with apparent needs as shown below.

--In 1970 the Ministry of Education in a joint effort with the Ministry of Social Welfare made available 16 technical schools for short-term refugee vocational training classes. A total of 71 classes were conducted, and 1,065 refugees were trained at these schools at a cost of 16 million piasters. An expansion was planned for 1971; the Ministry of Education would allot spaces for the training of 4,980 war victims.

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--In 1970, 5,000 refugees received vocational training through provincial training programs at a cost of about 22 million piasters.

--As of September 1971 a total of 641 disabled war victims had received vocational training at the four centers operated by the National Rehabilitation Institute.

--In 1970 about 2,000 war widows received vocational training from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Welfare.

COMMUNITY CENTERS

According to CORDS the war fragmented the traditional Vietnamese family and community social structure. Mass movements of people have generated new social and economic problems and have aggravated existing ones. The community center program seeks to resolve some of these problems. Similar programs have been implemented successfully in other Asian countries and to some extent in Vietnam.

The centers provide an opportunity to all citizens to become involved in recreational, cultural, and community development activities. Emphasis was on local determination and participation in community center activities including job training, child day care, credit services, legal services, and job-referral services.

In 1966 construction was started on five community centers in DaNang, Vinh Long, Long Xuyen, My Tho, and Vung Tau. Changes in administrative staffing in the Ministry of Social Welfare, the 1968 Tet offensive, and funding problems delayed completion of the centers, and interest in the program was not renewed until 1969. By November 1969 three of the original five, plus one other center in Nha Trang, had been completed but were not used.

From calendar year 1969 through calendar year 1971, the equivalent of about $990,500 in counterpart funds had been provided to the program primarily for construction or renovation of centers. As of November 1971, a total of 17 community centers had been constructed throughout Vietnam and an additional 23 centers were under construction.

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A responsible U.S. official told us that the establishment of community centers had been encouraged by CORDS and reluctantly had been accepted by GVN. Now that facilities have been constructed throughout the country, they are not being utilized. A large unused center in DaNang was being turned into a regional referral center for vocational rehabilitation of disabled persons, and the center in Nha Trang was being used for GVN offices.

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CHAPTER 8

RESOURCES APPLIED

IN SUPPORT OF WAR VICTIMS PROGRAMS

U.S. STAFFING

The downward staffing trend that we reported in November 1970 has continued. U.S. advisory personnel authorized for war victims programs have been reduced from 116 positions in January 1969 to 62 positions in September 1971--a reduction of nearly 47 percent. Further reductions are to be made to 36 positions in June 1972 and to 10 positions 2 years later. Thereafter it is expected that only minimal advisory assistance will be required.

Personnel shortages continue to exist. As of September 1971 only 71 percent of the authorized positions were filled. Most of the vacancies were in field positions, and the ratio of headquarters to field staff increased from 1:3 in January 1969 to 1:1.2 in September 1971. The following schedule shows the staffing trends since November 1967.

	Personnel staffing as of			
	11-67	1-69	7-70	9-71
Total positions:				
Authorized	96	116	97	62
Assigned	72	100	87	44
Headquarters staff positions:				
Authorized	27	27	26	28
Assigned	28	25	27	20
Regional and province staff positions:				
Authorized	69	89	71	34
Assigned	44	75	60	24
Ratio of headquarters to field assigned personnel	1:1.6	1:3	1:2.2	1:1.2

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Field personnel frequently are assigned other responsibilities and do not spend full time on refugee and social welfare work. Also personnel assigned to other duties may, when necessary, handle refugee and social welfare activities.

The effects of staffing cuts on war victims programs are difficult to assess. GVN lacks skilled personnel, however, in these activities; and as U.S. assistance declines, alternate sources of expertise may be needed.

GVN STAFFING

The lack of GVN manpower and expertise in the field of social development in Vietnam is becoming increasingly more apparent as emphasis is being shifted from relief to welfare. Although the Ministry has grown tremendously since 1966, it is unable to fulfill all existing social needs and to effectively plan long-range community development and social service guidance needed to make refugees and other war victims economically and socially viable.

To help alleviate this problem, AID contracted for the services of the Community Development Foundation to help train Ministry personnel and provided academic training and observation tours under AID's participant training program.

AID has also supported the development of the Ministry's School of Social Work by providing 33 million counterpart piasters toward the construction of the school which was completed in January 1971. The school has eight classrooms, an auditorium, a library, and offices. During our visit in September 1971, classes were being conducted in only two of the classrooms. Two rooms were being used as temporary dormitories and the other four were not being used.

