



UNITED STATES COMMITTEE FOR REFUGEES

With compliments,

Roger P. Winter, Director

815 Fifteenth Street, N.W.
Suite 610
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 667-0782

USCR is a program of the American Council for Nationalities Service

Vietnam's Other MIA's

Washington.

AS IT NEGOTIATES with Vietnam for information about American servicemen still listed as missing in action in Southeast Asia, the Reagan administration is neglecting another very important issue.

That is the issue of the "re-education" prisoners, people detained in Vietnam because of their political beliefs and former association with the U.S. They number approximately

By Roger P. Winter



UNITED STATES
COMMITTEE
FOR REFUGEES

815 Fifteenth Street NW, Suite 610
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Informing the public since 1952

July 23, 1984

President Ronald Reagan
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear Mr. President:

There are men and women in prison in Vietnam because they are identified with the United States role in that country prior to 1975. In many cases these political prisoners have been incarcerated for over nine years, yet the government you head has done little to obtain their release. Our nation's limited initiatives on their behalf have been indecisive and shallow. We hope you will intervene and precipitate a breakthrough in this tragedy.

For two years representatives of the government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam have publically indicated they would release persons in reeducation camps in Vietnam if the United States would take them. It is estimated that the number involved who would be "of interest" to the United States is about 9,000. Recent discussions with Vietnamese authorities by knowledgeable Americans yield the judgement that the Vietnamese offer is real.

We urge you to break through the impotence that has characterized U.S. actions on this matter. Within the next two weeks your Administration will be consulting with the Congress to determine the number of refugees to be admitted to the United States in FY 1985. We believe that the Administration proposal to the Congress should include a dedicated set of admissions numbers, over and above those provided in connection with existing refugee admissions efforts, to demonstrate our resolve to rescue these particular persons. It seems clear that the Congress would support such a proposal.

Mr. President, it also seems clear that without your intervention men and women who were "with us" in Vietnam will soon reach their tenth anniversary in prison. We urge you to keep faith with them now and to move unambiguously to obtain their release.

Sincerely,

Roger P. Winter
Director

RPW/g1



UNITED STATES COMMITTEE FOR REFUGEES

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Informing the public since 1958

December 8, 1987

bà lòi Tiel
Ajay 12/14/87
Hồ chí Minh
Cô lùi - Món
thuỷ cung.

Khuc Minh Tho, President
Families of Vietnamese Political Prisoners Association
Box 5435
Arlington, Virginia 22205-0635

Dear Mrs. Khuc:

For some time, we have worked closely together to achieve a single goal--freedom for all Vietnamese political prisoners.

An example of my office's continuing commitment to that end is the enclosed article that went to over 100 newspapers nationwide recently. As it has several times before, the United States Committee for Refugees (USCR) raised the wrongful incarceration of Vietnamese political prisoners and the need to make their plight a major point of discussion between Hanoi and Washington.

USCR plans to re-raise this issue again and again until the terrible ordeal of the imprisoned ends. However, in order to do that as effectively as possible, it must ask your organization for help.

For the first time--and because it is absolutely necessary financially--USCR seeks sponsors for the next World Refugee Survey, the publication that is central to our public information program.

Why is the Survey important? First of all, because it tells the truth. Unlike politically motivated government reports, it is the only annual publication on global refugee conditions which is privately produced and addresses refugee issues strictly out of concern for human suffering.

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Coverage of Vietnamese refugees, including political prisoners, has been a regular part of the Survey for several years. It will be again, and this effort to provide information and advocacy represents a significant portion of the resources and time USCR has devoted to refugees from Vietnam for over a decade.

In order to become Survey sponsors, concerned and active organizations such as yours are being asked to make a \$1,000 contribution to USCR. In recognition of their generosity, sponsors will be prominently listed the next Survey and they will receive 100 free copies each.

Won't the Families of Vietnamese Political Prisoners Association please help?

