

Tổng Hội  
Cựu Tù Nhân Chính Trị Cộng Sản Việt Nam  
Khu Hội Bắc Cali  
P.O. Box 2899  
Santa Clara, CA 95055

## Thiệp Mời

Tham dự bữa tiệc khoản đãi ông Robert Funseth  
Thứ trưởng Bộ Ngoại Giao Hoa Kỳ Đặc Trách  
Ty Nạn và Tù Nhân Chính Trị

Với sự hỗ trợ của:

- Liên hội Người Việt Quốc Gia Bắc Cali
- Hội Người Việt Cứu Dân Việt
- Phong Trào Tham Gia UBQT/YT/VNTD
- Viện Đấu Tranh cho Nhân Quyền Việt Nam
- Cơ quan IRCC
- Cơ quan VIVO

## CHƯƠNG TRÌNH

- 5:30 — Quan khách đến
- 6:00 — Khai mạc — Giới thiệu Ô. Robert Funseth cùng các Đại Biểu Cựu TNCT và Gia Đình TNCT từ khắp nơi về tham dự tiệc.
- 6:10 — Diễn văn chào mừng của Khu Hội Cựu TNCT Bắc Cali.
- 6:20 — Ô. Robert Funseth ngỏ lời cùng quan khách.
- 6:35 — Tặng quà lưu niệm cho Ô. Robert Funseth.
- 6:45 — Quan khách dùng tiệc và văn nghệ mở đầu.
- 6:55 — Trao quà tặng cho các cựu TNCT mới định cư.
- 7:05 — Văn nghệ tiếp theo.
- 7:15 — Ô. Robert Funseth giải đáp một số thắc mắc về vấn đề định cư TNCT do quan khách nêu ra.
- 8:00 — Văn nghệ tiếp theo.
- 8:10 — Bà Khúc Minh Thơ giải đáp một số thắc mắc của gia đình cựu TNCT.
- 8:25 — Một cựu TNCT lên kể chuyện vui buồn trong nhà tù.
- 8:35 — Văn nghệ tiếp theo.
- ....
- 9:00 — Bế mạc — Cảm tạ của Ban Tổ Chức.



INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC MIGRATION COMMISSION  
COMMISSION INTERNATIONALE CATHOLIQUE POUR LES MIGRATIONS  
COMISION CATOLICA INTERNACIONAL DE MIGRACION  
COMMISSIONE CATTOLICA INTERNAZIONALE PER LE MIGRAZIONI  
INTERNATIONALE KATHOLISCHE KOMMISSION FÜR WANDERUNGSFRAGEN

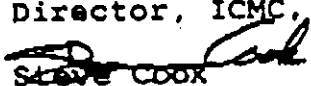
P.O. Box 444 Manila, Philippines 2800 ☎ 521-0328 -28/521-1878 [TX] (742) 40731 ICMC PM FAX # (632) 522-4560

September 25, 1989

MEMORANDUM

TO : Ann Morgan  
Director of Training  
Department of State

THRU : Mitzi Schroeder  
Director, ICMC, Inc.

FROM :   
Director  
ICMC ESL/CO

SUBJECT : Study of Re-education Camp Veterans  
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Attached please find a copy of a study of former re-education camp internees that are currently enrolled in ESL/CO training at the PRPC. This study was conducted by ICMC ESL/CO staff at our own initiative for our own information. However, I felt it may be of broader interest and therefore, am providing you this copy.

Please do not hesitate to share the study with anyone you feel it may be appropriate or of interest. If you have any questions or wish us to explore other areas please so advise. Also, a list of those surveyed along with their resettlement destinations in the U.S. can be provided upon request if there is an interest in direct follow-up of the survey respondents.

Attmt.: as stated.

SC/dfs

A STUDY

OF

RE-EDUCATION CAMP VETERANS

BY

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC MIGRATION COMMISSION  
PHILIPPINE REFUGEE PROCESSING CENTER  
MORONG, BATAAN

ICMC, September, 1989

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## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### INTRODUCTION

There are a number of events that took place over the last four months that have precipitated the development, administration and analysis of the re-education survey at PRPC:

1. There were numerous media accounts of renewed negotiations between the United States and Vietnam over the issue of re-education camp detainees being resettled to America.
2. It was apparent at PRPC that there is already a significant grouping of 1st Asylum and ODP re-education refugees in the camp.
3. In June, a small group of PRPC workers visited Vietnam. This resulted in unexpected contact with former re-education camp detainees in Ho Chi Minh City.
4. In late June, a group of 30 former re-education camp refugees met at PRPC to discuss the re-education issue.

Each of these events has required us to ask many questions and to start a process of acquiring information. The purpose of this report is to better define the needs and special characteristics of the re-education camp refugee. This includes a look at possible psychological problems they might manifest, their language needs, their present view of training here at PRPC, and their suggestions for possible program changes. The report is divided into four sections:

- 1) Excerpts with commentary from the Ho Chi Minh interviews.
- 2) Excerpts with commentary from the re-education group meeting held at PRPC late last June.
- 3) Results from the survey conducted at PRPC in September.
- 4) Conclusions along with a written narrative of three PRPC re-education camp veterans.

