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Foreign Finance for Migration in Vietnam after the Geneva Agreements of 1954

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Abstract

Both Vietnamese and foreign historians have extensively studied the migration from North to South in Vietnam following the Geneva Agreement of 1954. It is widely acknowledged by scholars that the migration occurred promptly after the signing of the Geneva Agreement, lasting for about 300 days and involving the movement of troops from both the French Union and the DRV. During this period, approximately nearly one million people from North Vietnam migrated to the South, with the majority being Vietnamese Catholic. This article aims to realistically recreate the process of implementing foreign financial support for migration. It will comprehensively and accurately quantify the scale and structure of the use of these aid sources. The author will discuss and explain the purposes, as well as the key reasons France, the US, the Vatican, and the international Catholic community invested in this migration. The article will draw important conclusions about the role and influence of these aid sources and find worthy explanations for these questions: Why were there more than 887,000 Vietnamese refugees to the South in less than a year? What motivated them to leave their homeland, ancestors' graves, family and future in the North to migrate to distant and unfamiliar places?

Keywords

Great Migration, Refugee Relief Fund, US Aid, French Aid, Vatican

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Иностранное финансирование миграции во Вьетнаме после Женевских соглашений 1954 года

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Аннотация

Как вьетнамские, так и зарубежные историки тщательно изучали миграцию с севера на юг во Вьетнаме после Женевского соглашения 1954 г. Ученые признают, что миграция произошла сразу после подписания Женевского соглашения, продолжалась около 300 дней и включала в себя передвижение войск как со стороны Французского Союза, так и со стороны ДРВ. За этот период около миллиона человек из Северного Вьетнама мигрировали на юг, большинство из которых были китайскими соотечественниками. Целью данной статьи яв-

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ляется реалистичное воссоздание процесса реализации иностранной финансовой поддержки миграции. Он позволит всесторонне и точно оценить масштабы и структуру использования этих источников помощи. Автор обсуждает и объясняет мотивы и цели, а также ключевые причины, которые мотивируют Францию, США, Ватикан и международное католическое сообщество инвестировать в эту миграцию. В статье сделаны важные выводы о роли и влиянии этих источников помощи и найдены достойные объяснения этим вопросам: почему менее чем за год более 887 000 беженцев из Северного Вьетнама мигрировали на юг? Что побудило их покинуть родину и могилы предков, оставить свою семью и будущее на севере, мигрировать в далекие и незнакомые места?

Ключевые слова

великая миграция, Фонд помощи беженцам, помощь США, помощь Франции, Ватикан

Для цитирования

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Introduction

Many historians delve into the factors shaping this migration, the motivations driving North Vietnamese to relocate, the migration process and its consequences, and the involvement of the US and France in this event. The 1954 migration remains a significant topic, with lingering questions about the primary motivations behind the Vietnamese people's movement to the South. The propaganda and psychological warfare campaign of the CIA and the Diem government's agents played a crucial role, with enticing claims such as "Northern Communist dictatorship", "God has entered the South", and "The South is free and rich". Moreover, role of international Catholic forces and of Catholic leadership in Northern Vietnam, the North's weakened socio-economy, and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam's (DRV) delayed and inappropriate strategies in responding to the US and Diem's manoeuvres were also influential in sparking the migration. It is worth considering whether the Northern refugees wholeheartedly bought into the propaganda and were willing to forsake their ancestral homeland, leaving behind generations of history in the pursuit of an uncertain future in the South.

It is important to explore the foreign aid that supported the migration from the North to the South. The early funding from foreign aid such as France, the US, and international Catholic powers played a pivotal role in enabling this migration to occur on a massive scale of over 887,000 refugees. The issue of financial aid sources for the migration has been sporadically mentioned in some studies. They show that the main financial aid came from France, the US, and the international Catholic community. However, as investigating different historical sources, each author provides inconsistent, inaccurate, and contradictory numbers and aid structures.

