

"Refugees - Indochina Status Report" from President Gerald Ford, April 3, 1975

FOR RELEASE AT 12 noon PDT
3 pm EDT

APRIL 3, 1975

Office of the White House Press Secretary
(San Diego, California)

THE WHITE HOUSE
STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

We are seeing a great human tragedy as untold numbers of Vietnamese flee the North Vietnamese onslaught. The United States has been doing and will continue to do its utmost to assist these people.

I have directed all available naval ships to stand off Indochina to do whatever is necessary to assist. We have appealed to the United Nations to use its moral influence to permit these innocent people to leave, and we call on North Vietnam to permit the movement of refugees to areas of their choice.

While I have been in California I have been spending many hours on the refugee problem and our humanitarian efforts. I have directed that money from a \$2 million special foreign aid children's fund be made available to fly 2,000 South Vietnamese orphans to the United States as soon as possible.

I have also directed American officials in Saigon to act immediately to cut red tape and bureaucratic obstacles preventing these children from coming to the United States.

I have directed that C-SA planes and other aircraft, especially equipped to care for these orphans during the flight, be sent to Saigon. I expect the flights to begin within the next 36 to 48 hours. These orphans will be flown to Travis Air Force Base and other bases on the West Coast and cared for there.

These 2,000 Vietnamese orphans are all in the process of being adopted by American families.

This is the least we can do, and we will do much, much more.