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**IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO EVERYONE CONCERNED ABOUT U.S. POWS IN VIETNAM
FROM FORMER U.S. CONGRESSMAN BILL HENDON IN HANOI 9 JUNE '95**

**DPMO ANNOUNCES USG OFFICIALS HAVE INITIATED LIVE SIGHTING
INVESTIGATION TO SECRET UNDERGROUND PRISON INSIDE
MOUNTAIN IN THE MILITARY SECURITY ZONE IN VINH PHU PROVINCE
NEAR HUNG HOA, SRV**

FINALLY, AFTER MUCH CONTROVERSY HERE AND MUCH PRESSURE BROUGHT ON THE USG BY THE DRAMATIC RESCUE OF A DOWNED U.S. PILOT IN BOSNIA, THE DEFENSE POW/MIA OFFICE (DPMO) ANNOUNCED TODAY U.S. INVESTIGATORS WILL UNDERTAKE A LIVE SIGHTING INVESTIGATION (LSI) OF THE SECRET UNDERGROUND PRISON LOCATED WITHIN A MOUNTAIN WITHIN THE MILITARY SECURITY ZONE NEAR HUNG HOA, VINH PHU PROVINCE, SRV. THE LOCATION OF THIS SECRET PRISON IS WELL KNOWN TO U.S. INVESTIGATORS. IT IS DESCRIBED BY GUARDS AND OTHERS WHO HAVE BEEN TO THE PRISON AND REPORT LARGE NUMBERS OF U.S. POWS HELD THERE AS BEING SOME 35 KM (21 MILES) WEST OF SON TAY CITY, AT GEOCORDS 2116N/10516E, UTM: 48Q WJ270520, NEAR THE AREA OF HUNG HOA. U.S. POWS HAVE BEEN RELIABLY REPORTED IN THIS PRISON DURING THE WAR (200 POWS), IN THE MID 80'S (300 POWS) AND MOST RECENTLY IN FEB '95 (UNKNOWN NUMBER). ADDITIONAL REPORTS MAY RELATE TO HUNG HOA. UNTIL THIS WEEK, U.S. INVESTIGATORS HAD REFUSED TO ASK PERMISSION TO INSPECT THE PRISON INSIDE THE MOUNTAIN BECAUSE THE PRISON ITSELF IS LOCATED WITHIN A SENSITIVE MILITARY SECURITY ZONE FROM WHICH U.S. INVESTIGATORS HAVE BEEN BARRED ON AT LEAST FOUR OCCASIONS. U.S. INVESTIGATORS WERE REFUSED ENTRY TO THIS ZONE IN NOV '93, FEB '94, AUG/SEPT '94 AND MOST RECENTLY ON 25 JAN '95, WHEN ON EACH OCCASION THEY SOUGHT TO ENTER THE SECURITY ZONE TO EXCAVATE AN F-111A CRASH SITE LOCATED WITHIN THE ZONE - THE SAME MILITARY ZONE WITHIN WHICH THE UNDERGROUND PRISON INSIDE THE MOUNTAIN IS LOCATED. SO IN SPITE OF COMPELLING EVIDENCE OF U.S. POWS HELD INSIDE THIS MOUNTAIN PRISON (INCLUDING EYEWITNESS TESTIMONY), U.S. INVESTIGATORS NEVER ASKED TO GO TO THIS PRISON, BECAUSE THEY KNEW ACCESS WOULD BE DENIED, AND THERE WOULD THEN BE A BIG UPROAR IN THE VETERAN/POW FAMILY ORGANIZATIONS WHEN PEOPLE REALIZED THAT THIS AREA WAS, IN THE WORDS OF VU CHI CONG, HEAD OF THE VIETNAM OFFICE FOR SEEKING MISSING PERSONS, "OFF LIMITS TO ALL FOREIGNERS, NO EXCEPTIONS," INCLUDING OFFICIAL MEMBERS OF THE U.S. MIA OFFICE IN HANOI. (AP HONG KONG STANDARD 6 AP '94) I AND MY ASSOCIATES FOUND OUT LAST YEAR THAT CONG MEANT WHAT HE SAID, WHEN THE VIETNAMESE THREW US OUT OF THE COUNTRY FOR DEMANDING TO GO INSIDE THE MOUNTAIN PRISON INSIDE THIS MILITARY SECURITY ZONE. AS RECENTLY AS 25 JAN '95, THE VIETNAMESE REAFFIRMED THAT STANCE WHEN THEY AGAIN REFUSED FOR THE FOURTH TIME AN OFFICIAL U.S. REQUEST TO ENTER THE ZONE.

NOW, FINALLY, WE HAVE A BIG BREAKTHROUGH, WITH DOD OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON ADVISING MEMBERS OF CONGRESS THAT THE VIETNAMESE HAVE RELENTED AND WILL ALLOW U.S. INVESTIGATORS ACCESS TO THE UNDERGROUND PRISON INSIDE THE MOUNTAIN INSIDE THE MILITARY SECURITY ZONE IN VINH PHU PROVINCE. ADDITIONALLY, DOD IS TELLING MEMBERS OF CONGRESS THAT THE PRESS WILL BE ALLOWED TO ACCOMPANY THE U.S. INVESTIGATORS INSIDE THE MOUNTAIN PRISON. MOST IMPORTANTLY, FIVE LONG YEARS AFTER RECEIVING A COMPELLING ACCOUNT FROM AN EYEWITNESS (SOURCE 12845, DESCRIBED BY U.S. INTELLIGENCE INVESTIGATORS AS "INTELLIGENT AND COOPERATIVE") WHO REPORTED 200 U.S. PILOTS IN THIS SECRET PRISON INSIDE THE MOUNTAIN, DOD HAS FINALLY RELENTED TO OUR DEMAND THAT THEY DEMAND TO GO INTO THIS PRISON ON A LIVE SIGHTING INVESTIGATION. IT IS MY FIRM BELIEF THAT THEY WOULD NEVER HAVE DONE THIS HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR THE EVENTS HERE OF THE LAST WEEK, THE PRESSURE BROUGHT BY HUNDREDS OF CONCERNED CITIZENS, VETERANS AND FAMILY MEMBERS, AND THE DRAMATIC RESCUE OF OUR DOWNED AVIATOR IN