### I. HO CHI MINH CITY INTERVIEWS

One of the PRPC workers visiting Vietnam in June is employed by ICMC. He has a degree in Psychology and has worked over five years in psychiatric facilities in the U.S. as a mental health practitioner. He has also designed and directed refugee mental health programs in the United States. While in Vietnam he had contact with two families. This contact would eventually lead to his meeting and talking to five different individuals that had spent time in re-education. None of the meetings were planned in advance and each lasted from 2 to 3 hours.

Of the five people interviewed, four were men and one was a woman. Three were ex-military and two were civilian. The range of time in re-education was from two years to thirteen and a half years. Only one of the five was employed. The age of the five ranged from 41 to 56.

The interviews in Ho Chi Minh pointed to a number of problems facing re-education detainees in Vietnam.

Because of conditions after the fall of the government in 1975, all of these people have been forced to make adjustments in their lives. They have had to deal with the trauma of imprisonment, both physically and emotionally. They were separated from their families for prolonged periods of time. They lost the legal status to hold jobs or to own property. They were forced to comply with routine accountability of their actions and movements with the local authorities. They were reduced to playing a secondary role in the every day survival of their family. They look outside Vietnam, rather than inside it, for a future they have no control over.

This is my fourth meeting with Vinh. I am at his house to eat dinner. Uncle Khanh is there. He has been out of camp since May 1988. He was in camps and new economic zones for 13 1/2 years. He says that there are about 120 people still in camps. "They are not just generals. I cannot understand why some of the people have been kept there. It is not logical. I cannot understand why some of the people are still a threat to the government."

Uncle Khanh was a colonel. He says that he should have gotten out of the country in 1975, but he was "let down" by an American advisor. "He was CIA I am sure." He tells me the name of the man and asks if I can trace this man for him. He says he would like to ask this man one question - WHY? "This man was a friend of mine. I will never trust Americans that way again."

Uncle Khanh speaks beautiful English. He says that he has been in 42 of the states in the U.S. and that he trained there. He is a man in exile. In some ways he is adjusting to being out of camp. He awaits the day to leave. "There is nothing I can contribute to this country." He is the authoritative head of this extended family. The other family members talk through him, even though I have been able to communicate on three prior occasions with these people. He starts a lot of sentences with, "Vinh tells me"...or, "my nephew tells me." He spends a lot of time checking me out. I feel that he is scrutinizing me, interviewing me. He stays for a couple of hours, then says he needs to meet some friends.

Uncle Khanh is a very dignified man, of military bearing. He is intelligent and his vocabulary in English is both technical and sophisticated. He has a dominating personality, certainly consistent with his military rank. He seems to live in the future. After he leaves, the family talks about him - "He sits around and only thinks of leaving. He listens to the BBC everyday and chases rumors with his friends. He has no motivation, nothing to grab onto."

Khanh is a restless man. He is having trouble adjusting to post-camp life in Vietnam. He is distrustful of the "new thinking" of the government. "They can take it all away tomorrow." He is a man of many talents that cannot or will not make a contribution toward the family's survival. He says that he will wait to go to America. He laughs, "I have learned to be a patient man." He has some family in the U.S. Khanh is 53 years old.

Some of the re-education people live in a time frame somewhere between the past and the future. It is as if there is not a present tense, almost a stateless existence. The loss of prestige, status and esteem is evident. Khanh seems emasculated in his inability to provide for his family. His hope for the future is clearly tied to going to America. There is a desperate feel to his wait.

I met Hung in the market near the hotel. He is a student in Foreign Languages at a University. He is 22 years old. He asks about me and if I could meet with him so that he could practice his English. I tell him that I am very busy, but that I will be happy to talk to him in my free time.

Hung called me twice at the hotel to arrange meetings. On the third call he asked if I would be willing to meet his father in Nha Be. He said that his father is a former officer who had been in re-education.

I met Anh at his home. He lives in a hovel on the Saigon river. His house looks like a part of a former fish market or bait shop. You can see the river under the floorboards of the house.

Anh went to Ft. Benning, Ga. for Officer Candidate School. He shows me his picture album and brings out the Fort Benning yearbook. The pictures show Anh as a vigorous, vital man. He is physically fit and the pictures show him with many friends.

Anh's English is unaccented. He speaks in a slow deliberate manner. He asks me questions about refugees, ODP and re-education. He shows me his Letter of Introduction from the Bangkok embassy and asks if I can help him. He is a desperate man at 49.

Anh lives in the past and the future. The past is of a time when he had a purpose, when he was a vigorous man doing important things. He was a man of action. Today he does nothing, despite the fact that his family lives in poverty. The future is full of high expectation.

"If I can only get to America, everything would be alright."

Hung says that his father seldom leaves the house; He sleeps during the day and is awake at night.

Of the people I have met with, Anh displays the most severe disturbance. He lives in an obvious state of depression. He looks sleepy, talks sleepy and he says nothing about today, the here and now.

"I can't wait any longer. Tell your government to help me."

Anh was in re-education for two years. He has had tremendous difficulties adjusting to life in post-war Vietnam. His state of mental health reflects this loss of esteem and purpose. He sits and waits for his life to change. Anh is a beaten man. His affect is flat, and he probably suffers from chronic depression and forms of post traumatic stress.

