The program is also designed so that each agency program or project can stand alone on its own merits and does not require outside technical assistance that is not already available in Vietnam, except for the activities for handicapped children which would be dependent on foreign technical training assistance from another source.

5. LONG-TERM BENEFITS

One of the hoped for outcomes of the first year of the program would be the setting of longer range program goals for the following three years in the various sectors of family and child welfare, rehabilitation, community development, and particularly social agency administration. If implemented, this program would, in effect, subsidize the community inservice training and advancement of a core of senior voluntary agency administrators. Over a period of a few years, this elite should have a positive impact on the present underdeveloped structure of community agencies, professional associations, and governmental organizations in the general welfare area.

Community-wide training programs in successive years should focus on issues such as the establishment of a United Fund approach to community financing of welfare operations (contributed to by the GVN), enhancement of the partnership between the government and the private sector, and the establishment of joint planning commissions to chart long range programs of assistance for widows, disadvantaged children, the handicapped, and the elderly.

Agency financial stability should be a clearly defined four-year goal and might be encouraged by gradually phasing out the subsidization of salaries while focusing community attention on the development of alternate means of funding services.

At the end of four years, the success of the program would be measured by the growth of financially secure Vietnamese agencies with salaried staff, the sophistication of their agency operations, and the increased role of the private Vietnamese welfare sector in national and community planning. If substantial progress is made in these areas, a major impact will have been made on the development of modern social institutions to assist with the re-integration of Vietnamese society through the institutionalization of a national sense of responsibility for dependent and disadvantaged groups in Vietnam.

The suggested grants and proposed budget in Part VI of this proposal are only preliminary suggestions subject to discussion with the concerned agencies.

6. SUGGESTED GRANTS AND PROPOSED BUDGET

Proposed grants to Vietnamese voluntary agencies are grouped under the categories of family and child welfare, rehabilitation, community development, and social work education and agency administration. Personnel supported under the grants are not restricted to the activities for which additional program funds are made available. The intent is to develop senior agency administrators responsible only to the dictates of their management committee or board of directors. The various program proposals are also only tentative at this time.

a. Family and Child Welfare

(1) Banco Community Center, District, Saigon, $2,200.
   (a) Staff support; 1 social worker at $1,200 per year.
   (b) Support of multi-service center program for widows, orphans, war victims including the physically disabled, $1,000.

(2) Family Planning Association, $2,200.
   (a) One social worker at $1,200.
   (b) Support of community center program in Petrus Ky, Saigon to extend family planning concepts, $1,000.

(3) Association to Assist War Victims (Sister Martine's group) $2,200.
   (a) One social worker at $1,200.
   (b) Operational expenses, $1,000.

   (a) One social worker at $1,200.
   (b) Operational expenses, $1,000.

(c) Foster care program: sponsoring 50 children for one year; at $120 per child, $6,000.
(5) Buddhist Social Service Center, Saigon, $2,200.
   (a) One social worker at $1,200.
   (b) Support of multi-service center program on behalf of widows, orphans,war
       refugees including the physically disabled, $1,000.
(6) Nghia Sinh Organization, $4,000.
   (a) One social worker at $1,200.
   (b) Funds would be utilized to institute "big sister" program in residential
       institutions where older children would be encouraged to "adopt" small ones as
       their foster brothers and sisters, $2,800.
(7) Buddhist Social Service Agency, $4,000.
   (a) One social worker at $1,200.
   (b) "Big sister and brother" orphanage program similar to the Nghia Sihn
       proposal, $2,800.
(8) International Social Service/Vietnam, $7,000.
   (a) One social worker at $1,200.
   (b) Project money for neighborhood center in area with many racially
       mixed children, $3,800.
(9) Association of Friends of War Victims, $4,000.
   (a) One social worker at $1,200.
   (b) Neighborhood program to enroll primary school-age children in school,
       aimed at disadvantaged children (racially-mixed, physically handicapped, desti-
       tute), $2,800.
  b. Rehabilitation.
   (1) Lai Thieu School for the Deaf and Dumb, $2,400. Salaries for two Vietnam-
       ese speech therapists.1
   (2) Children's Hospital, $2,400. Salaries for 2 VN speech therapists.1
   (3) Residential Institution for Severely Disabled, $7,000.
       (a) Salaries for three specially trained pediatric social work/nurses, $3,600.1
       (b) Program support, $3,400.
   (4) Mobile Team of Physiotherapists (NRI), $7,000.
       (a) Salaries for three Vietnamese physiotherapists, $3,600.1
       (b) Program support for team to set up regular schedule of visits to resi-
           dential institutions caring for disabled children, $3,400.
  c. Community Development.
   (1) Association of Friends of War Victims, $8,000.
       (a) Two social workers for an urban and rural loan program for widows,
           $2,400.
       (b) Loan funds of $5,600 for widows.
   (2) Family Planning Association, $4,000.
       (a) One social worker at $1,200.
       (b) Program support to extend family planning concepts to refugee reestab-
           lishment areas, $2,800.
   (3) National Association of Social Workers, $5,000.
       (a) Two social workers, $2,400.
       (b) Funds to support initiation of community development activities on
           behalf of families and children in refugee reestablishment areas, $2,600.
  d. Social Work Education and Social Agency Administration.
   (1) National Council of Social Welfare Organizations, $2,000.
       (a) Salary for 1 Exec. Secretary at $1,200.
       (b) Program funds to conduct seminar on fund raising and program
           development, $800.
   (2) National Association of Social Workers, $2,000.
       (a) Salary for Exec. Secretary at $1,200.
       (b) Program funds to conduct seminar on agency staff development and its
           relation to program development, $800.
   (3) The Association for the Social Sciences, $2,000.
       (a) Salary for Association Secretary at $1,200.
(b) Program funds to conduct seminar on agency use of applied research for program development, $800.

(4) National School of Social Work and Van Hanh University, $41,000. Visiting professor from School of Social Work (desirable speak French) to teach social work research at above schools and plan and participate in seminars, especially the one on applied research for agency development. Funds include salary, travel, housing, and one counterpart staff and program support for an extension course for agency administrators.

III. THE ROLE OF SOCIAL WELFARE IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: MANPOWER CONSIDERATIONS

The purpose of this paper is to outline the role of social welfare in national development. The referenced information is drawn from Social Welfare Planning in the Context of National Development Plans, published by the United Nations, 1970.

For purposes of this paper social welfare is broadly defined as follows:

"Social Welfare as an organized function is regarded as a body of activities designed to enable individuals, families, groups and communities to cope with the social problems of changing conditions. But in addition to and extending beyond the range of its responsibilities for specific services, Social Welfare has a further function within the broad area of a country's social development. In this larger sense, social welfare should play a major role in contributing to the effective mobilization and deployment of human and material resources of the country to deal successfully with the social requirements of change, thereby participating in nation building." (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.68.IV.8, p.6.)

A distinction is made between the specific programs of the Ministry of Social Welfare (MSW) such as institutional support, day care, community centers, etc., and the planning role of the Ministry of Social Welfare in relation to other ministries, as national development activities.

The concept of community development within this paper refers to both (a) planning and implementing of social development projects and programs at the local level such as day care centers or farming cooperatives, and (b) activities designed to enlist the active participation of community in local development activities. While rural community development activities emphasize participating in the effective mobilization and deployment of human and material resources of the country to deal successfully with the social requirements of change, thereby participating in nation building.

It is suggested that the goals of social welfare in national development planning are the following:

1. Strengthening national spirit and national morale through services of direct relief and rehabilitation for the victims of war and dislocation, and for other needy groups.
2. Enhancing the responsiveness of the national government to the legitimate welfare needs of politically sensitive groups such as widows, parentless children, and handicapped veterans. This ability to respond is a major factor in promoting and maintaining national consolidation.
3. Advancing human betterment a) at the local level through rural community development activities; b) at the urban level, through developing new social institutions to meet the changing needs of urban people, or adapting traditional institutions to accomplish this goal.

It is further suggested that the objectives of social welfare activities, in relation to the goals above, might be listed as:

1. Protection of dependent groups, such as children, youth, and the elderly;
2. Rehabilitation of war victims;
3. Reestablishment of refugees and other displaced groups in viable living situations.

Social Welfare planning in the context of national planning for social development has three major aims:

1. Contributing to the planning of other sectors of national development (i.e., Health, Education, Housing, Employment and Manpower);
2. Enabling citizens to participate in national development activities (i.e., promoting community self-help projects, etc.);
3. Making sure that no one falls below what are determined to be minimum social standards.
While the importance of community self-help activities designed to engage the citizens in participating in their own future, has been given substantial attention in Vietnam, aims one and three need further amplification:

SOCIAL WELFARE’S CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL PLANNING IN RELATED SECTORS

It is important to stress that while social welfare objectives are separate and distinct from related sectors of national planning, social welfare plays a key role in enabling people to achieve their aims through a supportive function. For example:

“The general objective of education is to help people acquire the knowledge and skills they need in order to develop their own potential and play a useful role in society . . . Social welfare plays a supportive role in dealing with the social aspects of education, for instance, in preventing children and youth from prematurely abandoning the school system, in stimulating the cooperation of parents and in facilitating the building of school facilities on a self-help basis.”

It should also be noted that if education is defined broadly to include a comprehensive approach to human resource development, embracing both formal and non-formal forms of education such as agricultural extension and adult literacy, educational programs overlap other sectoral programs including social welfare.

Similarly, the health of population relates to good nutrition, environmental circumstances, health education, and the cultural patterns of a community in which may have a crucial influence on the prevention or treatment of illness. The rehabilitation of the handicapped is another good example of the supportive role of social welfare in the promotion of health activities.

The Employment and Manpower sector of national planning may be seen either as a way of developing manpower for a required number of specific jobs over a specified number of years, or conversely, as a task of developing employment opportunities for a work force as projected over a specified number of years. In practice, a balance needs to be achieved between foreseeing employment opportunities which can be created over a definite period of time within the context of national development and employing manpower in sectoral activities to create these overall employment opportunities.

ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING MINIMUM SOCIAL STANDARDS

While minimum social standards relating to other sectors such as health, education, employment, housing, etc., may be specified by other components of the national government, it is the responsibility of the Minister of Social Welfare to be the advocate of disadvantaged or vulnerable groups within the population. The Minister’s major task should be to ensure that their needs are taken into consideration in planning and that the other sectoral plans give special attention, if required, to assure that these groups are assisted in achieving or maintaining minimum standards.

