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B2, B6, B7(C), B7(A), B5

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INFO LOG-00 CA-00 DS-00 EAP-00 UTED-00 H-00 TEDE-00
L-00 PPT-00 VO-00 DSCC-00 SAS-00 /000W
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R 210955Z MAR 08
FM AMEMBASSY HANOI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7445
INFO AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
USCIS WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS HANOI 000331

SENSITIVE

DEPARTMENT FOR CA/OCS, CA/OCS/CI, CA/OCS/ACS/EAP, CA/OCS/PRI,
DEPARTMENT ALSO FOR CA/VO/F/P, EAP/BCLTV, AND L/EAP
BANGKOK FOR DHS/DD
HO CHI MINH FOR CONS AND DHS OIC
HONG KONG FOR DHS OIC

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: KOCI, CVIS, CASC, PREL, PGOV, VM

SUBJECT: Adoptions: Warehousing of "Abandoned" Children Leads to
Overcrowding and Even Deaths; Exposes Abuse in the System

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The recent deaths of eight infants from a Hanoi orphanage highlights the sometimes tragic costs of overcrowding we are seeing in child welfare facilities throughout Vietnam. The surge in caseloads for these centers directly coincides with the increase in demand for infants created by American ASP's operating in those centers. It is not generally being experienced in centers not associated with foreign adoptions. Field investigations have revealed that many of these children enter the orphanages as a direct result of inducements to birth families and the desire by orphanage administrators to maximize incomes. Indeed, orphanage directors have told us that the direct cash payments given to them by some American adoption service providers in exchange for infant referrals for their clients create a clear financial incentive to bring in as many infants as possible, while keeping their costs per child as low as possible. Many "abandonments" are faked, apparently to make USG investigation into inducements offered birth parents more difficult.



B5

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: FRANK TUMMINIA
DATE/CASE ID: 09 SEP 2008 200801293

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[Redacted]

END

SUMMARY.

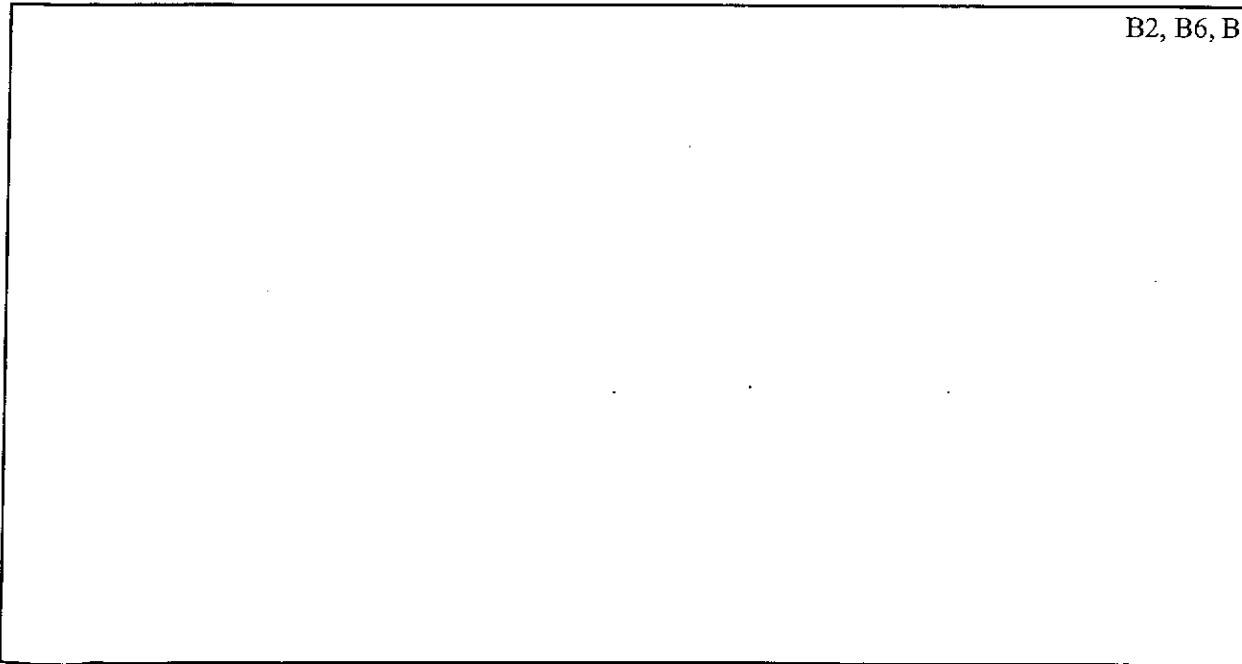
2. (SBU) Eight children, [Redacted]

