



# 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) 580-0058 \* Fax: (703) 204-0394

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## AGENDA FOR THE MEETING BETWEEN THE HONORABLE CHARLES SYKES, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY (PRM) AND THE FAMILIES OF VIETNAMESE POLITICAL PRISONERS ASSOCIATION

Wednesday, October 26, 1994

2:30 p.m.

### Introduction

By way of introduction, I am the President of the Families of Vietnamese Political Prisoners Association (FVPPA).

As you may already be aware, the Families of Vietnamese Political Prisoners Association was founded in 1977 by a group of relatives and friends of political prisoners 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. Due to the strong support of the government of the United States, especially the Department of State, more than 110,000 former political prisoners and their families have resettled in this country. On behalf of these former political prisoners and their families we would like to express our heartfelt thanks for your steady efforts which have resulted in these meaningful results and hope for your continued support. Once again thank you.

**We would like to focus today's meeting on the following issues:**

- We ask that you extend the deadline for application to the Orderly Departure Program (ODP) by the former political prisoners from September 30, 1994 to April 30, 1995, which would be the 20th anniversary of the fall of the South Vietnamese government. There are several reasons for this request. Many former political prisoners have been unable to access the application program because the SRV government requires bribes for documents and inclusion on the HO list. There is also a backlog in the processing and 36,000 refugee admission numbers programmed for former political prisoners in FY95. Numbers not used this fiscal year can be used for those who still need to apply for the program.
- We also ask your assistance is staffing the position that was filled by Mr. Ricardo Warner, who both answered ODP inquiries on the status of specific cases and provided general information about ODP. Mr. Warner resigned in July and we understand that your Bureau has decided not to fill the position. In August, Mr. Larry Noyes informed us that ODP inquiries would be handled either by the National Visa Center (NVC) in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, or by personnel at the ODP offices at the American Embassy in Bangkok. This has proven unsatisfactory for the cases of the former political prisoners. In the first place, the NVC simply keeps on file non-current preference immigrant petitions, while most of the former political prisoners cases are processed as refugees. Secondly, many in the Vietnamese community tell us that the personnel at ODP, when they can be reached (despite the time difference and expense of calls), are unable to provide timely and reliable information to specific ODP cases. Furthermore, written inquiries from voluntary agencies are rarely answered. Given the unique nature of processing guidelines and the volume of cases still in the pipeline, we think the replacement of Mr. Warner is extremely important.

- We also ask for a review of several eligibility issues in the processing of the cases:
  - a. We ask that you consider eligibility for former political prisoners who were incarcerated prior to 1975 but who suffered imprisonment and persecution due to their close association with the former government of South Vietnam and USG policies that supported it. We believe that these requests are consistent with Lautenberg legislation governing the processing of certain refugee groups in Southeast Asia from the Vietnam War era.
  - b. We believe that the spouses and children of former prisoners who died before reaching the interview should still be consistently processed as refugees. This was the policy for many years but recently we have noticed that some family members of deceased applicants are allowed to go and others are not - a change for which we have no policy guidance and that appears arbitrary.
  - c. We ask that former political prisoners who are extremely ill be processed on an expedited basis for humanitarian reasons.
  - d. We ask that applicants who were deterred from telling the full story of their persecution at the interview due to the presence of SRV-sponsored translators be given another interview.
  - e. We ask that unmarried sons and daughters over 21 be included as members of the family for ODP processing purposes even though they may not have been included on the same Family Registry.
  - f. We ask that you consider eligibility for former prisoners who served more than two years in prison or who served more than one year and attended training under USG auspices, whether in the U.S. or outside Vietnam.
- I want to thank you for your time and we look forward to helping in any way we can to resolve these issues.



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NGUYEN XUAN LAN  
TRẦN KIM DUNG

## PARICIPANTS SCHEDULED TO ATTEND MEETING WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Wednesday, October 26, 1994

2:30 P.M

Le Tho Trung  
DOB: 02/02/30  
SSN: 224-69-1327

Former Political Prisoner  
(Colonel), 13 years in camp

Tran Ngoc Hue  
DOB: 01/04/42  
SSN: 223-63-7625

Former Political Prisoner  
Association Advisor

Tran Kim Dung  
DOB: 11/14/41  
SSN: 586-34-2376

Association Advisor

Khuc Minh Tho  
DOB: 01/12/39  
SSN: 223-13-1426

Association President

● We also ask for a review of several eligibility issues in the processing of the cases:

- a. We also ask that you consider eligibility for former political prisoners who were incarcerated prior to 1975 but who suffered imprisonment and persecution due to their close association with the former government of South Vietnam and USG policies that supported it. We believe that these requests are consistent with Lautenberg legislation governing the processing of certain refugee groups in Southeast Asia from the Vietnam War era.
- b. We believe that the spouses and children of former prisoners who died before reaching the interview still be consistently processed as refugees. This was the policy for many years but recently we have noticed that some family members of deceased applicants are allowed to go and others are not - a change for which we have no policy guidance and that appears arbitrary.
- c. We ask that former political prisoners who are extremely ill be processed on an expedited basis for humanitarian grounds.
- d. We ask that applicants who were deterred from telling the full story of their persecution at the interview due to the presence of SRV-sponsored translators be given another interview.
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