In addition to serving as an advocate to other ministers, the Minister of Social Welfare must also develop specific social welfare programs for vulnerable people toward the goal of minimum social standards of income, nutrition, housing, health, work, education and other social standards.

After assisting in the formulation of minimum social standards, it is then possible to detect those persons who will fall below, accepted minimum standards unless given special attention. In Vietnam, groups requiring special attention have been identified as widows, orphans, refugees, the disabled, and other war victims. The Minister of Social Welfare, as the special advocate of the weaker segment of the population, has a special responsibility for collecting information which will identify those who have fallen below the given standards.

Having formulated standards, and detected vulnerable groups, the Minister of Social Welfare can, then—

“Devise strategies that will promote at the highest levels of government the fundamental right of these people to receive fair treatment and to enjoy the same opportunities as their fellow citizens. A certain priority may have to be given to those cases which appear to be more urgent or more acute; but in general, the endeavor should be to look for types of solution, which, over a given period of time, can bring substantial improvement within the limitations of available resources”
In this regard, the minister of Social Welfare must seek to identify and attack causes of social problems rather than merely symptoms.

Having formulated standards, detected vulnerable groups, and served as their advocate at the highest councils of government, the Minister of Social Welfare must then develop relevant social welfare programs which become, then the body of activities referred to earlier which are distinct from the social welfare planning function of the Minister which relates to other sectoral planning. A pertinent example of this distinction can be seen in MSW’s role in meeting the needs of the physically handicapped. The general responsibility of the Minister of Social Welfare is to insure that the handicapped person receives fair treatment in the various sectors of health, housing, education, employment, etc., while the specific function of the MSW is to provide employment counseling and job placement.

**MANPOWER CONSIDERATIONS IN SOCIAL WELFARE PLANNING FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

1. What are the manpower requirements in carrying out the programs designated as the body of social welfare activities? In this regard, it is important to determine manpower requirements for each category of programs and at the various staffing levels, i.e., village, provincial, national.

2. How do the social welfare manpower needs fit into national manpower requirements? It is important to plan on other sectors using social workers and other workers identified with social welfare programs, such as social workers and child care workers in health settings.

3. What are the short range and long range implications of the Veteran’s Law? The potential for recruitment, as influenced by mobilization and demobilization, must first be taken into consideration; the present lack of trained male manpower and short range training programs for women; then, the possible effects of demobilization must be considered such as pressure on the MSW to hire veterans who may not have the desired training or training potential.

4. Whereas it is desirable that social workers and related workers should be employed by other sectors, the setting of standards of training and practice for social workers and related workers should be centered in the Ministry of Social Welfare.

5. In addition to projecting the manpower needs of anticipated programs, it is also necessary for the Ministry of Social Welfare to project what the training needs of the disadvantaged groups are. How many widows will need to be employed? What are the special training needs of the handicapped, etc.?

6. In order to begin to make projections of either anticipated social problems, or manpower requirements there is a first requirement that a means of collecting base line data on social situations be established. Social situations must be studied in terms of the size and composition of the national population. The nature and dimension of social problems relate to population factors such as environmental conditions and the distribution of the population. Baseline data needs to be obtained that takes into account cultural variations, health factors, and educational patterns, etc.

7. It would be most appropriate for the Minister of Social Welfare to take the initiative in advocating the establishment at the highest level of government, a Central Office for Social Planning which would consider social planning as an integral part of national development establishment of a central planning function has been recommended by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.
APPENDIX IV

THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF VIETNAMESE CHILDREN:
A CRITIQUE

(By Wells Klein, February 1972)

In recent months there has been mounting publicity and expressions of concern regarding the welfare of children in South Vietnam—particularly those fathered by Americans. It is apparent that the general public is becoming increasingly concerned with these children and is looking for ways to be of assistance. However, like many considerations relating to Vietnam, this question is emotionally laden and much of the information disseminated in this country about children in Vietnam is either erroneous or exaggerated.

In an attempt to place the question of American-fathered children in a realistic perspective and suggest some useful channels through which public concern can be expressed, ISS convened a meeting in Washington on July 18th 1971 to consider the "special Needs of Vietnamese Children." Although no formal consensus was arrived at by the participants, some of the information developed at the Conference and some of the actions taken since July will be of interest to those concerned with children in Vietnam.

THE STATUS OF CHILDREN

Part of the confusion relating to American-fathered children derives from lack of accurate information as to the numbers involved and their acceptance in Vietnamese society. Although no actual count of American-fathered children has been taken, estimates by the Vietnamese Ministry of Social Welfare, as well as by American and Vietnamese voluntary agency personnel and others, place the total number between five and fifteen thousand. It is important to note that most of these children are living with their mothers and families at the present time.

This is a relatively small group among the children in Vietnam, but one that can be identified and appears to have special problems. However, it is important to realize that these children cannot be considered separately from other Vietnamese children. Their condition reflects the general problems of children in a country at war with limited resources for child welfare services. The children with American fathers are part of Vietnamese society, and their culture and life style will be determined by that society as long as they remain within Vietnam. Also, these children, born of Vietnamese mothers in Vietnam, are Vietnamese citizens and any consideration of their future requires recognition that the Government of Vietnam does not differentiate between racially mixed and other children. The Vietnamese have a deep sense of responsibility towards their children and the Vietnamese Government is not insensitive to the special problems that racially mixed children may face. However, the Government is reluctant to see them further differentiated from their siblings and other children by being treated as a group apart.

Some further statistics may be useful in placing the question of children in perspective. There are some 120 registered orphanages in Vietnam caring for approximately 18,000 children. In addition, there are another 40 (an estimate) unregistered institutions caring for about 6,000 additional children—a total of approximately 25,000. While these 25,000 children are in institutional care, the term "orphanage" is misleading. Well over 50% of the children are neither orphans nor abandoned. They have families or close relatives, and have been placed in orphanages because of economic difficulties or because their families are in movement around the country as refugees or military dependents. Children left in orphanages are frequently reclaimed by their mothers or relatives when family circumstances permit. Despite more than 25 years of war, the Vietnamese extended-family is still a strong institution.

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Almost all of the orphanages are organized and supported by private groups. Those that are registered with the Vietnamese Ministry of Social Welfare receive monthly payments amounting to approximately $2.00 per child. Over the past five years a number of orphanages have also received substantial help—food, clothing, financial assistance and equipment—from American servicemen. This assistance will be reduced and in many instances totally discontinued as American troops are withdrawn. A serious and immediate problem is the development of substitute sources for this essential support.

Although physical and child care facilities in orphanages are significantly better than several years ago, they still remain poor in many areas. Medical care is minimal and access to educational opportunities, even at the elementary level, is often unavailable. The infant mortality rate in institutions is very high—some estimates are as high as 90%. This rather alarming statistic is the result of: (1) poor infant care facilities and staff resources; and (2) the often moribund condition of infants brought to the orphanage. The future, for those that do survive, is not bright from a medical viewpoint.

Of the 25,000 children in institutional care, fewer than 1000 appear to have American fathers. About half of these are Negro-Vietnamese children. The remaining, and vast majority of the American-fathered children are living with their Vietnamese mothers and families, interspersed among the general population.

One of the primary concerns in our own country regarding American-fathered Vietnamese children is the question of their acceptance in Vietnamese society. Vietnam has a history of contact with other racial or ethnic groups including the French, Chinese, Khmer (Cambodian) and Indians. As a result of Vietnam's colonial experience, the Caucasian-Vietnamese child is not a new phenomenon. Unlike Korea, and, to some extent, Japan, Vietnamese culture does not place great emphasis on racial purity.

It is nevertheless difficult to predict what degree of acceptance the Caucasian-Vietnamese child will face, growing up in Vietnamese society where light-skinned infants are thought to be the most attractive. There seems to be a consensus that the Caucasian-Vietnamese child will face few difficulties because of his racially-mixed background during preschool years, particularly in urban areas. Once a Caucasian-Vietnamese child enters school, however, there is some indication that he may have problems, relating to his peers, though such problems may result as much from the implication that the child is illegitimate or that his mother was a prostitute, as from the fact of racial mixture itself. "Much" of this is conjecture and many Vietnamese are unclear as to the future status of the Caucasian-Vietnamese children.

Prognosis for the Negro-Vietnamese child is quite different. There is general agreement among Vietnamese that the part-black child will encounter many difficulties because of his color. The experience and present social position of children fathered by French-Senegalese troops during the 1945-1955 period would seem to bear out this contention. Stated simply, the part-black child in Vietnam faces dim prospects because of his color. Furthermore, because there is no black community in Vietnam, he will grow up and live in relative social isolation.

Conceivably being expressed in some circles in this country regarding the possible effects of future political events upon the attitudes or acceptance in Vietnamese society of children fathered by Americans regardless of race, is the absence of any evidence on this, the answer to such questions can only be a matter of speculation, and if raised at this stage may not be to the best interest of any "Vietnamese child of mixed parentage.

In viewing the special needs of Vietnamese children, including those fathered by Americans, it should be borne in mind that Vietnam is now in its 27th year of almost uninterrupted warfare and that it is also, in the world spectrum, one of the poorer nations with a well-established system of social welfare services. Social security and provision for socially-dependent members of society has always been a concern of the extended family and, to a lesser extent, the immediate community. With the impact of 27 years of war, traditional patterns of social welfare are no longer capable of caring for the new, vast numbers of dependent persons. For example, in addition to American-fathered and institutionalized children discussed above, there are several hundred thousand children who have only one remaining parent (usually the mother) or more distant relatives upon whom to depend for care and sustenance. In addition, there are tens of thousands of other people— the aged, wounded, widowed—who cannot care for themselves because of the war.
Vietnamese and foreign voluntary agencies provide a significant share of existing child welfare services in Vietnam. These range from institutional care to medical treatment, day care services, direct financial assistance, and programs which support the child within the family structure. Though, the voluntary agencies provide valuable assistance and demonstrate good child care services, they offer relatively limited and geographically uneven coverage.

The Vietnamese Ministry of Social Welfare has a very small budget and has not yet developed a comprehensive child welfare plan to augment the role of the extended family. The Ministry contributes nominal support to orphanages and day care centers, and has some programs to rehabilitate juvenile delinquents and to house the street boys. The bulk of its programs, however, are directed towards care for refugees and students for civilians suffering injury, loss of their homes, or death as a result of the war.

