

STATEMENT BY THE HONORABLE
BENJAMIN A. GILMAN
POW/MIA HEARING
SUBCOMMITTEE ASIA & PACIFIC
FEBRUARY 10, 1994

MR. GILMAN: I WANT TO THANK THE CHAIRMAN FOR BRINGING TOGETHER SO MANY MEMBERS OF THE POW/MIA COMMUNITY SO THAT THEY HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE THEIR THOUGHTS WITH THE CONGRESS WITH REGARD TO THE RECENT DECISION MADE BY THE PRESIDENT TO LIFT THE TRADE EMBARGO WITH VIETNAM.

MR. CHAIRMAN, U.S. INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, ACCEPTED FOR MANY YEARS AND REINFORCED BY MORE RECENTLY ACQUIRED INFORMATION, POINT OUT THAT OFFICIALS OF THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM AND THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC HAVE BEEN FAR LESS THAN FORTHCOMING IN PROVIDING OUR GOVERNMENT ALL INFORMATION ABOUT U.S. PERSONNEL STILL MISSING FROM THE VIETNAM WAR. ACCORDINGLY, IN A LETTER TO PRESIDENT CLINTON LAST WEEK MANY MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS JOINED WITH ME TO REQUEST THAT BEFORE LIFTING THE TRADE EMBARGO HE SHOULD REASSURE THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, AND IN PARTICULAR THE POW/MIA FAMILIES THAT OUR OWN INTELLIGENCE WAS NOT CORRECT. THE PRESIDENT HAS NOT DONE SO.

WE ALSO RECOMMENDED TO THE PRESIDENT THAT HE RELEASE A LIST OF NAMES OF THE MISSING AND UNACCOUNTED FOR U.S. PERSONNEL FOR WHOM, ACCORDING TO OUR INTELLIGENCE, VIETNAMESE AND LAOTIAN OFFICIALS MAY HAVE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION. IN RELEASING SUCH A LIST, WE

RECOMMENDED TO THE PRESIDENT THAT HE EXPLAIN WHY HE DEEMS IT APPROPRIATE TO LIFT THE TRADE EMBARGO NOTWITHSTANDING THE POSSIBILITY THAT REMAINS AND INFORMATION ABOUT THE PERSONNEL IDENTIFIED ON THE LIST ARE BEING WITHHELD. WE REGRET THAT THE PRESIDENT DID NOT HEED OUR RECOMMENDATION.

DURING THE PRESIDENT'S CAMPAIGN, HE PLEDGED TO THE FAMILIES AND THE NATION'S VETERANS THAT THERE WOULD BE "NO NORMALIZING OF RELATIONS WITH ANY NATION THAT IS AT ALL SUSPECTED OF WITHHOLDING ANY INFORMATION ON THE POW/MIA ISSUE." FOR THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, THE PRESS HAS BEEN REPORTING ON THE GRATIFICATION THAT THE ADMINISTRATION HAS BEEN EXPERIENCING REGARDING VIETNAM'S SUPPOSED COOPERATION. FOR THIS REASON, INCLUDING LAST WEEK'S SENATE PASSAGE OF A NON-BINDING RESOLUTION URGING THE PRESIDENT TO LIFT THE EMBARGO AND REASSURANCES FROM VARIOUS DISTINGUISHED VIETNAM VETERANS, THE PRESIDENT LIFTED THE EMBARGO.

PERMIT ME TO POINT OUT, AS I AM CERTAIN THAT OUR FAMILY AND VETERAN GROUPS POINTED OUT TO THE PRESIDENT BEFORE HE LIFTED THE EMBARGO, WHILE THERE HAS BEEN SOME "ACTIVITY" IN VIETNAM ON THIS ISSUE OVER THE LAST 12 MONTHS, ONLY THE REMAINS OF 3 AMERICANS PREVIOUSLY UNACCOUNTED FOR HAVE, IN FACT, BEEN RETURNED AND IDENTIFIED SINCE PRESIDENT CLINTON TOOK OFFICE. IN ADDITION, IF THE ADMINISTRATION NEEDS TO CONSULT WITH DISTINGUISHED VIETNAM VETERANS ABOUT THE QUESTION OF REMAINS AND VIETNAM'S COOPERATION IN FINDING THEM, THEN PERMIT ME TO CALL TO THE ATTENTION OF OUR ADMINISTRATION WITNESSES

HERE TODAY A FEBRUARY 3RD, LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT, SIGNED BY 70
FORMER POWS, INCLUDING OUR COLLEAGUE SAM JOHNSON, ON THIS VERY
ISSUE.

