

SYMPOSIUM

ON

VIETNAMESE FORMER POLITICAL PRISONERS

*

is sponsored by

**COALITION OF NATIONALIST ORGANIZATION OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA
INDOCHINESE RESETTLEMENT AND CULTURAL CENTER, INCORPORATED
STATE LEGISLATURE JOINT COMMITTEE ON REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT,
CHAIRMAN, SENATOR ART TORRES**

*

* *

and is

made possible by the support of

**SANTA CLARA REFUGEE FORUM
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SANTA CLARA SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY
BACH VIET ASSOCIATION IN SACRAMENTO
FAMILIES OF POLITICAL PRISONERS ASSOCIATION
CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
CATHOLIC CHARITIES - UNITED STATES CATHOLIC CONFERENCE
ASSOCIATION OF VIETNAMESE POLITICAL PRISONERS IN N.CALIFORNIA**

SYMPOSIUM ON VIETNAMESE FORMER POLITICAL PRISONERS

AGENDA

- 09:30 - 10:15 AM. -REGISTRATION
- 10:15 - 10:20 -WELCOME: Mr. Vu Van Loc.
- 10:20 - 10:30 -OPENING REMARKS: MS. Beverly Hunter-Curtis
Representing Senator Art Torres
- 10:30 - 11:00 -RE-EDUCATION CENTER
DETAINEES AND U.S. GOVERNMENT EFFORTS
ON THEIR BEHALF. Mr. Robert Funseth, Senior Deputy
Secretary of State as keynote speaker.
- 11:00 - 11:10 -PANEL I: COMMUNITY EFFORTS
ON BEHALF OF POLITICAL PRISONERS. Ms. Khuc minh Tho, Families of
Political Prisoners Association.
Mr. Cao van Hung, Associations of
Vietnamese Political Prisoners.
- 11:10 - 11:30 -BREAK.
- 11:30 - 12:00 -PANEL II: RESETTLEMENT
SERVICES. Ms. Deborah Tran, State Depart. of
Social Services - Refugee Services
Sister Nicole Nguyen, Catholic
Charities Refugee Services, San Jose
Mr. Manuel Ares, Director, Employment
& Training Programs, Santa Clara
County Social Services Agency.
Mr. Thuy Pham, Bach Viet Association.
Mr. Loc van Vu, IRCC (Moderator).
- 12:00 - 12:45 -QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS. Members of the Audience are asked
to submit questions in writing to a
Floor Facilitators. Questions will be
screened to avoid duplication
Secretarial team.
- 12:45 - 01:00 PM -WRAP-UP.
-MASTER OF CEREMONIES. Van Le Do & Barrett Thang Nguyen
-SECRETARIAL TEAM. Dr. Chi Nguyen, Lam Nguyen,
Beverly Hunter-Curtis,
Cao Hung Nguyen

Symposium

on

VIETNAMESE FORMER POLITICAL PRISONERS

Saturday, October 28, 1989

at

MARRIOTT HOTEL
Anaheim, California

Sponsored by the
California Legislature's Joint Committee on Refugee Resettlement,
International Migration and Cooperative Development
Senator Art Torres, Chairman

**SYMPOSIUM ON
VIETNAMESE FORMER POLITICAL PRISONERS**

. Saturday, October 28, 1989 .
. Marriott Hotel . Anaheim, California .

This symposium is convened by Senator Art Torres who is Chairman of the California Legislature's Joint Committee on Refugee Resettlement, International Migration and Cooperative Development in direct response to the accord signed on July 29, 1989 between the United States and Viet-Nam for the emigration of released Vietnamese political prisoners and family members.

A G E N D A

- 8:30 - 9:30 am : REGISTRATION
- 9:30 - 9:35 am : INTRODUCTION & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
- 9:35 - 9:45 am : **OPENING REMARKS:** Senator ART TORRES
- 9:45 - 10:30 am : **REPORT: Re-education Center Detainees and U.S. Government Efforts on Their Behalf**
Senior Deputy Assistant Secretary ROBERT FUNSETH
- 10:30 - 10:35 am : **Statement by a Former Political Prisoner**
- 10:35 - 10:50 am : BREAK
- 10:50 - 11:00 am : **REMARKS:** Senator ED ROYCE
Introduction of Panels
- 11:00 - 12:00 pm : **PANEL I - National Perspective**
Dr. Le-Xuan-Khoa (Moderator),
Indochinese Resource Action Center
Mrs. Theresa Rusch, U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Refugee Program
Mrs. Mary Chi Ray, Office of Refugee
Resettlement
Ms Alicia Cooper, InterAction
Mrs. Khuc-Minh-Tho, Families of Former Political
Prisoners Association
Mr. Ton-That-Dien, General Association of Former
Political Prisoners of Vietnamese Communists

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the
**California Legislature's
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International Migration and Cooperative Development**
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- . United States Department of State
- . California State Department of Social Services
- . Orange County Social Services Agency
 - . City of Irvine
 - . InterAction
- . National Voluntary Agencies
- . Church World Service - St Anselms Immigrant & Refugee Center
 - . Indochinese Resource Action Center
 - . Economic and Employment Development Center
in Los Angeles
 - . Vietnamese Community of Orange County, Inc.
- . Families of Vietnamese Political Prisoners Association
 - . Task Force for Vietnamese Political Prisoners
in Northern California
- . Reception Committee of the Coalition of Vietnamese
Organizations in Northern California
- . Association of Former Political Prisoners of Communist Viet-Nam
in Southern California
- . General Association of Former Political Prisoners
of Vietnamese Communists

and by
the contributions of
the

- . City of Irvine
- . Vietnamese Community of Orange County, Inc.
- . Economic and Employment Development Center
in Los Angeles
- . Association of Former Political Prisoners of Communist Viet-Nam
in Southern California

Special thanks
to

- . Marriott Hotel
- . The Vietnamese Community in California
- . The Vietnamese Student Volunteers in Southern California .

12:00 - 1:00 pm : **PANEL II - State and Local Perspective on Resettlement Task**
Mr. Walter Barnes (Moderator), State Department of Social Services - Refugee Services Branch
Ms Mai Cong, Vietnamese Community of Orange County, Inc.
Mr. Giao Hoang, Economic and Employment Development Center in Los Angeles
Mr. Larry Leaman, Orange County Social Services Agency
Mr. Cung Pham, Church World Service - St. Anselms Immigrant & Refugee Center
Dr. Van Van Nguyen, Association of Former Political Priosoners of Communist Viet-Nam
Mr. Lam Duc Nguyen, Task Force for Vietnamese Political Prisoners in Northern California

1:00 - 1:15 pm : WRAP-UP

MASTER OF CEREMONIES **Father Nguyen-Xuan-Duc**

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Questions from the audience will be allowed following Mr. Robert L. Funseth's report and after each panel discussion. Due to the time constraint, members of the audience are asked to submit their questions to a Floor Facilitator who will screen these questions to avoid duplication. Our volunteer Floor Runners will assist you to fill out these questions. Your help and cooperation on this matter are greatly appreciated.

