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of Reeds, 60 miles west of Saigon, late last week. Another shifted south from Tay Ninh into the Parrot's Beak area of Cambodia. There was continued pressure north of the capital, where Communist tanks overran the town of Chon Thanh, 45 miles up Route 13, and east of it where North Vietnamese troops cut Route 1 just beyond the town of Xuan Loc. Military analysts in both Saigon and Washington were unable to find a coherent pattern in those actions, but they suggested North Vietnam might be pursuing one of several courses:

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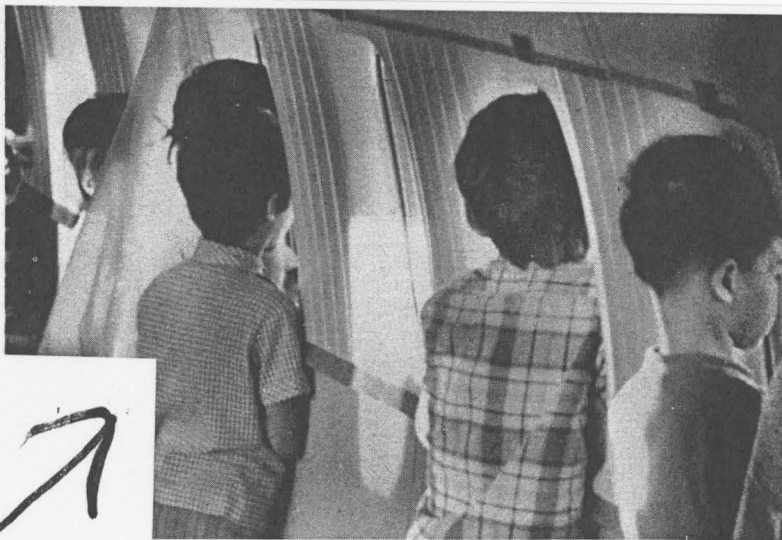
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DA-8



Though U.S. military men believed strongly last week that a major strike at Saigon was only weeks—or even days—away, the woman who served as the chief Viet Cong negotiator during the Paris peace talks seemed to indicate otherwise. In an interview with NEWSWEEK in Paris, Mme. Nguyen Thi Binh, Foreign Minister of the Provisional Revolutionary Government, said: "Our policy is to preserve the lives of all our people and all our property. After all, Saigon is the property of the Vietnamese people." While maintaining that "it is too early to tell" whether a battle for the city will be necessary, she added that if Thieu is ousted, "there will certainly be people prepared to form a government which will declare itself for peace . . . and the PRG is ready to begin conversations" with them.

That statement seemed to leave the fate of Saigon squarely in the laps of the South Vietnamese themselves. If they were able somehow to unhorse Thieu and install a government willing to seek accommodation with the Communists, a decent interval of coalition politics might give them a few years' grace and a gentle slide into Communism. If not, it seemed certain that sooner or later there would be one final paroxysm of violence, a last great bloodletting before the longest war of modern times came to an end that was now inevitable.

—KIM WILLENSON with LOREN JENKINS and TONY CLIFTON in Saigon, PAUL BRINKLEY-ROGERS in Phnom Penh, SCOTT SULLIVAN in Paris and PHILLIP S. COOK in Washington



children peer at their new American homeland: A flying playpen

## Orphans of the Storm

ic controller at Saigon's whut airport was enraged. off, don't take off," he have no clearance." Ken r was to gun the four jet DC-8 and turn onto the unground runway. Seconds later, the 52-year-old World Airways pilot was airborne, taking with him the most unusual cargo ever to be flown out of South Vietnam. On board the scooped-out transport last week, nestled in blankets on its bare floor and snuggled up to their pillows, were 57 orphaned Vietnamese children enroute to their new homes in the United States.

