When most reeducation detainees were ordered to the camps in June 1975, they were told to pack food and clothes for only a "few weeks."

Detailed descriptions provided by my interviews with ex-prisoners who have since escaped from Vietnam concerning reeducation camp cruelties may be found in an article I wrote for the April 1977, Worldview magazine, which I now submit for the record to be included as part of my testimony.[1]

Let me also include for the record that some of the former prisoners I have interviewed, and James Forest, Coordinator of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation in Holland, who has been collecting massive quantities of information on repression in Vietnam from recent refugees and visitors to Vietnam now in Europe, all might be willing to testify before this subcommittee, or elsewhere but have not yet been invited to do so. Because Vietnamese have family and friends still in the country and fear retaliation, some would request that their identities be obscured if they were asked to testify.

There are four areas that need attention from Members of Congress, I believe:

The first area involves direct expressions of humanitarian concern for particular detainees, communicated to Hanoi.

Representative Fraser and many other members of the House International Relations Committee sent a letter to Hanoi last fall, stating concern for five political prisoners mentioned in a New York Times "Op Ed" column I wrote September 17, 1976.

Hanoi has not responded to this letter, I am told, although it was signed by more than 20 former leaders of the antiwar effort in the House of Representatives.

Perhaps it is time to dispatch another communication.

Perhaps members of this subcommittee could suggest to their colleagues in the Senate the possibility of undertaking a similar communication, since unlike Members of the House, Members of the Senate have not yet expressed their concern to Hanoi in this manner, as far as I am aware.

This subcommittee might also consider urging the executive branch to express concern for individual prisoners in the course of its diplomatic contacts and discussions with the Vietnamese Government.

Members of this subcommittee might also consider requesting foreign parliamentary and political leaders informally to communicate their own expressions of concern for individual prisoners.

Particularly helpful could be parliamentary and political leaders in countries like France, Sweden, Japan, India, and other democracies with significant trade and aid relationships with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Members of this subcommittee might also consider urging the Carter administration to communicate with governments of democracies with trade and aid relationships with Hanoi, asking that they too express concern for prisoners.

Among the many political prisoners who merit concern are:

[1] See appendix 1, p. 169.

(1) Bui Tuong Huan: Mr. Chairman, I have brought with me a letter from the wife of Senator Bui Tuong Huan, who now lives in this country, asking that you transmit her letter to Mrs. Rosalynn Carter.

The wife of the political prisoner respectfully but urgently requests that the wife of the President appeal personally to the Government of Vietnam to release her husband in the interest of family reunification.

Senator Huan, who has been imprisoned since 1975, was the second ranking leader of the An Quang Buddhist bloc of antiwar senators, elected under the campaign slogan of "national reconciliation," and the former president of Hue University.

Representative Fraser met Senator Huan in Saigon in February 1975, among other times at the home of the ranking Buddhist Senator, Vu Van Mau.

(2) Tran Van Tuyen: Mr. Chairman, I have also brought with me a copy of a letter from the daughter of Deputy Tran Van Tuyen to President Jimmy Carter, asking that the President appeal to the Government of Vietnam to release her father and permit him to join her here for medical attention.

The letter was presented to Allard Lowenstein, now U.S. Representative to the U.N. Human Rights Commission and a former Member of Congress, at a meeting on June 13, by a group of Americans and Vietnamese who opposed U.S.-Indochina policies during the war but are now deeply concerned about human rights violations in Vietnam. Tuyen's daughter asked me to transmit her letter to Representative Fraser for inclusion in the record. Attached to it, at her request, is a copy of a statement Tran Van Tuyen's daughter made at a conference called by the International League for Human Rights in December 1976, providing more biographical information about her father.

Tuyen has been imprisoned since June 1975. He is reported to be gravely ill, perhaps stemming from ailments incurred during jailings by previous Saigon regimes.

I have photographs of Tuyen leading demonstrations to free political prisoners, open closed newspapers or negotiate an end to the war (one of which appears in the Worldview article I presented earlier).[1]

Among other distinctions, Tuyen was chairman of the opposition bloc in Saigon's National Assembly—the equivalent of House minority leader—chairman of Vietnam's chapter of the International League for Human Rights, and was a member of the International Commission of Jurists.

Mr. Chairman, you also met Deputy Tuyen when you were in Vietnam.

(3) Father Tran Huu Thanh: Mr. Chairman, you spent much of your time at the Third Force dinner I mentioned earlier conversing with Father Thanh.

A popular Catholic priest who led mass demonstrations against Thieu government repression and corruption, Father Thanh also preached a vivid "social gospel" comparable to that of Brazilian Archbishop Helder Camara or Martin Luther King, Jr.

[1] The photographs are retained in the subcommittee files.

(4) Tran Ngoc Chau: Mr. Chairman, you did not meet Deputy Tran Ngoc Chau when you were in Saigon in 1975—because the Thieu government had him confined.

I mention him now because the last two times I testified before congressional subcommittees on human rights violations in Vietnam—back in 1971, when I was speaking against Thieu regime oppression—I asked for the help of Members of Congress to secure the release of Deputy Tran Ngoc Chau from Chi Hoa Prison.

Reports from Vietnam are that he is in the same notorious prison again, although now, I am told, they have cemented over the cell window bars to make the cells darker and hotter than ever before.

A charismatic democrat with strong convictions about social justice and free elections, Chau was once the third ranking member of Saigon's National Assembly. At first a hard-liner, Chau became an outspoken critic of Thieu's dictatorship and publicly advocated a peace settlement permitting political representation for the National Liberation Front.

As a result he was dragged out of the National Assembly and jailed by Thieu's police in 1969.

Gov. Averell Harriman, whose distinguished career includes heading the American delegation to the Paris peace negotiations, is one of many Americans who knew and respected Deputy Chau. Governor Harriman has authorized me to use his name for expressions of concern for Chau's release, which I hope this subcommittee will undertake.

(5) An Quang Buddhist Venerables: Mr. Chairman, I have also brought a copy of a letter to President Carter from Venerable (Thich) Giac Duc, former secretary general of the An Quang Buddhist organization in Vietnam, on behalf of the large number of Buddhist leaders swept up and arrested on April 6 of this year.

Since autumn, 1975, more than a dozen Buddhist monks and nuns are reported to have immolated themselves in protest against Vietnamese Government persecution. Recent communications from Vietnam indicate that many more people have pledged themselves to fiery suicide protests if the Government does not relent.

Among those reported detained are Venerable (Thich) Tri Thu, Patriarch Rector of the An Quang Buddhists; Venerable (Thich) Huyen Quang, the Vice Rector; Venerable (Thich) Quang Do, Secretary General of the pagoda organization; and at least three other Buddhist executive committee members.