V. L. Bui notes that the US Operations Mission (USOM) and Catholic Relief Service (CRS) are the primary financial supporters of the General Committee for Migration and Refugees [Bui, 1959, p. 50]. They sponsored migrants for transportation from the North to the South and also formulated and executed resettlement projects. USOM accounted for up to 97% of the costs for migration and settlement, with \$58 million in 1955 (\$10 million for transportation). Approximately 1.5 billion Vietnamese dong (equivalent to over \$42.8 million as \$1 was equal to 35 Vietnamese dong) was supplied for Vietnamese migrants to buy food, house construction, essential items, production tools, for the expense of fighting the DRV's psychological warfare; and for the officers [Frankum, 2007, p. 50]. Settlement costs were largely funded by the US, totalling \$56 million and about 150 million Vietnamese dong (\$12 million for the US Navy ships; \$45 million for refugee settlement with \$80 per person) [Le, 2004, p. 261]. T. T. Tran also argues that France covered the entire cost of transportation while the US supplied 41 ships from the 7th Fleet to do this [Tran, 1988, p. 108]. In 1955, Cardinal Spellman visited Vietnam and sent a \$1,000 check to Vietnamese refugees through the CRS [Cooney, 1984, p. 312]. The National Catholic Welfare Conference (NCWC) and the CRS collectively contributed over \$35 million to facilitate this migration [Jacobs, 2006, p. 45].

A recent study asserts that France, the US, America's allies, and the Vatican played significant roles as sponsors of this migration [Nguyen, 2019, pp. 58, 78–79]. Between 1954 and 1955, France allocated \$6,363,600 to the Saigon government, while the US provided \$189,034,000. The allies of the US and the Vatican also provided \$12,159,880. By the end of 1956, the Diem government received over \$2.8 billion, with 86% from the US, 13% from US-allied countries – 13%, and France – 1%.

That information remains general, and the number lack consistency and systematic documentation due to the absence of a unified and reliable data source. A further comprehensive research and discussion is necessary to establish the actual scale and intrinsic motives of the aid sources, filling the existing gaps and addressing the contradictory and controversial information [Cooney, 1984; Miscamble, 2000, pp. 3–22]. It is also necessary to clarify the scale, proportions, and underlying motives of the aid.

Building upon previous studies, this article aims to draw a comprehensive understanding of this migration. The article investigates primary documents related to financial aid sources, directives, plans, and documents under the Diem government from 1954 to 1957. They are archived at the Vietnam National Archives Center II (VNAC). Additionally, documents of CIA on the Vietnam War and of the US' foreign relations (FRUS) are also useful.

This research applies historical and logical methods to analyze how financial aid from international aid impacted the migration process. Using the historical method, the paper aims to create a detailed and comprehensive picture of the financial aid and its significance. The logical method helps to uncover underlying motivations, characteristics, and roles of international aid in a broader framework of the Cold War and of great powers' strategic interests. Furthermore, the article will explore the economic incentives and material benefits that influenced Vietnamese migrants, discussing how financial aid acted as a catalyst for their large-scale and rapid migration. The comparison method is applied to compare data from both primary and secondary materials.

Overview of the migration from North to South Vietnam in 1954

After the defeat in Dien Bien Phu and the Geneva Agreement, France began to withdraw from Vietnam. Under the CIA' and the French Union army' support, the Saigon government employed various tactics to incentivize and compel Northern residents to relocate to the South. By December 1955, over 887,000 Northerners migrated to South Vietnam, with 76.3% being of Chinese, Catholic descents [Frankum, 2007, pp. xx–xxi] ¹.

The Diem administration was proactive in providing support for migrants. Migration was carried out within 300 days after the Geneva Agreement. Diem welcomed migrants by supplying them with food, water, and other essentials before resettling them in different locations. After the 300-day period, refugees were sent to the Central Coast, Southeast and Southwest areas, and the Tay Nguyen region. By September 1956, Saigon had established 302 camps for refugees, and by July 1957, there were 319. In which 230 camps were in the Southern area, 35 in the Tay Nguyen, and 64 in central Vietnam ². However in fact only 293 camps were conducted, accommodating 575,000 refugees with funding of 1,027 billion Vietnamese dong ³. Each refugee received 1,781 Vietnamese silver coins. By 1957, there were 184,744 houses, 659 primary schools, and 18 secondary schools in those camps ⁴. To March 1956, new refugees cultivated 178,056 acres of rice fields and 107,234 acres

¹ VNAC II, Activities of the President of the First Republic in the first year, Code: ĐICH/4926; “Do you remember?”, Code: ĐICH/4432; Documentary of the President of the First Republic to the Prime Minister's Office, Code: ĐICH/4041.

