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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

July 13, 2000

FACT SHEET

Vietnam Bilateral Trade Agreement
 Historic Strengthening of the U.S.-Vietnam Relationship

In 1993, President Clinton began a policy of normalization of relations with Vietnam to encourage Vietnam's cooperation on issues of interest to the United States and to promote Vietnam's integration into the region and the world economy. The decision to pursue the trade agreement was made after Vietnam had established a record of cooperation in accounting for POW/MIA's from the war, the highest priority in our relations.

The Bilateral Trade Agreement signed on July 13, 2000, marks a key step in the historic reconciliation between the United States and Vietnam. By normalizing trade relations and committing Vietnam to sweeping economic reform, it will help lay the foundation for a new American relationship with Vietnam.

The policy of normalization has led to:

-- Strengthened cooperation on the fullest possible accounting of our missing from the war. Since 1993, the United States has undertaken 39 joint field activities with Vietnam, repatriated 288 possible sets of remains, and identified the remains of 135 formerly unaccounted for American servicemen;

-- Resettlement of tens of thousands of refugees through the Orderly Departure Program and related programs. Over 500,000 Vietnamese have emigrated as refugees or immigrants to the United States and only a small number of refugee applicants remain to be processed.

-- Enhanced cooperation in combating narcotics trafficking, promoting human rights and religious freedom and expanding economic linkages. Our human rights dialogue, begun in 1993, has led to release of prisoners and some improvements in the overall situation.

The process of normalization has been accomplished in a step-by-step manner, leading to the Bilateral Trade Agreement:

-- 1989 -- Vietnam withdraws from Cambodia and seeks admission into regional organizations, sending a clear message that Vietnam intended to play a positive role in regional security and economic liberalization;

-- 1993 -- The President authorizes the United States to support international lending for Vietnam and allows for U.S. firms to join in development projects;

-- 1994 -- The President lifts economic embargo to allow U.S. firms to export to Vietnam and compete for business opportunities in Vietnam that had been closed;

-- 1995 -- Vietnam joins the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN);

-- 1995 -- The United States opens normal diplomatic relations with Vietnam;

-- 1996 -- The United States begins negotiations with Vietnam on a Bilateral Trade Agreement that would improve the opportunities and protections available to U.S. firms;

-- 1997 -- Exchange of ambassadors. President Clinton appoints former Congressman and POW, Douglas "Pete" Peterson to be the U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam;

-- 1998 -- Vietnam joins the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum;

-- 1998 -- The United States grants the first waiver of the Jackson-Vanik amendment extending U.S. export promotion and investment support programs to Vietnam. The waiver was then renewed in 1999 and 2000;

-- 1999 -- The United States and Vietnam reach an agreement in principle on key provisions of the Bilateral Trade Agreement; and

-- 2000 -- The United States and Vietnam reach final agreement on the Bilateral Trade Agreement, fulfilling the President's goal of negotiating a comprehensive trade agreement with Vietnam that would advance reform by leading to significantly more open markets and to Vietnam's firmer integration into the global economic community.

Vietnam has made a comprehensive set of commitments on: tariffs and non-tariff barriers for industrial and agricultural goods, the full range of services, intellectual property rights, investment, transparency and other issues. This constitutes for the first time a broad opening of Vietnamese markets for the United States, and will provide a major stimulus to Vietnam's economic reform efforts. This agreement sends a positive signal regarding Vietnam's commitment to integrating into the world economy and is an important step toward both the development of the rule of law in Vietnam and its eventual membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The agreement has five major sections, including:

- Dramatic new market access for agricultural and industrial goods for American citizens and companies;
- Increased intellectual property rights protection;
- Market access in a broad array of service sectors;
- Investment provisions to protect U.S. investments; and
- Transparency Measures making Vietnamese laws, rules, and regulations in these areas public and including a right to appeal for U.S. citizens

U.S. total (two-way) goods trade with Vietnam totaled \$900 million in 1999. Exports to Vietnam have increased considerably in recent years from \$4 million in 1992 to \$291 million in 1999.

DETAILS OF THE BILATERAL TRADE AGREEMENT

The agreement has five major sections:

- Market Access for Industrial and Agricultural Goods. Vietnam agrees to allow all Vietnamese firms, and over time U.S. persons and firms, the right to import and export freely from within its borders for the first time. It has agreed to sharply lower tariffs on the full range of U.S. industrial and agricultural exports, phase out all non-tariff measures, and to adhere to the WTO standards in applying customs, import licensing, state trading, technical standards and sanitary and phytosanitary measures.

-- Intellectual Property Rights. Vietnam agrees to adopt the WTO standard for intellectual property protection within 18 months and take further measures in several other areas such as protection of satellite signals.

-- Market Access for Services. Vietnam allows U.S. persons and firms to enter its services market in the full range of services areas, including financial services (insurance and banking), telecommunications, distribution, audio visual, legal, accounting, engineering, computer and related services, market research, construction, educational, health and related services and tourism. These commitments are phased-in over time, typically within three to five years.

-- Investment Provisions. Vietnam has agreed to protect U.S. investments from expropriation, eliminate local content and export performance requirements and phase out its investment licensing regime for many sectors.

-- Transparency Provisions. Vietnam has agreed to adopt a fully transparent regime with respect to each of the four substantive areas above, by issuing draft laws, regulations and other rules for comment, ensuring that advance public notice is given for all such laws and regulations, that these documents are published and available, and by allowing U.S. citizens the right to appeal rulings made with respect to all such relevant laws and regulations.

Under U.S. law, for Vietnam to receive annual NTR status, a bilateral trade agreement must be completed and approved by Congress, and the President must waive the "Jackson-Vanik" provision, indicating that such a waiver would substantially promote freedom of emigration from Vietnam. Since 1998, the President has granted the annual Jackson-Vanik waiver for Vietnam. Thus, completion of this agreement, and its subsequent approval by Congress, would clear the way for Vietnam to receive NTR treatment on an annual basis. This in turn would bring Vietnam's trade commitments into force.

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

July 11, 1995

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
IN ANNOUNCEMENT ON NORMALIZATION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS
WITH VIETNAM

East Room

2:03 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. I welcome you all here, those of you have been introduced and distinguished members of Congress and military leaders, veterans, others who are in the audience.

Today I am announcing the normalization of diplomatic relationships with Vietnam. (Applause.)

From the beginning of this administration, any improvement in relationships between America and Vietnam has depended upon making progress on the issue of Americans who were missing in action or held as prisoners of war. Last year, I lifted the trade embargo on Vietnam in response to their cooperation, and to enhance our efforts to secure the remains of lost Americans and to determine the fate of those whose remains have not been found.

It has worked. In seventeen months, Hanoi has taken important steps to help us resolve many cases. Twenty-nine families have received the remains of their loved ones and at last have been able to give them a proper burial. Hanoi has delivered to us hundreds of pages of documents shedding light on what happened to Americans in Vietnam. And Hanoi has stepped up its cooperation with Laos, where many Americans were lost.

We have reduced the number of so-called discrepancy cases, in which we have had reason to believe that Americans were still alive after they were lost to 55. And we will continue to work to resolve more cases.

Hundreds of dedicated men and women are working on all these cases, often under extreme hardship and real dangers in the mountains and jungles of Indochina. On behalf of all Americans, I want to thank them. And I want to pay a special tribute to General John Vessey, who has worked so tirelessly on this issue for Presidents Reagan and Bush and for our administration. He has made a great difference to a great many families. And we as a nation are grateful for his dedication and for his service. Thank you, sir. (Applause.)

I also want to thank the presidential delegation, led by Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs Hershel Gober, Winston Lord, James Wold, who have helped us to make so much progress on this issue. And I am especially grateful to the leaders of the families and the veterans organizations who have worked with the delegation

and maintained their extraordinary commitment to finding the answers we seek.

Never before in the history of warfare has such an extensive effort been made to resolve the fate of soldiers who did not return. Let me emphasize, normalization of our relations with Vietnam is not the end of our effort. From the early days of this administration I have said to the families and veterans groups what I say again here: We will keep working until we get all the answers we can. Our strategy is working. Normalization of relations is the next appropriate step. With this new relationship, we will be able to make more progress. To that end, I will send another delegation to Vietnam this year. And Vietnam has pledged it will continue to help us find answers. We will hold them to that pledge.

fullest possible accuracy

By helping to bring Vietnam into the community of nations, normalization also serves our interest in working for a free and peaceful Vietnam in a stable and peaceful Asia. We will begin to normalize our trade relations with Vietnam, whose economy is now liberalizing and integrating into the economy of the Asia-Pacific region. Our policy will be to implement the appropriate United States government programs to develop trade with Vietnam consistent with U.S. law.

As you know, many of these programs require certifications regarding human rights and labor rights before they can proceed. We have already begun discussing human rights issues with Vietnam, especially issues regarding religious freedom. Now we can expand and strengthen that dialogue. The Secretary of State will go to Vietnam in August where he will discuss all of these issues, beginning with our POW and MIA concerns.

I believe normalization and increased contact between Americans and Vietnamese will advance the cause of freedom in Vietnam, just as it did in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. I strongly believe that engaging the Vietnamese on the broad economic front of economic reform and the broad front of democratic reform will help to honor the sacrifice of those who fought for freedom's sake in Vietnam.

give them their meaning

I am proud to be joined in this view by distinguished veterans of the Vietnam War. They served their country bravely. They are of different parties. A generation ago they had different judgments about the war which divided us so deeply. But today they are of a single mind. They agree that the time has come for America to move forward on Vietnam. All Americans should be grateful especially that Senators John McCain, John Kerry, Bob Kerrey, Chuck Robb and Representative Pete Peterson, along with other Vietnam veterans in the Congress, including Senator Harkin, Congressman Colby and Congressman Gilchrist, who just left, and others who are out here in the audience have kept up their passionate interest in Vietnam, but were able to move beyond the haunting and painful past toward finding common ground for the future. Today, they and many other veterans support the normalization of relations, giving the opportunity to Vietnam to fully join the community of nations and being true to what they fought for so many years ago.

Whatever we may think about the political decisions of the Vietnam era, the brave Americans who fought and died there had noble motives. They fought for the freedom and the independence of the Vietnamese people. Today the Vietnamese are independent, and we believe this step will help to extend the reach of freedom in Vietnam and, in so doing, to enable these fine veterans of Vietnam to keep working for that freedom.

This step will also help our own country to move forward on an issue that has separated Americans from one another for too long now. Let the future be our destination. We have so much work ahead of us. This moment offers us the opportunity to bind up our own wounds. They have resisted time for too long. We can now move on to common ground. Whatever divided us before let us consign to the past. Let this moment, in the words of the Scripture, be a time to heal and a time to build.

*just the
in
Viet Nam*

Thank you all. And God bless America. (Applause.)

END

2:12 P.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

July 11, 1995

PRESS BRIEFING

BY NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR TONY LAKE,
DEPUTY SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HERSEL GOBER AND
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EAST ASIAN AFFAIRS WINSTON LORD

The Briefing Room

2:52 P.M. EDT

MR. LAKE: With me -- Tony Lake -- Hershel Gober, the Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs; Winston Lord, the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs; and James Wold, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense who follows POW-MIA issues. I'm going to have to go. I'll start with a few remarks, if I may, and then Hershel will take it over.

Let me just give you some background and some points of emphasis. First of all, as many of you know who have been covering this, the President had contemplated this decision now for some time. He made the final decision this weekend. One reason we did it today was that we wanted to wait until the Congress was back in session, so that we could both have members of Congress here, as we did, and so that those members of Congress who might disagree would have an opportunity to voice that disagreement.

We believe that we have the support certainly of most members of the Congress. This was based on a unanimous recommendation by the President's senior advisors, and over the weekend General Shalikashvili polled the Joint Chiefs and they were unanimous also in their support of this decision.

You'll see at the back of the packet statements that were sent to us by a number of former officials including various military commanders in support of the President's decision as well.

Let me emphasize a few points in substance. First of all, this decision the President deeply believes, we all believe, represents the best way before us to pursue our central goal, and that is the fullest possible accounting for all of the Americans who did not return from the Vietnam War.

Let me emphasize also that this is not a reward for what has been done so far. We have been pleased with the cooperation that we have been receiving from the government in Hanoi, but this is not done; there is much more to be done; and we believe that this is the best way to get it done.

We think that evidence for that fact is what has happened since the lifting of the embargo in February 1994. There were those then who said that this would let the Vietnamese off the hook and that there would not be further cooperation. In fact, we have made further progress in that period.

You've got in your packets a lot of statistics. Let me just emphasize a few -- that since February '94, various sets of remains have been returned, 85 total. And of those, 29 have been identified as Americans and, as the President noted, those remains have been returned to the families. We believe that another 40 to 50 sets of remains will be identified during the course of 1995.

