

## December 02, 2004- Vietnamese Government Denies Sanchez Visa

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GARDEN GROVE, Calif. &ndash; On December 1, 2004, the Government of Vietnam denied the visa application of Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez to enter the country. Government officials cited her &ldquo;&hellip;lack of objectivity and goodwill toward Vietnam&rdquo; in a letter from the National Assembly of Vietnam to the American Embassy. The Government of Vietnam concluded that Sanchez&rsquo;s visit &ldquo;would not serve Vietnam-U.S. relations&rdquo;. The decision marks Sanchez&rsquo;s second denial to travel into Vietnam.

&ldquo;I&rsquo;m obviously disappointed with the decision, but I suppose I shouldn&rsquo;t be surprised,&rdquo; said Sanchez. &ldquo;The Socialist Government of Vietnam has proved its intolerance in dealing with people who do not share its point of view. I think it&rsquo;s unfortunate that the government is unwilling to participate in a cooperative dialogue.&rdquo;

Sanchez, a tireless advocate for human rights, has continuously challenged the Government of Vietnam to change its repressive human rights policy that condones political and religious persecution. She has promoted awareness and policy debates in the U.S. Congress, urging her colleagues to address the human rights violations as it considers the United States&rsquo; relationship with Vietnam. Sanchez is also the co-founder of Congressional Vietnam Caucus and represents the largest Vietnamese community outside of Vietnam.

Despite the numerous obstacles, Sanchez hopes to meet in the future with Vietnamese government officials to participate in a constructive bilateral dialogue that will address its human rights violations.

The following letter was communicated by the National Assembly of Vietnam to the American Embassy.

&ldquo;November 29 04:01:54 2004

In the past years, Vietnam - U.S. relations have witnessed encouraging advances in many fields and through channels, including that between U.S. Congress and the Vietnamese National Assembly, as demonstrated by the increasing number of U.S. Congressmen who visit Vietnam and vice versa. For the sake of promoting relations of cooperation based on an equal footing, mutual benefit and mutual respect, Vietnam's National Assembly extends consistent support to U.S.-Vietnam exchanges and dialogue conducted in an open spirit and goodwill. In that spirit, Vietnam has welcomed many U.S. Congressional delegations and staff, including Representative Loretta Sanchez.

&ldquo;Regrettably, however, Ms. Loretta Sanchez altogether lacks objectivity and goodwill toward Vietnam. The Vietnamese National Assembly and Vietnamese public opinion share the view that a visit to Vietnam by Ms. Loretta Sanchez would not serve Vietnam-U.S. relations. The Office of the National Assembly wishes to inform the Embassy of the United States of America of the above and requests the Embassy to convey the same to the office of Representative Loretta Sanchez.

&ldquo;The Office of the National Assembly avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Embassy of the United States of America the assurances of its highest consideration.&rdquo;