While the individual reactions and adjustments may vary, there are some general observations that can be made:

1. The range of psychological problems that re-education detainees probably manifest are vast. They are however, more adjustment related in nature than a true psycho-pathology. While they may not require psychiatric intervention per se, they will require a re-structuring of their lives.
2. The re-education people have been out of the information chain for 14 years. They do not know what is going on outside their country in terms of economics, foreign policy, etc. They especially seek information that may effect them in terms of leaving Vietnam.
3. The re-education people are anxious about adjusting to life in America. They live in a time frame somewhere between the past and future. They are concerned about their ability to be contributing members of society. They are also anxious about being reunited with their families.



## II. RE-EDUCATION GROUP MEETING AT PRPC

The meeting with the re-education camp refugees at PRPC consisted of both ODP and 1st Asylum arrivals. The 30 people had a combined total of 138.5 years in re-education in Vietnam. All of them had been exposed to life at PRPC and were enrolled in the training programs. The discussion was in Vietnamese, though there was a high level of English proficiency among the group.

There is a consensus of thought on a variety of subjects related to time at PRPC and the benefits of the training program. The single, dominant thought, was that PRPC is a necessary element in the preparation for, and adjustment to, the United States.

"If I go to the United States to unite with my family and I have not had enough time to prepare myself, I may destroy everything my family has built up. This is because I might only be thinking of myself and my misery."

"Some of us speak good English, some of us do not. Maybe we haven't spoken it in 15 years. I was in America in 1970. America is very different in 1989."

"Some of us are not too old to work and make a contribution. I want to work in the States. I have been inactive too long. I need time to prepare for this so I will know where to start."

"Working as a Neighborhood Leader has allowed me to use my abilities for the first time in 15 years."

"Remember that when you teach us ESL or CO you are also helping us heal, to become whole again."

"PRPC is a good place. I am glad I am here. I could not prepare like this in a First Asylum camp or in Ho Chi Minh City."

## III. RE-EDUCATION VETERANS SURVEY

The original design of the survey included a series of open-ended questions developed to deal with the issues raised in the Ho Chi Minh interviews and the re-education camp veterans meeting at PRPC. The questions were translated into Vietnamese by one of our Vietnamese refugee counselors from the U.S. After translations were finished, the questions were then back-translated to English to ensure accuracy of translation. Once we were satisfied with the translations, we had copies of the survey printed for administration.

The survey was distributed to re-education veterans through the refugee neighborhood councils here at PRPC. Of the approximate total of 150 re-education veterans at PRPC, 102 took the survey. The sample was random in that there was no pre-selection of respondents. Only those re-education veterans who volunteered took the survey.

### DATA COLLECTION

After the survey was administered, our Vietnamese bilingual counselors translated the responses into English. The translated responses were then back-translated into Vietnamese to ensure accuracy of translation. A committee of American and Vietnamese counselors then met to try and group the responses into categories, attempting to identify the most common type of responses. When a response was given by only one or two of the respondents or when it did not clearly fit any of the obvious categories, we categorized the response as 'other' for analysis purposes.

We realize that our survey design and data collection procedures are open to comments and criticisms. We felt strongly that using open-ended rather than multiple choice questions was a better way of eliciting the true opinions and feelings of the respondents.

### SAMPLE PROFILE:

Of the 102 surveyed, 31 or 30% came from Cycle 130. The remaining 71 respondents were spread across Cycles 122-135. In terms of level, the majority of the respondents came from the C-E+ levels, with the highest concentration in the E+ level. Distribution by age group shows that the majority of our respondents belong to the 41-50 age group. The data also indicates that 96% of the sample were males.

Distribution by origin shows that more than half of the respondents or 53% came from 1st asylum camps while only 30% came through the ODP Program. It is important to note that 17% did not indicate their place of origin. In terms of years spent in re-education camps, 63% spent 5 years or more in re-education while only 28% spent less than 5 years. Only 9% did not indicate the time spent in re-education camps.

Distribution by branch of military service indicates that the majority or 52% of the respondents were from the Army, with most of them being commissioned officers. The majority of our respondents or 70% have not been to the USA.

## DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis was composed of two parts:

- 1) Description of the data which included both summary frequency distributions and frequency distributions controlling for origin and number of years in re-education.
- 2) Tests of significance of selected variables controlling for origin and number of years in re-education.

Origin and years in re-education camp were identified as key variables that could influence the answers of the respondents. The first part of the analysis gave us both an over-all picture of the distribution of responses for each question and a breakdown by origin and years in re-education. The second part helped us identify questions where respondents of different origin and years in re-education answered differently.

## KEY FINDINGS

There were six key findings from the survey:

- 1) The majority of the respondents, regardless of their origin and years in re-education, felt that time in PRPC is valuable for re-education camp veterans. Almost 50% of them stated more than one reason for staying in PRPC but most of them felt that there were two major reasons for staying in PRPC: 1) to study ESL/CO/VO; and 2) to use the time at PRPC as a preparation period for their resettlement in the U.S. This helps to support the following excerpts taken from the Re-education Group Meeting late last June:

"Working as a Neighborhood Leader has allowed me to use my abilities for the first time in 18 years."

"Remember that when you teach us ESL or CO you are also helping us heal, to become whole again."