World Airways' maverick flight made instant celebrities out of the 57 young pioneers—half of them the abandoned children of American GI's—and touched off a barrage of telephone calls across the United States from families pleading to adopt Vietnamese orphans.\* It also sparked an international drive to evacuate more of the hundreds of thousands of homeless children in South Vietnam. The Australian Government flew 215 children to new homes in Sydney and other nations announced airlift plans of their own. President Ford pledged that the U.S. would bring 2,000 children to America in a \$2 million airlift and ordered the U.S. Embassy in Saigon to "cut red tape" to speed the evacuation. Even before the first 57 children were brought to their new homes across the U.S., the American airlift began—but the very first flight ended in disaster.

\*Among United States agencies handling the adoption of South Vietnamese children are: Friends for All Children, Boulder, Colo.; Holt Adoption Program, Eugene, Ore.; Travelers Aid-International Social Service of America, New York; Catholic Relief Services, New York; Migration and Refugees Services, New York, and World Vision International, Monrovia, Calif.

A giant C5-A Galaxy, the largest plane in the world, took off from Tan Son Nhut with 243 orphans jammed inside—some wedged ten abreast in seats that normally hold three persons, others strapped down to the floor in the plane's lower cargo deck. Minutes after the lift-off, the jet's rear loading door blew out and the cabin pressure plummeted. Plastic-lined pillows exploded and the children's possessions were hurled like missiles through the cabins. As the orphans grew groggy from lack of oxygen (there were not enough oxygen masks for everyone),



A flight to tragedy: Babies cuddle



eland: A flying playpen

# Storm

A Galaxy, the largest plane took off from Tan Son Nhut with 150 children jammed inside—some crammed in seats that normally held two persons, others strapped to the floor in the plane's lower cabin. Minutes after the lift-off, the engine door blew out and the plane plummeted. Plastic-lined seats were crushed and the children's bodies hurled like missiles into the cargo bins. As the orphans grew dazed from lack of oxygen (there were oxygen masks for everyone),

the pilot banked and headed back to Saigon. The plane never made it. It crash-landed in a rice field 1 1/2 miles from the airport—killing 150 children and 50 of the adults on board.

Neither fire trucks nor ambulances could get through the swampy field to reach the wreckage. American rescue teams who were lowered into the paddy from helicopters found the field littered with debris: baby bottles, children's toys, boxes of diapers. The pages of a Donald Duck comic book flipped in the wind. Bodies were half-buried in the mud, and 30 children were still trapped in the plane's cargo deck. "Some of us got out through a chute from the top of the plane," said an American woman survivor, "but the children at the bottom of the plane didn't have a chance."

## THE LOST GENERATION

The U.S. quickly announced that the orphan airlift would continue, but only a small percentage of South Vietnamese children are ever likely to be adopted. Although many are homeless orphans, many more are children of the Communist regime who have been abandoned by their parents. Many of these children are from the rural countryside, and they are being sent to new families in the United States. Many children in the nation have been waiting months for success. The angry bureaucratic World Airways president, who tried to block the plane, countered that the U.S. government—made the delay, whose airline

or overexposure, some drowned as they fell or were pushed off crowded barges, some were trampled in the crush of refugees clawing for places on evacuation helicopters, some were shot by soldiers determined that nothing would get in the way of their passage to what they thought would be safety.

As the Communists pushed ever closer to Saigon last week, the city's adoption agencies began to gather children from orphanages to line them up for places on the promised flights—and many frightened Vietnamese parents even gave their children up. "Maybe the Viet Cong be here," sobbed 28-year-old Nguyen Thi Liem as she signed a waiver permitting adoption of her three children. "Maybe they rocket. Maybe they bomb. I don't want my babies to die." There was no guarantee that her children—or even many of the children placed with adoption agencies—would ever board the planes. Several of these agencies are unlicensed, which in the past has made it impossible for them to place children in

flew the last rescue mission out of Da Nang two weeks ago in defiance of government orders, was not to be thwarted. He rounded up the 57 children from other orphanages, stocked the plane with milk, diapers and baby food, and took off for the U.S.

