



JOINT TASK FORCE - FULL ACCOUNTING
DETACHMENT TWO/US MIA OFFICE
DOC NGU STREET, HANOI, VIETNAM

#3

JULY 9, 1993

SUBJECT: FOLLOW UP INTERVIEW OF REQUESTED SOURCE, RETIRED PAVN COLONEL DOAN HANH

REFS: A. ENTRY NUMBER 25, LIST OF 83 INTERVIEW REQUESTS, PRESENTED BY U.S. SENATOR JOHN KERRY TO ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER TRAN QUANG CO, 15 MAY 93.

B. DET 2, JTF-FA FAX, 28 APR 93, SUBJ: INTERVIEW OF COLONEL DOAN HANH-- FORMER COMMANDER OFFICE 22, GROUP 875.

1. BACKGROUND. THIS REPORT TRANSMITS INFORMATION OBTAINED DURING 10 MAY 1993 FOLLOW UP INTERVIEW WITH RETIRED PEOPLE'S ARMY OF VIETNAM (PAVN) COLONEL DOAN HANH ((DOANF HANHJ)), WHO COMMANDED ONE SECTION OF OFFICE 22 OF GROUP 875 OF PAVN'S GENERAL POLITICAL DIRECTORATE (GPD). MR. [REDACTED], DET 2, JOINT TASK FORCE FULL ACCOUNTING RESEARCHER/HISTORIAN, CONDUCTED THE INTERVIEW AT THE GOVERNMENT GUEST HOUSE, NUMBER 2 LE THACH STREET, HOAN KIEM DISTRICT, HANOI. THE INITIAL INTERVIEW WAS ON 23 APRIL 1993 (SEE REF B). THE PURPOSE OF THE SECOND INTERVIEW WAS TO CLARIFY OR EXPAND ON TOPICS THAT WERE TOUCHED ON DURING THE FIRST INTERVIEW AND TO ADDRESS QUESTIONS RECEIVED FROM ANALYSTS IN HQ JTF-FA, DIA/POW-MIA, AND THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE SPECIAL ANALYST FOR THE [REDACTED] CASE.

2. SUMMARY. COLONEL HANH AMPLIFIED HIS EARLIER REMARKS CONCERNING PAVN'S PROGRAM TO RECOVER U.S. REMAINS; PAVN'S SYSTEM FOR REPORTING CAPTURE OR DEATH OF AMERICANS IN NVN; AMERICANS CAPTURED IN LAOS AND SOUTH VIETNAM; ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF GROUP 875; JOINT SRV/RUSSIAN/CHINESE EXPLOITATION OF U.S. POWS; GROUP 875 RECORDS; REMAINS RECOVERED AT CHI HOA CEMETERY IN SAIGON IN 1976; CONVICTED COLLABORATOR [REDACTED]; OTHER AMERICANS WHO MIGHT HAVE VOLUNTARILY STAYED IN VIETNAM WHEN THE WAR ENDED; MR. [REDACTED] THAI COMPANION.

3. DETAILS.

A. PAVN'S PROGRAM TO RECOVER U.S. REMAINS (PARAS 4 AND 8, REF B): ANALYSTS HAD SEVERAL QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE ROLE OF GROUP 875 AND THE DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY JUSTICE IN PAVN'S POST-1972 EFFORTS TO RECOVER REMAINS OF AMERICANS WHO DIED DURING THE WAR. COLONEL HANH PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL DETAILS.

(1) COLONEL HANH RECALLED THAT GROUP 875 WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BURIAL, PRESERVATION, AND REPATRIATION OF REMAINS OF THE 23 AMERICAN AND ALLIED POWS WHO DIED IN THE HANOI PRISON SYSTEM. ADDITIONALLY, IN EARLY 1975 HE SUPERVISED THE RECOVERY OF TWO U.S. MARINES IN HCMC. HE SAID DURING THE FEW MONTHS BEFORE GROUP 875 WAS DISSOLVED, IN ABOUT OCTOBER 1974, A FEW LOCALITIES HAD REPORTED THEY HAD LOCATED REMAINS OF SOME AMERICANS; HOWEVER, GROUP 875 PASSED THAT INFORMATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY JUSTICE SO THE DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY JUSTICE COULD COLLECT THE DOCUMENTS AND SUPERVISE THE RECOVERY. HE SAID HE WAS NOT AWARE THAT GROUP 875 WAS INVOLVED IN ANY OTHER REMAINS RECOVERY ACTIVITIES. LTC PHAM TEO, VNOSMP SPECIALIST WHO MONITORED THE INTERVIEW, CONFIRMED THAT GROUP 875 PARTICIPATED IN EFFORTS TO RECOVER OTHER U.S. REMAINS ON A LIMITED AND CASE-BY-CASE BASIS. HE EXPLAINED THE EFFORTS WERE IN THE CONTEXT OF COMPLYING WITH PROVISIONS OF THE PARIS PEACE ACCORD; HOWEVER, HE COULD NOT RECALL SPECIFIC DETAILS.

