ORIGIN CJTF2 INFO DCM POL SA DAO PW/MIA EXA DALO INHH (9)

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DE RUEHBK #5990/01 042 **
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FM CJTF-FA DET ONE BANGKOK TH
TO RUHQHQE / CDR JTF-FA HONOLULU HI
INFO RUMTFS / AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE//CJTF-FA DET THREE//
RUEHPF / USMISSION PHNOM PENH//CJTFFA DET FOUR//
RUEKJCS / JOINT STAFF WASHDC//OCJCS-PW-MIA/J5//
RUEKJCS / SECDEF WASHDC//OASD-ISA/PW-MIA//
RUHQHQB / USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI//J3//
RUEKJCS / USCINCPAC LO WASHDC//
RUEKJCS / DIA WASHDC//POW-MIA//
RUEAIIA / CIA WASHDC//DFA/SEA/IB/DDO/ICOG//
RUHVAAA / CDRUSACILHI HICKAM AFB HI//
RUEADWW / NSC WASHDC
RUEHC / SECSTATE WASHDC//CA/OCS/CCS/EAP//
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 BANGKOK TH 05990

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DIA PASS TO DOD POW-MIA CENTRAL DOCUMENTATION OFFICE

SUBJ: SRV ORAL HISTORY, INTERVIEW WITH FORMER ENEMY PROSELYTING CADRE VO NIEM

REF: DET 1, JTFFA MSG 200341Z JAN 93

1. REF WAS THE SUMMARY REPORT OF ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY JTFFA SPECIAL ASSISTANT, MR G.E.BELL, IN VIETNAM DURING THE PERIOD 6 TO 18 JAN 93. PARA C. OF REF REFERS TO FORMER ENEMY PROSELYTING CADRE MR [redacted] WHO WAS INTERVIEWED IN HUE CITY, THUA THIEN PROVINCE ON 11 JAN 93. THE INTERVIEW WAS MONITORED BY ASSIGNED COUNTERPART AND MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE (MND) REP, LTC PHAM TEO, AND MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR (MOI) REP, MR HA MINH THAN. THE FOLLOWING REPORT PROVIDES THE RESULTS OF THE INTERVIEW.

2. MR VO NIEM (NIEEMJ), A 68 YEAR OLD NATIVE OF PHU LOC DISTRICT, TRUA THIEN PROVINCE, IS CURRENTLY RETIRED AND RESIDES ON PHAN CHAU TRINH STREET IN HUE CITY. SOURCE JOINED THE REVOLUTION DURING 1945. DURING THE PERIOD 1945 TO 1948 SOURCE SERVED AS A MEMBER OF THE LOCAL FORCES AGAINST THE FRENCH AND THE JAPANESE. SOURCE REMAINED A SECRET MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT AT HOME UNTIL 1967 WHEN CALLED TO DUTY WITH THE POLICY OFFICE (PRONG CHINH SACH) OF THE MILITARY/ENEMY PROSELYTING OFFICE (MEPO), SUBORDINATE TO THE POLITICAL DEPARTMENT (CUC CHINH TRI) OF TRI THIEN MILITARY REGION (QUAN KHU TRI THIEN). SOURCE'S DUTIES INCLUDED EDUCATING THE MASSES, EDUCATING THE FORCES OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM (RUN) AND THEIR FAMILIES, AND EDUCATING ANY

AMERICAN SOLDIERS WHO WERE CAPTURED CONCERNING THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE REVOLUTION. AFTER BEING EDUCATED, RUN POW'S WERE RELEASED TO RETURN TO THEIR HOMES. US POW'S WERE EVACUATED TO THE HO CHI MINE TRAIL WHERE THEY WERE PLACED IN THE CUSTODY OF THE 559TH LOGISTICS GROUP (DOAN 559).FOR FURTHER EVACUATION NORTH. WHEN THE WAR ENDED IN 1975, SOURCE RAD ATTAINED A CIVILIAN GRADE CONSIDERED AS A REGIMENTAL LEVEL CADRE AND EQUIVALENT TO THE MILITARY RANK OF LTC.

