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HEARING ON SYMBOLS

HEARING BEFORE THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON POW/MIA AFFAIRS

UNITED STATES SENATE
ONE HUNDRED SECOND CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

ON

SYMBOLS

OCTOBER 15, 1992



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(II)

HEARING ON SYMBOLS

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15, 1992

U.S. SENATE,
SELECT COMMITTEE ON POW/MIA AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:35 a.m., in room SH-216, Hart Senate Office Building, Hon. John F. Kerry (chairman of the committee) presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN F. KERRY, U.S. SENATOR FROM MASSACHUSETTS

Chairman KERRY. The hearing of the Senate Select Committees on POW/MIA Affairs will come to order.

We are meeting this morning in a unique kind of open session on matters that are almost always discussed in closed session and on matters that are normally classified. It is not easy to walk the line here. We have gone through some negotiations with Secretary Cheney and Assistant Secretary Andrews in order to try to see if we can do this in a responsible way, so that we can meet the needs of the committee to try to adequately inform the public about this and not leave people with a sense that something is being hidden behind closed doors.

On the other hand, I want to make this point emphatically, and I know I am joined in this by other Members of the committee. There is a reason that imagery analysis and certain other aspects of this issue related to these analyses are classified. We have national security interests. We have ongoing processes of imagery. The world knows it. But the world does not know precisely how we analyze, precisely what we are capable of. If we sit here in open session and display every tool of our trade, we are in effect turning over to people a full measure of our abilities.

Maybe they know it. Maybe they know a lot of it. Maybe they have learned it and culled it through their own experiences, but good security procedures and good national security protective efforts require that you not voluntarily and willfully and somewhat stupidly just say here it is, and hand it over. There is always the interest of keeping people guessing about what your abilities and capacities are. That is why we have line renditions, as they are called, or facsimiles, not the actual photography, so that they do not see the actual clarity or capacity of your photography, or what the full measure of size and other aspects of it are.

By the same token, there are certain facets of escape and evasion, certain codes, certain concepts of survival that we would not want to tip somebody off in the event that in a future conflict some

...not who is downed might find their efforts compromised on the ground as a consequence of that. So there is a rationale that we beg people's understanding and indulgence as we try to proceed here.

On the other hand, there is also a need in this country, and on this issue particularly, for people to be able to know whether or not the Government is hiding something, which has been a long, suspected concept that has been part of the POW/MIA issue. There are deep concerns about that, and concerns about what analysis has been made, and when.

So today, with the cooperation of all, we are going to try to get to the conclusions, the judgments, the process, and be as careful as we can not to compromise anything or step over the bounds of security. I thank Secretary Cheney for being willing to make the effort to make this happen and working with Secretary Andrews. We have a number of experts here who will testify, and we are going to have to try to make rulings that are appropriate to our capacity to make this make sense without stepping over the line.

Senator Smith.

[The prepared statement of Chairman Kerry follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JOHN KERRY

In the interest of time, I am not going to make a long opening statement. Let me say that I do thank Secretary Cheney and Assistant Secretary Andrews for working with us on this public hearing—despite some hesitations.

The charge to us on this committee and to the government as a whole is: first, to open up U.S. efforts on behalf of POW/MIAs, and second, to separate fact from fantasy. We owe this to the families and to all Americans. Both have been ill-served because of excessive Government secrecy in the past, and by manipulation of this issue by those who have operated unchallenged because information was over-classified.

This morning we will hear about possible U.S. military evader or distress signals in Vietnam and Laos. I hope that all who are concerned about unaccounted-for servicemen will evaluate the Defense Department's evaluation of these possible signals. We will also hear about on-the-ground followup by our committee, and hear from private citizens working in Laos at the same time these possible signals were made.

Some of the issues raised today may require that we go into a closed session later, but pursuant to our agreement with Secretary Cheney and Assistant Secretary Andrews, we are proceeding in open session for as long as we can without jeopardizing national security.

I look forward to hearing your testimony.

STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT SMITH, U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW HAMPSHIRE

Vice Chairman SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I might just start by just a quick reference to the documents that are up there, first, going from left to right, the USA-K, USA with a possible K underneath is the document that was seen on the television program on NBC. The second photograph is when Senator Kerry and myself went to the rice paddy in Laos. That is a photo of that rice paddy where we landed. This third photo refers to the spot, the location in Laos where we landed. The third group of photos are photos that were taken from the rice paddy. Another is a sketch of the USA-K, and another, the last item, is another possible symbol which we will be getting into later.

Mr. Chairman, today, the Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs meets to continue its investigation into information which has

surfaced in Southeast Asia since the end of the war, information which may pertain to the subject of American prisoners of war or personnel listed as missing in action who did not return at Operation Homecoming. In August, the committee held 2 days of hearings on some of the first-hand and hearsay accounts of U.S. POWs reported alive after 1973, reports which clustered in geographic areas where there were known detention facilities. The committee has a lot more work to do in this area, but I am pleased we have begun the process of examining each of these reports in detail.

Today, we scheduled a hearing to examine certain man-made symbols that have appeared in aerial photography in Southeast Asia which could relate to distress signals from U.S. pilots shot down, captured, and possibly held long after the war. In view of the information put forward at our September hearings that we had expected more POWs and MIAs to come home in 1973, it is incumbent upon the committee to treat the information before us today, I believe, with the assumption that American pilots from the war could still be alive and held against their will somewhere in communist hands in Laos and Vietnam.

I look forward to the public testimony of each of the witnesses that have been invited here today. For those who may not know, the joint services SERE agency—SERE stands for survival, escape, resistance, and evasion—is run by the Air Force, and is the agency which taught our POWs and MIAs how to survive in captivity and how to make so-called distress signals. They are the people responsible for evaluating these markings. Yet, when the DIA found what their own imagery analysts believed were the letters K and USA stamped out in a rice paddy, DIA apparently did not show this information to JSSA, even though the alleged K was a known distress signal during the war. It is also somewhat surprising that the Air Force did not become aware of possible distress signals from possible Air Force POWs until the committee extracted it from the DIA earlier this year.

In 1988 when the USA-K was found, I was a member of the POW/MIA task force in the House of Representatives. We were never briefed on these markings. Not only was Congress not briefed, but the Air Force was not briefed, either. The very agency responsible for evaluating the information was not briefed. Mr. Chairman, you and I and Senator Grassley were the first Americans to demand to fly to this remote region in Laos some 4 years after the fact this past April. That, too, is somewhat surprising to me.

Mr. Chairman, let me conclude by stating that one of the main reasons that—there are good reasons for having some portions of this hearing closed today, I will admit that. But there also is much reason to keep this information out in public other than very sensitive sources and methods. We have to be very cautious about reasons for exposing the truth to the American people. There are agendas out there among many people involved with this issue. What we need to do is find the truth.

What is the truth? There is a real probability that some American prisoners of war, in my opinion, speaking for myself, have been held long after the 1973 ceasefire agreement with Vietnam and long after our Government said there was no evidence anyone was

still alive. If anyone should doubt that possibility, the facts, I believe, speak for themselves: radio intercepts; solid live sighting reports, many of them still classified, unresolved; statements of North Vietnamese defectors; possible distress signals; Bobby Garwood; the mortician; and the fact that there were lists of prisoners thought to be held prisoners admitted by our officials in 1973. Putting all that together, you understand why the task before this committee is so vital and important.

But sadly, the case is that in the case of these symbols, our intelligence agencies, and the policymakers, there really only are three options here, and I am not making any accusations one way or the other. There really only are three options as we deal with these signals. One, they had signals and did not know it, these symbols, did not know they had them; two, they knew they had them but did not believe they were real; and three, they knew they had them and refused to do anything about it. Those are the only three options we face.

That is why I believe we have the hearing format this morning. The fact that the hearing format this morning is thrust upon us somewhat differently than I expected is a concern to me. We have a spokesman, and I am hoping that when we get to the witness panels that we will be able to get into more detail. But we do have a spokesman for the agency, and I am somewhat concerned about that because we want to be able to get to each of the witnesses in terms of their own knowledge.

We, as you know, Mr. Chairman, have agreed to have an independent consultant conduct a complete review of imagery, which Secretary Cheney has agreed to, which we are very grateful for. We look forward to doing that. But if we are to restore the credibility and confidence in our Government in the American people in our efforts to account for these men, then the committee must proceed to the truth regardless of the consequences. And the Defense Department, by the same token, must not fear different viewpoints.

We must work together to find the truth. We must present it in its entirety to the American people. Each and every witness must have the full—the feeling that they can fully represent what they feel to be the case with absolutely no intimidation by anyone in the Government. If we cannot get our own Government to tell the truth, I do not know how we can get Laos and Vietnam to do it.

So, Mr. Chairman, I am ready to proceed with the first panel, and look forward to the testimony today.

Thank you.

Chairman KERRY. Thank you very much, Senator Smith. Senator Grassley, do you have an opening statement?

[Opening statement of Senator Smith follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR SMITH

Today, the Select Committee on POW/MIA affairs meets to continue its investigation into information which has surfaced in Southeast Asia since the end of the war—information which pertains to the subject of American prisoners of war or personnel listed as missing in action who did not return at Operation Homecoming in 1973.

In August, the committee held 2 days of hearings on some of the first-hand and hearsay accounts of U.S. POWs reported alive after 1973—reports which clustered in geographic areas where there were known detention facilities. The committee

still has more work to do in this area, but I am pleased we have begun the process of examining these reports in detail.

Today, we scheduled a hearing to examine certain man-made symbols that have appeared in aerial photography in Southeast Asia, which could relate to distress signals from U.S. pilots shot down, captured and held long after the war.

In view of the information put forward at our September hearings—that we had expected more POWs and MIAs to come home in 1973—it is incumbent upon this committee to treat the information before us today with the assumption that American pilots from the Vietnam War could still be alive against their will somewhere inside Communist Laos and Vietnam.

I look forward to the public testimony of each of the witnesses that have been invited here today.

Mr. Chairman, I now want to make a few comments about the prepared testimony the committee has received from the gentleman sitting at the Witness Table—Assistant Secretary of Defense for Command, Control, Communications, and Intelligence, Mr. Andrews.

I did not invite this witness to be here today, nor did I invite the other two Defense Intelligence Agency witnesses, Mr. Sheetz and Mr. Santora. Yet here they are. Mr. Chairman, on October 2, 1992, during a break in a Defense Department briefing to this committee, a trusted assistant of mine overheard Mr. Andrews state that I had a conspiracy theory for everything.

Mr. Andrews also stated that the Department of Defense was succeeding in showing colleagues on this committee that I was "isolated" in my views on this issue. Less than 30 minutes later, I confronted Mr. Andrews with this statement, and he denied making it.

Second, Mr. Chairman, I did not receive a copy of Mr. Andrews' lengthy statement until late last night, even though our committee's own rules state that all opening statements must be received 48 hours in advance. And, having reviewed the statement, I can see why Mr. Andrews did not want me to have it until the last minute.

Simply put, Mr. Chairman, the prepared statement of the Assistant Secretary of Defense is deceiving to the American people, it contains inaccurate statements, it is dishonest to Defense Department employees sitting in this room right now, and it is downright misleading to this committee. But to the press people here today, without all of the facts, they will have a difficult time challenging Mr. Andrews. And I am not prepared, today, on such short notice, to rebut line by line Mr. Andrews' 12-page single-spaced filibuster—which is the only way to properly rebut his statement. I am not going to do this.

Instead, I will simply work even harder over the remaining months of this committee's lifespan to get the whole truth out to the families of our MIAs, to our veterans, and to the American people, who have a right to know.

For those who may not know, the Joint Services Sere Agency, (Sere stands for Survival, Escape, Resistance, and Evasion) run by the Air Force, is the agency which taught our POWs and MIAs how to survive in captivity, and how to make distress signals. They are the people responsible for evaluating possible distress markings. Yet, when the Defense Intelligence Agency found what their own imagery analysts believed were the letters "K" and "USA" stamped out in a rice paddy in 1988, DIA did not show this information to JSSA, even though the "K" was a known distress signal used during the war.

In fact, it astounds me that the Air Force did not become aware of possible distress signals from possible Air Force POWs until this committee extracted it from the Defense Intelligence Agency earlier this year.

In 1988 when the USA-K was found, I was a member of the POW/MIA Task Force in the House of Representatives, and we were never briefed on these unusual markings. It's bad enough that Congress was not briefed on the discoveries, but not even the Air Force?—the very agency responsible for evaluating this information? And to think, Mr. Chairman, that you and I, and Senator Grassley, were the first Americans to demand to fly up to this remote region in Laos some 4 years after the fact this past April—that, too, is astounding.

Mr. Chairman, let me conclude by stating that I fear one of the main reasons certain Defense Department officials wanted this hearing behind closed doors today, was not because of national security, but because of their fear of exposing the truth to the American people.

And what is that truth? I'll tell you what it is—there is a real probability that some American Prisoners of War have been held long after the 1973 Cease-Fire Agreement with Vietnam, and long after our Government said there was no evidence anyone was still alive.

If anyone doubts that this probability is real, read the radio intercepts, the solid live-sighting reports (many of them still classified), read the statements of North Vietnamese defectors, the possible distress signals,—talk to Bobby Garwood, talk to the mortician, and help us get all the intelligence declassified. Then, you will understand why the task before this committee is so vital and important.

Sadly, the truth is that, in the case of these symbols, our Intelligence Agencies, and certain policy makers, either—1. Didn't know they had it 2. Knew they had it, but didn't believe it could be real. or 3. Knew they had it, and refused to do anything about it. Those are the possible scenarios, and in each one, our Intelligence Agencies have a lot at stake. That probability that men could still be alive, in my view, is something they fear most.

And that is why I believe we have the hearing format this morning thrust upon us where only one viewpoint is apparently tolerated by the Defense Department, and no viewpoint is personally put forward by the Central Intelligence Agency, even though we have their written analysis of markings indicating they maybe pilot distress signals. I note that the Defense Department has also chosen who will make an opening statement following Mr. Andrews and who will not. The last time I checked, our committee, not the Defense Department, decides who we want to hear from.

