

HỘI GIA ĐÌNH TÙ NHÂN CHÍNH TRỊ VIỆT NAM
FAMILIES OF VIETNAMESE POLITICAL PRISONERS ASSOCIATION

P.O. BOX 5435, ARLINGTON, VA 22205-0635
TELEPHONE: 703-560-0058

Hội Đồng Quản Trị
Board of Directors

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Advisory Committee

HIẾP LOWMAN
NGUYỄN XUÂN LAN

May 9, 1988

The Honorable Stephen J. Solarz
Chairman
Committee on Foreign Affairs
1536 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

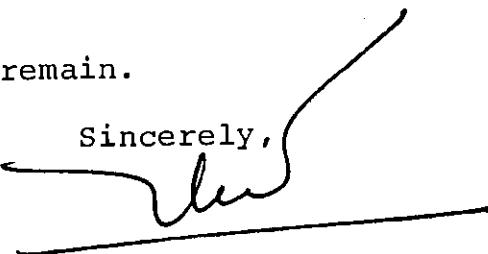
Dear Congressman Solarz:

It was with great honor that we acknowledge your presence at the reception organized in commemoration of Vietnamese political prisoners on April 27, 1988. We are deeply grateful for your unwavering support which has been instrumental for all our successes achieved until the present time.

It is with great hope that we are looking toward the future. Members of the Vietnamese community are longing for the time when all political prisoners are released and reunited with their families. With your strong support we are convinced that by this time next year we will be able to welcome the first group of recently released political prisoners whose names have been submitted to you. Should you need any additional information, please feel free to contact me.

With my sincere thanks, I remain.

Sincerely,


Khuc Minh Tho
President



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Cố Vấn Đoàn
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HIẾP LOWMAN
NGUYỄN XUÂN LAN

May 9, 1988

The Honorable Rudy Boschwitz
United States Senate
SH-506
Washington, D.C. 20510

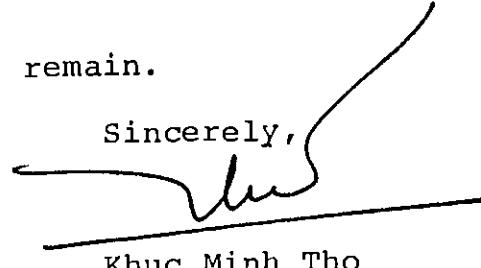
Dear Senator Boschwitz:

It was with great honor that we acknowledge your presence at the reception organized in commemoration of Vietnamese political prisoners on April 27, 1988. We are deeply grateful for your unwavering support which has been instrumental for all our successes achieved until the present time.

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HIẾP LOWMAN
NGUYỄN XUÂN LAN

May 9, 1988

The Honorable Frank McCloskey
House of Representatives
127 Cannon HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman McCloskey:

On behalf of the Families of Vietnamese Political Prisoners Association, I wish to express our deep gratitude for your presence at the reception organized by our Association on April 27, 1988 to commemorate thirteen years of imprisonment of their loved ones.

Your presence lent strength and encouragement to us as we continue to fight to bring pressure on Hanoi to set them free, and for their reunification with their families.

We shall always be grateful for your support.

Sincerely,



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HIẾP LOWMAN
NGUYỄN XUÂN LAN

May 9, 1988

Ms. Dawn T. Calabia
Staff Consultant
Congressman Stephen J. Solarz
Committee on Foreign Affairs
House of Representatives
707 House Annex # 1
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Ms. Calabia:

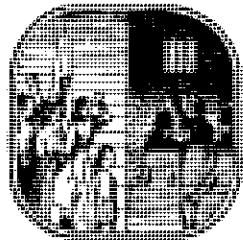
On behalf of the Families of Vietnamese Political Prisoners Association, I wish to express our deep gratitude for your presence at the reception organized by our Association on April 27, 1988 to commemorate thirteen years of imprisonment of their loved ones.

