

REPORT OF MY TRIP TO HOUSTON, TEXAS

NOVEMBER 20, 1992

I had two (2) meetings with former political prisoners, including those who recently arrived, representatives of the Federation of Associations of Former Political Prisoners and with representatives of community and other mutual associations and/or organizations.

On Sunday, November 22, 1992 I met with 160 former political prisoners. On Friday, November 27, 1992 I met with 53 representatives of the Federation of Associations and Former Political Prisoners and other community-based organizations.

Issues discussed:

- Former political prisoners (free cases) being sent to the Philippines for training.
- Former political prisoners imprisoned before 1975 and resettlement for former political prisoners after normalization of U.S.-Vietnam relations (meeting with EAP/RP on November 13, 1991).
- Quota of Amerasians will be transferred to PP quota after Amerasian program is over.
- Resettlement of former political prisoners in January 1993 by Volags.
- Household Registration

I shared with the various groups a package of related information regarding the issues/concerns that I had received from the Department of State (especially the correspondence faxed from the Training Office of Ann Morgan on 11/17/92).

Most of the former political prisoners who are newly arrived conveyed information regarding cases of their friends (free cases) in Vietnam who have expressed a desire to come directly to the United States. However, they would be happy just to be able to leave Vietnam after their physical examination.

- Ann Morgan, Director of the Office of Training for the Department of State, said that normally after the physical examination former political prisoners would be leaving in about 30 weeks. However, the former political prisoners feel that the length of time should be reduced to 12 to 16 weeks.
- Some of the former political prisoners feel that if the plans are already in place, they actually have no choice; however, they have suggested that they would like to leave Vietnam at least three (3) months before their scheduled departure so they can arrive in the United States on time.
- Dental and eye care were other issues and concerns that were expressed.
- There was a desire expressed by the former political prisoners to receive Driver's Training.

The Families of Vietnamese Political Prisoners Association had a meeting on November 13, 1991 with Mr. Kenneth Quinn, Christopher Lafleur and Frank Light of EAP and James Williard of RP. Both Bureaus agreed that:

- Former political prisoners imprisoned prior to 1975 should be allowed to count their years in prison as time towards their approval for ODP.
- However, 3 cases were submitted to ODP by us and were not approved. We would like the Department of State to review the status of these cases, and others.
- The desire for unlimited resettlement for former political prisoners was expressed, even if the United States and Vietnam have normalized their relations.
- The Amerasians' quota should be transferred to the re-education quota after the Amerasian program is over. This suggestion was approved by Mr. James Williard.

All former political prisoners who are new arrivals and those in Vietnam are very concerned about the new Resettlement Program which is known as the Private Resettlement Program (PRP) which takes effect in January 1993. I was asked to convey to Congress, Department of State and other governmental agencies the need and desire for job training in order for them to rebuild their new life in a new country. We will follow-up on this program with ORR.

- Another wish expressed was that of the former political prisoners' children being allowed to accompany their parents even if they have not been living in the same household. When the fathers were in re-education camps many children had to go to live elsewhere; the rule in Vietnam does not permit them to choose where they go. They would like ODP to consider these requests and circumstances given that the mother may have re-married and the status of the household has changed.

Overall, I experienced a very warm and receptive welcome while on my trip and it was refreshing and delightful to see and share with so many people and loved ones. I am sure that our issues and concerns have been clearly articulated and documented. And, I am equally assured that resolution will be forthcoming.

Khuc Minh Tho

DRAFT

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Issues and Concerns:

- Former Political Prisoners (free cases) being sent to the Philippines for training.
- Former Political Prisoners prior to 1975 and resettlement for Former Political Prisoners will be unlimited even with normalization from both countries (meeting with EAP/RP on November 13, 1991).
- Quota of Amerisians will be transferred to PP quota after Amerasian program is over.
- Resettlement for Former Political Prisoners in January 1993 by Volags
- Household Registration

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- Ann Morgan, Director of the Office of Training for the Department of State, said that normally after the physical examination former political prisoners would be leaving in about 30 weeks. However, the former political prisoners feel that the length of time should be from 12 to 16 weeks maximum, not 30 weeks.

- Some of the Former Political Prisoners feel that if the plans are already in place, they actually have no choice; however, they have suggested that they would like to leave Vietnam at least three (3) months before their scheduled departure so they can arrive in the United States on time.
- Dental and Eye Care were other issues and concerns that were expressed.
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The Families of Vietnamese Political Prisoners Association had a meeting on November 13, 1992 with Mr. Kenneth Quinn, Christopher Lafleur and Frank Light of EAP and James Willard of RP. Both Bureaus agreed that:

- Former Political Prisoners prior to 1975 should be allowed to use their years in prison as time counted towards their approval for ODP.
- However, 6 cases were submitted to ODP by us and were not approved. We would like the Department of State to review the status of these cases.
- The desire for unlimited resettlement for Former Political Prisoners was expressed, even if the United States and Vietnam have normalization.
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All Former Political Prisoners who are new arrivals and those in Vietnam are very concerned about the new Resettlement Program which is known as the Private Resettlement Program (PRP) and takes effect in January 1993. I was asked to convey to Congress, Department of State and other governmental agencies the need and desire for jobs in order for them to rebuild their new life in a new country.

- Another concern expressed was that of the Former Political Prisoner's children being allowed to accompany their parents even if they have not been living in the same household. When the fathers were in re-education camps many children had to go everywhere to live and the rule in Vietnam does not permit them to choose where they will move. They would like ODP to consider these requests and circumstances given that the mother may have re-married and the status of the household has changed.

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