



## Southeast Asia Resource Action Center

October 15, 2004

President George W. Bush  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Many Southeast Asian American community members and leaders in the U.S. are very concerned about a statement you made during an interview on the "O'Reilly Factor" on September 27, 2004. We are writing to respectfully request clarification about that statement.

The following statement is in question, and is posted as part of the transcript for the program at <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,133712,00.html>:

"O'REILLY: The South Vietnamese didn't fight for their freedom, which is why they don't have it today."  
"BUSH: Yes."

As senior officials of the United States Government have affirmed for many years, South Vietnamese forces fought bravely to protect their homeland during the Vietnam War. In fact, approximately 1.5 million Vietnamese died during the war, and millions more forever lost their homes and businesses, and suffered grave injuries.

Over two million Southeast Asian Americans now make their home in the United States, and over 1.2 million of them are from Vietnamese families. Most of them are refugees who arrived in the U.S. after the fall of Saigon in 1975, or are the children of refugees. Many Vietnamese, Cambodians, Hmong and Laotians now living in the U.S. served alongside American forces in the Vietnam War, and they and their families continue to suffer from the effects of the War.

The Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC) is a national organization managed primarily by and for the communities. Now celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary, SEARAC strengthens Southeast Asian American communities and a national network of 180 community-based organizations through the provision of sub-grants, training, technical assistance, leadership development, and advocacy services.

We believe that Southeast Asian Americans would appreciate clarification of your views expressed during the September 27 interview, and we would be happy to serve as a vehicle for communicating clarifications through our appropriate national networks.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bouy Te".

Bouy Te  
Board Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Max Niedzwiecki".

Max Niedzwiecki  
Executive Director