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PRESS KIT

SYMPOSIUM ON VIETNAMESE POLITICAL PRISONERS

Background

On July 29, 1989 the United States and the Vietnamese government signed an Accord on the emigration of Vietnamese who had been released from reeducation camps. The Accord represents the culmination of seven years of difficult, often stalled, negotiations between the United States and Vietnam.

This breakthrough is critical to the lives of these men, many of whom have spent over ten years imprisoned because of their involvement with the United States and the South Vietnamese governments during the war. Until this Accord opened the door for emigration, many to reunite with families in the U.S., the thousands released are languishing in Vietnam with the only real prospect for leaving being the route of clandestine, dangerous escape.

One of the most tragic experiences for the Joint Committee fact-finding delegation earlier this year was to meet with the former political prisoners in Ho Chi Minh City, formerly Saigon. The tragedy of their imprisonment had been replaced with a depressing life of unemployment and hopelessness. Now there is hope. Some are already registered with the Orderly Departure Program set up as a mechanism for orderly, safe emigration as an option to escape. Some are not registered with the ODP out of fear of further persecution from the government.

Upon announcement of the Accord, intense interest on the part of the Vietnamese community gave rise to speculation and rumor about who would be admitted, and even whether it would actually happen after all this time. For the general community and public and private service providers there is a need to know about these refugees, where they will settle and what their needs will be.

Purpose of the Symposium

The Symposium is designed to inform the Vietnamese community and the general public on the Accord. Mr. Robert Funseth of the Department of State who has been the point person for the negotiations resulting in the Accord will report on what the Accord means and its implementation. He will also be available to answer questions in order to clarify issues of concern to the community.

In addition the Symposium will feature panels on former political prisoners first, from a national and, secondly, from a state/local perspective. Panel presentations on the national perspective will assess the current situation and cover advocacy efforts and planning for reception and placement of the political prisoners admitted to the United States.

The second panel will include the State Refugee Coordinator and local mutual assistance association, local voluntary agency and local government perspective. The purpose of Panel II is to begin the process of understanding the needs of the former political prisoners and coordinating services to help them integrate successfully into the communities where they settle.



Embassy of the United States of America

U.S. ORDERLY DEPARTURE PROGRAM (ODP) PROCESSING

The U.S. Orderly Departure Program (ODP) has brought over 85,000 people to the U.S. from Vietnam since the program began in 1979. In general, eligibility for the U.S. ODP is based on having sponsoring relatives in the U.S. or proven close association with U.S. policies and programs in Vietnam prior to 1975.

ODP files can be opened on the basis of Affidavits of Relationship (AOR), Immigrant Visa Petitions (Form I-130), Visas 93 cables or ODP Questionnaires indicating close association. Spouses, children, parents and siblings of people residing in the U.S. are eligible for the family reunification aspect of the ODP. Grandparents, grandchildren or other relations may be included in the files, but their eligibility for the ODP will be determined at the time of their interview when a decision will be made as to their dependency on the family unit.

In most cases, once a file is opened the next step in the U.S. processing is review for issuance of a Letter of Introduction (LOI). The LOI is a document which states that the U.S. is willing to interview the person or persons named on the LOI for possible acceptance for movement through the U.S. ODP. It is not a guarantee of approval. The LOI is normally presented to the Vietnamese authorities by the applicants as a preliminary step in obtaining exit permission and pre-departure interviews. Please note that it is the Vietnamese authorities who determine who will be allowed to be interviewed by the ODP.

The success of the ODP has attracted a large number of applicants. Because of this, priorities have been established for LOI review and issuance. Family reunification cases will be reviewed for LOI issuance when the applicants are the beneficiaries of current or near-current Immigrant Visa Petitions and would therefore be able to travel to the U.S. as immigrants. Parents of minor children (under 18 years of age, and thus ineligible to file petitions) living in the U.S. with neither parent are also eligible for LOI issuance upon receipt of an AOR and proper documentation verifying the relationship. This priority system allows the ODP to reserve limited refugee numbers for those who are not eligible for immigrant status. The number of immigrants who can be accepted into the U.S. each year is far greater than the number of refugees allowed.

Visas 93 beneficiaries are also eligible for LOI review. However, as they would enter the U.S. as refugees, review of cases of Immigrant Visa Petition beneficiaries has priority over review of cases based solely on Visas 93. It is strongly recommended that second preference petitions be filed as soon as the U.S. relative is eligible to do so.

The immigration channel will continue to be emphasized in the foreseeable future. If sponsors are eligible to file Immigrant Visa Petitions for their relatives the ODP urges them to do so. Relatives in the U.S. may continue to send AOR's and other documents to the ODP office in Bangkok to serve as the foundation for a future Immigrant Visa file. The file will not be reviewed for an LOI, however, until the petition has been received and is close to being current.

LOI's will continue to be issued to applicants for refugee status who are of special humanitarian concern. These will primarily be Amerasians and their accompanying family members, and applicants who spent long periods of time in reeducation camp due to their close association with U.S. policy and programs in Vietnam.

The ODP receives on a periodic basis lists of names of people the Vietnamese authorities will allow to be interviewed by ODP staff in Ho Chi Minh City. Upon receipt of the list, ODP staff in Bangkok review the cases to determine what further documents or information are necessary. Once the files are complete, the ODP requests that the applicants be made available during one of the interview sessions. If the applicants are approved documentarily they must also undergo a medical examination. If there are no medical ineligibilities the ODP office in Bangkok transmits final approval to the Vietnamese authorities, through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Working Group. The case is then manifested by the Vietnamese for a flight to Bangkok or, in the case of some Amerasian or refugee applicants who will be attending the English as a Second Language/Cultural Orientation program in the Philippines, a direct flight from Vietnam to Manila.

In Bangkok, approved ODP applicants are housed in a transit center where final paperwork and medical checks are completed. They generally stay in Bangkok for about one week. The majority of family reunification applicants then travel directly to the U.S. The majority of Amerasian immigrants and some refugee applicants are sent to the Philippines for the six month language training and cultural orientation program before travelling to the U.S.

All travel arrangements are made by the Intergovernmental Committee for Migration (ICM). Travel costs and visa fees for immigrants and parolees travelling through the ODP must be paid for in advance. When payment is due, the U.S. anchors are sent letters outlining specific information regarding payment. People travelling in refugee status continue to sign promissory notes to be paid back later. The U.S. sponsor will be notified of the exact travel itinerary by a local voluntary agency.

The entire process depends on many variables so it is impossible to predict how long any segment of the procedure will take.

It is very important that ODP be notified immediately of any address changes either in Vietnam or the U.S. Delays in processing have occurred due to ODP having outdated addresses on file.