(2) THE INTERVIEWER ASKED COLONEL HANH TO COMMENT ON A REPORT THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SECURITY ((NOW MINISTRY OF INTERIOR)) CARRIED OUT SOME REMAINS RECOVERY OPERATIONS IN THE HANOI AREA PRIOR TO 1972. COLONEL HANH SAID HE DID NOT KNOW WHETHER THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SECURITY HAD CARRIED OUT ANY SUCH OPERATIONS; HOWEVER, HE WAS CERTAIN THE MILITARY DID NOT CARRY OUT SUCH OPERATIONS PRIOR TO 1972.

(3) AS COLONEL HANH RECALLED THE HISTORY OF THE ISSUE, REMAINS RECOVERY

SUBJECT: FOLLOW UP INTERVIEW OF REQUESTED SOURCE, RETIRED PAVN COLONEL DOAN HANH

REF: ENTRY NUMBER 25, LIST OF 83 INTERVIEW REQUESTS, PRESENTED BY U.S. SENATOR JOHN KERRY TO ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER TRAN QUANG CO, 15 MAY 93.

DID NOT BECOME IMPORTANT UNTIL ABOUT 1974. COLONEL HANH RECALLED THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY JUSTICE (DMJ) WAS ESTABLISHED IN ABOUT OCTOBER 1974; ABOUT THE TIME GROUP 875 WAS DISBANDED. WHEN THE ISSUE BECAME IMPORTANT, SENIOR PAVN AUTHORITIES ESTABLISHED A SMALL ELEMENT, ATTACHED TO THE DMJ, TO RECEIVE REMAINS RECOVERED BY THE PROVINCES. THIS ELEMENT MAINTAINED AN OFFICE AT NO. 3 DUONG THANH STREET, IN HANOI. ALTHOUGH THE DMJ PARTICIPATED IN THE RECOVERY EFFORTS, THE DMJ WAS NOT IN CHARGE OF THE EFFORT. COLONEL HANH ALSO SAID HE WAS CERTAIN THE ENEMY PROSELYTING DEPARTMENT HAD NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR RECOVERING REMAINS, ALTHOUGH THEY PROBABLY KNEW ABOUT THE REMAINS OF THE POWS WHO DIED WHILE IN CAPTIVITY. HE SAID THE CENTRAL OFFICE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY DIRECTED THE EFFORTS TO RECOVER U.S. REMAINS.

(4) HE RECALLED THE GENERAL POLICY CONCERNING THE REMAINS RECOVERY EFFORT WAS THAT THE MILITARY ALONE COULD NOT FIND THE REMAINS; THE EFFORT REQUIRED PARTY LEADERSHIP OF ALL SEGMENTS OF SOCIETY TO FIND THE REMAINS. WITHIN THE MILITARY THE CHAIN OF COMMAND FOR REMAINS RECOVERY MATTERS WAS FROM THE GENERAL STAFF DIRECTORATE THROUGH THE MILITARY REGION COMMANDS TO THE PROVINCE MILITARY COMMANDS.

(5) ONCE A SET OF REMAINS WAS FOUND, THE LOCAL MILITARY AUTHORITIES WOULD REPORT THE FACT TO THEIR MILITARY COMMAND, WHICH WOULD ARRANGE FOR THE REMAINS TO BE TAKEN TO HANOI. REPORTS NORMALLY WERE TRANSMITTED BY MORSE CODE RADIO COMMUNICATIONS OR TELEPHONE. SENIOR AUTHORITIES NORMALLY DIRECTED THE LOCAL COMMAND TO SAFEGUARD THE REMAINS AND WAIT FOR INSTRUCTIONS TO EXCAVATE THE REMAINS. COLONEL HANH SAID GROUP 875 WAS NOT INVOLVED IN THIS REPORTING PROCESS. ALTHOUGH THE DMJ PLAYED A ROLL IN RECEIVING AND PROCESSING REMAINS AT THE CENTRAL LEVEL, COLONEL HANH WAS NOT DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN DMJ ACTIVITIES AND COULD NOT PROVIDE ANY ADDITIONAL INSIGHT INTO THE DMJ'S REPORTING AND RECORDS.

(6) COLONEL HANH RECALLED THAT THE PAVN FORENSIC LABORATORY PLAYED A MINOR ROLE IN THE REMAINS RECOVERY EFFORT. AS COLONEL HANH UNDERSTOOD, THE FORENSIC LABORATORY, COLLOCATED WITH MILITARY HOSPITAL 108 IN HANOI, BECAME INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS ONLY WHEN THERE WERE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE IDENTITY OF A SET OF REMAINS.