"PRPC is a good place. I am glad I am here. I could not prepare like this in a First Asylum camp or in Ho Chi Minh City."

- 2) The majority of the respondents felt that they should stay in PRPC for less than 6 months. It is interesting to note, however, that a majority of the respondents also felt that they needed at least 18 weeks to study at PRPC. This appears to indicate that the length of the instructional cycles is sufficient but that the waiting period after instruction could be shortened.

- 3) Regarding reasons for length of stay, the majority of the respondents felt that less than 6 months or about 18 weeks would be enough time for study and enough time for emotional and physical recovery. This finding helps to support the first excerpt taken from the Re-education Group Meeting:

"If I go to the United States to unite with my family and I have not had enough time to prepare myself, I may destroy everything my family has built up. This is because I might only be thinking of myself and my misery."

- 4) More than half of the respondents or 65 out of 102 felt that re-education officers still in Vietnam have more than one psychological problem. The majority of the respondents felt that re-education veterans in Vietnam still feel a sense of hopelessness, discouragement and frustration. The respondents also felt that many re-education veterans still feel anger, hate and fear based on their situation there. In addition, family conflict and separation were also identified as problems still facing re-education veterans in Vietnam. These findings help to support some of the excerpts from the Ho Chi Minh City interviews:

Uncle Khanh was a colonel. . . . "This man was a friend of mine. I will never trust Americans that way again."

Uncle Khanh speaks beautiful English. . . . "There is nothing I can contribute to this country."

Uncle Khanh is a very dignified man. . . . He sits around and only thinks of leaving. He listens to the BBC everyday and chases rumors with his friends. He has no motivation, nothing to grab onto."

Anh went to Ft. Benning, Georgia for Officer Candidate School. Of the people I have met with, Anh displays the most severe disturbance. He lives in an obvious state of depression. He looks sleepy, talks sleepy and he says nothing about today, the here and now.

"I can't wait any longer. Tell your government to help me."

- 5) Re-education officers here in PRPC also felt that ICMC and PRPC could provide better services in the following areas:

- 1) better living conditions
- 2) more assistance in emotional recovery and adjustment
- 3) more extra-curricular activities or recreation.

6) The majority of the respondents appear to be anxious about three aspects of resettlement:

- 1) employment
- 2) English
- 3) family reunification

This finding helps to support some of the excerpts from the Re-education Group Meeting:

"If I go to the United States to unite with my family and I have not had enough time to prepare myself, I may destroy everything my family has built up. This is because I might only be thinking of myself and my misery."

"Some of us speak good English, some of us do not. Maybe we haven't spoken it in 15 years. I was in America in 1970. America is very different in 1989."

"Some of us are not too old to work and make a contribution. I want to work in the States. I have been inactive too long. I need time to prepare for this so I will know where to start."

### CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of this report and the accumulated knowledge of the refugee experience at the PRPC, it seems reasonable to conclude the following:

- 1) That the present ESL/CO/WO program at PRPC meets with the approval of the re-education veterans presently residing at PRPC.
- 2) Many of the implications inferred in this report for the ESL/CO program focus are already a part of our advanced level classes. They could be further refined with input from a follow-up survey.
- 3) That the present 18 week duration of the program is neither too long nor too short.
- 4) That there is a need for a recovery period without major survival demands for re-education camp veterans.
- 5) That significant adjustment problems exist among re-education camp veterans, which are best addressed in the supportive and structured PRPC environment.
- 6) That an adequate support system already exists at the PRPC which stimulates educational and social growth.

EPILOGUECase #1 - Nguyen Van Thin

Nguyen Van Thin is a 42 year old former officer in Vietnam's Police Field Forces, an elite combat arm. He spent more than six years in re-education, returning to his native Dalat in 1982, where he remained until early 1989 when allowed to leave Vietnam under the Orderly Departure Program. (He and his wife have a 17 year old adopted Amerasian son, two other younger sons, one of whom is mildly retarded, and an eight year old daughter.) By his own account Thin "did nothing" but "help keep the home" during the seven years following release from re-education. His cheerful, gregarious wife and, after 1986, his adoptive son supported the family by buying and selling on the black market.

Thin was withdrawn, passive, reclusive when he arrived at the PRPC. Although he was tested for English at a communicative level (C), he largely refused to use the language, saying, "I speak no English." He refused to enter into community life, which is expected of veterans, particularly former officers.

Fortunately for Thin, his first week at the PRPC overlapped with the last week of a close friend from Dalat, himself a former air force major who had spent two years in the U.S. for training prior to 1978.

What the friend could not do in Vietnam - help revitalize Thin - was accomplished in the PRPC - through letters (including money orders) both to Thin and mutual friends, Vietnamese and American. Time and gentle persuasion took effect. By the end of his stay at the PRPC in September, 1989, Thin was active in the neighborhood as an informal sports leader for youths, was de facto building leader for ten families, a noted peer counselor for a steady stream of refugees and was actively using his English in negotiating with Filipino and American staff personnel for his peers. "When I come here, I think I very old to do things. Very tired. Everything finished for me. Tai (his friend) tell me is not true and I will see because many will come to me for help. I think maybe later in America I want to work for refugees and support my family. Now I feel good and I am happy I be together with Tai soon."