Office Address:

Orderly Departure Program
Panjabum Building
127 South Sathorn Road
Bangkok 10120, Thailand
Tel: 252-5040, EXT ODP

APO Address:

Orderly Departure Program
American Embassy Box 58
APO San Francisco 96346-0001
Cable: JVAODP, BANGKOK
Telex: 87008 JVAODP TH

C O N T A C T L I S T

**Joint Committee on Refugee Resettlement, International Migration
and Cooperative Development**

1100 "J" Street, Suite 540, Sacramento, CA 95814
(916)323-8641 or FAX.(916)444-0581
Senator Art Torres, Chairman
Ms Beverly Hunter-Curtis, Principal Consultant
Mr. Nguyen T. Nguyen, Consultant

Department of State, Bureau of Refugee Program

Room 5824, Washington D.C. 20520
(202)647-5822
Mr. Robert L. Funseth, Senior Deputy Assistant Secretary

Department of State, Bureau of Refugee Program

Office of Reception and Placement
Room 1245 SA-1, Washington D.C. 20520
(202)663-1057
Ms Theresa Rusch

California State Department of Social Services

Refugee Services Branch
744 "P" Street, Sacramento, CA 95814
(916)324-1576
Mr. Walter Barnes, Chief

Orange County Social Services Agency

1055 North Main Street, Suite 600, Santa Ana, CA 92701
(714)541-7707
Mr. Larry Leaman, Director

City of Irvine

One Civic Center Plaza, P.O. Box 19575, Irvine, CA 92713
(714)724-6233
Mr. Larry Agran, Mayor

Indochinese Resource Action Center

1628 16th Street N.W., 3rd Floor, Washington D.C. 20009
(202)667-4690 or FAX.(202)667-6449
Dr. Le-Xuan-Khoa, Director

International Rescue Committee

1801 West 17th Street, Santa Ana, CA 92706
(714)953-6912
Ms Alicia Cooper, Director

Economic and Employment Development Center

1908 Beverly Blvd, Suite 100, Los Angeles, CA 90057
(213)413-4859
Mr. Andy Anh, Executive Director

Vietnamese Community of Orange County, Inc.
3701 McFadden, Suite M, Santa Ana, CA 92704
(714)775-2637
Ms Mai Cong, President
Mr. Tuong Duy Nguyen, Executive Director

Families of Vietnamese Political Prisoners Association
P.O. Box 5435, Arlington, VA 22205
(703)560-0058
Mrs Khuc-Minh-Tho, President

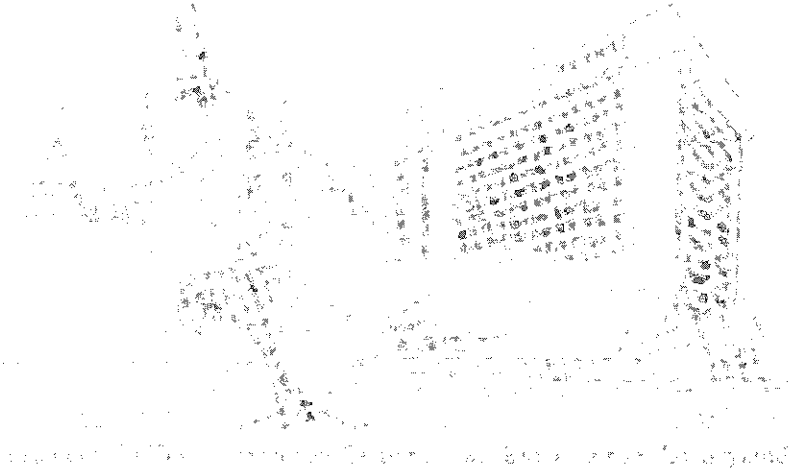
Task Force for Vietnamese Political Prisoners in Northern California
Reception Committee of the Coalition of Vietnamese Organizations in Northern California
c/o IRCC, 399 West San Carlos, San Jose, CA 95110
(408)971-7857
Mr. Lam Duc Nguyen, South Bay Coordinator

Association of Former Political Prisoners of Communist Viet-Nam in Southern California
P.O. Box 635, Westminster, CA 92684
10472 Chapman Avenue # C, Garden Grove, CA 92640
(714)534-9012
Mr. Quy Mau Nguyen, Chairman

General Association of Former Political Prisoners of Vietnamese Communists
P.O. Box 1953, Garden Grove, CA 92642
13612 Yockey Street, Garden Grove, CA 92644
(714)894-4136
Mr. Hau Nguyen, Chairman of Central Coordinating Committee

ANAHEIM **Marriott.**

happy but still worried by the outcome
not to be optimistic with what you have
obtained from it. There's a long
way to go, many things to do



Sau đây chị đi đâu?

San Diego - ngay? Thế bài và hồ
về Orange County thì thì
ba

700 West Convention Way, Anaheim, California 92802-3483 (714) 750-8000

Chị muốn nói đến mấy giờ?

Nghỉ du lịch

Bà Cooper o có kiến

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(916) 323-8641
1100 J STREET
STE 540
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814

October 18, 1989

Dear Symposium Participant:

Enclosed are your ticket(s) for admission to the **Symposium on Vietnamese Former Political Prisoners on Saturday, October 28, 1989** in Anaheim, California. On behalf of Senator Art Torres and the Joint Committee on Refugee Resettlement, International Migration and Cooperative Development, we thank you for your participation at this important symposium and we look forward to working with you to insure the success of this event.

DIRECTIONS

- . From John Wayne Airport (Santa Ana):
Freeway 55 North to Freeway 5 North, Katella Avenue EXIT (LEFT turn), LEFT on Harbor Blvd, RIGHT on West Convention Way to Marriott Hotel.
- . From Long Beach Airport:
Freeway 405 South to Freeway 22 East, Harbor Blvd EXIT (North), LEFT on West Convention Way to Marriott Hotel.

REGISTRATION

- . Panel Presenters: Please pick up your name card and package at Registration Desk between 8:30 AM and 9:30 AM.
- . Guests with tickets: Please present your ticket at door for admission.
- . Guests without tickets: Please pick up your admission ticket(s) at Registration Desk between 8:30 AM and 9:15 AM.
- . Press/Media: Please pick up Press Information Package at Registration Desk. Contact Persons: Mr. Peter Blackshaw or Mr. Nguyen T. Nguyen.
- * The program will start at exactly 9:30 AM. We ask for your cooperation to be ON TIME.

HOTEL ACCOMMODATION

- . Marriott Hotel: Group rate of \$105.00 for Single and/or Double Occupancy guaranteed before Oct. 16, 1989 and available on first-come-first-serve basis after Oct. 16, 1989.
- . Reservation: 1-800-228-7290 or (714) 750-8000 - FAX. (714) 750-9100.
- . Contact Person: Ms Renee Sheffner, Executive Meeting Manager.

FOR OTHER INFORMATION:

Please contact: Ms Beverly Hunter-Curtis or Mr. Nguyen T. Nguyen at (916) 323-8641 or FAX. (916) 444-0581.

Special Program for P.P.

1- Make them feel welcome, feel at home.

2- Be their guides and friends ^{there}

~~Give them the love and moral support~~

3- Form a support group to

assist them adjusting (promptly)

(to eat coordinating for reception

of P.P.)