Venerable (Thich) Giac Duc requests that his letter, which provides more information, be submitted for the record as part of my testimony.

The venerable's letter was given to Allard Lowenstein in connection with our June 13 meeting.

I would also like to submit three other documents concerning repression of Buddhists, one from the An Quang Buddhist delegation in Paris; a collection of other documents published as appendixes in the brochure "A Buddhist Tragedy In Vietnam," put out by the Buddhist Congregational Church of America; and the third a petition from Buddhist venerables from all over the world, all providing additional

information on religious persecution and expressions of concern for these arrests.[1]

Venerable (Thich) Giac Duc, incidently, gave me this letter in front of the United Nations, where he has been on a hunger strike since June 10 to dramatize the repression of Buddhists in Vietnam.

Further bio data on Huan, Tuyen, Father Thanh and Chau, along with names and descriptions of many other Vietnamese political prisoners unmentioned here, may be found in my Worldview article.[2]

Some of us who used to be active opponents of U.S. Vietnam policy have proposed, and ask others to join us in proposing, that the Government of Vietnam grant a general amnesty and release political detainees, including not only all former Saigon foes, but all unjustly or inhumanely imprisoned.

The second possible area for your attention should be appeals for family reunifications, since Hanoi may prefer to release people to the outside world and call it "family reunification" rather than "releasing political detainees."

I am informed that members of the Leonard Woodcock mission to Hanoi were told that the Vietnamese Government would respond favorably to family reunification requests.

The third area of human rights concern—the recent refugees—is one where, more than any subject I have mentioned, Members of Congress and the administration can act independently to speedily and decisively help a large number of people.

Thousands of refugees are fleeing Vietnam on barely seaworthy coastal fishing boats, or even rowboats. The U.N. Refugee Commission now calls these refugees the "boat people."

The U.N. High Commission on Refugees estimates that many thousands, perhaps as many as 8,000, have perished on the seas.

Many people apparently drown after they cross the South China Sea to Malaysia, Singapore, and elsewhere and are forced out to sea again by local authorities. This situation is possible only because the U.S. Government has not made clear to these governments that America will be the guaranteed refuge of last resort.

Where the refugees are permitted to land, they are warehoused in desperate and destitute camps, where they wait for months in the hope that some country somewhere will provide permanent refuge.

At this time, the U.S. permits 100 Indochinese families per month to enter this country. The Carter administration could easily increase this to 500 families per month, or more, until the refugee problem is decreased; and it should encourage other nations to do the same.

In the meantime, the United States should step up its direct humanitarian assistance for refugees in the camps, until the people are dispersed to permanent residency.

Refugees who are perishing on stormy seas need to be rescued. Members of Congress should consider how to initiate and finance an international rescue project, administered either through the United Nations or by private humanitarian organizations, to pick people up who make it to international waters before their flimsy boats go under.

[1] Not included in the record.
[2] See appendix 1, p. 169.

Recent refugees frequently report that they were ignored by passing merchant ships, even when they are in dire distress. The merchant vessels often cannot get permission to disembark the rescued people in nearby Southeast Asian countries and must assume financial responsibility for the refugees until they can be relocated.

Evidently there is a need for an international fund guaranteeing reimbursement for expenses incurred by merchant ships that rescue refugees—not just Vietnamese—to end the current financial disincentive for humanitarian concern.

Given recent congressional votes reflecting a sentiment of inflexible opposition to any possibility of even multilateral, humanitarian aid to the Vietnamese people, this fourth and final area of attention may be the most difficult subject for me to urge you to consider, but I respectfully request that U.S. acceptance of specific aid programs to Vietnam be rethought by Members of Congress, connected in a sophisticated way to human rights concerns.

If Congress is not interested in trying to ameliorate human rights problems in Vietnam, then the present, total rejection of all multilateral and bilateral assistance possibilities does not matter: the current congressional sentiment is certain to have no impact in swaying Hanoi's present policies.

Let me make absolutely clear that I do not suggest no-strings-attached economic development aid to Vietnam, in effect white-washing the very political prisoner violations about which I have been speaking.

However, nor do I mean heavy-handed, explicitly proclaimed demands for quid pro quo linkage between trade and aid concessions from the United States on the one hand and specific Hanoi actions ending human rights violations on the other.

Saying either "no on aid" or "no aid unless you do exactly what we want" won't work, if one of our goals is helping Vietnamese prisoners.

But if Hanoi saw that there was a possibility of U.S. acceptance of humanitarian assistance programs—connected in an implicit but determined manner to American concerns for political prisoner releases, family reunifications and access to Vietnam for press and others who would increase information flow—that could be helpful.

Moreover, some forms of aid proposals to Vietnam are entirely just, and this subcommittee ought to consider them.

For example, prosthetics—artificial limbs; medicines and medical expertise to treat burn victims; or chemical and agricultural expertise to overcome the effects of defoliation.

Food too, as Don Luce has pointed out.

Don Luce has also suggested that Vietnam needs electronic sensor equipment to locate and deactivate mines. That ought to be given some priority, since the present alternative seems to be that prisoners are forced to take the place of technical equipment, killing and maiming many.

There are many other legitimate possibilities for humanitarian aid that Congress ought to consider, with appropriate safeguards against misuse.

In the current formal discussions in Paris of United States-Vietnamese relations, members of this subcommittee might consider recom-

mending that major emphasis be placed on commitment to the human rights of live political prisoners, not simply the locations of MIA corpses, as important as that may be.

Above all, I request that members of this subcommittee consider how efforts to achieve releases for specific Vietnamese political prisoners and amnesty for all such prisoners, along with family reunifications, access to information from Vietnam, humane immigration policies, refugee rescue and relief efforts, diplomatic and trade normalizations and humanitarian aid to the Vietnamese people can unite Americans in an honorable and decent common purpose.

Mr. FRASER. Thank you, Mr. Jacquenay.

Our next witnesses are going in tandem. I don't know how you plan to handle it, but Dr. McCleary and Ms. Meinertz, go ahead, any way you like.

Ms. MEINERTZ. Thank you.

Dr. McCleary and I were accompanied by Dr. Haines on a recent visit to Vietnam May 29 through June 1, including in the north and south, and we have jointly filed a written testimony, giving a narrative description of our visits to a reeducation camp in Tay Ninh Province.

I would like Dr. McCleary to make the first comments and I will follow.

STATEMENT OF PAUL F. McCLEARY, D.D., EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CHURCH WORLD SERVICE, NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN THE U.S.A.

Mr. MCCLEARY. On May 29 we had an opportunity to visit a reeducation camp in Vietnam. As a part of that visit, we were given an opportunity to speak to a group of former ARVN officers.