The United States Government, through the Agency for International Development (AID), provides some technical assistance to the Ministry of Social Welfare and major material assistance for refugees. A substantial number of these are children, and they directly benefit from U.S. Government programs. While child welfare needs in Vietnam have had low priority in United States Government programs and funding, it is nonetheless true that substantial food for Peace commodities (surplus food) have been made available to orphanages, day care centers, and other recipients recognized by the Ministry of Social Welfare. Also, as discussed below, the U.S. Government has recently agreed to allocate about two million dollars in local currency for expanded child welfare services in Vietnam to be carried out through the Ministry of Social Welfare. However, there has been no consideration of continued funding beyond calendar year 1972.

INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTIONS

Intercountry adoption of American-fathered Vietnamese children is one form of assistance that has received a good deal of attention in the United States. Numerous American couples and interested groups see intercountry adoption as a specific and meaningful way to assist Vietnamese children.

Over the past years there have been various programs to send Vietnamese children abroad for adoption, medical care, or special educational opportunities. Some of these enterprises were clearly ill-conceived. After several unfortunate experiences and attendant unfavorable publicity, the Vietnamese Government—In 1969—issued a decree barring any group or mass emigration of children. While this decree did not directly affect case-by-case intercountry adoption, it tended to make such adoptions more difficult and very slow.

Vietnamese law, which must be followed in intercountry adoptions, requires that adoptive couples be married ten years, be childless, and that one partner be aged over 30 years of age. Prospective parents not meeting these requirements must secure a special waiver signed by the President of the Republic before they can adopt a child from Vietnam. Present procedures affecting the issuance of passports also requires that children be legally adopted within Vietnam prior to their departure overseas. Vietnamese authorities are currently reviewing a proposed revision of the adoption law which would relax these provisions. The new law, still under review, places greater emphasis on providing a home for a child, rather than a child for a home. It also provides more realistic safeguards for children being adopted either locally or abroad.

As with many people, the Vietnamese are ambivalent about intercountry adoption. While they see it as a meaningful solution to the needs of specific children, pride of culture, nationalism, and perhaps resentment of foreign involvement—all rather understandable—may tend to inhibit intercountry adoption from Vietnam. While it is true that a number of adoptions are taking place from Vietnam to Europe and the United States each year, most of these are going through private channels and do not involve social agency participation either in Vietnam or the United States. As might be expected, a number of bad placements have resulted, including instances where children were placed abroad for adoption without their parents' knowledge or consent. The Vietnamese Government is very sensitive to these facts. Unfortunately, until there is adequate intercountry adoption service available in Vietnam, displacements will probably continue to occur.
With this background, it is obvious that the Vietnamese Government will not be willing to see large numbers of intercountry adoptions, whether we agree or not, even though they may permit and even encourage adoption on a case-by-case basis where adequate safeguards are available for the children. When one considers that fewer than a thousand American-fathered children are now in institutional care, and that many of these may not be legally available for adoption, it is apparent that intercountry adoption is a realistic alternative for only a relatively few part-American children. Thus, concern for children—including this special group—must be exercised through programs of assistance in Vietnam.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS IN VIETNAM

At the time of the French withdrawal from Vietnam in 1954 there were tens of thousands of French-Vietnamese children whose future status was in question. France has historically recognized children born of one French parent as having the right to French citizenship regardless of place of birth and whether or not the child's parents were legally married. After 1954 many of these children went to France as French citizens and were provided with special institutional care funded by the French Government. In addition, the French established special educational and other programs of assistance for French-fathered children staying in Vietnam. Today there are some 400 French-fathered children receiving special schooling in Vietnam with assistance from the French Government.

The historical relationships of France and the United States to Vietnam are decidedly different, as are our respective legal systems with regard to paternity and citizenship. It has been suggested that the United States establish special programs for American-fathered children in Vietnam along French lines. Under such programs the United States would provide educational, medical, and perhaps financial assistance to American-fathered children without requiring that they come to the United States for adoption.

On the surface, at least, this suggestion would seem to have merit. It is, however, unacceptable to the Vietnamese Government which would have the final say on any such program. Also there are many who believe that special programs for part-American children would tend to exacerbate the problems these children face by setting them up as a special privileged group—thereby working against their welfare.

In a letter dated July 9, 1971 the Minister of Social Welfare stated:

"My Ministry's policy is not to distinguish racially mixed orphans from the others, for the former, although they are racially mixed, are Vietnamese-born citizens. Therefore, my Ministry has no intention of establishing separate orphanages for racially mixed children for this would have a traumatic effect on them."

The Ministry's position as expressed here and referred to earlier in this paper not only applies to orphans but to consideration of all racially-mixed children.

Aside from this official view, following the French pattern of special programs also raises problems in terms of the children's welfare. Most of the American-fathered children are living in Vietnamese families and have full Vietnamese brothers and sisters who would not benefit from special assistance. If special programs were established, they would identify and isolate the American-fathered child who by and large, must grow up and make his home in Vietnam.

Thus, both because of the views held by the Vietnamese Government and the impact such special programs would have on the children, this approach to the welfare of American-fathered children is unacceptable. Whatever we do for American-fathered children in Vietnam must be done for the broader group of disadvantaged and dependent children, including those having American fathers.

ALTERNATIVES

It is apparent from a review of existing programs that, to date, child welfare has a low priority in South Vietnamese and United States Government plans for the future. In fact, both Governments seem to be relying on the voluntary agencies for new and improved, as well as existing, services. This reliance, however, is unrealistic. While a number of American and International voluntary agencies have provided useful child welfare assistance, and will continue to do so, the private agencies have increasingly scarce resources and can, at best, reach only a limited number of children.
With these considerations in mind, following the July 19th Conference, five voluntary agencies—Catholic Relief Services, Church World Service, Foster Parents Plan, International Social Service, and the Urban League—met with AID and White House officials to urge that the United States Government provide priority and reasonable funding for child welfare services in Vietnam, to be channeled through Vietnamese institutions—particularly the Ministry of Social Welfare. The agencies were not urging massive funding. We talked in terms of three to five million dollars, a small expenditure, indeed, given our responsibilities and our commitments of funds to other purposes.

While the agency representatives did not discuss specific program details, we were suggesting such areas of need as: (1) the prevention of abandonment of newborn infants; (2) improved institutional care; (3) improved infant care and medical services; (4) programs that would encourage and facilitate reunion of families; and (5) efforts to keep children within family settings. We also emphasized the need to channel augmented child welfare funds through Vietnamese government and voluntary agency structures to stimulate long range capacity to provide needed services. A final recommendation was that the United States Government look for multilateral mechanisms (e.g. UNICEF) through which to channel assistance on the assumption that child welfare needs will continue for some time, while direct American aid programs may not be as welcome in future years as those under international auspices.

These representations to the Administration were made in late July and early August. In October the Administration agreed to allocate approximately two million dollars in local currency for child welfare services in Vietnam for 1972. We like to think that this resulted, at least in part, from the representations made by the voluntary agencies.

Initiatives on behalf of Vietnamese children are also being taken in the Congress. Over the years Congress, and in particular Senator Kennedy and the Subcommittee on Refugees and Escapees, has shown greater sensitivity to the needs of the civilian population and the human consequences of war than either the Democratic or Republican Administrations. In recent months several bills have been introduced to Congress on behalf of Vietnamese children, especially in response to concern for American-fathered children. The most comprehensive of these, S.2497, introduced by Senators Williams, Hatfield, and Hughes on September 8th, states that:

(1) ... the United States has a moral responsibility to assist the Government of South Vietnam in the care and protection of all South Vietnamese children, particularly those orphaned or abandoned, and

(2) ... the United States has a special responsibility to assist in facilitating the care or adoption of children in Vietnam whose fathers are United States citizens and who are not living with their Vietnamese families.

This legislation and its companion House bills call for the establishment of a temporary Vietnamese Children’s Care Agency to provide assistance to children through the Ministry of Social Welfare and voluntary agencies, and to facilitate the adoption of Vietnamese children. The bills also request the President to determine what multilateral mechanisms can be utilized to channel continuing child welfare assistance. They state that the Vietnamese Children’s Agency will be discontinued once multilateral channels have been established.

Any piece of legislation represents a compromise, and these bills may not represent all things to all people concerned. They are, however, major new initiatives and deserve careful consideration. The Williams-Hatfield-Hughes bill has been referred to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and it is important that it receive hearings in the near future, both to determine what additions or modifications may be desirable and to move this important response to a critical situation through the legislative process.

Even though today may be the eleventh hour in terms of our opportunities to assist children in Vietnam, there is clearly concern in this country to do so. The voluntary agencies operating child welfare programs need direct financial support from the public. There is an important role which must be maintained and which is presently endangered by lack of money. However, the voluntary agencies cannot go it alone. The American Government must also step in and provide continuing assistance through Vietnamese institutions—either by means of legislative initiative or through a policy decision within the Administration. We still have an opportunity to recognize our responsibilities in this area. But, time is growing very short, for us, and for some children in Vietnam.
SENATOR KENNEDY APPEALS TO ADMINISTRATION TO SUPPORT PROGRAMS FOR VIETNAMESE ORPHANS AND CHILDREN

(A Statement released, June 3, 1973)

Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Chairman of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Refugees, said that "the Nixon Administration is pursuing a policy of tokenism and lip service towards helping the children of Vietnam," and charged that high officials in the U.S. Embassy in Saigon and the Department of State "with undermining the legitimate efforts of other American officials to upgrade our country's priorities in helping the youngest victims of the Indochina War." After many months—and even years—of promises and commitments by our government to move on helping the children of Vietnam, we find that precious little progress has really been made.

"High officials in our government put off decisions for helping these children. Humanitarian appeals for help by the Vietnamese Ministry of Social Welfare are referred for study. Token funds set aside for child welfare are not always used. Commitments to support voluntary agency programs in the field are bogged down in red-tape and not being fulfilled. Offers of international humanitarian assistance are all but ignored. And reasonable suggestions for action from Congressional committees and others go unanswered."

Senator Kennedy said that "our country's heavy backlog of responsibilities in helping the many thousands of Vietnamese children who are fathered by Americans—and the hundreds of thousands more who are malnourished or abandoned or simply disadvantaged from the war—grows and grows with each passing day.

"This appalling record of neglect—and the urgency of humanitarian needs among the children of Vietnam—demands the immediate concern and active intervention by the highest officials in our government. Congress and millions of Americans expect nothing less. And I urge the Administration to respond in helping to heal the wounds of conflict among the youngest victims of the war."

