

ORIGIN CJTF2 INFO ICM POL SA DAO PW/MIA EXA DALO INHB (9)

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 DE RUFMBY #6579/01 357 **
 ZNR UUUUU
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 FM CJTFFA DET ONE BANGKOK TH
 TO RUHQHQ / CDR JTF-FA HONOLULU HI
 INFO RUEKJCS / JOINT STAFF WASHDC//OCJCS-PW-MIA/J5//
 RUEKJCS / SECDEF WASHDC//OASD-ISA/PW-MIA//
 RUHQHQ / USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI//J3//
 RUEKJCS / USCINCPAC LO WASHDC//
 RUEKJCS / DIA WASHDC//POW-MIA//
 RUHVAAA / CDRUSACILHI HICKAM AFB HI//
 RUFALWW / NSC WASHDC
 RUFHC / SECSTATF WASHDC//CA/OCS/CCS/EAP//
 RUFALIA / CIA WASHDC//OEA/SEA/IB/DDO/EA/ICOG//
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 UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 BANGKOK TH 56579

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SUBJ: SRV ORAL HISTORY; INTERVIEW WITH PAVN MAJ PHAM MANH KHOI AKA PHAM CONG KHOI AKA PHAM VAN KHOI

1. SUMMARY: THE FOLLOWING REPORT IS BASED ON INFORMATION PROVIDED INFORMALLY BY VIETNAMESE OFFICE FOR SEEKING MISSING PERSONNEL STAFF MEMBER, MAJ PHAM MANH KHOI, TO JTF-FA SPECIAL ASSISTANT MR G.E. BELL. THIS INFORMATION WAS RECEIVED THROUGH PERIODIC OFFICIAL CONTACTS WITH MAJ KHOI DURING THE COURSE OF JOINT FIELD ACTIVITIES, AND DURING HIS MOST RECENT TRANSIT STOP IN BANGKOK, AFTER HIS 4-9 OCTOBER 1992 VISIT TO TO JTF-FA HQ IN HAWAII

2. INFORMATION:

A. MAJ KHOI SAID HIS FIRST INVOLVEMENT WITH US POW'S BEGAN DURING 1969 WHEN HE WAS ASSIGNED AS AN ASPIRANT (CHUAN UY) TO HOA LO PRISON IN HANOI. AT THAT TIME, MAJ KHOI WORKED UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF LLT NGUYEN MINH Y (YS) AKA "RABBIT". MAJ KHOI WAS INVOLVED IN THE ROUTINE DAILY HANDLING OF FIELD GRADE (CAP TA) US POW'S, INCLUDING REFNCs 0140 (STOCKDALE), 0680 (GARDIS), 0880 (MCCAIN), AND 0146 (HISNER). ALTHOUGH MAJ KHOI'S DUTIES WERE MORE ORIENTED TOWARD CORRECTIONAL CUSTODY, HE AT TIMES DID PARTICIPATE IN EXPLOITATION SESSIONS CONDUCTED BY PERSONNEL OF THE PAVN RESEARCH DEPARTMENT (CUC NGHIEN CUU).

B. AT THE TIME OF HIS ASSIGNMENT TO HOA LO PRISON IN 1969, MAJ KHOI WAS ACTUALLY A MEMBER OF THE MILITARY JUSTICE DEPARTMENT (CUC QUAN PHAP) OF THE PAVN GENERAL POLITICAL DIRECTORATE (TONG CUC CHINH TRI). MAJ KHOI SAID HE IS STILL ASSIGNED TO THE SAME ORGANIZATION, BUT

THE DESIGNATION HAS NOW BEEN CHANGED TO MILITARY POLICE AND CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION DEPARTMENT (CUC QUAN CANH VA DIEU TRA HINH SU).

