

**The original documents are located in Box 3, folder “Speech to Indochinese Refugees, San Diego, California, May 20, 1975” of the Frances K. Pullen Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

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## REMARKS

MY HUSBAND, OUR CHILDREN AND I HAVE FOLLOWED WITH GREAT SADNESS THE TRAGIC EVENTS IN INDOCHINA. WE SHARE YOUR GRIEF, AND HAVE PRAYED FOR YOUR SAFE ARRIVAL.

I KNOW MANY OF YOU ARE TROUBLED, AND THAT YOU WONDER WHAT LIES AHEAD FOR YOU. I AM HERE TODAY TO ASSURE YOU THAT AMERICA OFFERS YOU THE SAME OPPORTUNITY THAT IT HAS OFFERED COUNTLESS GENERATIONS OF IMMIGRANTS -- OUR WELCOME IS GENUINE, AND OUR INTENTIONS ARE SINCERE.

I KNOW YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED GREAT HARDSHIP, AND THAT YOUR SITUATION HERE IS NOT IDEAL. BUT THIS IS ONLY A TEMPORARY SITUATION WHICH, WHEN RESOLVED, WILL ALLOW YOU TO REALIZE A NEW LIFE FOR YOURSELF, YOUR FAMILIES, AND A PROMISING FUTURE FOR YOUR CHILDREN AND YOUR CHILDRENS' CHILDREN.

THOSE WHO CAME BEFORE -- PEOPLES FROM ALL OVER  
THE WORLD, OF ALL RELIGIOUS FAITHS AND POLITICAL  
CONVICTIONS -- HAVE IN AMERICA FOUND A NEW HOME.  
EVEN AS THEY PRESERVED THEIR MEMORIES AND MANY  
CULTURAL TRADITIONS OF THEIR FORMER HOMES, THEY  
JOINED WHOLEHEARTEDLY IN THE EXPERIENCE OF  
AMERICAN LIFE.

THERE IS A LOVELY VIETNAMESE PROVERB FROM WHICH WE  
CAN ALL DRAW INSPIRATION:

"THE ROAD IS HARD BUT IT IS NOT HARD

BECAUSE OF THE WIDTH OF THE RIVERS

OR HEIGHT OF THE MOUNTAINS.

IT IS HARD ONLY BECAUSE OF THE FEAR WE

HAVE OF THE MOUNTAINS AND THE RIVERS."

AMERICA OFFERS OPPORTUNITY IN FEAR. IT COMES  
TO THOSE WHO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IT. I KNOW YOU HAVE  
THE INDUSTRY, THE STRENGTH AND THE COURAGE TO SEIZE  
THAT OPPORTUNITY.

I WANT TO EXTEND TO YOU, ON BEHALF OF ALL  
AMERICAN IMMIGRANTS, AS WE ARE ALL IMMIGRANTS,  
A WARM HEARTFELT WELCOME.

Status of Refugee Resettlement Program as of May 16

To date a total of 126,989 refugees from Indochina have entered U.S. control.

Of this total, 65,553 are at Pacific safehavens and restaging areas or on vessels.

Approximately 61,436 have arrived in the United States. Of those, 44,635 are at reception centers and 16,801 have been processed and have left government control.

My husband, our children and I have followed with great sadness the tragic ~~recent~~ events in Indochina. We share your grief, ~~and have prayed for your safe arrival.~~ (7) (9) (10) (11)

I know many of you are troubled, and that you wonder what ~~will~~ ~~happen to you here in the United States.~~ ~~lies ahead for you.~~

~~am here today~~ I want to assure you that America offers you the same ~~promise~~ opportunity

that it has offered countless generations of immigrants. ~~America's~~ welcome is genuine. ~~and our intentions are sincere.~~ (1) (2)

Those who came before -- peoples from all over the world, of all religious faiths and political convictions -- have ~~found~~ <sup>in Amer</sup> found a new home. Even as they preserved their memories and many cultural traditions of their former homes, they joined wholeheartedly in the experience of American life.

America offers opportunity; it comes to those who take advantage of it. I know you have the industry and strength to seize that opportunity.

You bring to our nation a rich cultural heritage that, added to the variety of the American experience, can only make our nation stronger. You will find with us love and understanding and a desire to share in your culture and experience. You will also learn we are anxious to help.

We can be proud that you have chosen America as your haven and your home.

(1) (4) I know you have experienced great hardship (1) and that your situation here is not ideal (1) But this is only a temporary situation which (1) we reserved (1) I will allow you to realize a new life for yourself (1) your families (1) and a promising future for your children and your children's child

We will draw new strength from you, our most recent generation of immigrants. You may need our help and understanding now, but I know you will soon achieve success of your own.

I want to extend to you, on behalf of all Americans, the same warm welcome that we have extended throughout our history to those who have sought refuge here. You come to us in your moment of deep tragedy, and we reach out our hands.

③ There is a lovely Vietnamese proverb from which we can all draw inspiration:

"The road is hard but it is not hard because of the width of the rivers or height of the mountains. It is hard only because of the fear we have of the mountains and the rivers."

Not to be spoken, to be used only by translator

ĐƯỜNG ĐI KHÓ. KHÔNG KHÓ VÌ  
 NGÃN SÔNG CÁCH NÚI MA KHÓ  
 VÌ LONG NGƯỜI NGẠI NÚI E  
 SÔNG

*America offers opportunity in fear. It comes to those who take advantage of it. I know you have the industry, the strength and the courage to seize the opportunity. I want to extend to you on behalf of immigrants as we are all immigrants.*