(7) COLONEL HANH RECALLED THAT REMAINS STORAGE DID NOT BECOME AN ISSUE UNTIL ABOUT 1974. AFTER THAT DATE, HE BELIEVED, REMAINS RECEIVED FROM VARIOUS LOCALITIES WERE STORED AT NO. 3 DUONG THANH STREET OR HOSPITAL 108. HE ASSERTED THAT PAVN NEVER STORED REMAINS FOR PROLONGED PERIODS AT NO. 17 LY NAM DE STREET. AFTER THE U.S. POWS WERE RELEASED, GROUP 875 RETAINED CONTROL OF ONE ROOM THAT WAS USED TO STORE REMAINS FOR SHORT PERIODS. COLONEL HANH SAID HE WAS CERTAIN THE REMAINS WERE NOT STORED IN THE LONG BUILDING SOUTH OF THE ENTRANCE AND ALONG THE WEST WALL OF THE COMPOUND ((NOTE: THE BUILDING CITED IN 1979 BY THE MORTUARY SPECIALIST WHO PROCESSED U.S. REMAINS)). COLONEL HANH INSISTED THAT THE ARMY FILM INSTITUTE RETAINED CONTROL OF THE BUILDING AND USED IT AS A STORAGE SITE FOR THE INSTITUTE'S EQUIPMENT WHILE THE COMPOUND WAS USED AS A TEMPORARY POW CAMP. HE RECALLED REMAINS WERE STORED IN ONE OF THE SMALL ROOMS USED TO HOUSE U.S. POWS IN A LONG BUILDING ALONG THE EAST WALL OF THE COMPOUND; HOWEVER, HE COULD NOT RECALL WHICH ROOM. HE BELIEVED THE REMAINS OF THE 23 POWS WHO DIED IN CAPTIVITY WERE KEPT AT THIS SITE FOR A FEW DAYS IN LATE-1972 OR EARLY-1973, BETWEEN THE TIME THEY WERE EXHUMED FROM VAN DIEN CEMETERY AND REBURIED AT BA HUYEN CEMETERY. HE ALSO BELIEVED OCCASIONALLY IN LATE 1974 REMAINS RECOVERED BY THE PROVINCES MAY HAVE BEEN KEPT HERE FOR A FEW DAYS.

B. PAVN'S SYSTEM FOR REPORTING CAPTURE OR DEATH OF AMERICANS IN NVN (PARAS 3, 9, AND 8, REF B). ANALYSTS POSED SEVERAL QUESTIONS CONCERNING PAVN'S PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING INFORMATION TO HANOI CONCERNING AMERICANS WHO WERE CAPTURED OR KILLED IN NORTH VIETNAM. COLONEL HANH CLARIFIED AND AMPLIFIED SLIGHTLY ON HIS EARLIER COMMENTS:

SUBJECT: FOLLOW UP INTERVIEW OF REQUESTED SOURCE, RETIRED PAVN COLONEL DOAN HANH
REF: ENTRY NUMBER 25, LIST OF 83 INTERVIEW REQUESTS, PRESENTED BY U.S. SENATOR JOHN KERRY TO ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER TRAN QUANG CO, 15 MAY 93.

(1) COLONEL HANH EXPLAINED THAT FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR THE POLICY ESTABLISHED BY THE PARTY AND THE PAVN HIGH COMMAND WAS FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO INFORM CENTRAL AUTHORITIES IMMEDIATELY WHEN AN AMERICAN WAS CAPTURED OR KILLED. IF THE AMERICAN WAS ALIVE HE WAS TO BE TAKEN TO CENTRAL AUTHORITIES. IF HE WAS DEAD HE WAS TO BE BURIED IN THE LOCAL AREA. GROUP 875 HAD NEITHER THE AUTHORITY NOR THE NEED TO INSTRUCT LOCALITIES TO DEVIATE FROM THIS STATE POLICY.

(2) COLONEL HANH EXPLAINED THAT VILLAGES WERE THE FIRST LINK IN THE REPORTING CHAIN. VILLAGES CUSTOMARILY DID NOT HAVE TELEPHONES WITH WHICH TO REPORT INFORMATION TO THE DISTRICT. THEREFORE, VILLAGE AUTHORITIES NORMALLY WROTE DETAILS ABOUT AN INCIDENT ON A PIECE OF PAPER AND CARRIED IT TO THE DISTRICT COMMAND. THE DISTRICT COMMAND NORMALLY PASSED THE INFORMATION BY TELEPHONE TO THE PROVINCE COMMAND, WHICH, IN TURN, PASSED THE INFORMATION BY TELEPHONE TO THE MILITARY REGION COMMAND. THE MILITARY REGION COMMAND THEN TELEPHONED THE INFORMATION TO AN OFFICE--PROBABLY IN THE ENEMY PROSELYTING DEPARTMENT--OF THE GENERAL POLITICAL DIRECTORATE. POWS CAPTURED IN SOUTH VIETNAM AND LAOS WERE REPORTED TO CENTRAL AUTHORITIES ONLY AFTER THE POWS ARRIVED AT MILITARY REGION FOUR'S MILITARY STATION IN THE VICINITY OF VINH CITY, NGHE AN PROVINCE, NORTH VIETNAM. THE PAVN CONTINUED TO USE THIS REPORTING PROCEDURE AFTER GROUP 875 WAS ESTABLISHED IN ABOUT APRIL 1972. THE ONLY CHANGE WAS THAT UPON RECEIVING THE INFORMATION ABOUT A NEWLY CAPTURED PILOT, THE GENERAL POLITICAL DIRECTORATE TELEPHONED GROUP 875'S DUTY OFFICE TO ALERT THEM THAT A PRISONER WAS ENROUTE TO HANOI SO GROUP 875 COULD PREPARE TO RECEIVE THE PRISONER.

