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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 23, 1975

[Handwritten initials]

MEMORANDUM TO: THE PRESIDENT

THROUGH: THE STAFF SECRETARY

FROM: ROLAND L. ELLIOTT *[Signature]*

SUBJECT: Incoming Presidential Mail for
the Week of May 19-23, 1975.

The MAYAGUEZ incident was the dominant subject of incoming Presidential mail this week, accounting for 40% of the total of 35,000 letters, telegrams and mailgrams received.

Mail concerning the MAYAGUEZ was overwhelmingly in support of your actions.

PRO:	12,381
CON:	1,156
COMMENT:	95

The cumulative total of MAYAGUEZ mail received to date is:

PRO:	23,228
CON:	2,092
COMMENT:	134

Writers commended you for "doing what had to be done" and for "standing up for our rights." They expressed pride in you, in the Marines and in America.

You may find the single letter in the COMMENT: MAYAGUEZ section of the Sample of special interest. It is from the wife of the captain of a tuna boat seized off the coast of Ecuador in January 1975. She supports your rescue of the MAYAGUEZ and questions why a like policy is not being followed in Ecuadorian seizure incidents. More than 100 similar letters have been received.

Vietnamese refugee mail dropped this week about 1900 pieces, and it was divided almost evenly on the subject:

PRO:	851
CON:	956
COMMENT:	75

Opposition to accepting and aiding the refugees stems mostly from economic concern, especially among middle class people who express frustration and resentment over their own present condition. The first letter in the CON: Refugees Section of the Sample is particularly representative of this point of view.

Another foreign policy issue that is beginning to draw mail is the question of U.S. sovereignty over the Panama Canal. To date you have received 409 letters urging the U.S. to retain full control of the Canal and all its support services.

Public debate over refugee resettlement -- i.e., appeals to American generosity and goodwill -- as well as your statements about seeking a national reconciliation have apparently fostered new interest in a program of full amnesty for American exiles and deserters. This week you received 351 letters urging such a program, 14 opposing it.

You have also received considerable mail urging and/or supporting a veto of the Strip-Mining Bill (690 pieces). Slightly over 100 wrote in support of the bill.