C. ALTHOUGH COL (AT THAT TIME LLT) NGUYEN MINH Y WAS MAJ KHOI'S SUPERVISOR, HE HAS ASSIGNED TO THE ENEMY PROSELYTING DEPARTMENT. MAJ KHOI EXPLAINED THAT THE VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS OF THE GENERAL POLITICAL DIRECTORATE WERE BROUGHT TOGETHER UNDER ONE ORGANIZATION SIMILAR IN COMPOSITION TO THE CURRENT VNOSMP. THAT ORGANIZATION WAS CALLED "GROUP 875" (DOAN 875). MR KHOI SAID PREVIOUS US REFERENCES TO A "GRAVES MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT" (CUC QUAN LY MO MA) WERE ERRONEOUS AS THIS WAS MERELY A GENERIC TERM USED BY THOSE ASSOCIATED WITH THE REMAINS OF PAVN SOLDIERS FOR EASE IN UNDERSTANDING. ACCORDING TO MAJ KHOI, THE OFFICIAL DESIGNATION OF THE ORGAN RESPONSIBLE FOR PAVN REMAINS WAS THE "POLICY OFFICE" (CUC CHINH SACH), WHILE THE ORGAN RESPONSIBLE FOR US REMAINS AND LIVE PRISONERS WAS DESIGNATED "OFFICE 22" (PHONG 22). MAJ KHOI SAID THAT PRIOR TO 1976, OFFICE 22 WAS SUBORDINATE TO GROUP 875. SOMETIME DURING 1976, GROUP 875 WAS REDESIGNATED AS GROUP 776, BUT REMAINED SUBORDINATE TO THE GENERAL POLITICAL DIRECTORATE (GPD). THE GPD WAS SUBORDINATE TO THE "INTER-MINISTRY" (LIEN BO), WHICH INCLUDED STAFF MEMBERS FROM THE MINISTRIES OF DEFENSE, INTERIOR, AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS. THE INTER-MINISTRY IS SUBORDINATE TO THE OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER. MAJ KHOI SAID THAT ALTHOUGH SR COL (SIC) THAN PIEN IS THE RANKING OFFICIAL OF THE SRV GOVERNMENT ASSIGNED TO THE VNOSMP, MR HO XUAN DICH HAS CONSIDERABLE INFLUENCE, DUE TO HIS POSITION AS PARTY CHAPTER SECRETARY (BI THU DANG BO).

D. MAJ KHOI SAID THAT DURING 1969, CURRENT VNOSMP MEMBER, LTC PHAM TEO, WAS ASSIGNED TO THE POLICY OFFICE. ACCORDING TO MAJ KHOI, LTC TEO PERFORMED LIAISON DUTIES BETWEEN THE POLICY OFFICE AND THE OTHER DEPARTMENTS OF GROUP 875, AND SUBSEQUENTLY GROUP 776. DURING THE TIME MAJ KHOI WAS ASSIGNED TO HOA LO, ORGANIZATIONS IN ADDITION TO OFFICE 22 INVOLVED WITH US POW'S INCLUDED THE ENEMY PROSELYTING DEPARTMENT (CUC DICH VAN) AKA DEPARTMENT 14 (CUC 14), AND THE MILITARY PROSELYTING DEPARTMENT (CUC BINH VAN) AKA DEPARTMENT 12 (CUC 12).

F. MAJ KHOI SAID HE PERSONALLY REMAINED INVOLVED WITH

US POW'S UNTIL 1976. HIS LAST CONTACT WITH SUCH POW'S WAS WITH REFNO'S 1996 (GROUP OF 10 CAPTURED IN BAN ME THUAT ON 21 MARCH 1975), AND REFNO 2001 (GAY, ARLO N.). HE SAID THAT AFTER REFNO'S 1996 AND 2001 WERE RELEASED, HE WAS TRANSFERRED TO A STUDENT ASSIGNMENT FOR UNSPECIFIED TRAINING. MAJ KHOI SAID HE WAS ALSO INVOLVED FOR A TIME WITH MR ROBERT GARWOOD AND A THAI CITIZEN PRISONER NAMED "SON" (SOWN). MAJ KHOI SAID MR GARWOOD WAS AN OFFICIAL OF THE "PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY PARTY" (DANG NHAN DAN CACH MANG), BUT WAS NEVER A MEMBER OF THE LABOR PARTY (LAO DONG), OR THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF VIETNAM (DANG CONG SAN VIET NAM). HE SAID MR GARWOOD HELD A CIVILIAN SPECIALIST POSITION EQUIVALENT TO THE MILITARY RANK OF LIEUTENANT COLONEL. HE SAID MR GARWOOD REQUESTED HE BE ALLOWED TO MARRY A VIETNAMESE NATIONAL, BUT THE REQUEST WAS NOT FAVORABLY CONSIDERED. HE SAID THAT REGARDING SALARY AND BENEFITS, THE THAI CITIZEN PRISONER CALLED "SON" WAS ONE GRADE LOWER THAN MR GARWOOD. THE THAI POW WORKED AS AN ASSISTANT FOR MR GARWOOD DURING THE PERFORMANCE OF UNSPECIFIED "TECHNICAL" TASKS. MAJ KHOI SAID HE LEARNED FROM "SON" HE HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN SOME SORT OF BUSINESS DEALINGS IN THAILAND WHICH FAILED, AND AS A RESULT HE WAS HEAVILY INDEBTED TO HOSTILE CREDITORS. "SON" KNEW HOW TO PILOT AN AIRCRAFT AND DECIDED TO FLEE TO NORTHERN VIETNAM. WHEN HIS AIRCRAFT LANDED IN NORTHERN VIETNAM HE WAS IMMEDIATELY SURROUNDED AND CAPTURED. MAJ KHOI SAID "SON" WAS NOW DEAD, DUE TO NATURAL CAUSES.