(READ ENCLOSED LETTER DATED 2/3/94)



February 3, 1994

EUGENE B. MCDANIEL
PRESIDENT

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MRS HOLLY COORS

MR. WILLIAM MURCHISON

AN OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT CLINTON FROM FORMER POWS

The Honorable William J. Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are deeply troubled by news reports that you may have an announcement to make on the trade embargo against Hanoi in a matter of days. You have also been quoted as saying that there are many distinguished veterans who think the embargo should be lifted.

As former American POWs of the Vietnam War, we urge you, in the strongest possible terms, not to take further steps to restore economic or diplomatic relations with Hanoi until you can certify that the Communist government there is being fully forthcoming in telling us what they know about our fellow POWs and MIAs who did not make it home with us in 1973.

Mr. President, all of us who were held as POWs in North Vietnam know first-hand that there are no limits to what the Vietnamese will do to show they are "cooperating" with the United States to account for our missing comrades. We consider ourselves experts at distinguishing between propaganda and results. As Dr. Kissinger once stated, Hanoi's leaders are duplicitous and they will stop at nothing to achieve their goals.

Some of our fellow POWs died in captivity in Vietnamese prisons. Yet they have not been accounted for. Some of our crewmates became missing during the same incidents which we survived. They too have not been accounted for. Some were captured and never heard from again. They have not been accounted for. Finally, a great many of our comrades never returned from Laos, even though we know they survived their incidents. North Vietnam controlled Laos during the war, and yet they still

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have not accounted for a single POW captured and held in Laos during the war.

There are those in Congress who are urging you to lift the embargo as a means to get more information. Mr. President, such a recommendation is nothing but a submission to blackmail by Hanoi. Do not let yourself be manipulated on this issue. The only way to get Hanoi to unilaterally provide what they are withholding is to be firm. Do you really think that those of us who made it home would have been released if the U. S. hadn't flexed its muscle during the December, 1972 bombing campaign? Of course not. And while we certainly do not recommend military action, we do recommend that the sanctions continue until the Communists in Hanoi decide to be fully forthcoming in accounting for our fellow POWs and MIAs.

Mr. President, we sacrificed precious years of our lives while in captivity. We survived because we believed our country would hold true to principle despite the disruptions at home. Please do not let us down by abandoning any hope we have of firmly convincing Hanoi to account for the remaining POWs and MIAs who came into their possession or control during the war. And please do not tell us that crash site excavations and fragmentary archival documents should be the measure of success in judging Vietnam's cooperation to date. We know better.

Sincerely,

U.S. Congressman Sam Johnson, USAF	POW 16 April 66 - 73
ADM. James B. Stockdale	POW 9 Sept 65 - 73
Col. Orson Swindle, USMC(Ret)	POW 11 NOV 66 - 73
BG. Robinson Risner, USAF(Ret)	POW 16 Sept 65 - 73
Capt. Eugene "Red" McDaniel, USN(Ret)	POW 19 May 67 - 73
Col. Larry Barbay, USAF(Ret)	POW 20 July 66 - 73
Col. Jerry Marvel, USMC(Ret)	POW 24 Feb 68 - 73
LCol. Myron Young, USAF(Ret)	POW 6 July 66 - 73
CDR. Dale Osborne, USAF(Ret)	POW 23 Sept 68 - 73
Col. Rudolf Zuberbuhler, USAF(Ret)	POW 12 Sept 72 - 73
LCol. Keith Lewis, USAF(Ret)	POW 5 Oct 72 - 73
LCol. James Padgett, USAF(Ret)	POW 11 May 92 - 73
Col. Bob White, USAF(Ret)	POW 24 Nov 69 - 73
LCol. John Alpers, USSF(Ret)	POW 5 Oct 72 - 73
Capt. Cole Black, USN(Ret)	POW 21 June 66 - 73
Capt. Moon Mullen, USN(Ret)	POW 6 Jan 67 - 73
Capt. James L. Hutton, USN(Ret)	POW 16 Oct 65 - 73
Capt. Bill Stark, USN.(Ret)	POW 19 May 67 - 73
Capt Harry Jenkins, USN(Ret)	POW 13 NOV 65 - 73
Col. James Young, USAF(Ret)	POW 6 July 66 - 73
LCol. Konrad Trautman, USAF(Ret)	POW 5 Oct 67 - 73
Col. Laird Gutterson, USAF(Ret)	POW 23 Feb 68 - 73

