

(12) JCRC2 INFO AMB DCM POL SA3 DAO DAO-SB EX/A DATLO INHIBIT

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P1 050944Z JUL 89

FM JCRC LIAISON BANGKOK TH

TO RUHQEFA / CDR JCRC BARBERS PT HI PRIORITY

INFO RUEADWW / WHITEHOUSE WASHDC//NSC// PRIORITY

RUEKJCS / SECDEF WASHDC//OASD-ISA/PW-MIA// PRIORITY

RUFGC / SPCSTATE WASHDC//FAP-VLC// PRIORITY

RUEKJCS / JCS WASHDC//OCJCS-PW-MIA/J5// PRIORITY

RUEKJCS / DIA WASHINGTON DC//PW-MIA// PRIORITY

RUHQEFA / USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI//J3// PRIORITY

RUHQEFA / CDRUSACILHI FT SHAFTER HI//TAPC-PED-H// PRIORITY

BT

[REDACTED] SECTION 01 OF 02 LIAISON BANGKOK 34209

CONFIDENTIAL 0425 JUL 89

SUBJ: SUICIDE OF AN AMERICAN PILOT (C)

1. (U) THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION WAS GATHERED DURING THE SIXTH JOINT INVESTIGATION, 1-17 JUN 89;

2. [REDACTED] SOURCE/ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

- A. NAME: NGUYEN VIET TAO (NGUYENX VIEETJ

TACJ) (M)

- B. DPOB: 1942, THAI BINH TOWN

- C. OCCUPATION

- PRE-1975: CPT. PAVN

- POST-1975: MERCHANT SEAMAN

- D. STATUS: SHV CITIZEN

- E. DATE OF INFORMATION: 15 JUN 89

- F. ADDRESS IN VIETNAM: 217 NO TRANG LONG ST.,

Q. BINH THANH, HCMC

- G. INTERVIEW DATA: SOURCE WAS INTERVIEWED AT 217

NO TRANG LONG ST., Q. BINH THANH, HCMC ON 15 JUN 89

BY JAMES M. COYLE, CS-12, DOL.

- H. MAPS USED: SCALE: 1:50,000; SERIES: L7014;

SPRIT(S): 6050-1V

3. [REDACTED] SUMMARY: SOURCE, A FORMER PAVN OFFICER, CLAIMS TO HAVE WITNESSED THE SHOOTING DOWN OF AN F-4 AIRCRAFT NEAR HOA BINH ON 17 MAY 67. A PARACHUTE LANCED SEVERAL KILOMETERS NORTH OF HIS POSITION. SOURCE LED A CONTINGENT OF HIS MEN IN AN UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT TO CAPTURE THE PILOT. THREE DAYS LATER, AT A STAFF MEETING, HE HEARD THAT THE PILOT HAD COMMITTED SUICIDE AS HE WAS ABOUT TO BE CAPTURED.

4. [REDACTED] INFORMATION: IN MAY, 1967 SOURCE WAS A PAVN 2LT IN COMMAND OF AN EARLY-WARNING RADAR POST LOCATED ON HILL 1196, ALSO KNOWN AS NUI THOI (NUIS THOWIE), IN HOA BINH PROVINCE. (AFTER SOME

DISCUSSION SOURCE DECIDED THAT THE HIS RADAR HAD BEEN LOCATED ON WHAT IS DESIGNATED AS HILL 1196, NUI THOI (NUIS BIEU), ON US MAPS, WJ 192027.) SOMETIME BETWEEN 0800 AND 0900 ON 17 MAY 67 SOURCE WAS PERFORMING MAINTENANCE ON THE RADAR WHEN THE 12.7 MM ANTI-AIRCRAFT BATTERY ASSIGNED TO DEFEND THE HILL OPENED FIRE. SOURCE SAW TWO F-4 AIRCRAFT FLYING TOWARD HIS POSITION. THE AIRCRAFT WERE AT THAT TIME FLYING EAST OF HOA BINH TOWN, IN THE GENERAL VICINITY OF ROUTE 6. SHORTLY THEREAFTER THE F-4S ENGAGED IN AERIAL COMBAT WITH TWO MIG-21 INTERCEPTORS, WITH NEITHER SIDE SUFFERING ANY LOSSES THAT SOURCE COULD SEE. ABOUT 20 MINUTES AFTER SOURCE FIRST SAW THE AMERICAN AIRCRAFT, ONE OF THEM WAS SUDDENLY STRUCK BY A SAM. A WHITE PARACHUTE EMERGED ALMOST AT ONCE FROM THE STRUCK AIRCRAFT. FOLLOWED A SHORT TIME LATER BY A SECOND. THE FIRST PARACHUTE APPEARED TO LAND NORTHEAST OF SOURCE'S POSITION, BUT WEST OF THE NORTHEAST END OF THE BLACK RIVER. THE SECOND PARACHUTE DID NOT SEEM TO BE UNDER CONTROL, AND QUICKLY DISAPPEARED FROM VIEW. SOURCE COLLECTED 20 OF HIS MEN AND HEADED IN THE DIRECTION IN WHICH IT APPEARED THE FIRST PARACHUTE HAD COME DOWN. THE TERRAIN WAS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO TRAVERSE. SOURCE AND HIS MEN CAME DOWN THE SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN, STOPPED FOR LUNCH, THEN CONTINUED THEIR PURSUIT UNTIL ABOUT 1500. AT THAT POINT SOURCE AND HIS MEN WERE EXHAUSTED. THEY DECIDED THAT SINCE THE CAPTURE OF DOWNED PILOTS WAS NOT THEIR PRIMARY MISSION, IT WOULD BE BETTER IF THEY RETURNED TO THE RADAR BASE. MOREOVER, AS THE PARACHUTE HAD OBVIOUSLY LANDED AT A CONSIDERABLY FARTHER DISTANCE FROM HIS POSITION THAN HE ORIGINALLY THOUGHT, SOURCE EXPECTED THAT THE LOCAL AND DISTRICT MILITIA WOULD BE ARRANGING THE PURSUIT. WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE LOCAL MUONG POPULATION, SOURCE AND HIS MEN RETURNED TO THE BASE AT ABOUT 1600.