We have also recently received a report concerning 79 of the 81 pending so-called special remains cases, and that's described in your packet. Let me emphasize that that report does not resolve those cases, but it does provide us with leads that we can follow up on. And since February 1994, although mostly in the period -- the few months after that, we have determined the fate of 18 so-called discrepancy cases, i.e., cases in which we know that the Americans were alive when they were on the ground and cannot determine what happened to them since.

So we think that, as after the embargo, the strategy is working, and this is another step in pursuing that strategy. We also believe that this step is very much in our national interest. It will help to draw Vietnam into an Asia in which we are supporting stability and democracy and freedom and human rights. And we believe that it will encourage also freedom and human rights within Vietnam.

As the President implied, at least -- or actually stated, we will extend this into our economic relationships. There will, obviously, be trade. We have established an interagency group that will be examining the various legal questions involved with regard to, for example, Ex-Im or OPIC, and other ways in which we can encourage that trade. Those issues have not been resolved, and the President will be getting the advice from his advisers as we work that through.

We have not made a decision to extend more aid. We are annually providing some \$2 million to \$3 million -- I think it was \$3 million over this year, approximately -- humanitarian aid to Vietnam. That includes prosthetics, it includes aid to street children, it includes disaster assistance, for example, when there are floods. As I have said, we have not made a decision to increase that aid level.

The President, before he made his announcement, met first with a group of members of Congress, senators and representatives who had been active on the issue and who stood with him on the stage; thanked them for their work on this issue; gave them the credit that they very richly deserved for this day. Before that, he met with the leaders of veterans organizations and the League of Families, and at that meeting he emphasized to them, first of all, that we do consider this a process, this is another step in the process; that he remains committed to the pledge he made to keep this issue at the center of our concerns. And he asked them to remain engaged to work with us and to participate in the delegation, presidential delegation, that we would be sending to Vietnam later this year. And I'm happy to say that they pledged to stay involved and to work with us. That is not to say that they, all of them, agreed with this decision. There is a tactical difference with a number of them. But they did say they will continue to work with us.

So let me turn it over to Hershel.

Q Will you tell us a little bit about what's going on in Bosnia and maybe some kind of assessment of the situation there now?

MR. LAKE: Let me give you a very brief answer: No.

Q Why not?

MR. LAKE: Because this is a fluid situation, is one reason. I'm leaving, and as you know is our practice, when we're in the middle of a situation like that, for a variety of obvious reasons, we prefer not to comment. There will be comment later.

Q There will be? In what way and where?

MR. LAKE: We're working that out, and it depends in part on events --

Q Should we expect United Nations --

MR. LAKE: Not necessarily from here.

Q Do you expect the United Nations to announce a pullout this week?

MR. LAKE: Fluid situation. No, it is not a yes.

Thank you.

DEPUTY SECRETARY GOBER: Tony about said it all. He gave you the background brief; you've got the information there. I am privileged to have led -- been a leader of three presidential delegations to Vietnam since the beginning in 1993 -- '94 and '95. And as Tony indicated, over the years we have seen increased cooperation on the part of the Vietnamese. We are still pushing for more results. We will continue to do so.

The meetings with the veterans groups, to expand a little bit on that, they were part of the President's delegation in 1994 -- well, actually, '93-'94, and they'll go back with us again later this year. There are a lot of differences, but what is good about it is they -- we can disagree on the way to accomplish the mission, but we must never forget the mission, and the mission is to obtain as full accounting as possible. And we take that very seriously.

Our meetings in Vietnam on our past delegation in May -- we met with the highest level of Vietnamese officials and reemphasized to them how important this was to the people of America. And it may be confusing to some people why we place so much emphasis on returning those men that served in Vietnam, but we think they understand it. We will continue to push for more results, full accounting as possible.

I'll tell you right now probably the most productive thing would just be to take questions from you.

Q Mr. Lord, can you address the issue of MFN, OPIC and Ex-Im -- when will they get that, and what type of economic support are being talked about?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY LORD: As the President indicated and Mr. Lake elaborated, we now will be examining this on a systematic basis. So I can't give you any timetable or even any assurance what will happen.

With diplomatic relations you make legally possible certain steps -- or possibly possible -- subject to other conditions,

other steps. And so we're going to examine the legal framework as well as the appropriateness of moving on some of these fronts. And, of course, we'll be in close contact with the Congress and others on these issues.

Q Will you move on any of these fronts before the interagency commission?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY LORD: There's no announcement today about moving on any of these fronts. We're going to have to look at the whole picture.

Q But could you explain just in principle how it works now -- I mean, do you go ahead and appoint an ambassador -- and how quickly that could happen, that type of thing?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY LORD: In terms of the process, among your packet should be a fact sheet on diplomatic relations, give you a little bit of background on what this means.

Essentially, I think you will see a response out of Hanoi -- there's a time difference -- in a few hours in which they will -- I don't want to speak for them, but I think it's safe to assume they will welcome this step. So, in effect, according to the lawyers, once both sides have expressed an intention to establish diplomatic relations, in effect takes hold.

But as the President mentioned, the Secretary of State will be traveling to Vietnam. We're still working out the exact dates. This would be after his meetings at Brunei at the beginning of August. And I think we envision some exchange of documents. This won't require laborious negotiations. It's more the symbolism in formalizing what has happened today which, of course, is the key event.

And as far as ambassadors, both -- I think the Vietnamese will also indicate their intentions on ambassadors, and as the President says, the search will now go underway to see who should head up our embassy.

Q To any of you gentlemen -- you say that you've received a comprehensive report saying 79 of 81 pending special cases, special remains cases, will help you out a great deal. Are you satisfied now, at this time, that the Vietnamese government unilaterally is doing everything it can and is not withholding any more information about POWs or MIAs?

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY WOLD: We are satisfied with the progress to date that the Vietnamese have demonstrated. Indeed, on the special remains cases -- discrepancy cases -- we will continue to press them very hard on each one of those cases.

Q So, in other words, they still have information that they are withholding from you?

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY WOLD: I don't know that they're withholding information, but we believe that they have information and that they will be forthcoming in the months to come. The process is in place, and they have demonstrated their willingness and their forthcomingness on the turnover of documents.

Q And they've not been forthcoming up until this point? I'm just wondering why that is.

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY WOLD: I would disagree. I think they have been forthcoming.

DEPUTY SECRETARY GOBER: Let me answer a little bit of that. You know, when we were there in 1994, we asked them to establish document teams to go into the Ministry of the Interior which controls the police there and has a great deal of power, and the Ministry of National Defense. They did establish those teams. And the documents that we received, over 200 pages of documents when we were there in May, was a result -- some of the work was a result of that.

I think that what they're doing -- and we feel good about it because they're going into the provinces and they're starting to get documents, because many of those documents would be at the province level. You know, like the state capitols -- they're provinces are like our states. So I think, as Jim said, the process is in effect, and we hope to see continued results from it. And we will continue to remind them that, as the President said, that's still our number one concern is the MIA problem.

And so -- that doesn't answer your question fully. I think that they are trying to find these documents.

Q Could you please outline a little bit what is changing strategically by that commission in that part of the world?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY LORD: Let me emphasize again what the President and Mr. Lake emphasized. This decision was taken on the criterion of progress toward the fullest possible accounting. Now, as the President and Lake also mentioned, obviously there are other American interests. And we believe this will further those interests as well, now that the criteria the President set out have been met in terms of sufficient progress on the key question.

So Asia is a very dynamic region. We have tremendous security and economic interests in the region. We think one of the benefits of this move will be to forward those interests, and that will be one of the objectives of Secretary Christopher's trip to the region, in general, and to Vietnam, in particular.

So, regional security, geopolitical factors, economic factors, promotion of human rights, promotion of our efforts to control the flow of narcotics -- all of these issues, we think, will be advanced by this step today by the President and by our expanded presence in Hanoi. In short, I think, it helps our strategic position in Asia. But this is a benefit that flows from it -- the primary criteria where the progress made on the MIA question.

Q You keep referring to security interests. Is there any hint of military cooperation between the United States and Vietnam?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY LORD: Only in a sense of going after to the MIA question. There our militaries have cooperated very closely. But, no, not in other respects. What I'm talking about is regional security dialogues. As you may know, they have these yearly at the foreign minister level, and they've had, a couple of months ago, at the senior officials level. Vietnam is part of that dialogue, as is Russia, China, Japan, ASEAN, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Korea and so on.

Q Have there been any visits to the old facilities at Cameron Bay?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY LORD: Only in the search for MIAs which is an example of sensitive military areas, like Haiphong Harbor and Cameron Bay, which the Vietnamese, with our encouragement, have opened up for inspection for MIAs. But no strategic talks.

Q Has there been any response today to this?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY LORD: Well, we just announced it a couple of hours ago, so I have not heard any response.

Q Can I ask you one on another topic while you're there?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY LORD: Sure. I think New Zealand will welcome this, too. (Laughter.)

Q All right. Have you had any contact with the French? Just every country in the world has now condemned the French because of the situation of Rainbow Warrior and the resumed testing and, of course, the U.S. --

ASSISTANT SECRETARY LORD: I think my instructions ought to keep this on the Vietnam or closely-related subjects.

Q Could you tell us whether you've had contacts with the French?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY LORD: We've had contact with the French to tell them about our announcement today on Vietnam. (Laughter.)

Q The Republicans are talking about cutting off funding --

ASSISTANT SECRETARY LORD: No, no. I'm just reconfirming my tight instructions from Mr. McCurry. (Laughter.)

Q The Republicans are talking about cutting off funding in the next budget for any actions that would formalize -- towards normalization. What can they do to interfere with what you're trying to do?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY LORD: First of all, there are many Republicans, and you saw many standing up with the President today in that room, who would disagree with that. So it's not monolithic.

Secondly, we'll have to see how this plays out on Capitol Hill. And I know one of the resolutions is suggesting that. But I think there are other resolutions that are more positive, and we would hope they would prevail.

Q But if they won't -- if they do cut off funding, what can they do? How much interference --

ASSISTANT SECRETARY LORD: Well, I really don't want to speculate on a hypothetical situation. I'd rather wait and see. But we made very clear, the President has, why this is in the U.S. national interest, and we are confident that a majority in the Congress, as well as the American people will support that.

Q How will this decision affect U.S. relations with China?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY LORD: Well, we would certainly not see this in any way directly related to China in a sense that this would be taken as a grand strategy with respect to China. That is not our intent. So I would imagine China would welcome it. They've indicated in the past we should establish friendly relations with Vietnam. So we'll have to see -- you'd have to ask them that question. But there is not a China motive behind our move today.

Q Mr. Lord, you've spoken today about documents and remains. Does the U.S. government now believe that there are no live Americans being kept in Vietnam?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY LORD: Why don't I have Mr. Wold address that question.

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY WOLD: The government cannot say that there are no live Americans. However, all of the live study investigations and all the evidence that we have available to us does not -- is not suggestive that there are alive Americans remaining anywhere in Southeast Asia.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

3:10 P.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

June 28, 1994

STATEMENT BY THE PRESS SECRETARY

Last February, when the President announced the lifting of the trade embargo against Vietnam, he also announced that he would send another top-level delegation to Vietnam later in the year to press for further progress from Vietnam on unresolved POW-MIA issues. This Presidential delegation will travel to Vietnam July 1 to 4, and to Laos July 4 to 5. It will stop in Hawaii for briefings by the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific (CINCPAC), the Joint Task Force-Full Accounting (JTF-FA) and the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory (CILHI).

The delegation will be jointly led by Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs Hershel Gober, Assistant Secretary of State Winston Lord and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for POW/MIA Affairs James Wold. A similar high-level delegation went to Vietnam in July 1993.

At the invitation of the President, leaders of the five largest veterans organizations -- the Executive Director of the American Legion, John F. Sommer, Jr.; the Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Paul A. Spera; the National Legislative Director of the Disabled American Veterans, Richard F. Schultz; the National Commander of the American Veterans of World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War, Donald M. Hearon; and the National Vice President of the Vietnam Veterans of America, Jack Clark -- will be members of the delegation. The Executive Director of the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia, Ann Mills Griffith, will also be a member of the delegation.

President Clinton has asked this delegation to continue the search for answers that will help us achieve the fullest possible accounting for our POW/MIAs.

The delegation will make clear to Vietnam that further steps in relations between our two nations depend on additional tangible progress on the outstanding POW/MIA cases. In particular, the President is looking for concrete progress in four key areas:

- more -

REMAINS: Concrete results from efforts on their part to cases, live sightings and field activities.

DISCREPANCY CASES: Continued resolution of 55 discrepancy cases, live sightings and field activities.

LAOS: Further assistance in implementing trilateral investigations with the Lao.

ARCHIVES: Accelerated efforts to provide all POW/MIA-related

documents that will help lead to genuine answers.