Senator Kennedy made his comments in releasing the text of a May 22 letter to Secretary of State William P. Rogers. The letter to Secretary Rogers followed the return of the Subcommittee's Study Mission to Indochina, and Subcommittee hearings early in May on the humanitarian needs of children in Vietnam. Several Study Mission recommendations to energize American policy on this issue are currently under review in AID and the Dept. of State.

In his letter to Secretary Rogers, Senator Kennedy said: "Study Mission findings, supported by internal memoranda of the U.S. Mission and conversations in the field, strongly suggest that legitimate efforts by some American officials to upgrade our country's long-term policy and program priorities, have been repeatedly undermined by higher officials in the U.S. Mission, especially those representing the Department of State. Such conditions are distressing to me, as I know they are to others in the Congress and to many Americans."

"As I recently wrote to the President, there are no easy solutions to the many people problems that beset South Vietnam and all of Indochina. But few of these problems evoke more public compassion and concern, and have greater significance for the future, than the special problems and needs of children, who represent at least fifty percent of South Vietnam's population. I share the view of many Americans that our country should do a great deal more to help these young war victims. But unless some greater measure of priority is attached to this task by our Ambassador in Saigon and other officials within our government, and unless some impediments in our bureaucracy are removed, the cries of children in South Vietnam and other war-affected areas of Indochina will continue."
There follows a summary of the internal memoranda mentioned above, the text of Senator Kennedy's letter to Secretary Rogers, and a summary of the Study Mission recommendations.

**SUMMARY OF INTERNAL MEMORANDA OF U.S. MISSION/SAIGON TOWARD ADOPTIONS AND CHILD WELFARE PROGRAMS IN SOUTH VIETNAM**

1. On March 8, 1978, an internal USAID/S memorandum was prepared by USAID officials responsible for adoption and child welfare programs in South Vietnam. The memorandum contained a number of recommendations, and was, in the main, urging that the GVN M/SW be given the most vigorous support from the highest levels of the U.S. Mission. The memo was forwarded to the USAID director for transmittal to Deputy Ambassador Charles Whitehouse. The memo was never transmitted, but suppressed.

2. According to the memo, early in 1973 USAID officials responsible for adoption and child welfare programs, requested "an audience with the Deputy Ambassador to enlist his intercession with the [GVN] Prime Minister to urge action" on overseas adoptions and the strengthening of the GVN M/SW, in the context of meeting "the needs of all children disadvantaged by the war." The audience was denied by Deputy Ambassador Whitehouse.

3. According to the memo, on February 26, however, Whitehouse, "at the request of the Embassy Public Affairs Officer," called a meeting "to discuss Mission participation in an hour long documentary by NBC . . . on the plight of the GI-fathered child left behind in Vietnam."

4. According to a March 4, Whitehouse memo on the Feb. 26 meeting, sudden urgency was put on the adoption and child welfare issue for a number of reasons, "including public and Congressional pressures from America".

5. Among other things the Whitehouse memo took note of the fact "that for years prior to last summer, for various reasons, mainly bureaucratic ineptitude and sluggishness, the number of VIetnamese orphans eligible for overseas adoption was very small." The memo clearly implied that an increase in the number of adoptions would meet "public and Congressional pressures", and no concern was expressed for the broader humanitarian issue of child welfare and the long term rehabilitation of all children disadvantaged by the war.

6. The suppressed March 8 USAID memo mentioned above was prepared in response to the Whitehouse memo of March 4. The USAID memo, in addition to urging "the most vigorous support from the highest levels of the U.S. Mission" for the GVN M/SW, also made these points:

   a. "USAID finds the statement of U.S. Mission policy pertaining to the adoption by American adoptive parents of orphans and mixed blood children in Vietnam to be completely unacceptable."

   b. "The U.S. Mission must not undermine the confidence and integrity of the Ministry of Social Welfare at this critical juncture where the Ministry is beginning to exercise leadership . . ."

   c. "Increased funding by the Mission of Ministry of Social Welfare child welfare activities will provide only short-term benefits unless the Ministry is fully supported in its efforts to upgrade orphanages and day care services as well as monitor intercountry adoption."

**TEXT OF LETTER TO SECRETARY OF STATE WILLIAM P. ROGERS BY SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY, CHAIRMAN OF THE JUDICIARY SUBCOMMITTEE ON REFUGEES**

**MAY 22, 1973.**

Hon. William P. Rogers,
Secretary of State,
Department of State.

**DEAR MR. SECRETARY:** As you may know, following the return of its Study Mission to Indochina, in mid-April the Judiciary Subcommittee on Refugees began a series of public hearings on humanitarian needs resulting from the war and the kinds of additional effort our country could make in helping to meet these needs. In light of the very high percentage of children in the population of the war-affected areas, and the special problems the conflict has brought to young people, on May 11: the Subcommittee held a hearing on the children of Indochina, especially those in South Vietnam. Witnesses before the Subcommittee included Mr. Robert Nooter, Assistant Administrator for Supporting Assistance in the Agency for International Development (AID), and
two members of the Study Mission—Dr. James Dumps, Dean, School of Social Service, Fordham University, and Mr. Wells Klein, Executive Director, American Council for Nationalities Service.

With regard to the situation in South Vietnam, the hearing record and Study Mission findings clearly establish that, until recent months, the special problems of children, including those fathered by Americans, received scant attention in official quarters; and, because of this, both our own government and the Government of South Vietnam have a backlog of responsibility in meeting child welfare needs. The hearing record and Study Mission findings also suggest that one of the continuing impediments to more meaningful progress in this area—especially as it concerns long-term rehabilitation goals—relates to conflicting assessments within the U.S. Mission in Saigon, over such matters as the urgency and scope of child welfare needs, the degree of priority our government should attach to these needs, and the kind of commitment our government should make to encourage and support the long-term efforts of the South Vietnamese Ministry of Social Welfare, the voluntary agencies and others, in restoring the lives and spirit of the youngest war victims.

Study Mission findings, supported by internal memoranda of the U.S. Mission and conversations in the field, strongly suggest that legitimate efforts by some American officials to upgrade our country’s long-term policy and program priorities, have been repeatedly undermined by higher officials in the U.S. Mission, especially those representing the Department of State. Such conditions are distressing to me, as I know they are to others in the Congress and to many Americans.

As I recently wrote to the President, there are no easy solutions to the many people problems that beset South Vietnam, and all of Indochina. But few of these problems evoke more public compassion and concern, and have greater significance for the future, than the special problems and needs of children, who represent at least fifty percent of South Vietnam’s population. I share the view of many Americans that our country should do a great deal more to help these young war victims. But unless some greater measure of priority is attached to this task by our Ambassador in Saigon and other officials within our government, and unless some impediments in our bureaucracy are removed, the crisis of Children in South Vietnam and other war-affected areas of Indochina will continue.

In the hearing on May 11, Dean Dumson and Mr. Klein submitted a number of recommendations to energize American policy towards the special problems and needs of children in South Vietnam. Enclosed are excerpts from their testimony, which, in consultation with members of the Study Mission and representatives of interested voluntary agencies, are currently under review by officials in AID.

Hopefully, our government will take immediate steps along the lines recommended by the Study Mission, and I look forward to getting your comments on American policy toward helping the youngest war victims in South Vietnam and the other countries in the area. Many thanks for your consideration and best wishes.

Sincerely,

EDWARD M. KENNEDY.

SUMMARY OF STUDY MISSION RECOMMENDATIONS CURRENTLY UNDER REVIEW BY THE AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE

1. Invite the establishment of, and fund, a consortium of experienced and professional competent voluntary agencies to facilitate and expedite inter-country adoption of Vietnamese children for whom adoption is legally possible and clearly the best plan. Particular priority should be given to the racially mixed child. The primary bottleneck with regard to inter-country adoption at present is the lack of adequate services and staff in Vietnam. We view this recommendation as an urgent requirement, though we recognize that adoption must still be handled on a case by case basis to protect all parties concerned. The expensive services for the few at the expense of the many is unconscionable. Therefore, the consortium must equally concern itself with providing counselling services to mothers who may be considering abandoning their children, and with the immediate upgrading and improvement of child care services and institutions in Vietnam.
2. Expedite the inter-country adoption process by assigning one additional officer to the INS regional office in Hong Kong so that U.S. government formalities will not represent a bottleneck as they have, on occasion, in the past. INS is planning to transfer 1,000 inspectors to the U.S. Customs Bureau in the near future. We ask that one of these be diverted to Hong Kong.

3. The U.S. Government, through its Embassy in Saigon, should urge the Government of Vietnam to expedite passage, or interim implementation by decree, of sound adoption legislation which, we understand, is presently in draft form.

4. The Government of the United States should formally transmit to the Government of Vietnam a clear statement of intent of support for programs designed to assure the welfare of children in Vietnam. This recommendation will have the dual effect of indicating American commitment particularly in terms of funds on a more than a year-to-year basis, and of stimulating the Government of Vietnam to give its own child welfare programs and Ministry of Social Welfare reasonable support and priority. One of the persistent problems is that U.S. funding is only available on a year to year basis. The Vietnamese, understandably, are reluctant to commit themselves to long-range programs with only a few months of funding in sight.

5. The U.S. Government should strongly urge the Vietnamese Government to lift its present restriction on hiring new personnel within the Ministry of Social Welfare. At present, the Ministry does not have adequate personnel, in terms of numbers of professional competence, to supply many of the child welfare services needed.

6. AID should be authorized to proceed with direct hire from outside its own personnel resources in order to replace departing child welfare advisory and support program by several additional positions.

7. The Subcommittee on Refugees should review the various pieces of legislation addressed to the needs of children of Vietnam which have been introduced over the past two years to determine whether modification of previously proposed legislation, or new legislation, is warranted to ensure that we can and will continue to exercise our responsibilities to the children of Vietnam.

8. The appropriate Subcommittee of the Judiciary Committee should be asked to explore some modification of our present Immigration and Nationality Act in order to enable American fathered children in Vietnam to obtain American citizenship, if they so wish, upon reaching their majority.

