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Canada opens doors for further 1,000 Vietnamese refugees

Canada plans to increase its resettlement commitment for Indochinese refugees by 3,000, bringing to 12,000 the total Canadian commitment for 1979, Secretary of State for External Affairs Flora MacDonald and Minister of Employment and Immigration Ron Atkey announced recently.

After reviewing the situation in Southeast Asia of recent weeks, the Government has decided to increase by 1,000 a contingency reserve of 2,000, created by the former Federal Government to help meet emergencies. That program, announced late last year, provided for resettlement of 10,000 refugees world-wide with 5,000 allocated to Southeast Asia. The Ministers' statement appears below:

The Government firmly believes that the root causes of the whole refugee problem in Southeast Asia must be tackled, including the inter-relationship between the exodus and the gross and persistent violations of human rights in all the countries — Viet Nam, Kampuchea and Laos — from which refugees are still fleeing. As regards Viet Nam, it now appears clear that the Hanoi Government has embarked on a systematic policy to

expel, on ethnic grounds, a whole segment of its population, most of which has been resident in Viet Nam for generations. While Canada supports the rights of all the peoples to depart from their countries of origin, this must be done in an orderly and humane way which does not involve physical danger or intimidation and which does not amount to active expulsion. It must be made very clear to the Government of Viet Nam that the international community finds entirely unacceptable a policy of expulsion which has caused great human suffering and has confronted concerned countries everywhere with a humanitarian problem of daunting proportions. To this end, the Government of Canada will be making these views clear to the Government of Viet Nam both bilaterally and multilaterally. With this in mind, Canada intends to support the convening of an international meeting, under the auspices of the U.N. Secretary General; which would examine the whole refugee problem in Southeast Asia, including the political causes of the exodus.

Canada has also expressed our serious concern to the governments of Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, over recent announcements concerning their refugee policies, particularly their reported determination that new arrivals should be forced back to sea. While recognizing the very heavy burden countries of first asylum have willingly assumed by offering temporary haven to refugees, Canada nevertheless believes that any concerted



Sentinel

A young Vietnamese child is comforted by Captain Marcelle Langlais of the Canadian Forces after arriving in Canada with a group of refugees from Hai Hong.

Ninety-three years ago today...

The *Pacific Express*, the first regular Canadian passenger train arrived on time in Port Moody, British Columbia, after making the first scheduled trip across Canada. At that time, it was also the longest continuous scheduled train trip in the world.