While in Laos, the delegation will discuss with senior Lao officials ways to further advance joint efforts to achieve the fullest possible accounting of the 504 Americans missing in Laos. In particular, the delegation will seek progress in establishing a live-sighting mechanism, in expanding the pace and scope of joint U.S.-Lao field activities, furthering trilateral cooperation with the Vietnamese and obtaining broader access to Lao government archival holdings.

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THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

February 3, 1994

BACKGROUND BRIEFING
BY
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL

February 3, 1994

The Briefing Room

3:53 P.M. EST

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: This is all on
BACKGROUND, and embargoed until 5:00 p.m.

Q I thought you were lifting the embargo.
(Laughter.)

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The one that counts is
on until 5:00 p.m.

The President made a decision at about 12:30 p.m. today
on Vietnam. After all the speculation, we wanted to get it right
out, and, therefore, he will be announcing it at 5:00 p.m. this
afternoon.

The first act after he made the decision was to call the
leaders of veterans organizations, invited them in for a meeting with
the President, which took place this afternoon. He met with them
about 2:30 p.m. I could give you the list of those who were there if
you wish now.

Larry Rivers, the VFW; John Summer of the American
Legion; Donald Hearon of Am-Vets; Arthur Wilson of the AV; Paul Egan
of the Vietnam Veterans of America; Anne Mills-Griffiths was invited.
It was a last-minute thing and she apparently wasn't able to make it.
Anyway, he had a meeting with them. I can talk about that later if
you want it.

The decision, in essence -- and the others will speak
about it more -- is, first of all, he has decided that we should lift
the trade embargo against Vietnam; and second, has authorized the
establishment of liaison offices in Hanoi and Washington.

Let me emphasize again -- and you have heard this before
-- that the sole criterion that the President used in making this
decision, as in previous decisions on Vietnam, was the goal of
achieving all the progress possible on accounting for the Americans
missing in Vietnam. At every meeting that we were at during recent
weeks and previously, that was the sole criterion that we used. And
I know that that is the sole criterion the President has used in his

thinking about this.

His decision reflects the results that have been achieved in this regard over the past year and in recent weeks, and more importantly, it reflects his and his advisors' judgment as to how best we can achieve further progress in the coming months.

As a part of that, this spring, the President will send back out again the delegation of Herschel Gober and Win Lord and General Mike Ryan to Vietnam to pursue further progress. He has

invited, again, the leaders of veterans organizations and the families to accompany that delegation.

In the meeting with the leaders of the veterans organizations, the President emphasized his continuing commitment on this issue, and he and the veterans leaders agreed that they will continue to work together. The President was very, very strong in his personal commitment on this issue.

I'm sure there's going to be a lot more questions here, but why don't we go on to my colleague.

Q Could you just say whether -- was Hanoi immediately informed?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We've been in touch with Vietnamese representatives this afternoon.

Q From here?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: From the State Department.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: What I would like to do is to review in considerable detail the progress that the Clinton administration has achieved in the past year on the -- what I'd like to do, my role here today is to discuss specifically in detail the progress that we have achieved in the past year on the POW-MIA issue in Vietnam.

Last July, President Clinton spelled out four key areas in which we said that we would have to see tangible progress in accounting for our missing servicemen. And I'd like to describe the progress we have made in each of those four areas.

The first criteria set out by the President was concrete results from efforts by Vietnam to recover American remains. Since the President's call in July, 39 remains have been recovered, bringing the total recovered remains in 1993 to 67. I should point out that none of the 39 remains recovered since July have been identified yet. But three other remains previously recovered have been identified in that time period.

It's important to note that this is more than twice the number that were recovered in 1992, and the third most productive year for recovering remains since the end of the war.

The Vietnamese have also increased publicity for its remains amnesty program, encouraging its citizens to turn over any remains they might be holding. They have also established an office in Ho Chi Minh City to increase efforts to recover remains of Americans who died in captivity in the South.

On the second criteria regarding the resolution of discrepancy cases and continued investigation of live sighting reports, cooperation has been excellent. We and the Vietnamese have formed the Priority Case Investigation Team, the acronym you'll hear a lot, PCIT, to focus on joint investigations of the 92 remaining priority, last-known alive discrepancy cases.

Since July, we have confirmed the deaths of 19 individuals on that list. In all of 1993, we confirmed the deaths of 62 individuals, removing them from that list. A special U.S. team operating in Vietnam continues to investigate the remaining 73 cases.

Nearly 100 reported live sightings have been investigated on the ground in Vietnam since 1991, and none have produced evidence that an American POW is today held captive in

Vietnam. We have, and of course will continue to pursue vigorously any report of a live prisoner.

The third area identified by the President was assistance in arranging trilateral investigations with the Lao. Last August, the Vietnamese and Lao agreed to conduct trilateral investigations with us along their common border, including along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. The first such operation was in December '93, and it located remains as well crash sites, which will be excavated in the coming months. The Commander of the Joint Task Force Field Accounting, General Tom Needham, has noted that the vigorous efforts by Vietnam during this trilateral investigation were particularly helpful.

Finally, President Clinton demanded accelerated efforts to provide POW-MIA documents that would help lead to genuine answers. Since July 1993, we received for the first time records from Vietnam's wartime antiaircraft units along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. This is the so-called 559 documents. These records related to U.S. airmen who were shot down and are listed as POW-MIA.

We have also received important documents from a wartime military political unit that handled U.S. personnel during the war. Both sets of documents are expected to provide leads to the location of remains of MIAs.

Finally, we have received for the first time written reports from Hanoi on unilateral investigations the Vietnamese have conducted to attempt to locate American remains. To date, more than 25,000 documents, artifacts and photographs related to U.S. POW-MIAs have been examined, with over 600 items correlating to missing servicemen.

In addition to these tangible results achieved in the four key areas since the President's statement last July, there have been other areas of progress relating to the meticulous progress of POW-MIA accounting. Since our U.S. POW office was established in Hanoi in July '91, our staff has increased from four to 19 permanent Americans. Vietnam has instituted an oral history program designed to gain information from the memories of Vietnamese participants of operations during the war. Seventy of the 120 individuals identified for interview have been completed, resulting in information on 20 unresolved questions.

DOD has established a defense POW/MIA Office, which has consolidated the DIA special office on POW/MIAs, essential documentation office. The U.S. Army's Task Force Russia, the Office of the Secretary of Defense for POW/MIA Affairs.

Consolidating these key functions has centralized the Washington, D.C.-based POW/MIA efforts resulting in not only more efficiency, but in greater responsiveness in dealing with the families, with public inquiries, a number of interagency tasks interests.

Finally, I should point out that virtually all the Vietnam War POW/MIA documents have been declassified. There are now more than 1.5 million pages in the Library of Congress that have been declassified. As is evident from all these statistics, President Clinton's strategy is working. We are achieving important results.

Last year, as a result of all of our efforts, we were able to provide the families of POW/MIAs with 5,600 meaningful reports on the circumstances of the loss of their loved ones. We will continue to deal with Vietnam with only one goal in mind, what we can do to make even more progress for the family of our missing Americans.

□

Q What's the current count, do you have that? The current count of unaccounted for.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: POW/MIA -- 2,238.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Let me just make a couple of other points, and then we can go to your questions. First, the President, of course, throughout this process has been consulting a wide variety of people on this issue. The families and the veterans we've already mentioned; and, of course, the military and the members of his government. And I can say that this is absolutely true -- it's not always the case, but he got unanimous recommendation from all his top military leaders, including General Shali and Joint Chiefs of Staff, the command of our Pacific forces, all the members of the Cabinet concerned with this history, including, of course, Secretaries of State and Defense, National Security Advisor -- everyone believed this was the best way to make further progress, and that was the sole criterion as the other senior administration official has pointed out.

It doesn't mean there can't be disagreements on this issue, but I am saying a remarkable array of people on the ground and here in Washington have advised this course. So have, of course, the U.S. Senate, and the many names that I think will be associated with this today, including some that I believe have submitted statements, but including most of the Vietnam veterans, ex-prisoners of war and so on.

Secondly, I would point out that this is an ongoing process. For those who believe that leverage is important and, in dealing with this issue there were many other economic and political and diplomatic assets that can be employed for this purpose. This is just the beginning of a resumption of a process, a continuation of the process. This is not normalization of diplomatic relations.

There are areas in the economic field that are not affected by this decision. It is, of course, an important step forward, but I'm just pointing out that there are many other sources and many other incentives for future progress, which we now fully expect.

Finally, just a couple of comments on the liaison office, which is, frankly, a term which can be quite flexible. We have to, of course, to sit down with the Vietnamese and discuss

exactly what this will entail. Its purposes from our standpoint are already very clear. Namely, above all, to increase and help our efforts to search for information on the POW/MIA question, both directly with these people and being able to talk to the Vietnamese, but also to relieve any burden from those most directly responsible for the joint task force, et cetera, from having to do other duties.

Those are the most important purposes. Also, it will enable us to carry on important bilateral dialogue with the Vietnamese, including on the issue of human rights, which we consider very important and which we have raised in the past consistently. There will be a dialogue started officially later this month, so that will be an important factor, and there will be many other issues to be discussed as well.

And finally, of course, we would envisage many more Americans, whether businesspeople or tourists, going into Vietnam, and we want to service them and protect them as well.

I think those are the main points to get out. Now we can go to your questions.

□ Q Most of the members of Congress who talked about this yesterday at least talked about the economic implications. Could you go into that a little more?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: First of all, I want to repeat that although economic objectives are crucial to the President's foreign policy, this is one issue where he has clearly delineated his priorities, and it is not economic in this case. It is the fate of our missing personnel.

We often have sometimes some tension between goals when we're pursuing relations with various countries: security, human rights, economics, et cetera. And often, it's judgment calls and you have to try to reconcile these.

This is one case where the priorities are firmly established, and in this case the MIA issue. Now, having said that, we don't believe, in this case, it's mutually exclusive, even though the criterion is pursuing the MIA question. If more people go into Vietnam, we believe we'll get more information. We also believe -- and this is a crucial calculation for the President -- that this process of engagement with the Vietnamese will produce further progress. And in informing them of this decision, we made it very clear that we expect even heightened cooperation and certainly continued high-level cooperation that we've seen, and I can say that we have received those assurances from the Vietnamese, and we will be looking very carefully at that continually, including this delegation going out.

Q You didn't answer the question about what the economic --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: That was inadvertent, not purposeful. Excuse me. I'll be very honest with you, I don't want to dwell on that in this background briefing. There will be plenty of time to go into that -- I'll address it, but I do not want this to take away from the primary motivation, the primary rationale for this decision.

Of course, there are economic implications. Of course, this will help economically in American business; there's nothing to

be apologetic about for that. And it will perhaps have other implications in terms of regional security, et cetera. But I want to emphasize the main theme, that that was not what was behind this decision.

Q Did the President attach any conditions --

Q Why?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: There will be plenty of time for briefings from other agencies involved in this to go into that. But I really don't want to change the thoughts of this background. I'll be very honest.

Q Did the President attach any conditions to the lifting of the embargo?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, except the expectation that the high-level cooperation will certainly continue.

Q How was that expressed?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: How was that expressed? Further tangible progress in the four areas laid out.

Q How as it expressed in the agreement, or in anything that attaches to it?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, it is part of the process we've been engaged on throughout this administration, where we take steps both to acknowledge cooperation and to encourage further cooperation. The Vietnamese fully understand that; it was repeated this morning to them. And we will watch very closely. We expect further progress.

Now, on the economics, which ought to be some help, we're lifting the embargo, as said. We will take some time to work out the regulations. This will be up to Treasury and Commerce. And I would not think it would take a long time. In the past it's sometimes taken a couple of months. In this case it's not so difficult to interpret, so I would think it's a matter of weeks, certainly not months and probably not days. We're not talking about -- Excuse me?

There's one technical point that I should point out with respect to this. And this is a technical point. We are -- this will really throw you off. We, in fact, are maintaining the Trading with the Enemy Act for the sole purpose of hanging on to Vietnamese assets, because we will have claims negotiations and, therefore, you need this authority to continue in order to hang on to them. So everything else, in effect, is waived -- everything else is lifted.

Q Do you know what the estimated value of those assets that we hold are?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I don't want to jeopardize our negotiating position; so I don't know whether I ought to be -- we'll get that for you if there's no problem. The question is, I don't know whether it's not a good idea to release it at this point. We will find out immediately and let you know if there's any problem with that.

Q There are certain laws on the books --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, let me finish. What we're doing with freezing the assets is what we've done with Cambodia, for example. We still have trading there, but we're working out the claims assets negotiation. That's a technicality.

Q There are certain laws on the books now independent of this embargo that ban trade with Vietnam. Have you had discussions with Congress about that, and what would be the status of those? And does Congress have any input in this decision or is it purely a presidential decision?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, no. First of all, obviously, it's a presidential decision, but the President considered very carefully the opinions of both the House and the Senate. He, of course, noted the Senate vote. But he's had many discussions with both supporters of this move and presumable opponents of this move. But the former are vastly in the majority.

