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HONG KONG REFUGEES

The largest unpunished crime of World War II was the deliberate action of the British and American governments to force millions of anti-Communist Russians, Ukrainians and Cossacks to return against their will to the Soviet Union and sure death in slave labor camps. This tragic denial of the Four Freedoms for which World War II was fought has been fully documented in several recent books and is known by its code name, "Operation Keelhaul."

Now the British are at it again. Beginning in December 1974, the British authorities at Hong Kong have been turning refugees from Mainland China back over to the brutal Red Guards. Most of these refugees are from 17 to 30 years old. Many of them have escaped to Bong Kong island by making the long and dangerous swim through shark-infested waters and past heavily-armed Red patrol boats.

The swim from Red China to Bong Kong is almost as long as the English Channel, but is much more-difficult. The swimmers are not accompanied by a boat with a guide to navigate and dispense food. Last summer, I asked one of these freedom swimmers what percentage is successful. She said one out of a hundred.

It is quite a commentary on the Mao-Chou regime that these boys and girls choose a course of action in which they have 99 chances out of 100 of being shot by Red Guards, blown up by mines, eaten by sharks, or drowned from exhaustion.

Now, the lucky few who arrive in Hong Kong are being hunted

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down by British helicopters and patrol boats, and then turned over to the Chinese Communists. The tragic fate awaiting these refugees after their return to Mainland China is too horrible to describe.

These young refugees are the bravest and strongest of the Mainland Chinese, and any nation would be fortunate to have them apply for citizenship. Previous refugees have made great contribu tions to Hong Kong's industry and commerce.

The excuse given by the British government for carrying out the inhllDlane repatriation is that it no longer has room for refugees in Hong Kong. If that is the real reason, then the British could give the refugees the opportunity to go to Taiwan, which has a stand ing offer to accept all refugees from Red China.

The United States now has the opportunity to prove to the world that we still care about freedom and about the Captive Nations Reso lution signed by President Eisenhower. Surely those who want to emigrate from Red China are just as worthy of our concern as those who desire to emigrate from Russia.

A message from President Ford to the British Prime Minister expressing America's deep concern over the tragic fate of the Hong Kong refugees is probably all that would be needed. Great Britain is even more dependent on U.S. military and economic power today than when threatened by Hitler. We should not sin by silence while freedom lovers are being sent back into the slavery from which they have risked their lives to escape.

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