

Case Number: 2015-0530-S

SYSTEMATIC MARKER

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Original OA/ID Number: 161				
Document ID: 9306822				
Row: 44	Section: 2	Shelf: 2	Position: 1	Stack: V

TO: SMITH, ROBERT C

FROM: PRESIDENT

DOC DATE: 10 DEC 93
SOURCE REF:

KEYWORDS: VIETNAM
INTL TRADE

CO
WH STAFF SECRETARY

PERSONS:

SUBJECT: PRES REPLY TO PRES FM SEN SMITH ADVOCATING MANTAINING PROHIBITIONS
ON TRADE W/ VIETNAM

ACTION: ORIGINALS RETURNED TO NSC/S DUE DATE: 14 SEP 93 STATUS: C

STAFF OFFICER: WIEDEMANN

LOGREF:

FILES: WH

NSCP:

CODES:

D O C U M E N T D I S T R I B U T I O N

FOR ACTION

FOR CONCURRENCE

FOR INFO
NSC CHRON
ROSNER
WIEDEMANN

COMMENTS:

DISPATCHED BY _____ DATE _____ BY HAND W/ATTCH

OPENED BY: NSMEM

CLOSED BY: NSJDA

DOC 4 OF 4

UNCLASSIFIED
ACTION DATA SUMMARY REPORT

RECORD ID: 9306822

DOC ACTION OFFICER

CAO ASSIGNED ACTION REQUIRED

001 WIEDEMANN	Z 93091007 PREPARE MEMO FOR LAKE
002 LAKE	Z 93102808 FOR SIGNATURE
002 WIEDEMANN	Z 93111611 FOR FURTHER ACTION
002 LAKE	Z 93120717 FOR SIGNATURE AND DECISION
003 PRESIDENT	Z 93121309 FOR SIGNATURE
004	X 93121309 PRESIDENT SGD LTR
004	X 94011810 ORIGINALS RETURNED TO NSC/S

DISPATCH DATA SUMMARY REPORT

DOC DATE DISPATCH FOR ACTION

DISPATCH FOR INFO

003	931210		VICE PRESIDENT
003	931210		WH CHIEF OF STAFF
004	931210	SMITH, ROBERT C	

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED
NSC/RMO PROFILE

RECORD ID: 9306822
RECEIVED: 10 SEP 93 07

TO: PRESIDENT

FROM: SMITH, ROBERT C

DOC DATE: 03 SEP 93
SOURCE REF:

KEYWORDS: VIETNAM
INTL TRADE

CO
WH STAFF SECRETARY

PERSONS:

SUBJECT: LTR TO PRES FM SEN SMITH RE MAINTAINING PROHIBITIONS ON TRADE W/
VIETNAM

ACTION: PREPARE MEMO FOR LAKE

DUE DATE: 14 SEP 93 STATUS: S

STAFF OFFICER: WIEDEMANN

LOGREF:

FILES: WH

NSCP:

CODES:

D O C U M E N T D I S T R I B U T I O N

 FOR ACTION
WIEDEMANN

FOR CONCURRENCE
FROMAN
ROSNER

FOR INFO
GROSS
ITOH
KENNEY
KRISTOFF

COMMENTS: _____

DISPATCHED BY _____ DATE _____ BY HAND W/ATTCH

OPENED BY: NSMEM

CLOSED BY:

DOC 1 OF 1

UNCLASSIFIED

National Security Council
The White House

X Status

PROOFED BY: _____ LOG # 6822

URGENT NOT PROOFED: _____ SYSTEM PRS NSC INT

BYPASSED WW DESK: _____ DOCLOG _____ A/O _____

	SEQUENCE TO	HAS SEEN	DISPOSITION
DepExecSec	_____	_____	_____
ExecSec	_____	_____	_____
Staff Director	_____	_____	_____
D/APNSA	_____	_____	_____
APNSA	_____	_____	_____
Situation Room	_____	_____	_____
West Wing Desk	<u>1</u>	_____	<u>R</u>
NSC Secretariat	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

A = Action I = Information D = Dispatch R = Retain N = No Further Action

cc: VP McLarty Other _____

Should be seen by: _____
(Date/Time)

COMMENTS: add to file

DISPATCH INSTRUCTIONS:

FROM
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Senator Bob Smith
United States Senate
Dirksen Building
Suite 332
Washington, D. C. 20510-2903

Andrew -
Pls put
this in
Folder

6822

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

Kristine -

John Jany Smith
wrote a letter accompanying
this report that John
gave to Will & that
should get answered -
this ring a bell?

Todd

**National Security Council
The White House**

PROOFED BY: WA LOG # 6822
 URGENT NOT PROOFED: _____ SYSTEM PRS NSC INT
 BYPASSED WW DESK: _____ DOCLOG WA A/O _____

	SEQUENCE TO	HAS SEEN	DISPOSITION
W DepExecSec	<u>1/14</u>	<u>nan</u>	_____
ExecSec	<u>2</u>	<u>ve</u>	_____
Staff Director	<u>3</u>	_____	_____
D/APNSA	_____	_____	_____
APNSA	_____	_____	_____
Situation Room	_____	_____	_____
West Wing Desk	<u>5</u>	_____	_____
NSC Secretariat	<u>6</u>	_____	_____
<u>Wiedemann</u>	<u>7</u>	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

A = Action I = Information D = Dispatch R = Retain N = No Further Action

cc: VP McLarty Other _____

Should be seen by: _____
 (Date/Time)

COMMENTS:

27 OCT 95 4:11

DISPATCH INSTRUCTIONS:

Exec Sec's Office has dispatch

1

— need 12-8 need 12-8
3:20 PM 5:35 PM
JWZ
12/8

National Security Council
The White House

PROOFED BY: RA LOG # 6822 REDO
URGENT NOT PROOFED: _____ SYSTEM PRS NSC INT
BYPASSED WW DESK: _____ DOCLOG ASK A/O _____

	SEQUENCE TO	HAS SEEN	DISPOSITION
W DepExecSec	<u>8 / 10</u>	<u>W</u>	
ExecSec			
Staff Director	<u>9</u>	<u>W</u>	
D/APNSA	<u>11</u>	<u>Natl Sec Advisor has seen</u>	
APNSA			
Situation Room			
West Wing Desk			
NSC Secretariat			

A = Action I = Information D = Dispatch R = Retain N = No Further Action

cc: VP McLarty Other _____

Should be seen by: _____
(Date/Time)

COMMENTS:

DISPATCH INSTRUCTIONS:

— Foster office
closed by 11:00
this came down

6822

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

DATE: 09/09/93

TO: ~~TONY LAKE~~
HOWARD PASTER

FROM: **JOHN D. PODESTA**
Assistant to the President and
Staff Secretary

Please prepare a Presidential
response and return to my office.

(The original letter has been
forwarded to the President.)

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Dear Senator Smith:

Thank you for your thoughtful letter concerning our relations with Vietnam. As I considered how to proceed on the embargo, I found your views very helpful. I regret the delay in my response but I wanted to take the time to carefully analyze the information you sent me..

I am deeply committed to resolving the cases of all personnel missing since the Vietnam War. For this reason, I have made achieving the fullest possible accounting for our POW/MIAs the test of our relationship with Vietnam. Like you, I seek an honorable solution to this issue. I will not accept mere activity by Vietnam on POW/MIA issues as "progress." To advance our objective, in July I 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. These four areas serve as criteria for judging whether we obtain tangible progress, and I believe reflect the concerns you have raised in our discussions. Some concrete progress in each of these areas has been made in recent months although it falls short of what we believe needs to be done.

On September 13 I decided to maintain our trade embargo against Vietnam while adjusting it to permit U.S. firms to benefit from projects funded by the international financial institutions. This action recognizes concrete results from Vietnamese efforts, while encouraging further progress. It makes clear that more must be done to ensure we ultimately achieve the fullest possible accounting of our POW/MIAs. We shall continue to press for concrete results.

With respect to the Russian documents we obtained, I intend to release publicly our analysis and conclusions of their content as soon as possible. Given the serious potential implications of these documents, I am sure you would agree that we must accord them the most careful analysis in the context of all other known information. In doing so, we must of course, avoid the "mindset to debunk" but we also have a responsibility to provide our best analysis of the facts.

Thank you again for your letter. I look forward to staying in touch on how best to account for those who did not come home.

Sincerely,

The Honorable Robert C. Smith
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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Thank you again for your letter, ~~and~~ I look forward to staying in touch on how best to account for those who did not come home.

Sincerely,

The Honorable Robert C. Smith
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: ANTHONY LAKI 
HOWARD PASTER

SUBJECT: Letter to the President from Senator Bob Smith
Advocating Maintaining Prohibitions on Trade with
Vietnam

Purpose

To reply to Senator Smith's letter arguing for maintaining the trade embargo against Vietnam.

Background

Senator Smith, a staunch believer in the view that the Vietnamese are holding live POWs, sent a letter to you raising numerous detailed questions on POW/MIA issues and the manner in which the Administration is dealing with them. At Tab C is a point-by-point analysis of Senator Smith's letter, prepared by experts at the Pentagon responsible for POW/MIA affairs. Your letter reflects some of this information and reaffirms your commitment to the fullest possible accounting for POW/MIA's as the basis of our relations with Vietnam.

RECOMMENDATION

That you sign the letter at Tab A.

Attachments

Tab A Letter to Senator Smith
Tab B Letter from Smith
Tab C DOD comments on points raised in Smith's letter

cc: Vice President
Chief of Staff

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Dear Senator Smith:

Thank you for your thoughtful letter concerning our relations with Vietnam. As I considered how to proceed on the embargo, I found your views very helpful. I regret the delay in my response but I wanted to take the time to carefully analyze the information you sent me.

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Thank you again for your letter, ~~and~~ I look forward to staying in touch on how best to account for those who did not come home.

Sincerely,

The Honorable Robert C. Smith
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Tab β



12/1/1911

6822

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

September 9, 1993

MR. PRESIDENT:

Mack wanted you to see. I've
forwarded to Howard and Tony
for a response.

John Podesta

BOB SMITH
NEW HAMPSHIRE
IN NEW HAMPSHIRE
1-800-922-2230

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2903

6822
COMMITTEES:
ARMED SERVICES
ENVIRONMENT AND
PUBLIC WORKS
SELECT COMMITTEE ON
ETHICS
COMMISSION ON SECURITY
AND COOPERATION
IN EUROPE

September 3, 1993 28:20

The Honorable William J. Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing you concerning your impending decision, required by law before September 14, 1993, on whether to extend for another year the exercise of your authority to maintain prohibitions on trade with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

I respectfully suggest that the central issue affecting your decision should be the historically dragged-out and overall disappointing performance of communist authorities in the region, including Laos, in accounting for our missing and captured personnel, especially the most troubling cases where the U.S. intelligence community knows that Vietnamese communists have direct knowledge as to the fate of personnel who were last known to be alive. Other issues you must consider are Hanoi's terrible record on basic human rights issues (including their most recent affront to Senator Robb), their long-standing support of terrorist and hostile nations to the U.S (ie: Libya, Cuba, North Korea), and the decades-old U.S. national security interest of seeing the collapse of communism in Southeast Asia.

You are well aware of my deep concern over the "historic tendency and mutual desire of both Washington and Hanoi to sidestep" around the very core of the POW/MIA issue -- ie: what happened to the more than 1,150 still unaccounted for U.S. personnel (1,300 in 1973) who were listed as missing and captured at the end of the war. And more importantly, what happened to those individuals from this category who did not return even though we knew they had fallen into communist hands. (The number of these cases range anywhere from 92 to 299 still unaccounted for POW/MIAs depending on the criteria used and whether Laos discrepancy cases are included).

Mr. President, in February, March, April, and June of this year, I personally made you aware of my concerns about the POW/MIA issue and its relation to our policy toward Hanoi. However, as you consider your decision on the embargo, I want you

DIRKSEN BUILDING
SUITE 332
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2903
(202) 224-2841

THE GATEWAY BUILDING
50 PHILIPPE COTE ST
MANCHESTER, NH 03101
(603) 634-6000

46 S. MAIN STREET
CONCORD, NH 03301
(603) 228-0453

ONE HARBOUR PLACE
SUITE 435
PORTSMOUTH, NH 03801
(603) 433-1667

136 PLEASANT STREET
BERLIN, NH 03570
(603) 752-2800

The Honorable William J. Clinton
September 3, 1993
page 2

to be aware of two matters concerning the POW/MIA issue which disturb me the most. Both of these matters concern American POWs reported alive but not returned at the end of the war.

First is the Russian language translation of the 1972 North Vietnamese politburo presentation which addressed the total number of American POWs held by North Vietnam at the time -- a number far greater than those who eventually came home. As you know, this report was located in the archives of the former Soviet Union this past spring, and to date, Hanoi has dismissed it as a complete fabrication, maintaining that no such presentation even remotely resembling the Russian language translation ever took place. Are we to seriously believe that their politburo was never briefed by their military in 1972 on the results of interrogations of American POWs and the total number captured to date? Of course not, yet we have not even officially asked Hanoi for the dates or content of any politburo briefings in 1972 on American POWs.

What is startling to me after reading the document, Mr. President, is not just Hanoi's position (which one might expect from a Communist regime with a well-established propaganda machine), but the lack of any firm position from Washington which holds Hanoi's feet to the fire in explaining the content of the document. At the request of my friend Ross Perot, I have enclosed for your review a copy of an analysis of this document I recently submitted to Ambassador Malcolm Toon. I hope it will underscore for you the seriousness of this discovery and why it must have a direct impact on our future relationship with Hanoi. (Last month, I provided a copy of this analysis to Kent Wiedemann on your NSC staff.)

I recall your public commitment during your April East Room news conference to apprise the American people and the POW/MIA families once you had personally drawn your conclusions on the veracity of this document. You should know that the Senate Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs found that on occasion, the Department of Defense had been "evasive, unresponsive, and disturbingly incorrect and cavalier" in its dealings with the Senate on this issue last year. This conclusion is contained in the Final Report of our investigation which I co-chaired. Given this fact, I would strongly urge you to read my analysis of the Soviet archival document, so you can present a balanced and fair report to the American people on this document.

Second, Mr. President, I am extremely concerned about the fate of unaccounted for American pilots known to have been captured and held in Laos during the war by both North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao forces. To date, the United States has received

The Honorable William J. Clinton
September 3, 1993
page 3

no convincing explanation on what happened to the vast majority of these men, especially the American pilots whom we know were held in northern Laos and captured along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Our Committee found last year that the Secretary of Defense in 1973 had informed the White House at the time in a Top Secret memorandum of his grave concern on this matter. You may also know that Ross Perot was specifically briefed on the presence of U.S. POWs in northern Laos by the CIA during his trips to Laos in 1969/70 at the request of the Administration, and our Committee found substantiation of this fact.

During my trip to Hanoi last month, I shared with the Vietnamese recently-declassified NSA radio intercepts, human intelligence reports, and overhead wartime photography on this subject to demonstrate that we know conclusively that the Vietnamese have the ability to easily account for the American personnel they captured and held in Laos.

Even your current Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Ambassador Winston Lord, stressed this fact in Senate testimony before our Committee last year, and he is well aware from his work with Dr. Kissinger in 1972/73 of Hanoi's control over Laos. Simply put, I hope we not let a few tripartite meetings between Laos, Vietnam, and the U.S. be a substitute for Hanoi telling us what happened to the U.S. personnel they captured in Laos.

Mr. President, as I stated to you personally in June, I accept your offer to discuss any of these matters with you, to include briefing you on the most compelling and troubling information about living American POWs left behind in Communist countries in 1973. I had hoped we could have had such a meeting prior to your decision on removing our long-standing and legitimate objection to granting IMF status to Hanoi. I hope that you would now consider having such a meeting prior to any decision by your Administration to further relax any portion of the U.S. trade embargo currently in place against Hanoi.

In June, I urged you not to be deceived by those who claim enormous progress is being made on POW/MIA issues. The families of these men can count, Mr. President, and your intelligence community is well-aware of what Hanoi is capable of doing if it truly wanted to account for hundreds of our missing and captured personnel. Now more than ever, we must not abandon the only credible leverage we have to convince Hanoi of our resolve to obtain a full and honorable resolution to this issue. And Mr. President, I would also recommend that this time around we use this leverage wisely to bring Hanoi to the table for a resumption of serious negotiations on this issue -- the likes of which have

The Honorable William J. Clinton
September 3, 1993
page 4

not been seen since the Paris Peace Accords.

It is no coincidence that only yesterday the Vietnamese issued a press release entitled "New Documents on MIA Found." You and I both know that these documents have long been in the possession of Hanoi's Ministry of National Defense and they could easily have been provided to General Vessey long ago. Two of the items listed in their press release will have no bearing on resolving "MIA" matters, and, indeed, one of the items pertains to POWs who returned in 1973. I understand the last item, concerning the list of plane crashes along the Ho Chi Minh trail between Laos and Vietnam, is being brought to Washington for analysis this weekend. I assure you, Mr. President, if Hanoi had a list of plane crashes, they also have a complete list of the pilots who were captured in these important wartime areas, and one should expect this list to match, in many respects, what U.S. intelligence knew in 1973. In short, you have the opportunity to send a message to the Vietnamese that you will not be fooled into accepting such "activity" as real progress in accounting for missing servicemen. We want a serious and honorable resolution to this issue.

Mr. President, I again urge you, for the sake of our missing men and their families, do not accept at face-value what the bureaucracy or some in Congress might like you to believe on this issue. Study the facts for yourself because your decisions will be critical in our efforts to find our missing and captured men, and they will have a lasting effect on those Americans who wear our uniform today and in the future.

You are a very busy man, and I thank you for taking the time to read this letter and the attached analysis of the Soviet archival document. I also thank Mr. Perot and your Chief of Staff, Mr. McLarty, for their efforts to get the enclosed analysis into your hands prior to your decision on the trade embargo against Hanoi.

I look forward to hearing from you.

With warm regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Bob Smith", with a stylized, flowing script.

BOB SMITH
United States Senator

BS/dc
enclosure



SENATOR BOB SMITH

New Hampshire

Report to Ambassador Malcolm Toon, Chairman of the U.S. Side of
the Joint U.S./Russian Commission on POW/MIAs
from U.S. Senator Bob Smith, Commissioner

July 21, 1993

AN INTERIM ANALYSIS

of the

1972 TRANSLATION OF A NORTH VIETNAMESE REPORT CONCERNING U.S. POWS
DISCOVERED IN 1993 IN THE ARCHIVES OF THE FORMER SOVIET UNION
AND SUBSEQUENTLY PROVIDED TO THE U.S. SIDE OF THE
JOINT U.S./RUSSIAN COMMISSION ON POW/MIAS

I EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. Dr. Stephen Morris, the man who first discovered the North Vietnamese report on POWs in Russian language form, deserves special thanks from the United States of America. General Dmitri Volkogonov, head of the Russian side to the U.S./Russian Joint Commission on POW/MIAs, likewise deserves our gratitude for continuing to open the archives of the former Soviet Union in an effort to resolve outstanding humanitarian issues such as the fate of our POWs and MIAs.

B. The report found by Dr. Morris contains numerous statements which can be corroborated by U.S. knowledge. Because of this, I am convinced the presentation took place in 1972. In the absence of convincing evidence to the contrary from Vietnam, I can only assume that from 1964 to 1973, the leadership of North Vietnam withheld the total number and identity of American POWs in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia over whom it had direct control.

C. The position of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam that the report in Russian language form is a "pure fabrication" which they "completely reject" is unacceptable to me, and I believe, the majority of the American people. This matter is still wide open.

D. The U.S. Government does not know the fate of many of its missing personnel in Vietnam and Laos, and the U.S. Government should stop believing that it knows the fate of just about everybody. It's time people study the facts, even if it means revisiting "old" issues.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Analysis of Senator Smith's September 3, 1993 Letter

The following is an analysis of the POW/MIA information presented by Senator Smith in his recent letter to you. Senator Smith's assertions are noted in bold type and addressed in the order in which he presented them.

Senator Smith refers to Washington and Hanoi's "mutual desire to sidestep around the very core of the POW/MIA issue -- i.e. what happened to the more than 1,150 still unaccounted for U.S. personnel."

The Senator's premise is flawed in two respects. First, the USG, instead of sidestepping the issue, has devoted unprecedented resources to achieving its resolution. The Vietnamese in turn have been informed at every opportunity of our serious intent. To imply there is some form of "mutual desire" to sidestep the issue is to deny the very real achievements that attest to our commitment to see it through to resolution.

Second, the Senator's question of what happened to the more than 1,150 Americans still unaccounted for is misleading and poorly explained. Since President Reagan appointed General Vessey in 1987 to pursue a dialog on this issue with Hanoi, USG efforts have focused on determining the fate of those men who did not

return at Operation Homecoming but whose circumstances at the time of their loss suggests they may have fallen into enemy hands. These cases, known as *priority discrepancy cases*, originally included 196 individuals lost in Vietnam. Today they number 80 and their cases remain the priority focus of our efforts.

Senator Smith raises the issue of the 1972 document found in the archives of the former Soviet Union and known as the "1205 Document." He specifically argues that we should not accept Vietnam's dismissal of the document as a fabrication, and charges that the USG has not officially asked Hanoi for the dates or content of any politbureau briefings in 1972 on American POWs.

Again the Senator's statement is flawed in that it omits facts which support conclusions to the contrary. As you know, General Vessey travelled to Hanoi in April to specifically discuss this document with the Vietnamese. He met with the document's alleged author and in a private meeting with Foreign Minister Cam asked the Vietnamese to provide documents or evidence to support their dismissal of the document as a fabrication. Foreign Minister Cam confirmed that a check of the records showed no politbureau session was convened on the day the document allegedly was delivered or any day close to it. Not content to leave the matter at the Vietnamese Foreign Minister's word, experts from all agencies of the USG have combed through all available current and archival information and have not found any data to support the

substantive POW/MIA conclusions of the document. A comprehensive body of all source intelligence collected by U.S. intelligence agencies over 30 years supports the conclusion that the governments of Indochina released all American POWs at the time of Operation Homecoming in 1973. All our data confirms that they did not hold additional prisoners as alleged in the 1205 Document.

