

FIRST LADY VISITS WITH KY ON COAST

Mrs. Ford Tours a Refugee
Camp and Has Talk With
Former Vietnam Leader

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Special to The New York Times

CAMP PENDLETON, Calif., May 21—Betty Ford visited former South Vietnamese Premier Nguyen Cao Ky today in what he called "my humble palace" as she toured the Southeast Asian refugee center here.

The two conversed at length, sitting opposite each other on Army cots—the standard furnishing of the tents that have been set up here for thousands of Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees.

Later, standing in the warm sunshine on an open basketball court, Mrs. Ford welcomed the refugees to the United States and said that she hoped that they would stay.

"I'm very happy to be here today," she told the applauding refugees surrounding the basketball court. "I came because I wanted to meet each and everyone of you. I wanted to bring the warmth of the people of the United States to you who are so far from your homeland."

Mrs. Ford said that she and the President and her children "have suffered with you for what you have had to go through. I only hope we can bring you some help and happiness. After all most of us came here at one time from another country.

A Long Road

Mrs. Ford said that the refugees may find it difficult at first to adjust and that the road ahead might seem long.

"But I hope you will be happy and will stay and we will be happy to have you as citizens of the United States.

The First Lady rode here this morning from San Diego on what she called a mission for the President. She was greeted by smiling refugees as she toured the processing center and Camp No. 8, nestled at the foot of hills covered with yellow wild flowers.

As she walked through the graveled area she received a tiny bouquet of flowers from a Vietnamese girl.

Among those on hand to greet her was Saukham Khoy, the former president of Cambodia, who urged her to "tell the president how grateful we are for everything that's being done."

Mrs. Ford smiled and replied, "I will give him that message. That's why I'm here today."

Shortly before Mrs. Ford arrived at the camp this morning 115 Cambodian refugees were checked in, raising the total number now on hand to 17,988.

Official Briefing

Mrs. Ford's first question as she arrived at the camp for a briefing by Nicholas Thorne of the State Department and Gen. Paul C. Graham was, why was the processing so slow?

The officials explained that many of the families refused to be broken up and thus something of a bottleneck had developed but it was now beginning to open up.

It was a beautiful sunny day as Mrs. Ford walked through the camp stopping occasionally to greet children including one little boy in a baseball cap.

She also saw a three-year-old child who was wearing an enormous field jacket.

"Are you sure that coat is big enough," she asked mischievously.

A few paces later she was met by former Premier Ky. "I invite you into my humble palace," he said, pointing to the tent in which he has been living.