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FM CDR JTF-FA HONOLULU HI//J2//

TO RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC//USDP:RSA//

INFO RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASH DC

RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC//CA/EAP/VLC/CCS/OCS//

RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC//OCJCS/J5/PW-MIA/J3-JDD//

RUHQHQB/USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI//J3/J30-M//

RUEKJCS/USCINCPAC LO WASHINGTON DC

RUEKJCS/DIA WASHINGTON DC

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC//DEA/SEA/IB/DDO/EA/ICOG//

RUHVAAA/CDRUSACILHI HICKAM AFB HI//TAPC-PED-H//

RUEHBT/USDAO BANGKOK TH//PW-MIA//

RUEHBT/CJTFFA DET ONE BANGKOK TH

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SECTION 01 OF 02

MSGID/GENADMIN/CDR JTF-FA/J223//

SUBJ/INTERVIEW OF REQUESTED SOURCE, NGUYEN VAN MINH//

REF/A/FAX/DET 2/16MAY93//

RMKS/1. BACKGROUND. ON 17 AUG 93, A JOINT U.S./VIETNAM

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PROGRAM INTERVIEW TEAM INTERVIEWED PAVN SENIOR COLONEL (SRCOL) NGUYEN VAN MINH, AN APPROXIMATELY 65 YOA HANOI RESIDENT. SRCOL MINH CO-AUTHORED A HISTORY OF THE PAVN WESTERN FRONT AND OPERATED AS A PAVN NEWSPAPER REPORTER IN VIETNAM'S WESTERN HIGHLANDS DURING THE WAR. THE TEAM MET AT THE GOVERNMENT GUEST HOUSE, NUMBER 2 LE THACH STREET, HOAN KIEM DISTRICT, HANOI TO INTERVIEW SRCOL MINH, LISTED IN REFERENCE AS A POTENTIAL SOURCE OF INFORMATION CONCERNING U.S. PERSONNEL MISSING IN ACTION (MIA) IN VIETNAM. THE U.S. CONTINGENT CONSISTED OF TSGT RONALD D. WARD, JOINT TASK FORCE-FULL ACCOUNTING (JTF-FA) ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM COORDINATOR; AND PO2 JOHN L. HARVEY, JTF-FA ANALYST/LINGUIST. THE VIETNAMESE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT CONTINGENT CONSISTED OF LTC LE KY, MINISTRY OF DEFENSE; AND NGUYEN VAN THANG LOI, MINISTRY OF INTERIOR. SRCOL MINH HAD NOT BEEN INTERVIEWED BY A JOINT TEAM BEFORE.

2. SUMMARY. THE SOURCE, SRCOL NGUYEN VAN MINH, PROVIDED INFORMATION PRIMARILY CONCERNING HIS SOURCES FOR WRITING THE BOOK THE PEOPLE'S ARMED FORCES OF THE WESTERN HIGHLANDS DURING THE WAR OF NATIONAL SALVATION AGAINST THE AMERICANS. SOURCES FOR THE BOOK WERE MAINLY OPERATIONAL BATTLE REPORTS WHICH THE SUBJECT RESEARCHED AT THE PAVN 3RD CORPS CLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS ARCHIVE IN

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PLEIKU IN 1977. HE BRIEFLY SUMMARIZED HIS ROLE IN CO-AUTHORING THE BOOK AND RECOUNTED SOME OF HIS EXPERIENCES AS A PAVN NEWSPAPER REPORTER IN THE WESTERN HIGHLANDS DURING THE WAR. THE

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Oral History, Nguyen Van Minh, B3 Front

SUBJECT CLAIMED NO KNOWLEDGE OF U.S. PERSONNEL, LIVING FREELY OR AGAINST THEIR WILL, IN VIETNAM SINCE 1973.

