



VIETNAM AGENT ORANGE RELIEF & RESPONSIBILITY CAMPAIGN

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PRESS RELEASE

FIRST CONGRESSIONAL HEARING ON U.S. RESPONSIBILITY TO VIETNAM'S THREE MILLION AGENT ORANGE VICTIMS IS HELD

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Congressman Eni F.H. Faleomavaega, the Chairman on the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, and the Global Environment, convenes a hearing on *Our Forgotten Responsibility: What Can We Do to Help Victims of Agent Orange* on Thursday, May 15th at 10:00 A.M. in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building. This is the first hearing ever to be held in the United States Congress examining the consequences of the use of Agent Orange during the Vietnam War for the health and environment of the Vietnamese people today.

At the conclusion, the Vietnam Agent Orange Relief & Responsibility Campaign will hold a press conference at 2:00 P.M. in Room 2255 Rayburn House Office Building with Congressman Faleomavaega and two of the witnesses testifying at the hearing:

- **Dr. Nguyen Thi Ngoc Phuong** is the Chief of Obstetrics and Gynecology of the Medical University of Ho Chi Minh City and the Director General of Ngoc Tam Hospital. Dr. Phuong has researched and published extensively on the deleterious health impact of Agent Orange on the people of Vietnam including the impact of toxic chemicals on reproductive outcomes, dioxin induced risk to pregnancies, and women giving birth to grossly deformed babies as seen at the OB/GYN Hospital in HCM City. She spoke at the American Public Health Association National Conference in November, 2007.
- **Jeanne Mirer, Esq.** is the Secretary General of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers, an international human rights organization, a member of the National Lawyers Guild and counsel to the Vietnamese Agent Orange victims.

Dr. Phuong will discuss the public health and environmental impact of the use of dioxin laden Agent Orange for the Vietnamese people, who now suffer from cancers and other illnesses and whose children are affected by severe birth defects, as well as the danger from toxic *hot spots* where dioxin in the soil and water remains at dangerous levels. Counselor Mirer will discuss the rationale for U.S. assistance to Vietnam's Agent Orange victims in international and U.S. law

The scientific and public health community is on record in calling for compensation for both Vietnamese and U.S. veteran Agent Orange victims. A recent American Public Health Association Policy Statement recognized the relationship between Agent Orange exposure and severe consequences to public health and recommended that, "*the US government and involved chemical companies provide resources for services for the disabled in areas where dioxin victims are concentrated... for American and Vietnamese people harmed...[and] be responsible to remediate or attempt to clean up those areas in Vietnam that still contain high levels of dioxin.*"

BACKGROUND:

More than 30 years after the end of the U.S. war that killed more than 58,000 Americans and 3 million Vietnamese, U.S. veterans are demanding compensation for their Vietnamese counterparts. U.S. veterans received partial compensation for their injuries from the chemical companies and the U.S. government but Vietnamese veterans received **not one penny** in compensation from the U.S. government which sprayed them with Agent Orange.

- More than three million Vietnamese and tens of thousands of U.S. soldiers are affected by Agent Orange caused cancers and other life threatening diseases.
- Agent Orange causes tragic birth defects in several generations of children of those exposed.
- Agent Orange continues to poison the natural environment of Vietnam in the “hot spots”.

The Vietnam Agent Orange Relief & Responsibility Campaign, a project of Veterans For Peace, (www.vn-agentorange.org) is a grass roots organization of veterans, Vietnamese Americans, people of faith, workers, scientists, environmentalists and others who support the lawsuit of Agent Orange victims against U.S. chemical manufacturers and bring citizen pressure on the U.S. government to provide compensation for Vietnamese Agent Orange survivors.

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