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So far, our sponsorship appeal has been encouraging. For example, United Cambodian Community of Long Beach, California has decided to contribute, and it will be listed as one of the groups that understands the importance of the Survey. Others which have shown interest in being sponsors are the U.S. Catholic Conference, the Presbyterian Church USA, and the American Baptist Church.

Still, I urgently request the support of your organization in making the next World Refugee Survey as effective as possible for your loved ones as well as for all refugees. Please indicate the association's interest in becoming a sponsor by December 31, 1987. That will ensure that its name will appear next to others' in the next Survey which will be published in February 1988.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions--and thank you very much, Mrs. Khuc. I wish you and all association members Happy Holidays. It is my fervent wish that the new year brings freedom at last for all the incarcerated in Vietnam.

Sincerely yours,


Roger P. Winter
Director

Burgess

Vietnam's Boat People Still Suffer

By JOSEPH CERQUONE
Recent news from Hanoi merits

mention. The

World are in a much stronger position to help who may be worse off.

escape routes have been forced back to us. The truly innocent people

education is to continue to their

should be made a clear opportunity

to help. Many other countries

are now more than

Chicago Tribune

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BURRELLES

A perilous exodus and then rejection

Boat people are the forgotten war vets

By Joseph Cerquone

still flee Vietnam as economic migrants — individuals who seek economic gain — rather than as bona fide refugees who

be frustrated by Western unhelpfulness, and they could easily resort to expelling refugees to the sea — they have done so

Kheynhien, Vietnam

Presentation of Roger Winter
Director, U.S. Committee for Refugees
June 11, 1984

Mr. Ambassador, I am Roger Winter, Director of the U.S. Committee for Refugees, the public information arm of the American Council for Nationalities Service. Your willingness to consider my comments this morning is appreciated. I have chosen to limit my comments today to three subjects: public attitudes regarding refugee admissions; political prisoners in Vietnam; and the Orderly Departure Program.

Public Attitudes regarding Refugee Admissions

On June 8, Congressmen Hamilton Fish, Jr. (R-NY), Stephen J. Solarz (D-NY), and Jim Moody (D-WI), and USCR released the results of a professional survey, conducted for USCR by the opinion research firm of Kane, Parsons and Associates, Inc. The poll, which was more comprehensive than prior polling on this subject, confirms a number of impressions many of us involved in refugee issues have long held.

In summary, the survey shows there is not solid opposition to refugee admissions within the American public as some have alleged. In fact, notwithstanding widespread confusion on the issues, there is statistical evidence to indicate the American public remains supportive of refugee

admissions. When citizens were asked to make judgments on admitting ten particular types of immigrants and refugees, in each case, a majority indicated it would opt to admit the person. The survey also shows the public is confused on who refugees are, in what relative numbers they are admitted, and where they come from. Over half of all respondents did not know the difference between refugees and other migrants; 50 percent believe Mexico is a major source of refugee admissions to the U.S. The survey also showed that the more accurate knowledge the public has on refugee issues, the more supportive the public is of a generous admissions policy; and that for most Americans, refugee admissions policy is only of low to moderate importance.

In such a situation, positive leadership from government leaders can help fashion national support, even consensus, on maintaining a generous admissions policy, thereby influencing how the world-at-large reacts to refugees' needs for protection and long-term solutions.

We urge you to take leadership in broad efforts to inform the public about refugees and to interpret to the public U.S. interests in finding durable solutions for refugees. (A fuller explanation of the results of the survey is attached).

Mr. Ambassador, we recognize that no administration can be expected to move forward to resolve all refugee situations worldwide simultaneously or with equal intensity. We believe, however, there are much-needed, do-able initiatives to resolve some long-standing refugee issues that President Reagan would support -- and so would the public. In Southeast Asia, these include dramatically improved anti-piracy efforts; a breakthrough in the release and resettlement of political prisoners in Vietnam; and a meaningful reduction in

first asylum camp populations.

Our survey demonstrates the public will take pride in your accomplishments if your tenure includes resolving these issues.

