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LOU CORREA

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November 17, 2003

H.E. Tran Duc Luong
President
Socialist Republic of Vietnam
Office of the State
1 Bach Thao
Hanoi, Social Republic of Vietnam

H.E. Nong Duc Manh
General Secretary, Community Party of
Vietnam
Central Committee Headquarters
Nguyen Canh Chan
1A Hung Vuong
Hanoi, Social Republic of Vietnam

H.E. Phan Van Khai
Prime Minister
Socialist Republic of Vietnam
Office of the Prime Minister
Hoang Hoa Tham
Hanoi, Socialist Republic of Vietnam

H.E. Nguyen Van An
President of the National Assembly
Socialist Republic of Vietnam
National Assembly
35 Ngo Quyen
Hanoi, Socialist Republic of Vietnam

Dear Excellencies:

We wish to express our deep concern for the safety and health of the Most Venerable Thich Huyen Quang, Patriarch of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam and his Deputy, Venerable Thich Quang Do. Media reports indicate that security police detained a UBCV convoy carrying the Patriarch and his Deputy on October 9, 2003, a day after a standoff outside Nguyen Thieu pagoda in Binh Dinh. We understand that they and other leaders of the UBCV have since been detained or put under house arrest.

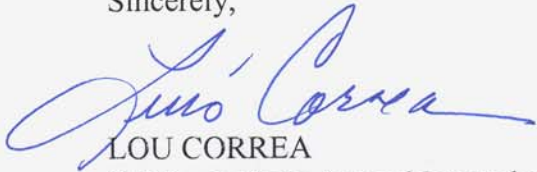
Early this year your government released Venerable Thich Huyen Quang and Venerable Thich Quang Do after nearly twenty years of house arrest. In April 2003, a meeting between Venerable Thich Huyen Quang and Prime Minister Phan Van Khai suggested that the Buddhist monks would be released and their freedom returned. However, your government has instead continued to restrain their movement and activities. Additional leaders of the UBCV has also been detained and put under house arrest. These latest incidents indicate a continuing lack of religious freedom in Vietnam.

We respectfully request that your government immediately release and put an end to the persecution and false imprisonment of the UBCV and its leaders. The exercise of the freedom of

Protection of Religious Freedom letter, 11/17/03

religion is a basic human right that must be respected by a government if the government is to be respected by the free people of the world. We are hopeful that your government will take action to respect the right of independent churches to practice their faith and demonstrate your sincere commitment to improving your human rights record.

Sincerely,



LOU CORREA
California State Assemblymember
69th Assembly District

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