Now, what was the other part of your question? Oh, yes, about the details.

Q There are laws on the books now --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, we have not addressed this in detail. We will discuss it closely with the Congress. There are many economic aspects which are not affected automatically by this in export control laws, national security laws, so that there will be some continuing restrictions, presumably, but this all has to be worked out.

□

Q Does the President see this decision as both a reward for past cooperation recently and an incentive for future cooperation?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: In the first place, no one has ever used the word "reward" except some ill-informed backgrounder person who put it in somebody else's mouth. But that's a phrase we never use. We're talking about acknowledging cooperation and motivation and incentive for future cooperation. We're not talking about rewards.

Let me get back, since there was some grumbling on the economic question.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: -- emphasize that the latter is more important.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Sure. Of course. That's a good point, the other senior official is helping me out here, a point I hope we've already made clear. What is most important is the future, namely the President has made the decision that this is the best way to get more accounting. In order to take that decision, he also has to acknowledge that the criteria he laid out in July have been met, but the primary purpose is to get more, and continue cooperation.

But let me get back to the economic question. Did we get into some of the things you were concerned about? I didn't want to look evasive. I just didn't want to take away -- make this look like an economic decision, which it's not.

Q If the trade embargo is lifted, will the U.S. Ex-Im

Bank be able to make loans to Vietnam?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: These are the kinds of decisions we still have to examine. American businesses are free to trade now and invest in Vietnam; that's the main point.

Q Any estimates of how big this trade will be, how much money it will involve for U.S. businesses?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I've seen varying estimates, and again, I do think Commerce would be better positioned to do that. There's a lot of disagreement. Many feel there's major opportunities here, others feel that's been inflated.

Q Are these the first diplomatic representatives?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: One point. It's been obvious to everybody who was involved in the decision-making process here that there is an economic stake. But it strikes me in retrospect that we never, in any of the meetings of the principals, actually got an economic analysis of what was at stake, because we were focusing so clearly on that single central criterion.

Q Is this the first diplomatic presence the United States has had in Hanoi since Hanoi became an independent country 40 years ago?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: It's not a full diplomatic presence, a liaison office.

Q I didn't say full. Have we ever had a diplomat assigned to Hanoi?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, we have right not three temporary duty foreign service --

□

Q Well, we were told they were not diplomats, they were consular offices, basically. They didn't really have dealings with the Vietnamese government.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Yes. We had a consul general there for --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I believe we had a consulate in Hanoi in the late 1940s.

Q What is it that occasioned this at this time? This was -- if you had such a good year last year in this regard, it would suggest, perhaps, that the policy in effect was working, and perhaps to some, at last, and perhaps that policy should have been continued. What occasions the shift now, and could you explain that?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, first of all the President said he'd keep under constant review after his previous decisions whether to take another step and judge the level of cooperation and the prospects for future cooperation. It was his best judgment that this is a reciprocal process, and if they have shown an effort -- and we believe that our taking a step in return would increase their efforts or make sure of the high level of cooperation, this would be best to do that. People can speculate whether, if we cut off any further steps over a period of time, cooperation would slacken. I'm not asserting that, but I am asserting that the President judged that we would have the best

chance of guaranteeing further cooperation by taking another step.

Q If that's true, then why are you so averse to the word "reward"? Isn't this a case of incentive and reward? Isn't that what the policy is about?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, I'll be very honest in that. For many years, the Vietnamese were not cooperative. They were, frankly, evasive, they didn't help the families, and that's why many of us -- and we all have great sympathy for the families, even if we may disagree on tactics. So when you're talking about a country that we believe broke the Paris Agreements and who have been evasive with us in the past, we'd rather not use verbs like that. It doesn't mean we don't want to have a sound relationship, but I just think it's an inappropriate verb.

Q It's more of a noun.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: It can be a noun or a verb.

Q What will we do now if the cooperation slows down a bit? Will we put the embargo back on?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: First of all, we don't expect that to happen. The Vietnamese have already in their initial response -- because we judge by actions, not words -- but they've already pledged, if anything, even further cooperation, although they would claim it's very full, and we believe it's quite full now. So we'd have to address that if it came up. But I think it's a hypothetical situation. We certainly don't expect it to arise.

But we will make very clear that this is a ongoing process -- the Vietnamese know that -- and that we will continue to look for further tangible progress. And that is our expectation. It's based on that the President made this decision.

Q you want the focus on the POW-MIA issue, but can you give us some idea, sir, when and what magnitude the economic aspect would begin? You said a matter of weeks. Companies have been over there, have had representatives over there. They appear ready to go into motion almost instantly. Surely you must be able to give us some idea, sir, what size and of what magnitude economic --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I honestly am not being evasive. And also it's not a matter of keeping the focus. If I knew the answers precisely at this point, I would try to give them to you. I really don't have a good feel for the estimates. You may find that hard to believe, but it's also disputed.

We will, obviously, implement the regulations as soon as possible. This has been a close hold situation, so I don't know how fast Treasury and Commerce thinks they can do that. They will obviously move with the utmost speed. I mean, once the decision is made, there's no reason to slow down on it.

I think many Americans are poised to move out quickly. They were authorized under the Bush administration to set up offices and even to enter into talks. They couldn't conclude contracts, but they could do a lot of the spade work to get ready for it. So, I think they can act very quickly once the regulations are issued by Treasury and Commerce.

Q This is not diplomatic recognition, is it?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, it is not.

Q Under what conditions -- how do you move forward towards that now?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, we're just addressing the immediate situation. We haven't addressed those issues.

Q Well, is that tied as well to the POW-MIA? Where does that go from here?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, I think it's fair to say that that will remain the President's top criterion -- is the POW-MIA progress on any further steps.

Q Is there any feeling -- you've emphasized the incentives. Is there any feeling that you're on the wrong course and if incentives should have been employed earlier, it would have gotten more results?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I'm sorry I missed the timing --

Q Is there any feeling now that you're going with emphasis on incentives that maybe the hard sell, the hard line of fullest possible accounting was the wrong course and you would have gotten better results earlier if you had gone with the incentives as a first policy?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Not at all, no. There's a difference here between what the goal is which is a very clear goal. And that is the fullest possible accounting and the tactics towards that goal. And we have been over the past year calibrating the progress in our relationship with them to the progress they have been making towards that goal. And we think that's been working right since last spring when we laid out both this goal and that strategy.

Q Being tough got you this far, but you don't think that's the best step now -- incentives are better now?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, again, the goal -- I don't know whether tough is the right word here. The goal is and ☐ has been very clear. And that has not changed at all. And the tactics towards that goal, the strategy towards that goal has been consistent throughout. As you will recall, we had previously, first of all, had allowed the Vietnamese to clear their arrearages with the IMF last spring. And that was a step because they were making progress. Then last September, we allowed -- and that meant, I'm sorry, that previous decision meant that the international financial institutions could then start to carry out projects and make loans in Vietnam.

In September then, when there had been more progress, we then allowed American companies to bid on those contracts. Since last September there has been further progress, and now we are taking another step. So I think it's been quite a consistent strategy.

Q Would you please address the concerns of the families, because Griffiths was here last week -- I believe she saw

you. When she spoke to us outside the driveway, she was quite adamant saying that she believes that Vietnam has not been as cooperative as it could have been and that there has not been the kind of progress that she thinks should have been made. How are you dealing with that, and what are you saying in the interview to people like Ms. Griffiths and other family representatives to reassure them?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, I have met with her many times over the past year. I've found all our conversations valuable. She knows a lot about the issue. Clearly, she disagrees with our tactical judgment here as to what is the best way to achieve further progress.

I might say a word here about the meeting with the leaders of the veterans organizations. I can't speak for them, but I can say that it has been a very respectful one in both directions. And that while some of them disagreed with this as a tactical step, I was impressed with the way all of them expressed appreciation for the President's commitment on this issue and the concern he has showed and the thought that went into the decision. One of them said we will be agreeable in our disagreement on this tactic. And they all agreed at the end that we are working toward a common goal and that we will continue to work together on it, and we will continue to work with the League of Families as well.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Could I answer the answer on the Griffiths situation?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We're inviting her to go along, of course, on the mission next spring.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: First, I might add, that I also met with her and her group on Saturday for over two hours, and I was -- all of us are trying to keep in touch. But the important point is the following: Whether it's the League of Families or some of the veterans groups -- and this isn't monolithic by any means -- I think if you describe the debate, here's how it sort of breaks down. First, I think both sides -- and again, we believe the vast majority of people do back this decision -- but honest people can disagree and we have great sympathy for both the veterans and families. As I said, in the past they've had some -- a lot of disappointments and deception.

~~There's agreement on the goal, namely, full as possible accounting of MIAs. I think there's general agreement, most of these people -- I can't put words in their mouth -- on the strategy, namely that you avoid the two extremes if no engagement -- where you won't get any information, and where we didn't get it for many years because there was no engagement; but also not great leaps forward, as I suggested earlier, I think, where you squander your leverage if you go immediately to diplomatic relations and so on.~~

So, therefore, the general point of, sort of an in between course, I think, disagreement on. Then the issue comes, what's happening with respect to cooperation and progress. Again, I think there's agreement; there's been a lot of cooperative attitude in the sense of activity, stepped up Vietnamese efforts on joint field investigations, going out and trying to find witnesses and so on. So the disagreement, and I'm not belittling it -- the disagreement comes whether there's been actual sufficient tangible progress to want this incremental step. The other senior official laid out for you why we think there has, and does the President. And I think it's there that the disagreement revolves. So I just wanted

to give you the parameters of the debate.

Q You use the term, fullest possible accounting. Is it possible that that term will eventually mean that there will be a sizable portion of the 2,238 that will never be accounted for, and that the families are simply going to have to accept that?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think the families understand that a large portion of the 2,238 will never be accounted for. Fullest possible accounting simply means to account for everyone that can be accounted for. We just recovered three sets of remains from World War II in Tibet. We recovered remains from World War II in New Guinea and various places. As long as there are leads, as long as there is information, we will attempt to do whatever we can and get answers to the family.

Q You spoke about not squandering --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Let me just add to this. This is a process that is almost certainly going to take years into the future. And we are committing ourselves, have committed ourselves to continue to work on this issue for those years. And as he said, we are still recovering remains from wars ago.

Q You spoke of not squandering your leverage, sir. What leverage is left?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, I'm not -- the answer is there are many aspects of fully normal relationship that we have not achieved, both economic and diplomatic.

Q But has there -- there's been no great call for that from Vietnam. What they're interested in now --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Oh, yes, Vietnam -- no, Vietnam would welcome immediate diplomatic relations. They would welcome complete free trade without regard to other controls, which will still remain, as they do with many other countries. So there's plenty of objectives that -- I'm sure, that have not been fulfilled.

On the other hand, obviously, they can and have and should welcome this significant step forward.

Q Will they have MFN?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, you can't have MFN until you have a trade agreement, so you'd have to negotiate a trade agreement first.

Q How long will it be, do you think, before there are diplomatic relations? You just said, certainly it will be years before we resolve the POW problem.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: That's a future issue that we are not addressing now.

□

Q But can you just talk about a reasonable time line, or what your own expectations are?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think it depends on events.

Q How much control are we talking about on trade?

You describe it as controlled trade. How much control of --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, I was referring to like the State Department munitions list, the Commerce restrictions on dual-use items, national security. I understand your questions on the whole economic front, I really do, and we'll try to get Commerce and Treasury people to help you over the coming days to fill in some of these issues.

Q Is there another country that the relationship will be somewhat similar to? For example, will it be as restricted as -- less restricted than with China? Or is there a parallel you draw on that?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I don't want to give you off the top of my head something which may be misleading. It will be somewhere in between England and Iraq. (Laughter.)

Q Can you just give us -- since the Koreans are today sort of saying to the United States, enough of this talk; if you keep trying to inspect us, we're going to drop out of nonproliferation -- could you give us a answer on how the U.S. is responding to that today?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We have been in touch with the Koreans. Our position has not changed. The focus right now is on the negotiations between the North Koreans and the IAEA. And we hope that the North Koreans recognize their interest in achieving an agreement on inspections that will allow the IAEA to certify the continuity of safeguards, and that those negotiations continue.

Q But the U.S. has no sense of suggesting that there not be full inspections and the Koreans kind of get what they want?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No. No, our position has not changed in the slightest in the last few weeks.