And finally, the first panel's prepared statement is a filibuster in the typical debunking mode, so characteristic now of the DIA's POW/MIA office. That is sad.

Because of all this, Mr. Chairman, I believe it is essential that we have an independent consultant conduct a complete review of all of this photography and imagery. I am pleased you have accepted my proposal, and I trust the Department of Defense will give our consultant full and complete access to relevant materials.

If we are to restore credibility and confidence in our Government and its efforts to recover those unaccounted for, then this committee must not fear the truth, and its consequences. And the Defense Department must not fear different viewpoints. We must work to uncover the truth, and we must present it, in its entirety, to the American people.

If we cannot get our own Government to tell the American people the truth, then cannot see how we can expect to ever get Vietnam and Laos to tell us the whole truth about our men.

So, Mr. Chairman, I'm ready to proceed with the first panel that this committee invited to be here today, and that's the JSSA. I'm aware of Mr. Andrews views, and believe they will be adequately addressed by the DIA panel, which is the second panel we invited to be here. I formally object to all uninvited witnesses, without my knowledge or consent.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

STATEMENT OF HON. CHARLES E. GRASSLEY, U.S. SENATOR FROM IOWA

Senator GRASSLEY. Yes, Mr. Chairman. I have just a few words that I want to say that will hopefully put this hearing in context. I have been hearing on the news lately comments that we have evidence that we left men behind but we do not have proof, that we have evidence that men may still be alive but we do not have proof. I am not sure what the relevance is of such comments because in my humble opinion I believe it is impossible to get proof of men left behind or living men now unless we get it from either the Vietnamese or the Lao. And that is not likely to happen. At least, we should not presume it is going to happen.

In my view, proof is a false standard. Three former Secretaries of Defense did not have proof when they stated their beliefs. It was their judgment that we may have left men behind. As Secretary Schlesinger put it, quote, I can draw no other conclusion, unquote. Their judgment was based on evidence, not proof. You do not need absolute conclusive proof to render judgments. Certainly, those three former Secretaries of Defense did not.

It seems to me that what this committee will be doing is rendering a judgment based on evidence, not proof. We cannot be naive

enough to assume proof is going to walk right up and bite us in the hind end. Our committee has the same evidence that the three former Secretaries of Defense had. In fact, we have much more. Now, I do not intend to prejudge the committee's own judgments before the report is written, but logic tells me that we will have a hard time concluding less than what the three former secretaries did, and that would be based on evidence, that would not would be based on proof.

The next logical question is if it is our judgment that we left men behind, what happened to them? Is there any evidence that some might have survived? The answer to that question is there is evidence that some may have survived. Not proof, but evidence. As my friend Senator McCain stated last week on NBC's Dateline, let us examine the evidence that we have that men may still be alive, and then I will indicate the significance of the information we are supposed to be examining today.

First is the universe of men who were unaccounted for after March 1973. According to the documents that we uncovered at the Library of Congress last month, there were 1,276 men unaccounted for after Homecoming. Now, without that statistic, none of the evidence of possible survival is plausible. With that statistic, however, our analysis should have a presumption of life, not death as it has been.

When taken together with this universe of unaccounted for, the stated judgment of three former Defense Secretaries creates a new context for looking at live sighting reports. I still do not understand why this committee held the live sighting hearings before the Paris Peace Accords hearings. All that did was to deprive the live sighting hearings of the context that I am now describing. We put the cart before the horse.

In that light, we cannot yet successfully judge DIA's wholesale debunking of live sighting reports. For one thing, there are still outstanding discrepancies to be addressed. You will recall, Mr. Chairman, that the original ground rules for that hearing were that DIA would not be allowed information not contained in their files for the purpose of debunking live sighting reports. Now, they did it anyway. And we, so far, have let them get away with it.

As a consequence, the committee then identified numerous discrepancies between assertions made by DIA and what was in the files. Many of DIAs assertions were not supported by documentation. We sent those identified discrepancies in letter form to DIA, and we have yet to have a response.

When taken as a whole, the live sighting reports are compelling. General Secord, in his testimony, referred to the law of large numbers. These sightings are especially compelling in light of the Paris Peace Accords hearings and the 1,278 men who were unaccounted for after Homecoming. Some of the live sighting reports were deemed invalid by DIA merely on the basis that we left no one behind, therefore, the sighting is false.

DIA's position is that every one of the thousands of reports are invalid or unresolved. They are all kind of like UFO sightings with no basis in reality. For some reason, thousands of people came forward to lie or to misrepresent or to misinterpret the truth. But the relevant question is how can these live sightings be viewed like

UFO sightings in light of the Paris Peace Accords hearings that we just had? The answer is simply they cannot be, because the Paris Peace Accords hearings gave the live sighting reports a context, a plausibility quotient. In my view, we must revisit this issue before our work is completed, and we must certainly get a response on the discrepancies.

The second body of evidence suggesting survival is the radio intercepts. The committee found five such intercepts referring to the transfer of prisoners; two in particular from 1979 and 1980 spoke of a specific number of U.S. prisoners being transferred.

The third body of evidence is the distress signals and the pilot code numbers. There are two issues here. The first is that DIA and CIA were not even aware of DOD's distress symbol program until this year. DIAs photographic interpreters, or PI's, as I will call them, have not been trained in interpreting photographs related to this program. So how reliable can DIA's assessment be? We need to keep this in mind as we listen this morning to the debunking.

We are going to hear that these numbers and symbols are shadows or vegetation. We will hear that one symbol cannot be real because it is composed of rice stubble. Yet those who trained pilots to make these symbols say that they train them to use rice stubble, to use vegetation, or to use anything else that might be at their disposal to send that signal.

The second issue is the most crucial. We have heard from some that we have no specific evidence about a specific person at a specific time in a specific location. The issue of the pilot code numbers, if valid, constitute specific evidence of specific people at a specific time in a specific location. It must be understood that these code numbers, if valid, can be tied to specific people. This is not necessarily the case with the distress symbols such as the walking K.

On October 2 and 5, the committee received a full court debunking from DOD on the pilot code numbers in two closed sessions. They said that numerous sets of numbers seen in a photo and which match code numbers of known MIAs were shadows and vegetation. They made the numbers disappear, presto, just like that, by some sort of high-technology equipment.

But what DIA did not tell the committee was the following: First, it failed to provide an adequate foundation for understanding the strengths and the weaknesses of the technical systems used to obtain photography. Second, it failed to discuss alternative systems available for verification and for clarity. Third, it failed to inform us about other analytical techniques that could and should have been used. And, fourth, it failed to look at wartime photos for comparison purposes. It even failed to consult with wartime PI's for their expertise and experience.

Because of these shortcomings, DIA provided us with an incomplete analysis. When we put these shortcomings on top of the obvious deficiencies and the qualifications of DIA personnel to examine symbols photography, the question once again is how reliable can DIAs assessment be? DOD's failure to present these basic assessments to our committee, along with the debunking and the resulting questions of credibility stemming from this failure, is outlined in a memo by committee staff. And, Mr. Chairman, at this point I

would like to include that in the record, not at this point, at the end of my statement.

Let me conclude, Mr. Chairman, by stating that this issue is too important for us to rely on DIA's analysis exclusively for our judgment. This may be the only evidence that we find that possibly points to specific men. We need an independent assessment, not just a DIA assessment. Five different reports have raised the issue of DIA's mindset to debunk. The public is skeptical of DIA's continued debunking of evidence. No matter what DIA says, we need an independent evaluation of the evidence, as well. These photos may, in fact, show shadows. But I want an independent analysis to tell me that, not just DIA.

It is not enough for a photo interpreter to have a background in interpreting imagery. It requires a PI with experience and expertise in distress symbols programs. DIA's PI's do not have such expertise. They have no background in this program, no database on this program, and no wartime imagery of such symbols to draw from. If a PI is not trained in reading distress symbols and does not know what to look for, he will likely see shadows and vegetation, and he will likely write them off as anomalies.

The USA-K symbol, with no context, means nothing. The point is that the DIA has no context for interpreting this particular imagery. It does not know what other things should be looked at or looked for. DIA did not treat the USA-K symbol in the case of a program. They had no files on the program, no database, and no wartime photos. The fact that numbers disappear when blown up or subjected to concentrated light sources does not negate the possibility that they could be real. There are checks and balances analysts must go through for verification, and DIA does not appear to have taken that basic step. What could possibly have cast a shadow that says Xmas?

If we want brain surgery performed, we do not just want a doctor, we want a brain surgeon. If we want to interpret this data, we do not just want a PI, we want one with expertise and experience in reading distress symbols. That is the way it is done in the intelligence community, and that is the only way we will be able to reach a credible judgment in my view.

I would just say to the media and to the public that a complete story about the subject matter of today's hearings cannot be told without reference to the points made in the staff memo on the DIA's presentation to the committee October 2 and 5. It behooves us all to take a very measured and skeptical approach to this issue and to DIA's analysis. We need independent verification to make an informed and credible judgment. I understand the committee is attempting to identify independent analysts to serve the committee, and I do not think that we should be drawing conclusions on this subject, especially not today, until that independent analysis is done.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman KERRY. Thank you very much, Senator. Let me say, with respect to the memo that you want to put into the record, I am personally going to object to that going into the record until we have had a chance to sit down together. I have read the memo. There are factual errors in the memo, and think we should not

have a memo go in that has factual errors. So I would like to sit with you if we could go through it on the question of the errors and then also make sure that we are not putting anything classified in.

Senator GRASSLEY. I want the chairman to know, though, that after that is done I will move that that be done.

Chairman KERRY. I have no problem with putting it in, as long as it is accurate. And I want to make sure that it is accurate.

Secondly, on the question of the hearings that we held, just to clarify for the Senator, as you may recall, a number of Senators, particularly the vice chairman, and I think yourself, were screaming about the fact that we were not having hearings on the live sighting reports and we were holding this back. So we scheduled them specifically to meet the needs of Senators who felt that the committee ought to get this out to the public as fast as possible, and that is why we held the live sighting hearings.

Finally, I think it is a little bit unfair to simply say that DIA made these things disappear, when in fact we are going to be looking at these images with our own experts, we will have an opportunity to make some judgments about it, and I just think it is strong to make a judgment that somehow they were made to disappear. I do not know that, and I do not think that you know that, for certain.

I might add that in the last days since we have had private sessions on this I have taken the liberty of trying to inquire about it a little bit. We have one trained expert on our committee, Senator Daschle, who went to school on this interpretive process, and he has looked at some of these and is going to come over with us to look at them.

But I must tell you that the people I have talked to tell me that seeing something like Xmas or seeing a name or seeing a Social Security number or seeing a printed message of any kind is not unusual at all in looking at raw imprints and trying to really get a sense of them. And I think it is again not fair to say what else could it be if it is not, because the fact is any analyst will tell you that they consistently will find something that strikes them as being something and further analysis shows it not to have been that at all.

So I am just saying that this is a very difficult interpretative matter, which is why it is very hard to do in this kind of session, and I think we need to leave our minds open with respect to it.

Senator GRASSLEY. You make fair comment. I guess my point would be that it is very important that we push for independent analysis. And also, I would not be blaming anybody in regard to when the hearing was held before or after the Paris Peace Accords, but I would say in retrospect that these are questions that I have raised about that judgment.

Chairman KERRY. I concur. I think it would have been better. I, as you know, was hoping to hold off a little on the live sighting reports but I came under enormous pressure from those who felt that the committee was somehow holding something back. So I bowed to it, and we are where we are. I think we need to proceed from where we are and get on with today's hearing.

We are going to start off, Mr. Andrews, Mr. Secretary, with your testimony. But then we do want panels of people to come up and

join you so we can ask the individual questions Senator Smith and others have referred to, and I think that is a very important part of the process.

Can I ask if you would stand and be sworn?

Would you raise your right hand?

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

Mr. ANDREWS. I do.

TESTIMONY OF DUANE ANDREWS, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR COMMAND, CONTROL, COMMUNICATION, AND INTELLIGENCE, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE; ACCOMPANIED BY ROBERT SHEETZ, CHIEF, SPECIAL OFFICE FOR POW/MIA AFFAIRS, DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY; COLONEL ROBERT BONN, COMMANDER, BOB DUSSAULT, DEPUTY COMMANDER, AND AL ERICKSON, INSTRUCTOR, JOINT SERVICES SERE AGENCY; RALPH SANTORA, CHUCK KNAPPER, WARREN GRAY, AND WILLIAM GRAVER, DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY; AND BILL GADOURY, JTF-FA DETACHMENT THREE

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee:

While I'm pleased to support your hearing which is examining markings on buildings and terrain in Southeast Asia that may relate to American POWs and MIAs, and to have this opportunity to set the record straight on a lot of incorrect information that is in circulation, I have great apprehension in discussing in an open hearing topics that relate to the capabilities and practices of our Nation's intelligence services. I believe it is poor security practice to talk around classified activities.

My concern has been heightened by the intelligence and operations information that was recently disclosed in TV and print media. It seems that we, and officials that have served before us, have been indicted in the court of public opinion for ignoring signs that Americans were left behind based on an inaccurate bill of particulars that was drawn up using incomplete, selectively leaked intelligence. I believe we can adequately address Senator Grassley's concerns. We've been working with the committee to do that. We have not stopped that process. We continue in closed session and with the chairman, as he knows, to look at the imagery in more detail. That process hasn't stopped, so it's premature to judge what the final process will yield.

I understand the frustration with classification expressed by many in the general public, and in particular, by the families and veterans' organizations that are so concerned with the POW/MIA issue. They appear to believe that we are unnecessarily keeping this intelligence material behind a veil of secrecy. Some argue that since this intelligence relates to events from decades ago it therefore no longer requires classified protection. This is not the case.

I think the chairman said it very well. Much of what we have discussed in closed meetings is based on current intelligence sources and methods. This is not, as some have charged, an attempt to hide a perceived Government failure to liberate our POWs. Rather, it is the fulfillment of our obligation to protect

those intelligence means and methods vital to our global responsibilities in the defense of the Nation.