4- Each family adopts a newcomer's family

- As in the speech of Mr. Robert L.

Furseth at our dinner last

August. He said:

"Perhaps each family here could

pledge to "Adopt" one family and

help them to adjust their new

lives. Only with your personal

support will they truly feel

that their journey in search

of a homeland has finally

ended and that they are truly

at home in America."

Propose a Special Act
enacted at the Congress as
American Progra



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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KHUC MINH THO

Khuc Minh Tho has been President of the Families of Vietnamese Political Prisoners Association (FVPPA) since 1977 when it was founded. The Association represents 10,000 families of prisoners believed to be held by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. The Association shares news about political prisoners with their families and works for their reunification in the United States and other countries with their loved ones. Mrs. Tho's husband, formerly a Colonel in the Army of South Vietnam is a "reeducation camp" prisoner in Northern Vietnam and has been there more than 13 years, after the fall of Saigon and his arrest. Mrs. Tho previously worked for the Vietnamese Embassy in Manila, Philippines, and came to the United States in 1977 as a refugee.

SENATE MEMBERS

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COMMITTEE SECRETARY

(916) 323-8641

1100 J STREET
STE 540

SACRAMENTO CA 95814

October 4, 1989

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

Dear Mrs. Khuc:

I am writing to confirm our invitation to participate in the Symposium on Vietnamese former Political Prisoners to be held October 28, 1989 at the Anaheim Marriott Hotel, 700 W. Convention Way, Anaheim, California, from 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

We appreciate the significant efforts you and your organization have done in advocating on behalf of the Vietnamese political prisoners. We are requesting your participation in a panel to inform on these efforts and the continuing work we need to do.

Mr. Nguyen T. Nguyen will call to discuss further the details of the agenda. We are looking forward to meeting you and working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

ART TORRES
Chairman

AT:BHC:mrl

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HEWAN YOHANNES
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(916) 323-8641
1100 J STREET
STE 540
SACRAMENTO CA 95814

October 10, 1989

MEMORANDUM:

FROM : Nguyen T. Nguyen *NTN*
TO : All Panel Presenters
RE : Symposium on Vietnamese Political Prisoners

Enclosed are additional information on this upcoming symposium on October 28, 1989 in Anaheim, California to help you with the preparation of your statement.

At this point, both Beverly Hunter-Curtis and myself are in the process of collecting supporting materials on the issue of Vietnamese political prisoners and will forward to you as soon as possible. We are also planning to have a pre-symposium planning meeting in Southern California on Wednesday, October 18, 1989. If you have agenda items to be included in the discussion at this meeting, please contact us immediately.

The agenda for this symposium is shaping up as follows:

1. Opening remarks by Senator Art Torres (D-Los Angeles)
2. Report by Mr. Robert Funseth
3. Statement by a Vietnamese Political Prisoner
4. Remarks by Senator Ed Royce (R-Santa Ana)
5. Panel I (Mr. Le-Xuan-Khoa, Moderator)
6. Panel II (Mr. Walter Barnes, Moderator)
7. Wrap-Up

As a reminder, we need the outline or the draft of your statement by October 16, 1989 to share them with the Panel Moderators and to get back to you with our input. Our Fax number is (916)444-0581. Please call me at (916)323-8641 if you have any questions. Thank you.

SYMPOSIUM ON VIETNAMESE POLITICAL PRISONERS

Background

On July 29, 1989 the United States and the Vietnamese government signed an Accord on the emigration of Vietnamese who had been released from reeducation camps. The Accord represents the culmination of seven years of difficult, often stalled, negotiations between the United States and Vietnam.

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In addition the Symposium will feature panels on former political prisoners first, from a national and, secondly, from a state/local perspective. Panel presentations on the national perspective will assess the current situation and cover advocacy efforts and planning for reception and placement of the political prisoners admitted to the United States.

The second panel will include the State Refugee Coordinator and local mutual assistance association, local voluntary agency and local government perspective. The purpose of Panel II is to begin the process of understanding the needs of the former political prisoners and coordinating services to help them integrate successfully into the communities where they settle.

SENATE MEMBERS:
WILLIAM A. CRAVEN
RALPH C. DILLS
KEN MADDY
MILTON MARKS
DAVID ROBERTI
ED ROYCE

ASSEMBLY MEMBERS:
CHARLES CALDERON
DOMINIC CORTESE
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CONSULTANT

AUDREY NODA
CONSULTANT

HEWAN YOHANNES
COMMITTEE SECRETARY
(916) 323-8641
1100 J STREET
STE. 540
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814

California Legislature

JOINT COMMITTEE ON REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT, INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT

ART TORRES
CHAIRMAN

RUSTY AREIAS
VICE CHAIRMAN



ANNOUNCEMENT

Symposium on Vietnamese Former Political Prisoners October 28, 1989 - Orange County

The purpose of this symposium is to inform the Vietnamese community and the general public about the Accord between the United States and the Vietnamese government on the emigration of former political prisoners. Senator Torres will introduce Mr. Robert Funseth, Department of State, who will report on the Accord and its implementation. The Symposium will also feature panels on Vietnamese former political prisoners from a national and from a state and local perspective.

Date: October 28, 1989
Time: 9:30 AM to 1 PM
Location: Anaheim Marriott Hotel
700 W. Convention Way
Anaheim, California

Because of the anticipated interest in this symposium, seating will be limited. To request invitations, please submit the following information by **OCTOBER 18, 1989**

I (we) plan to attend the Symposium on Former Political Prisoners:

Name of organization or individual: _____

Address: _____

Number Requested _____

Phone: _____

Send to: Joint Committee on Refugee Resettlement
1100 J St, Ste. 540
Sacramento, CA 95814



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

October 1989

Hội Đồng Quản Trị Board of Directors

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NGUYỄN XUÂN LAN

Ladies & Gentlemen:

It is indeed a great honor and pleasure for me to be here today and introduce myself and tell you a little about the Families of Vietnamese Political Prisoners Association, of which I am President.

My name is Khuc Minh Tho and I previously worked for the Vietnamese Embassy in Manila, Philippines before coming to the United States in 1977 as a refugee. My husband was a former Colonel in the Army of the Republic of Vietnam and was a reeducation camp prisoner in Northern Vietnam for 13 years after the fall of Saigon. He was just released in February 1988.

The Families of Vietnamese Political Prisoners Association was founded in 1977 and I have been the President of this organization since that time.

The FVPPA is a nationwide, non-profit organization. We try to provide support services to over 10,000 members by sharing information, helping them file documents with INS and the State Department (BRP/ODP), obtaining LOI, helping the ex-prisoners arrive in third country camps, and continually expressing our concern to the State Department and various Congressional entities. We also maintain computerized listings of our membership, as well as political prisoners at home. We keep our data up-to-date so that they can be useful to resettlement agencies in their understanding of the problems that this population will face when they arrive in this country.

Occasionally we organize fundraisers, but our primary source of funding is our own. We have not received any financial assistance from any government or private sources; and all of our workers volunteer their time and services.

