Long Lost Brothers: Securing Citizenship for Vietnamese Amerasians

Miles C. Petty (Brenda Gunnison)
Asian Studies/University Writing Program, University of Utah

The signing of the Paris Peace Accords on January 8, 1973 pulled US troops out of Vietnam. According to a study by Ohio State University, they left behind nearly 80,000 of their children. Though American children are perhaps the most protected of any people on earth, those children were all but forgotten because they were fathered in relationships with Vietnamese women during an unpopular war.

Well over a decade after the pullout of US troops, these Amerasian children were finally brought to the United States through the "Amerasian Homecoming Act." Now, well over another decade later, these Amerasian children though they cannot actually be called "children" any more - they are 30-40 years old and many have teenage children themselves still are not recognized as citizens of the United States, their father's land. My purposes here are to make known the difficulties faced by a people rejected by two countries and to show that granting them US citizenship will be advantageous to them. It is a step necessary towards making amends for years of neglect. I will draw on the research of such authors as Robert McKelvey and Tim Yarborough into the social hardships of Vietnamese Amerasians, and add research into the specifics of US citizenship as well as primary research (including interviews of Vietnamese-Amerasians themselves) into why citizenship has yet to be granted and how it will impact Amerasians in the lives they are leading now as immigrants to America, the land of their fathers.