The giant cargo plane soon resembled a flying playpen and picnic ground. The children snatched up the crayons that Daly had provided and many drew pictures of what they thought their future foster parents would look like. Their twenty adult supervisors ran a non-stop food service (bananas, crackers, sandwiches and rice splashed with soy sauce) and mustered up a diaper-changing assembly-line. Although the U.S. Embassy said that the DC-8 was neither heated nor pressurized, Peter Arnett of the Associated Press, the only reporter on board, cabled that it was. The orphans slept soundly through the night hours of the flight. When daylight broke, the older children scooted up and down the length of the cabin or pressed against the windows to watch the clouds. Seventeen hours after they left Saigon, they landed in Oakland, Calif., where a Red Cross volunteer proclaimed: "They look like they fared quite well."

## NEW TOYS, NEW NAMES

The red and white jet taxied to a welcome reminiscent of the return of the first planeload of American prisoners of war two years ago. More than 500 people crowded onto the tarmac, waving and cheering. Few of the children waved back, but one jaunty 7-year-old, wearing a baseball cap with the name Paul stitched on it, made a grandstand wave to the television cameras and was rewarded with a laugh. The children, ranging in

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t to tragedy: Babies cuddle up

ewsweek, April 14, 1975



for take-off, the search for the bodies

Newsweek, April 14, 1975

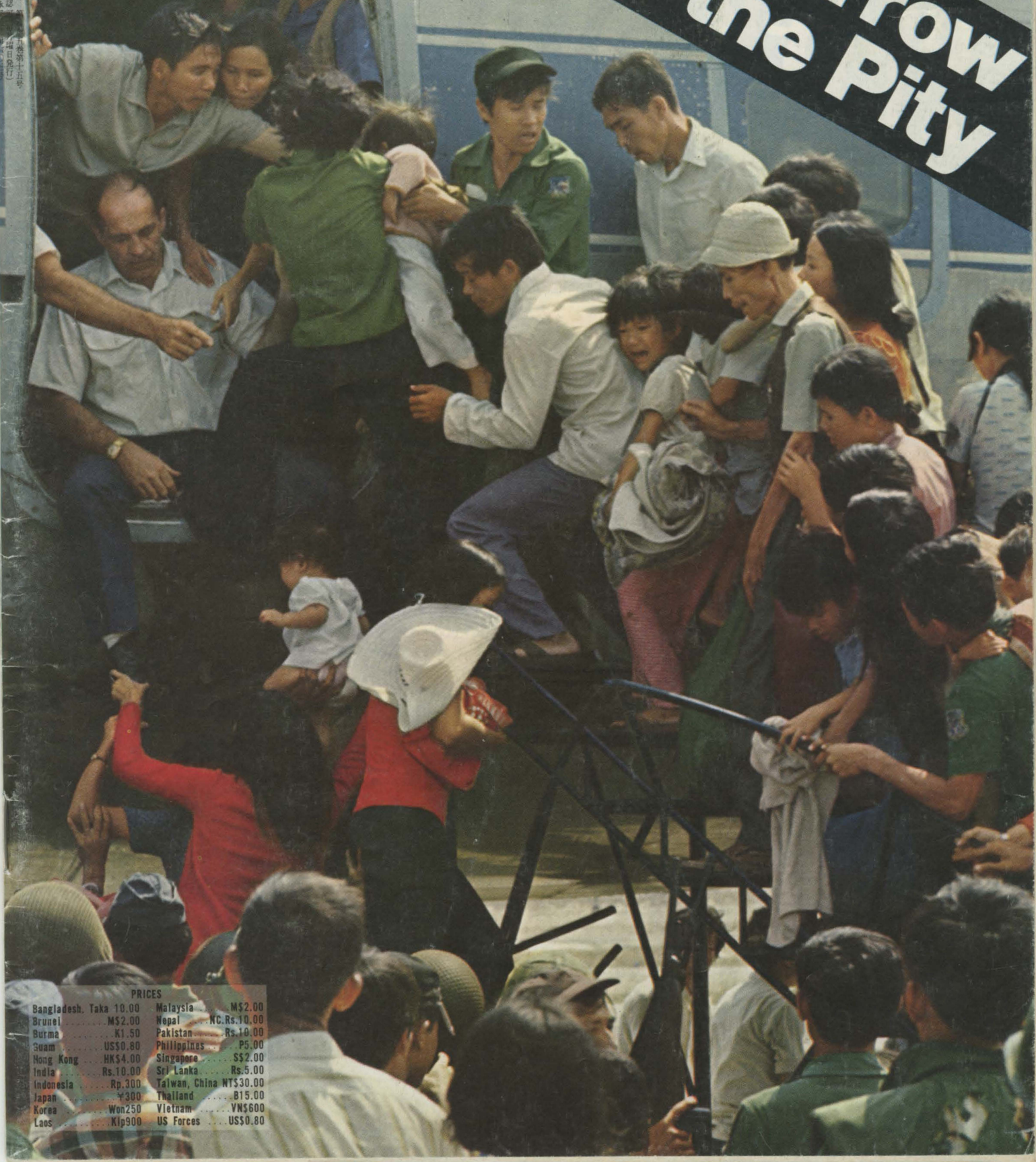
April 14, 1975

# Newsweek

THE INTERNATIONAL NEWSMAGAZINE

## The Sorrow And the Pity

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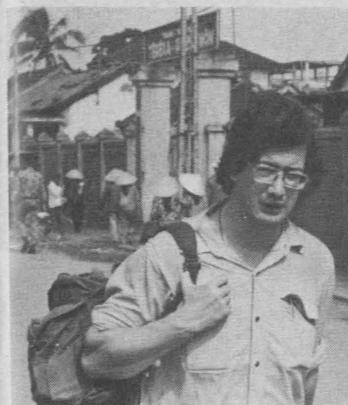
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## Top of the Week



Newsweek's reporting team in Indochina: Nick Proffitt, Loren Jenkins, Tony Clifton, Ron Moreau, and Paul Brinkley-Rogers

