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WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

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**POTTER APPEALS TO WALDHEIM
ON INDO-CHINA REFUGEES**

Geneva (EPS) - In response to the deteriorating situation concerning refugees in Indo-China, Dr Philip Potter, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches has today, sent the following message to Dr Kurt Waldheim, Secretary General of the United Nations:

"The World Council of Churches reiterates its support for all your efforts and those of UNHCR for assistance and resettlement of refugees from Indo-China. In view of the fast deteriorating situation and the need for more concerted international efforts WCC welcomes the proposal for a new international conference under UN auspices with the widest possible participation. Though the burden on countries like Thailand and Malaysia has become very heavy it is essential to ensure that refugees are not turned away and forced into situations that endanger their lives. We urge you to have further discussions with Vietnamese Government for measures that would avoid undue hardship and danger for those who leave the country especially in view of critical questions being raised about present government policies on people wishing or being forced to leave the country. WCC is calling upon member churches to increase assistance to refugees and to bring pressure on their governments especially in the richer countries to accept more refugees from Indo-China."

In order that the WCC be fully briefed on the situation and to express ecumenical concern and solidarity with the churches, two staff members of the Commission on Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service (CICARWS), Miss Ruud van Hoogevest, Coordinator for Refugees, and the Rev. William Tung, Secretary for Asia, will shortly depart for a visit to Thailand, Malaysia and Hong Kong.

Since the beginning of this year CICARWS has been involved in resettling 4,868 refugees from South-East Asia and has sent US \$ 213,170.- into the area for use with refugees.

EPS

Vietnam Refugees: Behind the Flood

IHT June 13, 1979

By Derek Davies

Not Only Money

HONG KONG — Like rats from a sinking ship, a continuous armada of creaking junks, waterlogged sampans, large fishing boats and even rusty freighters all crammed to the gunwales with refugees spread out from the shores of Vietnam across the South China Sea and the Gulf of Thailand. Sometimes only 50 percent of those who set sail ever make landfall.

Even so, their welcome can be deadly, as naval patrol boats of Vietnam's Southeast Asian neighbors tow the overladen vessels out again to open seas or as villagers, anxious about their own future security, watch the men, women, children and babies drown in the surf.

Since the fall of Saigon, well over 650,000 persons, the great majority of Chinese race, have fled Vietnam, starting with a trickle that today has become a flood. Perhaps 200,000 were forced overland into China before last February's Sino-Vietnamese war. Over a quarter of a million persons, including Khmers and Laotians, who have escaped from countries now governed by Hanoi-backed regimes, are in camps in Thailand.

Reluctant Host

Malaysia, where the camps are already pitifully overcrowded, plays reluctant host to about 90,000. The southeast monsoon is bringing dozens of boats every day to Hong Kong. (Nearly 3,000 arrived last Sunday alone.) And the total (comparatively well-housed by the already crowded colony) is over 50,000. Hong Kong is also reeling under a heavy influx of immigrants from China, the total of legals (those who possess exit permits but who do not return home) and illegals now running at over 1,300 a day.

Indonesia has received about 27,000 (a very rough estimate) while those who take more active measures to discourage arrivals — Singapore, the Philippines and Macao — have kept their refugee numbers low.

Vietnam's export of refugees is now far and away its largest single source of foreign exchange earnings. The overwhelming majority pay at least four taels of gold (about \$1,000) in direct tax to the Hanoi authorities, plus the cost of the boat and supplies, plus bribes to local officials. It is estimated that an adult pays in all about \$4,000 and children under 16 are charged \$350. Those who cannot pay either borrow or persuade relatives abroad to remit the money.

Thus the traffic so far has probably earned about \$350 million for Vietnam's economy, counting only those who have survived. If one speculates about the number lost at sea and assumes that Vietnam will expel another half-million who reportedly wish to leave, then the total earnings could prove astronomical — "they could well reach the incredible total of \$3 billion," according to one Hong Kong official.