In 1971 four million piasters were budgeted for instructors' salaries; however, the Ministry has been unable to hire qualified people because low salaries were offered. At the time of our visit, the school had only one full-time instructor. She told us that she had given up a 40,000-piaster monthly salary to take the 14,000-piaster-month position at the school.

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There has not been an increase in Ministry personnel to offset the decline in U.S. personnel assigned to the program. The Ministry's staffing decreased from 2,293 in October 1970 to 1,944 in October 1971, as shown below.

	Personnel assigned as of	
	10-70	10-71
Headquarters	826	737
Military Region 1	336	275
Military Region 2	373	314
Military Region 3	275	264
Military Region 4	362	354
Miscellaneous assignments (note a)	121	-
	2,293	1,944
Ratio of headquarters to field staff	1:1.8	1:1.6

[a]Composed of 55 Community Development Coordinators assigned to provinces, 54 personnel attending courses, and 12 assigned to Cambodia.

There was also an imbalance in the distribution of assigned staff. There was no correlation between active cases handled and personnel assigned, as shown below.

Military Region	Personnel assigned (note a)	Average monthly case load (Jan. to Aug. 1971)	Case load per assigned staff member
1	127	146,814	1,156.0
2	175	91,797	524.6
3	167	11,064	66.3
4	217	290,924	1,340.7
Total	686	540,599	788.0

[a]Regular and relief cadre personnel. Monthly hires, social cadre personnel, and regional headquarters staff were excluded from this analysis.

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Ten of the 44 provinces and four autonomous cities handle about 56 percent of the total refugee and other war victims case load and use about 18 percent of the staff. Conversely, 17 provinces handling less than 1 percent of the case load have 34 percent of the staff. For example, the case load in Chuong Thien province quadrupled during 1971 because of military activity in the U-Minh Forest. The province's 16-man staff handled an average case load of 81,000 refugees a month. During the same period a nearby province, An Giang, had a staff of 30 but did not have a single active case.

LEVEL OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The GVN refugee and social welfare programs reportedly received, from all sources, financial assistance totaling about $72.4 million and $65.6 million in fiscal years 1969 and 1970, respectively. The fiscal year 1971 estimate is $50.4 million, down about 21 percent. The U.S. contribution decreased from 85 percent in fiscal year 1969 to 69 percent in fiscal year 1971, whereas GVN contributions increased from 5 percent to 18 percent during the same period.

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 (counterpart 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, Title I) or derived from the sales of commodities furnished under the AID Commodity Import Program for use within Vietnam. Direct dollar assistance budgeted and obligated for fiscal years 1969 through 1971 is shown below.

	Fiscal years			
	1969	1970	1971	Total
	(000 omitted)			
Budgeted	$16,400	$10,452	$6,282	$33,134
Obligated	10,075	5,849	3,791	19,715

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An estimated $2.3 million in dollar funds will be provided in fiscal year 1972.

The piaster counterpart support in calendar years 1969 through 1971 and the amount programmed for 1972 are shown below.

U.S. Piaster Support in Million Dollar Equivalents

Calendar year	Amount
1969	25.5
1970	27.0
1971	30.5
1972	42.4 (programmed)

Department of Defense assistance-in-kind funding has been reduced over the last few years. In fiscal year 1969, $424,000 was budgeted; $212,000 in 1970; and $60,000 in 1971.

GVN support

GVN budgeted the piaster equivalent of $3.6 million and $9.6 million of its own funds in calendar years 1969 and 1970, respectively. For calendar year 1971, $9 million has been programmed. The following table shows the relationship between the budget for refugee and social welfare programs and for all civil programs and the amount of U.S.-provided counterpart piasters included in the GVN budgets for calendar years 1970 and 1971.

	Support for refugee relief and social welfare programs			
	1970		1971	
	Total budget	U.S.-provided portion	Total budget	U.S.-provided portion
	(millions)			
Total civil budget	$695.5	$110.2	$1,080.5	$118.6
Refugee and social welfare budget	36.6	27.0	39.5	30.5
Percent	5.2	24.5	3.7	25.7

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Slow rate of piaster expenditures

The rate at which piaster expenditures were made by the Ministry of Social Welfare province representatives in 1971 appears to have improved only slightly when compared with the 1970 rate. During the first 8 months of 1970, only 36 percent of the budgeted funds were expended. During the first 8 months of 1971, 38 percent of the funds had been expended as shown below.

