

A Mandate for All America

BREATHES THERE AN AMERICAN, with soul so dead, who hasn't to himself said, "Right on, Edward Daly!"

Daly is an anachronism, a throwback to those earlier Americans of animal spirits who were always trying preposterous things, like digging canals across New York, or building railroads across the Rockies. He may be mad as the Hatter, like Indochina, where his World Airways flies the unfriendly skies.

The other day, Daly and a pilot got a trifle frisky with a handful of red tape.



Somehow they got the idea that about 500 Vietnamese orphans should go immediately to the United States, where there is a shortage of adoptable children, rather than remain in Saigon orphanages waiting for the battle of Saigon. So they decided to pack the children into a DC-8 cargo plane and bring them to the land of the free and the home of the brave.

★ ★ ★
UNFORTUNATELY, before the Daly airplane could get airborne civilization asserted itself. U.S. officials in Saigon, and representative of the orphanages that have custody of the children, examined the plane, which lacked oxygen masks and seats (not to mention seatbelts), and declared it unsafe. They were, of course, quite right, and humanely motivated.

Somehow 57 orphans found themselves aboard the plane. But shortly before takeoff, the Saigon airport closed because a Viet Cong attack was expected.

Pilot Ken Healy, another menace to the social fabric, reached an opposite conclusion: If the Viet Cong are coming, let's fly somewhere.

When Healy and his tumbling cargo arrived in Oakland, he was asked how the flight went. Healy flew refugees out of mainland China in the late 1940s, and he is not easily fazed. "It was one big playpen. They ran around and we fed them cookies."

Arrest that man! He did not comply with Federal Regulations about dispensing cookies and paper diapers to the underaged jet set. Arrest him, and then enter him in the New Hampshire primary.

★ ★ ★

THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, and especially the Agency for International Development, is acting with a commendable sense of urgency. And the South Vietnamese authorities are showing no more than an understandable concern about regulating the departure of parentless children.

But everyone can do better — better for the frail children of the Indochina dust — if AID, and the rest of the U.S. government, is energized by the full power of the rolling waves of American concern.

There is a mandate struggling to register itself. Events in Vietnam have loosed the mighty river of American decency, a spontaneous flood of desire to put the government in the service of an unambiguously good cause, like helping the homeless, the tempest-tossed, the wretched refuse of Vietnam's teeming shores.

That mandate is to help as many of the children as possible to come unto us, for such is the purpose of this nation of immigrants, built of — and by — the wretched refuse of many teeming shores.