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HIẾP LOWMAN
NGUYỄN XUÂN LAN

May 6, 1988

The Honorable David Lambertson
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Bureau for East Asian
and Pacific Affairs
Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

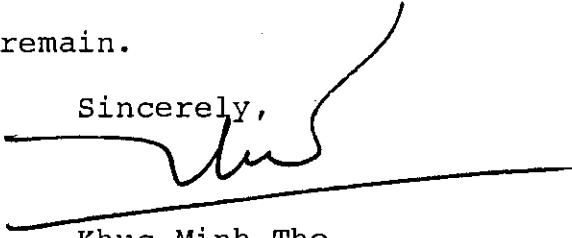
Dear Mr. Lambertson:

On behalf of the Families of Vietnamese Political Prisoners Association, I wish to express our deepest gratitude for your presence and encouraging words at the reception organized in commemoration of Vietnamese political prisoners on April 27, 1988. We are deeply grateful for your unwaivering support which has been instrumental for all our successes achieved until the present time.

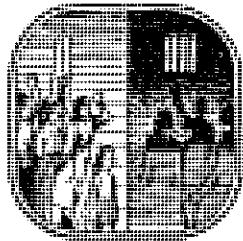
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HIẾP LOWMAN
NGUYỄN XUÂN LAN

May 9, 1988

The Honorable Frank H. Murkowski
United States Senate
SH-709
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Murkowski:

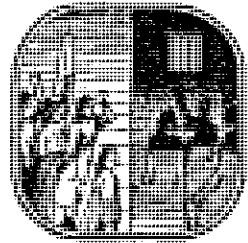
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HIẾP LOWMAN
NGUYỄN XUÂN LAN

May 6, 1988

Mr. Daniel Sullivan
RP/RAP/SEA (ODP)
Department of state
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Sullivan:

On behalf of the Families of Vietnamese Political Prisoners Association, I wish to express our deep gratitude for your presence at the reception organized by our Association on April 27, 1988 to commemorate thirteen years of imprisonment of their loved ones.

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HIẾP LOWMAN
NGUYỄN XUÂN LAN

May 9, 1988

Mr. Eric Schwartz
Program Director
The Asia Watch Committee
739 - 8th Street, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20003

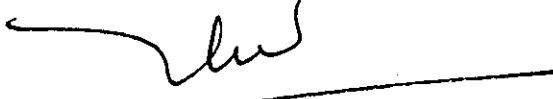
Dear Mr. Schwartz:

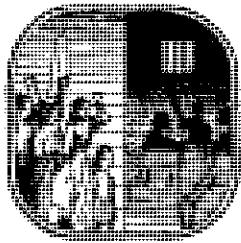
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Ngày 5 tháng 5 năm 1988

Kính gửi Ông Trần Minh Đức
VOA/Vietnamese Service
Roon # 2700 - HHS/N. Building
330 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20547

Thưa Ông:

Hội Gia Đinh Tù Nhân Chinh Tri Việt Nam xin thành
thật cảm ơn Ông đã đến phòng vân và giúp phô biến nhanh
chóng tin tức về buổi tiếp tân tổ chức tại trụ sở Quốc
Hội vào chiều ngày 27.4.1988.

Sự giúp đỡ của Ông qua buổi phát thanh trong
Chuồng Trinh, Việt Ngữ của Đài, Tiếng Nói Hoa Kỳ, hoạt
động tranh đấu cho tù nhân chính trị Việt Nam của Hội
chung tôi chắc chắn đã được đồng đồng bao bùa que,
nhà theo dõi và đón nghe. Đó là sự khích lệ cho chúng
tôi và cũng là niềm an ủi cho tù nhân chính trị và gia
đình họ vì sự kiện này đã chứng minh dù xa xôi cách
trở, chúng ta vẫn nghĩ đến họ và lo cho họ.

Xin kính chào và chúc Ông thành công trên mọi
lĩnh vực hoạt động.

