

The original documents are located in Box 13, “8/10/75 - Talking Points for Fort Chafee, Arkansas Refugee Center” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE PRESIDENT HAS ~~SEEN~~

TALKING POINTS FOR FORT CHAFFEE, ARKANSAS

REFUGEE CENTER, SUNDAY, AUGUST 10, 1975

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1. I AM VERY PLEASED TO VISIT FORT CHAFFEE TO
SEE FIRST-HAND WHAT IS BEING DONE TO HELP THE VIETNAMESE
REFUGEES. AND I WANT TO PERSONALLY THANK ALL WHO ARE
PARTICIPATING IN THE RELOCATION EFFORT -- ALL 1,700 OF YOU --

FROM THE ARMY, THE FEDERAL AGENCIES AND THE VOLUNTEER AGENCIES. *Volag*

YOU ARE TO BE HIGHLY COMMENDED FOR AIDING AMERICANS TO OPEN THEIR HEARTS AND THEIR HOMES TO THESE REFUGEES.

2. SINCE FORT CHAFFEE OPENED ON MAY SECOND AS A REFUGEE CENTER, SPONSORS HAVE BEEN FOUND FOR NEARLY 21,000 PERSONS. APPROXIMATELY THAT SAME NUMBER ARE STILL AWAITING SPONSORSHIP.

MORE THAN 51,000 REFUGEES HAVE GONE THROUGH ALL FOUR OF

OUR DOMESTIC RELOCATION CENTERS, WITH SOME 54,000 STILL

REMAINING. ANOTHER 4,800 ARE STILL IN THE GUAM CENTER.

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Indo Chinese

3. SO FAR, VIETNAMESE REFUGEES HAVE BEEN

SETTLED IN ALL 50 STATES AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

ARKANSAS, PARTICULARLY, HAS OPENED ITS ARMS TO THESE

FINE PEOPLE.

ALTHOUGH IT RANKS 33RD IN POPULATION, THIS STATE RANKS
18TH NATIONALLY IN THE NUMBER OF REFUGEES SPONSORED.

YOUR GOVERNOR, DAVID PRYOR, HAS TAKEN A SPECIAL INTEREST--
MEETING THE FIRST ARRIVALS AT THE AIRPORT AND VISITING HERE
A FEW DAYS LATER.

HE ALSO HAS ESTABLISHED A SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE
EMPLOYMENT POSSIBILITIES FOR VIETNAMESE DOCTORS WHILE THEY
RECEIVE ADDITIONAL EDUCATION.

4. IN ADDITION, THE ARKANSAS CHILDRENS'
HOSPITAL AND THE UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS MEDICAL SCHOOL
AT LITTLE ROCK ARE PROVIDING LONG-TERM CARE FOR
VIETNAMESE CHILDREN IF FUNDS ARE NOT AVAILABLE FROM
SPONSORING FAMILIES.

WESTARK COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN FORT SMITH IS PLANNING AN
EDUCATION PROGRAM AND THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION
HAS BEEN HOLDING ENGLISH CLASSES SINCE THIS CAMP OPENED
FOR SOME 6,000 CHILDREN.

THE Y.M.C.A. HERE HAS RECREATION CENTERS FOR INDOOR AND
OUTDOOR SPORTS AND HOLDS DISCUSSION MEETINGS SO MEMBERS
OF THE COMMUNITY CAN HELP ACQUAINT REFUGEES WITH AMERICAN
CUSTOMS AND ATTITUDES.

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WITHOUT THESE GROUPS AND OTHERS SUCH AS THE SALVATION
ARMY AND THE RED CROSS, THE TASK OF HELPING THE REFUGEES
WOULD BE MUCH HARDER. ALTOGETHER, YOU HAVE DONE A
MAGNIFICENT JOB AND EVERY RESIDENT OF ARKANSAS SHOULD BE
VERY PROUD OF IT. I CERTAINLY AM.

5. WHAT IS BEING DONE HERE AT FORT CHAFFEE
AND IN THE OTHER RELOCATION CENTERS DEMONSTRATES ONCE
AGAIN THE NATURALLY GENEROUS SPIRIT OF THE AMERICAN
PEOPLE.

THE GENUINE CONCERN SHOWN BY SO MANY SHOULD HELP EASE
THE WORRIES OF THOSE REFUGEES WHO STILL HAVE NOT FOUND
SPONSORS.

I PLEDGE TO ALL OF THE VIETNAMESE REFUGEES THAT THEY WILL
NOT BE FORGOTTEN -- THERE WILL BE A CONTINUED NATIONAL
COMMITMENT TO HELPING THEM SETTLE IN AMERICA.

END OF TEXT