9. Until such time as multi-lateral mechanisms can be determined and utilized, the Agency for International Development should continue to work with the Government of Vietnam, particularly the Ministry of Social Welfare, in an advisory and supporting role, to assist that government in carrying out its responsibilities to the children of Vietnam, responsibilities which we share. After many years of inaction, AID has initiated a well-thought-out program of child welfare assistance in Vietnam. The AID continuing effort should be encouraged and supported by this Subcommittee and by the Administration.
APPENDIX VI

SELECTED PRESS REPORTS AND COMMENTARY ON THE PROBLEMS OF ORPHANS AND CHILDREN IN INDOCHINA

[From Newsweek magazine, May 28, 1973]

VIETNAM’S WAR-TORN CHILDREN

(By Loren Jenkins)

She was 13 years old, a frail and shy child named Huynh Thi Chi. Along with her parents and six brothers and sisters, she lived in the village of Dien Bang where she tended the family vegetable patch, helped her mother clean house and, on occasion, plowed the rice fields with her father’s water buffalo. Then, on a hot and steamy day in 1968, the tranquil world of Huynh Thi Chi vanished in a blinding flash. Artillery shells began to fall as Chi was working in the fields, and when the barrage ended she lay in the paddy, bleeding and paralyzed from the waist down. Last week, with the aid of stiff metal braces and crutches, Chi stood on the veranda of a Saigon home where she lives with a dozen other paraplegic children. Casting her coalblack eyes to the ground, she whispered: “I do not even know which side fired the shell that left me like this. All I want and hope is to try to live again.”

Hope is a rare quality in today's Vietnam—almost as rare as a child who has not been scarred, one way or another, by the war. Unlike conventional military conflicts, the Vietnamese war knew no fixed boundaries or front lines, and it made little distinction between soldier and civilian, adult and child. Although the pain the war inflicted upon the children is impossible to calculate statistically, the estimates are immense.

Foreign medical experts say there are hundreds of thousands of malnourished and crippled youngsters like Chi, children who not only suffer their physical agony but face a life of isolation in a society that has traditionally turned its back on the weak and disabled. At least 800,000 children—and possibly as many as 1.5 million—have lost one or both of their parents to the war. While some have been taken in by relatives, countless others have been cast adrift in fostering refugee camps, jammed into filthy and overcrowded orphanages or simply left to wander the streets and beg or steal. As one American doctor says, “It is a tragedy of life and limbs whose magnitude we simply will never know.”

Some 8 million Vietnamese—nearly half the nation’s population—are under the age of 15, yet the government in Saigon allocates only 1 per cent of its national budget for the care and rehabilitation of its crippled, diseased or orphaned children. “Orphans are not producers,” Maj. Gen. Pham Van Dong, Minister for Veteran Affairs, explains. “They are spenders at a time when we need productive returns on our investment.” The American Government is also niggardly when it comes to contributing funds for the children of Vietnam—despite the fact that many of those children fell victim to U.S. bombs and others are the illegitimate offspring of American servicemen. Some private American agencies have tried to ease the burden by arranging adoptions of Vietnamese children.

For the children injured by the war, medical facilities are antiquated and inadequate. The country suffers from a woeful lack of trained doctors—only one of every 8,000 hospital patients. “Some of the hospitals here,” one U.S. official in Saigon said to me, “would make Dr. Schweitzer’s African clinic look like Walter Reed hospital. As for doctors, the Vietnamese Army has drafted many and hundreds of others have gone abroad either to avoid military service or because the money is much better.”
One bright spot in the medical picture is the modern 54-bed plastic-surgery hospital in Saigon set up by Dr. Arthur Barsky, a physician noted for his successful treatment of disfigured survivors of the Hiroshima A-bomb. The second-floor ward of the Barsky hospital is crowded with children, either waiting for their operations or just recovering from them.

Fourteen-year-old Le Thi Ut, a tiny girl with a body scarred by flame and torn by shrapnel, is about to undergo yet another of the dozen operations she must have. She sits in bed with her right leg and left arm in splints and scarlet-red graft scars still healing on her thighs and hips. "I was out working in the fields," she told me, "when I found some bullets and grenades lying around. I wanted to get rid of them because I did not like war. I threw them into the fire but they exploded." Le Thi Bo, 13, was playing in her home in Saigon when a bullet tore her chin away. When I saw her she had just been wheeled out of surgery after the seventh operation to graft a rib onto her jaw to rebuild her chin. "It is horrible what has happened to some of these children," says Dr. Caesar Arrunategui, "but you would be surprised at how much we can do to fix them up so they will not have to go through life thinking they are freaks."

**FLOTSAM**

Not all the children can be fixed up. One needs only to step outside the door of the venerable Continental Palace Hotel in Saigon to see the youthful human flotsam that is the last decade of war has cast adrift. Ragged children of all ages and sizes—some orphaned, some malnourished—swarm through the streets scraping a pitance by shining shoes or washing cars or selling garlands of jasmine. Some just beg; others steal or become prostitutes—and some, even the youngest, have turned to pushing drugs.

Cau is a veteran of the streets, a tiny 8-year-old who has been selling peanuts at the Continental Place's veranda bar since she was 3. For Cau there was never a childhood, and it shows in her hardened face and eyes which hardly ever reveal even the hint of a smile or a sign of warmth. She does not know her surname—when I tried to ask her about herself and her life, she just shrugged, looked blank and said in nasal English: "Buy peanuts, Joe?"

Among the forlorn pack of street urchins, there is a sad and haunting unwillingness to talk about the past—if they remember it. To many, the past is only something to erase from their minds; to forget is to escape. Ten-year-old Dong would only tell me his name and age. He would not say how he had lost one leg, or how he got the napalm burns that scar his remaining leg and both his arms. He lives on the street and sleeps on the sidewalk, hoping that the horde of rats that infest Saigon will not bother him. When I asked Dong how he was wounded, he choked back tears and said, "I do not want to talk to anyone about it."

Other children have been so traumatized by their experiences they cannot recall what made them what they are. Nguyen Thanh Son is a tall, handsome boy of 12 whom I saw one day standing by himself at the tawdry Go Vap orphanage in the town of Tu Duc, gazing at the world through his one good eye. The other is just a gaping socket. At first, he would not reply at all to my questions, but finally he kicked the dirt and said, "I don't know what happened. I have been this way since I was 2."

As Son and I talked, other children among the orphanage's 200 charges sat in the dusty courtyard unattended. There are supposed to be six nuns to care for the children at Go Vap, but the only person around when I visited was the housekeeper. The children, most of them barefoot and in rags, many with sores or obvious maladies, simply wandered aimlessly with no guidance. In the nursery, emaciated and malnourished babies lay in the cribs in diapers, made from old sacks, once used to hold rice donated by the U.S. Go Vap is not unique; almost all of the 183 "approved" orphanages are squalid, poorly equipped, understaffed and overcrowded—worse than any Charles Dickens described. "The state some of the babies are in when they are brought here is simply incredible," said a nurse at one orphanage. "And we have only enough staff to change their diapers and feed them." Too often, the children seem to be little more than swollen bellies carried on stalks of legs—and the mortality rate ranges between 50 and 70 per cent.

**BURDEN**

In part, the tragic condition of Vietnam's orphanages stems from an Oriental belief that it is the responsibility of relatives—not strangers—to care for
parentless children. "We intentionally do not want to build more orphanages," says Tran Nguon Phieu, the Minister of Social Welfare, "because we want the people themselves to take care of the children." Many orphans are indeed being tended by relatives—but U.S. Agency for International Development officials say that at least 150,000 of these are living in "severely disadvantaged" conditions and urgently need the kind of care and medical attention that impoverished relatives cannot provide. However laudable the government's child-care philosophy may be in principle, the fact remains that in Vietnam today the people cannot—or will not—assume the extra burden of caring for the children who need help.

Perhaps the children who suffer the most as a result are the 25,000 mixed-blood babies, mostly the offspring of American GI's. (Again, accurate statistics are not available; one American foundation official told me there could be as many as 100,000 such children.) "These are the forgotten souls of the Vietnam war," says Robert G. Trott, director of CARE in Vietnam, "When the soldiers left, the money that these children's fathers—or friends of their fathers—had provided left with them."

Many of the mixed-blood babies are half-black and, despite the Saigon government's official insistence that discrimination does not exist in Vietnam, Vietnamese readily admit that they consider the black babies "inferior." Even those who love and take care of the black babies worry about their future in Vietnam. Mrs. Vo Thi Nen, who has cared for her daughter's black baby since the child's mother died, told me: "He is too different from the other children in our community. I think he would be better off in the United States."

The Saigon government does not agree. Vietnamese policy is to discourage adoptions by non-Vietnamese—a policy that Saigon implements by entangling adoption papers in mounds of red tape. The feeling that Vietnamese children should be raised in Vietnamese society certainly has merit. But as Elsie Weaver, of the World Vision child-care agency in Vietnam, notes, "The question is not whether a child will be better off being raised in his own culture. The choice is not there. I see so many babies in orphanages who are simply going to die unless somebody rescues them." The ideal rescuers, the Vietnamese, do not seem to be up to the task—in part because of their own poverty, in part because of their demoralized state of mind. "To survive, Vietnam has had to rely on negative values: corruption, graft, self-interest," says Dr. Olivetti Nikolajezak, the only child psychologist in Vietnam. "Morality has simply disappeared in much of the society."

To be sure, Washington has funneled massive amounts of aid to Saigon, and Nixon Administration officials point out that the U.S. is spending some $20 million this year on "children-related programs." But virtually all of that money goes for general-welfare programs, with only $1.1 million used directly to benefit the neediest children—the orphans, the crippled, the malformed. And that sum is considerably diluted as it trickles down through the corruption-riddled Vietnamese bureaucracy. "What surprises surprise is the insensitivity of our government," said Dr. James R. Dumpson of Fordham University, who recently completed a visit to Vietnam to study postwar humanitarian problems. "There are simply a large number of children for whom [Americans] share a responsibility—who desperately need our help—help which is not now forthcoming." If that help does not come from the United States, it may not come at all.

A NEW FAMILY FOR DUONG MUOT

(Note.—Shortly after he arrived in Saigon in late 1969 to join the Newsweek bureau, correspondent Paul Brinkley-Rogers and his wife, Kathleen, began to explore the possibility of adopting a Vietnamese war orphan. Now reporting from the magazine's Tokyo bureau, Brinkley-Rogers filed this personal account of the Americanization of Duong Muot, who has since become Sarah Brinkley-Rogers.)

(By Paul Brinkley-Rogers)

A hundred ragged kids surged toward us as Kathleen and I entered the Viet-Hoa Sino-Vietnamese Orphanage in Saigon. They broke into a rhythm
chant that we couldn't understand. Some of the nubile ones clawed their way up my trouser legs and wiggled onto my back and arms; in a moment, I was immobilized by a half-dozen kids clinging to me. They knew exactly why we had come to Viet-Hoa: to adopt a child. We could see desperation in their faces. None of them smiled but their eyes pleaded: "Take me, take me."