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Col. Ted Guy, USAF(Ret)	POW 22 Mar 68 - 73
Mr. Mike Berge, Civ	POW 28 Jan 68 - 73
Col. Lee Ellis, USAF(Ret)	POW 7 Nov 67 - 73
Col. Jay Jensen, USAF(Ret)	POW 18 Feb 67 - 73
Maj. Jose Anzaldua, USMC(Ret)	POW 23 Jan 70 - 73
Mr. Larry Stark, Civ	POW 1 Feb 68 - 73
Col. Bert Campbell, USAF(Ret)	POW 1 July 66 - 73
Capt. Irv Williams, USN(Ret)	POW 24 Apr 67 - 73
Maj. John Parsels, USA(Ret)	POW 5 Feb 70 - 73
Col. A.J. Myers, USAF(Ret)	POW 1 Jun 66 - 73
Col. Steve Long, USAF(Ret)	POW 28 Feb 69 - 73
Col. Jack Van Loan, USAF(Ret)	POW 20 May 67 - 73
Col. Bill Baugh, USAF(Ret)	POW 21 Jan 67 - 73
Col. Don Burns, USAF(Ret)	POW 2 Dec 66 - 73
Col. Art Burer, USAF(Ret)	POW 21 Mar 66 - 73
Col. Thomas Klomann, USAF(Ret)	POW 20 Dec 72 - 73
Col. Ken Cordier, USAF(Ret)	POW 2 Dec 66 - 73
Capt. Jim Ball, USN(Ret)	POW 16 Oct 65 - 73
Maj. Mark Smith, USA(Ret)	POW 7 Apr 72 - 73
Maj. Dennis L. Thompson, USA(Ret)	POW 7 Feb 68 - 73
Col. Bob Jeffray, USAF(Ret)	POW 20 Dec 65 - 73
Col. Julian Jayroe, USAF(Ret)	POW 19 Jan 67 - 73
Capt. Ross Terry, USN(Ret)	POW 9 Oct 66 - 73
LCol. Hank Barrows, USAF(Ret)	POW 19 Dec 72 - 73
Col. Wes Schierman, USAF(Ret)	POW 28 Aug 65 - 73
Col. Fred Flom, USAF(Ret)	POW 8 Aug 66 - 73
Capt. Gordon Nagagawa, USN(Ret)	POW 21 Dec 72 - 73
Col. Terry Uyeyama, USAF(Ret)	POW 18 May 69 - 73
Col. Frank D. Lewis, USAF(Ret)	POW 28 Dec 72 - 73
Col. Gobel James, USAF(Ret)	POW 15 July 68 - 73
Lt. Bill Robinson, USAF(Ret)	POW 20 Dec 65 - 73
Col. Ralph W. Galati, USAF(Ret)	POW 16 Feb 72 - 73
Capt. Rv Southwick, USN(Ret)	POW 14 May 67 - 73
Col. Ken Wallingford, USA(Ret)	POW 7 Apr 72 - 73
Mr. Harry Ettmueller, USA	POW 3 Feb 68 - 73
Mr. John A. Deering, USMC	POW 3 Feb 68 - 73
MSG. Donat J. Gouin, USA(Ret)	POW 3 Feb 68 - 73
Col. James O. Hivner, USAF(Ret)	POW 5 Oct 65 - 73
Col. James L. Lamar, USAF(Ret)	POW 6 May 66 - 73
Col. Thomas M. Madison, USAF(Ret)	POW 15 May 66 - 73
Capt. Render Crayton, USN(Ret)	POW 7 Feb 66 - 73
Capt. Brian Woods, USN(Ret)	POW 18 Sept 68 - 73
Col. Jim Bedinger, USAF(Ret)	POW 22 Nov 69 - 73
Capt. Jim Hickerson, USN(Ret)	POW 22 Dec 67 - 73
Capt. Dave Carey, USN(Ret)	POW 31 Aug 67 - 73
Capt. Rob Doremus, USN(Ret)	POW 24 Aug 65 - 73
Capt. Reid McCleary, USN(Ret)	POW May 67 - 73
S/SGT. John Sexton, USA	POW 12 Aug 69 - 73

MR. CHAIRMAN, AS YOU CAN SEE, THIS ISSUE IS NOT ABOUT REMAINS. IT IS ABOUT THE FAMILIES' TRUST IN THEIR GOVERNMENT AND SEEKING AND DISCOVERING THE TRUTH. FOR EXAMPLE:

IS IT TRUE THAT WHEN A LIVE SIGHTING INVESTIGATION IS CONDUCTED, OUR PEOPLE GIVE THE VIETNAMESE ABOUT 48 HOURS BEFORE VISITING THE AREAS IN QUESTION?

IS IT TRUE THAT WHEN WE KNOW THAT WE ARE GOING TO DO A LIVE SIGHTING INSPECTION WE DO NOT TAKE MEASURES TO MONITOR ACTIVITY AT THOSE LOCATIONS, PRIOR TO AND AFTER THE VISIT? (WHEN WE CONDUCT NO-NOTICE OR SHORT-NOTICE VISITS OF IRAQI NUCLEAR WEAPONS SITES WE TASK OUR SATELLITES TO LOOK BEFORE AND AFTER. HOW CAN THE SEARCH FOR POW/MIAS BE A "HIGHEST NATIONAL PRIORITY" IF WE DO NOT TAKE THESE SIMPLE PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES.