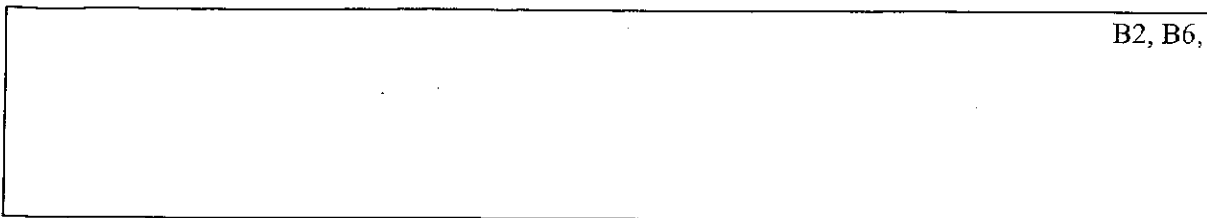
[Redacted] have recently died in hospital after contracting pneumonia at the Hanoi Center 1 orphanage. Post first heard reports of an illness in this center in early February. At that time, Mr. Tran Van Minh, the director of Hanoi Center 1, told an LES investigator that some children were suffering from colds but were being treated by a doctor who visited the center daily. In late February, a delegation from USCIS and CA/OCS/CI visited Center 1 and met with Mr. Minh. At that time, Mr. Minh said that ten children were hospitalized for rhinovirus (a type of common cold). Since then, officials at the hospital where the infants were treated confirmed that eight children from Hanoi Center 1 had died in hospital of pneumonia.

Number Of Abandoned Infants Skyrocketing

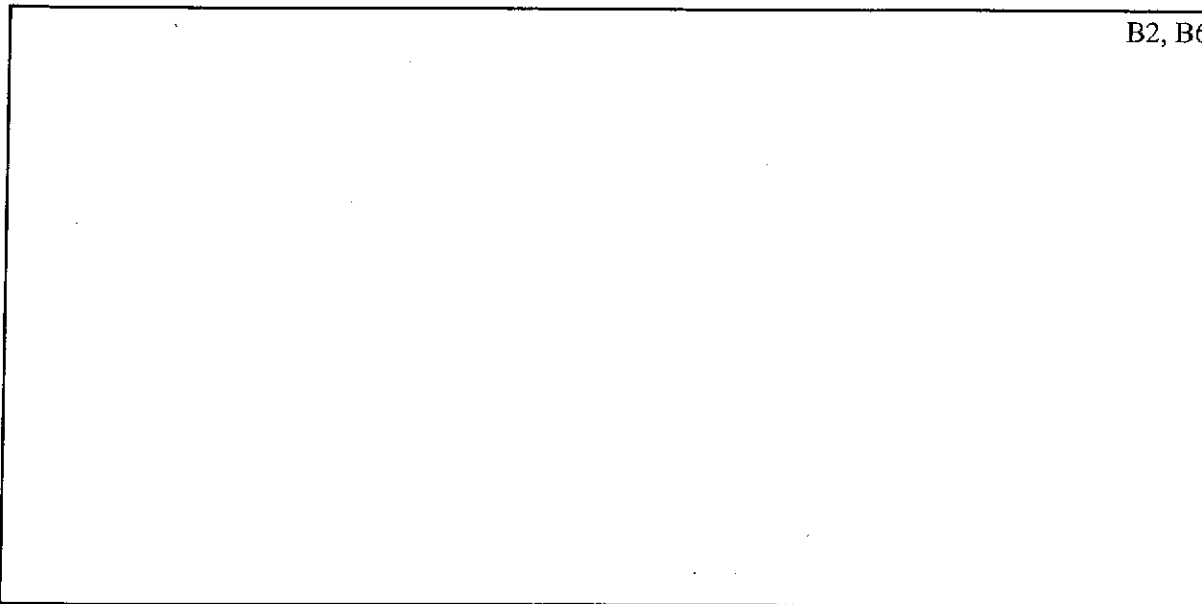
3. (SBU) This tragedy underscores the critical state of the adoption process in Vietnam by highlighting a troubling phenomenon: the skyrocketing number of "abandoned" infants in Vietnamese orphanages that are authorized to process international adoptions. This is especially disturbing in light of the documented fact that, were it not for cash payments and false promises made to birth families, many of these children would be raised by the birth families or close relatives in a home environment.