Senator Smith criticizes the lack of a Washington position on the 1205 document. He champions his own analysis, stating his hope that it will underscore "the seriousness of this discovery and why it must have a direct impact on our future relationship with Hanoi."

The Washington analysis of the 1205 document is attached. (See p.8) This analysis has not been released in its entirety, but excerpts have been published in DoD's POW/MIA newsletter. (See p.18) The Administration has never trivialized the importance of the document with regard to its impact on our future relationship with Vietnam. Indeed, your request that General Vessey undertake a short-notice mission to Hanoi to investigate the matter illustrates the serious treatment accorded this document. DoD's assessment of Senator Smith's analysis of the 1205 Document is also attached. See. p. 25.

To undermine the Government's conclusions regarding the 1205 Document, Senator Smith refers to a quote from the Senate Select Committee's final report to the affect that

DoD had been "evasive, unresponsive, and disturbingly incorrect and cavalier (sic) in its dealings with the Senate."

The quote is out of context and incorrect. Rather than a conclusion concerning DoD made by the entire Committee, as the Senator asserts, the statement is actually attributed to "several members" of the Committee and refers specifically to "individuals within DIA" not DoD. The report goes on to state that "several members of the Committee also noted that other individuals within DIA have performed their work with great professionalism and under extraordinarily difficult circumstances..." A verbatim copy of the text is attached. See p.29.

Senator Smith states that he is extremely concerned about the fate of unaccounted for American pilots known to have been captured and held in Laos by both North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao Forces. He implies that their numbers are large and there remain many questions regarding their fates.

The fate of Americans lost in Laos is a matter of concern and extensive resources have been devoted to accounting for these losses. However, Senator Smith has misrepresented known facts regarding U.S. personnel captured in Laos. There were only a small number of Americans who were confirmed to have been captured in Laos during the war. All but two of these men returned alive

at Operation Homecoming, escaped captivity, or died in captivity. There is extensive reporting that the remaining two POWs also died in captivity during the late 1960s. Many questions still remain regarding the fate of Americans lost in Laos, but there is no credible evidence to suggest that any Americans were held in Laos after Operation Homecoming.

Senator Smith alludes to declassified NSA intercepts and other forms of intelligence data that he provided to the Vietnamese as proof that "we know conclusively that the Vietnamese have the ability to easily account for the American personnel they captured and held in Laos." He goes on to state he hopes "we not let a few tripartite meetings between Laos, Vietnam, and the U.S. be a substitute for Hanoi telling us what happened to the personnel they captured in Laos."

Without knowing the exact data the Senator provided to the Vietnamese, we cannot comment specifically. However, USG experts have analyzed all NSA intercepts, human intelligence reports and overhead wartime photography as well as other intelligence data on this issue. This analysis, necessarily ongoing, indicates that Vietnamese forces deployed along the Ho Chi Minh Trail network in Laos were indeed responsible for the majority of U.S. losses in Laos. We agree that the answers to many of these cases rest with Vietnam, and we have repeatedly pressed Hanoi for answers. The question of how many Laotian cases the Vietnamese will actually be

able to help us account for, however, will only be known when joint investigations of the individual cases are completed, and all Vietnamese records regarding these losses have been acquired.

The efforts in the area of U.S./Vietnam/Laos trilateral cooperation are aimed at the issue of border sovereignty and combined technical operations on individual case investigations, not at letting Vietnam "off the hook" as Senator Smith suggests. These tripartite efforts complement and support our equally important efforts to acquire archival and other Vietnamese information regarding these cases.

Senator Smith notes that very recently the Vietnamese turned over a "list of plane crashes along the Ho Chi Minh Trail..." He goes on to state his belief that "if Hanoi had a list of plane crashes, they also have a complete list of pilots who were captured in these important wartime areas, and one should expect this list to match, in many respects, what U.S. intelligence knew in 1973."

Senator Smith is correct that on September 1, 1993, Vietnam turned over a list of planes they claimed were shot down over the Ho Chi Minh Trail. An analysis of this document, which is referred to as the "Group 559 Shootdown Record" after the Vietnamese organization in charge of operations on the trail, is attached. (P.30) This document confirms what U.S. intelligence knew in 1973 about Americans captured in Vietnamese controlled

areas of Laos, namely that all Americans captured by the Vietnamese returned at Operation Homecoming or died in captivity and have since been accounted for. Senator Smith is also correct that the Vietnamese probably have a list of U.S. pilots whom they captured in Laos, or at least such a list existed in the past. The U.S. is currently pressing Vietnam to provide such a document. At present, however, there is no reason to expect that such a list will contain names of any additional Americans.

UNCLASSIFIED

The Director of Central Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

NIC 00558/93
13 September 1993

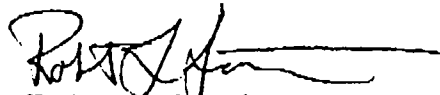
MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Ed Ross, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense
POW-MIA Affairs

FROM: Robert L. Suettinger, Deputy National Intelligence Officer
for East Asia

SUBJECT: POW/MIA Document from Russian Archives

REF: Your Request of 10 September 1993

As per your request, analysts have reviewed the Russian document received by Ambassador Toon on 2 September 1993 (report of Hoang Anh). I have added a section on that document to the earlier analysis of the "1205 Report" and "Dang Tan Reports," and added some additional conclusions. Again, please feel free to use this analysis as you and your superiors at the Defense Department see fit. The analysis is unclassified, and may be released to the public, if that is what you decide to do.



Robert L. Suettinger

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Recent Reports on American POWs in Indochina: An Assessment

Introduction

On 8 April 1993, the Co-chairman of the US-Russian Joint Commission on POW-MIAs received officially a document from the former Soviet Union's Communist Party Central Committee archives that purports to be an official Vietnamese report on American POWs held in North Vietnam in 1972. This same document was released and publicized shortly afterward by researcher Stephen Morris. The document asserts that Hanoi held 1205 American prisoners in mid-September 1972, a number far higher than the United States Government believes could have been captured, and representing more than twice the number actually freed in early 1973 in Operation Homecoming. This report is hereinafter referred to as the "1205 Report," due to the reference to the numbers of US POWs.

In mid-May 1993, a review of documents being declassified by the Central Intelligence Agency and State Department under Executive Order 12812 uncovered a series of reports (originally disseminated in 1970) from a North Vietnamese defector named Dang Tan. These reports appeared generally to corroborate the idea that there were more POWs held alive in Hanoi than the Vietnamese Government admitted. One of what we will hereinafter call the "Dang Tan Reports" claimed that, in 1967, when Tan left the North, Hanoi already held "more than 800" US pilots as POWs. On 2 September 1993, the Co-chairman of the US-Russian Joint Commission on POW-MIAs received another intelligence document from the former Soviet Union Central Committee archives containing information pertinent to the POW-MIA situation. This fragmentary GRU report--purportedly part of a report given to a Vietnamese Communist Party plenum in late December 1970-early January 1971--refers to 735 "American fliers" held in Hanoi at that time. This report is hereinafter referred to as the "735 Document."

At the request of the Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for POW-MIA Affairs, a committee of Intelligence Community analysts from the Defense Intelligence Agency, Central Intelligence Agency and State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research, as well as other POW-MIA specialists convened to review and assess the information contained in the "1205 Report," the "Dang Tan Reports" and the "735 Document." The following assessment represents a consensus view of those representatives, and should be considered a step in an ongoing process to evaluate all information pertinent to the POW-MIA subject. As further information becomes available, it will be updated.

Separately from this analysis, US Government representatives have made considerable efforts to follow up on information in the "1205 Report." One of the principal

objectives of General John Vessey's 18-19 April 1993 trip to Hanoi, and of a US Congressional delegation that visited there 31 May-1 June was to obtain information pertinent to the Russian document. Although the Vietnamese charge that the "1205 Report" is a fabrication, they did provide General Vessey and Senator Kerry with several documents on POW-MIA matters, and extensive interviews with and official reports about General Tran Van Quang--the supposed author of the speech presented in the Russian document. These materials have not enabled us to resolve questions about the reports, but the information has been useful for analytical purposes. Efforts are continuing to gain more information from Moscow on the document. The Russians have not made available a Vietnamese language version of the report, nor have they explained how or by whom it was originally acquired, nor indicated what was their assessment of the value of the report. At the request of the US Government, they are continuing to search their records for relevant information.

The "1205 Report" -- Is It What It Claims To Be?

Analysts find the 1205 Report perplexing. It appears to be an authentic Russian intelligence report, consisting of two parts: a covering memo and summary, signed on 1 December 1972 by GRU chief Petr Ivashutin; and a "Translation of the report of Deputy Chief of the General Staff, Vietnamese People's Army, General-Lieutenant Tran Van Quang, at the session of the Politburo, Central Committee of the Vietnamese Communist Party, 15 September 1972." Most of the attached report is taken up with a discussion of a planned political subversion campaign against the South Vietnamese government. The remainder deals with the numbers and treatment of American POWs. At no point in the report itself is the speaker identified, nor his audience specified, nor the precise date of the report provided. That information comes only from the cover memo, which provides no data on how the document was acquired. The report itself contains some verifiable, or at least plausible information, but also some which is completely erroneous.

The "1205 Report" appears most credible in its first section, about political operations planned for South Vietnam. For example:

- It identifies several South Vietnamese leaders (one incorrectly) who were known opponents of the regime of President Nguyen Van Thieu and who were variously reported to have had clandestine contacts with representatives from the North.
- It accurately depicts the circumstances surrounding the surrender of a South Vietnamese unit during the 1972 Easter Offensive, admitting that the North's propaganda had misrepresented the event.
- It predicts an upsurge in terrorist attacks beginning in October 1972, which was indeed noted in the Mekong Delta region in November, although not on the scale or with the political effect predicted in the document.

The report, however, also contains numerous errors and inconsistencies, particularly in the section on POWs. Because of these errors--detailed below--we cannot accept without question that the "1205 Report" is a report to the Vietnamese Politburo, nor that General Quang delivered the speech. While we cannot dismiss the "1205 Report" as a fabrication, we believe that much more supporting evidence of its authorship and inherent credibility must be presented before it can be accepted as what the Russian cover document claims it to be.

Incongruous Numbers

Our doubts about the document are multi-fold. Most importantly, the numbers provided in the 1205 Report simply cannot be reconciled with US Government records and known facts:

- The figure of 1205 American POWs is inordinately high, and inconsistent with any other estimate from any reliable source. If it were to be accepted as true, it means there were 669 more prisoners in North Vietnam than we ever believed to be the case. Returning POWs were unaware of any other American prisoners, not to mention in such numbers. If Americans had been segregated by rank, as claimed by the document, they should have known about these additional POWs.
- To have remained unknown to other Americans (who kept careful track of each other during their imprisonment), this number of additional POWs would have to have been separated from other prisoners at or close to point-of capture and immediately sent to a separate prison system. The United States has employed technical means to search thoroughly for signs of such a system, and developed detailed information on the known Vietnamese prison system, but found no evidence of an additional system. Over the last 20 years, thousands of interviews have been conducted with people who could have known of that many more captives: American POWs, South Vietnamese POWs, reeducation camp and prison inmates, and Vietnamese refugees and defectors, including former North Vietnamese civilian and military officials. No information has emerged that would substantiate the inference of the "1205 Report" that a separate prison system existed.
- The figure 1205 is also inconsistent with our understanding of how many Americans would have survived their loss incidents and become captives. US research indicates there are, at most, 80 Americans lost in all of Vietnam whose fates are still uncertain. This figure is derived from US wartime records, nearly six years of on-the-ground investigation throughout Vietnam, and interviews with thousands of Vietnamese residents. For the 1205 figure to be correct, we would have to assume that 669 Americans--including some whom their wartime commanders declared "killed in action/body not recovered"--actually survived their incidents and were captured alive and transported to an unknown prison system. This is highly implausible, not only

because of the lack of evidence of a secondary prison system, noted above, but also because subsequent investigation has verified that a high percentage of those declared KIA-BNR were indeed killed in their incidents.

Errors and Omissions

Our doubts about the figures in the "1205 report" are reinforced by numerous other errors of fact in the Russian document. Some of these have been discussed in the press, and reflect the experience of returned POWs:

Claimed in the 1205 Report

POWs were segregated by rank, with majors in one camp, colonels in another.

Sixteen US officers with the rank of Colonel (O-6) were held in Hanoi in 1972, seven captured in the North and nine in the South or elsewhere.

Prisoners were classified and would be released on the basis of their political cooperation and attitude.

Prisoners were dispersed to 11 different camps after the US raid on Son Tay Prison in 1970.

Reported by Returned US POWs

POWs were not segregated by rank, but were held together in several facilities.

According to US records, only 10 O-6 pilots were lost during the entire war, nine over the North, and one over Laos. Only four became POWs.

Although Hanoi may have classified and planned to free US POWs based on their attitude, those released in 1973 were freed in order of their date of capture.

Prisoners were not dispersed after Son Tay, but were consolidated into four more heavily-defended camps.

Analysts consider that there are several things missing from the speech that should have been mentioned if it was delivered at the time claimed.

- On 16 September, supposedly the day following the speech, three American pilots were released into the custody of an American peace activist, a plan that had been made public two weeks earlier. It is curious that, in a report supposedly made to the Politburo, no mention is made of this plan.
- Vietnam's public and private position on POW releases, as of 31 August 1972, was that captured Americans would be released after a negotiated solution to the conflict and a cease-fire in Vietnam, and concurrently with the withdrawal of US forces from South

Vietnam. Contrary to the 1205 Report, Laos and Cambodia were not included in the terms.

On a more subjective level, some analysts consider the overall tone and length of the "1205 Report" speech inappropriate for delivery to the Political Bureau, the highest decisionmaking organ in North Vietnam. In their experience with other official Central Committee reports, a more formal style is usually adopted. The frequent use of the first person and occasional hortatory exclamations found in the "1205 Report" are more consistent with an address delivered to peers or underlings.

Where Was Tran Van Quang in 1972?

Tran Van Quang and other Vietnamese have denied the authenticity of the "1205 Report" on grounds that Quang was not Deputy Chief of Staff, but rather a Military Region commander in September 1972. US Government biographic records tend to corroborate Quang's story, especially as supplemented by an extensive interview he gave to the US Congressional delegation during its visit to Hanoi.

According to US biographic records, Quang was publicly identified as a Deputy Chief of the General Staff in 1959, and again in 1974, but we believe he probably did not function in that position in the intervening period. Quang's military career is not well-known, in part because he served for several years in the South as an "underground" military leader. (He was noted publicly only twice, as the author of articles in military publications in 1965-66). Available evidence suggests two tours in the South, one from 1960 to 1964, and another from 1966 to 1972. During this latter tour, he first commanded Military Region IV--along the northern side of the DMZ--then in August 1966 was placed in command of troops in the newly-created "Tri-Thien-Hue" Military Region, also known as the "B-4 Front," in northern South Vietnam. In that capacity, he was heavily involved in the bloody occupation of Hue during the Tet Offensive of 1968.¹

Quang claims he remained as B-4 Commander through the 1972 North Vietnamese Offensive (the "Easter Offensive"), which lasted from April to September. He provided the US Congressional delegation copies of a letter sent to him in the South by General Secretary Le Duan in August 1972 (he is addressed by his pseudonym, Bay Tien). He also provided a copy of a November 1972 document that reorganized the B-4 command, relieving him of duty there. US Government biographic records for that period are spotty. Fragmentary information from prisoner interrogations suggests that Quang was in the B-4 Front at least as of the end of April 1972. During the 1972 offensive, North Vietnamese troops captured the provincial capital of Quang Tri and held it until the end of September

¹ In a January 1988 article in the Vietnamese military journal, *Tap Chi Quan Doi Nhan Dan*, Quang criticized the lack of coordination between main force North Vietnamese units (presumably out of Military Region IV) and local guerrillas during the 1968 "Tet" Offensive. He claimed the problem had been resolved by 1972, suggesting his experience spanned the period.

1972, when they were finally driven out by heavy US bombing and a South Vietnamese assault. It is likely Quang remained with his troops in the B-4 Front during this critical battle. Quang claims he was not in Hanoi during the period that the report cited in the Russian document was supposedly delivered, only passing through Hanoi in mid-December en route to medical treatment in East Germany. We believe our information generally corroborates Quang's account of his career.

A report to the Politburo on POWs in captivity would more likely have been delivered by an official of the General Political Department than someone from the General Staff, in our judgment. POWs were under the control and administration of the "Enemy Proselytizing Department" of the General Political Department, and officers of that department jealously guarded information about them. Other than two disclosures in 1970 and 1971, the Vietnamese withheld information on the numbers of US POWs not only from Washington, but also from Moscow.

A Note on Numbers

If the "1205 Report" was not an official, accurate report to the Politburo, there is even more reason to be dubious of the numbers it provides on American POWs. The Vietnamese propensity for exaggerating figures is evident throughout their own historical records of the Vietnam War. General Tran Van Quang, for example, in his 1988 military journal article on the Tet Offensive of 1968, asserted that 8,000 Americans were killed or captured in the attack on Hue alone. The Vietnam Military History Institute of the Ministry of National Defense in 1990 claimed, according to a Vietnamese researcher, that during the seven weeks of the Tet Offensive, 43,000 Americans (and over 100,000 other "enemies") were "annihilated," and 2370 airplanes were destroyed. According to US records, 4,256 Americans lost their lives in all of South Vietnam during the period from 29 January to 30 March 1968. In and around Hue, 28 Americans were captured in the initial assault on the city, and the US Marines suffered 147 killed in action and 857 wounded in recovering the city. There are numerous other examples of officially sanctioned exaggeration of battle statistics, mainly for propaganda purposes. In our view, unless a set of figures can be verified as having been delivered in circumstances that required accuracy, they should be considered questionable.

The Dang Tan Reports

That same judgment holds for the reports from a Central Intelligence Agency source that recently have been made public. Dang Tan, a North Vietnamese medic who "rallied" to the South Vietnamese cause in April 1969, was debriefed over an extended period at the then National Interrogation Center in Saigon. Numerous reports were disseminated from Tan's interrogation, seven of which concerned the treatment of American POWs. Because the United States Government was increasingly concerned about POWs at that time (witness the Son Tay raid), and because we had so little data on POW conditions, Tan's

information was given broad circulation, even though it was dated, and acquired second or third hand. The reports made clear that much of his reporting was based on what he remembered from briefings or conversations with North Vietnamese officials.

The most striking portion of Tan's reporting is contained in a report disseminated on 12 January 1970, in which he claims that Hanoi held "more than 800" Americans as of late 1967, when Tan left the North, and that they were categorized on the basis of their degree of cooperation. Even at that time, the CIA had doubts about the accuracy of this aspect of Tan's reporting. Tan had initially reported an even higher figure, then scaled back his estimate when challenged by his interrogators. In 1971, it was decided to "surface" Tan and pass his information on to the press. The CIA instructed that Tan's press release be edited to remove any reference to numbers of POWs in Hanoi. The rationale was that the numbers were so much higher than the United States Government had reason to believe had been captured that they detracted from Tan's credibility on other points.

A review of Tan's reporting on the POW issue reveals a number of errors and exaggerations:

- As of September 1967, in all of Indochina, there were only 282 air crew believed held prisoner and only 292 air crew carried in MIA status (a total of 574 theoretically possible POWs, significantly below Tan's late 1967 figure of "over 800").
- Tan alleged that POWs captured in the South were sent to North Vietnam within six months. In fact, some Americans were held in the South until late in the war, even in the B-3 Front area, where Tan worked.
- Among Tan's most noteworthy claims at the time were that Hanoi gave Soviet officials access to US prisoners, and that US POWs were being sent to other Communist countries. In fact, only one POW reported being interrogated by a Soviet official, and that was in 1973, three years after Tan's report. There is no credible evidence that American POWs were moved out of Indochina.

Not all of Tan's reports are erroneous or fraudulent, and he did report accurately on some aspects of POW conditions in the North. However, he clearly embellished his reports with rumors, hearsay, and inaccuracies. And it is notable that at least some in the Intelligence Community found his reporting questionable, even at a time when little information was available on the condition and numbers of American POWs in Hanoi.

The "735 Document"

This document, released by the Russians at the end of a 2 September 1993 plenary meeting of the Joint Commission on POW-MIA Affairs, is quite fragmentary (we have only two complete pages, 11 and 18, of a longer report) and is therefore difficult to analyze closely. Like the 1205 Report, it is a GRU document, transcribing and translating the text

of an oral report presented at a Vietnamese Communist Party conclave. We have no indications when or how the report was acquired, and have only the GRU cover memo to identify the speaker, time, and place of delivery. Nonetheless, we believe the report is a genuine GRU document, not a "fabrication," as claimed by Hanoi. There are, however, certain problems with the document.

The cover memo indicates the speech was presented at the 20th Plenum of the Vietnamese Communist Party Central Committee, held from late December 1970 to early January 1971. Verifiable records indicate the 19th Plenum was held during that period, and the 20th was not held until February 1972. We assume that the number was mis-transcribed, and that the speech was actually delivered at the 19th Plenum. According to the cover memo, the speech was delivered by "Khoang An'," a Secretary of the Central Committee. Our biographic records hold a Hoang Anh as a member of the Central Committee Secretariat at that time. His principal area of responsibility was agriculture. The limited publicity given the 19th Plenum by the Vietnamese at the time included reference to a report on agriculture, but did not indicate who delivered it. Although Anh had a military background--he was a Vice Minister of Defense in 1957, according to our records--we cannot establish any tie to the Vietnamese army, or any other POW-related field that would have enabled him to speak authoritatively on POWs in 1970-71.