(3) GROUP 875 RECORDED THESE INITIAL REPORTS AS ENTRIES IN THE DAILY JOURNAL FOR THE DUTY OFFICE. THESE REPORTS SELDOM CONTAINED INFORMATION ABOUT THE IDENTITY OF THE PRISONER. COLONEL HANH EXPLAINED THAT VILLAGE AND DISTRICT UNITS SELDOM HAD THE ABILITY TO QUESTION A POW OR TO READ ANY DOCUMENTS THEY MIGHT HAVE CAPTURED WITH THE POW.

(4) COLONEL HANH SAID NORMALLY GROUP 875 RECEIVED ITS FIRST CONCRETE INFORMATION WHEN THE GROUP 875 DUTY OFFICE IN HANOI RECEIVED THE PRISONER AND HIS DOCUMENTS. THE DUTY OFFICE IMMEDIATELY DISPATCHED THE POW TO ONE OF THE POW CAMPS IN THE HANOI AREA. THE DUTY OFFICE RETAINED THE DOCUMENTS FOR EXAMINATION BY SPECIALISTS IN THE INTERROGATION AND INDOCTRINATION SECTION, AFTER WHICH THE DOCUMENTS WERE REPORTED TO THE ENEMY PROSELYTING DEPARTMENT. WHENEVER DOCUMENTS WERE CONSIDERED SEVERELY DETERIORATED GROUP 875 WOULD SEEK GUIDANCE FROM SENIOR AUTHORITIES, WHO NORMALLY INSTRUCTED THE GROUP TO DESTROY THE DOCUMENTS SINCE THEY WERE NO LONGER NEEDED.

C. AMERICANS CAPTURED IN LAOS AND SOUTH VIETNAM (PARAS 2, 3, AND 7)
REF B: ANALYSTS POSED SEVERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT PAVN'S PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING INFORMATION TO HANOI CONCERNING AMERICANS WHO WERE CAPTURED OR KILLED IN LAOS AND SOUTH VIETNAM:

(1) PAVN DID NOT MAINTAIN ANY U.S. POW CAMP IN LAOS. PAVN FORCES IN LAOS EVACUATED ALL AMERICANS THEY CAPTURED TO HANOI.

(2) COLONEL HANH HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF U.S. POW CAMPS IN SOUTH VIETNAM OR THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE HIGH COMMAND IN HANOI.

(3) HE WAS AWARE THAT MANY U.S. POWS CAPTURED IN THE SOUTH WERE RELEASED FROM THE NORTH; HOWEVER, HE DID NOT RECALL ANY SPECIFIC PERSONS OR INCIDENTS.

(4) IF A POW DIED WHILE ENROUTE TO THE POW CAMPS IN HANOI, THE ESCORTS WOULD REPORT THE FACT THROUGH COMMUNICATION-LIAISON CHANNELS AND PREPARE THE APPROPRIATE RECORDS OF BURIAL FOR THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE COMMUNICATION-LIAISON ROUTE.

SUBJECT: FOLLOW UP INTERVIEW OF REQUESTED SOURCE, RETIRED PAVN COLONEL DOAN HANH
 REF: ENTRY NUMBER 25, LIST OF 83 INTERVIEW REQUESTS, PRESENTED BY U.S. SENATOR JOHN KERRY TO ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER TRAN QUANG CO, 15 MAY 93.

D. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF GROUP 875 (PARA 4, REF B): COLONEL HANH HAD LITTLE ADDITIONAL KNOWLEDGE CONCERNING THIS TOPIC. COLONEL HANH DID NOT KNOW THE SIGNIFICANCE OR SYMBOLISM, IF ANY, OF THE NUMBER "875" IN THE TITLE FOR GROUP 875. HE IDENTIFIED THE FOLLOWING PERSONNEL FOR GROUP 875:

- COMMANDER: PHAM THAI ((PHAMJ THAIS)). DECEASED.
- DEPUTY COMMANDER: LE DIEN ((LEE ZIEENX)), DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE ENEMY PROSELYTING DEPARTMENT. DECEASED.
- POLITICAL OFFICER: NONE.
- ENEMY PROSELYTING DEPARTMENT CADRE: MR. THO ((THOJ)), MR. Y ((NOTE: COL NGUYEN MINH Y)), MR. DUY ((ZUY)), AND MR. DAI ((DDAIJ)). ((NOTE: COL HANH DID NOT RECALL FULL NAMES.))

E. JOINT SRV/RUSSIAN/CHINESE EXPLOITATION OF U.S. POWS: VIETNAM DID NOT ALLOW RUSSIANS, CHINESE, OR REPRESENTATIVES OF ANY OTHER NATION TO HAVE DIRECT ACCESS TO U.S. POWS. VIETNAM DID NOT SEND ANY U.S. POWS TO ANY OTHER COUNTRY.

