

August 10, 2006

Bee Yang, M.S.W  
6489 North De Wolf Avenue  
Clovis CA 93619

Senator Dianne Feinstein  
U.S. Senator  
2500 Tulare Street, Suite 4290  
Fresno, CA 93721

Dear Honorable Feinstein,

I am writing to oppose the resolution you are sponsoring to commemorate the U.S. – Thai relationship, in light of the Thai Government's involvement in the desecration of at least 900 graves of deceased Hmong refugees buried at *Wat Tham Krabok* monastery in Saraburi, Thailand. We request that you communicate your concern about these grave desecrations with the Thai Government and request that it take all appropriate action to halt further exhumations, to investigate the whereabouts of the remains that have been disinterred and to return those remains to family members.

In fall 2005, Hmong families resettled in the U.S. began to receive reports that the graves of their deceased loved ones were being excavated without notice at *Wat Tham Krabok*, a Buddhist monastery that served for more than a decade as their home. In 2004-05, thirteen thousand Hmong refugees left *Wat Tham Krabok* for the United States. Many of our Hmong neighbors in California, Minnesota and Wisconsin have been directly affected by the desecration of graves of their loved ones that remained in their former refugee camp.

It is estimated that there were approximately 2,000 Hmong refugees buried on the grounds of *Wat Tham Krabok* and other private land adjacent to the monastery. In mid-October, 2005, apparently at the invitation of the Abbot of the monastery, an ethnic Chinese organization, the Bhoti Pavana Foundation, and later, the Buddha Dhamma organization, began exhuming the dead. A video shot on October 26, 2005 showed hundreds of Thai workers arriving by the busloads, accompanied by an ambulance, other official Thai Government vehicles and representatives of the Thai Government. The video also showed the desecration of the sacred burial sites and the treatment of individual corpses in vivid detail.

**Senator Dianne Feinstein**

August 10, 2006

Page Two

The Government of Thailand claims that the graves of the Hmong at *Wat Tham Krabok* are being exhumed because of water quality concerns. The actions of those disinterring the bodies make it evident that those claims are not true. Video footage of the desecration shows crews dismembering the bodies, removing the bones and throwing the rest of the remains into open graves. Much of this footage is too gruesome to describe. The evidence supports instead the diggers' intent to remove solely the bones from the graves of the Hmong dead. We have not yet been able to determine what has happened with those bones.

The monks of *Wat Tham Krabok* have stated that Hmong relatives were given a chance to claim the bodies and make other burial arrangements, but the relatives insist they were not notified and those who have tried to make other arrangements have been told that they have no right to do so.

We believe that the Thai Government's participation in the desecration of these graves constitutes a clear violation of the human rights of the Hmong people as enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Despite many inquiries, we have not received any official response from the Thai Government.

We have requested Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to engage the Government of Thailand to try to reach a reasonable resolution on this situation, including an apology for the Thai Government's involvement in the desecrations, assurances that there will be no further exhumations of Hmong graves anywhere in Thailand and an accurate identification of the remains that were exhumed at *Wat Tham Krabok*.

We have enclosed several documents for your information about this ongoing case: our complaint to the United Nations, resolutions passed by the City of St. Paul and the Minnesota State Legislature, photos of the desecrations, and selected individual statements from affected family members.

It is our hope that there will be no congratulatory resolutions adopted by U.S. Congress while this case remains unresolved. We request that you communicate your concerns about the grave desecrations and request that the Thai Government take all appropriate action to halt further exhumations, to investigate the whereabouts of the remains that have been disinterred and to return those

**Senator Dianne Feinstein**

August 10, 2006

Page Three

remains to family members. I would be pleased to respond to any questions you might have about this request. Thank you for your attention to this issue.

Sincerely,

Bee Yang, M.S.W

cc: Minnesota, Wisconsin, California Congressional Delegations