Aside from the anomaly of an agriculture specialist speaking on POWs, analysts have the same problem with the numbers in this document that we have with the "1205 Report." Anh claims that 735 "captured American fliers" were held in Hanoi as of the date of the plenum, early 1971. According to US records, of the 591 POWs released in 1973, 384 were prisoners at this time, along with four who subsequently died in captivity. Of the priority discrepancy cases, 82 were lost prior to this date. Even assuming all these were alive in 1971, the total number of prisoners Hanoi could have been holding at the time was 470. Even if the speech was given at the 20th Plenum in early 1972, the number of American aviators in captivity could not have exceeded 498. Finally, analysts noted that the "735 Document" and "1205 Report" are not consistent with each other by any accounting. To have had 1205 US pilots in captivity by late 1972, Hanoi would have to have held far more than 735 by early 1971.

We have no idea of where the number 735 came from, or why Anh referred to it in this report. Analysts found it interesting that, in both the Quang and Anh reports, reference is made to opposition within the Party to the leadership's handling of the war, as well as the negotiations with the United States. If these two documents are excerpts from actual speeches, it is possible the speakers exaggerated their figures for political effect.

Conclusions

In summary, while we found portions of the "1205 Report" that were plausible and recognize that the Russians have indicated that it is an authentic Soviet document, we find

the evidence in support of its claims to be an accurate summary of the POW situation in 1972 to be far outweighed by errors, omissions, and propaganda that detract from its credibility. As additional information becomes available, we will continue to assess the document. But at this point, our bottom line judgment is that the document is not what the Russian GRU claimed it to be, and the information contained in it suggesting more than 600 additional POWs is not accurate. The Dang Tan reports contain much unsubstantiated hearsay, probably embellished, and his estimates of POW numbers are not credible. The "735 Document" is too fragmentary to permit detailed analysis, but again, the numbers used are inconsistent with our own accounting.

Several conclusions can be drawn from these documents. Foremost is that foreign "intelligence reports," particularly from human sources about whom we know nothing, should not be assumed to be true and accurate. The experience of the US Intelligence Community during the Vietnam War era holds numerous examples of inaccuracies, exaggerations, and outright fabrications passed off by Vietnamese sources as intelligence. Although the USSR was an ally of Vietnam during the war, it was an uneasy, distrustful relationship, particularly as Soviet support began to fade during the era of detente. The fact that the GRU was so interested in collecting intelligence on the inner workings of the Vietnamese Politburo suggests that Moscow had doubts it was getting accurate information through official liaison channels. We believe there is undoubtedly much more information in Russian, and particularly GRU, archives on this issue. We doubt that any particular document will yield up "the truth," but all are useful in helping us understand and resolve the remaining questions.

Second, the POW issue was clearly an element in an internal Vietnamese political debate over the conduct of both the war and peace negotiations. We have only a limited understanding of the outlines of and participants in this debate. There is probably more information in Vietnamese party and military archives that could shed light on the situation.



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE POW/MIA NEWSLETTER

July 1993

A Department of Defense newsletter to inform families, interested members of the public and veterans organizations on DoD efforts to resolve the POW-MIA issue.

CINCPAC IG COM- PLETES SHREDDING INVESTIGATION

Admiral Larson, Commander in Chief U.S. Pacific Command, wrote the following letter to Edward W. Ross, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (POW/MIA Affairs), concerning the shredding of documents by JTF-FA personnel in Bangkok.

Dear Mr. Ross,

This letter is intended to bring you up to date on JTF-FA's shredding of documents in Bangkok, Thailand. I hope you will consider publishing it in your Newsletter so we can keep the families informed.

The Inspector General's investigation I ordered is now complete. The investigation was conducted by two very senior experienced investigators (including an Army Colonel with two Silver Stars and a Purple Heart from Vietnam) who interviewed twenty-six witnesses and with the assistance of an investigation team inventoried 9,588 documents. No stone was left unturned in this investigation.

The results of the investigation show that no original documents were destroyed and no useful information was lost which would prevent the fullest possible accounting of our missing in Indochina. The following are the basic findings of this detailed investigation:

- The destruction was part of a routine declassification and elimination of duplicate files. This declassification effort was pursuant to instructions from the President and the Secretary of Defense.

- The documents that were shredded were duplicates of originals that are on file at CJTF-FA Headquarters in Honolulu, Hawaii. Over 90% of them were refugee reports from 1984-1992.

- The duplicate refugee reports were destroyed because JTF-FA no longer has the mission of interviewing refugees and originals are on file in Hawaii.

- The shredding was done openly and publicly during normal working hours after extensive review and screening of the records (five separate reviews).

- Refugee reports from 1979-1983 were reviewed by Mr. Bill Bell. Mr. Bell is assigned to JTF-FA, stationed in Bangkok, as the Special Assistant to CJTF-FA for negotiations. For many years he was key refugee interviewer for the former Joint Casualty Resolution Center. On 10 February 1993 he stated he no longer needed any of these reports and they were shipped to Hawaii for destruction of duplicates. This shipment numbered 1579 refugee reports.

- The remainder of the reports, 7962 in number, covering 1984-1992 were reviewed by Mr. Bell, his secretary and a temporary duty Warrant Officer to save any files Mr. Bell thought would be of value. He retained 1384 for possible further use.

- CDR Hays of JTF-FA traveled to Bangkok and reviewed the remaining 7962 reports one by one to verify that there was a report and an evaluation by analysts in Hawaii which would indicate that the originals were in our headquarters files. Any that were not complete were shipped to Hawaii. He saw no marginal notes of significance.

- To double check the number and

potential value of any marginal notes, the investigating officers examined each of the 1579 refugee reports shipped on 11 February to Hawaii and found 166 marginal notes, consisting of grid coordinates, cross-references to other reports, REFNO numbers, province names, and one word expletives. Only one report contained any information that could be considered of significant information. This 1979 report concerned uncorrelated information involving a Japanese tourist being held alive in a big cave in Laos with American pilots. The marginal note concerned a telephone call to the Japanese Attache in Bangkok, regarding whether there had been any reports of missing Japanese tourists.

- The investigating officers also examined the 1384 reports in Mr. Bell's files and found 58 reports with marginal notes. These marginal notes were of a similar nature as described above and none of the reports contained information that could be considered of significant analytical value.

- Only one person interviewed contended that the marginal notes were of significance. When he was shown copies of the marginal notes that had been found on the refugee reports, he was at a loss to explain the lack of substantive comments. He contended that the former Detachment Commander also made analytical comments on the reports; however, when the investigating officers interviewed the former commander, he stated that he did not recall any analytical notes, only cross-references on a small percentage of reports.

- The investigators concluded that the refugee reports underwent five separate reviews to ensure that nothing unretrievable was destroyed. The final review

conducted by CDR Hays was a detailed systematic page-by-page process that examined each report to verify it was a duplicate report held by JTF-FA HQs. CDR Hays testified he did not see any reports with substantive comments and if he had he would have saved them. The Inspector General investigation team conducted a page-by-page examination of the 1579 refugee reports returned to Hawaii and the 1384 refugee reports retained for Mr. Bell's files and determined the minimal amount of marginal notes, if indeed lost, were of no significant analytical value to anyone.

- The JTF-FA has completed accountability for all 9588 refugee reports from 1979-1992.

I sincerely hope you will convey this information to the families, veterans' organizations and all others who are involved in supporting our efforts in the field. Please assure them that we continue to share a common goal of achieving the fullest possible accounting for our missing from the war in Southeast Asia. The men and women who comprise the JTF-FA are deeply committed, have made tremendous accomplishments, and are a source of great pride to me.

With kindest personal regards.

SIGNED

C.R. LARSON

Admiral, U.S. Navy

The "1205 Document"

On April 8, 1993 the Co-chairman of the U.S.-Russian Joint Commission on POW/MIAs officially received a document from the former Soviet Union's Communist Party Central Committee archives that purports to be an official Vietnamese report on American POWs held by North Vietnam in 1972. This same document was released and publicized shortly afterward by researcher Stephen Morris. The document asserts that Hanoi

held 1205 prisoners in mid-September 1972, a number far higher than the United States Government believes could have been captured, and representing more than twice the number that were freed in early 1973 in Operation Homecoming.

U.S. Government representatives have made considerable efforts to follow up on the information in the "1205 document." One of the principal objectives of General Vessey's April 18-19, 1993 trip to Hanoi, and of Senator Kerry's May 31-June 1 delegation to Hanoi was to obtain information pertinent to the Russian document. Although the Vietnamese charge that the "1205 document" is a fabrication, they did provide General Vessey and Senator Kerry with several POW/MIA related documents and extensive interviews with and official reports about General Tran Van Quang--the supposed author of the speech presented in the "1205 document." These materials have not enabled analysts to resolve all questions about the 1205 document, but have been useful for other analytical purposes. Efforts are continuing to gain more information from Moscow about the document. The Russians have not made available a Vietnamese language version of the document, nor have they explained how or by whom it was originally acquired, nor indicated what was their assessment of the value of the report. At the request of the U.S. Government they are continuing to search their records for relevant information.

Analysts have found the Russian document perplexing. It appears to be an authentic Russian intelligence report, consisting of two parts: a cover memo and summary, and a "Translation of the report of Deputy Chief of Staff of the General Staff, Vietnamese People's Army, General-Lieutenant Tran Van Quang, at the session of the Politburo, Central Committee of the Vietnamese Communist Party, 15 September, 1972." Most of the report is taken up with a discussion of a planned political subversion campaign against the South Vietnamese Government. The remainder deals with the numbers and treatment of American POWs.

The "1205 document" appears most

credible in its first section, about political operations planned for South Vietnam. The report, however, also contains numerous errors and inconsistencies, particularly in the section on POWs. While portions of the document are plausible, evidence in support of its claims to be an accurate summary of the POW situation in 1972 are far outweighed by errors, omissions, and propaganda that detract from its credibility. As additional information becomes available, the Department of Defense and other U.S. Government agencies will continue to assess the document. At this point our bottom line judgement is that the document, and the information contained in it suggesting the Vietnamese held more than 600 additional POWs is not accurate.

Preparations begin for Annual POW/MIA Family Meeting

Preparations are currently underway for the 1993 POW/MIA annual family meeting. Briefings designed to update the families on U.S. Government POW/MIA efforts will be given by senior officials in conjunction with the annual meeting of the National League of Families at Andrews AFB, Maryland July 16-17, 1993.

The service casualty offices have mailed each family a package allowing families to sign up for round trip COIN ASSIST air transportation, service hosted luncheons, appointments for review of family members service casualty files with the service casualty officers, and the option to attend the full League meeting or just the government briefings. Preregistration is required for attendance at these functions. Events are available to all family members of unaccounted for Americans from the Vietnam-era. There is a limit of two members per family for the COIN ASSIST air travel.

If you request tickets from your casualty officer for the service hosted luncheon and later determine you will be unable to attend, please let the casualty office know so they can make the neces-

sary adjustments with the Hotel to avoid ordering extra meals and wasting money.

We look forward to meeting with the families again and hope the presentations will provide information family members will find reassuring and useful.

JTF-FA UPDATE

Joint Task Force Full Accounting (JTF-FA) has maintained an ever-increasing operational tempo in support of the mission of achieving the fullest possible accounting of the more than 2,253 Americans still unaccounted for as a result of the Vietnam War. Since JTF-FA was established, task force personnel have completed 26 joint field activities (JFAs) in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

In Vietnam, the most recent field operation was completed May 24. From all accounts, including those of the team leaders and the Hanoi detachment commander, Vietnamese preparation in support of and cooperation during this operation were outstanding. During the operation, our teams investigated 102 cases and excavated six sites. Remains representing possibly 12 unaccounted-for Americans were recovered, repatriated June 9, and are currently undergoing analysis at the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii (CILHI).

The current operation in Vietnam commenced on June 24. Our teams, consisting of more than 70 specialists, will operate in seven provinces, investigate as many as 120 cases, and excavate at least three sites.

In addition to our periodic Vietnam-based field activities, we have embarked on several initiatives to more speedily resolve the outstanding questions surrounding this issue.

One of these initiatives is the Priority Case Investigation Team (PCIT), designed to help focus our priority case research effort on the remaining last-known-alive cases. Located in Hanoi, the team is composed of a JTF-FA analyst, a Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA)

representative, and two Vietnamese representatives. The PCIT will travel extensively and follow where the flow of information leads them. It will have latitude and flexibility of action similar to that afforded live-sighting investigators.

The PCIT will not supplant the JFA field investigations; rather it will supplement them. JFAs will also continue to investigate priority cases. These dual-pronged investigations will ensure the priority cases receive the additional emphasis they need to be resolved.

Secondly, our archival research program has been expanded with the opening of the Joint Document Center in Hanoi. We expect Vietnamese representatives to review documents from the various governmental ministries to determine if they have any bearing on the POW/MIA issue. If they do, the documents will then be jointly reviewed to determine if there is any new information concerning an unaccounted-for American.

Our third initiative is an increased emphasis on our Oral History Program. Interviews of Vietnamese citizens have long been a part of the field investigative process, but recently the Vietnamese government has increased our access to Vietnamese cadre (former and present military members) for interview.

Our most recent operation in Laos was completed on May 28. Our 34-member team investigated 14 cases and excavated four sites. Cooperation in Laos has also improved, although we still face sporadic delays in and intermittent curtailment of our operations. Our next operation in Laos was scheduled to start in late June, but it has been delayed by the Lao for unknown reasons. We now hope to begin by mid-July.

Although we had been receiving great support from the State of Cambodia, operations there were suspended April 3. Our 52-member field team was operating in the Stung Treng province when what we believe were two mortar rounds were fired in the vicinity of the team's camp. As they were evacuating the area,

the team also encountered some small-arms fire. One of the aircraft was hit, but no personnel were injured. If the recent election results improve the security situation, we hope to return to Cambodia later this year.

In sum, the cooperation and assistance the governments of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia are lending the effort to account for Americans continues to improve. While we still have many challenges facing us, our chances of obtaining the answers to questions concerning unaccounted-for Americans from the Vietnam War have never been better.

U.S., SRV and LPDR Governments Participate in Trilateral Cooperation Conference

Representatives from the Governments of the United States, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Lao Peoples Democratic Republic met on May 6-7, 1993 in Hanoi to discuss a trilateral cooperative effort to account for American losses along the Vietnam/Laos border. This technical level meeting was held in hope of establishing a mechanism to consolidate collective wartime knowledge to further the investigation of American losses along the Ho Chi Minh Trail and other areas of Laos occupied by Vietnamese forces during the war where Americans were lost.

The exact demarcation of the border between Laos and Vietnam has been in question for many years. On occasions in the past, both countries have refused to investigate sites in border areas claiming they were in the other country. As a result of this conference, representatives from Vietnam and Laos are working on a map with a clear depiction of the border and an agreement as to which country will be responsible for the investigation of specific loss locations in this area. This will greatly aid U.S. access to those sites.

The most significant proposal made during this conference was the offer to schedule a trilateral field activity in December of this year. The concept of operation calls for a joint U.S./Lao team working the Lao side of the border and a joint U.S./SRV team in Vietnam. These two teams will periodically meet for discussions and the exchange of information at specified border crossings. Prior planning for this activity calls for both the Lao and Vietnamese to fully research the cases in their archives and to complete a comprehensive search for witnesses who can provide important information. To date the Vietnamese have agreed to this plan and we are still waiting for confirmation from the Lao.

KOREA

Task Force Russia, together with the Army Casualty Office, is developing a single consolidated all-service Korean War Casualty data base incorporating all information now held by almost two dozen separate sources. Because this information is so widely dispersed, identification of names provided by the Russians has been difficult. A consolidated data base will ease retrieval and identification, speed the process, and reduce ambiguities. One of the problems experienced by Task Force Russia in dealing with lists of POWs provided by the Russians has been the fact that American names were transliterated from English into Russian at the time of captivity, making identification of some names difficult.

WORLD WAR II

A survey expedition (consisting of representatives from CILHI, OSD POW/MIA Affairs, and Task Force Russia, as well as Russian military and security officials) was sent out to Iturup (southern Kurile Islands) and Sakhalin for the purpose of ascertaining the presence of U.S. POW remains. Members of the expedition interviewed numerous local residents who had second-hand knowledge of American POWs in the region. They also checked local archives and visited al-

leged POW camps sites.

No concrete evidence of U.S. POWs was found. However, this is a preliminary assessment, and Task Force Russia continues to analyze the results of the trip.

COLD WAR UPDATE

In recent months, the U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIAs (USRJC) has uncovered some promising sources of information which may add significantly to our knowledge of ten Cold War shoot-downs and the fates of U.S. servicemen who are still unaccounted for. Extending the search for U.S. POW/MIAs, the USRJC traveled to the Baltics in April to request information they may have about Americans in the Soviet Gulag and on specific Cold War shoot-downs that occurred in the Baltic region.

Information found in the National Archives, known as the Klaus files, has enabled the analysts of Task Force Russia (TFR) to compile a detailed case study which documents the U.S. position on, and knowledge of, each of these ten cases. Five of the case files were presented to the Russian side of the USRJC during our April meetings at the Kremlin in Moscow. The remaining five case files are near completion and are expected to be presented to the Russians during our next meeting tentatively scheduled for the week of August 29 to September 3. They are intended as working documents which will be updated as new information becomes available and as a guide for the Russians to use in their own search for information.

TFR personnel have located important new information in the Military Archives at Podolsk and the Soviet Naval Archives at Gatchina which provide many details of the Soviets' involvement in some of the Cold War incidents. Despite many previous Soviet/Russian statements to the contrary, evidence found in the Gatchina archives clearly states that Soviet patrol boats were sent to conduct search and rescue missions for the 29 July 1953 shoot-down of a USAF RB-50 in

the Sea of Japan. TFR is following up with the Russians to determine the results of those missions. At the Podolsk archives, gun camera photos and detailed after-action reports of the September 2, 1958 shoot-down of a USAF C-130 over Soviet Armenia were found. This information not only added to our knowledge of the circumstances of this shoot-down but provided new leads for follow-up research in Moscow and in Armenia. The Joint Commission is planning to travel to Yerevan, Armenia in August to discuss this incident with the newly independent Armenian government.

Late last year the TFR received documents from the Russians which indicate that Soviet forces had recovered the remains of two unaccounted for USAF pilots, shortly after their loss incident: Major Eugene Posa, lost on July 1, 1960, and Captain John Dunham, lost on October 7, 1952. This is new information that was never before provided to the United States. Ambassador Toon, the USRJC Co-Chairman, has asked the Russians for additional information, specifically the location of the remains. Russian officials have initiated a search of their archives but have not yet provided anything further.

Classified Files

The Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for POW/MIA Affairs is frequently asked by family members what the primary next of kin will see in a review of the classified file that would differ from the declassified file that is prepared for public release through the Library of Congress.

The classified file review includes all material directly bearing on the loss incident and recovery efforts. This file may also include personnel, medical, financial, administrative, correspondence, and similar items. Documents that were originally classified will retain all classification markings and appropriate warnings. There may be "redactions" or blanking out of still sensitive intelligence sources and methods or continuing operational information. Also, some mate-

rial pertaining to other persons may be redacted to protect that person's privacy.

The declassified file prepared for public release with the consent of the primary next of kin contains less material. Pursuant to the "McCain" provision, these files contain materials relating to the "location, treatment, or condition" of the person concerned. Accordingly, and for reasons of privacy, the personnel, medical, financial, and similar administrative materials are not included. Declassified files will be devoid of classification markings and warnings, and may contain redactions of intelligence sources and methods and continuing operational matters. The declassified files may also contain redactions of materials pertaining to other persons, the release of which would constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

Vietnam-Era F-111A Crew Capsule Found in Moscow

In September 1992, a relatively intact F-111 crew capsule was displayed at the training center of the Moscow Aviation Institute. Expert analysis of the condition of the capsule indicated that it had separated from the main body of the aircraft during an ejection, and the markings on the aircraft identified it as a Vietnam era F-111. However, the condition of the markings on the capsule was too poor to permit positive identification at that time, not permitting a conclusive determination as to which F-111 the capsule came from. Because the capsule is from the Vietnam era, because its condition indicates that the crew might have survived, and because it could not be immediately correlated to any one particular F-111 loss, it became a U.S. Government priority to exhaust every asset to ascertain which F-111 the capsule came from.

There were seven F-111 losses during the Vietnam War. The readable portions of the serial number on the F-111 crew capsule in Moscow eliminate four of the seven loss candidates. The partial

serial number is "NO. 67-06?A." The last number before "A" is unreadable. The serial numbers of the three possible F-111 candidates and their associated REFNOs are 1) "NO. 67-066A" (REFNO 1939), 2) "NO 67-063A" (REFNO 1945), and 3) "NO 67-068A" (REFNO 1966).

The FBI Laboratory Division, Special Photographic Unit, performed computer-enhanced photographic analysis of the crew capsule photographs taken by Task Force Russia personnel in Moscow. The results of that computer-aided analysis indicate that the previously unreadable portion of the serial number is probably an "8," making the whole serial number "NO. 67-068A" and establishing a correlation to the REFNO 1966 aircraft.

In order to positively identify the aircraft, FBI special agents traveled to Moscow during the week of June 3 to 9, 1993 to examine the crew capsule firsthand. During this examination a previously undiscovered, numbered plate was found in the interior of the capsule. The number on the panel "F111A-113" was identified by General Dynamics as a unique identification number associated with a particular aircraft during assembly. It was an aircraft delivered to the USAF and later designated as tail number 67-068A. This information positively identified the aircraft from which the crew capsule originated and confirmed the initial correlation to REFNO 1966.