Kính thư

Khúc Minh Tho
Chu tịch



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May 9, 1988

Ms. Patricia Gossman
The Asia Watch Committee
739 - 8th Street, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20003

Dear Ms. Gossman:

On behalf of the Families of Vietnamese Political Prisoners Association, I wish to express our deep gratitude for your presence at the reception organized by our Association on April 27, 1988 to commemorate thirteen years of imprisonment of their loved ones.

Your presence lent strength and encouragement to us as we continue to fight to bring pressure on Hanoi to set them free, and for their reunification with their families.

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May 9, 1988

Ms. Coroleen Williams
Senator Heinz's Office
United States Senate
SR-277
Washington, D.C. 20510

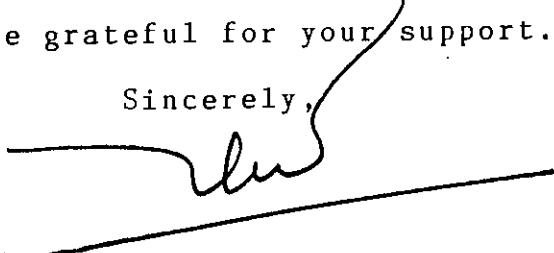
Dear Ms. Williams:

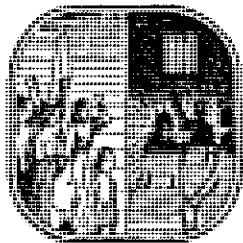
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May 9, 1988

Ms. Mina Goldberg
5028 Swinton Drive
Fairfax, VA. 22032

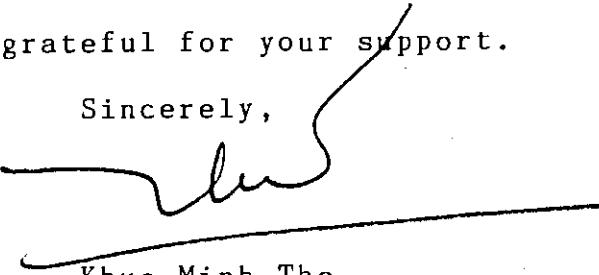
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HIẾP LOWMAN
NGUYỄN XUÂN LAN

May 9, 1988

Mr & Mrs. Terry McNamara
6683 - 32nd Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20015

Dear Mr. & Mrs. McNamara:

On behalf of the Families of Vietnamese Political Prisoners Association, I wish to express our deep gratitude for your presence at the reception organized by our Association on April 27, 1988 to commemorate thirteen years of imprisonment of their loved ones.

Your presence lent strength and encouragement to us as we continue to fight to bring pressure on Hanoi to set them free, and for their reunification with their families.

We shall always be grateful for your support.

Sincerely,



Khuc Minh Tho
President



HỘI GIA ĐÌNH TÙ NHÂN CHÍNH TRỊ VIỆT NAM

FAMILIES OF VIETNAMESE POLITICAL PRISONERS ASSOCIATION

P.O. BOX 5435, ARLINGTON, VA 22205-0635
TELEPHONE: 703-560-0058

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NGUYỄN XUÂN LAN

May 9, 1988

Rev. Nguyen Thanh Long
11812 New Hampshire Avenue
Silver Spring, MD. 20904

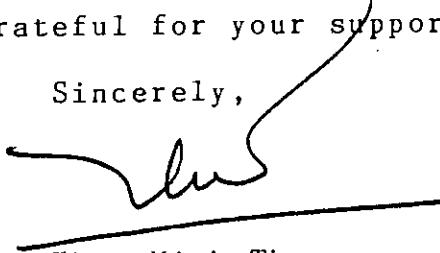
Dear Rev. Nguyen Thanh Long:

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HIẾP LOWMAN
NGUYỄN XUÂN LAN

May 9, 1988

Rev. Phung Son
9105 Balick Road
Fort Belvoir, VA. 22060

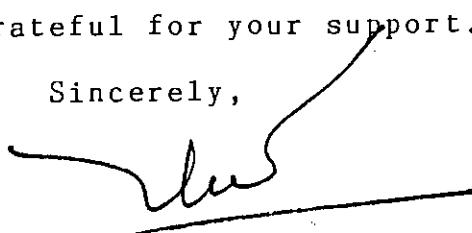
Dear Rev. Phung Son:

On behalf of the Families of Vietnamese Political Prisoners Association, I wish to express our deep gratitude for your presence at the reception organized by our Association on April 27, 1988 to commemorate thirteen years of imprisonment of their loved ones.

