

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 31, 2014

The Honorable John Kerry
Secretary of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Chuck Hagel
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Kerry and Secretary Hagel,

We write to you regarding our concern with the deteriorating conditions of the Bien Hoa National Military Cemetery in Vietnam, and our desire for the Department of State and the Department of Defense to address this issue with the Vietnamese government at your earliest opportunity.

The Republic of Vietnam constructed this cemetery over fifty years ago as a final resting place for over 16,000 South Vietnamese soldiers. Today, the cemetery's care and upkeep have been neglected and much of the cemetery lies in disrepair. As you know, many of these soldiers fought bravely alongside the United States and its allies during the Vietnam War, and now many of their descendants reside in the United States as American citizens.

We urge you to include the Bien Hoa National Military Cemetery during bilateral meetings between the government of Vietnam and your respective departments to ensure restoration and upkeep of the cemetery that properly respects those that gave their lives.

As you are aware, Congress has been closely monitoring the increasing number of human rights abuses by the Vietnamese government in recent years, and we remain concerned about issues ranging from freedom of religion and the press to prisoners of conscience. By bringing up the Bien Hoa National Military Cemetery, we hope that the Department of State and Department of Defense can express the commitment of the United States to fundamental human rights and the basic dignity of all. Most importantly, addressing this issue will help demonstrate Vietnam's seriousness and commitment in moving toward reconciliation with all Vietnamese people who were impacted by the war.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



ALAN LOWENTHAL
Member of Congress