The earnings alone do not explain why Vietnam has apparently determined to purge itself of its ethnic Chinese population (estimated at the time of the Communist victory in 1975 to total about 1.3 million) and why it is now apparently about midway in a ruthless program which Thailand's chief of staff, Gen. Saiyud Kerdphol, has described as "racist expulsion policies that resemble those of the Nazis during World War II."

The Chinese, traditionally active in commerce and banking, do not fit into Hanoi's new hard-line Socialist policies. They are escaping from schemes to banish them from the towns to the virgin lands of the "new economic zones" where they are given a supply of seed rice and told to teach themselves how to be farmers.

More to the point, Vietnam's Chinese have proved adept at evading military service either in the north for the Viet Cong or for the former regime of South Vietnam. The recent war with China has convinced the Vietnamese that their ethnic Chinese community is a huge fifth column in what they are convinced will be a long struggle against an hegemony-seeking Peking.

In this atmosphere, Vietnam's Chinese themselves are anxious to get out, to avoid being ground between the two sides in a long, bitter conflict. Vietnam's economy is in ruins, despite Soviet aid. This year it faces at least a 1-million ton grain shortage and townspeople are now rationed to 2 kilograms of rice per month and 300 grams of meat, supplemented by wheat flour, sweet potatoes and manioc. The hardliners now controlling Hanoi see the Chinese as unproductive mouths to feed in their new Socialist society.

The reaction of those forced to play hosts to the flood of refugees has been predictably bitter. On diplomatic levels, Southeast Asia has been relatively restrained but fears are being expressed that Vietnam may be implementing a plan to destabilize its neighbors. Vietnam's suggestion that the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) should sign pacts of nonaggression and cooperation with Hanoi, which would join with them in implementing Asean's goal of establishing a zone of peace has been rejected as farcical.

Security officials are expressing concern that Hanoi is deliberately infiltrating long-term agents into Southeast Asia with the flood. There are reportedly 36 men, who disappeared from Malaysia's main refugee camp on Pulau Bidong, now under detention while a senior Thai security official claims that at least 10 percent of Vietnamese refugees are spies.

Although the hardliners now in control of Hanoi may be convinced that the advantages of purging the Chinese are persuasive in the short-term, they must also be counting the long-term costs. Although any accommodation with China appears unlikely, in the foreseeable future, Hanoi must calculate that a degree of independence within the Socialist bloc will be possible only with the re-acquisition of the late Ho Chi Minh's ability to balance Peking off against Moscow — and thus Vietnam must have a "China card" to play.

Third Option

Equally, Hanoi's policy statements confirm that Vietnam sees itself as part of any future Southeast Asian community. Closer relations with Asean would provide a desirable third option for a Hanoi whose diplomacy for the last 25 years has been largely limited to variations on the Moscow-Peking theme. But Hanoi's present policies, of confronting China and dumping its unwanted Chinese onto Southeast Asia are minimizing its options and maximizing its dependence on Moscow.

Moscow is evidently actively encouraging Vietnam in its present policies. The crackdown on the Chinese began in March of last year, and the spate of refugees from Vietnam began soon after that.

In the meantime, Vietnam was moving into the Soviet orbit, joining Comecon in June and signing its treaty of friendship and mutual defense with Moscow last November. A month before that, President Leonid Brezhnev declared his "resolute support" for Vietnam's economic plans and pledged to support Vietnam as a "reliable outpost of socialism in Southeast Asia."

The Soviet Union appears to be the only country likely to benefit from the exodus. The strategists of the Kremlin may well have calculated that the Vietnamese are not the type of people likely to remain the puppets of any one nation for very long and that Moscow's hegemony over Vietnam would last only as long as Vietnam's economic crisis.

Thus, Moscow is not interested in improving Hanoi's relations with Southeast Asia and can regard the flood of ethnic Chinese refugees into the region with equanimity. Most Asean governments regard their overseas Chinese communities with some suspicion. Vietnam is brutally demonstrating that any country can rid itself of its Chinese while Peking is unable or unwilling to intervene on their behalf. And it is Peking which will reap the whirlwind of the resentments and suspicions of ethnic Chinese being stirred up by the exodus.