	In piasters		
Fund	Funds available	Expenditures	Percent expended
Temporary refugee relief	325,000,000	95,295,869	29
War victims relief	591,840,000	248,931,072	42
Resettlement (note a)	3,053,736,000	1,181,272,416	38
Social welfare	159,424,000	38,851,500	24
Total	4,130,000,000[b]	1,564,350,857[b]	38

[a]Includes return-to-village benefits and site development.

[b]Equivalent to $35 million available and $13.3 million expenditures at 118 to 1 rate of exchange.

Notwithstanding an acknowledged need for a social development program, very small amounts of funds, as shown above, have been provided compared with those provided for refugee and war damage victims. The funds made available were expended at a slow rate for various reasons, including (1) the relatively low program priority and (2) limited organizational and manpower capabilities within the Ministry.

In our November 1970 report, we said that a social development program was formulated in 1969 and that it was expected that the major effort would shift during 1970 from emergency relief to social development. During 1970, as in previous years, however, GVN devoted most of its time and efforts to emergency assistance. Consequently the shift had to be deferred to 1971.

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Emergency situations have not only prevented the small social development program from expanding but have actually caused it to be reduced. In our November 1970 report, we pointed out that only 4 percent of the counterpart funds programmed for 1969 were provided for social development activities. Funds programmed for 1970 totaled 112.4 million piasters, down from the previous year's total of 133 million piasters. The 1970 budget was later reduced further to 96.4 million piasters, or about 2.7 percent of programmed counterpart funds. Budgeted funds for 1971 were 109.4 million piasters, or about 3 percent of programmed counterpart funds.

In October 1971 the Minister of Social Welfare requested that AID authorize the allocation of 545 million piasters (about $4.6 million) in counterpart funds for an expanded child welfare program. Included would be an increase in the monthly subsidy to orphanages and day-care centers, vocational training for civilian war widows, and expanded use of voluntary agencies. AID supported the proposal but details concerning implementation of the expanded program were not available at the completion of our review.

The success of this program largely depends on the capability of the Ministry of Social Welfare personnel to effectively administer the activities contemplated. AID officials state that, although measures are being taken to develop the capability, it does not now exist within the Ministry.

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U.S. COMMODITY SUPPORT

The United States, under title II, Public Law 480 (Food for Peace program), donates agricultural commodities to support war victims and others unable to provide their basic food needs. The Ministry of Social Welfare issues about 55 percent of the commodities and the remainder is handled by voluntary agencies. As the following schedule illustrates, the amounts actually shipped were far below the programmed amounts.

Fiscal year	Programmed amount	Amounts actually shipped
	(millions)	
1969	$27.2	$25.8
1970	28.4	16.6
1971	19.6	0.5[a]
Total	$75.2	$42.9

[a]As of October 1971.

Fiscal year 1972 support is expected to be about $5 million.

In addition, AID programmed project commodities valued at $5.8 million and $3.3 million in fiscal years 1970 and 1971.

Public Law 480 commodities

Reductions in the program have resulted from the disclosure of numerous deficiencies since October 1969. Some U.S. officials in Vietnam believe that it should be eliminated entirely. Several reviews of program operations have disclosed significant program management and control deficiencies. Department of State auditors and AID auditors found cases where the food had been (1) used to feed farm animals or exchanged for traditional diet items, (2) held in storage for excessive periods allowing it to become unfit for human consumption, and (3) not always issued on the basis of need.

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AID advised the Ministry in December 1970 that, because of reported abuses, food distributions to nine provinces and one city had been suspended until the program could be operated in a satisfactory manner. The Ministry was advised also that further shipments of bulgar wheat, cornmeal, and rolled oats had been suspended because of numerous reports that commodities were not being used as intended but were being diverted into commercial channels and used as animal feed. In March 1971, 13 suspended feeding stations were restored in Chuong Thien, Vinh Long, Chau Doc, An Xuyen, and Vinh Binh provinces.

A high percentage of food is wasted in transit or storage or while in the possession of the recipient because of antiquated packing techniques. For example, it is not uncommon for 10 pounds of dry milk to be issued in a brown paper bag. Even if recipient receives the item in good condition, it is unlikely that he will be able to consume it in a reasonable period of time before it spoils. Improperly packaged commodities placed in a Vietnamese thatched-roof hut will rapidly deteriorate from the high humidity or will become infested by rodents and insects.