3. SOURCE RECALLED THAT DURING THE WAR YEARS GUIDANCE FROM THE TRI THIEN MR POLITICAL DEPARTMENT CALLED FOR ANY US POW'S WHO WERE CAPTURED NORTH OF THE PERFUME RIVER (SONG HUONG) TO BE EVACUATED THROUGH HUONG DIEN DISTRICT TO QUANG TRI PROVINCE. AFTER ENTERING QUANG TRI, THE US POW'S WERE FURTHER EVACUATED TO THE AREA OF KITE SANE WHERE THEY WERE PLACED ON TRUCKS FOR MOVEMENT UP THE HO CHI MINE TRAIL TO HANOI. SOURCE SAID THAT ANY US POW'S CAPTURED SOUTH OF THE PERFUME RIVER WERE EVACUATED THROUGH THE COMMUNIST CONTROLLED VILLAGES OF THUONG LO AND THUONG NEAT IN HAM DONG DISTRICT OF THUA THIEN PROVINCE TO THE AREA OF A'LUOI ON THE VIETNAM-LAO BORDER. IF CIRCUMSTANCES PERMITTED, US POW'S COULD BE EVACUATED FROM THUA THIEN THROUGH CAM LO IN QUANG TRI, AND FROM CAM LO ACROSS THE VINE LINE SPECIAL ZONE TO QUANG BINH. SOURCE RECALLED THAT THE EVACUATION ROUTE THROUGH CAM LO HAS THE MOST EXPEDITIOUS ROUTE AVAILABLE, ALTHOUGH SECURITY HAS A PROBLEM DUE TO THE PRESCENCE OF US/ARVN FORCES.

4. SOURCE CLAIMED TO HAVE HAD PREVIOUS CONTACT WITH ONLY TWO GROUPS OF US POW'S. SOURCE SAID BOTH OF THESE CONTACTS OCCURRED DURING 1968, SHORTLY AFTER THE "TET" GENERAL OFFENSIVE. SIX DAYS AFTER THE "TET" OFFENSIVE, SOURCE OBSERVED TWO MALE CAUCASIAN POW'S AT A COMMO-LIAISON STATION ON ROUTE 12. (NOTE: WARTIME US MAPS INDICATE ROUTE 547 WHILE PAVN MAPS INDICATE ROUTE 589 FOR THIS SAME ROUTE). SOURCE SAID THAT AT THE TIME OF HIS OBSERVATION, HE WAS RETURNING FROM THE TRI THIEN MR HQ, WHICH WAS LOCATED IN LAOS WEST OF A LUOI. THE CAPTURING UNIT ESCORTING THE TWO MEN WERE REGULAR PAVN FORCES FROM THE ROUTE 9 AREA OF QUANG TRI, THEREFORE, SOURCE WAS NOT INFORMED CONCERNING THE PLACE OR CIRCUMSTANCES OF CAPTURE. SOURCE HEARD FROM THE CAPTURING UNIT THAT A THIRD POW, WHO WAS A BLACK MAN,

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WAS ALSO CAPTURED AT THE SAME TIME AS THE TWO CAUCASIANS. ALTHOUGH SOURCE DID NOT OBSERVE THE REPORTED BLACK POW, SOURCE BELIEVES HE WAS BEING HELD IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO THE TWO CAUCASIANS. SOURCE RECALLED THAT ALTHOUGH THE TWO CAUCASIANS WERE BEING EVACUATED WITH WOUNDED PAVN PERSONNEL, THE TWO CAUCASIANS WERE IN APPARENT GOOD HEALTH WITH NO OBVIOUS WOUNDS OR INJURIES. BOTH OF THE CAUCASIANS WERE WEARING NORMAL CIVILIAN ATTIRE, AND NO EQUIPMENT WAS OBSERVED IN THEIR POSSESSION. SOURCE HEARD THAT THE TWO CAUCASIANS WERE "SPECIALISTS" (NFI). SOURCE SPECULATED THAT THE US POW'S HE OBSERVED WERE EVACUATED ALONG ROUTE 12 TO THE A LUOI AREA. SOURCE ADDED THAT IT IS POSSIBLE THE MEN WERE EVACUATED ALONG ANOTHER COMMO-LIAISON ROUTE WHICH PARRALLED ROUTE 12 DESIGNATED ROUTE 73. SOURCE DESCRIBED ROUTE 73 AS A 1.5 METER WIDE TRAIL HAND-CUT BY PAVN ENGINEERS. SOURCE SAID ROUTE 73 IS NOW COMPLETELY OVERGROWN BY VEGETATION. (NOTE: DURING PREVIOUS JFA'S IN SOUTHWESTERN THUA THIEN, SA HAS TRAVELLED ROUTE 12 BY VEHICLE. AS OF MAY 1992 THIS ROUTE WAS BEING WIDENED AND SURFACED WITH QUARRIED ROCK. US INVESTIGATORS SHOULD HAVE NO DIFFICULTY IN REACHING FORMER COMMO-LIAISON STATIONS IF SUBSEQUENT REPORTING INDICATES ANY US PERSONNEL DIED AND WERE BURIED ALONG THE REPORTED EVACUATION ROUTE). SOURCE SAID HE ONLY OBSERVED THE TWO CAUCASIANS BRIEFLY ON THAT ONE OCCASSION, AND AFTER HE PASSED THROUGH THE COMMO-LIAISON STATION HE DID NOT SEE OR HEAR ABOUT THEM AGAIN.