Notwithstanding his reservations about public discussion of intelligence matters, Secretary Cheney has authorized me to present an unclassified statement describing certain of our intelligence activities and other related activities that were undertaken in response to certain symbols that have been purported to indicate the possible presence of American prisoners of war in Vietnam and Laos. The President and Secretary Cheney have directed the release of unprecedented amounts of information, and that's out on the public record, and we've provided all of the information that the committee has requested.

These symbols that have been referred to in the press that you see around the room and others that aren't shown on these viewgraphs that we'll talk about, as the USA and K, the 1973 or 1573 TH symbols, a Morse code K reported, a B52 or 52, and an arrow and P on an image and what were believed to be a series of escape and evasion identity numbers—these are ones referred to by Senator Grassley—that were seen by the Joint Services SERE Agency personnel on some of the photographs in Laos. To the extent that I can in open session, and to the best of my knowledge based on what I have pulled from the reports of actions that were undertaken by the Defense Intelligence Agency and the Central Intelligence Agency and by the JSSA, I will review our current understanding of these symbols.

I have with us, and there will be coming up in the panels, various members, Colonel Bob Bonn, the commander of the JSSA; Mr. Bob Dussault, Colonel Bonn's deputy; Mr. Al Erickson, a SERE instructor and an evasion and escape expert. Mr. Sheetz, Mr. Sanctora, and Mr. Knapper from the Defense Intelligence Agency are also present, and we have Central Intelligence Agency imagery analysts also with us.

However, I must caution that in open session we will be unable to present the full range of information available to us on these matters, information that we have previously presented to the Select Committee in closed meetings. Any questions that require getting into classified information in order to provide a complete answer will have to be answered in closed hearing.

Please do not take this as an indication that we are not willing to answer your questions fully. We have willingly made all of our documents available and we will willingly answer all of your questions. If we can't answer them in open session we will answer them in closed. We just have to do so in a responsible manner when dealing with sensitive intelligence or escape and evasion matters. If we divulge the trade craft used in either area it may cost American lives in future conflicts.

Before I review the specific symbols of interest, I'd like to make a few comments concerning imagery. I believe that a short, general description of this topic will help you understand the complexity of the issue and the technical jargon that we use in discussing imagery. When someone mentions photographs, we probably think of the snapshots that we get back from the drug store or the 1-hour film processor. When we talk about imagery here we are talking about quite a different thing.

Although some of our imagery is produced by light directly falling on a wide strip of film which you're most accustomed to, most is produced now by very high-technology process involving devices which transform the varying light signals into digital signals. These digital signals can be read out on very-high-resolution work stations, a kind of very-high-definition television, or can be projected onto film through laser light to produce a film image.

We examine such film on a light table under very powerful optics. In effect, we put it under a microscope. Interpreting the information contained in a film transparency is not a skill you can pick up easily. I was an imagery analyst in my earlier years in the Air Force and did analyze a lot of imagery from Vietnam. It took me 6 months of basic schooling and another 6 months of on-the-job training before I was qualified to even sign my name to an imagery report. Today, we send our analysts to an additional 3 months of advanced schooling after they have the basic qualification training.

When viewing an image, it is often easy to see things in nature that appear to be man-made, but which on closer examination are shadows and foliage. There's no question. It's well-documented. When an intelligence analyst has a question about an area or specific point target, he submits an imagery request. This request is given an appropriate priority, and in accordance with that priority would be imaged. This image does not go directly to the intelligence analyst that has requested it be taken. Rather, that skilled imagery interpreter that I've discussed examines the image and prepares an imagery interpretation report. This report, and occasionally a print or photograph of the target is then forwarded to the analyst.

Sometimes, when an imagery interpreter examines an image, he or she will see something that was not mentioned in the original analyst's request. An example is the USA, which we will discuss, and that possible K, which was seen by a CIA imagery interpreter who was examining imagery in Laos for another totally different purpose. In such a case, the imagery interpretation report is then forwarded to the analytic section responsible for this unexpected sighting.

I also should address that we are showing line drawings of these symbols today, and it is a fair question to ask, well, you're trying to be open about this, why not show the photographs? And the reason, as the chairman mentioned, is that we have to protect the technical capabilities of our systems. If a camera scientist can get his hands on the actual image he can determine many of the characteristics of the camera that took the picture, its location, its focal length, its stability, and so forth.

We do not want the scientists of other countries to obtain such knowledge. This knowledge would help them hide things from us that we need to support our military forces and for our national security.

Now, I will turn to the symbols that have been the subject of so much discussion. I will review each of the images of interest in turn. I believe this will support our conclusion that of all the millions of square kilometers of territory in Southeast Asia that we've examined over the years, we really only have two unexplained sets of symbols which were clearly intended to communicate something

to an observer from above. And that's the 19 or 1573 TH and the USA with the possible K.

The first symbol is this 1973 or 1573 TH. This symbol was imaged on May 20, 1973 and again on July 10, 1973, on the Plain of Jars. Would you show where that is? The Plain of Jars was a highly contested area during the war in Indochina. Lao General Vang Pao and his Hmong soldiers fought valiantly to control this vital area which contains within its borders the key lines of communications in central Laos. Control of the Plain of Jars shifted back and forth between the Royal Lao Army and the Pathet Lao and the Vietnamese forces during the war.

The imagery, now unclassified, which contains this set of symbols was obtained using an unmanned airborne reconnaissance system. It has been interpreted as either a 1573 or a 1973 and either a TA or a TH. And he's pointed that out. And you can see the T and the A or H.

None of these four possible combinations of symbols correlate to a classic distress symbol or to the escape and evasion symbols that our crews were trained to use, although the TA, if it was by itself, could be such a symbol. Another explanation is that the four numbers resemble a personal authenticator number that we have been unable to correlate with any individual. Although it is not what we would expect to be used by an unaccounted for U.S. military person, the symbols remain of interest to the Defense Department because they have not been explained.

There are possible explanations for the appearance of many of the symbols, and none seem particularly convincing. For instance, the U.S. Government provided aid to General Vang Pao though the CIA-operated Air America assets. Some Air America crews were downed in action. One such U.S. aviator, Emmet Kay, went down in May 1973 approximately from the area which this symbol was either tramped, cut, cleared, or etched into the elephant grass; we can't be sure. Emmet Kay did return to the United States in September of 1974.

Some have surmised that Emmet Kay's Hmong passengers might have made the symbol during the few hours they were free before capture. The leader of the Hmong was a Major Thao. We can speculate that they may have tried to signal their location by abbreviating his name. We may never know the answer to this, as Major Thao died in captivity.

Senator GRASSLEY. You are aware that Emmet Kay, in his deposition, stated that the Lao used his own fire extinguisher to put out the fire in their airplane, which means that the Lao troops were there to get him right away and they did not have time to make those signals? That is what Emmet Kay testified in his deposition.

Mr. ANDREWS. Well, it was my understanding that they had evaded for several hours before they were captured.

Others have surmised that the symbol could have been placed on the ground by a group of Thai personnel that were also captured during this period by the Pathet Lao. TH, of course, is the two-character U.S. country code for Thailand. We know that these three Thai individuals were held in captivity with Emmet Kay and his Hmong crew members. Many attempts have been made over the years to follow this lead. Only recently a new lead has surfaced

indicating that one of the Hmong may now be available for interview in Thailand. If we are successful in our attempt to interview this individual, we may learn more. But at this point, we have no way of knowing if the symbol was or was not made by either the Thai individuals or the Hmong.

Another and less likely theory for the symbol relates to the downing of an AC-130 gunship in December 1972 some 300 miles away in southern Laos, just across the Lao-Thai border. While only two crew members were known to have survived, one of the crew members that stayed with the plane down to its impact on the jungle floor was Captain Thomas Hart. Captain Hart is the only downed aviator whose initials and loss circumstances could possibly correlate with the initials TH. My written statement states that Captain Hart's remains were recovered in 1985 by the JCRC. I understand and realize that there is disagreement as to whether, in fact, that was Captain Hart. But it is our position that we have resolved this case.

Even if Captain Hart had survived, it is unlikely that he could have chosen to evade for over 300—that he would have chosen to evade for over 300 miles through some of the roughest territory in Laos. He would more likely have gone the relatively short distance due west into Thailand and to freedom. All we know for sure at this point in time in 1992, and it's easy to try to guess back what happened back in 1973, but in 1992 is that the symbol remains unexplained despite having been analyzed in depth on at least four separate occasions: by the Pacific Command in 1973, by the JCRC and DIA in 1976, by DIA again in 1986 and 1987, and by the DIA, CIA, and JSSA in 1992. Neither the DIA, JSSA, or the Joint Task Force Full Accounting have been able to make a correlation to any individual.

I will now turn to the USA and possible K.

Chairman KERRY. Can I just inquire very quickly, you said that this was an unmanned reconnaissance done in 1973, correct?

Mr. ANDREWS. Yes, sir.

Chairman KERRY. I take it that there were—can you tell us how many of those might have taken place at that point in time?

Mr. ANDREWS. The number of missions?

Chairman KERRY. 1973, unmanned reconnaissance.

Mr. ANDREWS. We flew several of them, I don't know the precise number. We do use a similar system today. We keep that—it remains classified. But we did a number of reconnaissance missions over this area during this period of time. All we have is a report from CINCPAC in 1973 that reported that the image was detected, analyzed, and that followup action was taken. We don't have a lot of detail back in that period of time.

Chairman KERRY. This is the only signal that we have, during the 1970's period, is that correct, that remains in question?

Mr. ANDREWS. That remains in question. We had a number of signals that occurred during the war, and—but in terms of remains, still a question.

Chairman KERRY. But those were resolved, correct?

Mr. ANDREWS. Yes, sir.

Now, if I can turn to the USA and possible K. This symbol was imaged on January 22, 1988, in a narrow rice paddy valley in

northeast Laos near Sam Neua, Laos. And you see lots of examples of this around the room. This imagery was taken for a project unrelated to POW/MIAs and was not looked at by an imagery analyst until early December 1988. There wasn't any deliberate attempt not to look at it. It was taken for a different purpose and was looked at by an imagery analyst at the Central Intelligence Agency in December 1988.

While the actual imagery remains classified, the line drawing here is unclassified. And you can see this depiction, although I think around the room are bigger blowups that are even clearer.

As you can see, the letters USA are clearly distinguishable, and each character is estimated to be more than twice the height of a normal-sized man. On the imagery, below the USA letters, some additional markings can be seen. Some have speculated that these markings are in the pattern of the number 34 or even the letter K, or perhaps a so-called walking K distress symbol.

This symbol was only imaged once. By the time it was discovered in December of 1988 and immediately brought to DIA's attention, it was no longer observable on the ground.

Once this symbol was known to DIA, investigative steps were promptly taken. The full range of followup steps taken by the U.S. Government have been briefed to the committee in a closed meeting. What I can say here in open session is that all appropriate means of information collection, including the full range of intelligence assets currently available to the U.S. Government, have been brought to bear to no avail. Like the prior symbol discussed that appeared on the Plane of Jars in 1973, this USA symbol remains unexplained.

There is still disagreement as to whether or not the markings and shadings seen below the USA letters are in actuality some type of evader symbol. It is clear to DIA and CIA imagery analysts that the USA letters were constructed by scraping or pulling away the rice stubble from a harvested rice paddy in dry season. One likely explanation for what appears to some as a 34 or the K is the dumping of extracted rice stubble in several piles at random. Point to some of those piles, and you can see again a number of those images, you can see piles.

Clearly, the supposed K is not in any fashion comparable to the USA letters. Not in size, not in means of construction, not in spatial orientation, and certainly not in clarity. When this image was further examined through the application of sophisticated computer-enhanced analysis, this alleged K symbol appears even more likely to be mounding of rice stubble and thus even less convincing as a possible K.

So what do we have here? No one—not DIA, not CIA, and not the JSSA—can correlate the USA and possible K symbols to an unaccounted for individual. While the Lao Government has admitted that prior to 1973 prisoners were kept in Pathet Lao headquarters caves located in the Sam Neua area, prisoners were not known to be held there after the war ended. These caves have been visited many times in recent years by Americans and Westerners, and members of this committee visited the caves. And it was clear to us that by the late 1980's the caves were no longer in use at all. Other

facilities that would likely be used for hiding American POWs are not known to exist anywhere else in the Sam Neua area.

I acknowledge that there have been isolated reports of POWs being held in some areas in Laos, including Sam Neua. But after giving these reports, most of which come from refugee sources, a full and complete evaluation, the Department has been unable to develop convincing evidence that U.S. POWs are being held in Sam Neua today, nor do we have any evidence that they were being held there in 1988. And I will say, nor do we have any evidence that they weren't being held. We'll just have to accumulate the evidence that's available.

Mr. Bill Gadoury, an investigator who covers Laos for the Joint Task Force Full Accounting, has an interesting story to tell that may relate to the USA symbol. I hope that the committee will hear his story before we get too far into questions about the USA.

Where we are now, with regard to this USA symbol, can be summarized as follows: The USA and possible K remain unexplained despite extensive tasking of information collection activities of the intelligence community. No correlation to a known, unaccounted for individual—to a known, unaccounted for individual—has been made. And unless an unexpected lead develops, there is little more that can be done other than continuing to monitor the situation. We have discussed in our closed meeting how we are accomplishing this monitoring.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like now to address some images that we believe can be explained but that have been talked about in the press and elsewhere and that the committee has asked us about.

Chairman KERRY. OK, just so the record is very clear. There are only two images that are currently in the possession of DIA or DOD or any entity that we are still trying to analyze and understand, is that correct?

Mr. ANDREWS. Well, we're continuing in response to committee questions to analyze all the imagery. But in terms of our position, we believe right now, based on the best information we have available and the followup actions that we've taken, that the only two images, the first two I talked about, the 15 or 1973 TA or TH and the USA and the possible K are clearly intended to send some signal to someone from above, and those we cannot explain today.

Senator GRASSLEY. Mr. Chairman, when you said we, you mean DIA and not the committee and DIA.