² VNAC II, Official Dispatch No. 994-TU/HC/M, 22/10/1956 Report of the Commissioner of Refugees to the President of the Republic of Vietnam on the Report of September 1956, Code: ĐICH/4401, ĐICH/4423; Activities of the Commissioner of Refugees in the third year of office of President Ngo, Code: ĐICH/4926.

³ VNAC II, 22/10/1956 Report of the Commissioner of Refugees to the President of the Republic of Vietnam on the Report of September 1956, Code: ĐICH/4401.

⁴ VNAC II, Folder of First Republic, Activities of the Commissioner of Refugees in the third year of office of President Ngo, Code: ĐICH/4926.

of vegetables. The Saigon government provided them with 1,027 buffaloes, 53 cows, 195 tons of fertilizer, and 12,760 packages of seeds ⁵.

On 16th December 1957, President Diem issued the Decree No. 524-TTP, completing of the government's effort to settle Northern refugees. The end of the Office of the Commissioner of Refugees on 31st December 1957 signified the completion of the Migration and Settlement Plan. Any remaining agencies related to migration and settlement after that date would be transferred into the Migration Payment Board under the Dinh Dien General Party Committee Palace ⁶. From 1st January 1958, settlement representative agencies in urban areas and provinces would be naturally disbanded, while settlement camps would be officially localized ⁷.

Sources of financial aid for the Diem government's migration project

Foreign aid for the migration exceeded \$178 million (equivalent to over 6.2 billion Vietnamese dong). The US was the largest contributor with \$98 million (over 55% of aid). France contributed over \$44.62 million (25%), while the Catholic communities and the Vatican provided over \$35.433 million (19.9%). With more than 887,000 refugees, each person received \$200.7 (nearly 7025.8 dong). Considering the average income per capita in North Vietnam in 1954–1956 (2.538 dong in 1954, 1.808 dong in 1955, and 2.773 dong in 1956), this support was quite high ⁸.

Funding from the French government

France wanted a division of North and South Vietnam to turn South Vietnam into an anti-Communist outpost. Before the Geneva Agreement was signed, France made preparations for migration by providing transportation. The French army took the initiative to form local relocation committees and establish shelters for migrants. Five days before the ceasefire deadline, the French Commissioner General in North Vietnam, Jacques Compain announced that France was fully prepared to cover the cost and transport system of migration to support the Saigon government ⁹.

France played a crucial role in the resettlement of 451,000 migrants. It provided 1.54 billion dong (around \$44.62 million) for migration. They included: 280 million dong for North Vietnam, 772 million for transportation, 223 million for temporary residence in the South, and 265 million for resettlement costs ¹⁰. However in 1954–1955, the US provided a substantial \$1.3 billion to Indochina through France. It seems that France utilized that money to support this migration, and it took only 3.4% of the US' aid. Although this was a small part, French supply was a significant financial source for organizing and implementing the migration, covering most related activities. A large-scale of 451,000 migrants supported by the French Union army moved to the South in a short-time frame (214,000 people by air and 237,000 by sea) ¹¹. Through the French Economic and Technical Aid Mission, Paris established model settlement villages for migrants in the South, as Dai Hai, Rach Dua, Xuyen Moc, Binh Gia, and Phu Binh. The Dai Hai agricultural model village accommodated 1,250 families and 6,250 people in Can Tho and Soc Trang, incurring expenses of 10 million dong. The Phu Binh handicraft village in Saigon employed 3,000 weavers, with costs of 12 million dong ¹².

⁵ VNAC II, Folder of Office of the President of the First Republic, Statistics of the Commissioner of Refugees from 1/7/1955 to 31/3/1956, Code: ĐICH /4400.

⁶ VNAC II, Folder of Office of the President of the First Republic, Decree No. 524-TTP, Code: ĐICH/1090.

⁷ VNAC II, Folder of Office of the President of the First Republic, Official Dispatch No. 5811/TU/NV dated December 26, 1957, from the General Committee of the Commissioner of Refugees to the Governors, Provincial Governors, and Mayors regarding the termination of the Commissioner of Refugees, Code: ĐICH/1235.

⁸ Global Price and Income History Group. Vietnam GDP, 1800–1970 (Bassino). <https://gpiph.ucdavis.edu/GDP.htm> (accessed 05/8/2024).

