

WXPost
**Refugee
Critics**
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Shock Ford

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Congressional and public criticism of administration policy on the admission of Vietnamese refugees has shocked and disturbed President Ford, White House sources said yesterday.

The President is expected to express himself on the subject in strong terms at a televised news conference at 7:30 tonight, the first he has held since the surrender of Saigon.

The President was quoted by one source as having said "it is not the America I know" when informed of what some public figures and citizens have said about not wanting the Vietnamese to come to this country.

The President also is expected to discuss in public for the first time the consequences for this country of the Communist victories in Cambodia and Vietnam.

He asked Congress yesterday for \$507 million to care for the Vietnamese refugees until they can find homes and jobs, and he is expected to defend his position that they should be welcome and that the United States owes them refuge.

Last week, through his press secretary, Mr. Ford said he was "proud" of what he had done to help evacuate Vietnamese who wanted to leave their country.

Yesterday, press secretary Ron Nessen, asked about reports of criticism of Graham A. Martin, ambassador to South Vietnam, quoted the President as strongly defending the ambassador and hailing the success of the evacuation.

"The President feels that Ambassador Martin accomplished an extraordinarily difficult task under trying circumstances and did it

well," Nessen said.

Declaring that Martin was responsible for the lives of Americans in Saigon and for maintaining the embassy to the end, Nessen said the President "thinks the results speak for themselves."

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The Americans were evacuated safely as were thousands of Vietnamese, Nessen said.

Nessen said Mr. Ford appreciated the support of Gov. Reubin Askew of Florida and Gov. David Pryor of Arkansas, both Democrats, for refugee resettlement activities in their states.

Evacuees are being sent to Eglin Air Force Base in Florida, Ft. Chaffee in Arkansas and Camp Pendleton in California.

Asked if the President had thanked Democratic Gov. Edmund G. Brown Jr. of California, Nessen replied, "Why should he?" Brown has complained of the new immigrants at a time when many Americans are unemployed.

While there have been reports of heavy mail to members of Congress opposing the admission of Vietnamese refugees, Nessen said White House mail favored their admission.

Of 7,600 letters received on the subject in the last month, 4,456 supported the President's policy, 2,936 opposed it and the remainder commented but stated no firm position, Nessen said.

Asked about a suggestion by Sen. George McGovern (D-S.D.) that some of the refugees would want to return to their homeland, Nessen said they left voluntarily and if some want to return they are free to do so.

Nessen confirmed earlier reports that the President has invited Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to visit Washington next month. The visit will take place June 11-12, Nessen said, for discussions of "matters of

mutual interest and in order to further strengthen the friendly ties between the two countries."

Israeli officials were reportedly disturbed last week because the White House announced that the President would meet first with Egyptian President Anwar Sadat during Mr. Ford's trip to Europe.

The meeting with the Egyptian leader is scheduled for June 1-2 in Salzburg, Austria. The President will first attend a North Atlantic Treaty Organization summit meeting in Brussels May 29-30 and also visit Madrid and Rome before returning to Washington June 3 or 4.