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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 10, 1975

*MAC 7*

MEMORANDUM TO: THE PRESIDENT

THROUGH: THE STAFF SECRETARY

FROM: ROLAND L. ELLIOTT

SUBJECT: Incoming Presidential Mail for  
Week of May 5-10, 1975

Incoming Presidential mail totalled about 25,000 pieces, of which 25% dealt in some way with South Vietnam.

The first letter in the attached Mail Sample is from General F. J. Chesarek, USA (Ret). He discusses U.S. military versus political performance in Vietnam and calls for a thorough assessment of the American experience there, in order to inform the public mind and shape the national will toward responsible future policies. Many others (295) make the same points, if less articulately.

Renewed support was expressed this week for your strong and "humane" position on refugee assistance. You have received 1,081 letters and telegrams commending your stand and agreeing that America must always remain an open haven for the oppressed and displaced. Many writers offered money and/or personal assistance for one or more refugee families.

In addition to this mail, more than 95% of the favorable comment on your Press Conference (888 pieces) specifically praised your forthright support for the refugees.

In contrast, of the critical telegrams and mailgrams received following your Press Conference (598), virtually all opposed refugee aid and resettlement.

Similarly, general mail also continued heavy in opposition to refugee resettlement in the U.S. (1,904 pieces). The principal concern was economic: that there are not jobs or food or welfare assistance enough for American citizens and that "charity" and "humanitarianism" should begin at home. About 30% of the con-mail had racist overtones.

There were 61 telegrams and mailgrams deploring the fact that the bodies of the two Marines who died were not evacuated, particularly since so many other, non-Americans were taken out.

You also received several letters from Americans involved in the evacuation, telling of the gratitude of the refugees and of the Americans' own pride in their country in this regard.

Other issues drawing attention were:

(1) Strip-Mining Bill:

Pro: 43; Con: 217;

(2) Federal gun and ammunition controls:

Pro: 38; Con: 211;

(3) Support for enforcement of environmental standards:

Pro: 866;

(4) Termination of the Nursing Salary Cost Differential under Medicare:

Con: 350;

(5) Nomination of Governor Hathaway as Interior Secretary:

Pro: 23; Con: 172.

Also, in the Personal Section of the Sample is a warm and encouraging letter to you from Professor McDougal.

cc: Paul Theis