Commodities frequently are held in storage for excessive periods causing a high rate of condemnation loss. In September 1971 AID auditors reported that the Mission's programming system invited overstocking. In May and June 1971, 10 percent of the inventories were identified as being unsuitable for human consumption. Between April 20, 1971, and September 22, 1971, commodities valued at about $3.3 million had been disposed of, or were in the process of being disposed of, due to condemnation. In Nha Trang we observed 11,600 bags of dry milk which had been in inventory for over 1 year. The entire inventory was unfit for consumption. Numerous other examples could be cited where spoilage of commodities had resulted from excessive periods of storage in warehouses throughout Vietnam.

Pilferage of commodities in transmit is also a problem. Cooking oil, the most valuable commodity sent to Vietnam from a commercial viewpoint, is especially susceptible. In Region 2, advisors told us of instances where cases had been received with cans filled with sea water or rocks which had apparently been substituted for cans of cooking oil. This

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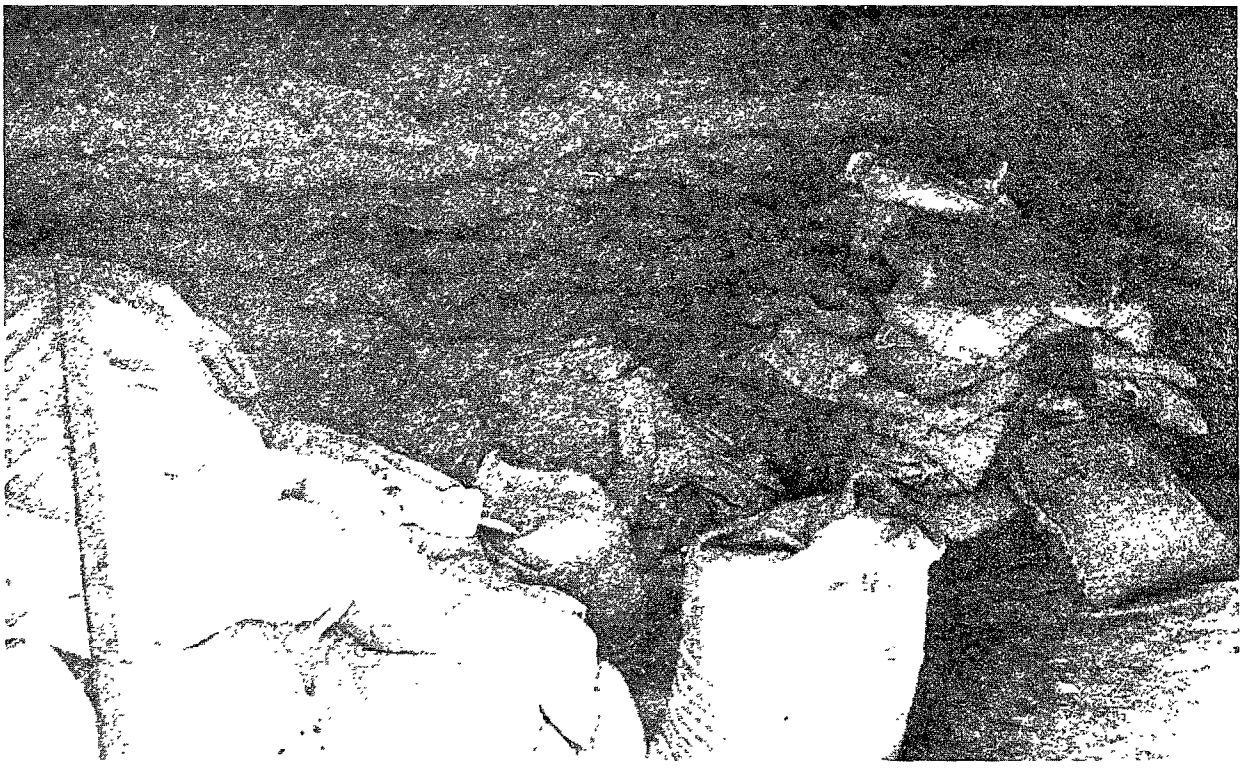
matter has been informally brought to the attention of AID, and we have been advised that it is currently being investigated.

