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Sent: Tuesday, May 06, 2008 7:19 AM
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Subject: Adoption

(SBU) Status of Provinces with Blocked Investigations - Currently there are five provinces and one institution where investigations of adoption cases have been blocked. In most of these cases we are making progress towards a resolution of the issue. A list of the provinces and the current state of play is as follows:

Phu Tho (6 cases) - Phu Tho has agreed in principle to meetings to discuss investigations. We expect a firm date to be set by early next week. Post has recently heard that Orphans Overseas is telling PAPs that the province is open as a result of a DIA letter stating that Phu Tho had no objections to announced and accompanied visits. We have told them that we are aware of the letter, but that to be valid investigations need to be unannounced and unaccompanied.

Quang Nam (12 cases) - The province has agreed in principle to permit investigations, and yesterday a post investigation team was able to complete investigations in three locations. A second team will travel later this week, including visits to the orphanages where previous investigations were blocked. Should these proceed smoothly, we will remove the province from the list.

Thai Nguyen (12 cases) - Provincial officials have agreed to meetings on May 9.

Thanh Hoa (12 cases) - Post requested meetings with provincial officials. This request was initially turned down. The official reason was that the request was submitted through the wrong channel. Unofficially, they told us that they saw no point in meeting when the MOA is set to expire in September. We have submitted a new request noting that there are 12 pending cases that need to be resolved. DIA has also agreed to formally request that Thanh Hoa agree to the meetings.

Thua Thien Hue (2 cases) - Provincial officials have agreed in principle to a meeting with ConOff. We expect a date to be set in the next two weeks.

Tu Du Hospital (31 cases) - USCIS HCMC has requested the provincial Department of Health assist with the verification of these cases. We are waiting for a reply.

(SBU) Uncertainty Regarding DIA’s Willingness to Supply Case Lists - ConOff met today with DIA director Vu Duc Long and his assistant Mr. Dao. ConOff thanked MOJ for their clear policy on the processing of pending cases, and requested that Post be supplied with a list of cases that had received a referral by September 1. Dao initially said that this was not possible. However, Long contradicted him and said that we would be given a list. An argument between the two DIA officials followed, with Long again promising a list, but Dao remarking that an list could not be regarded as definitive as DIA might add cases to the list after September 1. This conversation raises further concerns about DIA’s plans for implementing the policy decision of the Office of the Government.
DIA Reaction to Fraud Statement - At the same meeting Long noted that DIA was disturbed by the Embassy's Fraud Summary. He cited two passages that he felt were objectionable. The first was the statement that H'mong women had been required to pay for transportation to Hanoi for an interview with DIA where they were pressured to release their children for international adoption. Long objected that DIA had not forced the women to pay for the trip, but had requested the ASP pay for it. ConOff replied that, as Post had previously informed DIA, the women had stated that the ASP asked them for payment. When ConOff asked Long if DIA had investigated the women's statement or taken any action against the ASP, he replied that this was not important but requested that Post remove the statement. Long also objected to the section noting that ASPs had reported being asked to pay bribes in order to obtain a license and had had to fund shopping trips in the US for GVN officials. Long told ConOff that he had requested every licensed ASP write to him confirming that they had never made any such payments and then handed ConOff copies of the letters. Long concluded that DIA planned to release a statement on these two points. It is noteworthy that DIA did not object to the Post's criticisms of DIA procedures or the statement that they can not compel any action from any official.

Adoptions In the Vietnamese Press - On Friday, May 2, the DCM spoke with four local journalists regarding adoption. So far two have written stories both favorable to the US. Post's translations of these articles are attached.