Political Prisoners in Vietnam

Nine years after the fall of Saigon, many Vietnamese nationals who were "our people" continue to serve time in so-called reeducation camps in Vietnam. There have been a variety of offers by Hanoi officials that these prisoners will be released if the U.S. and other countries will take them for resettlement. The U.S. has publicly indicated a willingness to resettle those prisoners "of interest to us," but has set forth certain preconditions to embarking on a program. Frankly, I think the preconditions enunciated by the U.S. are not unreasonable and are consistent with U.S. law.

However, it appears to us that Hanoi, which has much experience with the U.S. as a result of the Orderly Departure Program, also understands that, ultimately, we will need to have access to and to prescreen those to be resettled here to fulfill the requirements of our law. Thus, our stated preconditions have in practice become obstacles to further progress.

We believe a new initiative by the U.S. is needed to put Hanoi's offer to the test and perhaps achieve a long overdue breakthrough.

We, therefore, encourage the Administration to include in its FY 1985 admissions proposal to the Congress a block of 10,000 numbers to be available exclusively for political prisoners of interest to the U.S. who are released

from reeducation camps and their families. They should not be limited to FY 1985, but rather remain available until used. Finally, they should be in addition to numbers available for off-take from first asylum countries and the current ODP program.

It is our belief that such a proposal would be supported by the Congress and, thus, be a strong signal to Hanoi about our intentions on this matter. If Hanoi then chooses not to respond, our government will at least have taken a strong positive step on this matter, which, we believe, it has not done to date. If Hanoi responds positively, a broader international program of resettlement could then be initiated.

The Orderly Departure Program

All those familiar with refugee issues in Southeast Asia know the sensitivity of first asylum nations there to our off-take from their refugee camps. The growth of ODP is, to some degree, seen by them as a threat to future off-take by the U.S. The proposal the Administration is considering to provide an entirely separate set of admissions numbers for ODP is, in our view, therefore, appropriate.

However, if the resettlement countries are to make a significant contribution to improving protection and treatment and eliminating long stays in camp for refugees in Southeast Asia, it is important that the ODP numbers be in addition to the 50,000 numbers needed for first-asylum off-take in that region.

By modestly increasing our FY 1985 ceilings, as we herein suggest, it appears the U.S. can restore a sense of progress towards resolving the Indo-chinese refugee tragedy, rather than simply treading water.

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Don TORRACE
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424/425A, APT 1007 213-473-2525

Piong Mao, in the Triad
in the Manchurian
area in Viet Nam

Friends of Families
of Vietnames. Pol. Prisoners
Fifteen for PP

Uvan Ma, Trinh in Tu Phao
village, Viet Nam



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Washington, DC 20005
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July 3, 1984

Paul Wolfowitz
Assistant Secretary of State
Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Secretary:

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On June 11 we encouraged the administration (statement enclosed) to provide a specific block of refugee admissions number for FY 1985 exclusively for released reeducation camp prisoners and their families. We have been of the opinion that the Vietnamese public offer to release prisoners of interest to the U.S. has not adequately been responded to by the U.S.

It is our belief that provision of a specific block of number as delineated in our June 11 statement will either result in the initiation of more organized release of prisoners for resettlement or show up the bad faith of the Vietnamese offer. Either event would help clarify the current ambiguous situation, although obviously we would hope for release.

Clearly you are in a key position to resolve the current situation. It seems to us this is one of those refugee situations the President would support if he were presented with an adequate decision package by the Department of State.

I very much encourage you to assure the Administration proposal on refugee admissions for FY 1985 includes an adequate and specific response to this issue.

Sincerely,

Roger P. Winter
Director

RPW/g1



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Informing the public since 1954

July 23, 1984

President Ronald Reagan
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20006

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We urge you to break through the impotence that has characterized U.S. actions on this matter. Within the next two weeks your Administration will be consulting with the Congress to determine the number of refugees to be admitted to the United States in FY 1985. We believe that the Administration proposal to the Congress should include a dedicated set of admissions numbers, over and above those provided in connection with existing refugee admissions efforts, to demonstrate our resolve to rescue these particular persons. It seems clear that the Congress would support such a proposal.

