

So then we proceeded forward. We worked on it. And right in the middle of that, we mined Haiphong Harbor and they broke it off. So I'm saying, if during the war we could have that kind of a conversation, surely 20 years after the war we could consider minor little things that would mean a great deal to them.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, let me just say to you, Mr. Perot, I do not disagree with you. But, as you know, the POW/MIA activist community and others in the country do not think there should be anything at all until they have given you the full accounting. Now, you are contradicting that today.

Mr. PEROT. Let me talk to them.

The CHAIRMAN. You are saying we should have a different approach, correct?

Mr. PEROT. I am just saying I think I can take the most vigorous MIA activists in the country, who I am certain has one mission in mind—that's to get his friends home and his family members home—and convince them that a series of small gestures to build faith and confidence between the countries, to build the stature of the negotiator to show them that this is a person of tremendous influence in this country, who can snap his fingers and have an economic team over there visiting with them about—

The CHAIRMAN. I like this approach, incidentally. I think this makes a lot of sense.

Mr. PEROT. Now, then, suddenly, they look on this—see, one of the interesting things the Communists could never come to grips that one person in the United States was free to charter an airplane. See. They just—any time I would visit with them they—in their culture, they just couldn't believe that one private citizen—

The CHAIRMAN. Could do this.

Mr. PEROT. Could do that. And it was beyond their scope as a Communist and what have you, which I understood. But, then they will still look on—keep in mind, Russia can't support these people any longer. Russian can't prop them up.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, they need help. They admit that.

Mr. PEROT. Camranh Bay, sitting there, right?

The CHAIRMAN. In your testimony, you say that you thought that in 3 months of this kind of negotiation you could clear this issue up. Is that correct?

Mr. PEROT. It would go a long way down the road to find out whether you could or not.

The CHAIRMAN. So, what happens if you were empowered? Let us say that President Bush empowered you to go over there and take some of these little steps in the next 3 months, and you say to them, come clean. And at the end of the 3 months—

Senator KERREY. Mr. Chairman, make it President Clinton, a more acceptable hypothetical. [Laughter.]

Mr. PEROT. Well, I want to do this immediately.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes, I understand. And we cannot do that until January.

Mr. PEROT. No, no, no, I understand.

The CHAIRMAN. So, I am just dealing with the constitutional limitations.

Senator McCAIN. You were not displaying your bias there, either?

The CHAIRMAN. Since we are not monolithic we are proceeding. Now, let's assume that he gave you that power. You go over in the next 3 months and you are able to engage in these efforts. At the end of the 3 months they say to you, you know, this has been a terrific relationship and you have been able to travel all over the country, but we just do not have anybody to give you. And you have been able to see that there is no real change. Is there an end to the process? Or does it then become, well, you have not given us the people that we know you have, even though we cannot prove you have them?

Mr. PEROT. I would say that at the end of 3 months you have a very keen sense. Everything I have ever done in my life I had an idea planted in my head when I started. It changes wildly from day to day based on actual experience. And I think that is true of most of us. But I think in 3 months of very intense work you would have a good sense of whether or not this would work.

Now, as I said this morning, I would urge—and I am not—you know, let's not make it personal. Let's pick a qualified person that Congress and the President are very comfortable with, and there are many wonderful people in this country that could do it. And have that person go night and day. And at the end of 3 months, that person would either have made significant progress, which I think he would have, or he could come back and he would have broken the code, or she would have broken the code, on how you do it.

We would say, what we thought would work won't work, but this could work. But you have been there and you have seen it, felt it, tasted it, lived with it. And I would not spend a minute running around the country looking for MIAs. I would spend all the time finding out, how do we heal the wound.

The CHAIRMAN. I think there is some merit in what you are saying. I am confident that President Bush would be very interested in sending you over there for 3 months and telling you not to come back until you have resolved it. [Laughter.]

Mr. PEROT. Now, just so your committee knows this, there are addendum to my letter. One is comments on the meeting. It starts off: "The Vietnamese repeatedly emphasized their belief that our country is good and the people of the United States are good." Then it goes all the way through, and this is basically—they say, you are always asking us to do things for you and you are unwilling to do anything for us.

See, this—now, again, this is just the beginning of talk and negotiation. But, the point is, it helps you—the Indians had a statement, you know, walk a mile in the other man's moccasins. We need to spend enough time understanding what their issues are to help resolve this.

The CHAIRMAN. I think your point, incidentally, is a very interesting one. I do not take it lightly at all. I think that we have been miserable in our negotiating approach, almost nonexistent in many regards. Not all colleagues might share that view, but I think that we have given this very little opportunity to really get to the bottom of it. And if it is indeed a matter of urgency to bring anybody home alive who might be there, in many ways, our current posture merely prolongs the agony, I believe.

Senator Kerrey has an additional 5 minutes from his previous questioning period.

Senator KERREY. Well, first of all, Mr. Chairman, the way I hear the discussion going as I come back into the room it pretty well continued the line of questioning that I had started as far as where do we go from here. I must say, Mr. Perot, in spite of some anger that you might feel toward the Federal Government in this regard, I would say that it is apt to be that however we resolve this, and it is my deep desire to resolve the agony that we have, that you are going to get called on by somebody to be play a role. Because you do have the capacity to communicate, not only to Americans, but to Vietnamese as well.

You may say no, but you unquestionably have the experience and the commitment to play a role.

We regrettably have got to examine the past as well. And one of the most difficult moments for me is that period from 1973 to 1975, when we went from having a peace accord to the fall of Saigon. As Senator McCain isolated earlier, the North Vietnamese breaking the agreement, no elections allowed in the South, and eventually, the war spreading all the way into the South, and the South fell. The North Vietnamese had all kinds of excuses and reasons for violating the peace accords, but nonetheless, it is hard fact that they violated the peace accord.

Some of the dates I think might be relevant, at least they are for me and it might be, as I ask you the questions about these things, it would be to refresh your memory as well. The peace accords were signed on the January 23, 1973. The Homecoming date was the March 29. The famous letter that now apparently has been repudiated was on the April 13, 1973.

You referenced Watergate earlier, and my memory was not sound enough so I had over the lunch hour some dates pulled on that as well. The break-in occurred on the June 17, 1972. The guilty verdict came down for those broke in on the January 30, 1973, a week after the peace accords themselves were signed.

There was a breakthrough in the investigation on the March 23, 1973, when Watergate defendants were first provided some information. The committee convenes in May. The hearings went from May to August 1973, not long after the Homecoming itself occurred.

Can you just elaborate a bit on your own recollection of the mood of the Nation in 1973 and how you think that might have contributed to our own Government's attitude? Because I must say that it seems to me that, as I examine it, what happened was, without any intent of pointing fingers or finding scapegoats, that early on in this game the rules of engagement were set and those rules were never broken all the way through. Information was not released.

Senator Grassley and others have been hounding the Defense Intelligence Agency to release information. They finally released the information recently, and we are now all pouring through the reams of stuff. It seems to me the rules of engagement were set very early. And it seems to me, as I look at it, the rules of engagement came as a consequence of just wanting to pull the window down on Vietnam and get it off the screen altogether and move on to something else entirely. And that any reference to POWs or any-

thing having to do with Vietnam provoked a difficult political situation and people just did not want to examine it for a relatively long period of time.

I am wondering, sir, if that is your own recollection? If not, could you perhaps elaborate on what you recall from those days from 1973 to 1975?

Mr. PEROT. It is very close. You mention the Homecoming in March?

Senator KERREY. March 29 is the day I have.

Mr. PEROT. The first plane came back from Hanoi when, earlier than that, wasn't it? January, right.

So they came home in several groups. But in January the first group came home. And I think all of the POWs were home well before March. But you had your White House event in March probably. That would have been the big event, where all were welcomed home officially.

It was just like, you know, just constant saturation bombing day in and day out on Watergate. The country was preoccupied with it. The country was exhausted from Vietnam and then had Watergate on top of that. And it's fascinating, I think a key document in this whole thing is when the decision was made—and Roger Shields made the statement—and we put the problem behind us.

But there is one little piece that we haven't mentioned today. Former POWs, just back from hell, who kept raising the issue of men left behind after April 14, were called in, chewed out, and told to cut it out.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you know who they were?

Mr. PEROT. With time and with patience I can reconstruct it. But that's old, because I remember how angry they were at the time. And I was still hearing from the families that were home, and what have you.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you recall if Admiral Stockdale or—

Mr. PEROT. I will have to just go back and start calling people. And I'm sure they'll level with me.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, clearly, Mr. Perot, and I am sorry to interrupt, that would be very helpful to us. And we will leave the record open for the purposes of that information.

Mr. PEROT. I will try to do my best to find you a few of those guys.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. PEROT. But if you didn't put it behind you there was a point when basically, they said, look—and the general theme was, it's so bad in this country that a military man can't wear his uniform to the Pentagon. And that's how bad it was.

"We've got to rebuild the military. We've got to defend this country against Russia. We still have the cold war in full force. We have got to face forward, not backward." And that was the general theme that was given to them.

Now, then, 20-some odd years later, we have got a White House official in this memo here today talking about, my gosh, how will it look if someone pops up? See, we're back to the same old story. How will it look? To me, it looks a lot worse to leave them there. It would look great to have them come home.

Senator KERREY. Probably the first POWs were released on February 12, 1973, and the completion must have been around some time in March.

Mr. PEROT. Is that it?

Senator KERREY. Can you tell me a little bit about this organization, United We Stand? I assume you had a very close relationship with the Nixon administration. You said you had a close relationship with Mr. Kissinger and a close relationship with others in the administration. United We Stand, as I understand it, was organized for the purpose of making the American people understand that the POWs themselves were being held. It was expressly for that purpose, trying to generate—

Mr. PEROT. And for trying to show unity to get the war Vietnamized and closed down. The thing that was obvious to me and I think obvious to any close observer of this is the Vietnamese were really taking advantage of the division in our country. Once the decision was made to Vietnamize the war and the intelligence community indicated that half the prisoners might die of brutality and neglect in the 3-year period it would take, then it seemed to me that it made a lot of sense to try to show unity, and particularly on the POW issue, and if we could extend that, fine.

And, as it turned out, there was tremendous unity on the POW issue, to the point, as I said this morning, a senior officer of the North Vietnamese military, as they went to the airport, told one of our officers, the worse mistake we made in the war was the brutal treatment of the prisoners in the early years. It was the only thing that united the American people.

Now, the closeness—it was a professional—I don't want to infer a closeness with Dr. Kissinger. He was a very busy man. He is the man I worked with on this project. But that was at a very high policy level. I had very little contact with him. Most of my contact was with then-Colonel Alexander Haig, who was available night or day, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. And as I have said before publicly, both Dr. Kissinger and Dr. Haig's—and Colonel Haig's attitude when I was around them was—it was as if these men were their sons. They really cared.

Senator KERREY. I am not trying to trap you in any way—

The CHAIRMAN. Unfortunately, we need to try to move on.

Senator KERREY. Didn't you take some of my time earlier?

The CHAIRMAN. No, I took my time from my second round, and I am about to turn it over to Senator Smith.

Senator KERREY. If I could just complete the question, Mr. Chairman.

I am not trying to trap you at all, Mr. Perot. I acquired the information about United We Stand from the deposition you gave voluntarily. And it seems that, in the deposition, the idea of forming this 501(c)(3) came from the Nixon administration.

Mr. PEROT. No.

Senator KERREY. It did not?

Mr. PEROT. I don't think you got that from my deposition.

Senator KERREY. It was an idea that you had on your own to keep it a private organization, not connected with the Government, that was your idea?

Mr. PEROT. Excuse me. The POW project had to be a completely private project, otherwise it would have had no credibility with the Vietnamese, and these were the people we were trying to impact.

Senator KERREY. But that was your suggestion that it be kept private?

Mr. PEROT. That is a good point. No, I think that was actually Dr. Kissinger and/or Colonel Haig said this has to be done privately. You will have to use your own money. Because if there is any chance, you know, that it could ever leak, then everything you've done is destroyed. That's the way it was done.

Senator KERREY. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Smith.

Senator SMITH. Is it the chairman's wish to bring the other witnesses up?

The CHAIRMAN. I thought what we might do now is integrate the panels. I know there are more questions for you, Mr. Perot.

Mr. PEROT. I am going to eat lunch, if it's all right. I didn't get a chance to.

The CHAIRMAN. Wait, Mr. Perot, if we could, I want to finish then the other round with the senators before you do that.

Mr. PEROT. Sure.

The CHAIRMAN. I just thought it would be handy to have them present at the same time.

Senator REID. Mr. Chairman, to expedite things, do you think we ought to go 5 minutes on this round?

The CHAIRMAN. I think we will be all right timewise. We have got plenty of time.

Senator Smith, if you have questions now, of him? If you want to wait, we can come back.

Senator SMITH. I do have one or two specific questions about the period of time of the meeting in Laos, and perhaps I can pick up on it again when the other panelists come up.

The evidence regarding POWs in Laos, in my opinion, centers around live-sighting reports, which we have gotten post-1973. The Eagleburger document that you referred to, in my opinion, shows some indication of knowledge at least of intelligence that would support knowledge of POWs in Laos.

When you were there in 1970 and you had this meeting with the [CIA] station chief and others, what types of indications did they give to you specifically about the existence of POWs in Laos during the war in 1970?

Mr. PEROT. Well, basically, that's in my letter to the President. They basically indicated that they had radio intercepts. They were able to track the prisoners on the ground. They knew where the prisoners were being held. The reason they had not tried to rescue the prisoners is the risk-reward ratio was not good. I certainly agreed with that. They probably would have gotten more people killed in a rescue than they rescued.

But they seemed to have a great deal of knowledge about who they were, where they were held. And they told of specific cases of Sam Neua Province, which ties in with General Walters' testimony several years later.

Senator SMITH. And I would certainly say for the record, based on documents thus far that the committee has reviewed, and it is

my understanding in some cases these documents may still be classified, so I cannot discuss them at this time, but hopefully they will be declassified shortly, that some of this documentary information was provided to Mr. Kissinger and it was his impression as well that there were POWs. In fact, a specific number was mentioned in some of the documents that I have seen. At this point I do not choose to mention that number, but that there was far more than the number 10 which was released by the North Vietnamese.

So I think it is important to show on the record that Mr. Perot is relating to the committee and to the American people what he was told by Government officials in Laos. I think the documents that have been provided would certainly lend credence to that—that somebody had information to that effect. Whether or not the information was correct or incorrect I guess depends on our intelligence collecting abilities.

We do know, regarding the Baron 52 incident, which we have already had testimony on publicly, that there was a belief, at least, that there were intercepts. Some choose to deny that there were radio intercepts. Some say otherwise. The point is there were copies of such intercepts in the files which we saw.

So I think there is an ample amount of evidence to show, in my opinion, that somebody believed there were American POWs in Laos not only in 1970, but also 1973 and after.

And I think it is important to point out here, there is a time-frame that begins to develop. Mr. Perot was there in 1970. He is briefed by the station chief, and we will be hearing from those people shortly. But he is briefed and they have indicated that there are POWs there. The intelligence right up until the Paris Peace Accords indicated that.

And then, as I said before, a 2 or 3-week window of time develops in which an administrative decision comes down saying otherwise. So, the point I am making here is there is a lot of open-ended questions to be answered. And I think, unfortunately, sometimes, because of the nature of the way we operate around here, and certainly on this issue, we beat up on each other.

The truth of the matter is that all of these documents and all of this information should be willingly provided to the committee and to the American people. That is not the case. We are getting a lot of information without a great deal of trouble. But we are also having a heck of a time getting other pieces of information. Specifically, information at the highest level of intelligence, especially in the area of the CIA. And it is a CIA operation, was a CIA operation in Laos.

You have given a very specific comment about what you heard, and I would just for the record that I think, based on documents that I saw, that I have seen thus far, there would be support for what you have said. I think it is also important to point out that Mr. Perot is testifying to what he was told. That he was not a Government official. Never represented himself as a Government official.

He essentially, and I will be happy to take your comment and yield to my colleagues, but, as I understand from his testimony, has basically talked about four areas. His humanitarian efforts on behalf of the POWs who were in Vietnam during the war, he was

asked to help and did help. He was asked to help in terms of going over to Laos and getting a briefing from the station chief, and he did that. He was also asked by his testimony to look into the matter of a tape by high level Government officials. And I might say that I had direct involvement in that information, and everything that I heard Mr. Perot say was correct regarding the tape.

I was involved in the negotiations for that tape as well. It did not materialize. It may have been a fraud. It may not have been. I do not know. But I was involved in those negotiations, and nothing Mr. Perot said was incorrect about that.

And fourth, a man who has offered his services at the request, again, of President Reagan in 1986 or 1987, to try to jump start the issue.

So I think we all should try to remember that the testimony that Mr. Perot is giving—he is trying to be helpful. He has worked very closely with this committee over the past several months to be helpful. And I think we ought to be careful not to characterize something that he is not saying. I think we have to be very careful about that.

But I just believe that we have a tough time sometimes defining the word evidence. But, to me, when intercepts are valid for one sighting and not valid for another, I think we need a reasonable explanation. We have radio messages. We have signal intelligence on Laos, which you have already indicated, and we probably have more that the committee will be getting into. We do have radio messages.

We have the Nhom Marrot raid. Some believe in that. Some do not. We do know, though, as a result of Nhom Marrot, that the President of the United States, President Reagan, thought enough of the information on that to organize it and to try to determine if POWs were there.

So, this does not happen, the President of the United States does not order a raid without adequate intelligence preparation. Let us be honest with each other, for God's sake. So, if he is getting erroneous information, then we have got a problem with the intelligence agencies in the country, not with Ross Perot or the President of the United States.

That may be the problem.

So, I just want to offer that for the record, Mr. Chairman. But, to conclude by saying that we do have documents that do support, and the Eagleburger document is one of them, that does support or does lend credence to the fact that there were American POWs there during the war and after the war.

Are these documents correct?

That is the intelligence agencies involved, they have got to try to answer those questions. Certainly not the President or Ross Perot.

