

to which the minister referred. The Malaysian Chinese and the Vietnamese Chinese are cousins, of course. They are all "South Seas" Chinese and they all migrated to the *Nanyang*, the South Seas, from Southern China. If the boat people are garbage....

So once more the *Nanyang* Chinese have had a graphic reiteration of their position. There is no excuse for such a deplorable position, nor is there any justification for it. But once again the international community has decried only the symptom. A small, poor, racially tense country like Malaysia simply cannot be asked to accept the burden of this genocide. Both Malaysia and Indonesia have been willing, for humanitarian reasons, to provide transit facilities for the refugees if the international community will guarantee an orderly and prompt resettlement. Indonesia has apparently volunteered an island for the purpose--and that willingness, after all, is how the 70,000 refugees got to Malaysia in the first place. They could have been turned back in their "boats" from the very beginning.

BUT UNLESS THE OTHER HUNDRED NATIONS, especially the wealthier ones of Europe, North America, and East Asia, are willing to do their commensurate share (we have taken 215,000; England has taken 2,000; Japan has taken 3), they will have to be less self-righteous and will have to contain their moral indignation about Malaysia and Thailand. The moral imperatives and burdens exist, but they are not now being equitably distributed. The home minister's statement and the deputy prime minister's policy were themselves desperate, deplorable responses to a problem growing even faster than the bureaucratic impediments to its solution. "We have tried humanitarianism," said the deputy prime minister in the same policy statement, "and it hasn't worked." Meanwhile, 300,000 boat people continue to suffer and to die, if not one way then another.

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EXCURSUS III

FREDERICK C. DYER on ADMIRALS NEVER BECOME PRESIDENT

No admiral has become president.

There have been eight army generals who became president: Washington, Jackson, Taylor, Pierce, Grant, Hayes, Garfield, and Eisenhower.

When Eisenhower was president, nineteen of the twenty-one countries in the Americas had generals at the top; only Canada and Costa Rica did not.

Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, and Ford (we'll come to Carter later) were Naval Reserve officers in World War II, but in their careers as politicians the war was just an interruption. Similarly, Harrison in 1841, Theodore Roosevelt in 1898, and Truman in 1917 served in the army temporarily.

Even among the vice-presidents and also-rans there have been no ex-admirals or graduates of Annapolis. Fremont, the Republican candidate in 1856, served briefly on a naval vessel but made his mark with the land forces. After the Spanish-American War there was talk of running Admiral Dewey for president. More recently, Admiral Zumwalt's picture appeared on *Time*'s cover, his book was a selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club, and he started to run for senator from Virginia, but no luck.

Yet the United States has had many naval heroes, such as Jones, Farragut, Preble, Decatur, Porter, DuPont, Dewey, Nimitz, King, Halsey. They were all physically attractive, intelligent, and experienced in the management of large operations.

It is difficult to name a nation that has had a naval leader at the top. Years ago an admiral took charge in Argentina after a revolution--can you remember his name? During World War II the French Admiral Darlan came to prominence, but not as did Generals Pétain and De Gaulle. In Germany after Hitler's fall Admiral Dönitz succeeded to command, but not until the generals had been killed or removed. The same for Japan--a naval power, but no navy men in top political positions.

On the other hand, Generals Franco, Smuts, Somoza, Mao, Chiang Kai-shek, Hindenburg, Napoleon, Caesar, and Alexander come easily to mind.

"That's the point," one may object, "politicians have to be on land where the voters are!" The army general gets more exposure to the electorate. But the ordinary soldier is also more likely to have unfriendly attitudes toward the brass, so perhaps being a general is a political handicap.

The maritime nations--Britain, Greece, Norway, Japan--have not had navy men at the top. The colonels ran Greece, not the admirals. Winston Churchill called himself a naval person, but he had graduated from Sandhurst, the Royal Military Academy, and served in the army during the Boer War. Like Franklin Roosevelt, who was an assistant secretary of the navy, Churchill obtained his naval experience by political appointment, not through a naval career.

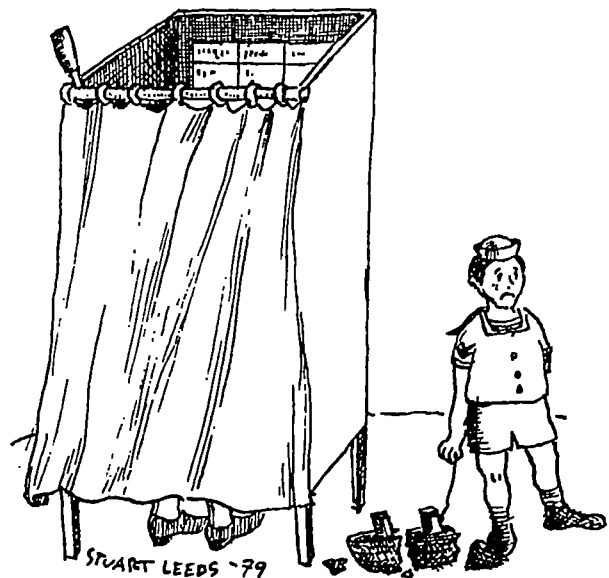
Carter, the Annapolis graduate, has said that when he was thirty he knew he had to decide whether to stay in the navy and seek the position of Chief of Naval Operations or to get out to run for president. He campaigned on the basis of his twenty years and more of business and political experience, not on his youthful years with the navy. Indeed, he was elected despite his naval background rather than because of it.

A candidate for president of the United States must run as a demagogue, promising everyone everything in order to obtain a coalition of voters. After election he must govern through a coalition of power brokers. The United States is a democracy during an election but a republic and hierarchy in governance.

It may be that admirals would make good presidents if they could get elected, but it is also possible that the characteristics that suit them for the sea prevent them from winning voters and ruin them for political leadership.

I believe we need elections to throw old rascals out, to break up cliques, to bring in fresh blood--all in accord with the old (and true) clichés. But one is inclined to think that the man who can't or won't charm the voters should have the job over the avid scramblers.

In his now classic *The Statesman* (first published in 1836; republished in 1958 by Mentor Books with an introduction by C. Northcote Parkinson of Parkinson's Laws fame) Henry Taylor noted that men bred in the army or navy have experiences in large complex establishments that should be to their advantage. But when they are working outside their actual experience, "the faults of the sailor will be the faults of action and enterprise...[and of]...peremptory and off-hand courses." Taylor said that the navy was the more cultivating profession and that it produced minds of more general applicability to civil affairs. The navy man "is thrown upon his own resources and his books. The ordinary subject matter of his duties requires more care, skill, alacrity, and decisiveness."



Nonetheless, admirals do not become president. They've been made ambassadors, administrators, and directors; but none that I can recall has become a caudillo, duce, dictator, prime minister, chairman, or president.

I have no answers to why admirals do not become president, but I suspect the question touches on something that might help to explain how we get the leaders that we do.

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