**Case #2 - Nguyen Van Hai**

Nguyen Van Hai lost both legs in 1973 while serving as a young naval officer on the Mekong River. Only eight inch stubs protrude from his short pants. Hai also arrived at the PRPC via the ODP. His strapping 18 year old adopted son, an Amerasian, carried Hai often; otherwise Hai walked considerable distances using his upper torso muscles and two 8-inch-high stools.

Hai has a wheel chair now but uses it only for recreation rides in the evenings and on non-school days. He attends a special class with van transport for the crippled, having—~~in-~~anger asked for the special class when he found distances to regular classes too much.

"I was very angry and unhappy first two months here. I think before, in Vietnam everything be OK when I go out to America. People take care of me and my family. (Wife, Amerasian son, two boys 15 and 11 and an adopted daughter, 4). I come here [to the PRPC] and I think it same as Vietnam. Nothing to do. Not true. Yes, I want to go to ESL and CO, but too difficult. Then my ESL supervisor tell me maybe I ask go to Mornon [special class]. I ask and everyone say OK so I go with Mornon."

"Everyone tell me, Hai, it be better in America. Tell me I can go to vocation school, get good job, take care my family, OK for me. I want job fixing boat motors. That the way I work in Vietnam after 1975. I even have my own boat."

"In Vietnam I am very angry about my legs. When I come here [PRPC] I still angry. I want my children to have good life, but. . . " and he slaps the stumps." I learn here. Most important I learn is never mind these legs - I can take care my family. I not angry now.

Hai is an immensely popular man in his neighborhood, admired for his courage and the bright, vivacious wit he exudes. He has no family in the US, thus is a "free case." His "case" has been assigned in Florida and he looks forward to starting again, "near the sea with boat motors to fix."

"I think soon I have a wheelchair with a motor so I can work easy. Now I sure I can take care my family. "I stop being angry."

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"I think soon I have a wheelchair with a motor so I can work easy. Now I sure I can take care my family. "I stop being angry."



**Case #3 - Nguyen Van Xe**

Nguyen Van Xe, 45, a veteran of shadowy military operations with American agencies right up to April, 1975, says he was disgusted when he arrived at the PRPC. "Not as much as with re-education, but I didn't like this because my English is good and I know about Americans - I worked with them for many years. I wanted get my children to America, to school, to go to work, to get started on a new life."

"I'm not sure now. I didn't think I would have a family problem."

Xe's 16 year old adopted son suddenly announced to officials at the PRPC that he did not wish to go to the U.S. with his family of 14 years, but believed his real mother was enroute to the PRPC. He wanted to wait for her. Moreover, he accused his adoptive family of having abused him. After four months at the PRPC, seemingly a normal, high-achievement family group, a major schism, one that postponed departure to the U.S. indefinitely.

Xe asks rhetorically: "What would I do if I was already in America?"

The family's problem had not been resolved at this writing, on the eve of it's projected departure to the U.S., three months after it surfaced. Xe is calm, even philosophical about the situation, feeling the PRPC support system will soon help resolve the impasse. "I've learned not to be in a big hurry," he says. "I learned again that life is not so simple. I want what is best for my son and people here are helping us to get that."

JOE M. SUGARMAN  
Secretary



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

Olympia, Washington 98504-0095

March 21, 1989

Mrs. Khuc Minh Tho  
Chairperson  
Families of Vietnamese  
Political Prisoners  
7813 Martha Lane  
Falls Church, Virginia 22043

Dear Mrs. Tho:

This is to express support from the State of Washington for your effort to help resettle former detainees in re-education camps in Vietnam. I have contacted Mutual Assistance Associations in our state and have received very positive feedback regarding our state's involvement with the resettlement of this group. Voluntary agencies in our state also express their interest in helping with the resettlement effort. Your dedication to this cause is highly commended, and I can assure you of our assistance in this endeavor.

If you can send us a list of those former detainees in the camps who are waiting to have their papers processed, we will be more than happy to assist you in finding appropriate sponsors for them in our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Thuy Vu", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Thuy Vu, Ph. D., Director  
Bureau of Refugee Assistance

TV:cs



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

October 31, 1989

MEMORANDUM

TO: RP/RP - James Willard  
Richard Beer  
Ann Morgan  
Pam Lewis  
HHS/ORR - Phil Holman  
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Bill Eckhof  
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IRC/Ray Evans  
MAAs - IRAC/Mr. Khoa  
FVPPA/Mrs. Tho  
SCORE - Frank Bien  
Anne Hamrick

FROM: RP/RPL - Anita Botti *Anita Botti*

SUBJECT: Former Reeducation Detainees Task Force Meeting

Please review the attached DRAFT summary of the October 26 Former Reeducation Detainees Task Force Meeting. With the assistance of Ann Morgan, I have tried to summarize the critical points presented during the meeting. With respect to recommended next steps, I have taken the liberty of suggesting several different ideas. See what you think of them, expand or change them accordingly.

So that I may finalize the summary, I would appreciate your comments by Monday November 6. Since time for comment is brief, you may wish to FAX your response(s) to me. The Bureau for Refugee Programs' FAX number is 202-663-1061.

Thank you, in advance, for your assistance.