Your presence lent strength and encouragement to us as we continue to fight to bring pressure on Hanoi to set them free, and for their reunification with their families.

We shall always be grateful for your support.

Sincerely,


Khuc Minh Tho
President



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NGUYỄN XUÂN LAN

May 9, 1988

Mr. & Mrs. Dale A. Pruna
Special Agent
Federal Bureau of Investigation
1900 Half Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20535

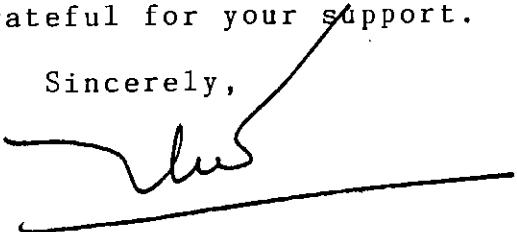
Dear Mr. & Mrs. Pruna:

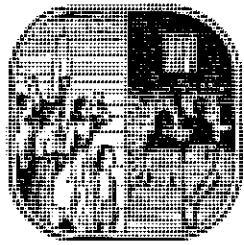
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Sincerely,


Khuc Minh Tho
President



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Treasurer

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Advisory Committee

HIẾP LOWMAN
NGUYỄN XUÂN LAN

May 9, 1988

Mr. Wick Tourison
Defense Intelligence Agency
Pentagon, Room # 2E230
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Mr. Tourison:

On behalf of the Families of Vietnamese Political Prisoners Association, I wish to express our deep gratitude for your presence at the reception organized by our Association on April 27, 1988 to commemorate thirteen years of imprisonment of their loved ones.

Your presence lent strength and encouragement to us as we continue to fight to bring pressure on Hanoi to set them free, and for their reunification with their families.

We shall always be grateful for your support.

Sincerely,



Khuc Minh Tho
President

Ladies and Gentlemen :

I am honored to have this opportunity to share with you some personal opinions as a former political prisoner.

Compared with my fellow political prisoners, many of whom have spent some thirteen years in concentration camps, my eight years as a political prisoner seem short. Many have been released but are still being kept in Vietnam without having regained their basic human rights. Others still remain in prison. Unfortunately, despite their contribution in fighting for democracy, they have been virtually forgotten since April 30th, 1975 when the communists took over Vietnam.

It is not necessary for me to dwell on the details of the suffering of the political prisoners; the press having dealt with the issue at great length. I only wish to mention that they have all suffered greatly, physically as well as mentally through hard labor, hunger, sickness, and torture. Also, allow me to make the following comments regarding political prisoners.

Vietnam was a close ally of the U.S. for 30 years in its fight for freedom and democracy. In spite of the fact that South Vietnam has been relegated to the past since the end of the war, a great number of those who fought for the freedom of Vietnam are still suffering under the communist regime. I urge that the free world continue to be concerned about their fate.

The U.S. government has repeatedly declared that all Vietnamese political prisoners will be readily accepted along with their close families to resettle in this country. We have been encouraged and heartened by such a commitment. Unfortunately, the Vietnamese authorities have yet to prove their sincerity in releasing all political prisoners and allowing them to emigrate. We have witnessed the release of about one thousand prisoners at the occasion of the lunar New Year; thousands of others still remain in prison. Furthermore we have not yet seen any indications that the Hanoi government will allow those already released to emigrate.

For the above reasons, I strongly appeal to you to continue the pressure on the Vietnamese authorities to release all political prisoners and allow them to emigrate with their families to the U.S. or other countries of their choice.