F. GROUP 875 RECORDS (PARAS 5 AND 6, REF B): COLONEL HANH WAS UNABLE TO PROVIDE ANY ADDITIONAL INSIGHT INTO THE TYPES OF DOCUMENTS THAT MIGHT REMAIN AVAILABLE TODAY. THE INTERVIEWER ASKED COLONEL HANH WHERE WE MIGHT LOOK TO FIND DOCUMENTS RELATED TO AMERICANS WHO ARE STILL UNACCOUNTED FOR. HE OFFERED HIS OPINION THAT WE MIGHT MEET SOME SUCCESS IF WE ASKED THE GRAVES REGISTRATION AUTHORITIES IN HANOI TO MAKE AN APPEAL TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS AND LOCAL POPULACE TO SEARCH FOR GRAVES AND REPORT INFORMATION ABOUT GRAVES.

G. REMAINS RECOVERED AT CHI HOA CEMETERY IN SAIGON IN 1976 (SEE PARA 12, REF B). BACKGROUND: IN JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1976, WHILE SEARCHING FOR REMAINS OF TWO U.S. MARINE CORPS (USMC) ENLISTED MEN AT CHI HOA CEMETERY, IN HO CHI MINH CITY (HCMC), COLONEL HANH DISCOVERED THE REMAINS OF AN UNIDENTIFIED BLACK MAN-- POSSIBLY AN AMERICAN. U.S. FORCES HAD LEFT THE REMAINS OF THE TWO MARINES IN THE MORGUE OF THE 7TH DAY ADVENTIST ((AKA CO DOC/COW DDOOCS)) HOSPITAL ON 30 APRIL 1975. EMPLOYEES OF THE MORGUE BURIED THE TWO MEN AT NEARBY CHI HOA CEMETERY. UPON INVESTIGATION, COLONEL HANH LEARNED THAT AN UNKNOWN PERSON OR PERSONS HAD LEFT THE BLACK MAN'S BODY AT THE 7TH DAY ADVENTIST HOSPITAL MORGUE ALSO ON OR ABOUT 29 APRIL 1975. THE SRV REPATRIATED THE REMAINS OF THE TWO USMC SERVICEMEN ON 22 FEBRUARY 1976, AND THE REMAINS OF THE BLACK MAN IN 1986; HOWEVER, THE IDENTITY OF THE BLACK MAN REMAINS A MYSTERY. ANALYSTS ASKED THAT WE CLARIFY COLONEL HANH'S KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE UNIDENTIFIED BLACK MAN.

(1) CENTRAL AUTHORITIES SELECTED COLONEL HANH TO SUPERVISE THE EXHUMATION OF THE TWO USMC SERVICEMEN AND PREPARE THEM FOR REPATRIATION BECAUSE COLONEL HANH HAD PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE--IN 1972 HE SUPERVISED THE EXHUMATION OF THE 23 AMERICAN AND ALLIED POWS WHO HAD DIED IN CAPTIVITY IN HANOI AND PREPARED THEIR REMAINS FOR REPATRIATION.

(2) INITIALLY, COLONEL HANH DID NOT HAVE SPECIFIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE LOCATION OF THE GRAVES OF THE TWO MARINES. AFTER ARRIVING IN SAIGON HE INQUIRED AT SEVERAL CEMETERIES AND FINALLY LOCATED FOUR POSSIBLE GRAVES IN A SECTION OF CHI HOA CEMETERY RESERVED FOR UNIDENTIFIED PERSONS. LOCAL SOURCES TOLD HIM THE REMAINS WERE BURIED IN METAL CASES THE U.S. ARMED FORCES USED TO TRANSPORT BODIES. TO AVOID OPENING EVERY GRAVE, COLONEL HANH'S TEAM PUSHED A METAL ROD INTO GRAVES LOOKING FOR SOUNDS OF METAL STRIKING METAL. EVENTUALLY, THEY FOUND FOUR GRAVES THAT CONTAINED A METAL CASSET. ONE CASSET CONTAINED THE BODY OF ONE CAUCASIAN; A SECOND CASSET CONTAINED THE UPPER TORSO OF A CAUCASIAN; A THIRD CONTAINED THE REMAINS OF A BLACK MAN; AND A FOURTH CASSET CONTAINED THE LEGS AND LOWER TORSO OF THE SECOND CAUCASIAN. ((NOTE: MR. BUI DAC TAM (BUIF DAWCJ TAM), DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF HCMC EXTERNAL RELATIONS OFFICE, WHO HELPED EXHUME THESE REMAINS, CORROBORATED MOST DETAILS OF COLONEL HANH'S ACCOUNT. DURING A 2 JULY

SUBJECT: FOLLOW UP INTERVIEW OF REQUESTED SOURCE, RETIRED PAVN COLONEL DOAN HANH

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1993 INTERVIEW, HE RECALLED THAT THEY FOUND THE CASKET CONTAINING THE BLACK MAN'S BODY WHILE SEARCHING FOR THE CASKET THAT HELD THE SECOND HALF OF THE BODY OF ONE OF THE MARINES.))

