

WXPostJUN 18 1975

Guam Asks U.S. Aid to Clear Harbor of 7 Refugee Ships

By George C. Wilson
Washington Post Staff Writer

The governor of Guam sought help from official Washington yesterday to dispose of a fleet of refugee ships cluttering up his harbor—one with chained prisoners clanking around the decks, another with treasure in the hold, a third the new home of Vietnamese families and four completely abandoned.

"Everybody in Washington seems a little nervous about doing anything about these ships," Gov. Ricardo J. Bordallo said after making his rounds. "I may have to tow the ships out in the ocean and sink them."

Otherwise, said Bordallo, summer and fall storms could sink the ships in Guam's harbor or wash them onto the shore—requiring a multimillion-dollar salvage and repair effort.

The standard response from Washington bureaucrats, Bordallo said, was: "Well, governor, use your good judgment."

Julia V. Taft, director of the Ford administration's task force handling refugee

problems, was one of the officials he talked with, Bordallo said.

"Nobody was reassuring," he said. "I don't mind being the scapegoat if nobody wants to take the responsibility. But who owns the ship? The Bank of Saigon is supposed to own one. But what is the Bank of Saigon now?"

One of the ships, with soldiers aboard, have gone from Saigon to Singapore, where naval authorities, according to Bordallo, put three unruly soldiers in irons and sent them on to Guam.

One rumor, he said, is that the three are North Vietnamese soldiers who intended to pirate the ship after leaving Saigon. His own view is that they are South Vietnamese soldiers who are disillusioned with everybody and everything.

The three men—who will not give their names—are in leg irons and are sometimes manacled to the rail or other fastening points.

The guard for the prisoners, the governor said, is the ship owner, who fears he will lose his vessel if he

abandons it. The owner's 21-year-old daughter, educated at the University of Florida, and his wife and another relative are also living on the ship.

The treasure ship—which is manned—has vases and other Vietnamese antiquities in boxes in the hold, the governor said. Guam officials had thought the treasures were from a Saigon museum when they examined the boxes, the governor said, only to find them addressed to a Vietnamese woman now living in Canada. Somehow the museum pieces were left on the Saigon dock, the governor said, and the woman's collection was loaded aboard instead.

The largest refugee ship in Guam harbor, a 10,000-ton vessel built in Italy, is now a floating apartment house for about 15 Vietnamese.

Feeding the people on the three occupied ships and taking care of the four abandoned ones is costing Guam \$100,000 a month, the governor said. That, together with other expenses incurred by Guam for being a way station for refugees, will cost a total of \$5 million for the year, Bordallo predicted.