

Refugees find USA hard to believe — it's so kind

The Kosovars are being greeted with a level of enthusiasm not seen, some say, since the fall of Saigon a quarter of a century ago

By Rick Hampson
USA TODAY

Driven from their home in Kosovo, members of the Pllana family have been given a new one in Florida, their future furnished with bits of other people's pasts.

The refugees' apartment has the desk where Patrick Whelan once wrote college recommendations for his students, the recliner where Skip Huene cuddled his kids; the knives Rick Blackmore used when fixing his favorite dishes, the table on which, until a few weeks ago, Bill and Bonnie Connell ate dinner.

The Connells did what many other people at Redeemer Episcopal Church in Sarasota did, and what people around the nation are doing. They picked up the phone and promised to help resettle the Kosovar refugees.

In the nation's most enthusiastic refugee resettlement effort since the fall of Saigon, Americans are opening their hearts, wallets and homes to

the first wave of 20,000 refugees coming to the USA from the embattled Serbian province.

Five weeks after the Clinton administration announced the resettlement program, Kosovars are moving into communities around the country. The first arrived via commercial flights and were taken in by relatives; now others are settling into homes after being checked out at Fort Dix, N.J.

As of last weekend, about 1,600 of the 5,300 Kosovo refugees who had entered the country had been settled in new homes in 27 states. The largest concentrations are in New York City (with more than a third of the settlers), northern New Jersey, southern California and greater Detroit.

A nation largely populated by descendants of European migrants — many of them victims of persecution or war, refugees in all but name — seems to see something of itself in the Kosovo exodus.

People are giving the refugees everything from a key to the front door to a lift to the

doctor's office. They're translating, interpreting, baby-sitting or just visiting. They're even standing in line at the Social Security office — whatever it takes to ease the Kosovars' transition.

Americans are teaching the Kosovars what they know best, such as English and shopping.

They've offered them jobs and vacations, a vacant convent in Massachusetts and a fully furnished farmhouse in Iowa.

Anita Vukpelag, a refugee who just started work as a waitress in Detroit, got a \$45 tip from a couple whose son is with NATO forces in the Balkans.

"I can hardly believe it," she says. "Kindness isn't very common where I come from."

Students at the Trevor Day School, a private elementary school in New York City, are collecting money to provide refugee children with knapsacks filled with school supplies. In Rochester, N.Y., Girl

Scouts are assembling "gender- and age-appropriate" hospital-ity packs.

A group of Dearborn, Mich., residents rushed to the Detroit airport on short notice to greet a Kosovar family with shopping certificates and gift bags. One of the Kosovars asked why.

"I didn't know what to say," recalls Don Cardwell, 48. "So I said, 'Because now you're our neighbors.'"

"I'll tell you, seeing them get off that plane beat Christmas."

This is an effort in which Jews work with Muslims, Episcopalians with evangelicals. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has provided apartments for people being settled by Catholic Community Services in Salt Lake City.

In the Los Angeles area, a Catholic family working through a Jewish agency has taken in a Muslim family whose American sponsor, a

Muslim from Kosovo, is married to an American Jew.

The Catholic is Lloyd Martin, vice president of a big Hollywood production company. He read that 700,000 Kosovars were homeless, knew that he had a few spare bedrooms, and saw a way to repay an old debt.

In the Depression year of 1937, the 18-year-old Martin was half-starving on a cross-country hitchhiking trip when he was taken in for a few days by a couple in Springfield, Ohio.

He has marveled ever since at their generosity. "What a way to treat a stranger!"

Martin thought about that as he watched the Kosovar refugees on television. He picked up the phone, and a week later he was at the airport greeting Nuh and Merandisa Vlasi and their six children.

Since they moved into his Simi Valley house, neighbors and strangers have been at the door with food, clothes and best wishes. Martin invites them in to meet the newcomers. "They're a catalyst," he says. "They bring out the best in everybody."

The other night, he called his old friends in Ohio. "I said, 'If it weren't for you, this family wouldn't be at my house.'"

The public's response has stunned not only the weary, traumatized refugees, but also the agencies charged by the government with resettling them.

"All of us have been overwhelmed," says Leonard Glickman of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, one of 10 agencies resettling the Kosovars. "It's been such a grassroots thing that it's been hard to capture all this sudden energy. The phone has been ringing off the hook."

A toll-free line set up for Albanian-Americans who wanted to sponsor relatives to come here has gotten six times as many sponsorship requests from Americans with no family connection to Kosovo.

One resettlement agency's Web site is getting 700 messages a week offering to take Kosovars into private homes, even though the site has a warning that the agency generally avoids such arrangements.

Ginny Hamilton of the U.S. Committee for Refugees started out a quarter-century ago as a volunteer in the Indochina resettlement effort, "calling hotels to see if they had old mattresses."

Now, she's reminded of the spirit of '75, when 135,000 Vietnamese entered the country in 10 weeks. "This has lifted my spirits," she says. "People feel the need to reach out again."

In Sarasota, members of Redeemer Church decided to welcome the Kosovars to Tampa Bay by furnishing and equipping their two-bedroom apartment in Clearwater with items from their own homes. Not castoffs, nothing that looked worn or stained, but things that still had some life in them.

And so Rick Blackmore stored all the stuff in his garage, found himself dragging the Connell table out of their kitchen, thinking that it looked brand new, and wondering what they would eat on now.

He and five other men loaded all the furniture in a trailer, drove an hour up to Clearwater, and carried the stuff — including a sofa bed, a bedroom set, bunk beds and tables — up three flights of stairs.

The bunk beds alone took hours to assemble. The volunteers, including Brad Potts, who'd slept in them as a kid, didn't have enough screws. They had to drive through the rain to find a hardware store. Told of their mission, the clerk asked, "Do you have a shower curtain?" They bought one.

When they were finished, another team from the parish decorated, arranged and cleaned the apartment, singing hymns as they worked.

When they finished, the apartment was ready, down to thumbtacks and Band-Aids.

A few nights later, a welcoming group that included Patrick Whelan and his 5-year-old son Kyle met the Pllanas — Mehmed and Sevdia and their three daughters — at the airport.

They all looked tired, and the 9-year-old, Ajshe, looked scared. Then Kyle walked up and handed her a teddy bear. She smiled.

They all drove to the apartment,

where the family found a new home with fresh flowers, pictures on the wall and a shower curtain in the bathroom. A family of Bosnian refugees was there, preparing dinner for them.

"Every one of us has given a part of our home to help build your home," Whelan told the Pllanas.

Now Whelan doesn't have a desk. His computer sits on the floor of the closet. "That's OK," he says. "Someone else needs the desk more than me."

One image stays in his head: Ajshe, who'd seen more than any 9-year-old should have to, smiling with the teddy bear his son gave her.

"Someday," he says, "I hope that girl will talk to her own children about the day when a child reached out to her, and she realized the power of love is greater than the power of hate."

FAX

RENE

COVER SHEET

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DATE: 5/5/99

456-7431

TO: Eric Gould

NO. OF PAGES

(Including cover): 4 5

FROM: Julie

SUBJECT: Kosovar Refugees

COMMENTS:

Any ideas on how to get these into the
rights lands?

**Departamenti Amerikan i Bujqësisë
Programe për Asistencë në Ushqim
Informacion për Refugjatë**

PROGRAMI PER TRISKAT E USHQIMIT

Programi për triskat e ushqimit u ndihmon shumë njerëzve, përfshirë refugjatët për të blerë ushqimin e nevojshëm për shëndet të mirë.

Si të aplikoj për këtë program?

Nëse keni nevojë për ushqim duhet të shkoni në zyrën lokale për triska ushqimi për të aplikuar. Kjo zyrë sigurisht është e regjistruar në librin e qeverisë lokale ose në regjistrin e numrave të telefonit me emrin "Human Resources" "Social Services" ose "Food Stamps". Zyra për triskat e ushqimit do të caktojë një intervistë për të biseduar me ju rreth çështjeve sic janë: burimet tuaja, të ardhurat dhe shpenzimet. Mos harroni të merrni dokumentet e imigracionit me vete.

Sa kohë zgjat procedura?

Në kushte normale, vendimi për rastin tuaj do të merret brenda 30 ditësh. Megjithatë, nëse të ardhurat tuaja janë shumë të vogla, ose nuk keni fare të ardhura dhe më pak se 100 dollarë para, ka mundësi që të merrni triskat e ushqimit brenda 7 ditësh.