Chairman KERRY. I meant the U.S. Government.

Mr. ANDREWS. That's correct.

Chairman KERRY. All entities that are charged with responsibility for pursuing this issue.

Senator GRASSLEY. Well, I am part of the U.S. Government. I wanted to know if the we included these three Senators up here plus DIA.

Chairman KERRY. Are we in possession of some images that I am not aware of? The only images that I know of are these two here.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Mr. Chairman, there are many images that are in dispute. I certainly do not want to be included in the we. I do not agree that there are only two, speaking for myself.

Senator GRASSLEY. In regard to the viewpoint expressed by DIA, I do not think that any of us three have drawn the conclusion that these are the only two we have got questions about.

Chairman KERRY. No, these are the only—what I am getting at is that these are the only two clearly definable images that they currently have under discussion that are unresolved.

Senator GRASSLEY. I accept that.

Vice Chairman SMITH. I do not.

Chairman KERRY. Now, whatever else they have, I have seen it. It is not clearly defined. I do not think any Senator could in good conscience say it is clearly defined. There are questions as to whether they are, in fact, symbols. Is that a fair statement? There are questions as to whether they are symbols. But as of this moment, they have not been determined to be symbols. Do you know otherwise? Have they been determined to be symbols?

Senator GRASSLEY. No, but I want a presumption that until we have had all of the information and evidence shown to us that I am not drawing that conclusion.

Vice Chairman SMITH. I feel the same way, Mr. Chairman. We have a photo interpreter for this committee that is going to be looking. Excuse me, Senator.

Senator GRASSLEY. No, please go ahead.

Vice Chairman SMITH. We have a photo interpreter who is going to be analyzing a series of things, and I do not want to draw that conclusion.

Chairman KERRY. But let us be really careful. The American public is listening really carefully and a lot of POW activists are listening very carefully. And if we pretend to them that something is a symbol when it is not, we are falsely raising hopes.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Mr. Chairman, I am not pretending anything.

Chairman KERRY. Now, we do not know that there is, in fact, a defined symbol. We have questions about some things. I share the questions. We have questions.

Vice Chairman SMITH. There are items that appear in imagery that, if—

Chairman KERRY. But to the naked eye of a nontrained person.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Well, I am not drawing that conclusion, Mr. Chairman. Absolutely not.

Chairman KERRY. There is no trained person that has yet determined them to be a symbol, Senator. I mean, correct me if I am wrong.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Mr. Chairman, we have not determined that.

Chairman KERRY. That is exactly the point I am making.

Vice Chairman SMITH. We have not had our imagery people look at it.

Chairman KERRY. Precisely.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Well, then why are we talking about it?

Chairman KERRY. Because we do not know, as we sit here today, that it is, in fact, a symbol. I will not be party to falsely raising hopes. It may not be a symbol. Let us be honest.

Vice Chairman SMITH. And it may be.

Chairman KERRY. May be, but it is not yet.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Well, may be or may not be, Mr. Chairman, the laws of probability can cut both ways on that.

Chairman KERRY. All I am saying is indeed—I am not talking about laws of probability. It may indeed turn out to be, but as of this moment we only have two clearly defined symbols that we know are symbols, which are being acknowledged to be person-made.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Mr. Chairman, I disagree with your terminology. I disagree with your saying clearly defined. That is the opinion of the people in the Defense Intelligence Agency. It is not my opinion at this point, nor is it everybody else's opinion, especially the consultants who have not had a look at it.

Chairman KERRY. Will you agree we have no trained expert who has yet asserted there is another symbol undefined? There is no trained expert who has done that. Will you agree with that?

Vice Chairman SMITH. Well, it depends on how you define symbols, Mr. Chairman. When a number appears, if, in fact, that number is man-made, it is a symbol.

Chairman KERRY. But we are fighting over something that is silly to fight about.

Vice Chairman SMITH. No, we are not fighting over anything silly.

Chairman KERRY. The question is—the question is has a trained expert determined anything else to be a symbol? Has a trained expert?

Vice Chairman SMITH. We have not. We are trying to get our trained expert to look at it.

Chairman KERRY. Correct. They have not done it yet, have they?

Vice Chairman SMITH. But what I am saying is—no, but I do not know—

Chairman KERRY. I think the point is made.

Vice Chairman SMITH. But what I am trying to say, Mr. Chairman, that if there is a number that appears on a piece of imagery, if that number is man-made it is a symbol. If it is not man-made, it is not a symbol, and we have not concluded that at this point.

Chairman KERRY. That is correct. So we do not know if there are any other symbols yet. That is the point I am trying to make.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Well, do not say there are not any symbols that are clearly defined, because that is not accurate.

Chairman KERRY. There are no symbols that have yet been determined to be person-made symbols that are in front of the committee. That is just a fact. I do not know why we are struggling with this unless it is of great interest to have everybody hyped up over some imaginary symbols.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Well, let each Senator speak for himself, Mr. Chairman. I do not agree with that conclusion. I think the evidence is very compelling. I think the laws of probability would indicate to you that if there are a series of numbers that identify with an individual or individuals who are missing in action in Southeast Asia and those numbers correlate with individuals, the laws of probability would tell you that it is a very high probability that those people are, in fact, identified with those numbers.

Chairman KERRY. But no one, Senator, has yet determined—no one has determined—that those are, in fact, real, man-made symbols. Is that correct, Secretary?

Mr. ANDREWS. That's absolutely correct. In fact, we've determined that we do not believe they are. And when I say we, this is not the Defense Intelligence Agency position. They are a very professional part of our Government. It's also the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense's position based on the best analysis that we have to date. And I'm going to talk about many of these alleged symbols and why we do not believe that they are, in fact—remain unexplained in our mind.

Vice Chairman SMITH. I will get to that in the question and answer period, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Chairman, the first one of these symbols that I want to talk about in this other category is a possible—referred to as the possible K Morse code on the roof of a building. This possible symbol was seen on July 30, 1975 when DIA and CIA imagery analysts noticed several light spots on the roof of one building within a known prison compound in Vietnam, northeast of Hai-phong. Would you also point out where that image is on the map. [Indicating.]

The photography remains classified, so DIA has prepared these line drawings for our discussions in open session. Noticing a distinct color difference—some sections of the roof appear much brighter than the remainder of the roof on one barracks-type building—CIA imagery analysts attempted to discern a possible pattern. They made a tenuous call that the pattern could be a dash-dot-dash in Morse code, which could be the letter K or it could be the letters N and T.

Although this was an admittedly tenuous analytic call, an extensive all-source analysis effort was mounted by DIA. What they learned can be summarized at the unclassified level as follows. First, the prison compound was formerly a French detention facility, used later during the Vietnam War years as a provincial jail. We know that it was used to house captured South Vietnamese commando infiltrators, several of whom were ultimately interviewed after emigrating from Vietnam after the war. These former inmates stated that no U.S. prisoners were ever known to be incarcerated during wartime.

Other sources provided post-war information. This prison, known to us now as Dong Vai Reeducation Camp, was used from late 1975 to late 1978 by the North to house former Army of Vietnam officers and other South Vietnamese officials who underwent reeducation. Thus from late 1975, Dong Vai became part of a much larger reeducation camp system in Vietnam that has been described to us in great detail by many thousands of South Vietnamese refugees that have been interviewed by DIAs investigative personnel.

Taken as a whole, the body of reporting from Dong Vai points to a consistent picture; this camp was used for reeducation and not for housing U.S. prisoners.

A closer look at the photography of July 30, 1975 reveals some interesting details. The front gate is wide open and no special security measures are apparent. The roofs of a number of buildings inside and just outside the compound are off, indicating probable

rehabilitation of the jail facility, no doubt preparing it for its subsequent use as a reeducation camp.

Fusing all of this information, we see a very consistent picture. First, after the fall of Saigon, Dong Vai was renovated and subsequently used as part of the reeducation camp system. Second, the replacement of the roof tiles accounts for the color differences seen on July 30, 1975. In fact, the photography shows that one section of the roof of the building in question is open, indicating the tile replacement is still in progress.

Further, photography of the compound taken in January 1975, before this reconstruction process started, failed to show any roof tile color variations. And photography of December 1975, after the roof reconstruction was complete, shows weathering of sections replaced in July; no color variations were observable.

The Dong Vai reeducation camp had a rather short lifetime. By 1978, most of the reeducatees had been released or were moved to other reeducation camps. For Vietnam and China, the late 1970's were punctured—or were punctuated by recurring security threats and border crises.

We can speculate that because this facility was so far north, the Vietnamese decided to close it for security reasons, or perhaps it was no longer needed as part of the reeducation camp system. What is known through recent photography is that the camp is no longer in use. Many of the buildings have been torn down now, and much of the former prison camp area has reverted to agriculture.

In short, the fused, all-source analytic view of the DIA and CIA is that Dong Vai was not a facility that housed American prisoners, that roof reconstruction accounted for the roof color tile differences seen only on July 30, 1975 imagery, and that it is highly unlikely that the symbols were consciously placed on the roof structure as a signal. JSSA fully agrees with this assessment. We consider this possible signal symbol closed and are not pursuing it.

I will now, Mr. Chairman, if I can, address the 52 or B52 symbol. Based upon source reporting in 1979 and 1980 that American prisoners might be held in a detention facility in Southern Laos, imagery analysts began to review the area for the presence of a detention facility.

Chairman KERRY. This is which area, now?

Mr. ANDREWS. Point to the area.

[Indicating.]

In doing so, the numbers 52, believed to be a possible symbol, were observed five times between December 1980 and March 1981 in a facility located in the area southeast of the city of Nhommarath. The photography, which remains classified, shows a possible 52 in an agricultural area within the camp.

The possible symbol was first observed on December 4, 1980, with subsequent observations on December 30, 1980, January 2, 1981, February 6, 1981, and March 8, 1981. Slight changes in the structure of the symbol were noted from sighting to sighting, and as late as March 8, 1981 the symbol was still in place. However, the top portion of the 5 could no longer be seen.

The symbol was located within a row crop area between the walls of an inner compound and the perimeter fence. Although imagery analysts have arrived at different conclusions as to whether

there was actually a 52 symbol or not, because of the variations in the size and structure of the possible numbers from observation to observation there was strong suspicion that what was—what the imagery analysts were reporting as a possible 52 might be nothing more than shadowing within the crop area.

During continued analysis of the possible numbers, some imagery analysts report that there might even be a B associated with the symbol. However, the possible B appeared to be another instance of shadowing within the area under observation.

The source reporting which was the basis for the requested imagery analysis came—the American prisoners might be held in a detention facility in Southern Laos—came from DIA and CIA which stated that the reporting should be read with caution since there was some question as to the reliability of the sources involved.

As noted earlier, the facility in question is located near the Lao city of Nhommarath, which is situated in Khammouane Province. The city of Nhommarath is within 50 kilometers of the Mekong River and the border of Thailand. The proximity of this facility to Thailand raised doubts that the Lao communists would actually hold American prisoners in an area so close to Thailand.

In 1980 and 1981 there was not a large number of sources as yet available who had visited the area or been within the facility near Nhommarath. Nevertheless, photographs of the facility in question were turned over to U.S. Government representatives. The photographs, taken in early 1981, indicated that Western prisoners were not present within the facility.

The exact measures undertaken by the U.S. Government to inspect the facility and to determine whether American prisoners were being held or not remains classified. In addition, the body of reporting from human sources who had detailed knowledge of the interior and purpose of the facility does not support the notion that American prisoners have ever been held within the facility. I know the committee plans to examine this more in closed session tomorrow.

There was not then, and there has never been proof or even strong evidence that American prisoners were held in the facility near Nhommarath. As a matter of fact, continued analysis since 1980, photographs of this facility and human sources, support our best judgment that Americans were not held in the facility.

The facility is now known to have been a reeducation camp used by the communist government that took power in 1975 to educate former Lao army officers and certain officials from the Royal Lao government. This camp has been described to us in detail by former inmates that have been interviewed outside of Laos. There is even more reason to believe now that what was interpreted as a possible 52 symbol was nothing more than the irregular furrows of many individual garden plots.

Mr. Chairman, I would now like to turn to the symbols referred to as the arrow and P. In mid-1992, during a routine review and analysis of central Laos, as you can see it pointed out here—

[Indicating.]

Mr. ANDREWS [continuing]. Analysts discovered possible symbols which included a large arrow and a possible letter P. These sym-

bols were on the ground in December 1987. Further review of these symbols revealed that although one symbol has the overall shape of an arrow, the stem does not join the arrow head. The stem of the arrow may be up to 100 feet in length.

The possible P, which is noted next to it, appears to be nothing more than a scarred area on the ground with vegetation, perhaps a bush or two, growing in the center of the walk area, the walk-around area.

There is no evidence that this possible symbol has any association with Americans, whether living freely or in captivity. Explanations for possible arrow—for the possible arrow include natural limestone outcroppings or logs.

An imagery search was conducted in both directions of the axis of the possible area with negative results. When imaged, this area was undergoing the slash and burn process associated with clearing jungle for agricultural use. When next imaged, this area was under cultivation. While we are attempting to identify refugees in Thailand who came from the area where the symbol was observed, we have little hope in gaining further information on these 5 year old possible symbols.

This gets us to the bottom line of the various symbols which we believe were intended by their makers to be detected. We've talked about this already, the two, and the ones that have been alleged in the past to be symbols.

I'd like to turn to what's been discussed several times about all of the numbers and the potential authenticators that were in evidence, and is cited as evidence of POWs in Laos. These supposed symbols were seen by members of the JSSA on a poor quality print of an image. For context, the JSSA is a 65 person organization located in three States and headquartered at Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

I thought I'd take a minute and just explain who they are since we've mentioned them several times today. As commander, Colonel Bonn, who's with us, reports directly to the Air Force Director of Operations in this assignment. The Air Force and JSSA are executive agents for the department for two major areas, joint operational evasion and escape matters and Code of Conduct and SERE, the survival, evasion, resistance, and escape training. They have a third, more recent, charter as an executive agent for the purpose of drafting, in coordination with the services and other DOD agencies, a Department of Defense directive on POW/MIA matters. The latter project is still in progress.

