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Can We Drop You Off, Mr. Thieu?



— Arthur Hoppe

PRESIDENT FORD feels we should evacuate Mr. Thieu and his friends from South Vietnam after first giving them \$722 million to keep the fighting going for a while — presumably on the theory there will then be fewer of them to evacuate.

Mr. Ford's first point is well taken. We can't just say, "So long, it's been nice knowing you. And we sure hope you enjoyed our little war over here."

Unfortunately, Mr. Ford's advisers estimate that as many as 170,000 Vietnamese might wish to go with us when we leave. The problem that immediately arises is what the devil are we going to do with them?

Transpacific air fares are exorbitantly expensive. Besides, many Americans who have most vigorously supported these gallant allies over the years certainly wouldn't want one living on their block.

The only possible solution was first proposed in this space ten years ago — Con Son Island.

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CON SON ISLAND is strategically located in the South China sea a scant 50 miles off the Vietnamese coast. Thus all we need do is drop Mr. Thieu and his friends off there on our way home.

Con Son is definitely recognized by all map makers as being composed of sacred South Vietnamese soil. So Mr. Thieu could go right on happily defending sacred South Vietnamese soil — and with considerably better chances of success.

For, naturally, we would promptly declare Con Son a bastion of democracy and the key to our defense perimeter — the only obstacle preventing the Viet Cong from landing in their sampans on Waikiki.

With the Seventh Fleet patrolling the nearby waters and for a paltry investment of only a few hundred million a year, there's no reason Mr. Thieu couldn't grow serenely old on Con Son, annually reviewing his aging troops and threatening to "liberate the mainland!" Any day now.

When the wind was right, he could amuse himself by releasing balloons with messages urging his former subjects to rise up against their masters. And by purchasing a large enough flag he could continue to show his colors to all Communists on the mainland equipped with binoculars.

At first, there will, of course, be demands from hawks in this country that we "unleash Thieu!" But the very thought of that possibility should prevent him from getting too vociferous.

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SO OUR FRIENDS on Con Son will live in peace. The peasants on the mainland will live in peace. And, best of all, our consciences will be eased.

After 21 long years of bloodshed, intrigue and profligate spending, we will at last achieve the ultimate goal of our current foreign policy in Southeast Asia: we will be able to forget the whole sorry mess we got ourselves and our friends into.