I yield, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. I was about to say thank you for the questions, then I caught myself.

Thank you.

Senator SMITH. Other people can ask questions. That is my prerogative. I can make a statement if I want to.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Reid.

Senator REID. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Perot, you are really going to want that lunch I guess pretty soon. This is a long time for you.

Mr. PEROT. That is all right. It's all right. This is more important.

Senator REID. One of the things I think we have to establish clearly, because there are, as you know, some contradictory testimony about the briefing that you had in Laos in 1970. First of all, what time of the day or night did that take place, do you recall?

Mr. PEROT. Could you tell me what the contradictory testimony is? See, because I'm not a Government employee, so I don't get any of this. Could we first explain where is the contradiction?

Senator REID. It is my understanding that the CIA Laos station chief will say that he never spoke to you either at the U.S. embassy in Laos or anywhere else. That the U.S. Ambassador to Laos at the time states that they lacked the sophisticated intelligence necessary to come up with reports of specificity that you, Martin and Meurer said that they had received.

So, what I want to do is establish that the conversation took place. You have talked about it a number of times. What time of the day or night did it—

Mr. PEROT. I don't remember, sir. It was in 1970. I probably will shock you that I can't give you the exact time. But I don't remember the exact time of day.

Senator REID. And that is fine. That is fine.

Mr. PEROT. Now, perhaps one of my associates who was there will.

Senator REID. And we will try to do that.

Mr. BRYANT. Senator, all three of these gentlemen have testified about everything they recall about that conversation, including the time.

Senator REID. Sure. Fine. No problem.

Do you remember, Mr. Perot, who was present?

Mr. PEROT. I just remember being in a meeting. There were several people there. I remember there were maps on the wall. And my recollection is that * * * was the man briefing us.

Senator REID. And tell us briefly what was said and by whom?

Mr. PEROT. Well, he was the one doing the talking, as I recall. And I've already covered what he said and he pointed out, you know.

Senator REID. So, the briefing took place in the—

Mr. PEROT. The spring of 1970.

Senator REID. And present at the meeting were you, your two associates, and the CIA station chief, right?

Mr. PEROT. * * * who, you know—

Senator REID. Whoever he was.

Mr. PEROT. You know, he may be the tooth fairy. I don't know who he is. But the point is, he was the person doing—excuse me, he was introduced to me as * * *. Have you spent much time around the CIA, Senator?

Senator REID. Probably more than I would like.

Mr. PEROT. OK. Then you understand why I would ask that question?

Senator REID. Yes.

Mr. PEROT. All right, fine. Again, they had a very difficult mission. These are fine people. I have the highest regard for them.

Senator REID. Was there anybody else there?

Mr. PEROT. But they were running a nonexistent war in Laos, right?

Senator REID. Was there anyone else there in the meeting?

Mr. PEROT. I said my recollection is there were other people there. I don't remember who was there.

But basically the embassy was a CIA operation.

Senator REID. Mr. Perot, would you tell me what happened in 1970, wherein the Vietnamese sent people to kill your family? What do you know about that?

Mr. PEROT. They went to Canada. The Vietnamese met with terrorist groups in this country. The FBI had penetrated those terrorist groups. The FBI warned me. We took security precautions around my family, and the most significant event we had one night is five people coming across my front yard with rifles.

Fortunately, we had a security dog trained, supposedly trained to go for one person. Instead, he worked them like a sheep dog. He worked all five and got a big piece out of the seat of one of the guys as he went over the fence. We thought we'd be able to find that person, because if you take a tremendous hit to your seat you bleed profusely. We checked the hospitals within 300 miles of Dallas, never could find a soul.

Senator REID. But you were alerted to this by the FBI?

Mr. PEROT. The FBI, yes. They had penetrated that group. They alerted us, so fortunately nothing happened. Well, when you have got several guys with rifles, that is a pretty good crowd coming at your house.

We had a number of other interesting incidents on airplanes, places like that, but so far, so good. Nothing happened.

Senator REID. What is your opinion as to why no further attempts were made by the U.S. Government to locate this Mr. Gregson? This is the man with the videotape that you talked about earlier.

Mr. PEROT. I don't know. You'd have to ask the people. See, I'm just down in Texas doing business. I get a call from the Vice President of the United States, I drop everything.

Can you imagine how complicated it is to figure out how to get a guy out of jail in Singapore? How'd you like to find an Indian businessman and convince him that you'll give him the \$45,000, he'll drop the charges, then a guy goes to Bangkok.

This was a very complicated undertaking, and in mid-flight everybody got cold feet, which is—you know, that's fine, but they got partially cold feet. They wanted me to finish it, but they wanted to be away from it.

I agreed to finish it. I kept them informed every step of the way. They knew when he was going to be in Washington. They attempted to arrest him. He avoided them, and then everybody just kind of ran away from it.

Senator REID. Do you at this time think that there was a videotape? What's your gut feeling?

Mr. PEROT. I would hope that my Government wouldn't send me on that kind of a wild goose chase if they didn't think there was

one. Keep in mind, we had the man asking me—the man asking me ran the CIA, General Peroots ran the DIA, so these are not just two ex-paper boys up there having fun over the phone.

Now, somebody has told me there's a press statement by General Peroots that they were just teaching me about scams.

Senator REID. Teaching you about what?

Mr. PEROT. When you get him under oath, ask him, because when you think of all the things they've asked me to do over the years, I consider that a really gross abuse, if this was just, one day they said let's go play a trick on Perot and see how much money he'll spend on nothing—keep in mind there is the Special Forces officer who claimed he saw the tape. I never saw the tape.

Senator REID. Mr. Perot, one of the things—as Chairman Kerry mentioned, we're going to go into this in November. One of the things that has been alarming, disappointing, and amazing, is all of the groups, special interest groups who are in this for money, just trying to drum up people.

I met with a couple of people from Nevada last trip home. One woman lost her husband she'd been married to 19 years, on his third tour of duty in Vietnam. Another man's young son was in the Army and was lost in a battle, but because of their desperation, over the years they have given money to people to bring their son and father home—son and husband home.

Now, are you familiar with any of these groups that have done this to these people?

Mr. PEROT. If I knew of anybody like that, I'd do everything I could to put him out of business. I'd bring in legal action against him.

Senator REID. You feel that should be one of the responsibilities of this committee, do you not?

Mr. PEROT. Yes, but again, as I said this morning, as you look at this—see, first off, anybody that wants to do this as a business doesn't understand that this is not a good place to do business, you know, to try to make a living ripping off the families of MIAs. You'd be a whole lot better to cut grass for a living. This is a not a profitable thing to do, I wouldn't think.

It's my sense—and I've had very little contact with these groups, except that every now and then they call me all excited about something they're in the middle of, and I listen, and so you say well, do you know so-and-so, so-and-so? Maybe I've never heard of them. I say yeah, I've heard his voice over the phone. That'd be 99 percent of them.

A few of them might have gotten in my office and I would listen. Some of them were sent to my office by senior officials of the U.S. Government and I always listen to them and then marvel why they were sent.

But when the dust clears, I would put most of them in the category of people whose hearts were in the right place but who were so emotionally involved that they lost perspective in terms of what they were trying to do.

I'm sure there are some that are just rip-off artists, and certainly action should be taken there, but just imagine, let's assume you do go over there, you do live up on the Mekong River, this is not the Riviera. These fellows that group there and do all that stuff, half of

them I think really believe in what they're doing. Most of them really believe in what they're doing, and they're well-intentioned but misguided, would be my summary.

So I think you need to look at it. I put them—in general terms, now if we had a real rip-off guy I'd say let's put him in jail tonight, right? The well-intentioned person, I'd say be very careful. The U.S. Government employee taking my tax money month after month after month, burying this, sitting on this, spin-controlling it and letting the clock tick down on these guys, I've got a lot less respect for him than I do of the well-intentioned guy who will go to the Mekong, even though he's not fully informed in terms of what he's trying to do.

Senator REID. I can appreciate that, but specifically referring to some of these photographs, which from all the information we've been able to obtain are just phony—there is no other way to say it—it would seem to me that this is in a different category than the well-intentioned people.

Mr. PEROT. Well again, I don't know anything about them. See, I've never—again, when you all were pinning me down wanting live videotape, et cetera, et cetera, I was sitting here thinking to myself, gee, if you ever produced it, God knows how they'd recast it.

The point being, the person might have brought that out thinking he had something. Let's assume he's been over there fishing around for years, finally gets this, some con man on the other side sells it to him, I don't know who the bad guy is here, and I don't mean to defend any of these people. I'm just saying my heart goes out to all of them.

Now, there are people who have fallen on the battle field in Vietnam who feel so strongly about their friends who were left behind that it has driven their lives since the war. Now, again, I would say as you go into that, don't be more harsh on them than you would on a high-level Government employee that sat on this, left these guys behind, shut it down on April 14 and let them rot in wholesale numbers, and we're paying for that.

Senator REID. I think your advice is well taken.

Senator Kerry, that's all I have.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Reid. Senator McCain.

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you, Mr. Perot. We appreciate your patience and your perseverance. Maybe we can send someone out to get you a sandwich if we have extended questions.

Before we go much further, I think it's very important I was not here when you came in after the lunch break, but I understand you made a comment or statement that you had heard that you were going to be set up, or something along those lines. I can document, Mr. Perot, and I hope you're paying attention.

Mr. PEROT. I am. I'm just looking at your papers.

Senator MCCAIN. Last night, my staff—at about 10:30 at night I was on the floor debating the Bosnian resolution—received those documents. My staff person this morning came in with these documents.

I looked at them, I asked him if they were going to be disclosed to the press. I was told that they were going to be made public, and since they were, I knew that they would be of great interest to you,

and I felt that it would be very important that you be allowed to respond after—as I said this morning, after you had had the opportunity to examine those documents.

So I want to make it perfectly clear, I don't know who you may have been referring to, but the fact is that I wanted you to be able to see those documents and have knowledge of them as quickly as possible and have time to examine them and respond to them before you read about them in some newspaper or magazine.

I hope that clears up any misunderstanding that I may have had, or that you may have had or may not have had. The fact is, when I referred to these documents this morning, I said I would like you to have ample time to examine them and respond to them, so I hope that clears up any misunderstanding.

Mr. BRYANT. Senator, I would note that Mr. Perot really hasn't had ample time to look at the documents.

Senator McCAIN. Let me say, Mr. Bryant, I am not seeking a response. I want Mr. Perot to be knowledgeable of those memos as quickly as possible. That was why I mentioned it this morning, and that's why this morning I did not request a response to them, nor do I now.

The CHAIRMAN. I think there are only about ten pages of new documents. A lot of them are the letters, I think, if I'm correct. Were they not included in the package?

Mr. BRYANT. There are about 40 pages of documents that we got before lunch that may not be new to the committee, but they're new to Mr. Perot.

Senator McCAIN. Let me put it this way, Mr. Perot. If the information making the allegations or statement or information such as contained is in there, I would want to know about it as soon as possible. I tried to bring your attention as soon as possible, after I had seen it at approximately 7:30 this morning.

Mr. Perot, in your testimony before Congressman Solarz in 1986 you referred to two individuals who you stated had evidence which proved the existence of live prisoners of war. Can you tell us the names of those two individuals?

Mr. PEROT. They've already testified before your committee. They've testified—these are people with very top clearances. Senator Kerry knows who they are. Senator Smith knows who they are. Senator Codinha—excuse me, Mr. Codinha knows exactly who they are.

Senator McCAIN. Let's make me the last to know.

Mr. PEROT. Again, if I was a Government employee I could have a private session, but I'm just a taxpayer and I can't mention the CIA station chief's name, right, or whoever it was.

I turn around over here, though, here are these people who—I don't really understand all their oaths and security and what-have-you. They have come forward and testified before your committee.

The Chairman: There's no reason for their names not to be public. We're talking about Jerry Mooney and Mr. Minarcin.

Those are the two names.

Mr. PEROT. Whatever you say.

The CHAIRMAN. They've been deposited by the committee and they've testified before the committee.

Senator McCAIN. Mr. Perot, and you stated earlier that you have evidence that American Vietnam prisoners of war were flown to Russia. Is that your view?

Mr. PEROT. I would say there is evidence. I don't say I have evidence. There is evidence.

Senator McCAIN. Would you describe that evidence, please?

Mr. PEROT. First, you've got the Russian KGB key people talking about it, you've talked with them. Secondly, you've got—

Senator McCAIN. I'm talking about Vietnam POWs.

Mr. PEROT. Yes. KGB people were talking about it several months ago. It was in the papers. You've interviewed those people, it's my understanding. Apparently they tell different stories, but I find it fascinating that the KGB is singing about it.

Then we have some interesting signals intelligence that these gentlemen know about of people being taken to Russia.

The CHAIRMAN. Let me just point out that neither of the gentlemen we talked to says they were taken. They talked about interrogation at different points in time, but neither made an allegation that they were transferred to the Soviet Union.

Mr. PEROT. All right. Don't you have someone that's testified?

The CHAIRMAN. We're talking about General Kalugin and Mr. Nechaparenko, and both of them alleged times that prisoners were interrogated in Vietnam, one of them alleging it had been post-1975.

Mr. PEROT. We had one case that I recall, I can't remember the details, that people were being taken to the Soviet Union. We even tried to intercept the aircraft. Does that ring any bells?

The CHAIRMAN. There is a signal intelligence interpretation to that effect from one of the people you mentioned.

Mr. PEROT. OK, that's one. Again, I don't have access to that information. I think the more is available, the more you'll be helped, because they have a lot.

Senator McCAIN. Mr. Perot, my question was framed in the context that you have made statements to this committee in your deposition that there was evidence that some Americans were taken, American Vietnamese prisoners of war that were taken to the Soviet Union. My question is, what evidence was that?

Mr. PEROT. I've given it to you.

Senator McCAIN. So my understanding is that your answer is that the signal intelligence and the conversations by the KGB—is that correct?

Mr. PEROT. All the public news stories from the KGB, and then I think President Yeltsin made some interesting comments on one of his trips over here, too, didn't he? I find it fascinating, the standard that you all demand. When the President of Russia is talking about it, can't we assume that there might be a smoking gun somewhere? I'll leave it to you.

Senator McCAIN. I'm simply asking the question as to what evidence that you'd heard of. I'm not sure that—

Mr. PEROT. Well, I'll give you another piece in a few days. I got a letter yesterday from a person who claims that he has the details and is sending me a map, and I intended to send it directly to you as soon as I get it, and who knows, you only have to get lucky once. It's probably another ship passing in the night.

This is a person in this country from Russia who said, I'll trust you with this if you will get it to the appropriate authorities, and I said well, send it to me. I will turn it over to you just as I have everything else that's come to me.

See, Mr. Codinha, you got the dogtag list I got from the guy who was the naval officer in Europe, right. It may be another lost one, but it was how many dogtags, 50, 60 dogtags? Worth checking out, right? U.S. naval officer sent me a message, I sent it to you.

Senator McCAIN. I'm glad to hear of this new information. I'm glad I asked the question.

Can you give me your assessment—recognizing, as you stated, that you don't have a lot of secret information, can you give us your assessment of the job General Vessey has done as first President Reagan's and then President Bush's emissary on the MIA issue?

Mr. PEROT. I think General Vessey is a wonderful man. I have the highest regard for him. I think they gave him a mission too narrow. I think they are reserving too much control over him at the National Security Council.

He does not have the financial resources to be able to just do this out of his own pocket, and that way he is totally under the control of the Federal Government in terms of what you do, when you do it, how you do it. He doesn't have much of a staff that I know of. Maybe he does—I hope he does.

But the key thing is, he's only been over there five times since 1986. That's not exactly a night and day aggressive operation. I have every sense that if you'd required, General Vessey would have been there and never come home, if he felt that it would have been worthwhile and he could have gotten clearance to do it.

I would like to know, and my sense is, that he reports somewhere—at the National Security Council, you've got—at last at one time you had some pretty turf-sensitive people there. Under General Scowcroft, if he's reporting direct General Scowcroft, then I would be very comfortable. I know any of that. I don't have access to that. Who does he report to? Is that a fair question?

Senator McCAIN. The President.

Mr. PEROT. Real world, who does he report to?

Senator McCAIN. The President. He meets with the President.

Mr. PEROT. Does anybody know how many times he's met with the President?

Senator McCAIN. I don't.

Mr. PEROT. Again, I know it's probably not appropriate for me as just a taxpayer to ask, but I would like to know, if it's not a secret, how many times has he met face-to-face with the President on this issue since 1986-1987. That would give us some sense of the priorities.

Senator McCAIN. I've asked General Vessey on several occasions if he felt that he has been given the authority that he needs to carry out his duties, and he has affirmed so. This is a person who has fought in several wars and became the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, of whom I also share your very high regard.

I would point out for the record that the United States has taken several steps along the lines that you suggest, such as the sending of a CAT team to Laos, such as the construction of a school, such

as money extended for humanitarian aid, prosthesis efforts, disaster relief, and there have been several small steps taken by the Government, as you know, the latest of which is lifting some communications ban between the United States and Vietnam in keeping with the road map that was laid out.

I also think that there's a certain political reality here that maybe is not part of this hearing, but there's still a great resistance amongst the American people and the veterans population, as pointed out by Senator Kerry early on, amongst the POW/MIA families, strong resistance to steps towards normalization until all those missing in action are accounted for.

So we do have a rather delicate balancing act here, because of course we need to take into consideration the views, as you have all these years, of the families of those who are still missing in action, so it makes for a rather difficult path, a very delicate path, that we have to tread.

I thank you again for your patience here today and your very important responses to questions. Thank you.

Mr. PEROT. Do you want to go through this?

Senator McCAIN. Pardon me?

Mr. PEROT. Do you want to go through this?

Senator McCAIN. No, sir. Your lawyer said you hadn't had time to review it.

Mr. PEROT. I think we should go through it today, because it's fascinating. If you all want to have these other fellows come on for a while, let me read it, mark it, and then we'll talk about it.

[See pages 57-104 for the referenced documents.]

