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ADMINISTRATIVE MESSAGE

ROUTINE

R 120002Z OCT 93 ZYB PSN 769107P30

FM CDR JTF-FA HONOLULU HI//J2//

TO SECDEF WASHINGTON DC//USDP:RSA//

INFO WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASH DC
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CIA WASHINGTON DC//DEA/SEA/IB/DDO/EA/ICOG//
RUEHBT/USDAO BANGKOK TH//PW-MIA//
RUEHBT/CJTFFA DET ONE BANGKOK TH

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MSGID/GENADMIN/CDR JTF-FA/J223//

SUBJ/INTERVIEW OF REQUESTED SOURCE, HOANG NGOC CHINH//

REF/A/FAX/CJTFFA DET ONE/30SEP93//

RMKS/1. BACKGROUND. ON 14 SEPTEMBER 1993, A JOINT U.S./VIETNAM ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM INTERVIEW TEAM INTERVIEWED MR. HOANG NGOC CHINH, POSSIBLY ALSO KNOWN AS PHAM CHINH. MR. HOANG NGOC CHINH IS A FORMER CADRE OF THE B2 FRONT POLITICAL OFFICE ENEMY PROSELYTING UNIT. HE IS 46 YOA AND CURRENTLY WORKING AND RESIDING AT THE REGION 2 GAS AND OIL COMPANY, HO CHI MINH CITY (HCMC). THE TEAM MET AT THE EXTERNAL RELATIONS OFFICE, 6 THAI VAN LUNG STREET, DISTRICT 1, HCMC, TO INTERVIEW PHAM CHINH, LISTED IN REFERENCE AS A POTENTIAL SOURCE OF INFORMATION CONCERNING U.S. PERSONNEL MISSING IN ACTION (MIA) IN VIETNAM. THE U.S. CONTINGENT CONSISTED OF MR. [redacted], DET 2 CASUALTY RESOLUTION SPECIALIST, AND SGT [redacted], JTF-FA ANALYST/LINGUIST. THE VIETNAMESE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT CONTINGENT CONSISTED OF LTC LE KY, MINISTRY OF DEFENSE; AND MR. NGUYEN VAN THANG LOI, MINISTRY INTERIOR. OTHER PERSONNEL ATTENDING THIS INTERVIEW WERE MR. LE KIM LAM, HCMC MIA TEAM CHIEF; MR. HA, HCMC PUBLIC SECURITY SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE; AND PAVN LTC TRAN VAN TAN, MILITARY REGION SEVEN (MR7) HEADQUARTERS REPRESENTATIVE.

ENCLOSURE(/)

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2. SUMMARY.' THE SOURCE, HOANG NGOC CHINH, BELIEVED BY THE VIETNAMESE CONTINGENT OF THE OHP TEAM TO POSSIBLY BE THE INDIVIDUAL LISTED IN REF AS MR. PHAM CHINH, WAS A CADRE OF THE ENEMY PROSELYTING SECTION OF THE B2 FRONT POLITICAL OFFICE. FROM 1968 TO 1973, HE WORKED AS AN INTERPRETER FOR A PRISONER HOLDING CAMP IN TAY NINH PROVINCE NEAR THE VIETNAM-CAMBODIA BORDER. DURING THE YEARS HE WAS ASSIGNED TO THE CAMP, THERE WERE TWELVE U.S. PRISONERS OF WAR (PW) HELD CAPTIVE. OF THOSE TWELVE MEN, MR. CHINH RECALLED THE NAMES OF ONLY THREE INDIVIDUALS: "CAPTAIN HARTLEY", "[redacted]", AND "[redacted]". MR. CHINH THOUGHT THAT HE RECALLED ONE ADDITIONAL NAME, BUT HE SUBSEQUENTLY ADMITTED THAT HE COULD NO LONGER REMEMBER THE SOUND OF THE NAME. HE CLAIMED HE ATTENDED THE 1973 REPATRIATION CEREMONY AND WITNESSED THE RETURN OF THE TWELVE MEN FROM HIS CAMP TO THE U.S. THE SOURCE PROVIDED NO INFORMATION CONCERNING U.S. PERSONNEL WHO DIED IN CAPTIVITY AND CLAIMED NO KNOWLEDGE OF U.S. PERSONNEL LIVING FREELY OR AGAINST THEIR WILL.IN VIETNAM SINCE 1973.

3. DETAILS. AFTER INTRODUCTORY STATEMENTS BY THE JOINT TEAM, THE SOURCE PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

A. THE SOURCE, HOANG NGOC CHINH (HOANGF NGOCJ CHINHS), ALSO POSSIBLY KNOWN AS PHAM CHINH (PHAMJ CHINHS), IS ORIGINALLY FROM HANOI AND STUDIED ENGLISH THERE FOR ONE YEAR BEFORE GOING TO THE B2 FRONT IN FEBRUARY OF 1968. DUE TO HIS POSITION WITHIN THE B2 FRONT STRUCTURE, HE MAY BE THE INDIVIDUAL SOUGHT FOR THIS INTERVIEW. HE WAS ASSIGNED TO THE ENEMY PROSELYTING SECTION OF THE B2 POLITICAL OFFICE. BECAUSE HE WAS TRAINED IN ENGLISH, HE WAS SELECTED TO WORK AS A TRANSLATOR FOR A PW HOLDING UNIT IN TAY NINH, NEAR THE VIETNAM-CAMBODIA. AT THAT TIME, HIS UNIT HELD TWELVE U.S PW'S.