# DRAFT

## Task Force Meeting Former Reeducation Detainees October 25, 1989 Summary

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Mr. Robert L. Funseth, Senior Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Bureau for Refugee Programs chaired the task force meeting. He gave a brief history of the U.S. program regarding resettlement of Former Reeducation Detainees. Starting with the first formal interviews of reed detainees on October 13, 1989, the U.S. plans to interview approximately 1,000 persons per month. Since the PRPC will be filled to capacity for much of the current fiscal year, the Bureau does not plan to provide reed detainees with training prior to their admission to the U.S. As a result, we may see the first arrivals around the end of this year.

Mr. Funseth stated that the task force should oversee the resettlement program of former reeducation detainees by acting as an advisory council to the resettlement players - private and public. Since the time to plan for resettlement of this group is limited, we need to outline major issues affecting resettlement of this group and recommend potential strategies to meet their needs.

### Discussion

(agenda and attendee list are attached)

Various participants offered comments about strategies for resettling political detainees who are expected to exit Vietnam in the near future. We had available to us three documents which provided some information about the demographics of this group and which anticipated some of the special problems they may experience in resettlement as well as some comments from the refugees themselves respecting their situation. These documents were (1) a paper prepared by families of political detainees in the U.S., (2) a survey by ICMC of political detainees currently at the PRPC, and (3) a list of probable resettlement sites for the first group.

Based on these documents as well as the collected experience of agencies present which have had some experience in resettling detainees, the group appeared to agree on the following:

- As a group, political detainees have a higher degree of English proficiency than any other group coming out of Southeast Asia.
- Most detainees are male, ranging in age from 41 to about 55, and have spent an average of 5 to 6 years in detention. Seventy percent of them have never been to the U.S.
- In the ICMC study, the refugees indicated that most detainees have some emotional difficulties, ranging from frustration and discouragement to a feeling of extreme anger and hopelessness. Most express anxiety about the future, particularly with respect to employment and maintaining the integrity of the family structure.
- In the ICMC study, detainees in Bataan expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the services that are provided there and believe that those who are still in Vietnam would profit from the same services and the time that training in the Philippines provides for decompression.
- Most agencies with experience with detainees also believed that there could be health problems among this population, stressing the probable need for extensive dental care.
- Total number of reed detainee cases scheduled for interviews during October and November is 465 (250 cases/October, 215 cases/November) which include approximately 2,000 persons.
- Of the total 465, 346 cases indicate anchors in the U.S. while 119 cases indicate no anchor.
- According to the family reunion statistics, California will receive 181 cases (52%). Texas expects to receive 21 cases (6%) and the D.C. Metropolitan area which includes Northern Virginia and Maryland (Montgomery County and Prince George's County) expects to receive 25 cases (7%). Of those interviewed, 27 states will receive 10 or fewer cases.
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During the course of the discussion, it quickly became clear that funds from all sources were limited and that it would be necessary to come up with some creative ways to use existing resources to address these problems.

Although the meeting tended to focus on problems which may surface with this group, it was noted that we should not forget that they bring strengths as well as challenges. We have a group with good English skills who could profit from mainstream vocational education. We also have a group which expresses a strong desire to be employed in the U.S. and to get on with their lives. We also have a situation in which most detainees will probably be going to sites where there is a strong network of existing services which can be tapped to serve the need of some for individual and family counseling. Most of all, we can expect a group of survivors, who have demonstrated the inner strength necessary to overcome hardship, long periods of incarceration, and separation from their family support system. These characteristics can work for successful resettlement.

It was suggested that we need a program of education targeted to selected resettlement sites to prepare social service agencies for a large influx of people who bring certain strengths but who may also experience some difficulties. MAAs can be tapped as well as experienced health and counseling services. Voluntary agencies with experience with this group will be invaluable as well as the ORR network, including state coordinators.

It was also suggested that the Match Grant Program be considered as a viable option for this group. The USCC representative stated that USCC has had some success in placing Reed refugees into the match grant program in California.

#### Next Step Recommendations:

1. The Bureau for Refugee Programs, with the assistance of ICMC/ODP/JVAR, should continue providing geographic resettlement locations of reed detainees as they are scheduled for interviews.
2. Utilize the upcoming ORR State Coordinator's Meeting of November 7-8 to discuss ways in which existing programs could meet the needs of this group.
3. InterAction's Domestic Concerns Sub-Committee should convene a meeting with interested national MAA groups regarding coordination of resettlement services for the reed detainees. Local agencies should conduct similar meetings to determine the best use of resources by all parties.

4. Resettlement agencies should discuss with ORR the merits of utilizing match grants for this population.
5. Initiate state and local fora ('a la the Amerasian fora) to discuss ways of integrating existing refugee programs and resources for resettlement of this group.
6. Enlist the resources of the National Institute of Health and the National Institute of Mental Health in assisting state and local agencies to identify existing health programs throughout the U.S. Add Former Reeducation Detainees to the refugee mental health initiative that ORR is considering.
7. SCORE will recommend state coordinators to serve on the task force. Suggested states are California, Texas, Maryland or Virginia.
8. InterAction's Domestic Concerns Sub-Committee will appoint national and local representatives to the task force.
9. Co - Chairs of the task force will be the Bureau for Refugee Programs and the Office of Refugee Resettlement.
10. The next meeting of the task force is scheduled for Thursday November 9 at 1:30p.m., National Association of Counties (NACO), 440 First Street N.W., conference room/8th floor (note: time and site of meeting has been changed to meet a scheduling conflict of State Coordinators).