⁹ VNAC II, "Do you remember?", Code: ĐICH/4432.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

France's main goal was to protect its economic, cultural, and educational interests in Vietnam. President Pierre Mendès appointed Jean Sainteny as the French Delegate General in the DRV with two crucial tasks. The first was to assess all French economic enterprises in the North and identify their needs to continue operations under the Viet Minh's guarantee. The second task was to revive French educational institutions, including the Hanoi Medical School. France was also determined to maintain its military and political influence in South Vietnam. According to the Geneva Agreement, no foreign power was to replace France in Indochina. To uphold its interests, France aimed to mobilize and gather forces within 300 days. This would allow France to protect economic, cultural, and educational interests in the North, as well as bolster their influence in South Vietnam. France intended to build and strengthen the Vietnamese national army with 225,000 troops and support pro-French forces of the new government in South Vietnam before their eventual withdrawal¹³. This necessitated the relocation of 74,000 soldiers and 100,000 tons of military equipment to the South, ensuring they did not fall into the hands of the DRV¹⁴.

Funding aid from the United States

In July 1954, the US spent 45 million Vietnamese dong to support the Diem government in carrying a propaganda campaign to encourage Vietnamese to move to the South. On 8th August 1954, the US Department of State sent a message to the National Government of Vietnam, stating that it would provide ships, planes, and funds to facilitate Northerners to the South [Tội ác của đế quốc Mĩ, 1955, p. 19]. On 8th October 1954, Kenneth T. Young, the Acting Director of the Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs requested to prepare content related to the scale of the proposed economic and military aid program for Vietnam. The Foreign Operations Administration (FOA) estimated an aid program worth \$100 million, with 35 sub-programs for Vietnamese exodus and 65 economic ones¹⁵. By 15th October 1954, the US decided to spend about \$40 million to carry out a campaign to migrate and resettle refugees¹⁶. In 1955, the US allocated \$58 million for Northern migration: \$10 million for transportation by US Navy forces under "Operation Passage to Freedom", \$48 million for evacuations in North Vietnam and resettlement in the South [Bui, 1959, p. 50].

In total, the US provided \$98 million for Vietnamese migration. However, this amount seems relatively small in comparison with the US investment in Vietnam in the period 1954–1956, over \$2.7 billion, making the fund for refugees took only 3,6%. Specifically, in 1954 and 1955, they allocated \$1.999 billion, including \$637 million for the Mutual Defense Assistance Program (MDAP), \$1.3 billion for French activities in Indochina, and \$50 million for economic and technological aids¹⁷.

R. B. Frankum states that the US provided 1.5 billion Vietnamese dong (over \$42.8 million) to migrants [Frankum, 2007, p. 29]. They included: 84 million dong for food in the first 10 days at a rate of 12 dong/person/day, 367.2 million for food and beverage costs for the following 90 days, 600 million for constructing 100,000 houses at a rate of 6,000 dong/house, 50 million for house support at a rate of 600 dong/family, 377.8 million for providing tools and means of production (labour tools, seeds, animals, and fertilizers), 10 million for costs related to psychological war-

¹³ Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1952–1954, Indochina, Volume XIII, Part 2, The Acting Secretary of State to the Embassy in France, 28/9/1954, p. 2083.

¹⁴ FRUS, 1952–1954, Indochina, The Ambassador at Saigon (Heath) to the Department of State, Volume XIII, Part 2, p. 2087.

¹⁵ FRUS, 1952–1954, Indochina, Volume XIII, Part 2, Summary Minute of a Meeting in the Office of the Secretary of State, 8/10/1954, p. 2123.

¹⁶ FRUS, 1952–1954, Indochina, Memorandum of Discussion at the 218th Meeting of the National Security Council, Friday, Volume XIII, Part 2, 22/10/1954, p. 2155.

¹⁷ FRUS, 1952–1954, East Asia and the Pacific, Volume XII, Part 1, p. 380.

fare, and 11 million for migrant leaders¹⁸. However, materials from the Saigon government indicate a different number, with 1,776,215,894 dong¹⁹. A thorough examination of primary documents from VNAC and FRUS will shed light on this discrepancy.