AND THE CHANGES TO THE VNOSMP OPERATING PROCEDURES WERE CONSIDERED TO BE SIGNIFICANT TO THE DEGREE THAT SA SUBMITTED A SEPARATE "MEMO REPORT" SHORTLY AFTER RETURNING TO BANGKOK. SA ALSO RECALLS REPORTING THAT SOME ITEMS OF EQUIPMENT WERE MARKED WITH "P 2 SQUARED", I.E. OFFICE 22 (PHONG 22). MAJ KHOI HAS NOT INDICATED AN ABILITY TO CONVERSE IN ENGLISH OR ANY LANGUAGE OTHER THAN VIETNAMESE. HOWEVER, HIS ABILITY TO TRANSLATE FROM WRITTEN ENGLISH TO VIETNAMESE IS RIVALLED ONLY BY THAT OF HIS FREQUENT COLLEAGUE, MR LUU VAN THO. ALTHOUGH MAJ KHOI'S SPECIFIC DUTIES WITHIN THE VNOSMP ARE NOT YET CLEAR, HE HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN INVOLVED IN THE JOINT RECOVERIES OF DISCREPANCY CASE REMAINS, AT LEAST IMPLYING A DEGREE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR PHYSICAL SECURITY OF REMAINS CONSIDERED AS SENSITIVE BY THE SRV. MAJ KHOI HAS BEEN REFERRED TO AS BOTH "MAJ" AND "MR" DURING PAST JOINT FIELD ACTIVITIES, BUT DURING THE 19-21 NOVEMBER VISIT TO THE SRV BY CODEL KERRY, HE APPEARED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE FULL MILITARY UNIFORM OF A FAVN MAJ.

C. MAJ KHOI'S MENTION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE

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GENERAL POLITICAL DIRECTORATE, THE INTER-MINISTRY, AND THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE IS CONFUSING, BUT SA WAS NOT ABLE TO CONDUCT APPROPRIATE FOLLOW-UP REGARDING THIS ASPECT. SA BELIEVES MAJ KHOI MAY HAVE BEEN REFERRING TO THE GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONSHIP THAT EXISTS BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE AND SO CALLED "INTER-MINISTRY" AND THE PARTY RELATIONSHIP THAT EXISTS BETWEEN THE LATTER WITH THE EXTERNAL AFFAIRS SECTION OF THE PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE, I.E. THE APPARATUS WOULD HAVE GOVERNMENTAL TERMS OF REFERENCE WITH THE MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENCE (SR COL THAN BIEN) AS THE LEAD AGENCY, AND PARTY TERMS OF REFERENCE WITH THE EXTERNAL AFFAIRS SECTION (HO XUAN DICH) AS MONITOR/POLITICAL CONTROL.

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3. COMMENTS:

A. MAJ KHOI'S INFORMATION WAS PROVIDED IN A RELAXED ATMOSPHERE WITH NO REFERENCE MATERIALS PRESENT, AND WITH NO WRITTEN NOTES TAKEN. MAJ KHOI PROVIDED HIS INFORMATION IN A GENERALLY STRAIGHT FORWARD MANNER, BUT DID EXPRESS APPREHENSIVENESS IN DISCUSSING THE BACKGROUND OF HIS COLLEAGUES. HE POLITELY DEJECTED ANY QUESTIONS DIRECTED TOWARD THE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT, BUT DID INDICATE BY FACIAL RECOGNITION THE PREVIOUSLY REPORTED ADDRESS OF NUMBER 7 DUONG THANH STREET IN HANOI AS THE WARTIME LOCATION OF THAT ORGANIZATION. MAJ KHOI ALSO INDICATED RECOGNITION OF THE BO DUONG-CAO BANG PROVINCE CAMP AS THE SITE FOR WARTIME SRV/PRC JOINT EXPLOITATION OF US POW'S, BUT POLITELY GUIDED THE CONVERSATION AWAY FROM THAT PARTICULAR SUBJECT. ALTHOUGH HE APPARENTLY FOUND THE QUESTION OF COL NGUYEN MINH Y'S ABILITY TO SPEAK LAO DURING THE TIME THAT SA WAS ASSIGNED AS A COUNTERPART TO HIM DURING 1973 "OPERATION HOMECOMING" AMUSING, MAJ KHOI DECLINED TO PROVIDE ANY INSIGHT AS TO WHY A CADRE ASSIGNED TO HOA LO PRISON IN HANOI WOULD BE FLUENT IN LAO. MAJ KHOI ALSO DECLINED TO COMMENT CONCERNING JOINT SRV/USSR EXPLOITATION, AND ALTHOUGH HE ADMITTEDLY WAS IN CONTACT WITH SOME US POW'S DURING 1976, HE AVOIDED ANSWERING QUESTIONS CONCERNING HIS POSSIBLE CONTACT WITH MR JAMES P. LEWIS.

B. SA VAGUELY RECALLS THAT MAJ KHOI FIRST APPEARED ON THE POW/MIA SCENE DURING A REMAINS REPATRIATION CEREMONY IN 1988. AT THAT TIME THE NUMBER OF NEW FACES APPEARING