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BOSNIA. THE POWERFUL PICTURES COMING OUT OF BOSNIA LEFT THE POLICY MAKERS WITH NO CHOICE - YOU SIMPLY CAN'T DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO RESCUE A BRAVE PILOT IN BOSNIA WHILE IGNORING THE FATE OF THE BRAVE PILOTS IN AN UNDERGROUND PRISON INSIDE A MOUNTAIN IN VIETNAM. THANK GOD THAT PILOT WAS RESCUED FROM BOSNIA, AND THANK GOD HIS DRAMATIC RESCUE HAD SUCH A POSITIVE IMPACT ON EVENTS HERE. TO REPEAT, DPMO HAS ANNOUNCED THAT USG OFFICIALS HAVE INITIATED A LIVE SIGHTING INVESTIGATION - THEY ARE FINALLY GOING TO THIS PRISON.

SEVERAL HOURS AGO, HANOI POLICE CAME TO MY HOTEL AND ACCOMPANIED ME TO THE IMMIGRATION OFFICE WHERE I WAS TOLD THAT I MUST LEAVE THE COUNTRY ON THE FIRST PLANE OUT TOMORROW. I REGRET THAT, BECAUSE I CAME HERE TO TAKE UNWILLING U.S. INVESTIGATORS TO THE MILITARY SECURITY ZONE IN VINH PHU AND SHOW THEM WHERE THE PRISON IS AND GO DOWN INTO THE MOUNTAIN PRISON WITH THEM. IN SPITE OF MY EFFORTS, INCLUDING A HUNGER STRIKE AND HAVING TO HANDCUFF MYSELF TO THE FRONT GATE OF THE U.S. MIA OFFICE FOR 10 1/2 HOURS EARLIER THIS WEEK, INVESTIGATORS REFUSED TO ACCOMPANY ME TO THE SITE. THEY GAVE A NUMBER OF BOGUS, LAME EXCUSES FOR THEIR REFUSAL, BUT NOW WE ALL KNOW WHY THEY REFUSED TO GO: THE VIETNAMESE WOULDN'T LET 'EM GO! BUT THANKS TO ALL THE PUBLICITY HERE IN HANOI, YOUR EFFORTS IN THE STATES, AND THOSE DRAMATIC PICTURES OF OUR COURAGEOUS AVIATOR IN BOSNIA, THAT HAS ALL CHANGED: THE U.S. NOW TELLS CONGRESSMEN IT WILL GO TO THIS SECRET PRISON INSIDE THE MOUNTAIN NEAR HUNG HOA; THE VIETNAMESE SAY THE U.S. CAN GO; AND OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE INTEGRITY OF THIS EFFORT, THE VIETNAMESE PLEDGE TO ALLOW THE PRESS TO GO INTO THIS MOUNTAIN PRISON. THOUGH THE VIETNAMESE, ACCORDING TO DOD, SAY THAT I CANNOT GO INTO THE PRISON, THAT REALLY DOESN'T MATTER NOW, BECAUSE RESPONSIBLE MEMBERS OF THE PRESS WILL BE ALONG TO KEEP BOTH SIDES HONEST.

SO WE'VE GOT A DEAL HERE - A GOOD DEAL - AND I COULDN'T BE MORE PLEASED WITH THE OUTCOME. WE MUST ALL MONITOR VERY CLOSELY WHAT GOES ON HERE. WE MUST KEEP THE HEAT ON SO THAT THE U.S. INVESTIGATORS WILL GO TO HUNG HOA AT ONCE, AND NOT WAIT FOR DAYS OR WEEKS AS THEY OFTEN DO. US POWS WERE REPORTED TO ME BY A CONFIDENTIAL SOURCE HERE IN VIETNAM TO BE ALIVE INSIDE THE MOUNTAIN NEAR HUNG HOA JUST OVER 90 DAYS AGO. I GOT HERE AS FAST AS I COULD WITH THE INFORMATION, BUT WHEN I GAVE IT TO THE JTFFA THEY WOULD NOT MOVE. EVENTS HAVE NOW FORCED THEM TO MOVE. WE MUST INSIST THAT THEY MOVE FAST AND ACCOMPANIED BY THE PRESS AT ALL TIMES. IN THAT REGARD, ALL VETERANS AND FAMILY MEMBERS WHO ARE APPLYING FOR VISAS TO COME TO VIETNAM IN SUPPORT OF OUR EFFORTS HERE SHOULD CONTINUE THE VISA APPLICATION PROCESS, BUT PUT SPECIFIC DEPARTURE DATES ON HOLD PENDING A SUCCESSFUL LSI AT HUNG HOA.

A PERSONAL NOTE:

SO FOR NOW MY JOB HERE IS FINISHED, AND IT'S A GOOD THING BECAUSE LIKE IT OR NOT I'M OUTTA HERE ON THE FIRST PLANE! BUT I'M VERY PLEASED AND I SEND MY SINCERE THANKS TO ALL OF YOU WHO WORKED SO HARD TO MAKE THIS TRIP POSSIBLE.

BILL HENDON
HANOI
9 JUNE '95