It is with great hope that I look forward to a very near future where you will join all of us in the Vietnamese community in welcoming these heroes to their new homes in the free world.

Thank you for your attention.

April 27, 1988
NGUYEN VAN GIOI
Ex- Lt Colonel
National Police Forces
Republic of Vietnam

Robert Funseth

Current
Policy
No. 1037

Aspects of U.S. Resettlement Programs for Vietnamese Refugees



United States Department of State
Bureau of Public Affairs
Washington, D.C.

Following are addresses by Robert Funseth, Senior Deputy Assistant Secretary for Refugee Programs, before the annual dinner meeting of the Families of Vietnamese Political Prisoners Association, Falls Church, Virginia, November 14, 1987, and before the annual consultative meeting on the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Orderly Departure Program (ODP) from Vietnam, Geneva, Switzerland, December 3, 1987.

NOVEMBER 14, 1987

I am deeply honored by your invitation to share this evening with you in support of the Vietnamese political prisoners and to be asked to address you. I have the greatest respect for your noble cause and the greatest admiration for your personal courage in sustaining your heartfelt efforts and in maintaining your hope in the face of tremendous emotional hardship and torment.

Sitting together to share a meal is one of the most venerated of traditions in the history of the human family. It is, therefore, right and proper that we should experience together this profoundly symbolic act as we commemorate and rededicate ourselves to the freedom of your husbands, your fathers, your brothers, and your relatives and our Vietnamese colleagues and our friends.

You will all remember that in September 1984, Secretary Shultz made the historic announcement of President Reagan's great humanitarian initiative aimed at bringing all of the "reeducation" camp prisoners and their qualifying family members to the United States. You will also recall that, sadly, the Vietnamese authorities backed away from their initial willingness to negotiate with us to implement the President's program. We profoundly regret that change. We sincerely hope it will change.

When it was my privilege to speak briefly at your solemn commemoration in April at the U.S. Capitol—which marked the 12th anniversary of the imprisonment of your loved ones—I reaffirmed our readiness to resume bilateral discussions with Hanoi at any time. Six weeks ago, in his testimony before the Congress of the United States, Secretary of State Shultz again reiterated this pledge on behalf of the government.

And this evening I stand before you to reaffirm with the strongest possible words and feelings our firm commitment to continue our steadfast efforts to bring about the release and resettlement in the United States of all the former and current "reeducation"

camp prisoners and their accompanying family members who wish to be resettled in America.

Proposals To Hasten Resettlement and Reunification

I believe you all know that we have urged the Vietnamese Government to allow all the prisoners who have been released from their "reeducation" camp prisons to apply to leave Vietnam through the Orderly Departure Program and to approve their applications for exit permits. Since our formal presentation of the President's initiative to the representatives of the Vietnamese Government in Geneva in 1984, 270 former prisoners and over 1,000 of their accompanying family members—for a total of nearly 1,300 persons—have been allowed to come to the United States. Perhaps some of you are here this evening.

However pleased we are that these 1,300 persons have been permitted to leave, we remain greatly disappointed that there are 11,000 other Vietnamese—including 2,280 former prisoners—whose names we have sent to the Vietnamese, who have not been given permission to leave, as well as many, many others who still have not come to our attention.

In your association's letter to me, you noted the September announcement in Hanoi of the release of 480 political prisoners and asked that we

consider five specific proposals that might hasten their resettlement and reunification with relatives in the United States. Please allow me now to respond directly to each of your proposals.

First, you asked that we: "continue to press Vietnam to release the prisoners for resettlement in the United States."

We have done so. We are doing so. We will do so. Our policy is clear; our objective is clear. We have declared, again and again, our readiness to negotiate the release of all political prisoners, and we intend to keep trying. I will once more be leading the U.S. delegation to the annual meetings with the Vietnamese in Geneva 3 weeks from now, and I pledge that we will again use these bilateral meetings to reaffirm strongly President Reagan's humanitarian initiative for the release of the "reeducation" camp prisoners and for their resettlement in the United States.