We went up and down the rows as we counted the orphans and saw scores of infants lying sick and helpless. "How about this one?" we asked Sister Robert du Sacre-Coeur, the dedicated and deformed Vietnamese nun in charge of Viet-Hoa. "Polio," she replied. "And this one, Sister?" "Retarded." "This cute little boy?" "TB." Twenty-five children are abandoned there each week, and we wondered why the orphanage was not inundated with kids. "God is fair," the sister said quietly. "The same number of children die here each week."

Then we saw Duong Muoi, age eleven months. She was flopped over on her face, as if she had no spine. She could neither sit up nor grasp anything with her hands. We were told that Duong Muoi had been brought to Viet-Hoa nine months earlier by her mother, who already had twelve other children. Because the baby was very ill, the orphanage sent her to a Saigon hospital. She remained there, half forgotten, until she was covered with bedsores and rat bites. When Duong Muoi returned to Viet-Hoa, she bore a wicked-looking 2-inch scar on her backside from rat bites, large indentations from wounds in both legs and a host of tiny pits and scars all over her body. When we first met, her face was completely expressionless—except for a pair of huge, brown eyes that followed us as we moved around the nursery.

Less than a week later, Kathleen returned to Viet-Hoa and brought Duong Muoi home. We put a pink ribbon in her hair, dressed her in a smock and took her out of the orphanage. She fell over. But with Kathleen filling Duong Muoi with U.S. baby formula supplied by an American doctor, and our Chinese maid and Vietnamese cook filling the baby with protein-rich fish sauce, Duong Muoi was sitting up in a few weeks. Soon, she was smiling, too.

LUCKY BREAKS

But our efforts to adopt Duong Muoi turned into a nightmare of complexity. It took months to obtain the adoption papers, then a passport and exit visa for Duong Muoi and then a U.S. entry visa on top of those. We had some lucky breaks. By chance, we were in Guam when a special U.S. Federal court was holding naturalization hearings. Without going through a customary five-year waiting period, Duong Muoi was made an American citizen on the spot.

We gave our daughter the name Sarah, which to our minds seemed to fit her friendly and inquisitive nature, and the Vietnamese middle name Thuy-Nga—"beautiful moon"—which fitted her Vietnamese soul. She seemed to possess a desperate need to learn and was talking before she was standing. When she began to stand, we discovered that she could not put her left heel to the ground because wounds had shortened her calf muscle. A British medical team in Saigon did a muscle-lengthening operation. And last week in a Tokyo hospital, Sarah underwent a second operation. She is doing fine, though she now faces the unhappy prospect of several months in and out of casts.

Friends sometimes ask us, "If we feel differently about Sarah than we do about Chip, our own natural son who was born after we adopted Sarah. Our immediate response was "No," and it still is. No one has ever asked us if adopting Sarah has given us any kind of special satisfaction. It has. But we remember the orphanages of Saigon, where there are still thousands of kids like Sarah who have been abandoned because of the war. That memory doesn't give us any satisfaction at all.

HOW TO ADOPT A VIETNAMESE

Last year, almost a thousand Vietnamese children were adopted by non-Vietnamese families. Of this number, fewer than 400 were adopted by Americans chiefly because of the complexities involved in the adoption process on both sides of the Pacific. Nevertheless, an increasing number of Americans are interested in adopting a Vietnam war orphan. Here is a guide to how to go about it:

CHILDREN

There are some 20,000 children in licensed orphanages in South Vietnam. There are also an estimated 100,000 parentless children in refugee camps, re-
settlement sites or roaming the streets of Saigon and other cities. Not all of them are available for adoption, however, and in every case surviving relatives must be given the first chance to adopt the child.

**Eligibility**

Americans who wish to adopt a Vietnamese child must satisfy South Vietnamese, U.S. and state adoption laws. The South Vietnamese laws are particularly stringent, requiring that both parents be over 35, have been married for at least ten years and have no children. However, a loophole allows President Nguyen Van Thieu to waive the requirements of the law—and he has done so on quite a few occasions in the past. Many of the orphanages in South Vietnam are Roman Catholic and are reluctant to turn over children to families of other faiths.

**Procedures**

Local adoption agencies in the U.S. investigate applicants to determine whether they are suited to become adoptive parents. These agencies then make recommendations to three American agencies authorized by the South Vietnamese Government to handle such adoptions: Travelers Aid International Social Service of America, New York City; the Holt Adoption Program, Eugene, Ore., and Friends of Vietnam, Boulder, Colo. Only these three agencies can make all the necessary legal arrangements in South Vietnam, handle the paper work required in the U.S. and—if all goes well—arrange to transport the child to its new home in the U.S.

**Cost**

Fees vary from agency to agency and according to the income of the prospective parents. But the average cost—which includes the agency’s processing fee, the legal fee and the price of air transportation—is a bit more than $1,000. Some of the agencies charge low-income families only minimal fees.

**Waiting Time**

Due to red tape in Saigon and archaic South Vietnamese adoption laws, it used to take an average of two years to complete the adoption process. Things have been speeded up somewhat in recent months, but it still takes a year in most cases. For those Americans who wish to adopt half-black children, the process is considerably easier, since the agencies are finding it difficult to find adoptive parents for them. Families willing to adopt a handicapped child automatically go to the head of the line.

[From the Christian Science Monitor, Apr. 28, 1979]

**Helping Vietnam’s Children**

“Peace. That is what the children of Vietnam need most. But even if the lasting peace desired by so many here develops out of the cease-fire agreement, the problems of many of South Vietnam’s orphans and refugee children will not be easily solved.”

So wrote this newspaper’s Saigon correspondent, Daniel Southerland, in his series last February on the effects of the war on Vietnam’s children.

Outside aid will be necessary for years to come in helping meet the needs of the child refugees and homeless. One of the international organizations that has already done valuable work for children in South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia is UNICEF (the United Nations Children’s Fund). Now UNICEF is planning to extend its work to the Communist-held areas of South Vietnam and also to North Vietnam.

UNICEF director Henry Labouisse is asking for an immediate allocation of $8 million for emergency aid for the children of all of Indo-China. He would like to see the program expanded during 1973-74 to a total of $30 million. This would require special contributions from UNICEF members. Up till now Hanoi has been reluctant to accept UN help, but it might be more willing to open the door to UNICEF than to any other UN agency.

In the long run, as our correspondent pointed out, foreign organizations and governments can only do so much to help. Aid of the hand-out variety can
even have a debilitating effect on the recipient. The best form of aid is to help the receiving country help itself. This is the goal that UNICEF will aim at in Indo-China. It will give special attention to such projects as restoring basic health services fighting malnutrition and training social workers.

Tens of thousands of children have suffered in one way or another from the Vietnam war. Many of the children in the rural areas have known nothing but war. There can be no higher priority than succoring these children and giving them a fresh start along paths of peace.


HELPING TO REHABILITATE THE YOUNG IN SOUTH VIETNAM

(By Della Denman)

VINH LONG, SOUTH VIETNAM.—Yu Thi Mal is a former heroin pusher. She and her family used to peddle narcotics to the servicemen at Saigon’s Tan Son Nhut air base. An attractive, sleek-haired 18-year-old, Mal lived with an American construction worker and has a 10-month-old daughter with fair hair and blue eyes.

But she has nearly forgotten her traumatic arrest and three awful months in South Vietnam’s women’s jail, where she said the women almost kill each other fighting over what food there is. Since late last year she has been living in a remarkable rehabilitation and detention center run by a group of Irish nuns in this small dusty town on the Mekong River, 65 miles southwest of Saigon.

The five Good Shepherd nuns at the center educate and teach trades to some 150 juvenile delinquents, prostitutes, street urchins who have run afoul of the law, and a few unwed mothers and their children. Most of the girls are referred to the nuns by the police courts or the women’s jail.

The Center for Protection for Young Women and Girls is the Government’s only vocational training center for girls. It is housed in a fine old two-story French colonial villa, once the property of late President Ngo Dinh Diem’s brother Thuc, a bishop in the Roman Catholic Church, who is now living in exile in France. The house and its long yellow-brick school and trade buildings stand in extensive gardens looking out onto the exquisite emerald-green paddy fields of the Mekong Delta.

One of Mal’s friends is a 17-year-old former prostitute, Bach Yen. Now she has swapped her miniskirt, high heels and false eyelashes for a starched uniform and is learning hairdressing.

“I used to earn 2,000 plasters [about $4.50] a night in Qui Nhon,” she said as she carefully set a new hair style in the mock salon. “With the Americans I could demand even more. When I leave here and join a hairdresser’s it’ll take me a week to earn the same.

80 ARE PRIMARY SCHOOL AGE

“I never liked the job, I did it for the money. But now the Americans are gone, bars are closing and many girls have lost jobs. I don’t think I will go back.”

Fifty of the nuns’ wards are teenagers like Bach Yen, who worked in bars or brothels, stole, picked pockets, or just loitered in the streets. Another 80 are primary school age—refugees, orphans, vagrants, and boys and girls from broken homes. The center also has several abandoned babies.

The young children, who wear a prim navy and white uniform, go to the home’s neat verandahed primary school. The more advanced attend the Vinh Long secondary school.

The older girls work under Vietnamese teachers in the trade school, where they learn sewing, embroidery, cooking and household management, child care, hairdressing and typing. They stay for two or three years—long enough to absorb a trade—and then the sisters find them jobs in Saigon or the delta towns.

“They’re quick to learn,” said Sister Fidelma in her soft Irish brogue, “but over half the girls who come here are illiterate. Some girls are 17 and 18, and they can’t do their ABC.”

The nuns were asked to come to Vietnam in 1968 by President Diem, a fervent Catholic, who had just outlawed prostitution along with gambling and dancing. The nuns were given Bishop habilitate.”
"Those were rough days," Sister Fidelma recalled. "The girls used to pick up iron bars and fight each other. But those first girls were mostly 25 to 30, too old to correct. Now they're under 20's and we give them so much work they've no time to think about rebelling."

The nuns receive five new arrivals each months. At first, the girls often look for escape routes, but the 3-acre compound is heavily guarded and enclosed by a high wall.

Nguyen Thi Dep, 18, has been at Vinh Long two months. Her parents are dead, she explained over the hum of hair dryers.