4. SOURCE SAID THAT SOMETIME APPROXIMATELY 10 DAYS AFTER HE SAW THE TWO CAUCASIANS ON ROUTE 12, HE ALSO OBSERVED TWO CAUCASIAN FEMALES. SOURCE SAW THE TWO FEMALES AT A VEHICLE PARK ON THE HO CHI MINH TRAIL WEST OF A LUOI AND INSIDE LAOS. SOURCE RECALLED THE TWO FEMALES WERE WEARING NORMAL CIVILIAN ATTIRE. SOURCE SAID THE TWO WERE IN APPARENT GOOD HEALTH WITH NO OBVIOUS WOUNDS OR INJURIES. SOURCE HEARD FROM PAVN PERSONNEL OF TRI THIEN MR THAT THE TWO WERE "AMERICAN TEACHERS" WHO WERE CAPTURED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HUE. SOURCE RECALLED THAT THE ENGLISH SPEAKING CADRE OF THE MEPO ASSIGNED TO ESCORT THE TWO FEMALES WAS CALLED "CHIEN" (CHIEENS) (NFI). SOURCE SAID HE ONLY OBSERVED THE TWO FEMALES BRIEFLY ON THAT ONE OCCASSION, AND AFTER HE DEPARTED THE AREA TO RETURN TO HUE HE DID NOT SEE OR HEAR ABOUT THEM AGAIN. SOURCE SPECULATES THAT THE TWO WERE PLACED IN THE CUSTODY OF LOGISTICS GROUP 559 AND FURTHER EVACUATED TO HANOI.

5. WHEN ASKED CONCERNING HIS KNOWLEDGE OF OTHER WARTIME CADRE WHO MIGHT BE ABLE TO PROVIDE INFORMATION REGARDING INCIDENTS INVOLVING US PERSONNEL SOURCE RELATED THE FOLLOWING:

A. LTC LE BA MINH, A CADRE FROM THE ENEMY PROSELYTING DEPARTMENT (EPD), GENERAL POLITICAL DIRECTORATE (GPD) IN HANOI WHO WAS DETACHED TO WORK IN THE MEPO OF TRI THIEN MR. MINH WAS IN CHARGE OF ALL US PERSONNEL CAPTURED IN THE MR. LTC MINH NORMALLY WORKED IN THE MR HQ LOCATED

NEAR "A NGO" VILLAGE WEST OF A LUOI AND INSIDE LAOS. LTC MINH WAS A PROFICIENT ENGLISH SPEAKER. LTC MINH'S CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND WHEREABOUTS IS UNKNOWN TO SOURCE, BUT SOURCE SPECULATES HE IS RETIRED AND RESIDES IN HANOI.

B. LTC THAN VAN TRUNG, A NATIVE OF HUONG DIEN DISTRICT, THUA THIEN PROVINCE, WAS A CADRE OF THE NORTHERN EPD DETACHED TO WORK FOR THE TRI THIEN MR MEPO. LTC TRUNG'S CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND WHEREABOUTS ARE UNKNOWN TO SOURCE, BUT SOURCE SPECULATES HE IS RETIRED AND RESIDES IN HUE CITY.

C. SR CPT GIAI, A NATIVE OF PHU VANG, WAS INITIALLY ASSIGNED TO THE TRI THIEN MR RECONNAISSANCE UNIT, BUT LATER TRANSFERRED TO THE MEPO. SOURCE BELIEVES SR CPT GIAI IS CURRENTLY RETIRED AND RESIDES IN HO CHI MINH CITY.