The JSSA does not have, and never has had, MIA accountability as a functional responsibility. They are not cognizant of all-source intelligence related to MIAs and have never been tasked by anyone to conduct a comprehensive review of reports of downed, missing, or captured personnel in Southeast Asia. However, in 1978 the JSSA did do a survey of Operation Homecoming POW debriefs and compiled a data base of all references to sightings of non-returnees.

The only POW analytical role the JSSA now performs is to review POW and peacetime hostage debriefs for lessons we can apply to the training programs we oversee. The JSSA has never been asked to review DIA's MIA efforts. The JSSA is not an inspector general and has no one qualified as an intelligence imagery analyst for photo interpretation and does not perform that function.

Aside from the project to draft a DOD directive, the JSSA's current involvement in POW/MIA matters was solely due to requests by this committee that they review the poor quality, poor resolution copies of photography for evaluation with respect to evasion and escape techniques of ground signal communication.

This they did with some degree of discomfort at being asked to be photographic interpreters, a technical skill they do not possess and which was called to the committee's attention by the DOD POW/MIA Central Documentation Office. That's an office that works for me and was created solely to get the information out to the committee and to the public.

On June 22, the chief counsel of this committee requested that the JSSA evaluate the photograph containing the USA symbol discussed earlier. The letter of request asked the JSSA to provide an independent evaluation of the symbol's probable origins, meaning, and if it was consistent with accepted SERE training and procedures. The JSSA was also asked to evaluate a photograph of a second larger area some distance to the southwest.

In forwarding the JSSA's response on July 10, the Director of the DOD Central Documentation Office cautioned the general counsel of the committee that the JSSA does not maintain a capability to perform imagery analysis and that imagery was only one source used in the intelligence process and that to fully comprehend the significance of a photo, information from multiple sources must be considered and examined by analysts from an appropriate intelligence organization.

I regret that I was not personally aware of the committee's request to the JSSA and our response in July. I believe we could have avoided the resulting misunderstandings if we had been aware that the JSSA was attempting, in good faith, to perform a function that was well outside their area of expertise.

Basically, the JSSA personnel viewed a very poor quality print with a magnifying glass and saw a lot of numbers and letters. They then matched these symbols against the authenticator lists of missing Americans. They saw hundreds of number and letter combinations and correlated some of those to numbers that were possible fliers missing in action. Where matches occurred, they indicated that these might be possible evader symbols.

I do not want to get more specific on these symbols, as much of the escape and evasion tradecraft is classified and may well be used again, if it doesn't all get leaked. I am concerned that all of the media attention to these symbols has probably compromised any attempts by any possible surviving POWs to use the symbols they were taught in Southeast Asia. I have every expectation that we're going to be seeing out in the fields of Laos a lot of K's and other kinds of symbols showing up and detected by our imagery systems here in the next few weeks and months.

Senator GRASSLEY. They are watching CSPAN over there, I suppose.

Mr. ANDREWS. Yes, sir. Viewing a poor quality print with a magnifying glass is just not how imagery exploitation should be done. This ignores the basic principles of imagery interpretation, which consider the pattern, shape, size, shadow, surroundings, tone, and texture of each artifact. When the JSSA personnel viewed the

original quality imagery of the printed photography on a light table using high resolution optics the nature of all the supposed evader symbols became clear.

They were simply vegetation, shadows, or artifacts of the photography production process. Some possible symbols were even in the tops of 200 foot tall tress, an unlikely place for an evading POW to leave a signal. When shown photographs of other locations—and I think this is very significant—other locations in Africa and one in Utah, the JSSA personnel also saw the same kinds of symbols, symbols which again disappeared on the light table.

Each and every apparent evader symbol was reviewed by JSSA on the light table and none were found to be real. Now I don't want to give the impression they were imagining things. Often when you look at a photographic print you see numbers and letters in the shadows. I can see them on the prints myself, but I also can—and I'm a trained imagery analyst, although it's been many years—I can also see them go away and become the shadows in the terrain as you get better quality imagery.

That's why we don't interpret such prints for intelligence purposes, and that is why it takes a long time to train imagery interpreters. It's easy to be misled. In this case, it is unfortunate that untrained personnel were used to support an unwarranted conclusion concerning evader symbols in Laos.

Finally, and I'm at the end of my statement, despite our best efforts we have limitations on our intelligence capabilities. And I have to leave the committee with the final observation that we can't get perfect answers with intelligence, that in the end the real answers are going to be in the hands of the Vietnamese Government and the Laotian Government to get some of these open questions resolved.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my statement. The committee may want Mr. Gadoury of the Joint Task Force Full Accounting to present his statement before we get into a lot of questions about the USA, but that concludes my statement, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Andrews follows:]

THE PREPARED STATEMENT OF DUANE P. ANDREWS, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Mr. Chairmen, members of the Committee. While I am pleased to support your hearing which is examining markings on buildings and terrain in Southeast Asia that may relate to American POW/MIAs and to have this opportunity to set the record straight on a lot of incorrect information that is in circulation, I have great apprehension in discussing in an open hearing topics that relate to the capabilities and practices of our Nation's intelligence activities. I believe that it is a poor security practice to "talk around" classified activities. My concerns have been heightened by the intelligence and operations information that was recently widely disclosed in the TV and print media. It seems that we and officials that have served before us have been indicted in the court of public opinion for ignoring signs that Americans were left behind based on an inaccurate bill of particulars that was drawn up using incomplete, selectively leaked intelligence.

I understand the frustration with classification expressed by many in the general public and in particular by the families and Veteran's organizations that are so concerned with the POW/MIA issue. They appear to believe that we are unnecessarily keeping this intelligence material behind a veil of secrecy—that as it relates to events from decades ago it therefore no longer requires classified protection. This is not the case. Much of what we have discussed in closed meetings is based on current intelligence sources and methods. This is not, as some have charged, an attempt to hide a perceived government failure to liberate our POWs. Rather, it is the fulfillment of our obligation to protect those intelligence means and methods vital to our global responsibilities in the defense of the Nation.

Notwithstanding his reservations about public discussion of intelligence matters, Secretary Cheney has authorized me to present an unclassified statement describing certain of our intelligence activities and other related activities that were undertaken in response to certain symbols that have been purported to indicate the possible presence of American prisoners of war in Vietnam and Laos. These symbols have been referred to in the press as the USA and K, the 1973 or 1573 TH, the Morse Code K, the 52 or B52, the "arrow" and P, and what were believed to be a series of escape and evasion identity numbers that were seen by Joint Services Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape Agency, or JSSA, personnel on some photographs of Laos.

To the extent that I can in an open session, and to the best of my knowledge based on what I have pulled from the reports of actions that were undertaken by the Defense Intelligence Agency and by the JSSA, I will review our current understanding of these symbols. Following my statement Mr. William Gadoury of the Joint Task Force—Full Accounting will present his statement concerning certain activities related to the search for Americans and the USA symbol. Colonel Bob Bonn, Commander of the the JSSA, Mr. Bob Dussault, Colonel Bonn's deputy, and Mr. Al Erickson, a SERE instructor and evasion and escape expert, and Mr. Sheetz, Mr. Santora, and Mr. Knapper from the Defense Intelligence Agency are present. These individuals are prepared to independently confirm the accuracy of what I relate.

However, I must caution that in open session we will be unable to present the full range of information available to us on these matters—information that we have previously presented to the Select Committee in closed meetings. Any questions that require getting into classified information in order to provide a complete answer will have to be answered in a closed hearing. Please do not take this as an indication that we are not willing to answer your questions fully. We have willingly made all of our documents available to the Select Committee and we will willingly answer all of your questions. We just have to do so in a responsible manner when dealing with sensitive intelligence or escape and evasion matters. If we divulge the tradecraft used in either area it may cost American lives in future conflicts.

Before I review the specific symbols of interest I would like to make a few comments concerning imagery. I believe that a short general description of this topic will help you understand the complexity of the issue and the technical jargon we use when discussing imagery. When someone mentions photographs we probably think of the snapshots we get back from the drug store or the one hour film processor or the portraits we have taken on special occasions. When we talk of imagery we are talking about quite a different thing. Although some of our imagery is produced by light directly falling on a wide strip of film, most is produced by very high technology processes involving devices which transform the varying light signals into digital signals. These digital signals can be read out on very high resolution workstations—a kind of very high definition television—or to control the projection of laser light onto a film negative. Such imagery can be made up of a single view of the area or it can be made up of two images taken slightly apart in time or from two slightly different angles. This allows us to view the image as if it were in three dimensions.

We examine such film on a light table under very powerful optics. In effect we put it under a microscope. Interpreting the information contained in a film positive or negative is not a skill you can pick up quickly. I was an imagery analyst in my earlier years in the Air Force. It took me six months of basic schooling and another six months of on-the-job training before I was considered qualified to sign my name to an imagery interpretation report. Today, we send our analysts to an additional three months of advanced schooling after they have had this basic qualification training. When viewing an image it is often easy to "see" things in nature that appear to be man-made but which on closer examination are shadows and foliage.

When an intelligence analyst has a question about an area or a specific point target he submits an imagery request. This request is given an appropriate priority and will be imaged. This image does not go directly to the intelligence analyst that requested that it be taken. Rather, a skilled imagery interpreter examines the image and prepares an imagery interpretation report. This written report, and occasionally a print or photograph of the target, is forwarded to the analyst. Some times when an imagery interpreter examines an image he or she will see something that was not mentioned in the original analyst's request. An example is the USA seen by a CIA imagery interpreter

who was examining imagery of Laos for another purpose. In such a case the imagery interpretation report is forwarded to the analytic section responsible for the unexpected sighting.

I also should address why we are showing line drawings of the symbols we are here today to discuss. A fair question is "You are very open about what these symbols are or appear to be so why not show photographs of them?" The reason is straightforward. If a camera scientist can get his hands on an image he can determine many characteristics of the camera that took the picture. Its location, its focal length, the camera's stability, its sensitivity to the varying intensity of light, and a host of other technical parameters. We do not want the scientists of other countries to obtain such knowledge of our technical capabilities. Such knowledge would help them hide things from us that we need to see to support our military forces and for national security.

Now I will turn to the symbols that have been the subject of so much discussion. I will review each of the images of interest in turn. I believe this will support our conclusion that of all the millions of square kilometers of territory in Southeast Asia that we have examined over the years we really only have two unexplained sets of symbols which were clearly intended to communicate something to an observer from above.

The first symbol of interest is a 1973 TH. This symbol was imaged on May 20, 1973 and again on July 10, 1973 on the Plain of Jars in Laos. The Plain of Jars was a hotly contested area during the war in Indochina. Lao General Vang Pao and his Hmong soldiers fought valiantly for control of this vital area which contains within its borders the key lines of communication for central Laos. Control of the Plain of Jars shifted back and forth between Royal Lao Army and Pathet Lao and Vietnamese forces during the war.

The imagery, now unclassified, which contains this set of symbols was obtained using an unmanned airborne reconnaissance system. It has been interpreted as either a 1573 or 1973 and either TA or TH. None of the four possible combinations of these symbols correlate to a classic distress symbol or to the escape and evasion symbols that our crews were trained to use. Another explanation is that the four numbers resemble a personal authenticator number but we have been unable to correlate them with any individual. Although it is not what we would expect to be used by an unaccounted-for U.S. military person, the symbols remains of interest to the Defense Department because they have not been explained.

Possible explanations for the appearance of these symbols are many, though none seem particularly convincing. For instance, the U.S. Government provided aid to General Vang Pao through CIA-operated Air America assets. Some Air America crews were downed in action. One such U.S. aviator, Emmet Kay, went down on May 7, 1973 approximately 8 kilometers from the area where this symbol was either tramped, cut, cleared or etched into the elephant grass. (Emmet Kay returned to the U.S. in September 1974.) Some have surmised that Emmet Kay's Hmong crew might have made the symbol during

the few hours they were free before capture. The leader of the Hmong was a Major Thao. We can speculate that he may have tried to signal their location by abbreviating his name. We may never know the answer to this as Major Thao died in captivity.

Others have surmised that the symbol could have been placed on the ground by a group of Thai personnel that were also captured during this period by the Pathet Lao. TH, of course, is the two character U.S. country code for Thailand. We know that these three Thai individuals were held in captivity with Ernest Kay and his Hmong crew members. Many attempts have been made over the years to follow this lead. Only recently, a new lead has surfaced indicating that one of the Hmong may now be available for interview in Thailand. If we are successful in our attempt to interview this individual we may learn more. But at this point, we have no way of knowing if the symbol was or was not made by either the Thai individuals or the Hmong.

Another, and less likely, theory for the symbol relates to the downing of an AC-130 gunship in December 1972, some 300 miles away in southern Laos just across the Lao/Thai border. While only two crew members were known to have survived, one of the crew members that stayed with the plane down to its impact on the jungle floor was Captain Thomas Hart. Captain Hart is the only downed aviator whose initials and loss circumstances could possibly correlate with the initials TH. While Captain Hart's remains were recovered in 1985 by the JCRC, even if Captain Hart had survived, it is unlikely that he would have chosen to evade for over 300 miles through some of the roughest territory in Laos. He would more likely have gone a relatively short distance due West toward Thailand and freedom.

All we know for sure at this point in time in 1992 is that the symbol remains unexplained despite having been analyzed in depth on at least four separate occasions: by the Pacific Command in 1973; by the JCRC and DIA in 1976; by DIA in 1986/87; and by the DIA, CIA and JSSA in 1992. Neither the DIA, JSSA or the JTF-FA have been able to make a correlation to any individual. While positive results may have been hoped for in 1973-75, it is not likely that 19 years later we will be able to pick up the trail in Laos. In short, the origin and meaning of this symbol is unexplained and probably will remain so.