This capsule was part of an F-111A aircraft flown by Captain Robert D. Sponeyberger and First Lieutenant William W. Wilson when they were shot down over Hanoi on December 22, 1972. The crew capsule successfully separated from the main body of the aircraft during ejection and descended to the ground intact. Both aviators were captured, imprisoned and eventually returned during "Operation Homecoming" in March 1973. A photo which appeared in the Hanoi newspapers in December 1972 clearly shows the intact crew capsule on the ground and in enemy hands.

FAMILY ACCESS TO VIETNAM-ERA POW/MIA RECORDS

Access to the classified file is limited to the family member recognized by the respective service casualty offices as the designated primary next of kin (PNOK) with some limited exceptions. Access to the file requires cooperation of the PNOK, the service casualty office, the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for POW/MIA Affairs (ODASD), the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) Special Office for POW/MIA Affairs, and the Department of Defense (DoD) POW/MIA Central Documentation Office (CDO). The PNOK is required to present a photo identification such as a valid driver's license, etc., to gain access to the ODASD review area.

The CDO prepares a consolidated file from the contents of the Joint Casualty Resolution Center/Joint Task Force-Full Accounting casualty file(s), and the DIA intelligence file. Because preparation of files is in addition to CDO's assigned mission, it is essential that PNOKs submit requests for review so that requests can be processed through the casualty offices to arrive at the CDO at least 30 days before the desired review date. The ability to comply with the request is enhanced if the PNOK provides the primary date and one or more alternate dates. Every effort will be made to accommodate the primary date requested, but alternate dates provide flexibility to enable the casualty office and the ODASD to better serve the PNOK. PNOKs are advised not to confirm travel reservations until their casualty officer notifies them of a firm date of review. Travel to and from the review site in Arlington, Virginia, as well as lodging, meals, and associated costs of travel are solely the responsibility of the PNOK.

Because the records are classified and the PNOK lacks the necessary security clearance to gain normal access to the records, normally only the PNOK of record is afforded the opportunity of review. A government representative will

be present throughout the PNOK's review. The PNOK is not allowed to remove any documents from the files, nor take notes. However, the PNOK will be provided paper and pen to develop questions encountered during the review. The records presented for review are complete as DoD knows them with the sources and methods redacted. Family members are not authorized access to classified files, records, or other material not directly associated with the missing service member or his loss incident.

AMERICANS ACCOUNTED FOR IN 1993

Since January 1993, the remains of 11 Americans have been identified and returned to their next-of-kin (NOK). The year in brackets is the year in which the remains were repatriated. They are:

Welles Hangen, Civilian (CB-1992)

Douglas C. Condit, USAF (VN-1992)

Ralph E. Foulks, Jr., USN (VN-1988)

Raphael L. Collazo, USA (VN-1993)

David A. Frederick, USMC (VN-1992)

Craig H. Waterman, USMC (VN-1992)

Earnest R. Byars, USMC (VN-1992)

Robert L. Biscailuz, USMC (VN-1992)

James A. Branch, USAF (VN-1992)

Gregory S. Crandall, USA (LA-1991)

The other American accounted for who's remains were repatriated in 1992 is not listed at the request of the NOK.

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Defense Prisoner Of War/Missing In Action Office

assessment

September 8, 1993

SENATOR SMITH'S REPORT TO AMBASSADOR TOON ON THE SENATOR'S JULY 21, 1993, INTERIM ANALYSIS OF THE "1205 DOCUMENT"

- ▶ As Senator Smith's study has noted, the so-called 1205 Document addresses a number of different matters, and many of the statements or claims contained therein appear to be accurate representations of contemporary events and of Vietnamese thinking at the time. The fact that some of the information contained in this document is accurate, however, does not change the fact that other assertions in the document, particularly those dealing with numbers of POWs in captivity, are not accurate.
- ▶ Since the early days of U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia, U.S. intelligence agencies have collected and analyzed an enormous volume of all-source intelligence, much of which has dealt with U.S. POWs and MIAs and with the Indochinese communist governments' systems for dealing with Americans--alive or dead--who came under their control. The preponderance of this comprehensive body of intelligence indicates that the Indochinese governments released all American prisoners of war who were being detained at the time of Operation Homecoming in 1973.
- ▶ Not all observers appreciate the scope of the extensive collection effort that supports these conclusions. During wartime and in the postwar period, the U.S. intelligence community developed a collection and analytic strategy to search for evidence of any pattern of directives, organizations, activities, and facilities needed to administer, secure, house, feed, provide medical care for, and exploit POWs. This effort developed a large body of evidence on the known system for handling U.S. POWs during the war. It also identified a positive pattern indicating that no U.S. POWs remained in captivity after Operation Homecoming. Despite the fact that U.S. POWs would at a minimum have had to have been observed by local people and capturing units, no credible evidence or signature of a separate, compartmented wartime system ever surfaced. Moreover, no system to hold U.S. POWs is in evidence after 1973 nor is there any sign of U.S. POWs being moved out of Vietnam to captivity in a third country.

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- ▶ The U.S. has been collecting and analyzing data on the POW/MIA issue for over thirty years and from a wide variety of sources.
 - ▶ Several million captured enemy documents were translated and screened for information about missing Americans.
 - ▶ Over one-quarter of a million prisoners and defectors from communist forces were questioned about missing Americans.
 - ▶ American, Vietnamese, and other allied prisoners were debriefed upon their escape or release for information on U.S. POWs.
 - ▶ National technical systems provided information directly related to the POW/MIA issue.
 - ▶ Defectors from Hanoi's security services, military, and diplomatic corps were debriefed for their knowledge of U.S. POWs.
 - ▶ After the war, hundreds of thousands of refugees were screened for information on U.S. POWs or on wartime incidents in which U.S. personnel were captured or were killed.
 - ▶ Although reports of Americans held prisoner in Indochina continued to surface after the war, the U.S. government has been unable to discover any credible evidence that any missing American POW continued to be held captive in Indochina after 1973. A thorough review of the results of more than a decade of refugee reporting leads to the conclusion that the refugees have not seen U.S. POWs held after 1973.
 - ▶ Clearly, there are Americans who did or may have survived their loss incidents and for whom the Indochinese governments could provide answers as to fate. In conjunction with the initiatives undertaken by General John W. Vessey, Jr., during the 1987-92 period, the U.S. government reviewed the cases of all Americans unaccounted-for in Southeast Asia to identify all who might have survived their loss incidents. These individuals have been the focus of extensive joint field investigations in the three Indochinese countries. Although 305 individuals were originally identified as candidates for priority investigation, through joint field activity the U.S. has been able to determine that well over 100 of these died in their loss incidents. Information collected to date suggests that many of the remainder were also killed during loss or capture. Although these investigations are not complete, and questions still remain, there are simply not enough Americans who could conceivably have survived their loss incidents to reach captivity and account for the numbers claimed in the 1205 document.
 - ▶ One final point: Senator Smith's analysis of the document's credibility seems to be based in part on the assertion that because the relationship between Vietnam and the

Soviet Union was close, Soviet archives would contain accurate information about Vietnamese affairs. In fact, although the USSR was an ally of Vietnam during the war, it was an uneasy, distrustful relationship, particularly as Soviet support began to fade during the era of detente. The fact that the GRU was so interested in collecting intelligence on the inner workings of the Vietnamese Politburo suggests that Moscow had doubts it was getting accurate information through official liaison channels. The experience of the U.S. Intelligence Community during the Vietnam War era holds numerous examples of inaccuracies, exaggerations, and outright fabrications passed off by Vietnamese sources as intelligence. There is every reason to believe that the Soviets faced the same problems.

agency's procedures for evaluating and responding to reports that U.S. POWs had been seen alive after the conclusion of the war.¹⁹

The Committee agrees that the DIA's POW/MIA Office has historically been

- . plagued by a lack of resources;
- . guilty of over-classification;
- . defensive toward criticism;
- . handicapped by poor coordination with other elements of the intelligence community;
- . slow to follow-up on live-sighting and other reports; and
- . frequently distracted from its basic mission by the need to respond to outside pressures and requests.

In addition, several of those who reviewed the workings of DIA during this period also faulted DIA's analytical process and referred to a "mindset to debunk" live-sighting reports.

Several Committee Members express concern and disappointment that, on occasion, individuals within DIA have been evasive, unresponsive and disturbingly incorrect and cavalier. Several Members of the Committee also note that other individuals within DIA have performed their work with great professionalism and under extraordinarily difficult circumstances both at home and abroad.

The Committee recommends that the Secretary of Defense ensure the regular review and evaluation of the DIA's POW/MIA office to ensure that intelligence information is acted upon quickly and that information is shared with families promptly.

The Committee also believes that a central coordinating mechanism for pooling and acting upon POW/MIA-related intelligence information should be created as one of the Intelligence Community's Interagency Coordination Centers.

The Committee notes that the focus of the POW/MIA accounting process is in Southeast Asia. As a result, DIA analysts are spending more and more of their time traveling back and forth between Washington and the region or to Hawaii. The Committee

¹⁹ the reviews included Inspector General reports in 1983 and 1984/5; a 1985 inter-agency review; a September, 1985 review by Rear Admiral Thomas Brooks; and Task Force reports conducted in 1986 by Gen. Eugene Tighe, USA, and Col. Kimball Gaines, USAF.

Defense Prisoner Of War/Missing In Action Office

assessment

September 23, 1993

GROUP 559 SHOOTDOWN RECORD PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

SUMMARY

- ▶ The Group 559 Shootdown Record is a 58-page hand written summary record of U.S. and allied aircraft that units of Group 559 claimed to have shot down during the period 1965-75. This document was turned over to the Joint Document Center in Hanoi on September 1, 1993.
- ▶ Group 559 was the Vietnamese military command in charge of the Ho Chi Minh Trail network during wartime. Records of this organization represent one of the most likely sources for information about U.S. losses in areas of Laos controlled by the Peoples' Army of Vietnam (PAVN) during wartime.
- ▶ A preliminary analysis of the Group 559 Shootdown Record reveals correlations to a total of 241 individuals (105 incidents in which Americans were captured, killed, or became missing).
- ▶ There is no information in this document to suggest that any Americans, other than known and accounted-for POWs, were captured and made prisoners.
- ▶ Analysis of this document makes clear that the Vietnamese have additional Group 559 records that may contain information useful to POW/MIA case resolution. Although this document contains a few references to the fate of air crews, the information contained therein will be of value chiefly in establishing Vietnamese knowledgeability of specific cases and in providing order of battle (OB) data of potential value for future long-term investigation.

PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

- ▶ Like the 84-page Military Region 4 Shootdown Record, the Group 559 Shootdown Record is prepared in ledger style consisting of a chronological listing in columnar format. The formal title of this record is "Record of Enemy Aircraft Shot Down from 1965 to 1975." The first 11 pages of the document consist of what the Vietnamese describe as a "working draft" list of aircraft downed during November 1971 - February

1973. The information on these pages is replicated in the final pages of the record, pages 50-56. The document appears to be written in a single hand. Original entries are in blue ink; there are some corrections overwritten in red ink.

- ▶ The Vietnamese have been queried as to the date of origin of this document but have not yet responded. The U.S. has only a photocopy of the original, and there is no way at present to determine independently when this record was prepared. It is clear, however, that the Group 559 Shootdown Record was compiled after the fact from original records. This is apparent both in its form and appearance as a summary document and by virtue of the fact that the document itself, in its first 11 pages, makes explicit reference to contemporary wartime documents from which information was obtained.
 - ▶ The first 11 "working draft" pages contain a column called "electronic message report number," in which appear cross references to numbered messages. This column and the information contained therein have been omitted in the pages at the end of the document where the rest of the information on these shootdowns is replicated.
 - ▶ For instance, the first entry on Page 4 contains a cross reference to electronic message number "01k.10/2." Data in the second entry is also drawn from this same message number, as evidenced by a set of ditto marks. Entries 3-5 refer to electronic message number "02k.23/2," and entries 6-13 to "03.3/3."
 - ▶ The significance of the first half of this numbering system is not clear at this time, but the numbers in the second half, for example "10/2," are apparently dates of message transmittal (given in day/month format), similar to U.S. date time groups. These dates show a short lag time between incident dates and message date. For example, downings on January 28 and 29, 1972, are noted on message "01k.10/2," the "10/2" referring to February 10, 1972. Similarly, downings on February 4-10, 1972, are noted on message "02k.23/2," referring to February 23, 1972.
- ▶ The existence of additional Group 559 records is also clearly implied by the page numbers appearing on the document, which make clear that this record is part of a larger document. In all there are three series of page numbers in the upper right hand corners of the total 58 pages.
 - ▶ The first series appears to be the numbering system for the larger document of which the Group 559 Shootdown Record occupies pages 146-203. These numbers are legible on about two-thirds of the photocopied pages on hand.

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- ▶ The second series appears within a stamped seal which is not clearly discernible in the photocopied version. These numbers all are in a similar form--"3/1, 3/2...3/26-...3/57, 3/58"--suggesting numbering of all 58 pages as part of a third tab or third chapter in a larger work.
 - ▶ The last series of numbers appear beside the second series and number the pages 1-58, without the "3/" designation. In at least one place, these numbers correct misnumbering within the "3/" series.
 - ▶ The last page of the Group 559 Shootdown Record contains a statistical summary of the record's contents.
 - ▶ According to this summary, the record lists 2,466 aircraft that were claimed to have been downed (or hit) by Group 559 units. These downings are then broken out statistically in several ways, for instance, by aircraft type or type of unit or weapon by which they were downed. (Note: Analysts have not yet validated these numbers against claimed downings/hits enumerated in the body of the document). Like the Military Region 4 Shootdown Record, however, this document evidences vastly inflated claims of air defense victories.
 - ▶ The summary asserts that 11 (9) American pilots were captured alive, including 2 lieutenant colonels, 1 major, 4 (2) captains, and 4 lieutenants. The numbers in parenthesis--which were in the original blue ink--were overwritten in red ink, indicating corrected data.
 - ▶ Individual entries in the Group 559 Shootdown Record actually note 12 pilots captured. These include 1 lieutenant colonel (Case 1101); 3 majors (Cases 1127, 1698, and 1982); 4 captains (Cases 1198, 1790, and 1111--2 individuals); and 4 lieutenants (Cases 1393, 1526, 1734, and 1894). All of these are returned POWs. Seven were captured in Laos, one in North Vietnam, and four in South Vietnam.
 - ▶ Relevant individual entries in the record note the ranks of only 5 of these 12 Americans, indicating that additional records containing the ranks of the other POWs were available to the compiler of this record.
 - ▶ The summary also indicates that the bodies of 96 persons were observed and 143 were killed in their aircraft. (Note: These numbers have also not yet been validated. It appears, however, that not all these will correlate to unaccounted-for Americans. Some will relate to foreign nationals; others to Americans whose remains were recovered during or after the war).

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- ▶ Also turned over at the same time as the Group 559 Shootdown Record was a separate, undated list labeled "Units that Captured/Took Enemy Pilots." (Note: the title is translated as "captured/took" because this list contains entries for pilots who are described as having died, as well as those who were captured alive and returned at Operation Homecoming). All entries on the list are replicated in the Group 559 Shootdown Record, leading to the conclusion that the list was compiled as a working draft summary of the larger document. This list also contains information not found in the Group 559 Shootdown Record, however, again indicating that the list's compilers had access to additional records not yet made available.
 - ▶ The only Americans listed as captured alive on this list are known POWs who have been accounted for.
 - ▶ This list appears to be an imperfect working draft summary of entries drawn from the Group 559 Shootdown Record. The top half of this list has been crossed out, although entries are still clearly legible. Some of the entries on the top half are replicated on the bottom half. Two entries on the bottom half have been lined out. One entry has been incorrectly transcribed from the original Group 559 Shootdown Record, resulting in a mixup of two entries.
 - ▶ The Group 559 Shootdown Record proved to be surprisingly accurate as to date, time, and aircraft type. This was contrary to early expectations that the accuracy might have been adversely affected by difficult reporting conditions in this remote area. All entries contain relatively detailed OB data. A few contain locational data. Very few contain information regarding fate.
 - ▶ The OB data will require additional, probably time consuming, follow up. The data appear to focus only on PAVN units; preliminary analysis indicated no sign of Lao participation.
 - ▶ Some entries contain locational data in the form of Lao place names, high point designations, or kilometer markings on various routes. Some of this information may prove useful in supporting joint field activities or in helping locate off-the-radar-scope cases in which crashsites have never been determined.
 - ▶ A few entries contain information regarding fate of the crew. This data is concise and without detail, stating merely that one or more enemy pilots were killed. In some cases involving MIAs, this may be new information.
 - ▶ Initial analysis was limited to evaluation of entries that correlate to incidents involving captured, missing, and killed Americans. No effort was made to correlate operational losses in which air crews were rescued or recovered. Several entries which did not

correlate to incidents of principal interest to the POW/MIA issue, however, contain notations indicating pilots had ejected or had been rescued, which suggests the possibility of reference to an operational loss.

- ▶ The initial round of analysis resulted in correlations to a total of 241 Americans.
 - ▶ In all, 141 of the total 241 individuals in these initial correlations are still MIA, and 53 were declared KIA during wartime. As previously indicated, 12 of the 241 are returned POWs. The remainder (35) represent personnel whose remains were recovered during wartime or whose remains have been returned and identified during the postwar period.
 - ▶ During this preliminary analysis, data were interpreted strictly and correlations made conservatively. Correlations were made only in cases where virtually all data elements matched. In nearly all cases, this meant that date, aircraft type, general time of day, and general area (indicated by unit area of operations or other geographic data) matched.
 - ▶ Other correlations will doubtless result from more extensive long-term analysis. For instance, with further work, analysts should be able to correlate most or all of the helicopter losses suffered in operation Lam Son 719 during early 1971. Due to the large number of vague entries claiming helicopter downings in the same area during this period, no correlations of these helicopter losses were attempted during this initial run through. Moreover, additional analysis may reveal correlations in which date of incident has not been noted correctly.
- ▶ The record is clearly confined to the area of operations of Group 559, which extended from the start of the Ho Chi Minh Trail on the Laos side of the Quang Binh border through Laos towards South Vietnam. Although analysts expected this record to cover losses over the southern length of the trail, perhaps even to Tay Ninh Province, this proved not to be the case. The explanation for the southern limits of coverage is still under analysis.
- ▶ DPMO analysts have computer plotted all 241 correlations using ARCINFO software. The result is a dramatic representation of air defense operations by PAVN units deployed along the Ho Chi Minh Trail network. In the north (the northernmost plot is 174000N), a pattern of aircraft crashsites outlines the three feeder routes coming out of North Vietnam through the Mu Gia Pass, the Ban Karai Pass, and just north of the DMZ. The routes through Laos are clearly indicated, as are the supply routes into South Vietnam at Route 9 in Quang Tri Province, via the A Shau Valley in Thua Thien Hue Province, and into the southern border area of Quang Nam - Da Nang Province.

-
- ▶ Interestingly, the southernmost plot is at 151600N, and early analysis reveals no sign of any information in the record on incidents to the south of that area. If this early analysis holds true, it suggests that some administrative boundary existed in this area, and additional records will have to be sought for coverage of southern Ho Chi Minh Trail losses. This break appears to lie at the southern boundary of Quang Nam - Da Nang Province which, perhaps not coincidentally, is also the boundary between Military Region 5 and the B-3 Front. The significance of this break is not clearly understood at this time but continues under study.
 - ▶ Although the loss locations of correlated incidents lie broadly in the eastern half of Laos, these sites range from very close to the Vietnam border to 50-70 kilometers to the west in many areas. One 1972 loss in central Saravan Province, over 100 kilometers from the border with Vietnam, is also noted. Clearly, investigation of cases involving aircraft shot down by PAVN units in Laos will require work well outside any narrowly defined border region.
 - ▶ Of the 241 total individuals represented in these correlations, 85 percent were lost in Laos, 14 percent in South Vietnam, and 2 percent in North Vietnam. Most of the South Vietnam losses are found in the Route 9 and A Shau Valley areas. One North Vietnam loss, Case 0240 which occurred in 1966, appears to reflect the early establishment of Group 559 units on Route 20. There are three 1972 incidents that occurred in the eastern half of Vietnam, both to the north and the south of the DMZ. This appears to reflect the deployment of every unit available during the 1972 Spring Offensive and the subsequent readjustment of forces in this entire area as the North Vietnamese offensive gained ground in Quang Tri Province.
 - ▶ Not all incidents that would be expected to be located within the Group 559 area of operations appear to be noted in this document. (DPMO analysts have also computer-plotted these incidents). The failure of an incident to appear in this document, however, should not necessarily be interpreted as proof that the Vietnamese were not responsible or knowledgeable. The coverage of different periods within the document is spotty for many time frames. For instance, there are intervals, sometimes months, in which reporting is so sparse as to suggest loss of original documents. Although correlations to some of these "missing" incidents will doubtless be made upon further analysis, the issue of why some incidents do not appear in this document will be a matter for further investigation.

CONCLUSION

- ▶ The significance of the Group 559 Shootdown Record rests most importantly in the fact that it provides clear proof of extensive record keeping and knowledgeability of U.S. losses in Laos by PAVN forces operating in that country. It also provides explicit cross references to where additional information might be located. Although it is difficult to believe that this document could not have been turned over to the U.S. side much

earlier, or that additional Group 559 documents could not be turned over forthwith, it is still true that provision of this document represents significant cooperation by the Vietnamese and addresses longstanding requests by the U.S.

