

NYTimes Some Refugees Were Just Swept Along

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CAMP PENDLETON, Calif., May 22—The appeals of a small number of Vietnamese refugees who want to return to their homeland are not the result of a change of heart about the United States.

For the most part, they said, they never intended to come here in the first place. They were simply swept along by the exodus of refugees during the chaos accompanying the fall of Saigon.

There are many stories about what happened; about Vietnamese who is seeking refuge from Communist guns became involuntary exiles. Nguyen Van Trieu is typical of a few dozen young men in this refugee camp who fall into the same category.

Mr. Trieu, 22 years old, sat on a cot in Tent 10-C the other day in Camp 8, eating a cookie, and told what had happened to him.

He was a flight mechanic in the Vietnamese Air Force, and on the eve of the fall of Saigon he and his flight crew came under attack by Communist rockets at Tan Son Nhut airport.

Plane Took Off

The crew scrambled aboard a plane at the sound of the first explosions, and it took off, with Mr. Trieu assuming it would land at a safe base somewhere in South Vietnam.

Instead, the plane was ordered to Thailand along with hundreds of other South Vietnamese aircraft.

In Thailand, Mr. Trieu explained, United States and Thai authorities were not entertaining requests from those who wanted to go back home.

Since then he has been caught in the strong currents of the tide of evacuation, moving across the Pacific from Thailand to Guam to Camp Pendleton, where this week he formally requested repatriation.

Presumably, officials in the United States would not be reluctant to honor Mr. Trieu's application, since the cost of resettling Mr. Trieu in this country could be expected to run many times beyond the

cost of transporting him back to Southeast Asia.

"Obviously," said one United States aide here, "we don't want to keep anyone here against his will."

Lack of Response

Early reports out of Saigon, however, indicate that the new regime has not been responsive to signals that some refugees might like to return and face whatever consequences are likely to befall them.

"A lot of us have been in the military for a long time," remarked one of the other men who have decided to return regardless of the personal risk. Like the others, he felt that the use of his name in a news article could only hurt him with the new Government in Saigon.

"When we go back something will occur to us," he continued, a wry smile putting at his thin face. "Prison, maybe. Perhaps they will kill us. But the men here don't worry about that now, because they are too much homesick."

The man in Tent 10-C were high in their praise of Americans, an wanted it known that they were grateful for the assistance that has softened the anxieties of trans-global upheaval.

'Generous and Kind'

"The Americans are very generous and kind," said an officer, "and I think that if I stay in this country I would have a good life, maybe even be rich."

He paused for a moment to make sure his English was equal to his emotion. "Who will look after the children in Saigon? I would leave the country without them. I am a too selfish man. Without them my life is nothing. Without them I can never be a

rich man, but always be a poor man."

It is estimated that 20 Vietnamese in Camp 8, nearly all military men with families still in Vietnam, want to return. There was only a light sprinkling in the other seven camps of this refugee processing center who shared that desire.

Camp 8 has a population of nearly 6,000, most of whom fled Vietnam in the convulsive last days of the war. The seven other camps, for the most part, have earlier arrivals, those who had the luxury of time to plan their escapes. The implication of this, according to one official, is that the subsequent waves of refugees now detained in Guam might bring larger numbers of Vietnamese who left their land in haste or panic and who might now

consider their decision ill-advised.

The great majority of refugees, although impatient with the long processing delays, have no illusions about returning home. In a way, the long processing wait has chased away other illusions, and in some cases has better prepared them for entering this country.

"Now we are only worrying about when we can get out of the camp and go to work," remarked Le Hong Duc, a 39-year-old pilot who left his family behind but who will not live under Communist control. "Because we are men, we like to work. Here we feel lazy, just sitting around or talking or sleeping. Give us a chance and we will take care of ourselves."