

RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY NCVA ON THE HUMAN TRAFFICKING QUESTION IN VIETNAM May 12, 2006

1/ The National Congress of Vietnamese Americans (NCVA) is of the belief that the human trafficking question in Vietnam should be, in view of its cross-border nature, an *international* concern, one that should primarily concern the ASEAN countries since it is carried out in a number of countries in the region, to wit, in the form of prostitution (including child prostitution) in Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Southern China, and in the form of arranged marriages of adult Vietnamese women to men in Singapore, Taiwan, and South Korea.

2/ NCVA is convinced of the *systemic* nature of this present-day “white” slavery and therefore of the need to address it at its source. The Government of Vietnam at the present time either condones this traffic or turns a blind eye on it. Evidence can be found in the many open businesses (including sales on the Internet) engaged in this traffic, not only in the southern part of the country but also in northern and central provinces, a story that is frequently reported upon by the daily press (in Vietnam, Taiwan, Korea) and captured on international television clips. This suggests that pressure should be put on Hanoi by the international community, especially those UN agencies and NGOs in charge of women’s and children’s wellbeing, so that the Government of Socialist Vietnam takes responsibility for stemming the source(s) of this trafficking.

3/ NCVA notices the *woefully inadequate resources* presently available to address this tragedy. A couple of NGOs operating in Cambodia or individuals like Father Hung in Taiwan are essentially reactive operations that could at best only respond to “the tip of the iceberg.” Unable to stem the traffic at its source, these operations are already overwhelmed the way they are by the sheer magnitude of the problem, and the situation is only going to get worse as the months and years go by.

NCVA THEREFORE CALLS UPON:

1/ The United Nations, especially those agencies in charge of women’s and children’s welfare, to send observers to the region to carry out in-depth investigations of the issue and come back with facts and figures and a full set of feasible, realistic recommendations.

2/ The Governments of Nations in the area, especially those in which this trafficking is being carried out on a large scale, make it a priority to control and monitor such traffic. While some arranged marriages are clearly legitimate, the said Governments should provide language training and counseling services to all Vietnamese brides so that cultural conflicts be minimized and wife battery be avoided as much as possible. In extreme cases, the women and especially children should be transferred to the care of neutral authorities or NGOs.

3/ The Government of the United States give support to a long-term program of eradication of the traffic, especially through its leadership, a vast awareness campaign (working in particular with international media), training in monitoring and counseling services, and sharing with countries in Southeast Asia and in the region the extensive experiences that the U.S. has had in eradicating the “white slavery” problem at the beginning of the twentieth century.

4/ Major NGOs in the world, especially those concerned with human rights, to turn their attention to this question to expose the extent of the problem and call on everybody concerned to bring their collective wisdom and make a concerted, large-scale effort to address this most shameful expression of trampled dignity of the Vietnamese women.

5/ Finally, more NGOs join the effort in stemming this calamity and be financed, through public and private funds, to have adequate means to address the issue as it is accumulating and getting worse and worse over the foreseeable future.