I will now turn to the USA & possible K symbols. This symbol was imaged on January 22, 1988 in a narrow rice paddy valley in Northeast Laos near Sam Neua, Laos. This imagery was taken for a project unrelated to POW/MIAs and was not looked at by an imagery analyst until early December 1988. While the actual imagery remains classified, the line drawing we have with us today is unclassified. As you can see, the letters USA are clearly distinguishable, and each letter is estimated to be more than twice the height of a normal sized man. On the imagery, below the USA letters some additional markings can be seen. Some have speculated that these markings are in the pattern of the number 34 or even the letter K, or perhaps even a so-called walking K distress symbol. This symbol was only imaged once. By the time it was discovered in

December 1988 by the Central Intelligence Agency and immediately brought to DIA's attention, it was no longer observable on the ground.

Once this symbol was made known to DIA, investigative steps were promptly taken. The full range of follow-up steps taken by the U.S. Government have been briefed to the Committee in a closed meeting. What I can say here in open session is that all appropriate means of information collection, including the full range of intelligence assets available to the U.S. Government, have been brought to bear to no avail. Like the prior symbol discussed that appeared on the Plain of Jars in 1973, this USA symbol remains unexplained.

There is still disagreement as to whether or not the markings and shadings seen below the USA letters are in actuality some type of evader symbol. It is clear to DIA and CIA imagery analysts that the USA letters were constructed by scraping away the rice stubble from a harvested rice paddy in dry season. One likely explanation for what appears to some as a 34 or possible K is the dumping of extracted rice stubble in several piles at random. Clearly, the supposed K is not in any fashion comparable to the USA letters--not in size, not in means of construction, not in spatial orientation, and certainly not in clarity. When this image was further examined through the application of sophisticated computer-enhanced analysis, including the use of so-called false color analysis to differentiate between grey scales, this alleged K symbol appears even more likely to be the mounding of rice stubble and thus even less convincing as a possible K.

So what do we have here? No one, not DIA, not CIA and not JSSA, can correlate the USA and possible K symbols with an unaccounted for individual. While the Lao government has admitted that prior to 1973 prisoners were kept in Pathet Lao headquarters caves located in the Sam Neua area, prisoners were not known to be held there after the war ended. These caves have been visited many times in recent years by Americans and other Westerners, and it was clear by the late 1980's that the caves are no longer in use. Other facilities that would likely be used for hiding American POWs are not known to exist anywhere else in Sam Neua.

I acknowledge that there have been isolated reports of POWs being held in some areas of Laos, including Sam Neua. But after giving these reports, most of which come from refugee sources, a full and complete evaluation, the Department has been unable to develop convincing evidence that U.S. POWs are being held in Sam Neua today, nor do we have any evidence they were being held there in 1988.

Mr. Bill Gadoury, an investigator who covers Laos for the Joint Task Force - Full Accounting, has an interesting story to tell that may relate to the USA symbol. As I indicated earlier, Bill will tell this story at the conclusion of my statement.

Where we are now with regard to the USA symbol can be summarized as

follows: 1). The USA and possible K remains unexplained, despite having tasked every means of information collection available through the Intelligence Community. Many collection capabilities have been exercised multiple times to no avail. 2). No correlation to a known unaccounted-for individual can be made by DIA, JSSA or the JTF-FA. And 3). Until an unexpected lead develops, there is little more that can be done other than continuing to monitor the situation. We have discussed in our closed meeting how we are accomplishing this monitoring.

I will now address the possible K symbol in Morse code on the roof of a building. This possible symbol was seen on July 30, 1975 when DIA and CIA imagery analysts noticed several light spots on the roof of one building within a known prison compound in Vietnam Northeast of Haiphong. The photography remains classified, so DIA has prepared line drawings for our discussions in open session.

Noticing a distinct color difference -- some roof sections were much brighter than the remainder of the roof on one barracks-type building -- CIA imagery analysts attempted to discern a possible pattern. They made a tenuous call that the pattern could be a dash - dot - dash in Morse code, which could be the letter K or the letters N and T. Although this was an admittedly tenuous imagery analytic call, an intense all-source analysis was mounted by DIA.

What they learned can be summarized at the unclassified level as follows. First, the prison compound was formerly a French detention facility, used later during the Vietnam war years as a provincial jail. We know that it was used to house captured South Vietnamese commando infiltrators, several of whom were ultimately interviewed after emigrating from Vietnam after the war. These former inmates stated that no U.S. prisoners were ever known to be incarcerated there during wartime.

Other sources provided postwar information. This prison, known to us now as the Dong Vai Reeducation Camp, was used from late 1975 to late 1978 by the North to house former Army of Vietnam (ARVN) officers and other South Vietnamese officials who underwent "reeducation" to prepare them for "proper functioning" in the new socialist/communist unified Vietnam. Thus, from late 1975 Dong Vai became part of a much larger reeducation camp system in Vietnam that has been described to us in great detail by many of the thousands of South Vietnamese refugees that have been interviewed by DIA's investigative personnel. Taken as a whole, the body of reporting from Dong Vai paints a consistent picture--this camp was used for reeducation and not for housing U.S. prisoners.

A closer look at the photography of July 30, 1975 reveals some very interesting details. The front gate is wide open and no special security measures are apparent. The roofs of a number of buildings inside and just outside the compound are off, indicating probable rehabilitation of the jail facility, no doubt preparing it for its subsequent use as a reeducation camp.

Fusing all this information, we see a very consistent picture. First, after the fall of Saigon, Dong Vai was renovated and subsequently used as part of the reeducation camp system. Second, the replacement of roof tiles accounts for the color differences seen on July 30, 1975. In fact, the photography shows that one section of the roof of the building in question is open, indicating that tile replacement was still in progress. Further, photography of the compound taken in January 1975 before this reconstruction process started failed to show any roof tile color variations. And photography of December 1975 after the roof reconstruction was complete, shows weathering of the sections replaced in July; no color variations are observable.

The Dong Vai reeducation camp had a rather short lifetime. By late 1978, most of the reeducates had either been released or were moved to other reeducation camps further south. For Vietnam and China, the late 1970's were punctuated by recurring security threats and border crises. We can speculate that because this facility was so far north, the Vietnamese decided to close it for security reasons, or perhaps it was no longer needed as part of the reeducation camp system. What is known through recent photography is that the guard towers, fencing and other security provisions have been long removed, many of the buildings have been torn down and much of the former prison/camp area has reverted to agriculture.

In short, the fused, all-source analytic view of DIA and CIA is that Dong Vai was not a facility that housed American prisoners; that roof reconstruction accounted for the roof tile color differences seen only on July 30, 1975; and, that it is highly unlikely that symbols were consciously placed on the roof structure as a signal. JSSA fully agrees with this assessment. We consider this possible symbol closed and are no longer pursuing it.

I will now address the 52 or B52 symbol. Based upon source reporting in 1979 and 1980 that American prisoners might be held in a detention facility in southern Laos, imagery analysts began to review the area for the presence of a detention facility. In doing so, the numbers 52, believed to be a possible symbol, were observed five times between December 1980 and March 1981 in a facility located in the area southeast of the city of Nhommarath, Laos. The photography, which remains classified, shows a possible 52 in an agricultural area within the camp. The possible symbol was first observed on December 4, 1980, with subsequent observations on December 30, 1980, January 2, 1981, February 6, 1981 and March 8, 1981. Slight changes in the structure of the symbol were noted from sighting to sighting and as late as March 8, 1981, the symbol was still in place, however, the top portion of the 5 could no longer be seen.

The symbol was located within a row crop area between the walls of an inner compound and the perimeter fence. Although imagery analysts have arrived at different conclusions as to whether there was actually a 52 symbol or not. Because of the variations in the size and structure of the possible numbers from observation to observation there was strong suspicion that what the imagery analysts were reporting as a possible 52, might be nothing more

than shadowing within the row crop area. During continued analysis of the possible numbers, some imagery analysts reported that there might even be a "B" associated with the symbol, however, the possible B appeared to be another instance of shadowing within the area under observation.

The source reporting which was the basis for requesting the imagery analysis came to DIA from the CIA which stated that the reporting should be read with caution since there was some question as to the reliability of the sources involved. As noted earlier, the facility in question was located near the Lao city of Nhommarath, which is situated in Khammouane Province; the city of Nhommarath is within 50 kilometers of the Mekong River and the border of Thailand. The proximity of this facility to Thailand raised doubts that the Lao Communists would actually hold American prisoners in an area so close to Thailand.

In 1980 and 1981 there was not a large number of sources as yet available who had visited the area or been within the facility near Nhommarath. Nevertheless, photographs of the interior of the facility in question were turned over to U.S. Government representatives. The photographs, taken in early 1981, indicated that Western prisoners were not present within the facility. The exact measures undertaken by the U.S. Government to inspect the facility and to determine whether American prisoners were being held or not remains classified. In addition, the body of reporting from human sources who had detailed knowledge of the interior and purpose of the facility does not support the notion that American prisoners had ever been held within the facility.

There was not then and there has never been proof that American prisoners were held in the facility near Nhommarath. As a matter of fact, continued analysis since 1980, photographs of this facility and human sources support our best judgement that Americans were not held in the facility. The facility is now known to have been a reeducation camp used by the Communist government that took power in 1975 to educate former Royal Lao Army officers and certain officials from the Royal Lao government. This camp has been described to us in detail by former inmates that have been interviewed outside of Laos. There is even more reason to believe now that what was interpreted as a possible 52 symbol was nothing more than the irregular furrows of many individual garden plots.

I will now turn to the symbols referred to as an arrow and a "p." In mid-1992, during a routine review and analysis of central Laos, analysts discovered a possible symbols which included a large arrow and the possible letter "p." These symbols were on the ground in December 1987. Further review of these possible symbols revealed that although one symbol has the overall shape of an arrow, the stem does not join the arrow head. The stem of the arrow may be up to 100' in length. The possible "p" symbol appears to be nothing more than a scarred area on the ground with vegetation, perhaps a bush or two, growing in the center.

There is no evidence that this possible symbol has any association with Americans, whether living freely or in captivity. Explanations for the possible arrow include natural limestone outcroppings or logs. An imagery search was conducted in both directions of the axis of the possible arrow with negative results. When imaged this area was undergoing the slash and burn process associated with clearing jungle for agricultural use. When next imaged this area was under cultivation. While we are attempting to identify refugees in Thailand who came from the area where the symbol was observed, we have little hope of gaining further information on these five year old possible symbols.

This gets us to the bottom line of the various symbols which we believe were intended by their makers to be detected from above. To date, we have two unexplained sets of symbols. One was imaged in 1973 and one was imaged in 1988. A full range of follow up actions were undertaken. None of these symbol can be tied to a U.S. POW but neither can we absolutely disprove that "possibility."

I would now like to turn to some apparent evader symbols that have been cited as recent evidence of POWs in Laos. These supposed symbols were seen by members of the JSSA on a poor quality positive print of an image. For context, the JSSA is a 65 person organization located in three states and headquartered at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. As commander, Colonel Bonn reports to the Air Force Director of Operations. The Air Force and JSSA are executive agents for the Department of Defense for two major areas: Joint operational evasion and escape matters, and Code of Conduct and SERE training. They have a third, more recent charter as an executive agent for the purpose of drafting, in coordination with the Services and other DoD agencies, a Department of Defense Directive on POW/MIA matters. The latter project is in progress.

Under the JSSA E&E charter, they are responsible for working E&E operational matters with command planners and operators to ensure tactics, procedures, equipment, and training are adequate and consistent with JCS policy. The JSSA also acts as executive agent for the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Force Management and Personnel with respect to Code of Conduct and SERE training. To accomplish this they have a special training unit with 19 people responsible for providing advanced instruction and exercises for selected high risk-of-capture personnel from all the military services. This unit trains these personnel in Code of Conduct, SERE, and hostage survival courses, both in residence and using mobile training teams.

The JSSA has also been charged by DoD to conduct periodic inspections of five SERE certified training schools operated by the Army, Navy and Air Force; to research and analyze prisoner of war and actual SERE experiences for lessons learned to improve training; and to maintain a Code of Conduct-related research library.

That then, in a nutshell, is the JSSA. The JSSA does not have and never has had MIA accountability as a functional responsibility. They are not cognizant of all-source intelligence related to MIAs and have never been tasked by anyone to conduct a comprehensive review of reports of downed, missing, or captured personnel in Southeast Asia. However, in 1978 the JSSA did do a survey of Operation Homecoming POW debriefs and compiled a data base of all references to sightings of non-returns. The only POW analytical role the JSSA now performs is to review POW and peacetime hostage debriefs for lessons we can apply to the training programs we oversee.

The JSSA has never been asked to review DIA's MIA efforts. The JSSA is not an inspector general and has no one qualified in intelligence analysis or photographic interpretation to perform such a function.

Aside from the project to draft a DoD Directive, the JSSA's current involvement in POW/MIA matters was solely due to requests by the Select Committee that they review poor quality, poor resolution copies of photography for evaluation with respect to evasion and escape techniques of ground signal communication. This they did with some degree of discomfort at being asked to be photographic interpreters, a technical skill they do not possess and which was called to the Committee's attention by the DoD POW/MIA Central Documentation Office—this is the organization that I established to declassify POW/MIA documents and to support the Select Committee.

On June 22, the Chief Counsel of the Select Committee requested that the JSSA evaluate the photograph containing the USA symbol discussed earlier. The letter of request asked the JSSA to provide an independent evaluation of the symbol's probable origins, meaning, and if they are consistent with accepted SERE training and procedures. The JSSA was also asked to evaluate a photograph of a second larger area some distance to the southwest.

In forwarding the JSSA's response on July 10, the Director of the DoD Central Documentation Office cautioned Mr. Codinha, Chief Counsel of the Select Committee, that the JSSA does not maintain a capability to perform imagery analysis and that imagery was only one source used in the intelligence process and that to fully comprehend the significance of a photo, information from multiple sources must be considered and examined by analysts from an appropriate intelligence organization.

