

Sen. Kennedy Cites Mistakes In Evacuation of Vietnamese

By Lawrence Meyer
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The United States failed to evacuate thousands of Vietnamese it had intended to bring out, while thousands of Vietnamese who should not have been evacuated either were airlifted out or picked up after they fled themselves, Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) said yesterday.

Continuing hearings he has held over the last several weeks, Kennedy summarized the findings of two staff members of his Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Refugees and Escapees. The two aides spent a week touring refugee camps in the western Pacific and the United States.

The last-minute rush from

Saigon left behind thousands of Vietnamese who had been designated for evacuation, according to the aides. Kennedy said the administration's evacuation plan was "ill-conceived, poorly implemented and undertaken with little command control in the field."

At the same time that the United States was unable to bring out these Vietnamese, officially designated as "high risk" because of their U.S. associations, thousands of other Vietnamese were evacuated or fled although they would have been better off staying, according to Kennedy.

These refugees—including low-ranking soldiers, shop-

keepers, an entire fishing village, and Saigon bar girls—compose the bulk of the 60,000 now crowding into western Pacific staging areas on Guam and Wake Island, according to Dale DeHaan, counsel to the refugee subcommittee.

"When over half of the refugees fall outside the categories targeted for evacuation and parole into the United States," Kennedy said, "troubling questions inevitably arise over the wisdom and efficacy of the evacuation program. And these questions were known from the first days of the airlift from Saigon."

To maintain and help re-

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settle 115,000 or more refugees, the House Appropriations Committee approved by voice vote yesterday a 14-month, \$405 million bill—\$102 million less than the administration requested.

The House Judiciary Committee last week approved an open-ended authorization of refugee funds with a cutoff date of Sept. 30, 1977. The House is expected to take up both bills today.

Chairman Daniel K. Inouye (D-Hawaii) said his Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations won't report a refugee money bill before next Wednesday.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee Monday authorized \$405 million to aid the refugees.

Following an afternoon of hearings, during which Inouye asked members of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Vietnam several questions about the disposition of funds previously appropriated by Congress for Vietnam, Inouye said he would wait until next Tuesday for



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Sens. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.), left, Hiram L. Fong (R-Hawaii) and Charles McC. Mathias (R-Md.) of the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Refugees and Escapees listen to testimony on the Vietnamese evacuation.

the answers before taking up the administration's request.

Inouye indicated that Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield who had raised similar questions on Monday, supported the delay.

Worried about "a heavy

negative vote" on the Senate floor, and wanting the measure to pass "as smoothly as possible," Inouye said he wanted to be able to answer questions and avert a big "no" vote, "which might give the wrong impression."

Inouye asked Erich von Marbod, principal deputy assistant secretary of defense, how much of the \$70 million appropriated for Vietnam military aid for this fiscal year could be recovered.

Von Marbod, stressing

Inouye asked von Marbod to return next Tuesday with a firmer estimate, and said he had asked the General Accounting Office to make its own estimate of Defense Department construction costs for the refugee camps on Guam and Wake Island and at Camp Pendleton, Calif., Ft. Chaffee, Ark., and Eglin Air Force Base, Fla.

Although the first waves of refugees were highly skilled, well-educated and relatively prosperous, those now in the western Pacific "are different in a number of important respects from most of those who have already landed in the United States," Kennedy said.

"Few speak English, and fewer still comprehend the implication of their plight as refugees. In fact, many of the refugees fled in panic from conflict and violence—as Vietnamese have fled for years—and many give the impression of not fully understanding where they are or why they got there."

hat it still is too early to say with any certainty, said he felt comfortable with an estimate of \$17 million but that the figure could be as high as \$40 million to \$80 million.

Kennedy and representatives of private voluntary agencies helping refugees resettle predicted that thousands would choose to return to South Vietnam.