What would you, as an American, say to a group of former ARVN officers in a reeducation camp in Vietnam?

The thought that came to our mind was the fact that the Vietnamese Government has provided the means by which these former officers can be reconstituted back into society as full citizens, while members of American society, either draft dodgers or deserters, have not yet found that means to become full participants back in U.S. society.

Vietnam and the United States have chosen to take two quite divergent responses to the post-Vietnam war situation.

Vietnam has set about the process of what they call healing the wounds of war. As we all know, the major scars of a war are not the physical but the psychological ones. In dealing with the psychological scars of war, the Vietnamese have indicated that each individual has a value as a part of society. Hence, no bloodbath after the fighting as a means to deal with the enemy, but rather, a process of reeducation.

They recognize that in the process of eliminating one person who opposes the new leadership or its direction, they also continue the social alienation by engendering it in the family and relatives of those who might be eliminated. The end result of the reeducation process is to hopefully reincorporate all those who might have opposed the change. This is a difficult process but certainly, the more enlightened of many of the options which other nations have taken with regard

to those among their own who they consider to be collaborators with the enemy.

The United States, on the other hand, has continued to maintain a state of hostility toward the Vietnamese nation. It prohibits trade under the Trading With the Enemy Act; it refuses to fulfill a commitment of aid for reconstruction on the premise that they broke the peace agreements first; it has failed to deal with the alienation and polarization that the war caused within our own society by refusing to pardon the draft dodger and the deserter. It has maintained a state of alienation within our society and from the Vietnamese.

I think it is fair to say that while some in the United States have wanted to forget the war, the vast majority find that the unresolved issues of the Vietnam war are forced into the subconsciousness of the Nation because we as a nation have not openly dealt with these issues but rather continue an attitude of hostility. This social alienation can only come back to haunt us some day.

As a churchperson, I would have to identify with the Vietnamese as those who have chosen the better way to heal the wounds of war. It is a clear indication of the value they place on persons as members of the collective. It stems from their sense of the significance of the family and their desire to restore the value of tradition and society which have been corrupted by the introduction of foreign elements into their culture.

It also clearly speaks to the issue of human rights. If their end goal were complete and ultimate domination over the entire nation, then other means lie readily at hand to make that objective a reality within a matter of hours. The rapid and radical transformation of society in China stands in sharp contrast to the gradual, more evaluative process now underway over 2 years and yet incomplete in Vietnam. If their ultimate desire is the reconstruction of their society and every individual as a productive participant in it, then it seems that the issue of human rights is not a matter of major violations but perhaps a definition of coercion.

Our written testimony speaks to the matter of what we personally witnessed in the reeducation camp which we visited and while we cannot generalize from the particular, what we saw seems more in harmony with the objective of reconstructing a nation badly divided by war for over 30 years, than it does a punitive action against those who opposed the change in government and lost.

STATEMENT OF MARGARET A. MEINERTZ, DIRECTOR FOR SOUTHERN ASIA, CHURCH WORLD SERVICE, NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN THE U.S.A.

Ms. MEINERTZ. It was Sunday when our three-member delegation took the 4½-hour drive from Ho Chi Minh City—Saigon—up into western Tay Ninh Province, just 20 kilometers from the Cambodian border, to a reeducation camp known as T–4.

I begin my testimony with this, not because it is the most substantial component of my impression about human rights in Vietnam, but because among the many Americans concerned about human rights in Vietnam, we were uniquely privileged to have the opportunity to visit such a camp.

Extensive description is in the written testimony, so I will only make a few comments here. This camp, like most, was formed in June 1975, and at that time had 1,000 commissioned officers of the South Vietnamese Army, lieutenants through captains. On the day of our visit, 503 of these men remained. The camp members at this place are not, as I understand is true of other camps, involved in economic production, such as land clearing or irrigation projects.

They are primarily focusing on political studies and training in skills for nonmilitary jobs. They do engage in extensive manual labor. They grow all of the food, vegetables, animals, that is consumed by the camp, reporting to us that they were self-sufficient in food, except for rice, nuc man, and salt.

There was a staff of 50, including teachers, and we inquired as to what they studied. Their focus is on the Vietnamese revolution, its significance, the reunification and independence of the country, the whole policy of leniency and reeducation of the new government, and socialism.

So when I was asking what models do you study, how do you learn about socialism in terms of Vietnam, it was clear that they feel that 30 years of history in the north is a primary reference and they don't seem to be adopting Soviet, Chinese, or Cuban models that are available. Clear evidence of this is the reeducation policy itself, rather than the massive bloodletting which has characterized most other revolutionary victories.

Physically, the camp conditions were far better than we might have imagined. There was a small sentry stand at the gate, but no guard towers, no barbed wire. The camp was remote, certainly, and there were two army units engaged in land-clearing so that the disincentives to leave the camp would be extensive. Still, it was not a prison.

The men we saw seemed healthy and were clearly used to outdoor work but were not overly darkened by sun or strained by extreme physical exercise. They were lucky to have this self-sufficient diet because probably their diet was better than most in Vietnam, where food is in great shortfall. The shelters were simple but sturdy and clean. The clinic was stocked with traditional medicines that the men had grown themselves. They made their own camphor, for example, from the herbs grown nearby.

Just as a matter of curiosity, I happened to notice that under the eaves in one of the workshops there was a very elaborate dragon's head which had been handmade for some festival. So that clearly, although we did not see people celebrating on a Sunday afternoon, they do have a varied routine.

I provide the curriculum and daily schedule in my written testimony.

A last comment regarding the camp. The men we saw were quiet, but not "prison passive." For those of you who have been in prisons in this country or any place else, they would not seem, on observation, to be men upon whom sophisticated techniques of psychological warfare were being used. If anything, they seemed a cohesive, independent group, independent from the staff; and a group, not a series of beaten-down individuals.

Clearly, in terms of technical and psychological warfare, this cohesion could have been done away with over the last 2 years.

One senses that there is an understanding that they have the potential to contribute to the society, but it may take a long time and we were unable to pin people down as to what the policy is on the closing of the camps. But I would add that there were many incidents throughout the visit which broadened our understandings of where concern for human rights fits into Vietnamese perception, both in terms of national strategy and in terms of personal situations.

Dr. McCleary and others have mentioned the importance of the family unit, as opposed to other socialist models where this has been put under a tremendous strain. Time and time again we were struck with clear manifestations of the respect for individual human dignity and the importance of the family, which underlies their emphasis on the right to food, education, medical care, religious freedom, training, and the opportunity for productive work.

I would mention briefly only four instances here. One was the evening with four army officers, former ARVN, who had been released from reeducation—one was there 15 months—and who are now back, engaged in their professions.