In the information sheet handed out to you today, we present some major areas of concern that need to be dealt with in our efforts to help our dear relatives and friends return to a normal life. We also spell out a series of activities we are trying to perform in order to achieve successfully the purpose of our association. Needless to say, this important task requires a tremendous coordination of efforts from both public and private sectors. The reeducation center detainees will need all the services that can be provided to them. We count very much on your cooperation and support so that we can carry out our activities properly and effectively.

I will be pleased to answer any questions or concerns you may have about our Association and let you know ways in which you can assist us.



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TELEPHONE: 703-560-0058

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NGUYỄN XUÂN LAN

Traumatic Experience

Naturally, those who had been incarcerated for years, with limitations of what they could do or what they could receive, will have problems in adjusting to their new lives. For years those men were neither allowed to write nor receive letters. It was not until 1979 - 1980 that their families were allowed to visit them once or twice a year. Their only resting time was in the indoctrination sessions at night. They saw their friends go one by one because of disease, suicide, or starvation; they were all too weak to work.

Family Structure

Now, coming back to freedom, for those who still have families at home, they see all their children cannot complete their education, but must work at odd jobs; some of the families have already been broken up. And for those whose families have left the country and resettled abroad, the situation does not seem any better. Their wives and children have adjusted to American ways and the former prisoners will find family relationships have changed in ways that are hard to accept. It is not easy for a Vietnamese man to accept his wife's authority, and his children's knowledge better than his own. Some of the wives have taken another man in their loneliness - although they may not share the same living quarters. Worse, he sees that most of his friends, comrades in arms, are now settled with good jobs and good living standards.

Cultural/Language Barriers

We must be aware of the cultural differences and language barriers that many will face. Some will have limited English speaking capabilities and others will find adapting to the cultural difference will pose hardships and handicaps. We must be prepared to assist them in these areas of concern so that they will at least have an opportunity to enjoy and appreciate their freedom.

A C T I V I T I E S

1. To continue to work towards the release and resettlement of the remaining reeducation camp prisoners.
2. To assist the Department of State and ODP in updating lists of prisoners and their families.
3. To work with other mutual assistance associations and service agencies in helping former political prisoners and their families to adjust smoothly to their new lives, especially in the following areas:
 - Language and/or Skills Training
 - Housing
 - Health Care
 - Education

(Present at door)

No. 255

Admit One

S

ymposium on

VIETNAMESE FORMER POLITICAL PRISONERS

Saturday, October 28, 1989

9:30 A.M. - 1:00 P.M. (Registration: 8:30 A.M. - 9:30 A.M.)

at

MARRIOTT HOTEL

700 West Convention Way, Anaheim, California

Sponsored by the

California Legislature's Joint Committee on Refugee Resettlement, International Migration and Cooperative Development

Senator Art Torres, Chairman

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RECOMMENDATIONS

WORKGROUP D: SPECIAL POPULATIONS 1989 & 1990

To ORR:

1. Make available adequate additional funding for local service providers to meet the needs of special populations, for example: appropriate bilingual and culturally-sensitive mental health counseling services.
2. Facilitate coordination and a stronger partnership between the local, state, and voluntary agencies and the MAAs in the planning and delivery of services.
3. Provide full access for all former political prisoners entering the United States, regardless of status (immigrant or refugee), to the entire range of services and benefits available to refugees.
4. Initiate a more substantial and regular flow of information from the State Department, as well as from ORR, regarding refugee policy and programs, in particular information pertaining to the resettlement of Amerasians and political prisoners.

To MAAs:

1. Affirm support for the resettlement of Amerasians and political prisoners and pursue full participation at the local and national levels in the planning and delivery of services for these special groups. (There is potential in the successful implementation of such programs as models for the resettlement of other special groups.)
2. Affirm support for organizations such as the Families of Vietnamese Political Prisoners Association in their efforts on behalf of Vietnamese political prisoners; involve them in the planning for the resettlement of this special group.
3. Assist in the development of a National Coalition of all MAAs to monitor and participate in the design and implementation of national refugee policies and programs.

WORKGROUP D: SPECIAL POPULATIONS 1989-1990

Facilitator: Michael A. Knowles

Discussants: Dimitrie Ianculovici, Kyle Horst, Marta Brendan

Rapporteur: George Devendorf

IRAC staffer: Meg Nord

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Amerasians and political prisoners had been identified through the agenda setting process as a focus for the workshop. The discussion began with the participants answering the questions: What do we mean by special populations? & How can MAAs play a significant role in dealing with them? Most of the discussion focussed on the Amerasians, as 15-20,000 (including family members) are expected to be resettled in the U.S. over the next one to two years.

Another question debated was: To what extent the MAA community is willing to commit its limited resources to help special populations? ORR needs to know the community's feelings. The example of the Armenian community's opposition to the acceptance of Soviet Armenians as "refugees" was given. The U.S. government did not consult with the Armenian community already established in America before it started accepting large numbers for resettlement this past year.

A consensus arose within the group that the MAAs with their language capabilities and cultural ties are better suited to work with special populations than the Volags. In any case, a close working relationship between Volags and MAAs is needed.

Several MAA representatives voiced their discontent with the continued expectations by ORR and Volags that MAAs should volunteer their services instead of receiving compensation and grants. A Volag representative suggested MAAs should stay in close contact with the local Volag offices and should be sure to remind them of their presence and desire to become involved.

The group agreed that the three month term of initial services is too short. Many refugees, and it is expected the special populations in particular, need more than 90 day assistance.

Part of the discussion was on the psychological difficulties former political prisoners face. They will need special mental health counselling as well as extra medical care for physical ailments which may have developed as a result of their internment.

It was the groups consensus that services are needed "up front" for

successful resettlement of special populations. Those who receive services early on will be better off in the long run. Emphasis must be placed on "the human relationship" between service provider and client; it is vital. Funds should be made available to enhance the opportunity for such connections to be made.

Finally, the participants agreed that coordination between federal, state, local government agencies, volags and MAAs will be the key to successful efforts. Otherwise, as one participant pointed out, "the efforts and funds will be wasted; it will be like pouring water into a bottomless cup."

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How do -

Thu can gi?

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
AMBASSADOR AT LARGE
WASHINGTON

October 16, 1989

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

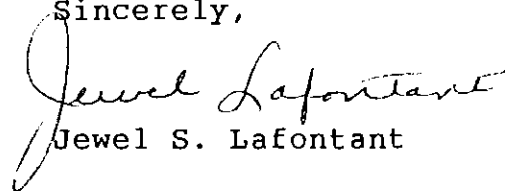
Dear (Mrs.) Tho:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter. Your greetings were well received.

I look forward to meeting with you and your Association to obtain your insights on the humanitarian issues regarding the political prisoners still in re-education camps in Vietnam.

Please contact Rebecca Smith at 647-3964 for an appointment.