(3) COLONEL HANH RECALLED THERE WAS SOME DISAGREEMENT WHETHER THE FOUR CASKETS CONTAINED THE REMAINS OF THREE OR FOUR PERSONS. HE ASKED FORMER EMPLOYEES OF THE 7TH DAY ADVENTIST HOSPITAL AND CHI HOA CEMETERY TO HELP. THE FORMER EMPLOYEES OF THE HOSPITAL RECALLED THREE BODIES WERE BROUGHT TO THE MORGUE ON 29 APRIL 1975--THE DAY BEFORE THE LAST U.S. FORCES LEFT VIETNAM. THEY RECALLED THAT THE HOSPITAL WAS IN A STATE OF CHAOS AND CONFUSION AND NO ONE MADE A RECORD OF THE IDENTITIES. NO ONE COULD RECALL WHO BROUGHT THE BODY OF THE BLACK MAN TO THE MORGUE. THE HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES RECALLED THE MORGUE LOST ELECTRIC POWER SOON AFTER COMMUNIST FORCES ENTERED THE CITY AND THE EMPLOYEES WERE COMPELLED TO BURY THE DECOMPOSING REMAINS. HOPING TO HELP RESOLVE THE CONFUSION ABOUT THE NUMBER OF REMAINS, COLONEL HANH ASKED CENTRAL AUTHORITIES TO REQUEST DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS OF THE TWO MARINES FROM U.S. AUTHORITIES. LATER, CENTRAL AUTHORITIES INSTRUCTED HIM TO REPATRIATE ONLY THE REMAINS OF THE TWO CAUCASIANS. HE SAID HE INSTRUCTED MR. TRAN VIEN LOC, THE MORTUARY SPECIALIST ON HIS TEAM, TO FINISH PROCESSING THE REMAINS OF THE BLACK MAN. HE THEN TURNED THE REMAINS OVER TO THE EXTERNAL AFFAIRS OFFICE OF THE HO CHI MINH CITY (SAIGON) GOVERNMENT. ((NOTE: MR. BUI DAC TAM (BUI DAWCJ TAAM), DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF HCMC EXTERNAL RELATIONS OFFICE, WHO HELPED EXHUME THESE REMAINS, CORROBORATED THIS PART OF COLONEL HANH'S ACCOUNT. DURING A 2 JULY 1993 INTERVIEW, MR. TAM RECALLED THAT U.S. AUTHORITIES HAD PROVIDED DETAILED DATA CONCERNING THE TWO MARINES; HOWEVER, ALL EFFORTS TO IDENTIFY THE BLACK MAN FAILED.))

(4) COLONEL HANH SAID THAT MR. LOC WAS MISTAKEN WHEN HE TOLD U.S. OFFICIALS THAT COLONEL HANH HAD LOCATED THE REGISTER OF REMAINS FOR THE MORGUE. HE SAID MR. LOC WAS NOT DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN ANY MATTERS OTHER THAN THE TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF EXHUMING THE REMAINS AND PREPARING THEM FOR REPATRIATION. COLONEL HANH SUGGESTED THAT MR. LOC'S BELIEFS WERE BASED ON HEARSAY AND SPECULATION.

(5) INTERVIEWER ASKED COLONEL HANH TO RECOUNT HIS DESCRIPTION OF THE BLACK MAN'S CLOTHING ((NOTE: DURING 23 APR 93 INTERVIEW COLONEL HANH DESCRIBED A CAMOUFLAGE MILITARY UNIFORM)). COLONEL HANH SAID THE BLACK MAN WAS WEARING GRAYISH CLOTHING; HOWEVER, HE COULD NOT RECALL WHETHER THE CLOTHING WAS A MILITARY UNIFORM. HE WAS CERTAIN THE BLACK MAN DID NOT HAVE RANK INSIGNIA OR A HAT. HE COULD NOT RECALL WHETHER THERE WERE SHOES WITH THE BODY; HOWEVER, HE SAID EVERY ITEM OF CLOTHING FOUND WITH THE REMAINS WAS TURNED OVER TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES. ((NOTE: MR. BUI DAC TAM, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF HCMC EXTERNAL RELATIONS OFFICE, CORROBORATED SOME OF THESE DETAILS DURING A 2 JULY 1993 INTERVIEW. MR. TAM RECALLED THAT THE BLACK MAN WAS WEARING AN AMERICAN MILITARY CAMOUFLAGE FIELD UNIFORM AND AMERICAN MILITARY NYLON AND LEATHER JUNGLE BOOTS. MR. TAM SAID HE WAS CERTAIN THE UNIFORM DID NOT HAVE RANK INSIGNIA.))

H. [REDACTED] (SUMMARY, KEY POINTS, PARAS 4, 7, 13-17, REF B). DURING THE 23 APR 93 INTERVIEW, COLONEL HANH SAID HE HAD BEEN A FRIEND OF CONVICTED COLLABORATOR [REDACTED]. ANALYSTS POSED SEVERAL QUESTIONS CONCERNING [REDACTED] EXPERIENCES IN VIETNAM.

