



UNITED STATES SENATOR  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

LARRY PRESSLER  
SOUTH DAKOTA

November 28, 1990

Mrs. Khuc Minh Tho  
President  
Families of Vietnamese Political  
Prisoners Association  
P.O. Box 5435  
Arlington, VA 22205-0635

Dear Mrs. Tho:

Thanks so much for your recent letter of congratulations. Your kind words of support are very much appreciated and I look forward to representing South Dakota in the United States Senate for the next six years.

Mrs. Tho, your friendship means a great deal to me. I will do my best to live up to the trust and confidence my fellow South Dakotans have placed in me.

Sincerely,

Larry Pressler  
United States Senator

STATEMENT BY SENATOR LARRY PRESSLER  
"UNITED STATES POLICY TOWARD INDOCHINA"  
BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS  
AUGUST 2, 1988

Mr. Chairman, as you know, I served in the U.S. Army in Vietnam in 1967-68 and returned there for an official visit in April of this year.

Based on my April visit, I came to the conclusion that it is time for the United States government to begin thinking of new approaches to our relations with Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. Thirteen years after the fall of Saigon to the forces of North Vietnam, we still do not have normal diplomatic relations. Although official contacts have occurred at various levels, including those led by General Vessey, our bilateral relationship lacks the stability and continuity so necessary for a resolution of the problems that concern our nation the most.

Those problems are: (1) the POW/MIA question; (2) the Kampuchean war; and (3) the Amerasian and other refugees.

#### POW/MIA ISSUE

It is encouraging to note that Vietnam recently accepted General Vessey's proposal that the U.S. and Vietnam jointly conduct a search to help resolve the approximately 70 MIA "discrepancy" cases. As a member of the honor guard at the Hanoi airport ceremony at which 27 sets of MIA remains--the largest number returned by Vietnam in one group to date--were turned over to American military authorities, I am keenly aware of the deep emotions surrounding the MIA issue. We must do our best to resolve the over 1600 remaining MIA cases relating to Vietnam, as well as the several hundred other cases relating to Laos and Cambodia.

The Vietnamese have not been as cooperative in this matter in the past as they have since their leadership changes last year. The Vessey Mission joint search effort may or may not produce the desired result--a resolution of the "discrepancy" cases. But it may be instructive for us in learning more about Vietnamese willingness to settle the MIA problem, as well as the techniques and resources they commit to it.

I have felt that the best way to resolve the POW/MIA problem is to put more Americans on the ground throughout Vietnam. By this I mean both officials and ordinary citizens. The more Americans who travel there, the greater the likelihood of turning up evidence that may help to resolve the remaining cases. The establishment of joint interest sections might be a useful step in this direction, and I shall be very interested to hear the comments of our witnesses on this proposal.

#### THE VIETNAMESE OCCUPATION OF KAMPUCHEA

The Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchea is another major barrier to full normalization of relations between the U.S. and Vietnam.

This is a very complicated problem. Its resolution will require the good faith and best efforts of not only Vietnam and the U.S., but also the Soviet Union, China and other nations. I applaud the insistence by the U.S. that the Vietnamese occupation forces get out of Kampuchea. Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach of Vietnam assured me personally, and has reiterated frequently to others, the intention of his government to remove all military forces from Kampuchea by the end of next year. He asserts that 50,000 Vietnamese troops will have been removed by the end of this year.

As this withdrawal process continues, it is incumbent on Southeast Asian nations, China, the Soviet Union, the U.S. and perhaps the United Nations to consider ways to prevent the genocidal Khmer Rouge from seizing control once again. That faction is the single most powerful force in Kampuchea today, aside from the Vietnamese.

It seems to me that U.S. interests would be served by a continuous diplomatic presence in Hanoi through the interest section mechanism. In this critical period of change in Indochina, we need to have people who can be right on top of unfolding events. Our goal is to promote an independent Vietnam--independent of Soviet control. In the current situation, the Soviets have virtually a free hand. My visit to Vietnam convinced me that the Vietnamese wish to be free of Soviet control. They know that we will not provide them with massive foreign aid. I reminded them of that and we need to keep reminding them of that fact.

#### REFUGEE ISSUES

Progress has been made on the refugee situation during the past year, thanks in large measure to General Vessey's efforts. The processing of Amerasian immigrants has been speeded up, and the Vietnamese seem increasingly cooperative in expediting the immigration of other refugees through the Orderly Departure Program.

Further progress on this front might be achieved through an interest section in Hanoi and a refugee office in Ho Chi Minh City. Again, the more Americans there are in Vietnam, the greater is the potential for resolving this and the other key issues separating us.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I realize that reconciliation with Vietnam is an extremely painful prospect for many Americans--especially those who lost relatives and friends in that country. I lost friends there, too. I will never forget their sacrifice for our nation. Yet we must look ahead to discover the best methods or policies to protect U.S. interests in Indochina. A policy of continued isolation of Vietnam may not serve those interests during this relatively new era of demonstrable change in Vietnamese society. We are not so incapable that it would be impossible for us to respond appropriately if the Vietnamese suddenly began backtracking from their recent policy initiatives. Finally, I would urge everyone to look carefully at the very narrow scope of Senator McCain's resolution, of which I am proud to be a cosponsor.

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March 22, 1988

The Honorable Larry Pressler  
United States Senate  
SR-411  
Washington D.C. 20510

Subject : Former U.S. Government employee's request for assistance  
in family reunification

The Honorable

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to you : My name is Lan Van Phan, 61 years old, now living at 6009 Vista Dr. #202, Falls Church, VA. 22041.

I was an employee of the U.S. Government for 17 years, with MAAG-VN from 1957 to 1964 and with USAID-Saigon from 1964 to 1974. My position with USAID was Advisor in Public Administration.

I escaped from Vietnam in 1979, leaving behind my wife and 5 children, resettled in the United States in the same year and became naturalized as a U.S. citizen in 1986.

I filed a petition with the Naturalization and Immigration Service for family reunification in 1982 and obtained a Notice of Approval of Relative Immigrant Visa Petition for my family a few months later and a Letter of Introduction from the Office of ODP, Bangkok the following year (IV No. 067898).

In the meantime my wife in Saigon submitted an application for exit visa to the Vietnamese authorities in Saigon. However to this date no exit visa was obtained.

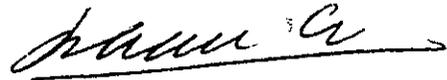
You know how depressed I feel now after having missed my loved ones for almost ten years and having waited in loneliness for so long with little hope to meet them again. Meanwhile my old age doesn't permit me to wait any longer.

Having learned that you are going to serve as the leader of a U.S. visiting team to Vietnam some time this month I sincerely and eagerly request you to take into consideration the deplorable situation of a man who has cooperated with the U.S. Government for so many years and to exceptionally intervene with the responsible authorities of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam so that my wife and children may leave Vietnam soon to join me in the United States.

In this connection I would also request you a favor in transmitting the attached petition in Vietnamese to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam for the purpose of requesting them to take a special and favorable consideration of my wife's application for exit visa.

I am confident that with your prestige and through your assistance I will have a chance to meet my family again in the near future.

Please accept my deep respect and sincere appreciation for your highly valuable assistance.



Lan Van Phan