



202/223-6846

NATIONAL LEAGUE OF FAMILIES
OF AMERICAN PRISONERS AND MISSING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA
1001 CONNECTICUT AVENUE, NORTHWEST, SUITE 219
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036-5504

UPDATE LINE: 202/659-0133

LEAGUE POSITIONS

On Live Prisoners: The League's position is that Americans are still held based on history of the issue, known discrepancy cases and the weight of intelligence information which supports our view. The League's position places the burden on Hanoi to provide answers and is not in conflict with the U.S. Government position.

On the Fullest Possible Accounting: As stated in the League's charter and bylaws, the fullest possible accounting is critical to achieving answers for the families and directly impacts on the live prisoner question. The two tracks must be pursued simultaneously, as a matter of highest national priority, using largely separate but complementary assets.

On Current Priority and Policy: The League strongly supports current priority and policy, recognizing that the U.S. Government has adopted all initiatives proposed by the League. The League urges the U.S. Government to continue to recognize the importance to the United States of honoring and implementing the President's commitments by devoting the resources necessary to resolve the fates of Americans unaccounted for as thoroughly and rapidly as possible.

On Cooperation with Laos: The League recognizes the significant increases in cooperation which have occurred during the past two years and commends recent US/Lao agreements to expand the joint POW/MIA program by investigating cases of Americans last known to be alive in Lao control and implement other concrete actions in areas of Laos where U.S. teams were previously not allowed. The League urges the U.S. and Lao governments to rapidly implement these important agreements, and urges the U.S. Government to expand the level assistance to meet humanitarian concerns of the Lao people and to upgrade the bilateral relationship between the two countries in keeping with long-standing U.S. assurances that serious cooperation on the POW/MIA and narcotics issues would lead to that development.

On Cooperation with Vietnam: The League recognizes and appreciates that the level of POW/MIA activity between the U.S. and Vietnam has expanded significantly since September, 1988; however, the results of these joint efforts have been disappointingly slow. To achieve more rapid results, Vietnam must seriously implement their commitments by increasing unilateral efforts to immediately provide all information and remains available and by expediting the joint accounting process. The U.S. Government should continue, within legal and policy constraints, to address humanitarian concerns of the Vietnamese people. So long as there is an ongoing, viable process of humanitarian cooperation between the U.S. and Vietnam to resolve the POW/MIA issue, and so long as the Government of Vietnam continues a policy of non-linkage, the League will take no position on matters affecting normalization of relations between the two countries.

On Cooperation with Cambodia: Encouraged by recent indications that officials in Phnom Penh are prepared to repatriate remains in their possession which may be those of Americans, the League calls upon Phnom Penh to quickly implement their recent agreement in principal to repatriate any and all Americans remains as a humanitarian matter, separate from political differences.

On Cooperation with China: Recognizing that six Americans are still unaccounted for in territorial waters of the People's Republic of China and that despite numerous efforts by the U.S. answers regarding the fates of these individuals have not been obtained, the League urges the U.S. Government to seek the immediate cooperation of the PRC to provide any and all information available.

On Release of Classified Information: The League supports the U.S. Government's policy of "full disclosure" to ensure the provision of all relevant information to the next-of-kin. The League strongly opposes legislation which calls for public release of classified reports pertaining to Americans still held captive in Southeast Asia. Public release of sensitive data aids counter-intelligence and destroys any hope of effective U.S. Government action to obtain the release of those involved, as pledged by the President.

On Bipartisan Support: The League calls upon the Republican and Democratic leadership to continue current bipartisan policy and priority to resolve the POW/MIA issue, recognizing that resolution of this humanitarian issue can only be achieved through serious U.S. Government efforts to increase the cooperation of the governments of Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and China.

On Use of Misinformation/Allegations: The League condemns any exploitation of the POW/MIA issue. Misinformation, unfounded allegations or claims without proof, including fund-raising appeals using false or distorted information, undermine the seriousness of the issue and must be countered with facts. The League condemns exploitation of the POW/MIA issue taking place at the National Vietnam Veterans Memorial and calls upon the Department of the Interior and all veterans organizations to take appropriate action to eliminate this desecration.

On Irresponsible Private Efforts: The League is strongly opposed to offers of rewards which historically have been counterproductive to achieving our goals. Such offers have elicited strong Vietnamese and Lao government denials that any Americans are still held captive, thus undermining serious attempts by the U.S. to generate responsiveness on the live POW question. In addition, the logical result of such public offers is the tightening of security on any and all Americans held. The League opposes irresponsible private forays which interfere with legitimate efforts to confirm the existence of POWs as well as government-to-government negotiations to account for those still prisoner, missing or unaccounted for in Southeast Asia.

On Conspiracy and Coverup: The League rejects charges of conspiracy and coverup by the US Government on the POW/MIA issue. Current priority assets, particularly within the Defense Intelligence Agency, must not be further squandered on responding or reacting to such unfounded allegations.