Si të përdorë triskat?

Triskat e ushqimit jepen në formë të kuponave të letrës ose të një karteje plastike, varësisht nga vendi ku jetoni. Këto mund të shfytëzohen për të blerë ushqime në dyqane ushqimore.

PROGRAMI WIC

Ky program i ndihmon gratë shtatëzëne dhe gratë pas lindjes si dhe fëmijët deri në moshën 5 vjeçe për blerjen e ushqimeve plotësuese, të nevojshme gjatë shtatëzënisë, gjatë viteve të para të foshnjës dhe fëmijës. Refugjatët kanë të drejtë të aplikojnë për programin WIC. Që të kenë të drejtë të fitojnë këtë program, gratë dhe fëmijët duhet të kenë të ardhura të ulëta dhe të rrezikohen nga mungesa e ushqimit adekuat, për shembull kanë ushqimin e dobët, një rritje të ngadalshme ose një rritje të pa mjaftuar të peshës.

Si të aplikoj për këtë program?

Nëse keni nevojë për programin WIC, duhet të shkoni në klinikën lokale WIC për të aplikuar. Për informacione mbi klinikën më të afërt kontaktoni Departamentin tuaj lokal ose shtetëror të shëndetësisë dhe kërkoni "Health Department" ose "WIC" në regjistrin e telefonave, ose në librin e qeverisë lokale.

Sa kohë merr procedura?

Klinika WIC do të caktoj një takim për të biseduar me ju mbi të ardhurat dhe gjendjen shëndetësore të familjes. Do të përpiqen që t'ju takojnë sa më shpejtë që të jetë e mundur. Do t'ju pyesin për dietën tuaj. Do t'ju masin dhe do t'ju marrin masën, gjatësinë dhe do të caktojnë një testim për gjakun. Ky informacion do t'u ndihmojë për të vendosur nëse u takon programi WIC. Vendimi do të merret brenda 20 ditësh pas vizitës.

Vizita në klinikë merr ca kohë. Por stafi i klinikës do t'u japë më shumë informacione mbi ndihmat e tjera që mund t'i merrni në nivelin lokal, sic janë vaksinimet për fëmijët, ose kujdesi shëndetësor për ju, do t'ju ndihmojnë edhe me qumështin e gjirit, dhe do t'ju mësojnë se si mund të përdorni ushqimet WIC.

Si mund të marr ushqime përmes WIC?

Pasi që të jetë marrë vendimi se u takon programi WIC, ju mund të merrni çeqet në klinikën WIC dhe t'i përdorni në dyqane ushqimore për ushqime siç janë: qumësht, vezë, cereal, lëngje frutash, groshë të thatë dhe bizele si dhe ushqim për foshnjat, Formula. Klinika juaj lokale e WIC-ut do t'ju mësojë se tek cilat dyqane të shkoni dhe se si mund t'i përdorni çekat WIC.

Barazia

Departamenti Amerikan i Bujqësisë (USDA) nuk lejon diskriminim në programet e saj në bazë të racës, ngjyrës, origjinës kombëtare, gjinisë, fesë, moshës, të metave fizike, ose bindjeve politike. Për të bërë ankesë shkruani Sekretarit të Bujqësisë, në këtë adresë: US Department of Agriculture, Washington DC, 20250 ose merrni në telefonin: 188-245-6340. Departamenti Amerikan i Bujqësisë është punonjës që ofron mundësi të barabarta.

**United States Department of Agriculture
Nutrition Assistance Programs
Information for Refugees**

FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

The Food Stamp Program helps many people, including refugees, buy the food they need for good health.

How do I apply?

If you need food, you should go to the local food stamp office to apply. It is probably listed under "Human Resources," "Social Services," or "Food Stamps" in the State or local government pages of the telephone book. The food stamp office will set up an interview to talk to you about things like your resources, income, and expenses. Be sure you take your Immigration documents with you.

How long does it take?

Normally a decision will be made on your case within 30 days. However, if you have very little or no income and less than \$100 in cash, you may be eligible to get food stamps within 7 days.

How do I use food stamps?

Food stamp benefits are issued either in the form of paper coupons or a plastic card, depending on where you live. They can be used to buy food in grocery stores.

WIC PROGRAM

This program helps low income pregnant and postpartum women, and children up to age five, buy extra foods they need during pregnancy, infancy and young childhood. Refugees are eligible for the WIC program. Women and children must be low income and have a nutritional risk such as poor diet or slow growth or low weight gain.

How do I apply?

If you need WIC, you should go to your local WIC clinic to apply. For information on your nearest WIC clinic, contact your State or local health department (look for "Health Department" or "WIC" in the State or local government pages of the telephone book).

How long does it take?

The WIC clinic will set up an appointment to talk to you about your family income and health status. They will try to see you as soon as possible. They will ask about your diet. They will weigh you and take your height measurement, and also arrange for a blood test. This information will help to decide if you are eligible for WIC. This decision will be made within 20 days of your visit.

The actual visit to the clinic takes a while. But the WIC clinic staff also will be giving you more information about how to get other local help too, like shots (immunizations) for your children, or health care for you. They also can help you with breastfeeding, and will help you learn more about how to use WIC foods.

How do I get foods using WIC?

Once you are determined eligible, you can pick up checks at the WIC clinic and use them at grocery stores for foods like milk, cheese, eggs, cereal, juice, dry beans and peas, and formula for babies. Your WIC clinic will tell you what stores to go to and how to use the WIC checks.

Nondiscrimination:

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) does not allow discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, or political beliefs. To file a complaint, write the Secretary of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC, 20250 or call 1-800-245-6340. USDA is an equal employment opportunity employer.

First refugees from Kosovo arrive in U.S.

By August Gribbin
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

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FORT DIX, N.J. — The first tired, bewildered contingent of refugees from the "Killing Fields" of Kosovo stepped from a jumbo jet into the spring air of New Jersey last evening to face an uncertain future and one certainty: They were safe at last.

The 249 adults, 195 children ages 3 to 18, and nine infants were greeted briefly by first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton after their charter flight from Macedonia landed at McGuire Air Force Base.

One official said federal agencies aimed to provide the refugees with a "welcoming environment, which is comfortable."

The refugees displaced by the war in Yugoslavia had been airborne for 13 hours, during which they watched movies — "The X-Files: Fight the Future" and "Mighty Joe Young" — and received basic information about what to expect when their Boeing 747 landed.

The battery of U.S. officials welcoming the ethnic Albanian refugees was concerned that the newcomers would be overwhelmed by the more than 300 media representatives bused from nearby Fort Dix to report their arrival. A row of television cameras 50 yards long awaited the planeload of Kosovars, who seemed to pay no attention to the media swarm.

Officials also assumed the refugees would be exhausted. So they quickly checked identification, issued base identification, doled out soap and shampoo, and hustled them to their assigned dormitories.

The newcomers face two to four weeks of processing that includes medical checks, counseling and even language classes. They will be cared for the way "we would have wished our grandparents were treated when they arrived at Ellis Island years ago" said Brig. Gen. Mitchell V. Zais, who heads the task force charged with receiving and caring for the refugees.

The Department of Health and Human Services is coordinating

see KOSOVO, page A12

the resettlement of the refugees and is being aided by the American Red Cross and nine refugee agencies.

The refugees who landed yesterday are part of two distinct groups of Kosovars who will be arriving. These people were chosen because the conditions under which they were living in Macedonian refugee camps were untenable. "They were conditions that could not be sustained," said Marguerite Hauze, assistant secretary of state for refugee resettlement.

These refugees have no sponsors in the United States. While some may have relatives here, they have not yet been located. Ultimately, most must be helped to find families with whom they can live.

Finding host families will be coordinated by the local agencies. Officials were careful to explain that it is not possible to drive to Fort Dix, where the refugees will be living, and take home a needy Kosovar family.

A group of 100 refugees will be arriving Saturday by commercial flight at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport. That group of Kosovars has relatives residing in the United States. They will be united with their families upon arrival, and to make that possible, they are now being processed while in the Macedonian refugee camps.

U.S. officials anticipate that most of the refugees who arrived last evening will want to return to their homeland. In fact, many have told U.S. officials that is their intention.

But if they choose to stay in the United States, they will be able to do so. After a year, they can apply for permanent residency. Meanwhile, efforts will be made to help them adapt to American society and to get jobs.