Mr. President, it also seems clear that without your intervention men and women who were "with us" in Vietnam will soon reach their tenth anniversary in prison. We urge you to keep faith with them now and to move unambiguously to obtain their release.

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United States Department of State

Assistant Secretary of State
for East Asian and Pacific Affairs

Washington, D.C. 20520

August 22, 1984

Dear Mr. Winter:

Thank you for your letter of July 3. I have read it and the enclosures with interest, and I have discussed the issues involved with colleagues in the Bureau for Refugee Programs. This also responds to your letter to the President of July 23, which was referred to the Department of State for reply.

As I believe you are aware, we have repeatedly made clear to Vietnam, both directly and through the UNHCR, that the United States is prepared to receive past and present political prisoners from Vietnamese prison camps -- so-called "re-education camps" -- through the UNHCR's Orderly Departure Program.

Indeed, at the UNHCR-sponsored meeting on the Orderly Departure Program in Geneva in October 1983, the United States representative submitted to the Vietnamese Vice Foreign Minister a list of almost 2,000 special humanitarian cases, including names of political prisoners and their families, and requested their immediate release. On our behalf, the International Committee of the Red Cross has asked many times for a list of the prisoners the Vietnamese hold and are prepared to release, so far without success. Since we turned in our list, we have repeatedly urged the Vietnamese to begin releasing prisoners and we have received no response to that request.

The Vietnamese are fully aware of our willingness -- indeed, our eagerness -- to expand the Orderly Departure Program to accommodate these "re-education camp" prisoners. We are continuing to explore ways of persuading the Vietnamese authorities to cooperate with the international community in making prisoners and their families available for resettlement. Despite your expressed belief in the sincerity of Vietnamese offers to release political prisoners, your letter rightly acknowledges doubt about the good faith of their offers. However, I share your view that we should continue to make every effort to explore the possibility that the offer is genuine, and ideas such as yours are being given careful consideration as we develop our FY 85 refugee admission

Mr. Roger P. Winter, Director,
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proposals. If the Vietnamese authorities would demonstrate a willingness to meet our reasonable procedural needs, we are confident that the Congress will readily authorize as many admission numbers as we need.

I personally feel that there is almost no one more deserving of admission to the United States as a refugee than the people who are suffering in prison because of their past association with us. Securing the release of these political prisoners is one of the foremost goals of the U.S. refugee program. It is for this reason that we appreciate your interest and support in persuading the Vietnamese to begin freeing those who would be eligible for resettlement in the United States.

We also continue to hope that the Vietnamese authorities will allow the International Committee of the Red Cross access to the "re-education camp" prisoners. This access would not only ascertain their total number and identity, but also, of equal importance, could hopefully lead to the Vietnamese improving the deplorable conditions in these prisons. Although we have not made Red Cross inspection of the prisons a pre-condition for our resettling political prisoners, we continue to believe that it is a humane and important first step to a regularized program.

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Paul Wolfowitz



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December 8, 1987

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Box 5435
Arlington, Virginia 22205-0635

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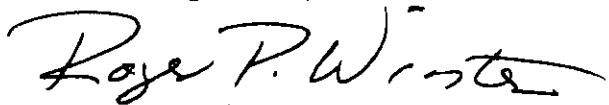
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Paul Wolfowitz

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20515

August 10, 1984

The Honorable Ronald Reagan
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Next year will mark the 10th anniversary of the fall of Saigon. Tragically, many Vietnamese who were associated with the United States before 1975, to this day remain imprisoned by the Communist Vietnamese government in "Re-education Camps". We know, of course, that "Re-education Camps" is nothing more than a euphemism for prisons. Conditions in these prisons have been compared to those in concentration camps.

