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The Consulate General of the United States of America in Ho Chi Minh City presents its compliments to the Office of External Relations in Ho Chi Minh City, and has the honor to refer to the Consulate General's diplomatic notes numbered 527-07 of October 23, 2007 and 532-07 of October 25, 2007, the External Relations Office's diplomatic note numbered 5099/NV-LS-QHLS dated October 25, 2007, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs diplomatic notes numbered 035/NG-LS of January 30, 2007 and 142/NG-LS dated May 9, 2001.

The Consulate General would like to remind the Office of External Relations that the text of both of the diplomatic notes from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs cited above include text stating that:

*3/ In case an activity needs to be done outside the consular district, it is required to obtain the permission from the Government of Vietnam. Following is the petition procedure:*

- *Embassies are requested to send diplomatic notes to the Consular Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs for consular missions that are based in the area from Thua Thien Hue and the north. Consular missions send diplomatic notes to the Office of External Relations in Ho Chi Minh City for consular mission from Danang City and south.*
- *Embassies & Consular Missions are required to provide time, the area to be visited, activity's purpose, names of consular officers, vehicle information.*
- *The Consular Department and the Office of External Relations under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will approve or disapprove in writing within 5 working days.*
- *In emergency cases, consular missions can fax the request in advance and mail the official diplomatic note after that. The Consular Department and the Office of External Relations will respond as soon as possible (after receiving the request)*

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The Consulate General would also like to remind the External Relations Office that on the Consulate diplomatic note number 527-07 of October 23, 2007, met the exact details described quoted above from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs diplomatic notes 035/NG-LS of January 30, 2007 and 142/NG-LS dated May 9, 2001. In addition to providing all of the details requested in the two diplomatic notes from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Consulate's note number 527-07 included the exact details of whom the Consulate's team planned to meet in Can Tho: the Can Tho Children's Hospital. Despite providing all of these details, on October 29 the Consulate's officer in Can Tho was informed by the Can Tho Children's Hospital that they were not approved to meet with the Consulate officer or his staff. In addition, the External Relations Office of Can Tho reported that they had received no information from the External Relations Office of Ho Chi Minh City concerning this visit.

The Consulate General also notes that the External Relations Office's diplomatic note 5099/NV-LS-QHLS requested the exact name and contact information for any Vietnamese persons that the Consulate's officer may need to meet based upon information obtained at the Can Tho Children's Hospital. As explained in both of the Consulate General's diplomatic notes on this topic (527-07 and 532-07) the Consulate General cannot speculate on what information the Can Tho Children's Hospital may be able to provide and is thus unable to guess which persons, if any, the Consulate's officer may need to visit after the meeting at the Can Tho Children's Hospital. Despite this, the Consulate General still fulfilled all of the requirements laid out in the Ministry of Foreign

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Affairs diplomatic notes numbered 035/NG-LS of January 30, 2007 and 142/NG-LS dated May 9, 2001 by providing all of the information requested in those notes: the dates of the visit, the area to be visited, activity's purpose, names of consular officers, and vehicle information. In diplomat note 532-07, the Consulate General also offered to brief the External Relations Office as soon as additional information was available and prior to beginning work in any location other than Can Tho Children's Hospital.

The Consulate General regrets that fact that despite all of these efforts to comply with every request from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the External Relations Office that the External Relations Office has taken steps to prevent the Consulate's officer from fulfilling his mission by collecting information at the Can Tho Children's Hospital. This decision by the External Relations Office renders the Consulate General unable to fulfill its consular responsibilities in the region.

The Consulate General of the United States of America in Ho Chi Minh City avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of External Relations the assurances of its highest consideration.

Consulate General of the United States of America,

Ho Chi Minh City, October 29, 2007

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