Another flight of some 400 "vulnerable" ethnic Albanians is scheduled to arrive at McGuire Air Force Base tomorrow. Two more flights with approximately the same number of refugees is sched-

uled for next week.

To provide facilities for the refugees at Fort Dix, a building containing open dining facilities for the camp was converted to a medical clinic complete with cubicles and treatment equipment. A Muslim chaplain from the Army will be visiting the camp.

Early last month, the United States agreed to accept 20,000 Kosovar refugees. And at first, it was thought they would be housed at the U.S. Guantanamo Naval Base in Cuba. The base has, in the past, housed thousands of Cubans and Haitians seeking asylum in the United States.

Partially explaining that proposal, Secretary of State Mad-

eleine K. Albright later said that the United States wanted "to show the generosity of spirit of the American people."

However, the proposal quickly prompted objections. Karen Abu Zayd, the U.S. representative to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, last month said sending Kosovar refugees to the United States would establish a "bad precedent." She declared the refugees "would much prefer to stay in the neighboring countries near home so they can go home more quickly when it's possible."

Sen. John Ashcroft, Missouri Republican, said he thought other alternatives should be investigated. And Sen. Arlen Specter,

Pennsylvania Republican, pondered the intricacies involved in flying tens of thousands of people to this country only to return them later.

But as the situation in Serbia has dragged on and the anguish of the expelled Kosovars has continued with no end in sight, the idea of whisking the displaced persons to this country has gained support.

Ferrying the refugees back and forth between here and the Balkans is expensive, Mr. Specter said in a television interview, but he concluded the "dollars are relatively minor compared to the suffering" the refugees have experienced.

The Washington Times

THURSDAY, MAY 6, 1999

Hello, America: Refugees land in N.J.

By Vivienne Walt
Special for USA TODAY

STANKOVIC REFUGEE CAMP, Macedonia — At day-break Wednesday, two friends stood near the gate of this huge camp, sobbing in each other's arms, too choked up even to say farewell.

Both men, students at Kosovo's Pristina University until just last month, were set to leave for the United States in the first group of 453 Kosovar refugees to be accepted for U.S. settlement.

But as the buses began to fill before dawn to carry the refugees to a 747, Arben Shatri decided he could not wrench himself from the Balkans.

"I will wait here to join the KLA," he said, referring to the Kosovo Liberation Army, the ethnic Albanian guerrilla army that is fighting Serb forces just 15 miles from here. "My parents are in Albania, my one brother is in Sweden. My other brother and I will go fight," Shatri, 23, said.

But 453 other Kosovo refugees arrived at McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey Wednesday, leaving behind this crowded camp and their war-ravaged homeland. They were bused to nearby Fort Dix, where they will stay for a few weeks before being placed in homes around the country.



By H. Darr Belser, USA TODAY

Welcome: Members of the first group of Kosovo refugees to arrive in the USA wave as they leave the jet Wednesday.

Another group of 100 refugees was expected to arrive Saturday at New York's Kennedy Airport, where they would meet relatives and sponsor families. Eight hundred additional refugees are scheduled to fly into Fort Dix next week — 400 each on Monday and Wednesday. The United States

has agreed to accept 20,000 ethnic Albanian refugees over the next couple of weeks.

Military officials at Fort Dix have worked overtime to make refugees feel welcome at the base. The sign hanging over the base's gym-turned-processing center reads: *Mirsevini Ne Amerike* (Welcome to Ameri-



USA TODAY

ca). Dormitories hold playrooms bursting with board games, baseball bats, indoor basketball nets and plastic kitchen sets. There is a big-screen television.

There will be reminders of home, too. An empty room serves as a place of prayer for Muslims. All signs inside the dormitories and dining hall have been translated into Albanian. And the Fort Dix cooks are being instructed on preparing Albanian foods.

"The goal here is to provide a welcoming environment which is comfortable," said Lavinia Limon, director of the Office of Refugee Settlement for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Most of the refugees selected by U.S. immigration officials for the first flights to the United States have spent at least a month living in tents, amid

Stankovic's growing squalor.

Hundreds of thousands of Kosovar Albanians have fled to Macedonia and Albania to escape an apparent Serb ethnic cleansing campaign that began in March and aims to keep the separatist province under Belgrade's control.

Yet, for some refugees, leaving the region is no cause for celebration. They already have been forced out of their homes in Kosovo. Now they are going across the world to a country where they know no one and do not speak the language.

"This is too far away," said Shatri's friend, Astrit Ajdari, 20, wiping tears from his cheeks. "This is a temporary stay for me. That's all."

But how and when these refugees return home remains uncertain. "That's something that perhaps you will have to ask (Yugoslav President) Slobodan Milosevic," U.S. Ambassador to Macedonia Christopher Hill said. "They've been thrown out of Kosovo in a policy of forced expulsion. We're looking at a Kosovo that's increasingly empty."

Under the immigration plan, the refugees are eligible for permanent residence within a year and U.S. citizenship five years later. But if peace is restored in Kosovo, U.S. officials will resettle any who choose to return.

Carrying Little but Hope, Albanian Refugees Begin Arriving

DIANA JEAN SCHEMO

MC GUIRE AIR FORCE BASE, N.J. -- With their families torn apart and their homes turned to ashes, the first 453 of 20,000 Albanian refugees arrived here from Macedonia Wednesday, taking the first step toward rebuilding their lives away from the battlefield their homeland has become.

Arriving on a chartered Tower Air 747 jet Wednesday afternoon, the refugees, many of them women, children and old people, were taken to a newly fenced-in section of the neighboring Fort Dix, where they were expected to remain for three to six weeks.

As the refugees filed past a receiving line on the runway, what they had been through could be read in the way they clustered together, and the missing generations: a young woman walked with an old woman; a man alone carrying an infant; a mother shepherded a gaggle of children, but no husband; teen-agers came with their grandparents. Though beginning a new life, they carried no luggage.

They were welcomed to the gymnasium by Hillary Rodham Clinton. "We know that your thoughts are thousands of miles away, with families or loved ones who are in Kosovo or in refugee camps," the First Lady told them. "We will not let Milosevic succeed in keeping you out of your home," she said, to the sustained applause of the newcomers. Above her was stretched a banner. "Mirsevini ne Amerike," it said: "Welcome to America."

Though the United States had pledged to take in the refugees nearly a month ago, preparations to receive them here began in earnest only last Friday, after a renewed exodus from Kosovo brought 200,000 more people flooding into Macedonia over the last two weeks.

Since then, private contractors, reservists and soldiers have been working round the clock to outfit Fort Dix with bilingual signs, medical clinics, dormitories for families of varying sizes and children's playrooms. The stairwells, with high metal banisters, have been lined with plexiglass sheets to keep little children from falling, while gates now surround basement steps, also for safety.

Wednesday, officials of the Immigration and Naturalization Service fingerprinted the newcomers and issued them identity cards, and gave them sweat suits and toiletries.

In the last 24 hours, some 8,000 Kosovar Albanians fled to Macedonia, said Marguerite Rivera Houze, Undersecretary of State for Population, Refugees and Migration. A main refugee camp at Stankovic was operating at triple capacity, Ms. Houze added. "What we're trying to do is to get people moved out very quickly," she said.

Under pressure of the new outpouring, the Clinton Administration scrapped plans to initially restrict the refugees coming here to those with relatives in the United States willing to sponsor them. Instead, it is accepting refugees after only a preliminary screening in Macedonia, and allowed nonprofit relief agencies to sponsor them for resettlement.

Ms. Houze said that those arriving here Wednesday had suffered neither more nor less than the hundreds of thousands of other ethnic Albanians who remained behind.

Perhaps they were just luckier, or more eager. Those arriving Wednesday "were the ones who were already psychologically ready to move," said Roger Winter, executive director of the Immigration and Refugee Services of America, a private charity based in Washington.

He said that when the plane touched down here, ending a journey that began in Skopje 13 hours earlier, the refugees erupted in cheers and applause.

While here, the refugees will undergo security, medical and immigration exams, which are usually conducted before refugees ever reach the United States. Afterward, nine nonprofit organizations that resettle refugees will channel the newcomers into apartments throughout the United States, said John Fredriksson, who is overseeing the effort for the Immigration and Refugee Services of America.