The CHAIRMAN. Why don't we do that? I think that's a good suggestion. Are there other Senators who have questions in this round? Senator Grassley.

Senator GRASSLEY. I want to start with something that Senator Smith mentioned in his last statement, and that is a discussion of what the administration knew about POWs in Laos in 1973.

Without resort to any classified information, we know that Dr. Kissinger believed that the Laotians still held POWs after Homecoming, by a reference to his book, *Years of Upheaval*.

I want to quote, and I—it is a long paragraph, I will just quote a little bit—and I will ask you for your comment. We knew of at least 80 instances in which an American serviceman had been captured alive and then subsequently disappeared. The evidence consisted of either voice communication from the ground in advance of the capture or photographs and names published by the Communists. Yet none of these men was on the list of POWs handed over after the agreement. Why? Were they dead? How did they die? Were they missing? How was that possible after capture?

And you tend to agree with this and have you ever had any conversations with Dr. Kissinger on this whole subject?

Mr. PEROT. Not since the war, no, sir. Yet an interesting thing occurred at the end of the war. It didn't involve Dr. Kissinger.

When the first prisoners landed in the Philippines, one of them called and said, Ross, I had two phone calls. I called my wife. I wanted to call you to thank you for all you did. And I was asked to do this by all the men. This was Jerry Denton, later Senator Denton.

And I said, well, thank you very much, but if you only had two calls, you called the wrong person. You should have called the people who went to Son Tay. You should have called Colonel Simons, because they risked their life for you in a very open way and they never received any credit.

And he said—I loved his response. Here was a guy that had been in prison for years. Without batting an eye, he says, you're right. I should have called Colonel Simons.

And I said, let's do this, Jerry. When you get home, the first time you guys ever come together, let's come together to thank them, because nobody ever did.

Then, that started. This man here was sent to—Tom stepped out. Tom Meurer was sent to San Francisco to plan the San Francisco weekend. The prisoners wanted it in San Francisco. I said, fellows, San Francisco has got a lot of anti-war movements. I'm not sure it's a good idea.

He said, Perot, we've been in jail for several years, have it in San Francisco. Tom set it up mid-flight. And this will show you the pettiness of Washington. I get a call from a senior White House staffer saying, we don't like the San Francisco weekend. I said, who's we? Of course, I didn't get an answer to that.

Then he said, we want you to kill it. I said, look, the whole community has come together in San Francisco. It's on the front page of the paper every day. It's going to be the biggest parade in the history of San Francisco. It's too late to kill it. And besides, the POWs want to do it.

We do not want the POWs to come together as a group until they come to the white House. And I said, well, I understand, but it's too late. They say, if you pursue this, you will never be invited to the white House again and you will not be invited to the POW Homecoming at the White House.

And I said, fine. But sooner or later—oh, and if you pursue this, we will not allow any military bands to participate. I said, fine. But sooner or later somebody in the press is going to ask me why there are no military bands, and I going to tell him every detail of this conversation.

A few hours later I got a call from General Stilwell who was commander of the Presidio. He says, Perot, what in the devil did you do to the white House? I said, what are you talking about? He says, they just called and said, get him anything he wants.

Now, we had the military bands. We could have gotten high school bands, but this world class pettiness, not the President by any means, but down there at—you know, the guys blowing up balloons and what have you at the staff level. They didn't like that and so I was, after 4 years of working night and day on this, I became a nonperson. But that was fine with me because I thought Watergate was abhorrent and I didn't want to have anything to do with them anyhow.

Not that Dr. Kissinger had anything to do with it, but the point is there would not have been an occasion for me to talk to Dr. Kissinger because unfortunately we had a welcome home for the POWs to thank the Son Tay raiders.

Senator GRASSLEY. Have you ever had any discussion with Dr. Kissinger on whether or not we have ever gotten all the POWs home?

Mr. PEROT. No, sir. I have no contact with him. I had one contact with him when I asked him to help get the people out. It had been so many years since I talked to him, it was 1979, I started to explain who I was. And he says, I know who you are. You helped us with the POWs.

I explained it to him and I offered to retain him and he was really—he really reacted negatively. He said, Ross, after all you did, this is nothing. I will do everything I can. He called me. He said, they will be released. I found out at 2 p.m. in the morning that the prison commander, who now lives in this country, refused to release them. And then we had to go ahead with the rescue. But that was the contact I had with him, I think the only contact I had with him after the war and he certainly responded then and I appreciate it.

Senator GRASSLEY. The DIA position stated to this committee is that there are no MIAs or POWs still alive in Indochina. Now what I am asking for when I ask this question is kind of your judgment. As a committee that ends its business on December of this year, I presume we will be making some recommendations and any ideas you might have if you were writing a report for this committee, the extent to which you might recommend something about organization of our Government for handling this issue.

In your judgment, does there exist any justification for DIA's continued involvement at the center of this activity or would you have any suggestions on personnel changes or Governmental reorganization?

Mr. PEROT. It's a good question. I need to think about it. I would say that you need something like DIA. I have not been around DIA since 1986. I don't know how the system works there now. You need an organization who goes in every morning and says, here is a new shred of evidence. Let's really look at it objectively. Let's not try to debunk it. Let's not discredit the person who brought it in. Let's not spend all of our energy discrediting the person who brought it in.

This goes back to the mind set to debunk that their own people wrote reports about that was alive and well back in 1986. And I don't why that's true and they're all good people. But if you're going to spend the taxpayers' money, it ought to be on a productive way.

I would say at this point in time, if with limited resources, I would put all the big bucks on trying to just negotiate directly, not waste a lot of time with the other, in terms of all the details on intelligence. I would skip that and go straight into negotiation. They have what we want. We've got to work something out with them to get our men back. The sooner we start the better.

Senator McCain makes a point on the veterans' group. I'll be available 24 hours, 7 days a week, to talk to veterans' groups. I've been very close to them. I was close to them when not many people were. They know where I come from. I know where they come from. There is no way the veterans' groups or the families would want to obstruct a series of negotiating steps to get these men

home. He made his premise that we would go straight to normalization. That is not the premise I would use.

There are a whole series of things we can do to see if we can negotiate the release of anyone who might be alive. I know that every family and every veteran would support that, and every person in uniform would support it. And every American would support it.

Senator GRASSLEY. You spoke about the mind set to debunk. I do not know whether you are making that as a statement you agree with. If you do, how does that square with your further comment just made that they are all good people?

Mr. PEROT. One person years ago, when I was working in 1986, a young person—I can't remember his name—came in, he says, don't you ever wonder how we live with ourselves?

I said, what do you mean? He says, don't you wonder what it must be like to spend all day of your life, every day, trying to discredit any sighting that comes in?

And I just sat there and listened. He says, well, here's the way you live with yourself. You just set the screen so fine that nothing can get through. And I just listened. And that's one person wandering into my office, making a voluntary statement and leaving, but it was a statement, in my judgment, it was a statement of conscience from that person.

Senator Grassley: And so you mean their willingness to open up and be candid with you is your statement about them being all good people?

Mr. PEROT. I just—see, you can take good people, put them in the wrong environment, give them the wrong set of ground rules. No, I haven't found any villains. Again, pray that we won't look for villains. If we look for villains, we'll never get our MIAs back. If we spend our energy trying to get our MIAs back, we probably will get everybody back who's still alive. And many of the remains back from the people who are dead.

Senator GRASSLEY. You and the committee here have discussed about the possibility of American prisoners sent to the U.S.S.R. from Vietnam. There has been some reporting in the press recently about it. A journalist and researcher, Mark Sauter, S-a-u-t-e-r, wrote about it on August 4 this year from Moscow.

And I am not going to go into detail about it, but I guess I would ask you if your judgment is based upon these newspaper reports or your judgment is based upon other evidence you have or just a gut feeling you have or statements that have been made to you or from the newspapers as well?

Mr. PEROT. Other evidence, but I would want to give it in closed session. It would be obvious to you why and if you—I think it would be very obvious to you why I don't want to give it in open session.

Senator GRASSLEY. Well, I guess that is up to the chairman. If he wants to—

Mr. PEROT. Well, I can tell him privately if I haven't already told him and let him make the decision. That would be a simple way to expedite that. I'm happy to tell you, but I really feel strongly this should not hit the papers if you want the men back. If you just want another show business—

The CHAIRMAN. No, no, no. We are not looking—as we have said all along, we are not—this is not show business. So, why don't you talk to me privately.

Mr. PEROT. Yes. We can get into a conference room with the whole committee, however you do it. I just would like for you to know why I feel that there is a very high probability that they are there.

The CHAIRMAN. We would really want to do that and we would want to do it before we leave today. Senator Kassebaum?

Senator KASSEBAUM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not have any questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Perot, we do have—I have got some additional questions, but I want to get the other panel up here now. I want to give you a chance to read the documents that you wanted to respond to, so why do you not take a moment to do that? We can make a space available for you. Mr. Codinha will give you a place where you can sit quietly and do that, unless you want to sit here and do it. It is up to you.

Mr. PEROT. No, I'll just go somewhere else.

The CHAIRMAN. And we will get you a sandwich at the same time.

Mr. PEROT. No, that is fine. And then I will come right back in. It won't take me that—I just want to get this marked, so that I can be efficient.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Codinha will escort you up there and then if you could come back so that we could finish some of the other questions that we do have apart from that, I would appreciate it.

If I could ask Mr. Meurer, Mr. Martin and Mr. McKillop if they would come up and be sworn.

Mr. PEROT. Could we have one of the staff members point out Sam Neua on the map, please, point out where Sam Neua is on the map? Are you pointing right at it? How does it square with—OK. There, where all those flags are, right? That's Sam Neua over there? What is the province where all the flags are right over to the right? Right up in there is where the action is supposed to take place.

The CHAIRMAN. which also, I might add, was an area reputed to be controlled by North Vietnam and by the North Vietnamese Army. Is that accurate?

Mr. Perot: It wouldn't surprise me a bit.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. We will welcome you back, Mr. Perot, momentarily.

Mr. PEROT. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Gentlemen, if the members of this new panel would remain standing, if you would raise your right hands please?

Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mr. MARTIN. I do.

Mr. MCKILLOP. I do.

Mr. MEURER. I do.

The CHAIRMAN. If each of you would just identify yourself quickly for the record, and I understand that one of you will make an opening and that is all. Is that—Mr. Martin, you are going to make an opening?

Mr. MARTIN. Right.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, gentlemen. And thank you for your patience today. We appreciate it very much. If you could just identify yourself and make your opening statement and then we will proceed. Mr. Martin?

TESTIMONY OF MURPHY MARTIN

Mr. MARTIN. My name is Murphy Martin. I was a working newsman for over 30 years and during that time, I served as a news anchorman at ABC-TV and also as a news correspondent there and also in various news positions at other TV and radio operations around the country.

In 1969, I became interested in the plight of the families of American prisoners of war in Southeast Asia. And after making a trip to Paris with four wives from the Dallas-Ft. Worth area, whose husbands were missing in action or POW, I put together a television documentary for WFAA-TV in Dallas focusing on these wives and POWs in that area.

After putting that documentary together, I contacted Ross Perot, whom I had met for the first time several months earlier, and told him about that documentary. Mr. Perot came to the studio to preview the documentary and at that time, he met a young boy named Rick Singleton, whose father was, at that time, listed as missing in action in Southeast Asia.

Mrs. Singleton told Mr. Perot that her little boy had been born after his father had left for Vietnam. And Mr. Perot said, do you mean that young man has never seen his father? This very simple encounter with one little boy and his mother had an immediate and powerful effect on Ross Perot.

He said at that time he would like to do anything that he could to help. And during the 23 years since that time, Ross Perot has been as good as his word. I believe that no American has worked so long, so hard and so selflessly for American POWs and MIAs in Southeast Asia and their families as this man has.

I had the privilege of working with Ross Perot and the organization that he founded, United We Stand, from 1969 to 1972. Together we made two trips to Southeast Asia, at Christmas time in 1969 and then again in the spring of 1970 in an effort to gain improved treatment for American prisoners of war.

And we succeeded through those trips and through many, many other efforts involving thousands of people throughout this country in putting the world spotlight on the mistreatment of our men.

And I must say I have never been involved before or since with anything that was as gratifying as those efforts on behalf of our POWs and their families. There is no reward that can ever match having a fellow American who spent years in solitary confinement come up to you and say, thank you for what you did. After you all went to Southeast Asia in 1969, they took the leg irons off me for the first time in 4 years.

This year, as in 1969, many have questioned the motivations or the judgment of Ross Perot. And I want to say I to this committee and to anyone who will listen that American owes this man a huge debt of gratitude. It was only through his tenacious leadership and

his sincere and deep concern for others, and of course his willingness to spend millions of dollars of his own money that ended the torture and inhumane treatment of so many of our men.

The anxiety and heartaches of those days still linger in many Americans whose relatives are still missing in Southeast Asia. It is my hope that this committee will do anything and everything that is necessary to answer the questions of these families fully and honestly, unaffected by politics or by any consideration other than the truth. After more than 20 years, that is the very least that they deserve.

I thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Martin. We can hear your news media background. Mr. McKillop?

[The prepared statement of Mr. Martin follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF C. MURPHY MARTIN

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Mr. Perot came to the studio to preview the documentary and met a little boy named Rick Singleton, whose father was a prisoner of war in Southeast Asia. Mrs. Singleton told Mr. Perot that her little boy had been born after his father had left for Vietnam. Mr. Perot said, "Do you mean this young man has never seen his father?"

This simple encounter with one little boy and his mother had an immediate and powerful effect on Mr. Perot. He said he would like to do anything he could to help. Over the 23 years since then, Ross Perot has been as good as his word. I believe that no American has worked so long, so hard, and so selflessly for American POWs and MIAs in Southeast Asia, and their families, as this man.

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I have never been involved, before or since, with anything that was as gratifying as these efforts on behalf of our POWs and their families. There is no reward that can ever match having a fellow American who spent 7 years in solitary confinement come up to you and say, "Thank you for what you did. Right after you went to Southeast Asia in 1969, they took the leg irons off me for the first time in 4 years."

This year, as in 1969, many have questioned the motivations or the judgment of Ross Perot. I want to say to this committee, and to anyone who will listen, that America owes this man a huge debt of gratitude. It was only his tenacious leadership, his sincere and deep concern for others, and of course his willingness to spend millions of dollars of his own money, that ended the torture and inhuman treatment of so many of our men.

The anxiety and heartaches of those days still linger in many Americans whose relatives are still missing in Southeast Asia. It's my hope that this committee will do anything and everything that is necessary to answer the questions of these families fully and honestly, unaffected by politics or by any other consideration than the truth. After 20 years or more, that is the very least they deserve.

TESTIMONY OF HARRY MCKILLOP

Mr. MCKILLOP. Thank you, Senator. My name is Harry McKillop as you indicated and we are today voluntarily giving sworn testimony to the Senate Select Committee in the hope that it will be

helpful to the committee and also to clear up false and misleading allegations made or suggested in recent news coverage relating to Ross Perot and his efforts on behalf of the POW/MIAs and their families.

I have been associated with Ross Perot on matters relating to American prisoners of war and men missing in action in Southeast Asia since 1969. I have worked closely with him on this issue and have made a total of nine trips to Southeast Asia since the beginning of 1987.

Throughout the 23 years, Ross Perot has never expressed or shown to me any interest in any personal investment or moneymaking activity in Southeast Asia. He has absolutely never authorized me or anyone else, to my knowledge, to discuss any possible investments or moneymaking activities in Southeast Asia.

He has clearly and consistently told me that he has no interest whatsoever in any personal business or investment activity in Southeast Asia. Based on my observations over many years, I state without reservation that the only concerns of Ross Perot on this issue have been our men and their families. He has had one purpose and one purpose alone. Anyone who suggests anything else does not know what they are talking about.

Recent news coverage has focused on a document I brought back from Vietnam on my next to last trip in 1990. The basic facts about this document are as follows.

Ross Perot did not send me to Vietnam then or ever to discuss any business matters for him or to make any business deals for him. He had no knowledge of this document or the discussions I had until I returned to Dallas. The document was just an invitation to Ross Perot to help Vietnam attract American investment if and when diplomatic relations between Vietnam and the United States were every restored. It was not an agreement with Ross Perot, as has been suggested.

Ross Perot has never had any business agreement with Vietnam ever. The document arose from the fact that my interest in dealing with the Vietnam was the POW/MIA issue. And Vietnam's main interest was in developing or talking about Vietnam economically.

I felt that by talking with them about their economic aspirations or listening to their ideas of what they may need in the future during these trips to Vietnam, I might develop and strengthen a rapport of relationship that would lead to progress on the POW/MIA issue.

However, the Vietnamese wanted to send a document back to Mr. Perot through me. I accepted this and brought it back because of my friendship with Vietnamese Foreign Minister Thach and my concern for the plight of the Vietnamese people.

When I returned to Dallas and showed the document to Mr. Perot, he said, quote, "what the hell is this?" He made it very clear that he had no interest whatsoever in the document or in any business dealings in Vietnam.

Mr. Perot also at the time told me not to go back to Vietnam, even though Foreign Minister Thach had extended a general or continuous invitation for further visit. I later did return to Vietnam, once in 1991, on the occasion of Foreign Minister Thach's retirement. I did so because I had been invited and I had heard that

he wanted me to come for this occasion. I, as always, thought that this might lead to a breakthrough on the POW/MIA issue. There was none.

In short, Ross Perot's purpose in Southeast Asia has been humanitarian and patriotic. He has never, never had a business purpose there. He has always been careful to make sure that his efforts on behalf of the POW/MIAs and their families did not jeopardize or conflict with those of the U.S. Government on this issue.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. McKillop. Let me ask you—first of all, we are going to limit ourselves, although there are not as many Senators here, but we are going to try to—

Mr. McKILLOP. Excuse me, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. McKILLOP. I had one more paragraph. My mistake. I thought I was finished.

The CHAIRMAN. Go right ahead.

Mr. McKILLOP. Thank you.