B. THE SOURCE WORKED AND LIVED IN CLOSE QUARTERS WITH U.S. PW'S FROM 1968 TO 1973. HE CLAIMED TO HAVE SINCE FORGOTTEN MOST OF THEIR NAMES BUT THOUGHT HE WOULD STILL BE ABLE TO RECOGNIZE THEIR FACES IF HE WAS SHOWN PHOTOGRAPHS. MR. CHINH REMEMBERED A MAN, MORE THAN 1.8 METERS TALL, WHO WAS A CIVILIAN ADVISOR CAPTURED IN FORMER HAU NGHIA PROVINCE (NOW A PART OF HO CHI MINH MUNICIPALITY). INITIALLY, MR. CHINH COULD NOT RECALL THE TALL AMERICAN'S NAME, BUT LATER IN THE INTERVIEW HE RECALLED WITH CERTAINTY THAT THE MAN'S NAME WAS "[redacted]". MR. CHINH ALSO REMEMBERED A "CAPTAIN HARTLEY", A MAN NAMED "[redacted]", AND A CAUCASIAN AUTO MECHANIC WHO CHEWED TOBACCO. MR. CHINH ONCE SAID THAT HE BELIEVED ONE OF THE PRISONERS MAY HAVE BEEN FROM PUERTO RICO BUT THEN CHANGED HIS MIND. WHEN ASKED FOR MORE DETAILS CONCERNING THE PRISONERS HELD IN HIS UNIT, MR. CHINH REPLIED THAT HE WAS STRUGGLING TO RECALL MORE DETAILS BUT TOO MUCH TIME HAD ELAPSED FOR HIM TO REMEMBER CLEARLY.

C. MR. CHINH CLAIMED THAT IN ACCORDANCE WITH VIETNAMESE POLICY, THE PW'S IN HIS CAMP WERE TREATED HUMANELY. THE PW'S FOOD RATIONS EQUALLED OR EXCEEDED THAT OF THEIR VIETNAMESE

CAPTORS, EVEN IN TIMES OF SHORTAGES AND RATIONING, AND THE PW'S WERE PROVIDED WITH ADEQUATE MEDICAL CARE BY THE CAMP DOCTOR. HE EMPHASIZED THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CAMP HAVING A DOCTOR BY ADDING THAT EVEN FOR LARGER PAVN UNITS, IT WAS VERY UNUSUAL FOR A UNIT

TO HAVE A PERMANENT DOCTOR ASSIGNED. MR. CHINH CLAIMED THAT NOT ONE PW DIED DURING HIS TENURE WITH THE UNIT (1968 -1973).

D. MR. CHINH CLAIMED HE ATTENDED A REPATRIATION CEREMONY IN 1973 AND WITNESSED THE RELEASE OF ALL THE U.S. PW'S FROM HIS CAMP. AT THAT TIME, ACCORDING TO MR. CHINH, ALL PW'S IN VIETNAM WERE RELEASED AND ALL HOLDING CAMPS DISBANDED. HE SAID THAT ABSOLUTELY NO PW'S WERE HELD BACK.

E. THE SOURCE CLAIMED NO KNOWLEDGE OF THE REPORTING METHODS USED BY UNITS TO PASS INFORMATION REGARDING CAPTURED U.S. PERSONNEL. HE CLAIMED ANY SUCH SYSTEM WOULD BE CLASSIFIED, AND ONLY THOSE WHO CONDUCTED THE ACTUAL REPORTING WOULD BE ALLOWED ACCESS TO IT. HE ADDED THAT THE LOCATION OF PW HOLDING CAMPS WAS ALSO KEPT SECRET TO PROTECT THE PRISONERS. HIS CAMP MOVED OFTEN AND ALWAYS AT NIGHT; MOST OF THE TIME HE DID NOT KNOW HIS EXACT LOCATION. ACCESS TO HOLDING CAMPS WAS LIMITED STRICTLY ON A "MUST KNOW" BASIS. EVEN MEMBERS OF THE UNITS WHICH CAPTURED PRISONERS WERE NOT ALLOWED TO VISIT THE CAMPS. AFTER CONDUCTING AN INITIAL INTERROGATION, MEMBERS FROM THE CAPTURING UNIT WOULD DELIVER THE PRISONER TO A DESIGNATED NEUTRAL LOCATION TO MEET MEMBERS OF THE RECEIVING CAMP AND EFFECT THE PRISONER TRANSFER. IN THIS WAY, CAMP LOCATIONS WOULD NOT BE COMPROMISED EVERY TIME A NEW U.S. PRISONER WAS DELIVERED TO A CAMP.