Public Law 480 foodstuffs historically have been used in Vietnam to reward individuals in the community. Frequently, when government officials make visits to a hamlet, they feel obligated to bring gifts. Often Public Law 480 items are given and distributed without regard to the need of the individuals. In September 1971, after the presidential election campaign began, the Phu Yen province warehouse doors were opened and commodities were given to anyone who wanted them. Authorized versus actual issues of commodities in September 1971 were as follows.

Commodity	Authorized	Actual
Bulgar wheat (bags)	33	697
Cooking oil (cases)	72	4,919
Corn, soybean, and milk (bags)	33	3,218
Rolled oats (bags)	33	589



GAO Photo

Public Law 480 commodities declared unfit for human consumption

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Other commodities

AID project commodities also were found to be stored in warehouses for excessive periods. In Darlac province, we observed commodities, such as aluminum roofing sheets, tarpaulins, cloth, and farming tools, which reportedly have been on hand for 2 to 4 years. The tarpaulins were rotten from dampness. We were told that the items had not been issued because of the Ministry's procedural red tape. The advisors said that there had been a great need for the items but that there had been an undue delay in obtaining authorization to make the issues.

In Phu Yen province we observed also project commodities that had been in storage for years. Here we saw shop tools, such as anvils and saws, that had been in storage for up to 7 years. Most of the tools were not the type traditionally used by the Vietnamese and probably would never be used.

At the Thu Duc warehouse, near Saigon, we saw several weaving looms which had been in storage for years. We were told that the looms were too complex for easy assembly or operation and that, because there were no spare parts, the looms were virtually worthless.

VOLUNTARY AND INTERNATIONAL AGENCY ASSISTANCE

Voluntary agencies and countries other than the United States are potential sources of financial and technical support available to GVN, but little effort has been made by the Ministry of Social Welfare to increase assistance from these sources. As the American involvement declines, we believe that it is increasingly important that alternate sources of support are identified and used extensively by the Ministry if social welfare programs are to be sustained and developed further.

Support is now provided to the refugee and social welfare program by some 30 American, international, and other voluntary agencies. During fiscal years 1969 and 1970, direct support provided by voluntary agencies was about $3.9 million and $3.4 million, respectively. Programmed support for fiscal year 1971 was estimated to be about $3.4 million. In addition to the foreign agencies, there are about 17 Vietnames voluntary agencies.

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Voluntary agencies have made a significant contribution to the overall effort in Vietnam not only by providing large amounts of refugee relief assistance but also by providing professional expertise to train Vietnamese in the areas of urban and rural community development, medical relief, rehabilitation, and institutional leadership.

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CHAPTER 9

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 refugee program in Vietnam with particular emphasis on long-term programs of rehabilitation and reconstruction to assist war victims.

The review was conducted at AID Headquarters in Washington, D.C.; at USAID/VN and CORDS Headquarters in Saigon; at CORDS Regional Headquarters in DaNang, Nha Trang, and Can Tho; and at various refugee sites throughout Vietnam. Our work included examination of available records, discussions with responsible United States and GVN officials, and observations in the field.

AID's written comments provided to the Subcommittee in May 1971 on our November 1970 report were reviewed and considered, where appropriate, in the conduct of our review and in the development of this report.

Our review of site conditions in Military Region 1 was limited because of a typhoon which caused extensive damage to the area during October 1971. We were able, however, to inspect conditions at two sites in Military Region 1 and at 36 sites in the other three regions. (See app. II.)

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EDWARD M. KENNEDY
MASSACHUSETTS

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

July 7, 1971

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

Dear Mr. Staats:

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

In light of continuing Congressional and public interest, I would like to request a continuing inquiry into the situation in both Vietnam and Laos, and request as well that the inquiry now include Cambodia. Additionally, in view of growing interest in long-term programs of rehabilitation and reconstruction, I would also like to request that a separate inquiry be made into United States policy, projection, and planning in this area of concern.

To facilitate these requests it would be helpful if you would designate a representative of the General Accounting Office to get in touch with Mr. Dale de Haan, Counsel to the Subcommittee, for additional information.

Many thanks for your consideration and best wishes.