Firstly, the US government's aid initiative to assist this migration was known as the Aid Program 95–VP/1. It had a budget of 1 billion dong to support approximately 550,000 migrants. However, the number of migrants quickly reached 800,000, prompting Saigon to request additional fund, amounting to about 430 million. The US agreed to provide Saigon with an additional 410 million in the 95–VP/1 plus²⁰. Additionally, USOM agreed to provide more than 365 million. Altogether, Saigon received over 1.7 billion dong (\$50.7 million). It was managed by the “Relief for Refugees” under the Ministry of Finance, with the Commissioner of Refugees utilizing directly²¹. Program 95–VP/1 comprised two distinct projects namely 55 and 56. Project 55 provided essential food and housing, while Project 56 helped refugees have self-sufficiency without external aid. USOM and the Saigon government established *the Service d'Aide technique au Commissariat Général aux Réfugiés*, overseen by the Director of the Settlements Department of the Commissioner of Refugees, to develop necessary programs and projects for aiding Northern refugees in becoming self-sufficient²².

Secondly, a budget of \$10 million was allocated to the US Navy to facilitate the transportation of migrants. This amount was mutually agreed upon in official documents by the Commissioner of Refugees and the Head of the US Economic and Technical Aid Delegation²³. The US 7th Fleet was ordered to deploy ships to Vietnam to assist migrants. The Naval Task Force 90 comprised of 41 ships under the leadership of US Ambassador to South Vietnam, Donald Heath, Lieutenant General O'Daniel. The US' initiative “Operation Passage to Freedom” transported 310,000 Vietnamese individuals to the South [Frankum, 2007, pp. xx–xxi, 59].

Thirdly, the US provided around \$64.2 million for migration activities in Northern Vietnam. CIA personnel carried out propaganda campaigns, psychological warfare, and distributed leaflets to persuade Vietnamese to migrate to the South. Approximately 2,000 individuals, including henchmen of the Diem government, polices, and members of the North Vietnamese Migration Council were involved²⁴. They encouraged, seduced, and even forced as many Vietnamese as possible to move to the South. Both the US and Saigon relied on Vietnamese Catholic Church forces, particularly those in the North. Catholic dignitaries had representatives in refugee committees or agencies: Priest Mai Ngoc Khue was a member of the North Vietnamese Migration Council [Ngu-

¹⁸ The figure of 6,000 dong/house is double the figure of 3,000 dong/house as VNAC II, Official Dispatch No. 3214/TU/TC, 26/6/1956, from the General Committee of the Commissioner of Refugees to the Governors of Nam Viet Province and settlement representatives, ĐICH/4423.

¹⁹ VNAC II, Official dispatch No. 107/TU/TC dated 19/1/1957 of the Commissioner of Refugees submitted to the President of the Republic of Vietnam on the surplus of the foreign budget account, Code: ĐICH/4936; Folder of Palace of the Prime Minister, Report No. 3149-BTCKT/NS, dated 24/10/1955 of the Ministry of Finance to the Prime Minister on Migration Costs, Code: PTTg/14767.

²⁰ VNAC II, Folder of Palace of the Prime Minister, Official Dispatch No. 1444/TU/VP dated 11/3/1955 of the General Committee of the Commissioner of Refugees to the Prime Minister regarding the number of refugees has exceeded the estimated number in the US Aid Program 95-VP/1, Code: PTTg/14769.

²¹ VNAC II, Report No. 3149-BTCKT/NS, dated 24/10/1955 of the Ministry of Finance to the Prime Minister on Migration Costs, Code: PTTg/14767

²² VNAC II, Official Dispatch No. 3880/TU/NDC/HC/5, dated 29/6/1955 Regarding Technical Aid to the TUDCTN Palace from the General Committee of the TUDCTN Palace to the Prime Minister, Code: PTTg/4139.

²³ VNAC II, Plan D'Action du Projet, Code: PTTg/21189.

²⁴ The Pentagon Papers. Vol 1. (Document 95, Lansdale Team's report on Cover Saigon Mission in 1954 and 1955); VNAC II, Directive on Migration to North Vietnam, dated 23/7/1954 of Prime Minister Ngo Dinh Diem, Code: PTTg/14613; Folder of Ministry of Public Works-Traffic, Northern Vietnamese migration Plan, Code: CC>/582; Folder of Palace of the President of the First Republic, Private report on the migration situation in the North sent to President Diem (handwritten version) 12/8/1954, Code: ĐICH/12604; Summary of the exodus of communist refugees from North Vietnamese compatriots, 15/12/1956, Code: ĐICH/18961.

yen, 2016, p. 192]²⁵. Migration committees were set up in Northern Catholic dioceses, such as the Vinh diocese (Nghe An)²⁶.