Second, you asked that we: "assure that, if these political prisoners are allowed to emigrate, adequate budget and resettlement numbers are available to take care of this increased requirement."

You always have our assurance to do this. We stand prepared to take all necessary steps, in consultation with the Congress, to ensure that we have the necessary money and refugee admission numbers to resettle any and all of these prisoners the Vietnamese authorities allow to emigrate and who wish to be resettled in the United States.

Third, you asked that we: "assure that letters of introduction (LOIs) are issued to any of the recently released political prisoners who do not have such a letter as soon as the names of these political prisoners can be identified."

Again, you have our assurance. When we are informed of the identity of recently released prisoners, the American Embassy in Bangkok is instructed immediately to review the files and issue LOIs wherever needed.

Fourth, you asked that we: "be prepared to establish a bilateral program with Vietnam to process the political prisoners if necessary and required by the Vietnamese."

You ask that we be prepared to establish a bilateral program. We have already had direct bilateral meetings with the Vietnamese in 1984, 1985, and 1986. I can assure you that we are fully prepared to establish such a bilateral program if this is necessary. It may not be necessary. Our current Orderly Departure Program mechanism and the initiative we have put to the Viet-

namese representatives for these prisoners would be perfectly sufficient without the establishment of a separate program. Through it, we have resettled 1,300 former prisoners and their families. However, if the Vietnamese authorities indicate that they would prefer to establish such a bilateral program with us for these prisoners, we are ready to discuss the modalities of such a program without further delay.

Finally, fifth, you asked that we: "provide to the Vietnamese community, in writing, clear guidelines on what family members can accompany."

We appreciate that clear guidelines on accompanying family members are of great importance to all of you. Our office has already provided your president with a written explanation of the current guidelines. If additional information or clarification is required, we will be more than happy to provide that as well, and we are always available to answer any of your questions.

Resumption of the Orderly Departure Program

I am pleased to be able this evening to give you some good news about the Orderly Departure Program itself. It is working again, and we are encouraged by the way things seem to be going. After 18 months of persistent U.S. diplomatic activity, we succeeded in July in reaching an agreement with the Vietnamese Government for the resumption of interviews for the ODP. In September, a parallel agreement was reached on a bilateral program with the Vietnamese Government for the Asian children. Two interview trips to Vietnam by teams of U.S. consular and INS [Immigration and Naturalization Service] officers from the American Embassy in Bangkok have now been successfully completed. Each resulted in the interview and approval of over 1,000 persons. We now expect to be making further interview trips on a reasonably regular basis, and we hope for similarly positive results.

I am sure that all of you are aware that at the beginning of 1986, the ODP suffered a severe setback. At that time, the Vietnamese authorities unilaterally suspended the interviewing of new ODP applicants for the United States and sharply cut back the ODP program for all other participating countries. We conducted a series of meetings with Vietnamese officials over the next 18 months, during which we urged that

interviewing be allowed to resume and during which we made proposals on how the interviewing process could be improved and accelerated once it was resumed.

In July of this year in Hanoi, the Vietnamese Government accepted our proposals and agreed to a resumption of interviewing in Ho Chi Minh City. Since then, we have twice sent interview teams to Ho Chi Minh City. I am very pleased to be able to report to you this evening that these trips have been, in our view, successful, and we are encouraged by the way they have gone and, indeed, by the very good cooperation which the Vietnamese officials in Ho Chi Minh City have extended to the U.S. officials.

Let me explain briefly how the interview process has changed and why we believe it could result in faster departures from Vietnam for those we are able to interview and approve. Before the end of 1985, the interviewing was done for us by UNHCR personnel. The results of the interviews were then taken back to the American Embassy in Bangkok, where they had to be reviewed by U.S. consular and immigration officers. Under the new U.S.-proposed procedures, U.S. consular and immigration officers are going directly to Ho Chi Minh City to conduct the interviews in person. This means that, hopefully, most cases can be adjudicated on the spot, subject to satisfactory medical examination results, with final approval normally occurring within only a few weeks after the interviews take place. Since there is no longer a long backlog of people waiting for flights, we hope that the first of those approved in September will be able to join their relatives in the United States before the end of the year.