I think that the overall sense in talking with these men was simply their sheer wonderment at being alive, the fact that they were not just killed upon the change of government, and this in itself has encouraged in them a commitment to contribute to the new society.

A second one was visits we had with the religious leaders of the Protestant Church, north and south, the Catholic archbishop of Saigon, and various Buddhist monks in the south.

We did talk at length about the immolations that Mr. Jacqueney mentioned, and I wish we had more time. Government funds were made available for the rebuilding of war-damaged houses of worship, and we observed ourselves during the Sunday drive out to the camp that along the way churches were being filled and dispersed at normal worship hours, just like any countryside.

The church itself, as in many countries in the world, will probably need to struggle for years to come for theological understanding of what its role in the new society must be. But it would seem that the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is at least physically providing the opportunity and time to do that, unlike other socialist experiences often cited when people predict the dire fate of the church in the new Vietnam.

A third series of comments which made a human rights impression on me was talking with our host committee in the north, several of whom still had relatives in the south in reeducation camps. They are still separated and this fills them with regret, that as a nation and as individual families they are not whole. However, it was clear that individually, right on up the line, it was felt that the quick solution of exterminating the old order would simply scar the body and handicap their corporate future.

I could not help but feel that the opportunity for work-study, though difficult and prolonged—and I think the indefiniteness alone causes the most mental anguish for families—stems from a deep respect of personal worth and the hope that each one can bring his unique talent to the group.

A fourth, and last, observation I will share—I share as a woman, a mother, an exwife of a U.S. Marine infantry platoon leader who fought

in Vietnam and was shot near Chu Lai in September of 1966. I have a strong sense of the nature of war wounds, those visible and those perhaps so internalized we would bury them deep in invisible places. We went to a "Home for the Restoration of Human Dignity," which is a rehabilitation center for some of the nearly half-million prostitutes left in the south following the occupation. These women are considered war victims, not of bombings or napalm related, but culturally victimized by the years of occupation. They have been treated medically, just as surely as if their disabilities were mine inflicted.

I do not know if anyone here has ever seen third-degree syphilis and its aftermath, but it produces leprous lesions and deformity.

Now these women are being trained to make a variety of handicrafts, not as busywork but as participants in an expert cooperative. They are being given essential skills to make a new life for themselves and finding a place in society productively. But for me, the phrase "restoration of human dignity" echoed over and over again. How does one restore human dignity to such women?

I think for me, worse than the physical deformities from venereal disease were the tattoos—American flags, hearts and flowers, names of GI's long departed. These women, like many of the soldiers who knew them, are survivors of a dehumanizing process called war. The new Government has taken seriously their need to be restored as persons first, and then people who need to be restored to the community.

I think this right to be a whole person in the society is one which the Vietnamese seem to be taking very seriously. I would hope that our own Government will consider the human rights of the 750,000 Vietnam vets with less than honorable discharges, the remaining draft evaders in need of a full amnesty, the families and vets, and Vietnamese refugees, too, who need restoration and inclusion in our national future.

I noticed that Mr. Jacqueney called on the Vietnamese Government for full amnesty and I would bring that call home.

No person, system, or government is flawless, and I cannot speak to situations I have not seen. Life is difficult in Vietnam. The needs are great. Food shortage and medical shortage has been well stated and we could help. It is frustrating, especially to me, that our reports, even before such a subcommittee, are in conflict one with the other, and we allow ourselves as a Nation to be divided still about that controversy, Vietnam.

But it seems clear to me that the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is systematically encouraging individuals to exercise their rights in the framework of respect, understanding, and productivity. There is a feeling of Vietnamese working together, trying to heal themselves and move toward a future as a whole nation taking its rightful place in the world.

I hope that the U.S. Government will respond legislatively with openness in assisting them and will recognize that we cannot separate ourselves from this member of our global community or from the walking wounded in our midst without diminishing our own human dignity in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The joint prepared statement of Dr. McCleary and Ms. Meinertz follows:]

JOINT PREPARED STATEMENT OF PAUL F. MCCLEARY AND MARGARET A. MEINERTZ, CHURCH WORLD SERVICE, NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN THE U.S.A.

The following testimony is filed in writing by Dr. Paul F. McCleary, Executive Director of Church World Service and Midge Austin Meinertz, Director for Southern Asia, Church World Service following a visit to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, May 21–June 1 this year. They were accompanied on this visit by Dr. J. Harry Haines, Board Member of CWS and Executive Director of the United Methodist Committee on Relief.

Arrangements for our delegation's visit to a reeducation camp in Vietnam were made through the efforts of Vietmy, the committee for Friendship and Solidarity with the American People, located in Hanoi, in cooperation with the Vietnam Fatherland Front Committee of Ho Chi Minh City, both of which applied to the offices of the Army for permission to see such a place. The request was made in connection with our stated concern regarding human rights violations reported by the press in relation to reeducation centers established following the end of the war in 1975. We were accompanied by two members of the Vietmy Committee, including our translator, one representative of the VFF Committee, and two representatives of the Army (one a press officer).

Reeducation Camp T–4, located in Tay Ninh Province just 20 kilometers from the Cambodian border in the southern part of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, was formed in June 1975. The location was formerly a National Liberation Forces camp, so the land was already cleared. Most of the housing has been built in the past two years by camp members and staff.

At the time of formation, T–4 was comprised of 1,000 former commissioned officers of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam), rank of first lieutenant through captain. At the time of our visit, May 29 this year, there were 503 camp members remaining.

Approaching the camp from Tay Ninh, we first passed two compounds of army personnel engaged in land clearing and other work designed to bring land under production and employ military manpower now that the war is over. (Unemployment remains a problem in Vietnam, much of it still in the south where ARVN troops and personnel dependent on foreign industry were left suddenly without jobs.) At the camp itself, although there was a small open sentry stand at the gate, there were no guard towers, no barbed wire, none of the traditional "prison" appurtenances. In fact, the general standard of living observed in the camp would seem to be on a par with the army compounds, and in some ways higher than rural peasants might enjoy.

We were greeted by the two camp commanders, both senior captains of the SRVN army. One of the captains was originally from Tay Ninh Province, the other from the Central Highlands. During preliminary discussions, while the camp members had their midday rest period, it was explained to us that this camp, unlike some others, was not involved in economic production (land clearing, irrigation projects, etc.) other than vegetable and animal care for camp consumption. (Aside from rice, nuc man and salt, the camp is self-sufficient in food production.) Although we were assured that such production was for dietary improvement and did not diminish the rations provided by government for staff and members, clearly the remoteness of the camp and the shortage of food in the entire country would make self-sufficiency virtually a practical necessity. Our own drive to T–4 took 4½ hours from Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), with the distance from Tay Ninh city to the camp (approximately one-half the distance) on unpaved roads. One might surmise that in monsoon weather, travel would be difficult, and dependable supply routes rare. When we inquired about cigarettes, for example, although we were assured there were rations, it was also clear that supply was uncertain, and therefore the men had begun growing tobacco as well. Rations for camp members and staff are the same, and such rations were said to be equivalent to those for SRVN soldiers. Later we observed that the men appeared to be sufficiently fed and in general good health.