The information from the recent news accounts apparently came from Mr. La Bang, who was a young guide at the beginning of our visits and became a low or middle level official of Vietnam. This information as reported is wrong in many respects, ranging from his misstatement of the number of trips I made to Vietnam to his claim that Mr. Perot or I made unkept promises to provide books, medicines, and other aid to Vietnam.

Although I sometimes expressed sympathy for the plight of the Vietnamese people in this regard, no such promises were ever made by or on behalf of Ross Perot that he did not fulfill.

Thank you. That's it.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. McKillop. Let me just say to you that there sort of strikes me, and maybe you can help me understand it, a contradiction, and I want to ask Mr. Perot about this afterwards, but in what he has said thus far and what you said your goal was and the action here. If the purpose was to negotiate and he said we needed to negotiate and you needed to understand what they wanted, clearly, Foreign Minister Thach sent this letter believing he was meeting some needs or interests of Mr. Perot. There would be no reason for him to offer this to Mr. Perot if he did not think there would be some takeup on it. And yet, you're saying the reaction to Mr. Perot was an outright dismissal not going to deal with it, do not go back and talk to them which seems to just cut off right in midstream the very kind of exchange and process that might have, in fact, led to are solution of POW.

Now, how do you further the POW process by just turning it off and not going back and not responding?

Mr. McKILLOP. Oh, I think since day one it was our intention to inquire and to obtain as much information as was available to us, and each time we went over there we felt we were making progress but that progress would come through a more intense, a more sincere, and a more creditable relationship. And while they listened to me for four or five of those visits, about four of the visits, there came a time when their interests become paramount.

The CHAIRMAN. But is that not part of negotiating?

Mr. McKILLOP. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Somebody's interest becomes paramount and you have to meet their interest. Is that not primary negotiation 101, as Ross Perot says?

Mr. MCKILLOP. That, in a sense, is negotiation to some people.

The CHAIRMAN. You just shut it off. You walked away, so you say.

Mr. MCKILLOP. Yes. We did.

The CHAIRMAN. Why? It seems so contrary to the notion of getting the MIA/POWs back.

Mr. MCKILLOP. Well, I think because by the nature of the document it would appear that they were wanting to do personal business with Mr. Perot, and that was not what we were looking for.

The CHAIRMAN. But it was only after normalization. The document itself said so. The last paragraph of the document said nothing in here is intended to circumvent any law or to take effect until after the time that normalization occurs. In fact, it mentioned POW/MIA, did it not?

Mr. MCKILLOP. Yes, mmm-hmm.

The CHAIRMAN. So it clearly required moving forward on POW/MIA.

Mr. MCKILLOP. But you see, we were looking for information on behalf and because our country's interest in liberating or defining them, and this document began to take on the semblance of a personal invitation to Ross to engage in business ventures that would involve investment and profit, and that was the furthest thing from Mr. Perot's mind. His discussions this morning about negotiations were the fact that one country should negotiate with another.

The CHAIRMAN. Are you saying to me that if Ross Perot's personal business involvement was what it took to get POWs back he would not have done it?

Mr. MCKILLOP. Oh, I don't know that. Mr. Perot would have to answer that question. -I know he had no intention of getting involved in personal business ventures.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, he said here he would do anything to get them back. He was prepared to put down \$4.2 million to buy a tape. He spent \$3 million to go over there. It is incomprehensible to me that he would not have been willing to invest a few million dollars, if that is what it took, to get a POW back.

Mr. MCKILLOP. That, you would have to ask him. I clearly think that this involves a profit motive, and I think that is where we left off, a personal profit motive.

The CHAIRMAN. OK. Let me come back to you afterwards, perhaps when Mr. Perot is here, but I really want to ascertain this is almost a corollary issue, incidentally. It goes to the theory of negotiation, perhaps, but far more central to the concern of this committee is your testimony, gentlemen, with respect to what transpired in Laos. And I would like it to be on the record in very precise terms what you learned and what you heard with respect to prisoners being held in the briefing that you received.

Now, Mr. Martin and Mr. Meurer, you were both there in that trip to Laos, is that correct? In 1970?

Mr. MARTIN. April of 1970.

The CHAIRMAN. You both went to the embassy?

Mr. MARTIN. Yes, we did.

The CHAIRMAN. Would you both answer for the record?

TESTIMONY OF THOMAS MEURER

Mr. MEURER. Yes. Yes, we did, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. And both of you were present when the CIA briefed?

Mr. MARTIN. We were.

Mr. MEURER. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Was the CIA station chief present during that briefing?

Mr. MEURER. Yes.

Mr. MARTIN. Yes, he was.

The CHAIRMAN. Was he identified to you?

Mr. MEURER. Yes.

Mr. MARTIN. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Were you introduced to him?

Mr. MARTIN. Yes, we were.

Mr. MEURER. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Was the Ambassador present during that briefing?

Mr. MARTIN. Through a portion of it. I can't remember if he was there through all of it, but I recall he was there through a portion of it, yes.

Mr. MEURER. I don't recall, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Were other people present?

Mr. MARTIN. Yes, I believe that political officer Jim Murphy was also there.

Mr. MEURER. Jim might have been there, I think. Ross was there.

The CHAIRMAN. Anyone else that you can recall?

Mr. MARTIN. Ross was there, of course.

The CHAIRMAN. And anyone else that you recall?

Mr. MARTIN. I don't recall.

The CHAIRMAN. Who conducted the briefing? Who gave the briefing?

Mr. BRYANT. Senator, I think it's kind of awkward because neither witness knows which one is to speak. Perhaps you could start with Mr. Martin.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you recall who conducted the briefing?

Mr. MARTIN. As I recall, the briefing initially was introduced and conducted by Jim Murphy, and he introduced the station chief who we are not to name, as I understand it, and then he proceeded with the intelligence information about POWs that were being held in the Sam Neua area.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you concur with that, Mr. Meurer?

Mr. MEURER. Yes, I do, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Was there a map on the wall?

Mr. MARTIN. I recall the maps, but for some reason I recall maps on a table, not on a wall. I'm not saying that that's accurate. There were maps.

The CHAIRMAN. Were you shown specific locations of where prisoners were being held in Laos, Mr. Martin?

Mr. MARTIN. Shown in the Sam Neua area, and caves were mentioned there and a number was mentioned in the mid-20's as to the number of men that were being held.

The CHAIRMAN. So you were told specifically in 1971 at this briefing—

Mr. BRYANT. 1970.

The CHAIRMAN. 1970, excuse me, that 25 or so—

Mr. MEURER. I heard 27, sir.

Mr. NARTIN. He thinks 27, I remember mid-20's, 25.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Meurer remembers 27, Mr. Martin remembers 25, but the memory of both of you is specific as to mid-20's of American prisoners of war being held in the Sam Neua area in caves, is that accurate?

Mr. MARTIN. That is correct.

Mr. MEURER. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. And was there any question in your mind that these were prisoners who were alive and being held at that time that you were there, or had they been tracked earlier?

Mr. MARTIN. No question in my mind.

The CHAIRMAN. They were alive at the time you were there.

Mr. MARTIN. They were alive at that time.

The CHAIRMAN. Now, what is it about the conversation that makes you remember that? Can you share with us perhaps specifically what was said to you?

Mr. MARTIN. Speaking for myself, there was such an interest then in trying to come with what we call hard information, particularly in Laos, about any prisoner that had been sighted recently and alive. And when you mention a group of them or a number of them, it really tweaked your interest. And that was indelible in my mind from that day forward, the mention of the number, they were alive, they were in Sam Neua.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes, sir, Mr. Meurer?

Mr. MEURER. Senator, I recall, you know, this was a meeting that was some 22 years ago, so quite frankly it is foggy to some degree. What I recall, the meeting was very late at night, 1 or 2 in the morning. I recall that we were in the embassy. To say how many people in there, I can't recall precisely. I know Ross and Murphy were in there and the station chief, I remember him. I remember the number 27. In fact, I made a note of that later on so that has stuck in my mind, and men in the caves at Sam Neua. Now to say that these were anything else, I just don't remember.

The CHAIRMAN. Did they inform you that these men were specifically being tracked by them?

Mr. MEURER. I don't recall that.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you recall, Mr. Martin?

Mr. MARTIN. I don't recall that.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you recall how it was, did any of you ask how do you know these men are alive and being held prisoner?

Mr. MARTIN. I don't recall the specific question along that line except that the presentation as it was made and the tone of the conversation and the person who was making it and where it was being made gave it all the credence that I needed to believe it to be a true statement.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Meurer?

Mr. Meurer: Well, I just remember the sighting or scene. So it was a visual observation somehow that I recall. Somebody had seen these men.

The CHAIRMAN. Did you discuss, either of you, afterwards? Did you have further discussion about the fact saying gee, wow, these guys are being held or did you take note of it in any way among you as a group?

Mr. MARTIN. Oh, yes. We discussed it. I'm not sure how often or how soon thereafter, but we discussed it on that trip. And I seem to recall that we discussed it the following day because of wondering out loud did it affect Soth Petrasay who had promised us something and then the next day did not deliver on what he had promised the day before. And I wondered if somehow there was a tie-in over what we had learned during the night that affected the list that he was going to give us.

The CHAIRMAN. Did either of you have occasion to tell any other people of what you had learned at that time?

Mr. MARTIN. Any other people?

The CHAIRMAN. At any time.

Mr. MARTIN. Afterwards?

The CHAIRMAN. Yes, what you had learned.

Mr. MARTIN. I feel quite certain that when we got back from that trip, that in subsequent conversations with people at State and DOD and the white House that we visited with and gave reports to and kind of summarized what went on and told them about that, yes.

Mr. MEURER. Yes, that was a figure that we had used quite a bit after 1970, as I recall, too.

The CHAIRMAN. Beyond this particular journey, have either of you been particularly active in POW/MIA affairs in, of course, the last 20 years?

Mr. BRYANT. Are you including all of the activities on behalf of United We Stand?

The CHAIRMAN. Apart from United We Stand.

Mr. MARTIN. I was active in United We Stand through I think September or October on a full-time basis in 1972. I then returned to broadcasting and continued to follow the story and remained on the board of United We Stand until—I want to say late December of 1973, after the men came home. Since that time, only what I have read and I continue to follow with a great deal of interest and every opportunity I get.

The CHAIRMAN. Has anybody ever refreshed your recollection in any way by showing you something or aiding your memory with respect to this meeting in Laos in 1970?

Mr. MARTIN. With respect to that particular meeting? That meeting per se, not necessarily. But I thought I found something that certainly emphasized what we heard in Lieutenant General Vernon Walter's report, which was made March 17, 1976, before the Select Committee on Missing Persons of the U.S. House, and if I may refer to page 9 and quote from that report, in the case of permanent facilities such as those around Sam Neua, the Pathet Lao headquarters, it was possible to verify allegations as to presence of American captives in specific prison locations. And I thought at that time when I learned of that—

The CHAIRMAN. And the number, 25 to 27 is firm in your memory?

Mr. MARTIN. In the mid-20's, yes.

The CHAIRMAN. So there is no question, as both of you sit here under oath before this committee, no question whatsoever in your memory that in 1970 you were told in a briefing from American Government officials in Laos that American prisoners and the number of 25 to 27 were alive and held in captivity in Sam Neua in Laos, is that accurate?

Mr. MARTIN. That's accurate in my mind.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Meurer?

Mr. MEURER. Yes,

The CHAIRMAN. Well, let me say, we have had a number of discussions here about what is and what is not evidence. When I have three citizens in good standing come before this committee and under oath testify as to something they personally witnessed and heard with that kind of affirmation, I certainly individually deem this committee to have evidence of something. Where it fits in the larger mosaic is subject to the whole committee's judgment, but I think it is important testimony.

Senator Smith.

Senator SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Martin and Mr. Meurer, I would like to pick up on the same line of questioning. Obviously, this is a very significant meeting, probably more significant today or after the war than you thought it was at the time you were there. I realize it has been 22 years, but if the facts, as you state them, are accurate, and they are being disputed by others in the meeting, as you have been told, if they are accurate, it means that POWs were held in camps, as you say, in the Sam Neua area, maybe other areas. You were told that, and it would mean that somebody would have to followup on that in the intelligence community and give us some idea of what happened to those people. And as far as we know, as far as I know, we have never received such information.

Let me ask you a couple of questions very specifically about the meeting. If you do not remember, say so. If you do—and I know it has been a long time. Was Mr. Petrasy mentioned at all in that meeting by any one of the briefers as far as his credibility or what he had been saying in terms of whether or not he was reliable, knowledgeable, in a position of authority to know what he was talking about when he in fact did indicate publicly and privately to you that he held American POWs in Laos or knew of them being held in Laos? Either one. Mr. Meurer, I am sorry.

Mr. MEURER. You're saying at that meeting? No, there was nothing mentioned about Soth Petrasy at that meeting that I recall.

Senator SMITH. In any other conversations that you had while you were there in 1970 or any other time, was Petrasy mentioned in terms of his credibility or lack of credibility?

Mr. MARTIN. I don't remember his veracity ever being questioned by anyone to me.

Senator SMITH. Was he discussed at all?

Mr. MARTIN. Not to my knowledge. Not that I recall.

Mr. MEURER. No, I met with him several times, and he was kind of the Communist Pathet Lao ambassador there, and I'm sure he

had his job. But to say that he was flaky or anything like that, I don't know.

Senator SMITH. Do you have any doubt in your mind, and you are aware of the constraints that we are under in terms of names, so I just want to remind you of that. Do you have any doubt in your mind who the individual was that briefed you or was at that meeting?

Mr. MARTIN. I only know the name he was introduced to me as and what his position was. An I don't have any doubt in my mind that he was who he was told to us to be. And following the briefing made that more positive in my thinking.

Senator SMITH. By name, you have no doubt that that individual gave his or her name.

Mr. MARTIN. That was the name and the only name I ever heard used by that man.

Senator SMITH. Help me to get an understanding of what this meeting was about. Characterize it for me, if you can, in terms of specific information that was said. You came into a room, and I will let you characterize it, but I mean you come into this room, there are maps present, you are being told you are going to get a briefing on POWs in Laos, you were sent there or Mr. Perot was sent there at the behest of then President Nixon. What was said? I mean, what types of comments were made by the station chief to either of you, or not necessarily to you, but during the meeting? Did they talk about radio transmissions, did they talk about imagery, did they talk about live-sighting reports, did they talk about direct knowledge, personal eyewitness accounts, what type of discussion, if you can remember it, took place to give you the feeling that we were talking about a number of American POWs? Either one of you. Mr. Martin?

Mr. MARTIN. Earlier, as I recall, we had been briefed by Ambassador Godley, what I call an—and got what I call an overview of the situation in Laos. I am not talking about that meeting, but earlier. Prior—shortly after our arrival there. At that meeting, per se, we walked down stairs a few steps to a room as I recall it. And the discussion began as to people being held.

There were some reports of sightings and then it was discussed about how some of these pilots, when they would make a parachute, they would be entrapped in that triple canopy foliage, and some would be suspended there, perhaps not be able to get out of their parachutes. That made it difficult and so on.

And then it got around to this particular thing, that the men that were in Sam Neua were in the caves and there were 20 some-odd. That is what I recall about it.

Senator SMITH. Mr. Meurer, the same question.

Mr. MEURER. I remember it was an impromptu meeting. It is not one that I think was planned, if I recall. I think we were called on relatively short notice, that we would have a special meeting for the information. And I still go back—I recall it being late at night. I am pretty sure of that. I could be wrong, but I am pretty sure of that. And of—we had a party that night. We had 150 press with us on that second trip. And I think we were probably trying to stay away from the press to some degree in that meeting, too.

What went on in the meeting, I just do not recall, Senator. I apologize. I tried during the deposition to construct something that was accurate and I just do not recall. I mentioned in my deposition I was organizing all those things, and I had a lot of things on my mind, because I think we were going to Paris the next day. And I might have not just focused and clicked as much. I did make some—I did make a note, which I later put in a report, and that in essence said, 27 men mentioned by this individual at that particular meeting. So, you know, I had written this down at a later date so, you know, I do not think that I just made that number up if I had pulled it out like that again.

Senator SMITH. Did any of the information surprise you at all? You came to Laos. Did you have knowledge beforehand that we were actively in Laos during the war, or was that a surprise to you?

Mr. MEURER. It was not a surprise to me. I was in the Air Force and I was teaching at the officer training school. I knew about the Laotian operations in 1965, 1966, 1967. I guess that is my point right there. I did know about it, so it did not come as a surprise to me at all.

Senator SMITH. The final question, I ask you the same question I asked Mr. Martin, do you feel certain that the individual who was identified to you as the person giving the briefing, the so-called station chief, is that person? Are you confident that the name that was given to you, there was a name given to you, do you recall it?

Mr. MEURER. The name I wrote down, so I recall the name. Actually, I probably couldn't pick him out in a lineup today, so that is there, too. Let me go back to one point you had made, the comment were we surprised at that time. If you recall, from our standpoint, United We Stand, the POW thing was kind of an unfolding thing, and we were quite novices in 1969 even though I had military experience.

Still, a lot of the information coming out was relatively new. And I think we basically had a premise that there were an awful lot of people. The number at that particular time was 1,200 to 1,500 men, so I think we assumed that there were just an awful lot of people that they had not commented on.

And I think—April of 1970, I think Hegdahl had come out and I think there was a number, 300 or something like that, that we knew were in the camps in the North based on what he had. But we assumed there were a lot more. So, an incremental 27, I think probably at that time, in my mind, was not that surprising.

In the caves of Sam Neua, yes, caves, big areas where they were operating up there that we knew the Pathet Lao—I had read about that, so it wasn't a eureka, but it was still an important number, I thought.

Senator SMITH. Just for the record, I just want to clarify two terms. The word missing as opposed to the word prisoners.

Mr. MEURER. Yes.

Senator SMITH. Were you told at that meeting it was 25 to—this 25 to 27 figure were prisoners?

Mr. MEURER. I do not recall the term prisoners.

Senator SMITH. What term do you recall?

Mr. MEURER. I recall men, I think, being up there.

