



Media Note

Office of the Spokesman
Washington, DC
October 22, 2007

Secretaries of State and Homeland Security Exercise Discretionary Authority Relating to Material Support to Benefit Certain Hmong Refugees from Laos

The Secretary of State, on October 20, jointly with the Secretary of Homeland Security, exercised her discretionary exemption authority under the *Immigration and Nationality Act* and determined that the material support inadmissibility provisions of the Act are inapplicable to material support provided to certain Hmong individuals or groups prior to December 31, 2004. This will allow Hmong refugees from Laos who are already resettled in the United States to adjust status and become legal permanent residents. This exemption will also benefit certain individuals outside the United States who would otherwise be inadmissible for having provided material support to Hmong individuals or groups. To benefit from this exemption, an applicant must meet all other eligibility requirements -- including that they pose no danger to the safety and security of the United States. The U.S. Government does not support or condone violent or destructive efforts directed against governments with which we are at peace, including the Government of Laos.

The United States Government has no plans to initiate a resettlement program for Hmong asylum-seekers currently residing in Thailand. However, the United States will maintain its policy of considering individual cases for resettlement to the United States through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program upon referral by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

To date, the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Secretary of State have exercised their discretionary authority relating to material support to benefit certain individuals who have provided material support to six ethnic minority organizations from Burma, to the Cuban Alzados, to the FULRO in Vietnam, and to the Tibetan Mustangs. The Secretary of Homeland Security also has exercised this authority to benefit those who provided material support to a terrorist organization under duress.

2007/907

Released on October 22, 2007