MS. MYERS: We'll take one more question.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: One question about the liaison office. Can you tell us when the liaison office will be set up and also, will the top officers at the liaison office have the ambassadorial rank?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The answer to the second is almost certainly -- no, is the quick answer to the second one, I think it's fair to say.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Absolutely. Because we're not talking about diplomatic relations or anything that high profile. This is a practical step that is needed for the purposes that we've already outlined. We will sit down shortly with the Vietnamese and begin to work out these details, but we just don't have them today. I can't give you more than what we have.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END4:35 P.M. EST

THE WHITE HOUSE

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PRESS BRIEFING

BY

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ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ASIAN AND
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AND

ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR ECONOMIC POLICY BOB RUBIN

The Briefing Room

5:52 P.M. EDT

MR. LAKE: Hi. I know you're all very close to deadlines, so we will be very brief. Let me simply begin by emphasizing five points. First, the President wanted to make this decision and present it based on an honest assessment of progress that had been made over the past year. We'll be handing out a fact sheet soon that analyzes that. I will not bore you then by repeating it.

Secondly, the executive order, we believe, did lead to progress over the past year, but that approach has taken us as far as it could take us and, therefore, third, the President wanted to adopt a new approach aimed at the same strategic objectives and to make a clear decision to delink and has done so.

Fourth, the President's decision is designed to lay the basis for a long-term, sustainable relationship with China through which we can pursue both our human rights interests and our security and economic interests as well.

And, fifth, we will be now pursuing a very active human rights policy with China in the context of that broader relationship that Win Lord will be describing to you. And John Shattuck, Assistant Secretary for Human Rights at the State Department, will be here to answer questions as well.

We'll have just a little more to say first.

MR. RUBIN: Thank you, Tony. Let me comment for a moment on the process, if I may. This was really a terrific example of how a process should work. The human rights, the foreign policy, the economic considerations were all brought together at the same time for the President so he could make a fully informed decision based on all of the variables being in front of him at the same time, the same place, with all of the relevant people at the table.

Tony and I worked very closely together; it's exactly what the President wanted from the beginning of the administration, the foreign policy and economic people working together in the White House to work on the White House component of this.

Senior administration people agreed from the beginning

the revocation of MFN did not make sense, that democracy and human rights could be better served by engagement, integration into the global community of China. As time went on and we studied this more, we all agreed there has not, as Secretary Christopher has advised us -- there has not been overall significant progress. We agreed on delinkage as the best way to proceed in terms of human rights and other interests of the United States. And we agreed on a vigorous human rights agenda.

Let me add one more thing, if I may, and that is, this has been a very significant week with respect to Asian-United States policy in general. We cleared away the underbrush with respect to Japan. And we have begun, or we're about to begin, talks again with Japan on the various sectors under the framework agreement. Secondly, we've opened representative -- or have agreed to open representative offices in Vietnam. And thirdly, as you know, we now have a new policy with respect to China, forward-looking policy, as the President has just announced.

Thank you.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY SHATTUCK: Because of your deadlines and because the President and my colleagues have really covered the essential ground, I will speak at New York speed and be very brief here.

You have fact sheets -- you'll be getting more. So you have a sense of what progress has been made and what progress hasn't been made. The main point here is both the Secretary and the President, indeed, the entire administration was determined to make sure we gave an accurate, credible rendition of the situation in China. We believe we have done that. We have made some important progress, but there is some glaring deficiencies.

We've worked intensively. We've shown the spotlight on the human rights situation in China more than ever before. There has been progress, but China falls short, obviously, of international standards.

Now, where are we going in the future? There is a comprehensive approach outside of MFN that the President has outlined and you have further facts in front of you.

Very briefly, our rationale is the following: There are various ways to approach human rights and we have an initiative here on each of the sectors or elements that can do that. For example, we believe the business community can and should help. The President is going to sit down and talk with the business community and see whether we can develop a set of principles for operating in China. It would be voluntary and it would be cooperative. And so that is one element.

Second, obviously, in an age of information and technology, international broadcasting, bringing the facts and outside opinions and values to the people around the world including China, is another factor for liberalizing societies. Therefore, we will be stepping up our Voice of America programs, as well as launching the new Radio Free Asia.

Thirdly, it's obviously more effective whenever you can act multilaterally rather than bilaterally, and reflect the international community's consensus and not just the American views. And, therefore, we will put increased emphasis in working with other countries and an international fora.

And, finally, you have to look at the long-term and not just what is happening from week to week or day to day. And over the long-term, the development of nongovernmental organizations, a civil society, legal reform, parliamentary exchange we believe can have a major impact on Chinese society and human rights. So we'll be developing programs in that area as well. All of us will be accompanied, however, by an intensified, broad dialogue in the governmental channels which we have pursued, which we will continue to pursue, but as the President said, we believe in a more constructive and broader framework.

Thank you.

Q When did the President actually make the decision to delink? And it sounds like you just threw out the rules of the game so that you could reach a different decision than what you started out pursuing.

MR. LAKE: The President reached the decision to delink -- which was, of course, not the whole of the decisions he made -- I would say, some weeks ago as he was thinking this through. That became -- Bob, would you disagree -- that became one of the basic points of agreement between the President and his senior advisors. That, as I said, was not the only decision he made, and there remained a series of decisions then about what the best human rights strategy would be to take advantage of the new relationship we could build then with the Chinese; what, if any, sanctions to impose that were not in the MFN context, et cetera.

On your second question, the point here is that we have a very important strategic objective here, and that is to build a relationship with China within which we can seriously pursue human rights as well as our other security and economic interests.

The importance of that goal makes it imperative that you proceed in as practical a fashion you can at every stage. Therefore, for example, last September when it became evident that we needed to broaden the range of our contacts with China in order to be able, effectively, to pursue the human rights provisions of the executive order, we did so. The President decided that we should meet with the Chinese, expand those contacts. That meant Secretary Christopher and others were meeting with them, and that meant that the President met with President Jiang last year.

That was a tactical shift towards the same goal. We are doing exactly the same thing here. The executive order took us as far as it could. We think now the next stage is to pursue the human rights dialogue that the executive order allowed us to establish.

This is the first time over the past year that we have really gotten ourselves into a serious human rights dialogue with China thanks to the executive order. We are convinced that this now is the best way to pursue that dialogue in an effective fashion.

Q Have you communicated the decision to the Chinese government, and if so, have you had a response from them?

MR. LAKE: Yes. We did that today.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY SHATTUCK: We informed the Chinese government today about the decision. They basically listened, and indeed, we're having further discussions with them today, and also Ambassador Roy in China tomorrow. So we don't have any response at

this point. We'll let them speak for themselves.

Q Over the past year, administration officials repeatedly emphasized that what you were asking China to do on human rights was very minimum, that there were conditions which could be met. And yet, they weren't met. Was the position, both the rhetoric and the position taken during the 1972 campaign a mistake?

Q The '92 --

Q Excuse me, the 1992 campaign.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY SHATTUCK: -- 72 also. I remember very strong statements in 1972 when we -- (laughter.) There was immutable interest.

Q Was the 1992 campaign position a mistake? Was the executive order a mistake?

MR. LAKE: You'll not be surprised to know that I would say, absolutely not. Again, the executive order and the approach in the executive order, which laid out serious conditions, allowed us to achieve, we believe, the progress as shown in the fact sheets that has been achieved this year. Wang Juntao, who I met with a couple of weeks ago would not, in our view, be free today were it not for the approach we have taken over the last year. There are many ways in which we have made progress.

The President, by making China an issue in 1992 and through the executive order, has allowed -- has created an impulse for the progress we have achieved -- and again let me emphasize this, because I think it's very important -- has allowed us to get into a serious dialogue on human rights with the Chinese that we have not had before. And we think that this approach now will allow us best to exploit that opening into further progress on human rights in the future.

And as the President said, let us judge a year or two from now in the longer-term whether this approach is the right one or not. We believe that it is. This is the best tactic towards a very serious goal.

Q Tony, does this mean that the United States is now delinking trade and human rights as a matter of foreign policy, or delinking that kind -- or MFN with human rights? Or does it simply mean that if the trading partner is big enough and powerful enough and politically influential enough that it will be delinked?

MR. LAKE: I think neither. On the first point -- for example, on the sanctions now on munitions, the Secretary of State will determine when he believes -- or, in the future, she perhaps -- believes that that sanction should be lifted with regard to the overall state of American relations with China, which includes human rights. This is not to say that we are delinking human rights and economics around the world.

The answer to both of your points is that since societies differ, since situations differ, and since human rights matter, we will pursue in each case what we believe is the most effective strategy to achieve the greatest-possible results. And we are convinced that this approach in China is the best one now to pursue.

Q Presumably, you've had some input from people on

the Hill and gotten just a feel for the reception that this decision will probably receive there. Do you think now -- I'm thinking now particularly of Senator Mitchell -- do you expect that Senator Mitchell might go one step better and introduce the bill that he's threatened to that would impose more expansive sanctions against China?

MR. LAKE: I think we'll have to see what Senator Mitchell and others now do. The President has spent a great amount of time today, and over the past weeks, speaking to members of Congress, across the whole spectrum of opinion. As the President said today, he has no doubt that some of our friends and some of those who believe very strongly in human rights as we do will disagree on what is the best tactic here. I think we all still agree on the goals; they will have to decide how they will proceed; those who may disagree with this tactic.

I would say all of the conversations that he had with members of Congress, however, were very positive and respectful, and with both the President and other administration officials speaking with members of Congress, and the members I think respecting each other's basic commitment to human rights.

Q How important was the emergence of the Korean situation strategically dangerous in causing the President to put human rights perhaps on a lower stage of significance? The President seemed to hint at a changing strategic situation.

MR. LAKE: Certainly issues like Korea, issues that come up at the U.N., the Chinese vote and veto at the U.N. -- all of those things reinforce the importance of our having a positive, constructive relationship with China -- issues of nonproliferation. At the same time, that does not mean that he has one inch backed away from the importance he places on human rights.

In my view, throughout, the Chinese have made their decisions with regard to Korea based on China's interests. That has not been a function of our relationship with China. So the President did not pull back on human rights because of Korea or other issues. He does believe that the importance of our working with the Chinese on such issues reinforces the approach we are taking, which will also allow us to pursue the human rights dialogue. And we certainly hope that it will help us communicate all the more with the Chinese on Korea.

But I don't think it will affect their fundamental calculus about what they should do on Korea. They have a basic interest in a denuclearized Korean Peninsula. And they have a basic interest in seeing the Koreans choose the path of greater engagement with the international community, rather than going down the road of further isolation and possible sanctions.

Q I'd like to ask Mr. Rubin, now that we have these new rules of the game, could you give us either a two-year or five-year economic projection of the level of trade we're going to have with China?

MR. RUBIN: The answer to the question basically is no, I don't know. But I do think there is -- there is a broadly-held view that sometime in the next two or three decades China is likely to be the largest economy in the world. Furthermore, as you know, it does not have a trade surplus with the rest of the world. It's not a mercantilist society in that sense. I think business in this country has been somewhat held back in terms of developing markets in China

because of the uncertainty of the relationship. But I think that with the steps the President has taken today, there will be all the more incentive for developing markets in China. I think it will become an ever-larger and ever more important trading partner; but I don't have specific numbers. I don't think it's possible to make judgments at this point on that.

Q But you see a fairly substantial increase in U.S. exports?

MR. RUBIN: If you speak to people who are involved in running large companies, and they talk about the various countries in the world and parts of the world in which they see great opportunity, China ranks number one or number two -- right at the top of anybody's list. The answer is, absolutely yes.

Having said that, let me repeat something that Tony said. There was no question -- and we all sat through every one of these meetings with the President -- that the President put enormous emphasis on what is the best way to accomplish human rights objectives. And it was this engagement and integration of China to the rest of the world that -- was his judgment, was the best way to accomplish our human rights objectives.

Q Since Mr. Rubin was up there, maybe I'll -- you and Win. If any stiffer sanctions had been placed on China, do you think that the Boeing sale, potential Boeing sale would be jeopardized?

MR. RUBIN: Win, you're the expert on China.
(Laughter.) You were an ambassador at one time.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY LORD: China expert's an oxymoron. I don't want to speculate on what the Chinese may have done or might not have done. I don't think that's useful. China will act in its self-interest, whether it's Korea or whether it's a need for good aircraft. And, of course, American companies have the best aircraft in the world.

Q Mr. President and you just both mentioned that you think the question is, what is the most effective way. Some have suggested that to influence China, to increase contact with Taiwan or Tibet probably would be very effective. I was wondering, is that under consideration as a future tool?

MR. LAKE: As you know, the President has met with the Dalai Lama now both last year and a few weeks ago, and I assume within the context in which we have met with him previously, we will continue our contacts with the Dalai Lama as well.

Let me emphasize that, because we have not spoken a great deal about it, we are very disappointed that the Chinese government did not yet agree to enter into a dialogue with the Dalai Lama in the wake of the Dalai Lama's statements that the question of independence would not be on the agenda for those talks. And we are, of course, very disturbed by many of the Chinese actions in Tibet with regard to the Tibetan culture and people. So that item will remain very much on our agenda.

Q What about Taiwan? You didn't answer the question about Taiwan.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY SHATTUCK: We have a very strong, unofficial relationship with Taiwan. If anything, we believe it's become even stronger in this administration. We will pursue that.