Mr. MARTIN. Men alive in caves. U.S. servicemen alive in caves. Senator SMITH. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Let me ask my colleagues if we can try to move to 5 minutes. I do not want to cut anybody off because in fairness—with others who have had 10 or more, but if we can try to do that, we can come back if somebody has an urgency or so forth, because we do want to hear from Ambassador Godley.

I think that is very important testimony in the context of today. Senator Reid.

Senator REID. Mr. Meurer, in going through your deposition, it is my understanding you had a subsequent meeting several years later with Mr. Murphy in Vietnam.

Mr. MEURER. I got to know Jim, Jim Murphy. I think my first meeting was probably 1969, and every time I would go into Laos, I generally would call him.

Senator REID. So the meeting that is the subject of all this discussion was not the first time you had seen him?

Mr. MEURER. No. I had seen Jim on three or four other occasions prior to that.

Senator REID. So there is no question in your mind that the person you were meeting with was the person that you have told us. So it was not some man with some fake identification.

Mr. MEURER. I do not know that.

Senator REID. But it was the same person you saw time after time, no matter what his name was?

Mr. MEURER. You are talking about Mr. Murphy or the other individual?

Senator REID. Mr. Murphy.

Mr. MEURER. No, no doubt at all. I know Jim.

Senator REID. I see you describe another trip to Laos in September of 1973 with Bull Simons, who was retired military, to meet with contacts as you met with embassy staff. You think you met with Godley and Murphy, is that right?

Mr. MEURER. I do not recall specifically. I think I might have. But we were there and, generally, would make courtesy calls. On several occasions I met with Ambassador Godley. If it was, it was a courtesy call, I think.

Senator REID. Chairman Kerry may have asked you this, but this meeting in 1970 that we have talked to you about so much today, how long did that meeting take?

Mr. MARTIN. I seem to recall something no more than an hour, maybe less.

Senator REID. Late at night?

Mr. MARTIN. Yes, and I seem to recall one of the reasons it was late at night, that there had been this semi-official thing given at the Lang Syne Hotel.

Senator REID. I am sorry, I didn't understand that.

Mr. MARTIN. The Lang Syne Hotel. A party, a lawn party at the hotel, and I seem to remember that it was there that we learned that we could get this information later that evening. And it was following that party, where all of the various embassies were represented, and so forth. It was following that that we went over for the meeting.

Senator REID. Now the meeting that we are talking about was the one where you were told that there were 25 to 27 Americans, and they were being held in caves, right?

Mr. MARTIN. Yes.

Senator REID. That is not something that you heard about on any other trips to Vietnam or any place else?

Mr. MARTIN. We had heard mentions of caves in the Laos area.

Senator REID. Before that?

Mr. MARTIN. Before that, yes.

Senator REID. That Americans were being held in caves?

Mr. MARTIN. There had been information, but it was without validation, that some of the men were being taken to caves. Those that were shot down. But at no time did they pinpoint the area, for example, as being Sam Neua or was there a definitive answer such as this. And, certainly, no definitive answer from someone in position to know.

Senator REID. But this night the location was pinpointed and there were men being held in caves, that is what you were told?

Mr. MARTIN. That is correct, sir.

Senator REID. Mr. Meurer.

Mr. MEURER. Yes, that particular evening the caves were mentioned in Sam Neua.

Senator REID. And at any time subsequent to that have you talked to anyone, either one of you, that gave you information about prisoners being held in caves?

Mr. MEURER. Yes.

Senator REID. When was that?

Mr. MEURER. I think in 1973 when Bull Simons and I were over there on a trip that fall, again, a station chief at Udorn had mentioned it to Bull that they were there. I think they were no longer there at that time. A number, it was not the same number, but it was—there were people there.

Senator REID. Did Mr. Murphy tell you this night where he got this information?

Mr. MEURER. It was not Mr. Murphy who was doing this. It was the station chief.

Senator REID. OK, I am sorry about that. Did the station chief tell you where he got the information?

Mr. MEURER. I don't recall. He might have, but I don't recall.

Senator REID. Mr. Martin?

Mr. MARTIN. I do not recall him saying where he got the information.

Senator REID. Mr. Meurer, my time is fast winding down here. In your deposition, you indicate that you talked to a Jean Cadeux, a Eurasian, who asserted that many Americans were executed in Laos.

Mr. MARTIN. Yes.

Senator REID. And a statement by a Monica Schwinn, a nurse who saw two blacks wearing VC pajamas, who spoke English. Now could you respond to those two?

Mr. MEURER. Yes. Let me go to Monica Schwinn, because actually that was Bernard Neal and Monica Schwinn. It was Bernard Neal that I had talked to, and I said that in my deposition. I just forgot his name the other day.

These were two German nurses actually. I think they were both nurses, one male and one female. And Bernard had come through Dallas about 1974. They were captured by the VC and through a period of many, many months were taken from the south to the north where they were eventually released with everybody.

Bernard had told me on the trip up there somewhere central, near Hue, they had stopped at a VC camp for a period of time. And one evening a couple of Americans, black Americans who were carrying Kalashnikovs and wearing the uniform of the VC, had come in. They had heard them talking. They assumed they were Americans because of the language. That is the only information I had got on that. And I am assuming that—I did not turn that over to the Government. This was 1974, but I am assuming that information was turned over.

Senator REID. Tell me about this Eurasian.

Mr. MEURER. This Eurasian was a man by the name of Jean Cadeux. Jean was an associate of Bull Simons' in 1962, and they were organizing the Kal, which are the mountain people on the Bullivan Plateau. When we went over, Bull remembered Jean, and figured maybe Jean could go back in that area. He was Eurasian. He could move in there pretty good, and see if he could find anything.

We went down to meet with them on the South Coast of Thailand. He agreed to do it. He did spend a month back there and came back and said the information he had that a lot of Americans, toward the end—especially toward the end of the war, if they were caught, they were summarily executed and put in shallow graves. He said that there was a concern about North Vietnamese and the complexity of cadres coming into the villages, and that this was the reason it was done. What number he gave, I don't know. What locations, I don't know.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. Senator McCain?

Senator MCCAIN. If I could just followup. He stated to you that he believed that the policy was to execute captured Americans?

Mr. MEURER. It was not a Laotian policy, I recall, Senator. It was the villagers. Individual villagers. I think they were a little concerned about North Vietnamese cadres coming in and wanting prisoners, as I understand it. By 1971 and 1972, the North Vietnamese were paying gold to a lot of villagers but they were harassing the villagers, and I think the simplicity of it—this is what I was told, anyway. That is really all I know about.

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have no questions except to restate what I said to Ross Perot this morning. And that is that these three individuals, Mr. McKillop, Mr. Meurer, and Mr. Martin, devoted several years of their lives on behalf of the POWs. They gave up their own families, their own time, their own businesses in behalf of this effort. And, as I mentioned this morning, they were part of a team that Mr. Perot assembled, and I still believe was directly responsible for the much better health and perhaps the survival of some of the POWs as a result of their efforts to publicize the plight of the POWs and their efforts to bring them home. And I think it is very important for the record that they also be recognized for their efforts for which I personally, and I know I speak for the POWs, am very grateful. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator McCain. Senator Grassley.

Senator GRASSLEY. Mr. Chairman, I do not have any questions of this panel.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. Senator Kassebaum.

Senator KASSEBAUM. The only question I have, and perhaps it was asked earlier of Mr. Perot, is regarding United We Stand. That was set up as a nonprofit organization to deal with the 1969 and 1970 trips and any following trips, I assume.

Mr. MARTIN. Actually, it was an organization that was set up to focus attention on issues of interest and to gather material and information and educate citizens about the problems, mutual problems in a nonpartisan way, nonpolitical way. And shortly after it was organized, it focused the attention on the POW/MIA, and to my knowledge, as long as I was involved in United We Stand, as its president, that was our center focus.

Senator KASSEBAUM. So, it was organized not just particularly—it did not start out as an organization focused just on POW/MIA?

Mr. MARTIN. It was not stated in its articles as being thus. But rather to take issues of interest public—to the public and educate them.

Senator KASSEBAUM. Did it continue on after 1973, or did it terminate?

Mr. MARTIN. I don't know the answer to that. I know it continued through 1973.

Mr. BRYANT. Senator, it was finally dissolved, I believe in 1978, but the level of activity after 1973 was at a much lower level than it had been in the period from 1969 through 1973.

The CHAIRMAN. The record should show that Mr. Bryant is counsel for Mr. Perot and the other gentlemen here. I did not introduce him at the beginning. And, perhaps, the record could reflect that at the appropriate time.

Mr. MARTIN. Mr. Chairman, if I might make one correction. Senator Brown earlier stated, or it might have been Senator Smith—Senator Smith stated that we made that trip in April at the behest of President Nixon. That is not quite true. We made that trip in behalf of United We Stand and on behalf of POW families.

It was an idea of Mr. Perot in order to keep the spotlight focused. It was not on instructions from anyone in Government. We made it because United We Stand thought it would be good to help solve this problem.

The CHAIRMAN. You raise a question when you say that. I remember somewhere in the deposition Mr. Perot saying that there were meetings with Mr. Cline at the white House and Mr. Chuck Colson. Is that accurate? Do you recall those?

Mr. MARTIN. I do not recall those. I am not aware of those. Those meetings could have been made earlier.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you recall them, Mr. Meurer?

Mr. MEURER. Not Mr. Cline. Colson, I vaguely remember meeting.

Mr. MARTIN. I know that he met with Mr. Cline. Mr. Cline would have told me later about meeting with Mr. Perot, but I am not sure of the timeframe on that, sir.

Senator SMITH. I think the reason I framed the question in that way was because, as far as I understand it, and you know more about it than I do, the embassy cables gave your group an official status. Justifiably, I would say on behalf of the families, but it did give them that. That is the reason why I implied President Nixon, but I stand corrected on that.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Kassebaum, have you completed your questions? I did not mean to interrupt you.

Senator KASSEBAUM. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Before we move to Ambassador Godley and Mr. Murphy, let me ask you gentlemen, do you share Mr. Perot's conviction that someone is alive today? Do you, Mr. Martin?

Mr. MARTIN. Yes, I do.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you, Mr. Meurer?

Mr. MEURER. I have mixed emotions, Senator. I share his conviction that there was somebody left in 1973. I firmly feel that there were some people there.

Mr. MARTIN. I should change mine.

Mr. MEURER. Whether they were POWs or people who had opted to stay for various reasons, like we knew about Garwood. But to say that there are still people alive today, I find it difficult. In my testimony, I had commented about a meeting I had—in my deposition—a meeting I had with a man who was head of security, who was one of the top people for Chiang Kai-shek and provided security for a big ship builder out of Hong Kong. I always recall the conversation I had with him after I went over the issue of the POWs in 1973 and he indicated that, in essence, even though they are out, the war is not over.

Therefore, they are going to keep some people, and you will never know about it. And they will be an asset. As long as they are an asset they will keep them alive. But once they cease becoming an asset, they will get rid of them, and you will never know about it.

And that has always stuck in the back of my mind. And the question is, are they an asset now or not. I don't know the answer to that question.

Senator SMITH. Who said that, Mr. Meurer?

Mr. MEURER. A man by the name of Mr. John Tian Mu, who was a military officer in Chiang Kai-shek's military, responsible for crossing over to China to pick up Chinese soldiers, torture them, find out information. He became head of security for a man by the name of C.Y. Tung in 1973.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Martin, you share the same opinion, then?

Mr. MARTIN. At the time I left I was not as close to the situation but there was no doubt in my mind that in 1973 and as late and 1976 and 1977 when I was still staying in touch with them, I thought that there were POWs still there. I think there were POWs left behind. Whether they are there today and what their status is today and what their condition is today I am not in a position to say.

The CHAIRMAN. I think those are candid assessments. Let me ask you also the same. Assuming, and I have no reason to assume otherwise, that you have these 25 to 27 people mentioned to you in caves, this is 1970, correct?

Mr. MARTIN. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. It would have been 3 years before they would have been transferred, conceivably, to North Vietnam for repatriation. Or repatriated through the Laotian return. In fact that is how they were. The 10 who came back were 9 Americans and 1 Canadian.

Mr. MEURER. Were they held in the caves?

The CHAIRMAN. They were initially, but they were then transferred to North Vietnam. They were, in fact, captured by North Vietnamese and reputed to be held by the Pathet Lao, but under the control—as you know, most of that northern area was really managed and run by the North Vietnamese. And in fact, there were North Vietnamese Army units present, as you have said.

My question to you then is, I suppose you would accept the possibility—not the probability, but the possibility that, if there were 25 to 27 and 10 returned, 15 could have died in the intervening years, or been killed, or tortured, or whatever.

Mr. MARTIN. Well, I would accept it more readily had it not been for General Walters' report on page 9 where he says, in 1973, he mentions the men being in Sam Neua at that time and confirmed as being there.

The CHAIRMAN. That is a good point. I take it that also the Eagleburger letter and the DIA assessment is really referring to that period of time, is that accurate? The 1973 period?

Mr. MARTIN. That is my interpretation, yes.

The CHAIRMAN. I think that is a fair interpretation. Did you want to add to that, Mr. McKillop?

Mr. McKILLOP. Yes, I wanted to add my position. To the extent that I am still firmly convinced as of today that there are still living prisoners over there.

The CHAIRMAN. Over where?

Mr. McKILLOP. Up in the Indochina area.

The CHAIRMAN. In Vietnam? Laos? Cambodia?

Mr. McKILLOP. Most likely in Laos, some in Cambodia. I do not have any evidence as you might like to have this morning, but on the basis of the many visits, the various people that we were in touch with—

The CHAIRMAN. Let me come back, if I can, Mr. McKillop. I do not mean to cut you off, but I want to try to keep things moving here, and moving crisply if we can. Mr. Meurer has put forward what a number of people have heard and hypothesized as this question of asset. If there is a value to them, they might have been alive.

But if you reach a point where they might have become a liability, it is hard to understand why the Government would keep them alive to deal with the problem. Can you tell us how you would view Vietnam being advanced today, how Vietnam would be advanced today by having people alive? How would their strategy, their goals of normalization, of joining the civilized world, and so forth, how would that be advanced by having people today alive?

Mr. McKILLOP. I think in Vietnam they have diminished asset value. But certainly Laos would still have reason and most likely Cambodia would.

The CHAIRMAN. Question mark. Cambodia with Pol Pot. It is very hard to believe that any foreigner could conceivably have survived through the Pol Pot regime. Can you suggest to us how American prisoners, of all people, might have survived Pol Pot?

Mr. McKILLOP. On the contrary, I think they are so far apart, there are at least three factions over there, that whatever faction may have them is certainly not going to give them up to another faction, or give them up to anybody.

The CHAIRMAN. In 1975 to 1979, there was only one faction. Only one faction. Nobody survived who was a foreigner at that period of time. I am sure you are familiar with that period. In fact the DIA and others and, in fact, the Cambodian Government has been very forthcoming.

We really do not have a live-sighting report of significance. We have a couple, I think, that exist that they are going to followup on. Anyway, I do not want to debate that with you.

Let me come back to one other question. On the business dealings, you know Foreign Minister Thach. I know Foreign Minister Thach. He is a very wise and very schooled diplomat. He does not engage in things lightly. He took great risks. He went on the line in the relationship to the United States in seeking the withdrawal of his country's troops from Cambodia, and he went on the line in the entire POW/MIA issue and, in fact, the degree to which he went on the line, and China's fears of him cost him his job, ultimately.

When he gives to you a document to deliver to Mr. Perot offering a business relationship, he clearly saw that as advancing his interests and the country's interests as foreign minister, would you agree?

Mr. McKILLOP. Except that I think it was driven more by the other faction than it was by Mr. Thach.

The CHAIRMAN. Did you negotiate with him or the younger group?

Mr. McKILLOP. I was talking to Mr. Thach. I was relating to Mr. Thach. But there was always the younger faction that was coming in with a different position or different, more urgent—

The CHAIRMAN. But they knew, all of them, that you were interested in POW/MIA, correct?

Mr. McKILLOP. Without question.

The CHAIRMAN. Did he, in the course of offering this deal, suggest to you that if you followed up on it you would, in fact, receive something in return with respect to POW/MIA?

Mr. McKILLOP. No, he did not.

The CHAIRMAN. So, there was not POW/MIA quid pro quo on this?

Mr. McKILLOP. No, there was not.

The CHAIRMAN. Does that not suggest to you, and Mr. Perot, now you are back here, it raises a huge issue in my mind about the capacity for this negotiation process you talk about. Clearly your sole interest, Mr. Perot, and I will wait until you come back, but I will just let you think about it maybe, your interest was POW/MIA and they knew that. To be proffering you some kind of business relationship without the offer simultaneously of people seems to defy the notion that there is any way down the road to get them to

make that kind of offer now. I may be wrong, and you may have a response to that. But it is a hard one to understand.

Senator SMITH. I have one clarification I would like to make in regard to the so-called 9 or 10. I think one died, so there were really only nine who came back, captured by the North Vietnamese in Laos and released. I think the chairman mentioned, with your figure—if you will look at the figure of 25 or 27, could any of those be some of those people?

It is my understanding that most of these 10, I do not know about all, but most of these were shot down in the mid-1960's and moved immediately to Vietnam, which would seem to predate the time period you are talking about. I would have to check it, but I think that that is accurate.

Just one question to you, Mr. McKillop. In terms of following up on what the chairman just said in terms of signals or possible signals that may have been sent to you by any reference to business, could there be assets in the sense that by allowing occasional evidence of live-sighting reports to surface that the Vietnamese were trying to send us this kind of a signal that they wanted to negotiate? Does that theory—and it is a theory, that is all it is, does that make any sense to you?

Mr. McKillop. No. I had very few signals sent to me concerning Vietnam itself or having sightings in Vietnam. I had very few signals coming that way. Bear in mind that we got into their economic situation as a matter of interest and as a matter of developing our relationship. And it was a fine thing as far as it went. But when it started to develop into a personal invitation with all the significances of profitmaking and so forth, that is where I had to get off. And your earlier question of, doesn't this show that negotiation doesn't work—

The CHAIRMAN. I did not say that. It does not say that it does not work. It suggests that they had nothing to offer. It suggests that they were not willing to come through even to an independent personality like Mr. Perot whom they would have had reason to trust on the subject of MIA/POW, because he was so clearly moving down a road they wanted to move down, as we will see. Or as we see in the documents which Mr. Perot is going to discuss.