"I lived with a gang of girls in Saigon market," she said. "We had a tin-roofed shack. We worked for one man and made regular raids into the nearby streets. If we made a good grab, he would give us some money for food. If we didn't get anything, he would beat us."

When she arrived at the home her head had to be shaved to get rid of the lice. You can still see the marks where she was beaten.

SHES BEGINNING TO SETTLE IN

"She spent the first few weeks hiding in the bushes in the front garden waiting for an opportunity to escape," said Sister Patricia, who has been at the home the longest. "We have to watch her constantly because she steals so much. But she is beginning to settle in.

"All the girls use coarse language and fight," she added. "They appear docile, but they're cunning and sly. Many steal, particularly from the new girls. They sleep above the school, and need supervisors in their dormitories."

The girls' English is restricted to a few crude expressions learned from American soldiers, such as "no sweat," "Number 1, G.I.," and "you want boom-boom?" The nuns speak Vietnamese—but insist it is not advanced enough to understand swearing.

Despite their behavior, the girls appear to respond to the regimented life. They are courteous when they talk to the nuns. It is obvious, however, that there are several disturbed children in the home, but they are given no psychiatric help.

The former prostitutes are given moral instruction. And although only 20 per cent of the inmates are Catholics, they all attend the home's tiny chapel three times a week.

"They like the singing and the music in the chapel," Sister Patricia explained, "and then very often they just come and pour out all their sins to us."

After a hard day's work there is little for the girls to do. They form tight cliques and it often takes new girls a month or so to break into the home's "society."

The home has a number of abandoned babies in its large airy kindergarten. Some arrive straight from maternity wards, others come so undernourished that they look like skeletons.

One of the kindergarten's favorites is a 3-year-old curly-headed half-black girl. Her parents, an airman at Can Tho base, 18 miles from the home, and a "houch maid" doing laundry at the base, "have been arguing over possession of Dien since she was born," Dien's Vietnamese teacher said.

"She has been constantly passed from one to the other," the teacher said. "Now she is quite wild. It is impossible to get her to do anything. Now the mother has offered to sell Dien to her father for 500,000 plasters, [about $1,500]."

12-YEAR-OLD WITH ONE LEG

There are also dozens of children in the home whose parents have been lost or killed in the war. There is one girl whose mother had a mental breakdown and killed her father.

One of the girls in the embroidery class is the striking half-French Monique, who managed to run away while her mother was trying to sell her to a Chinese merchant.

In the math class is 12-year-old Chi, who only has one leg. She was caught in a mortar attack further south in the Delta in 1968. She said she doesn't remember much, but seldom talks.

The nuns have trained over 8,000 girls in 15 years. The Government gives the home 8,000 plasters a month or about $7 for each girl, and the Catholic Relief Services donate food and equipment.
Now the nuns are working on a second project, a community development center being built in a large refugee settlement area just outside Saigon. The nuns will take girls from poor families for a half-a-day's training so they can work at paying jobs the other half of the day.

The sisters try to find the girls jobs in hairdressing or dressmaking shops or as maids, but with more than 200,000 people out of work because of the rapid withdrawal of Americans, jobs are hard to find.

"Some will inevitably go back to the streets," Sister Fidelma conceded. "Some are basically dishonest. You have to change society before you can change people.

"but I see this mission as a great opportunity. The girls are eager to learn and better themselves. They're not doing it out of morality but for their own advantage. Even so, we're giving them a better start in life."

[From The Washington Post, Nov. 26, 1972]

THE ORPHANS LEFT BEHIND
(By Dennis Neeld)

SAIGON (AP).—As U.S. troops withdraw from Vietnam they leave thousands of illegitimate children behind. A conservative guess is 10,000. Some authorities put the figure closer to 20,000.

As many as 1,000 American-fathered children, half of them black, have been located in orphanages, but most are living with their Vietnamese mothers, many of whom are prostitutes or bar girls.

When the French pulled out of Indochina in 1954 all mixed-blood children sired by Frenchmen, whether born in or out of wedlock, were entitled to French citizenship. Thousands went to France where they got free education and other benefits.

The United States, as a matter of policy, has made no such provisions for GIs’ offspring. Social workers and U.S. government officials take the view that any scheme designed exclusively for these children would set them further apart in Vietnamese society.

"Most American-fathered children are living with Vietnamese families and have full Vietnamese brothers and sisters who would not benefit from special assistance," said Wells Klein, general director of the American branch of International Service. "Special programs would identify and isolate the American-fathered child who, by and large, must grow up and make his home in Vietnam."

"My ministry’s policy is not to distinguish racially mixed orphans from others," declared Saigon’s social affairs minister, Dr. Tran Nhuon Phieu. "They are Vietnamese-born citizens and we have no intention of establishing separate orphanages, for this would have a traumatic effect upon them."

Vietnam has a history of contact with other racial and ethnic groups, including French, Chinese, Cambodian and Indian. The mixed-blood child, therefore, is not a new phenomenon. Vietnamese culture does not place great emphasis on racial purity. Light-skinned children often are regarded as the most attractive.

Thus most social workers believe children with white American fathers face few difficulties because of their color and looks. If they bear any stigma at all it likely will arise from their illegitimacy or the background of their mothers as whores and bar girls, say social workers.

The same may not be true of the partly black child.

"The part-black child in Vietnam faces dim prospects because of his color," said Klein. "Because there is no black community in Vietnam, he will grow up and live in relative social isolation. He will always be the oddball."

"Probably for this reason a disproportionately large number of children with black fathers are abandoned and now can be found in Vietnam’s orphanages.

Janita Williams, of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, came to Vietnam last year and in canvassing help for the part-black orphans wrote: "Our visit was heartbreaking. We visited more than 50 orphanages and found many had no medical care and very few workers to feed and clean hundreds of babies. Living conditions were unbelievable and there was no one to give the babies even a tiny bit of love and affection,"
"We saw tiny babies, without clothing, strewn across the cement floors, babies too weak to respond to sound and too weak to keep the flies from resting all over their faces and bodies."

After her visit, Mrs. Williams, wife of the Rev. Hosea Williams, initiated a project to establish orphanages in Saigon and Atlanta, Ga., from which adoption of Negro-fathered children by U.S. couples could be arranged.

Victor Srinivasan, an Indian social worker, was appointed Saigon director and has been in protracted negotiations with the Ministry of Social Welfare.

The South Vietnamese Embassy in Washington informed its government that the SCLC supports the anti-war movement in the United States and favors a total withdrawal of American forces from Vietnam.

"I think the Vietnamese want to assure themselves that the SCLC scheme is not going to be used as some kind of political weapon against them," said Srinivasan.

Ten part-black children taken out of Vietnamese orphanages are being cared for by foreign families in Saigon. Srinivasan is looking after four of them.

"Some of these children obviously would benefit from intercountry adoption," reports Klein. "Those who need homes most are the blacks and the physically handicapped, and there are many couples in the U.S. who would give them homes."

In 1969 the Saigon government barred any mass emigration of children. Adoption by foreign couples became more difficult but still was permitted on an individual basis.

"No country likes to admit that it cannot care for its own children," said Klein. "There are many factors—pride of culture, nationalism and perhaps resentment of foreign involvement."

Vietnamese law requires that adoptive couples be childless after 10 years of marriage and that one partner be over 30. Those failing these requirements need a waiver signed by President Nguyen Van Thieu.

Efforts by the U.S. Embassy and voluntary agencies have reduced the procedure to two months or less; last year 180 Vietnamese children were adopted by American couples.

Rosemary Taylor, an Australian social worker who arranged most of these adoptions, reports she has requests from 50 families for every available child.

Some 100 orphanages in South Vietnam have about 25,000 children. The demand from abroad for adoptions can alleviate the problem marginally. The most pressing need, say social workers, is for assistance programs within Vietnam.

The United States is providing less than $1 million a year toward child welfare programs in this country. A bill introduced by Sen. Harrison Williams, D.-N.J., urged the U.S. government to recognize its "moral responsibility" to assist in the care and protection of all South Vietnamese children, particularly those orphaned or abandoned.

The bill didn't go through, but it is likely that $5 million will be made available for child welfare in Vietnam as a compromise measure. Some of this will assist the adoption of Vietnamese orphans by American couples.

(From The New York Times, Jan. 3, 1972)

EFFORTS GROW TO BRING HERE BABIES THAT G.I.'S LEFT IN VIETNAM

(By Winthrop A. Rockwell)

Ruth Friedman's first daughter was not delivered in a hospital. The 2½-year-old Vietnamese girl was delivered into her mother's arms at Kennedy International Airport on Dec. 11.

Mrs. Friedman wept as she took Le Thi Hong Hao, or Kim Marie as the Friedmans plan to call her, from an Air France stewardess, hugging the crying infant, Mrs. Friedman kissed her softly on the cheek.

"She's probably hungry, and she'll probably have diarrhea until she adjusts to a new diet," observed Naomi Bronstein, who accompanied Kim Marie and five other Vietnamese children on the 50-hour trip from a halfway house in Saigon to New York.

The children were among an estimated 100 to 200 Vietnamese orphans adopted by American families in the last year. Such adoptions, which have
sharply increased since the American build-up in South Vietnam in 1965, have reflected a rising American concern for Vietnamese babies fathered by G.I.'s. Only recently has public attention begun to focus on the issue.

Historically, armies have spawned children and the American army is no exception. In Vietnam, these illegitimate children face a dismal future. Some assistance, however, is provided by the United States Government and private social service agencies.

Before her adoption, Kim Marie lived in a halfway house in Saigon run by Rosemary Taylor, an Australian nurse who has been in Vietnam since 1967. At To Am—warm nest in Vietnamese—Miss Taylor, who has been more successful than anyone in getting children out of the country, cares for orphans turned over to her by overcrowded Catholic orphanages.

Her techniques are unorthodox but effective. With the help of Vietnamese lawyers, she pummels the Vietnamese bureaucracy for clearances to send the children abroad.

"She has the courage, the time, and the fortitude to do it," says her liaison in the United States. "Day after day after day she keeps trying, knowing when to cry, when to laugh, and when to plead."

Miss Taylor will not say how many Vietnamese children she has placed in adoptive homes abroad. Because of the ambivalence of South Vietnamese officials about adoptions, she is afraid her channels will be closed off if she discloses how many children have left.