- ▶ The document's significance for case resolution is less clear or immediate. Except in those few instances where there is explicit reference to aircrew fate, information contained within the document will prove useful mostly in support of long-term and predictably laborious archival and field investigation. Although it is very probable that additional Group 559 documents exist, getting the Vietnamese to release that material will probably be a long and drawn out process. Moreover, although experience has time and again demonstrated that Vietnamese assertions that wartime records have long been lost or destroyed should not be taken at face value--witness the sudden appearance of this document--nonetheless, the issue of how much of the original Group 559 documentation still exists is a real one. The outline of future records research may need to be rethought to deal with these issues and to support what promises to be an extended process of records exploitation.
- ▶ In documenting PAVN responsibility for aircraft downings several tens of kilometers inside Laos, the Group 559 Shootdown Record provides manifest evidence of PAVN activity well inside the immediate border area. Given this clear proof of Vietnam's geographic reach during wartime, it may be necessary to rethink the U.S. approach toward trilateral investigations of relevant Lao cases.

Prepared by Melinda Cooke, Chief, Casualty Support Section, DPMO Research and Analysis Division

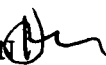
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

September 27, 1993

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR ANTHONY LAKE

FROM: KENT WIEDEMANN 

SUBJECT: Letter to the President From Senator Smith
Regarding Maintaining Prohibitions on Trade With
Vietnam

Senator Robert Smith sent a letter (Tab B) to the President opposing positive steps in U.S.-Vietnam relations and specifically asking that the trade embargo not be lifted. In addition, Smith asked the President to explain several POW/MIA issues, including the implications of the Russian language translation of a Vietnamese Politburo meeting in 1972 that suggests Hanoi was holding many more American soldiers than have been accounted for since. Some of his questions distort our policy and actions regarding Vietnam.

The President's response (Tab A) addresses the major points in the Senator's letter and emphasizes that the Administration is unwaveringly committed to achieving the fullest accounting possible for our POW/MIAs.

Concurrences by: Michael Froman, ^{copy provided} Jeremy Rosner 

RECOMMENDATION

That you sign the memo at Tab I.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

Attachments

Tab I Memo from you to the President describing Senator Smith's letter

Tab A Letter from the President to Smith

Tab B Incoming from Smith

Tab C DoD analysis and refutation of points raised in Smith's letter

TO: SMITH, ROBERT C

FROM: PRESIDENT

DOC DATE: 10 DEC 93
SOURCE REF:

KEYWORDS: VIETNAM
INTL TRADE

CO
WH STAFF SECRETARY

PERSONS:

SUBJECT: PRES REPLY TO PRES FM SEN SMITH ADVOCATING MANTAINING PROHIBITIONS
ON TRADE W/ VIETNAM

ACTION: PRESIDENT SGD LTR

DUE DATE: 14 SEP 93 STATUS: C

STAFF OFFICER: WIEDEMANN

LOGREF:

FILES: WH

NSCP:

CODES:

D O C U M E N T D I S T R I B U T I O N

FOR ACTION

FOR CONCURRENCE

FOR INFO
NSC CHRON
WIEDEMANN
ROSENER

COMMENTS: _____

DISPATCHED BY

JOA

DATE

12/13

BY HAND

W/ATTCH

OPENED BY: NSMEM

CLOSED BY: NSJDA

DOC 4 OF 4

UNCLASSIFIED
ACTION DATA SUMMARY REPORT

RECORD ID: 9306822

DOC ACTION OFFICER

CAO ASSIGNED ACTION REQUIRED

001 WIEDEMANN	Z 93091007 PREPARE MEMO FOR LAKE
002 LAKE	Z 93102808 FOR SIGNATURE
002 WIEDEMANN	Z 93111611 FOR FURTHER ACTION
002 LAKE	Z 93120717 FOR SIGNATURE AND DECISION
003 PRESIDENT	Z 93121309 FOR SIGNATURE
004	X 93121309 PRESIDENT SGD LTR

DISPATCH DATA SUMMARY REPORT

DOC DATE DISPATCH FOR ACTION

DISPATCH FOR INFO

003 931210	VICE PRESIDENT
003 931210	WH CHIEF OF STAFF

UNCLASSIFIED

National Security Council
The White House

PROOFED BY: _____

LOG # 6822

URGENT NOT PROOFED: _____

SYSTEM PBS NSC INT

BYPASSED WW DESK: _____

DOCLOG 45K A/O _____

	SEQUENCE TO	HAS SEEN	DISPOSITION
DepExecSec	_____	_____	_____
ExecSec	<u>/</u>	<u>VE</u>	_____
Staff Director	_____	_____	_____
D/APNSA	_____	_____	_____
APNSA	_____	_____	_____
Situation Room	_____	_____	_____
West Wing Desk	<u>2</u>	<u>45K 12/10</u>	<u>D</u>
NSC Secretariat	<u>3</u>	<u>45K 12/10</u>	<u>D</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

A = Action I = Information D = Dispatch R = Retain N = No Further Action

cc: VP McLarty Other _____

Should be seen by: _____
(Date/Time)

COMMENTS:

Date 12/10 ?

DISPATCH INSTRUCTIONS:

National Security Council
The White House

PROOFED BY: _____ LOG # 6822
URGENT NOT PROOFED: _____ SYSTEM PBS NSC INT
BYPASSED WW DESK: _____ DOCLOG 4SK A/O _____

	SEQUENCE TO	HAS SEEN	DISPOSITION
DepExecSec	_____	_____	_____
ExecSec	<u>1</u>	<u>LE</u>	_____
Staff Director	_____	_____	_____
D/APNSA	_____	_____	_____
APNSA	_____	_____	_____
Situation Room	_____	_____	_____
West Wing Desk	<u>2</u>	<u>4SK 12/10</u>	<u>D</u>
NSC Secretariat	<u>3</u>	<u>4SK 12/10</u>	<u>D</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

A = Action I = Information D = Dispatch R = Retain N = No Further Action

cc: VP McLarty Other _____

Should be seen by: _____
(Date/Time)

COMMENTS:

Date 12/10 ?

DISPATCH INSTRUCTIONS:

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

December 10, 1993

Dear Senator Smith:

Thank you for your thoughtful letter concerning our relations with Vietnam. As I considered how to proceed on the embargo, I found your views very helpful. I regret the delay in my response but I wanted to take the time to carefully analyze the information you sent me.

I am deeply committed to resolving the cases of all personnel missing since the Vietnam War. For this reason, I have made achieving the fullest possible accounting for our POW/MIAs the test of our relationship with Vietnam. Like you, I seek an honorable solution to this issue. I will not accept mere activity by Vietnam on POW/MIA issues as "progress." To advance our objective, in July I 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. These four areas serve as criteria for judging whether we obtain tangible progress, and I believe reflect the concerns you have raised in our discussions. Some concrete progress in each of these areas has been made in recent months although it falls short of what we believe needs to be done.

On September 13 I decided to maintain our trade embargo against Vietnam while adjusting it to permit U.S. firms to benefit from projects funded by the international financial institutions. This action recognizes concrete results from Vietnamese efforts, while encouraging further progress. It makes clear that more must be done to ensure we ultimately achieve the fullest possible accounting of our POW/MIAs. We shall continue to press for concrete results.

[With respect to the Russian documents we obtained, I intend to release publicly our analysis and conclusions of their content as soon as possible. Given the serious potential implications of these documents, I am sure you would agree that we must accord them the most careful analysis in the context of all other known information. In doing so, we must of course, avoid the "mindset to debunk" but we also have a responsibility to provide our best analysis of the facts.

Thank you again for your letter. I look forward to staying in touch on how best to account for those who did not come home.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "The Honorable Robert C. Smith". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "R" and "C".

The Honorable Robert C. Smith
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

THE WHITE HOUSE

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

WASHINGTON

December 10, 1993

93 DEC 10 P2:38

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM:

ANTHONY LAKE
HOWARD PASTER

SUBJECT:

Letter to the President from Senator Bob Smith
Advocating Maintaining Prohibitions on Trade with
VietnamPurpose

To reply to Senator Smith's letter arguing for maintaining the trade embargo against Vietnam.

Background

Senator Smith, a staunch believer in the view that the Vietnamese are holding live POWs, sent a letter to you raising numerous detailed questions on POW/MIA issues and the manner in which the Administration is dealing with them. At Tab C is a point-by-point analysis of Senator Smith's letter, prepared by experts at the Pentagon responsible for POW/MIA affairs. Your letter reflects some of this information and reaffirms your commitment to the fullest possible accounting for POW/MIA's as the basis of our relations with Vietnam.

RECOMMENDATION

That you sign the letter at Tab A.

Attachments

Tab A Letter to Senator Smith
Tab B Letter from Smith
Tab C DOD comments on points raised in Smith's letter

PHOTOCOPY
WJC HANDWRITINGcc: Vice President
Chief of Staff

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

September 9, 1993

MR. PRESIDENT:

Mack wanted you to see. I've
forwarded to Howard and Tony
for a response.

John Podesta

BGB SMITH
NEW HAMPSHIRE
IN NEW HAMPSHIRE
1-800-922-2230

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2903

COMMITTEES:
ARMED SERVICES
ENVIRONMENT AND
PUBLIC WORKS
SELECT COMMITTEE ON
ETHICS
COMMISSION ON SECURITY
AND COOPERATION
IN EUROPE

September 3, 1993 P8:23

The Honorable William J. Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing you concerning your impending decision, required by law before September 14, 1993, on whether to extend for another year the exercise of your authority to maintain prohibitions on trade with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

I respectfully suggest that the central issue affecting your decision should be the historically dragged-out and overall disappointing performance of communist authorities in the region, including Laos, in accounting for our missing and captured personnel, especially the most troubling cases where the U.S. intelligence community knows that Vietnamese communists have direct knowledge as to the fate of personnel who were last known to be alive. Other issues you must consider are Hanoi's terrible record on basic human rights issues (including their most recent affront to Senator Robb), their long-standing support of terrorist and hostile nations to the U.S (ie: Libya, Cuba, North Korea), and the decades-old U.S. national security interest of seeing the collapse of communism in Southeast Asia.

You are well aware of my deep concern over the "historic tendency and mutual desire of both Washington and Hanoi to sidestep" around the very core of the POW/MIA issue -- ie: what happened to the more than 1,150 still unaccounted for U.S. personnel (1,300 in 1973) who were listed as missing and captured at the end of the war. And more importantly, what happened to those individuals from this category who did not return even though we knew they had fallen into communist hands. (The number of these cases range anywhere from 92 to 299 still unaccounted for POW/MIAs depending on the criteria used and whether Laos discrepancy cases are included).

Mr. President, in February, March, April, and June of this year, I personally made you aware of my concerns about the POW/MIA issue and its relation to our policy toward Hanoi. However, as you consider your decision on the embargo, I want you

The Honorable William J. Clinton
September 3, 1993
page 2

to be aware of two matters concerning the POW/MIA issue which disturb me the most. Both of these matters concern American POWs reported alive but not returned at the end of the war.

First is the Russian language translation of the 1972 North Vietnamese politburo presentation which addressed the total number of American POWs held by North Vietnam at the time -- a number far greater than those who eventually came home. As you know, this report was located in the archives of the former Soviet Union this past spring, and to date, Hanoi has dismissed it as a complete fabrication, maintaining that no such presentation even remotely resembling the Russian language translation ever took place. Are we to seriously believe that their politburo was never briefed by their military in 1972 on the results of interrogations of American POWs and the total number captured to date? Of course not, yet we have not even officially asked Hanoi for the dates or content of any politburo briefings in 1972 on American POWs.

What is startling to me after reading the document, Mr. President, is not just Hanoi's position (which one might expect from a Communist regime with a well-established propaganda machine), but the lack of any firm position from Washington which holds Hanoi's feet to the fire in explaining the content of the document. At the request of my friend Ross Perot, I have enclosed for your review a copy of an analysis of this document I recently submitted to Ambassador Malcolm Toon. I hope it will underscore for you the seriousness of this discovery and why it must have a direct impact on our future relationship with Hanoi. (Last month, I provided a copy of this analysis to Kent Wiedemann on your NSC staff.)

I recall your public commitment during your April East Room news conference to apprise the American people and the POW/MIA families once you had personally drawn your conclusions on the veracity of this document. You should know that the Senate Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs found that on occasion, the Department of Defense had been "evasive, unresponsive, and disturbingly incorrect and cavalier" in its dealings with the Senate on this issue last year. This conclusion is contained in the Final Report of our investigation which I co-chaired. Given this fact, I would strongly urge you to read my analysis of the Soviet archival document, so you can present a balanced and fair report to the American people on this document.

Second, Mr. President, I am extremely concerned about the fate of unaccounted for American pilots known to have been captured and held in Laos during the war by both North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao forces. To date, the United States has received

The Honorable William J. Clinton
September 3, 1993
page 3

no convincing explanation on what happened to the vast majority of these men, especially the American pilots whom we know were held in northern Laos and captured along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Our Committee found last year that the Secretary of Defense in 1973 had informed the White House at the time in a Top Secret memorandum of his grave concern on this matter. You may also know that Ross Perot was specifically briefed on the presence of U.S. POWs in northern Laos by the CIA during his trips to Laos in 1969/70 at the request of the Administration, and our Committee found substantiation of this fact.

During my trip to Hanoi last month, I shared with the Vietnamese recently-declassified NSA radio intercepts, human intelligence reports, and overhead wartime photography on this subject to demonstrate that we know conclusively that the Vietnamese have the ability to easily account for the American personnel they captured and held in Laos.

Even your current Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Ambassador Winston Lord, stressed this fact in Senate testimony before our Committee last year, and he is well aware from his work with Dr. Kissinger in 1972/73 of Hanoi's control over Laos. Simply put, I hope we not let a few tripartite meetings between Laos, Vietnam, and the U.S. be a substitute for Hanoi telling us what happened to the U.S. personnel they captured in Laos.

Mr. President, as I stated to you personally in June, I accept your offer to discuss any of these matters with you, to include briefing you on the most compelling and troubling information about living American POWs left behind in Communist countries in 1973. I had hoped we could have had such a meeting prior to your decision on removing our long-standing and legitimate objection to granting IMF status to Hanoi. I hope that you would now consider having such a meeting prior to any decision by your Administration to further relax any portion of the U.S. trade embargo currently in place against Hanoi.

In June, I urged you not to be deceived by those who claim enormous progress is being made on POW/MIA issues. The families of these men can count, Mr. President, and your intelligence community is well-aware of what Hanoi is capable of doing if it truly wanted to account for hundreds of our missing and captured personnel. Now more than ever, we must not abandon the only credible leverage we have to convince Hanoi of our resolve to obtain a full and honorable resolution to this issue. And Mr. President, I would also recommend that this time around we use this leverage wisely to bring Hanoi to the table for a resumption of serious negotiations on this issue -- the likes of which have

The Honorable William J. Clinton
September 3, 1993
page 4

not been seen since the Paris Peace Accords.

It is no coincidence that only yesterday the Vietnamese issued a press release entitled "New Documents on MIA Found." You and I both know that these documents have long been in the possession of Hanoi's Ministry of National Defense and they could easily have been provided to General Vessey long ago. Two of the items listed in their press release will have no bearing on resolving "MIA" matters, and, indeed, one of the items pertains to POWs who returned in 1973. I understand the last item, concerning the list of plane crashes along the Ho Chi Minh trail between Laos and Vietnam, is being brought to Washington for analysis this weekend. I assure you, Mr. President, if Hanoi had a list of plane crashes, they also have a complete list of the pilots who were captured in these important wartime areas, and one should expect this list to match, in many respects, what U.S. intelligence knew in 1973. In short, you have the opportunity to send a message to the Vietnamese that you will not be fooled into accepting such "activity" as real progress in accounting for missing servicemen. We want a serious and honorable resolution to this issue.

Mr. President, I again urge you, for the sake of our missing men and their families, do not accept at face-value what the bureaucracy or some in Congress might like you to believe on this issue. Study the facts for yourself because your decisions will be critical in our efforts to find our missing and captured men, and they will have a lasting effect on those Americans who wear our uniform today and in the future.

You are a very busy man, and I thank you for taking the time to read this letter and the attached analysis of the Soviet archival document. I also thank Mr. Perot and your Chief of Staff, Mr. McLarty, for their efforts to get the enclosed analysis into your hands prior to your decision on the trade embargo against Hanoi.

I look forward to hearing from you.

With warm regards,



BOB SMITH
United States Senator

BS/dc
enclosure



SENATOR BOB SMITH

New Hampshire

Report to Ambassador Malcolm Toon, Chairman of the U.S. Side of
the Joint U.S./Russian Commission on POW/MIAs
from U.S. Senator Bob Smith, Commissioner

July 21, 1993

AN INTERIM ANALYSIS

of the

1972 TRANSLATION OF A NORTH VIETNAMESE REPORT CONCERNING U.S. POWS
DISCOVERED IN 1993 IN THE ARCHIVES OF THE FORMER SOVIET UNION
AND SUBSEQUENTLY PROVIDED TO THE U.S. SIDE OF THE
JOINT U.S./RUSSIAN COMMISSION ON POW/MIAS

I EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. Dr. Stephen Morris, the man who first discovered the North Vietnamese report on POWs in Russian language form, deserves special thanks from the United States of America. General Dmitri Volkogonov, head of the Russian side to the U.S./Russian Joint Commission on POW/MIAs, likewise deserves our gratitude for continuing to open the archives of the former Soviet Union in an effort to resolve outstanding humanitarian issues such as the fate of our POWs and MIAs.

B. The report found by Dr. Morris contains numerous statements which can be corroborated by U.S. knowledge. Because of this, I am convinced the presentation took place in 1972. In the absence of convincing evidence to the contrary from Vietnam, I can only assume that from 1964 to 1973, the leadership of North Vietnam withheld the total number and identity of American POWs in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia over whom it had direct control.

C. The position of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam that the report in Russian language form is a "pure fabrication" which they "completely reject" is unacceptable to me, and I believe, the majority of the American people. This matter is still wide open.

D. The U.S. Government does not know the fate of many of its missing personnel in Vietnam and Laos, and the U.S. Government should stop believing that it knows the fate of just about everybody. It's time people study the facts, even if it means revisiting "old" issues.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Analysis of Senator Smith's September 3, 1993 Letter

The following is an analysis of the POW/MIA information presented by Senator Smith in his recent letter to you. Senator Smith's assertions are noted in bold type and addressed in the order in which he presented them.

Senator Smith refers to Washington and Hanoi's "mutual desire to sidestep around the very core of the POW/MIA issue -- i.e. what happened to the more than 1,150 still unaccounted for U.S. personnel."

The Senator's premise is flawed in two respects. First, the USG, instead of sidestepping the issue, has devoted unprecedented resources to achieving its resolution. The Vietnamese in turn have been informed at every opportunity of our serious intent. To imply there is some form of "mutual desire" to sidestep the issue is to deny the very real achievements that attest to our commitment to see it through to resolution.

Second, the Senator's question of what happened to the more than 1,150 Americans still unaccounted for is misleading and poorly explained. Since President Reagan appointed General Vessey in 1987 to pursue a dialog on this issue with Hanoi, USG efforts have focused on determining the fate of those men who did not

return at Operation Homecoming but whose circumstances at the time of their loss suggests they may have fallen into enemy hands. These cases, known as *priority discrepancy cases*, originally included 196 individuals lost in Vietnam. Today they number 80 and their cases remain the priority focus of our efforts.

Senator Smith raises the issue of the 1972 document found in the archives of the former Soviet Union and known as the "1205 Document." He specifically argues that we should not accept Vietnam's dismissal of the document as a fabrication, and charges that the USG has not officially asked Hanoi for the dates or content of any politbureau briefings in 1972 on American POWs.

Again the Senator's statement is flawed in that it omits facts which support conclusions to the contrary. As you know, General Vessey travelled to Hanoi in April to specifically discuss this document with the Vietnamese. He met with the document's alleged author and in a private meeting with Foreign Minister Cam asked the Vietnamese to provide documents or evidence to support their dismissal of the document as a fabrication. Foreign Minister Cam confirmed that a check of the records showed no politbureau session was convened on the day the document allegedly was delivered or any day close to it. Not content to leave the matter at the Vietnamese Foreign Minister's word, experts from all agencies of the USG have combed through all available current and archival information and have not found any data to support the

substantive POW/MIA conclusions of the document. A comprehensive body of all source intelligence collected by U.S. intelligence agencies over 30 years supports the conclusion that the governments of Indochina released all American POWs at the time of Operation Homecoming in 1973. All our data confirms that they did not hold additional prisoners as alleged in the 1205 Document.

Senator Smith criticizes the lack of a Washington position on the 1205 document. He champions his own analysis, stating his hope that it will underscore "the seriousness of this discovery and why it must have a direct impact on our future relationship with Hanoi."

The Washington analysis of the 1205 document is attached. (See p.8) This analysis has not been released in its entirety, but excerpts have been published in DoD's POW/MIA newsletter. (See p.18) The Administration has never trivialized the importance of the document with regard to its impact on our future relationship with Vietnam. Indeed, your request that General Vessey undertake a short-notice mission to Hanoi to investigate the matter illustrates the serious treatment accorded this document. DoD's assessment of Senator Smith's analysis of the 1205 Document is also attached. See. p. 25.

To undermine the Government's conclusions regarding the 1205 Document, Senator Smith refers to a quote from the Senate Select Committee's final report to the affect that

DoD had been "evasive, unresponsive, and disturbingly incorrect and cavalier (sic) in its dealings with the Senate."

The quote is out of context and incorrect. Rather than a conclusion concerning DoD made by the entire Committee, as the Senator asserts, the statement is actually attributed to "several members" of the Committee and refers specifically to "individuals within DIA" not DoD. The report goes on to state that "several members of the Committee also noted that other individuals within DIA have performed their work with great professionalism and under extraordinarily difficult circumstances..." A verbatim copy of the text is attached. See p.29.