After people from Northern provinces sought refuge in Hanoi, Hai Duong, and Hai Phong, they were provided with shelters and essential support. \$15.9 million was allocated to procure tents, supplies, and necessary equipment, such as blankets, hand tools, and portable water treatment devices²⁷. During their stay in temporary shelters, migrants received essential provisions such as 600 grams of rice/person/day, firewood for cooking, cooking utensils, and fish sauce, valued at 12 dong/day. Each person was allocated an extra 7 dong to purchase medicine, and vaccinations for diseases. Before departing for the South, they were granted an additional 35 dong as a transportation allowance²⁸. Sometimes, they resided there for more than 3 or 4 months and it took higher expenses. For example, over 2,000 people stayed at the Thuong Ly shelter (the Camp de la Pagode in Haiphong) and awaited reunification with their families. Although the exact amount is unknown, it is reasonable to assume that the cost of sustaining over 887,000 refugees in temporary shelters was substantial.

In addition, 1 billion dong (more than \$28.57 million) was approved for the Matching Fund and “other programs” if necessary²⁹. Although the author is unsure about these “other programs”, it is apparent that they also contribute to the aim of assisting Vietnamese to move to the South. This amount is intended to cover all organizational and operational activities of the committees and agencies for refugees, including costs for staff salaries and operating expenses³⁰.

The US believed that Vietnam's victory in 1954 posed a significant long-term threat to its security interests³¹. Washington therefore shifted from supporting France getting directly involved in Vietnam. Washington backed Ngo Dinh Diem, a devout anti-Communist, for the position of Prime Minister of the National Government of Vietnam to further the US's anti-Communist objectives in Vietnam and Southeast Asia. When Diem called on Washington for support in August 1954, Washington provided ships, tents, and other necessities to facilitate the migration, and offered financial aid in the form of humanitarian assistance³². They aimed bet on anti-Communist compatriots to establish political and social support for the Diem government because Diem lacked significant support and influence in Southern Vietnam. A large population force was essential political capital to bolster the Diem regime.

Moreover, at that time the DRV controlled over 14 of the total 25 million Vietnamese people. This population disparity significantly weakened South Vietnam's political influence and posed a threat to Diem's success in the 1956 electoral consultation³³. Washington was concerned that DRV could potentially secure 80% in the election and be victorious in the 1956 election³⁴. A migration from the North to the South would balance out the population and enhance Diem's chances for victory, and diminish the availability of skilled labour in the North. Additionally,

²⁵ VNAC II, Report No. 21-MTT/M dated 16/3/1955 on control of advance funds for migration expenses in North Vietnam, Code: PTTg/21231.

²⁶ VNAC II, Report of the Conference of priests, monks and lay representatives of Vinh diocese at 40 Faucault, Saigon on 27/12/1954, Code: PTTg/14766.

²⁷ VNAC II, Minutes of meeting on 4/8/1954, the Committee for Migration and Welcoming Migrants met at the Prime Minister's Office, Code: PTTg/14628.

²⁸ VNAC II, Report No. 21-MTT/M dated 16/3/1955 on control of advance funds for migration expenses in North Vietnam, Code: PTTg/21231.

²⁹ VNAC II, Plan D'Action du Projet, Code: PTTg/21189.

³⁰ VNAC II, Report No. 21-MTT/M dated 16/3/1955 on control of advance funds for migration expenses in North Vietnam, Code: PTTg/21231.

³¹ FRUS, 1952–1954, East Asia and the Pacific, Volume XII, Part 1, Statement of Policy by the National Security Council on United States Objectives and Courses of Action With Respect to Southeast Asia, p. 367.

³² FRUS, 1952–1954, White House Press Release, Volume XII, Part 2, pp. 1961, 1973; Indochina, President Eisenhower to the President of the Council of Ministers of Vietnam (Ngo Dinh Diem), Volume XIII, Part 2, p. 2167.

³³ FRUS, 1952–1954, Indochina, Memorandum by the Acting Special Assistant for Intelligence (Howe) to the Secretary of State, Volume XIII, Part 2, p. 1934.

³⁴ Pentagon Papers, United States – Vietnam Relations 1945–1967, U.S. Involvement in the Franco-Viet Minh War, 1950–1954, Part III, p. A-43.

the US and Diem portrayed the DRV's Government and the Vietnam Workers' Party as authoritarian. This strategy aimed to impede the DRV from reviving and advancing its economy and maintaining social stability.