Brig. Gen. Mitchell Zais, head of the Joint Command for Task Force Open Arms, the military's name for the resettlement effort, said he told soldiers here to welcome the refugees with sensitivity, in sharp contrast to the treatment that Cuban refugees had received just a few years ago, when they crammed into Guantánamo Bay in an effort to force their way to the United States.

"We want to welcome them to America as we would have hoped that so many of our parents and grandparents were welcomed at Ellis Island," General Zais said.

A second flight of about 400 Albanian refugees is expected to arrive here Friday, while 100 Albanians with relatives who have agreed to take them in will arrive Saturday at Kennedy International Airport. Those coming in on Saturday will already have gone through immigration, security and medical reviews in Macedonia.

Next week, two more planeloads of refugees are due to arrive at Fort Dix.

Ms. Houze said that Washington had promised officials in Macedonia that the United States would take 2,000 refugees a week from the overcrowded camps. But with Fort Dix only geared to accommodate up to 3,000 refugees, the United States Government has opened discussions with officials in Greece, Turkey and Bulgaria about the possibility of sheltering refugees there, if only temporarily.

Eventually, she said, the Administration would like to conduct immigration, medical and security screenings of the refugees outside the United States, and to install them in homes found by nonprofit agencies immediately on their arrival in the United States.

Whitman Aides in Pique at First Lady

ides to Gov. Christine Todd Whitman accused Hillary Rodham Clinton of trying to avoid sharing the media limelight Wednesday during ceremonies to greet Kosovar refugees as they arrived at Fort Dix in New Jersey.

Peter McDonough, a spokesman for the Governor, said that Mrs. Whitman had wanted to shake hands with the refugees as they got off a chartered plane at McGuire Air Force Base. But McDonough said that the First Lady's office vetoed the idea, contending that it would not be safe for Mrs. Whitman to be so close to the refugees because many of them were thought to be carrying tuberculosis or other infectious diseases.

McDonough scoffed at that explanation, asserting that Mrs. Clinton simply did not want to allow Mrs. Whitman to be first in line greeting the refugees at an event that was getting intense media coverage.

"I don't know how stupid they think we are to fall for such a flimsy excuse," McDonough said. "It's an extraordinarily transparent bit of political jockeying by an apparent Senate candidate in the state of New York."

Mrs. Clinton is said to be thinking of running as a Democrat for the United States Senate in New York next year. Mrs. Whitman, a Republican, has already said she plans to run for the Senate in New Jersey.

Julie Mason, a spokeswoman for Mrs. Clinton, said, "The First Lady was not involved in establishing how the refugees were greeted when they arrived."

Mrs. Whitman eventually did get to shake hands with many of the refugees as they disembarked from buses that had brought them from the Air Force base to Fort Dix, where they will be housed. She then appeared with the First Lady inside a gymnasium where Mrs. Clinton addressed the refugees.

After the event, Mrs. Clinton and Mrs. Whitman exchanged niceties. "She thanked the Governor for being so helpful in setting up the event," said Jayne O'Connor, a spokeswoman for Mrs. Whitman.

END

NATO general: 'We are winning,' and Serbs know it

By Fred Coleman
USA TODAY

TIRANA, Albania — NATO's top military commander said here Tuesday that the alliance's six-week air campaign is right on target and heading for victory.

In Albania for talks with political and military leaders, U.S. Army Gen. Wesley Clark's assessment came as NATO reported that a U.S. fighter jet shot down a Serbian MiG-29 in a dogfight over Serbia, and NATO attacked artillery and mortar positions along Kosovo's mountainous border with Albania.

The American F-16 shot down the Russian-built MiG, the most sophisticated fighter in the Yugoslav air force, after it was challenged in the air near Belgrade, according to military officials at NATO headquarters in Brussels, Belgium. It was the sixth air-to-air kill recorded against Serbian aircraft since airstrikes began March 24. Another MiG-29 was destroyed on the ground.

"The air campaign is proving every day that we are winning," Clark declared. "(Yugoslav President Slobodan) Milosevic is losing, and he knows it."

"We are putting Serb forces under heavy pressure," he said. "Our mission is to get out and win this conflict, and that's exactly what we are doing."

Warplanes targeted Serb forces in the mountains of western Kosovo to halt shelling of villages inside Albania. The weapons posed a threat to hundreds of thousands of refugees in border camps, NATO spokesman Jamie Shea said. Meanwhile, the Pentagon said B-52 jets dropped dozens of unguided bombs on Serb troop concentrations.

Continued favorable weather made it possible for alliance aircraft to carry out attacks on Yugoslav military and special police command sites; radio relay and transmitter facilities; fuel and supply depots; and a highway bridge. In the field, NATO aircraft continued to search for and destroy tanks, artillery and military vehicles.

The Apache helicopters brought into Albania two weeks ago for attacks across the border in Serbia are expected to be a key element in the next phase of NATO's strategy.

Clark said the Apache training runs in the region were going well.

"They are on track in terms of their capabilities to take the fight to the Serb forces," he said. "Right now they are sharpening those skills. We certainly intend to use them." But Clark declined to say when they would be used.

Contributing: Jim Drinkard in Brussels

For 444 refugees, next stop US

First group leaves horrors of war today

By Vivienne Walt
Special for USA TODAY

STANKOVIC 1 REFUGEE CAMP, Macedonia — As the sun set over the nearby Kosovo mountains Tuesday, the Pilana family sat in the doorway of Tent G-54, drinking tea for the last time with camp neighbors, swapping tales of massacres they witnessed in Kosovo and wondering what lay ahead.

For once, there was an answer, albeit uncertain: a life in the United States. The Pilanas will arrive today on the first plane carrying Kosovo refugees who were accepted by U.S. immigration officials.

"Our house, our town, everything was destroyed. We left with nothing," says Sevdije Pilana, 40, who fled with her family three weeks ago from Kosovo's war-torn Racak district, traveling some of the way by horse-drawn cart. "I just want my children to finish school now."

About 444 refugees — the first of 20,000 bound for the United States — were scheduled to leave Macedonia today.

Immigration and Naturalization Service officials began arriving from Washington last week to speed up the paperwork, even suspending mandatory medical tests until the refugees arrive in the United States.

The refugees will fly to Fort Dix, N.J. They will be eligible for permanent residence with-

INFORMATATA



By Ruben Sprich, Reuters

Looking for good news: Ethnic Albanian refugees look at an information board at the Stankovic refugee camp in Macedonia. On the board are lists containing the names of refugees to be airlifted out.

in one year, and full U.S. citizenship five years later.

Officials seemed astonished at the smooth operation. "Many of our refugee programs take years to process people," says Kathleen Thompson, director of the INS refugee program.

Hundreds of applicants snaked through a tent set up in a corner of this sprawling camp, where many of its 30,000 refugees have endured weeks with no sanitation or showers in overcrowded tents with near-strangers.

Since Monday, INS officials have processed more than 500 refugees and expect to accept

hundreds more within the next few days. U.N. refugee officials say more than 11,000 refugees have crossed into Macedonia since Monday.

The United States is not the top choice for many refugees, most of whom have contacts elsewhere in Europe, where hundreds of thousands of Albanians have lived and worked for decades. Like many others, the Pilanas know no one in the United States. But by sundown Tuesday, refugees had crowded around the wooden information board in the camp's main clearing to see if their names were on the U.S. list.

Dardane Pilana, 15, erupted with laughter as an INS official snapped a Polaroid photo for her immigration document. "I don't know about America," she says, stumbling over her English. "I really want to see the White House."

The Pilanas' new papers are their only documents. All others were seized by Serb police, who, they said, rampaged through their village, Shtimle, where Mehmet Pilana, 60, was a high-school math teacher. The family fled to a nearby village before leaving Kosovo.

On the last night in her refugee tent, Dardane pored over

DEVELOPMENTS

Events in the Kosovo conflict Tuesday:

► The United States is ready to approve the release of two Serb POWs in response to the weekend return of three U.S. soldiers, administration officials say.

► A divided U.S. Senate, uncertain how it wants to proceed on the Kosovo crisis, set aside a measure that would have allowed President Clinton to use "all necessary force" in the conflict.

► Russian envoy Viktor Chernomyrdin holds a second round of talks with Clinton administration officials, but no breakthrough is seen.

► President Clinton plans to meet NATO Secretary General Javier Solana and U.S. troops in Europe.

► Ethnic Albanian refugees are scheduled to arrive in the United States. First lady Hillary Rodham Clinton travels to New Jersey today to welcome them.