Let me suggest if I can, with the consent of my vice chairman, that we move to the next panel. We can pick up on this if we need to when Mr. Perot comes back. But we do want to get Ambassador Godley and Mr. Murphy in as quickly as we can.

Mr. BRYANT. Senator, do you know how long?

The CHAIRMAN. This will be a brief panel. I suspect it will be half the time we just took. There are two people, and it really centers around the meeting alone. Ambassador Godley—oh, while we change here, the stenographer deserves and needs, literally, a 5-minute recess. We stand in recess for only 5 minutes.

[Recess.]

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will come to order. Please, we have a fair amount of work to do. I have offered Mr. Perot the opportunity to proceed and, with characteristic graciousness and with extraordinary generosity with his time today, he would like to hear this panel, and then he will come back on. So we are grateful for that fact and impressed by his willingness to be so available here.

Mr. Ambassador and Mr. Murphy could I ask you both to rise so I can swear please.

Would you raise your right hand? Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Ambassador GODLEY. I do.

Mr. MURPHY. I do.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Ambassador, we recognize that you are speaking with a little bit of difficulty, and I hope—if you talk right into the microphone, I think that should facilitate. If you get up very, very close, but you are probably a better judge of that than we are. Do you want to make any statement at all or just submit to questions?

TESTIMONY OF McMURTRIE GODLEY, U.S. AMBASSADOR TO LAOS, 1969-1973, MORRIS, NY

Ambassador GODLEY. No, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Murphy, do you have any statement you would like to make?

TESTIMONY OF JAMES MURPHY, FORMER U.S. EMBASSY POLITICAL OFFICER, CALUMET, OK

Mr. MURPHY. No, I have prepared a statement for the committee, and I haven't.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Murphy to follow:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JAMES MURPHY

In response to the questions posed by the committee in a letter to me dated July 30, 1992, I have the following observations:

I joined the Lao Desk at the State Department in June, 1966, and was assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Vientiane, Laos, in July, 1967. I served in Laos about 3 years, took home leave and was assigned to INR/REA/SEA at State in September, 1970. Around March, 1971, I went to work for Frank Sieverts, a Special Assistant to the Undersecretary of State for POW/MIA Matters. Almost immediately after the release of NVA and U.S. prisoners of war, early in 1973, I joined the Cambodian Desk where I stayed until reassigned to FSI for mid-career training in July, 1974. I recall files on POW/MIA "sightings" at the Lao Desk, in my office in Vientiane, and, of course, at Frank Sieverts' office at State. Other U.S. agencies had these reports as well as other information.

Activities to confirm the whereabouts and conditions of American POWs during the war had been under way long before I joined the Lao Desk in June, 1966. They continued after I left Vientiane. I was not involved with any activities or operations to secure such information after the war.

The Pathet Lao had admitted to holding some Americans before I joined the Lao Desk. Other than that evidence, I gave little weight or credence to statements by Soth Pethrasy about American POWs. I am confident that Mr. Pethrasy listened to radio broadcasts from the Pathet Lao zone. Almost daily, these broadcasts claimed that U.S. planes bombing Laos were shot down by the PLA. The FBIS translated these broadcasts and almost every day I read these translations carefully. I recall trying to link these PL claims to some known U.S. Air force missions over Laos. I discovered no correspondence between PL claims and real events. I also learned that U.S. military officials were monitoring these claims for the same purposes. I later understood that these effort produced little or nothing in terms of useful evidence of the survival of U.S. airmen downed over Laos.

I have little or no knowledge of discussions about the POW/MIA issues during the 60-day implementation of the Paris Peace Accords. The Department of Defense and the State POW/MIA offices earlier had provided U.S. negotiators all of our information about this issue along with recommendations as to what agreements the U.S.G. negotiators should try to obtain about the question. I add two impressions: First, the issues was of highest priority to U.S. negotiators; and, second, Frank Sieverts and Roger Shields (DoD) appeared satisfied with the way their proposals were treated. I

recall that delays in the POW exchange took place. These were resolved but I don't know how they were settled. A few days after the POWs were exchanged, I was transferred to the Cambodian Desk.

During Mr. Perot's visits to Laos, I was the Embassy Control Officer (a euphemistic term for baggage handler and expeditor). As we at the U.S. Embassy understood the messages from Washington, we were supposed to help Mr. Perot, but he was a private citizen and hence had to pay for the costs he incurred during his visit.

The secretary of the Political Section and a junior Foreign Service Officer proved enormously efficient in helping on the first visit during which some expenses were incurred in handling the media covering the Perot visit. We sent Mr. Perot the bills for these costs and he paid them. We reported to Washington on the Perot visit. I drafted some of this reporting. I understand that the Committee has all of these reports. As I was reminded by the Committee's staff, Mr. Perot returned to Laos with family members of some U.S. Air force men downed over Laos. Perot and some of these ladies met with the PL representatives who lived in a compound across the street from the U.S. Embassy. Mr. Perot and some of the family members met with U.S. officials. I probably would have reported to the ambassador and Washington on any such meetings.

My reporting would give the Committee a much more accurate and detailed impression of my views than I can reconstruct 22 years later. As I recall, also, Mr. Perot and his assistants were very friendly, scrupulous in paying any bills, and quite appreciative of the Embassy's help. During one or both visits, Mr. Perot also met with officials of the Royal Lao Government. I assume the Embassy helped get these appointments.

Finally, the Committee asks if "Embassy personnel, including CIA officials, had intelligence information sufficient to track U.S. personnel and to estimate the number of U.S. POWs being held in Laos?" The short answer would be "no." Reports of "informers" strongly suggested that some U.S. citizens were captured alive. Most of us involved with this issue guessed, or "knew", there were survivors of shoot-downs. We did not know if they had survived very long after the shoot-down, although some other later reports seemed to confirm that some may have done so. We did not have any certainty about where they were or how many were being held. Our own intense desire for any news about U.S. POWs may have distorted any information we did obtain. As is true elsewhere, some people in Asia tend to tell you what they think you want to hear. As I told families of U.S. citizens missing in Laos (shortly after the POW release), I do not believe any U.S. citizen was held against his will in Southeast Asia.

The CHAIRMAN. All right. We thank you for joining us today. Obviously the critical question on the committee's mind is to try to focus on the visit of Messrs. Perot, Martin, and Meurer to Laos in 1970. Do you both recall that visit?

Ambassador GODLEY. Senator, I must say, I am very confused.

The CHAIRMAN. Let me just ascertain for the record, you were ambassador during what years?

Ambassador GODLEY. 1969 to 1973.

The CHAIRMAN. So, you were ambassador in Laos during a good period of the war—of the nonwar war.

Ambassador GODLEY. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. And Mr. Murphy, your role was what?

Mr. MURPHY. I was in the political section. I was one of the officers in the political section. I worked for Nick Galiotis and, later, Charles Rushing. And, at the time my boss was Charles Rushing, who reported to the ambassador. By the time Ambassador Godley arrived, I had become more identified with POW/MIA questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Were you in your embassy in Vientiane tracking American prisoners and trying to ascertain a status of American soldiers lost during the course of the secret war in Laos?

Mr. MURPHY. I was not doing that.

The CHAIRMAN. Was the embassy doing that?

Mr. MURPHY. Well, I am trying. The embassy was—through the intelligence community—the embassy had that as a matter of fact.

And that was a standard. You have a list of things you are supposed to be looking for and that was one of the standard things. And that had been there before I got there and after I left.

The CHAIRMAN. Were you aware as the political officer, in the course of your meetings with the ambassador and others in the intelligence community that Americans had been lost fighting over Laos and in Laos?

Mr. MURPHY. Oh, yes. The Pathet Lao—let me try to make one clarification. This was not a secret war in the sense that the press kept referring to it as a secret war. The North Vietnamese, as you have correctly remarked, had 45,000 to 100,000 regular army troops in Laos in violation of their written agreement of 1962.

We, in the process of saying, describing how we were keeping track of this, had said we would fly armed reconnaissance over Laos and, if fired upon, they will fire back. Therefore, there was no particular embarrassment or sensitivity about having a pilot lost over Laos, in my mind.

The CHAIRMAN. But let us be a little bit more forthcoming.

Mr. MURPHY. Furthermore, the Pathet Lao—

The CHAIRMAN. We were dropping bombs?

Mr. MURPHY. Oh, sure.

The CHAIRMAN. That is not just flying reconnaissance.

Mr. MURPHY. I am talking about the sensitivity of having a missing pilot. If you have reconnaissance, armed reconnaissance overflying—flying over a country, you can lose pilots.

The CHAIRMAN. But do not suggest to the committee that the reason we were losing pilots and were not surprised about it was simply because we were flying reconnaissance.

Mr. MURPHY. Oh, no. We were bombing.

The CHAIRMAN. We were bombing.

Mr. MURPHY. We were bombing the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

The CHAIRMAN. That is a war.

Mr. MURPHY. And in other parts of Laos, but mostly the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

The CHAIRMAN. So, in point of fact, we were losing people?

Mr. MURPHY. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. We lost how many in total? 600 and some?

Mr. MURPHY. I don't recall at this time. I had all that information year ago. I simply don't have it now.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, do you specifically recall that when you were in the embassy, your embassy had knowledge of American prisoners of war held by the Pathet Lao?

Mr. MURPHY. I specifically recall intelligence reports stating that someone, an informant, unidentified, but a native, not an American, claimed to have seen live Americans captured. That would not be surprising because the Pathet Lao had broadcast saying that they held Americans prisoner.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Ambassador, or Mr. Murphy, or both, did you have an intelligence assessment that Americans were, in fact, held during the period 1969 to 1973?

Ambassador GODLEY. Sir, we had proof, as much as you can, that Americans were taken prisoner. Where they were held, and by whom they were held, there was a good deal of question. I personally was convinced that there were no Americans held by the

Pathet Lao, and the Americans that were prisoners were prisoners of the North Vietnamese units in Laos or had been taken back to North Vietnam.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you concur, Mr. Murphy, with that assessment? Is that also your memory?

Mr. MURPHY. My memory at that time, in 1970, was that one of the reports, there may have been more, one of the intelligence reports seemed plausible that live Americans might have been held in the caves near Sam Neua? It seemed, I do not recall, and the committee should know what was the date, not of the report, but the date of the sighting. When they were there, I do not recall.

The CHAIRMAN. Is that the only report in the entire time you were there of Americans being held in Laos?

Mr. MURPHY. It was one of the most specific and detailed, and I think that is why it stuck out. There were other reports. I recall a file. I am trying to remember the size, I can't even do that.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you recall the period of time?

Mr. MURPHY. Do I recall the period of time?

The CHAIRMAN. That that specific report was made.

Mr. MURPHY. I do not. It had to have been before 1970, but I don't recall.

The CHAIRMAN. Were either of you, or both of you present during the briefing in April 1970 which Mr. Perot, Mr. Meurer, and Mr. Martin have all referred to?

Mr. MURPHY. Yes, I think I recall being at such a meeting. I had a great deal of difficulty with this because initially I had the whole darn two trips confused in my mind. As my deposition shows, it just was a jumble. And I had a definite recollection of a meeting, this famous meeting—of not even Murphy and Tom, who I know very well, and certainly are not making things up—nobody is lying in this. I recall that meeting, but I didn't have it directly associated with this briefing, but I guess it was. Now, I guess it was.

RESPONSE BY JAMES MURPHY

My response to a question about a briefing of Perot and his assistants was confused. I believe my deposition was that Perot wanted to meet the Station Chief and that I arranged such a meeting. Today just before I answered questions, Tom Meurer told me there was a "briefing." I do not doubt them but I did not recall such a briefing during my deposition and specifically I have no recollection of the Station Chief giving a briefing. Maybe he did; maybe someone did, but I could not tell the Committee I remembered the Station Chief giving a briefing at any meeting if one took place.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you recall the number of 25 or 27 prisoners being held in caves in Sam Neua as having been briefed to them by the station chief?

Mr. MURPHY. I do not recall that number.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you recall any number whatsoever?

Mr. MURPHY. I would just—just to add to the confusion, I had in mind 18 in one report. Now, I don't know whether that was briefed to them or not. And then when I talked to your staff and was giving my deposition to your committee, the lawyers and so forth, I have now been trying to think about this for all this time. But I just cannot get it sorted out in my mind. Although, of course, I was quite interested, and I later worked in POW/MIA affairs. And I had lists of everybody missing and all that. I just cannot recall.

And on that particular meeting, I cannot recall at all a number being briefed. I had in mind, as I said, on this particular report, I had in mind a different number.

Ambassador GODLEY. I do not believe I was at that briefing. I never heard until today of the figure of 25 Americans held in Sam Neua.

The CHAIRMAN. You have never heard that number until today?

Ambassador GODLEY. According to my recollection 20 years ago. I mean, my conviction was that, as I said earlier, no Americans were held by the Pathet Lao. But Sam Neua was, of course, the Pathet Lao, quote, capital, unquote. So I would have seriously questioned 25 or 27 men held there. One, how did we know that figure? I do not think we ever had such good intelligence. Two, had that been the case, the station chief certainly would have informed me.

The CHAIRMAN. Let me understand again, the date you departed from Vientiane was what, 1973?

Ambassador GODLEY. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Were you there through the Paris Peace Accords?

Ambassador GODLEY. I was there for most of them, yes.

The CHAIRMAN. So when Secretary Eagleburger sends to the Secretary of State—strike that. When he sends—he is Assistant Secretary of Defense and he sends to the Secretary of Defense a memorandum in which he is citing the inadequate accounting for prisoners by the Lao, do you concur that there was an inadequate accounting by the Lao?

Ambassador GODLEY. I'm sorry, would you repeat that question?

The CHAIRMAN. In 1973, at the time of the Peace Accords, Laos was not a partner to the peace negotiations, correct?

Ambassador GODLEY. (nods in the affirmative)

The CHAIRMAN. The Peace Accords signed by Vietnam were not signed by Laos. In a specific memorandum written by Lawrence Eagleburger, then Assistant Secretary of Defense.

Ambassador GODLEY. Eagleburger Secretary of Defense, no, sir. Do you mean somebody else?

The CHAIRMAN. He was the Acting Assistant Secretary. Lawrence Eagleburger was the Acting Assistant Secretary.

Ambassador GODLEY. Of State?

The CHAIRMAN. Of Defense.

Ambassador GODLEY. OK.

The CHAIRMAN. And he wrote a memorandum to the Secretary suggesting that after the recovery of the last prisoners from North Vietnam Hanoi should be advised unequivocally that we will still hold them responsible for the return of all POWs being held in Indochina, and once again North Vietnam should be clearly informed that an accounting for 10 men out of a total of more than 350 from Laos is considered unacceptable. Do you recall pressing that issue with the Pathet Lao?

Ambassador GODLEY. No, sir, I do not recall it.

The CHAIRMAN. It is possible, and again we have not heard from Lawrence Eagleburger yet, that they were simply reacting to statistics, which he mentions in his first paragraph suggesting that a 2.5 percent accounting in contrast to the 45 percent accounting which

he cites for North Vietnam is simply inadequate, and because so many people were lost, perhaps there should have been more.

It may not be that it was based on a lot, except that he does mention specifically an assessment that some people were still being held.

Now, do you have a recollection of that?

Ambassador GODLEY. No, sir, I do not.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you, Mr. Murphy?

Mr. MURPHY. I left Laos on June 1970, shortly after the second Perot visit, in fact, so that was in April. I left in May and June, and then I was back, and later in 1971 I was on the POW/MIA desk—office. To answer your question directly, no, but then I probably wouldn't have, because just as soon as Operation Homecoming ended, I was transferred to the Cambodian desk and so totally out of the circuit on that.

The CHAIRMAN. Let me read this to both of you. This is 28 March, or after 28 March, 1973, Larry Eagleburger, a strong demarche be made to the ranking LPF representing at Vientiane by the U.S. Ambassador personally—that's you—and he references you earlier in this, and he says this initiative should plainly and forcefully assert that the United States will no longer play games with the POW issue in Laos.

The LPF should be told that we have reason to believe they hold additional U.S. prisoners and we demand their immediate release as well as an accounting and information on all those who may have died.

Finally, the LPF should be advised that failure to provide a satisfactory answer could result in appropriate United States actions.

Now, do you have a recollection of what the rationale was for that?

Ambassador GODLEY. I do not.

The CHAIRMAN. You do not?

Ambassador GODLEY. The only thing, I might wonder if Eagleburger was Assistant Secretary of Defense—I would have received instructions from the Secretary of State, not the Secretary of Defense. I just wonder if any such instructions were issued by State.

The CHAIRMAN. I might add that he simultaneously wrote a memorandum to Secretary Kissinger, who was negotiating this at the time, and he said to Secretary Kissinger almost the same thing. In fact, he said—it's verbatim, the same paragraph I just read. It's a shortened memo.

As an accompanying measure, Ambassador Godley should be instructed to lean hard on Souvannaphouma, and tell him to let the LPF know that political concessions in the new Provincial Government of National Union will be next to impossible without resolving the POW question. You have no memory of that instruction?

Ambassador GODLEY. No. I wonder if the State records indicate that such a telegram was sent to me.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, at this point, gentlemen, neither of you can say that Messrs. Meurer, Perot, and Martin, didn't hear what they have told this committee they heard, is that accurate?

Mr. MURPHY. No, I cannot say that.

Ambassador GODLEY. I cannot guarantee it, because I was not there. I do, however, believe in my own mind that such a statement

would not have been made, because I don't think it's accurate to say that 25 or 27 Americans were detained in Sam Neua.

The CHAIRMAN. Why is it not accurate? Why do you say that? Ambassador GODLEY. (1) How did we know it? (2) I was always under the impression and convinced that Americans taken prisoner in Laos were handed over to the Vietnamese, or perhaps to better rephrase that, American prisoners captured in Laos were captured by the Vietnamese. The Pathet Lao military establishment existed on paper.