Senator Smith states that he is extremely concerned about the fate of unaccounted for American pilots known to have been captured and held in Laos by both North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao Forces. He implies that their numbers are large and there remain many questions regarding their fates.

The fate of Americans lost in Laos is a matter of concern and extensive resources have been devoted to accounting for these losses. However, Senator Smith has misrepresented known facts regarding U.S. personnel captured in Laos. There were only a small number of Americans who were confirmed to have been captured in Laos during the war. All but two of these men returned alive

at Operation Homecoming, escaped captivity, or died in captivity. There is extensive reporting that the remaining two POWs also died in captivity during the late 1960s. Many questions still remain regarding the fate of Americans lost in Laos, but there is no credible evidence to suggest that any Americans were held in Laos after Operation Homecoming.

Senator Smith alludes to declassified NSA intercepts and other forms of intelligence data that he provided to the Vietnamese as proof that "we know conclusively that the Vietnamese have the ability to easily account for the American personnel they captured and held in Laos." He goes on to state he hopes "we not let a few tripartite meetings between Laos, Vietnam, and the U.S. be a substitute for Hanoi telling us what happened to the personnel they captured in Laos."

Without knowing the exact data the Senator provided to the Vietnamese, we cannot comment specifically. However, USG experts have analyzed all NSA intercepts, human intelligence reports and overhead wartime photography as well as other intelligence data on this issue. This analysis, necessarily ongoing, indicates that Vietnamese forces deployed along the Ho Chi Minh Trail network in Laos were indeed responsible for the majority of U.S. losses in Laos. We agree that the answers to many of these cases rest with Vietnam, and we have repeatedly pressed Hanoi for answers. The question of how many Laotian cases the Vietnamese will actually be

able to help us account for, however, will only be known when joint investigations of the individual cases are completed, and all Vietnamese records regarding these losses have been acquired.

The efforts in the area of U.S./Vietnam/Laos trilateral cooperation are aimed at the issue of border sovereignty and combined technical operations on individual case investigations, not at letting Vietnam "off the hook" as Senator Smith suggests. These tripartite efforts complement and support our equally important efforts to acquire archival and other Vietnamese information regarding these cases.

Senator Smith notes that very recently the Vietnamese turned over a "list of plane crashes along the Ho Chi Minh Trail..." He goes on to state his belief that "if Hanoi had a list of plane crashes, they also have a complete list of pilots who were captured in these important wartime areas, and one should expect this list to match, in many respects, what U.S. intelligence knew in 1973."

Senator Smith is correct that on September 1, 1993, Vietnam turned over a list of planes they claimed were shot down over the Ho Chi Minh Trail. An analysis of this document, which is referred to as the "Group 559 Shootdown Record" after the Vietnamese organization in charge of operations on the trail, is attached. (P.30) This document confirms what U.S. intelligence knew in 1973 about Americans captured in Vietnamese controlled

areas of Laos, namely that all Americans captured by the Vietnamese returned at Operation Homecoming or died in captivity and have since been accounted for. Senator Smith is also correct that the Vietnamese probably have a list of U.S. pilots whom they captured in Laos, or at least such a list existed in the past. The U.S. is currently pressing Vietnam to provide such a document. At present, however, there is no reason to expect that such a list will contain names of any additional Americans.

UNCLASSIFIED

The Director of Central Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

NIC 00558/93
13 September 1993

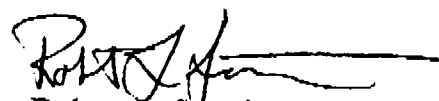
MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Ed Ross, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense
POW-MIA Affairs

FROM: Robert L. Suettinger, Deputy National Intelligence Officer
for East Asia

SUBJECT: POW/MIA Document from Russian Archives

REF: Your Request of 10 September 1993

As per your request, analysts have reviewed the Russian document received by Ambassador Toon on 2 September 1993 (report of Hoang Anh). I have added a section on that document to the earlier analysis of the "1205 Report" and "Dang Tan Reports," and added some additional conclusions. Again, please feel free to use this analysis as you and your superiors at the Defense Department see fit. The analysis is unclassified, and may be released to the public, if that is what you decide to do.



Robert L. Suettinger

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Recent Reports on American POWs in Indochina: An Assessment

Introduction

On 8 April 1993, the Co-chairman of the US-Russian Joint Commission on POW-MIAs received officially a document from the former Soviet Union's Communist Party Central Committee archives that purports to be an official Vietnamese report on American POWs held in North Vietnam in 1972. This same document was released and publicized shortly afterward by researcher Stephen Morris. The document asserts that Hanoi held 1205 American prisoners in mid-September 1972, a number far higher than the United States Government believes could have been captured, and representing more than twice the number actually freed in early 1973 in Operation Homecoming. This report is hereinafter referred to as the "1205 Report," due to the reference to the numbers of US POWs.

In mid-May 1993, a review of documents being declassified by the Central Intelligence Agency and State Department under Executive Order 12812 uncovered a series of reports (originally disseminated in 1970) from a North Vietnamese defector named Dang Tan. These reports appeared generally to corroborate the idea that there were more POWs held alive in Hanoi than the Vietnamese Government admitted. One of what we will hereinafter call the "Dang Tan Reports" claimed that, in 1967, when Tan left the North, Hanoi already held "more than 800" US pilots as POWs. On 2 September 1993, the Co-chairman of the US-Russian Joint Commission on POW-MIAs received another intelligence document from the former Soviet Union Central Committee archives containing information pertinent to the POW-MIA situation. This fragmentary GRU report--purportedly part of a report given to a Vietnamese Communist Party plenum in late December 1970-early January 1971--refers to 735 "American fliers" held in Hanoi at that time. This report is hereinafter referred to as the "735 Document."

At the request of the Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for POW-MIA Affairs, a committee of Intelligence Community analysts from the Defense Intelligence Agency, Central Intelligence Agency and State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research, as well as other POW-MIA specialists convened to review and assess the information contained in the "1205 Report," the "Dang Tan Reports" and the "735 Document." The following assessment represents a consensus view of those representatives, and should be considered a step in an ongoing process to evaluate all information pertinent to the POW-MIA subject. As further information becomes available, it will be updated.

Separately from this analysis, US Government representatives have made considerable efforts to follow up on information in the "1205 Report." One of the principal

objectives of General John Vessey's 18-19 April 1993 trip to Hanoi, and of a US Congressional delegation that visited there 31 May-1 June was to obtain information pertinent to the Russian document. Although the Vietnamese charge that the "1205 Report" is a fabrication, they did provide General Vessey and Senator Kerry with several documents on POW-MIA matters, and extensive interviews with and official reports about General Tran Van Quang--the supposed author of the speech presented in the Russian document. These materials have not enabled us to resolve questions about the reports, but the information has been useful for analytical purposes. Efforts are continuing to gain more information from Moscow on the document. The Russians have not made available a Vietnamese language version of the report, nor have they explained how or by whom it was originally acquired, nor indicated what was their assessment of the value of the report. At the request of the US Government, they are continuing to search their records for relevant information.

The "1205 Report" -- Is It What It Claims To Be?

Analysts find the 1205 Report perplexing. It appears to be an authentic Russian intelligence report, consisting of two parts: a covering memo and summary, signed on 1 December 1972 by GRU chief Petr Ivashutin; and a "Translation of the report of Deputy Chief of the General Staff, Vietnamese People's Army, General-Lieutenant Tran Van Quang, at the session of the Politburo, Central Committee of the Vietnamese Communist Party, 15 September 1972." Most of the attached report is taken up with a discussion of a planned political subversion campaign against the South Vietnamese government. The remainder deals with the numbers and treatment of American POWs. At no point in the report itself is the speaker identified, nor his audience specified, nor the precise date of the report provided. That information comes only from the cover memo, which provides no data on how the document was acquired. The report itself contains some verifiable, or at least plausible information, but also some which is completely erroneous.

The "1205 Report" appears most credible in its first section, about political operations planned for South Vietnam. For example:

- It identifies several South Vietnamese leaders (one incorrectly) who were known opponents of the regime of President Nguyen Van Thieu and who were variously reported to have had clandestine contacts with representatives from the North.
- It accurately depicts the circumstances surrounding the surrender of a South Vietnamese unit during the 1972 Easter Offensive, admitting that the North's propaganda had misrepresented the event.
- It predicts an upsurge in terrorist attacks beginning in October 1972, which was indeed noted in the Mekong Delta region in November, although not on the scale or with the political effect predicted in the document.

The report, however, also contains numerous errors and inconsistencies, particularly in the section on POWs. Because of these errors--detailed below--we cannot accept without question that the "1205 Report" is a report to the Vietnamese Politburo, nor that General Quang delivered the speech. While we cannot dismiss the "1205 Report" as a fabrication, we believe that much more supporting evidence of its authorship and inherent credibility must be presented before it can be accepted as what the Russian cover document claims it to be.

Incongruous Numbers

Our doubts about the document are multi-fold. Most importantly, the numbers provided in the 1205 Report simply cannot be reconciled with US Government records and known facts:

- The figure of 1205 American POWs is inordinately high, and inconsistent with any other estimate from any reliable source. If it were to be accepted as true, it means there were 669 more prisoners in North Vietnam than we ever believed to be the case. Returning POWs were unaware of any other American prisoners, not to mention in such numbers. If Americans had been segregated by rank, as claimed by the document, they should have known about these additional POWs.
- To have remained unknown to other Americans (who kept careful track of each other during their imprisonment), this number of additional POWs would have to have been separated from other prisoners at or close to point-of capture and immediately sent to a separate prison system. The United States has employed technical means to search thoroughly for signs of such a system, and developed detailed information on the known Vietnamese prison system, but found no evidence of an additional system. Over the last 20 years, thousands of interviews have been conducted with people who could have known of that many more captives: American POWs, South Vietnamese POWs, reeducation camp and prison inmates, and Vietnamese refugees and defectors, including former North Vietnamese civilian and military officials. No information has emerged that would substantiate the inference of the "1205 Report" that a separate prison system existed.
- The figure 1205 is also inconsistent with our understanding of how many Americans would have survived their loss incidents and become captives. US research indicates there are, at most, 80 Americans lost in all of Vietnam whose fates are still uncertain. This figure is derived from US wartime records, nearly six years of on-the-ground investigation throughout Vietnam, and interviews with thousands of Vietnamese residents. For the 1205 figure to be correct, we would have to assume that 669 Americans--including some whom their wartime commanders declared "killed in action/body not recovered"--actually survived their incidents and were captured alive and transported to an unknown prison system. This is highly implausible, not only

because of the lack of evidence of a secondary prison system, noted above, but also because subsequent investigation has verified that a high percentage of those declared KIA-BNR were indeed killed in their incidents.

Errors and Omissions

Our doubts about the figures in the "1205 report" are reinforced by numerous other errors of fact in the Russian document. Some of these have been discussed in the press, and reflect the experience of returned POWs:

<i>Claimed in the 1205 Report</i>	<i>Reported by Returned US POWs</i>
POWs were segregated by rank, with majors in one camp, colonels in another.	POWs were not segregated by rank, but were held together in several facilities.
Sixteen US officers with the rank of Colonel (O-6) were held in Hanoi in 1972, seven captured in the North and nine in the South or elsewhere.	According to US records, only 10 O-6 pilots were lost during the entire war, nine over the North, and one over Laos. Only four became POWs.
Prisoners were classified and would be released on the basis of their political cooperation and attitude.	Although Hanoi may have classified and planned to free US POWs based on their attitude, those released in 1973 were freed in order of their date of capture.
Prisoners were dispersed to 11 different camps after the US raid on Son Tay Prison in 1970.	Prisoners were not dispersed after Son Tay, but were consolidated into four more heavily-defended camps.

Analysts consider that there are several things missing from the speech that should have been mentioned if it was delivered at the time claimed.

- On 16 September, supposedly the day following the speech, three American pilots were released into the custody of an American peace activist, a plan that had been made public two weeks earlier. It is curious that, in a report supposedly made to the Politburo, no mention is made of this plan.
- Vietnam's public and private position on POW releases, as of 31 August 1972, was that captured Americans would be released after a negotiated solution to the conflict and a cease-fire in Vietnam, and concurrently with the withdrawal of US forces from South

Vietnam. Contrary to the 1205 Report, Laos and Cambodia were not included in the terms.

On a more subjective level, some analysts consider the overall tone and length of the "1205 Report" speech inappropriate for delivery to the Political Bureau, the highest decisionmaking organ in North Vietnam. In their experience with other official Central Committee reports, a more formal style is usually adopted. The frequent use of the first person and occasional hortatory exclamations found in the "1205 Report" are more consistent with an address delivered to peers or underlings.

Where Was Tran Van Quang in 1972?

Tran Van Quang and other Vietnamese have denied the authenticity of the "1205 Report" on grounds that Quang was not Deputy Chief of Staff, but rather a Military Region commander in September 1972. US Government biographic records tend to corroborate Quang's story, especially as supplemented by an extensive interview he gave to the US Congressional delegation during its visit to Hanoi.

According to US biographic records, Quang was publicly identified as a Deputy Chief of the General Staff in 1959, and again in 1974, but we believe he probably did not function in that position in the intervening period. Quang's military career is not well-known, in part because he served for several years in the South as an "underground" military leader. (He was noted publicly only twice, as the author of articles in military publications in 1965-66). Available evidence suggests two tours in the South, one from 1960 to 1964, and another from 1966 to 1972. During this latter tour, he first commanded Military Region IV--along the northern side of the DMZ--then in August 1966 was placed in command of troops in the newly-created "Tri-Thien-Hue" Military Region, also known as the "B-4 Front," in northern South Vietnam. In that capacity, he was heavily involved in the bloody occupation of Hue during the Tet Offensive of 1968.¹

Quang claims he remained as B-4 Commander through the 1972 North Vietnamese Offensive (the "Easter Offensive"), which lasted from April to September. He provided the US Congressional delegation copies of a letter sent to him in the South by General Secretary Le Duan in August 1972 (he is addressed by his pseudonym, Bay Tien). He also provided a copy of a November 1972 document that reorganized the B-4 command, relieving him of duty there. US Government biographic records for that period are spotty. Fragmentary information from prisoner interrogations suggests that Quang was in the B-4 Front at least as of the end of April 1972. During the 1972 offensive, North Vietnamese troops captured the provincial capital of Quang Tri and held it until the end of September

¹ In a January 1988 article in the Vietnamese military journal, *Tap Chi Quan Doi Nhan Dan*, Quang criticized the lack of coordination between main force North Vietnamese units (presumably out of Military Region IV) and local guerrillas during the 1968 "Tet" Offensive. He claimed the problem had been resolved by 1972, suggesting his experience spanned the period.

1972, when they were finally driven out by heavy US bombing and a South Vietnamese assault. It is likely Quang remained with his troops in the B-4 Front during this critical battle. Quang claims he was not in Hanoi during the period that the report cited in the Russian document was supposedly delivered, only passing through Hanoi in mid-December en route to medical treatment in East Germany. We believe our information generally corroborates Quang's account of his career.

A report to the Politburo on POWs in captivity would more likely have been delivered by an official of the General Political Department than someone from the General Staff, in our judgment. POWs were under the control and administration of the "Enemy Proselytizing Department" of the General Political Department, and officers of that department jealously guarded information about them. Other than two disclosures in 1970 and 1971, the Vietnamese withheld information on the numbers of US POWs not only from Washington, but also from Moscow.

A Note on Numbers

If the "1205 Report" was not an official, accurate report to the Politburo, there is even more reason to be dubious of the numbers it provides on American POWs. The Vietnamese propensity for exaggerating figures is evident throughout their own historical records of the Vietnam War. General Tran Van Quang, for example, in his 1988 military journal article on the Tet Offensive of 1968, asserted that 8,000 Americans were killed or captured in the attack on Hue alone. The Vietnam Military History Institute of the Ministry of National Defense in 1990 claimed, according to a Vietnamese researcher, that during the seven weeks of the Tet Offensive, 43,000 Americans (and over 100,000 other "enemies") were "annihilated," and 2370 airplanes were destroyed. According to US records, 4,256 Americans lost their lives in all of South Vietnam during the period from 29 January to 30 March 1968. In and around Hue, 28 Americans were captured in the initial assault on the city, and the US Marines suffered 147 killed in action and 857 wounded in recovering the city. There are numerous other examples of officially sanctioned exaggeration of battle statistics, mainly for propaganda purposes. In our view, unless a set of figures can be verified as having been delivered in circumstances that required accuracy, they should be considered questionable.

The Dang Tan Reports

That same judgment holds for the reports from a Central Intelligence Agency source that recently have been made public. Dang Tan, a North Vietnamese medic who "rallied" to the South Vietnamese cause in April 1969, was debriefed over an extended period at the then National Interrogation Center in Saigon. Numerous reports were disseminated from Tan's interrogation, seven of which concerned the treatment of American POWs. Because the United States Government was increasingly concerned about POWs at that time (witness the Son Tay raid), and because we had so little data on POW conditions, Tan's

information was given broad circulation, even though it was dated, and acquired second or third hand. The reports made clear that much of his reporting was based on what he remembered from briefings or conversations with North Vietnamese officials.

The most striking portion of Tan's reporting is contained in a report disseminated on 12 January 1970, in which he claims that Hanoi held "more than 800" Americans as of late 1967, when Tan left the North, and that they were categorized on the basis of their degree of cooperation. Even at that time, the CIA had doubts about the accuracy of this aspect of Tan's reporting. Tan had initially reported an even higher figure, then scaled back his estimate when challenged by his interrogators. In 1971, it was decided to "surface" Tan and pass his information on to the press. The CIA instructed that Tan's press release be edited to remove any reference to numbers of POWs in Hanoi. The rationale was that the numbers were so much higher than the United States Government had reason to believe had been captured that they detracted from Tan's credibility on other points.

A review of Tan's reporting on the POW issue reveals a number of errors and exaggerations:

- As of September 1967, in all of Indochina, there were only 282 air crew believed held prisoner and only 292 air crew carried in MIA status (a total of 574 theoretically possible POWs, significantly below Tan's late 1967 figure of "over 800").
- Tan alleged that POWs captured in the South were sent to North Vietnam within six months. In fact, some Americans were held in the South until late in the war, even in the B-3 Front area, where Tan worked.
- Among Tan's most noteworthy claims at the time were that Hanoi gave Soviet officials access to US prisoners, and that US POWs were being sent to other Communist countries. In fact, only one POW reported being interrogated by a Soviet official, and that was in 1973, three years after Tan's report. There is no credible evidence that American POWs were moved out of Indochina.

Not all of Tan's reports are erroneous or fraudulent, and he did report accurately on some aspects of POW conditions in the North. However, he clearly embellished his reports with rumors, hearsay, and inaccuracies. And it is notable that at least some in the Intelligence Community found his reporting questionable, even at a time when little information was available on the condition and numbers of American POWs in Hanoi.

The "735 Document"

This document, released by the Russians at the end of a 2 September 1993 plenary meeting of the Joint Commission on POW-MIA Affairs, is quite fragmentary (we have only two complete pages, 11 and 18, of a longer report) and is therefore difficult to analyze closely. Like the 1205 Report, it is a GRU document, transcribing and translating the text

of an oral report presented at a Vietnamese Communist Party conclave. We have no indications when or how the report was acquired, and have only the GRU cover memo to identify the speaker, time, and place of delivery. Nonetheless, we believe the report is a genuine GRU document, not a "fabrication," as claimed by Hanoi. There are, however, certain problems with the document.

The cover memo indicates the speech was presented at the 20th Plenum of the Vietnamese Communist Party Central Committee, held from late December 1970 to early January 1971. Verifiable records indicate the 19th Plenum was held during that period, and the 20th was not held until February 1972. We assume that the number was mis-transcribed, and that the speech was actually delivered at the 19th Plenum. According to the cover memo, the speech was delivered by "Khoang An'," a Secretary of the Central Committee. Our biographic records hold a Hoang Anh as a member of the Central Committee Secretariat at that time. His principal area of responsibility was agriculture. The limited publicity given the 19th Plenum by the Vietnamese at the time included reference to a report on agriculture, but did not indicate who delivered it. Although Anh had a military background--he was a Vice Minister of Defense in 1957, according to our records--we cannot establish any tie to the Vietnamese army, or any other POW-related field that would have enabled him to speak authoritatively on POWs in 1970-71.

Aside from the anomaly of an agriculture specialist speaking on POWs, analysts have the same problem with the numbers in this document that we have with the "1205 Report." Anh claims that 735 "captured American fliers" were held in Hanoi as of the date of the plenum, early 1971. According to US records, of the 591 POWs released in 1973, 384 were prisoners at this time, along with four who subsequently died in captivity. Of the priority discrepancy cases, 82 were lost prior to this date. Even assuming all these were alive in 1971, the total number of prisoners Hanoi could have been holding at the time was 470. Even if the speech was given at the 20th Plenum in early 1972, the number of American aviators in captivity could not have exceeded 498. Finally, analysts noted that the "735 Document" and "1205 Report" are not consistent with each other by any accounting. To have had 1205 US pilots in captivity by late 1972, Hanoi would have to have held far more than 735 by early 1971.

We have no idea of where the number 735 came from, or why Anh referred to it in this report. Analysts found it interesting that, in both the Quang and Anh reports, reference is made to opposition within the Party to the leadership's handling of the war, as well as the negotiations with the United States. If these two documents are excerpts from actual speeches, it is possible the speakers exaggerated their figures for political effect.