Source: Staff and wire reports

one of the few possessions she had grabbed as the family fled: a well-thumbed photo album. Inside was a world of parks and streets and a sweeping hilltop vista of Shtimle's houses, now mostly destroyed by bullets and fires. "These are my friends," she says, pointing to a photograph of a group of giggling teen-age girlfriends, hugging in the sun. "I don't know where they are. I don't know if I will see them again."

> .



Eugenia Chough

04/30/99 12:41:45 PM

Record Type: Record

To: See the distribution list at the bottom of this message

cc:

Subject: Kosovar refugees: Albright announcemt at 12:30pm

ANNOUNCEMENT

NSC, OSD, DoD, State folks just had a quick call to discuss a last-minute change in plans for bringing Kosovar refugees into the US. Sec'y Albright would like to move people out more quickly than processing people in Macedonia would allow. We'll have to use Ft Dix to process the first 500 (combination of "vulnerables" and relatives) refugees, afterall. We are aiming to have them arrive by Tuesday, 5/4.

Sec'y Albright will make a general announcement (no specification of dates) of these Ft. Dix plans at 12:30pm today during a war crimes press conference.

Brian Atwood and Julia are tentatively scheduled to do a more detailed announcement at 3:30pm today.

Attendees were assigned to make calls to Torrecelli, Congressional delegation, Gov'r, and local officials.

TENTATIVE TIMELINE

INS team will arrive in Macedonia on Sunday to do preliminary screenings on Monday. Refugees will depart for US on Tuesday, arriving on Tuesday afternoon/evening.

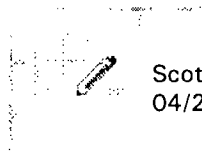
TALKING POINTS

-- Due to the large influx of refugees into Macedonia, we would like to move them into the United States as quickly as possible.

-- We anticipate that sometime early next week, Ft. Dix will receive the first arriving groups of refugees. An exact date is unknown at this time.

-- We are pursuing two tracks for processing refugees. We hope to operate a full-blown processing center in Macedonia, and also a partial Macedonia/Ft. Dix processing system.

Message Sent To: _____



Scott Busby
04/26/99 04:04:29 PM

Record Type: Record

To: See the distribution list at the bottom of this message
cc: Maria Echaveste/WHO/EOP, Miles M. Lackey/NSC/EOP, Eric P. Schwartz/NSC/EOP
Subject: Fort Dix and Kosovar Refugees

As I relayed to some of you, on Saturday the press (AP and CNN) reported that we would bring Kosovar refugees into Fort Dix, New Jersey for processing. (This was the result of a leak out of Fort Dix.) This report is not accurate. We are hoping to do all necessary processing in Macedonia or some other place in the region; a USG team is in Macedonia right now exploring these options. We are only considering use of a U.S. facility if we cannot do all necessary processing in the region.

Folks in WH Leg or Intergovernmental Affairs may want to reach out to New Jersey members/officials to clarify where we are. Here are the talking points you can use:

- The news reports on the use of Fort Dix for Kosovar refugees are not accurate. Our first preference is to do all necessary processing in the region where the refugees are currently located. A U.S. Government team is right now in the region reviewing these options.
- Only if processing in the region is not possible will we consider using a facility in the U.S. We are considering a number of facilities but won't make a final decision until and unless we have to use such a facility.
- [If pressed] Yes, Fort Dix is among the facilities under consideration should we need to use one in the U.S.

Message Sent To:

Janet Murguia/WHO/EOP
Irene Bueno/OPD/EOP
Fred DuVal/WHO/EOP
Mindy E. Myers/WHO/EOP
Mona G. Mohib/WHO/EOP



Eugenia Chough

04/22/99 07:21:51 PM

Record Type: Record

To: See the distribution list at the bottom of this message

cc: Scott Busby/NSC/EOP, Laura Emmett/WHO/EOP, Irene Bueno/OPD/EOP

Subject: Kosovo refugee mtg

Irene and I just attended a conference call with OMB, HHS-ASMB, HHS-ACF-Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) to discuss the process -- both in terms of operation and funding -- of moving 20,000 Kosovo refugees to the US next month. Lavinia Limon, ORR, outlined the following two options, and suggested that the likely outcome will be a mixture of both. There will be a conference call tomorrow (NSC, HHS, OMB) to further discuss Scenarios 1 and 2.

Scenario 1: Process refugees abroad

Refugee processing (INS interviews, medical screening, etc) is conducted overseas and State Dept picks up the costs.

HHS estimates that of the 20,000 arriving refugees:

- 35% would be eligible for Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) and Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA), increasing program costs by \$23.3 million in FY99, and \$14.6 million in FY00;
- 10% would be eligible for SSI/MA (no cost estimate available at this time);
- 55% would be eligible for TANF/MA (no cost estimate available at this time); and,
- all would be eligible for Food Stamps (no cost estimate available at this time).

Scenario 2: Process refugees in the US

When processing refugees in the US, the Refugee Act requires the Secy of HHS to operate a domestic processing center. DoD is exploring the use of military facilities as processing centers. HHS estimates that processing could take up to 6 months. Under this scenario, HHS provided very rough cost estimates (as follows), but plans to meet with DoD folks on Monday to compare numbers.

- \$20 million for placement, reception (OMB will see if State Dept can cover these costs.)
 - \$10 million for ongoing transportation
 - \$15 million contractor staff, communications, orientation, recreation
 - \$23 million medical, dental, hospital
- TOTAL processing costs = \$68 million for FY 99

Since refugees would reside in camps for the remainder of FY 99, there would be no program costs until FY 00. HHS estimates FY00 additional RCA and RMA costs of \$38.7 million.

Processing refugees in the US may require changes in the supp. OMB is investigating. ACF-ORR conveyed that the ORR could cover the FY 99 costs associated with this option. However, the FY 00 budget would leave them with a cushion of only \$5 million.

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April 22, 1999

THE VICE PRESIDENT

U.S. Will Open Door to 20,000 Kosovars**Related Articles**

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By KATHARINE Q. SEELYE

NEW YORK -- The United States is offering to bring 20,000 Kosovar refugees to the American mainland for temporary placement with families, Vice President Al Gore announced Wednesday. The offer represents a new policy, and formal abandonment of the much-criticized earlier proposal to relocate thousands of the refugees to the naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

"We will accept, on the American mainland, up to 20,000 of the hurting and homeless Kosovar refugees -- those with close family ties in America and those who are vulnerable," Gore said in a speech to about 200 community leaders on Ellis Island in a ceremony commemorating the 50th anniversary of NATO. "We will bring them here until they are able to return home safely."

The refugees are to be screened from among the many thousands who have fled Kosovo, and they will need to meet international standards for refugees in order to come.

Administration officials said they had no idea how many refugees might want to come to the United States, but that they were limiting the number to those who had family in the United States or whose health was too fragile to withstand the difficulties of the nomadic life many have now been forced to adopt. The United States is home to numerous pockets of Albanian-Americans, including in New York and Detroit.

Gore said the refugees would not be granted political asylum. "We

anticipate their return to Kosovo," he said.

The NATO allies, including the United States, first announced plans two weeks ago to provide temporary homes for the refugees who have been streaming out of Kosovo. So far, refugees have been placed in 11 countries; Germany has accepted about 10,000.

Macedonia has indicated to the United States that it is simply out of space for accommodating any more refugees, one U.S. official said.

An administration official said that refugees could be identified for placement early next week.

But the Clinton administration's plan to send refugees to a vast tent community at the naval station on Guantanamo Bay has fizzled, with officials suspending a proposed airlift and offering to build barracks in Albania instead. Many refugee agencies and Albanian refugee families rejected the idea of being shipped so far from their homeland, and to such an isolated spot.

"The decision to use Guantanamo was made when it looked like a large group needed to be moved quickly and there was no time for screening," an administration official said. The official said that those circumstances no longer prevailed and that there would be more time for screening and moving those who wanted to move.

When the base was first selected as a location, administration officials indicated it was also chosen to eliminate the possibility that some of the refugees would claim political asylum in the United States. Under federal immigration law, refugees can claim asylum only once they reach American soil.

More important, as recently as last week, President Clinton, among others, said that moving the refugees out of the Balkan region could appear to hand a victory to President Slobodan Milosevic of Yugoslavia and to his policy of "ethnic cleansing," and that it would therefore not be in NATO's interest.