Meanwhile, Asean officials are fearful that any anti-Chinese backlash could be exploited by Moscow to sell its version of an Asian security treaty, designed to take over the former U.S. objective of containing the people's republic.

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Derek Davies, the editor of the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, wrote this article for the *International Herald Tribune*.

Forced Repatriation

Thailand Expelling 80,000 Cambodians

By Henry Kamm

BANGKOK, June 12 (NYT) — About 30,000 Cambodian refugees have been forcibly returned to their homeland by Thai military authorities in the last four days and 50,000 more will be sent back to Cambodia as soon as possible, according to government and United Nations refugee sources in Thailand.

"There is no question we are going to ship them all out," said a well-placed Thai military source. He indicated that the 50,000 still to be forced back had been encamped for several weeks around Aranyaprathet, Thailand.

In addition to the 80,000 that are being sent back, 30,000 Cambodians largely under the control of the heavily armed troops of former Premier Pol Pot are encamped on the Thai side of the border south of Aranyaprathet. The Thais hope that the monsoon rains that have begun will bring a retrenchment of Vietnamese forces, leaving some border areas free, and that the Pol Pot forces will return to Cambodia on their own, taking the largely unwilling civilians with them.

Yesterday, for the fourth day, a long column of buses moved along the Thai side of the border from the Aranyaprathet area northeast to the spot where the temple of Preah Vihear dominates the landscape on the Cambodian side.

The buses were crammed with Cambodians who had been told that they were being moved to another refugee camp. They assembled at a spot near the border until darkness had fallen over the deserted region, which is flat and rocky on the Thai side and rises sharply into the Dangrek Mountains in Cambodia.

Ordered to Keep Walking

Then the passengers, far more of them women and children than men, were ordered to alight. They were surrounded by Thai soldiers and trooped into a narrow mountain pass. At the border they were ordered to keep walking. Those who stalled or wanted to turn back were threatened with being shot.

A UN official said that many of the refugees were seriously ill. "If they have to walk for days, many will die," he said. He reported that Thai soldiers were distributing

small amounts of food before forcing the Cambodians across the border.

Bus drivers who are ferrying the refugees are reported to have said that they have heard shots from the Cambodian side after groups of refugees walked into the dark.

While the forced repatriation is under way, the flow of Cambodians seeking safety, food and medical attention outside their devastated country continues. About 1,200 who made their way across the border at one place Sunday were put on buses back to Cambodia yesterday. At another place, 854 who arrived yesterday morning were instantly loaded on the buses.

Foreign Pressure

A number of foreign and international organizations, notably the U.S. Embassy, are trying to persuade Thailand not to repatriate the Cambodians. The UN refugee agency and a number of embassies are receiving anguished cables and telephone calls from Cambodian families abroad who, after getting the first word in more than four years that their relatives were alive and had managed to escape, had learned that they were being pushed back. A number of relatives have arrived here, mainly from France, to plead to no avail for their parents, children, brothers and sisters.

The U.S. Embassy gathered about 25,000 names of refugees and information on their relatives in other countries. It has, together with France, given Thai authorities a number of lists of refugees who would be admitted for immigration. About 1,500 were sent to refugee transit centers before the forced return began. U.S. and French officials here and the UN agency have learned, however, that most of the people on the lists have been returned to Cambodia anyway.

The Thai military officer said that Thailand was repatriating the Cambodians because the Western countries had shown by their relative inaction that they were not prepared to accept enough Cambodians quickly enough to relieve Thailand of what it sees as a serious threat to its security.

Refugees' Gold Sent to Russia

Hanoi Seems Determined To Expel Chinese Minority

By Fox Butterfield

HONG KONG, June 12 (NYT) — Vietnam appears determined to expel almost all of the members of its Chinese minority and is exacting hundreds of millions of dollars from them before their departure, much of it to repay the Soviet Union for aid and arms sales, according to refugees and intelligence sources here.