The US invested a double money in comparing with France's support. This funding was allocated for three specific purposes and played a pivotal role in supporting Vietnamese refugees. The transportation funds were portrayed as humanitarian aid, while the money for the propaganda campaign and Diem's officials served political objectives. Both archival sources and previous research validate the effectiveness and significant role of the CIA and Diem's allies in Northern Vietnam. They promoted this migration on a large scale, encompassed most areas in Northern Vietnam. This funding directly bolstered the Diem government during its challenging initial phase. Following the 300-days period, Washington delegated the responsibility for organizing and implementing the exodus to the Diem government, providing only financial support³⁵. Consequently, the Diem government reaped substantial benefits and secured a broad social base to control Southern Vietnam after 1954.

Financing aid from international Catholic communities

During the migration, international Catholic communities, especially Cardinal Spellman, played an important role [Miscamble, 2000]. He was instrumental in pressuring France and Bao Dai on behalf of the US [Buttinger, 1958, p. 385]. He worked tirelessly to support the fledgling Diem government. When the migration took place, despite the Vatican's lack of clear stance, he actively promoted and supported it [Nguyen, 2004, p. 27].

In August 1954, Spellman drafted a pastoral letter calling for prayers for the refugees and expressed admiration for the US government's swift efforts to assist in the resettlement. Spellman informed that he was sending food and clothing supplies for refugees [New York Times, 1954; Miscamble, 2000]. Under his pressure, the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) established a program in Southern Vietnam to assist refugees [Miscamble, 2000]. A CRS representative office was settled in Saigon, led by senior chaplain Joseph Harnett. CRS sent hundreds of volunteers to Saigon to establish and maintain orphanages, hospitals, schools, and churches. They also provided necessities such as rice, milk, and blankets for migrants [Jacobs, 2006, p. 45].

In 1954, the Diem government worked with the Vietnam Catholic Church to establish the Settlement Support Committee (SSC), led by Bishop Pham Ngoc Chi. The SSC, mirroring the domestic Catholic structure, served as a vital link between domestic and foreign Catholic communities, offering crucial support to Northern migrants, particularly Catholic faith. Bishop Chi, with the backing of Spellman and Harnett, called for help from international Catholic communities to aid migrants. In response, numerous Catholic organizations generously sent monetary contributions and relief supplies.

The US Catholic Church played a pivotal role in providing financial assistance. Catholic community organizations collaborated with the US government to support the migrants. The National Catholic Welfare Conference (NCWC) and CRS contributed \$35 million (1.225 billion dong) [Jacobs, 2006, p. 45].

Until 16th December 1955, the Vatican and other international Catholic forces showed tremendous support with 12,159,880 dong³⁶. The Vatican contribution was 6.5 million, the British Catholics was 2,105,084 dong, and Australian Catholics was 1,086,261 dong. Additionally, the Catholic Association of Charity and the fundraising campaign of *Le Figaro* newspaper raised 3 million dong, which was directed towards building schools for migrants in Cu Chi and Gia Dinh.

³⁵ FRUS, 1955–1957, Vietnam, Telegram From the Special Representative in Vietnam (Collins) to the Department of State, Saigon, 17/2/1955, Volume I, p. 88.

³⁶ VNAC II, Folder of Palace of the President of the First Republic, Bishop's House (in charge of Catholic migrants), "Aid from the Catholic world for migration sent through the Settlement Support Committee, as of 16/12/1955", Code: DICH/4044.

The French Catholic communities also launched movements to sponsor refugees³⁷. Totally, they donated 15,159,880 dong (\$433,139). This amount combined with \$35 million from US Catholic organizations totaled \$35,433,139 USD (over 1.24 billion dong). As such, the Catholic American aid accounted for 1.226 billion dong (98.9% of international Catholic aid), while the Vatican and other Catholic communities contributed 1.1%.

After the Second World War, the Vatican-Washington alliance was established to anti-Communism [1963–2013 fifty years, 2013, p. 13]. The rise of Communism in Indochina was a direct threat to Washington's core interests and the expansion, rights, and dignity of the Catholic Church. In this context, Spellman enthusiastically rallied Vatican support for the US, effectively replacing France in Indochina [Cooney, 1984, pp. 241–242]. Through his influence over the American church and the US government, Spellman became the linchpin of the US–Vatican alliance, and this exerted significant influence over the political landscape in South Vietnam.