While in the Detroit area last week, Clinton met privately with seven Albanian-Americans who have relatives in the war-torn region. P.J. Crowley, a spokesman for the president, said Clinton agreed with them that for the short term, it would be better to try to help the refugees stay in the Balkans rather than move them to Guantanamo Bay.

Crowley said at the time that temporarily relocating some refugees to Guantanamo "remains an option," but for the moment, such a mass movement would look like "a propaganda victory" for Milosevic.

Asked about some refugees' reluctance to leave the Balkan region, Gore said, "It is a balance. The vast and overwhelming majority will remain right in the region prepared to return on short notice. These too, the ones coming to the United States, will also be prepared to return on short notice."

Rep. Lamar Smith, R-Texas, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee's immigration panel, said that "the administration's

decision to bring 20,000 Kosovar refugees to the United States is the largest and most compelling evidence yet of a complete breakdown of administration policy."

"Where the goal was to halt Serb atrocities, we now have the biggest refugee crisis in postwar history," Smith said. "We are now witnessing a stunning string of failures that continue to multiply the miseries of the Kosovars."



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WORLD

A peace pact
armament issue

ps in East Timor signed a broadly nesday, appealing for an end to vio- lonesian territory. But doubts imme- effectiveness of the plan because it issue of disarming either the sepa- iamen who want East Timor to stay ident B.J. Habibie admitted that the amilitary groups responsible for a nd his control. The deal also fails to of East Timor's political future and bel r. Indonesia invaded East exed it a later. Violence has es- i said it would let go of the former s people reject an autonomy offer. is set for July.

NT: R s upper house of parlia- y's top prosecutor, dealing an- Boris Yeltsin's efforts to oust him. Af- ay session, the Federation Council 'uri Skuratov as prosecutor general. ed to boot Skuratov in a similar vote as been investigating alleged bribe dials.

JE: Problems plaguing Cambodia's serious that a trial of Khmer Rouge et international standards of justice a, a U.N. official said. Thomas Ham- cretary-general's special representa- is in Cambodia, said only an in- uld guarantee Khmer Rouge leaders ster Hun Sen has rejected a U.N. pro- nial tribunal be established for 20-30 rs on charges of crimes against hu- luring their 1975-79 rule.

A moderate Muslim cleric has been s in prison, Iran's official Islamic Re- ported Wednesday. Mohsen Kadivar pected court that is reserved for the id. Kadivar, a middle-ranking cleric dy pr r, was jailed Feb. 27 on tion of lies and disturbing public op- inlivar's reformist views had angered against Kadivar is seen as part of a i the media and supporters of moder- Khatami.

TALKS: Hoping to get a troubled n track, government and rebel dele- ind of talks amid rising public skepti- a rights abuses by the rebels. But representative Raul Reyes said, "The riment is still stalled." The rebels are own on right-wing death squads as a g the faltering peace process.

from wire reports

First Apaches arrive for duty

Copters aren't
sign of ground
force, Army says

By Andrea Stone
USA TODAY

TIRANA, Albania — Nearly three weeks after they were called out to join the airstrike against Yugoslavia, the first six of at least 24 Apache attack helicopters swooped across a twilight sky and gently touched down to a landing here Wednesday.

The Apaches are joining Task Force Hawk, the Army's piece of the action in NATO's month-old assault against Serb forces. Two heavy-lift Chinook helicopters and seven Black Hawk support helicopters also joined the aerial armada. Two of the Black Hawks bore red crosses, indicating their role as medical evacuation copters.

Army officials won't say when the first combat missions will begin, but it is likely that crews will rehearse for a few days before flying off to destroy Serb tanks, armored convoys, field artillery and infantry forces in Kosovo.

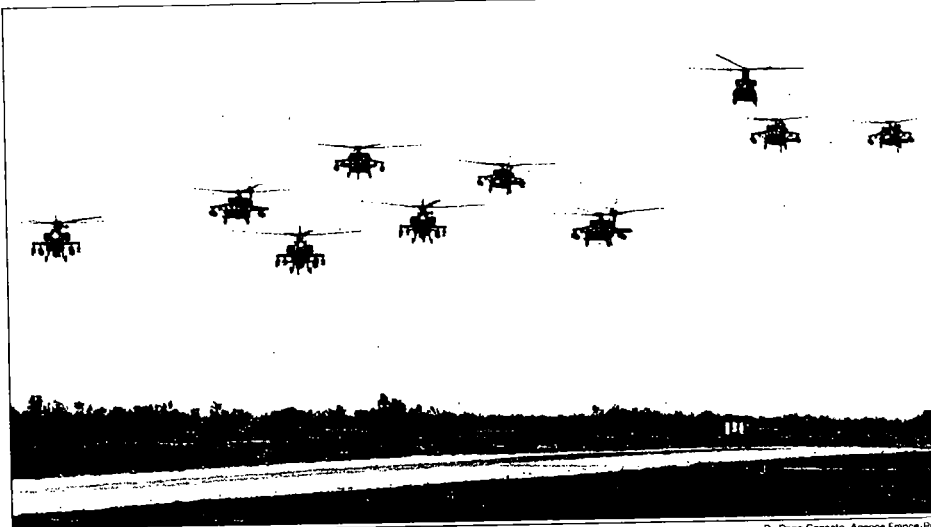
"The first one to know when we're ready to go will be Slobodan Milosevic," says Army Capt. Mark Arden, 29, of Washington. He is an Apache pilot from the 11th Aviation Brigade here.

The Apache, with a two-person crew, can operate day or night in most weather. It hovers behind hills and pops up to surprise armored targets, which it shoots before popping out of sight again. The Apache can fire up to 16 laser-guided missiles, 76 rockets or a combination of both. It also carries a 30-mm cannon that can fire 1,200 rounds.

Apaches played a prominent role in the opening hours of the ground assault in the Persian Gulf War by destroying early-warning radar sites. Military officials credit Apaches with taking out 500 Iraqi tanks and hundreds more armored personnel carriers, trucks and other vehicles during Operation Desert Storm. The Apache's night sensors and sighting system also proved crucial in the action in Panama in 1989.

The Apaches, mobile rocket launchers and the 3,300 soldiers who will support them are not the vanguard of any future ground invasion force of Yugoslavia, Army spokesman Lt. Col. Garrie Dorman said.

The helicopters arrived from bases in Italy, where they were delayed for a



By Dino Cancato, Agence France-Press

Apaches in the air: U.S. Apache combat helicopters prepare to touch down at Brindisi airport on Italy's southeastern coast Wednesday, before crossing the Adriatic to Albania, where they are joining the NATO airstrikes against the Serbs.



By Petr Josek, Reuters

Welcome arrival: The first of at least 24 U.S. Apache helicopters arrive at the Tirana airport Wednesday in Albania.

week after having been sent from Germany.

The Apaches are touted as all-weather war machines, but Army officials decided not to risk flying the \$16 million helicopters across the Adriatic Sea until

20,000 refugees headed to USA

By Bill Nichols
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — The White House announced Wednesday that up to 20,000 refugees from Kosovo will be allowed haven in the United States rather than at the U.S. Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Vice President Gore announced the change in policy at New York's Ellis Island.

"We will accept, on the American mainland, up to 20,000 of the hurting and homeless Kosovar refugees — those with close family ties in America and those who are particularly vulnerable — until they are able to return home safely," Gore said.

The plan to house refugees at Guantanamo was scrapped several weeks ago after U.N. officials and

other refugee aid groups questioned whether a barbed-wire enclave was suitable for ethnic Albanians displaced by war.

White House officials said the refugees to be placed in the USA would come only from camps in Macedonia, as those camps are full and Macedonian authorities say they desperately need more room.

The State Department and Immigration and Naturalization Service will screen refugees in Macedonia to find those who have relatives in the USA or who are in particularly vulnerable circumstances.

The administration said the refugees would be granted only temporary refuge. But once an emigrant is granted refugee status, he or she can apply for citizenship and essentially cannot be forced to return home.

Tirana's bad weather cleared.

Officials also had to negotiate with the Air Force and NATO, so humanitarian relief operations could be moved to another corner of Rinas Airport to make room for the helicopters. The Ar-

my also needed time to construct p to land and park the heavy helicopt which otherwise would sink into mushy mud.