No one knows for sure how many G.I. babies there are in Vietnam. Donald Luce, an American writer and Vietnam expert, says there may be as many as 200,000, but his figures are almost universally discounted by Government officials. Professional estimates, by American social service agencies and the Vietnamese Ministry of Welfare, range from 5,000 to 15,000.

But for many Americans, the issue has nothing to do with statistics. They hear and read that there are G.I. babies in Vietnam who are homeless, or who are not getting adequate care, and they want to do something about it.

"We Americans must take up our responsibility because we helped bring these children into the world," says Pearl S. Buck, who played a leading role in bringing Korean children to the United States for adoption after the Korean War. "I hate to see half-Americans wasted. Many of the abandoned ones live a miserable life on the streets. The American public is waking up to this problem very slowly."

Marjorie Graves, executive director of Welcome House, an organization which specializes in adoptions of Oriental children, is also concerned. "We have to try to get the children out. They are in terribly crowded conditions, without enough food or individual care. There are fewer children there now than there were a little while ago. They are dying."

In New Jersey, a group called the Council on Adoptible Children, International, has recently become active in organizing to bring Vietnamese orphans to the United States. Roy Bertelson, one of the prime movers of the group, says it is working with Welcome House and Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota to explore the possibility of setting up reception centers in Vietnam where abandoned children could be taken while homes are found for them in the United States.

The council is also helping to form The Committee of 1,000, a group of individuals each contributing $100 to adoption efforts in Vietnam.

Senator Harrison A. Williams-Jr., who has sponsored a bill on Vietnamese child welfare, has worked with the New Jersey group, as have Jim Bouton, the former baseball player and television sports commentator, and Jerry Orbach, the actor.

Why do Americans want to adopt Vietnamese children?

For many people it is just a question of wanting a child. One woman wrote to President Johnson: "I want to know if you want people to open their homes to these children. If so, I would very much like to take one. (Please). You see, I have always wanted a baby of my very own but couldn't have one. So please tell me if I could get one of these. It would make my life complete. I would be so happy."

For others, the concern is to right a wrong. "Since seeing the plight of these small, forgotten, innocent victims of this war on TV," wrote another woman, "I've had little peace of mind."
Sometimes a G.I. falls in love with a child while in Vietnam. John Wetterer of Massapequa, L. I., is taking a vacation from his job at the Chase Manhattan Bank to bring home a 3-year-old Vietnamese boy he got to know when the two were stationed in Vietnam. Mr. Wetterer is not married, but his aunt, who has a Vietnamese child herself, has promised to help care for his son.

There is some feeling among the child welfare professionals and Government officials that amateur efforts to bring Vietnamese children to the United States are somewhat precipitous and do not reflect an understanding of the scope and complexity of the child welfare problem in Vietnam. At the same time, many amateurs say that the professionals are too wrapped up with policy and not sufficiently concerned about the welfare of the children.

"WE AMERICANS MUST TAKE UP OUR RESPONSIBILITY BECAUSE WE HELPED BRING THESE CHILDREN INTO THE WORLD."—PEARL S. BUCK.

Wells C. Klein, the general director of the American branch of International Social Service, agrees that "we can get tied up in our professionalism sometimes and forget the children."

But Mr. Klein, who has been to Vietnam numerous times and is one of the most knowledgeable people in this country about child welfare in Vietnam, is concerned about an overemphasis on adoption as a solution and about an overemphasis on G.I. babies as distinct from the war. To adopt a Vietnamese child—a G.I. baby—is an individual act from other Vietnamese children.

"We have had a sense of helplessness which is concrete and meaningful," he says. "But if we have a responsibility, is it only for American-fathered kids? What about kids whose parents were killed as a result of the war?"

"If we are going to respond to this situation in terms of the needs of children rather than in terms of our guilt and frustration, then we must respond to all children whose needs arise from the American presence in Vietnam and not just those fathered by Americans."

Mr. Klein says that intercountry adoption can be a solution for the relatively few children who are truly orphaned, as well as for the black G.I. babies who face a particularly difficult time if they remain in Vietnam. But to try to bring all of the G.I. babies back from Vietnam would involve taking many of them away from their mothers, something Mr. Klein regards as intolerable.

Another problem in singling out G.I. babies is identifying them. In cases where Caucasian features are obvious or where the father was black, identification is usually not difficult. But there are many cases in which it is not possible to make a positive identification.

Many of the 19,000 children in the 120 officially recognized Vietnamese orphanages are there because their parents can't take care of them. When the parents are not alive, there are often relatives who have some knowledge of or contact with the orphan. In these cases, the South Vietnamese Government refuses to permit intercountry adoptions.

In 1954, after the French were forced out of Indochina, the French Government offered citizenship and educational assistance to children who were judged to have been fathered by French soldiers. Most observers say it is unlikely that the United States will follow the French example.

Nevertheless, there is a bill in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, sponsored by Senator Williams, that would simplify and standardize procedures for Americans who want to adopt Vietnamese children. The bill also provides for the establishment of a Vietnam Child Care Agency, which would coordinate welfare programs in Vietnam.

Until a few months ago, the Vietnamese Government had no firm policy on intercountry adoptions, although small numbers of children did leave Vietnam during the sixties for homes in other countries, with a significant number of departures in the last three years arranged by Rosemary Taylor.

Figures from the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service show that from 1964 through 1970, 383 Vietnamese children officially entered the United States. The numbers increased from 80 in 1964 to 80 in 1970. No figures are available for the last 18 months, but it is believed that the numbers have increased substantially over the 1970 figure.

Last July, the Vietnamese Ministry of Social Welfare clarified its position on adoptions and child welfare assistance. The ministry specifically ruled out mass adoptions; it said its policy was not to distinguish racially mixed chil-
dren from others; and it said that outside groups offering assistance should do so for all orphans without racial distinction. The Agency for International Development has supported the stand of the Ministry of Social Welfare.

Several United States’ social service agencies have had programs of assistance in Vietnam for some time. One of the biggest is Vietnam Christian Service, which maintains 52 international employees and 120 Vietnamese on its staff in Vietnam. Their efforts have included medical and agricultural aid; refugee rehabilitation, restoration of limbs, efforts to have orphaned children cared for through the extended family system, and programs at maternity hospitals to help Vietnamese women care for their babies instead of abandoning them.

Money is a problem. Vietnam Christian Service’s budget has dropped substantially in the last two years. “There is a great hue and cry about humanitarian interests in Vietnam, but try to raise a buck and you can’t,” said Wells Klein.

Last spring, Mr. Klein called a conference in Washington of people from Congress, Government agencies, volunteer groups and the social service agencies. The group examined the adoption situation and, among other things, concluded, according to Mr. Klein, that the dimensions of the problem had been grossly exaggerated and that the Federal Government had not shown any leadership in helping the children.

In its role as the United States has been weak at best.

As recently as 1970, the Department of Defense stated that the welfare of the children was not considered an area of Government responsibility. In June of 1971, the Defense Department, in response to increasing pressure, said it “was not complacent about the morals of servicemen and associated activities.” Then in July, in response to a request from the State Department, the American Embassy in Saigon reported that “responsibility for American-fathered children has become a matter of serious and continuing concern.”

On Sept. 2, the National Security Council, as a result of White House interest, asked the State Department for policy recommendations on the whole matter, recommendations which have now been forwarded to the national Security Council for action.

In October, the South Vietnamese Government submitted a proposal to the State Department for increased child welfare assistance, a proposal which is now being negotiated. “We’re basically for this program,” said Lars H. Hydle, a member of the Vietnam Working Group of the East Asia Bureau in the State Department.

When all is said and done, Vietnam is, as one person put it, “a drop in the bucket compared with the needs of children around the world.”

But for many Americans, helping the Children of Vietnam is one way to try to right a wrong.

ARRANGING AN ADOPTION: CONFUSION AND RED TAPE

There are a few set procedures for those American families wanting to adopt Vietnamese children. Unlike Korean adoptions; where there are at least some clear avenues of approach, Vietnamese adoptions are hit or miss, guess-as-you-go procedures where patience, unyielding determination and cultivation of the right people are the decisive factors.

When Mr. and Mrs. William F. Spicuzza, of Eastlake, Ohio, decided “around the time of the My Lai massacre” that they wanted to adopt a Vietnamese girl, they went first to the social service agencies in nearby Cleveland, but, according to Mr. Spicuzza, who is a chemist, the agencies were either unable or reluctant to help.

During their efforts to find someone who could help them, the Spicuzzas were introduced to a Cleveander who, at that time, was based in Saigon as a State Department liaison between the United States and South Vietnamese Governments. He located a set of twins, a boy and girl, who were available for adoption.

Then the red tape began. Because the twins were found abandoned in the street with no clue about their parents, birth certificates had to be authorized and issued. An official search for parents or relatives was conducted, since South Vietnamese law permits adoption only where there are no living relatives. A court hearing was held. All of this had to be arranged from 10,000 miles away through the offices of a South Vietnamese lawyer.
Immigration authorities in Cleveland were consulted about United States regulations that require that the prospective parents must either go and meet the children in the country where the adoption is taking place (in this case Vietnam) or meet the pre-adoption requirements of the particular state in which the parents live.

Five months after they started the adoption process, the Spicuzzas found they would be unable to meet the Ohio pre-adoption requirements. So last March, they flew to Saigon, where they concluded negotiations for the children to leave South Vietnam and obtained final approval for the adoption. They also had to arrange for special dispensation—signed personally by South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu—for the adoption, since they did not meet the standard South Vietnamese requirement that adoptive parents be over 30, have been married for at least 10 years, and have no natural children of their own.

Ten days after they arrived in South Vietnam, having been housed and helped by their friend in the State Department, the Spicuzzas, who have a 4-year-old son, Patrick, flew home with their new 11-month-old twins.

Do Kim Sa and Do Kim Xuyen, or Laurie and Terrie as the Spicuzzas call them, were abandoned on the street just a few days after they were born. At the time each weighed two pounds. They were first taken to the Viet Hoa orphanage in Cholon, the Chinese section of Saigon, and later moved to Rosemary Taylor's halfway house, where they remained until the Spicuzzas came to take them to the United States.

The adoption was not cheap. The round trip to Saigon cost $1,200 each; for the twins, the fare was $100 each. The Vietnamese lawyer who arranged many of the details was paid $150.

"The most discouraging thing," said Mrs. Spicuzza, who is a part-time nurse in a local hospital, "was the attitude of the American social service agencies, who could only ask whether the children would be better off in the United States. Our response was that at least in this country there is no war and plenty of food."