5. [REDACTED] FOR THE NEXT THREE DAYS US AIRCRAFT CIRCLED THE AREA. DURING THE FIRST TWO DAYS F-4S WERE USED, AND ON THE THIRD DAY AD-6S. ON THE DAY AFTER THE INCIDENT, HE SAW AN AMERICAN AIRCRAFT DROP WHAT HE PRESUMES WERE SUPPLIES NEAR WHERE THE PILOT HAD COME DOWN. HE LATER HEARD THAT THE MILITIA HAD RECOVERED

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THE SUPPLIES.

6. (C) ON THE MORNING OF THE THIRD DAY AFTER THE INCIDENT, SOURCE ATTENDED A STAFF BRIEFING. DURING THE BRIEFING, THE AREA COMMANDER ANNOUNCED THAT THE LOCAL MILITIA HAD FOUND THE DOWNED PILOT'S HIDING PLACE ON ONE OF THE MOUNTAINS. THE MILITIAS OF BOTH LUONG SON AND KY SON DISTRICTS HAD BEEN UTILIZED IN THIS QUEST. BY THE TIME OF THEIR DISCOVERY, THEIR NUMBERS HAD INCREASED TO MORE THAN 2,000. AS THE MILITIAMEN CLOSED IN ON THE HIDING PLACE, THEY ISSUED A CALL FOR THE PILOT TO SURRENDER. THEN THEY HEARD A SHOT. WHEN THEY GOT TO THE PLACE FROM WHICH THE SHOT HAD COME, THEY SAW A PARACHUTE SUSPENDED ABOVE THE GROUND BETWEEN TWO TREES. THE BODY OF THE PILOT WAS LYING IN THE PARACHUTE. THE MILITIAMEN BELIEVED THAT HE COMMITTED SUICIDE RATHER THAN FACE CAPTURE. THE BRIEFING OFFICER TOLD THE ASSEMBLED PERSONNEL THAT THE DEAD PILOT HAD BEEN A LIEUTENANT COLONEL.

7. (C) SOURCE DOES NOT KNOW WHAT BECAME OF THE BODY OF THE DEAD PILOT. HE NEVER HEARD ANYTHING CONCERNING THE FATE OF THE SECOND PILOT.

8. (C) COMMENT: SOURCE IS A MARITAL RELATIVE OF INTERVIEWER, WHOM INTERVIEWER FIRST MET AT THE COMPLETION OF THE FIFTH JOINT SEARCH EFFORT. IN CASUAL CONVERSATION AT THAT TIME SOURCE REVEALED HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE INCIDENT. INTERVIEWER TOOK NOTE OF THE BASIC INFORMATION AND UPON HIS RETURN TO BANGKOK COMPARED IT WITH DATA IN JCRC FILES. AT THE COMPLETION OF THE SIXTH JOINT SEARCH EFFORT INTERVIEWER RETURNED TO SOURCE'S HOME AND CONDUCTED A FORMAL INTERVIEW. MSGT RICHARD L. JOHN AND SFC RANDALL J. NASE OF THE JOINT SEARCH TEAM WERE ALSO PRESENT AT THE INTERVIEW. MSGT JOHN POSITS A PROBABLE CORRELATION OF THE INFORMATION OBTAINED IN THIS INTERVIEW WITH REFNC 0691. DFCL: OADR

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