The CHAIRMAN. In point of fact, isn't it true, Ambassador Godley, there really wasn't much of a Pathet Lao organization? It was a very low number of people. Isn't that accurate, Mr. Murphy?

Mr. MURPHY. That's certainly correct.

The CHAIRMAN. But the one place they did hang out was Sam Neua, was it not?

Mr. MURPHY. That's correct.

The CHAIRMAN. So it's accurate that while they were small and few in number that they did have a presence with their headquarters in Vientiane and Sam Neua.

Ambassador GODLEY. Yes. Their headquarters in Vientiane were under Soth Pethrasy.

The CHAIRMAN. Would it not be reasonable to assume, or not even to assume, but would it not have been reasonable that they would have sought to hold some American prisoners in order to have leverage to make the United States negotiate with them and to deal for their interests?

Ambassador GODLEY. No, sir, I do not believe so.

The CHAIRMAN. Why?

Ambassador GODLEY. The North Vietnamese so dominated the Pathet Lao that—

The CHAIRMAN. You don't think they could have pulled that off? Do you concur in that, Mr. Murphy?

Mr. MURPHY. If the North Vietnamese had wanted the prisoners, they would have had them. It was a colony.

The CHAIRMAN. What about what we were told by Minister Souvan when we were there recently, that the soldiers would kill these people, they were dropping bombs on them, they were angry, they popped out of the sky and landed, and we were told they were killed? Do you accept that?

Mr. MURPHY. That was always a worry of mine.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, was it a reality?

Mr. MURPHY. I don't know whether it was a reality or not.

The CHAIRMAN. You never learned of that through the intelligence network?

Mr. MURPHY. I did not learn of a pilot being shot down being murdered by villagers. I did not hear that. I heard it here today.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Smith.

Senator SMITH. Just picking up on that, Mr. Ambassador, you were there from 1969—I know you have difficulty, and I'll try to give you questions that you can answer yes or no, but you were there as the ambassador from 1969 to 1973, correct?

Mr. Eagleburger writes in this memorandum—and Senator Kerry just quoted very liberally from it, and I have a copy that's

cut off on the edge and I'm having difficulty reading it, but let me just try one line here.

The intelligence indicates the North Vietnamese Pathet Lao forces have captured U.S. personnel since 1964, and the LPF have provided no prisoner of war casualty—I'll just assume the word information, other than the ten names listed on 1 February that were released.

I mean, I'm having trouble understanding, and it really is no offense intended at anyone here, but the bureaucratise in this business just drives me up the wall.

We have four individuals, highly respected individuals who have led lives of their own, entirely unrelated to POWs, who come in. Three individuals said they had a meeting in Southeast Asia in Southeast Asia in 1970, that a certain series of events took place. They've all testified to it. They have some recollections 22 years later.

We have the greatest intelligence collecting data in the world at the time, placing our resources on collecting data about prisoners, and we've got the Assistant Secretary of Defense writing a memo, just about ready to start the war again because we don't get them back, and you guys don't know anything about it, and I just don't understand it, and frankly I don't believe it.

Now, what did you guys know? What kind of intelligence data were you getting in there in the 1970's? I don't care whether they were in Sam Neua or any place else, what kind of intelligence data were you getting?

There's no way that the Secretary or the Assistant Secretary of Defense writes a memo like that that goes to the President of the United States risking starting a war again, risking bringing home 590 or so POWs—there's no way he writes that memo to the President, or indirectly to the President, without some knowledge, and I haven't heard anybody say there is any knowledge.

To hear you guys talk, there's nothing available. There's no intelligence out there. We don't know if anybody's there, and that's not what three individuals who came and heard a briefing are saying to me.

Now, what knowledge did you have in the intelligence community about prisoners in Laos during the war?

Ambassador GODLEY. I think I can perhaps shed some light on that. We had very little information about prisoners of war. We knew when U.S. aircraft were shot down or missing. We rarely had any indication of an open chute.

Most of the aircraft that were shot down ended up in flames. Occasionally, chutes would be opened, and occasionally we would rescue those men either by USAF SAR, search and rescue efforts, or by Air America helicopters. That related to Northern Laos.

There, our basic information obviously came from the Air Force. In the Ho Chi Minh Trail area we had very little responsibility. That was Saigon's war, and our war was Northern Laos or the strip west of the Ho Chi Minh Trail area, so that as far as ground forces were concerned and POWs or MIAs in Southern Laos, that was MAC/SOG or MACV's area of operation, over which I had very little control or responsibility.

Senator SMITH. Captain Hrdlicka—his wife I believe is here with us today—was captured in Laos. His picture was in Pravda Newspapers. He was a POW who was held by the Pathet Lao. We had intelligence to that effect, yes or no?

Mr. MURPHY. Yes. We had Pathet Lao broadcasts, I think, to that effect, stating that they had captured him.

Senator SMITH. Mr. Murphy, if you can answer this question, I'd appreciate it, make it a little easier on the ambassador. Did you have any information—did your offices have any information on the Baron 52, any intelligence data on the Baron 52? You were there only until 1970.

Mr. MURPHY. No. That doesn't ring a bell with me.

Senator SMITH. Mr. Ambassador, had you left by April of 1973?

Ambassador GODLEY. I'm sorry?

Senator SMITH. Were you in Laos in April of 1973?

Ambassador GODLEY. I think I was. I left in April 1973.

Senator SMITH. Did you have any intelligence on that aircraft, on pilots missing from that aircraft, the EC-47?

Ambassador GODLEY. No. I don't recall now, frankly.

Senator SMITH. Let me just ask one final question of each of you. Did you set the meeting up? Who set the meeting up with Mr. Perot and his associates? Was that you?

Mr. MURPHY. It would have had to have been me. It would have had to have been me. I was control officer.

Senator SMITH. Do you agree or disagree with the characterization that the station chief who we cannot name was present at that meeting?

Mr. MURPHY. I'm not positive. I know, and I've stated, that Mr. Perot met the station chief. I think I introduced them.

Senator SMITH. But not at that meeting, is that what you're saying?

Mr. MURPHY. Well, you see, I'm having trouble getting the question down in my mind about this meeting and briefing. I don't doubt Tom and Murphy Martin. I don't have any ax to grind. I'm just having trouble getting it fixed in my mind.

Senator SMITH. You stated in your deposition to the committee that you recalled setting up a meeting with Mr. Perot's delegation and the CIA station chief. You also described the room at the embassy the same way Mr. Perot described it, by the way, independently.

In other words, there was a map and that the map, according to your own statement, had suspect POW camps on it, and the reason why those camps were plotted on there was to avoid any mistakes of our aircraft flying over the area. Did you say that in your deposition?

Mr. MURPHY. I said Mr. Perot. I don't recall saying anything about the delegation, because until today I had forgotten that Tom was there.

Senator SMITH. You're remembering about a lot of detail about a meeting, and you can't remember one of the major participants, who would be the station chief.

Mr. MURPHY. I'm not denying that he was there, or anything at all. I'm just saying I remember meeting and introducing Mr. Perot

to the station chief outside the Ambassador's office in U.S. Embassy.

I remember some remarks being exchanged. They had to be about POW/MIA affairs. I'm having a difficult time getting that touch with the meeting that obviously took place, as far as I know. It just doesn't make the same kind of thing, do you see what I'm saying?

I'm not trying to deny or say there wasn't a meeting. I would have certainly tried to help provide all the information we had available, but if I can't remember it, I can't remember it. I don't remember it the way they do, that's all.

The CHAIRMAN. Gentlemen, what I would like to do is be able to leave the record open in the event we have additional questions that we would like to followup with you with. We appreciate both of you taking the time, and particularly your patience through the day, but as you can tell, this is an important piece of testimony, and I think it's important to have all of your reflections on it as well as on the issue in general.

I suspect the committee will want to come back a little bit for some of the other issues about intelligence gathering in the briefing process within the embassy and so forth. I take it you had regular intelligence briefings in the embassy. Were there regular intelligence briefings to you, Mr. Ambassador?

Ambassador GODLEY. Every morning.

The CHAIRMAN. We'll followup on that. I do want to thank you both, and we will excuse you at this point in time, so we can proceed back to Mr. Perot at this time.

Thank you very much, both of you.

Mr. Perot, could I ask you to indulge us?

Mr. PEROT. While they're moving, can I make a point on the map here, sir?

The CHAIRMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. PEROT. They missed Sam Neua. That's Sam Neua (indicating). That is not Sam Neua. That is Hanoi, not too far from Sam Neua, that is the Plain of Jars.

The CHAIRMAN. Correct.

Mr. PEROT. I just want to make sure that where we see the big clusters is where the action took place, OK? I'm sure with the best of intentions they just pointed out the wrong place, where there was just a couple of flags. This looks like flag city here. That's Sam Neua.

The CHAIRMAN. We don't have any doubt.

Mr. PEROT. Hanoi looks about right, and you see the Concentrations all the way down.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Perot, the flags are properly positioned in Sam Neua.

Senator SMITH. But they weren't properly identified.

Mr. PEROT. Then my National Geographic map is wrong.

The CHAIRMAN. You are correct. You pointed to the cluster.

Mr. PEROT. I'm sure it's hard. You know, the town is covered up with all the flags on it, but I just thought it was important to clear the record.

The CHAIRMAN. We appreciate that.

Mr. PEROT. There's a lot of confusion about what happened there, and I understand that a lot of time has passed. I know you want to get to the bottom of it. If you want to find out what happened in Laos, go to the Special Forces teams that were part of White Star, Operation White Star.

If you have trouble finding them, I can find them. I can find the key people. I can find key people who lived, fought, and took incredible risks for our country right up in there. They can tell us with certainty who dominated each area. You say, gee, Sam Neua is in Laos, therefore the Pathet Lao must be guarding the prisoners. Not necessarily.

Today, if we go to the people who worked in Operation White Star, who recruited and trained the Pathet Lao, took extraordinary risks for our country, never got any credit or recognition, they can tell you. And believe me, they carry a heavy burden about the people who were left there.

The CHAIRMAN. We would like to, obviously, work with you.

Mr. PEROT. I'd be glad to help in any way I can. I have another suggestion. You get a list of all the names of all of the participants representing the United States in Paris Peace Talks.

The CHAIRMAN. I think we have that.

Mr. PEROT. Including the lower-level staff members, and follow the old prosecutor's theory of start at the bottom and work your way up.

The CHAIRMAN. That is what we are doing.

Mr. PEROT. Right. Start with the lower-level staff members, because I recall there was great concern on the part of the working staff that we were leaving the men in Laos. And I think that if you just work from the bottom up, you will find a very interesting picture.

The CHAIRMAN. I know, Mr. Perot, you wanted—I want to let you comment on anything you want to comment on.

Mr. PEROT. No, no. I just want to get those parts out today because it ties back into what we've been talking about.

The CHAIRMAN. Fair enough.

Mr. PEROT. And one last—excuse me. This is important. Get the Continental Air Services and the Air America guys in. I stayed at their compound on my second trip. They talk openly about large numbers of POWs—openly. They just sat around and talked about it at night. Everybody knew about it. I stayed in their compound.

And these, again, were wonderful people who took unbelievable risks for our country. They were flying airplanes where you shouldn't be walking. They were landing airplanes where nobody, you know, that was prudent would be trying to put an airplane down.

So, there are a lot of people around if we really want to say, OK, who was doing this, that, and the other. We'll find somebody with a good recollection on it. All right, sir? I'm finished.

The CHAIRMAN. You wanted to specifically comment, I think, on the documents. I did not have any specific questions on the particular set of documents. Senator McCain may have, but I do not think he did. But I think you wanted to comment on them. And you wanted to take a moment to read them and then comment on them.

Mr. PEROT. But I have read them.

The CHAIRMAN. That may prompt some questions.

Mr. PEROT. Does Senator McCain have any questions he wants to ask me?

Senator MCCAIN. No, sir. As I stated earlier, I thought that it was important for you to see those documents since they were released to the public, and have an opportunity to comment on any of either the statements or contents of those documents.

Mr. PEROT. All right, sir, we'll start with Michael Deaver's letter to Howard Baker, who was acting as chief of staff. Last paragraph, page 1. March 18, 1987.

We refuse to negotiate with them, being the Lao and the Vietnamese. We refuse to negotiate with them until all missing Americans are accounted for, a policy that perversely prevents negotiations concerning the release of Americans held prisoner.

He goes on at the end, I remember a Ronald Reagan who wore a POW bracelet for years and met continuously with the wives and families of those held during the long years of captivity. And I remember Ronald and Nancy hosting dinners for every California returned POW and their wives upon their return.

No other President will address this issue if Ronald Reagan doesn't do it in his remaining 2 years. And above all else, it's the right thing to do.

The CHAIRMAN. Now, you are drawing that to our attention—

Mr. PEROT. The point is—

The CHAIRMAN. To underscore the fact that their negotiating approach was wrong?

Mr. PEROT. He's basically saying, we should be negotiating, and Ronald Reagan should take the initiative because he cares about these men. And I would confirm that position. I knew Governor Reagan, when he was Governor. He and Mrs. Reagan did hundreds of very fine things for the prisoners.

The CHAIRMAN. Are you saying, then, that the negotiating position was not Ronald Reagan's position or was not in his interest?

Mr. PEROT. The reason I mentioned this first is one of his closest associates who may or may not have still been in Government—was not in Government, I guess, at this time—he was out, but still very close to President, was basically saying, and I assume Howard Baker had asked him for information. And he wrote this letter.

He's basically saying, we have a President who really cares for these men, and the right thing to do is to negotiate because if we just take the approach we're talking about, we're frozen in time.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I would concur with you that that is an important statement, but it seems to indicate that Ronald Reagan's policy was against his own interest.

Mr. PEROT. I'm not sure it was the President's policy. I think the President had an open mind. I think he had staff people who had a program that they were trying to keep him focused on.

The CHAIRMAN. This policy has often been asserted to be the policy of Brent Scowcroft, who had a particular feeling about this issue through the years.

Mr. PEROT. He wasn't there at that time.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you have any sense of where this policy came from?

Mr. PEROT. I feel comfortable it came from the National Security Council.

The CHAIRMAN. But you do not know specifically?

Mr. PEROT. They had a POW group there. I don't know specifically. No, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Well you specifically, in your deposition—I do not need to find the specific reference. I know you will remember it. But you talked about the fact that there was no strategy earlier, no negotiating strategy. Is that correct?

Mr. PEROT. Well, as we go through these documents I think you'll see that reconfirmed, that they're basically just kind of in freeze. Now, then, in the last few months in their stories for the press, they've claimed that my trip to Hanoi fouled up their negotiating strategy. These documents basically say they didn't have one.

These documents basically confirm everything I've told you here today. They didn't have one. The Vietnamese didn't want to talk to them. The Vietnamese were offended by the way they'd been treated, etc, etc, etc. Now, it bounces around, but when you read all these documents, it's all there.

The second document is from a document apparently typed by the Vice President.

The CHAIRMAN. Could I ask you a question on that, if I may, because this is helpful for the record I think? You were quoted, on page 220 of the deposition, as saying—the question from Mr. Codinha to you was: do you know what the administration's negotiating strategy was? Your answer was: no, there wasn't one. Either there wasn't one, or I don't know what it is. Fair?

Mr. PEROT. I think I said, no, there wasn't one, or if they had one it was a well-kept secret from me. And they had taken several months of my life working on this project, and you would think that someone would have done me the courtesy to say, now, here's our strategy in dealing with the Vietnamese. You would certainly think someone would have brought it up as we were talking about whether or not I should go on this trip. It never came up.

The CHAIRMAN. In point of fact, General Powell said, in his deposition to us, that he—let me just read this to you, if I can, Mr. Perot. And the reason I am doing this is that I want to underscore what was happening in terms of this overall policy. It seems to me that it was not that they did not have a negotiating policy. They had a policy not to negotiate.

Mr. PEROT. All right.

The CHAIRMAN. And the policy—do you see what I am saying?

Mr. PEROT. Yes, I would agree with that. I think that's confirmed here.

The CHAIRMAN. I think that it is very important. It is very important to understand that.

Mr. PEROT. But they were stiff-arming. They were going through what you call a stiff-arming thing.

The CHAIRMAN. Here is what General Powell said. The question to General Powell was: can you articulate what the position of the President of the United States was in March or April, versus what Mr. Perot's position was?

Answer: the President's position and the position of the administration was to get the fullest possible accounting for our missing in

action, and to be very firm in that position, to make sure that the Vietnamese understood that until that was dealt with there could be no improvement in our relationship, and there would be no benefits offered.

We had come to grips with this issue. We had a policy that was firm. The Vietnamese are marvelous negotiators, and they were constantly trying to find seams and ways around the policy.

When Mr. Perot came on the scene, his interest was—he made it clear that his interest had to do with finding live Americans, not just accounting for dead Americans. And he made it clear that he believed that there were live Americans. And the basis for that belief—and that was what he was interested in was bringing home live ones.

He seemed to be more willing to offer things to the Vietnamese in the way of potential economic benefits they might derive, or changes in the political and diplomatic situation between our two countries than existed, than the President and the administration were willing to do.

This is a very important paragraph, I think. General Powell says: the Vietnamese seem to be attracted to Mr. Perot and to his ideas, and the concern was that they might view him as the formal channel to the U.S. Government as opposed to the formal channels that might exist already through the diplomatic means, the Secretary of State as well as emissaries that the President might designate to deal with these matters.

Now, I see this as the fundamental difference and the fundamental conflict. H. Ross Perot had a set of ideas, and he clearly—by General Powell's own admission, the Vietnamese were attracted to it. You were on a separate track. The administration was over here. As I said, their policy was not to negotiate, your's was to try to move forward.

And so, in a sense, they got caught in a deadly circle. We do not negotiate, we will not get an account—we will not move forward until there is an accounting. The accounting could not come because there was no sense of opening. So, if anybody was alive, they languished while the diplomatic circle when around, and around, and around. Is that a fair assessment?

