

John Wayne Sets Indians Straight

Window Rock, Ariz.

Actor John Wayne has told Navajo Tribal Chairman Peter MacDonald that he never suggested Arizona land as a relocation site for a flood of Vietnamese refugees, a tribal spokesman said yesterday.

While visiting MacDonald here, Wayne showed him a copy of the letter he wrote to former South Vietnamese Premier Nguyen Cao Ky. In it, the actor said, he simply mentioned that a few refugees might be able to settle on Papago Indian land in Arizona to farm.

He said Wayne was offering to help him acquire 17,000 acres, but Wayne later said this was a misinterpretation of a reference to the actor's own ranch — which he was not offering.

Wayne tried to explain that he had been thinking only of the possibility that 40 or 50 refugees might be relocated on the Papago land. Navajo leader MacDonald publicly called the proposal — as he understood it — an insult to the American Indian.

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