There still remain some unresolved processing problems. As you know, the ODP office at the embassy in Bangkok issues letters of introduction on behalf of applicants whose files are sufficiently complete and who have either an approved Form I-130 petition which is "current," or nearly so, or who have been tentatively approved for travel. The United States has provided to the Vietnamese authorities the names of everyone to whom we have issued an LOI. In August of this year, after the Vietnamese Government agreed to the resumption of interviewing, the American Embassy sent them a new consolidated list of everyone to whom an LOI had been issued who was still in Vietnam. That list contained about 95,000 names. We hope that the Vietnamese authorities will increasingly draw from

these U.S. lists of persons who have already been issued LOIs.

For most of the time that interviewing was suspended, the Vietnamese Government did not issue any exit permits—or issued only a very few. The good news is that they have, in recent months, resumed issuing some exit permits again. So we will make this one suggestion for something you can do: if your relatives in Vietnam have LOIs but do not have exit permits, we would suggest that you urge them to reapply now, either for an exit permit or for an appointment for an interview. The chances for favorable action on a request may be better than they have been for some time. Urge your family members in Vietnam to take a copy of their LOI to the appropriate authorities and try again now. They may not be successful, but they may be.

U.S. Commitment to Refugee Resettlement

Our mission is not to posture. Our mission is to bring about the freedom of your relatives and to obtain Vietnamese agreement for their resettlement in the United States. Therefore, we must be discreet and careful in what we say in public. We leave the polemics to others. When we meet with the Vietnamese authorities on this unresolved humanitarian issue we must be sober, sincere, and serious—and we are.

There is, we believe—based on the recent positive developments concerning the Orderly Departure Program—some reason to be hopeful that there may be better news ahead about the “reeducation” camp prisoners and their prospects for being allowed to leave Vietnam for resettlement here.

In June, in an address to the foreign ministers of the Southeast Asian countries meeting in Singapore, Secretary of State George Shultz declared that the United States would support the countries of first asylum for the long haul, including the continuation of a substantial American refugee resettlement program. In September, this pledge was made concrete in President Reagan's formal proposal to the Congress and subsequent determination to set the first-asylum admissions ceiling for FY 1988 at 29,500 and the ODP ceiling at 8,500, for a total of 38,000 persons.

Commitment is, indeed, the watchword of U.S. refugee policies and programs. We are committed to humani-

tarian ideals as a nation. We are committed to helping refugees who are the victims of oppression in this world. We are committed to generous refugee admissions programs in order to offer hope and new lives to the thousands and thousands who have lost their homes. And we are committed to fighting for the freedom to emigrate of those still imprisoned for their beliefs. Your loved ones are uppermost in our thoughts and actions, and we commit ourselves—and rededicate ourselves again this evening—to unceasing efforts to obtain their freedom.

DECEMBER 3, 1988

Mr. High Commissioner [Jean Pierre Hockel], we would like first to express appreciation to you and those of your organization for your efforts and interest on behalf of the UNHCR's Orderly Departure Program. The sponsorship by UNHCR of this very important annual consultation and your personal participation again this year as chairman is a significant manifestation of the commitment of UNHCR to do everything possible to ensure that this program becomes truly a viable, safe, and orderly alternative to clandestine, dangerous departures from Vietnam as envisaged in the 1979 memorandum of understanding between the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the UNHCR. We believe that your recent visit to Hanoi contributed in an important and helpful manner to the renewal of this vital program.