3. DETAILS.

A. FOLLOWING INTRODUCTORY STATEMENTS BY LTC LE KY, THE INTERVIEWER OUTLINED THE TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION. THE SOURCE PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

B. SRCOL NGUYEN VAN MINH (NGUYENX VAWN MINH) WORKED AS A REPORTER FOR THE LIBERATION ARMY IN B3 FRONT, THE VIETNAMESE WESTERN HIGHLANDS, BETWEEN 1966 AND 1975. PRIOR TO THAT, HE TAUGHT COLLEGE LEVEL POPULAR LITERATURE IN HANOI. FROM 1977 TO 1980 HE CONTRIBUTED TO WRITING THE HISTORY OF THE WESTERN HIGHLANDS AS SENIOR EDITOR FOR THE PROJECT.

C. AS A REPORTER FOR THE LIBERATION ARMY NEWSPAPER, SRCOL MINH WAS STATIONED AT B3 FRONT HEADQUARTERS (HQ) AND WROTE ARTICLES BASED ON OPERATIONAL BATTLEFIELD REPORTS. HE SELDOM TRAVELED TO ACTUAL BATTLEFIELD LOCATIONS AND RELATED THAT AT FRONT HQ, HE WAS REMOVED FROM THE TACTICAL FRONT AND "COULD NOT

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HEAR THE GUNFIRE". THE B3 FRONT COMMAND ECHELON DIRECTED OPERATIONS MAINLY BY RADIO. DURING THIS PERIOD, SRCOL MINH NEITHER VISITED NOR KNEW THE LOCATION OF ANY PRISONER OF WAR (PW) CAMPS. CONCERNING PRISONERS, HE ONLY KNEW GENERALLY THAT THE PAVN FOLLOWED A HUMANITARIAN PW POLICY. HE AT TIMES INCLUDED PW INFORMATION IN HIS ARTICLES, BUT HE COLLECTED THE SOURCE INFORMATION FROM OPERATIONAL REPORTS SENT FROM FIELD UNITS TO FRONT HQ. HE HAD BEEN TO B3 FRONT HOSPITAL V211 (APPROXIMATELY A DAY'S WALK FROM B3 FRONT HQ). BUT CLAIMED NO KNOWLEDGE OF A PW CAMP NEAR THAT LOCATION AND NEVER SAW FOREIGNERS THERE. SRCOL MINH SAID SRCOL KHUONG XUAN QUE, FORMER B3 FRONT PROSELYTING OFFICER (SEE PARA. 7.B., BELOW), WOULD KNOW ABOUT PW CAMPS BECAUSE ENEMY PROSELYTING PERSONNEL HAD REASON TO VISIT THE CAMPS. THE MAJORITY OF PAVN PERSONNEL IN B3 FRONT WERE PROHIBITED FROM GOING TO PRISON CAMPS. SRCOL MINH SAID THE CAMP SYSTEM, INCLUDING THE ROUTES FOR EVACUATING PRISONERS TO THE NORTH, WAS SECRET AND UNKNOWN TO THE MAJORITY OF PAVN PERSONNEL. DURING HIS TIME IN THE WESTERN HIGHLANDS, HE KNEW NOTHING OF A B3 FRONT OPERATIONS LOG WHICH MIGHT HAVE CONTAINED INFORMATION ON PW'S.

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E. BEGINNING IN 1977, SRCOL MINH CONDUCTED RESEARCH FOR THE BOOK AT PAVN 3RD CORPS HQ IN PLEIKU, AND WAS ALLOWED LIMITED ACCESS TO THE CORPS CLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS ARCHIVES. THE PROCEDURE WAS FOR HIM TO REQUEST DOCUMENTS CONCERNING A CERTAIN INCIDENT OR BATTLE, SUPPLYING THE DATE, AREA, AND OR PARTICIPATING UNITS TO THE CLERK, WHO WOULD THEN RETRIEVE THE MATERIAL. THE CLERK USED AN INDEX OR DIRECTORY TO LOCATE THE DOCUMENTS. SRCOL MINH COULD NOT ENTER THE ACTUAL DOCUMENTS STORAGE AREA. BUT WORKED IN A NEARBY ROOM. HE COULD ONLY ACCESS DOCUMENTS ONE TIME, AND HAD TO LEAVE WHATEVER NOTES HE TOOK IN THE FACILITY OR DESTROY THEM.