Sincerely,

Edward Kennedy

Edward M. Kennedy, Chairman
Subcommittee on Refugees

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REFUGEE SITES, SOCIAL WELFARE SITES, AND WAREHOUSES VISITED BY GAO

I. Refugee sites:

1. Dong Phuoc resettlement site in DaNang, Military Region (MR) 1.

2. Hoa Khanh resettlement site in DaNang, MR 1.

3. Cu Tanh 1 resettlement site in Khanh Hoa province, MR 2.

4. Cu Tanh 2 resettlement site in Khanh Hoa province, MR 2.

5. Cu Tanh 3 resettlement site in Khanh Hoa province, MR 2.

6. Ha Gia return-to-village site in Khanh Hoa province, MR 2.

7. Xuan Vinh return-to-village site in Khanh Hoa province, MR 2.

8. Buon Kli B Montagnard relocation-resettlement site in Darlac province, MR 2.

9. Buon M'Bre Montagnard relocation-resettlement site in Darlac province, MR 2.

10. Buon H'Dok Montagnard relocation-resettlement site in Darlac province, MR 2.

11. Buon Kram B Montagnard relocation-resettlement site in Darlac province, MR 2.

12. Buon Ea Bong Montagnard relocation-resettlement site in Darlac province, MR 2.

13. Tuy Luat Hoa Vietnamese relocation-resettlement site in Phu Yen province, MR 2.

14. Long Hoa resettlement site in Phu Yen province, MR 2

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15. An Xuan resettlement site in Phu Yen province, MR 2.

16. Ninh Tinh resettlement site in Phu Yen province, MR 2.

17. An Tho resettlement site in Phu Yen province, MR 2.

18. Chop Chi temporary reception-resettlement site in Phu Yen province, MR 2.

19. Dong Tac resettlement site in Phu Yen province, MR 2.

20. Plei De Groi Montagnard relocation-resettlement site in Pleiku province, MR 2.

21. Plei Towanly Montagnard relocation-resettlement site in Pleiku province, MR 2.

22. Plei Ia Maih Montagnard relocation-resettlement site in Pleiku province, MR 2.

23. Plei Doch Montagnard relocation-resettlement site in Pleiku province, MR 2.

24. Soi Cat Vietnamese repatriate resettlement site in Bien Hoa province, MR 3.

25. Nhoc Bien return-to-village site in Chuong Thien province, MR 4.

26. Vinh Tay II temporary resettlement site in Chuong Thien province, MR 4.

27. Vinh Trinh temporary resettlement site in Chuong Thien province, MR 4.

28. Vinh Hoa temporary resettlement site in Chuong Thien province, MR 4.

29. Soc Son resettlement site in Kien Giang province, MR 4.

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30. My Tam resettlement site in Kien Giang province, MR 4.

31. Dong Thanh return-to-village site in Kien Giang province, MR 4.

32. Dong Hoa return-to-village-resettlement site in Kien Giang province, MR 4.

33. Ngoc Vinh return-to-village site in Kien Giang province, MR 4.

34. Dong Yen return-to-village-resettlement site in Kien Giang province, MR 4.

35. Truong Thanh return-to-village site in Phong Dinh province, MR 4.

36. Dick Non return-to-village site in Phong Dinh province, MR 4.

37. Hau Loc return-to-village site in Vinh Long province, MR 4.

38. My Loc return-to-village site in Vinh Long province, MR 4.

II. Social Welfare sites:

1. National Rehabilitation Institute in DaNang, MR 1.

2. International Rescue Committee Day-Care Center in Khanh Hoa province, MR 2.

3. Khai Doan orphanage in Darlac province, MR 2.

4. Phuoc Thiem Buddhist orphanage in Phu Yen province, MR 2.

5. Tuy Hoa Day-Care Center in Phu Yen province, MR 2.

6. Community Center in Pleiku province, MR 2.

7. Tu Tam orphanage in Pleiku province, MR 2.

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8. Chanh Tam Day-Care Center in Pleiku province, MR 2.

9. Nguyen Tri Phuong Community Center in Saigon.

10. Phu My Catholic orphanage in Saigon.

11. Thu Duc Wards of the Nation orphanage in Bien Hoa province, MR 3.

III. Warehouses:

1. DaNang regional warehouse in MR 1.

2. Nha Trang regional warehouse in MR 2.

3. Khanh Hoa province warehouse in MR 2.

4. Darlac province warehouse in MR 2.

5. Ministry of Social Welfare (MSW) warehouse in Darlac province, MR 2.

6. Phu Yen province warehouse in MR 2.

7. MSW warehouse in Phu Yen province, MR 2.

8. Pleiku province warehouse in MR 2.

9. MSW warehouse in Pleiku province in MR 2.

10. Ben Suc warehouse in Saigon.

11. Thu Duc warehouse in Saigon.

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