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U.S. NAVY'S SHIPS
QUIT THE REGION

But Some Chartered Craft
May Still Be Rescuing
People Off the Coast

The following dispatch was written by a pool of reporters aboard the United States ship Blue Ridge and transmitted by Agence France-Presse.

ABOARD THE U.S.S. BLUE RIDGE, in the South China Sea, May 2 (Agence France-Presse)—As many as 50,000 to 80,000 Vietnamese refugees, many suffering from lack of food and water, were still at sea today, according to messages reaching this Seventh Fleet command and communications ship.

A message from a Vietnamese vessel appealing for aid said about 200 children might die of hunger and exhaustion if no help was forthcoming.

Other messages said 3,000 refugees aboard a barge were hungry and in a serious situation.

The messages said a 27-ship convoy was carrying from 10,000 to 30,000 refugees from the island of Phuoc Quoc, off the southern coast of Vietnam.

Before it fell two days ago, the Saigon Government of President Duong Van Minh shipped about 50,000 refugees to the island to keep them out of Saigon.

Phuoc Quoc is less than eight miles from Cambodia and about 25 miles from the Vietnamese mainland.

Food and water are urgently needed aboard the Vietnamese ships, according to a message to the Blue Ridge, the flagship of a 46-vessel fleet that carried out the final evacuation of 25,000 refugees from Saigon on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Besides the thousands of refugees from Phuoc Quoc, officers on the Blue Ridge said at least 12,000 people were aboard two barges, about 7,000 on naval ships, 6,000 on the merchant vessel Greenville Victory, 3,500 on the American Challenger and tens of thousands on other vessels.

Officials reported earlier that 1,000 fishing boats left Vung Tau harbor with about 15,000 to 20,000 passengers. Many of the smaller vessels have appealed for food and water and tows by bigger ships.

The most prominent Vietnamese refugee aboard the Blue Ridge is former Air Vice Marshal Nguyen Cao Ky, the former Premier. More than 500 American and Vietnamese re-

fugees have boarded this ship since Monday, mostly by helicopter.

The Americans include Ambassador Graham A. Martin and Thomas Polgar, known as the Saigon station chief of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Two Vietnamese generals are also aboard this ship. They are Lieut. Gen. Nguyen Van Toan and Lieut. Gen. Nguyen Van Minh.

More Refugees Reported

WASHINGTON, May 2 (UPI)—A flotilla of Vietnamese ships with as many as 30,000 refugees aboard has been discovered and is being escorted to safety by United States vessels in the South China Sea, the Defense Department said today.

The refugees could raise the total who have escaped the Communist take-over of South Vietnam to more than 100,000.

The spokesman said all United States Navy ships had left the Vietnam area and the closest was now more than 35 miles from the coast. He said there was no longer any organized effort to rescue refugees, although any found at sea would be picked up.

Some Ships Still in Area

WASHINGTON, May 2 (Reuters)—United States Navy ships have withdrawn from Vietnamese waters, but an undisclosed number of freighters under Government contract are apparently still in the area picking up refugees.

Singapore monitors of shipping communications said evacuation of refugees was continuing from offshore islands.

'Moral Responsibility' Cited

Murray Gart, chief of correspondents for Time magazine, said yesterday that news-gathering organizations had "a long-standing moral responsibility" to assist their Vietnamese employes in Saigon to escape from the city before it fell to the Communists.

Mr. Gart issued his statement in response to remarks yesterday by Ron Nessen, President Ford's press secretary, who said that news organizations had not been "overly concerned about the legalities" of such evacuations.

Mr. Nessen was making a point that reporters should not be too concerned whether President Ford's use of American troops in the evacuation of Vietnamese nationals had been legal or not because news organizations had not been concerned about the legality evacuating their Vietnamese employes, some of whom lacked proper documentation.

Mr. Gart was a key figure in a joint effort by major American news-gathering organizations to assure that their Vietnamese employes were evacuated from Saigon before it fell. These included Time, Inc.; The New York Times, NBC, CBS, the Associated Press and United Press International.