

UNITED KINGDOM - HONG KONG - SOCIALIST
REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM
DISCUSSIONS ON REFUGEES *

Representatives of the British and Hong Kong Governments and of the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam met in London on 11 and 12 October 1988 for the second round of talks on solutions to the problems created by the number of Vietnamese boat people trying to enter Hong Kong since the introduction of the Hong Kong Government's new policy on 16 June 1988. The discussions took place in a friendly and constructive atmosphere.

The two sides reviewed progress in implementing the agreement reached at the first round of talks in Hanoi on 3 and 4 August that realistic and effective measures to bring the outflow of boat people from Vietnam to an end were urgently required. They agreed that some progress had been made in stemming the outflow but that it was essential to persist in these efforts and, if necessary, to reinforce them in order that they should be fully effective. The two sides recognised the value of the Orderly Departure Programme as the main channel for Vietnamese who wish to leave Vietnam in order to settle in other countries. They called on other countries to increase their efforts to accept Vietnamese eligible for resettlement from Hong Kong.

The two sides accepted the need for comprehensive arrangements for Vietnamese boat people arriving in Hong Kong after 15 June 1988 who do not qualify for resettlement in other countries. Both sides agreed to make an immediate start on phased returns to Vietnam of those who have already applied to return. The British side handed over a list of those whose documentation had been processed by UNHCR. It was also recognised that comprehensive arrangements would pose problems of a practical nature for the Vietnamese Government. The British side was ready in principle to extend financial assistance towards the organisation of repatriation to, and resettlement in Vietnam. The two sides invite UNHCR to participate in the implementation of the agreement on the basis that the arrangements should be carried out in a humanitarian way. Both sides agreed to stay in close touch in order to implement quickly and expeditiously the agreements recorded in this statement.

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Discussions on Refugees cont'd.....

During his stay in London, Mr Vu Khoan, Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, had a meeting with Mr. Tim Eggar, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, to exchange views on matters of mutual concern.

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* [The text of this Press Statement of 12 October 1988 was provided by W.J. Dixon, First Secretary (Information) British High Commission, Canberra].