Sincerely,


Jewel S. Lafontant

Saigon ngày 14/9/89

Chị Thơ khôn thiêng,

* Trước hết xin gửi chị 2 hồ sơ nhà thờ chuyển
gửi cho ODP (Bangkok hay S. Francisco sẽ tùy chị)
hoặc cho chúng tôi tại định cư R.F. cũng nhanh.)

① - CÁI KÊ TÔNG (tên thật và tên đi tù.)

bi danh: NG² - H² - TÔNG (N.V.S trước 70, và

TRẦN - HIỀN - NAM (Phu Độc uỷ Tuyn cũng biết bìa)

Tù: 14 năm

Phần này lơ em út của anh giao đủ NG² 40. Họy
xin như chị bảo hồ gửi (mười của thờ ai giúp bảo
hồ gửi cũng được.)

② - H² - AN - NIÊN. Hiện tại ở quê - dưới huyện
tên ở xã H² X Ban 2 Tg đôn 42. ~~12~~ quân huyện Tân uyên.

- Tù 10 năm 3 tháng.

* - Có hai hồ sơ đến chị Kim 1 hồ 12 nhà thờ
đi thờ lâu và theo dõi gửi như thường lệ.

* .. Bây giờ xin thông báo chị chuyển nhà. Tuần rồi
báo Công An nhân dân Hanoi có đăng 1 bài nói về chuyển
trình tại định cư, mà thôi việc việc Kỳ 3 Hanoi cuối tháng
7/89. Có như chính thức Hanoi công bố joint communique
qua bài này (xin gửi Kim photo để chị xem.) Đây
cũng là 1 lĩnh vực duyệt Thuận của chính Phủ VN về
bên theo hiệp này mà tuần đây Đ² Ngoại Vụ Thành phố

2/

Hôm đó gọi là "Chợ Kỳ tất", chợ ở chợ Thuần cũ
chợ Phú & Bôn khu kỳ về VN", trong 1 buổi buổi
đấy ở các báo Saigon + Trung tâm Saigon. Tháng 8/89.

Thầy vậy có những chỗ mà tôi nghĩ có thể cần giúp
khó khăn (bước duyệt danh sách), chỉ nên cho người cần
lại sớm sau, để khỏi bị trễ ngại cho các chuyến đi trong
năm này cũng như các năm kế tiếp.

Ngươi ra tôi cũng xin luận ý Chi & điểm nữa, cần
sớm lại; để lo việc đơn tiếp các anh em khi họ đến đây
chúng tôi thấy ở đây họ rất ngại (nếu không muốn nói
lẽ Kỳ) về việc các hồ sơ ở đây từ việc tiếp đến
rình rình từ chính trị tại địa phương. Chính phủ VN
không muốn mình để cao các chuyến ra đi này, để lo
lẽ tương nhân về chính phủ, họ ngại về phía cảnh cảnh
trị hay vì những khi các khác, thì đó là ý của họ.
Những phía chúng tôi cũng thấy rằng "nếu chuyến làm việc
ràng đến tiếp tùy buổi này có thể làm tất phần các
chuyến đi kế tiếp thì chúng tôi có ý ngại cho anh em đi
sau, không những cho năm 89 này mà cho những năm kế
tiếp nữa" "Mười lần tất phần là mười lần tại thủ cấp theo
vả các anh em chưa đi được vì nó tất phần này có thể
cả phần trước qui luật cho các buổi lễ đơn tiếp ở các
đấy. Đó đó chúng tôi cũng thấy thật xin Chi về các hồ sơ
xem lại coi có thể "giảm đi hoàn toàn" để các nghi thức này
được bao nhiêu thì có lợi cho người đi sau bấy nhiêu, để
cho các chuyến đi được tốt đẹp hơn, họ bị đứt khúc
đứt đoạn. Cái chủ yếu là tinh thần, chứ hình thức quá
có khi sẽ bị họ nhìn vào để cho người các chuyến sau thì
cũng bị cho anh em. Đó tại thủ cấp theo, rồi tại lấy các
chuyến bay... v.v. có khi kéo dài khi gần, phần lớn

3)

Anh em bên này đều biết hết về chuyến các hội đoàn
bên này rất sốt sắng lo cho anh em, từ chuyến
đón tiếp cho đến việc giúp đỡ bảo trợ sau này. Tuy vậy
người may mắn được đi trước cũng phải lo âu cho
cả phần những người chưa được đi, liệu đi chuyến
sau, hay các năm sau... Điều cốt yếu là chúng ta
tất nhiên vì này đều thực hiện được sẽ, không vậy vậy,
các chuyến đi khi bị cắt đứt đoạn, về anh em
đều được đi đây đi, ít nhất cho năm 89 này
sau đi cho các năm kế tiếp. Do đó xin các hội đoàn
bên nơi có thể giúp anh em đạt được điều cốt yếu như
trên, mà đi cũng lo mục đích các cơ cấu các anh chị
em trong các hội đoàn phải không chị? Tôi xin thưa
đem về 1 ví dụ để chị về các anh chị em trong các hội
đoàn như hiện của xem sau: Anh em bên này đi dần dần
lên người đi trước phải lo cho người đi sau bằng cách không
rời tuýn bỏ lại, nhảy bừa bãi có hại cho các chuyến đi
kế tiếp. Nhưng nếu các hội đoàn tổ chức năm bằng quá
hình thức tổ chức lặt vặt, phân khởi quá, cũng sẽ tạo
cả lời cho 1 vài người hãy mau gấp hơn từ xa mình lo
ta đây, nơi bừa bãi quá các cuộc phẩy vãn ôn ào, thì
họ mới nghĩ thật, các ông phẩy vãn thối-mãnh thật, buổi
lễ thắp cây như ý muốn thật, nhưng sau đi lại quá 2
hết với các chuyến đi sau, ở đây họ sẽ "mình có" để
để lại các chuyến bay chầy lặn, thì anh em đi sau
sẽ bị thiệt thòi lắm, thế chị! Theo chúng tôi thấy thì
tình thế này là cốt lõi, hình thức (cả về, tuýn bố v.v...)

h) chỉ là bị 14 cái, và Mục đích cũ anh chị em các bạn đều là nhằm vào việc giúp đỡ anh em qua đèo ừ càng nhiều càng tốt phải không? do đó anh em mà bị làm khó, dứt cái đũa kết lại thì mục đích mình đạt không được vậy.

Chị Thảo ơi,

Tôi rầy nghĩ đến do mai em viết cho chị những gì này. Hy vọng chị hiểu giúp tôi, hiểu ý anh em bên nhà muốn điều gì. Đây có ý nghĩ gì khác mà chỉ nêu coi đây là một ý kiến nhằm tránh cho anh em tự nhận những trục trặc trên con đường đi tại đình vì mà anh em đã kiên nhẫn chờ đợi đến nay nay, mỗi cái trục trặc sẽ làm cho anh em đi sau thêm khổ sở hơn, ngược lại tìm cách tránh cho anh em những trục trặc như vậy mà thì anh em sẽ sống với thân hồn coi đường tại đình cứ bấy nhiêu. Tóm lại chỉ xin chị 2 điểm thôi:

1- Hạn chế bớt những hình thức trợ tá chức tỳ tôn, khảm tôn trong không khí giờ đình, như hôn trợ tôn tỳ tôn, đây để cho họ muốn có làm khó để các chuyến đi sau.