The United States is greatly encouraged by the resumption of processing of applicants for resettlement in our country which has occurred in the past months and by the recent increase in approval for other countries. We are here to build on that progress. We salute the good will and cooperation demonstrated by the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and its representatives, the UNHCR, the ICM [Intergovernmental Committee for Migration], and all other parties involved. Together, we now have the opportunity and the challenge for a new beginning—to restore departures to the levels achieved in 1984 and 1985, when, for the first time, more Vietnamese left via the ODP than risked clandestine, dangerous departures. But our goal must be to go beyond those levels. We, therefore, welcome the Minister's [Vietnamese Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs Tran Quang Co] clear statement that his country does not wish its citizens to become “boat” people.

It is useful to recall on this occasion that the memorandum of understanding recognizes both “family reunion and other humanitarian cases.” It provides that selection of those persons authorized to leave Vietnam is to be made on the basis of lists of persons submitted by the Vietnamese Government and lists of persons submitted by the receiving countries. The 1979 memorandum also affirms the central role of the UNHCR.

U.S. Commitment to the ODP

On behalf of my government, I reaffirm the steadfast commitment of the United States to the UNHCR Orderly Departure Program within the terms of the 1979 understanding. This American commitment was further strengthened by all of the Members of the U.S. Congress in a 1987 resolution unanimously endorsing the program's provision for departures from Vietnam for both family reunification and for humanitarian reasons.

Vietnam's Southeast Asian neighbors also recognize the central humanitarian role of the Orderly Departure Program. At their June meeting in Singapore, the Foreign Ministers of the Association of South East Asian Nations strongly urged the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to take measures to remove the causes of clandestine departures from Vietnam and to cooperate earnestly with the UNHCR and the resettlement countries to ensure the success of the Orderly Departure Program.

Alternative to the Perils of Clandestine Flight

Since 1980, the Orderly Departure Program has enabled more than 130,000 persons to depart Vietnam safely and in an orderly way to build new lives in new homelands, with over 60,000 coming to my country. In 1984, more than 28,000 persons departed Vietnam under this program, and in 1985, more than 26,000. In those years, the Orderly Departure Program truly was becoming an alternative to the perils of clandestine departure. Sadly, this is not now the case, with clandestine departures now exceeding departures under the Orderly Departure Program. However, with the recent renewal of the program, we are hopeful that it will once again become the principal means for persons to depart Vietnam.

Amerasians and Prisoners

At our consultations in 1984, I had the honor to announce on behalf of my government two special humanitarian initiatives of the President of the United States. One called for the admission to the United States of all Amerasian children, their mothers, and close family members from Vietnam who wished to be resettled in the United States. The second called for the resettlement of all the so-called reeducation camp inmates and their qualifying family members who also wished to be resettled in the United States.

We are very pleased that recent steps have been taken to fulfill the intent of the initiative on behalf of Amerasians. We remain, however, profoundly disappointed that the Vietnamese authorities have not as yet responded positively to our initiative on behalf of the reeducation camp prisoners—a population of compelling concern to the international community.

This afternoon—as was done at this consultation last year—I once again reaffirm that we are ready to resume discussions with the Government of the

Socialist Republic of Vietnam on this important issue. Our humanitarian goal must be to develop ways to receive these prisoners or former prisoners and their immediate families who wish to be resettled in the United States. We are hopeful that the cooperative spirit reflected in the recent resumption of the Orderly Departure Program and Amerasian Program will now manifest itself in addressing this profound, unresolved humanitarian issue.

In a special act of amnesty, the Vietnamese authorities recently announced the release of 480 persons from "reeducation" camps—persons who had been incarcerated since 1975 and who held positions under the former government. We appreciate, applaud, and welcome this humane gesture of amnesty by Vietnam. We invite the Vietnamese authorities to allow any of this group who wish to be resettled in the United States or in any

other country to be accorded priority in the ODP on special humanitarian grounds. We also reaffirm our request that all former "reeducation camp" prisoners be allowed unhindered access to the Orderly Departure Program.

Conclusion

This year's international meeting is a significant consultation. My delegation is looking forward very much to continuing consideration of this very important humanitarian undertaking in meetings tomorrow with the Vietnamese delegation led by Vice Minister Co. ■

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Office of Public Communication • Editorial Division • Washington, D.C. • March 1988
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