We've also had a policy toward Taiwan through several administrations, Republican and Democrat, that has essentially been very successful, on the one hand allowing us to improve our relations with Beijing, on the other hand, creating the context not only for strong friendship with Taiwan, but for a strengthening of their de facto security, amazing economic development and a movement toward human rights and democracy in Taiwan.

So we will not play games or alter our One China policy. We will continue to strengthen our unofficial ties with Taiwan. It's worked for many administrations. It's going to work under this administration.

Q I'd like to follow up on your answer. I'd like to know the status of the Taiwan policy review. Now that the MFN issue is out of the way, are you going to move on with that policy review, which I understand, because of the MFN debate, has been sort of put on hold.

And also, I'd like to know personally -- it's being suggested that you might be made the fall guy because of this MFN issue because you're obviously the architect of that policy. It's been suggested you might leave government or -- (laughter.)

ASSISTANT SECRETARY SHATTUCK: I'll take both of these. (Laughter.) Are you trying to make me leave? (Laughter.)

MR. LAKE: I think I should answer that.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY SHATTUCK: I have a funny answer. (Laughter.)

As far as I'm concerned, if the Knickerbockers and Rangers win, it's still a good spring no matter what happens. I'll let Tony answer both questions. But on the schedule, seriously, the NSC advisor and the NEC, if it's an economic issue, control the schedule. I will not accept the premise of your question that's been held up. We had an intensive review, and I'll let you know when we're going to have a high-level meeting on it.

MR. LAKE: I think it will be moving along in the next few weeks. I would prefer to say that it is proceeding apace rather than was on hold.

Let me say very, very strongly, first of all, that as a Red Sox fan with a sense of tragedy, I don't think it would be a good summer at all. But the policy of the executive order was last year put together jointly in the White House and with the State Department and other agencies.

It is wrong to say that any one individual is the architect of that policy. And again, I think it has been a good policy, and it has taken us as far as it has, and it has placed us in a good position now to pursue our human rights dialogue with the Chinese. And I absolutely have no expectation that a year from now, as we discuss the progress made under this new policy, that Win Lord will not be standing here with us.

Q What does it mean when you said the President has not backed away on human rights? But what do you think the impact that this decision is going to be on his credibility overseas? The perception appears to be that any position he takes can be reversed with sufficient amount of pressure.

MR. LAKE: This policy was not -- this decision the President has reached was not made as a result of pressure.

Q pressures from the interests here --

MR. LAKE: Absolutely. A lot of different people had a lot of different views. There were pressures -- if you want to use that word -- from a lot of different directions. And at a certain point, after you have consulted and heard different points of view, you simply sit down and decide what is right; what is the best approach to advance our interests, including our human rights. And that is precisely what the President did. And those of us who sat in every meeting with him will -- I think all of us -- tell you precisely that.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END6:16 P.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

February 3, 1994

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
IN ANNOUNCEMENT OF LIFTING TRADE EMBARGO ON VIETNAM

The Roosevelt Room

5:06 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. I want to especially thank all of you who have come here on such short notice. From the beginning of my administration, I have said that any decisions about our relationships with Vietnam should be guided by one factor and one factor only: gaining the fullest-possible accounting for our prisoners of war and our missing in action. We owe that to all who served in Vietnam and to the families of those whose fate remains unknown.

Today I am lifting the trade embargo against Vietnam because I am absolutely convinced it offers the best way to resolve the fate of those who remain missing and about whom we are not sure. We've worked hard over the last year to achieve progress. On Memorial Day I pledged to declassify and make available virtually all government documents related to our POWs and MIA. On Veterans Day I announced that we had fulfilled that pledge. Last April, and again in July, I sent two presidential delegations to Vietnam to expand our search for remains and documents.

We intensified our diplomatic efforts. We have devoted more resources to this effort than any previous administration. Today, more than 500 dedicated military and civilian personnel are involved in this effort under the leadership of General Shalikashvili, Secretary Aspin and our Commander in the Pacific, Admiral Larson.

Many work daily in the fields, the jungles, the mountains of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, often braving very dangerous conditions, trying to find the truth about those about whom we are not sure. Last July I said any improvement in our relations with Vietnam would depend on tangible progress in four specific areas:

First, the recovery and return of remains of our POWs and MIA. Second, the continued resolution of discrepancy cases -- cases in which there is reason to believe individuals could have survived the incident in which they were lost. Third, further assistance from Vietnam and Laos on investigations along their common border, an area where many U.S. servicemen were lost and pilots downed. And, fourth, accelerated efforts to provide all relevant POW/MIA-related documents.

Today, I can report that significant, tangible progress has been made in all these four areas. Let me describe it. First, on remains. Since the beginning of this administration, we have recovered the remains of 67 American servicemen. In the seven months

since July, we've recovered 39 sets of remains, more than during all of 1992.

Second, on the discrepancy cases. Since the beginning of the administration, we've reduced the number of these cases from 135 to 73. Since last July, we've confirmed the deaths of 19

□
servicemen who were on the list. A special United States team in Vietnam continues to investigate the remaining cases.

Third, on cooperation with Laos. As a direct result of the conditions set out in July, the governments of Vietnam and Laos agreed to work with us to investigate their common border. The first such investigation took place in December and located new remains as well as crash sites that will soon be excavated.

Fourth, on the documents. Since July, we have received important wartime documents from Vietnam's military archives that provide leads on unresolved POW/MIA cases. The progress achieved on unresolved questions is encouraging, but it must not end here. I remain personally committed to continuing the search for the answers and the peace of mind that families of the missing deserve.

There's been a substantial increase in Vietnamese cooperation on these matters over the past year. Everyone involved in the issue has affirmed that. I have carefully considered the question of how best to sustain that cooperation in securing the fullest possible accounting. I've consulted with my national security and veterans affairs advisers, with several outside experts, such as General John Vessey, the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who has been an emissary to Vietnam for three presidents now. It was their view that the key to continued progress lies in expanding our contacts with Vietnam.

This was also the view of many distinguished Vietnam veterans and former POWs who now serve in the Congress, such as Senator Bob Kerrey and Congressman Pete Peterson, who are here. And I want to say a special word of thanks to Senator John Kerry -- is he here? There he is. He just came in. And Senator John McCain, who had to go home on a family matter and could not be here. But I thank the two of you so much for your leadership and your steadfastness. And all the rest of you -- Senator Robb and so many others, especially those who served in Vietnam, for being counted on this issue and for taking all the care you have for such a long time.

I have made the judgment that the best way to ensure cooperation from Vietnam and to continue getting the information Americans want on POWs and MIAs is to end the trade embargo. I've also decided to establish a liaison office in Vietnam to provide services for Americans there and help us to pursue a human rights dialogue with the Vietnamese government.

I want to be clear: These actions do not constitute a normalization of our relationships. Before that happens, we must have more progress, more cooperation and more answers. Toward that end, this spring I will send another high-level U.S. delegation to Vietnam to continue the search for remains and for documents.

Earlier today, I met with the leaders of our nation's veterans organizations. I deeply respect their views. Many of the families they represent have endured enormous suffering and uncertainty. And their opinions also deserve special consideration. I talked with them about my decision. I explained the reasons for that decision. Some of them, in all candor, do not agree with the

action I am taking today.

But I believe we all agree on the ultimate goal -- to secure the fullest possible accounting of those who remain missing. And I was pleased that they committed to continue working with us toward that goal.

Whatever the Vietnam war may have done in dividing in our country in the past, today our nation is one in honoring those who served and pressing for answers about all those who did not return. This decision today, I believe, renews that commitment and □ our constant, constant effort never to forget those until our job is done. Those who have sacrificed deserve a full and final accounting. I am absolutely convinced, as are so many in the Congress who serve there and so many Americans who have studied this issue, that this decision today will help to ensure that fullest possible accounting.

Thank you very much.

* * * *

Q Mr. President, aren't you giving up some leverage, though? Could we ask you about that? And what do you anticipate in terms of American trade? What's the size of the market? What do you think the opportunities are?

THE PRESIDENT: I have no idea. Because I can -- I wanted to make sure that the trade questions did not enter into this decision. So, we never -- I never had a briefing on it, and we never had a discussion about it. I thought it was very important that that not be a part of this decision.

I don't think we're giving up anything. It was the consensus of all those who had been there, who had worked there that we had gotten so much more cooperation that we needed to keep moving the process forward, and that we would lose leverage if there were no forward movement. Have we given up anything? I don't think so. Nothing we are doing today is irreversible if the cooperation ceases. So I am convinced we are moving in the right direction for the right reasons.

Q Mr. President, you mentioned people who had served in Vietnam had served; you did not. Did this have any role in your decision, and did it make it more difficult for you to reach this decision?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I do think, however, everybody my age, whether they were in Vietnam or not, knew someone who died there, knew someone who was wounded there. And I think people in our generation are perhaps more insistent on trying to get a full accounting, more obsessed with it than perhaps people who are younger and people who are older, except those who had children there.

I have spent an enormous amount of time on this issue. I got a personal briefing when I was in Hawaii last summer. I have talked to some of the young people who were there digging in the jungles for the remains. I have really thought about this, and I have tried to listen hard to -- when Senator Kerry and Senator McCain and their delegation came back, we had a long meeting here about it. I think the people, all the people my age just want to know we've done everything we can. And I think this is consistent with doing that.

Q Mr. President, on another subject, what do you hope to achieve with the immigration crackdown that was announced today? And do you have any concerns that people's rights will be violated?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we're going to do our best not to violate anybody's rights. What we hope to achieve is a continued environment in which America will be open for legal immigration. We are a nation of immigrants which we are a nation of immigrants -- which we can do our best to protect our borders.

Q You've had, sir, two influential business groups say that they prefer other plans than yours to health care. Does that hurt you?

THE PRESIDENT: One was the Chamber of Commerce.

□

Q Does their stand, saying that other directions are the way to go, particularly the Business Roundtable, does that hurt you in negotiations as you move forward?

THE PRESIDENT: All I know -- I don't want to make too much of it, because the people who came in here to see me said it was a negotiating strategy. And I said, well, if all of you are providing health care coverage to your employees, I don't think you want to come out for a position against providing guaranteed health insurance to all American workers. So I don't know what to make of it, but I wouldn't read too much into it. This is the beginning of what will be a protracted legislative discussion.

Q Tonight, sir, Ronald Reagan is apparently going to take issue with some of your criticisms of him. Do you feel that you have been unfairly savaging his record in the 1980s?

THE PRESIDENT: Gee, I don't think I've been very critical of him at all. You know, I disagreed with the economic policy, I said so. But I don't -- I think if you go back over the rhetoric of this last year, it's been fairly free of obsession with the past; I'm not much into that. I'm looking toward tomorrow.

Q You hired Gergen, after all. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: What greater compliment could I pay President Reagan?

MR. GERGEN: Last question. (Laughter.)

END5:17 P.M. EST

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the President

For Immediate Release

July 2, 1993

Statement by the President on U.S. Policy Toward Vietnam

It has always been my firm belief that America's highest priority in its approach toward Vietnam is to secure a full accounting on our Prisoners of War and Missing in Action.

Today, I am announcing two new steps toward that goal. The first involves access by Vietnam to the International Monetary Fund. The second is my decision to send a new, high-level delegation to Vietnam to press for further progress on unresolved POW/MIA issues. Together, these steps offer the best hope of providing America's POW/MIA families the answers and peace of mind they deserve.

Over the past several months, I have given intense thought to how best to achieve the fullest possible accounting for our POW/MIAs and how to shape U.S. policy toward Vietnam to achieve that goal. I have met with Veterans, with the families whose loved ones have not returned and with Members of Congress who have a strong interest in this issue, including some who were held as prisoners of war.

Last night, I met with a group of impressive, dedicated representatives of veterans organizations and families who care deeply about our government's efforts to achieve the fullest possible accounting of our missing. They share my own belief that our policy toward Vietnam must be driven not by commercial interests but by the overriding purpose of achieving further progress toward the fullest possible accounting of our POW/MIAs. Vietnam has long been a divisive issue for America. It remains so today. I know there is strong disagreement among all those with an interest in the POW/MIA issue on how best to further our mutual goal. Where there is no disagreement, however, is on the need to ensure that any decision taken is made in answer to the only relevant question: will it help us discover the truth about our missing?

One of the tragedies of this issue is that our own government has often denied unnecessarily information about this issue to the American public. That is why I have instructed all U.S. Government POW/MIA related documents to be declassified by Veterans Day of this year, except for that tiny fraction that could still affect our national security or invade the privacy of the families. I have also been working to consolidate the POW/MIA agencies and resources to enhance the efficiency of these operations and access by the public. They have a right to know and I intend to ensure they do.