2- Xin giúp cho các anh em nào qua hức đèo có cả lính bị phụng vấn đi với các đi tại mà rồi duy tạo ra cái "chợ" làm trở ngại cho các chuyến sau, để giúp cho anh em không bị kết lại.

Chúc chị và anh chị em trung hòa thành công,

Phước

^{C.A.}
Báo Nhân dân số 50

ngày

Chuyên

AN NINH

**NUOC
NGOAI**

7-13/9/89

→ **MỘT CHƯƠNG TRÌNH
MỚI VỀ TÁI ĐỊNH CƯ
Ở MỸ**



Former Reeducation Detainee Task Force
Wednesday - October 25, 1989
State Annex I - 10:00 a.m.

AGENDA

1. Background/Purpose of Task Force - Mr. Robert L. Funseth
2. Status of Overseas Processing
 - ICMC Survey - Ann Morgan/RP
 - Resettlement Statistics - Anita Botti/RP
(geographic locations, family vs. free, refugee #/IV#)
 - Biographic Information (questionnaire) - Anita Botti/RP
3. Domestic Needs - Phil Holman/ORR and Anita Botti/RP
 - Special needs of this group?
 - What programs exist?
 - What new programs are needed?
 - Who should be the providers?
4. Next steps to implement programs?
5. Review composition of Task Force and schedule next meeting. Suggest November 9, 1989, 2:00 p.m./State Annex I.
6. Public Interest - how do we heighten public awareness of the program.

Attendees - October 25

RP:

RLFunseth
ALBotti
JWillard
RBeer
AMorgan
PLewis

ORR:

Phil Holman
Mary Chi Ray
Regina Arculli/Public Health

Volags:

National - World Relief/Don Hammond
 ICMC/Mitzi Schroeder
 USCC/Dawn Calabria
Local - LIRS/Ruth Mclean
 IRC/Ray Evans

MAAs:

Mr. Khoa - IRAC
Mrs. Tho

State Coordinators:

Frank Bein/Maryland
Anne Hamrick/Virginia

5120H



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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

October 24, 1989

The Honorable Robert L. Funseth
Senior Deputy Assistant Secretary
Bureau for Refugee Programs
Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Funseth:

This letter is written to thank you for your correspondence dated October 16, 1989 and for inviting me to be a member of the Task Force. I am very honored and pleased to accept your invitation. Unfortunately, for the initial meeting I will be out of town, as you are aware, I will be in Orange County, California on October 25, 1989. It is with deepest regrets that I will be unable to attend the important planning meeting of the Task Force; however, I will make all efforts to attend future meetings of the group.

In my absence, I am forwarding copies of our Association's concerns, recommendations and other documents. I hope that this information will be useful to the Task Force.

Again, thank you for your kind invitation to be a part of this Task Force. I wish you success on your plans and efforts on behalf of the former re-education center detainees, and I would like to thank all participants for their concern and dedication.

Sincerely,

Khuc Minh Tho

KMT/Irh
Enclosures



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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RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE TASK FORCE

1. Request that the process towards resettlement be expedited and that as many as possible be included in the process.
2. If there is an obvious need to increase the resettlement fund and numbers, please request that this be done immediately.
3. Request should be made to omit the temporary stay in Bataan Refugee Processing Center due to the fact that almost all former re-education center detainees are proficient in English. This will eliminate the long delays at Bataan; and short stays would serve virtually no purpose or be helpful in any way to the detainees. It would also be a cost saving if this process is possible to omit. This would also contribute greatly to the morale of the detainees who have spent far too many years in the re-education camps.
4. Information on the detainees' status: they will need to have made available to them all services, especially in the areas of health, mental health and employment (job training).
5. It will be important to have employed experienced refugees resettlement staff in all states where detainees will be resettled. This will help with the transition of the detainees and could also assist them with receiving expedient and necessary services.



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

October 16, 1989

Mrs. Khuc Mmh Tho
7813 Martha's Lane
Falls Church, Virginia 22043

Dear Mrs. Tho:

As you know, on October 13, 1989 the United States began interviewing the former reeducation detainees and their accompanying family members. We hope these individuals and members of their immediate families will begin arriving in the United States by the end of this year.

In an effort to effectively provide former reeducation detainees and their families with the most critical resettlement assistance once they arrive in the U.S., the Bureau plans to convene a task force specifically designed to oversee and ensure quality resettlement through the integration of public and private resources and programs.

To assist us with this process, we would like to invite you to participate as a member of this task force. The first meeting will take place on October 25 at 10:00 a.m. in the Bureau for Refugee Programs' conference room, Room 1264, 2401 E St. N.W., Washington, D.C.

We look forward to working with you to ensure the successful resettlement of many former reeducation detainees. If you have any questions regarding the upcoming meeting, please contact Anita Botti (202) 663-1071.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Theresa Rusch".

Theresa Rusch
Director

Office of Reception and Placement
Bureau for Refugee Programs



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CONCERNS

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Traumatic Experience

Naturally, those who had been incarcerated for years, with limitations of what they could do or what they could receive, will have problems in adjusting to their new lives. For years those men were neither allowed to write nor receive letters. It was not until 1979 - 1980 that their families were allowed to visit them once or twice a year. Their only resting time was in the indoctrination sessions at night. They saw their friends go one by one because of disease, suicide, or starvation; they were all too weak to work.

Family Structure

Now, coming back to freedom, for those who still have families at home, they see all their children cannot complete their education, but must work at odd jobs; some of the families have already been broken up. And for those whose families have left the country and resettled abroad, the situation does not seem any better. Their wives and children have adjusted to American ways and the former prisoners will find family relationships have changed in ways that are hard to accept. It is not easy for a Vietnamese man to accept his wife's authority, and his children's knowledge better than his own. Some of the wives have taken another man in their loneliness - although they may not share the same living quarters. Worse, he sees that most of his friends, comrades in arms, are now settled with good jobs and good living standards.

Cultural/Language Barriers

We must be aware of the cultural differences and language barriers that many will face. Some will have limited English speaking capabilities and others will find adapting to the cultural difference will pose hardships and handicaps. We must be prepared to assist them in these areas of concern so that they will at least have an opportunity to enjoy and appreciate their freedom.

ACTIVITIES

1. To continue to work towards the release and resettlement of the remaining reeducation camp prisoners.
2. To assist the Department of State and ODP in updating lists of prisoners and their families.
3. To work with other mutual assistance associations and service agencies in helping former political prisoners and their families to adjust smoothly to their new lives, especially in the following areas:
 - Language and/or Skills Training
 - Housing
 - Health Care
 - Education



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September 8, 1989

The Families of Vietnamese Political Prisoners Association (FVPPA) is a nationwide, non-profit organization. Our organization tries to provide support to its approximately 10,000 members by sharing information, helping them file documents with INS and the State Department (BRP/ODP), obtaining LOI, helping the ex-prisoners arrive in third country camps, and continually expressing our concern to the State Department and various Congressional entities. We maintain computerized listings of our membership as well as political prisoners at home. Our data is quite up-to-date. It can be useful to resettlement agencies in understanding some of the problems that this population will face when they arrive. (We talk with about 10,000 ex-prisoners plus their family members). Therefore, we would create a profile of the situation.

