

TO: MEMO -- BARRER

FROM: POC:tls

DATE: April 9, 1986

55

RE: AMERICAN POLITICAL POSITION AND RAMIFICATIONS

In 1973, Henry Kissenger signed a peace agreement with the North Vietnamese government. This agreement called for the withdrawal of American military forces from Indochina and \$3.25 billion in ~~reparation~~ reparation to be paid by the American government to the North Vietnamese govern- ment for the rebuilding of Vietnam. In exchange, the North Vietnamese government agreed to release all prisoners of war held in prisons by communist officials. A partial listing of these prisoners of war was given by the North Vietnamese to the American government.

Needless to say, by 1975, Congress had voted down the \$3.25 billion in war ~~reparation~~ reparation, and in turn the Vietnamese government stopped releasing the prisoners of war, leaving approximately 3,000 people listed on defense intelligence agency lists as missing in action/prisoners of war, unaccounted for. To date, not one man has been released ^{from} ~~for~~ Laos or Cambodia, and the United States government knew that prisoners had been captured in these areas and unaccounted for.

In 1975, the United States government withdrew all its remaining forces from Vietnam and the South Vietnamese government fell. Vietnam was now taken over by the communist forces of the North Vietnamese.

50

In the years that followed, there were thousands of reports from Vietnamese boat people that they had seen Americans held in captivity in Vietnam and Laos. The majority of these reports were claimed by the defense intelligence agency officials to be fabrications by the people who reported them.

In 1977, President Carter ended the issue by officially declaring MIA's dead and paying the families of these people the insurance benefits that they had coming to them. The reports kept coming in to the DIA, but as General Thighe, head of the DIA at the time states, a mindset existed in the government of the United States that no POW's existed and therefore very little monies were allocated to investigate the number of reports that came in concerning them. Everything from pictures to polygraph tests to live siting reports were classified as top secret, and no one in the public or Congress had access to any information concerning actual sitings of prisoners of war.

In 1979, the Vietnamese government released Mr. Bobby Garwood, POW held in Vietnam. The armed forces of the United States under the direction of the State Department debriefed and later court marshaled Mr. Garwood. In approximately 1983, Mr. Garwood finally came forward and revealed the existence of others who were held in prison in Vietnam up to the time of his departure in 1979. This information given to Bill Paul (Wall Street Journal) and published in the Journal. Since then, a number of people from the United States government have

57

come forward with information concerning living prisoners of war in Vietnam and the American government's position on this, to the point where a cover up by high ranking officials of the government has been strongly implied.

Today, the United States government has finally admitted that they have knowledge of live POW's held in Vietnam, and that they have brought this up with the Vietnamese government, with the Vietnamese government responding that they will look into the issue.

Everything that I have stated can be verified by reading the Senate Subcommittee Reports from the hearings on East Asian Affairs concerning the POW/MIA issue. The committee is headed by Mr. Steven Solarz, chairman. Also, you can contact Congressman Bill Hendon, Republican from North Carolina. Also, there is the National Forget-me-not Association by way of Bill Hendon in Washington, D.C., which can supply you with a film concerning the issue and a full background into the American attitude concerning the prisoners of war in Vietnam.

During the years of lack of interest and mindset by the United States Intelligence Agencies, 1975-1980, George Bush played an important role in a policy making decision of the Central Intelligence Agency. Mr. Bush is, of course, a realistic contender for the presidency of the United States. It is my belief and the belief of Mr. Bill Paul and the belief also of Mr. Ross Perot, that if the POW/MIA's are released in the wrong way, it could be detrimental to Mr. Bush's campaign for the presidency.

58

Another possibility which has occurred to me and to others is the matter of national security. If prisoners of war are released, in some cases 20 years after their capture, it will certainly have a damaging effect upon all volunteer arm forces, as no one would want to join a military service in the United States with the knowledge that if captured, the government would do nothing for years to effect their release. With a pending war in Central America and a potential protest by military personnel over the abandonment of POW's in Vietnam for so many years, the United States could not afford to gain the release of prisoners of war and hold the lid on the cover up implications which would reveal a government unconcerned for the prisoners for so many years.

For these reasons, I believe that if the prisoners of war are not released in a certain manner that made the United States government in power today look good, then the release would have to wait until after the next presidential election.

I have never had any intention of embarrassing the United States government, but I was and am still concerned with the release of the 475 prisoners of war left in Vietnam today.