5132H



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
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(geographic locations, family vs. free, refugee #/IV#)
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6. Public Interest - how do we heighten public awareness of the program.



Attendees - October 25

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RLFunseth  
ALBotti  
JWillard  
RBeer  
AMorgan  
PLewis

ORR:

Phil Holman  
Mary Chi Ray  
Bill Eckhof  
Regina Arculli/Public Health

Volags:

National - World Relief/Don Hammond  
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IRC/Ray Evans

MAAs:

Mr. Khoa - IRAC  
Mrs. Tho(submitted issues paper)

State Coordinators:

Frank Bein/Maryland  
Anne Hamrick/Virginia

5120H



**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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Treasurer

**Cố Vấn Đoàn**  
**Advisory Committee**

HIẾP LOWMAN  
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

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HIẾP LOWMAN  
NGUYỄN XUÂN LAN

### **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



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

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MAAs:

Mr. Khoa - IRAC  
Mrs. Tho

State Coordinators:

Frank Bein/Maryland  
Anne Hamrick/Virginia

5120H



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

October 31, 1989

MEMORANDUM

TO: RP/RP - James Willard  
Richard Beer  
Ann Morgan  
Pam Lewis

HHS/ORR - Phil Holman  
Mary Chi Ray  
Bill Eckhof  
Regina Arculli

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SCORE - Frank Bien  
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FROM: RP/RPL - Anita Botti

*Anita Botti*

SUBJECT: Former Reeducation Detainees Task Force Meeting

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Wednesday - October 25, 1989  
State Annex I - 10:00 a.m.

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Mrs. Tho(submitted issues paper)

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Frank Bein/Maryland  
Anne Hamrick/Virginia

5120H

Dong Hau



**HỘI GIA ĐÌNH TÙ NHÂN CHÍNH TRỊ VIỆT NAM**  
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**Ban Chấp Hành T.Ư.**  
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NGUYỄN THỊ HẠNH  
Treasurer

**Cố Vấn Đoàn**  
**Advisory Committee**

HIẾP LOWMAN  
NGUYỄN XUÂN LAN

**October 20, 1989**

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

Dear Mr. Funseth:

I am certain that you have probably received a copy of the Agenda for the dinner to be held in your honor by the General Association of Former Political Prisoners of Vietnamese Communists in Orange County on October 28, 1989.

Having spoken with representatives sponsoring the event they also sent a copy of the agenda to me. They asked if I would check with you to see if there were any changes you would like to have made to the agenda. If there are, please feel free to contact me with your requests because I will be out in Orange County on October 25th and I could convey your requests to the sponsors of the event.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions and/or concerns.

Sincerely,

  
Khuc Minh Tho

KMT?Irh

## A G E N D A

Date: Saturday, October 28th, 1989 - 6:30 PM

Location: KHAI HOAN Restaurant  
14390 Brookhurst  
Garden Grove  
(714) 531-4965

\*\*\*\*\*

6:00 PM - 6:30 PM: Guests Arrivals

6:45 PM : Flags Ceremony

7:00 PM : Opening Remarks  
Hau Nguyen, Chairman of Central Coordination  
Committee, GAFPPCVN

*Cong. R. Dornan* 7:10 PM : Remarks of a former political prisoner

7:20 PM : Remarks of a child of a political prisoner

7:25 PM : Presentation of a photograph to the Honorable  
Robert L. Funseth

7:30 PM : Remarks of the Honorable Robert L. Funseth,  
Assistant Secretary of the State Department

~~7:40 PM : Questions and Answers.~~

8:00 PM : Dinner

10:00 PM : Closing Remarks

*Cong. Dornan*

- Senator Torres.

- Register

- New York ~~Times~~ Times.



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

October 31, 1989

MEMORANDUM

TO: RP/RP - James Willard

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FROM: RP/RPL - Anita Botti *Anita Botti*

SUBJECT: Former Reeducation Detainees Task Force Meeting

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Thank you, in advance, for your assistance.



# DRAFT

Task Force Meeting  
Former Reeducation Detainees  
October 25, 1989  
Summary

## Introduction

Mr. Robert L. Funseth, Senior Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Bureau for Refugee Programs chaired the task force meeting. He gave a brief history of the U.S. program regarding resettlement of Former Reeducation Detainees. Starting with the first formal interviews of reed detainees on October 13, 1989, the U.S. plans to interview approximately 1,000 persons per month. Since the PRPC will be filled to capacity for much of the current fiscal year, the Bureau does not plan to provide reed detainees with training prior to their admission to the U.S. As a result, we may see the first arrivals around the end of this year.

Mr. Funseth stated that the task force should oversee the resettlement program of former reeducation detainees by acting as an advisory council to the resettlement players - private and public. Since the time to plan for resettlement of this group is limited, we need to outline major issues affecting resettlement of this group and recommend potential strategies to meet their needs.