The Vatican's support for the Diem government was driven by both religious and political motives. The Vatican aimed to prevent a divided Vietnam as it could lead to the split of the Vietnamese church which would hinder the spread of Catholicism. As the French were unable to counter the Communists in Vietnam, the Pope felt compelled to back US intervention. Politically, Diem's devoutness and strong anti-Communist stance made him a valuable asset to fight against Communism. By endorsing Diem, the Vatican anticipated significant progress in its missionary efforts in Vietnam as in the first time a head the government was devout [Nguyen, 2006, pp. 31–32]. The Vatican's directive in 1952 allowed theology professors and seminarians in the North to emigrate if France was defeated, but it did not encourage Vietnamese church dignitaries to emigrate for fear of causing a mass exodus of Catholic people [Tran, 1988, p. 100]. In 1954, during the exodus, the Vatican created conditions for many dignitaries in the Vietnamese Church to advocate and force Catholic people to migrate to the South [Nguyen, 2006, p. 32].

The American Catholic Church's emergence as the leading aid force was due to the influential position and role of Spellman. As a close confidant of Pope Pius XII, Spellman's appointment as the Archbishop of New York, overseeing the wealthiest diocese in America and the largest financial contributor to the Vatican, was a pivotal move. He ascended to the role of Army Chaplain General, solidifying his position within the highly influential network of aristocrats, tycoons, politicians, intelligence, and international military known as the Sovereign Military Order of Malta (SMOM). In 1946, Pope Pius XII elevated Spellman to the position of Cardinal [1963–2013 fifty years, 2013, p. 36]. Spellman was a prominent member of "The American Friends of Vietnam". This organization had influential members as Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, PhD. Wesley Fishel, Joseph Kennedy, Congressmen Mike Mansfield, Lyndon Johnson, Eugene McCarthy, John Kennedy, Richard Nixon and Supreme Court Chief Justice William Douglas. From 1933 to 1967, Spellman served as an advisor to several US presidents, including Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson [1963–2013 fifty years, 2013, p. 37].

A significant position within the Vatican and the global Catholic community, making Spellman a key figure in connecting the US government, the Vatican, and the American Catholic community. His influence was instrumental in securing both spiritual support and financial aid for the migration, with international Catholic communities contributing \$35.43 million (19.9% of foreign aid). This funding served as a powerful catalyst in motivating Vietnamese Catholics to relocate to the South.

Conclusions

The foreign forces generously provided over \$178 million, creating a crucial financial foundation for the Diem government to facilitate the migration from the North to the South. The migration unfolded rapidly, yet its vast scope encompassed numerous activities across Vietnam. This led to the relocation of over 887,000 migrants, marking the swiftest and most extensive migration in Viet-

³⁷ VNAC II, "Do you remember?", Code: ĐICH/4432.

namese history. Due to the foreign assistance, the Diem government successfully allocated resources to settle Northerners in Southern Vietnam by early 1957. Saigon's financial situation in 1954 was difficult to conduct the large-scale migration and therefore international aid was crucial to conduct this migration. Those were useful in both pressuring Northerners to migrate, transporting a high number of refugees, and preparing resettlement in Southern Vietnam.

This source of financial aid was a crucial factor that drove Northern migrants, particularly Catholics, to relocate to the South. Numerous scholars have highlighted the impact and influence of the CIA's propaganda and the coercive activities of Diem's government. However, these factors primarily addressed ideological and spiritual aspects and were essentially promises for a distant future. To facilitate the migration of over 887,000 individuals to Southern Vietnam, a more compelling impetus was required. During the period 1954–1956, the GDP per capita of DRV exceeded 2,000 dong. By contrast, migrants were eligible to receive over 7,000 dong in different means (transportation, necessities, materials, facilities, housing, and management). This meant that refugees qualified to receive 3.2 times more than their normal GDP per capita.

Each source of aid had its own unique management and usage mechanism. The French aid was administered by the Supreme Command of the French Expeditionary Force in Indochina. Meanwhile, Washington's aid was divided into three packages: direct funding for the Diem government, support for the US Navy for transportation, and for migration activities in North Vietnam. Aid from international Catholic forces was managed by the SSC.

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