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ADMINISTRATIVE MESSAGE

ROUTINE

R 250702Z OCT 93 ZYB PSN 829981P37

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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MSGID/GENADMIN/CDR JTF-FA/J2//

SUBJ/INTERVIEW OF REQUESTED SOURCE, TRAN CONG MAN//

REF/A/FAX/DET 2/16OCT93//

AMPN/SUBJ/ENTRY NUMBER 45, LIST OF 83 INTERVIEW REQUESTS//
THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE IS A VERBATIM TRANSCRIPTION OF AN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT FIELD REPORT.//

RMKS/1. BACKGROUND. ON 18 AUG 1993, A JOINT U.S./VIETNAM ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM INTERVIEW TEAM INTERVIEWED MAJOR GENERAL (MG) TRAN CONG MAN, A 67-YEAR-OLD HANOI RESIDENT. MG MAN IS CURRENTLY VICE-SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE VIETNAM JOURNALISTS' ASSOCIATION, FORMERLY EDITOR AND CHIEF OF THE PEOPLE'S ARMY NEWSPAPER. THE TEAM MET AT THE VIETNAM JOURNALISTS' ASSOCIATION HEADQUARTERS, 59 LY THAI

TO STREET, HANOI, TO INTERVIEW MG MAN, LISTED IN REFERENCE AS A POTENTIAL SOURCE OF INFORMATION CONCERNING U.S. PERSONNEL MISSING IN ACTION IN VIETNAM. THE U.S. CONTINGENT CONSISTED OF MR. [redacted], DET 2, JOINT TASK FORCE-FULL ACCOUNTING (JTF-FA) RESEARCHER/HISTORIAN; AND PO2 [redacted], JTF-FA ANALYST/LINGUIST. THE VIETNAMESE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT CONTINGENT CONSISTED OF LTC LE KY, MINISTRY OF DEFENSE; AND MR. NGUYEN THANH LOI, MINISTRY OF INTERIOR. TRAN CONG MAN HAD NOT BEEN INTERVIEWED BY A JOINT TEAM BEFORE.

ENCLOSURE 8

2. SUMMARY. THE SOURCE, TRAN CONG MAN, PROVIDED A SUMMARY OF THE METHODS USED BY PEOPLE'S ARMY NEWSPAPER REPORTERS TO WRITE ARTICLES ABOUT AMERICAN PRISONERS AND U.S. AIRCRAFT SHOOTDOWNS IN VIETNAM. HE RELATED NO INFORMATION ABOUT U.S. PERSONNEL MISSING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND CLAIMED NO KNOWLEDGE OF U.S. PERSONNEL LIVING AGAINST THEIR WILL IN VIETNAM SINCE 1973.

3. DETAILS.

A. AFTER FORMAL INTRODUCTIONS, MR. [redacted] EXPLAINED THE JOINT TEAM'S MISSION AND INVITED MG TRAN CONG MAN (TRAANF COON MAAN) TO SHARE HIS KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCES CONCERNING NEWS AGENCY INFORMATION GATHERING, BOTH DURING AND AFTER THE WAR AGAINST AMERICA, AND PROVIDE THE TEAM WITH ANY INFORMATION HE HAS RELATING TO U.S. PW'S AND MIA'S. MG MAN BEGAN BY SAYING THAT UNTIL 1954 HE WAS FIGHTING AGAINST THE FRENCH AS AN INFANTRY CADRE. IN 1964, HE BECAME VICE CHIEF EDITOR OF THE PEOPLE'S ARMY NEWSPAPER (BAOS QUAAN DOOIJ NHAAN ZAAN) AND WAS THEN PROMOTED TO CHIEF EDITOR IN 1978. HE SAID THAT HE REMAINED IN THIS POSITION FOR OVER 11 YEARS, TRANSFERRING FROM THE PEOPLE'S ARMY NEWSPAPER TO THE VIETNAM JOURNALISTS' ASSOCIATION (HOOIJ NHAF BAOS) IN EARLY 1990, WHERE HE NOW IS THE VICE SECRETARY GENERAL.

B. HE SAID THAT TO THE BEST OF HIS KNOWLEDGE, ALL UNITS REPORTED INCIDENTS INVOLVING U.S. FORCES TO THEIR MILITARY COMMAND, AND IF PRISONERS WERE CAPTURED THIS INFORMATION WAS ALSO PASSED TO THE ENEMY PROSELYTING OFFICE. THE NEWSPAPER REPORTERS NEVER WENT TO BATTLEFIELDS OR CRASH SITES TO GATHER INFORMATION. MG MAN CONTINUED, SAYING THAT ALL OF THE INFORMATION PUBLISHED IN THE PEOPLE'S ARMY NEWSPAPER WAS PROVIDED BY THE POLITICAL OR ENEMY PROSELYTING SECTIONS OF THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT TO THE POLITICAL SECTION OF THE MILITARY NEWS AGENCY FOR DISSEMINATION TO VIETNAMESE RADIO STATIONS AND NEWSPAPERS. THIS INFORMATION, HE SAID, WAS VERY GENERAL AND WAS RECORDED BY MILITARY UNITS IN THE FIELD OR THE MILITARY NEWS AGENCY. RECORDS OF THIS TYPE, INCLUDING PICTURES, HE OPINED, MAY POSSIBLY BE FOUND IN OPERATIONS AND ENEMY PROSELYTING SECTIONS, OR IN THE POSSESSION OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS. MG MAN SAID THAT HE DOES NOT KNOW IF ANY OF THESE RECORDS STILL EXIST BECAUSE VIETNAM DID NOT AND DOES NOT HAVE THE CAPABILITIES TO KEEP LARGE AMOUNTS OF RECORDS. THIS COMPOUNDED BY THE NEED TO MOVE QUICKLY DURING WARTIME MADE IT NECESSARY TO DESTROY ANY MATERIAL WHICH WAS NOT ESSENTIAL. IF IMPORTANT RECORDS WERE DESTROYED, HE ADDED, REPORTS WERE SOMETIMES MADE RECORDING THE DESTRUCTION, BUT HE DOES NOT KNOW WHERE THESE REPORTS WOULD BE KEPT.