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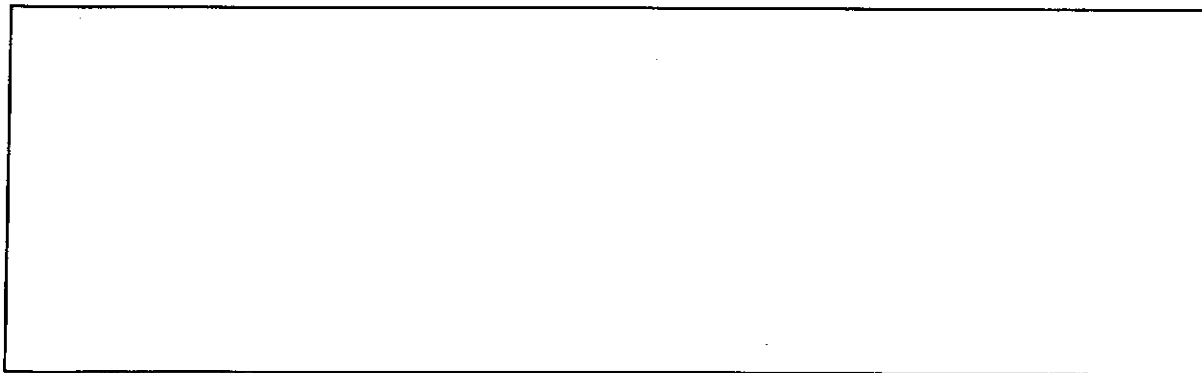




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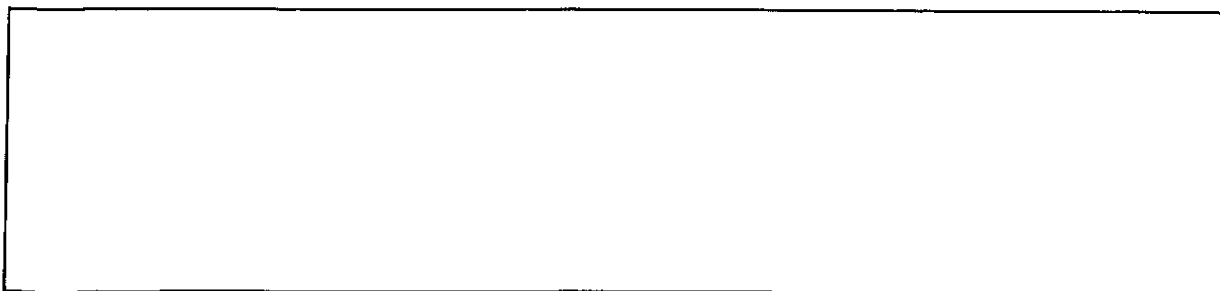


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B2, B7(A)

Other Problem Provinces



B7(A), B6

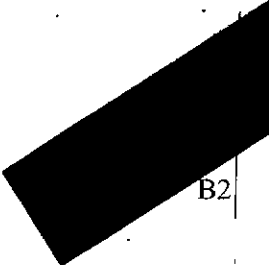
[Redacted]

B2, B7(A)

[Redacted]

B2, B6, B7(C)

[Redacted] In January 2008, a consular team visited the same orphanage and confirmed that 67 infants and three toddlers were being housed there; in just eight short months, the number of children in the orphanage had more than tripled, with the overwhelming majority of residents being "abandoned" infants. Separately, the Vietnamese government agency responsible for orphanages in [Redacted] confirmed to Post in writing that 76 of 77 reported child abandonments in the province took place at this same orphanage.



B2

B2, B7(A)

[Redacted]

Comment

10. (SBU) During a period where Vietnam has been experiencing peace, stability, and economic growth unparalleled in its modern history, and where public awareness campaigns regarding family planning and access to birth control are relatively widespread, it is noteworthy that the rapid growth in infants in orphanages has only occurred in institutions connected with U.S. adoptions, and only after the re-opening of adoptions for Americans. According to the evidence Post has seen, provinces that do not have international adoptions have not seen a commensurate increase in infants in institutions. These factors point to the re-opening of American adoptions, not other factors, in the overcrowding of these facilities over short periods of time. This, coupled with the statements of orphanage directors that they are under pressure from ASPs to supply their required "quotient of children," creates a situation in which

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orphanage officials are employing tactics, from questionable to illegal, to initiate campaigns to induce families to give up their children. To streamline processing, and frustrate attempts to uncover abuse, many cases are classified as abandonments, despite the fact that facilitators have direct contact with birth parents. The overcrowding we are seeing can have significant consequences, such as the tragic deaths of eight infants from Hanoi Center 1.

11. (SBU) We have already heard some advocates for adoptions from Vietnam cite the deaths of infants housed in Center 1 as an argument for quicker processing of adoption cases, which would of course be accomplished through reduced scrutiny of cases. In our view, this is exactly the wrong approach. With relaxed scrutiny, current trends will intensify, leaving yet more children at risk, more birth parents victimized and more American prospective parents potentially facing the pain of realizing that the children they seek to adopt do not fit the definition of orphan. The clear solution is to help Vietnam face the need to institute regulations and create a competent authority to regulate the adoption process to the benefit of all these groups.

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