Since taking office, I have reviewed the progress made to date in resolving unanswered questions concerning the fate of American service personnel who did not return from Vietnam. I have insisted on the fullest possible accounting from the Vietnamese government and pressed for further progress. As part of this effort, I dispatched General John Vessey to Vietnam last April as

my Special Emissary for POW/MIA Affairs to press for further progress. In addition, Members of Congress and representatives of veterans groups have travelled to Vietnam to press for that goal.

In an effort to encourage further progress, it is appropriate at this time to recognize what the Vietnamese have done in our effort to account for our missing. Attached is a summary outlining that progress. Therefore, I have decided to end our opposition to the efforts of other nations to clear Vietnam's arrears in the IMF. I believe, as do former POWs John McCain and Douglas "Pete" Peterson and others veterans such as John Kerry and others in Congress, that such action will best serve the goal of achieving further progress toward the fullest possible accounting.

Any further steps in US-Vietnamese relations will strictly depend on further progress by the Vietnamese on the POW/MIA issue. We should not be swayed from that course; America owes no less to the brave men and women who fought in Vietnam and to their loved ones. Progress to date is simply not sufficient to warrant any change in our trade embargo or any further steps toward normalization.

In order to press for further progress and send a clear message to the Vietnamese government, I will send to Hanoi a high level delegation. The official delegation will include Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs Hershel Gober, Assistant Secretary of State Winston Lord and Lieutenant General Michael E. Ryan.

I also have invited representatives of the three largest veterans group to accompany the delegation. The American Legion, The Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Disabled American Veterans have each agreed to send representatives with the delegation and I am grateful for their willingness to participate in this important mission. In addition, I have invited the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia to send a representative. I have also asked our current Ambassador in Thailand, David Floyd Lambertson, who has extensive experience in Vietnam, to assist the delegation.

The delegation will make clear to the Vietnamese that any further steps in relations between our two nations depend on tangible progress on the outstanding POW/MIA cases. We insist upon efforts by the Vietnamese in four key areas:

Remains:	Concrete results from efforts on their part to recover remains and repatriate American remains.
Discrepancy cases:	Continued resolution of 92 discrepancy cases, live sightings and field activities.
Laos:	Further assistance in implementing trilateral investigation with the Lao.
Archives:	Accelerated efforts to provide all POW/MIA related documents that will help lead to genuine answers.

The individuals on this delegation share my own determination to do all we can to find the truth surrounding those who did not come home. They will press hard for results.

The delegation will also raise with the Vietnamese continuing human rights concerns and press for progress in the areas of

basic freedoms, democracy and economic reform.

For many Americans, the Vietnam War left deep wounds that have yet to heal. One of the ways to help the process of healing is to help the friends and families of POWs and MIAs learn the truth. The steps I have outlined today will advance that goal.

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

September 13, 1993

Renewal of the Trading with the Enemy Act and
U.S. Policy Toward the Embargo Against Vietnam

In order to maintain the embargo against Vietnam and other countries, the President today signed a determination which renews his authorities under the Trading with the Enemy Act (TWEA). This action extends the President's authority to impose and maintain certain trade assets and fund controls variously affecting Cuba, North Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia and the Baltic nations. It does not alter the specific controls on the countries involved.

The President strongly supports the embargo against Cuba where the people continue to suffer Castro's unrelenting dictatorship. The embargo must also be maintained against North Korea which continues to pose a threat to peace in Asia. We continue to hold certain assets frozen involving Cambodia and the Baltic states pending a resolution of claims.

With respect to Vietnam, the President will maintain the embargo with an adjustment relating to international financial institution lending. The President is committed to achieving the fullest possible accounting of our POW/MIA's from the Vietnam war. Today's action will advance that goal. First, to recognize the recent steps taken by the Vietnamese government and, most importantly to encourage further progress, the President has decided to permit American companies to participate in development projects in Vietnam funded by International Financial Institutions. Second, to make clear to the Vietnamese that more needs to be done, he will otherwise maintain the trade embargo pending further progress on POW/MIA accounting.

BACKGROUND

To advance the objective of achieving the fullest possible accounting for our POW/MIA's, the President in July set forth four areas upon which further steps in relations between our two nations depend: obtaining additional remains, resolution of

discrepancy cases, trilateral investigation with the Lao and access to POW/MIA-related documents. Some progress in each of these areas has been made in recent months.

The United States has recovered a large number of remains from

Vietnam which await identification by our forensic specialists. Together with remains already received this year, this represents the third highest number of remains returned since 1973. Recent increased efforts to resolve discrepancy cases are generating important information which could lead to resolution of a significant portion of the remaining discrepancy cases. For the first time, Vietnam and Laos have agreed to conduct border-area investigations with our teams, cooperating bilaterally and trilaterally with the United States. And, the Vietnamese government has located and provided us access to key POW/MIA-related documents that we have sought since the end of the war. Further details on these steps are attached.

While these efforts by the Vietnamese are welcome, the results are not yet sufficient. To ensure further progress is achieved, our military personnel in Vietnam involved in the POW/MIA mission will continue to travel throughout the country to investigate leads on live sightings and locations of remains, interview Vietnamese witnesses, and excavate possible crash sites and burial locations. We will continue to press Vietnam to recover and return remains and for more information that could lead to a resolution of cases, especially those in which we have reason to believe the Vietnamese at one point recovered remains.

In addition, the Administration is actively investigating the latest document turned over to Ambassador Malcolm Toon, Co-Chairman of the U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIA Affairs, alleging the Vietnamese may have held larger numbers of American POW's than known at the time. The President is committed to pressing the Vietnamese and Russian governments for further information. The Administration will leave no stone unturned in the effort to determine the fate of those who served our nation.

The issue of whether the Vietnamese have made sufficient progress in POW/MIA accounting will remain under constant review. In evaluating how best to achieve the fullest possible accounting, the President looks forward to the continued counsel and advice from the families whose loved ones are missing and the veterans whose fellow soldiers did not come home. The President shares with them a deep commitment to obtaining answers and to ensuring our POW/MIA's the honor of being returned to the country for which they fought. The President believes firmly that the decisions announced today will serve that vital national goal.

Progress to Date in Meeting the Four Areas in POW/MIA Accounting

On July 2, 1993, the President announced four key areas in which he sought further progress by the Vietnamese in POW/MIA accounting:

Remains: Concrete results from efforts by Vietnam to recover remains and repatriate American remains.

Discrepancy cases: Continued resolution of 92 discrepancy cases, live sightings and field activities.

Laos: Further assistance in implementing trilateral investigation with the Lao.

Archives: Accelerated efforts to provide all POW/MIA related documents that will help lead to genuine answers.

To help achieve progress in these areas, the President sent a high level delegation to Vietnam in July to press for further progress and achievements in these key areas; a delegation met in August with the Vietnamese and the Lao to work toward more results. Since the President's announcement last July, the government of Vietnam has increased its efforts in each of the four areas. Below is a summary of the progress since July 2.

1. More Concrete Results to Recover and Repatriate American Remains

Since July, remains of 22 individuals were turned over; added to 28 remains returned earlier in the year, 1993 has already produced the third highest number of remains returned since 1973.

On September 6, Hanoi turned over further reports on investigations with respect to specific cases.

In August, Hanoi boosted publicity of its amnesty program over radio and in the print media to encourage citizens to locate and turn over remains, with a pledge to reimburse expenses incurred in recovering any remains which proved to be American.

At the request of the July delegation, Hanoi set up a permanent office in Ho Chi Minh City dedicated to POW/MIA

work; its current priority is to recover the remains of some POW's known to have died in captivity.

2. Resolution of 92 Discrepancy Cases and Investigation of Live Sightings

As of August 30, all necessary field investigation in Vietnam of live sighting reports had been completed, with assistance from the Vietnamese.

In July and August, 25 of the 92 priority cases were re-investigated; as a result, determination of fate has been made on an additional 12 cases, removing them from the priority last-known-alive discrepancy list. Such cases originally numbered 196.

3. Assistance in Arranging Trilateral Border Cooperation with Laos

In August, Vietnam's ministries of defense and interior for the first time pledged to cooperate on border cases (mainly along the Ho Chi Minh trail). Discussions with Vietnamese and Lao authorities led to a trilateral agreement to collaborate on investigations along the border where there are scores of aircraft crash sites and other locations where remains are likely to be found.

4. Accelerated Efforts to Provide Documents on POW/MIA's

On August 30, Vietnam provided us access to wartime aircraft shootdown records which may related to 14 individuals heretofore unaccounted for.

September 1, we gained access to perhaps the largest compilation of POW/MIA-related documents we have ever received from the Vietnamese: a 46-page document on shootdowns of 2466 aircraft which could lead to determination of the fates of many unresolved cases; long-requested military political-unit documents on POW's which could prove very useful in locating aircraft crash sites inside Laos, and in verifying numbers and other facts about our POW's during the war.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

February 22, 2000

February 18, 2000

Presidential Determination
No. 2000-14

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE

SUBJECT: Vietnamese Cooperation in Accounting for United States
Prisoners of War and Missing in Action (POW/MIA)

As provided under section 610 of the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2000, as contained in the Consolidated Appropriations Act for FY 2000 (Public Law 106-113), I hereby determine, based on all information available to the United States Government, that the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is fully cooperating in good faith with the United States in the following four areas related to achieving the fullest possible accounting for Americans unaccounted for as a result of the Vietnam War:

- 1) resolving discrepancy cases, live sightings, and field activities;
- 2) recovering and repatriating American remains;
- 3) accelerating efforts to provide documents that will help lead to the fullest possible accounting of POW/MIAs; and,
- 4) providing further assistance in implementing trilateral investigations with Laos.

I further determine that the appropriate laboratories associated with POW/MIA accounting are thoroughly analyzing remains, material, and other information and fulfilling their responsibilities as set forth in subsection (B) of section 609 of the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1999, as contained in the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, 1999 (Public Law 105-277), and information pertaining to this accounting is being made available to immediate family members in compliance with 50 U.S.C. 435 note.

I have been advised by the Department of Justice and believe that section 610 is unconstitutional because it purports to use a condition on appropriations as a means to direct my execution of responsibilities that the Constitution commits exclusively to the President. I am providing this determination as a matter of comity, while reserving the position that the condition enacted in section 610 is unconstitutional.

In making this determination, I have taken into account all information available to the U.S. Government as reported to me, the full range of ongoing accounting activities in Vietnam, including joint and unilateral Vietnamese efforts, and the concrete results we have attained as a result. Finally, in making this determination, I wish to reaffirm my

continuing personal commitment to the entire POW/MIA community, especially to the immediate families, relatives, friends, and supporters of these brave individuals, and to reconfirm that the central, guiding principle of my Vietnam policy is to achieve the fullest possible accounting of our prisoners of war and missing in action.

You are authorized and directed to report this determination to the appropriate committees of the Congress and to publish it in the Federal Register.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Aboard Air Force One en route Washington, D.C.)

For Immediate Release

September 15, 1999

NATIONAL POW/MIA RECOGNITION DAY, 1999

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BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

As we look back over this century that is swiftly drawing to a close, we recognize that the light of freedom still burns brightly in our world today because of the service and sacrifice of America's men and women in uniform. Through the devastation of two world wars and the brutality of numerous regional conflicts; on peacekeeping assignments and humanitarian missions; from the darkest days of the Cold War to the fall of the Berlin Wall, our Nation's servicemen and women have fought the forces of tyranny and won signal victories for liberty, human dignity, and the ideals of democracy. On every continent, on the seas, and in the air, gallant young Americans have paid for our future with their own, and many have preserved our freedom by sacrificing their own.

On National POW/MIA Recognition Day, we remember with profound gratitude those who suffered captivity and those whose fate remains unknown. Many American POWs were tortured at the hands of their captors; all experienced the ordeal of being held against their will and the anguish of indefinite separation from their families and their homeland.

Today we also honor the valiant families of our fellow citizens who remain missing -- families who have had to suffer not only the absence of their loved ones, but also the uncertainty of their fate. As Americans, we remain unshakable in our resolve to achieve the fullest possible accounting of those missing and to strive to bring home the remains of those who have died. Only by doing so can we begin to acknowledge the debt we owe to these patriots and assuage the grief of the families they left behind for the sake of our Nation.

On September 17, 1999, the flag of the National League of Families of American Prisoners of War and Missing in Southeast Asia, a black and white banner symbolizing America's missing and our unwavering determination to account for them, will be flown over the White House, the U.S. Capitol, the Departments of State, Defense, and Veterans Affairs, the Selective Service System Headquarters, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Korean War Veterans Memorial, national cemeteries, and other locations across our country.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim September 17, 1999, as National POW/MIA Recognition Day. I ask all Americans to join me in honoring former American prisoners of war and those whose fate is still undetermined. I also encourage the American people to remember with compassion and concern the courageous families who persevere in their quest to know the fate of their missing loved ones. Finally, I urge Federal, State, and local officials and private organizations to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies,

programs, and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fifteenth day of September in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)

For Immediate Release

April 9, 1999

NATIONAL FORMER PRISONER OF WAR RECOGNITION DAY, 1999

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BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

"We are honored to have had the opportunity to serve our country" With these simple words, Navy Commander Jeremiah Denton, released in 1973 from North Vietnam with his companions after the longest wartime captivity of any group of Americans in our history, summed up the courage, selflessness, and indomitable spirit of generations of American prisoners of war.