► Ground troops revisited, 1A

From: Matthew McKearn on 04/22/99 02:15:22 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Barbara Chow/OMB/EOP@EOP, Linda Ricci/OMB/EOP@EOP, Barry White/OMB/EOP@EOP

cc: See the distribution list at the bottom of this message

Subject: Kosovo refugees

The following e-mail outlines the mechanics of moving Kosovar refugees to the U.S. and discusses potential costs. We can follow-up with HHS at the 4:30 conference call today on whether they have any additional analysis on the State and local impacts of resettlement.

On Wednesday, Vice President Gore announced that the United States would accept, on the American mainland, up to 20,000 of the Kosovar refugees. Refugees are to be placed with family members in the United States or with volunteers. This memo outlines the procedures for resettlement in the U. S. and the estimated costs.

Relocation to the United States

The State Department is working to link Albanian-Americans in the United States with relatives from Kosovar. These Kosovars will be offered an opportunity to resettle in the U.S. If the Greek government agrees to provide support, refugees will initially be taken to Greece for one week or more for processing -- INS interviews, medical screening, and other paperwork. In the event that the Greek or another regional government does not allow the U.S. to keep the Kosovars on their soil for the time needed for screening, the refugees would be transported directly to a US military facility for processing (most likely Fort Dix). After the refugees are screened, either overseas or in the U.S., they will be connected with their sponsoring relative or a volunteer sponsor.

Support for Refugees in the U.S.

Kosovar refugees resettled to the U.S. are eligible for cash and medical assistance and services provided through the Departments of State and Health and Human Services. The State Department pays an initial resettlement grant of \$760 per refugee to the domestic private voluntary organizations that handle the actual refugee resettlement. This is intended to support the refugee for the first 30 days in the U.S. A portion of the grant is provided to the refugee in the form of cash.

Subsequent support for refugees is administered through HHS' Office of Refugee Resettlement. For FY 1999, \$435 million was appropriated to ORR to serve refugees through four different programs: cash and medical assistance, employment services, preventive health services, and the targeted assistance grant program. ORR programs are designed that provide assistance to refugees and Cuban and Haitian entrants so that they can achieve economic self-sufficiency and social adjustment within the shortest time possible following their arrival in the U.S.

Cash and medical assistance is available to those needy refugees who are not eligible for other cash or medical assistance programs, such as Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or Medicaid and who arrive in the U.S. with no financial resources. ORR cash and medical assistance is paid entirely from federal funds and is available only for 8 months following arrival in the U.S.

To help refugees become self-supporting as quickly as possible, ORR also provides employment services funding to state governments and private, non-profit agencies which are responsible for providing

services, such as English language and employment training. Refugees receiving cash and medical assistance are required to be enrolled in employment services and to accept offers of employment.

The Targeted Assistance Grants program provides additional resources to communities facing extraordinary resettlement problems because of a high concentration of refugees and a high use of public assistance by the resident refugee population.

Costs of Resettlement

The Department of State has estimated that it would cost it approximately \$40 million for its share of overseas processing costs, transportation to the US, and the \$760 per refugee grant to the domestic organizations that handle the actual refugee resettlement. The existing supplemental should be sufficient to cover these costs. INS estimates that pre-screening refugees in Europe and providing documentation and inspection services in the U.S. will cost approximately \$1.3 million.

The per capita cost of ORR refugee cash and medical assistance is approximately \$500 per month, for a maximum of eight months. If all 20,000 refugees received cash and medical assistance for the full 8 months, the outer-bound cost would be \$80 million. Actual ORR costs will be considerably lower because many refugees will be eligible for TANF and Medicaid, may find work before the end of eight months, or may find sponsor arrangements that obviate the need for cash assistance. At Wednesday's refugee coordination council meeting the HHS representative indicated that the Agency had sufficient available resources to both care for the refugees at the military bases and also provide the standard benefits to the refugees once they move into the host communities. The Secretary of HHS could, by declaring a domestic refugee emergency under section 412(b)(3) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, provide for the temporary care of the refugees at a domestic processing center.

Impact of Refugees

During the early 1990s, an average of nearly 130,000 refugees were admitted to the United States. Increasing the current ceiling of 95,000 by 20,000 would result in an admission level well within recent historic levels. In 1995, for example, the admission of 32,000 Cubans and Haitians pushed total admissions to 131,314, well above the ceiling of 110,000 established that year.

Refugee resettlement is likely to be concentrated in areas where sponsoring relatives and volunteers are concentrated. This is not uncommon. Again using 1995 as an example, the large influx of Cubans and Haitians caused total admissions to Florida to reach 31,000, nearly doubling the number from the previous year (16,000). Increases of a similar magnitude occurred in New York between 1988 (7,500) and 1989 (20,000) as large numbers of Soviet Jews were resettled.

Jurisdictions receiving refugees will experience increased expenditures for Medicaid and TANF. Nationwide, and in States that are likely to receive large numbers of refugees -- California, New York and Michigan -- there are significant unobligated or unspent TANF balances. However, Illinois, which could receive a large share of the Kosovar refugees, has obligated and expended all its FY 1997 and 1998 TANF dollars.

Because settlements are often concentrated HHS does have \$50 million in the targeted assistance grant program to help offset localized costs of resettlement.

Message Copied To: _____

Jack A. Smalligan/OMB/EOP@EOP
Evan T. Farley/OMB/EOP@EOP
Jeffrey A. Farkas/OMB/EOP@EOP
Iratha H. Waters/OMB/EOP@EOP
Anil Kakani/OMB/EOP@EOP

(2)

Assume all come in US + stay 6 months in camp - (Kunde hole 8 months)

Talking to DOD on Monday about costs -

- Reception + re-plant/gate \$23 million < State Dept ^{can} pay? medical screening ~~is~~
- Ongoing transportation to camp \$10
- K staff ^{orientation} communications \$15
- Medical, dental, counseling \$22.8

can transfer \$

Estimate = \$68.8 million / 6 months - F499 = ~~448~~ ^{ok}

~~Do~~ refugees don't get LMA, RCA, etc - w/ F499 ^{can} ~~cover~~ ^{cost}

\$38.7 for LMA + RCA = ~~not~~ not sure if ORR can cover.

F92000 cost - but don't need to do anything now.

Foster Care Costs =

Supplemental \$ needs to track the decision about ptn
(State has budgeted \$ for processing)

conference call on Friday -

probably a hybrid of 1 + 2

- Priority ① Very liberal definition of family

② Valuable pop.

Matthew
Crispin Call-Lainia
703-660-6750

Kosovar Refugee .4/22

20K

2 Scenarios

① assume come as refugees processed completely abroad
RMA 39.2% participation rate -

RMA 52.2% participation total \$41
\$23.3 million for FY 99
\$14.6 million FY 00
OKR has \$

RCA Eligibility

1st TANF Medicaid if not then, RCA

35% to RMA + RCA

13K 65% TANF Medicaid + SSI Medicaid - will get up
per capita

Food Stamps = eligible

Sponsor has no legal sponsorship ~~financial~~ financial support.

RMA - \$2,371.00/ per medical unit cost - RMA
but may be lower b/c children

States - New York, Michigan, Illinois, CA

Refugee Act - self-sufficient is a goal

? US gov has committed to
Pay for their return - when

1st 8 months -

Case manager at Vol Ag

② DOD Processing Center

See of HHS under the Refugee Act runs the processing center
How much, how long, etc.

HIV mtg 4/28
Wed 11am

- announcement made today - Phone # announced
- State
 - Greece - pending - fairly positive but doing? Shts - need to generate 2st AOR
 - Family call + 1 monthly family members - sponsorship
 - 10M will locate them - refugees can be a security check 15 days
 - If Greece says yes, move 300-400 to the site - INS interviews, medical screening - week to 10 days processing INS would put package together
 - Theodor + 1ki → US

AOR
affidavit of
relationship

DDP
3 sites have been identified - Fort Dix ^{NS} 2 mile It yes → go to Greece
3000 people - barracks. 1 hour south of Kennedy close to New York

②
Ft Mc Coy
near Chicago

Immigration records could be closed.
Admin. + medical support + cost - need info -
Control of the base - DDP would not run the base or services
INS ^{role} medical, final decisions - INS inspections would be
deferral inspection INS admit at an airport
at the port of entry until the INS
inspection - ~~sp~~ ~~at~~ makes final
determination on entry.

DDP would need to contract out.
Cost estimates - DDP ~~say~~ AHS will develop list of contractors
need to decide ~~agency~~ where agency paid

Domestic Refugee agency 412(b)(5) - HHS See authority to do
what necessary - in US - only processing center.