Conclusions

In summary, while we found portions of the "1205 Report" that were plausible and recognize that the Russians have indicated that it is an authentic Soviet document, we find

the evidence in support of its claims to be an accurate summary of the POW situation in 1972 to be far outweighed by errors, omissions, and propaganda that detract from its credibility. As additional information becomes available, we will continue to assess the document. But at this point, our bottom line judgment is that the document is not what the Russian GRU claimed it to be, and the information contained in it suggesting more than 600 additional POWs is not accurate. The Dang Tan reports contain much unsubstantiated hearsay, probably embellished, and his estimates of POW numbers are not credible. The "735 Document" is too fragmentary to permit detailed analysis, but again, the numbers used are inconsistent with our own accounting.

Several conclusions can be drawn from these documents. Foremost is that foreign "intelligence reports," particularly from human sources about whom we know nothing, should not be assumed to be true and accurate. The experience of the US Intelligence Community during the Vietnam War era holds numerous examples of inaccuracies, exaggerations, and outright fabrications passed off by Vietnamese sources as intelligence. Although the USSR was an ally of Vietnam during the war, it was an uneasy, distrustful relationship, particularly as Soviet support began to fade during the era of detente. The fact that the GRU was so interested in collecting intelligence on the inner workings of the Vietnamese Politburo suggests that Moscow had doubts it was getting accurate information through official liaison channels. We believe there is undoubtedly much more information in Russian, and particularly GRU, archives on this issue. We doubt that any particular document will yield up "the truth," but all are useful in helping us understand and resolve the remaining questions.

Second, the POW issue was clearly an element in an internal Vietnamese political debate over the conduct of both the war and peace negotiations. We have only a limited understanding of the outlines of and participants in this debate. There is probably more information in Vietnamese party and military archives that could shed light on the situation.



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE POW/MIA NEWSLETTER

July 1993

A Department of Defense newsletter to inform families, interested members of the public and veterans organizations on DoD efforts to resolve the POW-MIA issue.

CINCPAC IG COMPLETES SHREDDING INVESTIGATION

Admiral Larson, Commander in Chief U.S. Pacific Command, wrote the following letter to Edward W. Ross, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (POW/MIA Affairs), concerning the shredding of documents by JTF-FA personnel in Bangkok.

Dear Mr. Ross,

This letter is intended to bring you up to date on JTF-FA's shredding of documents in Bangkok, Thailand. I hope you will consider publishing it in your Newsletter so we can keep the families informed.

The Inspector General's investigation I ordered is now complete. The investigation was conducted by two very senior experienced investigators (including an Army Colonel with two Silver Stars and a Purple Heart from Vietnam) who interviewed twenty-six witnesses and with the assistance of an investigation team inventoried 9,588 documents. No stone was left unturned in this investigation.

The results of the investigation show that no original documents were destroyed and no useful information was lost which would prevent the fullest possible accounting of our missing in Indochina. The following are the basic findings of this detailed investigation:

- The destruction was part of a routine declassification and elimination of duplicate files. This declassification effort was pursuant to instructions from the President and the Secretary of Defense.

- The documents that were shredded were duplicates of originals that are on file at CJTF-FA Headquarters in Honolulu, Hawaii. Over 90% of them were refugee reports from 1984-1992.

- The duplicate refugee reports were destroyed because JTF-FA no longer has the mission of interviewing refugees and originals are on file in Hawaii.

- The shredding was done openly and publicly during normal working hours after extensive review and screening of the records (five separate reviews).

- Refugee reports from 1979-1983 were reviewed by Mr. Bill Bell. Mr. Bell is assigned to JTF-FA, stationed in Bangkok, as the Special Assistant to CJTF-FA for negotiations. For many years he was key refugee interviewer for the former Joint Casualty Resolution Center. On 10 February 1993 he stated he no longer needed any of these reports and they were shipped to Hawaii for destruction of duplicates. This shipment numbered 1579 refugee reports.

- The remainder of the reports, 7962 in number, covering 1984-1992 were reviewed by Mr. Bell, his secretary and a temporary duty Warrant Officer to save any files Mr. Bell thought would be of value. He retained 1384 for possible further use.

- CDR Hays of JTF-FA traveled to Bangkok and reviewed the remaining 7962 reports one by one to verify that there was a report and an evaluation by analysts in Hawaii which would indicate that the originals were in our headquarters files. Any that were not complete were shipped to Hawaii. He saw no marginal notes of significance.

- To double check the number and

potential value of any marginal notes, the investigating officers examined each of the 1579 refugee reports shipped on 11 February to Hawaii and found 166 marginal notes, consisting of grid coordinates, cross-references to other reports, REFNO numbers, province names, and one word expletives. Only one report contained any information that could be considered of significant information. This 1979 report concerned uncorrelated information involving a Japanese tourist being held alive in a big cave in Laos with American pilots. The marginal note concerned a telephone call to the Japanese Attache in Bangkok, regarding whether there had been any reports of missing Japanese tourists.

- The investigating officers also examined the 1384 reports in Mr. Bell's files and found 58 reports with marginal notes. These marginal notes were of a similar nature as described above and none of the reports contained information that could be considered of significant analytical value.

- Only one person interviewed contended that the marginal notes were of significance. When he was shown copies of the marginal notes that had been found on the refugee reports, he was at a loss to explain the lack of substantive comments. He contended that the former Detachment Commander also made analytical comments on the reports; however, when the investigating officers interviewed the former commander, he stated that he did not recall any analytical notes, only cross-references on a small percentage of reports.

- The investigators concluded that the refugee reports underwent five separate reviews to ensure that nothing unretrievable was destroyed. The final review

conducted by CDR Hays was a detailed systematic page-by-page process that examined each report to verify it was a duplicate report held by JTF-FA HQs. CDR Hays testified he did not see any reports with substantive comments and if he had he would have saved them. The Inspector General investigation team conducted a page-by-page examination of the 1579 refugee reports returned to Hawaii and the 1384 refugee reports retained for Mr. Bell's files and determined the minimal amount of marginal notes, if indeed lost, were of no significant analytical value to anyone.

- The JTF-FA has completed accountability for all 9588 refugee reports from 1979-1992.

I sincerely hope you will convey this information to the families, veterans' organizations and all others who are involved in supporting our efforts in the field. Please assure them that we continue to share a common goal of achieving the fullest possible accounting for our missing from the war in Southeast Asia. The men and women who comprise the JTF-FA are deeply committed, have made tremendous accomplishments, and are a source of great pride to me.

With kindest personal regards.

SIGNED

C.R. LARSON
Admiral, U.S. Navy

The "1205 Document"

On April 8, 1993 the Co-chairman of the U.S.-Russian Joint Commission on POW/MIAs officially received a document from the former Soviet Union's Communist Party Central Committee archives that purports to be an official Vietnamese report on American POWs held by North Vietnam in 1972. This same document was released and publicized shortly afterward by researcher Stephen Morris. The document asserts that Hanoi

held 1205 prisoners in mid-September 1972, a number far higher than the United States Government believes could have been captured, and representing more than twice the number that were freed in early 1973 in Operation Homecoming.

U.S. Government representatives have made considerable efforts to follow up on the information in the "1205 document." One of the principal objectives of General Vessey's April 18-19, 1993 trip to Hanoi, and of Senator Kerry's May 31-June 1 delegation to Hanoi was to obtain information pertinent to the Russian document. Although the Vietnamese charge that the "1205 document" is a fabrication, they did provide General Vessey and Senator Kerry with several POW/MIA related documents and extensive interviews with and official reports about General Tran Van Quang--the supposed author of the speech presented in the "1205 document." These materials have not enabled analysts to resolve all questions about the 1205 document, but have been useful for other analytical purposes. Efforts are continuing to gain more information from Moscow about the document. The Russians have not made available a Vietnamese language version of the document, nor have they explained how or by whom it was originally acquired, nor indicated what was their assessment of the value of the report. At the request of the U.S. Government they are continuing to search their records for relevant information.

Analysts have found the Russian document perplexing. It appears to be an authentic Russian intelligence report, consisting of two parts: a cover memo and summary, and a "Translation of the report of Deputy Chief of Staff of the General Staff, Vietnamese People's Army, General-Lieutenant Tran Van Quang, at the session of the Politburo, Central Committee of the Vietnamese Communist Party, 15 September, 1972." Most of the report is taken up with a discussion of a planned political subversion campaign against the South Vietnamese Government. The remainder deals with the numbers and treatment of American POWs.

The "1205 document" appears most

credible in its first section, about political operations planned for South Vietnam. The report, however, also contains numerous errors and inconsistencies, particularly in the section on POWs. While portions of the document are plausible, evidence in support of its claims to be an accurate summary of the POW situation in 1972 are far outweighed by errors, omissions, and propaganda that detract from its credibility. As additional information becomes available, the Department of Defense and other U.S. Government agencies will continue to assess the document. At this point our bottom line judgement is that the document, and the information contained in it suggesting the Vietnamese held more than 600 additional POWs is not accurate.

Preparations begin for Annual POW/MIA Family Meeting

Preparations are currently underway for the 1993 POW/MIA annual family meeting. Briefings designed to update the families on U.S. Government POW/MIA efforts will be given by senior officials in conjunction with the annual meeting of the National League of Families at Andrews AFB, Maryland July 16-17, 1993.

The service casualty offices have mailed each family a package allowing families to sign up for round trip COIN ASSIST air transportation, service hosted luncheons, appointments for review of family members service casualty files with the service casualty officers, and the option to attend the full League meeting or just the government briefings. Preregistration is required for attendance at these functions. Events are available to all family members of unaccounted for Americans from the Vietnam-era. There is a limit of two members per family for the COIN ASSIST air travel.

If you request tickets from your casualty officer for the service hosted luncheon and later determine you will be unable to attend, please let the casualty officer know so they can make the neces-

sary adjustments with the Hotel to avoid ordering extra meals and wasting money.

We look forward to meeting with the families again and hope the presentations will provide information family members will find reassuring and useful.

JTF-FA UPDATE

Joint Task Force Full Accounting (JTF-FA) has maintained an ever-increasing operational tempo in support of the mission of achieving the fullest possible accounting of the more than 2,253 Americans still unaccounted for as a result of the Vietnam War. Since JTF-FA was established, task force personnel have completed 26 joint field activities (JFAs) in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

In Vietnam, the most recent field operation was completed May 24. From all accounts, including those of the team leaders and the Hanoi detachment commander, Vietnamese preparation in support of and cooperation during this operation were outstanding. During the operation, our teams investigated 102 cases and excavated six sites. Remains representing possibly 12 unaccounted-for Americans were recovered, repatriated June 9, and are currently undergoing analysis at the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii (CILHI).

The current operation in Vietnam commenced on June 24. Our teams, consisting of more than 70 specialists, will operate in seven provinces, investigate as many as 120 cases, and excavate at least three sites.

In addition to our periodic Vietnam-based field activities, we have embarked on several initiatives to more speedily resolve the outstanding questions surrounding this issue.

One of these initiatives is the Priority Case Investigation Team (PCIT), designed to help focus our priority case research effort on the remaining last-known-alive cases. Located in Hanoi, the team is composed of a JTF-FA analyst, a Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA)

representative, and two Vietnamese representatives. The PCIT will travel extensively and follow where the flow of information leads them. It will have latitude and flexibility of action similar to that afforded live-sighting investigators.

The PCIT will not supplant the JFA field investigations; rather it will supplement them. JFAs will also continue to investigate priority cases. These dual-pronged investigations will ensure the priority cases receive the additional emphasis they need to be resolved.

Secondly, our archival research program has been expanded with the opening of the Joint Document Center in Hanoi. We expect Vietnamese representatives to review documents from the various governmental ministries to determine if they have any bearing on the POW/MIA issue. If they do, the documents will then be jointly reviewed to determine if there is any new information concerning an unaccounted-for American.

Our third initiative is an increased emphasis on our Oral History Program. Interviews of Vietnamese citizens have long been a part of the field investigative process, but recently the Vietnamese government has increased our access to Vietnamese cadre (former and present military members) for interview.

Our most recent operation in Laos was completed on May 28. Our 34-member team investigated 14 cases and excavated four sites. Cooperation in Laos has also improved, although we still face sporadic delays in and intermittent curtailment of our operations. Our next operation in Laos was scheduled to start in late June, but it has been delayed by the Lao for unknown reasons. We now hope to begin by mid-July.

Although we had been receiving great support from the State of Cambodia, operations there were suspended April 3. Our 52-member field team was operating in the Stung Treng province when what we believe were two mortar rounds were fired in the vicinity of the team's camp. As they were evacuating the area,

the team also encountered some small-arms fire. One of the aircraft was hit, but no personnel were injured. If the recent election results improve the security situation, we hope to return to Cambodia later this year.

In sum, the cooperation and assistance the governments of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia are lending the effort to account for Americans continues to improve. While we still have many challenges facing us, our chances of obtaining the answers to questions concerning unaccounted-for Americans from the Vietnam War have never been better.

U.S., SRV and LPDR Governments Participate in Trilateral Cooperation Conference

Representatives from the Governments of the United States, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Lao Peoples Democratic Republic met on May 6-7, 1993 in Hanoi to discuss a trilateral cooperative effort to account for American losses along the Vietnam/Laos border. This technical level meeting was held in hope of establishing a mechanism to consolidate collective wartime knowledge to further the investigation of American losses along the Ho Chi Minh Trail and other areas of Laos occupied by Vietnamese forces during the war where Americans were lost.

The exact demarcation of the border between Laos and Vietnam has been in question for many years. On occasions in the past, both countries have refused to investigate sites in border areas claiming they were in the other country. As a result of this conference, representatives from Vietnam and Laos are working on a map with a clear depiction of the border and an agreement as to which country will be responsible for the investigation of specific loss locations in this area. This will greatly aid U.S. access to those sites.

The most significant proposal made during this conference was the offer to schedule a trilateral field activity in December of this year. The concept of operation calls for a joint U.S./Lao team working the Lao side of the border and a joint U.S./SRV team in Vietnam. These two teams will periodically meet for discussions and the exchange of information at specified border crossings. Prior planning for this activity calls for both the Lao and Vietnamese to fully research the cases in their archives and to complete a comprehensive search for witnesses who can provide important information. To date the Vietnamese have agreed to this plan and we are still waiting for confirmation from the Lao.

KOREA

Task Force Russia, together with the Army Casualty Office, is developing a single consolidated all-service Korean War Casualty data base incorporating all information now held by almost two dozen separate sources. Because this information is so widely dispersed, identification of names provided by the Russians has been difficult. A consolidated data base will ease retrieval and identification, speed the process, and reduce ambiguities. One of the problems experienced by Task Force Russia in dealing with lists of POWs provided by the Russians has been the fact that American names were transliterated from English into Russian at the time of captivity, making identification of some names difficult.

WORLD WAR II

A survey expedition (consisting of representatives from CILHI, OSD POW/MIA Affairs, and Task Force Russia, as well as Russian military and security officials) was sent out to Iturup (southern Kurile Islands) and Sakhalin for the purpose of ascertaining the presence of U.S. POW remains. Members of the expedition interviewed numerous local residents who had second-hand knowledge of American POWs in the region. They also checked local archives and visited al-

leged POW camps sites.

No concrete evidence of U.S. POWs was found. However, this is a preliminary assessment, and Task Force Russia continues to analyze the results of the trip.

COLD WAR UPDATE

In recent months, the U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIAs (USRJC) has uncovered some promising sources of information which may add significantly to our knowledge of ten Cold War shoot-downs and the fates of U.S. servicemen who are still unaccounted for. Extending the search for U.S. POW/MIAs, the USRJC traveled to the Baltics in April to request information they may have about Americans in the Soviet Gulag and on specific Cold War shoot-downs that occurred in the Baltic region.

Information found in the National Archives, known as the Klaus files, has enabled the analysts of Task Force Russia (TFR) to compile a detailed case study which documents the U.S. position on, and knowledge of, each of these ten cases. Five of the case files were presented to the Russian side of the USRJC during our April meetings at the Kremlin in Moscow. The remaining five case files are near completion and are expected to be presented to the Russians during our next meeting tentatively scheduled for the week of August 29 to September 3. They are intended as working documents which will be updated as new information becomes available and as a guide for the Russians to use in their own search for information.

TFR personnel have located important new information in the Military Archives at Podolsk and the Soviet Naval Archives at Gatchina which provide many details of the Soviets' involvement in some of the Cold War incidents. Despite many previous Soviet/Russian statements to the contrary, evidence found in the Gatchina archives clearly states that Soviet patrol boats were sent to conduct search and rescue missions for the 29 July 1953 shoot-down of a USAF RB-50 in

the Sea of Japan. TFR is following up with the Russians to determine the results of those missions. At the Podolsk archives, gun camera photos and detailed after-action reports of the September 2, 1958 shoot-down of a USAF C-130 over Soviet Armenia were found. This information not only added to our knowledge of the circumstances of this shoot-down but provided new leads for follow-up research in Moscow and in Armenia. The Joint Commission is planning to travel to Yerevan, Armenia in August to discuss this incident with the newly independent Armenian government.

Late last year the TFR received documents from the Russians which indicate that Soviet forces had recovered the remains of two unaccounted for USAF pilots, shortly after their loss incident: Major Eugene Posa, lost on July 1, 1960, and Captain John Dunham, lost on October 7, 1952. This is new information that was never before provided to the United States. Ambassador Toon, the USRJC Co-Chairman, has asked the Russians for additional information, specifically the location of the remains. Russian officials have initiated a search of their archives but have not yet provided anything further.

Classified Files

The Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for POW/MIA Affairs is frequently asked by family members what the primary next of kin will see in a review of the classified file that would differ from the declassified file that is prepared for public release through the Library of Congress.

The classified file review includes all material directly bearing on the loss incident and recovery efforts. This file may also include personnel, medical, financial, administrative, correspondence, and similar items. Documents that were originally classified will retain all classification markings and appropriate warnings. There may be "redactions" or blanking out of still sensitive intelligence sources and methods or continuing operational information. Also, some mate-

rial pertaining to other persons may be redacted to protect that person's privacy.

The declassified file prepared for public release with the consent of the primary next of kin contains less material. Pursuant to the "McCain" provision, these files contain materials relating to the "location, treatment, or condition" of the person concerned. Accordingly, and for reasons of privacy, the personnel, medical, financial, and similar administrative materials are not included. Declassified files will be devoid of classification markings and warnings, and may contain redactions of intelligence sources and methods and continuing operational matters. The declassified files may also contain redactions of materials pertaining to other persons, the release of which would constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

Vietnam-Era F-111A Crew Capsule Found in Moscow

In September 1992, a relatively intact F-111 crew capsule was displayed at the training center of the Moscow Aviation Institute. Expert analysis of the condition of the capsule indicated that it had separated from the main body of the aircraft during an ejection, and the markings on the aircraft identified it as a Vietnam era F-111. However, the condition of the markings on the capsule was too poor to permit positive identification at that time, not permitting a conclusive determination as to which F-111 the capsule came from. Because the capsule is from the Vietnam era, because its condition indicates that the crew might have survived, and because it could not be immediately correlated to any one particular F-111 loss, it became a U.S. Government priority to exhaust every asset to ascertain which F-111 the capsule came from.

There were seven F-111 losses during the Vietnam War. The readable portions of the serial number on the F-111 crew capsule in Moscow eliminate four of the seven loss candidates. The partial

serial number is "NO. 67-06?A." The last number before "A" is unreadable. The serial numbers of the three possible F-111 candidates and their associated REFNOs are 1) "NO. 67-066A" (REFNO 1939), 2) "NO 67-063A" (REFNO 1945), and 3) "NO 67-068A" (REFNO 1966).

The FBI Laboratory Division, Special Photographic Unit, performed computer-enhanced photographic analysis of the crew capsule photographs taken by Task Force Russia personnel in Moscow. The results of that computer-aided analysis indicate that the previously unreadable portion of the serial number is probably an "8," making the whole serial number "NO. 67-068A" and establishing a correlation to the REFNO 1966 aircraft.

In order to positively identify the aircraft, FBI special agents traveled to Moscow during the week of June 3 to 9, 1993 to examine the crew capsule firsthand. During this examination a previously undiscovered, numbered plate was found in the interior of the capsule. The number on the panel "F111A-113" was identified by General Dynamics as a unique identification number associated with a particular aircraft during assembly. It was an aircraft delivered to the USAF and later designated as tail number 67-068A. This information positively identified the aircraft from which the crew capsule originated and confirmed the initial correlation to REFNO 1966.

This capsule was part of an F-111A aircraft flown by Captain Robert D. Sponcyberger and First Lieutenant William W. Wilson when they were shot down over Hanoi on December 22, 1972. The crew capsule successfully separated from the main body of the aircraft during ejection and descended to the ground intact. Both aviators were captured, imprisoned and eventually returned during "Operation Homecoming" in March 1973. A photo which appeared in the Hanoi newspapers in December 1972 clearly shows the intact crew capsule on the ground and in enemy hands.

FAMILY ACCESS TO VIETNAM-ERA POW/MIA RECORDS

Access to the classified file is limited to the family member recognized by the respective service casualty offices as the designated primary next of kin (PNOK) with some limited exceptions. Access to the file requires cooperation of the PNOK, the service casualty office, the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for POW/MIA Affairs (ODASD), the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) Special Office for POW/MIA Affairs, and the Department of Defense (DoD) POW/MIA Central Documentation Office (CDO). The PNOK is required to present a photo identification such as a valid driver's license, etc., to gain access to the ODASD review area.

The CDO prepares a consolidated file from the contents of the Joint Casualty Resolution Center/Joint Task Force-Full Accounting casualty file(s), and the DIA intelligence file. Because preparation of files is in addition to CDO's assigned mission, it is essential that PNOKs submit requests for review so that requests can be processed through the casualty offices to arrive at the CDO at least 30 days before the desired review date. The ability to comply with the request is enhanced if the PNOK provides the primary date and one or more alternate dates. Every effort will be made to accommodate the primary date requested, but alternate dates provide flexibility to enable the casualty office and the ODASD to better serve the PNOK. PNOKs are advised not to confirm travel reservations until their casualty officer notifies them of a firm date of review. Travel to and from the review site in Arlington, Virginia, as well as lodging, meals, and associated costs of travel are solely the responsibility of the PNOK.

