



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 * Fax: (703) 204-0394

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AGENDA OF MEETING WITH CONGRESSIONAL ASSISTANTS ON DECEMBER 19, 1991

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Vis-a-vis the Government of Vietnam:

The Association requests the assistance of the U.S. Congress to help obtain the following decisions by the Government of Vietnam:

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- * Health care
- * Job training
- * Housing
- * Reception at Capitol Hill on April 30, 1992
- * Former political prisoners in South East Asia.

1992

JANUARY

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IMPORTANT DATES

JANUARY
 1 New Year's Day
 20 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

FEBRUARY
 12 Lincoln's Birthday
 14 Valentine's Day
 17 Washington's Birthday - Obsvd.
 22 Washington's Birthday

MARCH
 4 Ash Wednesday
 17 St. Patrick's Day

APRIL
 12 Palm Sunday
 17 Good Friday
 18 Passover
 19 Easter Sunday

MAY
 10 Mother's Day
 16 Armed Forces Day
 18 Victoria Day (Canada)
 25 Memorial Day - Obsvd.
 30 Memorial Day

JUNE
 14 Flag Day
 21 Father's Day

JULY
 1 Canada Day (Canada)
 4 Independence Day

SEPTEMBER
 7 Labor Day
 28 Rosh Hashanah

OCTOBER
 7 Yom Kippur
 12 Columbus Day
 12 Thanksgiving Day (Canada)
 24 United Nations Day
 31 Halloween

NOVEMBER
 3 Election Day
 11 Veterans Day
 26 Thanksgiving Day

DECEMBER
 20 Hanukkah
 25 Christmas Day

JULY

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* Reception ở QH để các anh
 và hội thảo Tổng Hội ANVN



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- Bob.* * | Health care
- * | Job training
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- * | Reception at Capitol Hill on ~~April 30~~ ^{May} 30, 1992
- * | Former political prisoners in South East Asia.



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AGENDA FOR MEETING WITH
THE HONORABLE KENNETH QUINN,
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY,
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
TO DISCUSS ISSUES CONCERNING
VIETNAMESE POLITICAL PRISONERS

November 13, 1991

INTRODUCTION

As you may already be aware, the Families of Vietnamese Political Prisoners Association was created in 1977 to fight for the rights of Vietnamese political prisoners, their release from re-education camps, and their resettlement in other countries in the free world. Besides a few outstanding issues, the members of our Association believe that we have achieved most of what we have set out to accomplish and have, therefore, decided on the dissolution of the Association early next year.

We would like to use this opportunity to once more convey our sincerest thanks to you and to all those in the different branches of the U.S. Government who have steadily helped us achieve these very meaningful results. Once again, thank you.

SUMMARY

We would like to focus today's meeting on three interrelated issues:

- * progress in the discussions with Vietnamese authorities about re-establishing normal diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Vietnam;

- * human rights issues in Vietnam, particularly concerning former political prisoners after their release from reeducation camps; and
- * the Orderly Departure Program.

NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH VIETNAM

The declaration made on October 23 in Paris by the Secretary of State, Mr. Baker, indicates that official negotiations will begin soon in view of an eventual normalization of relations between the U.S. and Vietnam. Could you, in a few words, brief us about recent developments on this issue as well as the prospects in the next several months?

In discussing with Vietnamese representatives the issue of normalization, we would like to solicit your help in insisting that *all Vietnamese political prisoners be immediately released and that they be issued exit visas*. This would provide renewed hope for the political prisoners and reassure them that the United States has not forgotten them. Nearly seventeen years after the war has ended, the Vietnamese government still holds more than 100 of our loved ones, preventing them from rejoining their families in third countries.

HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES IN VIETNAM

It has been brought to our attention that Vietnamese authorities, in spite of claims to the contrary, continue to restrict the rights of former political detainees, even after their release from camps. It is, for instance, common practice that the whereabouts of former political prisoners are rigorously monitored, imparting tremendous psychological stress on thousands who have already endured long years of imprisonment. An even more important practice is the *de facto* interdiction for former political prisoners to meet with one another lest they run the risk of arrest for conspiracy and treason. Any former political prisoner being convicted, even wrongly or illegally, would see his chance of leaving Vietnam practically eliminated.

ODP PROGRAM

Mr. Nguyen Co Thach, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs for Vietnam, promised in October 1990 to release all political prisoners. While some concrete steps have been taken, our information indicates that about 100 former Government officials and military are still being held. We solicit your intervention so that they will be released immediately.

It is our feeling that this last group of political prisoners, together with those that have been released in recent times should be given the highest priority for exit permits from Vietnam.

Resettlement of former Vietnamese political refugees in the U.S. is proceeding at a good pace. If this pace should continue, a total of over 100,000 former political prisoners and family members will have emigrated to the U.S. by the end of the five-year program. Given that the actual number of former political prisoners is much larger than the aforementioned figure, would you consider an extension of the five-year program to allow those who desire to resettle in the U.S. to do so?

Finally, we wish to raise three issues of detail but which could have significant impact on the former political prisoners and their families. First, the departure of some prisoners has been delayed by the fact that they have to wait for the return to Vietnam --through forced repatriation--of their children who have managed to reach refugee camps in Southeast Asia. Such a process could take a long time and add additional pressure on the former political prisoners and their families. Could the prisoners, therefore and on an exceptional basis, be allowed to leave Vietnam as scheduled and that their relatives be permitted to join them in the U.S.?

A more dramatic situation has developed for the family members of former political prisoners who have their expectations to start a new life abroad, crushed following the untimely death of the prisoners themselves before the family depart from Vietnam. Could special considerations be given to the surviving members of the prisoners' families in allowing them to proceed with their departure?

We have also recently learned about the existence of a group of former Vietnamese political prisoners who were arrested prior to 1975 as the result of their participation in battles in Laos and Cambodia side by side with the U.S. Army.

In spite of having been issued exit visas, these prisoners have been denied entry to the U.S. as the ODP does not take into account years of imprisonment before 1975. In our view, this group should have the same considerations as other political prisoners since they all fought for the same causes which are freedom and democracy in South Vietnam.

Thank you.