C. HE SAID THAT THE PEOPLE'S NEWSPAPER ONLY SAVES PREVIOUSLY PRINTED MATERIALS FOR HISTORICAL PURPOSES. THE REPORTERS, HE SAID, WERE NOT REQUIRED TO KEEP THEIR WORKING NOTES OR GIVE THEM TO THE NEWSPAPER. HE SAID THAT IT IS POSSIBLE THAT SOME OF THE INDIVIDUAL REPORTERS MAY HAVE KEPT THEIR NOTES AFTER COMPLETING AN ARTICLE AND THEY MAY BE THE ONLY SOURCE OF WARTIME INFORMATION.

D. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS CONCERNING ARTICLES CONTAINING

STATEMENTS MADE BY PRISONERS, MG MAN SAID THAT THE REPORTERS NEVER ACTUALLY MET AMERICAN PW'S OUTSIDE OF GOVERNMENT SPONSORED PRESS CONFERENCES. THE PROSELYTING CADRE PROVIDED THE REPORTERS INFORMATION CONCERNING THE PW'S STATEMENTS DURING QUESTIONING AND THE ARTICLES WERE WRITTEN BASED ON THIS INFORMATION OR SOMETIMES U.S. PRISONERS WERE BROUGHT TO PRESS CONFERENCES FOR QUESTIONING BY BOTH VIETNAMESE AND FOREIGN REPORTERS.

E. MG MAN STATED THAT HE WAS AWARE OF THREE PW HOLDING FACILITIES DURING THE WAR, BUT HE NEVER WENT TO ANY OF THEM, NOR DID HE EVER MEET ANY PW'S. THESE FACILITIES WERE LOCATED AT 12 LY NAM DE STREET, HOA LO, AND SON TAY. HE SAID THAT PRISONERS WERE NOT HIS CONCERN.

F. MG MAN SAID THAT SINCE THE RETURN OF ALL U.S. PW'S IN 1973, HE HAS NOT HAD KNOWLEDGE OF ANY U.S. PW'S IN VIETNAM. HE ALSO SAID THAT HE HAS HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF ANY AMERICAN SERVICEMEN LIVING FREELY IN VIETNAM SINCE THE WAR, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF BOBBY GARWOOD. HE SAID THAT HE NEVER MET OR HAD FIRSTHAND KNOWLEDGE OF BOBBY GARWOOD, HOWEVER HE RECALLED THAT MR. GARWOOD HAD CROSSED-OVER IN THE SOUTH DURING THE WAR, THEN MOVED TO THE NORTH WHERE HE LIVED FREELY UNTIL RETURNING TO THE U.S. MG MAN SAID THAT HE LATER HEARD MR. GARWOOD CLAIMED TO BE A PW AFTER HIS RETURN TO THE U.S., BUT THIS IS NOT TRUE, MG MAN SAID. IN CONCLUSION MG MAN SAID THAT IN 1973 NORTH VIETNAM'S MAIN GOAL WAS TO LIBERATE THE SOUTH. HAD THE NORTH KEPT AMERICAN PRISONERS AFTER 1973 THE AMERICANS WOULD NOT HAVE LEFT VIETNAM, MAKING THE LIBERATION OF THE SOUTH MUCH MORE DIFFICULT. THERE WAS NO ADVANTAGE TO KEEPING PRISONERS SECRETLY, HE SAID. THE CONSEQUENCES OF DISCOVERY, HE SAID, GREATLY OUTWEIGHED ANY ADVANTAGE THAT MAY HAVE BEEN GAINED BY KEEPING PRISONERS. THE IDEA WAS TO GET ALL OF THE AMERICANS OUT OF VIETNAM.

G. WITH NO FURTHER QUESTIONS FOR MG MAN, THE JOINT TEAM AGREED TO CONCLUDE THE INTERVIEW.

4. CORRELATIONS TO EXISTING POW/MIA CASES. NONE.

5. POTENTIAL LEADS. NONE.

6. MATERIAL EVIDENCE: NONE. THIS SOURCE BROUGHT NO RECORDS, NOTEBOOKS, DIARIES, OR ANY MATERIAL EVIDENCE ASSOCIATED WITH UNACCOUNTED FOR U.S. PERSONNEL.
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MSGID/GENADMIN/CDR JTF-FA/J2//

SUBJ/INTERVIEW OF REQUESTED SOURCE, TRAN CONG MAN//

RMKS/

7. COMMENTS.

A. THE MEMBERS OF THE JOINT TEAM CONFERRED ON THE QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED DURING THIS INTERVIEW. TEAM MEMBERS AGREED THAT THE NEED TO REINTERVIEW THIS SUBJECT WOULD DEPEND ON WHETHER FURTHER QUESTIONS FOR MG MAN ARISE DURING THE COURSE OF THE ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW TEAM'S FUTURE WORK.

B. REQUEST THE VNOSMP MAKE MG MAN AVAILABLE FOR REINTERVIEW IF NECESSARY.//

BT

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J2(1)...INFO FOR USCINCPAC HONOLULU H(13)
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