The work/study experience at T–4 emphasizes political studies, training in skills for nonmilitary jobs, manual labor in vegetable and animal production

as well as cultural and sporting activities. We observed classrooms, gardens, volley ball courts, ping pong facilities, a hand-made dragon for use at festive occasions (stored under the eaves in a workshop), a piggery, as well as living quarters. When asked about the content of the political education, we were told the curriculum consisted of:

1. History of the Vietnamese revolution;
2. Significance of the policy of reeducation and the leniency of the new government;
3. The glorious meaning of labor;
4. History of the reunification and independence of Vietnam;
5. Abolition of exploiting classes; and
6. The superiority of socialism.

When further pressed as to content leading to the understanding of socialism and specific ideological and historical models studied, it became clear that the Vietnamese do not consider the Soviet, Cuban, Chinese, eastern European or other existing models primary nor particularly relevant to the Vietnamese situation. They said quite clearly that since they had 30 years of experience with socialism within the context of Vietnamese history and culture in the north, that this was the reference rather than any unrelated or theoretical base.

The daily routine of camp life was posted as follows:

5 a.m., Get up.
5–5:30, Calisthentics.
5:30–6, Toilet.
6–6:30, Breakfast.
6:30–11, Morning study/work.
11:00–11:30, Lunch.
11:30–1:30, Rest.
1:30–4, Afternoon work/study.
4–5, Sports.
5–5:30, Dinner.
5:30–7, Rest.
7–9, Club activity.
9, Bed.

The camp is organized into units of 10–15 men each for living and communications systems, production efforts, etc. Three of these units comprise the next larger unit, similar to the squad, platoon, etc., formations of military organization. (The reeducation camps are under army jurisdiction.)

We observed facilities for visitors, and were told that there were no restrictions on family visitation, although when we suggested in jest that a man's wife might come every day (conjugal visits are permitted), they agreed that that would be too much, as the man would not have time to work and study—location itself would minimize family access. (Two lighthearted but common remarks made in this connection were first that the only times camp members had tried to leave the camp without authorization had been because "they missed their wives so much," and second, that wives particularly appreciated the training their husbands got in reeducation, since beforehand the men had no training or experience in manual labor, but afterward they were more capable and willing helpmates in the home!)

When asked directly about punitive measures for would-be "escapees" the camp commanders indicated there were none. Although there were no guard towers and walls, the very remoteness of the camp, plus the stationing of army units in the vicinity would certainly be disincentives to leave. Additionally, it was noted that on at least one occasion, a man who had gone home without permission had been returned by his family. This is quite understandable in the context of social organization which has taken place in the larger society. Families, as part of block associations responsible for the health and welfare of each other, would be reluctant to try convincing the block organizations to accept such a person back in the community without a job, without an understanding of the intent or accomplishment of the new government, and without even waiting to have voting rights restored so that he could participate in his own future. (We were told on various occasions that 95 percent of the former ARVN personnel have returned to their families and have had their full citizen's right restored.)

Although the camp commanders assured us that no punitive measures were employed to assure that camp regulations would be followed, they did indicate

that positive reinforcement for meritorious behavior was common (extra cigarettes, extra soap, towels, whatever). By and large, the 10–15 man unit would be reasonable for the discussion and implementation of camp policy.

While the rest period for camp members was still in effect, our group walked through staff quarters. The camp has no electricity, but there were clean and sturdy latrine facilities, housing units for approximately 4 men each, an assembly hall—open sided, the location for evening viewing of battery-operated television broadcasts from Ho Chi Minh City—ping pong, playing fields, well-tended gardens.

Following our tour of this section of the camp (we were told upon arrival that we were free to photograph anything), we joined a broader grouping of staff for lunch. The meal was entirely of camp-grown produce and livestock prepared by camp members. It was delicious: chicken, pork, rice, fruit. Clearly our host committee had not known what to expect of this visit any more than we, as we came with box lunches expecting far more primitive conditions. Needless to say, we contributed these sandwiches to the table fare, but they were no attraction whatsoever in light of the meal served.

By 1:00 PM we began our tour of the camp members' section, not really distinguishable overall from the staff quarters, except that the housing units were long, partially-open barracks forming a large U, in the middle of which were two large meeting halls.

We stopped at the clinic, observing many of the dried herbs utilized in the preparation of traditional medicines. Clean, simple, and entirely lacking sophisticated pharmaceuticals. This shortage of medicines, particularly antibiotics, is true of all parts of Vietnam, not only reeducation camps, and whereas the clinic was primitive, it was quite representative of the kind of medical care which would be available to Vietnamese living in rural areas throughout the country.

As we walked into the U-shaped central area, the men were mostly sitting on their sleeping platforms in small groups talking, playing cards, playing guitars, smoking homemade water pipes. The facilities were spare but adequate, each man with a sleeping mat, a shelf overhead for personal effects. When we asked as to the limitation on personal effects, we were informed that there was none, that they could have watches, radios, and other goods. Still, the average stack of belongings at each place was equivalent to the size of two duffle bags, and most items were stored in bags or boxes. As we observed the men, all were wearing shoes (typical sandals) and two piece drab outfits, or tee-shirts, clean but certainly neither new nor tailored.

Perhaps it was during this initial walk past the men in their barracks that we first sensed unease of knowing that as Americans we had a special relationship to these men, who had in good faith associated with our own troops in a very different, wartime Vietnam. But more: the men showed very little open curiosity, almost belligerently "minding their own business" despite efforts by camp staff to say institutionally cheery greetings. If there were those who understood English, they did not reveal it.

As we neared the closed end of the U, near the volley ball court, we began to hear singing from one assembly hall. A camp chorus practicing, but certainly not surprised at our visit! When our visit was explained to those assembled, there was the group applause we had grown used to in orphanages, rehabilitation centers, any formal presentation. They performed a few songs, directed by the music teacher, accompanied by a drummer playing on a drum set and cymbals fashioned from empty cans. Again, the sense that these men, although singing beautifully and in full harmony, seemed removed from the gusto suggested by the revolutionary and patriotic verses coming from their lips. The drummer seemed to "get into" the songs; few others appeared to do so.