## Discussion

(agenda and attendee list are attached)

Various participants offered comments about strategies for resettling political detainees who are expected to exit Vietnam in the near future. We had available to us three documents which provided some information about the demographics of this group and which anticipated some of the special problems they may experience in resettlement as well as some comments from the refugees themselves respecting their situation. These documents were (1) a paper prepared by families of political detainees in the U.S., (2) a survey by ICMC of political detainees currently at the PRPC, and (3) a list of probable resettlement sites for the first group.

Based on these documents as well as the collected experience of agencies present which have had some experience in resettling detainees, the group appeared to agree on the following:

- As a group, political detainees have a higher degree of English proficiency than any other group coming out of Southeast Asia.
- Most detainees are male, ranging in age from 41 to about 55, and have spent an average of 5 to 6 years in detention. Seventy percent of them have never been to the U.S.
- In the ICMC study, the refugees indicated that most detainees have some emotional difficulties, ranging from frustration and discouragement to a feeling of extreme anger and hopelessness. Most express anxiety about the future, particularly with respect to employment and maintaining the integrity of the family structure.
- In the ICMC study, detainees in Bataan expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the services that are provided there and believe that those who are still in Vietnam would profit from the same services and the time that training in the Philippines provides for decompression.
- Most agencies with experience with detainees also believed that there could be health problems among this population, stressing the probable need for extensive dental care.
- Total number of reed detainee cases scheduled for interviews during October and November is 465 (250 cases/October, 215 cases/November) which include approximately 2,000 persons.
- Of the total 465, 346 cases indicate anchors in the U.S. while 119 cases indicate no anchor.
- According to the family reunion statistics, California will receive 181 cases (52%). Texas expects to receive 21 cases (6%) and the D.C. Metropolitan area which includes Northern Virginia and Maryland (Montgomery County and Prince George's County) expects to receive 25 cases (7%). Of those interviewed, 27 states will receive 10 or fewer cases.
- Of the 2,000 persons scheduled for interview in October and November, approximately 125 - 175 persons are expected to be immigrants.

During the course of the discussion, it quickly became clear that funds from all sources were limited and that it would be necessary to come up with some creative ways to use existing resources to address these problems.

Although the meeting tended to focus on problems which may surface with this group, it was noted that we should not forget that they bring strengths as well as challenges. We have a group with good English skills who could profit from mainstream vocational education. We also have a group which expresses a strong desire to be employed in the U.S. and to get on with their lives. We also have a situation in which most detainees will probably be going to sites where there is a strong network of existing services which can be tapped to serve the need of some for individual and family counseling. Most of all, we can expect a group of survivors, who have demonstrated the inner strength necessary to overcome hardship, long periods of incarceration, and separation from their family support system. These characteristics can work for successful resettlement.

It was suggested that we need a program of education targeted to selected resettlement sites to prepare social service agencies for a large influx of people who bring certain strengths but who may also experience some difficulties. MAAs can be tapped as well as experienced health and counseling services. Voluntary agencies with experience with this group will be invaluable as well as the ORR network, including state coordinators.

It was also suggested that the Match Grant Program be considered as a viable option for this group. The USCC representative stated that USCC has had some success in placing Reed refugees into the match grant program in California.

#### Next Step Recommendations:

1. The Bureau for Refugee Programs, with the assistance of ICMC/ODP/JVAR, should continue providing geographic resettlement locations of reed detainees as they are scheduled for interviews.
2. Utilize the upcoming ORR State Coordinator's Meeting of November 7-8 to discuss ways in which existing programs could meet the needs of this group.
3. InterAction's Domestic Concerns Sub-Committee should convene a meeting with interested national MAA groups regarding coordination of resettlement services for the reed detainees. Local agencies should conduct similar meetings to determine the best use of resources by all parties.

4. Resettlement agencies should discuss with ORR the merits of utilizing match grants for this population.

5. Initiate state and local fora ('a la the Amerasian fora) to discuss ways of integrating existing refugee programs and resources for resettlement of this group.

6. Enlist the resources of the National Institute of Health and the National Institute of Mental Health in assisting state and local agencies to identify existing health programs throughout the U.S. Add Former Reeducation Detainees to the refugee mental health initiative that ORR is considering.

7. SCORE will recommend state coordinators to serve on the task force. Suggested states are California, Texas, Maryland or Virginia.

8. InterAction's Domestic Concerns Sub-Committee will appoint national and local representatives to the task force.

9. Co - Chairs of the task force will be the Bureau for Refugee Programs and the Office of Refugee Resettlement.

10. The next meeting of the task force is scheduled for Thursday November 9 at 1:30p.m., National Association of Counties (NACO), 440 First Street N.W., conference room/8th floor (note: time and site of meeting has been changed to meet a scheduling conflict of State Coordinators).

5132H



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  
Bill Eckhof  
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(submitted issues paper)

State Coordinators:

Frank Bein/Maryland  
Anne Hamrick/Virginia

5120H



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

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          IRC/Ray Evans

MAAs:

Mr. Khoa - IRAC  
Mrs. Tho

State Coordinators:

Frank Bein/Maryland  
Anne Hamrick/Virginia

5120H





# HỘI GIA ĐÌNH TÙ NHÂN CHÍNH TRỊ VIỆT NAM

## FAMILIES OF VIETNAMESE POLITICAL PRISONERS ASSOCIATION

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HIẾP LOWMAN  
TRẦN KIM DUNG  
TRẦN THỊ PHƯƠNG

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