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TAGS: CVIS, KOCI, CASC, KFRD, NP
SUBJECT: NEPAL: ADOPTION UPDATE

REF: A) KATHMANDU 0564
    B) KATHMANDU 0485
    C) KATHMANDU 0342
    D) KATHMANDU 0290
    E) KATHMANDU 0212
    F) 06 KATHMANDU 3251
    G) 06 KATHMANDU 3154
    H) 06 KATHMANDU 0625

SUMMARY

1. (SBU) U.S. Adoption Agency representatives and a [REDACTED] in Kathmandu for the March 11-13 Government of Nepal (GON) international adoption conference agreed in separate meetings that the GON was aware that adoption reform is needed. The [REDACTED] representatives and [REDACTED] shared their assessment of international adoptions in Nepal and impressions of the conference. Both sought U.S. views. Post will continue to advocate for reform
along with the diplomatic community and interested international organizations.

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**RAPID ASSESSMENT**

2. (SBU) On March 16, shared impressions of the adoption conference and assessment of adoptions in Nepal. Adoptions in Nepal needed reform, they all stressed. met with a wide range of interested parties including the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare (WCS). (NOTE: Post will forward the report once received. END NOTE.) described the situation as "very bad" and lamented that the "whole system is corrupt from beginning to end." added that the situation was "even worse than we thought." cited lack of transparency, lack of oversight, possible exchange of money and questions about children's orphan status as issues of concern.

**U.S. POLICY, CONTINUED MANDATE WITH WCS**

3. (SBU) asked whether the USG was considering suspending adoptions in light of recent decisions to do so by the French and Germans. Conoff replied that there had been no change in U.S. policy, but that we were watching the situation closely. added that the mandate with the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare (WCS) was continued in the 2007 operating plan and would work closely with WCS. believed that the Minister and other officials were "keen" to work on a new draft of an adoption law. WCS had requested's assistance in drafting the new law. opined that the new law governing adoptions would mirror Hague Convention requirements, including a central authority. noted that possible GON personnel changes, including at WCS, would complicate implementation of new adoption regulations or laws.

**REVIEW**

4. (SBU) On March 14, gave Conoff a readout of the conference. said he had pushed for adoption reform in his remarks during the conference. He believed that the GON was aware of the myriad concerns associated with international adoptions in Nepal. He was approached by several Nepalese conference participants and asked about the recent suspension of an adoption agency and what the would do for the
approximately 30 families that were still waiting for their adoptions to be completed. [_____]'s trip to Nepal was to evaluate the situation on the ground and inform decision makers in his government. [_____] identified two primary concerns with international adoptions in Nepal: limited information on the origins of children and the amount of money that might be exchanged throughout the process. [_____] said he was not sure what [_____] might do, adding that he had not been impressed by the orphanages he had visited while in Nepal. He noted that there was pressure to find children eligible for adoption for [_____] families, especially as the number of countries open for international adoptions dwindle.

U.S. ADOPTION AGENCIES

5. (SBU) ConOffs met with U.S. adoption agencies to answer questions and provide information about processing international adoptions in Nepal. ConOffs urged parents and agencies to inform the Consular Section of concerns so that they could be addressed when advocating for adoptive parents with the GON. ConOffs stressed the importance of transparent relationships with orphanages and facilitators and suggested that parents pay all fees from the U.S. Several agencies requested that the Embassy provide an "approved" or "recommended" list of orphanages. ConOff explained that the Embassy did not maintain such a list and suggested they contact the GON. Agencies asked what action, if any, the Department of State was going to take against U.S. agency [_____] noting that [_____] had cases pending in Nepal. ConOff explained that we did not comment on specific cases or investigations or accredit U.S. agencies, but that we appreciated the information and would pass it along as appropriate.

U.S. AGENCY IMPRESSIONS OF THE CONFERENCE

6. (SBU) Most U.S. agencies agreed that GON officials seemed aware of areas that needed improvement. Agency representatives were impressed by the range of topics covered at the conference, but hesitated to establish new programs in Nepal. Many agency representatives told ConOff that they were interested in starting new programs in Nepal, but were worried that the U.S. might limit adoptions in Nepal. Agency representatives stated that the issues raised at the conference were not new to them, and that they hoped that the GON would ratify the Hague Convention.

COMMENT

7. (SBU) Mission Kathmandu has long been concerned over adoption
practices in Nepal (ref:els) and has been working with the diplomatic community and international organizations to lobby for necessary changes. The assessments by [redacted] are troubling, though not surprising. Post will continue to work for reform that leads to greater transparency and protection of Nepalese orphans while preserving the win-win outcome of international adoption and safeguarding the interests of U.S. adoptive parents.

Moriarty

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