### The Sorrow and the Pity Page 6

Misery became a way of life in Indochina long ago, but the tide of human suffering that engulfed South Vietnam last week swept forward with unprecedented cruelty. Major cities tumbled like tenpins, terrified refugees died by the hundreds in their desperate flight from the onrushing Communist armies and the toughest ARVN generals abandoned their command posts. Even one last, symbolic gesture of American goodwill turned into catastrophe when a jet evacuating war orphans crashed and burned. Vietnam had become a sad and ugly spectacle but there was little the U.S. could do about it—and Americans looked on with a deep sense of anguish and a chastened view of their national power, a view shared by many of America's allies. Five Newsweek correspondents filed for this week's special fourteen-page report. Hong Kong bureau chief **Loren Jenkins**, who has been in charge of Indochina coverage for the past two years, directed the reporting. The correspondents: Beirut bureau chief **Nicholas C. Proffitt**, back in Saigon, where he was based from 1971 to 1973; **Ron Moreau**, who has covered South Vietnam since 1969 and speaks fluent Vietnamese; **Paul Brinkley-Rogers** of the Hong Kong bureau, who covered Indochina from 1969

to 1970, and reported last week from Phnom Penh, and **Tony Clifton**, who first began covering Indochina in 1971. (Newsweek cover photo by Jean-Claude Francolon—Gamma.)

### Chiang Kai-shek, 1887-1975 Page 21

Not too long ago, Chiang Kai-shek was one of the most controversial political figures in the world. But when he died last week on the island of Taiwan, history had all but passed him by. At 87, he no longer could convince even his closest postwar friends, the U.S. and Japan, that he was the true leader of the Chinese people. **Raymond Carroll** examines the life of the near-legendary Chiang.

### A New Voice page 32

With this week's issue **Bernard Levin** joins Newsweek International's roster of contributing editors. One of Britain's most distinguished journalists, Levin, 46, has been a drama critic, political commentator and columnist for several of his country's leading publications; currently, he is a columnist for The Times of London. In his new role, Levin succeeds **Ludovic Kennedy**, who was obliged to discontinue his Newsweek column because of the pressure of other commitments.

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