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SRCOL MINH SUGGESTED THE JOINT TEAM SEEK ACCESS TO 3RD CORPS CLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS ARCHIVE TO FIND INFORMATION POSSIBLY RELATED TO UNACCOUNTED FOR U.S. PERSONNEL IN B3 FRONT. HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT ALL THE DOCUMENTS HE USED FOR THE BOOKS WERE OF OPERATIONAL NATURE AND CONTAINED VERY FEW DETAILS CONCERNING U.S. PRISONERS. IF PW'S WERE MENTIONED AT ALL. IT WAS ONLY IN TERMS OF NUMBERS OF PRISONERS CAPTURED. HE DID NOT DISCOUNT THE POSSIBILITY, HOWEVER, THAT OTHER TYPES OF DOCUMENTS, SUCH AS PROSELYTING DOCUMENTS, MIGHT ALSO BE IN THE ARCHIVE. ANOTHER PROBLEM WITH HIS IDEA, HE SAID, WAS THAT THE 3RD CORPS HAD TRANSFERRED TO THE

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CHINA-VIETNAM BORDER IN 1979, RETURNING TO THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS IN 1985 OR 1986. HE BELIEVED IT PROBABLE THE CORPS HAD DESTROYED THE DOCUMENTS DURING THAT PERIOD. AT THE TIME HE DID HIS RESEARCH IN PLEIKU, THE 3RD CORPS HAD NO REGULATION GOVERNING THE DESTRUCTION OF CLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS, BUT HE DID NOT KNOW IF THE UNIT HAD SINCE ADOPTED SUCH A REGULATION.

F. FINALLY, SRCOL MINH CLAIMED NO KNOWLEDGE OF U.S. PERSONNEL, LIVING FREELY OR AGAINST THEIR WILL, IN VIETNAM SINCE 1973.

4. CORRELATIONS TO EXISTING POW/MIA CASES. NONE.
5. POTENTIAL LEADS. THE 3RD CORPS CLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS ARCHIVE IN PLEIKU MAY CONTAIN DOCUMENTS WITH INFORMATION RELATING TO UNACCOUNTED FOR U.S. PERSONNEL IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.
6. MATERIAL EVIDENCE: NONE. THIS SOURCE BROUGHT NO RECORDS, NOTEBOOKS, DIARIES, OR ANY MATERIAL EVIDENCE ASSOCIATED WITH UNACCOUNTED FOR U.S. PERSONNEL.
7. COMMENTS.

A. THE SOURCE, SRCOL NGUYEN VAN MINH, WAS STRAIGHTFORWARD IN HIS STATEMENTS AND OFFERED INFORMATION AND OPINIONS IN A CANDID,

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RUHVAAA/CDRUSACILHI HICKAM AFB HI//TAPC-PED-H//
RUEHBT/USDAO BANGKOK TH//PW-MIA//
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ANIMATED MANNER. THE U.S. INTERVIEW TEAM DETECTED NO SIGNS OF

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COACHING OR SCRIPTING. ASSESS THIS SOURCE'S RELIABILITY TO BE GOOD.

B. A JOINT ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW TEAM INTERVIEWED SRCOL KHUONG XUAN QUE ON 17 MAY 1993.

C. THE MEMBERS OF THE JOINT TEAM CONFERRED ON THE QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED DURING THIS INTERVIEW. TEAM MEMBERS AGREED THAT THE NEED TO RE-INTERVIEW THIS SUBJECT WOULD DEPEND ON WHETHER FURTHER QUESTIONS FOR SRCOL MINH ARISE DURING THE COURSE OF THE SPECIAL INTERVIEW TEAM'S FUTURE WORK.

D. REQUEST THE VNOSMP MAKE SRCOL NGUYEN VAN MINH AVAILABLE FOR RE-INTERVIEW IF NECESSARY.//

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