

Cambodian Adoptions  
Talking Points For Congressional Briefing  
Update – Special Humanitarian Initiative for Cambodian Adoptions  
May 14, 2002

- The Special Humanitarian Initiative for Cambodian Adoptions and the US/Cambodian Task Force were established to address the special circumstances of those prospective adoptive parents whose cases were pending on December 21<sup>st</sup> when INS Commissioner Ziglar suspended adoptions from Cambodia because of serious irregularities in the Cambodian adoption process.
- The work of the Task Force has reinforced our concerns about the transparency of the Cambodian adoption process and the continued need for the suspension. We are pleased, however, that through the Special Humanitarian Initiative announced on March 1<sup>st</sup>, we have been able to provide relief to approximately 118 prospective adoptive parents who had completed the official Cambodian referral process for a particular child prior to the suspension. As a result, 126 children have been cleared for final adoption and entry into the United States.
- During the course of the last several months, we have received requests to broaden the criteria for the Special Humanitarian Initiative, specifically to include prospective adoptive parents who had been unofficially matched with a particular child from Cambodia at the time the suspension was announced, but were unable to complete the official Cambodian adoption process prior to December 21<sup>st</sup>.
- Based on extensive information we have gathered about these cases with the help of congressional offices, the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute, and prospective adoptive parents, we have asked the Department of State to propose to the Cambodian government that they work with us to process additional specific cases under the Special Humanitarian Initiative, specifically those in which an I-600A had been approved by the INS, and an informal match with a particular Cambodian child occurred prior to December 21<sup>st</sup>.
- The cornerstone of this decision is that these matches between prospective adoptive parents and children took place prior to the suspension being announced. Allowing this limited group of cases to go forward is consistent with the goals of our Special Humanitarian Initiative - to acknowledge the investment of those whose INS processing was complete and who had established a bond with a particular child in Cambodia prior to the suspension.
- We know that our decision will disappoint some people who had an interest in adopting from Cambodia but who had not been matched with a particular child by December 21. Although it may be a difficult decision, we encourage those prospective adoptive parents who still want to adopt a child to consider adopting from another country at this time. An individual can apply to switch countries on a Form I-824 at no charge if the form is completed by June 30, 2002.
- We have learned that approximately 50 prospective adoptive parents have decided to take advantage of this opportunity to adopt from another country or otherwise abandon their application in light of the suspension.

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