Relevance

Take back off Mac + more than 1. will help US clinics
Security - INS list of Qs - FBI, CIA, DDP
INS training but not extensive information - focus on bars +
exclusion
Prostate - AHS responsible - 1005. DDP

Domestic

DDD - provide the bids,
proceed w/ all planning

Report to Coordnity Council by 10am Wed. - 1 pgs

AHS has the money to ~~can~~ pay to camp + RMA + RCB
enough

#

Lamar, David - #413

semi - State

Rosovar Refugee - 4/19/99

American step forward to offer to sponsor refugee

INS

Interview overseas for family & others (the case) from Albania & Macedonia

Refugee transported here to process - parole defer negotiation

Medical exam

Security check

Family Sponsorship ~~can~~ can be done here

determine admissibility - better to do overseas. IF here - one family in US.

if denied, ~~the~~ removal proceding, can ~~they~~ assist asylee

Camp ~~in~~ America in Albania = \$150 - \$200 million

1st set of people - 5K - 12 days after info selection

#s of people - ~~of~~ + how long?

#s of ~~the~~ evacuees -

Security - no KLA

Health - TB

State

Sponsor would come forward w/ names first / fill-out form

Request ^{informal} of Greece to give a place for processing medical, security

~~fly from Greece to US~~ Fly from Greece to US

Greece

Family member knows HCB will phone

DOD

Feasibility of the DOD ~~to~~ facility for US processing - 3K at all time

Ft (Lee - Ark - 18K ^{out dated} ~~data~~) - Have capacity - only decision

Costs?

Only looking at ~~active~~ active - BRAC ~~to~~ facility -

Albanian concentration - NYC ~~to~~, Chicago, Detroit - ~~will~~ ID near those areas

Funding

- NON-DOD \$ to pay b/c DOD simply facilitates ^{no agency} functions

- Part of relief effort? legal restrictions

- State -

- Supplemental - does not contemplate this

Can American ~~to~~ - ? Check w/ legal authority

(2)

Deput~~ies~~ meeting tomorrow to decide. Gt^{er} trust

Options

Option #1 - Greece - processing as a settlement

Option 1B - another base in Europe -

Option #2 - Treated processing in Macedonia - defend inspection

Bring people to DOO facility to complete processing
- HHS has emerging authority to run the facility in part
but depends on ~~the~~ #5 & cost
maybe DOO pay for part.

Option #3 - Gt^{er} (Sale house - building vs. built s.t.)

Option #4 - parole + attempt to ~~get~~ get legislation to provide benefits.

(Could process some in Cap America but only Macedonia.)

Should we begin^{now} processing people who have family members.
or wait until Macedonia closes its borders? Adherent for Albania etc of
press in Macedonia. Begin study to start process.

#5



Irene Bueno

04/19/99 06:01:48 PM

.....

Record Type: Record

To: Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP, Elena Kagan/OPD/EOP

cc: Laura Emmett/WHO/EOP

Subject: Kosovar Refugee processing and resettlement

Today, I attended an interagency meeting that Scott Busby chaired on this issue that is expected to be discussed at a deputies meeting on Tuesday.

This group had been tasked to develop options and make a recommendation as to how and where Kosovar refugees should be processed. It is proposed to allow Kosovar refugees with family members residing in the US to be admitted to the US as refugees. First, the family member would identify the refugee, then the refugee would need to meet certain admission requirements (security check, medical screening, etc).

The preferred option is to conduct the processing of refugees outside the United States. The State Dept. is in informal discussion with Greece to provide such a facility in Greece. A response is expected sometime tomorrow. If this doesn't work, others options will be explored. This option would allow processing and final decision about a refugees status to take place prior to entry to the US. The second option is to fly refugees to an DOD facility in the US after they have passed initial screening but their processing would continue at the DOD facility somewhere in the US (DOD is still looking at different sites). The last option is to bring refugees directly to the US, parole them into the country, and conduct all processing in the US.

The issue of who will pay for such an operation is pending and agencies will bring recommendations back to the interagency group.

Please let me know if you need further information about this issue.



MEDIA ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 8, 1999

Contact: Gabrielle Bushman, USCR, (202) 347-3507
or Judy Mark, Nat'l Immigration Forum, (202) 544-0004, X 14

PRESS CONFERENCE TOMORROW:

GUANTANAMO IS NOT THE ANSWER FOR THE KOSOVAR REFUGEES

- WHAT?** A press conference will be held to discuss the negative implications of sending 20,000 Kosovar refugees to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.
- WHEN?** Friday, April 9, 1999
11:00 am
- WHERE?** Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room 138
- WHO?** Bill Frellick, U.S. Committee for Refugees
Frank Sharry, National Immigration Forum
Holly Burkhalter, Physicians for Human Rights
Ronald Aubourg, Haitian Centers Council
- WHY?** Earlier this week, the U.S. announced its intention to bring 20,000 Kosovar refugees to the naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. This "solution" to the overwhelming crisis in Kosovo is costly, ineffective and goes against the wishes of the Kosovo refugees. In the past, other refugees, including Haitians and Cubans, have faced terrible conditions at Guantanamo. The speakers will discuss better options for dealing with the refugee crisis.

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Kosovo Highlights the Injustice of Expedited Removal

The Kosovo crisis, in which the Serbian campaign of ethnic cleansing has included systematically stripping Kosovars of identification papers, highlights the injustice and unfairness of a 1996 law that makes it more difficult for individuals without travel documents to obtain political asylum in the United States. This “expedited removal” process must be repealed.

The Lawyers Committee for Human Rights has documented two cases of Kosovar Albanians who arrived at US airports with the intent to apply for asylum in the United States, but who were summarily deported by Immigration and Naturalization Service officials using the 1996 law.

- In the winter of 1998, “Driton,” an ethnic Albanian from Kosovo, traveled from another country in Europe to an East Coast airport. Even though the vicious persecution of Albanian Kosovars by Serbian authorities was already being featured prominently on the nightly news, the INS utterly failed to recognize Driton’s need for refuge. First, a Serbian translator was provided, but Driton stated that he (like many ethnic Albanians) did not speak Serbian well enough to answer the questions. Next, an Albanian translator was provided. When Driton told the translator that he was afraid to return home, the translator said that he had been instructed only to tell Driton that he was being sent back. Driton’s statement to the translator that he was afraid to return was ignored, as were similar statements to this effect that he made to another person in halting German. The INS then summarily deported Driton. This incident became known only because he succeeded in returning to the United States several months later; his application for asylum is pending.
- “Dem” is a 21 year old Kosovar student of Albanian ethnicity. Like Driton, Dem speaks only Albanian. Last October, Serbian police seized him at his home. Over the next ten days, the Serb police accused him of being a terrorist, beat him and threatened to kill his family. After he was released, Dem borrowed money from

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relatives and fled Kosovo. He walked through the mountains into Albania. He reached Italy by a small boat and there purchased a Slovenian passport. From Italy, he flew to Mexico City, then on to California, arriving around six in the evening on January 20, 1999. About two hours later, the INS arranged for a Serbian translator by telephone. When the translator realized that Dem could not speak her language, she said something to the INS officers, who immediately hung up the telephone in apparent disgust or anger.

At that point Dem said, "I am Kosovo Albana Yugoslavia." The response of the INS officers was to stand him up and handcuff his hands behind his back. He eventually was fingerprinted, photographed, asked to write his name and date of birth, and put on a plane back to Mexico City. He was never asked – in any language he could understand – whether he was seeking asylum or whether he was afraid to return to Kosovo. As with Driton, Dem's story is known only because he succeeded in a second attempt to enter the United States. He since has been found to have a credible fear of persecution in Kosovo and is now waiting for an Immigration Judge to make the final decision on his application for asylum.

These are classic cases of what Lawyers Committee Board Member Sigourney Weaver has called "inflicting asylum by ordeal." The 1996 law erects barriers to asylum that many bona fide refugees may not be able to cross. We only know about these two cases because Dem and Driton had the resourcefulness and luck to reach the United States a *second* time. How many Kosovars or Chinese or Iraqis have been less fortunate? What fate has befallen others who have been summarily deported by the INS? Though we may never know the particular stories, we do know what happens in the places they fled – whether it is Kosovo, China or Iraq. The "expedited removal" process, which allows people like Dem and Driton to be deported without being able to seek asylum, must be repealed.