F. MR. CHINH CLAIMED NO KNOWLEDGE OF ANY RECORDS OR DOCUMENTATION REGARDING U.S PERSONNEL HELD IN VIETNAM. HE SAID FROM A MOBILITY STANDPOINT, IT WAS EXTREMELY IMPRACTICAL FOR HIS UNIT TO MAINTAIN DOCUMENTS. IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO TRAVEL LIGHT, AND HE THOUGHT IT WAS VERY UNLIKELY THAT HIS UNIT WOULD HAVE KEPT ANY PRISONER RECORDS. IN ANY CASE, MR. CHINH CLAIMED TO HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE OF RECORDS, AS KEEPING RECORDS WAS NOT HIS RESPONSIBILITY. ASKED ABOUT A CENTRAL DOCUMENT STORAGE FACILITY,
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SUBJ/INTERVIEW OF REQUESTED SOURCE, HOANG NGOC CHINH//

RMKS/
MR. CHINH RECALLED THAT ANY SUCH FACILITY, IF IT EXISTED, WOULD BE LOCATED IN HANOI.

4. CORRELATIONS TO EXISTING POW/MIA CASES. MR. CHINH'S STATEMENTS REGARDING IN PARA. 3B CORRELATE TO THREE RESOLVED CASES: 0234, 0742-0-01, AND 1819-1-05. THESE CORRELATIONS ARE BASED ON THE SOURCE'S PHONETIC PRONUNCIATION OF THE NAMES. THE

OTHER PRISONERS ARE NOT MENTIONED IN ADEQUATE DETAIL; HOWEVER, BASED ON U.S. RECORDS, THE NUMBER OF PRISONERS HELD IN ONE CAMP BEFORE THEIR RELEASE MAY ALREADY BE KNOWN.

5. POTENTIAL LEADS: THE SOURCE PROVIDED THE NAMES OF THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS WHO MAY HAVE INFORMATION CONCERNING UNACCOUNTED FOR U.S. PERSONNEL:

A. TRAN QUANG HUY (TRAANF QUANG HUY) AKA TAM HUY (TAMS HUY). ALSO AN INTERPRETER AT MR. CHINH'S CAMP. MR. CHINH DID NOT PROVIDE CURRENT LOCATION DATA FOR MR. HUY.

B. TRUONG VAN MAO (TRWONG VAWN MAOX) AKA TU MAO (TW MAOX). POSSIBLY LIVING IN HO CHI MINH CITY.

C. NGO DAT TAI (NGOO DATJ TAIF) AKA MUOI TAI (MWOIF TAIF). HEAD OF MR. CHINH'S SECTION WITHIN THE POLITICAL OFFICE. MR. TAI IS ENTRY NUMBER 3 OF REF, AND WAS INTERVIEWED BY A JOINT TEAM ON 17 MAY 93 IN HANOI.

D. LE DAN MANH (LEE ZAAN MANHJ). COLLEAGUE OF TRAN QUANG HUY. MR. MANH IS POSSIBLY LIVING IN VUNG TAU.

E. DANG THUAN HOA (DAWNGJ THUAANJ HOAF). CO-WORKER IN THE UNIT WITH MR. CHINH.

F. THANH (THANH). CAMP SECURITY. MR. THANH IS POSSIBLY DECEASED.

G. SIEU (SIEEU). CAMP SECURITY. MR. SIEU IS POSSIBLY DECEASED.

H. NGUYEN HUNG TRI (NGUYEENX HUNGF TRIS). WORKED AS A TRANSLATOR AT MR. CHINH'S CAMP. MR. TRI IS POSSIBLY LIVING IN HANOI.

I. DR. TRUONG (TRWONG). CAMP DOCTOR. DR. TRUONG IS POSSIBLY LIVING IN BEN TRE OR GO CONG.

J. HOAN (HOANF). CAMP MEDIC. MR. HOAN IS POSSIBLY LIVING IN HAI HUNG.

6. MATERIAL EVIDENCE: NONE. THE SOURCE BROUGHT NO NOTEBOOKS, DIARIES, OR MATERIAL EVIDENCE ASSOCIATED WITH UNACCOUNTED FOR U.S. PERSONNEL.

7. COMMENTS.

A. THE TENTATIVE WHEREABOUTS OF THE POTENTIAL LEADS IN PARA. 5 WERE PROVIDED BY LTC LE KY FOLLOWING THE INTERVIEW.

B. REQUEST THE VNOSMP MAKE MR. CHINH AVAILABLE FOR RE-INTERVIEW IF NECESSARY.//

BT

DLVR:CDR JTF-FA HONOLULU HI(1)...ORIG
J2(1)...INFO FOR USCINCPAC HONOLULU H(13)
J30-M(1) J3(1) 00-01-04(1) WWMCS(0) MDT(0) LRN061PCMT(0) J52(1)
J51(1) J2D0(0) J1(1) J032(3) J03(1) CD0(2)