(1) ALTHOUGH HE HAD HEARD OF HIM EARLIER, COLONEL HANH FIRST MET MR. [REDACTED] ABOUT THE END OF 1972 OR EARLY 1973. HE RECALLED SOME PERSONS REFERRED TO MR. [REDACTED] AS A POW WHILE OTHERS REFERRED TO HIM AS A RALLIER. COLONEL HANH SAID MR. [REDACTED] WAS MOVED TO NORTH VIETNAM FOR HIS HEALTH AND SAFETY--TO PROTECT HIM FROM THE HARDSHIPS AND DANGERS OF THE SOUTHERN BATTLEFIELD. COLONEL HANH HAD NEITHER SEEN NOR HEARD ANY EVIDENCE THAT MR. [REDACTED] WAS EVER WOUNDED.

(2) [REDACTED] HAD COMPLETE FREEDOM TO TRAVEL AND RESIDE WHERE EVER HE WISHED TO IN HANOI. HE TRAVELED TO VERY MANY PLACES IN AND NEAR THE CITY, INCLUDING HA

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REF: ENTRY NUMBER 25, LIST OF 83 INTERVIEW REQUESTS, PRESENTED BY U.S. SENATOR JOHN KERRY TO ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER TRAN QUANG CO, 15 MAY 93.

DONG AND GIA LAM. PAVN AUTHORITIES NEVER DIRECTED MR. [REDACTED] TO LIVE IN GIA LAM; HOWEVER, COLONEL HANH THOUGHT HE MIGHT HAVE GONE THERE FOR RECREATION. COLONEL HANH BELIEVED THAT MR. [REDACTED] LIVED AT TRAI TRE CAMP (SEE REF B) FOR A PERIOD OF TIME IN THE EARLY 1970S WHEN MR. [REDACTED] WAS ASSIGNED WITH THE ENEMY PROSELYTING DEPARTMENT. COLONEL HANH SAID MR. [REDACTED] WAS VERY MOBILE AND LIVED AT SEVERAL LOCATIONS IN AND AROUND HANOI; HOWEVER, COLONEL HANH DID NOT RECALL ANY SPECIFIC LOCATION OTHER THAN THOSE MENTIONED ABOVE AND IN REF B.

(3) MR. [REDACTED] LIVED AT CAMP GROUP ONE ((LIEN TRAI 1)) WHILE ASSIGNED TO GROUP 776 FROM MID-1976 UNTIL LATE-1978. ((NOTE: COLONEL HANH WAS DEPUTY COMMANDER OF GROUP 776 OF THE GENERAL POLITICAL DIRECTORATE, WHICH ADMINISTERED A SYSTEM OF SIX GROUPS OF REEDUCATION CAMPS IN HOANG LIEN SON PROVINCE FROM MID-1976 TO LATE-1978.)) OCCASIONALLY MR. [REDACTED] VISITED OTHER CAMP GROUPS IN THE GROUP 776 SYSTEM, BUT ONLY FOR BRIEF PERIODS. ALSO, HE SOMETIMES WENT TO HANOI FOR SHORT PERIODS. MR. [REDACTED] NEVER RESIDED IN YEN BAI TOWN--THE LOCATION OF GROUP 776 HEADQUARTERS. COLONEL HANH EXPLAINED THAT PAVN OFFICIALS WOULD NOT LET MR. [REDACTED] STAY IN YEN BAI, EVEN OVERNIGHT, BECAUSE LIKE MOST WESTERNERS MR. [REDACTED] WAS NOT ACCUSTOMED TO SHARING VERY SPARTAN, SMALL, AND CROWDED GROUP LIVING SPACES SUCH AS THOSE IN WHICH HIS VIETNAMESE COLLEAGUES LIVED IN YEN BAI. COLONEL HANH SAID WHENEVER MR. [REDACTED] RETURNED FROM A VISIT TO HANOI HE WOULD PASS THROUGH YEN BAI TOWN, CROSS THE RED RIVER AT THE AU LAU ((AU LAU)) FERRY, AND GO DIRECTLY TO CAMP GROUP ONE.

(4) COLONEL HANH CLARIFIED HIS EARLIER COMMENTS CONCERNING MR. [REDACTED] RANK AND POSITION IN THE PAVN. ALTHOUGH PAVN WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR MR. [REDACTED] WELFARE, INCLUDING HOUSING, RATIONS, SALARY, HEALTH CARE, AND SECURITY, MR. [REDACTED] NEVER HELD A FORMAL RANK IN THE PAVN. WHILE HE NEVER HELD A FORMAL RANK, HE RECEIVED PAY AND RATION PRIVILEGES EQUIVALENT TO A CAPTAIN. THE ENEMY PROSELYTING DEPARTMENT OF PAVN WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR HIM FROM THE TIME HE CAME OVER TO PAVN IN 1965 UNTIL ABOUT MID-1976. GROUP 776 OF THE GENERAL POLITICAL DIRECTORATE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR HIM FROM MID-1976 UNTIL LATE 1978. THE DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY JUSTICE OF THE GENERAL POLITICAL DIRECTORATE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR HIM FROM LATE 1978 UNTIL HE RETURNED TO THE U.S. IN MARCH 1979.