I regret that I was not personally aware of the Committee's request to the JSSA and our response in July. I believe we could have avoided the resulting misunderstandings if we had been aware that the JSSA was attempting in good faith to perform a function that was well outside their area of expertise. Basically, the JSSA personnel viewed a very poor quality print with a magnifying glass and saw a lot of numbers and letters. They then matched these symbols against their authenticator lists of missing airmen. Where matches occurred they indicated that these might be possible "evader" symbols. I do not want to get more specific on these symbols as much of the

escape and evasion tradecraft is classified and may well be used again. I am concerned that all of the media attention to these symbols has probably compromised any attempts by any possible surviving American POWs to use the symbols that were taught to them in Southeast Asia.

Viewing a poor quality print with a magnifying glass is just not how imagery exploitation should be done. This ignores the basic principles of imagery interpretation which considers the pattern, shape, size, shadow, surroundings, tone and texture of each artifact. When the JSSA personnel viewed the original quality imagery of the printed photograph on a light table using high resolution optics the nature of all the supposed evader symbols became clear. They were simply vegetation, shadows or artifacts of the photographic production process. Some possible symbols were even in the tops of 200 foot tall trees, an unlikely place for an evading POW to leave a signal. When shown photographs of other locations including Africa and Utah, the JSSA personnel also "saw" the same kinds of symbols—symbols which again disappeared on the light table. Each and every apparent evader symbol was reviewed by JSSA on the light table and none were found to be real. Now I don't want to give the impression they were imagining things. Often when you look at a photographic print you can see numbers and letters in the shadows. That is why we do not normally interpret such prints for intelligence purposes and that is why it takes a long time to train imagery interpreters: it is easy to be misled. In this case it is unfortunate that untrained personnel were used to support an unwarranted conclusion concerning evader symbols in Laos.

Mr. Chairman that concludes my statement. I respectfully request that Mr. Gadoury of the Joint Task Force Full Accounting present his statement before we entertain questions. I make this request as I believe his statement is relevant to the questions that may remain concerning the USA and possible K symbols.

Chairman KERRY. All right. Mr. Secretary, what I think we would like to do is perhaps have the folks, the SERE folks, come up first and maybe explain what we can in unclassified terms here.

I, first of all, want to thank you for your statement because I think that in open session it is a very comprehensive and helpful look at a lot of things that people do not normally get to discuss in this kind of session, and we are very appreciative of that. There are questions.

Let me also make clear, I do not want anybody to misinterpret that my distinction about what is or what is not, at this moment, clearly interpretable to the committee or in hand, does not diminish our inquisitiveness or the fact that we are going to look at this. And the committee is going to do that through its independent people. So I do not want to—I am just trying to make sure we know where we are today, but that is not a reflection on where we know we are going.

Now if we could have the SERE folks come up, please. Each of the representatives from SERE, General. And if you could just remain standing so I could swear you all in. If you would raise your right hands. Do you swear, each and individually, to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God.

Colonel BONN. I do.

Mr. DUSSAULT. I do.

Mr. ERICKSON. I do.

Chairman KERRY. I am going to let Senator Smith lead off here with questions.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Mr. Chairman, first of all a brief response to a couple of points in Mr. Andrews' opening statement.

On June 22, 1992, the chief counsel, Bill Codinha, sent a letter to Margaret Munson, Director of DOD POW/MIA CDO. In that letter we said, and I will just quote briefly from it: The committee has received information in summaries of efforts taken by the DIA regarding a photo taken in January 1988, sometimes referred to as USA photo.

In order to have a complete understanding of this particular occurrence, the committee requests that the photo be evaluated by JSSA. We would like an independent evaluation by JSSA of the symbol's probable origins and meaning, and if they are consistent with accepted SERE training and procedures. It is also requested that JSSA evaluate photography of the second-larger area, et cetera.

Mr. Andrews, nobody from JSSA was asked, nor did they offer, any conclusions as to the authenticity of those signals. What they were asked and what they provided to this committee, because I was present at part of those interviews, was are they, those things that we see on those documents, in their opinion escape and evasion symbols.

That is what they were asked. They were not asked if they were man made. They were not asked if they were shadows. And to indicate that—and nor did they say—offer an opinion to that effect. So to indicate that is simply incorrect. That is number one.

There are so many inaccuracies in what you said, I do not even know where to begin, but I am going to take three of them.

Number two, there were not hundreds of numbers, there were 150 numbers—not hundreds, 150.

Number three, regarding the Dong Mang prison, and I know Senator Grassley has some questions, but I am just going to briefly say you indicated that it was not a labor facility—or that it was a labor facility, or words to that effect. We received an analysis from possible POW/MIA associated markings in Southeast Asia by the CIA, July 1976 analysis of Dong Mang prison, quote:

Although we were unable to find any conclusive evidence that this prison might contain American POWs, there are several unique features in this prison that differ from other known Vietnamese prisons. This is the CIA's own words. It is secluded in a relatively remote area and has an access control point on the road leading to the camp. Walls within the compound physically and visually segregate the prisoners. The visual segregation of prisoners indicates it is not a forced labor camp. The only other known prison that used internally walled compounds to segregate the prisoners was the former POW camp at Dong Hoi.

So that should correct those three inaccuracies, and there are others which I will have to get to later.

Mr. Erickson—I am not sure of the timeframe on questions, Mr. Chairman, so just whatever it is, just let me know.

Vice Chairman SMITH. In Mr. Andrews' opening statement, Mr. Erickson, he said that Captain Thomas Hart is the only downed aviator whose initials and loss circumstances could possibly correlate with the initials TH. Is that correct, as far as you know?

Mr. ERICKSON. I don't know about the initials.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Is it possible that they are not TH, but rather an A and not an H?

Mr. ERICKSON. I assumed they were a T and an A.

Vice Chairman SMITH. T and an A.

Mr. ERICKSON. Yes.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Do you believe that that signal was made by Thomas Hart?

Mr. ERICKSON. No.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Do you believe it was made by Emmet Kay?

Mr. ERICKSON. No.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Why do you not believe it was Emmet Kay?

Mr. ERICKSON. Emmet Kay was captured as soon as his aircraft hit the ground, or shortly thereafter.

Vice Chairman SMITH. So your information is that Emmet Kay was captured as soon as he hit the ground, as Senator Grassley indicated.

Mr. ERICKSON. Correct.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Is that your conclusion, Mr. Dussault?

Mr. DUSSAULT. Yes.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Mr. Andrews also said DIA, JSSA, and JTF have been unable to make any correlation to any individual. Is that your position?

Mr. ERICKSON. I don't have a name that it could correspond to, that's correct.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Do you have any indication that TA should correlate to any individual, Mr. Dussault?

Mr. DUSSAULT. Yes, sir. Those two letters are E&E code letters, and that applied to a certain period of time during the Southeast Asia war. If we went back, I'd have to check that particular timeframe against the unaccountable list and determine if there are any individuals in that timeframe that are still unaccounted for.

Vice Chairman SMITH. So it could correlate to someone else.

Mr. DUSSAULT. Yes, sir.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Does it, in your opinion, or could it?

Mr. DUSSAULT. It could. I'd have to check the list.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Is it true, on the 20 May 1973 photograph of the symbol—is it true that there is a clearer picture than what we have up there? Is there any clearer picture that you have seen, other than the one that we see up there?

Mr. ERICKSON. When we were in closed session, they had a 20 May photo that was quite clear.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Is it possible that number could be anything else other than—where am I trying to find it here? I guess we do not have it up there. The 1-9-7-3.

Mr. ERICKSON. It could be a 1-9-3-3.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Pardon me?

Mr. ERICKSON. It could be a 1-9-3-3. There's very many different number combinations, and the 20 May photo shows it the best.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Does that number correlate to a known POW?

Mr. ERICKSON. I don't have all the numbers. I can't tell.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Mr. Dussault, do you know the answer to that question?

Mr. DUSSAULT. I don't think we have the complete list of authenticator numbers accessible to us at this particular time. You'd have to check the entire list of authenticators to determine that, sir. I know in the Air Force, against the Air Force list right now, we didn't get any matches with the 1973 or the 1573, et cetera.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Based on your knowledge of escape and evasion, what is your assessment of that 1973 TA or TH, whatever the case may be, signal? How would you assess it?

Mr. DUSSAULT. My personal opinion is that we shouldn't set this aside, that we ought to really look at this seriously as an authenticator from an individual, as a possible authenticator where an individual is trying to communicate his existence to us.

That's my first opinion. That was my first opinion when I saw that photography for the first time. I believe that, today, it still should be looked at, should be checked against the complete list of authenticators to see if we get a match.

Vice Chairman SMITH. When did you see that?

Mr. DUSSAULT. For the first time?

Vice Chairman SMITH. For the first time.

Mr. DUSSAULT. I believe I saw it, personally saw it for the first time back in the April timeframe in front of the committee.

Vice Chairman SMITH. The first time you saw 1973 imagery of a possible escape and evader signal.

Mr. DUSSAULT. I know that was made available to our office back in the 1985 or 1986 timeframe, because a memo in our safe indicates that, yes, sir.

Vice Chairman SMITH. The first time you saw it was some 12 years after the imagery was taken.

Mr. DUSSAULT. Yes, sir.

Vice Chairman SMITH. And is it correct to say that you are the expert or one of the major experts in escape and evasion?

Mr. DUSSAULT. I think so, yes, sir.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Would you have liked to have seen it earlier than 12 years, to offer your opinion?

Mr. DUSSAULT. Sir, it's not—it's not my job. They had really no responsibility to send it to me. But I would have definitely liked to have seen it, yes, sir.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Does B52K—Mr. Andrews, do you consider that not to be a valid man-made signal in Laos?

Mr. ANDREWS. I don't—I think that they—I don't have a B52K.

Vice Chairman SMITH. All right, how about B52?

Mr. ANDREWS. We have a—

Vice Chairman SMITH. How about 52?

Mr. ANDREWS [continuing]. Likely 52 that we believe was made by shadows, although it could be 52. Some have speculated there was a B. I think if you look at the totality of the imagery coverage, that you're led to believe it probably is not a man-made number. I can't—I can't dismiss it totally. When I look at the total all-source picture, then I believe that it is not an unexplained symbol.

Vice Chairman SMITH. All right. Let me read from the DIA analysis of that. Analysis of further imagery of 30 December 1980 located what appears to be the number 52, possibly followed by the letter K traced on the ground, in an agricultural plot inside the facility. I won't mention the facility.

DIA is unable to ascribe any particular significance to the number, but K was given to U.S. pilots as a ground distress signal. It is thus conceivable that this represents an attempt by a prisoner to signal to any aircraft that might pass overhead. So that is basically incorrect, is that what you are saying?

Mr. ANDREWS. I think that—it's very hard when you're trying to go back a number of years to try to put yourself in the place of an imagery analyst or an analyst in that time frame to know why he concluded what he concluded. We've done the best we could, at the committee's request, to reexamine all this imagery and bring in multiple people to look at it. And what we looked at, we saw a possible 52 that we believed we could explain.

Vice Chairman SMITH. After subsequent imagery—in DIA's own analysis and words: After subsequent imagery of that same facility and that same number, the number 52 is still visible with no change. Your language: This lack of change indicates that the numerals may have been dug into the earth.

And yet you are taking the position here before this committee that it is not—there are only two man-made signals, and that this is not one of the two. That is what you said.

Mr. ANDREWS. Those weren't my words, Senator.

Vice Chairman SMITH. You said there were two man-made signals, Mr. Andrews.

Mr. ANDREWS. No, but that was the imagery interpretation report that you were reading from. Subsequently, we do not believe that they were dug into the earth and we looked at it with the best quality that we could.

Vice Chairman SMITH. All right.

Senator GRASSLEY. You are basically, though, saying that your experts cannot tell the difference between a shadow and a figure that would be stamped in the ground. That is what you are saying. You believe they are shadows, but you cannot really tell the difference between shadows and something stamped in the ground, right?

Mr. ANDREWS. Senator, as I said at the beginning you have to use all-source information to try to put a picture together. What you can tell is whether things are definitely man made, like the USA. Other things are questionable.

In 1980 when imagery analysis was made, we had not interviewed the camp participants and we didn't have a context to place it in. We're doing the best we can to look at this imagery and give you a quality, professional interpretation report of it. And I think that we have to make the best judgments we can.

We can't say there wasn't a 52 there. What we said was in the total source context, we do not believe—we believe it's more explainable by shadows than any other man-made object, based on the camp interviews and so forth.

Senator GRASSLEY. This goes back to what I said in my opening statement. There are other pieces of information and sources that ought to be brought to bear on this, not just one source, where we can get the answer to this. And it is a point, this information has been around a lot time. Cannot you use infrared to tell man-made temperature changes? Have you tried that?

Mr. ANDREWS. On this particular image, I don't know if we used the digitization and the color, the false color assist. I think that they—that the imagery analysts were satisfied that they had done a complete job.

Senator GRASSLEY. I rest my case, Senator Smith. The point is that maybe they have not used all the sources of information.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Well, I think the issue here is nobody is saying—and we are not holding you to the test of being infallible. But, basically, what you are saying here is that the analysis on 52, by your early analysis, is incorrect, or may have been incorrect. Therefore your analysis today very well may also be incorrect. And yet you are taking the emphatic position that you are correct.

Now, I do not want to monopolize all the time, so please feel free to jump in anyone else, but I just want to move to this—whatever we can talk about in open session on does the defense establishment, the intelligence community, manage a record of any authenticator numbers that may be attributed to individuals missing. Do you maintain a base, a database, of those numbers and individuals?

Mr. ANDREWS. Following the war, PACAF or PACOM tried to accumulate the best record of available authenticator numbers. What we've learned in going back and looking—and, again, it's very hard to place yourself in the place of someone 15 or 20 years ago—is that they kept incomplete records. We did not get all of the Navy

and the Army fliers, and there are probably some missing Air Force numbers.

We have here in the Defense Department and we've looked at, and I believe JSSA also has, the best set of authenticator numbers that are available to us today. One of the things we've learned from this process is we've got to keep better authenticator numbers in the future.