For more than two centuries, Americans have risked and lost their own freedom to defend democracy, preserve America's liberty and values, and protect our national interests around the world. In Andersonville or along the Yalu River, confined in Nazi stalags or enduring torture in the Hañoi Hilton, our prisoners of war have set an extraordinary example of valor, patriotism, and devotion to duty in the face of enormous hardship and adversity. The somber black and white POW/MIA flag serves as a reminder of their sacrifice and symbolizes our Nation's deep concern for and steadfast commitment to these brave Americans and their families.

But, however dark and trying the ordeal for our prisoners of war, their sacrifices did indeed serve a grand purpose. Inspired by their bravery in captivity, our Nation has been resolute in its defense of liberty. And, because of their sacrifice, the United States today is strong, free, and prosperous, looking forward to a future of limitless possibility.

Today we pay special tribute to our Nation's former prisoners of war and their families and express our heartfelt gratitude for their many sacrifices. They have embodied the ideals of a strong people and a free Nation. They have represented America at its best, and they have served a grateful Nation with honor, dignity, and distinction. As we honor them, let us also keep foremost in our thoughts and prayers Staff Sergeant Andrew Ramirez, Staff Sergeant Christopher Stone, and Specialist Steven Gonzales of the United States Army as they endure unjust captivity in Yugoslavia and as we work for their safety and swift release.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 9, 1999, as National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day. I call upon all Americans to join me in remembering former American prisoners of war who suffered the hardships of enemy captivity. I also call upon Federal, State, and local government officials and private organizations to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this ninth day of

April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

February 3, 1999

February 3, 1999

Presidential Determination
No. 99-12

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE

SUBJECT: Vietnamese Cooperation in Accounting
for United States Prisoners of War and
Missing in Action (POW/MIA)

As provided under section 609 of the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1999, as contained in the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, 1999, Public Law 105-277, I hereby determine, based on all information available to the United States Government, that the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is fully cooperating in good faith with the United States in the following four areas related to achieving the fullest possible accounting for Americans unaccounted for as a result of the Vietnam War:

- 1) resolving discrepancy cases, live sightings, and field activities;
- 2) recovering and repatriating American remains;
- 3) accelerating efforts to provide documents that will help lead to the fullest possible accounting of POW/MIAs; and,
- 4) providing further assistance in implementing trilateral investigations with Laos.

I further determine that the appropriate laboratories associated with POW/MIA accounting are thoroughly analyzing remains, material, and other information and fulfilling their responsibilities as set forth in subsection (B) of section 609, and information pertaining to this accounting is being made available to immediate family members in compliance with 50 U.S.C. 435 note.

I have been advised by the Department of Justice that section 609 is unconstitutional because it purports to use a condition on appropriations as a means to direct my execution of responsibilities that the Constitution commits exclusively to the President. I am providing this determination as a matter of comity with the Congress, while reserving the position that the condition enacted in section 609 is unconstitutional.

In making this determination, I have taken into account all information available to the United States Government as reported to me, including the full range of ongoing accounting activities in Vietnam, joint and

unilateral Vietnamese efforts, and the concrete results we have attained as a result of these efforts.

Finally, in making this determination, I wish to reaffirm my continuing personal commitment to the entire POW/MIA community, especially to the immediate families, relatives, friends, and supporters of these brave individuals, and to reconfirm that the central, guiding principle of my Vietnam policy is to achieve the fullest possible accounting of our prisoners of war and missing in action.

You are authorized and directed to report this determination to the appropriate committees of the Congress and to publish it in the Federal Register.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Cincinnati, Ohio)

For Immediate Release

September 17, 1998

NATIONAL POW/MIA RECOGNITION DAY, 1998

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BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

For more than two centuries, America has been blessed by the service and sacrifice of the men and women of our Armed Forces. Often leaving home and family, they have fought to preserve our freedom, protect our national interests, and advance American values and ideals around the globe. These valiant heroes have risked -- and many have lost -- their lives in service to our Nation and for the well-being of their fellow Americans.

Each year, on National POW/MIA Recognition Day, we acknowledge with special gratitude and profound respect those who paid for our freedom with their own, and we remember with deep sorrow those whose fate has never been resolved. Americans who were held as prisoners of war throughout our history endured the indignities and brutality of captivity without surrendering their devotion to duty, honor, and country. With steadfast hearts and indomitable spirit, these patriots never gave up on America because they knew that America, and the American people, would never give up on them.

In the same way, we will never give up on our efforts to obtain the fullest possible accounting of every American missing in service to our country. We reaffirm our pledge to their families to search unceasingly for information about those missing and to seek the repatriation of those who have died and whose remains have not been recovered. By doing so we keep faith with our men and women in the Armed Forces and with the families who have suffered the anguish of not knowing the fate of their loved ones.

On September 18, 1998, the flag of the National League of Families of American Prisoners of War and Missing in Southeast Asia, a black and white banner symbolizing America's missing and our fierce determination to account for them, will be flown over the White House, the U.S. Capitol, the Departments of State, Defense, and Veterans Affairs, the Selective Service System Headquarters, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Korean War Veterans Memorial, national cemeteries, and other locations across our country.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim September 18, 1998, as National POW/MIA Recognition Day. I ask all Americans to join me in honoring former American prisoners of war and those whose fate is still undetermined. I also encourage the American people to remember with compassion and concern the courageous families who persevere in their quest to know the fate of their missing loved ones.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this seventeenth day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

December 9, 1999

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

I was saddened to learn of renewed flooding in the central provinces of Vietnam, which were already inundated by heavy rains last month. On behalf of the American people, I extend my deepest sympathies to all those who have suffered losses and are struggling to rebuild, including the families of many Americans of Vietnamese descent.

The United States is providing emergency assistance to support flood relief efforts, just as we provided almost \$600,000 in November to deliver supplies and build flood-resistant homes. We stand ready to provide further help to meet the urgent needs of those affected by the flooding and to help the Vietnamese people better withstand future flooding.

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Shanghai, People's Republic of China)

For Immediate Release

June 30, 1998

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

Identification of Vietnam War Unknown Remains

DNA testing positively identified the remains of the Vietnam War unknown disinterred from the Tomb of the Unknowns in May as those of the Air Force 1st Lt. Michael J. Blassie. The Defense Department has notified the Blassie family and the other families involved in resolving this difficult case. I am pleased that one more family has finally learned the fate of a loved one, and I remain committed to seeking a full accounting of the missing in action from that conflict.

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

May 23, 1996

PRESIDENT CLINTON NAMES DOUGLAS "PETE" PETERSON AS
U.S. AMBASSADOR TO THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

President Clinton today announced his intent to nominate Douglas "Pete" Peterson, of Marianna, Florida, as Ambassador to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Congressman Peterson has represented the Second Congressional District of Florida since 1991. Prior to being elected to Congress, Mr. Peterson served as Director of the Specialized Treatment Program in the Psychology Department of Florida State University.

Mr. Peterson served as a fighter pilot and commander in the United States Air Force from 1954-1981 and attained the rank of full colonel. He served in worldwide assignments, including combat experience in Vietnam, where he spent six and one-half years as a prisoner of war. Currently, Congressman Peterson serves as chairman of the working group on Vietnam on the U.S. Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIAs, working with Russian officials to uncover information about missing American servicemen.

Mr. Peterson has maintained a close involvement in Vietnam affairs. During two congressional visits, he met with senior government officials, traveled in both northern and southern parts of the country and visited the prison where he was a former POW. He played a key advisory role in President Clinton's decision in July 1995 to establish diplomatic relations with Vietnam.

Born June 26, 1935 in Omaha, Nebraska, Mr. Peterson earned a B.A. from the University of Tampa. He is a widower and has two children.

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THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

May 14, 1996

EXECUTIVE ORDER 13002

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TERMINATION OF COMBAT ZONE DESIGNATION IN
VIETNAM AND WATERS ADJACENT THERETO

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including section 112(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (26 U.S.C. 112(c)(3)), June 30, 1996, as of midnight thereof, is hereby designated as the date of termination of combatant activities in the zone comprised of the area described in Executive Order No. 11216 of April 24, 1965.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

THE WHITE HOUSE,
May 13, 1996.

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

February 16, 1996

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

Warm greetings to everyone observing the Vietnamese Lunar New Year as you welcome the Year of the Rat.

This ancient annual festival unites people of Vietnamese heritage across America and around the globe in an exuberant celebration of hope and new beginnings. Family and friends gather to renew the bonds of love and to rejoice in the rich cultural traditions of Vietnam. The joys of the coming year are anticipated with a flurry of fireworks, flowers, decorations, and feasting.

Tet is a fitting occasion for us to reflect on the many gifts that Vietnamese Americans have brought to our national life -- among them a reverence for family, an unquenchable optimism, and an unwavering determination to make tomorrow better than today. Let us rejoice together in this season of renewal and resolve to work for a future of harmony and prosperity for us all.

Best wishes for a new year of happiness, health, freedom, and peace.

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

November 7, 1995

STATEMENT BY THE PRESS SECRETARY

Lake Meets POW-MIA Representatives on Relations with Vietnam

Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Anthony Lake and several other senior Administration officials met on November 2nd with representatives of the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Veterans of World War II, Korea and Vietnam, Vietnam Veterans of America, and the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing In Southeast Asia to review the issue of POW/MIAs and the current state of economic relations between the United States and Vietnam.

Mr. Lake underscored to the representatives of the veterans and families that achieving progress on the fullest possible accounting of our POW/MIAs remains the highest priority in our relations with Vietnam. They discussed the Presidential delegation, led by Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs Hershel Gober, which will travel to Vietnam later this month to press for further progress.

Mr. Lake also briefed the representatives on the tasks and goals of an inter-agency fact-finding delegation that will travel to Hanoi this week to discuss the economic relations between our two countries. The delegation will gather additional information on the economic situation, freedom of emigration, labor rights, bilateral debt and other issues important in our bilateral relationships. It will also explain our statutory requirements of the various economic programs. Mr. Lake agreed to stay in close contact with the representatives as we work through these issues.

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Kiev, Ukraine)

For Immediate Release

May 11, 1995

STATEMENT BY THE PRESS SECRETARY

President Clinton has asked a top-level delegation to travel to Vietnam and Laos in order to facilitate further progress in achieving the fullest possible accounting for our POW-MIAs. This presidential delegation will travel to Vietnam May 13-16 and Laos May 17-18.

The delegation will be jointly led by Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs Hershel Gober, Assistant Secretary of State Winston Lord and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for POW/MIA Affairs James Wold. Similar high-level delegations went to Vietnam in July 1993 and July 1994.

While in Vietnam, the delegation will reaffirm the priority President Clinton attaches to achieving additional tangible progress on the outstanding POW-MIA cases. The delegation will emphasize to Vietnam's leaders that the President is looking for concrete progress in four key areas:

Remains: Concrete results from unilateral and joint activities on cases, live sightings and field activities;

Discrepancy Cases: Continued progress in resolving discrepancy cases, including the 55 cases in which no determination of fate has yet been made;

Laos: Continued cooperation in implementing trilateral investigations with the Lao; and

Documents: Accelerated efforts to locate and provide all POW/MIA documents that could help lead to genuine answers.

In Laos, the delegation will meet with senior Lao officials to discuss ongoing activities to achieve the fullest possible accounting of Americans missing in Laos. In particular, the delegation will emphasize the importance of continued trilateral cooperation with the Vietnamese and seek broader access to Lao Government archival holdings.

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

April 11, 1993

Statement by the Press Secretary
Announcing Mission to Vietnam by the President's
Special Emissary for POW/MIA Affairs

The President has asked General John W. Vessey, Jr. to travel to Vietnam April 18-19 to assess Vietnamese cooperation on accounting of American POW/MIA's and to seek further progress. The government of Vietnam has agreed to receive General Vessey.

President Clinton has pledged that the fullest possible accounting for our service personnel must lie at the core of our policy toward Vietnam. General Vessey's trip is a step in the Administration's effort to make progress on this critical issue. While important advances have been made in recent years, the President seeks to determine whether the Vietnamese are cooperating fully.

The President is grateful that General Vessey has agreed to undertake this important mission. No one is better qualified to provide the best possible assessment of the progress to date on this issue or commands greater respect among the American people for his decades of dedicated service to the nation. As the President's Special Emissary to Hanoi for POW/MIA Affairs since 1987, he has been responsible for much of what has been achieved in recent years.

The President is looking forward to working with him, with the families of POW/MIA's, with veterans organizations, and with the United States Congress to assure the fullest possible accounting of our service personnel in Vietnam.

Attached is a biography of General Vessey.

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