These political prisoners were people who worked for the United States' programs in Vietnam: computer programmers, drivers, language teachers, officials of the former Republic of Vietnam, officers in the army, policemen, and Catholic, Buddhist and other clergy. These are people who were left behind in the evacuation when the war ended or who stayed behind to save their families. In some sense, for those Vietnamese who have spent the last nine years in communist prisons, the war has never ended.

There have been a number of statements by Hanoi officials that these prisoners will be released if the U.S. will take them for resettlement. The latest such offer occurred in May, when the Vietnamese Prime Minister, Pham Van Dong, told Newsweek that "we (Vietnam) are quite prepared to allow all of those left in the camps to leave tomorrow for the U.S." His statement echoed one made in 1982 by SRV Foreign Minister Thach. There are an estimated 8-10,000 such persons left in the camps, who along with certain of their family members might be eligible for resettlement.

We are writing to ask you, as a first step, to create a special allocation of 10,000 refugee admission numbers for re-education prisoners and their family members during the current refugee admissions consultation process for the 1985 fiscal year.

In April, State Department officials told Congress that before the United States determines that it will take anyone, an international organization must have access to screen the prisoners. Until now we have let this precondition stalk any consideration of the re-education issue. It is time for America to seize the initiative.

Creating admission places for "re-education camp" inmates and members of their families would send a clear signal to Vietnam that the United States is genuinely interested in freedom for these political prisoners. We must find room for this small, clearly defined group which has a legitimate claim to our attention. Your creative leadership could lead to serious negotiations.

We urge you to demonstrate the leadership that is needed to fulfill our moral obligation to those who put their trust in us and to pay the debt that is ours.

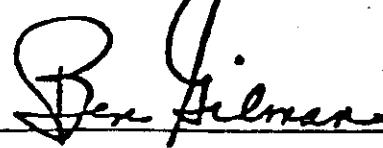
Sincerely,



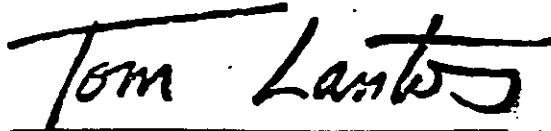
Joel Pritchard M.C.



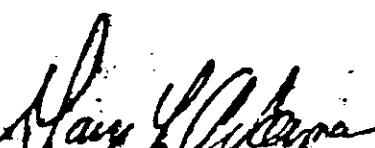
Bill McCollum M.C.



Benjamin A. Gilman M.C.



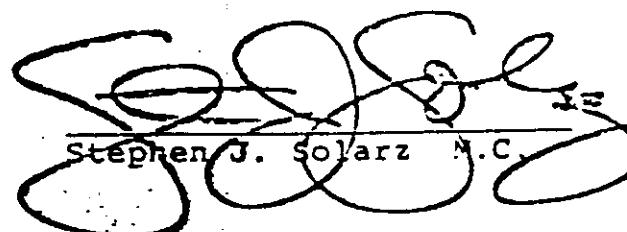
Tom Lantos M.C.



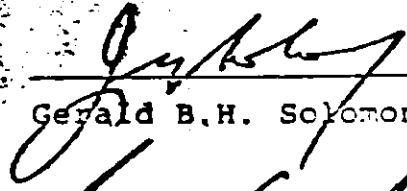
Gary L. Ackerman M.C.



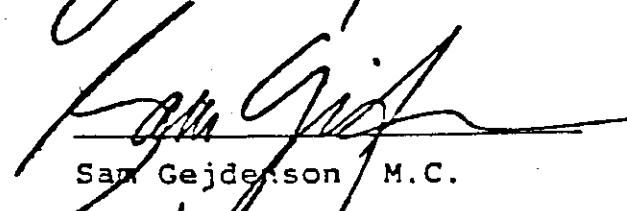
Michael DeWine M.C.



Stephen J. Solarz M.C.



Gerald B.H. Solomon M.C.



Sam Gejdenson M.C.



Mel Levine M.C.



Mike DeWine M.C.