IS IT TRUE THAT WHEN WE LEARN OF A VIETNAMESE SOURCE WHO HAS INFORMATION REGARDING LIVE SIGHTINGS, OUR INVESTIGATORS ASK VIETNAMESE AUTHORITIES FOR HELP IN FINDING THE PERSON AND HELP IN ARRANGING THE MEETING?

IS IT TRUE THAT THE QUALIFICATION STANDARDS FOR KEY PERSONNEL DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE INVESTIGATION/REPORTING CHAIN -- THE TASK FORCE COMMANDER, DETACHMENT COMMANDERS IN HANOI, VIENTIANE, PHNOM PENH, TEAM CHIEFS OF FIELD TEAMS, PRIORITY CASE INVESTIGATION TEAMS, AND ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW TEAMS -- DO NOT INCLUDE LANGUAGE

FLUENCY RELEVANT TO THE COUNTRY ASSIGNMENT, EXPERIENCE IN INTELLIGENCE INTERROGATION OR CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION, AREA STUDIES/ATTACHE EXPERIENCE RELEVANT TO THE COUNTRY OF ASSIGNMENT OR PREVIOUS POW/MIA EXPERIENCE?

MR. CHAIRMAN, REGRETFULLY THE ANSWERS TO ALL OF THESE QUESTIONS IS "YES". ACCORDINGLY, WE MUST CONCLUDE THAT WE HAVE NOT BEEN SEEKING THE TRUTH. AT WHICH POINT, THE OVERRIDING QUESTION BECOMES, "WHY"?

PERHAPS THE ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE POW AND MIA ELEMENTS IN THE PENTAGON HAVING BEEN RECENTLY REORGANIZED UNDER THE POLITICAL OFFICE OF POW/MIA AFFAIRS. SUCH A REORGANIZATION VIOLATES THE PRINCIPLE OF MAINTAINING THE INDEPENDENCE OF INTELLIGENCE ENTITIES FROM POLITICAL INFLUENCE. OUR GOVERNMENT IS BASED UPON A SYSTEM OF CHECKS AND BALANCES. THOSE WHO HANDLE THE CASH DO NOT KEEP THE BOOKS AND VICE VERSA. SO MR. CHAIRMAN, IF WE FIND OUT WHO WANTS TO CONTROL BOTH THE FUNDS AND THE BOOKS WE MIGHT DISCOVER OUR ASSETS IN THE FIELD ARE NOT DELIVERING ANY SIGNIFICANT DIVIDENDS.

MR. CHAIRMAN, MY COLLEAGUES, FOR FAR TOO LONG OUR NATION'S VETERAN'S ORGANIZATIONS, THE FAMILIES OF OUR POW/MIAS, AND EX-POWS THEMSELVES HAVE BEEN DESCRIBED BY SOME AS BEING UNABLE TO PUT THE WAR BEHIND THEM. THEIR FEARS, WE ARE TOLD, ARE GHOULISH AND DRIVEN BY SORROW. NOW, DUE TO THE OVERWHELMING EVIDENCE AVAILABLE TO PUBLIC, I BELIEVE THAT WILL CHANGE. AND IT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY

TO ACCELERATE THE PROCESS BY HELPING THOSE WHO KNOW THE TRUTH TO STEP FORWARD WITHOUT FEAR OF RECRIMINATION. THE PRESIDENT HAS REACHED OUT HIS HAND TO THE VIETNAMESE. LET US REACH OUT OURS TO THOSE AMERICANS WITH HEAVY HEARTS WHO HAVE MORE INFORMATION AND WISH TO HELP OUR NATION TO TRULY PUT THE WAR BEHIND US.

IN CONCLUSION, WHILE I HAVE THE GREATEST RESPECT FOR MY 62 COLLEAGUES IN THE SENATE, ESPECIALLY THE SEVEN WHO ARE VIETNAM VETERANS AND THE ONE FORMER POW WHO URGED THE PRESIDENT TO LIFT THE EMBARGO, I WOULD MUCH PREFER TO RELY ON THE ADVICE OF THE 70 FORMER POWS WHO ARE ALL VIETNAM VETERANS AND WHO TRULY HAVE EXPERTISE IN THIS ISSUE. WHEN THEY COME FORWARD TO INFORM THAT THE ADMINISTRATION AND THE VIETNAMESE ARE GETTING SERIOUS ABOUT SEARCHING FOR THE TRUTH, THEN I FEEL CERTAIN THAT OUR MIA/POW FAMILIES AND OUR VETERAN ORGANIZATIONS WILL REACH OUT TO THEM AND SAY "YES" THE WAR IS OVER.