The group, as based on our records, has the following composition:

- Army : 70 percent
- Civil Service : 20 percent
- Religious Leaders : 10 percent

Occupation/Rank:

- Major, Lt. Colonel, Colonels, some Generals and a few Lieutenants or Captains
- Civil Service: Ministers, Congressional, provincial, chiefs/provincial-city council chairmen, directors
- Religious leaders: Catholic, Buddhist, Hoa Hao/Cao Dai clergy

Reason for reeducation: association with the United States, former regime, worship God.

Length in camps: 5 to 14 years. The higher the rank, the longer the stay. According to the warrants issued at that time by the SRV, Major and upper exhelons - reeducate 1 month (it means 12, 13 years); captains and lieutenants - reeducate 1 week (it means 2, 3 years); privates and sergeants - reeducate locally (it means one week or 3 months).

- Present status:** These ex-political prisoners are not allowed to work. The 87 and 88 groups are given ration cards right after their release; while the previous ones had to serve one year of confinement, and were given no ration cards after 2 and 3 years, depending on the People's committees at their residence. These people now either stay with their families or relatives, roaming around the cities. Among this group 45-50 percent have family ties in the United States or in third countries.
- Family makeup:** The average family size is 5. Their children are mostly grown up and have their own families.
- Where Will They Go?** Approximately 1/3 of the groups' relatives, spouses, and children are in California. The rest of the anchor families are spread out in five (5) other states: Pennsylvania, Texas, Washington State, Virginia, Washington, D.C. We estimate that about half of this group will come in as free cases.
- Problems:**
- Age:** The majority of these people are middle-aged or at least in their late 40's to 60's.
- Language:** Those military men who had been in the Navy, Air Force, and Intelligence, have been in training abroad, usually the United States, at one time or the other. The Infantry's high-ranking officers mostly went through executive management in the United States. However, their training was short-term - ranging from 3 months to a full year. Their language training was customized to the field they would be trained, therefore, they would need some brush-up. We foresee that they may have problems even in refresher courses because of their age, and years in confinement; it requires more time to pick up.
- Job-readiness:** They may need the whole range of skill-training because their old skills may not be useable in the new land.
- Adaptation:** As any newcomers, they have to learn to adapt to the work situation. Their age is such that it is not easy to get a permanent-pensioned job. It is very hard for these people to accept reality - a menial job.

Health:

With 5-14 years in reeducation camps, these men are now old and loaded with diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, rheumatism, and malnutrition. When they were in reeducation they had to produce their own food. Besides, they had to cut lumbers and carry them to certain destinations. The work is hard, the food is not adequate or enough. Some of them lost all their teeth during the confinement.

Mental Health:

Naturally, those who were kept in camps for years, with limitation of what they can do or receive, will have problems. For years those men were neither allowed to write or receive letters. Not until 1979-1980 were their families allowed to visit them at the lobby of the camps once or twice a year. Their only resting time was in the indoctrination session at night. They saw their friends go one by one because of suicide, diseases, and starvation (they were too weak to work).

Family Structure:

Now, coming back to freedom, for those who still have families at home, they see that their children cannot complete their education, but must work on odd jobs; some of the families have already been broken up. And for those whose families left the country, resettling abroad, the situation does not seem any better. Their wives and children have adjusted to American ways and the prisoners will find family relationships changed in ways that are hard to accept. It is not easy for a Vietnamese man to accept his wife's authority, and his children's better knowledge than he himself. Some of the wives have taken another man in their loneliness - although he may not share the same quarters. Worse still, he sees that most of his friends, comrades in arm, are now settled with good jobs, and good living standards.



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OBJECTIVES

1. To continue to work towards the release and resettlement of the rest of the re-education camp prisoners.
2. To provide assistance to the Department of State and ODP in updating lists of prisoners and their families.
3. Assist in facilitating the resettlement of the prisoners and their families.
4. Continue to work with other associations and agencies to help the prisoners and their families to adjust to the new life.
5. We would ask, on behalf of our Association, assistance from ORR and MAA with the prisoners when they arrive to the United States by providing:
 - Training
 - Health Care
 - Housing Referrals and Assistance
 - Education
6. We feel that these objectives will be met and thereby produce loyal, dedicated and productive citizens in the United States.

September 8, 1989

1. Passes quickly.
2. Spec. Act from the Congress
3. Pub. Ed. Campaign
4. American public - what they have ^{not} done in the past. get Viet vets involved.
5. Efforts to produce this Act be coord.

Tom Klwa

971 - 1673

- I suggest that this is also the panel's recommendation

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1100 J STREET
STE. 540

SACRAMENTO, CA 95814

November 2, 1989

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

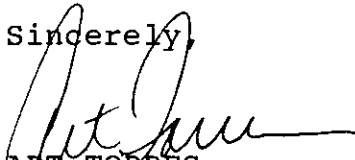
Dear Mrs. Tho:

I want to express my great appreciation for your participation in the October 28 Symposium on Vietnamese Former Political Prisoners. It was so good to meet you after all I have heard about your successful advocacy efforts.

I hope this will be just the beginning of our mutual efforts to help the former political prisoners. I was encouraged by the show of support and cooperation at the Symposium. With a cooperative spirit, I believe we can truly help the former prisoners rebuild their lives.

Thank you again.

Sincerely,



ART TORRES
Chairman

AT:hbhc



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Cố Vấn Đoàn Advisory Committee

HIỆP LOWMAN
NGUYỄN XUÂN LAN

November 17, 1989

The Honorable Jewel LaFontant
Ambassador
United States Coordinator
Bureau for Refugee Programs
Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Ms. LaFontant:

First of all, on behalf of the Families of Vietnamese Political Prisoners Association we would like to thank you for giving of your valuable time to meet with us.

Secondly, we would like to present to you our organizational structure, goals, its objectives; and its present and future activities. The purpose of our organization is:

1. To promote the reunion of political prisoners with their families in the United States and elsewhere in the free world.
2. To call for the public awareness of the desperate plight of the re-education camp prisoners.
3. To encourage the adoption of human rights for the political prisoners.
4. To provide assistance for relatives of these political prisoners in their family reunification efforts along with those of the American government, International humanitarian organizations and other volunteer agencies.

Our Association is a non-profit organization which is devoted to providing humanitarian assistance to the Vietnamese political prisoners - current as well as past; and those who are in need of family reunification and resettlement opportunities. Our purpose is as stated above. We also provide activities to include public awareness and outreach programs. In addition, we offer Intake Services and Information, serving as a clearinghouse for data related to newly arriving immigrants.