We were asked if we had any words to share, and suddenly the contrast between our somewhat casual visit and their prolonged stay was painfully obvious. What does one say to such a group? How does one note with respect and appreciation a role chosen in the past, now considered a "mistake?" Our comments were brief, duly applauded, and then responded to by one of the group, who produced from his pocket remarks on a small piece of paper. Was it resentment we sensed? Certainly correct behavior, but a cohesive reserve, no overt trying "to please." Questions ran through our minds about their present situation: Would interest in this group of three Americans put them in a position of appearing to relate to the old ally? Were they withdrawn from us instead, perhaps as a statement of independence and anger at either our American "advisor" role during the

war which helped put them into this camp, or anger at our appearing to have "switched sides" and abandoned the old ally for the new government, or were they simply reflecting their independence from the camp administration? No answers, of course, to these unspoken questions, but a heightened sense of the long-lasting complexities of our relationships both in the U.S. and in Vietnam born of the intimacies of war.

Further on, we stopped again in an assembly hall with another group of men. Simple incident: the group was small in relation to the hall; the camp staff encouraged them to move toward the front, but they remained, by and large, seated where they were, while other men were encouraged (in apparently casual gestures) to join us, which they did.

With this second group, we were introduced, and we tried to see whether they had questions for us. No one asked questions, so again we each made brief remarks. The first speaker noted that many of the men had known Americans and wondered aloud if anyone spoke or understood English: no hands were raised. Again, questions rose in our minds as to how this visit was perceived by these men. Following our comments, the group was invited once again for questions—together or separately—but no initiatives were taken. Instead, a group spokesman stood and delivered remarks, this one without such obvious notes.

The substance of both camp members' presentations focused on the new government's policy of leniency, the realization that there had been no bloodbath, the value of reeducation and manual labor; statements recognizing that they had difficulty, that it was hard to be away from their families, but that they were trying to understand mistakes of the past and learn skills to contribute to the new society so that they could be reunited with their loved ones.

After we left the hall, the camp commander asked whether we wanted personal interviews, which they would be glad to arrange. We noted that since he himself had told us that many of the former officers had studied abroad, and many must have known English and yet felt they could not so indicate, that we thought it might embarrass them to select one or a few individuals with whom to converse. We noted further that despite the Vietnamese policy of encouraging friendship with Americans, it might be especially unrealistic for such men to be comfortable or interested in such a conversation, with former allies, now part of an experience they were trying to put in an intelligible past context of error.

So yes, we could have interviewed a few men regarding where they came from, how long they were in the ARVN, how many members in their families. But we did not, knowing that substantive conversation regarding feelings and private reflection would be impossible.

As we moved away from the meeting hall, we passed tool workshops, gardens, furniture-making workshops, dining halls, latrines. All neat, sufficient, well-constructed wood and bamboo woven mats with thatched roofing. Small touches, flowers in a vase made of a painted can, caught my eye. And the beautiful location itself—tall and ancient trees against the blue sky, sun bleached hard-packed dry walks sharply outlining the bright green of growing vegetables. In some ways the camp looked as though it could have been a small tropical resort area simply because of the surrounding natural beauty.

Back at headquarters, we discussed our observations and inquired as to how camp objectives are evaluated. How is it determined that reeducation has been completed? Four processes were mentioned: the individual's participation in discussions, and how they reveal to the group itself a new attitude and understanding; participation and expression of enthusiasm regarding the work/study programs, new skills; observation of the camp rules and regulations; discussion between members of the collective and the camp staff regarding individual progress. Still, though camp members and staff can recommend an individual's readiness, the camp command does not have the authority to release such a person but must petition the command of the military region, where such orders are issued. Although apparently this is routine, it is nonetheless clear that the camp's participation in the release decision is not singular.

The foregoing summary of observations in one reeducation camp cannot be said to reflect all the delegation's impressions nor can generalizations be made regarding all camps. As noted in oral testimony today, June 21, 1977, overall impressions regarding human rights, reeducation policy, government regard for individuals are a mixture of broad ranging conversations and observations. We

came away from Vietnam impressed at the government's apparent commitment to providing opportunities for individuals to prepare for a role in the new society. There are internal contradictions in some of what we have heard: a statement reported in *Le Monde*, attributed to a Vietnamese government person that all those remaining in the camps would be either freed or tried. No one we spoke with during this visit expected any war crimes trials.

Another person referred to the 12 points, noting that no one will be held longer than three years; but a few lower ranking persons we talked with conjectured that some people might be "very slow learners" and gave the impression of an indefinite time period for the camps. In response to my expression of frustration with the limitations on perceptions after a visit to one camp, Xuan Thuy (Secretary of the National Assembly, Secretary of the Communist Party, head of Paris negotiating team 1968–72) said that if I wanted to stay, I should do so and he would see that I visited as many camps as I desired. I may regret the decision to leave on schedule for a long time! Still, as we talked he finally joked that he was afraid I would come back in a year and want to see reeducation camps, and there wouldn't be any! Perhaps because of the distinction between civilian government and the military management of the camps, or because no one really knows for sure, we were not able to get a clear statement regarding national policy on the closure of the camps or firm figures regarding the number of camps and number of people still held. From the rough estimates of 1,000,000 from the former regime subject to reeducation, "95% of which have been released," one could conclude that 50,000 in camps would be a reasonable estimate. Camps like the one we saw have only reduced by 50% but that might be more typical of higher ranking camps, or might reflect the consolidation of camps as they are closed. The hardship of being separated from their families is taken seriously by all, and yet, with 4 million unemployed (mainly in the southern provinces), the government is taking a prudent policy on releasing men trained in violence and leadership without first assuring their alternate livelihood.

Certainly at T–4 the men we saw seemed to have their basic life needs met, and they can work toward the day they are reunified with their families, and their full citizens rights are restored. (Do we make the same restoration of rights to convicted felons regarding the right to vote?) From the broader pattern of observations, it would seem that the entire process of reeducation is one reflecting the government's commitment to encouraging and enabling people to exercise their rights, restored as full participants in Vietnam's future.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

APPENDIX

(Schedule of Appointments, Vietnam May 21–June 1, 1977)

Church World Service Delegation:
Dr. Paul F. McCleary, Executive Director.
Ms. Midge Austin Meinertz, Southern Asia Director.
Dr. J. Harry Haines, Member of the Board.

MAY 21

Arrival in Hanoi. Discussion of agenda with Vietmy Committee (Committee for Friendship and Solidarity with the American People, founded in 1968 to handle liaison with non-governmental US agencies. Comprised of representatives of various mass organizations, Vietnam.)

MAY 22

(Sunday) Mass at Catholic Cathedral.
Visit to mausoleum of Ho Chi Minh.
Archaeological and Historical Museum.
Trade Exhibition, Vietnam Export items.
Evening, Hanoi Circus.

