

FOR THE YOUNGER GENERATION: THE MEANING OF BLACK APRIL 30

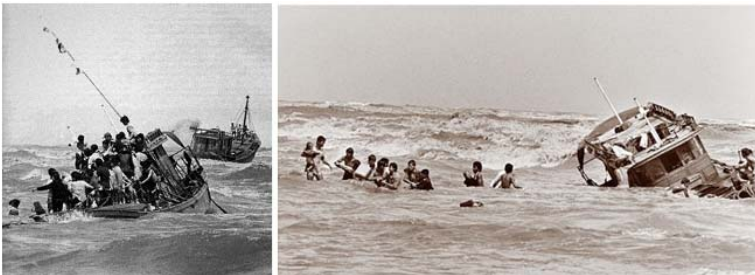
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With the coming of April 30, I'd first like to remind the younger generation, born after 1975, of one important issue many of you still don't realize: The National Mourning Day of April 30 is a sad day because on that day, we, the South Vietnamese, lost our country into the brutal hands of North Vietnamese communists from Hanoi. With their aggressive and illegal invasion by North Vietnamese army they forced themselves into the free democratic territory of the South citizens, in 1975. Briefly, the National Mourning Day is the Day We Lost Our Country, the home land of all Vietnamese who cherish liberty, human rights, democracy and peace.

Despite this, many Vietnamese college students in America ignorantly gather in groups to party or socialize, have fun and dance on that day and night, as seen in the past years. This year, parents, please explain to your children the historical meaning of how tragic April 30th is. After that day, approximately half a million Vietnamese in the South died on their way to escape communist brutality on the Eastern Sea.

I hope Vietnamese grandparents and parents still remember to teach their children the common Vietnamese proverb that was widely taught in our Southern schools in the Republic of Vietnam before 1975: When one horse gets sick, the others in the whole stall don't eat. We should reflect on how horses have the ability to share their pain and treat their own better than we, the human race, are able to.



The brave and tearful sacrifices of half a million Vietnamese, escaping by boat in the vast sea awakened the conscience of the United Nations. The UN High Commissioner for Vietnamese Refugees took care of the expenses to set up Refugee Camps in the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and more... from 1978 to 1988. These camps received Vietnamese refugees escaping from the communist regime

and allowed temporary living. But the compassion didn't end there. Americans citizens and US Congress appealed to the American government for documents to approve Vietnamese refugees settling in America to start their new life. Gradually, other free countries in the world supported and allowed South Vietnamese to seek asylum in their home countries, including Australia, Canada, France, Germany, England, New Zealand, Belgium, Denmark and Norway... Our compatriots died for us to live. And now how can those parents, i.e., the former Vietnamese refugees, indifferently (or unintentionally) allow their adult children to meet, have fun, and dance at night in the approaching of the National Tragic Day of April 30?

Next, I'd like the younger generation to acknowledge another important part of history from 1988 to 1989. US President, Ronald Reagan was successful in his great task, helping former political prisoners of South Vietnam who were tremendously suffering from being discriminated against and oppressed by the dictatorship of the single party communist government regime in Vietnam.

In 1988, President Reagan signed a decree permitting all Military, Citizens, Professionals and Government



Officials of the Republic of Vietnam (RVN), all ranks and levels included (who suffered for at least 3 years in the VC concentration camps) and their families, could apply for settlement in America legally. Meaning, the political prisoners and their families didn't have to escape by hiding dangerously and walking to Thailand or Cambodia, or by riding on a small boat resembling a fragile leaf and perishing on the sea waves.

Just one year before, in 1987, many US Congress members from both Republican and Democrat parties, along with former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Mr. Robert Funseth,

made great efforts as the main negotiators to present Resolution 212. When the diplomats traveled to Vietnam to talk with Vietnamese Communists to liberate prisoners of RVN, who were enduring torturous treatment in VC concentration camps with severe hard labor (that treacherous VC called “re-education” places), the VC argued against them roughly. They said: “No, we dont let them free. If we free those political and military prisoners of RVN, they would stand up and rebel across the country. Then, how can we control the people? Does your America accept all the (dirty) prisoners if we let them free...?”

The VC did not anticipate President Reagan would quickly affirm and reply that the RVN prisoners were welcome to immigrate to America if they were free to go. Thanks to President Reagan, an agreement between the US and VC party was signed on July 30, 1989. Therefore, Resolution 212 was considered as the legal document that liberated more than 300,000 South Vietnamese political prisoners. These Vietnamese people were allowed to leave communist Vietnam with their families to resettle and start a new life in America.

Clearly, to the former prisoners of RVN: After the heavy rain, comes a bright sky. Lets hope and pray, even when we are betrayed, deceived, failed, or meet adversity... All things shall pass ... along with the temporary human life. Lets trust those who work for the right cause and have kindness. We will rise above adversity, have opportunities to come across, and support one another for success.

Commemoration for April 30
TRẦN THỦY TIỀN – M.S.