I have no way to know why they don't have a complete set of authenticator numbers, and no one knows; we've asked. But there is not a complete set of authenticator numbers and there hasn't been. This isn't something somebody did away with last year or this year. It hasn't existed since after the Vietnam War.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Well, OK, I am not accusing you of anything. What I am saying to you, the statement needs to be made, needs to be understood here by the public, that we have an agency that teaches pilots escape and evasion procedures and identifying or authenticating numbers in order to locate them. Those people who taught that were not sent any imagery until at least, at the minimum, 1985; most of it was seen after this committee showed it to them in 1992. Is that correct?

Mr. DUSSAULT. Yes, sir.

Mr. ERICKSON. Yes.

Vice Chairman SMITH. OK, that is the first point. The second point is that in spite of all that information, in spite of the fact that they were taught to provide identifying information to imagery from above, we do not have the list of those identifier numbers to find them if they signal. Is that correct? Is that correct, Mr. Dussault?

Mr. DUSSAULT. Yes, sir. As far as I know right now, yes, sir.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Now that, to say the least, is pretty outrageous, based on this Senator's opinion. You teach people to communicate, you teach them how to communicate, you teach them what to communicate with, and then you do not keep the number so that you can identify them when they communicate. You are going to have a hell of a job identifying them, are you not?

Mr. ANDREWS. Absolutely.

Chairman KERRY. When you say you, I just want to be fair. I agree with you; the point is well made. But that was done back in 1974 or 1975.

Mr. ANDREWS. Senator, it's very difficult to figure out what happened 20 years ago when they were closing this down.

Vice Chairman SMITH. That is just the point, that we are closing it down.

Mr. ANDREWS. No, I'm talking about when they were pulling their forces out and trying to get back and recover a long-term effort. They did not keep all of the authenticators. I'm not sure they ever all existed. Remember, a lot of these were issued at local level. I issued them when I was in Vietnam to pilots.

Vice Chairman SMITH. What is the sense of issuing them? Why issue them? If you are not going to keep a record of them, why issue them?

Mr. ANDREWS. The main reason was for communications for search and rescue at the time. They weren't meant to be laid out on the ground as a communication symbol, Senator. The other—the

other symbols were meant to be the communications symbols. The authenticators were meant for communication purposes once you make contact, or for other—other purposes that I don't want to go into in this session.

Vice Chairman SMITH. All right, I understand.

How many authenticator numbers are you aware of, Mr. Dussault or Mr. Erickson or Mr. Andrews? Mr. Dussault, first, how many numbers are you aware of, that you have in your possession or know of?

Mr. DUSSAULT. You mean the record.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Yes, how many numbers that identify the specific individuals do you have?

Mr. DUSSAULT. Sir, we'd have to check the list. But as far as I'm concerned in my own mind, we've got records that were put together by PACOM at the end of the war that deal with the Air Force cases only. I believe that's been a complete list of every Air Force pilot still unaccounted for during Southeast Asia.

I believe that the list that we have available to us is a complete list, Air Force only now. And we have in that list several individuals that went down that did not identify an authenticator number for themselves. That was mostly a group of early individuals that went down. They did not start taking the seriousness of the war until, maybe, 1967, 1968 time frame. So there's a large number of people prior to 1967 that didn't have authenticator numbers.

But I'd say we've got authenticators in the thousands.

Vice Chairman SMITH. In the thousands.

Mr. DUSSAULT. Yes, sir.

Vice Chairman SMITH. But you do not have records—you have records of a thousand?

Mr. DUSSAULT. Yes, sir.

Vice Chairman SMITH. You have records—

Mr. DUSSAULT. Only Air Force related, though.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Air Force.

Mr. DUSSAULT. Yes, sir.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Do you have any knowledge or indication or opinion as to what may have happened to the others?

Mr. DUSSAULT. Sir, as I recall, in trying to satisfy some of the requests of the committee over the last few months, one of the sets of documents we had to furnish dealt with what we call the IPWIC Committee. It's the Interagency POW Intelligence Committee.

In these documents, going through these minutes, one of the references I remember seeing was that a decision was made somewhere in the 1974, 1975 time frame that all these authenticated numbers would be submitted by the services to the CIA for repository purposes.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Well, OK. I am just trying to lead through this. What we have established now is that pilots were taught evasion and escape. They were given a number. The numbers were lost or were not used. Those who trained those pilots were never sent the imagery with numbers appearing on them.

I am not getting into whether or not the numbers are shadows or whether or not the numbers are man made. The point is numbers appeared on imagery. We all agree to that, OK. At that point, something appeared on the imagery.

Now, Mr. Gray testified under oath to this committee that, quote: DIA always looked for symbols. DIA does not even have the authenticator numbers. They do not even have them from at least three services, and they have some from the Air Force. How can DIA say that they always look for symbols when they do not have the symbols to look for?

Mr. ANDREWS. Senator, they have the same list the JSSA has, and they—which is the most complete list that the U.S. Government has in its possession. And that's what they used.

Vice Chairman SMITH. I understand that.

Mr. ANDREWS. So they did the best they could with what they had.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Please understand me. I understand what you are saying. I know that you are only looking for what you have. But when you—now, let me move over now quickly, and then I will yield.

Senator GRASSLEY. I wanted to make a point.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Go ahead.

Senator GRASSLEY. That this is what I was saying in my opening statement about putting everything in the proper context. They don't have the proper context.

Vice Chairman SMITH. There is no context.

Senator GRASSLEY. And consequently they can draw a conclusion that something is a shadow, when maybe it is not a shadow, or at least we should not be drawing that conclusion until we have used all the sources available for this type of imagery.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Let me ask this question. If there are—as I understand it, there are 19 numbers; whether they are shadows or whether they are man made, leaving that aside. There are 19 numbers that appear on imagery that identify with missing American service personnel. Is that true or untrue?

Mr. DUSSAULT. I believe it's true.

Mr. ANDREWS. Senator, I can't—I can't agree with that. They appear as artifacts on a print copy, a poor quality print copy. They do not appear on imagery if they're not there, and I think that as we worked through this, it was shown that they weren't on the imagery.

Vice Chairman SMITH. I understand. I understand your position. I do not agree with your position, but I understand it.

Mr. ANDREWS. I think it's the department's position, not just my position.

Vice Chairman SMITH. OK. But what I am saying is if you look at the imagery, which we cannot do in public here, you will see, with the naked eye, something that appears to be numbers, most of them four digit numbers. Is that correct?

Mr. ANDREWS. When you look at the actual imagery, you will not see it with the naked eye. Senator, when you come to see the imagery you will see that you can't—

Vice Chairman SMITH. Well, I have seen imagery with numbers.

Mr. ANDREWS. Right, you've seen copies, you've seen prints.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Have you seen it?

Mr. ANDREWS. Yes, I have.

Vice Chairman SMITH. All right.

Mr. ANDREWS. I've seen them for years, and I've seen them in lots of places in the world other than in Southeast Asia.

Senator GRASSLEY. How can a symbol be on a print and not on a film?

Mr. ANDREWS. It's an artifact of the print. There are—Senator, you have to understand that when people—if we walked outside today and looked up at a cloud and we had 10 people with us, there would be 10 different explanations for what that cloud was.

When people look at terrain on poor quality, there are a lot of artifacts, there are a lot of naturally occurring features that, if your brain is wired right, and it takes a special skill, you can see numbers. People can pull numbers out of it, you know, out of this kind of terrain. They aren't imagining them. They're real to them, but that doesn't mean that they're there and that doesn't mean that when you look at it carefully, that you can find the numbers.

They found—when the three JSSA guys got together, they couldn't even agree on the numbers that they saw from the poor quality print. So it's something that is—that's real—to Mr. Erickson, it's real. We can see some of the numbers, you can see some of the numbers, others you can't.

Senator GRASSLEY. I still want to know how something can be on the print if it is not in the film the first time.

Mr. ANDREWS. It's an artifact.

Senator GRASSLEY. Or in the first place.

Mr. ANDREWS. It's the way your mind creates and pulls the shadows and the artifacts of the image together, Senator.

Vice Chairman SMITH. What creates a shadow in a rice paddy?

Mr. ANDREWS. It could be a dike, it could be the—Vice Chairman Smith: Supposing there is no dike?

Mr. ANDREWS. Senator, I'd have to look at the specific example that you are talking about.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Well, I have looked at it and there are numbers in rice paddies, Mr. Andrews. Now what creates a shadow in a rice paddy?

Mr. ANDREWS. We've had the best imagery analysts look at this, Senator, and I have not seen any numbers in rice paddies.

Vice Chairman SMITH. You have not seen any numbers in rice paddies.

Mr. ANDREWS. If we join you and you show us numbers in rice paddies, we will be happy to examine them further. We do not see them, Senator.

Vice Chairman SMITH. OK, you do not see them in rice paddies.

Colonel BONN. Senator, with respect to the numbers, the 19 numbers you're talking about, Mr. Erickson was the one who identified those originally and went through the authenticator list and picked out names that could correspond to those. He subsequently has spent time over with DIA looking, with their technology, on a light table at these numbers. He's satisfied they're not there. You can ask him directly on this issue.

Vice Chairman SMITH. What I am asking, and what I am getting at here, is there are 19 numbers—whether they are numbers, man made, or numbers made by shade of trees or something else is a matter of dispute, I will grant you that. That is a matter of differ-

ence of opinion; whether it is in dispute or not depends on who is doing the analyzing.

But there were 19 of them that, if one looks at the imagery, they can see these numbers. You can see 5674, for example, or whatever the number is. You can see that and you can conclude that that is a number, however it is made. And that number, 19 times, appears to correlate with a missing serviceman in Southeast Asia.

Now what in the world—in terms of laws of probability, that is like hitting the lottery 19 times, 19 times in a row.

Colonel BONN. Sir, there are thousands of numbers.

Vice Chairman SMITH. No kidding.

Colonel BONN. There can be a hit—there will be a hit plenty of times. We have no vested interest one way or another. I have backed off and let Mr. Erickson make his own analysis. He did that independently. He's the one that found it in the first place, and he doesn't see it now.

When I took command of the JSSA a couple of months ago I was told we had these photographs, and that we were looking at them. I immediately asked to see them and be shown what Mr. Erickson was seeing.

He did that, and, frankly, there were many things he saw I couldn't see. There were some things I could also see, but there's a large area of disagreement between me and Mr. Dussault and Mr. Erickson. Anybody that looks at the same photo comes out with different things, and the worse the photo the more—the greater the contrasts in the photo, the more images start emerging out of the shadows. It's just—and I'm convinced of that.

Senator GRASSLEY. What you are really saying is it is the figment of somebody's imagination.

Colonel BONN. Sir, I'm not a photo interpreter.

Senator GRASSLEY. The bottom line is there cannot be anything on a picture that is not on film.

Colonel BONN. I didn't say that, sir.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Do you have the film? Where is the film? Do you have the original film of this picture?

Colonel BONN. No, I'd have to ask DIA, sir.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Mr. Andrews.

Mr. ANDREWS. Do I have it with me?

Vice Chairman SMITH. No, do you have it?

Mr. ANDREWS. We have a positive print of high quality of the original picture.

Vice Chairman SMITH. I did not ask you about the print. Do you have the original?

Mr. ANDREWS. When I say a positive transparency, we do have the original of this one, I'm informed.

Vice Chairman SMITH. You have the original on the USA area with the numbers. You have the original of that. The December, 1988 followup imagery on USA.

Mr. ANDREWS. I'm told we have it.

Vice Chairman SMITH. I am told you do not.

Mr. ANDREWS. I understand that, Senator, and when we were last before the committee I think that there was a missing picture because that was taken for a special purpose and was pulled out of the normal data base.

Vice Chairman SMITH. So you do not have it.

Mr. ANDREWS. I am now told they have it.

Vice Chairman SMITH. Well, I just want to make sure. You are under oath; I just want to make sure I give you another chance to say it. Do you have the original or not, of the USA, December 1988 followup photography that was taken after the image appeared? I you have that original?

Mr. SANTORA. Senator, I'm Ralph Santora from the imagery shop at DIA. We had a problem with the original imagery when we were together the last time. It was filed in an unusual place, and I won't go into that. But we did find it subsequently, and we do have it on hand, yes.

Vice Chairman SMITH. You have the master.

Mr. SANTORA. Yes, yes.

Vice Chairman SMITH. OK.

Chairman KERRY. Can I just ask a couple of questions, if I can, here. The 19 numbers, as they are purported to be, these are on a rough print. Is that accurate?

Mr. ANDREWS. Yes, sir.

Chairman KERRY. Is that the print we were shown?

Mr. ANDREWS. Yes, sir, that was the print you were shown.

Chairman KERRY. OK. So I saw the same print you saw, is that correct?

Mr. ERICKSON. Correct.

Chairman KERRY. Well I know that this Senator, even with eye-glasses, had a lot of problem finding a lot of these numbers and the print was of extremely poor quality. Is that not accurate? Is that accurate, Mr. Erickson?

Mr. ERICKSON. Very accurate.

Chairman KERRY. You are the person who originally saw this, correct?

Mr. ERICKSON. Correct.

Chairman KERRY. And you, Mr. Dussault, did you also see it?

Mr. DUSSAULT. Yes, sir.

Chairman KERRY. Do you agree that the print is of poor quality?

Mr. DUSSAULT. Yes, sir. Compared to what we've seen since then, yes, sir.

Chairman KERRY. OK, now you are both under oath. Did anybody try to have you readjust your thinking on this?

Mr. ERICKSON. No. They provided me all the materials and allowed me to look at it many times.

Chairman KERRY. And what did you do? You went and reanalyzed it, is that correct?

Mr. ERICKSON. I sat down at the light table and I had a hard copy photo beside me and I looked at the imagery, both in the light table and on the hard copy photo, and attempted to find them on the light table.

Chairman KERRY. And could you find them?

Mr. ERICKSON. You could find a lot of shadows. In fact one large arrow that I found turned out to be actually in the treetops.

Chairman KERRY. In the treetops.

Mr. ERICKSON. Yes. There was a cliff next to it that was casting a straight-line shadow which formed an arrow.

Chairman KERRY. Now, you are not a trained analyst, are you?