MAY 23

Ministry of Foreign Trade: Nguyen Phuoc Dich.
Tin Lanh Church (Vietnam Evangelical Church): Hoang Kim Phuc, Chairman; Bui Hoanh Thu, General Secretary.
Con Tiem Street, site of Christmas Bombings 1972.
Bach Mai Hospital.
Vietmy: Xuyen Oanh, Mr. Hanh, Mr. Duc, Mr. Lu, Miss Trinh.

MAY 24

7:00 A.M. flight to Ho Chi Minh City:
Reception by Vietnam Fatherland Front Committee of Ho Chi Minh City: Nguyen Ngoc Thanh, Vice Chairman (formerly 13 years in prison, Con Son); Nguyen Luu Khanh, VFF Cadre (journalist); Mrs. Nguyen thi Quyen, VFF Committee member (former prisoner, Con Son).
10:30 People's Committee of the First Precinct, Ho Chi Minh City:
Tour of Saigon slum area, exhibition of export commodities; visit to small handicraft cooperative (lacquer work).

MAY 25

Vietnam Fatherland Front Committee of Ho Chi Minh City:
Nguyen Ngoc Thanh, Vice Chairman.
Father Chung Ba Canh, Vice Chairman (Catholic Priest).
Mrs. Nguyen thi Quyen (VFF Committee Member).
Father Chan Tin, VFF (Catholic Priest).
Reverend Ong Van Huyen, VFF and Chairman of Tin Lanh Church in the south.
Mr. Nguyen Huu Hanh, VFF Member of Central Committee (Ex-Brigadier General ARVN, Assistant Chief of Staff 1958–59).
Ministry of War Wounded and Social Affairs:
Miss Xia Linh, Director.
Miss Xuyen Thi Loan, orphanage work & prostitute rehabilitation.
Miss Le Phung Loc, prostitute rehabilitation.
Center for the Restoration of Human Dignity (Gia Dinh):
Mrs. Cho, Director (also staffed by Catholic sister, part of original Caritas Orphanage staff originally on premises).
Mam non Orphanage, Tu Du:
Director and Catholic sister on staff.
Association of Patriotic Intellectuals, Ho Chi Minh City:
Mr. Nguyen Van Bau (host for Association).
Mr. Thu, agronomist, agricultural engineer, former ARVN Major, now with Ministry of Agriculture, Ho Chi Minh City.
Mr. Nguyen Hai Nam, former ARVN army, Saigon police force major; general surgeon, now with hospital staff.
Mr. Nguyen Tin Xam, former ARVN major, medical doctor, working with Association medical section awaiting placement in hospital.
Mr. Buu, medical doctor, former Saigon air force major, now working at Phuc Khien hospital, active Buddhist.

MAY 26

My Tau, Provincial Headquarters staff:
My Tau, state farm cooperative, hydraulic project.
Vam Lang fishing village, cooperatives.
Also visited privately owned fruit plantation.

MAY 27

Bien Hoa, Dong Nai Province, Vinh Cuu District.
Bien Hoa School for Training of Agricultural Mechanics, site.
Dong Nai Provincial People's Committee.
Le Minh Xuan, New Economic Area 17 KM west of Ho Chi Minh City, Long An Province.
Ho Chi Minh City Television: Huynh Van Tieng for taping of interview.

MAY 28

Ho Chi Minh City, War Crimes Museum.
Saigon Zoo.
Dinner with Peoples Committee of Ho Chi Minh City: Host, Mr. Le Quang Chanh, Vice Chairman, Director of External Relations (formerly Deputy Foreign Minister of Provisional Revolutionary Government)

MAY 29

Reeducation Camp T–4, Tay Ninh Province, accompanied by Phuong Nom, Nguyen Trung and Muoi Au, army staff.

MAY 30

Return to Hanoi.

Evening with Mr. Hoang Ung, editor of Nhan Dan Vietnamese newspaper and quasi official policy organ.

MAY 31

Vietmy (Committee for Friendship and Solidarity with the American People) and Vietpeace (Liaison Committee for International Friendship and Solidarity). Discussion and ceremony for reception of $400,000 worth of rice shipped by Church World Service from Thailand which arrived during the visit. Additionally, two representatives from the Commission for Reception of International Peoples' Humanitarian Aid.

Mr. Nguyen Xuan, Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Mr. Cu Dihn Ba, Acting Director of the North American Department, Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Mr. Xuan Thuy, Central Committee, Vietnam Fatherland Front, Chairman of External Relations, Secretary of the Vietnamese Communist Party, Secretary of the United National Assembly. Former chief negotiator, Paris Peace Talks 1968–72.

Farewell dinner with Vietmy.

JUNE 1

Departure from Hanoi for Rangoon.

Mr. FRASER. Thank you Ms. Meinertz.

Our final witness is Mr. Coi. Perhaps I should read something about Mr. Coi's background to simplify our proceedings, since he does not speak English and will have to use an interpreter.

Mr. Coi is aged 31. He comes from a farming family in the Mekong Delta of South Vietnam. His family belongs to the Hoa Hao Buddhist Church. Hoa Hao Buddhism is a religion native to South Vietnam and it has 3 million members, or adherents, and a long history of religious anticommunism.

In 1969, Mr. Coi was elected provincial representative of Quang Duc Province.

He was making connections between the various Hoa Hao groups in the Seven Mountains area of South Vietnam when he was arrested by the new authorities on August 2, 1975.

For 30 days he was interned in Long Xuyen Prison. For the following 60 days he was interned in Can Tho Prison. For the following roughly 7 to 8 months, he moved to a forced labor prison in the U Minh Forest in the Ca Mau Peninsula in the southernmost part of South Vietnam.

On July 15, 1976, Mr. Coi escaped from the U Minh labor camp and from July 15 of 1976 to October 16, a period of about 3 months, he took his family and went into hiding among the Hoa Hao villagers in the Rach Gia Province.

In October, he escaped by boat to Thailand and in December of last year, arrived in the United States. He has extensive first-hand experience with the new regime's reeducation system and detention centers, as well as forced labor camps and also with Hoa Hao Buddhist underground resistance movement.

He does not speak English. He is presently living in Pittsburgh, Pa.

We are delighted to have you here, Mr. Coi, and you may proceed. I guess there is an English statement prepared and you will proceed to read it directly.

Ms. CUMBIE. Yes, this one.

Mr. FRASER. Fine.

STATEMENT OF NGUYEN VAN COI, FORMER PROVINCIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF QUANG DUC PROVINCE, VIETNAM[1]

Mr. Coi. I am most grateful to be given the opportunity to present to this committee my personal experience with life under the new regime as lived by the Vietnamese; 11½ months in three different kinds of detention centers and forced labor camp.

I escaped from Vietnam on October 15, 1976, thus having lived under Communist rule for 17½ months.