(5) MR. [REDACTED] WAS NEVER EMPLOYED TO TRANSLATE DOCUMENTS. HE WAS NEVER EMPLOYED TO TEACH ENGLISH, ALTHOUGH HE UNDOUBTEDLY HELPED ACQUAINTANCES PRACTICE ENGLISH IN EVERYDAY CONVERSATION.

(6) COLONEL HANH DID NOT KNOW WHETHER MR. [REDACTED] HAD EVER BEEN HOSPITALIZED FOR TREATMENT AT MILITARY HOSPITAL 108.

(7) MR. [REDACTED] DID NOT HAVE A WIFE NOR, TO THE BEST OF COLONEL HANH'S KNOWLEDGE, DID HE FATHER ANY CHILDREN IN VIETNAM.

I. OTHER AMERICANS WHO MIGHT HAVE STAYED AFTER THE WAR (PARA 18, REF B): DURING THE EARLIER INTERVIEW COLONEL HANH SAID MR. [REDACTED] WAS THE ONLY AMERICAN WHO STAYED IN NORTH VIETNAM AFTER THE WAR. DURING THE CURRENT INTERVIEW HE WAS ASKED TO COMMENT ON PRIVATE [REDACTED], A U.S. ARMY DESERTER WHO CROSSED OVER TO COMMUNIST FORCES IN B.2 FRONT, IN SOUTH VIETNAM, IN 1967 AND VOLUNTARILY STAYED BEHIND WHEN U.S. POWS WERE RELEASED IN 1973. COLONEL HANH SAID HE HAD NEVER HEARD OF PRIVATE [REDACTED]. ((NOTE: PVT [REDACTED] REPORTEDLY DIED IN CAMBODIA IN LATE 1974 OR EARLY 1975.))

J. MR. [REDACTED] THAI COMPANION (PARA 13E, REF B): THE DOD SPECIALIST REVIEWING MR. [REDACTED] EXPERIENCE REQUESTED ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONCERNING A FORMER THAI SERVICEMAN WHO ADOPTED THE VIETNAMESE NAME CHU VAN SON AND LIVED AND WORKED WITH MR. [REDACTED] AT GROUP 776. COLONEL HANH HAD NO ADDITIONAL KNOWLEDGE ABOUT MR. SON BEYOND THE FOLLOWING DETAILS:

SUBJECT: FOLLOW UP INTERVIEW OF REQUESTED SOURCE, RETIRED PAVN COLONEL DOAN HANH
REF: ENTRY NUMBER 25, LIST OF 83 INTERVIEW REQUESTS, PRESENTED BY U.S. SENATOR JOHN KERRY TO ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER TRAN QUANG CO, 15 MAY 93.

(1) PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION. ABOUT 1.60 METERS TALL, SLIGHTLY DARK COMPLEXION, ROTUND BUILD.

(2) CIRCUMSTANCES OF DEFECTION: MR. SON WAS A PILOT. HE FLEW A T-28 AIRCRAFT TO NORTH VIETNAM AND DEFECTED.

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

5. POTENTIAL LEADS OBTAINED DURING THE INTERVIEW.

A. COLONEL HANH SUGGESTED WE MIGHT ASK THE GRAVES REGISTRATION AUTHORITIES IN HANOI TO MAKE AN APPEAL TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS AND LOCAL POPULACE TO SEARCH FOR GRAVES AND REPORT INFORMATION ABOUT GRAVES.

B. ENEMY PROSELYTING DEPARTMENT CADRE:

MR. THO ((THOJ))

MR. Y ((NOTE: COL NGUYEN MINH Y)). PREVIOUSLY INTERVIEWED.

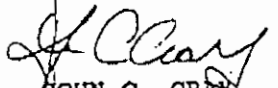
MR. DUY ((DUY)), AND MR. DAI ((DDAIJ)). ((NOTE: COLONEL HANH DID NOT RECALL THEIR FULL NAMES.))

6. MATERIAL EVIDENCE: NONE. THIS SOURCE BROUGHT NO RECORDS, NOTEBOOKS, DIARIES, OR ANY MATERIAL EVIDENCE CONTEMPORARY TO THE WARTIME ERA WHICH COULD BE ASSOCIATED WITH ANY UNACCOUNTED FOR U.S. PERSONNEL.

7. COMMENTS.

A. COLONEL HANH APPEARED TO HAVE A CLEAR MEMORY AND A LOGICAL MIND. HE RESPONDED TO QUESTIONS AND EXCHANGED VIEWS IN A RELAXED, SPONTANEOUS, AND CANDID MANNER. LIEUTENANT COLONEL (LTC) PHAM TEO, A MEMBER OF THE VIETNAMESE OFFICE FOR SEEKING MISSING PERSONS (VNSMP) AND ALSO A FORMER OFFICER OF GROUP 875, ACCOMPANIED COLONEL HANH AND VOLUNTEERED CONSTRUCTIVE INFORMATION.

B. REQUEST THE VNSMP ALLOW THE U.S. ACCESS TO THIS SOURCE FOR POTENTIAL FUTURE INTERVIEW IN THE EVENT THAT SIGNIFICANT SPECIFIC QUESTIONS ARE DEEMED NECESSARY.


JOHN C. GRAY
LTC, USA
COMMANDER