with Congressman Paul Findley (R-Ill.) on November 25, and on that occasion asked again for a dialogue between the United States and the PLO.

Foremost among the proponents of such a dialogue are certain prominent Israeli "doves." These individuals feel certain that only the PLO can bring the West Bank leaders to participate in the Camp David procedure and that the key to further development is some form of dialogue between the United States and the PLO. These Israelis, who believe that their country's security will be strengthened rather than threatened by the redress of Palestinian grievances, also express confidence that the self-rule plan would almost certainly evolve in the direction of Palestinian self-determination. They would expect this to occur because world opinion would support Palestinian aspirations; because the United States, in keeping with its own tradition, would be drawn toward a solution based on self-determination; and because Israel itself could be expected to become less fearful of Palestinian nationalism, and more responsive to its own democratic impulses, in the wake of peace with Egypt. In somewhat similar vein a Likud member of the Knesset predicted that profound changes of attitude would occur in Israel if the self-rule plan worked well. "We don't like being occupiers," he said. "It is not in our nature."

Extensive interviews in Israel, the West Bank, and with the PLO suggest three broad conclusions regarding the Camp David accords: that their ultimate success depends upon Palestinian participation, that the key to Palestinian participation is the consent of the PLO, and that the essential step toward securing that consent is the initiation of dialogue between the United States and the PLO. At present the United States is restrained by the promise given Israel in 1975 that the United States would not recognize or negotiate with the PLO as long as it did not recognize Israel's right to exist and did not accept Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 (the latter reaffirming the former in the wake of the 1973 war). A strong argument can be made that the PLO has, in effect, met these requirements, but in any event a request by the United States to be released from its promise of 1975, positively framed, could hardly be refused.

Whether or not the United States Government is prepared to take that initiative, with its attendant political consequences, it seems likely that the PLO will play a critical role in determining the ultimate success or failure of the Camp David accords. In his famous statement of December, 1977—"bye-bye, PLO"—Mr. Brzezinski, it would seem, bade a premature farewell.

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### EXCURSUS III

**John Watt on Refugee Disaster in Southeast Asia**

In the last six months the refugee crisis in Southeast Asia has grown beyond all expectations. There are now over 300,000 Indochinese refugees in transit camps scattered throughout the region. Many hundreds of thousands more have died en route. Receiving countries anticipate that over a million more "illegal immigrants" may be knocking on their doors before the end of the year. But the doors are now slamming shut.

The problem is worst in Thailand, Hong Kong, and Malaysia. As of early June, Thailand had approximately 250,000 refugees from Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam, only 150,000 of whom were placed in U.N.-supported camps. According to recent reports, Thailand has been receiving 5,000 to 6,000 Laotian refugees per month; during 1979 it expects anywhere from 100,000 to a million refugees from Cambodia, many of them ethnic Chinese.

Refugees from Vietnam and China are also streaming into Hong Kong. As of early June, Hong Kong was harboring over 45,000 refugees from Vietnam. Since the beginning of 1979 it has returned 37,000 illegal Chinese immigrants to China, but this figure implies that 70,000 to 100,000 escaped detection. Hong Kong has also absorbed another 45,000 legal immigrants from China. Latest estimates are that another half-million illegal immigrants may be expected during the next twelve months (only 8,000 were caught in 1976 and 1,200 in 1977).

In Malaysia there are now 76,000 Vietnamese refugees, most of whom are ethnic Chinese. Over 25,000 of these boat people landed during April and May. At the end of May the U.N. commissioner for refugees in Kuala Lumpur estimated that up to 600,000 Vietnamese refugees might leave during the next four months. More recent reports indicate that the Vietnamese Government may be planning to rid Vietnam of a million to a million-and-a-half ethnic Chinese.

Economic and political conditions indicate that these estimates should be taken seriously. Vietnam is anticipating a poor harvest for the third year in a row. Eight years of war have virtually destroyed the Cambodian economy. A Chinese deputy chairman is reported to have said recently that China has 20 million unemployed workers, and that 10 per cent of its population—over 90 million people—does not have enough to eat. Problems of this magnitude, coupled with the hostility between China and (Continued on page 59)
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Vietnam and warfare in Cambodia, ensure that the refugee crisis will continue.

The present strategy for dealing with this crisis is for the principal receiving countries in Southeast Asia to set up transit camps but to avoid offering long-term settlement if at all possible. Political, economic, and racial issues dictate this course of action. Resettlement thus depends on the advanced countries. To date the U.S. has accepted 200,000 Vietnamese refugees and is accepting 7,000 Indochinese refugees per month, or 84,000 per year. The other principal countries of resettlement are China, France, Canada, and Australia. China has accepted over 200,000 refugees from Vietnam and is said to be taking 10,000 (overland) a month. France has been accepting 1,000 boat people per month. Australia plans to absorb 10,500 Indochinese refugees during 1979, and Canada will take 5,000 from Malaysia. To "ease" the problems of the receiving countries Vietnam has offered to dispatch 10,000 refugees a month directly to countries of resettlement.

Because these policies come nowhere near resolving the resettlement of refugees in existing transit camps or the flood of Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Chinese attempting to leave their countries, the principal receiving countries have begun to adopt much more drastic policies. In recent weeks Thailand has forcibly repatriated over 40,000 Cambodians and plans to repatriate another 40,000. Hong Kong is planning to construct a "Berlin Wall" of chainlink and barbed wire fencing to keep out the illegal Chinese immigrants. Since January, Malaysia has towed 40,000 refugees back to sea, most of whom have not yet landed elsewhere. Other drastic plans are threatened for the 76,000 now inhabiting its camps.

Refugees rejected in this way face the prospect of early death by drowning, starvation, disease, or murder. Repatriated Cambodians must negotiate mine fields, hidden stakes smeared with feces, and the prospect of running into unfriendly armed patrols. Boat people rejected by Malaysia are provided with a week's rations and some repairs to their vessel. Officials of receiving countries defend their policies by pointing out that the traffic originates elsewhere and that their countries are stretched to the limit. Because Vietnamese officials are said to exact $750 to $3,500 for every departing Chinese refugee, Vietnam has come under especially harsh criticism.

The refugee crisis has reached such proportions that it demands more vigorous worldwide attention. Leaders of the advanced countries, including Japan and Britain, are now calling for an international conference to determine more effective policies. As the major resettlement country, the U.S. is formulating new legislation on the admission of refugees. Readers of Worldview who wish to promote these efforts should consider doing the following: (1) contacting such agencies as the International Red Cross, the International Rescue Committee, or the major denominational relief services that are already working closely on the refugee crisis (in particular, ask your own religious community to make refugee relief its top priority); (2) contacting your congressmen to urge passage of new and more responsive refugee legislation (refugee relief is central to the American tradition); (3) working for improved relations between the advanced countries and the countries of the refugees' origin to enable constructive aid to reduce the refugee problem at its source.

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As Worldview was going to press President Carter announced a doubling of the quota for refugee admissions to the U.S. and United Nations Secretary General Waldheim invited seventy-one countries to a meeting in Geneva July 20-21 on the Indochina refugee crisis. At the same time, five Southeast Asian countries, including the ones that have accepted the great majority of those who have fled or been forced to leave, announced for-