D. SR CPT HIEU (HIEEUS), A NATIVE OF BAC NINH, WAS A CADRE FROM THE NORTHERN EPD DETACHED TO WORK WITH THE TRI THIEN MR MEPO. SOURCE BELIEVES SR CPT HIEU IS NOW

RETIRED AND RESIDES IN HANOI.

6. WHEN ASKED IF HE RECALLED A CADRE NAMED VU VAN HOI IN THE MEPO, SOURCE SAID HE COULD ONLY RECALL A CADRE NAMED VO VAN HO (HOO). SOURCE SAID THE MAN HE KNEW AS "HO" WAS ACTUALLY A SR COL AND THE POLITICAL COMMISSAR OF THE 4TH REGIMENT. (NOTE: THE 4TH REGT AKA GROUP 4/DOAN 4 NORMALLY OPERATED ALONG THE BORDER BETWEEN QUANG NAM AND THUA THIEN PROVINCES FROM THE BACH MA MOUNTAIN RANGE TO A LUCI). SR COL HO IS CURRENTLY ASSIGNED TO MILITARY REGION 4 IN THANH HOA PROVINCE. WHEN ASKED IF HE COULD RECALL A CADRE NAMED PHAN HUAN (HUAANS), SOURCE SAID SR CPT PHAN HUAN WAS ASSIGNED TO THE TRI THIEN MR MEPO DURING THE WAR, BUT SOURCE WAS NOT ABLE TO RECALL HIS SPECIFIC DUTIES. SOURCE BELIEVES SR CPT HUAN IS NOW RETIRED AND RESIDES IN HO CHI MINH CITY. CONCERNING A WARTIME CADRE NAMED BUI CHICH OR BUI CHINH, SOURCE SAID HE DID RECALL A CADRE NAMED BUI CHINH (CHINHS). SOURCE SAID BUI CHINH WAS ASSIGNED TO A FOOD PRODUCTION CAMP HOLDING ONLY ARVN POW'S. THE CAMP WAS LOCATED IN THE AREA OF A NGO VILLAGE, NEAR THE TRI THIEN MR HQ. SOURCE SAID HE DID NOT RECALL BUI CHINH EVER BEING ASSIGNED TO A CAMP IN NAM DONG OR THE KHE L'BOI AREA. SOURCE ALSO DID NOT KNOW IF BUI CHINH WAS A NATIVE OF HUONG DIEN. SOURCE DID NOT RECALL ANY CADRE NAMED LE MUON OR ANY SIMILAR NAME. SOURCE SAID HE WENT TO A PAVN BASE OF GROUP 559 IN THE LANG TA AREA OF LAOS AT LEAST ONCE DURING THE WAR, BUT HE DID NOT RECALL ANY CAMP FOR US POW'S LOCATED THERE.

7. COMMENT:

A. SOURCE WAS HEARING IMPAIRED WHICH MADE IT EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO CONDUCT THE INTERVIEW. SOURCE WAS VERY NERVOUS THROUGHOUT THE INTERVIEW AND CONSTANTLY LOOKED TO THE VNOSMP CADRE FOR A NOD OF THE HEAD PRIOR TO ANSWERING QUESTIONS. SOURCE WAS NOT CONDUCIVE TO MAP TRACKING AND CLAIMED POOR RECALL DUE TO THE TIME LAPSE.

B. SOURCE GAVE THE IMPRESSION HE HAD LITTLE DIRECT INVOLVEMENT WITH US POW'S AND WAS PROBABLY ASSIGNED TO THE MEPO AS A COURIER/GUIDE DUE TO THE FACT HE IS A LOCAL NATIVE AND RESIDED AS A "LEGAL" DURING THE WAR YEARS. SOME OF THE WARTIME CADRE IDENTIFIED BY SOURCE SHOULD BE ABLE TO PROVIDE INFORMATION CONCERNING PRIORITY DISCREPANCY CASES INVOLVING US PERSONNEL LAST KNOWN TO BE IN THE CUSTODY OF PAVN FORCES IN BOTH THE TRI THIEN MR AND LOGISTICS GROUP 559 IN LAOS.

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