Because the records are classified and the PNOK lacks the necessary security clearance to gain normal access to the records, normally only the PNOK of record is afforded the opportunity of review. A government representative will

be present throughout the PNOK's review. The PNOK is not allowed to remove any documents from the files, nor take notes. However, the PNOK will be provided paper and pen to develop questions encountered during the review. The records presented for review are complete as DoD knows them with the sources and methods redacted. Family members are not authorized access to classified files, records, or other material not directly associated with the missing service member or his loss incident.

AMERICANS ACCOUNTED FOR IN 1993

Since January 1993, the remains of 11 Americans have been identified and returned to their next-of-kin (NOK). The year in brackets is the year in which the remains were repatriated. They are:

Welles Hangen, Civilian (CB-1992)

Douglas C. Condit, USAF (VN-1992)

Ralph E. Foulks, Jr., USN (VN-1988)

Raphael L. Collazo, USA (VN-1993)

David A. Frederick, USMC (VN-1992)

Craig H. Waterman, USMC (VN-1992)

Earnest R. Byars, USMC (VN-1992)

Robert L. Biscailuz, USMC (VN-1992)

James A. Branch, USAF (VN-1992)

Gregory S. Crandall, USA (LA-1991)

The other American accounted for who's remains were repatriated in 1992 is not listed at the request of the NOK.

SERVICE CASUALTY OFFICERS

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Ann Hammers
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Navy
Lieutenant Commander Jeff Manor
(703)614-3338
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Jenny Foo
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Defense Prisoner Of War/Missing In Action Office

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September 8, 1993

SENATOR SMITH'S REPORT TO AMBASSADOR TOON ON THE SENATOR'S JULY 21, 1993, INTERIM ANALYSIS OF THE "1205 DOCUMENT"

- ▶ As Senator Smith's study has noted, the so-called 1205 Document addresses a number of different matters, and many of the statements or claims contained therein appear to be accurate representations of contemporary events and of Vietnamese thinking at the time. The fact that some of the information contained in this document is accurate, however, does not change the fact that other assertions in the document, particularly those dealing with numbers of POWs in captivity, are not accurate.
- ▶ Since the early days of U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia, U.S. intelligence agencies have collected and analyzed an enormous volume of all-source intelligence, much of which has dealt with U.S. POWs and MIAs and with the Indochinese communist governments' systems for dealing with Americans--alive or dead--who came under their control. The preponderance of this comprehensive body of intelligence indicates that the Indochinese governments released all American prisoners of war who were being detained at the time of Operation Homecoming in 1973.
- ▶ Not all observers appreciate the scope of the extensive collection effort that supports these conclusions. During wartime and in the postwar period, the U.S. intelligence community developed a collection and analytic strategy to search for evidence of any pattern of directives, organizations, activities, and facilities needed to administer, secure, house, feed, provide medical care for, and exploit POWs. This effort developed a large body of evidence on the known system for handling U.S. POWs during the war. It also identified a positive pattern indicating that no U.S. POWs remained in captivity after Operation Homecoming. Despite the fact that U.S. POWs would at a minimum have had to have been observed by local people and capturing units, no credible evidence or signature of a separate, compartmented wartime system ever surfaced. Moreover, no system to hold U.S. POWs is in evidence after 1973 nor is there any sign of U.S. POWs being moved out of Vietnam to captivity in a third country.

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- ▶ The U.S. has been collecting and analyzing data on the POW/MIA issue for over thirty years and from a wide variety of sources.
 - ▶ Several million captured enemy documents were translated and screened for information about missing Americans.
 - ▶ Over one-quarter of a million prisoners and defectors from communist forces were questioned about missing Americans.
 - ▶ American, Vietnamese, and other allied prisoners were debriefed upon their escape or release for information on U.S. POWs.
 - ▶ National technical systems provided information directly related to the POW/MIA issue.
 - ▶ Defectors from Hanoi's security services, military, and diplomatic corps were debriefed for their knowledge of U.S. POWs.
 - ▶ After the war, hundreds of thousands of refugees were screened for information on U.S. POWs or on wartime incidents in which U.S. personnel were captured or were killed.
 - ▶ Although reports of Americans held prisoner in Indochina continued to surface after the war, the U.S. government has been unable to discover any credible evidence that any missing American POW continued to be held captive in Indochina after 1973. A thorough review of the results of more than a decade of refugee reporting leads to the conclusion that the refugees have not seen U.S. POWs held after 1973.
 - ▶ Clearly, there are Americans who did or may have survived their loss incidents and for whom the Indochinese governments could provide answers as to fate. In conjunction with the initiatives undertaken by General John W. Vessey, Jr., during the 1987-92 period, the U.S. government reviewed the cases of all Americans unaccounted-for in Southeast Asia to identify all who might have survived their loss incidents. These individuals have been the focus of extensive joint field investigations in the three Indochinese countries. Although 305 individuals were originally identified as candidates for priority investigation, through joint field activity the U.S. has been able to determine that well over 100 of these died in their loss incidents. Information collected to date suggests that many of the remainder were also killed during loss or capture. Although these investigations are not complete, and questions still remain, there are simply not enough Americans who could conceivably have survived their loss incidents to reach captivity and account for the numbers claimed in the 1205 document.
 - ▶ One final point: Senator Smith's analysis of the document's credibility seems to be based in part on the assertion that because the relationship between Vietnam and the

Soviet Union was close, Soviet archives would contain accurate information about Vietnamese affairs. In fact, although the USSR was an ally of Vietnam during the war, it was an uneasy, distrustful relationship, particularly as Soviet support began to fade during the era of detente. The fact that the GRU was so interested in collecting intelligence on the inner workings of the Vietnamese Politburo suggests that Moscow had doubts it was getting accurate information through official liaison channels. The experience of the U.S. Intelligence Community during the Vietnam War era holds numerous examples of inaccuracies, exaggerations, and outright fabrications passed off by Vietnamese sources as intelligence. There is every reason to believe that the Soviets faced the same problems.

agency's procedures for evaluating and responding to reports that U.S. POWs had been seen alive after the conclusion of the war.¹⁹

The Committee agrees that the DIA's POW/MIA Office has historically been

- . plagued by a lack of resources;
- . guilty of over-classification;
- . defensive toward criticism;
- . handicapped by poor coordination with other elements of the intelligence community;
- . slow to follow-up on live-sighting and other reports; and
- . frequently distracted from its basic mission by the need to respond to outside pressures and requests.

In addition, several of those who reviewed the workings of DIA during this period also faulted DIA's analytical process and referred to a "mindset to debunk" live-sighting reports.

Several Committee Members express concern and disappointment that, on occasion, individuals within DIA have been evasive, unresponsive and disturbingly incorrect and cavalier. Several Members of the Committee also note that other individuals within DIA have performed their work with great professionalism and under extraordinarily difficult circumstances both at home and abroad.

The Committee recommends that the Secretary of Defense ensure the regular review and evaluation of the DIA's POW/MIA office to ensure that intelligence information is acted upon quickly and that information is shared with families promptly.

The Committee also believes that a central coordinating mechanism for pooling and acting upon POW/MIA-related intelligence information should be created as one of the Intelligence Community's Interagency Coordination Centers.

The Committee notes that the focus of the POW/MIA accounting process is in Southeast Asia. As a result, DIA analysts are spending more and more of their time traveling back and forth between Washington and the region or to Hawaii. The Committee

¹⁹ the reviews included Inspector General reports in 1983 and 1984/5; a 1985 inter-agency review; a September, 1985 review by Rear Admiral Thomas Brooks; and Task Force reports conducted in 1986 by Gen. Eugene Tighe, USA, and Col. Kimball Gaines, USAF.

believes that this would be an opportune time to move the DIA's POW/MIA office to Hawaii where it could be closer to JTF-FA and CINCPAC, which it supports. A number of tasks now sometimes performed by the office involving public and family relations can be handled, and handled more capably and appropriately, by the office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for POW/MIA Affairs.

Live-sighting Reports. For the past 20 years, there has been nothing more tantalizing for POW/MIA families than reports that Americans have been seen alive in Southeast Asia and nothing more frustrating than the failure of these reports to become manifest in the form of a returning American--with the single exception of Marine Private Robert Garwood in 1979.

A live-sighting report is just that--a report that an American has been seen alive in Southeast Asia in circumstances which are not readily explained. The report could come from a refugee, boat person, traveler or anyone else in a position to make such an observation. The information could be first-hand or hearsay; it could involve one American or many; it could be detailed or vague; it could be recent or as far back as the end of the war.

The sheer number of first-hand live sighting reports, almost 1600 since the end of the war, has convinced many Americans that U.S. POWs must have been kept behind and may still be alive. Other Americans have concluded sadly that our failure, after repeated efforts, to locate any of these alleged POWs means the reports are probably not true. It is the Committee's view that every live-sighting report is important as a potential source of information about the fate of our POW/MIAs.

Accordingly, the review and analysis of live-sighting reports consumed more time and staff resources than any other single issue. The Committee investigation used a method of analysis that was based on the content of a carefully screened set of reports that dealt only with men allegedly seen in captivity after Operation Homecoming. The Committee took into account past criticisms and assessed current procedures while examining and testing DIA's methodology for evaluating live-sighting reports. In so doing, Committee investigators examined more than 2000 hearsay and first-hand live-sighting files while compiling a list of 928 reports for "content" analysis. These reports were plotted on a map and grouped into geographic "clusters". During briefings and public hearings, the Committee reviewed the most significant "clusters" for the purpose of determining whether they would,

Defense Prisoner Of War/Missing In Action Office

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September 23, 1993

GROUP 559 SHOOTDOWN RECORD PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

SUMMARY

- ▶ The Group 559 Shootdown Record is a 58-page hand written summary record of U.S. and allied aircraft that units of Group 559 claimed to have shot down during the period 1965-75. This document was turned over to the Joint Document Center in Hanoi on September 1, 1993.
- ▶ Group 559 was the Vietnamese military command in charge of the Ho Chi Minh Trail network during wartime. Records of this organization represent one of the most likely sources for information about U.S. losses in areas of Laos controlled by the Peoples' Army of Vietnam (PAVN) during wartime.
- ▶ A preliminary analysis of the Group 559 Shootdown Record reveals correlations to a total of 241 individuals (105 incidents in which Americans were captured, killed, or became missing).
- ▶ There is no information in this document to suggest that any Americans, other than known and accounted-for POWs, were captured and made prisoners.
- ▶ Analysis of this document makes clear that the Vietnamese have additional Group 559 records that may contain information useful to POW/MIA case resolution. Although this document contains a few references to the fate of air crews, the information contained therein will be of value chiefly in establishing Vietnamese knowledgeability of specific cases and in providing order of battle (OB) data of potential value for future long-term investigation.

PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

- ▶ Like the 84-page Military Region 4 Shootdown Record, the Group 559 Shootdown Record is prepared in ledger style consisting of a chronological listing in columnar format. The formal title of this record is "Record of Enemy Aircraft Shot Down from 1965 to 1975." The first 11 pages of the document consist of what the Vietnamese describe as a "working draft" list of aircraft downed during November 1971 - February

1973. The information on these pages is replicated in the final pages of the record, pages 50-56. The document appears to be written in a single hand. Original entries are in blue ink; there are some corrections overwritten in red ink.

- ▶ The Vietnamese have been queried as to the date of origin of this document but have not yet responded. The U.S. has only a photocopy of the original, and there is no way at present to determine independently when this record was prepared. It is clear, however, that the Group 559 Shootdown Record was compiled after the fact from original records. This is apparent both in its form and appearance as a summary document and by virtue of the fact that the document itself, in its first 11 pages, makes explicit reference to contemporary wartime documents from which information was obtained.
- ▶ The first 11 "working draft" pages contain a column called "electronic message report number," in which appear cross references to numbered messages. This column and the information contained therein have been omitted in the pages at the end of the document where the rest of the information on these shootdowns is replicated.
- ▶ For instance, the first entry on Page 4 contains a cross reference to electronic message number "01k.10/2." Data in the second entry is also drawn from this same message number, as evidenced by a set of ditto marks. Entries 3-5 refer to electronic message number "02k.23/2," and entries 6-13 to "03.3/3."
- ▶ The significance of the first half of this numbering system is not clear at this time, but the numbers in the second half, for example "10/2," are apparently dates of message transmittal (given in day/month format), similar to U.S. date time groups. These dates show a short lag time between incident dates and message date. For example, downings on January 28 and 29, 1972, are noted on message "01k.10/2," the "10/2" referring to February 10, 1972. Similarly, downings on February 4-10, 1972, are noted on message "02k.23/2," referring to February 23, 1972.
- ▶ The existence of additional Group 559 records is also clearly implied by the page numbers appearing on the document, which make clear that this record is part of a larger document. In all there are three series of page numbers in the upper right hand corners of the total 58 pages.
- ▶ The first series appears to be the numbering system for the larger document of which the Group 559 Shootdown Record occupies pages 146-203. These numbers are legible on about two-thirds of the photocopied pages on hand.

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- ▶ The second series appears within a stamped seal which is not clearly discernible in the photocopied version. These numbers all are in a similar form--"3/1, 3/2...3/26-...3/57, 3/58"--suggesting numbering of all 58 pages as part of a third tab or third chapter in a larger work.
 - ▶ The last series of numbers appear beside the second series and number the pages 1-58, without the "3/" designation. In at least one place, these numbers correct misnumbering within the "3/" series.
 - ▶ The last page of the Group 559 Shootdown Record contains a statistical summary of the record's contents.
 - ▶ According to this summary, the record lists 2,466 aircraft that were claimed to have been downed (or hit) by Group 559 units. These downings are then broken out statistically in several ways, for instance, by aircraft type or type of unit or weapon by which they were downed. (Note: Analysts have not yet validated these numbers against claimed downings/hits enumerated in the body of the document). Like the Military Region 4 Shootdown Record, however, this document evidences vastly inflated claims of air defense victories.
 - ▶ The summary asserts that 11 (9) American pilots were captured alive, including 2 lieutenant colonels, 1 major, 4 (2) captains, and 4 lieutenants. The numbers in parenthesis--which were in the original blue ink--were overwritten in red ink, indicating corrected data.
 - ▶ Individual entries in the Group 559 Shootdown Record actually note 12 pilots captured. These include 1 lieutenant colonel (Case 1101); 3 majors (Cases 1127, 1698, and 1982); 4 captains (Cases 1198, 1790, and 1111--2 individuals); and 4 lieutenants (Cases 1393, 1526, 1734, and 1894). All of these are returned POWs. Seven were captured in Laos, one in North Vietnam, and four in South Vietnam.
 - ▶ Relevant individual entries in the record note the ranks of only 5 of these 12 Americans, indicating that additional records containing the ranks of the other POWs were available to the compiler of this record.
 - ▶ The summary also indicates that the bodies of 96 persons were observed and 143 were killed in their aircraft. (Note: These numbers have also not yet been validated. It appears, however, that not all these will correlate to unaccounted-for Americans. Some will relate to foreign nationals; others to Americans whose remains were recovered during or after the war).

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- ▶ Also turned over at the same time as the Group 559 Shootdown Record was a separate, undated list labeled "Units that Captured/Took Enemy Pilots." (Note: the title is translated as "captured/took" because this list contains entries for pilots who are described as having died, as well as those who were captured alive and returned at Operation Homecoming). All entries on the list are replicated in the Group 559 Shootdown Record, leading to the conclusion that the list was compiled as a working draft summary of the larger document. This list also contains information not found in the Group 559 Shootdown Record, however, again indicating that the list's compilers had access to additional records not yet made available.
 - ▶ The only Americans listed as captured alive on this list are known POWs who have been accounted for.
 - ▶ This list appears to be an imperfect working draft summary of entries drawn from the Group 559 Shootdown Record. The top half of this list has been crossed out, although entries are still clearly legible. Some of the entries on the top half are replicated on the bottom half. Two entries on the bottom half have been lined out. One entry has been incorrectly transcribed from the original Group 559 Shootdown Record, resulting in a mixup of two entries.
 - ▶ The Group 559 Shootdown Record proved to be surprisingly accurate as to date, time, and aircraft type. This was contrary to early expectations that the accuracy might have been adversely affected by difficult reporting conditions in this remote area. All entries contain relatively detailed OB data. A few contain locational data. Very few contain information regarding fate.
 - ▶ The OB data will require additional, probably time consuming, follow up. The data appear to focus only on PAVN units; preliminary analysis indicated no sign of Lao participation.
 - ▶ Some entries contain locational data in the form of Lao place names, high point designations, or kilometer markings on various routes. Some of this information may prove useful in supporting joint field activities or in helping locate off-the-radar-scope cases in which crashsites have never been determined.
 - ▶ A few entries contain information regarding fate of the crew. This data is concise and without detail, stating merely that one or more enemy pilots were killed. In some cases involving MIAs, this may be new information.
 - ▶ Initial analysis was limited to evaluation of entries that correlate to incidents involving captured, missing, and killed Americans. No effort was made to correlate operational losses in which air crews were rescued or recovered. Several entries which did not

correlate to incidents of principal interest to the POW/MIA issue, however, contain notations indicating pilots had ejected or had been rescued, which suggests the possibility of reference to an operational loss.

- ▶ The initial round of analysis resulted in correlations to a total of 241 Americans.
 - ▶ In all, 141 of the total 241 individuals in these initial correlations are still MIA, and 53 were declared KIA during wartime. As previously indicated, 12 of the 241 are returned POWs. The remainder (35) represent personnel whose remains were recovered during wartime or whose remains have been returned and identified during the postwar period.
 - ▶ During this preliminary analysis, data were interpreted strictly and correlations made conservatively. Correlations were made only in cases where virtually all data elements matched. In nearly all cases, this meant that date, aircraft type, general time of day, and general area (indicated by unit area of operations or other geographic data) matched.
 - ▶ Other correlations will doubtless result from more extensive long-term analysis. For instance, with further work, analysts should be able to correlate most or all of the helicopter losses suffered in operation Lam Son 719 during early 1971. Due to the large number of vague entries claiming helicopter downings in the same area during this period, no correlations of these helicopter losses were attempted during this initial run through. Moreover, additional analysis may reveal correlations in which date of incident has not been noted correctly.
- ▶ The record is clearly confined to the area of operations of Group 559, which extended from the start of the Ho Chi Minh Trail on the Laos side of the Quang Binh border through Laos towards South Vietnam. Although analysts expected this record to cover losses over the southern length of the trail, perhaps even to Tay Ninh Province, this proved not to be the case. The explanation for the southern limits of coverage is still under analysis.
- ▶ DPMO analysts have computer plotted all 241 correlations using ARCINFO software. The result is a dramatic representation of air defense operations by PAVN units deployed along the Ho Chi Minh Trail network. In the north (the northernmost plot is 174000N), a pattern of aircraft crashsites outlines the three feeder routes coming out of North Vietnam through the Mu Gia Pass, the Ban Karai Pass, and just north of the DMZ. The routes through Laos are clearly indicated, as are the supply routes into South Vietnam at Route 9 in Quang Tri Province, via the A Shau Valley in Thua Thien Hue Province, and into the southern border area of Quang Nam - Da Nang Province.

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- ▶ Interestingly, the southernmost plot is at 151600N, and early analysis reveals no sign of any information in the record on incidents to the south of that area. If this early analysis holds true, it suggests that some administrative boundary existed in this area, and additional records will have to be sought for coverage of southern Ho Chi Minh Trail losses. This break appears to lie at the southern boundary of Quang Nam - Da Nang Province which, perhaps not coincidentally, is also the boundary between Military Region 5 and the B-3 Front. The significance of this break is not clearly understood at this time but continues under study.
 - ▶ Although the loss locations of correlated incidents lie broadly in the eastern half of Laos, these sites range from very close to the Vietnam border to 50-70 kilometers to the west in many areas. One 1972 loss in central Saravan Province, over 100 kilometers from the border with Vietnam, is also noted. Clearly, investigation of cases involving aircraft shot down by PAVN units in Laos will require work well outside any narrowly defined border region.
 - ▶ Of the 241 total individuals represented in these correlations, 85 percent were lost in Laos, 14 percent in South Vietnam, and 2 percent in North Vietnam. Most of the South Vietnam losses are found in the Route 9 and A Shau Valley areas. One North Vietnam loss, Case 0240 which occurred in 1966, appears to reflect the early establishment of Group 559 units on Route 20. There are three 1972 incidents that occurred in the eastern half of Vietnam, both to the north and the south of the DMZ. This appears to reflect the deployment of every unit available during the 1972 Spring Offensive and the subsequent readjustment of forces in this entire area as the North Vietnamese offensive gained ground in Quang Tri Province.
 - ▶ Not all incidents that would be expected to be located within the Group 559 area of operations appear to be noted in this document. (DPMO analysts have also computer-plotted these incidents). The failure of an incident to appear in this document, however, should not necessarily be interpreted as proof that the Vietnamese were not responsible or knowledgeable. The coverage of different periods within the document is spotty for many time frames. For instance, there are intervals, sometimes months, in which reporting is so sparse as to suggest loss of original documents. Although correlations to some of these "missing" incidents will doubtless be made upon further analysis, the issue of why some incidents do not appear in this document will be a matter for further investigation.

CONCLUSION

- ▶ The significance of the Group 559 Shootdown Record rests most importantly in the fact that it provides clear proof of extensive record keeping and knowledgeability of U.S. losses in Laos by PAVN forces operating in that country. It also provides explicit cross references to where additional information might be located. Although it is difficult to believe that this document could not have been turned over to the U.S. side much