Mr. PEROT. I believe that is incorrect because I had not gone to Hanoi. Hanoi did not know what my approach was. All I basically did when I went to Hanoi was listen to them. I came back and presented all—

The CHAIRMAN. This was after you had come back?

Mr. PEROT. In these notes here, he is talking about what you just said before I went.

The CHAIRMAN. No, he is not.

Mr. PEROT. He is here.

The CHAIRMAN. He is talking here—

Mr. PEROT. That's his deposition. These are the notes written at the time.

The CHAIRMAN. Correct. I'm referring—

Mr. PEROT. I suggest that this may be a little harder evidence than what his recollection is several years later.

The CHAIRMAN. And what you are suggesting is that in his notes he says what?

Mr. PEROT. Basically, he's talking about—I think it's on March the—hang on. Let me get back to it. Here's the chronology. Let's see, this is—

The CHAIRMAN. This is the telephone conversation with Colin Powell.

Mr. PEROT. Just a second. Well, I had it here a minute ago. I should have stayed with it.

The CHAIRMAN. You are saying—is this the memorandum of the telephone conversation with Colin Powell? Well, obviously there is a struggle going on here. I mean, let me read to you from the telcon with Colin Powell. Colin says—

Mr. PEROT. What date are you on, sir?

The CHAIRMAN. Colin says that he has heard that Ross is making calls again.

Mr. PEROT. To whom?

The CHAIRMAN. Ross has called Perroots and wants to know who is trying to cut him out.

Mr. PEROT. All right, number one, I didn't call any—can I interrupt you?

The CHAIRMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. PEROT. No. 1, this is wrong. This is on 3/21. 3/21 is a Saturday. 3/21 is a Saturday. We looked this up while I was down—the 19th was a Thursday, right, Bill, in this year? 3/21 was a Saturday. I was leaving on Sunday. I certainly did not call Perroots at the end of that week. Perroots I had not talked to in months.

The CHAIRMAN. He does not say when it is. It could have been a week earlier, it could have been 2 weeks.

Mr. PEROT. No, no. I'm just saying I didn't talk to General Perroots during this period.

The CHAIRMAN. What does it say?

Mr. PEROT. That is just what I just call National Security Council dissembling. I mean someone, I am sure, went into General Powell and said, gee, Perot just called Perroots, and that triggered off this. That did not happen, OK?

I find the fourth bullet here—

The CHAIRMAN. Well, here it says the same thing that I just suggested. He says: Hanoi, according to Colin, would rather deal with Perot. They have been stiffing the Government because they would rather deal with Perot.

Mr. PEROT. How would they know that. I haven't gone yet. I haven't gone. They don't know me for—all they know is I'm the guy that gave them a migraine headache for 4 years.

Senator McCain. I think they knew you.

Mr. PEROT. I guess to know me is to love me. I don't know, but they haven't met me yet. You see what I mean? This is fruit loop stuff.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, he is obviously referring to some kind of knowledge. I must tell you, I have never known Colin Powell to engage in fruit loop stuff, and I do not think you have either.

Mr. PEROT. Well, but again, this is somebody—this is not his memo. It's important that we get that on the record.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, on the contrary, General Powell says in his testimony in his deposition the very same thing that he is saying here—was that there was a sense that they would rather go your

route, which was doing a little business, feeling like there is some reciprocity. That is, in fact, in keeping—

Mr. PEROT. Nobody knew that was my route.

The CHAIRMAN. I beg to differ with you. Mr. McKillop had been going over there how many times? 11 times?

Mr. McKILLOP. Not before that. Once.

The CHAIRMAN. Once before what?

Mr. McKILLOP. Once before the trip.

Mr. PEROT. He went on the advance trip. I haven't been. They don't know me. I've had no contact with them. I'm a guy they hate. Why they invited me is still a mystery to me at that point. That's the reason I was so tentative about going. It's minor.

But the basic thing here—I think it's interesting to say that they don't have anything going on. We haven't been able to get far enough with discussions in Hanoi to communicate with them about Vessey.

Now, I ask every member of this committee to hold that thought because in the last 2 months, they have leaked endless stories to the press about the fact that I was disrupting what they were trying to do with Vessey. They never could get the Vessey message through.

We've got a news clip here somewhere, in this other stack you gave me, where the State Department is saying the Vietnamese have been dragging their feet since the prior fall on accepting Vessey. They'd never heard about Vessey the prior fall.

The CHAIRMAN. Let me interrupt you there if I can. I am not an expert in all of the sequence here.

Mr. PEROT. Well, maybe it's not important to you.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, it is important because I think it goes to the bona fides here and to what the situation is, and whether somebody is dissembling or whether they are, in fact, stating a reality of a situation. You had received an invitation from Vietnam, correct?

Mr. PEROT. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. When was that invitation issued?

Mr. PEROT. March 19th. Is that when we got the copy; the date of the written invitation?

The CHAIRMAN. So, you received a written invitation before this memo was written.

Mr. PEROT. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. OK, let me just finish my thought. Vietnam had decided it wanted to talk to you.

Mr. PEROT. Right.

The CHAIRMAN. Now, do you know how that decision came about?

Mr. PEROT. No.

The CHAIRMAN. You simply received an invitation?

Mr. PEROT. No, Mr. McKillop had been over. They first gave me a verbal invitation.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, let us just finish the thought. McKillop had been over there. Lo and behold, the Government of Vietnam invites Ross Perot to go to Vietnam.

Mr. PEROT. No, no. He went over because I told them I would not go to see them until an advance team had come in.

The CHAIRMAN. When did he go over?

Mr. McKILLOP. About 3 weeks before, in February.

The CHAIRMAN. So, in February he went over, to tell them what?

Mr. PEROT. Well, I told them I wouldn't go until I had sent an advance team in.

The CHAIRMAN. Was there already a discussion about your going?

Mr. PEROT. Excuse me. And I wouldn't go unless I got a written invitation. And then I wanted to make sure that if I went we were going to talk about POWs.

The CHAIRMAN. So, in February you were discussing with the Vietnamese going to Vietnam?

Mr. PEROT. Because they had invited me verbally.

The CHAIRMAN. And when did they do that?

Mr. PEROT. Earlier.

The CHAIRMAN. So, they obviously wanted to deal with you.

Mr. PEROT. They wanted to talk to me.

The CHAIRMAN. Fine.

Mr. PEROT. And they did, sir, I went to Don Regan, the Chief of Staff in the White House, to see if they wanted me to do it.

The CHAIRMAN. So, when Colin Powell says here—we have just spent 10 minutes getting to the point that when Colin says, Hanoi, according to Colin, would rather deal with Perot. They have been stiffing the Government because they would rather deal with Perot. He writes that on 3/21. For a month and a half or more you have been negotiating about how to go to Vietnam.

Mr. PEROT. With the full knowledge of the White House.

The CHAIRMAN. I understand. But, therefore, his statement here is accurate.

Mr. PEROT. No, they have no basis for wanting to—

The CHAIRMAN. That is not true, because he says here that we have not been able to—he says here: we can give Perot the name of the person in Hanoi with whom we have been dealing. So they have been dealing with somebody in Hanoi who clearly has informed them, Hanoi really wants to talk to Perot.

Mr. PEROT. But when you get to the bottom of it, that's talk.

The CHAIRMAN. That is what?

Mr. PEROT. That's talk. That finally comes out that this person—I kept going through, what is this, the person we've been dealing—

The CHAIRMAN. All I am suggesting is, Mr. Perot, and I do this very respectfully, and I do it without any sense—this does not—in fact, I think this reinforces everything you have said today. It strengthens what you have said today.

There really were two tracks. You represented an approach. Hanoi appreciated your approach. In point of fact, the fact that they appreciated your approach seems to indicate that you may have been on the right track; that they were open to you, they were willing to talk to you; you might have gotten somewhere.

But lo and behold, the administration had a different attitude which was, no, we do not want to go that track. They have to get to produce before we talk to them.

So, you are on the let us talk and see if we can get production track. And they are on the no talk until there is production track.

Mr. PEROT. The Vietnamese don't know that at this point.

The CHAIRMAN. I understand, but there is a presumption that they want to talk to you or they would not have invited you.

Mr. PEROT. But they don't know what I'm going to be—to negotiate or just another stiff-arm rude arrogant person.

The CHAIRMAN. That may well be, but I doubt they invited you over. Thach clearly had some sense that talking to you might make sense. Had you indicated anything to Mr. Thach, Mr. McKillop, about what might transpire, why this would be a good idea?

Mr. MCKILLOP. No, I did not have to. They were interested in meeting with Perot.

The CHAIRMAN. Why? Why did they say to you?

Mr. MCKILLOP. Because they felt they could talk to him and they had not been able to get the U.S. Government people to come back and talk to them.

The CHAIRMAN. It kind of reinforces what I am saying, does it not? Is your nod a yes?

Mr. MCKILLOP. No. I am just finishing my train of thought.

The CHAIRMAN. I have had more than my opportunity to pursue that. I just wanted to pursue that with you, because it seems to me these two tracks are at the center at an ultimate disagreement which, when the President talked to you, the administration expresses it as a concern that Ross Perot represented an approach that was kind of getting out of hand to them, because it undid their no-discussion nothing approach.

Mr. PEROT. All right, now that was before the meeting.

The CHAIRMAN. Even afterwards, after you came back from Vietnam.

Mr. PEROT. Well, this memo was before the meeting.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes sir, that is correct.

Mr. PEROT. Now then, let's look at the memos after I came back from Vietnam. Here's an April 12 memo from—to Senator Baker from Jim Cannon, April 12, 1987.

The CHAIRMAN. Which memo is this?

Mr. PEROT. April 12, 1987. It's on the back. It's too bad the pages aren't numbered.

Senator McCAIN. Before we get past that—

Mr. PEROT. Two or three pages before the news clips and all that starts.

Mr. BRYANT. It is just toward the end of the group of documents you gave us this morning.

Senator McCAIN. I do have a question, Mr. Chairman. If we are proceeding chronologically on a memo that says talking points from Paul to Ross Perot, on 3/21/87.

Mr. PEROT. I've got it.

Senator McCAIN. It says: In fact, right now the best interests of the U.S. Government might be served if you were not to go to Hanoi at this time. That is one of the notes there. Do you ever recall ever having that said?

Mr. PEROT. I don't recall Jim Cannon saying that. The final decision was with Senator Baker, not Jim Cannon.

Senator McCAIN. So you do not recall ever—

Mr. PEROT. Excuse me, this is the day before I went. [Pause.]

Mr. PEROT. Look at the whole thing. The President has asked Howard Baker to followup with you. Something as sensitive as this

subject is raised, we've got to coordinate with Frank Carlucci and the National Security staff. Let me tell you what we know and what we suggest. It has not been going well with those in Hanoi and our emissaries have not been in contact with anyone who will commit to a visit by a high-level U.S. citizen. I don't understand that point. Therefore, there is no one individual whose name we can give you to contact, should you go to Hanoi.

That doesn't mean anything to me because I was going as Thach's guest. In fact, right now the best interests of the U.S. Government might be served if you were not to go to Hanoi at this time. Should you decide to go to Hanoi, the best thing you could do is try to convince them that they must deal through the proper channels and deal with those representing the United States, which is exactly what I did, set up the Vessey arrangement.

Then, if you go back to April 12, now we're after the trip. Now here is an interesting one here, the man to reach is Foreign Minister Thach.

Senator McCAIN. Ross, if I might just interrupt, I would like to make it clear for the record, in other words you do not recall and I think it is perfectly understandable, we are talking about a whole series of conversations and events. You do not recall that he said, right now, the best interests of the U.S. Government might be served if you were not to go to Hanoi at this time?

Mr. PEROT. Yes, but you see that's just Jim Cannon, who I have known for years, saying, you know, maybe this is not a good idea. But Howard Baker had already said, we want you to go as a private citizen. So that's like one of your aides calling 2 days later and saying, well, maybe you should and maybe you shouldn't. This is Saturday. I'm getting ready to get on the airplane the next morning.

Senator McCAIN. I understand the context of your answer. I was just asking specifically if you recalled him saying that in the course of conversation, and I would certainly think it would be very understandable if you did not.

Mr. PEROT. He may have said it, but I don't understand the relevance if he did, because this is Senator Baker's aide who I had known for years calling me and visiting with me about it. If we go to April 12, I think you'll find it interesting. If you follow through down here where after the meeting, it's the recommendation of Senator Baker to Jim Cannon.

If you start with what is most important now, the broader issue is that the National Security Council in our defense also concluded that General Vessey should go to Hanoi as the senior negotiator for the United States, and Perot has cleared the way for General Vessey's acceptance by the Vietnamese. Now, isn't that interesting, because according to the State Department, they've been dragging their feet since the prior fall, and here is this crisp, clear statement, they didn't know about it and I assure you they didn't know about it until I brought it up to them.

And the reason I was asked to bring it up to them is back here, in these earlier notes—here we're back on this Colin Powell, next to the page we just had on Colin Powell talking points, right behind it, he is not holding up Vessey. We can't even get an advance team in there. That's Colin Powell. In other words, they

couldn't get anybody in to tell them about Vessey, because the Vietnamese were upset. OK, then it goes on to say, let's go ahead.

I recommend the following. Issue the White House press release this week, the draft of which I gave you and General Powell. That was very important, because I told the Vietnamese we would take these steps and when you look at the press release, it exactly parallels what I recommended that we do. It acknowledges that Perot studied the issue at the request to President Reagan and made a recommendation for the appointment of a senior negotiator and that recommendation has been accepted.

To do so may cost something in personal sensitivities, but is the most expeditious way to get going, and not to do so will put the clearance for General Vessey back in the hands of the NSC staffers, who for whatever reason cannot get into Hanoi to talk to Nguyen Thach or the other Vietnamese officials, and I hope you will put a little asterisk by that last statement.

OK, as to their claim that I was disrupting what they were doing. They couldn't get in the door because they had already offended him and we got an earful of that just sitting there listening to him. Fairly or unfairly, that's the way they felt about it. We should wait for Vietnam elections, we proposed that, to make sure Thach wins, so on and so forth.

Then this paralleled exactly, have the UN representative, Ambassador Walters arrange for the Vietnam UN representative to formally inquire, is Vessey acceptable. Follow diplomatic channels, that I mentioned this morning. To back up the UN approach if necessary, ask the British and French who have representatives in Hanoi to pave the way. That works.

Before Vessey goes to Vietnam, you might ask Ross to brief Vessey on who he met with, what he saw and what advice he might give him, which I did. Here we are. Then he goes through Jack Marsh's evaluation and that just goes on from there. I think that kind of sums it up, and back here somewhere is his proposed press release.

The CHAIRMAN. Let me ask you something. Now, you approved of what has happened in that letter, but that letter—first of all it says, after you left, I went to talk with Jack Marsh about the possibility of a prisoner, and he says the chances of there being one are almost none. When I asked him to state the odds, he suggested 1 in 100,000. Yet we need to know, underlined. With Vessey in place, we could put in teams to cover Laos and Vietnam, and answer the question once and for all.

Mr. PEROT. Exactly.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, that's the very thing you said does not work. The teams are irrelevant.

Mr. PEROT. But this is Jim Cannon's analysis, not mine.

The CHAIRMAN. I understand that.

Mr. PEROT. I'm just saying, yet—see, that's the reason the negotiation, the broad mission I felt was the key.

The CHAIRMAN. So in effect, that is what I am getting at. Your recommendation which they clearly acknowledged, because in the beginning of the paragraph they say, Perot studied the issue and made a recommendation for the appointment of a senior negotiator and that is what you were pushing. They really did not empower or

give the broad enough portfolio to the negotiator that you had envisioned. Is that accurate?

Mr. PEROT. That's correct, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. And by creating this sort of team effort, they diminished what you had really been seeking to accomplish. Is that fair?

Mr. PEROT. Yes, sir. Now, the press release that he proposed is on your very back page and in his handwritten notes down here on April 10, he said, send it to Colin Powell for distribution, send a copy to Perot. Fascinating, it was never sent out. That was the signal we were to give the North Vietnamese, that's what I told them we would do. That's what I really tried my best to get over and instead, let's go back now to this newsclipping. United States says Vietnam delaying Vessey's diplomatic mission, that's two pages after the Jim Cannon note we were just on.

Mr. BRYANT. The date is April 23, 1987.

Mr. PEROT. In the Washington Post. The second paragraph: The State Department's spokesman, Charles Redmond, disclosed that President Reagan asked Vessey last fall to be an emissary to Hanoi, and that basically they were delaying action. I was really concerned that this could hurt everything that we had gotten done because they were so sensitive, and I made a public statement that that was not true after checking with General Vessey to make sure that nobody had even talked to him the prior fall.

The Vietnamese were very appreciative of that statement and they called Mr. McKillop as I recall. We took no steps to contact them. Their people in New York saw it and called Mr. McKillop and said they appreciated our setting the record straight. We made it clear that we set it straight for one reason. We wanted the process to continue.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I think all of this helps to give us a much clearer understanding of what is going on.

Mr. PEROT. Well, interestingly enough, my statement is in the next day's—next page, April 24, the second column, and it basically was, I guess, maybe the left hand didn't know what the right hand was doing or something, but here Jim Cannon had in Colin Powell's hands, assuming it got there, the statement that was directly in line with what I had told the Vietnamese, and then suddenly we get the stray bullet coming out of the State Department.

Then we have this long and very interesting press conference where the press is haranguing Mr. Fitzwater about why they had a private citizen go to Hanoi in the first place, and he has again, and again, and again explained it to them in a very nice way.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Perot, does all this not really stem from the fact that in reality, despite all the rhetoric about highest national priority, this issue has been bouncing around with no real general—you know what I am saying, no person really having seized the cudgel and managing it. Is that not accurate?

Mr. PEROT. Yes sir, it's like a ship without a rudder. Every now and then a group will get interested and then let several years go by and then, another group will get interested, but there's no consistent logical program to resolve it.

The CHAIRMAN. And the reason as a private person you became involved in it was there was so little communication, frankly, be-