

# LETTERS

**Letters to the editor should be addressed to INQUIRY Magazine, 1700 Montgomery Street, San Francisco, California 94111. The editors reserve the right to edit letters for length when necessary.**

## Multiple drownings

**Y**OUR EDITORIAL [AUGUST 6 & 20, 1979] condemning Carter for not completely eliminating immigration barriers against Indochinese refugees comes about four years too late. Cuban refugees were freely admitted immediately after Castro's takeover in 1959. Why hasn't the same been done for Vietnamese refugees all along since 1975? Why have 100,000 to 200,000 boat people, according to official Australian estimates, been left to perish on the high seas, from hunger, thirst, exposure, drowning, and acts of piracy?

The answer is that the Ford administration was prepared, in the spring of 1975, to use its "parole authority" to admit some 200,000 endangered Vietnamese over and above the legislated quotas, if and when Saigon fell. However, this parole authority is subject to congressional oversight. On April 17, 1975, the chairmen of the Senate Judiciary Committee and its Refugee Subcommittee sent then Secretary of State Henry Kissinger a letter making it clear that they would erect every red tape obstacle at their command—even down to daily consultations—to keep these people out.

This policy is not unlike that of the United States in the 1930s towards Jewish refugees from Hitler. Boatloads of these people wandered from port to port, desperately seeking a new home. By not admitting them, we were partially responsible for their ultimate fate.

In 1975, Senator James Eastland was the chairman of the Judiciary Committee. His posture was understandable, since he represented Mississippi, possibly the most racist of Southern states. The position of the cosigner of this letter, however, is more difficult. This individual was Senator Edward Kennedy, who has an apparently misguided constituency among defenders of human rights. His coresponsibility for the South China Sea holocaust should be appreciated by all who would support him for the Presidency.

Chappaquiddick pales in comparison

to this deed. The earlier incident was obviously an accident. It involved only one life, was committed during off duty hours, and represented the old, immature Teddy Kennedy.

The South China Sea incident, on the other hand, was a deliberate, official act involving hundreds of thousands of lives. It shows what we can expect from the new, mature Ted Kennedy.

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