I was born and raised in a village in An Giang Province, in the Mekong Delta of South Vietnam. My parents were rice farmers; their religion was Hoa Hao Buddhism, so I was raised in that religion, too. Hoa Hao Buddhism is a reformed Buddhism native to the Mekong Delta of South Vietnam. Its 3 million adepts are rice farmers like ourselves.

Three decades ago, the Communists kidnaped and killed our Prophet, Huynh Phu So, the founder of the faith. As a result, we cannot accept communism and throughout the three war decades, we vigilantly kept Hoa Hao territory free from Communist infiltration, and consequently, free from the fighting.

When Saigon changed hands, I decided to stay in my country. I possessed no knowledge of any foreign language and no skills readily employable in a foreign country. I did not wish to become an exile.

No Vietnamese of farming background like myself wanted to become an exile. So I decided to make peace with my northern brothers. Our leader, 74-year-old Luong Trong Tuong, also advised us to seek peace and reconciliation with the new rulers.

This was in May 1975. Seventeen months later, I was in a forced labor camp called Nong Truong in the U Minh Forest down in the Ca Mau Peninsula, contemplating to put an end to my miserable life. Escaping from the camp was my way of committing suicide. I made it to the free world. As an offering to Buddha, I shaved my head and followed a strictly vegetarian diet until this day.

Born in 1946. In 1969, I ran and was elected the provincial representative of Quang Duc Province. I was in charge of the province's social welfare services. I was reelected again to the post of provincial representative in the 1972 elections; I received the largest number of votes and was elected the chairman of the provincial representative council.

I was traveling in the Seven Mountain area called That Son of Chau Doc Province when I was rounded up and arrested by the new authorities on August 2, 1975.

From August 2 to September 2, 1975, I was interned in Long Xuyen Prison. From September 2 to November 3, 1975, I was transferred to Can Tho Prison. From November 3 to July 15, 1975, I was transferred to a forced labor camp in the U Minh Forest. On July 15, 1976, I escaped from the U Minh labor camp and from July 17 to October 15, 1976, I went into hiding among the Hoa Hao villagers in Rach Gia Province.

On October 16, 1976, I took my family and escaped by boat from the coast of Rach Gia to Thailand.

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[1] Mr. Coi's statement was read in English by an interpreter, Ms. Nguyen Cumbie, from the Library of Congress.

On October 23, 1976, I arrived in Thailand and on December 23, 1976, was admitted to the United States.

The two prisons of Long Xuyen and Can Tho are standard prisons used by former regimes, but now they contained several times more inmates than during Thieu regime. The U Minh Forest forced labor camp, located in an isolated swamp and mangrove area, is a new one set up by the Communist regime to put members of various religious faiths and political parties, parliamentarians, and a large number of officers and officials of the former regime.

After being arrested on August 2, 1975, I was taken to the police station in Long Xuyen, the provincial capital of An Giang. The new police soon discovered I was a Hoa Hao parliamentarian and subjected me to a most intensive interrogation. During 20 days, I was slapped in the face a couple of times when the interrogators thought I did not tell the truth.

I was manacled during all the time I was in the cell and when I was brought out of the cell, I was handcuffed.

I was given two small bowls of rice twice daily, plain rice with salt. The cell in which I was detained was 11 feet by 22 feet. There were around 81 prisoners in my cell. We had to lay on our side because there was not enough room to lay on our back during the night.

I was one of the last brought in, so I was assigned a place near the only toilet hole available in the room, a clogged toilet full of fly larvae. During the night, the larvae were getting into my ears and mouth. An excrement and urine stench was floating in the air day and night. The cell's door was always closed; there were no windows, only two small holes to let the air in. The room was always dark and stinking.

I spent about 3 months in Can Tho Prison. Comparatively, the treatment I received in Long Xuyen Prison was better than Can Tho Prison. The latter contained an estimated 1,500 prisoners at the time I was there. The diet was the same—most of the time plain rice and salt.

The cell was a long room, 4.80 meters by 12 meters. There was a longitudinal alley in the middle and two cement benches, one on each side, for the inmates to sleep on.

I was interrogated countless times, every 2 or 3 days, sometimes twice a day.

I was forced to confess that I was a CIA agent and I was left behind in Vietnam to participate in a CIA network left behind by the U.S. CIA with the purpose of undermining the new regime. I was told I would be freed if I would tell them all about the CIA network and operations left behind in Vietnam.

Like all other inmates, I was required and instructed to write my personal and family histories, going back with minute details to my great grandfathers. I had to rewrite my history and confessions about 20 times during my stay in Can Tho Prison.

Along with other prisoners, we were called students. I was told that my reeducation included two phases: One, study to reform myself; two, labor to reform myself.

By the end of my third month, I was judged sufficiently reformed in thought; I was therefore transferred to the labor camp in U Minh Forest camp. Actually, there was no camp when I arrived there. Pris-

oners were chained by the ankle to the trees' trunks. The U Minh Forest is famous for its mosquitoes. Any time I clasped my hands I killed at least one.

Many prisoners died from malaria, dysentery from drinking dirty water, and other malnutrition diseases. We were given breakfast at 6 a.m. and went to work clearing the forest until 6 p.m., then escorted back to the camp for our second meal of the day. The evenings were reserved for self-criticisms and study of various subjects: revolution, Uncle Ho's works and especially the U.S. imperialist's crimes, and the righteous hatred we Vietnamese must have toward them. One of the course titles was: "Hatred of U.S. Imperialists and Their Wicked Lackeys."

I used eucalyptus bark for clothing since my clothes were gone. Many fellow inmates were deported to the north. I knew I would not get out of the camp alive. I wanted to commit suicide. But I so much loved my wife and children, I made a vow to Buddha—if I succeeded in escaping the camp, I would shave my head and follow a strict vegetarian diet for 1 year.

I would like to express my gratitude to the subcommittee chairman, Representative Donald M. Fraser and other subcommittee members, particularly Representative Edward J. Derwinski, for giving me the opportunity to bring the Vietnamese voice to this committee. I feel greatly honored to be the first Vietnamese to testify before the U.S. Congress, and perhaps the first Vietnamese farmer to do so.

I would like to express my gratitude to Ms. Cumbie, my interpreter.

Due to the limit of time, I can only give sketchy details about my experience in Communist prison camps.

I stand ready to the best of my knowledge to give more details on any subject raised or not raised here, regarding life in Vietnam under the new regime.

I was notified of the invitation to testify last Saturday. I spent 2 nights without sleep to pack into 18 pages what I saw, heard, what I have been through, and the despair and sorrow of my suffering countrymen.

Were I allowed to make a wish, I would wish that you would spend the time to read through my testimony.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[Mr. Coi's prepared statement follows:]