Despite denials by Vietnamese officials, there is growing evidence that the exodus is being organized by the government. The regime regards the Chinese as of doubtful loyalty and as unproductive city dwellers who are an obstacle to plans for rural development.

A Vietnamese official who is in charge of emigration in Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon) recently told the representative of a foreign relief agency that the government wanted to expel the Chinese as quickly as possible and asked for his help. The Vietnamese official, Vu Hoang, the head of the consular department of the Foreign Ministry, said that 800,000 to 1.2 million Chinese remained in southern Vietnam after the departure of 300,000 in the last year.

Roughly 200,000 others have been expelled or have fled from northern Vietnam in the last 12 months, leaving 50,000, according to a Western diplomat in Hanoi. Since Vietnam's border war with China in February and March, the rate has increased, with 3,000 a day leaving Vietnam in recent weeks, officials said.

Subjected to Harassment

To encourage the Chinese to depart, they have been subjected to harassment including the loss of their jobs, school closures, curfews, intimidation by the police and the creation of detention camps.

An International Red Cross official who has worked in Vietnam believes that, as more refugees put out to sea, the likelihood of their reaching a foreign shore is declining. From discussions with leaders of the Chinese community in Ho Chi Minh City, the official calculated that the number who are drowning or dying of exposure, hunger and thirst at sea had risen to 70 percent from 50 percent. The reason, he said, is probably that fewer seaworthy boats are being used.

The traffic in human beings has a double advantage for the Vietnamese government since the police have been collecting 10 taels of gold, or more than \$3,000, from each adult leaving southern Vietnam.

An intelligence report that reached Hong Kong contended that Vietnam has used some of this gold to repay \$100 million to the Soviet Union for its aid and arms sales. Soviet aid to Vietnam amounts to \$1 million to \$2 million a day this year, the diplomat in Hanoi said.

Gold Melted

The gold collected from the refugees is melted in the Bank of Vietnam in Ho Chi Minh City and shipped to the Bank of Foreign Trade in Hanoi before transport to Moscow, refugees reported. Some gold bearing faint Vietnamese government markings has appeared in Soviet sales in Europe, according to the intelligence report.

In addition, international banking sources here said, foreigners eager to help their Chinese relatives in Vietnam remitted \$242 million to the Bank of Vietnam in Ho Chi Minh City in April, the last month for which figures are available. Most of the money is thought to have been intended to pay for boat passage.

Such an amount, in one month, is more than half of the value of Vietnam's total estimated exports for all of last year, \$416 million. This year, because of the disruption caused by Vietnam's incursion into Cambodia in support of the new government there and because of the border war with China, regular exports are expected to be lower.

The refugees leaving now differ from the small groups of boat people who escaped after the Vietnam War ended in 1975. The earlier refugees largely were Vietnamese who were leaving clandestinely. About 80 percent of the present flow consists of Chinese and is arranged by the Vietnamese government.

Open Departure Urged

According to refugees arriving here, the government is so eager to keep control of the flow — and, evidently, to wring all possible profit from it — that some Chinese planning to leave surreptitiously are being approached by police officials and are urged to arrange their departure openly through them.

In another case, according to refugees who arrived here on the freighter *Sen On*, Vietnamese security forces opened fire in December on a boatload of 220 persons who tried to leave without clearance. Only 18 persons were said to have survived.

To insure that the emigration plan works, the Vietnamese government reportedly has established two camps in the north for Chinese who balk at the choice of risking their lives at sea or moving to a resettlement zone. The camps, described by refugees as concentration camps, are reported to be located at Vinh Bao, near Haiphong, and at Nghe An.

In the south, the authorities have set up two transit camps near the port of Vung Tau to process the refugees, according to some of those who arrived on the *Sen On*. The refugees are brought to the camps by bus from Ho Chi Minh City and are then taken to their boats on other buses, they said.